

Reference:	14/00038/BC4M
Ward:	Kursaal
Proposal:	Extend existing Sea Life Centre to east, alter all elevations, lay out outdoor enclosures and children's play area
Address:	Sea Life Adventure Centre, Eastern Esplanade, Southend-On-Sea
Applicant:	Mr M Miller
Agent:	SK Architects
Consultation Expiry:	7 April 2014
Expiry Date:	15 May 2014
Case Officer:	Phillip McIntosh
Plan Nos:	162 P01 REV B, 162 P03 REV B, 162 P04 REV B, 162 P06 REV B, 162 P08 REV B
Recommendation:	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION



This application was deferred at the April meeting of the Development Control Committee in order amendments were sought in respect of the scale and appearance of the proposal.

Amended plans have been received and are discussed in section 1 and section 4 below.

1 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission to erect an eastern extension to the existing sea life centre and create an outdoor enclosure. The proposal no longer seeks to re-clad the original building.
- 1.2 The extension would be 42m long, 32m wide and a maximum height of 6.4m at its western end (although the majority of the extension would be approx. 5m high). The extension would be sited on land formerly used for miniature golf but is currently an open grassed area. It will consist of an enclosed building to the north which will house a number of attractions including an additional fish tank, crocodile enclosure and meerkat enclosure. The remaining part of the extension although enclosed externally will not be roofed and includes a seal pool, penguin pool, seating area, external children's play area and space for exhibitions. The existing building will be tidied up, and the materials used on the new extension will reflect the existing.
- 1.3 The proposal seeks to enhance the tourism offer of Southend by providing improved attractions and a strong focal point at the eastern end of the seafront. It is the aspiration of the applicant that the extension will result in approximately 30% increase in customers which are currently around 150,000 per annum.
- 1.4 The applicant advises that the extension will result in an additional 20 full-time equivalent jobs (FTEs). It is proposed that the hours of operation will be from 9am-9pm Monday to Sunday, including bank holidays. The site is open all year round except Christmas Day and Boxing Day.
- 1.5 It is not proposed to provide any additional on-site parking.

2 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The site consists of approximately 0.3ha of land which sits between the Fairheads Green public car park and miniature golf complex to the east. This piece of land lies between Eastern Esplanade to the north and the promenade to the south consisting of the existing sea life centre and grassed area formerly used for miniature golf. The land rises up from Eastern Esplanade to the promenade with a maximum difference in levels across the site of approximately 2m.

- 2.2 To the north on the opposite side of Eastern Esplanade are mixed use properties which are commercial at ground floor level and predominantly residential on the upper floors. Beyond this to the east is a row of listed and locally listed fisherman's cottages and fall within the Eastern Esplanade conservation area. To the west is the Kursaal which is a listed building and forms part of the Kursaal conservation area. Beyond this are further recreational and leisure facilities of the 'Golden Mile'.
- 2.3 There is some informal parking to the east of the existing sealife centre, although this land is designated as public maintainable highway. A public car exists immediately to the west of the sealife centre and pay and display on street parking is available within Eastern Esplanade. A bus stop is also located on either side of the road outside the sealife centre.
- 2.4 The site is located within the Central Seafront area, as identified on the Local Plan, and in flood zone 3 (high risk). Immediately to the south of the sea life centre is the promenade and seawall. Beyond this lies the beach and inter-tidal zone of the Thames estuary which sits within the Benfleet Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.

3 Planning Considerations

- 3.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application are the principle of development, design and impact on the character of the area including listed and locally listed buildings, ecology, flood risk, traffic and transport implications, impact on residential amenity and sustainability.

4 Appraisal

Principle of Development

NPPF; DPD1 (Core Strategy) policies KP1, KP2, CP3 and CP4 Borough Local Plan C11, C16, L1, L2, T8 and T11.

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes the delivery of sustainable development and advises there are 3 dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. These 3 roles seek to deliver new development which will build a strong responsive and competitive economy; strong, vibrant and healthy communities and contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. The NPPF calls for the planning system to ensuring land is available in the right places to support growth and innovation.

4.2 Policy KP1 (Spatial Strategy) recognises that appropriate regeneration and growth will be focussed in a number of areas including the seafront. New development should; *“enhance the Seafront’s role as a successful leisure and tourist attraction and place to live, and make the best use of the River Thames, subject to the safeguarding of the biodiversity importance of the foreshore and ensuring that European and international sites for nature conservation are not adversely affected by any new development.”* Policy KP2 requires new development to meet the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy which include; *“SO4 – Secure sustainable regeneration and growth focused on the urban area, SO14 – Deliver high quality, well designed and attractive urban and natural environments which are safe, people friendly and distinctive, and which respect and enhance existing character and local amenity.”* Policy CP4 requires new development; *“to contribute to the creation of a high quality, sustainable urban environment by promoting sustainable development of the highest quality and encouraging innovation and excellence in design to create places of distinction and a sense of place, safeguarding, protecting and enhancing nature and conservation sites of international, national and local importance and protecting natural resources from inappropriate development.”*

4.3 Policy L1 of the Local Plan support proposals for new tourist and visitor facilities, particularly where they create jobs and result in environmental improvements. Policy L2 states the Council will promote new leisure facilities within the Central Seafront Area, and that proposals south of the seafront road will be considered where, amongst other things, they have regard to sites of nature conservation, wider foreshore views and public parking. Policy C11 requires new extensions to respect the scale and character of surrounding development and should enhance public pedestrian areas and open spaces. Policy C16 is concerned with the protection of foreshore views. This policy limits development south of the seafront road outside the Central Seafront Area, but not within it. The application site is located within the Central Seafront Area and therefore, the restrictions set out in Policy C16 do not apply in this case.

4.4 There is also emerging policy in the form of an area action plan for the town centre and central seafront. The ambition is for this area to be a prosperous and thriving regional centre. Some of the key objectives for the SCAAP are;

“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 culture, recreation and leisure”;

“To always have regard to the significant biodiversity assets and environmental quality of the Central Area, help meet obligations on carbon emissions and adopt an approach to climate change through measures that mitigate against, or adapt to change, including managing flood risk and water efficiency.” and;

“To encourage the establishment and expansion of all businesses in the Town Centre by identifying, promoting or by actively bringing forward suitable sites for development to meet modern user and investor requirements.”

Policy DS6 seeks to support proposals which will enhance leisure and recreational facilities.

- 4.5 The proposal has the potential to attract visitors to the sea front out of season and has the potential to benefit other, nearby business through linked visitor trips through increased seasonality. Particularly when considered in context with other current proposals such as the lagoon (13/01411/BC4M) and additional attractions such as the indoor rides pavilion at Adventure Island (14/00069/BC4M).
- 4.6 The benefits in terms of improving the seafront as an area for leisure, recreation and the tourism economy must be balanced against any potential impacts on the natural environment and biodiversity, in particular, the international importance of Benfleet and Southend Marshes for migratory birds and issues regarding potential flood risk. Subject to no significant impacts being identified or any impacts being satisfactorily mitigated, the principle of the development is considered acceptable. Other material considerations are discussed below.

Ecology and Biodiversity

NPPF, Policies KP1, KP2 and CP4 of the Core Strategy

- 4.7 The NPPF states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

“if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the site’s notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.”

- 4.8 The area is in close proximity to the Southend and Benfleet Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. The SPA and SSSI are afforded protection through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). Ramsar sites are afforded the same level of protection through the NPPF. The Southend and Benfleet Marshes SPA and SSSI qualifies under the Council of the European Communities Birds Directive (79/409/ECC) by supporting populations of European importance of migratory species. The area regularly supports at least 20,000 waterfowl and over winter regularly supports approximately 35,000 individual waterfowl. The directive recognises that habitat loss and degradation are the most serious threats to the conservation of wild birds. It therefore places great emphasis on the protection of habitats for endangered as well as migratory species, especially through the establishment of a coherent network of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) comprising all the most suitable territories for these species. Since 1994 all SPAs form an integral part of the NATURA 2000 ecological network (EUwide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive). The site also qualifies as a Ramsar site for assemblages of international importance and species populations of occurring at levels of international importance.
- 4.9 The Council, as the competent authority (CA) has particular duties in making the planning decision with respect to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The proposal does not relate to a project directly connected to site management therefore, the development must be screened for whether the project is *likely to have a significant effect*, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on the qualifying features for which the SPA and Ramsar site are designated. Natural England (NE) have been consulted and advised that the development proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European site and can therefore, be screened out from any requirement for further assessment. No objection is therefore, raised with regard to the impact on the internationally and nationally designated sites.
- 4.10 With regard to local biodiversity the site was formerly used as part of the adjacent miniature golf complex and consists of an area of open grass and hedge along the northern and western boundaries. The hedge has the potential to containing nesting birds. All wild birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They cannot be killed or taken except under licence. Nesting season is typically from 1st March to 31st July and therefore, it is recommended that an informative is added advising the applicant of their duty under this legislation. Other than this issue, the site is not considered to have any significant habitat value on a local scale. Furthermore, it is not considered there is a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present on the site particularly given the exposed nature of the site and location in the heart of the central seafront.

Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

NPPF; DPD1 (Core Strategy) policies KP2 and CP4; BLP policies C2, C4 and C11 and SPD1.

- 4.11 The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people and reinforce local character and distinctiveness. This is supported by development plan policies KP2 and CP4 of the Core Strategy and policy C11 of the Local Plan. Policies C2 and C4 of the Local Plan are concerned with impacts on the historic environment and heritage assets, ensuring new development is not detrimental to the historic or special character of such assets.
- 4.12 The character of the area varies within this part of Eastern Esplanade. On the corner of Southchurch Avenue and Eastern esplanade is the Grade II listed Kursaal building. With its striking dome this building forms a strong focal point for the gateway to the seafront. The buildings further to the east along Eastern esplanade are an eclectic mix of 1, 2 and 3 storey buildings many of which are in need of modernisation. These are typically commercial in character featuring amusements, cafes/restaurants and various retail outlets at ground floor with residential accommodation above. To the south of these buildings is a public car park. The sealife centre itself is a prominent building on the southern side of the esplanade with 3 distinctive pitched roofs facing the road (maximum height 11.5m) which provide an immediate presence and identification of the building within the public realm. The built form of the existing sealife centre is split into 2 components on the northern and southern side of the site. These elements are effectively 'mirrored' either side of an open central corridor (due to an underground gas main) running through the centre of the site. At ground floor level the façade consists of a painted brick wall on the northern side and an extensive level of glazing facing the promenade and estuary on the southern side. The building appears dated and is in need of refurbishment and revitalisation. Further to the east beyond the sealife centre is the existing miniature golf course on the southern side of the esplanade road and the promenade stretching along the seafront. On the northern side is a row of listed and locally listed former fisherman's cottages which date from the early to mid C19. These cottages also form the Eastern Esplanade Conservation Area. The cottages are on the whole unaltered apart from some minor cosmetic changes to the exterior.
- 4.13 The proposed extension will project some 42m to the east of the existing access onto Eastern Esplanade. This existing vehicular access will be retained for parking although is proposed to be gated and provide a break between the extension and existing building. The extension will have a pitched roof at the west end and a flat roof for the remainder. It will be set back slightly (up to 0.5m) from the existing building line along the road frontage and be sited adjacent to the edge of the promenade. There will be no openings at street level or along the promenade, however a number of porthole-style features would break up the facade.

The applicant has advised that the ability to provide openings within the fabric of the building is limited on the advice of marine and veterinary consultants. Materials would complement those on the main building.

- 4.14 It is acknowledged that within the street scene on the northern side of Eastern Esplanade there is a row of 6 listed and 12 locally listed dwellings which form part of the Eastern Esplanade Conservation Area. The conservation area stretches from the first property on the eastern side of Burdett Road to the last cottage (no.57). The fisherman's cottages remain largely unaltered and reflect the historical significance of former industry within the town. The proposed extension will not extend as far east as these cottages. Whilst some views of the conservation area will be lost from the promenade when approaching from the west, the first 5 properties within the conservation area have been assessed (conservation area appraisal 2006) as having a neutral or negative impact on the character of the area. However, views of the fisherman's cottages will still be available once passing the miniature golf course kiosk and will remain when approaching from the east by foot or vehicle. The street scene of Eastern Esplanade opens up to the south once passing the existing sea life centre, although views of the estuary are not available from the footpath due to the level of the land rising up to the promenade and sea wall. Whilst the extension will result in the built form being positioned on the back edge of footpath, thus enclosing the street, it will not be as tall as the buildings opposite.
- 4.15 The separation distance between the existing buildings on the northern side of the esplanade and the proposed extension will be approximately 22m. Given this separation, it is not considered the extension would be harmful to the character of the area. Furthermore, as the proposed extension would not project as far eastwards as the listed and locally listed buildings within the conservation area, on balance, it is not considered it will harm their setting or the character of the conservation area.
- 4.16 It is considered whilst significantly increasing the horizontal form of the existing building the setting within the openness of the seafront allows for a larger building to be accommodated in this location, without materially impacting upon nearby local heritage assets. The amended scheme is simple and results in far less bulk than the previously proposed scheme. The proposal is considered to comply with above policies.

Traffic and Highways Issues

NPPF; DPD1 (Core Strategy) policies CP3; BLP policies T8, T11, T12 and T13; EPOA Parking Standards 2001

- 4.17 The NPPF states that; *“all developments should take into account whether the opportunities for sustainable transport models have been taken up to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure, safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved by all people and improvements can be undertaken in the transport network that cost effectively limits the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the developments are severe.”*
- 4.18 Policy CP3 states; *“improvements to transport infrastructure and services will be sought in partnership to secure a 'step change' in provision to achieve a modern integrated transport system necessary to unlock key development sites and to secure the sustainable jobs led regeneration and growth of Southend.”*
- 4.19 The existing site currently uses as an area of hard standing at the eastern end of the building as an informal area for parking and as a servicing area. This area of land is currently designated as public highway and will require a stopping up order which is separate to this application. This area currently allows for parking of approximately 12 cars. It is proposed this will be reduced to 4 car parking spaces. With respect to customer parking, they will rely on public car parking in the locality which is current situation for existing customers. In particular, the Fairheads Green car park (213 spaces) which is immediately to the west of the site and pay and display on street parking in Eastern Esplanade. The proposal would result in 20 additional jobs being created. Furthermore, it is the aspiration of the applicant that the extension will result in approximately 30% increase in customers which are currently around 150,000 per annum. The vast majority of visitors comprise of families therefore, it would not result in a pro-rata increase in trip generation. The aim of improving the offer of the sealife centre is to increase its seasonality in Autumn, Winter and Spring. The enlargement of the sealife centre will mean that the duration of stay for visitors will be longer. Servicing will take place either through the proposed car parking area or kerbside within the existing road network. The width of the road allows for a lorry to be parked adjacent to the kerb with vehicles still able to pass in both directions.
- 4.20 Policy T11 requires the provision of adequate parking and servicing facilities. The Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) have been adopted by the Council and set out the requirements for each use. The parking standards are expressed as maximum standards and require a maximum of 1 space per 22m² of floorspace for leisure facilities. The additional floorspace proposed is 1,175m² which would require a maximum of 53 parking spaces to be provided on site.

- 4.21 The applicant has submitted a transport statement and contends that additional parking is not required as the sealife centre is visited as part of linked trips to other attractions along the seafront and is not a destination in its own right. It states that Southend, as a tourist destination, is at its busiest on sunny days at weekends and during school holidays when traffic generation is already at its peak. In this context, the sealife centre is an all-weather attraction but its busiest periods are during inclement weather in the summer (i.e. when visitors are already in the town). Therefore, given the aim is to provide an attraction which will seek to increase visitors during early Spring, late Autumn and winter months (i.e. outside the busiest periods of the year), the applicant's position is that there is capacity to cater for additional traffic generation during these periods. The applicant also considers the increase in visitor numbers will be drawn from local residents and the existing 6.5 million annual visitors to the town. Therefore, in essence, these are mainly linked trips. Attempts have been made by the applicant to use the industry standard database (TRICS) to assess the potential number of additional trips the extended sea life centre could attract. However, the applicant advises there are very few comparable sites and a significant number of variables in the information that is available to allow for a sound quantitative comparison to be made. Therefore, the applicant has relied upon a qualitative assessment.
- 4.22 The transport statement advises there is a number of pay & display public car parks within a 10 minute walk of the site. This includes Fairheads Green (213 spaces, 1 minute walk), The Royals (450 spaces, 10 min walk), Seaways (615 spaces, 6 min walk) and there is also on street parking available in Eastern Esplanade. With respect to Seaways, there are aspirations for redevelopment of this site although no planning application has been submitted at this point. Nevertheless, it is identified in the SCAAP (consultation draft proposed submission document) that any redevelopment of Seaways will still include public parking of approximately 450 spaces. It is understood that the seafront car parks tend to be fully occupied during the day at peak season/times and that town centre car parks average 55-60% occupancy at this time. This is thought to be, at least in part, due to variable message signs (VMS) primarily directing visitors to the seafront. Other potential development in the locality also includes the Marine Plaza site opposite the Kursaal which has previously had outline planning permission for a major redevelopment.
- 4.23 With regard to accessibility to public transport, the site is served by the number 9 bus route which stops directly outside the site for east bound and west bound services (runs every 12 minutes Mon-Sat and every 30 min Sun). There are also a number of other services within 500m of the site including routes 7, 8, 23A, 23B and 27. The Southend Travel Centre (bus interchange) is 1km from the site. Train stations within the town are 1.1km, (Southend East), 1.3km (Southend Central) and 1.8km (Southend respectively from the application site. There are also good cycleway and footpath connections to the site from the town centre and along the seafront. Cycle parking is also available immediately adjacent to the entrance to the sealife centre.

The application is supported by a Travel Plan which will be introduced in order to encourage a reduced number of trips by car and promote more sustainable modes of transport to access the site for visitors and staff. Information promoting public transport to the site is displayed on the sealife centre website and has been encouraged through initiatives such as promotions for free travel on c2c by buying Adventure Island wristbands from the station ticket offices (these can also be used for entry at the sealife centre).

- 4.24 The proposal will not provide any additional on-site parking and the parking that is currently provided will be reduced. The maximum additional on-site parking requirement is for 53 spaces and the existing sealife centre already relies on public car parks for its customers. It is regrettable that trip generation from comparable sites (TRICS) has not been deemed suitable to allow for a quantitative assessment and no data is available on trip generation for the existing sealife centre. Therefore, a qualitative assessment has been carried out within the Transport Statement. However, this assessment identifies that the site is well served by existing public car parks, public transport (particularly bus routes) and cycle/footpath links. The sealife centre will increase the tourist offer on inclement summer days and is intended to increase the seasonality by providing an improved attraction during early Spring, late Autumn and Winter months. The increase in visitors is expected to come from local residents and the existing pool of 6.5 million annual visitors, in essence, from linked trips. On the basis that the proposal is also to provide a Travel Plan, on balance, it is not considered the proposal will materially impact upon the free flow of traffic in the highway network subject to the provision of a Travel Plan being required by condition.

Flood Risk and Drainage

NPPF; DPD1 (Core Strategy) policies KP1, KP2.

- 4.25 The NPPF sets out advice to local authorities with respect to flood risk and states; *“Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Core Strategy policy KP2 is concerned with flood risk and water management. Development that increases the risk of flooding should be resisted.* The site is located within Flood Zone 3(a) which is classed as having a high probability of flooding (i.e. greater than 1 in 200 year) from tidal sources. On this basis the applicant has submitted a flood risk assessment.
- 4.26 The NPPF requires the development to meet the requirements of the sequential test (i.e. development should not be located within a high risk zone if there is land subject to less risk available). The Core Strategy identifies the seafront as an area for regeneration and growth and its formation was supported by a strategic flood risk assessment (SFRA). The SFRA indicates that the defence currently provides protection to the 1:1000 year standard. The crest of the defence in the vicinity of the site is approximately 5.3m AOD.

The SFRA also includes a simulation of the likely flood depth and flood hazard in the vicinity of the site following a breach or overtopping of the existing defences. This simulation was assessed at 3 breach locations (each 20m wide over 3 tidal cycles) in close proximity to the site. The depth of flooding at the site from a breach at any one of the three locations would be 0.5m in a 1 in 200 year event and 1.5m in a 1 in 1000 year event. The flood hazard following overtopping is 'Low' to 'Moderate' for the 1 in 200 year and 'Extreme' for the 1 in 1000 year event (inclusive of climate change).

- 4.27 As the proposal is to extend an existing leisure use, it is classified as a 'Less Vulnerable' use. Less Vulnerable uses are considered appropriate in flood zone 3(a) according to the flood risk vulnerability and flood zone compatibility matrix within the NPPF technical guidance. Therefore, it is only necessary to apply the sequential test. In this instance it is considered reasonable to apply the sequential test to the central seafront area only. There is limited potential for re-development within the central area and the proposal relates to extending the existing sealife centre. Furthermore, the land to the east of the existing sea life centre is deliverable and available. There are no other reasonably available sites within the seafront area that could support the extension. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of the sequential test.
- 4.28 It is proposed to build in flood defence mechanisms to the design of the building. The building will be designed to withstand the loading of an external water level of 5.4m AOD. Demountable defences will be provided for all external doors and openings and a demountable wall will be provided across the western 'open' side of the centre. Demountable defences are only as effective where there is adequate warning of an impending flood. Tidal surges can be forecast several days in advance as evidenced by events in November 2007 and December 2013. In both cases sufficient warning was given to enable necessary evacuations. Flood repairable options could also be built into the development such as tile/stone flooring, plastic surfaced materials, non-return valves to be fitted to drains and water inlet/outlet pipes and raising electricity supply boxes, wall sockets 300mm-600mm above floor level.
- 4.29 The site falls within the EA's 'Floodline' flood warning system. This service aims to provide a minimum 2 hour warning of an impending flood. It is recommended that the operator subscribes to this service as part of a flood emergency plan for the site. A flood emergency plan should also be prepared and implemented in the event of a flood and this can be imposed by condition. Subject to appropriate conditions it is therefore, considered the risks of tidal flooding can be satisfactorily mitigated.

4.30 With respect to surface water runoff, the proposed development will result in an increase in surface water run off without appropriate mitigation. The NPPF recommends that 'post development' run off rates should be restricted to those rates generated by the 'pre-developed' site, or less, for up to and including the 1:100 annual probability storm event and taking into account climate change. The FRA advises that based on local geology and the scale of the development the use of infiltration systems and soakaways would appear to be untenable in this location. It is therefore, recommended that a direct, attenuated, connection is made to an existing outfall as this will enable surface water runoff from the site to be discharged immediately to the River Thames before peak flows in the sewer system develop from the remainder of the catchment. The applicant has confirmed that an attenuation tank will be installed on site therefore, this is considered to be an acceptable solution to manage surface water drainage subject to Anglian Water approval.

Impact on residential amenity

NPPF; DPD1 (Core Strategy) policy CP4, Policy C11 Borough Local Plan

4.31 The proposal will extend further to the east which will be in front of properties on the northern side of Eastern Esplanade and be generally 5m high. The separation distance between the proposed extension and the front wall of the existing buildings is 22m. The majority of residential dwellings in this location immediately opposite the extension are flats therefore, they are located at first floor level or above. Given this separation distance, it is not considered the proposed extension would be overbearing or cause an unreasonable sense of enclosure. Furthermore, it is not considered the proposal would result in a material loss of light to these properties.

Sustainability

NPPF; DPD1 (Core Strategy) policy KP2

4.32 Policy KP2 of the Core Strategy states; "*All development proposals should demonstrate how they will maximise the use of renewable and recycled energy, water and other resources*" and that "*at least 10% of the energy needs of a new development should come from on-site renewable options (and/or decentralised renewable or low carbon energy sources)*".

4.33 The provision of renewable energy resources should be considered at the earliest opportunity to ensure an intrinsic design in this instance. The applicant has indicated in the Planning, Design and Access Statement that photovoltaics can be provided on the flat roof. No calculations have been provided through an energy statement to demonstrate the number required to meet the 10% requirement however, given the scale of the roof, it is considered this is achievable. Therefore, it is reasonable to impose a condition requiring details to be agreed.

Ecology

NPPF; DPD1 (Core Strategy) policy KP2

4.34

A habitat regulations assessment has been carried out by the Council, as required by the Habitat Regulations 2010, in consultation with Natural England and the RSPB. It has been concluded that an Appropriate Assessment is not required as the proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact on the conservation objectives of the designated sites.

Summary and Conclusion

4.35 The proposed development would improve the tourist/visitor offer on the seafront, particularly in early Spring, late Autumn and the Winter months and is acceptable in principle. The amended scheme would not detract from the character of the area or harm the setting of the nearby listed buildings and conservation area.

4.36 Whilst the extension will attract additional visitors (circa 30%) it is not considered this will result in a pro-rata increase in trip generation, particularly as the majority of visitors are families. Although no off street parking is proposed impacts on parking, subject to the implementation of a Travel Plan, would not be significant. The potential for flood risk can be managed through a flood emergency plan and flood defence measures for the building. Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with the NPPF and development plan policies.

5 Planning Policy Summary

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Technical Guidance

5.2 Development Plan Document 1 Core Strategy (2007); Policies KP1 (Spatial Strategy), KP2 (Development Principles), CP3 (Transport and Accessibility); CP4 (The Environment and Urban Renaissance)

5.3 Borough Local Plan (1994); Policies C2 (Historic Buildings), C4 (Conservation Areas), C11 (New Buildings, Extensions and Alterations), C16 (Foreshore Views), L1 (Tourism), L2 (Central Seafront Area), T8 (Traffic Management and Highway Safety), T11 (Parking Standards), T12 (Servicing Facilities) and T13 (Cycling and Walking)

5.4 SPD1 Design & Townscape Guide (2009)

6 Representation Summary

6.1 Design and Regeneration

While the development would certainly have a visual impact an approach that also seeks to reinforce the leisure offer and 'update' existing buildings is encouraging. It is considered that an approach that sympathetically responds to the setting, and improves the appearance of the existing buildings could be achievable, although this will likely necessitate some enhancements to the design. Given the nature of the use, a contemporary approach to the design would seem appropriate, marking the eastern extent of the central seafront promenade, and not unnecessarily competing with the nearby heritage assets, although close attention to detail will be needed to ensure old integrates successfully with new (if a comprehensive redevelopment of the site is not to be progressed).

The plans seek to introduce a significant built form into the (enclosed) open space of the former miniature golf course, and create a longer and inactive street frontage onto Eastern Esplanade. While it would be desirable to see opportunity for visibility through the building exploited (or indeed a reduction in scale), there is scope to better articulate the building, particularly at ground floor to all elevations, to mitigate against the associated impacts of this at street level.

Interestingly, the design incorporates some 'bubble' style windows which it is considered should add interest and therefore could be further utilised, in a range of sizes, across all elevations to provide activity.

The design approach has sought to respond to the opportunity to enhance the existing buildings on the site, which are relatively 'tired', by wrapping a contemporary cladding around old and new. The principles behind this approach are understood, and although an alternative approach for example could be to provide a simple extension to the rear with a subservient link between the two buildings, this would not necessarily incorporate improvements to the existing buildings. Nonetheless, enhancements may be possible that provide a more sensitive approach to the extension of this building, considering the impact on the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings (and wider conservation area) addressing scale and massing (particularly through a reduction in the scale of cladding proposed), materials and colour, and successfully articulating ground floor frontages.

6.2 Environment Agency

No objection subject to a flood emergency plan being conditioned.

6.3 Natural England

No objection. The proposal is not likely to have significant effects on the conservation objectives of the designated sites. Recommended conditions;

1. *No concrete-breaking, percussive pile-driving, or other particularly noisy demolition or construction activities are to be carried out during periods of freezing weather (ie when the ground or air temperature is at or below 0°C, or the ground is snow covered).*

Reason: In order to minimise the risk of disturbance to over-wintering wildfowl and waders using the nearby foreshore during periods when they are already subject to additional stress due to the weather conditions.

2. *No security or other exterior lighting shall be illuminated, unless such lights are so arranged as to prevent any light spill onto the Benfleet and Southend Marshes SSSI, and to minimise direct glare when viewed from the foreshore.*

Reason: To minimise the risk of disturbance to wintering birds whilst feeding on the SSSI, or of disorientation of birds whilst in flight.

6.4 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

No objection but would request due to the proximity of the development to the SPA a condition is imposed to prevent construction work taking place during the period October–March inclusive. **[Officer comment: Natural England are the statutory consultee and they have recommended a condition regarding limiting certain construction work during periods of freezing weather only rather than a blanket exclusion on construction work for 5 months of the year]**

6.5 Essex Wildlife Trust

No comments

6.6 Highways

Transport Statement

A Transport Statement has now been provided for the Sealife Centre application, which includes more information compared to the initial TS that was supplied.

No trip information to the site has been provided as the TS states the following:

“There is insufficient TRICS data to enable a sound assessment to be undertaken of the potential number of trips that could be attracted to the proposed Sealife Adventure extension by this method; due to variations due to different site locations influencing travel modes, the age of the data, the days of the week surveyed, weather conditions on the day(s) surveyed and seasonality factors. A qualitative rather than quantitative approach has therefore been adopted.”

Data from TRICS has been supplied and it is accepted this is not comparable. However some base line data is required as part of the Travel Plan. Monitoring of the site shall need to be undertaken and the results agreed with the Council. The monitoring shall need to be undertaken on the current site during the summer months to give a baseline, then after the new indoor fun park has been open after 3 months, then yearly for three years. If the visitor numbers increase during any of the monitoring periods by more than 25% compared to the baseline data then further evidence of the sites impacts on the highway network and the surrounding parking capacity shall need to be provided to the council.

Travel Plan

Overall the Travel Plan submitted still needs to give more consideration to providing the relevant information. Organisations that are expanding need to provide information regarding their current business and then this can be used for the baseline data.

Both the transport statement and travel plan still lack factual information regarding the numbers of visitors to the centre, age of visitors, when they travel there, from where and by what mode. There is also no clear indication of how many additional visitors they may receive. This makes it very hard to comment on the Travel Plan.

7 Public Consultation

- 7.1 Interests parties notified of amended scheme – no comments received at time of writing.

7.2 Original Scheme: Press notice, site notices posted and 41 neighbouring properties notified by letter. The public consultation period expires on 7 April therefore, any additional objections will be reported via the supplementary report. 14 representations have been received raising the following issues;

- Obstruction/loss of views of the estuary and pier from the fisherman's cottages
- Increase in volume of traffic and impact on parking along the seafront due to scale of the extension. Parking is already inadequate for residents who pay annual parking fees.
- Will result in further cruelty to animals (enclosures are too small and unnatural for animals in captivity)
- Existing building is unattractive and this is worse in terms of its proposed appearance
- Proposal is in complete contrast to the current neighbourhood of seafront cottages and small local businesses and will detract from the heritage of this important area
- Proposal is a backward step in the context of the historical preservation of the area and is obtrusive to conservation area
- Blueprint was designed to protect and enhance the last remaining part of the original fishing village of Southend which was backed by Cabinet. What happened to the policy of protecting the area?
- Aspiration to extend the City Beach development would be preferable to this proposal
- Loss of green space/grassy area of the site is used for leisure/recreation by locals and visitors and is one of the few non concreted areas remaining on the seafront
- Noise impact from public announcements within the centre
- Concerns with construction and potential issues with the gas main under the site
- The road immediately adjacent to the existing sea life centre on the eastern side is classified as public highway
- Negative impact on the foreshore which is a SSSI
- Will block off a public thoroughfare which was put in place after a public children's playground was demolished for the existing sealife centre
- Issues with drainage last summer when existing systems could not cope. Proposal will increase chances of a repeat of a similar event.
- Similar to a previous proposal which was rejected.

One (1) letter of support has been received stating a bigger and better sealife centre will attract more tourists particularly in the winter months. Will complement the City Beach scheme. Seafront Traders Association/BID considers the proposal is vital in improving the seafront.

8 Relevant Planning History

- 8.1 2007 – Application withdrawn to erect two storey building with basement (2770sqm) comprising children’s play centre, restaurant and party rooms as extension to sea life centre; layout outdoor childrens play area (Sea Life Centre And Miniature Golf Course) (07/00719/FULM).
- 8.2 December 2009 – Planning permission granted to install new windows, door and erect fire escape staircase to first floor on North elevation; alter and install new windows and doors to South, East and West elevations; re-clad and install awnings to South elevation (09/01934/FUL).
- 8.3 April 2010 – Planning permission granted to replace existing metal cladding on north elevation with weatherboard cladding (10/00456/FUL).

9 Recommendation

Members are recommended to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 (three) years from the date of this decision.**

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 162 P01 REV B, 162 P03 REV B, 162 P04 REV B, 162 P06 REV B, 162 P08 REV B**

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan.

- 3 No development shall take place until details of the materials have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: To safeguard the character and visual amenities of the area, policies KP2 and CP4 of DPD1 (Core Strategy) and Policy C4, C11 of the Southend-on-Sea Borough Local Plan and the Design and Townscape Guide SPD1.

- 4 Prior to first use of the development a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**

Reason: In the interests of sustainability, accessibility, highways efficiency and safety, residential amenity and general environmental quality in accordance with DPD1 (Core Strategy) 2007 policy KP2, CP3 and CP4, Borough Local Plan 1994 policies T8 and T11

- 5 Prior to first use of the development a flood emergency plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**

Reason: In the interests of the safety of customers and staff in the event of a flood in accordance with the NPPF and policy KP2 of the Core Strategy.

- 6 Prior to commencement of development an energy statement demonstrating that 10% of the energy requirements of the development can be provided through on site renewable sources, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The renewable energy sources shall then be implemented prior to first use of the building in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: In the interests of sustainability in accordance with the NPPF and policy KP2 of the Core Strategy.

- 7 No concrete-breaking, percussive pile-driving, or other particularly noisy demolition or construction activities are to be carried out during periods of freezing weather (ie when the ground or air temperature is at or below 0°C, or the ground is snow covered).**

Reason: In order to minimise the risk of disturbance to over-wintering wildfowl and waders using the nearby foreshore during periods when they are already subject to additional stress due to the weather conditions in accordance with the NPPF and policy CP4 of the Core Strategy.

- 8 No security or other exterior lighting shall be illuminated, unless such lights are so arranged as to prevent any light spill onto the Benfleet and Southend Marshes SSSI, and to minimise direct glare when viewed from the foreshore.**

Reason: to minimise the risk of disturbance to wintering birds whilst feeding on the SSSI, or of disorientation of birds whilst in flight in accordance with the NPPF and policy CP4 of the Core Strategy.

Informative

- 1** When you carry out the work, you must avoid taking, damaging or destroying the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or used, and avoid taking or destroying the egg of any wild bird. These would be offences (with certain exceptions) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Habitats Regulations 1994 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

- 2** The applicant is advised to subscribe to 'Floodline' the Environment Agency's flood warning system.

STOCKVALE

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO SEA LIFE ADVENTURE:
EASTERN ESPLANADE, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA



DRAFT TRAVEL PLAN

REPORT REFERENCE NO. T500-02

PROJECT NO. T500

MARCH 2014

**PROPOSED EXTENSION TO SEA LIFE ADVENTURE:
EASTERN ESPLANADE, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA**

DRAFT TRAVEL PLAN

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**REPORT REFERENCE NO. T500-02
PROJECT NO. T500
MARCH 2014**

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APPENDICES

- A Cycle Route Map**
- B Bus Route Map**

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

REV	ISSUE PURPOSE	AUTHOR	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
	1 st Draft for Review	SAF	ML	RMA	16/03/14
	Final Draft	SAF	ML	RMA	18/03/14

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Ardent Consulting Engineers (ACE) has been appointed by Stockvale to advise on highways/transport aspects of the proposed extension of Sealife Adventure at Eastern Esplanade, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.
- 1.2 This Draft Travel Plan has been prepared retrospectively to support a planning application (ref. 14/00038/BC4M), submitted to the local planning and highway authority (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council – SSBC) for extending the existing Sealife Adventure attraction to provide additional fish tanks and enclosures, and a children's play area.
- 1.3 The scope of this Travel Plan has been prepared in accordance with: the Department for Transport (DfT) documents *Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process*, *Essential Guide to Travel Planning*, *Towards a Sustainable Transport System* and *Making Smarter Choices Work* as well as the SSBC document *Travel Plan Framework/Travel Plan Guidance*.
- 1.4 It is consistent with the objectives of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, the *Southend Local Transport Plan* and adopted policy that forms part of the *Local Development Framework*.
- 1.5 This Travel Plan deals with both visitor and employee travel. It is a long-term management strategy and living document, which will be periodically monitored and subsequently reviewed on an annual basis, over a period of five years. Reviewing the Travel Plan will ensure that its measures and targets are reflective of visitor and employee travel demands and the local environment.
- 1.6 Its overall aim is to reduce reliance upon the private car by effecting a change in attitude to travel and increasing awareness of

alternative modes and the associated benefits of sustainable transport.

1.7 Following this introduction, the remainder of this report is structured as follows: -

- **Section 2** provides background policy guidance and sets out Travel Plan objectives;
- **Section 3** provides a description of the development;
- **Section 4** considers the existing travel characteristics;
- **Section 5** sets out the range of travel initiatives and incentives; and
- **Section 6** describes the process for setting targets and monitoring progress.

2.0 POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

2.1 A Travel Plan is an initiative which promotes smarter travel choices, with the aim of achieving a modal shift away from single occupancy car journeys towards more sustainable travel choices. It is a long-term strategy with the following aims: -

- to promote travel opportunities by environmentally-friendly modes; and
- to introduce a package of physical and management measures that will facilitate travel by other modes.

2.2 A Travel Plan for leisure use typically focuses on journeys to a site made by visitors and employees.

National Policy

2.3 *The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, March 2012, presumes in favour of sustainable development, with the three areas of sustainable development identified as being: economic, social and environmental.

2.4 The *NPPF* advises that transport has a key role to play in facilitating sustainable development as well as contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. It identifies that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable travel modes and to maximise use; however it recognises that opportunities vary by location.

2.5 The *NPPF* states that: *Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people... ...A key tool to facilitate this will be a Travel Plan.*

All developments which generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a Travel Plan.

- 2.6 The Department for Transport (DfT) summarises the concept of a Travel Plan as: a strategy for managing the travel generated by an organisation/development, with the aim of reducing its environmental impact, typically including support for walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing (ref: DfT, *Essential Guide to Travel Planning*, 2007).
- 2.7 The DfT's document *Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process* provides guidelines of how to make use of the planning process in ensuring the effective implementation of sustainable travel measures. The guidelines acknowledge that, for leisure sites, Travel Plans can help to promote the site and its attraction to new visitor markets and different sections of the community.

Local Policy

- 2.8 The *Southend Local Transport Plan* identifies the need to focus travel planning on promoting walking for journeys up to 1.5km and cycling for all journeys less than 5km, especially around the town centre and along the east/west bus corridors; with public transport otherwise promoted as the mode of choice for journeys.
- 2.9 Core Strategy **Policy KP2 – Development Principles** identifies the need to *promote improved and sustainable modes of travel*.

Travel Plan Objectives

2.10 The principal objectives of this Travel Plan are as follows: -

- Provide employees and visitors with greater information as to the alternative modes of travel available when travelling from within Southend and further afield;
- Promote to employees and visitors the use of alternative modes of travel other than single-occupancy car; and
- Support employees to achieve a shift in travel behaviour away from single occupancy car travel towards more sustainable forms of transport.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

- 3.1 It is proposed to extend the existing Sealife Adventure to the east to provide additional fish tanks and enclosures, and a children's play area.
- 3.2 Sealife Adventure is an all-weather attraction that is used throughout the year. Along with the nearby Adventure Island Fun Park, Sealife Adventure has been a key driver for tourist economy and regeneration on the Seafront for many years. Its proposed extension is considered an important step in extending the season in conjunction with the proposed new indoor fun park at Adventure Island (application ref. 14/00069/BC4M) and helping to make Southend a year-round tourist destination.
- 3.3 Sealife Adventure currently employs some 30 staff. It is anticipated that the proposed extension will generate an additional 20 jobs, and therefore around 50 people will be employed at the site.

Access

- 3.4 The existing vehicle access will be retained to serve 4 no. on-site car parking spaces for staff/servicing, with deliveries and servicing etc. taken on-street as per existing arrangements.
- 3.5 Pedestrian access to the extended Sealife Adventure building will be as existing, i.e. from the Promenade.

Parking

- 3.6 The existing car parking provision of 4 no. staff/servicing spaces is to be retained. As per the existing arrangement for visitors to Sealife Adventure, visitors by car will use the available Seafront and town centre public car parks.

- 3.7 The proposed redevelopment scheme will provide an additional 10 no. cycle parking spaces.

4.0 EXISTING TRAVEL PATTERNS

Site Location

4.1 The site is 0.32 ha in size and is located off Eastern Esplanade, on the Seafront of Southend-on-Sea, as shown at **Plate 1**.



Plate 1: Site Location

4.2 The site is bordered by: -

- Eastern Esplanade to the north;
- an 18-hole mini-golf course to the east;
- the Seafront pedestrian promenade to the south; and
- Fairheads Green public car park to the west.

4.3 An aerial view of the application site is shown at **Plate 2**.



Plate 2: Aerial View of Site

Extant Site Use

- 4.4 The application site includes the existing Sealife Adventure and vacant land to the immediate east, which previously formed part of the mini-golf course. The entrance to the centre lies adjacent to the promenade and Fairheads Green public car park.



Plate 3: The Site

- 4.5 Access to a pool of essential staff car park spaces is available from Eastern Esplanade via a simple priority 'T' junction, located to the rear (east) of the Sealife Adventure building.
- 4.6 Sealife Adventure is open every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day, from between 10am and 11am until between 5pm and 8pm, with the latter depending on the time of year. Its current exhibits include marine creatures found locally in the Thames and an array of tropical fish.

Walking

- 4.7 There are excellent pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of the site, with high standard wide footways and crossing facilities on Eastern Esplanade and Marine Parade.
- 4.8 SSBC has completed a "public realm" enhancement project on Marine Parade and Western Esplanade in recent years, which has created a safer, more attractive and more permeable environment for pedestrians in the Seafront area.
- 4.9 A zebra crossing is located on Eastern Esplanade immediately north of the site (see **Plate 4**) and a staggered pelican crossing is located circa 50m west of the site (see **Plate 5**), both of which facilitates safe movement across Eastern Esplanade.



Plate 4: Zebra Crossing on Eastern Esplanade



Plate 5: Pelican Crossing on Eastern Esplanade

- 4.10 The footways on both sides of Eastern Esplanade are well lit and provide direct access to bus stops (see below).
- 4.11 The Western Esplanade connects to footpaths on Pier Hill, facilitating visitor movement to/from High Street for direct access to the town centre and rail stations (see below).
- 4.12 The excellent local pedestrian facilities and available connections to the town centre, rail stations, bus stops, and local residential areas

makes walking a desirable mode of travel for staff and visitors alike; either as part of a multi-modal journey (with rail or bus) or as a main mode.

Cycling

4.13 There are a number of cycle routes in close proximity to the site, which connect to the town and borough wide network (see **Plate 6**). National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 16 passes the site on Eastern Esplanade and connects Southend-on-Sea with Shoeburyness.



Plate 6: Local Cycle Map

4.14 Around 200m east of the site, NCN Route 16 takes the form of a segregated cycleway running parallel with the promenade.

4.15 Cycle parking is available immediately adjacent to the entrance to Sealife Adventure, along the promenade, and at a number of other locations along the Seafront as shown at **Plate 6**.

4.16 Cycle maps for the town centre, Seafront and the whole Borough are included at **Appendix A**. The level of available cycle connectivity makes cycling a desirable mode of travel for visitors and staff alike.

Public Transport

Bus

4.17 The site is highly accessible by bus, with stops located on Eastern Esplanade within a circa 80m (1-minute) walk distance of the site (eastbound stop located west of the site, and westbound stop east of the site). Southend Travel Centre (bus interchange) is located within a circa 1km (13-minute) walk distance, north-west of the site (see **Plate 7**).



Plate 7: Local Bus Route Map

4.18 The bus stops closest to the site are served by the no. 9 route, which has a 12-minute daytime frequency and operates between Rayleigh and Shoeburyness via the Travel Centre.

4.19 Southend Travel Centre is served by an extensive network of bus routes; offering frequent services to many parts of the borough and across Essex. Frequencies of services available within a circa 500m (6-min) walk distance of the site are shown in **Table 2.1**, below, and a map showing local routes is included at **Appendix B**.

Table 2.1: Bus services within a 500m walk distance

	Service and Route	Frequency (minutes)		
		Weekdays	Weekends	
			Sat	Sun
	Southend-on-Sea Travel Centre - SOSTC			
7	Rayleigh - Hockley - Rochford - Prittlewell - SOSTC - Southchurch - Thorpe Bay - North Shoebury - Great Wakering	20	10	60
8	Hawkwell - Rochford - Prittlewell - SOSTC - Thorpe Bay - North Shoebury	30	30	60
9	Rayleigh - Eastwood - Prittlewell - Southend-on-Sea Victoria Station - SOSTC - Thorpe Bay - Shoeburyness - North Shoebury	12	12	30
23A	SOSTC - Southchurch (Loop service - morning & afternoon)	40	40	-
23B	SOSTC - Southchurch (Loop service - evening)	40	40	-
27	Canvey - South Benfleet - Hadleigh - Leigh-on-Sea - SOSTC - Southchurch	15	15	30

4.20 The availability of bus services that stop within a reasonable walk of the site actively encourages the use of this mode of travel for staff and visitors alike.

Rail

4.21 Southend is highly accessible by rail, with it being served by two lines; c2c services at Southend Central and Southend East, and Abellio Greater Anglia services at Southend Victoria (see **Plate 8**).



Plate 8: Rail Map

- 4.22 Southend East station is located with a circa 1.1km (14-minute) walk distance of the site and Southend Central station within a circa 1.3km (16-minute) walk distance. Both are served by c2c services operating between London Fenchurch Street (a 55/52-minute journey) and Shoeburyness (a 7/10-minute journey). Intermediate stations include West Ham, Barking, Upminster, Grays, Tilbury, Basildon, Pitsea and Leigh-on-Sea.
- 4.23 On weekdays there are around six trains per hour to/from Southend East/Central and London Fenchurch Street, and four to Shoeburyness. On Saturdays the frequency reduces slightly to five trains per hour to/from Southend East/Central and London Fenchurch Street. On Sundays, there are four trains per hour to/from Southend East/Central and London Fenchurch Street and two to Shoeburyness.
- 4.24 Southend Victoria station is located within a circa 1.8km (23-minute) walk distance of the site. Whilst such a walk distance may appear lengthy to/from a specific destination; it is important to recognise that many visitors to Southend will spend the whole day, shopping in the town centre, enjoying the central Seafront (including Adventure Island) and then walking along the Promenade to Sealife Adventure. As such, the walk effectively forms part of visitors' days out in the town, and therefore should not be viewed in isolation of this.

- 4.25 Further, the no. 9 bus service, that stops within a 1-minute walk of the site, connects the site with Southend Victoria station.
- 4.26 The station is served by Abellio Greater Anglia services operating between London Liverpool Street (a 60-minute journey) and Southend Victoria. Intermediate stations include Stratford, Romford, Shenfield (a 35-minute journey), Billericay, Wickford, Rayleigh, Hockley, Rochford and Prittlewell.
- 4.27 On weekdays and Saturdays there are three trains per hour to/from Southend Victoria and London Liverpool Street, all calling at Shenfield, and two per hour on Sundays.
- 4.28 The availability of rail services that serve the town actively encourages the use of this mode of travel for staff and visitors alike.

Local Highway Network

- 4.29 The Eastern Esplanade (the B1016) is a single carriageway road subject to a 30mph speed limit. Wide footways are present on both sides of the carriageway. There are double yellow line waiting restrictions at the site frontage; this permits loading/unloading for up to 20 minutes.
- 4.30 Access to Fairheads Green public car park is taken from Eastern Esplanade via a priority 'T' junction arrangement with right-turn lane.
- 4.31 The Eastern Esplanade, Marine Parade and Western Esplanade provides a route along the Seafront between Chalkwell (to the west) and Shoeburyness (to the east); the latter via the B1016 Chalk Esplanade. The B1016 Eastern Esplanade connects with the A1160 Southchurch Avenue via a three-arm signalised junction; this in turn links to the A13 and A127; with access beyond to settlements within the borough and other parts of Essex, the M25 and London.

Car Parking

- 4.32 There are a number of public (Council run) pay & display car parks within a reasonable walking distance of the site, located both along the Seafront and within the town centre. These include:
- Fairheads Green - 213 spaces (80m - 1 min walk);
 - Seaway - 615 spaces (500m - 6 min walk);
 - The Royals - 450 spaces (780m - 10 min walk); and
 - Tylers Avenue - 259 spaces (1km - 13 min walk).
- 4.33 There is also on-street pay-and-display parking available on Eastern Esplanade within a short walk of the site. This provision extends east along Thorpe Esplanade towards Shoeburyness.
- 4.34 In respect of the Seaway car park, it is understood that there is an aspiration for development on this site for leisure, cultural and tourism attractions including restaurants, digital gallery destination space and quality hotel together with new housing and re-provision of car parking. The development will result in the short-term loss of parking for the town centre and sea front as a whole.
- 4.35 Parking tariffs vary; however, generally short-stay parking located closer to the Seafront is more expensive than that in the town centre. Long stay parking tariffs are comparable; with these generally being £10 for a 6 hour stay or over.
- 4.36 Variable Message Signs (VMS) are located on strategic routes in and around Southend; these display parking availability for the central Seafront and town centre.
- 4.37 The VMS provision appears primarily focused on directing visitors to the Seafront car parks rather than town centre car parks; and congestion on routes to the Seafront can occur at peak season/times.

4.38 It is understood from discussions between Stockvale and officers at SSBC, that, although central Seafront car parks tend to be fully occupied during the day at peak season/times (typically in warm weather), town centre car parks average around 55-60% occupancy at this time. This is thought to be, in part, resultant from VMS primarily directing visitors to the Seafront and also a preference to park as near to the Seafront as possible.

Summary

4.39 It is clear from the above that the site is accessible by all modes of transport. Given its location on the Seafront and close to the town centre, reasonable proximity to the rail stations and bus interchange, and excellent pedestrian and cycle links, the site is well located to take advantage of sustainable travel opportunities.

4.40 As identified above, many visitors to Southend will spend the whole day, shopping in the town centre, enjoying the central Seafront (including Adventure Island) and then walking along the Promenade to Sealife Adventure. As such, a walk from local public transport nodes forms part of the visitor's day.

Existing Travel Patterns

4.41 Stockvale has confirmed that the majority of its employees working at Sealife Adventure reside in Southend, with others residing in neighbouring settlements; and either walk, cycle or use public transport to travel to/from work. This will be confirmed by travel surveys (see **Section 6.0**)

5.0 TRAVEL PLAN MEASURES

Introduction

Employees

- 5.1 The extended Sealife Adventure will have no additional on-site car parking spaces and the daily charges of local public car parks (generally £10 for over 6 hours) effectively restrains staff from using the private car to travel to/from work. It would therefore attract very few employee car trips.
- 5.2 The majority of Sealife Adventure's existing employees reside in Southend, with others residing in neighbouring settlements. The site is highly accessible by all modes of transport; therefore, the majority of journeys will be undertaken by bus and rail, as well as walking and cycling.
- 5.3 In line with *Southend Local Transport Plan* objectives, the measures proposed in this Travel Plan for employees are intended to: promote walking for journeys up to 1.5km; cycling for all journeys less than 5km; and otherwise public transport as the mode of choice for journeys.

Visitors

- 5.4 Sealife Adventure is part of the overall Seafront offer, including the beach, Pier, Adventure Island Fun Park etc. and it is not a destination in its own right. The majority of existing visitors to Sealife Adventure come from Southend, across the Borough and Essex.
- 5.5 The main customer base for Sealife Adventure is families (generally two adults and two children, travelling together); some of which from further afield will choose to drive to visit the seaside town of

Southend-on-Sea, as the main attractor, using available public car parking.

- 5.6 The short and long stay parking tariffs are reasonably priced for day-trippers, and car-borne trips are therefore only restricted by parking availability, which is plentiful when considering the Seafront and town centre parking collectively; especially on days of inclement weather when Sealife Adventure is busiest.
- 5.7 Given the above, the measures proposed in this Travel Plan for visitors primarily focus on publicity and financial incentives to promote and encourage the use of public transport, as well as walking and cycling for visitors that reside locally.

Employees and Visitors

- 5.8 The measures combine “hard measures” such as site design and infrastructure, with “soft measures” including marketing, promotion and awareness among employees and visitors.
- 5.9 The Travel Plan measures (and targets) will be set out following an initial survey of employees and visitors, carried out within six months of opening the new indoor fun park. These surveys will be undertaken in liaison with the SSBC Travel Planning Team and will be tailored to suit.
- 5.10 Annual employee and visitor surveys will be undertaken for the five years after occupation, with this data used to monitor whether travel plan targets are being met and to formulate future travel strategies.

Appointment of Travel Plan Co-ordinator

- 5.11 To ensure the delivery and management of the Travel Plan, a Travel Plan Co-ordinator (TPC) will be identified to promote and implement the various initiatives. The TPC role for the site is expected to be fulfilled by an employee of Sealife Adventure.
- 5.12 The SSBC Travel Planning Team will be notified of the name of the TPC prior to opening of the extended Sealife Adventure.
- 5.13 The TPC will update the Travel Plan prior to opening of the extended Sealife Adventure, and they will act as the initial point of contact for employees regarding travel to and from the site, and will also raise issues on their behalf with SSBC and local public transport operators.
- 5.14 Employees of Sealife Adventure will be trained to advise visitors on any queries regarding travel from the site.
- 5.15 The TPC will also be responsible for coordinating promotional events for promoting travel awareness campaigns such as *Cycle to Work Week* and *Walk to Work Week*. They will be supported by adequate funding to implement and monitor the Travel Plan.

Measures to promote Site Accessibility

- 5.16 The TPC will be responsible for commissioning the production of a legible and easy to use site accessibility map, highlighting how the fun park can be accessed by all transport modes (walking, cycling, bus, rail and car). The map will indicate other key local services/major attractions (such as the transport hubs, Adventure Island, and shops). The map will also indicate the locations of bus stops and rail stations and suggested walking routes to them, and existing cycle routes. Isochrones will be used to show access times for walking and cycling.

- 5.17 The TPC will be responsible for displaying the map in prominent locations in public areas, close to the entrance, and for keeping this up to date by obtaining information from SSBC and local public transport operators.

Measures to promote Walking and Cycling

- 5.18 In addition to the local public cycle parking already available, an additional 10 no. spaces within Sheffield stands are proposed. These will be located within the service courtyard.
- 5.19 Showers, changing rooms and lockers are available at Sealife Adventure for use by those who cycle or walk to work.
- 5.20 The TPC will be responsible for monitoring the use of the cycle parking provision to ensure that the facilities provided are adequate. If there is high demand, the TPC will investigate the possibility of introducing additional facilities.
- 5.21 The TPC will be responsible for displaying information on walking and cycling on noticeboards in public areas, and for keeping this up to date by obtaining information from SSBC and other organisations.
- 5.22 The TPC will distribute information and advice concerning safe walking and cycling routes to and from the site to new staff.
- 5.23 The TPC will encourage the formation of a cycle user group.

Measure to promote Public Transport

- 5.24 The TPC will be responsible for displaying information on local public transport on noticeboards in public areas, and for keeping this up to date by obtaining information from SSBC and local public transport operators to help promote use of buses and rail. The information displayed could include: -

- Maps showing the routes of bus services passing close to the site, the destinations they serve;
- Bus timetable and fares information; and
- Train timetables.

5.25 Stockvale, via its websites, actively encourage visitors to Sealife Adventure to travel by public transport (see **Plate 1** for example). Its IT team are committed to providing information on all potential modes of travel to and from Sealife Adventure on its website. This ensures that visitors are made aware of the different mode choices available to them and are able to make an informed decision as to how they are going to travel.

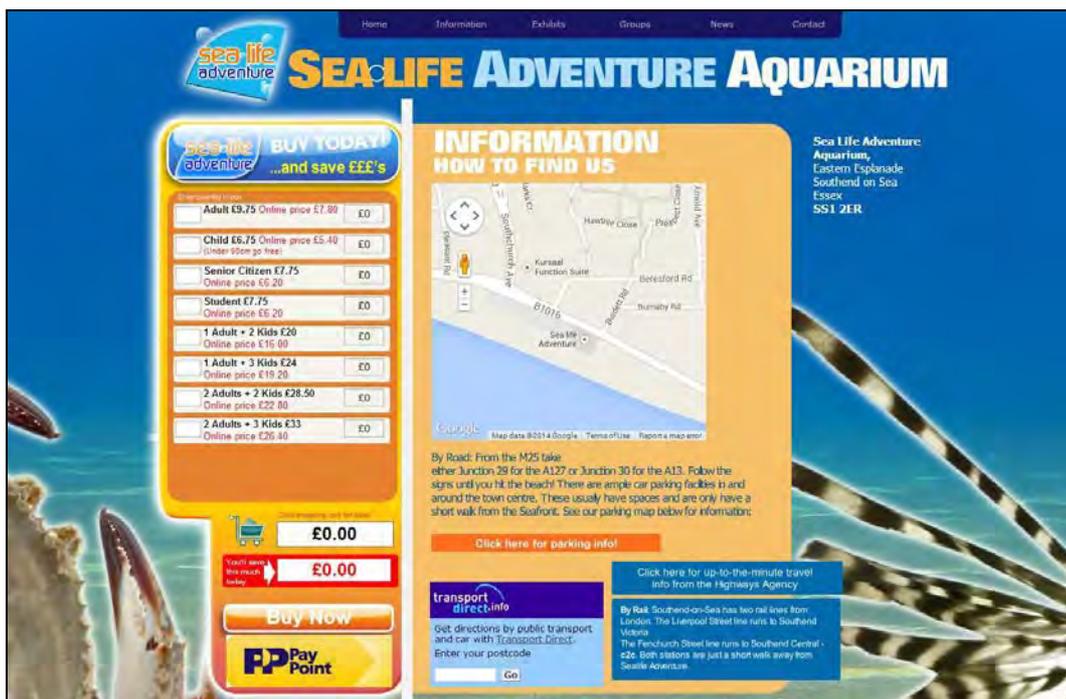


Plate 1: Travel Information on Website

5.26 The website currently includes a link to an external journey planner website www.transportdirect.info to enable users to plan their routes using sustainable means. It also provides details of local rail stations, a map which shows accessible town centre car parks in addition to those on the Seafront, and also a link to external

Highways Agency information for the motorway and trunk road network.

5.27 The website will be updated to include further details, including the Site Accessibility map that will be produced for display within the site, and also other relevant external links such as:

- the National Rail journey planner website; and
- Southend's Ideas in Motion website.

5.28 The TPC is responsible for liaising with Stockvale's IT team to further enhance the travel page on the Sealife Adventure website.

5.29 Stockvale has recently undertaken joint promotions with c2c to incentivise rail travel, whereby it is free to travel on c2c trains from any station along the route from London Fenchurch Street to Southend Central when an Adventure Island wristband is purchased at any of the stations' ticket office (these wristbands can also be used for entry at Sealife Adventure). The take up of this offer has averaged between 11,000 and 20,000 visitors annually. Stockvale are currently negotiating a package with c2c to encourage greater use of rail travel by visitors. The TPC will be responsible for displaying promotional material concerning this joint initiative in public areas and for this to be promoted on the Sealife Adventure website (see above).

Car Parking Management

5.30 The level of car parking is a key determinate of the success of the Travel Plan in respect of employee travel. The TPC will be responsible for communicating the high daily charges of local public car parks (generally £10 for over 6 hours) to staff, and promote non-car modes as the more cost effective option.

Car Sharing

5.31 Should some members of staff be unable to use public transport due to where they live, car sharing could be an option. A car sharing scheme for the site as a whole will be established on a website such as essexcarshare.com, which will allow employees to search for others with similar travel requirements. The TPC will be responsible for compiling a car sharing database, recording employees' home addresses and shift start and finish times.

Marketing and Promotion

Welcome Packs

5.32 Welcome Packs will be issued to all staff when they commence work from which they can make informed decisions about the travel mode they select. The packs will include details on all travel options available.

5.33 Specifically, the Welcome Packs could contain details of:

- Literature of the health benefits of walking and cycling;
- cycle routes in the vicinity of the site;
- safe pedestrian routes to the site;
- public transport routes and services (maps and timetables) along with fare information; and
- relevant journey planning web-sites to use to provide links to up-to-date and accurate information about public transport options in the area.

Noticeboards

- 5.34 In addition to the Welcome Packs, travel information will also be displayed on public noticeboards within communal areas. This will provide details of local transport links, including cycle and walking routes as well as times of trains from the rail stations and buses from local stops. The TPC will be responsible for ensuring the information is kept up to date.

Meetings

- 5.35 Regular Travel Plan meetings will be encouraged in which transport matters can be discussed with staff and any suggested improvements implemented by the TPC. Such meetings could be more frequent during the early stages of occupation to help identify any perceived barriers to travelling by certain modes and ways to overcome such barriers at the outset. These would provide an opportunity for staff to share information, suggest improvements to services and discuss local transport issues.

Personalised Travel Planning

- 5.36 The TPC will also offer a personalised travel planning service to employees. This could involve the issue of travel diaries, identifying other modes of transport that could be used for various journeys and identifying ways to overcome any barriers to travel. This service could be advertised on staff noticeboards.

Reducing Need for Business Travel

- 5.37 Business travel for administrative staff could be reduced by encouraging video or tele-conferencing to conduct meetings where possible.

6.0 TRAVEL PLAN TARGETS, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

Targets

- 6.1 It is the aim of the Travel Plan to increase use of public transport, walking and cycling amongst employees and visitors.
- 6.2 Travel Plan targets will be determined following an initial survey of employee and visitor travel behaviour, undertaken within six months of opening the extended Sealife Adventure. These surveys will be undertaken in liaison with the SSBC Travel Planning Team and will be tailored to suit.
- 6.3 Targets will be reviewed within three months of the initial surveys and then on an annual basis following consultation with SSCC and any other relevant stakeholders.
- 6.4 It is anticipated that a target of no more than 10% of journeys by car driver is achievable for staff travel to work. This initial target will need to be reviewed once findings of baseline travel surveys are assessed.
- 6.5 The target for visitors will be set once findings of baseline travel surveys are assessed.

Monitoring

- 6.6 The appointed TPC will be responsible for the on-going monitoring of the Travel Plan.
- 6.7 The monitoring programme will take the form of a five-year cycle.
- 6.8 The initial (baseline) survey will take place within six months of occupancy. This will provide the information base for future

monitoring of the plan. Annual monitoring reports will be provided for the five years after occupation.

- 6.9 The Annual monitoring report will be submitted to SSBC, within three months of the annual surveys taking place, and SSBC will review progress against the targets and agree remedial actions and improvements to the Travel Plan with the TPC as necessary.
- 6.10 Information gathered through the monitoring process will be made available to staff on request.

Management

- 6.11 The TPC will take responsibility for the development and management of the plan and ensure its delivery. If the targets are not being met, additional measures will need to be developed to address this. In this regard, it is anticipated that the Travel Plan will be a flexible and adaptable document that is continually evolving.
- 6.12 The TPC will choose the appropriate course of action for achieving the Travel Plan targets and arrange funding if required.

Funding

- 6.13 The Travel Plan, including monitoring, TPC appointment and funding for identified measures, will be funded by Stockvale.

Appendix A
Cycle Route Map

Published by CycleCity Guides for Southend-on-Sea
 www.cyclecityguides.co.uk
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 This map is based upon Ordnance Survey data and is published on behalf of the Ordnance Survey by Crown Copyright. Unauthorised copying and use may lead to prosecution under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (Section 100015871 (2010)).
 The representation of a track or a path way. Users of all routes shown on this map are advised to check the route for omissions or errors.
 Southend Borough Council and CycleCity Guides
 First published October 2010

Road definition

Yellow
 Quiet roads with little traffic. Generally suitable for all cyclists. Non-distributor residential streets, parks. Suitable for level 2 and above.

Green
 Through routes with moderate traffic. Suitable for level 2 and above.

Blue
 Busy roads, including A or B roads. Design is traditional and does not encourage overtaking. Few HGVs. Road width restricted, leading to overtaking of cyclists over a long length. Suitable only for level 2 and above.

Red
 Busy principal roads, perhaps with a roundabout. Road width restricted, leading to overtaking of cyclists over a long length. Road width with drivers looking over their shoulder. Suitable for level 3 cyclists.

Purple
 Fast, busy road with frequent roundabouts. Road width with drivers looking over their shoulder. Road width with drivers looking over their shoulder. Road width with drivers looking over their shoulder. Suitable for level 3 cyclists.

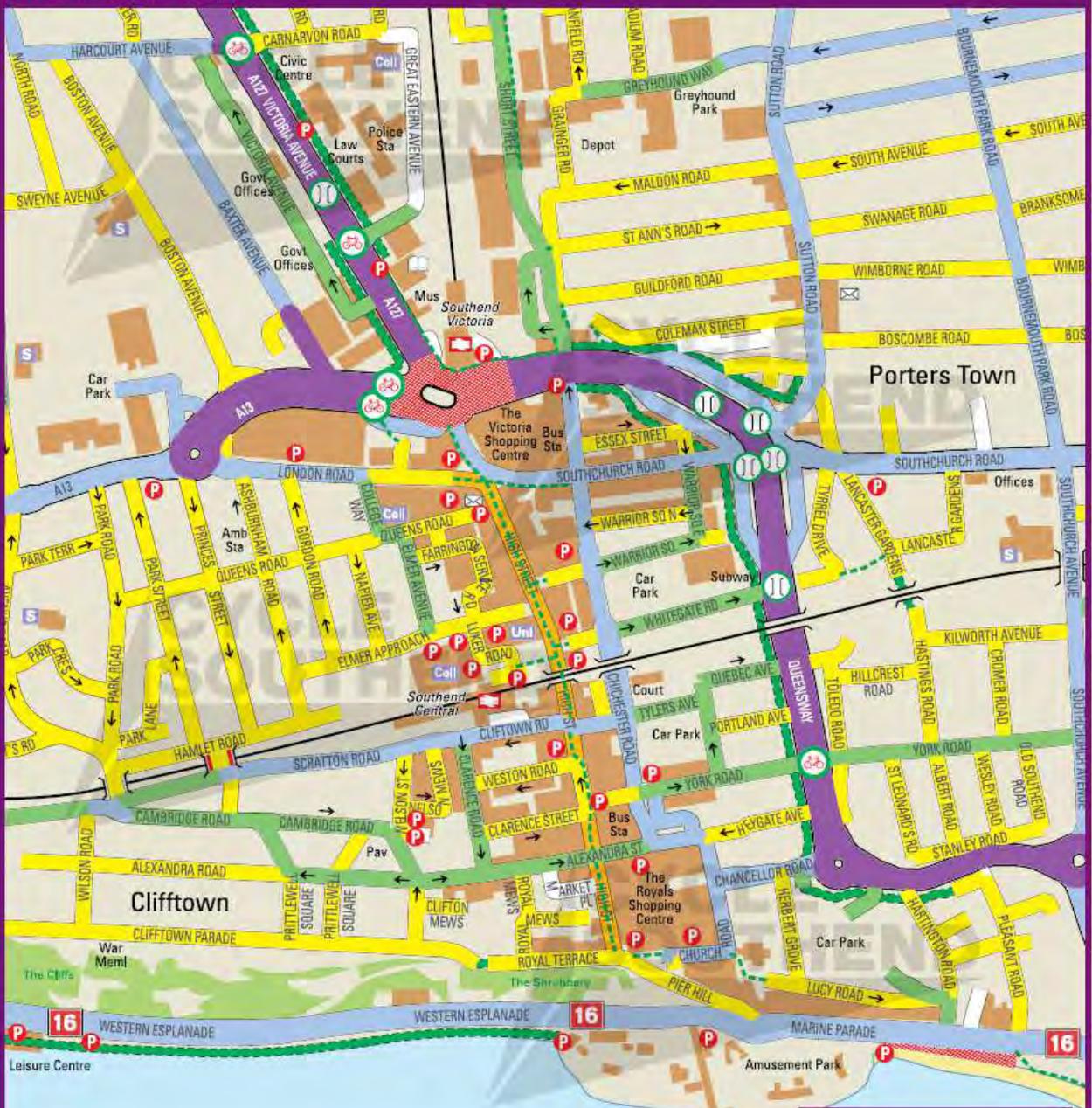


	Quieter road or street (suitable for level 2 and above)		Pedestrian zone
	Quieter road with cycle lanes (suitable for level 2 and above)		Shared space opening 2011
	Moderate traffic and low speeds (suitable for level 2 and above)		Cycle parking
	Busy road (suitable for level 2 and above)		University / College / School
	Busy / fast road (suitable for level 3 cyclist)		Hospital / Post office / Library
	Very busy / fast road (suitable for level 3 cyclist)		Toucan crossing
	Paths where cycle must be walked		Railway with station and cycle parking
	Cycle track/bridleway/byway (level 1)		National Cycle Network route number
	Cycle track or path needing care (level 1)		One way street
			Take care
			Footbridge / Subway
			Recycling centre

Scale bar: 0 to 1.5 Miles / 0 to 2.5 Kilometres

Time in minutes based on an average 10 miles per hour or 16 kilometres per hour

TOWN CENTRE INSET



This map shows

- The roads and traffic-free paths that you can use to cycle in and around Southend-on-Sea.
- All roads, tracks and paths within Southend have been colour coded to show the minimum level of cycling skill you need to use them safely. The levels are shown in the key. All roads are graded at peak times.

The skill levels are based on the three levels of Bikeability, the National Cycle Training Standard. Cyclists who have completed Bikeability should be able to do the following at each level:

Level 1 - Beginner (Training usually before the age of 10-11)

Cyclists with the skills to make a trip and undertake activities safely in a motor-free environment.

Level 2 - Intermediate (Training usually at age 10-11)

Cyclists with the skills to make a trip safely on quieter roads to school, work, other destinations or for leisure.

Level 3 - Advanced (Training usually after age 11 or as an adult)

Cyclists with the skills to make a trip safely on busy roads and using complex junctions and road features, to school, work, other destinations, or for leisure.

KEY

- Quieter road or street (suitable for level 2 and above)
- Quieter road with cycle lanes (suitable for level 2 and above)
- Moderate traffic and low speeds (suitable for level 2 and above)
- Busy road (suitable for level 2 and above)
- Busy / fast road (suitable for level 3 cyclist)
- Very busy / fast road (suitable for level 3 cyclist)
- Paths where cycle must be walked
- Cycle track/bikeway/bway (level 1)
- Cycle track or path heading care (level 1)
- Pedestrian zone
- Shared space opening 2011
- Cycle parking
- University / College / School
- Post office / Library
- Toucan crossing
- Railway with station and cycle parking
- National Cycle Network route number
- One way street
- Take care
- Footbridge / Subway

Appendix B
Bus Service Details

Southend and District Bus Network



Southend Travel Centre
 3.3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 4.4A, 5.6, 14.17
 20, 21, 21A, 21B, 23B, 24, 24A, 25
 25A, 25B, 26, 27, 27A, 28, 60
 61, 174, 251, X30
 also calling:
 1(AS), 7, 8, 9, 11A, 23, 23A
 29, B1, B1.X1

Key

- Road served at least 5 days per week
- Road served less than 5 days per week
- 4 Arriva bus route number
- 20 First bus route number
- 14 Buses run by other operators
- 251 Route terminus
- ◆◆ Certain journeys only
- ⊙ Sundays only
- ← Bus operates in direction of arrow shown
- (AS) Arriva Southend
- (RB) Regal Busways
- Rail line and station