Southend Borough Council

Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) Hearing Statement - Matter 4: Transport, access, parking and public realm

May 2017

Southend Borough Council – Southend Central Area Action Plan Examination
Hearing Statement – Matter 4: Transport, access, parking and public realm

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References

Topic Paper 2	http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/file/4723/sd15_topic_paper_2_-_strategic_highway_network
Core Strategy	http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/276/core_strategy
LTP3	http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/226/transport_policy
LTP3 Implementation Plan	http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/549/local_transport_plan_3_-_implementation_plan
Development Management DPD	http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200420/planning_policy_documents/389/development_management_dpd_2
Car Parking Study	http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/674/car_parking_study_for_the_central_area_of_southend%20_-_november_2016

Matter 4: Transport, access, parking and public realm

4.1 *Topic Paper 2 (Strategic Highway Network) notes that: "Current forecasts suggest that, with the planned development in Southend, congestion will increase" (second paragraph under Transport Context). With this in mind, can the development proposals in the SCAAP be implemented without causing unacceptable congestion and inconvenience to residents, workers and visitors to the central Area? Does the SCAAP relate well to the Southend Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3?*

4.1.1   The Borough of Southend is located on a peninsula bounded by the River Thames to the south and east and the River Crouch to the north. Due to this geography the Borough's transport network is focused on an east-west corridor. In relation to the highway network the main strategic access to the town is provided by the A127 corridor linking to the wider national network (M25, A13, A130). This route is critical to serving the Borough's future development and economic needs, and to the accessibility of the town centre and central seafront areas. Topic Paper 2 (Strategic Highway Network) recognises this by stating that 'with the planned development in Southend, congestion will increase, with particular issues on the A127 at principal junctions'. This has formed the basis for the focus over the last five years on the A127 Corridor to ensure that improvements are brought forward to manage the increase in traffic.

4.1.2   Taking this forward the Borough Council has been successful in implementing a programme of improvements to mitigate the impacts of congestion to support the delivery of growth. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2007, significant improvements have been made, are under construction or are planned to all the major junctions on the A127 corridor within the Borough.

4.1.3   Major junction enhancements have been made (from west to east) at Progress Road, the Tesco roundabout (A127/ B1013) and Cuckoo Corner (A127/ A1159). The latter two junctions also provide strategic access to the expanding London Southend Airport and new Business Park, currently being built. The upgrading of the Kent Elms junction is under construction, with completion planned for September, whilst improvements to The Bell junction are being planned for next year with a financial allocation from the SELEP Local Growth Fund (see Topic Paper 2, Map 1 – Strategy Map). As each scheme has progressed they have been developed using appropriate modelling techniques (Southend multi-modal model) to take account of the latest planned development and growth targets, both in Southend and Rochford and background traffic growth.

4.1.4   Outside the Borough the upgrading of the A127 Fairglen junction with the A130 is currently being planned together with other improvements to the

A127 corridor by Essex County Council in partnership with the South Essex local authorities.

4.1.5 The strategic highway corridor improvements have been complemented by a number of schemes and proposals to promote more sustainable travel patterns in the town. These have included improvements to the town's rail and bus interchange facilities, notably at Southend Victoria (Victoria Gateway scheme), and better pedestrian and cycle facilities. These and other schemes are detailed in Topic Paper 2.

4.1.6 The Southend Core Strategy and Southend Local Transport Plan strategy have been developed by the Borough Council to provide a strong inter-linked approach to the delivery of planned growth and transport infrastructure improvements (see Core Strategy Key Diagram page 28 and LTP2 Strategy Map in Topic Paper 2). This has been reflected in subsequent updated versions of the LTP over the past decade.

4.1.7 The current LTP (LTP3 Revised January 2015) makes numerous references to the SCAAP (for example Chapter 2, page 20, paragraph 2.2 makes specific reference to the Plan). As outlined in its executive summary, LTP3 provides a strong emphasis for reducing congestion whilst encouraging sustainable and active travel in order to secure a thriving and sustainable economy, minimising environmental impact, the promotion of a greener and safer Borough, reducing inequalities in health and wellbeing and to provide a more accessible Borough. The SCAAP has been prepared within this strategic context and with the latest LTP (LTP3) provides an up to date 'joined-up' approach to planned and coordinated delivery.

4.1.8 Having regard to this planned integrated approach to future development needs and transport infrastructure provision, the Borough Council is confident that the development proposals contained within the SCAAP can be successfully implemented without causing unacceptable congestion and inconvenience to residents, workers and visitors to the central area.

4.2 ***Are the sustainable transport measures set out in policy DS5: Transport, Access and Public Realm achievable, beneficial and deliverable? Topic Paper 1 (Parking and Access) refers to a number of transport schemes already delivered in recent years, and there is a list of such schemes in Appendix A. How successful has the Council been, in concert with the highway authority and other agencies, in promoting sustainable transport in terms of modal shift, both for the Central Area as a whole, but also in relation to visitors to the resort and especially day visitors?***

4.2.1 Policy DS5 seeks to provide for a number of sustainable transport measures, which are in conformity with the provisions of LTP3. These are

being implemented via a number of projects and initiatives as detailed in
Topic Paper 2. Highlights include:-

- Integrated transport improvements at Victoria Gateway, which has
already provided enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities, with over
10,000 pedestrians and cyclists crossing daily directly to and from the
High Street;
- Cycle route improvements to create a direct link to the seafront via
Queensway and a new "cycle ring route" around the town centre;
- New pedestrian signage and maps provided in the High Street and Pier
Hill area;
- New bus shelters and real time bus information screens at the Travel
Centre, Chichester Road and Victoria Gateway to provide up to the
minute travel information for passengers on all Southend and Essex
services;
- New secure cycle parking provided and a new "cycle hub" planned for
Central Station as part of the South Essex Active Travel Programme;
- Six new electric car-club bays to be provided as part of the
"MotionHub" project;
- Four new cycle hire docking stations to be provided, with three located
on City Beach;
- Further transport improvements are planned as part of the 'Better
Queensway' project, to provide for better pedestrian and cycle facilities
and improved connectivity to the town centre.

4.2.2   The benefits of securing the sustainable transport measures set out in
Policy DS5 are well documented in LTP3 and the Sustainability Appraisal
(SA) of the SCAAP. The SA outlines that achieving a modal shift away
from increasing car use will be essential to prevent the adverse impacts
that may result from development in central Southend and improvements
to non-car travel could help meet sustainability objectives relating to
social sustainability, such as accessibility and health, and environmental
sustainability including air quality and use of resources.

4.2.3   Major public realm improvements have been made at Elmer Square as
part of the University complex and further improvements are planned and
committed (see also Policy PA3). The 'City Beach' scheme has provided for
significant highway and public realm improvements at the heart of the
town's tourism area. Further improvements are planned as part of Phase 2
of the scheme (see also Policy CS1).

4.2.4   Public realm improvements have significantly improved the townscape and
quality of the town centre environment, and further enhancements are
considered essential to 'uplift' the image and vitality of the town to
support and complement regeneration, including housing and employment
growth. To deliver key public realm proposals in the SCAAP, the Borough

Council is developing 'S-CATS'[1], a Local Growth Fund Scheme that has an allocation of £7m, through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). The second phase of the Scheme is at the concept and preliminary design stages, which will enable the Borough Council, working with local stakeholders, to significantly improve the streetscape and public realm around the Victoria Circus, London Road, College Way, Queens Road, Elmer Approach and Southchurch Road areas. The proposals will compliment and continue the first phase of the S-CATS junction, public realm and cycle route improvements, which are nearing completion in Victoria Avenue.

Mode Share

4.2.5   Policy DM15, in the adopted Development Management Document, requires developers to submit Travel Plans to monitor changes in travel to development sites in the Central Area over time. The policy, introduced in July 2015, will give indications of mode share for journeys to those sites within the Central Area but there are insufficient results available from completed schemes at the present time.

4.2.6   However, comparison of travel to work data for the Southend Central Area between 2001 and 2011 can be made from available census data. These show a reduction in the proportion of people travelling to work in Southend by car, and increases in the proportion travelling to work by more sustainable modes: on foot, by bicycle and by train. Figure 4.1 illustrates the percentage point change in mode share for each mode between the two censuses. The data shown in Figure 4.1 include Southend residents and people commuting into Southend Central Area from other areas. It indicates some success in promotion of sustainable transport options to people living and working in Southend.

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[1] Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) Town Centre Public Realm Improvements Inception Report – August 2016

Figure 4.1: Change in mode share for travel to work in Southend Central Area
(percentage point change between 2001 and 2011 censuses)*
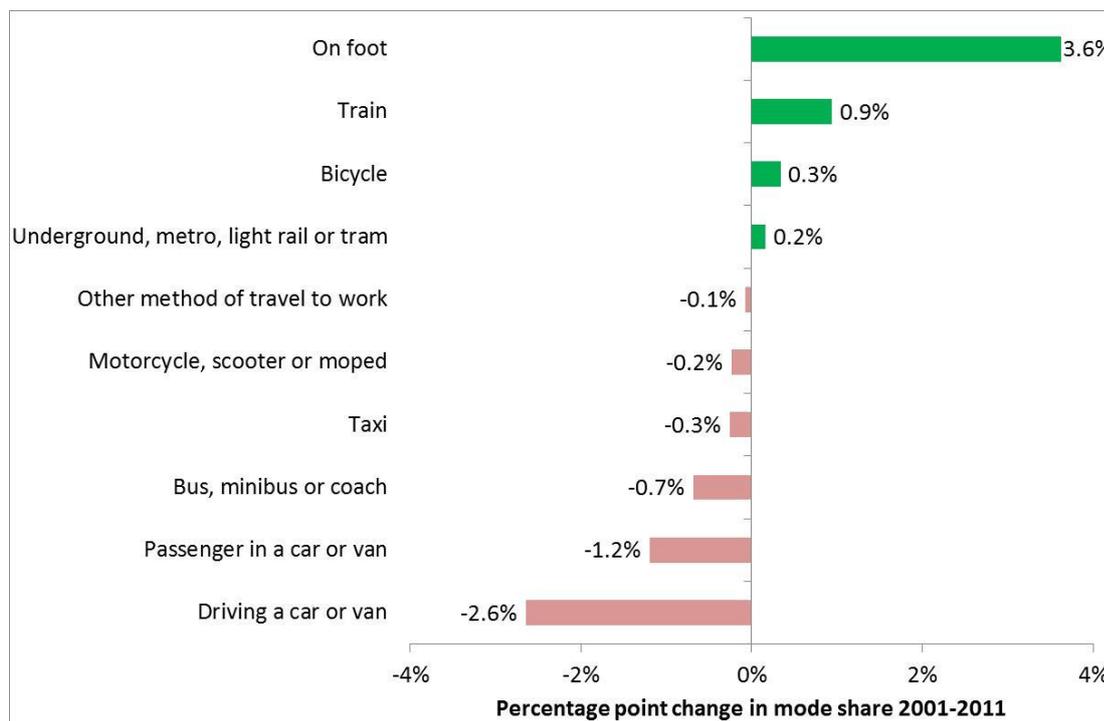
*(excludes working from home)

4.2.7 The overall level of commuting into the Southend Central Area fell between the two censuses. Around 2,500 fewer people commuted into Southend Central Area by car in 2011 compared to 2001.

- In the 2001 census, 23,867 people gave their work destination as a location within the Southend Central Area, of which 12,929 stated that their usual mode of travel was car as driver and 1,766 car as passenger. This equates to 62% of people traveling to work to the Southend Central Area by car.
- In the 2011 census, 21,699 people gave their work destination as a location within the Southend Central Area, of which 10,925 stated that their usual mode of travel was car as driver and 1,215 car as passenger. This represents a reduction in the proportion of people travelling to work by car to the Central Area (56%)[2].

Travel Survey

4.2.8 A further Visitor and Shopper Survey (Car Parking Study for the Central Area, 2016 -Steer Davies Gleave), was carried out on 23rd , 25th and 26th March 2016 and on Monday 30th May 2016 in the Southend Central Area, with a total of 843 responses. The results are summarised in Figure 4.2 - this found that most respondents travelled to Southend by non-car

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[2] It should be noted that travel patterns may have changed since the 2011 census but this represents the most up to date and comprehensive data about travel to the Central Area.

modes. Whilst the mode split only represents the people who were successfully interviewed it may provide a good indication as to the most likely modes and the importance of improving conditions for all users without disadvantaging any one particular group.

Figure 4.2: Visitor and Shopper Survey for the Central Area, 2016

Mode	% of respondents
Walk	33%
Car	29%
Train	18%
Bus	15%
Other	3%
Cycle	2%

Bus Usage

4.2.9 The implementation of the Passenger Transport Corridor on the A13, the principal route serving the town centre to provide improved bus infrastructure and real time travel information, has seen bus usage in the past year (2015/16) retain ridership levels of some 3m passengers a year. This compares to 2.3m in 2005/6 when public transport improvements were first planned. Further improvements to bus provision will be pursued via established partnership working with the bus operators. A good example of this is the Better Bus Area Fund application (2012) that was successful in delivering nearly £1.6m worth of improvement to resolve local congestion and upgrade interchange facilities. This included new shelters, real time information screens and CCTV.

Rail Usage

4.2.10 Rail usage of the town centre's two railway stations has increased in recent years. Victoria Station has seen entries and exits increase from 990,288 in 2000/1 to 1,439,480 in 2015/6 a 45% increase, whilst the Central Station has increased from 2,282,597 to 3,082,306 in 2015/6, a rise of 36%[3].

4.2.11 The Central Railway Station is located in close proximity to the university and college campus and therefore provides a convenient sustainable access option for students. Data (Figure 4.3) from the University Travel Plan[4] indicates that non-car modes of travel, by staff and students, have increased over the past decade.

Figure 4.3: Travel Plan Survey Mode Share 2006 - 2016 (Staff and Students)

Travel Mode	2006	2008	2011	2016

[3] The Office of Rail and Road Estimates of Station Usage 2015-16 report and data (http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates)
[4] University of Essex 2016-2020 Travel Plan for the Southend Campus, November 2016

Travel by Car %	65%	36%	27%	29%
Non-car travel %	35%	64%	73%	71%
Total	100	156	110	101

4.2.12 Improved pedestrian accessibility to the town centres rail stations has been successfully provided and further improvements are proposed to the south entrance of Central Station (Policy PA6 of the SCAAP).

Cycling and Walking

4.2.13 Cycle usage has grown in the Borough following the introduction of a number of cycle ways and cycle parking facilities, including the SUSTRANS segregated seafront cycle route, the Prittle Brook Greenway linking with the west side of the Borough and the promotion of cycling as part of the 'Cycle Southend' (www.cyclesouthend.co.uk) scheme. This includes the development of a 'cycle ring route' around the Town Centre and connecting to the seafront cycle route (www.cyclesouthend.co.uk/uploads/RehsqXV7f08Qm0vQ.pdf). There are a series of automatic cycle counters and these show a peak of nearly 350 cycle trips a day in Victoria Avenue, 200 along Prittle Brook and nearly 500 on Western Esplanade.

4.2.14 Following the award of funding in 2011 under the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to promote and develop sustainable travel in Southend, SUSTRANS undertook an analysis of the schemes impact on behalf of the Council conducting a sample of resident surveys in 2013 and 2015. These found that cycling and walking had increased in popularity as a mode of transport. Public realm improvements, particularly to the central seafront and university/college complex, have witnessed significant improvements to pedestrian facilities including City Beach and the public space at the Forum.

Sustainable Transport Initiatives

4.2.15 More recently the Department for Transport has awarded £3.2m of funding to the South Essex Active Travel Programme, of which the Borough Council is the lead partner. This will facilitate a step-change in the area's approach to sustainable transport; using targeted travel engagement with jobseekers, young people, newly recruited employees, students, lower socio-economic communities and volunteers so they can use active travel to get to work, training and educational opportunities and fully contribute to the local economy. Targeting six local Growth Areas, including the SCAAP, the programme will increase active travel by tailoring packages of advice, support and promotion to each of these groups – enhancing their access to new jobs and education and training opportunities available in South Essex over the next three years.

4.2.16   Working with the bus and train operators, smart ticketing is being introduced which will be further enhanced by the use of contact-less systems and mobile phone technology, which will be kept under review as systems develop. The use of modern technology will be promoted to encourage the use of sustainable modes and raise awareness of travel choice such as Variable Messaging Signs, Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) and CCTV webcams. A Southend travel website (www.ideasinmotionsouthend.co.uk) has been set up to promote improved marketing and provide up-to-date information regarding transport and travel around the Borough. Travel Plans for significant traffic and people attractors are required for new developments. Further detailed information is provided in Local Transport Plan 3 Implementation Plan 2015/16 - 2020/21. Following on from the Car Parking Study for the Central Area, the development of a Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy for Southend has commenced, including a strong emphasis on Smart City technology and management plans for peak demand.

Visitors to the Resort

4.2.17   As described in the travel survey results section above (see 4.2.8), visitors to Southend utilise a variety of transport modes to access the towns' facilities.

4.2.18   The Borough Council has over the years managed major attractions/tourist events by successfully promoting rail travel in partnership with the operators. A number of major tourist/visitor attractions are successfully marketed by the Council and operators with the rail companies to promote use of the facilities via rail travel.

4.2.19   The Borough Council has a successful track record of planning, securing funding and implementing sustainable transport schemes and initiatives to offer real travel choices, many of these in partnership with transport agencies, operators and users. The Borough Council is confident it can continue to achieve beneficial sustainable transport schemes and deliver these in accordance with the provisions of Policy DS5.

4.3   Several representations to the submitted SCAAP point to significant concerns in relation to car parking provision. With this in mind:

4.3   (i) Does the Car Parking Study commissioned by the Council (by Steer Davies Gleave, dated November 2016) provide an appropriate and robust evidence base (as asserted in Topic Paper 1, paragraph 1.56) to justify a realistic level of car parking provision in the Central Area?

4.3.1   The Car Parking Study provides an appropriate and robust evidence base to justify a realistic level of car parking provision in the Central Area. It

incorporates a broad range of evidence, including interviews with Central Area users, surveys of car parking occupancy at all major Central Area car parks across six survey days (covering public holidays and the summer period), and draws on data from the Borough Council's Controlled Parking Operating System to understand the profile of car park occupancy across the year.

4.3.2   The study also considers approaches to managing peak periods of demand taken in to account similar towns and cities with high levels of seasonal demand.

4.3.3   The study was not undertaken in isolation – the process of preparing the Car Parking Study included discussions with the local business community and consideration of SCAAP consultation responses to ensure it addressed concerns from stakeholders in the tourist industry in particular.

4.3.4   The study addresses all of the relevant topics including:

- A full description of current arrangements for publicly available parking in Southend Central Area (including the number of spaces, split between long and short stay, pricing structure and payment methods).
- Consideration is given to how Southend compares with similar seaside towns and cities (Brighton, Bournemouth and Blackpool) that also experience seasonal peaks in demand, based on research which includes consultation with parking professionals in those areas.
- Assessment of demand for publicly available parking in Southend Central Area, drawing on occupancy surveys undertaken and information from the Controlled Parking Operating System. The assessment considers network performance across a range of days with varying levels of demand including peak periods and typical demand during off-peak periods.
- Forecast of future supply and demand for car parking, including a detailed assessment of the likely impact of approved planning applications for sites in the Central Area and likely land use of policy areas and opportunity sites (which contain outline estimates of the nature of development to take place in the Southend Central Area).
- The behaviours of visitors to the Central Area, ascertained through a visitor survey which asked shoppers and visitors how they travelled to the Central Area and the amount they spent in the Central Area. The results are considered with reference to similar studies elsewhere and what the results mean for parking in Southend.

4.3.5   The parking level suggested is realistic – when considering the day-to-day parking needs of Southend Central Area outside of peak periods, there is over-provision of parking supply in the Central Area. There is a need to balance competing demands for land in the Central Area, maintaining a large amount of car parking that is under-used for the majority of the

year represents one of the least economically efficient uses of land in the Central Area.

4.3.6   However, maintaining off-peak over-provision within Central Area South allows accommodation of the majority of peak seasonal demand. There are options to provide additional seasonal parking supply during peak periods through additional parking in association with development[5], through Park and Ride, by improving access to parking and making more efficient use of the overall parking network through initiatives such as differential pricing and improved signage and communications with visitors.

4.3   (ii) Should policy DS5 aim to maintain parking provision, or is there a sustainable case to increase parking capacity by 25% over the plan period, which LTP 3 is alleged by some representations to infer? How much, if any, of this projected increased demand for car parking can be met by increased sustainable transport provision for the Central Area, for example through the park and ride scheme being suggested for Leigh on Sea rail station, and is this project deliverable within the plan period?

4.3.7   There is not a sustainable case to increase parking capacity by 25% over the plan period. The LTP 3 reference dates back to 2008 with a baseline of 2007. Please refer to Section 1.62 of the Parking Topic Paper for a full response to this element of the above question. Demand for car parking is therefore not expected to increase by 25% during the plan period.

4.3.8   The SCAAP aims to secure a more pleasant and accessible environment, encouraging more sustainable modes of transport including public transport, walking and cycling amongst local residents and visitors. This could include Park and Ride as part of a range of access options. The Park and Ride options recommended in the parking study involve the use of existing car parks and public transport services, rather than new dedicated Park and Ride schemes. As such, they are considered deliverable within the plan period with the infrastructure and services in place.

4.3.9   C2C are working in partnership with the Borough Council to develop Park and Road capabilities as well as promoting rail use specifically at peak visitor times. It is envisaged that linking data collected from both SBC and C2C car parks can improve travel information via website and travel

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[5] One such example is the proposal for a New Southend Museum (Opportunity Site CS1.4) which has planning permission for 220 additional new car parking spaces. In addition the Borough Council has allocated £5,000,000 in the Capital Programme to review options and additional car park capacity serving the south of the Central Area if required.

applications to promote Park and Ride options to visitors, including at Leigh-on-Sea and potentially other C2C car parks. The Park and Ride options being explored offer a significant amount of additional car parking for Central Area users at peak times:

- Leigh-on-Sea station has over 500 spaces. Surveys undertaken as part of the Car Parking Study indicated low utilisation of these spaces outside of the working week. Easter Saturday 2016 surveys identified peak occupancy of 20% of spaces, but higher use on Good Friday (peak occupancy of 61% of spaces).

- Southend Civic Centre and the Former Library (The Hive and Beecroft Gallery) provide over 350 spaces and are also under-used on weekends and Public Holidays (occupancy on Good Friday and Easter Saturday peaked at no more than 11% of spaces). Both car parks are in walking distance of the High Street and linked to the seafront by regular bus services and could offer additional supply for peak periods. The Council is also looking to expand The Hive and Beecroft Gallery car park. A planning application has been submitted, pending decision, 17/00562/BC3M. This would increase parking from 168 to 334 (166 additional spaces).

- Proposed changes to the highway configuration at the junction of Queensway and Whitegate Road will allow a right turn into Whitegate Road from Queensway for southbound traffic which is not currently possible. This will enable drivers to more easily access parking at Warrior Square and Tylers car parks, potentially reducing the amount of traffic travelling directly to the seafront - the current highway layout forces drivers to continue towards the seafront at this point.

4.3.10 There is potential for increased sustainable transport provision to meet demand for access to Southend Central Area and reduce reliance on private car travel to address issues of severance identified in the context and issues section of the SCAAP (page 8). This includes potential for shift from private car travel to public transport, walking and cycling by local residents. For example, of 246 Central Area users interviewed as part of the on-street surveys conducted for the Car Parking Study who arrived by car, 87 (35%) travelled to the Central Area from postcode areas SS0, SS1, SS2 or SS3. Journey distances from these postcode areas to the Central Area are typically short (up to 2.5 miles). Residents within these areas are more likely to have walking, cycling or public transport options available to them for their journey. These options are, in most part, already available and therefore deliverable within the plan period, and the policy provisions of SCAAP seek to enhance them further.

4.3.11 As described in Topic Paper 2, the Borough Council has funded or is funding a range of sustainable transport initiatives, including:

- South Essex Active Travel Fund;

- A joined up approach to public transport in South Essex;
- Better Queensway: Regeneration project transforming the town centre with new and improved transport layouts.

4.3 (iii) Policy DS5.2.b states that the Council will ensure that there is no net loss in car parking spaces within the key visitor car parks to the south of the Central Area. Should the SCAAP define exactly which car parks are included within this category of 'key visitor car parks' and what is the capacity of these car parks? Does the policy have sufficient teeth to give the certainty that members of the tourism industry seek? Should it state that it would not permit the loss of existing car parking spaces in the 'key visitor car parks', for example through development, until an equivalent amount of new car parking has been provided within a reasonable walking distance (say 10 minutes) of the car parking capacity that has been lost?

4.3.12 The suggested amendments to the SCAAP, also set out in section 7 of Topic Paper 1: Parking and Access, define key visitor car parks to the south of the Central Area and the proposed approach to implementing the policy. As noted in paragraph 1.65 of the Parking Topic Paper, there may be reductions / increases in supply at individual parking areas during the plan period – the policy will seek to ensure that the overall total is not reduced to the south of the Central Area.

4.3.13 There may be a need to permit temporary losses in parking capacity during development works. The extent to which temporary parking provision is re-provided during development works will vary according to the amount of parking temporarily lost at a key visitor car park and its location.

4.3.14 Only two of the key visitor car parks to the south of the Central Area are proposed for development in the SCAAP (PA7.1 Tylers and CS1.2 Seaways). Approaches to dealing with the temporary losses during construction are being developed as part of the Borough-wide Parking Strategy (more detail regarding the Borough-wide Parking Strategy is provided in paragraph 4.3.25 of this statement). The Council would encourage construction to be planned/ phased in such a way that temporary losses to parking supply occur during off-peak and non-seasonal periods, where possible to minimise the impact on the tourism industry.

4.3.15 In such cases, the Borough Council will seek to mitigate the impact of temporary parking reduction, having regard to the amount of available parking located in nearby existing car parks within a reasonable walking distance, through the potential provision of additional parking within the

Central Area[6] and outside the Central Area (e.g. through Park and Ride), and through better management of the Central Area network as a whole to maximise use of available spare capacity.

4.3.16 The commitment to no net loss will form Council policy in planning for the Central Area south and will be considered when assessing planning applications in accordance with the SCAAP. The no net loss policy has been developed with regard to the evidence base available and representations to the consultation and is considered robust.

4.3 **(iv) Are the car parking requirements of the area to the south of the Southend Central railway, including the seafront, significantly different from the rest of the Central Area, to the extent that parking provision should be planned for separately, or is there a strong case for maximising car parking provision across the plan area as a whole?**

4.3.17 Policy DS5.2 applies to the whole Central Area (North and South). As such, parking is planned for the Central Area as a whole. Within this, Policy 2.b has been developed to address particular issues around supply for Central Area South.

4.3.18 The car parking requirements of the Central Area South, including the seafront are different to the rest of the Central Area due to the higher levels of seasonal demand from tourists and visitors. The case for including a particular policy to cover Central Area South car parking separately was made by representatives of the tourism industry in discussions held as part of the development of the Car Parking Study. Tourism industry representatives noted a particular need to consider car parking in Central Area South to serve the tourist economy seperately. Considering the parking supply in the Central Area as a whole, rather than separately for North and South, risks a future under-provision of supply in the South.

4.3.19 There is not a strong case for maximising car parking provision across the plan area as a whole, rather there is a case for making best use of the existing parking supply across the Central Area (North and South) to accommodate the different types of demand for access to the Central Area. For example, one of the recommendations made in the Car Parking Study was to explore the potential for differential pricing of car parks to encourage, for example, use of car parks in Central Area North, which currently have spare capacity at peak times of demand, in order to relieve the pressure on car parks in the South. This is one option for better car

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[6] The Borough Council has allocated £5 million in the capital programme, over three years, to review options and car park capacity at sites in the south of the Central Southend area.

park management that is being pursued as part of the Council's Borough-wide Parking Strategy.

4.3   **(v) Topic Paper 1 refers to the need for development proposals within the key parking areas to be accompanied by detailed transport assessments, as set out in policy DM15 in the Council's Development Management Plan. What has been the impact of this policy, and in particular has it facilitated additional car parking spaces; is there any evidence of modal shift, e.g. to buses in recent years?**

4.3.20 Please refer to the response to matter 4.2 regarding evidence of effective modal shift arising from Policy DM15. As the Development Management Document was adopted in July 2015 there are insufficient results available from completed schemes to draw robust conclusions at the present time.

4.3.21 Since the Development Management Document was adopted in July 2015 586 dwellings, 7,793 m^2 of employment floorspace, 1,000 parking spaces[7] and 606 cycle spaces have been approved across the Borough[8].

4.3   **(vi) How reliable is the Vehicle Messaging System (VMS) as a tool for giving drivers clear information about car parking availability?**

4.3.22 The Variable Messaging System (VMS) data provides counts of the number of vehicles entering and exiting each car park 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is an automatic system that sources data from car parks via buried loops. This is then collated via a central computer which relays information to electronic signs. It is calibrated to reflect conditions in the car parks and adjusted to take account of vehicles that may park overnight, reserved spaces and other circumstances such as vehicles occasionally parking on the buried loops. It resets every morning. It is an industry standard product, but like any automatic system, reliant on communication technology, it can occasionally contain faults or display false readings for individual signs.

4.3.23 System faults (e.g. displaying inaccurate information) are identified through routine checking or reported from a member of the public.

4.3.24 Based on system reports from 2013 to 2016 the numbers of such incidences through the year is around 20 per year, i.e. generally around one every two to three weeks and mostly these faults affected individual signs or car parks. In the context of 15 car parks on VMS and 21 signs working 365 days per year, this represents a failure rate of 0.26% for

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[7] The 1,000 parking spaces comprise both residential and commercial parking spaces.
[8] The figures presented are from planning permissions approved from August 2015 to the end of March 2016.

signs and 0.37% for car parks. The system is therefore considered reliable and fit for purpose.

4.3.25 There have been no major malfunctions of the system in the last three years. Figure 4.4 sets out the faults logged on the system from 2013 to April 2017.

Figure 4.4: Reported VMS faults 2013-16

Date	Reported Fault to supplier
2013	12
2014	19
2015	28
2016 –	19
2017 up to 19/4/17	12
Annual average (2013-2016)	**19.5**

4.3.26 While the VMS is reliable, the Borough Council wishes to update and provide further information on car parking availability. This will be considered as part of the Borough-wide Parking Strategy currently being prepared and scheduled for completion in June 2017, comprising the following elements:

- A parking action plan for the Central Area, building on the recommendations made in The Car Parking Study for the Central Area of Southend.
- A parking signage plan incorporating opportunities for improved provision of car parking availability information via signage, screens, mobile devices and connected vehicles.
- A Visitor Access and Parking Management Plan, addressing the different needs of visitors to Southend, including specific measures to manage demand at peak demand periods.
- Options on future parking tariffs, permits and season tickets, including a more responsive approach to charging for car parking, taking into account the varying levels of demand on different days and at different times of the year.
- Smart City Technology Plan for Parking Management, ensuring that appropriate technology solutions are incorporated within each element of the strategy.

4.3 (vii) How critical is it for the tourism industry that there may be a few days in the summer peak when there is virtually no spare car parking capacity to satisfy the demand from day visitors? Would it be justified for the SCAAP to require additional spaces be found to meet this peak demand; would this be deliverable; and if so, what

would be the economic, social and public realm and other
environmental impacts (e.g. on air quality) of such a requirement?

4.3.27 The shortage of parking supply in Central Area on some days during the peak summer season is understood and demonstrated in both the Parking Study and Topic Paper. Those reports also identify the small number days in the year when there is a shortage of supply to meet demand. The short to medium term recommendations in the Parking Study to identify spare capacity, to absorb demand at peak times through improved information to drivers, and differential pricing to use under-utilised car parks in the Central Area, and Park and Ride sites outside of the Central Area are being explored in detail as part of the Borough-wide Parking Strategy. These approaches are deliverable within the SCAAP plan period.

4.3.28 Provision of additional parking supply outside the Central Area for seasonal peaks in demand (through Park and Ride) has the following potential benefits:

- Economic: low cost option using existing services and infrastructure. Allows development of land within Southend Central Area for more intensive, economically productive uses to bring about regeneration.
- Social: no severance impacts that may arise from provision of additional parking in the Central Area. Not building additional parking in the Central Area allows more intensive, sustainable development of land for other purposes which may improve the quality of life for Southend residents and increase its attractiveness as a visitor destination.
- Public realm: no direct impact on public realm within the Central Area and potential for reduced traffic movements.
- Air quality: positive impact on the Central Area through reduced vehicle movements.

4.3.29 The SCAAP Sustainability Appraisal notes that the SCAAP is compatible with achieving sustainable development and there are likely to be beneficial effects in relation to air quality from encouraging more sustainable travel that may help reduce car use and congestion. Provision of additional long-term supply of car parking is likely to have more negative effects in relation to air quality and severance in particular. Any economic benefits that may arise from accommodating seasonal demand from visitors must be considered against other potentially more economically beneficial and sustainable uses of land.

4.3 (viii) Is there any empirical evidence that provision of car parking in the Central Area has had an adverse effect of visitor numbers and the local economy?

4.3.30 While a specific study into the relationship between provision of car parking in the Central Area and the effects on visitor numbers and the

local economy has not been undertaken, the trends identified in visitor data available from Visit Britain[9] however indicates a growth in day trips to Southend borough between 2011 and 2015. Much of this demand is likely to be in the Central Area given the focus of tourism in this area. During this period visitor numbers have grown despite no significant growth in car parking within the Central Area.

4.3.31 A visitor shopper and spend survey, summarised in section 5 of the Car Parking Study, was undertaken with 849 randomly selected respondents on-street in Southend Central Area on behalf of the Borough Council. Evidence from this survey indicated that car users spend the most per trip but tend to visit less frequently, while shoppers and bus users visit frequently while spending less per trip. Estimated monthly spend by mode is shown in Table 5.5 of the Car Parking Study and replicated in Figure 4.5 below. The evidence suggests that all modes of transport make a valuable contribution to the local economy.

Figure 4.5: Average spend by mode per trip/per month

Mode	Spend per trip	Visits per month	Spend per month
	Weekdays and weekends combined average		Weekdays and weekends combined average
Walk	£20.79	12	£254.70
Bus	£22.46	8	£183.52
Car	£35.25	4	£145.20
Train	£22.58	6	£128.27
Cycle	£21.32	5	£112.89
Other	£41.20	2	£65.38

4.3.32 Daily spend by journey purpose is shown in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 of The Car Parking Study and summarised in Figure 4.6 below.

Figure 4.6: Daily spend by journey purpose

Purpose	Average weekday Spend	Average weekend /public holiday spend
Work	£12.30	£10.52
Shopping	£40.23	£38.93
Leisure	£17.83	£26.47
Education	£6.99	-
Seafront/amusements	-	£38.58

4.3   (ix) The Council has set out a number of suggested amendments to SCAAP (see section 8 of Topic Paper 1). Are any or all of these necessary for the soundness of the SCAAP?

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[9] https://www.visitbritain.org/gb-day-visits-survey-archive

4.3.33 The suggested amendments to the SCAAP, as outlined in section 8 of Topic Paper 1, are necessary to clearly define the key visitor car parks that the no net loss in car parking to the south of the Central Area as set out by Policy DS5.2.b apply to.

4.4 ***Is the provision in the SCAAP for improvements to the pedestrian/cycle route network and the public realm justified and achievable within the plan period?***

4.4.1 The SA states that 'non-car travel access to the Central Area could be improved, with particular emphasis on providing better quality walking routes. Currently there are areas where permeability of the streets is poor and/or routes are unattractive or car dominated. This discourages walking even for local residents. In these areas the natural flow of routes around the centre is disrupted, or where poor physical built quality and cars take priority, means walking is not always a safe or attractive option.'

4.4.2 Improvements to the public realm and pedestrian routes are, therefore, considered essential to improving connectivity between the town centre and central seafront area, and adjacent areas and gateway neighbourhoods, including improving access to sustainable modes of transport. They are also essential to improving road safety particularly where the principal road network bisects residential areas from the town centre, notably Victoria Avenue, Queensway and the London Road.

4.4.3 Improvements to cycle routes within the SCAAP area form part of Borough-wide proposals to provide for an integrated cycle network, as detailed in LTP3. Policy 2 of the LTP3 Implementation Plan (March 2015) identifies improvements to the Town Centre permeability by looking at the redesign of streets, including speed reduction, signage and route creation. The annual DfT Integrated Transport Block Allocation is prioritised to support investment in areas supporting growth, which includes the Town Centre. For example, the 2017/18 budget includes £100k for the cycle hub at Central Station and £50k for new cycle signage. £2m is allocated for 2017/18 towards the S-CATS project in the Town Centre, funded by the Local Growth Fund.

4.4.4 These are considered essential to providing for an integrated joined up network that provides sustainable access to the town's principal business, retail, leisure and tourism facilities, including the seafront. There have already been advancements in this respect, including the promotion of the 'cycle ring route' around the Town Centre and connecting to the seafront and Prittle Brook cycle routes.

4.4.5 Many of the proposed schemes are achievable within the Plan period, notably as part of the 'Better Queensway' project. Their deliverability and

funding is detailed in the Local Transport Plan 3 Implementation Plan 2015/16 - 2020/21 (see also response to 4.3 above).

4.5 **Is the impact of the SCAAP on the strategic highway network likely to be in accordance with the aims and programmes of LTP3?**

4.5.1   As the Southend Core Strategy and Southend Local Transport Plan strategy have both been developed by the Borough Council, as the local planning and highway authority, to provide for a strong inter-linked approach to the delivery of planned growth and transport infrastructure improvements, it is considered that the impact of the SCAAP on the strategic highway network will be in accordance with the aims and programmes of LTP 3.