

SOUTHEND ON SEA
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Sustainability Appraisal
of the Southend Central
Area Action Plan
Issues and Options

March 2010



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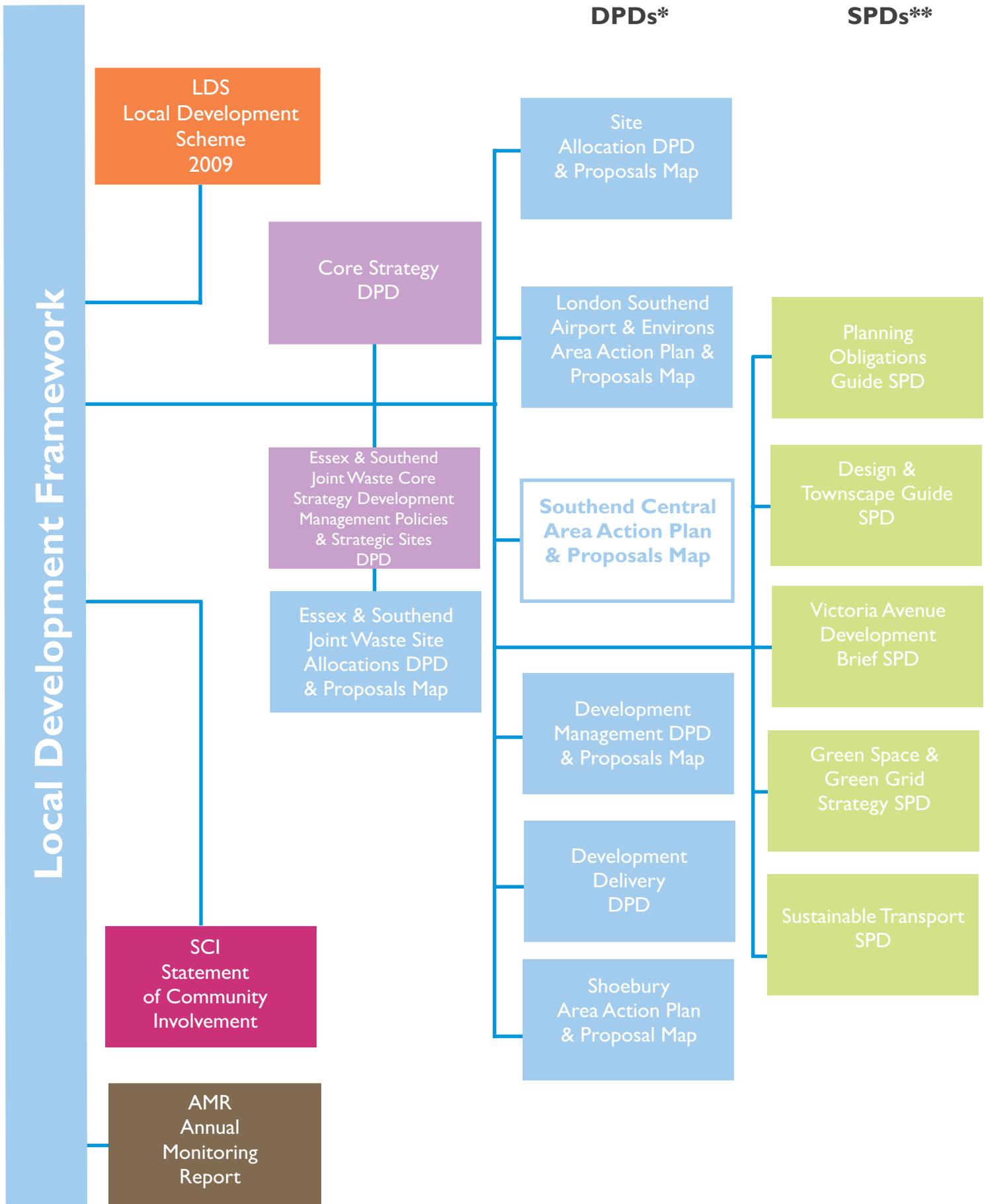
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is currently preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) for the Borough. This will outline the development strategy of the Borough for the next 20 years.
- 1.2 This report sets out the basis for the sustainability appraisal (SA), including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of one of the 'Development Plan Documents' (DPD) which forms part of the LDF - the Southend-on-Sea Central Area Action Plan (DPD3).
- 1.3 The purpose of the report is to set out a brief description of existing sustainability issues in the Central area and the sustainability objectives that will be used for appraisal. This report also provides a brief overview of the sustainability issues raised in the Issues and Options version of the DPD.
- 1.4 This is a consultation document used for stimulating debate about the scope of the issues that will be covered by the Issues and Options Document as part of a consultation process. This report builds on earlier work carried out on the SA/SEA of the Core Strategy of the LDF. The SA Report accompanying the submission version of the Core Strategy should be read in conjunction with this Scoping Report in order to get a full picture of the issues in the Southend Central Area Action Plan and the objectives used, as well as the sustainability implications of the Core Strategy which have already been identified.
- 1.5 In light of the European Habitats Directive and the 'Conservation (Natural Habitats, Etc) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006', a brief assessment screening was undertaken of the Core Strategy DPD. This ascertained whether the Core Strategy was 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.
- 1.6 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 effects 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 the Core Strategy to address potential adverse effects.
- 1.7 This SA follows on from an early stage of SA completed in 2007. This first report assessed the 2007 version of the Town Centre Area Action Plan, Issues and Options (now the Southend Central Area Action Plan). The introductory sections of this SA report repeat much from the original 2007 report, however given that the time difference between these two reporting stages repeat consultation is appropriate. SA is part of a continued process of SA to be carried out alongside preparation of the Area Action Plan.
- 1.8 Further work on Habitats Assessment will be required in developing the policies for Central Southend, to make sure there are not adverse impacts on the protected sites.

- 1.9 Sustainability appraisals are being undertaken of the whole LDF, with SAs already undertaken for all component LDF documents to date. These have reached various stage of completion, they are:
- the Core Strategy Development Plan Document
 - the Planning Obligations Supplementary Plan Document
 - Design and Townscape Guide Supplementary Planning Document
- 1.10 Figure 1 below outlines all the documents which together comprise the LDF.

Figure I: Southend on Sea Local Development Framework - Content



*Development Plan Document

** Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.11 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 an Area Action Plan. 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'*. However, the primary reason for SA is to help create a better plan, one that takes full account of the potential for impacts on sustainable development. This aims to avoid and mitigate the potential for adverse impacts and maximise the benefits for greater sustainability.

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 Southend Central AAP.
- 2.2 The strategic baseline issues for the Borough are covered in the SA report for the Core Strategy, which is the basis for this scoping report.

Sustainability appraisal of the LDF

- 2.3 The information gathering stage builds on work already undertaken for the SA of the Southend-on-Sea LDF Core Strategy. The early SA of the Core Strategy, reported in August 2006, provides a useful basis for this appraisal and could be read in conjunction with this scoping document for a better understanding of the process¹.

Collation of baseline information

- 2.4 The baseline data for the sustainability appraisal of the Area Action Plan outlined below has been specifically chosen to inform the SA of this DPD. It draws upon work carried out by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (SBC) during the preparation of the plan 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:
- 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
- 2.6 Therefore, for further detail 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 in 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 high 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.

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

- 2.8 The baseline information descriptions and identification of key sustainability issues is shown in Section 4. The 'sustainability framework' matrix will be investigated and altered to meet the specific needs for appraising the emerging DPD 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 Habitats Assessment of the AAP.

Sustainability appraisal of the AAP

- 2.9 The SA of the AAP will be a continual process during preparation from this early stage up to submission. Part of this will be appraising the alternatives put forward for implementing the AAP's strategy.
- 2.10 At this stage in AAP preparation it is necessary to consider the sustainability impacts of the emerging options for development, contained in the Issues and Option consultation document. The purpose 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. Sections 6 and 7 contain the appraisal, with Section 8 summarising findings and recommendations.
- 2.11 This is the second consultation on Issues and Options for the central area of Southend. However, since the previous version, the Issues and Options document has been comprehensively revised to help implement the town centre masterplan². Therefore, the SA of its content has been fully revised to take into account the amended proposals and the new area boundary (now includes an area of the seafront previously part of the now obsolete Seafront AAP).
- 2.12 This SA provides an 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 is 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 views 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.
- 2.13 The appraisal is in a commentary style, rather than using matrices, as this allows for flexibility, reflecting the range of topics covered and the uncertainties in implementation at this stage. As more specific policies and area based proposals are developed for the central area these can be appraised in greater detail.
- 2.14 Parts of the evidence base for the AAP are still under preparation, such as design briefs or masterplans for City Beach, Warrior Square and the St John's / Heygate area. These will need to feed into plan making in moving to submission and may

² Southend Central Area Master Plan – Consultation Draft September 2007

raise sustainability issues. Where possible public consultation on these plans will help make sure proposed schemes are supported by the public. In addition, a brief appraisal of sustainability of proposed schemes will help ensure sustainability implications of proposals can be taken into account during preparation. This will aid the transition of these plans into the AAP, and meet the need to test options that part of SA.

- 2.15 It will also be necessary to consider assessment, as required by the Habitats Directive (1995), as part of the appraisal process of the AAP. It is already recognised in the appraisal of the Core Strategy that there was a need to carry out assessment of the AAP due to 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 SPA; and
 - d) Crouch and Road Estuaries SPA; and
 - e) Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA.

Timetable

- 2.16 The timetable for the SA work is entirely directed by the programme by which the AAP 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 Southend Central Issues and Options consultation document and Core Strategy SA Report; what is attempted below is to draw out the main specific issues relating to the AAP.
- 3.2 The **Habitats Directive** and **Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994** (as amended), have relevance to the AAP because the area covered by the AAP is in 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.
- 3.3 Planning Policy Statements/Guidance: Of particular relevance are:
- PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
 - PPG20: Coastal planning.
- 3.4 Other PPS are also important guides for development such as PPS1: Delivery Sustainable development.
- 3.5 PPS4 (2009) stipulates the need to ensure that employment needs are based on a strong evidence base. This evidence should include the detailed floorspace needs for economic development, including for all main town centre uses (EC1.3). An evidence base should be used to identify deficiencies in provision of shopping and other facilities which serve people's day-to-day needs. Quantification of floorspace should also be identified for leisure uses, in addition to identifying the qualitative needs.
- 3.6 To deliver more sustainable economic growth the PPS calls for positive planning of growth sector clusters, and this could be a role for offices in Southend town centre. Policy EC3 deals with planning for centres. At a local level this calls for residential or office development above ground floor retail, leisure or other facilities within centres. Also, to identify sites or buildings within existing centres suitable for development, conversion or change of use.
- 3.7 Policy EC4 covers planning for consumer choice and promoting competitive town centres, including planning for a diverse range of uses throughout centres. For retail development a strong mix is encouraged, recognising the importance of smaller shops to enhance the character and vibrancy of centres. Of relevance to plans for Southend centre the PPS states existing markets should be retained and enhanced, where appropriate. Overall plans for the town centres should aim to *'enhance the established character and diversity of their town centre.'* Overall, there is also the need to ensure development in main urban centres does not adversely impact on the economy of other nearby centres. It should be noted that PPS4 (2009) replaces former town centre guidance on PPS6.

- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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 initiate a step change in housing delivery increasing housing levels about the existing growth rate. These new homes will 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.
- 3.12 The **Thames Gateway** area is a co-ordinated effort to develop and regenerate fifteen local authority areas, across three regions along the Thames estuary and north Kent coast. Renaissance Southend Limited 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.
- 3.13 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 Plan. The AAP should consider Southend-on-Sea's coast and town centre within the wider sub regional context.
- 3.14 **Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership:** The Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership produced a document specifically for South Essex. This presents an *'opportunity for driving forward regeneration and achieving growth and prosperity in South Essex as a key part of Thames Gateway'*. The material in this document has been reflected in the East of England Plan.

- 3.15 A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Water Cycle Study and Surface Water Management Plan are also being produced and will be part of the background material defining and guiding land use planning in the borough.
- 3.16 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.
- 3.17 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 between local jobs and workers.
- 3.18 Policy SS3 in the RSS outlines key centres for development and change. 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.
- 3.19 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.
- 3.20 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, so long as it does not adversely affect town centres.
- 3.21 Policy ETG4: *Southend on Sea Key Centre for Development and Change* identifies Southend Town centre as 'a focus for cultural and intellectual activities led by the development of a university campus'. With specific provisions for upgrading the university campus (much of which is already complete or underway) and improving local passenger transport accessibility.
- 3.22 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.'*
- 3.23 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.*

- 3.24 Key themes relating to the AAP includes; improving the centre and attracting conferences to the town, amongst 21 objectives.
- 3.25 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 the sustainable communities. The town centre in particular is the focus of many transport improvements in the Borough, including to the two stations within this area and the new Travel Centre. Drafting of LTP3 (2011-2026) has now begun.
- 3.26 The **Southend on Sea Core Strategy** is the overarching part of the LDF that has implications for the AAP. This contains policies that cover all development in the Borough, and sets goals for housing and job development 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 AAP as well as additional SPD still to be prepared on Sustainable Transport and the Green Space and Green Grid Strategies for the Borough.
- 3.27 **South Essex Green Grid Strategy:** this is a long-term project to deliver a network of open spaces and green links throughout Thames Gateway South Essex, as part of The Thames Gateway regeneration area. This aims to bring significant environmental improvements to this part of Essex, through the provision of combined recreational open spaces, wildlife corridors and improving the appearance of the landscape. The purpose of the Greengrid strategy is to:
- Provide a holistic and long-term vision for the sustainable future development and management of the south Essex area
 - Define an environmental infrastructure that promotes the establishment and managements of appropriate character settings
 - Provide the context for development over the long term.
- 3.28 Therefore, the Greengrid strategy will have particular implications for the LDF by ensuring improvements to the ‘green’ character of the Borough are taken into account in a strategic way – with long term planning for this change and how development can contribute to this.

- 3.29 A masterplan has been prepared for the regeneration and renewal of the town centre. This is the **Southend Central Area Masterplan**. The purpose of the masterplan is to set a vision for central Southend and the seafront, as part of the major scheme for Renaissance Southend. The aim is to:
- act as a catalyst for realising the vision and objectives for the revitalisation of the area
 - to help develop confidence amongst landowners and therefore encourage investment
 - to help deliver civic pride.
- 3.30 This document forms the basis of the AAP. The AAP takes forward many of the projects and proposals of the masterplan so they become planning policy, rather than a more open framework for delivery.

4 Baseline characterisation of the Borough and AAP area

- 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 AAP it is necessary to add another layer of detail to the more generic information collected previously, in order to better inform the SA process.
- 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 The SA Report for the Core Strategy contains as Appendix 3 baseline information for the Borough. Repeated here are the identified key sustainability issues for the Borough.

Summary of issues

- 4.4 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 may present a greater risk, and effects of climate change will only serve to increase this
 - 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 is, 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. Parts of central Southend are characterised by a current low quality in the built environment, although the underlying quality of the natural and built environment is high in many areas.

4.5 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 2007, 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. This includes areas with high levels of income, health and disability related deprivation.

4.6 An additional matter not addressed in the Core Strategy SA, but of importance to the AAP, 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)

4.7 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

- 4.8 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 Piedad 2003
 - Southend-on-Sea Retail study CB Richard Ellis, September 2003.
- 4.9 For the purposes of collecting further evidence for the LDF, the council have defined the boundary of the town centre as the in the masterplan, to include administrative wards of Milton and Victoria. The SA uses data from these two wards as the basis for data collection on the social and economic characteristics of the area.

Role of the town centre

- 4.10 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 area and largest shopping centre, providing nearly 40% of the jobs in the Borough.
- 4.11 Retail is an important role of the town centre, with the shops focused on the High Street, forming a central spine through the centre from north to south. The High Street is pedestrianised linking the recently renovated 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. There is some question about the future of Sainsburys at this site, with the possibility of the supermarket relocating to an edge of centre location.
- 4.12 The college and new university complex is adjacent to the High Street, with more development planned. Development of a multi-screen cinema, restaurants, café's and bars mainly along High Street side streets has given the town centre a complimentary leisure offer.
- 4.13 Victoria Avenue is the main area for office accommodation. Victoria Avenue has a number of 1960's office developments, some of which may be outmoded for modern requirements.
- 4.14 The central area of the town also is the focus for much of the seaside leisure activity. With the entrance to the Pier at Pier Hill at the southern end of the High Street as well as the Adventure Island 'fun park'. The seafront area also includes the eastern and western esplanades and formal parks of the Southend cliffs.

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 areas³.

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 newly refurbished bus station is also in the town centre, adjacent to the High Street. The main access by car is from 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 Cycling and walking routes are adequate, although there is potential for greater connectivity. The relatively flat character of the Southend topography means there is very good potential for more trips to be made by this mode. The seafront provides a particularly valuable connection of coastal neighbourhoods to the central Southend.
- 4.18 As previously noted in Section 3 there are also various schemes proposed by the Local Transport Plan 2 to bring enhancements to the public transport provision of the area.
- 4.19 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 approach of this AAP.

Population

- 4.20 The 2001 Census of resident population provides the best population record at Ward level. There is some fluctuation in exact population dependant upon source. 2007 mid year population estimates from the ONS record a small increase in population. The Town Centre makes up 11.7 % (19,000) of the total Borough's resident population.

Resident Population		
Area	Census 2001	mid year estimate 2007
Southend-on-Sea	160,293	162,000
Town Centre	18,347	19,000
<i>Town Centre %</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>11.7</i>

³ SBC, Town Centre AAP, Issues and Options Report

Source: Census 2001 and Mid-year estimates (1981/2007) Southend-on-Sea Information Leaflets

Employment

- 4.21 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.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	%Change
Southend	60,400	61,600	64,800	63,000	4.3
Town Centre	21,600	23,000	25,100	24,000	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.

- 4.22 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 is found in the area.
- 4.23 The unemployment rates in Southend show a sharp increase from 2008 to 2009 reflecting the global recession. The town centre has suffered particularly badly with the rate jumping well over 2 points, while in the rest of Southend the increase is under 2. Figures from earlier in the decade show rates of unemployment disparity are closing, as it was over twice as high as the percentage for the rest of Borough.

Unemployment rates

	from May 2008	to May 2009
Town Centre	5.6	8.0
Rest of Southend	3.0	4.76

Source: 2008/09 Unemployment Monitor Summary Statistics – Issue 127 May 2009⁴

⁴ 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.

Social characteristics

- 4.24 Education rates show that although the rate of adults with no qualifications are higher in central Southend than for the Borough as a whole, there are also more residents with higher level qualifications. This may be as a result of younger professional people with qualifications living close to or in the town centre juxtaposed with pockets of deprivation, although without further investigation this cannot be confirmed.
- 4.25 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 2007 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 majority of the town centre, with the exception of some residential areas, being in the most deprived 30% nationally.
- 4.26 The number of cars per household in central Southend is significantly lower (0.72) than for the rest of the Borough (1.09). This may reflect good transport connections but is also likely to be characteristic of income deprivation in parts of the centre.

Built environment quality

- 4.27 Some of the town centre is currently of poor architectural quality, for example the low quality of the Farringdon multi-storey car park. Although recent regeneration, including the South East Essex College and University of Essex buildings, Pier Hill 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.
- 4.28 The town centre area also contains many listed buildings and four conservation areas consisting 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, and Clifftown directly borders the retail core of the town as well as the seafront. Listed buildings are within the town centre, particularly within the conservation areas, although are also found beyond the boundaries of these areas. Many of the listed buildings reflect Southend's heritage as a seaside holiday destination.

Open space

- 4.29 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 particular 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). 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. Green spaces are needed in urban areas as demand will increase with a warming climate and these areas can help cool built urban areas, preventing 'heat island' impacts. Therefore, provision of green open spaces may be a matter to be addressed by the AAP.

- 4.30 Redevelopment of the 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

- 4.31 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. This is with the exception of the Kursaal area east of Southchurch Avenue which is at greater risk of flooding according to Environment Agency maps.

Air quality

- 4.32 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

- 4.33 There are no sites of identified nature conservation importance in the central area. However, the potential for nature conservation enhancement should be a consideration of all development sites in the area.
- 4.34 The Town Centre is also near the internationally designated Natura 2000 sites, as referred to in Section 3. Therefore, development in these areas will have to ensure it will not have an adverse impact on these nature conservation sites. Potential impact pathways include sewerage, rainwater 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

- 4.35 The additional scoping material gathered for the Southend Central 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.

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 Southend Central AAP. These changes are based upon the wider policy context, the baseline data and the Issues and Options Report for the area covered by the AAP.
- 5.2 Further detail on the derivation of the objectives of the sustainability framework are shown in the Core Strategy SA report, including the Scoping stage report.

Figure 5.1: 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, such as beach huts and kiosks to provide a recognisable unified approach for Southend provide new community open spaces in the Town Centre and Seafront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> doc – but little reliability of prediction

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, maintain the stock of non renewable energy sources and make the best use of the materials, energy and effort embodied in the 	<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 schemes quan – contribution likely from energy generation within new buildings

	product of previous activity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doc – likelihood of increase in efficiency of energy use in new development
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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 Appraisal of the Southend Central Area Action Plan

- 6.1 Sustainability appraisal is an iterative process that aims to help guide plan making to deliver more sustainable development. The SA is therefore an ongoing process that will inform the AAP process throughout its preparation.
- 6.2 The task at this stage is to appraise the objectives developed for the AAP and then test the content of the AAP to examine whether it is likely to be able to help in the delivery of sustainable development. This will include recommendations describing where sustainability performance could be improved or where additional matters could be considered.
- 6.3 The aims are to ask to the following questions:
- Could these effects be of special significance?
 - Are there ways of reducing or mitigating adverse effects?
 - Can any beneficial effects be further enhanced by positive planning?

Issues arising from the core strategy

- 6.4 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 AAP area although several policies contain relevant criteria. Most specific is Policy KP1: Spatial Strategy which sets out the following provisions for the two areas:

‘Southend Town Centre and Central Area – to regenerate the existing town centre, led by the development of the University campus, and securing a full range of quality sub-regional services and providing 6500 new jobs and 2000 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.’

- 6.5 The SA of the Core Strategy supported this policy, in particular the emphasis given to continued improvement of the town centre as the focus for growth in the Borough and improved accessibility by non-car modes. The central 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. The central location of the University campus also helps improve physical access to higher education and the other education and skills training the university may offer. Providing a mix of uses in a relatively compact areas is also welcomed, with the continued improvement to the vitality of the town centre at all times of day.

- 6.6 There were some concerns in the appraisal over development in areas at risk of flooding, and that continued maintenance or development of new flood defences may adversely impact on the biodiversity value of the foreshore.

Sustainability appraisal of the objectives

- 6.7 The starting point of the appraisal is to assess whether the objectives developed for the Southend Central AAP provide a sustainable basis for developing policies and setting allocations. To assess this the sustainability framework developed for the appraisal is used as a standard definition of what sustainability might mean in central Southend. This appraisal is shown as Appendix 1.

- 6.8 The AAP sets out the ambition, aim and objectives for the AAP. These are:

*Our **ambition** for Southend Central Area, including the Central Seafront, is for it to be a prosperous and thriving regional centre that is vibrant, safe and hospitable and rich in commerce, learning and culture.*

*Our **aim** is to transform the image of Southend through sustainable economic growth, development and social provision, and for it to be independently recognised as a popular location for businesses, residents and visitors.*

1. *To improve and transform the economic vitality, viability and diversity of Southend Town Centre by encouraging the establishment of a wider range of homes, businesses and shops whilst providing new opportunities for recreation and leisure.;*
2. *To improve the buildings and public realm within the Central Area, to manage traffic and improve cycling facilities so that Southend becomes a place that is more pleasant to move around in.;*
3. *To always have full regard to the unique assets of Southend Town Centre and in particular its spectacular coastal setting, its excellent rail links to London, and its airport;;*
4. *to promote design excellence in all things and to ensure that this quality standard is also expressed within the actions of our delivery partners;*
5. *To expand the presence of the University of Essex and the South Essex College and establish Southend as an important regional centre for learning;*
6. *To encourage the establishment and expansion of all businesses in Southend Town Centre by identifying, promoting or by actively bringing forward suitable sites for development to meet modern user and investor requirements;*
7. *To increase the number and diversity of people living within the town centre by bringing into use empty or underused floorspace and by building more homes and making efforts to ensure that living in the Town Centre becomes appealing to more families with children.*

- 6.9 The appraisal of the objectives (Appendix 1) finds that there is good coverage of sustainability issues related to improving the built environment and economic regeneration of the town centre. This should have positive benefits for the social and economic sustainability by creating a good place to live, visit and do business.
- 6.10 The focus on the town centre should also have benefits relating to the sustainable use of land, as all sites are previously developed.
- 6.11 The appraisal does identify where the objectives could be improved to ensure that they are guiding development in a clear coherent way that addresses all aspects of sustainable delivery. These are:
- the role of the town centre in a wider Southend context could be elaborated on. This will help show how development in this location is anticipated to be complementary to the development objectives of other areas. For example the Seafront, airport and environs, Shoeburyness and Leigh on Sea.
 - the objectives are not comprehensive in their coverage of sustainability issues. Matters relating to the protection of the natural environment are poorly covered. Despite the high quality biodiversity of the foreshore that is immediately adjacent to the centre protecting this is not mentioned as an objective. Enhancing and creating new urban greenspaces and bringing nature into the town centre is also not addressed through objectives.
 - the central area is at risk of flooding, minimising the risk and ensuring development does not exacerbate risks could be addressed as an objective.
 - no objectives relate to the protection and enhancement of the current built heritage of the area, and there is a need to ensure new development complements existing 'seaside' character, as well as recognising the role of Southend as a sub-regional centre
 - the role of central Southend as a visitor and leisure destination is not addressed through the objectives. This tourism role is an essential part of the Southend economy including a relevant objective could help support and expand this role
 - The objective for retail growth could widen its coverage to ensure that there is a range of retail premises on offer in the central area, not simply focusing on larger national retailers. Prioritising retail in the central area will help reduce the need to travel by car, as this is the most accessible location in the Borough.
- 6.12 Implementation of the aims and objectives for the AAP will inevitably create some tensions. The key areas where this might arise are:
- **Shift in transport mode:** The AAP supports a lot of new development in central Southend. There is the risk that this will lead to increase demand for car travel to access these new services, despite this being the location that could support the most sustainable travel options.

Therefore, it needs to be shown how traffic, transport and accessibility proposals will need to successfully secure a mode shift away from car use. The aim will need to be to get a greater proportion of people to choose not to use their cars to access central Southend. There is a great deal of potential for this mode shift in Southend as there are already good public transport services and few hills so cycling and walking is easy. Improvements to legibility, road safety, car parking management and connected public transport all playing a role. The impact of existing road traffic may need to be taken into account, possibly requiring transport modelling for the area, especially cumulative impacts with other new development e.g. possible airport expansion and at Shoeburyness.

- **New development equals additional resources:** New development will inevitably result in the consumption of additional natural resources. In particular energy, building materials and water. The objectives do aim to address this through promoting sustainable construction and this needs to be enforced. There will be a need to ensure new development is more energy and water efficient, and lower carbon energy sources are used wherever feasible – including small scale renewable energy generation. In addition, in all redevelopment areas every attempts should be made to retain existing buildings, or at the least building materials for re-use on site.
- **Relationship with wider Southend:** There is the risk development in central Southend may have adverse impacts on the objectives for other parts of the Borough. However, this location is the most sustainable as it has good access by a variety of types of transport. Therefore, the centre is a good location for high trip generating uses, such as offices, shops and educational establishments. Consideration could be given to the impacts on economic objectives for the airport environs and other proposed business locations – including those in neighbouring authorities.
- **The natural environment:** There is a high quality natural environment in Southend, particularly on the seafront that is internationally designated for its nature conservation value. Development in the centre and throughout Southend has the potential to have adverse impacts on this foreshore protected area. Impacts could include pollution from water run-off and sewerage, direct disturbance and gradual beach erosion. The potential for impacts and the need to avoid harm to protected areas is not recognised in the AAP.

Testing the spatial options

- 6.13 The AAP presents three possible options for central Southend, each with an increasing level of intervention and change. One option is presented as the preferred approach following an evaluation of all three by the plan making team.

- 6.14 The three spatial options are:
- Option 1: Strengthening the status quo
 - Option 2: Reinforcing the urban circuits
 - Option 3: City by the Sea (the preferred option)
- 6.15 There is only a limited amount of information available on which to base an assessment of the relative sustainability merits. Therefore, the SA is kept brief with an identification of the main sustainability issues that might arise from pursuing each option. However, there is question as to whether Options 1 and 2 are realistic given that some proposals for enhancement mentioned in Option 3 are already progressing. This means there is no real alternative but to include these development options.

Option 1: Strengthening the status quo

This would see the High Street remain the focus for all retail development in the centre, although some improvements will also take place in nearby areas. This is commensurate with a 'do-nothing' approach as it is what would occur without the AAP, relying on Core Strategy policy only.

- This option would focus on the High Street and this focus of resources may help in better securing improvements in this area. However, this option does not take advantages of wider environmental improvements that could help raise the overall image of Southend to potential investors (local and national), with wider benefits for the town. The option therefore may be too limited to successfully attract new inward investment.
- This option would also miss opportunities for more mixed use regeneration of the town centre, including additional education and cultural facilities and new housing.
- The overall scale of development may reduce impacts on natural resource use and on the natural environment.
- Lack of enhancement to public transport and improved movement routes is unlikely to encourage people to choose more sustainable modes. This option is unlikely to help promote Southend as a retail destination, with people choosing to make longer trips elsewhere for their shopping needs. However, fewer attractions in the town centre may reduce overall traffic volumes and avoid additional congestion.
- This option is unlikely to have any great benefit for the economic sustainability of the town, nor will help in meeting social sustainability objectives.

Option 2: Enhance urban circuits

This option would widen the central Southend regeneration and improvement to a larger area than Option 1. Chichester Road, London Road, Clifftown, Farringdon all be the focus for specific regeneration proposals. This option also includes Seaway car park as a new linking feature at the south east end of the High Street, although not a destination in itself.

- This option would help create a High Street of a quality to attract national retailers, and improving links to adjacent streets could help increase the attractiveness of the town centre for shopping and support retail businesses of the existing main route.
- This option does not include a residential element therefore not meeting objectives of delivering new homes or supporting a more mixed use and vibrant town centre.
- This option allows for growth of the education role of the town centre, supporting skills training, higher education and the related benefits this can bring to the town centre
- This option may risk not being bold enough in seeking a regeneration potential, therefore missing opportunities to create a high quality town centre, which is successful in improving the image of Southend as a place to live, visit or do business.

Option 3: City by the Sea

This is the most far reaching option seeking the greatest amount of regeneration of the town centre, surrounding area and mix of uses. It is taken forward as the preferred option for the AAP.

- This option would see the largest amount of redevelopment and therefore require the greatest use of natural resources. However, if new buildings use water and energy more efficiently than older ones it could have net benefits in the medium or longer term.
- This option is for comprehensive redevelopment of the town centre over a wide area, although with specific uses for different zones. It has the potential to have a positive benefit for Southend as a whole, improving its image as a place to live, visit and do business.
- This option may be the most risky to implement, particularly in a recession. However, having a joined up approach for the central area that sets out all development potential is likely to be beneficial in the long-term in ensuring a coherent redevelopment of the area. Implementation and funding schemes will need to be fully developed to ensure full delivery.
- Given the large amount of change this option may bring about, there is a need to ensure it is delivered in conjunction with other plans and strategies for the area to avoid adverse impacts. This could include travel and parking management, South Essex Rapid Transit (SERT) improvements and tourism strategies. This option does recognise the

need for transport and movement improvements in the town centre, especially making walking a more attractive option.

- This option is for a large scale redevelopment of areas of the town centre, for a range of uses including employment. There is a risk that this will have an impact on regeneration and growth options for other parts of the Borough. Therefore, the plan makers should ensure the objective for growth in central Southend do not adversely impact on the objectives for growth in other locations.

- 6.16 The third option is one investigated in further detail through the Issues and Options Report as the preferred approach. Within this broad spatial option there remains more detailed policy or site specific options to be determined.
- 6.17 The following section considers the sustainability implication of the schemes and options for delivering regeneration of central Southend.

7 Sustainability appraisal of the Quarters and Key Sites

- 7.1 The regeneration of central Southend is proposed through delivery of a number of redevelopment, renewal and enhancement schemes. These are made up of specific development sites, as well as proposals for improving the unique qualities of specific areas or 'Quarters'.
- 7.2 In this stage of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) the purpose is to identify what the sustainability issues may be of delivering development as proposed, looking for positive and potentially negative impacts. Where the potential for negative impacts are identified the SA makes recommendations on how these could be avoided or mitigated against.
- 7.3 The appraisal is based around several main themes that arise from the objectives for the town centre. However, these themes have been elaborated on to give more comprehensive coverage of sustainability issues as identified in the sustainability objectives. The themes therefore include natural conservation, retail, culture and tourism that are all important components of sustainable development in Southend. These main themes are:
- Travel and movement
 - Residential development and communities
 - The built environment
 - Education and culture
 - Employment development and retail
 - Leisure and recreation including tourism
 - Sustainable design and construction
 - The natural environment.
- 7.4 The appraisal is based on the information available at this time and it is evident that detailed aspects of schemes and delivery are still being prepared, including further options for some locations and the preparation of development briefs. For instance, the completion of the Warrior Square, St John's area and City Beach masterplans and the retail assessment will all add to understanding of the redevelopment potential and needs of central Southend. The sustainability implications of these plans will need to be appraised at the later stages of AAP development.
- 7.5 Options are also presented for some of the Quarters and Key Sites proposals. The SA integrates the assessment of these options into the general commentary about each theme. The appraisal does not seek to assess these options separately, rather where alternatives would have different sustainability impacts these are noted and may include recommendations on the more sustainable approach.
- 7.6 The Quarters and Key Sites identified for enhancement and development are:

- The Victorias
- London Road
- Queensway and Southchurch
- Elmer Square – University Campus
- Warrior Square
- Clifftown Quarter
- St John's, Central Seafront and the Easter Esplanade
- The Western Esplanade
- The Neighbourhood Gateways of: Sutton Road/Grainger Road (including the Greyhound Retail area), North Road/Salisbury Avenue, Kursaal Estate and its environs.

Transport and movement routes

- 7.7 One of the principle aims for the town centre is to improve connectivity for pedestrian movement, as the form of buildings and the busy roads currently means much of the area favours drivers rather than pedestrians.
- 7.8 Access to the AAP area by public transport is already good as it contains Southend Victoria Station, Central Station and the Travel Centre with proposed links to the SERT system. Therefore, there are very good connections with the wider Borough, other south Essex towns and London. The centre is also in easy walking distance from a large number of residents in Southend.
- 7.9 Improvements to non-car travel can help meet sustainability objectives relating to social sustainability, such as accessibility and health, and environmental sustainability including air quality and use of resources.
- 7.10 However, non-car travel access to the centre could be improved, with particular emphasis on walking routes. Currently there are areas where permeability of the streets is poor, discouraging walking. In these areas the natural flow of routes round the centre is disrupted, or where poor physical built quality and cars dominate it means walking is not always a safe or attractive option.
- 7.11 Specific improvement schemes for the area will help encourage walking and cycling. These include:
- improvements to pedestrian access around the stations (especially Victoria)
 - built environment improvements through the area, including at Victoria Avenue and Warrior Square
 - reducing car dominance
 - improved signage, active road frontages with shops, cafes and bars on ground floor levels
 - pedestrianisation

- greater permeability such as improved links to the seafront through Seaway and Tyler Avenue, and Victoria Avenue to retail offer at London Road.
- 7.12 Safety will also be improved with greater segregation of pedestrians/cyclists and cars. The High Street is predominantly pedestrian and should remain so during the daytime, at night use of the road for service vehicles and taxis can continue to be permitted. However, the risks of safety to pedestrians with partial use of the road for vehicles should be recognised, with pedestrians having clear priority.
- 7.13 To achieve a mode shift to non-car travel it will be necessary to implement these improvements alongside schemes to manage and reduce town centre parking, improve public transport and increase awareness of the benefits of non-car travel. Section 6.3 of the AAP addresses the transport improvements that would be needed to deliver the City by the Sea option. This will be in tandem with the Local Transport Plan and Regional Transport Strategy planned 'Town Centre and Seafront Integrated Transport Plan'. This plan puts a focus on car parking improvements in the town centre. New multi-storey car parks will replace some of the many surface car parks in and around the centre. This will bring built environment benefits to the town centre, helping make better use of land and removing barriers between different parts of the centre. However, to secure sustainable development it will be important to ensure that the quantity of car parking levels is not increased in the town centre, this is in order to encourage more sustainable transport choices. New multi-storey car parks will also need to be well designed, as this type of building can often detract from built environment quality.
- 7.14 Other proposed improvements include improved walking and cycling routes, all of which will have a positive benefit relating to sustainability benefits of reduced car use.
- 7.15 Development in the Central Area will need to be considered in the context of the wider area, ensuring schemes for central Southend do not adversely impact on other parts of the Borough e.g. more on street car parking on residential streets around the centre.
- 7.16 Achieving this modal shift will also be essential to prevent the adverse impacts that may result from more office development, shops and services being available in central Southend. At the moment it is likely that many people who live outside the centre, and beyond around a maximum fifteen minute walking distance from the town centre will choose to travel there car. This must be avoided by making other forms of transport more attractive to everyone, including cost and ease of use. Without reversing this trend to more car use increased car travel and congestion will have inevitable adverse impacts on all aspects of sustainable development. This include the climate change related impacts of car use, local air pollution, health and amenity impacts of congestion and adverse impacts on business from lengthy travel times.
- 7.17 The AAP is going some way to showing that pedestrians are being given priority within much of the area bounded by Queensway to the north and east and within

the area of Farringdon and non-residential Clifftown. It is evident that car access to these areas will remain necessary. However, the AAP has the potential to more clearly refer to the preference for pedestrian and cyclist movement in the area as part of a scheme to seek travel choices with fewer adverse sustainability impacts.

Residential development and communities

- 7.18 Southend central area is identified as needing to accommodate around 2,000 new homes between 2001 and 2021, this is around 30% of the total requirement for the Borough. Taking into account the completed housing in the centre since 2001 and looking forward to 2031 the Plan identifies the need for 1,800 new homes. This demonstrates the significant role central Southend has to play in achieving housing figures to meet identified needs.
- 7.19 Housing is proposed to be distributed throughout the central area, with several of the site specific schemes stated as including a residential element. This includes at London Road, Victorias, Clifftown Quarter, the St. John's and Seafront areas. Despite the role of the central area in providing for residential development there is surprisingly little detail in the AAP as to the type of development needed and the location. For many areas residential development comprises 'flats over shops', although there are some areas such as Seaways and at Warrior Square, where a mix of housing types may be provided.
- 7.20 For areas at Southchurch Road and Victoria Avenue there is an option presented for residential development to replace existing land uses. Without more information on employment land surplus and floorspace requirement, or the capacity of other sites to meet residential needs it is not possible to state if this would be sustainable.
- 7.21 The AAP must make sure that the central area delivers housing in the quantity needed. The AAP will need to quantify site allocations. However, the Plan does indicate that there should be sufficient capacity to accommodate this growth in the town centre and Neighbourhood Gateway Areas.
- 7.22 To make sure housing delivered is of the type needed and in the right location the AAP will need to include more detail on residential development. The AAP recognises the need to help deliver housing to meet a variety of needs. This includes family sized homes and not only small flats that typify recent residential development in this location. The Plan presents options for delivering new housing and to achieve sustainable delivery the Plan could identify locations where different types of homes would be suitable. For instance, family homes in the Neighbourhood Gateways and in other locations that have good access to schools and playspace (new or planned). Some parts for the central area are likely to remain most suited to one and two bedroom flats.
- 7.23 Furthermore, the AAP may need to include requirements and details of how community facilities and services will be provided to meet the needs of existing and future town centre residents. This will include provision of health services, community centres, schools (particularly nurseries and primaries) and open space

and play space for children and others. The Plan includes an option for the location of these facilities. However, identifying priorities and putting new development in locations that already have nearby services may initially be more achievable.

- 7.24 If homes and services are not provided to meet the needs of the population there can be adverse impacts related to delivering sustainable development. Impacts could be on the health of residents from lack of access to outdoor recreation space, playspace and health services, as well as from living in unsuitable or overcrowded housing. There may also be impacts on communities if the range of housing is not suitable to support a mix of residents.
- 7.25 To help support local communities there will also be the need to deliver a proportion of the housing as affordable. The Core Strategy only requires affordable housing be delivered on sites of 50 or more units. It is unlikely that many developments in the town centre will meet this threshold, therefore reducing the quantity of affordable housing that will be provided. To achieve sustainable and equitable development affordable homes must be provided, and the appraisal recommends including a higher target (based on a lower threshold) for affordable housing in the town centre. Targets should be set as low as possible, although an assessment may be necessary to demonstrate financial viability.
- 7.26 Policies on how affordable homes are delivered could also be included in the Plan. For instance this type of housing should be located throughout the town centre, integrated with market housing. This method of delivery can help avoid issues of isolation that can characterise larger areas of social housing.
- 7.27 The Neighbourhood Gateways will be well suited to residential development, and can support a range of types and tenures of housing, including larger family homes.
- 7.28 In developing policies for the Neighbourhood Gateways it will be necessary to make sure that the type and scale of development directed towards them is in keeping with the existing character. Policies should recognise that these are central Southend neighbourhoods and have advantages and disadvantages associated with this location. In terms of sustainable development these areas should retain their current function as local residential and business areas. However, walking and cycling links should be improved to promote walking and cycling between these neighbourhoods and the jobs and facilities of the town centre. This will also mean access to the Greyhound Retail park will be improved by non-car modes. Built environment improvements will help improve the quality of these areas as the gateway to the town centre.

The built environment

- 7.29 One of the main themes of the AAP is to bring improvements to the built environment quality of central Southend. This ranges from general quality improvements, such as the potential for new public art at the High Street railway bridge, to the regeneration of whole areas including demolition and rebuilding.

- 7.30 Improvements to the built environment will help to enhance the image of the area. This should help achieve a variety of sustainability benefits for the town, not only in terms of meeting objectives relating to protection and enhancement of the built environment, but also vibrant communities and economic prosperity.
- 7.31 Tourism in Southend is already a strong contributor to the town's economy, and an improved quality environment can only enhance this, drawing in a broader range of visitors and more people for longer stays. This will be helped not only by new leisure and cultural facilities and improvements to hotels in the town; it will also help improve the perception of the town as a place to visit. The regeneration of the Palace Hotel in the central seafront is an example of how the existing assets of the town can be well used to encourage tourism.
- 7.32 In addition to tourism income, an enhanced physical environment can help encourage other types of investment in the town by helping secure the image of the town as a good place to live in and do business.
- 7.33 There are specific proposed improvements that should aid tourism, including Southend Balcony and seafront enhancements. Encouraging more tourists, including day visitors into the High Street area through better pedestrian links could also help the local economy. This will be especially effective when paired with improvements to areas that contain locally owned independent shops and businesses. Other built environment improvements will be beneficial to different aspects of the economy such as improved office space along Victoria Avenue and new live/work neighbourhoods in the Clifftown Area. New learning facilities will also make the town attractive as a place of learning, with positive benefits for the perception and vibrancy of the town centre.
- 7.34 Improved built environment quality also has the potential to help secure social sustainability benefits. This is through helping the town build on its current seaside and heritage character, it can help people identify better with the place where they live and pride in their home town. The urban layout, design of streets and provision of good quality outdoor space for informal recreation also helps in creating a healthy place to live.
- 7.35 The AAP includes the possibility of new tall buildings or other landmark buildings to be developed as part of the centre regeneration. There are potential adverse sustainability impacts on built heritage for buildings that are radically different than the existing character of the area. Any new large or tall buildings will need to be carefully designed to compliment the town centre. This needs to take into account how appropriate high densities are for the location, the need to avoid overshadowing and create vibrant street-spaces. All new buildings need to be designed to enhance the streetscene of the central area, for example by avoiding blank walls and buildings 'facing away' from any areas where people may walk. The AAP could include policies for the design of any tall buildings.
- 7.36 There are already built environment improvement schemes underway in the area this includes the City Beach regeneration to improve tourism and recreation at the seafront. However, there is not much detail on these schemes yet available; proposals for delivery are anticipated to inform the submission version of the Plan.

- 7.37 Many parts of the urban area have an underlying high quality, which has become degraded over time and needs attention to be an asset again for the town. An example is the Western Esplanade where the cliffs and the promenade have the potential to be a great asset to the town as an area of traditional seaside character. Therefore, a cohesive scheme of regeneration has the potential to create a really exceptional place, with benefits for the image of the Seafront and for Southend as a whole. For example, an option for reduced car parking and narrowing of the carriageway on part of the Western Esplanade is proposed. This is supported in terms of seeking development that leads to greater sustainability.
- 7.38 Other areas where regeneration can help enhance areas of underlying quality are at Warrior Square and Clifftown Conservation Areas. In both these locations more recent development, or poor use of land, has detracted from the wider setting of these historic heritage areas.
- 7.39 Reducing car dominance in some areas by improving the quality of roads and streets through planting, reduced on street car parking and a reduction in traffic speeds could all help improve the built environment. This will include areas east and west of the High Street, such as St John's and Clifftown, as well as on the seafront. This will have benefits for built environment quality and access, and if successful may reduce car travel with associated environmental and health improvements. Plans for fewer surface car parks replaced by multi-storey parking has the potential to improve parts of the centre currently dominated and divided by parked cars. However, these buildings will need careful design to complement and enhance the built environment character.
- 7.40 To make sure the AAP delivers cohesive strategy for the central area it may be suitable to include design principles as part of the policy. This could aim to provide a unifying design style to the whole area, with specific measures to make each Quarter have a unique character.

Education and culture

- 7.41 The delivery of new higher education and learning facilities can only be positive for the town centre. Not only will these help enhance the perception of Southend as a place of learning but will also encourage students into the town centre and the vibrancy this can bring. However, avoiding conflicting land uses will be important and maintaining a balance in the type of facilities and retail offer available. This may include the potential incompatibility of a night-time economy in the town centre and delivery of new residential development.
- 7.42 New cultural facilities can also be of great benefit in developing sustainable communities. For new cultural venues to be successful local people and visitors will need to be supportive of what is on offer. Any new facilities will need to work with existing communities and visitor representatives to identify the right kind of facility. There have been recent examples, nationally, of successes and failures in provision of new cultural facilities. Successful schemes can have positive impacts for the whole town encouraging visitors and investment. However, those that are a failure can damage a town's image and be a waste of public money.

- 7.43 In delivering new education facilities it will be important to also consider the needs of town centre residents. For instance 2,000 new homes are likely to bring about requirements for additional nursery, primary and secondary school places.
- 7.44 The AAP also supports the regeneration of parts of the Clifftown Quarter. The aim is to create a new cultural area, using the existing historic character combined with new development to create a new cultural area west of the High Street.
- 7.45 These aims combine well with those on employment and new leisure facilities to help support Southend's economy.

Employment

- 7.46 The town centre is the most sustainable place to locate new office development in Southend, based on reducing impacts of travel to work, and creating a central hub of employment development. The town centre has the greatest potential for access by more sustainable travel modes. It contains two railway stations, a bus station and is within easy walking and cycling distance of a large proportion of the town's residents. Offices generate a high number of trips everyday therefore locating these uses in accessible locations has a positive relationship in terms of equitable access to employment opportunities and reducing the social and environmental impacts of car travel.
- 7.47 The AAP puts a strong emphasis on employment growth in the town centre. With an expectation coming from the Core Strategy that this area will be the focus of 6,500 new jobs between 2001 and 2021. This is half of the total anticipated jobs for Southend as set out in the Core Strategy. To achieve the greatest benefits for local residents new office development could be required to contribute to local training provision, such as Local Labour Agreements or in conjunction with the nearby university campus. This can help ensure that the benefits of inward investment in physical employment infrastructure support local enterprise and raise local skill levels.
- 7.48 Existing and potentially refurbished offices on Victoria Avenue provide the primary area for office development in the centre. Other employment will be provided through improved retail and leisure facilities and helping to strengthen the tourism economy of Southend.
- 7.49 New employment growth is also anticipated in other parts of the centre, including in a new cultural and creative quarter in Clifftown and near Southend Central Station. These locations in particular could be tailored to the needs of small local businesses.
- 7.50 The growth of central Southend as an employment destination needs to be taken into account in conjunction with the potential for growth in other parts of the Borough. This will include other areas that may be identified for office development, such as land near to the airport. The town centre should remain the focus for office development with other sites not detracting from this. To deliver sustainable development central office locations are preferable.

- 7.51 The plan proposes that existing office space on Victoria Avenue is replaced with residential uses. For sustainable development, it will be important for the town centre to have sufficient office floorspace to meet needs and achieve employment growth now and in the long-term. Therefore, areas currently used for offices should remain so unless it can be shown that there is no demand for this land use in this location. The purpose-built civic offices should remain in their current use as a significant employer in the town, well located near good transport links in a building of local character and relatively recent built heritage quality.
- 7.52 In some parts of central Southend there will be different potential land uses for the same area of land. It needs to be the role of the AAP to clearly address what type of use is more suitable in which location. This is essential to securing the long-term mix of uses in the town centre to meet the needs of Southend residents as well as visitors.
- 7.53 New retail will contribute to the additional employment in the town centre. The retail study anticipated in early 2010 will help set out the potential for this type of development. An option for smaller units away from the Victorias and The Royal may help support independent and local retailers. Smaller, locally owned business can have a positive benefit for the economy by improving the range of retail on offer, or promoting specialist retailers. It can also provide a better quality of job than some of the larger retailers where employment prospects are limited and wages low.
- 7.54 Keeping a market in central Southend is also important to the character of the area and can provide an important retail function. This would not necessarily need to be in existing location, but should be in an area of high footfall and cater to diverse needs. For instance, this could include space for temporary traders that may include periodic local produce and farmers markets.
- 7.55 The introductory sections of the AAP mention the need to improve the conference facilities in the town to help achieve more business revenue in Southend. The AAP does not elaborate on the role of the town for these uses and the potential of any new sites. Recent refurbishments and development, such as the refit of the Palace Hotel or the Kursaal and the new University of Essex campus, may have reduced this demand, although there remains no single large conference venue in the town.
- 7.56 As shown in section 3 on other plans and programmes, PPS4 calls for town centre employment, leisure and retail floorspace needs to be quantified. This quantification will need to be included in the AAP.

Leisure and recreation

- 7.57 Central Southend has a continued importance as a leisure destination for the people of Southend as well as visitors from other parts of the UK. This provides an important economic income for the town.
- 7.58 Several schemes are proposed to bring improvements to the built environment that should help enhance the image of the town to visitors. This includes

schemes already underway at the City Beach as well as other improvements to the central seafront and Pier Hill.

- 7.59 The seafront, especially the central Seafront (including the pier) and Eastern Esplanade, is one of the major assets of the town for tourism. The AAP includes proposals for how these areas can be further improved to aid tourism in the long-term. One of the major improvements to this area is the potential to reduce car dominance on the Esplanade road and create more legible access to the town centre. This includes improvements at the end of the High Street, including Pier Hill and through the St John's area.
- 7.60 In addition to meeting the leisure and recreation needs of the wider Southend population and visitors to the area, consideration may also need to be given to the more everyday needs of central Southend residents. New and existing housing in the area means open space is needed for formal and informal recreation, which will need to be incorporated into new development. This may include children's playspace, and with opportunities for informal recreation providing a quiet outdoor space, possibly separated from fully public areas.
- 7.61 The potential for new hotels or conference centres could also be included in area specific proposals, or schemes put in place to prioritise hotels in some locations. Maintaining a range of hotels to cater for diverse needs is an important part of delivering sustainable tourism in Southend. Good quality hotels can encourage visitors to stay longer and therefore spend more. Additional income from existing visitor numbers is more sustainable than increasing overall visitor quantity due to the environmental burden of increased trips and overcrowding from higher numbers.
- 7.62 Matters relating to the possible improvement of green open space in central Southend is addressed in the section on 'the natural environment'.
- 7.63 As mentioned in the section on employment, the AAP will need to quantify the leisure floorspace needs, as well as identify the type.

Sustainable construction

- 7.64 The large amount of redevelopment proposed through the AAP will require substantial use of natural resources during construction and operation. To reduce these impacts it is essential that new development is designed in such a way as to reduce overall natural resource demands.
- 7.65 Many older buildings in the town centre are unlikely to be energy efficient, therefore new buildings have the potential to deliver energy savings in the long-term. Energy savings can be achieved through efficiency, but also there is the possibility with larger projects to deliver some of the energy used from local low carbon sources. This could include community heat and power schemes, that may be suitable as part of larger redevelopment areas, including University Campuses or new office developments. In addition, the coastal location means wind energy could play a role in delivering energy for the town centre. New turbine technology presents ever more efficient wind energy generation for urban

spaces. The tidal range may also present opportunities for energy generation associated with leisure developments on the seafront.

- 7.66 Proposed policies for delivering sustainable construction are shown in the options for development management policies. These options are appraised in section 8 of this SA Report.
- 7.67 Water resource in the East of England can be limited, especially in times of low rainfall. Therefore, new buildings and refurbishments must incorporate water efficiency measures, including re-use of rainwater or greywater.
- 7.68 Proposals for specific Quarters and Key Sites could include areas wide targets for sustainable construction. Consideration could be given in the AAP on how these can further reduce resource use, beyond existing policy requirements. This could include setting specific policy in the AAP in addition to general principles for sustainable construction.

The natural environment

- 7.69 The sustainability appraisal of objectives reveals that the AAP does not cover matters relating to protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Given that the AAP covers the seafront and foreshore areas it is essential the natural resource assets are addressed. This includes protection of the internationally designated nature conservation sites, water quality and trees and planting. All of these are essential in maintaining the quality of Southend for residents, visitors and as part of the overall image of the area.
- 7.70 New development in central Southend must not adversely impact on the internationally designated nature conservation sites, evidence needs to be in place to demonstrate this has been addressed. A Habitats Regulations screening assessment will be needed to show how impacts on biodiversity have been taken into account.
- 7.71 Impacts that will need to be avoided include storm water runoff infrastructure that avoids impacts on the foreshore, and management of the sea defences. Development proposals closest to the seafront have the potential for direct impacts, this will include development in the City Beach.
- 7.72 Site specific proposals for the Quarters and Key Sites should set out how nature conservation will be integrated into development. For instance the AAP already includes the option of creating a pocket park at the north end of the High Street between the Odeon and Sainsburys or at St John's Church, or the potential to make better use of the green spaces along Queensway and the potential for a linear park. Delivering parks such as this can be positive in helping secure more sustainable urban environments.
- 7.73 The town centre currently has poor provision of public open space, with the exception of the seafront. The AAP could include proposals to improve the quality of existing areas. The existing green area of Warrior Square could also be enhanced and its role for biodiversity and informal recreation improved.

8 Sustainability appraisal of the Development Management Policies

- 8.1 The AAP will contain development management policies to guide the implementation of town centre development. To help ensure these policies are effective it will be necessary to avoid repetition or conflict with Core Strategy policy by making the AAP policies location or development type specific, addressing detailed matters the strategic policies cannot.
- 8.2 Including development management policies for the Southend Central AAP in advance of the preparation of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) will help ensure delivery of more sustainable development in the short-term. Waiting for the DPD to be prepared will miss opportunities for guiding better quality development in the town centre. However, once the DPD is prepared there may need to be a review of policy to remove duplication or conflict, this could include DPD policies replacing AAP policy.
- 8.3 Policies on specific criteria for delivery of larger development sites should also be included in the AAP. This will help make sure known issues and areas of concern are addressed through the design of new development, as part of a joined-up strategy for central Southend. This could include specific targets for affordable housing provision, specific design criteria, sustainable construction principles and/or low carbon energy.

Resource use and carbon emissions policy

- 8.4 An essential part of delivering development in a more sustainable way is reducing resource demand of new and refurbished buildings. The AAP contains options for policies on resource minimisation and designing buildings to make better use of primary resources in construction and operation.
- 8.5 Options are presented on whether it is preferable to pursue refurbishment of buildings in development areas in preference to demolition and rebuilding. In helping achieve sustainable development objectives refurbishment can help reduce demand for primary resources. However, setting a blanket policy for refurbishment over renewal is unlikely to be the most sustainable choice. Subject to suitable sustainable construction and environmental protection policies being in place redeveloped buildings have the potential to offer much better resource efficiency in their operation (e.g. energy and water), which may be difficult to achieve in refurbishment. To secure sustainability benefits it will be necessary to make sure demolition materials are re-used, preferably on-site.
- 8.6 Redevelopment can also allow buildings to be rearranged on a plot to allow more open or public space, improvements to water management, improved pedestrian links and movement routes and better orientation to make better use of the site. Therefore, the decision to refurbish or rebuild should be decided site-by-site.
- 8.7 In making decisions on whether demolition or refurbishment is most suitable it will also be necessary to consider the buildings existing contribution (and potential contribution if it has fallen into disrepair or been long-term vacant) to the character

of the town centre. It should not only be buildings of historic importance that are protected, but any building of architectural merit or represents something unique or part of the character of Southend.

- 8.8 There may be greater opportunities for more sustainable construction on larger development sites. For instance larger sites present opportunities for integrating technologies as part of development to help reduce carbon emissions. Setting carbon reduction or sustainable construction targets above national targets has the potential to deliver sustainability benefits for the Borough. However, moving beyond government targets will require an evidence base to prove it will be financially viable and not stall the delivery of needed development.
- 8.9 In terms of securing more sustainable development any district based energy scheme and local energy generation is strongly supported. Making more efficient use of fossil fuels, or using renewable resources, can help mitigate against climate change and help protect natural resources. Therefore, a scheme for district energy supply could be established for central Southend. This could make use of wind turbines, potential suitably due the coastal location or combined heat and power using a renewable or low carbon energy source. District based energy generation is preferable to national grid schemes as it reduces the inefficiencies of distribution. It also is likely to be more efficient than site specific renewable energy technologies, with micro-turbines and domestic photovoltaic generation shown to be of limited viability. Combined heat and power is also a sustainable option as it makes use of heat that would otherwise be wasted in power generation.

Transport and traffic

- 8.10 Helping people move away from using cars to walking, cycling and public transport will have a variety of benefits for sustainable development. The AAP has an important role to play in this by making the town centre the focus of activity in Southend. The centre can provide jobs, shops and leisure services all accessible in a single trip and by a variety of transport modes to the majority of Southend residents.
- 8.11 Policy options for transport are included in Option 17. Having a policy in place to help deliver a unified transport strategy for the town centre will be an important part of delivering sustainable transport in this location. The AAP has a role to play in implementing transport and parking strategies for central Southend. The AAP can help to identify and secure funding for schemes, for example, through developer contributions, and guide development to provide the necessary infrastructure for necessary travel and transport improvements.
- 8.12 Options are presented for car parking in Option 7. Reducing car parking spaces can help achieve a shift from car use. Parking is only one part of achieving this and needs to be delivered in tandem with improvements to other types of transport provision. New residential development in very accessible locations, such as next to the stations, could be built as car free instead relying on car clubs to reduce use. However, potentially more important in reducing car use is ensuring people commuting into the town centre every day for work do not drive.

Therefore, new office or other employment and commercial development should only have very limited employee parking. In addition, car parking management for all town centre parking should be used to help make bus travel competitive. This type of approach needs to be delivered carefully ensuring pricing and availability of spaces does not push shoppers to other town centres or out-of-centre locations.

Biodiversity and the greengrid

- 8.13 The coastline of Southend has very high nature conservation value, and is internationally designated. All new development in and around the town centre will need to ensure these assets are not harmed. If not already covered sufficiently in the Core Strategy there may need to be a specific policy criteria included in the AAP to protect these sites and ensure site specific 'appropriate assessment' is completed where needed.
- 8.14 As well as these international sites there is also a need to respect and enhance biodiversity wherever it is found, helping to 'green' Southend's town centre. There is a risk that intensification of uses in central Southend could be to the detriment of the natural environment quality, in an area that already suffers from poor access to open space. Therefore, the policy options for promoting open space and ecological improvements in the area are strongly supported in terms of sustainable development.
- 8.15 There is potential for natural environment enhancements to be made throughout the town centre. This can include improvements to existing open space and include new areas of open space and tree planting. New trees should be of species that help support local wildlife. In addition, new development should avoid the loss of existing mature trees wherever possible. Trees in urban areas are increasingly important for shading as long periods of hot weather increase with climate change.
- 8.16 Areas of green space within the urban context can have multiple sustainability benefits. This will include:
- supporting wildlife
 - providing open space for rest and relaxation of residents, workers and visitors to the town centre
 - providing shading and reducing urban heat island effects caused by the sun reflecting off hard surfaces on hot days that make outdoor spaces uncomfortably hot
 - views of trees and green spaces have been shown to have positive benefits for mental wellbeing
 - planting can make a valuable contribution to the quality of the built environment, such as tree lined avenues and pocket parks.

Flood risk

- 8.17 The area is under quite high risk of flooding, although direct tidal inundation is largely mitigated against through sea flood defences. The Kursaal area and east of Southchurch Avenue are at greatest risk, according to Environment Agency maps. Tidal effects on the rivers in the Borough may present a greater risk, and effects of climate change will only serve to increase this.
- 8.18 Avoiding locating vulnerable development in areas of risk is essential. Development will have to follow advice in Planning Policy Statement 25 on developing in flood risk areas. This should be sufficient to prevent/manage flooding in this area.

Housing growth and need

- 8.19 There is a need for new residential development in central Southend. The assessment of options is addressed under section 7 of this report.

Other comments

- 8.20 **AAP content:** What remains unanswered in this Issues and Options AAP is exactly what the document will contain. For instance the AAP should contain allocations and policies for delivering development in the central area. These need to set out clearly what type of development will be expected in which locations in order to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors and to deliver the growth anticipated through the Core Strategy. This will need to include the locations for new residential development, town centre design guidance, expectations for low carbon new buildings etc.
- 8.21 Development also needs to be quantified in terms of floorspace needs. Quantification is identified as an important part of preparing proposals for town centres to deliver sustainable economic growth. This is a policy requirement set out in Planning Policy Statement 4 on economic growth.
- 8.22 The plan could also contain areas specific design guidance to make sure new development is delivered as part of a comprehensive design vision for the town centre. The policy could address matters such as the design of leisure and tourism venues on the seafront, such as amusement arcades, kiosks and cafes, as well as guidance for tall or landmark buildings.

Implementation

- 8.23 The AAP has an essential role to play in showing how the multiple proposals and regeneration schemes for central Southend will be delivered and how they will be implemented. The 'delivery and monitoring' section of the AAP recognises this need, setting out basic details of possible funding and delivery partners (most significantly Renaissance Southend Limited).
- 8.24 The final AAP will need to provide details on the proposals, including who is responsible for delivery, partner organisations funding and timescales. Demonstrating development can be implemented is essential to sustainable

development, as it goes without saying that no sustainability benefits can be secured without new development being delivered.

- 8.25 The AAP and the SA will need to be monitored to ensure that development is being implemented as anticipated, and is not having adverse sustainability impacts. A monitoring framework will be developed when moving forward with the AAP, more information will be included at the next stage of SA reporting.

9 Summary and recommendations

- 9.1 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has recognised that the Central Southend AAP has an important role to play in the sustainable development of this area and the wider Borough.
- 9.2 The proposed AAP objectives provide the foundation for the development of policies and proposals for the central area. However, these objectives are stronger for some areas, such as built design enhancement, than for other areas such as protection of the natural environment or delivery of housing.
- 9.3 The SA of the current Issues and Options Document reveals some other sustainability issues. The SA makes recommendations on how sustainability matters could be incorporated into the AAP in moving forward with the preparation process.
- 9.4 **Transport and movement:** To successfully achieve a modal shift away from car use, there is a need to ensure transport, movement and parking strategy presents a proactive and joined up approach to managing traffic in the town centre. Without this the regeneration of central Southend could be adversely affected by increasing congestion, with negative health and environmental impacts.
- 9.5 Therefore, the AAP will need to set out policies, proposals and implementation plans that include:
- a clear vision for pedestrian and cycle movement in the centre and connections to the rest of the Borough
 - supporting access to bus and train stations and integrated transport system
 - improving the quality and safety of walking and cycling routes, including at Victoria Avenue and all the way down to the seafront and esplanade
 - car parking management, with perhaps most car parking situated on the periphery of the central areas
 - more pedestrianisation of roads and streets
 - the possible long-term improvements to Queensway to make better use of the space and reduce its impact as a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movement.
- 9.6 **Residential development:** Central Southend has a significant role to play in delivering new residential development for the Borough. The requirement is set through the Core Strategy for Southend. The final AAP will need to contain more specific information on housing delivery and the locations for growth. This may need to include quantified delivery targets on allocated sites, the type of housing (family homes or smaller flats) needed in different locations, and principles for affordable housing delivery. In seeking more equitable access to housing the AAP could also contain policies that go beyond Core Policy affordable housing targets. Current affordable housing policy is very unlikely to yield many new affordable homes in the town centre due to the size of development sites.

- 9.7 The AAP also needs to address where and how the needs of new and existing residents will be met, through provision of community services, such as health centres, community space and schools. This is essential to deliver health and wellbeing in these communities who live in central Southend.
- 9.8 **The built environment:** The principle focus of the Issues and Options AAP is how improvements can be made to the built environment of the central area, through new development and enhancement. This will have positive sustainability impacts related to improving the image of the centre. A better 'sense of place' can help support the community's pride in the place where they live, which can have positive impacts on social sustainability. The town centre is also the 'showcase' for the rest of the town, and therefore if this area has a high quality image it can encourage local and national investment in the whole town.
- 9.9 Built quality is also an essential part of an important component of the town's economy – tourism. Therefore, investments in the seafront and links to the rest of the town will have a positive impact.
- 9.10 Good quality built environment can also encourage more sustainable travel, by creating pleasant and safe walking routes.
- 9.11 The SA recognises it may be necessary for the AAP to contain specific design guidance policies for the central area. This will help ensure development creates a unified place, even if separate Quarters have their own distinctive qualities. Design guidance may be particularly necessary to avoid adverse impacts from tall buildings.
- 9.12 **Leisure and tourism:** Leisure and tourism are essential components of the economy of Southend. The AAP already addresses some matters relating to the leisure provision in the area, however, it does not address directly how improvements can help increase average visitor spend in the town. The AAP could give consideration to the role of new hotels or conference facilities, including possible locations for development, to increase the number of overnight stays in the town.
- 9.13 **Education:** Support for education in the town centre will have positive sustainability impacts, not only from improving availability of learning sites but also from the vibrancy a student population can bring to the central area. The AAP could consider making it a requirement for larger new employment developments in the town centre to contribute to training associated with the university, to improve the skills of local residents and access to newly created employment.
- 9.14 It may be necessary to consider the capacity of existing schools in the central area to ensure all new and existing resident children of the area have access to education.
- 9.15 **Employment:** The AAP recognises the primacy of central Southend for new retail and office development. This is compatible with sustainability objectives relating to supporting a thriving economy in Southend, and as the most sustainable location in terms of travel impacts in the Borough.

- 9.16 The AAP will need to ensure proposals are in place to meet the job growth requirements set through the Core Strategy. This will need to include premises for a range of business types from workshops, live/work units to larger office space. The Employment Land Review should be used to identify if any of the existing office space in the town centre is surplus to requirements, now and in the longer-term. Only where there is evident surplus should existing employment land be released for other uses.
- 9.17 **Sustainable construction:** To reduce natural resource consumption created by the large scale of proposed restoration and redevelopment an area wide energy strategy could be included as part of the AAP. The AAP could include targets for carbon reduction from new development and sustainable construction standards that go beyond national policy. However, this will require additional evidence to demonstrate financial viability to ensure that this does not result in stalling delivery of development needed in the town centre.
- 9.18 Policies for larger town centre development sites or whole 'Quarters' of the town centre could include the need to provide or contribute to district-wide low carbon energy. Schemes that include combined heat and power or renewable energy generation can achieve significant carbon dioxide reductions and protection of fossil fuels. District schemes can outperform national grid schemes and are more efficient and viable than many domestic or site specific renewable energy technologies. Wind power may be a good solution to energy needs in this coastal location.
- 9.19 New buildings should also be designed to make better use of water resources and reduce surface run-off.
- 9.20 Wherever possible new development should aim to reduce the amount of primary materials used in construction. Therefore, enhancement of the town centre could favour refurbishment over redevelopment, or at least re-use demolition materials on-site.
- 9.21 **Natural environment:** The SA identifies that issues related to protecting the natural environment are absent from the AAP. It is essential that new development does not harm the high quality, internationally designed, nature conservation sites that exist on the Southend foreshore and sandflats. The AAP will need to be able to demonstrate, through a Habitats Regulation assessment how the potential for impacts has been assessed and how any impacts will be mitigated against. Possible impact routes include direct disturbance, storm water or waste water outfall, and coastal squeeze caused by sea defences.
- 9.22 Other ways the natural environment could be addressed through the AAP includes proposals or policies for landscaping, new parks and new planting. This will not only have the sustainability benefits of enhancing the urban biodiversity, but also can help create shade within heavily developed areas essential in combating the urban heat impacts associated with global warming.
- 9.23 **Implementation:** It is clearly evident that no sustainability benefits can be secured if development cannot be implemented. The inclusion of a table in the

AAP to demonstrate how implementation will be achieved will help in securing delivery. This table could include:

- Who is responsible for delivery
- Who is funding delivery
- Timescale for delivery
- Other plans, programmes and partners for delivery (for matters beyond the role of a planning document).

9.24 Policies and site specific proposals will also need to be developed that provide greater certainty and clarification on delivery. Where possible this will need to include quantification for provision of employment, retail and leisure floorspace, as well as residential yield.

Appendix 1

Sustainability appraisal of the Area Action Plan Objectives

	Access	Housing	Education	Health	Community	Biodiversity	Landscape	Built envt.	Air	Water	Land	Soil	Minerals / waste	Energy	Local econ.	Employment	Wealth creation
1. New development	●	●	-	-	●	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?
2. Transport + movement	●	-	-	?	?	-	-	●	?	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	-
3. Promote assets	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	●	●
4. Design and delivery	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	●	?	?	-	-	?	●	?	-	?
5. Learning	?	-	●	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	●	●
5. Businesses	●	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	-	?	●	●	●
7. New homes	●	●	-	?	●	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	-	-	?	?	-
8. Retail	●	-	-	-	?	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?

1. New development, including homes, businesses and recreation	<p>This is a wide ranging objective that generally is supportive of new built development in the town centre. New development will be an essential part of delivering the built environment, social and economic improvements envisaged for central Southend.</p> <p>However, the objective does overlap with other on the economy and objective seven on residential needs.</p>
2. Access and movement	<p>This objective may be improved by greater focus transport and movement. In particular it should refer to the need to</p>

	<p>improve the pedestrian environment, creating new direct walking routes with landmarks and features to encourage walking and make it a more pleasant place to walk. Wording of the objective could be improved to make it clear this objective relates to transport and movement not necessarily visual quality of urban design.</p> <p>There are current problems with direct walking and cycling connectivity of parts of central Southend. Travel within central Southend should aim to reduce car use, car speeds, and car parking wherever possible. This should ideally keep car travel from dominating as few roads as is feasible and make alternatives the more attractive option.</p>
3. Promote assets	<p>The central area of Southend has many natural, built and connections that are assets to encouraging high quality regeneration of the town centre. By recognising what it is that is special about the central area and enhancing and promoting these can bring benefits to the people and economy of the wider Southend area.</p>
4. Design excellence and delivery	<p>This objective aims for all new development in central Southend to be built to high design standards. The benefits of this should be to the built heritage quality of Southend, with buildings enhancing the centre area and providing landmarks to encourage tourism in the area. In addition, high quality design for sustainable development will help reduce natural resource demand in constructing new buildings and in during their operation. This can have substantial benefits for sustainable development related to the natural environment. The objective also includes the role of partners in actually delivering higher quality development – as clearly policy is nothing without implementation.</p> <p>No objectives specifically relate to the design of new development to complement and enhance the built environment character of the town centre. This is important to improve the seaside ‘sense of place’ of the town centre, helping all part of the centre feel linked to the coastal location, showing although the town is a sub-regional business location as well as a resort location.</p>
5. Education and culture	<p>Southend centre is well placed to further develop the educational offer in the town centre, with two higher education facilities already located very close to the high street and student residences further north. Continuing to reinforce this role can help not only in supporting education attainment, but also help create a vibrant town centre with a range of shops, cafes and bars that a student population can support.</p> <p>The cultural offer in the town could also be improved, supported by the historic heritage of the area, it’s role as a tourism destination and easy access from London and other parts of Essex. Improved cultural activities and facilities</p>

	can help promote the town to investors and also support the local community.
6. Businesses	<p>Central Southend is already a major employment area for the town and surrounding area. However, there is the potential to improve this and bring new businesses to the town and improve its economic performance. Updating the office provision will help to encourage growing businesses remain in the area and businesses choosing to locate in Southend. The town centre is very well connected by train and other public transport for existing residents of Southend, as well as others along the northern bank of the Thames corridor. Therefore, encouraging new office development to primarily take place in this zone will help in promoting more sustainable travel, achieving a modal shift away from car use. In meeting this objective consideration will need to be given to how business growth in this location will be complementary to the objectives for other parts of Southend, for example links to potential new employment areas adjacent to the airport.</p> <p>The Core Strategy identifies the town centre as the focus of much of the economic growth and location of a large proportion of the Southend's jobs, this objective supports this approach.</p>
7. Homes	<p>This objective relates to the development of new homes in the town centre, as expected through the Core Strategy. The objective should aid in the delivery of homes to meet needs in this central location, raising the potential for homes to be provided by the refurbishment of existing buildings as well as new build. The objective also aims for the town centre to be a suitable location for families to live, this will including provision of necessary facilities and services, as well as suitably size homes. A mix of housing types and tenures in the town centre can build communities in these locations.</p>