

southend central area action plan dpd

preferred approach version 2015



local development framework
delivering regeneration and growth

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the plan and its context

part a

introduction

section one

Part A: The Plan and its Context

1. Introduction

Strategic Planning Context

- 1 The Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP), when adopted, will form part of the Southend-on-Sea (hereafter referred to as 'Southend') Local Planning Framework.
- 2 The boundary of the Southend Central Area is set out by **Map 1: Southend Central Area Action Plan Boundary**.
- 3 The SCAAP reflects the vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy of the Southend Core Strategy (2007). The Core Strategy is a strategic level document that provides the framework for subsequent DPDs, including the SCAAP. **Appendix 1** provides a broad overview of the Core Strategy policies.
- 4 The Core Strategy establishes housing and job growth targets for the SCAAP area, over a plan period of 2001 - 2021, as follows:
 - 2,474 additional dwellings¹
 - 7,250 additional jobs²
- 5 Between 2001 and 2014, 954 dwellings have been built within the Southend Central Area. Employment data for the entire Borough suggests that job numbers have declined over the plan period. However, more recently, since 2010, job numbers have increased and efforts to boost job creation is underway.
- 6 Building on this more recent resurgence and growth, the SCAAP is considered to be an important catalyst and driver for investment and for the delivery of the remaining proportion of regeneration and growth in the Southend Central Area to meet or exceed Core Strategy targets up to 2021.
- 7 It is acknowledged that further work is being jointly undertaken to establish an objectively assessed need, in terms of jobs and housing, for Southend and surrounding housing market area. Following this, preparation of a Southend Local Plan will commence. This will set out new growth targets replacing those of the adopted Core Strategy, including a review of unimplemented development sites within the SCAAP.

¹ Core Strategy CP8: Town Centre (2,000), plus Seafront (550), minus SHLAA sites identified in the rest of the seafront outside the SCAAP area (76) = 2,474

² Core Strategy Cp1: Town Centre (6,500), plus Seafront (750) = 7,250

SCAAP Plan Period and Context for Consultation for Deliverability of Sites

This consultation version of the SCAAP sets out all known major potential development sites within the central area, which are not being developed under permitted development rights. However, the final version of the SCAAP will only include sites that are deliverable by 2021, the end of the Core Strategy plan period. Sites that are to be developed after 2021 will be taken forward as part of the preparation of the Southend Local Plan.

Table 5 in reference to Map 4 outlines which sites are considered to be deliverable by 2021 and those which will be delivered during the next plan period, i.e. preparation of the Southend Local Plan. The Council is seeking comment on the likelihood of this phasing. For those sites included in the final version of the SCAAP there must be clear evidence of deliverability by 2021, which can be presented at examination.

- 8 The Borough Council has recently adopted its Development Management Document (July 2015). The Development Management Document sets out policies for positively managing development in Southend and will be used to assess and determine planning applications.
- 9 The Council's adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule sets out where the levy may be payable, where exemptions apply, together with the CIL rates for development types and charging areas, including Southend Central Area. The proceeds can be spent on providing infrastructure to support the development within that authority's area.
- 10 The Borough Council has also adopted the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which provide further guidance and advice:
 - **Design and Townscape Guide SPD** (adopted 2009). This document provides clear contextual development and design guidance and should be referenced within all development proposals;
 - **Planning Obligations Guide SPD** (revised 2015). This document provides guidance in relation to potential planning obligations or developer contributions in relation to development. The document also includes procedural information and contact details to assist in the negotiation of legal agreements.
 - **Streetscape Manual SPD** (revised 2015). This document provides guidance to ensure a coordinated, high quality streetscape is sustainably achieved within the Borough.

South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)

- 11 Southend, together with the areas of Essex, Thurrock, Kent, Medway and East Sussex, form part of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). The SELEP partnership has enabled the Council to secure a range of measures to support regeneration and growth within the Borough, including the City Deal which will link together a series of interventions including a newly formed business support facility and incubator space to aid business development, support for the regeneration of Victoria Avenue, and initial funding through the Growth Deal for the SCAAP area which will help to facilitate public realm enhancements.
- 12 The Council will continue to work with SELEP to generate public and private investment and support housing and jobs growth within Southend, with a particular focus on Southend Central Area.

Southend Business Improvement District (BID)

- 13 A Business Improvement District (BID) was established in Southend town centre and the seafront and began trading as the Southend BID Ltd in April 2013. This has helped to unlock £2.7m of investment for the town centre and seafront. The BID has introduced a number of measures to enhance the experience of visitors to the town, including the introduction of street wardens and planters to enliven the High Street experience.

Sustainable Development

- 14 The Council's Low Carbon Energy and Sustainability Strategy 2015-2020 focuses on delivering low carbon growth, improving energy efficiency and providing a more sustainable future for residents, communities and businesses, with the aim of establishing Southend as Low Carbon City.

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Context and Issues for the Southend Central Area

- a. **Housing** – the **core** town centre has relatively few residential dwellings compared to the rest of the Borough where residential development dominates. The result of this is a relatively small town centre population, and lower levels of activity in the evening once shops and businesses have closed.
- b. **Offices** – Southend Central Area is characterised by concentrations of large, outdated office development, which is identified for mixed-use redevelopment in this Plan. Modern, fit-for-purpose, smaller-scale, flexible high quality office accommodation, which better reflects demand, is therefore needed to support economic growth objectives.

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- c. **Retail** there has been limited investment in new retail development in recent years and there is a need for the town centre to diversify its offer, whilst maintaining its retail function, to ensure it remains attractive and competitive.
- d. **Education** – the educational offer of Southend has significantly improved in recent years, including a number of successful developments within Southend Central Area. There is a need to ensure that any increase in the local population is accommodated in terms of school places.
- e. **Leisure, Tourism, Recreation and Culture** – Southend has a vibrant offer in terms of leisure, tourism and cultural facilities, enhanced in recent years by a number of successful developments. However, there is opportunity to further maximise Southend’s potential as a visitor destination, particularly in terms of the evening economy and overnight stays.
- f. **Central Seafront Area** – the seafront is a valuable asset to the town, however, connections between it and parts of the town centre are disjointed and opportunities for linked trips are not maximised. With European and international environmental designations, it offers a unique form of open space, the biodiversity interests of which need to be sensitively balanced with regeneration and growth. The provision, and enhancement, of open and green spaces in Southend Central Area will be of benefit in terms of relieving pressure on these designations.
- g. **Transport, Access and Public Realm** – the car continues to dominate elements of Southend Central Area and the highway severs links between gateway neighbourhoods and the town centre. There is a need to build on the success of recent public realm and access improvement schemes to secure a more pleasant and accessible environment, encouraging more sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling.

In terms of car parking provision, even during peak periods, there is additional capacity within the town centre. However, during these peak times, a small number of car parks have been over capacity. As a number of the SCAAP Opportunity Sites are located on existing Council owned car parks, there is a need to manage car parking effectively, seeking to maintain capacity at a level that supports the vitality and viability of the town centre whilst enabling the delivery of relevant opportunity sites.

- h. **Heritage** – Southend Central Area boasts a wealth of heritage assets which will be celebrated as part of this Plan. However, there is a need to ensure that these assets and their setting are conserved and enhanced to ensure they continue to make a full contribution to the character of Southend Central Area.

- i. **Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage** – Underpinning all these issues is the need for this plan, in association with the Core Strategy, to address the challenge of Climate Change and Flood Risk in the Central Area. Southend has been identified by the Environment Agency as susceptible to local flooding under conditions of extreme rainfall. Additionally, areas of the Borough are at risk from tidal flooding, as demonstrated by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). There is a need to manage development within areas of flood risk, particularly within the Central Seafront Area, and to incorporate properly designed Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into development proposals to reduce the rate and quantity of surface water runoff.

- 15 The SCAAP aims to address these issues by promoting land uses that support economic growth and housing delivery in order to create sustainable, vibrant communities.

The Purpose of this Document

- 16 The purpose of this Plan is to give more detailed consideration to how and where regeneration and growth can sustainably be accommodated in the Southend Central Area, including the Town Centre, Central Seafront Area and gateway neighbourhoods.
- 17 It contains proposals for Policy Areas and Opportunity Sites aimed at strengthening and transforming Southend Town Centre's sub-regional role as a successful retail and commercial destination, cultural hub and educational centre of excellence, leisure and tourist attraction, and a place to live.
- 18 The intention is also to seek to safeguard, conserve and enhance the significant biodiversity, green space and other environmental resources in the area and on the foreshore, as well as to bring about public realm and access improvements.

Relationship between Policies

- 19 *All policies within this Area Action Plan should be read in conjunction with relevant national and local planning policies and guidance.*
- 20 *Please note that this Area Action Plan should be read as a whole, as the policies are cross-cutting and inter relate.*

How this document differs from the Proposed Submission draft Southend Central Area Action Plan consulted on in September 2011.

This is the Preferred Approach version of the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP). It is being published for consultation so that everyone can comment on the enclosed policies and proposals.

To reach this stage, the Council has assembled a comprehensive evidence base (available on the Council's website). There has also been extensive discussion and consultation, over several years, on the issues and principles underlying the policies and proposals within the SCAAP.

The SCAAP has been prepared in accordance with the Southend Local Development Scheme (LDS), is consistent with the over riding approach as set out by the Core Strategy (2007), and has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The SCAAP has been fully informed by a Sustainability Appraisal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment), a Habitat Regulations Screening Report, and an Equality Impact Assessment. The Sustainability Appraisal is published alongside this document for public comment.

This Preferred Approach builds on the Proposed Submission version of the SCAAP (referred to hereafter as the Superseded Proposed Submission version), published in September 2011, and the Issues and Options version, published in June 2010. It has also been informed by representations made to the Issues and Options versions of the Seafront Area Action Plan and Town Centre Action Plan, which preceded the SCAAP, consulted on in 2007, and the Central Area Masterplan (CAM), adopted by the Council in 2008 as corporate policy.

Main consultation stages of the SCAAP:

- Issues and Options version (June 2010)
- (Superseded) Proposed Submission version (September 2011)
- Preferred Approach version (November 2015) [Presenting this Document]

The purpose of the Issues and Options stage (Consultation – 21st June 2010 to 9th August 2010) was to explore the spatial options for Southend Central Area and how detailed policies and proposals could guide regeneration in a sustainable manner. The Council wanted to gather the public and stakeholder's views about the general direction of proposed policy to meet Southend specific issues.

The Borough Council put forward a suggested approach where development areas were referred to as 'Quarters', 'Gateway Neighbourhoods', and 'Proposal Sites' (referred to within this Preferred Approach version of the SCAAP as 'Policy Areas' and 'Opportunity

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Sites'), as part of the consultation alongside alternative options. The process has provided local people with the opportunity to shape the look and feel of Southend Central Area and its communities, including consideration of environmental and social interests. The responses received at this stage informed the production of the SCAAP policies.

The last key stage in the preparation of the SCAAP was the (Superseded) Proposed Submission Version. Consultation took place between 5th September 2011 and 17th October 2011. The purpose of this consultation was to allow representations to be made in relation to soundness and legal compliance. Preparation of the SCAAP has been delayed due to significant changes to national planning policy and guidance, the need to produce further supporting evidence in addition to dedication of resources to deliver the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) and Development Management Document, which have both been successfully examined and now adopted.

Due to changes since the (Superseded) Proposed Submission version was published in 2011, the Council will carry out a further round of preparatory consultation as necessary before publishing a final draft of the SCAAP.

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The SCAAP includes revised policies and proposals. Representations should be made on this version of the plan, even if comments have been submitted on earlier versions of the Plan. This will ensure that your issues can be considered during the preparation of the next stage of the Plan.

This Preferred Approach version of the SCAAP takes account of:

- Issues raised during the publication of the (Superseded) Proposed Submission version of the SCAAP in 2011, which itself built upon the Issues and Options version of the SCAAP;
- Changes in national policy and guidance, and removal of regional policy;
- Updates to the technical evidence base;
- Relevant progress on sites within the Plan area.

Once adopted, the SCAAP will replace a number of the remaining saved policies of the Borough Local Plan, as set out in Appendix 8.

Each preferred approach is presented in a consistent format, setting out the detail of the preferred approach and how it has been selected with regard to the following background information:

Fit with the vision and objectives: all preferred approaches are intended to deliver the vision for the plan, and how the preferred approach is linked to that vision is set out within the document.

Evidence Base: the preferred approach is founded on a robust evidence base and reference is made to key evidence.

Each of the preferred approaches has an associated question box, which provides the opportunity to comment on that particular matter.

Summary of main Changes

While no changes are proposed to the boundary of the plan area as a whole, some amendments are proposed to the boundaries of the Policy Areas and Opportunity Sites (previously referred to as Quarters/Gateway Neighbourhoods/Proposal Sites) and the inclusion of major planning permissions as site allocations, the new boundaries are shown on **Map 2** and a summary of amendments is available in accompanying consultation statement.

The Plan is available on the Council's website. Representations should be made using the Council's online interactive consultation system:

www.southend.gov.uk/planningpolicyconsultations. Alternatively, representations can be made using the Council's response form, available on request, and submitted using the following means:

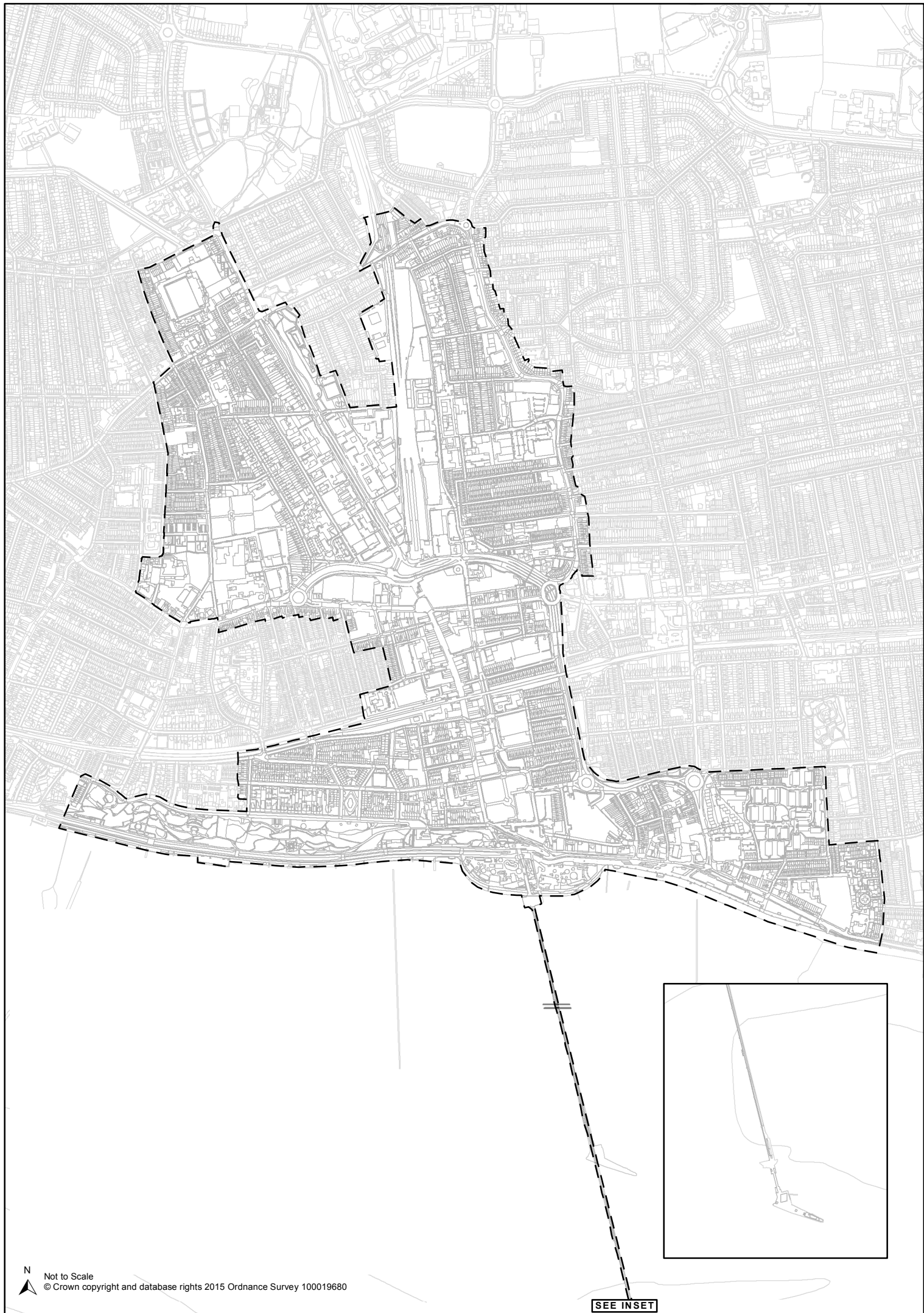
By email to: ldf@southend.gov.uk

By post to: Department for Place, PO Box 5557, Civic Centre, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6ZF.

Please be aware that representations made on this document cannot be treated as confidential, i.e. they will be in the public domain.

The SCAAP is accompanied by a **Policies Map**, which illustrates Policy Areas, Site Allocations and other designations, and a Sustainability Appraisal; both are available on the Council's website. Representations related to the Policies Map and Sustainability Appraisal are also invited.

Map 1 - SCAAP Boundary



Sustainability Appraisal

- 21 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is an assessment of the potential significant social, environmental and economic impacts of development and forms an integral part of the plan making process. It ensures that all policies and proposals are prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. The SA forms an iterative process with all stages of the SCAAP being assessed. These appraisals have been used to assess alternative policy options, assist decision-making and identification of the most sustainable policies to take forward. The latest assessment of the sustainability and the potential significant effects of this plan can be found in the SA Report which is available on the Council's website www.southend.gov.uk.

Please note that the Sustainability Appraisal is available for comment as part of this consultation.

Question 1: Do you have any comments regarding the Sustainability Appraisal?

Habitats Regulations Screening Report

- 22 Southend and the surrounding districts are home to a number of important designated sites for nature conservation. Habitats screening is an assessment of the potential significant effects of a policy on European Sites designated for their nature conservation importance. These include Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and international Ramsar sites.
- 23 The SCAAP was assessed for any significant impacts on European sites within or outside Southend. The screening report concluded that the proposed policies will have no significant impact on the European/ international designations, either alone or in combination with other plans and strategies. The Habitats Regulations Screening Report is available on the Council's website www.southend.gov.uk.

Policies Map

- 24 The SCAAP is accompanied by a Policies Map, available on the Council's website www.southend.gov.uk, which illustrates the boundary of the SCAAP area, its Policy Areas and Opportunity Sites, and land use designation related to policy, including the extent of the Town Centre Primary Shopping Area, and Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages within Southend Central Area (this is also shown on **Map 3**).

Question 2: Do you have any comments on the Policies Map?

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vision and objectives for the southend central area

section two

2. Vision and Objectives for Southend Central Area

25 The **Vision** for Southend Central Area is:

Proposed Vision

- Our **vision** for Southend Central Area, which includes the Town Centre and Central Seafront Area, is for it to be a City by the Sea. As a prosperous and thriving regional centre, it will be an area that is vibrant, safe and hospitable, rich in commerce, learning and culture and an attractive, diverse place where people want to live, work and visit for both day trips and overnight stays.
- Our **aim** is to transform the image of Southend through sustainable economic growth, development and social provision, and for it to be independently recognised as a popular location for businesses, residents, students and visitors.

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed 'Vision' set out above? Please explain your answer.

Rationale

By allocating a range of suitable development sites and identifying opportunities for regeneration and growth to ensure the vitality of the Town Centre and Central Area, the Plan builds on the spatial strategy of the Southend Core Strategy DPD (2007). This promotes Southend Town Centre and Central Area as the primary focus for growth within the Borough, to regenerate the town centre as a fully competitive regional centre, led by the development of the University Campus, and securing a full range of quality sub-regional services to provide for housing and employment growth, in conjunction with the upgrade of the strategic transport network. The Town Centre also performs a vital role as a retail centre and is the first preference for retail and town centre development and is identified as a key location for locating visitor accommodation. This approach aims to deliver sustainable development within the Southend Central Area in line with National Planning Policy and Guidance.

Key Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance
- Southend Core Strategy DPD (2007)
- Central Area Masterplan (2008)
- Consultation Statements, responding to comments made on previous versions of the SCAAP
- Sustainability Appraisal, HRA and EQIA.

This list is not exhaustive. Full evidence base is available on the Council's website.

26 Our objectives for achieving this are:

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Strategic Objectives

1. To improve and transform the economic vitality, viability and diversity of Southend Central Area by encouraging the establishment of a wider range of homes, businesses and shops whilst providing new opportunities for learning, recreation and leisure.
2. To promote design excellence and good quality development proposals and public realm improvements to reinforce a distinctive sense of place, complement new and existing development, and contribute towards the Council's aspirations to establish Southend as a Low Carbon City.
3. To improve accessibility to the area, ensuring streets, public and green spaces are connected, well-designed and safe, utilising a coordinated palette of materials and furniture that enhance the quality of the streetscape and improve opportunities for walking and cycling, and access to more sustainable modes of transport, such as rail and bus.
4. To promote a positive approach to public car parking provision that provides public car parking levels that support the vitality of the town centre and access to the seafront by encouraging improvements to the quality of access to parking so that it is convenient, well-signposted, safe and secure.
5. To appropriately manage and mitigate flood risk and to encourage the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems and urban greening measures in order to reduce surface water run-off.
6. To enhance the quality of, and access to, Southend Central Area's green and open spaces, and to improve connectivity between the Town Centre and Central Seafront Area in order to relieve pressure on the Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar site, Special Protection Areas (SPA) and other environmental designations, to protect and enhance local biodiversity and nature conservation, and to encourage opportunity for linked trips.
7. To celebrate and have full regard of Southend's unique heritage assets, such as the Grade II listed Pier, to ensure these assets are appropriately conserved and enhanced and continue to form an integral part of how Southend Central Area is experienced by those who live, work and visit it.
8. To increase the number and diversity of people living within Southend Central Area and its Gateway Neighbourhoods by building more homes and ensure that living in the area becomes appealing to more families with children, supported by social and community infrastructure that contribute to reducing inequalities in health and wellbeing and support all ages to lead independent lives and live

healthy lifestyles.

9. To encourage the establishment and expansion of businesses in Southend Central Area by identifying, promoting or actively bringing forward suitable sites for development to meet modern user and investor requirements.
10. To encourage new development, including visitor accommodation, that enhances Southend's leisure and tourism, having particular regard for the assets offered by the Central Seafront Area, in order to attract greater visitor numbers, promote more overnight stays and support growth, complemented by a thriving learning quarter that provides state of the art facilities and well-designed student accommodation.

Question 4: Do you agree with the 'Strategic Objectives' set out above? Please explain your answer.

Rationale

The proposed strategic objectives will help to deliver the vision for the SCAAP.

The SCAAP provides the strategic planning framework for delivering and managing regeneration and growth within the area. These objectives will facilitate this, by focusing this regeneration and growth on key themes. Objective 1 highlights the range of interlinking policy areas that will secure regeneration within Southend Central Area. Objective 2 promotes the obtainment of good design, recognising the role good design plays in sustainable development and the creation of successful place making. Objectives 3 and 4 are linked to the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, access and public realm improvements to encourage the uptake of more sustainable travel modes and to ensure public car parking provision supports the vitality of the town centre. Objective 5 recognises the need to appropriately manage flood risk, given the Council's role as Lead Local Flood Authority and areas at risk of flooding within the plan area. Objectives 6 and 7 promote the conservation and enhancement of natural and heritage assets. Objectives 8 and 9 are linked to the delivery of housing and jobs, while objective 10 is associated with enhancing Southend Central Area's offer in terms of providing facilities for education, leisure and tourism.

Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance
- Southend Core Strategy DPD (2007)
- Central Area Masterplan (2008)
- Consultation Statements, responding to comments made on previous versions of the SCAAP
- Sustainability Appraisal, HRA and EQIA.

This list is not exhaustive. Full evidence base is available on the Council's website.

