

SOUTHEND ON SEA
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Sustainability Appraisal
for Southend on Sea
Local Development Framework

Seafront and Town Centre
Area Action Plans
Joint Scoping Report

January 2007



Contents

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 The approach to the sustainability appraisal of the Area Action Plans**
- 3 Other plans and strategies**
- 4 Baseline Characteristics of the two AAP areas**
- 5 Sustainability Framework**
- 6 Identification of sustainability implications**
- 7 Appropriate Assessment**
- 8 Scoping and the involvement of the consultation bodies**

Appendix 1:

Identification of key sustainability implications of the Southend on Sea Town Centre Area Action Plan Development Plan Document 3: Stage 1 Pre-submission consultation Issues and Options

Appendix 2:

Identification of key sustainability implications of the Southend on Sea Seafront Area Action Plan Development Plan Document 4: Stage 1 Pre-submission consultation Issues and Options

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are currently preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) for the Borough. This will outline the development strategy for the Borough for the next 20 years (2001 – 2021).
- 1.2 This report sets out the basis for the sustainability appraisal (SA), including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of two 'Development Plan Documents' (DPD) which form part of the LDF. These two DPDs are both Area Action Plans, that set out an approach to development in specific geographical areas of the Borough. These are:
 - Southend-on-Sea Town Centre Area Action Plan (DPD3), and
 - Southend-on-Sea Seafront Area Action Plan (DPD4).
- 1.3 The purpose of the report is to set out a brief description of existing sustainability issues in the two areas, and the sustainability objectives that will be used in the joint SA/SEA. This is a consultation document, known as a scoping report, used for agreeing the scope of the issues that will be covered by the SA/SEA as part of a consultation process. This Scoping Report builds on early work carried out on the SA/SEA of the Core Strategy of the LDF, and the SA Report accompanying the submission versions of the Core Strategy should be read in a conjunction with this Scoping Report in order to get a full picture of the issues in the plan area and the objectives used, as well as the sustainability implications of the Core Strategy of the LDF that have already been identified.
- 1.4 In the light of the European Habitats Directive and the 'Conservation (Natural Habitats, Etc) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006', an 'Appropriate Assessment' has also been undertaken of the submission Core Strategy DPD, which ascertains whether the Core Strategy is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European or international site, either alone or in combination with other relevant plans or projects. The Habitats Regulations assessment considers the sensitivities of the European sites on the Southend foreshore and highlights issues and concerns about the potential for adverse effect on the interest features of the relevant European or international sites. It also identifies the strategic level policy developments, clarifications and reinforcements which should be included in this Core Strategy to address them; and the sustainability framework that will need to be addressed in the Appropriate Assessment of subsequent, more detailed Local Development Documents, in particular the Seafront AAP, Criteria Based Policies and Site Allocations DPD, and the Shoeburyness SPD, and of any relevant project, scheme or development proposal. The Appropriate Assessment of both the Seafront and Town Centre AAPs under the Habitats Regulations will be undertaken during the preparation of the strategies so that the assessment may influence the evolution of the policies and proposals and will therefore be integral with the 'SA process'. The Sustainability Appraisal Report will include therefore the Environment Report and a Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 1.5 In this instance a brief appraisal of the emerging issues and options, as set out in the pre-submission consultation 'Issues and Options Reports' for both AAPs, has also been undertaken. The primary purpose of which is to comment on the likely sustainability implications of proceeding with the

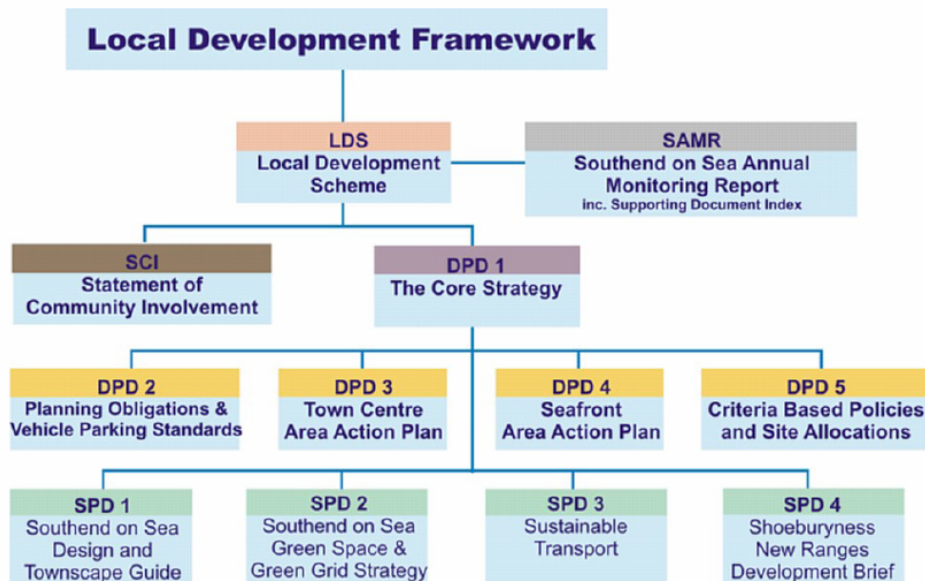
approaches set out at this stage of AAP preparation, and although this is most likely of greatest use to those preparing the AAPs it is also available for comment as part of the Scoping Report consultation.

1.6 This is the first stage in the SA of these AAPs, and is part of a continued process of SA to be carried out alongside their preparation. SAs are being undertaken of the whole LDF, with SAs already undertaken of all component LDF documents to date, these have reached various stage of completion, they are:

- the Core Strategy Development Plan Document
- the Planning Obligations and Vehicle Parking Standards Development Plan Document
- Design and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document

1.7 The Figure 1 below outlines all the documents which together comprise the LDF.

Figure 1: Diagram demonstrating the documents that make up the Southend Local Development Framework
Southend Local Development Framework



1.8 The SA of the LDF is being carried out as the LDF is prepared, and the process is being applied to each of the constituent Local Development Documents, in this case the Area Action Plans. The SA of the LDF is being carried out in order to fulfil the statutory requirement from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, including the requirement set out in paragraph 4.24 of Planning Policy Statement 12, stating that to meet the test of 'soundness' Development Plan Documents must have met the procedural requirement that: *'the plan and its policies have been subjected to sustainability appraisal'*.

- 1.9 The reason for carrying out this scoping stage is in response to the requirements of the SEA Directive as set out in Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The SEA Directive and Regulations are very specific in the regulatory process steps that must be completed as part of the SEA, and this also drives the process for the more broad based SA. The SEA Regulations require the preparation of an environmental report on the LDF, and hence on each of its component Local Development Documents (LDDs), and this is required (at para. 12(2)) to:

“identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of:

(a) implementing the plan or programme

(b) reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.”

2 The approach to the sustainability appraisal of the Area Action Plans

- 2.1 As noted in the introductory section of this report, the purpose of this scoping stage is to ascertain what issues should be considered in undertaking an SA of the two AAPs.
- 2.2 This is a combined scoping process for the both the AAPs, although separate sections have been completed for the baseline of the two areas giving the need to identify specific issues for each. The strategic baseline issues for the Borough are covered in the SA Report for the Core Strategy that is the basis for this scoping report.

Sustainability appraisal of the LDF

- 2.3 This stage of scoping builds on work already undertaken for the SA of the Southend-on-Sea LDF Core Strategy. This also included a scoping stage, and the appraisal process was completed alongside the preparation of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document from early discussion of alternatives and preferred options through to a final report at submission stage. This Sustainability Report, August 2006, provides a useful basis for this appraisal and should be read in conjunction with this scoping document for a better understanding of the process¹. Similarly SA work is currently being undertaken on the Planning Obligations and Vehicle Standards DPD, and has been completed for the Design and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document. These documents are available on the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council website.

Collation of baseline information

- 2.4 The baseline data for the sustainability appraisals of the two Area Action Plans outlined below has been specifically chosen to inform the SA of these DPDs. It draws upon work carried out by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (SBC) during the preparation of the plans and Baker Associates work carried out for the SA of the Core Strategy.
- 2.5 The primary sources of information for the baseline data collation are:
 - Seafront Area Action Plan (DPD4), Background information and evidence base, SBC
 - Southend-on-Sea Town Centre Area Action Plan Key Statistics, SBC
 - Town Centre Area Actions Plan Issues and Options paper, SBC
 - Baker Associates, Sustainability Appraisal, for Southend on Sea, Local Development Framework, Core Strategy Development Plan Document, SBC

¹ See also 'The Habitats Regulation Assessment' of the Core Strategy DPD also available on Southend on Sea Borough Council website

- 2.6 Therefore, for further details it may be suitable to refer to these additional sources, as they provide more detail than shown in Section 4, which is summarised to be specific to the task in hand.
- 2.7 In addition relevant plans and programmes which contain sustainability objectives or goals which will be important influences on the SA and AAP have also been noted. Again these are referenced from those identified by those producing the AAP, as well as those identified in the SA of the Core Strategy. In identifying the relevant plans and programmes it has been important to restrict this to those plans and programmes with real relevance to the area, in order that there is a clear purpose for their recognition. Details of plans and programmes can be found in **Section 3** of this report.
- 2.8 The baseline information descriptions and identification of key sustainability issues are shown in **Section 4**. The 'sustainability framework' matrix will be investigated and altered to meet the specific needs of appraising the emerging DPDs in **Section 5**. Both the sustainability 'issues' and 'framework' will also need to take account of the interest features and vulnerabilities of European Sites as developed through any Appropriate Assessments of the AAPs.

Sustainability appraisal of the AAPs

- 2.9 The SA of the AAPs will be a continual process during their preparation from this early stage up to their submission. Part of this will be appraising the alternatives put forward for implementing the strategy of the AAP.
- 2.10 It was agreed with SBC that at this early stage in AAP preparation it would be worth considering the initial sustainability implications of the AAPs, as put forward in the Issues and Option draft. The purpose of which is to ensure sustainability considerations can be taken into account at an early opportunity, and the sustainability implications can be incorporated into policy and proposal preparation from the outset. Therefore **Section 6** contain a brief synopsis of key appraisal issues, with more detail included in **Appendices 1 and 2** that give a brief appraisals with the intention of aiding those preparing the AAP.
- 2.11 This early Issues and Options stage is the first consultation stage in the preparation of the AAPs, and is also the first opportunity for appraising the emerging options and approach to development in these areas. The consideration of alternatives and identifying the relative sustainability impacts of these approaches is a key matter to be addressed by the SA, and an SEA requirement. At this early stage the alternatives, or options, presented are very broad with decisions still to be made about the type and number of policies to be included, as well as on specific sites for development. Therefore the approach taken to appraisal, although based on the sustainability objectives, is only intended to be brief and not a rigorous test of alternatives through use of matrices for instance. This more rigorous testing will be a feature of later stages of the appraisal where the structure better allows this approach and more detailed identification of impacts can be carried out.
- 2.12 Later stage of the appraisal will make use of policy matrices for comparing policies against the sustainable development objectives, in order to determine the likely sustainability impacts of proposed approaches. In addition at preferred options stage the relative impacts of proposed alternatives will also be considered. As part of this process the wider implications of the

approaches put forward for development will be considered, to include the cumulative impacts with other proposals or policies, the long-term impacts and indirect or secondary effects of the proposed approach. The Core Strategy appraisal gives an example of how the SA of the AAPs will be undertaken.

- 2.13 It will also be necessary to consider ‘appropriate assessment’ as required by the Habitats Directive (1995) as part of the appraisal process of the AAPs. It is already recognised in the appraisal of the Core Strategy that there is a need to carry out appropriate assessment of these AAPs due to their proximity, and occasionally overlap, with sites designated for nature conservation under European legislation. There are five European Sites relevant to the Local development Framework. They are:
- a) Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA;
 - b) Foulness SPA;
 - c) Essex Estuaries SAC;
 - d) Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA; and
 - e) Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA.
- 2.14 Therefore, in addition to the SA the emerging Seafront AAP will also be subject to appropriate assessment to ensure that none of the proposals or policies it would contain will have an adverse impact on the integrity of these sites, or to allow potential impacts to be identified early so they can be mitigated against. The original screening for appropriate assessment is in the SA of the submission version of the Core Strategy and additional information is provided in **Section 7**. See also the subsequent Habitats Assessment (including Appropriate Assessment) of the Core Strategy DPD.
- 2.15 Finally details of the consultation process are given in **Section 8**.

Timetable

- 2.16 The timetable for the SA work is entirely directed by the programme by which the AAPs is prepared and goes through successive stages of consultation, development, examination and adoption.

3 Other plans and strategies

- 3.1 A more comprehensive summary of other relevant plans and programmes can be found in the issues and options and Core Strategy SA Report, what is attempted below is to draw out the main specific issues relating to the two AAPs.
- 3.2 The **Habitats Directive and Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994** (as amended), have relevance to the AAPs, and in particular relating to the Seafront. This is because the area covered by the AAPs being in very close proximity, and in some instances overlapping, with areas designated as being of international significance for nature conservation. These sites are collectively known under European legislation as Natura 2000 sites. Any potential impact of planning policy, or specific proposals, on these sites needs assessment to determine the nature of these impacts to ensure that they are mitigated against, this is known as 'appropriate assessment' and is a feature of the SA of the LDF.
- 3.3 **Planning Policy Statements/Guidance PPS6: Town centres and PPG20: Coastal areas and PPS25: Development and Flood Risk**, are of particular relevance to the AAPs, in addition to other more generally relevant PPS such as PPS1: Sustainable development.
- 3.4 **PPS6** (2005) reinforces the need to use the sequential test in prioritising development in town centres over development in other locations, and hence strengthen the role of these areas as the focus of services including retail and leisure. PPS6 considers that a genuine range of shopping, leisure and services should be available in town centres as the most accessible locations particularly for excluded groups.
- 3.5 **PPG20** (1992) is the national guidance note on coastal planning. Its primary aims are to protect the undeveloped coasts, managing appropriate development, particularly that which requires a coastal location, managing risk, including flooding and erosion, and improving the environment particularly in urbanised or despoiled areas. PPG20 recognises that the developed coast may provide opportunities for economic restructuring and regeneration of existing urban areas, thereby improving their appearance and environment and notes that this approach can be particularly effective for buildings and areas of historic interest.
- 3.6 **PPS25** (2006) sets out Government policy on development and flood risk, with the aim of ensuring that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk. Where new development is necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, reducing flood risk overall. This is of particular relevance to Southend where the seafront and some inland areas at Southchurch and Shoeburyness are in EA Flood Zone 3 areas, although the risks of flood are reduced by flood and coastal defences. However, the approach taken in Southend needs to ensure that development is linked to the policy approach on coastal defence and flooding and relevant shoreline and coastal management strategies.

- 3.7 The **Sustainable Communities plan** published in 2003, set out the Government's agenda for sustainable development and urban renaissance across England. As part of the plan the Urban White Paper outlined key growth areas in the north and south of the country. A key part of delivering this agenda is the planned development of four identified growth areas, the first priority being the growth of the Thames Gateway stretching along the Thames estuary from London to the sea and including Southend-on-Sea.
- 3.8 This plan sets out an approach to creating new communities in the UK that provide sustainable places in which to live. The key aim of the approach is to a step change in housing delivery increasing housing levels above the existing growth rate. These new homes will need to include homes to meet the needs of all groups, and be integrated with economic growth and provision of new services and greenspaces to create desirable places to live.
- 3.9 The **Thames Gateway** area is a co-ordinate effort to develop and regenerate fifteen local authority areas, across three regions along the Thames estuary - north Kent coast and south Essex Coast. Southend-on-Sea town centre is an integral part of the overall strategy of regenerated polycentric retail and service centres. The role played by Southend-on-Sea and the south Essex sub area is reflected in the Regional Spatial Strategy and discussed in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy.
- 3.10 The Thames Gateway, and the south Essex towns which comprise part of it, are a key national objective, the economic and housing growth outlined in the Thames Gateway area should be supported by the Area Action Plans. The AAPs should consider Southend-on-Sea's coast and town centre within the wider sub regional context.
- 3.11 The East of England **Regional Spatial Strategy** provides the direct planning context for the preparation of the LDF, setting out the role that Southend-on-Sea is expected to perform and its contribution to the region, the level of employment and housing development that the LDF is to make provision for, and various objectives that the LDF is expected to contribute to.
- 3.12 The key objective for the sub-region is to achieve regeneration through jobs-led growth, higher levels of local economic performance and employment, and a more sustainable balance of local jobs and workers.
- 3.13 Policy SS5 in the RSS outlines town centre policy for the region. The RSS promotes the creation of 'thriving, vibrant' town centres, which will continue to be the focus of investment and regeneration. Each local authority should produce a strategy for each town centre to promote successful mixed use economies, manage change and support cultural heritage. Local Authorities should also protect and enhance existing neighbourhood centres.
- 3.14 The approach to land at risk of flood is set out in policy SS14: development and flood risk. This prioritises protecting existing properties from flooding, and where possible locating new development out of the flood zone. Where development is required on sites at risk of flood this should ensure that risks are mitigated against through design or engineering methods.
- 3.15 The RSS outlines regional policy for the coast in policy SS15. The overall policy is to ensure a balanced approach that recognises the economic and social role of coastal ports and tourism areas and the need for environmental

protection and enhancement of the coast. The RSS outlines that local Planning Authorities and local agencies should work towards achieving the regeneration of coastal towns and communities and the conservation of the environment of the coast and coastal waters.

- 3.16 In the RSS Local Development Documents are expected to ensure that the in the region's coastal areas:
- town centres continue to provide for local and visitor needs;
 - the interrelationship and linkages between town centres and leisure areas are facilitated for their mutual benefit; and
 - retailing in leisure areas where viable, without adversely affecting town centres.
- 3.17 Policies TG/SE1 sets out the major zones of change in the Thames Gateway/South Essex sub-region and this includes Southend Town centre as a 'cultural and intellectual hub and a higher education centre of excellence'. With specific provisions for upgrading the university campus (much of which is already complete or underway) and improving local passenger transport accessibility. The expected job and housing growth is also specified in the policy.
- 3.18 The **Community Strategy** and **SBC Corporate Plan** are both important parts of local policy. Under the new provision for making development plans as explained in PPS12: Local Development Frameworks, *'the local development framework should be a key component in the delivery of the community strategy setting out its spatial aspects where appropriate and providing a long term spatial vision'*.
- 3.19 The Community Plan for Southend sets the vision for Southend-on-Sea as *'a vibrant coastal town and prosperous regional centre where people enjoy living, working and visiting'*. This vision is to be achieved through inter-linked themes detailed in the plan.
- *prosperous community – a prosperous local economy*
 - *learning community – opportunities for learning for all and a highly skilled workforce*
 - *safer community – crime, disorder and offending reduced*
 - *healthy community – improved health and well-being*
 - *environmentally aware community – improved transport infrastructure and a quality environment*
 - *supportive community – better life chances for vulnerable people*
 - *cultural community – a cultural capital.*
- 3.20 key themes relating to the two AAPs include; improving the Town Centre and attracting conferences to the town, amongst 21 objectives.
- 3.21 Transport issues for the area are covered in the **Local Transport Plan 2** (2006-2011). This reinforces the approach set out in the RSS for the need for a high quality public transport infrastructure as part of creating sustainable

communities. The town centre in particular is the focus of many transport improvements in the Borough, including improved access to, and integration of, the two stations in this area and new Travel Centre.

- 3.22 The **Southend on Sea Core Strategy** is the overarching part of the LDF that has implications for the two AAPs. This contains policies that cover all development in the Borough, and sets out the housing and job provision in the town centre and sea front areas. Further information on the appraisal of the policies relating to the two areas can be found in Section 6. Other component parts of the LDF are of relevance to the AAPs as well as additional SPD still to be prepared on Sustainable Transport and the Green Space and Green Grid Strategies for the Borough.

4 Baseline characterisation of the two AAP areas

- 4.1 During preparation of the SA of the Core Strategy information was collected on sustainability issues on a Borough-wide basis. At this stage in scoping for the SA of the AAPs it is necessary to add to layer of detail to the more generic information collected previously, in order to better inform the SA process for the appraisal of AAPs.
- 4.2 The SEA Directive is concerned with the assessment of *'the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan'*, and this requires where possible some understanding of the 'baseline' situation so that the change that might arise from the influence of the plan can be considered.
- 4.3 From the particular nature of the area to which the LDF relates, and to the matters over which the LDF has influence, the environmental assessment of the material included in the core strategy and site specific allocations LDDs in particular, is likely to be most concerned with the implications of the location of development.
- 4.4 The SA Report of the Core Strategy submission draft contains as Appendix 3 baseline information for the Borough. Repeated here are the identified key sustainability issues for the Borough. This information is drawn from a review of the baseline characteristics of the plan area as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as required by the SEA Directive.

Summary of issues

- 4.5 Overall the gathering of data on the environmental baseline has served to identify a few key issues in the Plan area:
 - the area is under quite high risk of flood, although direct tidal inundation is largely mitigated for through sea flood defences. However tidal effects on the rivers in the Borough is a larger risk, and effects of climate change will only serve to increase this risk;
 - habitats of international significance are located within the Borough, although outside the built development boundary. These must be protected from development that would threaten their integrity, such as increased pollution, however the key threat is beyond the control of the LDF and is caused by built development limiting the natural movement of the coastal mudflats inland. These effects of 'coastal squeeze' will be exacerbated by climate change and sea level rise;
 - the constrained boundaries of the Borough and the need for new housing is putting pressure on open space within the built up area for development, as well as on the high quality agricultural land on the built up area boundary;
 - nature conservation and biodiversity resources within the built up area are limited, and every attempt should be made to conserve and enhance existing resources, and create new ones, as well as the protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors

- there are increasing traffic levels in the Borough, with consequences for air quality, and new development must help to limit any increase in this, by endeavouring to suggest a change to travel patterns (number, length and mode), through the spatial strategy
- studies have identified limits to the availability and accessibility of open space of different types and standard, especially in central Southend-on-Sea
- the East of England, and south Essex in particular, has, and will be, experiencing a shortage of potable water supply, therefore this must be taken into account in new development, and every attempt made to include water efficient design into new development
- the quality of the built environment is important, not only with the effect of new building in 'mending the fabric', but also in affecting existing areas of identifiable character.

4.6 The key social and economic impacts are the:

- current high levels of out commuting to London, due to relatively low house prices in Southend compared to the other local authority areas around London, and lack of appropriate employment opportunities in the Borough
- an identified need for affordable housing
- if there is not diversification of the economy this could lead to economic downturn in the area as the traditional employment base of the Borough is in decline
- relatively high levels of deprivation in some parts of the Borough, according to the Indices of Deprivation 2004, which identifies that some wards contain areas of significant deprivation. For example, most of the Kursaal ward and parts of the Milton and Southchurch wards are in the 10% most deprived nationally.

4.7 An additional matter not addressed in the Core Strategy SA, but over importance to both AAPs, is the impacts of climate change. Impacts of climate change for the East of England are covered in the publication 'Living with Climate Change in the East of England' (2004). In summary this will result in:

- increased summer temperatures, with higher peak temperatures as well as prolonged periods of high temperature (predictions show by 2080 temperatures could rise by as much as 4.5⁰ C)
- in summer there is likely to be at least a 30% reduction in rainfall, only marginally compensated by an increase of 15% winter precipitation levels
- increased storm events with times of intense rainfall and winds
- sea levels around Southend could rise by as much as 80cm by the 2080s, although this is likely to be at least a 20cm rise by the 2050s (Defra

October 2006)

4.8 This will lead to issues such as:

- water resource deficiencies, which may lead to serious issues in the area particularly with the levels of development set for the Thames Gateway
- increased flood risk, including for sea defence overtopping, and also from rivers
- a risk of subsidence through changing soil moisture levels

Baseline information for the Town Centre Area Action Plan

4.9 Several other key pieces of evidence are sources of information, these are:

- The Southend-on-Sea Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2002-2012
- Consultation Framework Document 'Town Centre Study and Master Plan' Buro Happold/DTZ Pineda 2003
- Southend-on-Sea Retail study CB Richard Ellis, September 2003

4.10 For the purposes of collecting further evidence for the LDF, the Council have defined the boundary of the town centre as the 2003 administrative wards of Milton and Victoria for the purposes of utilising census data. It is noted that although the two wards completely encompass the town centre, they also add to it some parts of residential areas, especially on the western side. However the SA also uses data from these two wards as the basis for data collection.

Role of the town centre

4.11 Southend-on-Sea town centre is a major retail, employment and commercial centre serving a catchment population of over 325,000 people. It lies at the heart of the Borough of Southend-on-Sea. The Town Centre is the Borough's most important commercial and largest shopping centre, and provides nearly 40% of the jobs in the Borough.

4.12 Retail is an important role of the town centre, with the central retail area forming a central spine through the town centre from north to south where it meets the seafront. The High Street is pedestrianised linking the Victoria Plaza (1960s) and Royals (1980s) retail centres. On the periphery of the northern part of the High Street is the town centres only large food retailer and a major retail outlet offering non food goods.

4.13 The college and new university complex is adjacent to the High Street, with more development planned. Development, mainly along side streets to the High Street, of a mutli-screen cinema, restaurants, café's and bars have given the town centre a complimentary leisure offer.

4.14 Victoria Avenue is the main area for office accommodation, the Council views that Victoria Avenue has a number of 1960's office developments, some of which are outmoded for modern requirements.

Housing

4.15 Extensive areas of high density housing, providing homes for some 18,000 people (11% of the Borough total) in 10,000 households, adjoin the centre.

Housing areas around the High Street are of historic and architectural quality and are designated as conservation areas².

Travel and transport

- 4.16 The town centre is accessed by two railway stations, Southend Victoria at the north end of the High Street and Central Station in the main shopping area. The main access by car is the A127 dual carriageway via Victoria Avenue and the A13 London Road, which has smaller and independent retail along it. The town centre has parking facilities for around 5,000 cars in surface and multi-storey car parks, Council owned car parking encourages short stay shoppers, but attempts to deter commuters through its pricing structure.
- 4.17 As previously noted in Section 3 there are also various schemes proposed through the Local Transport Plan 2 to bring enhancements to the public transport provision of the area.
- 4.18 All new development needs to support walking and cycling in the town centre, as well as the smooth flow of public transport and good quality interchange facilities. Linking the Town Centre to the Seafront is also a key issue, and this will include linking the proposals and approach of the two AAPs.

Population

- 4.19 The 2001 Census of resident population provides the best population record at Ward level. There is some fluctuation in exact population dependant upon source. Although recent mid year population estimates from the ONS record a small, 0.5%, reduction in population, data from GP registers and other sources suggest the population has gone up since 2001. The Town Centre makes up 11.4 % (18,347) of the total Boroughs resident population.

Resident Population

| Area | Census 2001 |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Southend-on-Sea | 160,293 |
| Town Centre | 18,347 |
| Town Centre % | 11.4 |
| Rest of Southend | 141,946 |
| Rest of Southend % | 88.6 |

Source: SBC after, Census 2001

Employment

- 4.20 In 2005 the Town Centre provided nearly 40% of all the jobs in the Borough. The number of jobs in the Borough itself has increased by 2,600 between 2002 and 2005, 92% of this job increased provided in the Town Centre. This equates to an 11.1% increase in jobs in the Town Centre between 2002-05 compared to only a 4% increase in the number of jobs for the rest of Southend-on-Sea.

² SBC, Town Centre AAP, Issues and Options Report

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | Change 02 - 05 | %Change |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Southend | 60,400 | 61,600 | 64,800 | 63,000 | 2,600 | 4.3 |
| Town Centre | 21,600 | 23,000 | 25,100 | 24,000 | 2,400 | 11.1 |
| % jobs in TC | 35.8 | 37.3 | 38.7 | 38.1 | | |

Source: Jobs totals are compiled through the Southend Business directory, Annual Business Enquiry and local knowledge. The datasets provides the most accurate post-census figures.

- 4.21 The Town Centre contains a mix of employment types, and some sectors are proportionately more significant than in the Borough as a whole, for example the financial sector (6.7% compared to 4.4%), real estate and business (20% compared to 17.2%) and 'other' (50.4% compared to 26.7%), retail is included in the 'other' category. In contrast there are a number of sectors which are less important in the Town Centre than the Borough as a whole such as health and social work (6.3% compared to 21.8%), which is dependent on the location of hospitals, and manufacturing (2.1% compared to 10%) as only one industrial site (Sutton Road) is found in the area.
- 4.22 Taking the full 2005 annual figure, the unemployment rate for the town centre is over twice as high, 5.2% compared to 2.5%, as the percentage for the rest of Borough. On the relatively small timescale of change from 2004 to 2005 the unemployment rate is also rising at a greater rate in the Town Centre area than for the remainder of the Borough.

Unemployment Rates

| Unemployment Rate | | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 as up to June |
| Town Centre | 4.9 | 5.3 | 6.0 |
| Rest of Southend | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.8 |

Source: DWP³

Social characteristics

- 4.23 Education rates show that although the rate of adults with no qualifications is higher than the Borough average, residents with higher level qualifications are also higher. This may relate to familiar patterns of younger people with qualifications living close to or in the town centre and the proximity of pockets of deprivation, although without further investigation it would be difficult to confirm this.
- 4.24 The Town Centre is made up of Milton and Victoria wards, and also includes some parts of the Kursaal ward. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 indicate that where these three ward areas overlap with the commercial and retail centre of the Town Centre area there are high levels of deprivation, with sub-ward areas being in the 10% most deprived nationally, and others in the

³ The data used are claimant count levels collected by the Department for Work and Pensions. These data are a by-product of the administrative records of all people claiming benefits at Jobcentre Plus offices. The claimant count rate is calculated by expressing the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits as a percentage of the estimated resident working-age population of the area. This figure is produced by the ONS Population Estimates Unit. Note, that the claimant count data relates to the number of benefit claimants only and therefore does not provide a comprehensive measure of unemployment.

majority of the town centre, with the exception of some residential areas, being in the most deprived 30% nationally.

- 4.25 The number of cars per household in the Town Centre area (0.72). This is significantly lower than for the rest of the Southend (1.09).

Built environment quality

- 4.25 Some of the town centre is currently of poor architectural quality, for example low quality of the Farringdon multi-storey car park. Although recent regeneration, including South East Essex College and the University of Essex buildings and the first phase of the Travel Centre have improved this, there is scope for further environmental improvements and making land available for alternatives uses.

- 4.26 The town centre area also contains many listed buildings and four conservation areas of Prittlewell in the north, Milton and Clifftown in the south west, and Warrior Square located in the middle of the centre. The conservation areas are all predominantly residential neighbourhoods, although Clifftown directly borders the retail core of the town as well as the seafront. Listed buildings within the town centre, particularly within the conservation areas, although are also found beyond the boundaries of these areas.

Open space

- 4.27 There are only very limited areas of public open space, particularly green space, in the town centre. The seafront to the south of the town centre area does have high quality open spaces, in particularly the Southend Cliffs formal gardens. However within the main commercial and retail areas of the town centre green space provision is poor, and only really includes the cemetery behind the Royals shopping centre and Warrior Square (0.5ha). Although neither of these areas are suited to informal recreational use, or as a place to take a break from other activities in the town centre. Churchill Gardens in the north of the town centre area provides additional open space, although is part of a more residential neighbourhood. With increased demand for open space due with a warming climate, and the need to prevent the build up of heat in urban areas through provision of green spaces, this may be a matter to be addressed by the AAPs.

- 4.28 Redevelopment of the Town Centre and proposals of the AAP should take into account ways in which open spaces in this location can contribute to the Thames Gateway and South Essex Green Grid strategy.

Flood

- 4.29 Although there is a risk of flood along the seafront south of the town centre, the town centre itself is at no particular risk of flood overall. However, the Kursaal area east of Southchurch Avenue is at greater risk of flood according to Environment Agency maps.

Air quality

- 4.30 The Essex Air Quality Consortium identifies that current air quality in Southend is below action levels. The main source of air pollution in Southend is road transport on busy road links such as the A127, A13 and A1159, and therefore in the Town Centre controlling traffic levels will be key to maintaining air quality. There are currently about 35 small scale industrial processes

which are authorised by the Borough Council. These are not considered to emit significant quantities of air pollution.

Nature conservation

- 4.31 There are no sites of identified nature conservation importance in the Town Centre area. Therefore the potential for nature conservation enhancement should be a consideration of all development sites in the area.
- 4.32 The Town Centre is also near the internationally designated Natura 2000 sites, as referred to in Section 3. Therefore development in these areas may have to take into consideration impacts on these sites, this should include assessing the sewerage, run-off or pollution impacts of large scale new development, as well as any direct impact on the birds for which these areas are designated.

Key issues

- 4.33 The additional scoping material gathered for the Town Centre AAP identifies several matters that may need to be addressed by the SA. These are:
- development should help in the continued enhancement of the built environment in the Town Centre, with new buildings of high quality and developed to sound urban design principles
 - new urban open space, including new green space, could be provided in the town centre, this may be particularly important given the changing climate and the likelihood of even greater demand for outdoor social space
 - the area is currently experiencing high levels of deprivation, and this should be addressed through the AAP
 - the town centre is a focus of employment for the Borough, and this role needs to be maintained, while also ensuring a range of employment opportunities are maintained in a variety of employment sectors. It will also be necessary to ensure high quality jobs are provided
 - air quality of the town centre should be maintained
 - every attempt should be made to bring biodiversity enhancements to the Town Centre, and also to ensure development in this area does not harm the nearby Natura 2000 sites
 - much of the Town Centre is used for car parking, the AAP should set out strategies for the rationalisation of town centre parking in order to allow land to be released for other uses and create a higher quality urban environment. In addition establishing residents parking schemes in the neighbourhoods in proximity to commercial and office areas is necessary to reduce car commuting, in tandem with delivery of the Local Transport Plan proposals for improved public transport in and around the town centre.

Baseline information for the Seafont Area Action Plan

- 4.34 The primary source of information is the document "Seafont Area Action Plan, Development Plan Document DPD4, Draft Background Information and Evidence Base" which is simply a document which draws together key data and known information relevant to the Seafont. It was not intended to be exhaustive.

Flood Risk

- 4.35 Government policy emphasises the need to ensure new development is protected from flood risk, primarily through location, but also through engineered defences and design. In sustainability terms flooding is a risk to human health and economic growth, and can contribute to pollution through sewerage overflow and contaminated land.
- 4.36 Current indicative flood plains show a number of locations in the Borough that are 'at risk' from coastal flooding, including Two Tree island, and land north to Belton Hill, Leigh old town, Leigh old town to pier to the seafront road, inland areas east of through Southchurch Park and Thorpe hall Golf Course, inland areas from Shoebury common through Gunners Park. The area in southern Southchurch, being heavily built up is especially significant.
- 4.37 Flood risk in the AAP Seafont area extends the entire length of the coast, although existing flood and coastal defences protect against flood to a large extent, at times of severe storm and high water there is the risk that these defences could be over-topped causing flood. In most cases the flood risk area only extends a few meters inland impacting on roads and seafront development. However east of the Town Centre near the Kursaal the flood risk extend into the residential areas near the cricket club and golf course to the railway line and beyond. Similarly the redevelopment areas at Shoebury Ness former MOD sites is also at a higher risk of flood.
- 4.38 Indicative flood plain maps do not take into account existing flood defences in Southend Borough. The actual risk is therefore likely to be much lower than the indicative flood risk maps suggest. However, there remain small, but significant, areas of the Borough where a residual risk remains in the event of a breach in the tidal defences, or where issue with defence maintenance may cause them to fail.

The Cliffs

- 4.39 The Cliffs are made up of London Clay. In the absence of other factors, slopes in London Clay will degrade naturally to a stable angle, which is between 8-10 degrees. The cliffs fronting the estuary at Southend vary from 12-30 degrees. This infers that the cliffs are naturally unstable and would require man-made intervention that either lowers the angle or fixes the layers preventing deep seated movement. This instability has potential to impact on built development stability, as well as being a potential risk to human health.

Air Quality

- 4.40 The main issue surrounding air quality is the increasing emissions from traffic on roads. Recent monitoring has indicated that levels of particulates and nitrogen Dioxide within the Borough are currently within National Air Quality Strategy limits. The Essex Air Quality Consortium do not identify any particular air quality impacts of the roads in the Seafont area.

Bathing Water

- 4.41 Southend-on-Sea has seven miles of beaches and bathing waters including four areas which have achieved International Blue Flag Awards in 2006. The majority of the Borough's bathing waters meet EU standards and are recognised as high quality. Six monitoring points in the Borough give data on water quality from 2003. With the exception of Leigh Bell Wharf, all of these achieved 'Excellent' standards in 2006. Since 2003 all of the monitoring areas have achieved 'Good' or 'Excellent' consistently.

Biodiversity

- 4.42 More comprehensive information on biodiversity can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Assessment (including Appropriate Assessment) of the Core Strategy.
- 4.43 Although a predominantly urban authority area, the Borough has a range of habitats and protected areas. The Southend and Benfleet Marshes in particular are covered by a number of designations including, SSSI, Ramsar and Special Protection Areas (SPA), and this runs along the coast for from the western boundary of the Borough to Shoeburyness. At Shoeburyness the nature conservation designations are the Foulness SPA as well as the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) all of which are also internationally designated Ramsar sites. In addition consideration needs to be taken of likely effects on the interest of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA and the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA.
- 4.44 The Southend-on-Sea foreshore is a rich ecosystem that contains and supports a large number of invertebrate fauna including many species of Hydrobia snails, crabs, mudhopper crustations, molluscs, and worms. A number of microhabitats exist along the foreshore which is also an important habitat for birds.
- 4.45 As well as the foreshore, there are a number of lakes and ponds nearby, and water course and drainage ditches, these are important for their own wildlife functions, in urban areas ditches and rivers may act as wildlife corridors. Saltmarsh can be found to the south and east of Two Tree island and it's important conservation value is recognised by it inclusion in to a national nature reserve.
- 4.46 The Borough also has a number of other habitats of relevance including; Seagrass, eelgrass, Hedgerows, cliff top grasslands, and unimproved coastal grasslands. There is very little agricultural land within the coastal area.
- 4.47 More information on species types can be found in the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Assessment. Some important species of note include; Dark-Bellied Brent Goose, Skylark, Shriill Carder Bee, Stag Beetle, several species of Bats, Dormouse, and a small Water Vole population.
- 4.48 All development in locations that may impact on the European sites will need to ensure it does not harm the integrity of these sites. Primarily by avoiding any impact, although it may also be possible for development to proceed where impacts can be full mitigated against.

Developed Coast

4.49 The coastline of Southend-on-Sea is heavily urbanised along its length, with the exception of the western edge near the boundary of the neighbouring authority Castle Point. The Area Action plan does not stretch very far inland at any point, predominantly covering the promenade and road and seafront buildings and open spaces. However the implications of the AAP are wide reaching with approximately 46% of the population of the Borough living within 1km of the coastline and population density along the coast is higher than for the Borough as a whole.

Travel, transport and movement

4.50 Many of the Borough's main road transport routes travel alongside or near to the coast. Road traffic counts show that from 2000-2005 road traffic has shown a steady increase on the Marine Parade, Chalkwell Esplanade, and Ness Road Shoeburyness, with levels increasing by almost 37% on Chalkwell Esplanade, to 19941 trips on average per day. This increase trend is unusual as many other roads in the proximity to the foreshore have decreased. Cycle traffic has increased significantly on seafront cycle routes since 2000, up 55% particular as a result of the Sustrans route improvements. The entire length of the coast is also popular with walkers, although in some instances the route is in need of improvement, such as west of Chalkwell station where the railway line runs along the seafront.

4.51 There are a large amount of car parks on the seafront, ranging from the large Shoebury East Beach to smaller road side car parking for example at the Eastern Esplanade and Marine Parade. There may be scope to rationalise car parking in some areas to make land available for other uses, including public open space and formal plazas, as some key car parks are underused although usage depends on time of year and purpose of parking.

4.52 There are some transport proposals for the seafront that will have positive impacts for more sustainable transport, including improved cycleways and bus links along the coast. However, some measures included in the Local Transport Plan, such as hovercraft and other river services from Southend have more unpredictable sustainability impacts, particularly if new landing facilities are required, due to likely impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.

4.53 The whole Seafront is already well served by public transport. However the quality of this varies, with all of the seafront east of the pier and at Leigh being within 400m of regular and frequent bus services. Other parts of the Seafront west of the pier to Leigh are not so well serviced. All of the seafront is within 1 mile of a station.

Built environment quality

4.54 Many of the Borough's key landmark building are in the Seafront area covered by the AAP, as well as 11 conservation areas and many listed buildings of national importance, as well as those of local importance. Landmark buildings include the Pier, Palace Hotel, Royal Terrace, Cliffs Pavilion, and Crowstone House. There are also three scheduled ancient monuments, the Cold War Defence Boom, Shoeburyness (Danish camp) and World War II cassion.

4.55 There have also been recent improvements to the Seafront area, including the redevelopment of the entrance to the Pier at Pier Hill, which as been recognised for its built quality, two houses on Undercliff Gardens, Allocat House, Westcliffe Parade and the Kursaal restoration. Although other parts of

the Seafront contain long term redundant or under-used spaces in need of regeneration, some of which have produced strong responses from the local community, based on the type of development proposed or impacts on the surrounding area including nature conservation.

- 4.56 In addition, buildings along the seafront and bordering on the foreshore also in some instances suffer from poor built quality, and detract from the overall character.

Open Space and landscape

- 4.57 In addition to the foreshore area the Seafront contains a range of public open spaces, predominantly used for informal recreation. This includes Gunners Park, Southend Cliffs and the Marine Parade Gardens. However the continuing risk of landslips from the unstable cliffs means that it may be necessary to reconfigure some of the cliff parks.

- 4.58 Parks of the Seafront are noted for their landscape quality, for example the Hadleigh Marshes Special Landscape Area defined by the County. Although the purpose of the designation and the features being protected require review as part of the LDF. Also of landscape value to the area is the open aspect onto the estuary from the coast that gives Southend its distinctive characteristics and setting.

- 4.59 The Thames Gateway South Essex green grid strategy extends into Southend with the intention of linking up the green spaces of the area for various functions including recreation, biodiversity protection and enhancement, community connectivity, sustainable transport and creating high quality urban areas. Green spaces in Southend make up part of this.

Economy

- 4.60 Tourism contributes about £255m to the local economy and supports 6,200 jobs (16% of employment in the Borough). Over 6 million day visitors visit Southend-on-Sea annually, making tourism hugely important to the local economy. Much of the development along the coast is specifically tailored to provide leisure and recreation facilities to tourists and visitors. The pier and amusement park, amusement arcades, and a theatre, amongst other attractions, are clustered on the Seafront.

- 4.61 In addition some seafront properties are in use as overnight accommodation for visitors including bed and breakfast, hotels and self-catering accommodation. However, the quality of the hotel accommodation may be limiting the amount of overnight visits made to Southend for tourism, and improving this could raise the money spent by each visitor significantly. Figures produced in 2002 on the Economic Impact of Tourism in Southend revealed overnight visitors spend over £100 on average each, with day visitors spending under £25 each. Increasing spend through overnight stays is a more sustainable way of improving tourism revenue than encouraging more day visits. Improved summer weather may attract more people to holiday in the UK, and Southend should take advantage of these opportunities.

- 4.62 There is also no conference facilities in the town and this may be an opportunity for the Borough as part of new development.

- 4.63 There is of course pressure on the coast for leisure uses including, seven boating clubs, three public slipways and 1200 mooring sites. The Southend-on-Sea central area has a large amusement park (Adventure Island) and the Southend-on-Sea pier, two major tourist attractions and local landmarks.
- 4.64 Retail and other employment uses are also found in the coastal zone, although a highlighted issue is the poor connectivity between the coastal area and the retail core of Southend-on-Sea. Unemployment varies in the coastal wards, with the majority having lower rates than the Southend average although Kursaal and Milton have significantly higher rates of unemployment than the Borough average whilst Leigh and West Leigh have very low rates in comparison.

Housing

- 4.65 Most of the buildings in the Seafront area are residential, apart from in the central area where uses are more for leisure. A target for residential development in this area is set in the Core Strategy and includes a requirement for affordable homes. Progress towards meeting the dwelling provision figure for the seafront in the Core Strategy is quite rapid.

Key issues in the Seafront AAP area

- 4.66 The additional scoping material gathered for the Seafront AAP identifies several matters that may need to be addressed by the SA. These are:
- much of the Seafront is at risk of flood according to Environment Agency maps, however flood defences should protect against this. Therefore maintenance of these is essential, in addition to ensure all new development where necessary has appropriate flood risk assessment before proceeding
 - to protect public safety and existing built assets unstable cliffs need to be engineered as appropriate to make stable
 - air and bathing water quality of the Seafront should be maintained, or enhanced as necessary, through control of relevant development
 - biodiversity and nature conservation is a key matter that needs to be considered through the AAP, and it will need to be ensured that new development does not cause harm to European sites. New development should also help enhance the biodiversity quality of the Seafront area where appropriate
 - reducing car use is a theme of planning in the Borough, and this should include the Seafront roads, provision of alternatives will be necessary, including better bus services west of the pier and completion of the Sustrans cycle route
 - car parking in the Seafront area needs some reorganisation to reduce underuse of car parks at all times of year and encourage visitors to use improved public transport and cycle routes. Land made available after reorganisation can be used for other purposes, such as public spaces or other leisure uses

- the built environment quality of the Seafront should be enhanced to provide a cohesive Seafront style, this will include regeneration of redundant sites but this must take into account impacts on biodiversity and take into account community views
- the AAP must support the Green Grid strategy
- the AAP should make particular provision for improving the overnight visitor accommodation on the Seafront to encourage longer stays and higher visitor spend. This could also include new conference facilities
- continued support needs to be given to employment provision and new housing in the Seafront area in order to meet objectives of the Core Strategy.

5 Sustainability Framework

5.1 The framework below is based upon that in the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal framework, however it has been altered to reflect the specific needs of the two AAP areas. These changes are based upon the wider policy context, the baseline data and the issues and options reports for the two AAP areas.

Figure: Sustainability appraisal framework for the SA of Southend on Sea LDF AAPs

| Concern | Explanation and desirable direction of change | Objectives | Means of identifying and reporting impact and contribution of the proposals and policies in the LDF |
|---|--|--|---|
| Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone | | | |
| Accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable all to have similar and sufficient levels of access to services, facilities and opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain Southend town centre as services, as the most accessible location improve accessibility to the town centre improvement public transport accessibility along the entire length of the Seafront | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> doc – likelihood of increase in facilities and mix of uses |
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to provide the opportunity for people to meet their housing need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure a sufficient number of dwellings encourage a suitable mix of dwellings, including tenure and size | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quan – no of dws created quan – no of affordable dws (by different types) likely to arise |
| Education & Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to assist people in gaining the skills to fulfil their potential and increase their contribution to the community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve accessibility to employment and education facilities support continued development of the University campus in the town centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> doc – but little reliability of prediction |
| Health, safety and security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to improve overall levels of health, reduce the disparities between different groups and different areas, and reduce crime and the fear of crime | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improvements to reduce fear of crime in the town centre, especially at night improve pedestrian routes through the Town Centre and Seafront to help design out crime | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quan – area and population subject to increased or decreased risk of flooding doc – likelihood of increased or decreased health standards (but little reliability of prediction) |
| Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to value and nurture a sense of belonging in a cohesive community, whilst respecting diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the viability and distinctive character of Southend-on-Sea town centre provide public art and improvements to the design of Seafront tourist buildings, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> doc – but little reliability of prediction |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | <p>such as beach huts and kiosks to provide a recognisable unified approach for Southend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide new community open spaces in the Town Centre and Seafront | |
|--|--|--|--|

| Effective protection of the environment | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to maintain and enhance the diversity and abundance of species, and safeguard these areas of significant nature conservation value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect undeveloped parts of the coastline • protect key habitats directly or indirectly from developments which may harm them • ensure new development brings enhancements to the built environment where appropriate • ensure 'appropriate assessment' of all development is carried out where appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quan – area of significant habitat affected • quan – potential area of significant habitat created / better managed • doc – likelihood of increase in biodiversity from creation of opportunities |
| Landscape character | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to maintain and enhance the quality and character and cultural significance of the landscape, including the setting and character of the settlement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect undeveloped parts of the coastline • retain notable features and areas of open space along the coast line • protect views of the estuary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quan – area of open land affected • quan – area of designated landscape affected • doc – likelihood of harmful change to character of landscape creating setting of the urban area |
| Built environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to maintain and enhance the quality, safety and distinctiveness of the built environment and the cultural heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance and protect land mark and listed buildings on the sea front • enhance and protect listed buildings and those of interest in the town centre • improve urban design quality through the AAPs • protect existing and create new open and green space on the sea front and in the town centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quan – area of useable and amenity open space affected • quan – potential area of useable and amenity open space created • quan – area of valued townscape harmed by change • doc – likelihood of increase in urban quality through new provision and investment • doc – likelihood of increase in urban quality through emphasis on quality |

| Prudent use of natural resources | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Air | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to reduce all forms of air pollution in the interests of local air quality and the integrity of the atmosphere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduce traffic congestion in the town centre encourage freight modal shift and encourage a reduction in emissions of new buildings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> doc – likelihood of increase or decrease in emissions. Regional target is for stabilising car traffic levels in Southend at 1999 levels and to increase the proportion of freight carried to and from ports by rail to 30% by 2020. Regional target to increase the proportion of energy met from renewable sources (on-shore + off-shore) to 44% by 2020. |
| Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to maintain and improve the quantity and quality of ground, sea and river waters, and minimise the risk of flooding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure no increased risk of coastal flooding in the AAP acknowledge the risk to water quality from on-shore developments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> doc – likelihood of increase or decrease in emissions quan – number of planning applications granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flood risk. |
| Land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to use land efficiently, retaining undeveloped land and bringing contaminated land back into use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> protect undeveloped coastline in the Borough encourage development on previously developed land encourage high density residential development and mixed use development in the town centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quan – area of open land affected irreversibly by development. quan – area of damaged land likely to be brought back into use - national and regional previously developed land target is 60% and minimum dwelling densities at 30 dwellings per hectare. |
| Soil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to maintain the resource of productive soil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect productive soil where applicable (little overall impact likely) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quan – area of productive land affected |
| Minerals and other raw materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to maintain the stock of minerals and other raw materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise use of aggregates for new development (relevance to sea defences) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quan – area of potential minerals extraction put beyond viable exploitation by development doc – efficiency of the use of primary and secondary materials doc – likely affect on reuse and recycling of materials - regional target to recover 70% of household waste by 2015 |
| Energy sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to increase the opportunities for energy generation from renewable energy sources, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the growth in car use and congestion within the two AAP areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quan – contribution likely from energy generation from renewable source |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | maintain the stock of non renewable energy sources and make the best use of the materials, energy and effort embodied in the product of previous activity | | schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quan – contribution likely from energy generation within new buildings • doc – likelihood of increase in efficiency of energy use in new development |
|--|---|--|---|

| Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Local economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to achieve a clear connection between effort and benefit, by making the most of local strengths, seeking community regeneration, and fostering economic activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the viability and vitality of the town centre as economic hub for the Borough • Improve the viability and vitality of the seafront as a major and flexible tourist destination • Identify sites for local business start ups in the town centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doc – likelihood of increase in desirable economic characteristics |
| Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to maintain and enhance employment opportunities matched to the size of the local labour force and its various skills, and to reduce the disparities arising from unequal access to jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to create new jobs in a range of sectors within the two AAP areas • Work to make the coast a major destination for conferences (as in Community Strategy) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quan – potential number of new jobs in different sectors and match to predicted needs of workforce |
| Wealth creation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to retain and enhance the factors which are conducive to wealth creation, including personal creativity, infrastructure, accessibility and the local strengths and qualities that are attractive to visitors and investors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to creating attractive environment for business to flourish • Improve access for all residents to a range of jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doc – likelihood of increase in desirable economic characteristics |

Notes: **doc** – matter where prediction of outcome likely to be presented in terms of ‘likely direction of change’
quan – matter where prediction of outcome likely to be presented in quantified terms

6 Identification of sustainability implications

- 6.1 The main purpose of this report is to consult with the relevant bodies on the scope of issues to be covered by the SA of the two AAPs. However, it was agreed with the Borough Council that the Scoping Report should include some discussion of the key sustainability implications of the emerging AAPs as this would help in moving forward with these documents. This approach is in accordance with good practice on SA in ensuring sustainability matters are incorporated into the plans from as early stage as possible. It also means that the relevant consultees have an opportunity to not only consider the matters being addressed in the appraisal but also be involved in the early identification of impacts.
- 6.2 The intention is for this stage of the appraisal to be a brief overview of the emerging AAPs and the emerging issues. The sustainability objectives in Section 5, although only in draft at the moment, are used as a basis for appraisal and an understanding of sustainable development in these areas. However, the format of the appraisal does not present a rigorous framework of comparison of AAP issues against sustainable development objectives, as this would not be appropriate at this stage given the loose way issues are presented with a lack of definite policy or detailed proposals. This more rigorous and standardised testing of policies, proposals and their alternatives will be carried out at later stages in AAP preparation as it moves towards preferred options consultation stage.

Issues arising from the core strategy

- 6.3 This SA process follows on from the SA carried out on the Core Strategy, which already identified key implications for the LDF on sustainability in Southend, and provides a basis for this appraisal. There are no specific Core Strategy policies relating solely to the two AAP areas although several policies contain relevant criteria and provisions for the areas. More specific is Policy KP1: Spatial Strategy which sets out the following provisions for the two areas:

‘Southend Town Centre and Central Area – including regenerating the existing town centre, led by the development of the University campus, to secure a full range of quality sub-regional services and providing 6500 new jobs and 1650 additional homes, and the upgrading of strategic and local passenger transport accessibility, including development of Southend Central and Southend Victoria Stations as strategic transport interchanges and related travel centres.’

‘Seafront – including the regeneration of the Seafront’s role as a successful leisure and tourist attraction and place to live, and making the best use of the River Thames, but subject to safeguarding the biodiversity importance of the foreshore. Appropriate sea defences will be provided as part of a comprehensive shoreline management plan.’

- 6.4 The SA of this approach welcomed the emphasis given to continued improvement of the Town Centre and emphasising it as the focus for growth in the Borough. As this area is the most accessible location, and already being

the focus for much of the employment, retail and leisure facilities makes it suitable for growth. Continued development here will support public transport accessibility for all, and walking and cycling improvements, with the overall aim of achieving a modal shift from car use to more sustainable travel, in addition to equitable access for all. In addition the central location of the University campus helps improve physical access to higher education and the other education and skills training the university may support. Providing a mix of uses in a relatively compact area is also welcomed, with the continued improvement to the vitality of the town centre at all times of day.

- 6.5 There were some concerns in the appraisal over development in areas at risk of flood, and that continued maintenance or development of new flood defences may adversely impact on the biodiversity value of the foreshore. The SA welcomed the provision in the policy that new Seafront development should ensure the safeguarding of biodiversity, although whether this will always be possible whilst still meeting the overall development objectives of the Southend and its role in the Thames Gateway growth areas is questioned.

General issues

- 6.6 In completing the brief appraisal of the Issues and Options Draft of the AAPs a number of matters were identified that were common to both plans, and also generic matters relating to the creation of a useful and implementable AAP.
- 6.7 It is made clear in both AAPs that defining the boundaries between the two areas was an issue for consideration and agreement, in particular defining the boundaries between the two areas. The current approach appears appropriate, as it allows the Seafront to be considered as a continual area right along the coast of the Borough, with the Town Centre area boundary placed at the edge of this area. However in the preparation of the two AAPs it will be essential to take a common approach to many issues where these two areas meet, for example when deciding on movement routes through the area to ensure the two areas support one another. This may be especially significant as links between the Seafront and the retail core are identified as an issue in need of improvement.
- 6.8 In addition the AAP preparation processes should be carried out in a similar way to ensure all those reading the plans and wishing to comment can identify the common themes. At this Issues and Options stage the approach taken to the identification of matters is different between the two AAPs, including the way that alternatives are presented and that the Seafront is addressed through division into zones, whereas the Town Centre is treated more as one area although having some specific area based approaches and proposals.
- 6.9 The purpose of an AAP, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Plans is to 'identify the distribution of uses and their inter-relationships, including specific site allocations, and set the timetable for the implementation of the proposals' (paragraph 2.19). In addition PPS12 states that the 'format of local development documents should be clear, succinct and easily understood by all' (paragraph 2.2). To create an understandable and implementable plan it will be necessary to ensure that the AAP policies are kept to those that would specifically help bring the desired changes, and associated sustainability benefits, to the area. In each current Issues and Options document there are a large amount of issues raised, and for the sake of plan clarity it will be necessary to make decisions of which matters are better addressed in other Development Plan Documents of the LDF, such as

matters already covered by the Core Strategy and other matters to be addressed in the Criteria Based Policies and Site Allocations DPD.

- 6.10 The nature conservation issues in and adjacent to the Borough are clearly shown to be a key sustainability concern on development in the area, and in particular on the Seafront. Development will need to proceed in sensitive areas only where it can be shown that there will no impacts that would affect the integrity of these sites. Seafront issues that may impact on the nature conservation value of the site include flood defence improvements, new facilities necessary for hovercraft or boat services, large scale Seafront redevelopment causing potential water pollution, and potentially any development that would bring increased visitor pressure to particularly sensitive areas or areas currently experiencing only very low levels of visitor pressure. The impacts of new development would also have to be considered in the long and short term, which will include consideration of impacts during construction as well as during operation.

Main issues arising from the SA of the Town Centre AAP Issues and Options pre-submission consultation document

- 6.11 The brief appraisal of the matters raised in the Town Centre AAP Issues and Options document is shown in Appendix 1. The approach taken to this stage in SA was to simply go through the issues raised in the document and highlight potential sustainable matters that they raise. This appraisal of sustainability implications used the draft sustainability objectives as a definition of sustainable development, and where necessary considered a variety of types of impacts of proposed approaches, such as the importance of impacts in the long and short term and during construction phases and at other times.
- 6.12 The key issues arising from this appraisal, and that would help secure sustainable development for the area are:
- to achieve joined-up sustainable development it will be necessary to ensure the **Town Centre AAP and Seafront AAP** are well linked, for instance taking a combined approach to transport and movement
 - incorporating new **open space** and **green space** into the Town Centre may help improve the quality of area, as well as providing more outdoor community spaces that may be useful in adapting to climate change and increased summer heat. Similarly new development should encourage use of trees, that are drought resistant and able to cope with high summer temperatures, as the shading and heat absorption they provide may help in cooling urban areas
 - **retail development** should be prioritised in appropriate areas, restricting uses that would detract from the character of these areas, this will help more spending being retained in Southend in this accessible location
 - support should be given to an improved **night time economy**, in combination with Seafront uses, to improve character of the Town Centre into the evening and provide economic opportunities including more overnight tourism, however it will be important these uses are kept to appropriate locations so as not to harm residential amenity

- **employment land** should be protected in the Town Centre, in order to continue to provide a range of jobs in the area, this should include the protection of industrial land. This will support the continued economic sustainability of Southend as a whole.
- sites should be allocated for **employment growth**, as part of this it should be identified what type of employment land is required in the Town Centre to meet needs of local and start-up businesses, this will help meet sustainability objectives relating to the local economy
- new **housing development** in the Town Centre should make the most efficient use of land, and this may include housing as part of mixed use development in very central locations. There is a demand for small one and two bedroom dwellings, as these should be relatively affordable, and therefore it may be suitable to lift any existing policy restrictions on this type of development.
- routes and sites identified to provide high quality **public transport** to and from the Town Centre must be retained. A key objective of the AAP should be to reduce car travel to the Town Centre for all uses, including shopping and work commuting, through the provision of new facilities and a joined up approach to public transport provision. Park and ride facilities could form part of this, but in terms of sustainability it is preferential to ensure people make all of their trip by public transport
- **car parking** should be rationalised and reorganised in the town centre, this will help improve environment quality in some areas, has the potential to release land for other uses and reduce car travel as part of a larger transport management plan. Reducing car use should also be encouraged by appropriate residents parking schemes in roads that are currently parked in for free by business commuters and other Town Centre users
- cycling and walking **movement routes and connections** through the Town Centre are vital to encourage alternatives to car use, they can also help create a high quality urban environment, and help in the reduction of crime, the AAP should therefore put an emphasis on movement routes as part of the proposals for the area. Any schemes of this type should be linked to the Seafrost AAP as necessary to ensure there is a cohesive approach to the two areas
- **good design** and protection of existing buildings of national and local historic or architectural heritage is a key matter for redevelopment of the Town Centre. However policies of the AAP should be restricted to those that add site specific detail to these design and protection principles, avoiding repetition with other DPDs including the Core Strategy, criteria based policies and the good practice principles of the Design and Townscape SPD.

Main issues arising from the SA of the Seafrost AAP Issues and Options pre-submission consultation document

- 6.13 The brief appraisal of the matters raised in the Seafront AAP Issues and Options document is shown in Appendix 2. The way that this AAP is set out divides matters into generic issues for the Seafront and then more site specific issue based on the eight character zones. The issues in the AAP are raised as questions, and the SA looks at each of these in turn to consider what factors may be significant in achieving more sustainable development in this part of the Borough. The purpose being to highlight sustainability issues early on in AAP preparation so they can be incorporated into the plan from an early stage, where relevant. This appraisal of sustainability implications used the draft sustainability objectives as a definition of sustainable development, and where necessary considered a variety of types of impacts of proposed approaches, such as the importance of impacts in the long and short term and during construction phases and at other times.
- 6.14 The SA identifies two issues of overriding sustainability significant in the Seafront AAP area these are:
- the presence of the European Sites and internationally designated **nature conservation** sites along the coast, and the need to ensure proposals of the AAP would not adversely impact on these. This will be a matter for continued assessment through the plan preparation process, including the need for 'appropriate assessment'. More information can be found in Section 7 of the SA. All new Seafront development will need to ensure it will not harm these sites, through direct impact or the effects of pollution or disruption to wildlife, as well as during construction and operation
 - almost the entire Seafront is a risk of **flood**, although sea defences protect the coast at present reducing actual risks. However, the risk of overtopping during storm events remains and therefore there is the need to control vulnerable development in the area, as well as ensuring defences are managed and maintained as part of a comprehensive shoreline and coastal management plan
- 6.15 Other sustainability issues that the SA raises are:
- as with the Town Centre AAP it is important that a **common approach** is taken to these two AAPs, showing links between the centre and seafront and the need for these plans to be mutually supportive
 - in addition to the protection of designated sites all new development should take opportunities for **biodiversity** enhancement
 - improvements to the **Seafront tourist buildings**, including kiosks and beach huts, should be carried out in a consistent way along the coast to bring a unified appearance to the area
 - protection should be given to **overnight accommodation** as well as encourage improvements to the quality of this to promote Southend as a high quality tourist destination, as this can encourage higher spend visitors without putting extra pressure on the natural environment
 - new large scale leisure and tourist attractions should be developed to be accessible by **public transport** and should be actively planned to help

reduce car reliance

- it may be suitable to reconsider policies protecting family **houses** from sub-division and the development of flats, this is in order to meet the housing needs of the Borough and provide more affordable housing. Considering each scheme on its merits may be the preferred approach
- full support should be given to improved **walking and cycling** routes along the Seafront, including a segregated Sustrans route
- the SA has reservations over the suitability of **hovercraft or river services** from Southend, as any related development is likely to impact on the biodiversity assets as is their operation
- **car parking** in on the Seafront is in need of review, overprovision should be removed and land made available for alternative public space and leisure uses, this should be in combination with public transport improvements for the area, particularly to the east of the pier
- employment land supporting traditional industries, and those that rely on a Thames front location, should be protected in **Leigh on Sea** to retain local jobs and the character of the town. Tourism potential and built environment quality of the town centre may also be improved through pedestrianisation
- improvements to the **Cinder Path** although promoting more sustainable travel will need to ensure this does not harm biodiversity assets
- it will be important to ensure the proposals of the **Central Seafront Area** are well aligned to the Town Centre AAP proposals to provide improvement linkage of the retail core of the town to the sea. Reorganisation of car parking is a key matter to be addressed in these areas
- at **Shoeburyness** improvements to the sea defences will need to ensure impacts to nature conservation are minimised and new development in this area incorporates biodiversity enhancements

7 Appropriate assessment

- 7.1 It is already noted in this Scoping Report and in the SA of the Core Strategy that there are areas designated as being of European importance for nature conservation in the Borough. Meaning that any policies or proposals that may impact on these areas require 'appropriate assessment' under the Habitats Directive and Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended). More information on the determination process of whether appropriate assessment is required of Core Strategy is contained in the SA Report of the Core Strategy submission version on the Council website.
- 7.2 However, in the light of the European Habitats Directive and the 'Conservation (Natural Habitats, Etc) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006', an 'Appropriate Assessment' has been undertaken of the submission Core Strategy DPD, which ascertains whether the Core Strategy is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European or international site, either alone or in combination with other relevant plans or projects.
- 7.3 The designated areas are two Special Protection Areas (SPAs) the Benfleet and Southend Marshes and Foulness and the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) the Essex Estuaries that coincides with the Foulness SPA at Southend. SAC sites and SPA sites are known collectively as Natura 2000 sites. These sites also have international designation for nature conservation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- 7.4 The Core Strategy appropriate assessment sets out the sensitivities of the European sites on the Southend foreshore. It also assesses the potential of the Core Strategy in having an adverse effect on the sensitivities of the designated sites, identifying any issues or concerns that may arise. The appropriate assessment then considers key features and particular sensitivities in relation to physical, non-physical and biological disturbance, air quality, physical loss, water quality and contamination, therefore, allowing identification of where, if any, impacts may arise and mitigation measures as necessary.
- 7.5 The Core Strategy appropriate assessment provides a steer for a specific assessment framework that can be used in the appropriate assessment of AAPs. It has been determined by the Council that the Seafront AAP will require appropriate assessment as it coincides with the Natura 2000 sites, in addition the Town Centre AAP may also require appropriate assessment.
- 7.6 The Appropriate Assessment of the AAPs under the Habitats Regulations will be undertaken during the preparation of the strategies so that the assessment may influence the evolution of the policies and proposals and will therefore be integral with the 'SA process'. The Sustainability Appraisal Report will include therefore the Environment Report and a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

8 Scoping and the involvement of the consultation bodies

8.1 Para.12(5) of the SEA Regulations includes the statement that *'when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies.'*

8.2 In this case the 'responsible authority' is Southend Borough Council, and the 'consultation bodies' are identified in the Regulations as:

- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency

8.3 SEA matters for that relate to the specialisms of the consultation bodies is set out in the table below of the identified bodies:

| Consultation body | Environmental issues identified in the SEA Directive within the remit of the consultation body |
|--------------------|--|
| Natural England | Landscape designations and possibly landscape character, biodiversity protection and enhancement and the protection of designated site |
| English Heritage | Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage |
| Environment Agency | Soil, water (groundwater, freshwater bodies and the sea), air quality and climatic factors |

8.4 As this SA does not solely concern the environment, but includes social and economic issues, widening the consultees at this stage to include other relevant stakeholders may be suitable. This could include representatives of other departments within the Borough and from outside. Although it is only these three consultees that have a statutory duty to make a response.

8.5 In this scoping exercise we are seeking a response from the Consultation Bodies of their opinion of:

- the baseline sustainability characterisation, and whether all relevant issues have been identified, the information is accurate, and sources of additional information where there appear to be gaps or errors
- the proposed sustainability objectives for use in the SEA, if all appropriate directions of change have been identified, or where they could be quantified
- plans, programmes, strategies etc that contain environmental and sustainability objectives that would be of relevance to the LDP
- whether the initial appraisal identifies the correct sustainability implications of the two AAPs or whether there are any other important consideration to be taken into account
- views on the approach to 'appropriate assessment'

Appendix 1

Identification of key sustainability implications of the Southend on Sea Town Centre Area Action Plan Development Plan Document 3: Stage 1 Pre-submission consultation Issues and Options

This is a brief overview sustainability appraisal of the Issues and Options document for the Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP), in order to identify the key sustainability implications of the issues raised. The sustainability appraisal takes each issue, as listed in the AAP, in turn and assesses likely implications and points for consideration. The purpose of which is to help guide policy development through an early process of identification of the matters which it may be suitable to address in the AAP in order to achieve more sustainable development.

Over 40 issues are set out for the Town Centre area in the issues and options AAP, these cover a wide variety of matters. Overall it is likely that the approach taken will be promoting more sustainable development, by allowing this area to grow as a mixed use, accessible focus for development in the Borough including houses, shops, offices, leisure development and industrial land.

In producing the AAP it will be important to ensure the plan remains as focussed and succinct as possible in order to clearly show what the intentions are for the area and how this can be implemented. Therefore keeping policies limited to an appropriately limited number, and that add value without repeating Core Strategy and other LDF policy will be necessary. At this early stage in plan preparation the form of these policies is not entirely clear and the number of issues raised does in some instances obscure the key matters that the AAP will address.

Issue 1: Town centre area action plan boundary

A choice has to be made on the boundary of the Town Centre and Seafront AAPs. The choice of boundary put forward at this stage does not include the Seafront area, and this may be most appropriate given that the Seafront forms a linear feature along the entire length of the Borough's coast. In practice so long as the two AAPs are closely linked and prepared using a unified approach and policies the separation should not be an issue that impacts on the sustainable development of the area.

Issue 2: The central business district

The use of a defined Central Business District may aid in clearly setting out the purpose and type of development that should be located in the area. It may not have any specific sustainability implications, although it should be ensured that the designation does not prevent the most efficient use of land in this very accessible location, and this may even include residential development in some circumstances.

Issue 3: A vision for the Town Centre

Issue 4: Objectives

Setting out as a vision and objectives for the ideal for the future of the Town Centre is a useful tool in provide a common understanding of what is wanted from development in the area, although in themselves they are unlikely to have any great sustainability implications. In terms for achieving more sustainable development it will be important to consider including objectives on issues such as promoting more sustainable travel modes, making the best use of land, enhancing the built

environment, reducing crime and fear of crime, and providing jobs to meet local residents needs.

Issue 5: The vitality and viability of the Town Centre

A high quality design scheme for the Town Centre could help improve the attractiveness of the area and encourage more retained retail and leisure spend in the area than at present, as well as encouraging visitors. However a great deal of care will need to be taken to ensure the design is appropriate to the location and provides improvements that will stand the test of time, and not simply innovation for its own sake.

It may be suitable in terms of securing more sustainable travel, as well as other matters such as reducing crime, to plan for pedestrian and cycle movements through the whole Town Centre area, including links to the Seafront.

The use of public spaces is welcomed in creating character and potential benefits for the community, although it will be important to identify the purpose that these spaces will serve, for example plazas for public events or for outdoor eating and drinking for example. Without a vision for these areas, and with many alternative outdoor spaces in the Borough, new public spaces may be improperly used and a waste of resources, or could exacerbate other problems such as crime and antisocial behaviour. Consideration of improved greening of the Town Centre will also be important, particularly as part of responding to the impact of climate change, as well as supporting the Thames Gateway and South Essex Green Grid Strategy.

Issue 6: Existing character zones

The character zones that have naturally grown up in the Town Centre, through clusters of similar uses, are worth retaining. The reason being is that they provide a mix of uses in the Town Centre as a whole, yet help to preserve the particular characteristics of each area and avoid conflict of use. However, it may be more suitable to also allow some degree of flexibility in these zones to allow adaptation to the changing needs of the Town Centre. This may be particularly relevant for residential use, which may be successfully integrated into many parts of the central area, such as in flats over shops and other commercial uses, so long as they only make up a small proportion of the area. Such an approach would be in line with Government policy on mix of uses, and high density residential development in accessible locations where reliance would not be on car use to access jobs, shops and other services, therefore with positive sustainability implications. Although, for some areas such as the retail parks and large scale industrial areas it may be better to retain these for specific uses given the low residential amenity in these locations.

Retail and Town Centre status

Issue 7: Retail provision

In order to deliver the expected level of retail development it may be suitable to allocate sites to meet these needs in the AAP, as this may expedite securing new retail development. However, the sequential approach should still apply to other retail development and focus this use in the central area of the Town Centre which is already accessible by public transport, and therefore compatible with sustainability objectives.

Issue 8: Primary and secondary shopping frontages

In terms of retaining the quality of the built environment in the Town Centre it may be preferential to ensure that retail use is the major use in the prime shopping frontages. Restricting change of use to banks and building societies helps to protect this character, but potentially more importantly control of restaurants and cafes may be appropriate as a proliferation of these uses may harm the retail character in the primary frontages.

In the secondary frontages it may be suitable to maintain the more relaxed approach to these areas being used for banks and building societies and restaurants and cafes. However, it may be suitable to maintain or enhance restrictions on control of drinking establishments and hot food takeaways as concentrations of these uses can be detrimental to areas, in relation to litter, noise and antisocial behaviour. This issue is linked to Issue 9, and the suitability of identifying suitable areas for these uses to protect amenity.

Issue 9: Potential for more vibrant evening economy

Improving the night time economy, for all users including families, will help improve the evening character of the town and make it more attractive to visitors, particularly encouraging overnight visits to the town. It may be suitable to focus this type of use in certain parts of the central area of the Town Centre, expanding the coverage of these uses as this sector of the economy grows. Suitable areas may include those near the Seafront, the university, and areas where there is existing evening entertainment such as the cinema. Focused development of this type may help to create lively night time neighbourhoods and avoid detrimental impacts on local residential amenity.

Employment Generating Development

Issue 10: Employment and business provision

In order to achieve the level of employment development expected in the Town Centre it is likely to be necessary to make suitable land allocations. For these allocations to meet identified needs the employment figures should be disaggregated into types of employment sectors and their land requirements. Much employment could be accommodated in existing businesses and buildings, not necessarily requiring land. Whereas others, such as small business start-ups will need specific types of land and facilities and therefore specific allocations may be most suitable. Therefore reviewing the existing allocations, and their suitability for various employment uses, may be the most appropriate approach to securing the desired employment growth in the AAP area to benefit the local economy and to make the most efficient use of land.

Issue 11: Safeguarding employment land

It will be necessary to retain the policy of protecting major employment sites in the Town Centre area, such as the large industrial site, due to the limited land resources for these uses in the Borough and pressure from alternative uses. Land that may no longer be suitable for employment uses could be redeveloped for alternative uses, however the presumption should remain on retaining employment land and only releasing it for uses that would benefit the wider community. This is necessary for

continued sustainable economic development, and helping to provide local employment for the large population growth expected in the Borough and wider South Essex area.

Issue 12: Secondary offices

Protecting office use in these locations for change of use may help retain employment in these areas, and prevent loss to residential uses.

Housing

Issue 13: Housing provision

As part of background evidence gathering for the AAP, and in order to meet the identified housing need, it may be suitable to survey the Town Centre area for sites suitable for housing, either as the sole use or as part of a mixed use scheme. Such sites should be allocated in the AAP, with additional policy criteria to test the suitability of other proposals, including retaining a mix of uses in locations outside those identified as predominantly residential.

It may also be suitable to prioritise small one and two bedroom units in the Town Centres to meet the identified need. These types of homes would also be better suited to the Town Centre area rather than family homes. A similar approach needs to be taken in Seafrost AAP, that raises the issues of retaining the single dwelling policy restricting conversion of buildings to flats and on new flat development.

Issue 14: Safeguarding residential uses

Issue 15: Flat developments

In order to help meet sustainability objectives relating to housing needs and to help ensure housing in the area is relatively affordable, protection should be given to existing residential properties to avoid them being lost to other uses.

It may not necessarily be suitable to retain the policy approach protecting family homes and restricting flats in the Town Centre area, as there is a proven need for smaller one and two bedroom units. Furthermore as this area is very accessible with shops, jobs and services accessible without the need to travel by car, increasing housing density through subdivision and development of flats would help achieve sustainability benefits relating to reducing car use, and would also result in the more efficient use of land.

Transport

Issue 16: Public transport

Improving the links, reliability and free flow of public transport through the Town Centre will help encourage its use in preference to car travel. This can help achieve sustainability benefits relating to reduced car use, including positive impacts on the natural environment, climate change, health and accessibility for all. Therefore appropriate routes should be protected and used in the Town Centre for this use in the longer term for the South Essex Rapid Transit scheme, but also in the short term for local public transport improvements. This should be linked to proposals for public transport at the Seafrost.

Issue 17: Park and Ride

Park and ride facilities can help reduce traffic congestion in the Town Centre, although may not reduce overall demand for car use, and therefore do not necessarily represent 'sustainable' travel modes. However, sustainability benefits of the schemes can relate to the better free flow of traffic in the centre with advantages for local businesses and residents, as well as reducing health related impacts of cars in towns. If such schemes are to be developed in Southend it should be ensured that these are well integrated into existing public transport routes, this could include the use of trains. However, as Southend is well served by public transport, with provision expected to improve, encouraging more people to make all of their trip by these modes instead of choosing to use their car for park and ride may be preferable in terms of maximising sustainability benefits.

Issue 18: Interchanges

Encouraging the link of different public transport modes is essential in encouraging greater use of these modes in preference to the car. It may be suitable to update existing Local Plan policy to reflect the specific schemes that are necessary to improve the interchanges.

Issue 19: Car parking – off street

There should be no net increase in off street car parking in the Town Centre, unless this is to meet the specific needs of a new development, in order to discourage car use as the primary mode of accessing the centre. In addition parking provision should be reviewed to identify if there is overprovision in the Town Centre, and parking rationalised accordingly. In addition in some locations land used for car parking could be more efficiently used, either by changing the layout out parking, some reduction in space numbers and possible use of decked parking. This could release land for alternative uses, such as housing or commercial development, and ensure the more efficient use of land in line with more sustainable development.

In order to be effective any reduction in car parking to promote alternative modes of travel needs to be carried out in conjunction with other car use management schemes and the provision of high quality public transport.

Issue 20: Car parking – on street

Periodic review of the suitability of residents parking schemes may be suitable as this represents a good solution to limiting car parking for work commuting in residential neighbourhoods. This will involve resolving reasons for lack of community support for these schemes, although in the future if parking near homes becomes a serious issue community support may grow naturally.

Issue 21: Traffic Management

The free flow of traffic can have various sustainability advantages, particularly for the local economy and where this includes bus priority routes can have a positive impact on encouraging travel by this mode. Unless there is evidence to the contrary it is likely to be suitable for the AAP to maintain the road hierarchy established in the LTP.

Issue 22: Cycling and walking

Encouraging more cycling and walking is a key way of reducing car use, as many such trips are only short distances that can easily be replaced by walking or cycling. In addition many visitors and residents of Southend, even if they travel to the area by car, will spend time in their visit walking through the Town Centre, therefore pedestrian improvements in particular can improve the built environmental character of the central area. It is important that these schemes are carried out in conjunction with Seafront improvements.

Urban design, open spaces and conservation

Issue 23: Design Policy

The LDF as a whole, including the SPD, includes quite comprehensive coverage of design policy and guidance. Therefore the repetition of this material in the AAP is not necessary in order to promote a well designed urban environment. So in terms of achieving a better built environment it may be suitable to limit AAP policy to specific parts of the area where particular matters arise that require tailored policy approaches. In addition setting out through the AAP movement routes and linkages through the Town Centre area will be a vital component of achieve more sustainable urban design with many benefits including promotion of walking and cycling, safety and reducing crime.

Issue 24: Frontages of townscape merit

Protection of areas of historic, or architectural importance will help to protect the quality of the built environment. However, any area locally designated for importance should be reviewed prior to inclusion in the AAP in order to ensure the resource is something that still requires conserving, and which aspects are those that make the asset distinctive and worthy of retention. Gaining a good understanding of these features can help ensure that the implications of any development that impact on these frontages can be well understood so appropriate decisions can be made, and this may be possible through general design policy for the LDF.

Issue 25: Tall buildings

All buildings, including tall buildings, will have to take into account the design policy and principles of the LDF. Therefore a specific tall building policy may not be necessary, with each application determined on its own merits.

Issue 26: Open space and landscaping

Providing sufficient greenspace within the Town Centre area can have a range of sustainability advantages. These include community and health benefits, improving the quality of the built environment, attracting visitors and tourists and also, if appropriate, contributing to biodiversity. Providing green open space in towns has also been shown to help reduce the impacts of climate change, with areas of planting helping to cool the surrounding area limiting the 'heat island' effect. Consideration of climate change will be a key aspect of designing such areas, as longer hot spells in summer, with higher peak temperatures, will impact on the way people use outdoor space and highlight the importance of greenspace in urban areas. In relation to this when creating new open spaces it will be important to ensure that these are designed in such a way to be able to adapt to the changing climate particularly reduced rainfall, and hotter temperatures, with suitable shade and planting.

Education, cultural and tourism

Issue 27: Education, culture and tourism

Improving the cultural facilities in Southend will have benefits for residents and in attracting visitors to the area. This can have economic benefits for the whole town, as well as sustainable community benefits. Accessible locations in the centre of the town, near other existing attractions, may be most suitable in achieving benefits for residents and for tourism. Therefore this type of development at the Market Place may be suitable. Continued growth and support of the University campus in this central location will also have benefits through providing accessible education to the Borough's residents.

Environment

Issue 28: Environment of residential areas

It may be suitable for the AAP to protect the amenity of the existing residential areas within the Town Centre. This should be through the control of uses in the residential areas, and should be achieved by application of the Central Business District boundary policy. In addition considering more innovative schemes for the residential streets off the main distributor roads in the Town Centre may be suitable, for example by identifying 'home zones' and preventing streets being used as short-cuts or 'rat-runs'. This could have benefits for the communities of these areas, as well as protecting health and safety in these areas.

Strategic Development Sites

Issue 29-39 – General Issues

The sustainability appraisal cannot identify all the issues related to the redevelopment of these proposed sites, as it is not the intention of the appraisal to assess the existing quality of the site, for instance in terms of contamination or biodiversity. Instead the SA identifies some general principles for the more sustainable development of Town Centre areas.

Car parking in the Town Centre should be rationalised to ensure that there is not an oversupply in order to help encourage use of alternative transport modes. Reorganisation of land currently used for parking could help release land that could be more effectively used, for example as student accommodation, key worker housing, or tourism and cultural facilities.

As part of encouraging alternatives to car travel all new development should be planned in a way that prioritises the needs of the pedestrian. This means that the main entrance to new buildings should be the pedestrian entrance and not from car parks for example.

Town centre employment sites, such as appropriate industrial uses and offices, should be retained in order to protect a wide range of employment in a central location. This will aid achieving the expected employment growth objectives set out in the Core Strategy, and support the employment in sustainable locations that are

accessible by a variety of modes of transport, as well as providing local employment for residents of the area. These types of employment facility may also support higher quality and more diverse employment than those often provided by jobs in retail for instance.

Redevelopment of all locations should consider ways in which open space and landscaping on the site can contribute to biodiversity, and adaptation to climate change.

Residential development should be located in areas where it would not be adversely effected by the surrounding land uses, in particular residential development should not be located in areas that will be the focus of the night time economy enhancements. However, including residential development in the Town Centre areas, including the Central Business District if appropriate, can help bring greater vibrancy to these areas and support the housing growth needs of the town. As these proposals are moved forward in the AAP preparation process more specific appraisal may be necessary.

Implementation and monitoring

Issue 40: Implementation and monitoring

Part of the purpose of an AAP should be to clearly set out proposals for a specific area that includes details of how these schemes will be implemented including a timetable. In order to check that these schemes are being implemented, and sustainability expectations realised, as envisaged by the AAP, it will therefore be important to monitor their progress. Therefore it will be necessary for the AAP to set up a monitoring framework for this, including specific indicators linked to policy approaches and proposals. It is also a requirement of the SA that monitoring of sustainability impacts is undertaken, and this should be integrated into the wider monitoring process of the AAP.

Appendix 2

Identification of key sustainability implications of the Southend on Sea Seafront Area Action Plan Development Plan Document 4: Stage 1 Pre-submission consultation Issues and Options

Introduction

This is brief overview sustainability appraisal of the Issues and Options document for the Seafront Area Action Plan (AAP), in order to identify the key sustainability implications of the issues raised. The sustainability appraisal takes each issue, expressed as questions, and character zone, as listed in the AAP. Then in turn assesses the likely implications and points for consideration in moving forward with plan preparation and drawing up policies and proposals. The purpose of which is to help guide policy development through an early process of identification of the matters which it may be suitable to address in the AAP in order to achieve more sustainable development.

The AAP covers a variety of general issues that are considerations for development along the full length of the Seafront, and then by identifying eight Seafront character zones allows the investigation of sites specific issues in more detail.

In producing the AAP it will be important to ensure the plan remains as focussed and succinct as possible in order to clearly show what the intentions are for the whole area and where specific zones of the Seafront require specific policy approaches. Therefore keeping policies limited to an appropriately limited number, and that add value without repeating Core Strategy and other LDF policy will be necessary. For this reason it may be suitable to review the 'saved' policies, and ensure the purpose of these policies are thoroughly reviewed before pursuing them in the AAP to make sure their provisions are not already covered by other policies of the LDF. At this early stage in plan preparation the form of these policies is not entirely clear and the number of issues raised does in some instances obscure the key matters that the AAP will address.

Seafront AAP – introduction

This section considers the questions set out in Section 2 of the AAP. These issues do not raise any significant sustainability implications yet in some instances matters related to implementation may be important to consider in order to ensure desired sustainability objectives are realised in practice.

From the point of view of clear planning it is necessary to define the boundaries of the AAP distinctly. Therefore preventing overlap with the Town Centre area is important and creating Seafront boundaries to allow a continuum along the coast is likely to be able to secure a joined-up approach to coastal planning. However, it should be ensured the actual strategy for the two areas are mutually supportive and shows a continuum between the two areas, particularly in terms of movement patterns and the approach to residential development for instance.

The matters identified under Issue 2 (3) all should help contribute to more sustainable development in the Seafront area, in line with the sustainability objectives of the sustainability appraisal. However in this location the protection and enhancement of the natural environment should be a key consideration, and in certain parts of the Seafront should perhaps take precedence. Particularly as these

areas are designated as being of international significance. In practice this matter may automatically become a deciding factor in some development decisions due to the strength of legislation that protect these internationally designated nature conservation sites, because if development is likely to have unavoidable impact on these areas it can only proceed where there is exceptional reasons for its development.

Cross-cutting issues

As with topic 2 the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural environmental should perhaps be better emphasised in the guiding principles for the area. It will be necessary for all development in the Seafront location that could impact on the special qualities of the SPA or the SAC, and in these locations this principle will have to be an overriding consideration, particularly given the level of legislative protection given through the Habitats Directive and relevant regulations.

Flood risk, sea defences, including beach and the cliffs unstable land

Flood risk and sea defences

Maintaining sea defences where they exist should help in the preservation of the existing built environment from the risk of flood, meeting sustainability objectives relating to the economy and protection of health.

However, where these defences include beach replenishment it will be important to consider the wider sustainability implications of this, including the source of the replenishment material and the suitability of this type of coastal protection. In addition if there are areas within the Borough where hard sea defences are no longer the best option for coastal management, particular in order to alleviate issues of coastal squeeze where sea level rise and hard sea defences are causing areas of high environmental quality to be constricted, it may be suitable to consider other options. It may be suitable for the AAP to ensure that consideration is given to these matters and innovate coastal management schemes used if appropriate.

The sea defences are essential in protecting the Borough from tidal inundation, however the impact of new or improved defences on coastal habitats should also be a consideration. Coastal protection and flood defences need to be carried out in line with appropriate shoreline and coastal management plans.

Consideration should also be given to restricting vulnerable development behind the sea defences, as whatever the quality of these they may still be vulnerable to overtopping and localised flood at times of high water and extreme storm events. In addition climate change will result in sea level rise at Southend as well as increased frequency of storm events which will increase the overtopping occurrences.

Unstable land and the cliffs

Stabilising the land may be essential in order to protect the existing built environment in the area of the cliffs, protecting existing assets and health. Any loss of open spaces as a result of through should be replaced elsewhere.

Nature conservation and biodiversity

This aspect of the AAP reflects the importance of protecting the nature conservation and biodiversity in and adjacent to the Borough, as it is a major asset to the area.

This highlights existing saved Local Plan and new Core Strategy policies on nature conservation protection in these locations. These policies recognise that there may be implications of increased recreational and tourism use of the foreshore and therefore the need to ensure any development of this type only proceeds where there will not be significant harm to nature conservation sites. This is a key issue of importance for the AAP as it should not encourage, and actively prevent, the proliferation of harmful activities on the foreshore through the control of development.

Under question 3 [6] it may be useful to have a specific AAP policy on nature conservation protection and enhancement from new development in the Seafront area. This policy may perform a useful role in highlighting aspects of the biodiversity interest of the area that are in particular need of protection, and development in some locations or of some types should actively aid in habitat enhancement.

Public realm and open space

The approach here should help to create a high quality Thames frontage in the Borough. The sustainability appraisal raises no particular concerns in relation to this, although it should be ensured that all improvements are in keeping with the adjacent areas of high nature conservation value. In addition planting in parks and landscaping as part of the schemes should use species in keeping with the nature conservation interest of the area, as well as resilient to the impacts of climate change on Southend-on-Sea, with planting and surfaces chosen for improvements able to withstand the impacts of prolonged periods of hot dry weather, as well as more frequent storm events.

Economic development

Any new economic development in the Seafront area should ensure it does not cause harm to the natural environment, and in particular the biodiversity importance. Therefore the 250 additional jobs expected to be developed in the AAP area should not be at the expense of the internationally designated biodiversity interest of the area. This includes consideration of new development appropriate to the area, and to ensure development is appropriately located along the coast so as not to cause harmful pressure points on the biodiversity resource.

Development that would impact on the foreshore, such as where redevelopment sites extend into the SPA particular care will have to be taken to ensure the protection of the integrity of the protected sites.

The impacts of development on the internationally protected sites needs to take into account not only from direct impact on the designated sites, but also impacts of waste water and sewerage of the site, and rain water run-off to ensure that these are managed in a way that does not cause harm to the nature conservation sites. In particular the impacts during construction will need to be considered as impacts at this stage also have the potential to cause significant impacts on the nearby nature conservation sites. It may be necessary for individual developments to undergo Environmental Impact Assessment and appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive to determine the nature of the impacts on the wildlife sites.

When considering appropriate policies to support the economy it may suitable to rationalised these into a single policy covering the Seafront, or for general issues rely on Core Strategy policy. In particular it needs to be clear that if any saved policies are pursued in the AAP these are in keeping with the environmental protection principles of the Core Strategy. For example policy L4 Water Recreation should be

reviewed to ensure development on the foreshore would not cause harm to the nature conservation interest of the area either directly or through increased pressure of visitors.

In terms of retaining the hotel and other visitor accommodation in Southend it may be preferential to treat all schemes on their merits. Whilst it is important to maintain and enhance the provision of these facilities in some instances built environment and regeneration advantages could be secured through the allowing some change of use. It may be necessary to monitor any change in visitor accommodation to ensure that levels are being maintained, and a range of types, including those of higher quality, remain available in the Borough.

Many of the sustainability issues that new economic development will raise will be subject to the type and scale of development (or redevelopment) that is proposed. Large scale tourism development may have an impact on the existing character of the town in this area, also a large new visitor attracting development could impact on travel and transport impacts including local congestion and environmental and health impacts related to increased car use. The importance of encouraging more high spend overnight visitors to the Borough should be promoted through relevant policies, for economic benefits as well as the advantages of having higher spending tourists rather than more tourists relating to pressures on the environment.

Housing

Retaining a mixed supply of housing type is necessary in order to maintain the demographic mix of the area, to include family homes as well as smaller dwellings. However a blanket approach to retaining larger homes may not be suitable, particularly where higher dwelling density may be suitable in proximity to the town centre or transport hubs. Therefore reconsideration of the saved policy H3 may be the most suitable approach, with an approach based on character areas or the particular merits of each application.

It may be more suitable, when considering subdivision of homes or development of flats, to base decisions on the individual merits of the scheme and whether it would help enhance the character of the area. For instance larger flats, with two or more bedrooms may also be suitable as family housing. Any decisions on retaining or removing this policy should be made on evidence on how successful the policy has been in retaining and enhancing neighbourhoods, and the mix of property types and character of the local area.

Movement and access

The improvement of the seafront road to make it more attractive to walking and cycling, as well as improving the free flow of buses is welcomed in terms of sustainability. This approach should help to encourage more sustainable travel modes, reducing related environmental impacts. Rationalising car parking may also bring visual improvements and enhance visitor experience, better segregation of leisure space and parking will help improve the area for visitors and tourists. The other travel improvements also have the potential to enhance the area and improve tourism revenues.

Any new development as part of Sustrans route improvement will have to take into account the nature conservation importance of the SPA.

Seafront Character Zones

The AAP area has been divided into separate zones helps highlight the particular characteristics and proposal in each. It may be suitable for the maps to better show the linked up nature of the schemes, to get an understanding of how they will work together to bring enhancements to the area, such as movement of pedestrians.

Showing the nature conservation designations as an SPA rather than just SSSI may be suitable given the particular importance of these areas in relation to protection under the Birds and Habitats Directive.

Zone 1: Two Tree Island, Leigh Marshes and Belton Hills

The options here relate primary to the additional use of the station car park as a park and ride facility for Leigh Old Town. This would be in keeping with sustainable development principles, although it should be ensured this does not reduce car parking at the station for those using the train for commuting or other purposes.

Protection policies for the area should be maintained particular those relating to the protection of the biodiversity interest. Plans to make a revision to the greenbelt to allow recreational related development south of the station would seem appropriate to encourage use of this area, with health related benefits. Although clearly development at this site would need to ensure it does not harm the nature conservation integrity of the site due to its location on the boundary of the SPA, and the possibility that it provides a nature conservation resource.

Zone 2: Leigh Port and Leigh Old Town

The marine industrial use of the Port is essential in retaining the historic integrity of the area and therefore continuing to seek retention of this use is important to the maintenance of traditional industries particularly suited to this area. The loss of these to alternative economic uses, with no connection to the Thames front location would be to the detriment of the character of the town. Therefore policies of the AAP should seek the protection of these industries, at least in a designated part of the Port or Old Town.

In terms of the protection of built historic heritage retaining the conservation area is essential. This should be backed up by design guide and conservation area plans to allow development to respond to the particularly characteristics of the area.

Reducing traffic through the Old Town area would have positive benefits for its heritage value and peoples' enjoyment of the area, both for visitors and local residents. This may help support businesses of the area by encouraging more visitors by providing a high quality historic environment and tourist destination. It may also help encourage more sustainable transport modes by prioritising alternatives to car use, particularly in conjunction with the 'Movement and Access' proposal of the AAP.

The sustainability benefits of this scheme will be from an improved recreational resource including the long distance Sustrans cycle route.

Zone 3: The Cinder Path

It may aid in the protection of the qualities of this area to have a policy, or policy criteria, that set out the particular features to be protected in development in the Undercliffe Gardens area.

Development including the cinder path improvements and changes to the foreshore in this area will need to take into account the special quality of the SPA, and ensure the integrity of the area is not harmed. This must be a consideration during construction and in the use of these improved facilities, and should be considered in combination with other schemes.

Zone 4: Chalkwell Station and Palmeira Avenue

This area is the first area moving from the east of the Seafront that is characterised by a promenade. The Issues and Options Report highlights the low quality of the beach huts in this area, and the possibility of their replacement. Although, it may not be necessary in terms of sustainable development to retain a specific policy on beach huts, as permitted beach hut redevelopment can be covered by general policies on the tourism use of the foreshore, along with other policies on seafront kiosks, shelters and toilet facilities.

As stated in the AAP it may be suitable to prepare a design guide, or other brief, on a unified design for beach related development on the Promenade and foreshore architecture and redevelopment for the whole area and give it a cohesive appearance fitting with the urban seafront characteristic of Southend.

The Design and Townscape Guide SPD should be influential in ensuring good quality design of new development in this area. Further guidance may be useful for this, particularly in relation to the conservation area, policy criteria could be used to ensure key elements of design in this area.

To reduce conflict of use, and encourage cycling as an efficient and viable alternative to car use, a high quality cycle route is necessary. Therefore creating a route segregated from pedestrians and cars will be necessary. Ideally, for safety, this would not be on the carriageway unless separated by a suitable barrier.

Zone 5: Central Seafront Area

The proposals for this area in the AAP focus on specific schemes that could bring environmental enhancements, as well as proposals for cliff stabilisation. This approach appears suitable and the majority of schemes will serve to enhance the tourism offer in the area. The redevelopment of the Corporation Loading Jetty will need to take into account impacts on the SPA, as the jetty extends in to the designated area, care must be taken during construction/demolition and operation not to harm the nature conservation value of the area.

The pier is essential to tourism and attracting visitors, therefore the regeneration of the pier head needs to be of high quality. Any redevelopment of this area will need to take into account the biodiversity significance, as although the pier end is beyond the SPA boundaries construction work may impact on the SPA itself. Clear guidance and criteria should be drawn up to guide development in this location, and ensure its design and use are of high quality in keeping with, but distinctive from, the new pier entrance.

The AAP proposes that some rationalisation of existing car parking takes place to improve the seafront road and promenade. This type of approach could help enhance the quality of the seafront areas, creating new areas for leisure and recreation use rather than the almost continued use of Marine Parade for parking. It should be ensured that the existing level of car parking is not increased in order to

encourage people to consider alternative modes of travel to the Southend seafront, which is relatively well served by public transport, especially west of the pier. This approach may also free up space for the segregated Sustrans route which could be built on the existing road side car parking areas.

In particular rationalisation of the Seaway Car Park could result in the more efficient use of land, including release of some land for to meet housing needs in the Borough.

Zone 6: Former Corporation Loading Jetty to Thorpe Hall Avenue

As with Zone 2 a design guide would be suitable to ensure refurbishment of existing seaside structures is in keeping with a unified approach for enhancement. Protecting the height of buildings may be suitable as part of a design code, however general Core Strategy design principles may be sufficient to control the appearance of new development in this location.

In addition it may be suitable to consider any improvements that can be made to the pedestrian environment in these locations, in terms of improving safety and improving the appearance.

Zone 7: Thorpe Hall Avenue to Ness Road

As with Zone 6 the control of development in this area may already be suitably covered by Core Strategy policy and the Design and Townscape Guide, making design code criteria for this area surplus to requirements.

Zone 8: Shoeburyness

This area of the Seafront is currently experiencing a large amount of development. Also this part of the coast is characterised by being adjacent to a site designated as an SPA, SAC and Ramsar site, indicating its particular importance for nature conservation, therefore it is important to protect this resource impacts that will affect the sites integrity. Therefore all development on and adjacent to the foreshore will need to ensure it does not harm the nature conservation site, either individually or cumulatively, including sea defence works.