

Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP)

Key Matters, Issues and Questions Discussion Note and Agenda

Matter 1: Legal Compliance

- 1.1 Does the SCAAP meet all its legal requirements, especially in such matters as the Local Development Scheme (LDS); the Habitats Regulations; the Duty to Co-operate (DTC); the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Local Development Regulations 2004, as amended in 2008?
- 1.2 How does the SCAAP relate to the main recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal?
- 1.3 How does the SCAAP relate to the Localism Act, the Government's Planning and Housing White Paper, the national Planning Policy Framework (*the Framework*) and the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)?

Matter 2: Spatial Strategy, and relationship to other areas, plans and programmes

- 2.1 Are there any differences of emphasis between the SCAAP and the adopted Southend Core Strategy, for example in relation to regeneration and sustainable growth? Does it also dovetail with the Council's Development Management Document?
- 2.2 How robust are the proposed vision, including the 'City by the Sea' concept and strategic objectives (paragraphs 28 and 29)?
- 2.3 How does the SCAAP relate to the plans and strategies of the remainder of the Borough and other neighbouring local planning authorities?
- 2.4 How far has the SCAAP taken on board the plans and programmes of statutory providers and regulatory agencies, such as transport companies, the Environment Agency, the utility companies, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and local businesses and community groups and agencies?

Matter 3: The local economy, employment, retailing, business and tourism

- 3.1 Is the SCAAP strategy, to seek opportunities for additional retail floorspace through incremental increases as opposed to specific allocations, the appropriate way forward for the Borough during the plan period?
- 3.2 Is policy DS1: *A prosperous retail centre* justified and realistic, especially in relation to the proposed location of the primary shopping area; the identification of the primary and secondary shopping frontages; the 'enhancement' of the street market; and the reasoning behind the

requirement for at least 60% retail use within the town centre primary shopping frontage?

- 3.3 Topic Paper 3 (Employment, Business and Investment) draws attention to the large amount of vacant shop floor space in the town centre. Should the SCAAP address this issue in more detail and provide more guidance?
- 3.4 Should the evening economy be specifically addressed in a policy?
- 3.5 How realistic is the employment target of 7,250 jobs to be delivered in the Town Centre and Central Area? How much progress has been achieved so far? How would the Council describe or explain the 'sustainable balance' between jobs and housing which is referred to in paragraph 59?
- 3.6 Does the SCAAP provide a sound framework for the development of key employment sectors in the Central Area, such as business and financial services, the creative industries, the university and civic and Government administration?
- 3.7 Does the SCAAP provide a sound framework for the development of tourism? In particular, how realistic is the aim in the SCAAP to improve and diversify the tourism offer to increase overnight and longer stays, as set out in paragraph 80 (and also set out in Topic Paper 3 under Tourism)? Does this aim complement or conflict with what is widely seen to be the principal tourism sector of serving the day visitor market?

Matter 4: Transport, access, parking and public realm

- 4.1 Topic Paper 2 (Strategic Highway Network) notes that: "*Current forecasts suggest that, with the planned development in Southend, congestion will increase*" (second paragraph under Transport Context). With this in mind, can the development proposals in the SCAAP be implemented without causing unacceptable congestion and inconvenience to residents, workers and visitors to the central Area? Does the SCAAP relate well to the Southend Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3?
- 4.2 Are the sustainable transport measures set out in policy DS5: *Transport, Access and Public Realm* achievable, beneficial and deliverable? Topic Paper 1 (Parking and Access) refers to a number of transport schemes already delivered in recent years, and there is a list of such schemes in Appendix A. How successful has the Council been, in concert with the highway authority and other agencies, in promoting sustainable transport in terms of modal shift, both for the Central Area as a whole, but also in relation to visitors to the resort and especially day visitors?
- 4.3 Several representations to the submitted SCAAP point to significant concerns in relation to car parking provision. With this in mind:
 - (i) Does the Car Parking Study commissioned by the Council (by Steer Davies Gleave, dated November 2016) provide an appropriate and

robust evidence base (as asserted in Topic Paper 1, paragraph 1.56) to justify a realistic level of car parking provision in the Central Area?

- (ii) Should policy DS5 aim to maintain parking provision, or is there a sustainable case to increase parking capacity by 25% over the plan period, which LTP 3 is alleged by some representations to infer? How much, if any, of this projected increased demand for car parking can be met by increased sustainable transport provision for the Central Area, for example through the park and ride scheme being suggested for Leigh on Sea rail station, and is this project deliverable within the plan period?
- (iii) Policy DS5.2.b states that there the Council will ensure that there is no net loss in car parking spaces within the key visitor car parks to the south of the Central Area. Should the SCAAP define exactly which car parks are included within this category of 'key visitor car parks' and what is the capacity of these car parks? Does the policy have sufficient teeth to give the certainty that members of the tourism industry seek? Should it state that it would not permit the loss of existing car parking spaces in the 'key visitor car parks', for example through development, until an equivalent amount of new car parking has been provided within a reasonable walking distance (say 10 minutes) of the car parking capacity that has been lost?
- (iv) Are the car parking requirements of the area to the south of the Southend Central railway, including the seafront, significantly different from the rest of the Central Area, to the extent that parking provision should be planned for separately, or is there a strong case for maximising car parking provision across the plan area as a whole?
- (v) Topic Paper 1 refers to the need for development proposals within the key parking areas to be accompanied by detailed transport assessments, as set out in policy DM15 in the Council's Development Management Plan. What has been the impact of this policy, and in particular has it facilitated additional car parking spaces; is there any evidence of modal shift, e.g. to buses in recent years?
- (vi) How reliable is the Vehicle Messaging System (VMS) as a tool for giving drivers clear information about car parking availability?
- (vii) How critical is it for the tourism industry that there may be a few days in the summer peak when there is virtually no spare car parking capacity to satisfy the demand from day visitors? Would it be justified for the SCAAP to require additional spaces be found to meet this peak demand; would this be deliverable; and if so, what would be the economic, social and public realm and other environmental impacts (e.g. on air quality) of such a requirement?

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

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

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

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

Matter 5: Housing provision

5.1 Table 1 in the SCAAP shows the scale of new residential development to be delivered in the plan area by 2021, which at 2,166 dwellings together with 1,087 completions since 2001, easily exceeds the Core Strategy requirement for 2,474 net additional new dwellings to be delivered by 2021. Does the SCAAP, however, provide sufficient guidance to ensure that sufficient numbers of affordable housing units are developed during the plan period?

5.2 Should the SCAAP be addressing the need for specialist housing, e.g. for students and nurses and other health workers?

Matter 6: Infrastructure, delivery and monitoring

6.1 Are the key infrastructure providers signed up to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)?

6.2 Are there any showstoppers in the IDP?

6.3 What is the critical path for securing the effectiveness of the SCAAP?

6.4 What is the likelihood of implementation within the plan period of the following key developments within the plan area: PA3.1; 4.1; 7.1; 8.1; 8.2; 9.1; 9.2 and CS1.1; 1.2; 1.3; and 1.4.

6.5 Which schemes are likely to require compulsory purchase orders and/or Section 106 contributions?

6.6 How will the monitoring arrangements work? Should this matter be addressed by a policy in the SCAAP? (This applies to the plan as a whole, not just infrastructure.)

6.7 Has the CIL adversely affected the viability of development schemes in the plan area and what is the likely outlook for the rest of the plan period?

- 6.8 In the light of the trends set out in Topic Paper 4 (Deliverability), how easily could the SCAAP be knocked off course by future economic trends at a regional or national level?
- 6.9 Is the planned provision of community infrastructure as set out in Topic Paper 5 (Community Infrastructure), especially in relation to health, education, and social and community facilities, deliverable during the plan period?

Matter 7: Environment

- 7.1 How robust are the policies for addressing key views (DS2), landmarks and landmark buildings (DS3) and flood risk management and sustainable drainage (DS4)?
- 7.2 Should the SCAAP include specific policies covering design excellence, the historic environment and green infrastructure?

Matter 8: The Policy Areas

- 8.1 Are the following policies setting out the development principles, including Opportunity Sites, where appropriate, in relation to the following policy areas, justified and deliverable within the plan period?
- (i) Policy PA1: High Street Policy Area
 - (ii) Policy PA2: London Road Policy Area
 - (iii) Policy PA3: Elmer Square Policy Area
 - (iv) Policy PA4: Queensway Policy Area
 - (v) Policy PA5: Warrior Square Policy Area
 - (vi) Policy PA6: Clifftown Policy Area
 - (vii) Policy PA7: Tylers Policy Area
 - (viii) Policy CS1: Central Seafront Policy Area
 - (ix) Policy CS2: Nature Conservation and Biodiversity
 - (x) Policy CS3: The Waterfront
 - (xi) Policy PA8: Victoria Gateway Neighbourhood Policy Area
 - (xii) Policy PA9: Sutton gateway Neighbourhood Policy Area

Mike Fox; 24 March 2017