



## 2. REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

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### 2.1 Regeneration Framework context

Renaissance Southend is leading on the preparation of a Regeneration Framework (the RF) for the Borough of Southend-on-Sea (Southend) that sets out the long-term strategy for achieving sustainable and ambitious regeneration and growth up to 2021. The document recognises that Southend is underperforming in some sectors, and identifies a range of opportunities for stimulating the economy through physical regeneration projects. The RF will be complemented by the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

The RF's Vision Statement for Southend is:

*"Southend-on-Sea - the regional centre, hub for higher education and culture, a centre for international air services in South Essex - a great place to live, do business and visit!"*

### 2.2 Performance of Southend town centre

As the biggest town in Essex, serving a population equivalent to a small midland city, the town's economy has been underperforming for a number of years. The reasons for this are complex, but an important part of the explanation is attributable to physical and market constraints arising from the town centre's evolution and urban form.

In terms of population, employment and GDP, the pace of growth over the last 15 years or so has been slower in Southend than in Greater London, the East of England and the South East.

Although the average income of residents is boosted by commuting to London, for those working locally incomes are significantly lower and compare unfavourably with other parts of the Eastern Region, where the gap is much narrower.

The supply and availability of new offices and employment premises are limited, and low rents discourage new development from coming forward.

Retail rents in the town centre have not performed as well as other centres such as Basildon and Chelmsford.

House prices reflect a discount compared to values prevailing in many locations throughout the rest of Essex.

While the number of seaside day-visitors has grown, tourism spending per head of population in Southend is lower than in other more successful seaside towns.

### 2.3 The Regeneration Framework and the town centre

The RF emphasises the importance of the part played by the town centre in contributing to the prosperity and overall economic performance of the whole region:

#### Cities and town centres

Cities and town centres play a key role in the current economy. The geographical characteristics of central urban areas support economic efficiency and the competitiveness of businesses. Specifically urban economies enable firms to take advantage of agglomeration, inter-trading and scale returns.

The RF recognises the importance of the town centre as a main driver of the local economy and identifies as its first priority the need to sustain and strengthen the town centre at the heart of the sub region by advocating a



The emerging boutique quarter

clear programme for the delivery of new housing, an improved retail offer, new office and leisure opportunities, and expansion of higher and further education facilities.

### The City Region

The RF advocates that Southend should function as an urban centre serving the sub region beyond its administrative boundary and providing opportunity for employment and services such as shopping, education and cultural pursuit, health, leisure and entertainment.

### Seaside towns

The RF recognises that the most effective approach to the regeneration of seaside towns has been to focus efforts to broaden their economic base, and improve their appeal as places to live, work and visit by meeting the employment, housing and leisure needs of residents, and diversifying its cultural and visitor offer. The aim is to create a town centre that is appealing and easy for the town's catchment population and visitor market to access and use all the year round.

### Retail and leisure drivers

The RF acknowledges that the retail and retail-related sectors is an essential building block in securing the town centre's vitality and attraction; if the town centre is not a successful retail/leisure destination then it will not be as successful in attracting businesses and visitors to reinforce its diversity and prosperity.

### Good quality design

Buildings and the spaces between them and the public realm confer distinctiveness and a sense of place. Southend's coastal location provides a unique platform upon which to build, and to create a place that is both easy to reach and move around, and therefore appealing to businesses, residents and visitors.

### Role of higher education institutions (HEIs)

HE and Further Education (FE) institutions have a key role to play: delivering a better skilled and qualified labour force; generating significant levels of spending by staff, visitors, students and their friends and families; providing a source for partnering in the delivery and maintenance of dual use facilities with the community; and creating a source of spin-out activities (incubation, innovation, support for cultural and other creative industries and support for local business).

### Managing travel demand

Traffic management and related transport investment to support multi-modal and efficient travel patterns throughout the Borough and within the town centre.

## Major change and major projects

The Regeneration Framework recognises the aspiration for major change necessitates a need for major projects if the desired step-change in Southend is to occur.

## 2.4 Objectives and opportunities for the town centre

### Strategic objectives

The Regeneration Framework proposes a series of strategic objectives, many of which the town centre will have a key role in delivering. These are summarised below:

1. Create a fully endowed, regional town centre.
2. Develop, and capture the spin-off value of the town centre's further and higher education sector.
3. Take full advantage of Southend Airport to provide South Essex with a full service airport.
4. Create the scale and diversity of housing and lifestyle choice needed to make Southend a more attractive place in which to live and increase the population size.
5. Provide the improvements needed to road infrastructure, parking, cycling and public transport facilities and pedestrian access for efficient travel to and within Southend.
6. Create the types and quality of industrial and distribution property needed (not a priority for the town centre)
7. Exploit Southend's distinctive heritage, landscape and biodiversity.



Royals shopping centre

8. Create a strategic public realm framework across the borough to connect its principal assets.
9. Put in place appropriate policies to promote and protect the strategy for regenerating Southend as set out by the Framework.

### Enabling objectives for the town centre

The RF proposes a series of 'enabling objectives':

- i. Create a clear spatial plan for the renewal and development of the town centre;
- ii. Assemble the land needed to improve the plan form and accommodate the forecast demand in the town centre's core markets.
- iii. Create within the town centre a fully functioning retail circuit, locating a third anchor development so as to create the missing circuit.
- iv. Expand the town centre population;
- v. Promote the delivery of a small office-based workspace and studio scheme aimed at the service sector;
- vi. Develop in the town centre a vibrant mix of food and drink, entertainment, cultural and leisure activities;
- vii. Re-configure the strategic and local access infrastructure to serve the new and extended purposes of the central core;
- viii. Put in place a public realm framework that 'binds, heals and reveals';

- ix. Exploit fully the potential of an expanding higher education campus;
- x. Deliver the stabilising and landscape works needed to stabilise the Cliff Gardens area and improve the legibility and pedestrian access between the seafront and the town centre core;
- xi. Secure the regeneration of the transitional area that lies between the town centre and the seafront;
- xii. Put in place appropriate design guidelines that are specific to development in the town centre; and
- xiii. Elevate the town centre unequivocally in policy for all town centre uses.

### Major projects

In order to achieve the enabling objectives, the Regeneration Framework identifies five major projects for the regeneration of Southend Town Centre:



Southend airport

## Regeneration of Southend Town Centre

### *Major projects identified in the Regeneration Framework*

1. Delivery of a third retail anchor and mixed use quarter around Tylers Avenue and Seaway car park.
2. An enhanced campus for the University and College centred around Farringdon car park.
3. A new prime office and residential-led mixed use quarter centred around Warrior Square.
4. New office, market residential and student housing scheme on London Road.
5. New centre and mix of uses at Victoria Avenue including University of Essex facilities.

### *Additional interventions*

The five major projects are to be supported by:

- Housing development - for families, for small households and for students - on a range of opportunity sites in addition to the major projects;
- A strategic public realm 'framework' for the town centre; and
- A package of infrastructure works to improve access to and movement around the town centre, to rationalise and improve the functionality of car parking provision and to make public transport use more efficient and appealing.



Regeneration of Pier Hill

