garon park development brief

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introduction
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introduction

Andrew Martin Associates were commissioned by The Garon Park Trust to work together with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to produce a Development Brief to guide the future development at Garon Park.

This Development Brief explains the vision for Garon Park and will help to ensure that future development proposals enhance the character of the site. The Brief was developed jointly with the Borough Council in accordance with the planning policy objectives identified within the local Development Framework and Core Strategy. The Brief intends to:

- Provide a context for discussions and negotiations between developers and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and the public;
- Evolve a shared vision and promote high standards of planning and urban design;
- Ensure the development proposals submitted are in accordance with local, regional and national planning policies; and
- Support policies contained within the Local Development Framework (LDF).
To create a centre of excellence for the South-East Essex area with leisure, cultural, recreational and community facilities, encouraging strong links with the University of Essex.
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site context
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planning policy background

introduction
The local plan policy context is shown opposite. The Garon Park site divides into three distinct areas; the allotments to the west which is partially within the Green Belt, with the scout headquarters next to the road; the open sports area which containing the cricket square and pavilion, parking for the leisure centre, the driving range, netball courts and football pitches is all within the Green Belt and finally the area abutting the A1159 Royal Artillery Way which lies outside the Green Belt and which has been developed to provide the new swimming pool, diving centre, the athletics track and tennis courts west of the main entrance with Kids Kingdom and the artificial pitch east of the entrance. Note policy P7d shown on the plan no longer exists.

planning policy
Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises:

- The SoSBC Core Strategy (CS), (May 2008); and
- A number of Development Control Policies have been saved from the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Joint Structure Plan (2001) and the SoSBC Local Plan (1994).

east of england plan
The East of England Plan, (EoEP), Regional Spatial Strategy 14, (RSS) sets out specific guidance for the region and sub-region, including the Essex Thames Gateway (ETG). The EoEP sets a central aim of delivering employment led regeneration, whilst maintaining a sustainable balance between jobs and housing in the future. For SoSBC this results in a requirement to deliver 13,000 net additional jobs (Policy E1) and 6,000 net additional dwellings in the period 2001 to 2021 set out in Section 1. Policies SS1 and SS2 seek to bring about sustainable development, by directing most strategically significant growth to the region’s major urban areas.

This brief has been prepared in the context that Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) were revoked, as announced by the Secretary of State, on 6th July 2010. However, subsequent to this the High Court ruled on 10th November 2010 that the revocation of RSSs by the Secretary of State without parliamentary scrutiny was unlawful. This notwithstanding the Government have reiterated their intention to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies under the ‘Decentralisation and Localism Bill’ to be introduced to Parliament during December 2010 with the intent that it will be enacted during 2011. Until this time, the RSS forms part of the statutory development plan with key policies set out as follows:

- From a cultural perspective Policy C1 (Cultural Development) recognises the contribution that cultural sectors, including sport, can add to the regeneration and renaissance of urban areas. In relation to tourism, Policy E6 (Tourism) requires LPA s to include policies to encourage realistic and sustainable investment in the maintenance, improvement, regeneration, extension and diversification of the region’s tourist industry, along with other considerations.
- Transport and access matters are set out in Section 7 with Policy T8 (Local Roads) setting priorities to compliment the transport objectives of the plan, namely tackling congestion and environmental impacts, facilitating safe and efficient public transport, walking and cycling. In addition efficient vehicular access should be provided.
- Policy ENV2 (Landscape Conservation) requires that local authorities should afford the highest level of protection to nationally designated areas of landscape protection. They should also protect and enhance local distinctiveness by developing criteria based strategies to ensure that all development respects and enhances local landscape character. The EoEP recognises through Policy SS7 (Green Belt) that the broad extent of Green Belts in the East of England is appropriate, and should be maintained. Policy SS8 (The Urban Fringe) seeks to secure the enhancement, effective management and appropriate use of land in the urban fringe, ensuring it contributes to enhancing its character, appearance and ecological value. The policy encourages a networks of accessible green infrastructure linking urban areas with the countryside.
- Through Policy ENV3 (Biodiversity and Earth Heritage) it is stated that consideration should be given to the potential effects of development on the conservation of habitats and species outside designated sites and on protected species. The policy requires that the region’s wider biodiversity, earth heritage and natural environment is protected and enriched through the conservation, restoration and re-establishment of key resources and that development minimises damage to biodiversity and earth heritage resources by avoiding harm to local wildlife sites.
- High standards of design are encouraged by Policy ENV7 (Quality in the Built Environment) which refers to new buildings but also requires the efficient use of land, promoting resource efficiency and more sustainable construction.

essex thames gateway
The EoEP identifies the Essex Thames Gateway (ETG), part of the Thames Gateway Growth Area, is a regional and national priority for urban regeneration under the Sustainable Communities Plan. Within the region Southend is designated as a key centre for development and change. A series of seven specific policies guide the development and delivery of the growth area objectives. These policies include: Policy ETG1 (Strategy for the Sub-Region) which refers transformational development and change throughout the ETG to increase employment provision, whilst protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environments; Policy ETG4 (Southend on Sea Key Centre for Development and Change) requires that the Council should, together with other requirements, facilitate physical, economic and social regeneration of the urban area and, establish focus for cultural and intellectual activities; Policy ETG6 (Employment Generating Development) should provide for 13,000 jobs within Southend including by enhancing use of the River Thames as an asset for business and leisure.

national planning policy
The national planning framework is set out in series of Papers, Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG), published by the Department of Communities & Local Government (CLG) or its predecessors. Those relevant to the proposed development include the following which are set out in more detail with the ES:

- PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development (Feb 05);
- Planning & Climate Change supplement to PPS1 (Dec 07);
- PPS4 - Planning for Economic Growth (December 2009);
- PPS9 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (Aug 05);
- PPS25 - Development and Flood Risk (March 2010).

Other national planning guidance published remain relevant as material planning considerations. These include:

- PPG2 - Green Belt (Sep 92);
- PPG13 - Transport (Apr 01);
- PPG 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002);
- PPG2 states that the five purposes of Green Belts are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; to assist in urban land. The construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is considered inappropriate unless it is for one of five strict purposes which include essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.

local planning policy
Local planning policy for development and land-use in Southend is set out in the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF comprises a series of development plan documents (DPDs) and supplementary planning documents (SPDs) which guide all aspects of planning in the borough, set under the framework of national planning guidance and the former East of England Plan. Until such time as SoSBC adopt additional development control and management policies those saved policies from the SoSBC Local Plan (2004) which is otherwise technically expired, remain in force.
Under the theme of ‘Healthy Community’ the Council aims to increase the uptake of physical activity throughout the community. Increased opportunities to access physical activity and increased uptake of existing schemes and facilities are identified measures to achieve this objective, which need to be supported and facilitated through local development documents. This is to be achieved by optimising the potential for sports excellence and research and development centred on existing sports and leisure facilities; and supporting the development of new green spaces and greenways. A ‘Southend-on-Sea Green Space and Green Grid Strategy’ Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared, adopted and maintained to guide and facilitate this.

Policy CP7 States that the Borough Council will bring forward proposals that contribute to sports, recreation and green space facilities within the Borough for the benefit of local residents and visitors. This includes but is not limited to the following facilities:

- 20 hectares of additional local and neighbourhood park space, provided on areas of at least 2 hectares in size;
- 4 additional equipped play areas for children and young people;
- 4 additional multi-use games areas (MUGA’s) of 1 x tennis court size, together with the conversion of existing tennis court facilities to multi-use;
- 10 hectares of additional grass playing pitch space and ancillary facilities, provided on areas of at least 2.1 hectares each to allow flexibility between adult and junior pitches, and use for cricket in the summer;
- improvements to existing recreational open spaces and sports facilities, including the ancillary facilities needed to support them, sports halls/centres and swimming pools, or their replacement with appropriately located new facilities; and,
- improvements to facilities for teenagers.

Saved Local Plan Policies relating to sport, recreation and green space are saved pending their review as part of the preparation of a ‘Criteria Based Policies and Site Allocations’ Development Plan Document. Those relevant include: Policy R1 – Outdoor Sports Facilities; Policy R2 – Indoor Sports Facilities; Policy R6 – Countryside Recreation; and, Policy R7 – Allotments.

The relevant saved policies that continue to be in force include those referred to below.
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planning policy background

policy G1 - development within the Green Belt

Within the Green Belt, permission will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use, replacement or extension of existing. Permission may, however, be given to development proposals for the following purposes:

i. agriculture, mineral extraction or forestry;
ii. small scale facilities for outdoor participatory sport and recreation;
iii. institutions requiring large grounds;
iv. cemeteries or similar uses which are open in character, provided that all buildings contained within such developments are of such a scale, design and siting that the appearance of the countryside and the character of the Green Belt is not impaired.

policy C11 - new buildings, extensions and alterations

New buildings and extensions or alterations to existing buildings should be designed to create a satisfactory relationship with their surroundings in respect of form, scale, massing, height, elevational design and materials. New buildings will have regard to, amongst other considerations, the need to protect residential amenity, important vistas and the potential for development to enhance public pedestrian areas and open spaces.

policy L1 - facilities for tourism

Proposals to provide new visitor attractions will be encouraged where they enhance the resort’s ability to attract and cater for visitors, increase local employment opportunities and provide for environmental improvements.

policy R1 - outdoor sports facilities

The Borough Council will encourage and promote the retention of existing, and the provision of additional, outdoor sports facilities, both public and private.

policy R2 - indoor sports facilities

The Borough Council will seek to remedy the deficiencies in indoor sports facilities identified by the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation by:

i. giving priority in the provision of new recreation facilities to indoor sports facilities located so as to be easily accessible to all local residents.
ii. exploring the opportunities for making more intensive use of the Borough Council’s existing land holdings and recreation facilities to provide additional indoor facilities, if necessary, in conjunction with the private sector as part of commercially viable leisure developments;
iii. investigating and keeping under review the precise needs of local residents for indoor sports facilities.

policy R6 - countryside recreation

Facilities for informal countryside recreation which provide for increased public access will be supported and encouraged within the Green Belt.

policy R7 - allotments

The Borough Council will normally support the laying out and use as allotments of those vacant, derelict or under-used sites which are incapable to more intensive development.

policy U1 - infrastructure provision

The Borough Council will have regard to the need for additional infrastructure provision, such as roads, sewerage, schools and community facilities. In addition the following policies would be relevant and any scheme accord with standards for:

• Policy T11 - Parking Standards
• Policy T13 - Cycling and Walking
• Policy T14 - Public Transport

policy U8 - provision of new education facilities

Permission will only normally be given where the site or property is of a size and nature that can satisfactorily accommodate the use - including playing fields, means of access, off-street parking and other associated facilities - without detrimentally affecting the character of the area; Schemes which would result in the construction of substantial buildings in the Green Belt (see Policy G1), will normally be refused.

policy U10 - provision of other community facilities

Proposals for those local community uses not subject to Policies U6, U8 or U9 will normally be supported by the Borough Council subject to acceptable design and layout criteria.
section 5
opportunities and constraints
section 5
opportunities and constraints

opportunities

Existing sporting provision - opportunity to maximise the potential of Garon Park with further high quality sports/leisure/community facilities

Links to surrounding footpath network giving access to wider area and countryside to the north

Better public transport - opportunity to improve accessibility to site

Better vehicular access and improved entrance - opportunity to enhance main vehicular access to site, creating an opportunity to relocate Kids Kingdom and provide a well designed building at prominent location at the entrance of the site

Large open site and core of excellence facilities - opportunity to coherently expand facilities with no major landscape impact

Pedestrian event access from Fossetts Farm - improving pedestrian accessibility to site

Potential to enhance planting along boundaries with additional copse planting and shelter belt on perimeter, creating a well screened site and reducing the visual impact of the development

Retention of the open nature of green belt - appropriate mitigation allows limited impact on the open character of green belt

Opportunity to create shared parking between proposed buildings

Planting/management opportunities on golf course

Links to Essex University presence in town centre

Relocate Kid’s Kingdom next to parking for sports

constraints

Long views to surrounding countryside

Poor access both pedestrian and vehicular

Public rights of way

Existing sports

Openness of green belt on northern portion of site

weaknesses

Lack of signage and strong identity for whole site

Poor image from road

Poor definition of golf course access
section 6
visual appraisal

Site Boundary
Essex Golf Complex
Surrounding Water Bodies
Surrounding Built form
Roads
Large scale and high rise buildings along ridge line
Existing vegetation
Significant vegetation
screening, negating short to long distant views
Juvenile tree and woodland
planting in time will further screen views into the site.

Borough Boundary
Short Distant Views
Middle Distant Views
Intermittant long distant views
Surrounding Footpath Network
Poor Urban Edge Fronting Onto Site
On Site Pitches/Driving Range
Bunding Surrounding Existing Sports Provision

Cemetery Cricket Pitch
Driving Range
Athletics Track
Public Open Space
Allotments
the site and its location

The site lies adjacent to the northern edge of Southend on Sea fronting onto Royal Artillery Way. The site is enclosed to the north and east by the Essex Golf Complex and west by Fossetts Farm Business Park.

The site presently includes; Southend Tennis and Leisure Centre with associated courts, Kids Kingdom, Essex Cricket Ground, Allotments and a golf driving range. Located within the green belt of land of high grade agricultural quality.

landscape character

The landscape character is on the whole not typical of the Crouch and Roach Farmland. Some notable features are present such as the remnants of dispersed small copses and scattered Oak and Ash hedgerows which combine to give a fairly wooded horizon and sense of enclosure.

The northern boundary is formed by a predominately hawthorn hedge ranging from 3-5m with additional native tree species growing intermittently along the boundary. The eastern boundary is formed by existing vegetation and the northern section of the tree lined access to the golf complex.

The southern boundary is formed by a mature native hedge adjacent to the A1159 Royal Artillery Way and the residential properties along its frontage. The western boundary is formed by a 3-4m bund. The large scale commercial buildings of Fossetts Farm Business Park create a visual stop enclosing the site along its western edge.

views from the site

The site has a good network of public footpaths leading from the fringes of Southend on Sea to the surrounding landscape. Looking south high rise buildings are visible on the skyline, along with intermittent views of the residential properties along the A1159.

views to the west are generally well screened by existing planting and the large scale commercial buildings however there are some limited long distant views to the Eastwood and Hockley. Mature hedgerows and copses to the north and west as well as the Essex golf complex fully enclose the northern and eastern boundary with some intermittent long distant views towards Burnham-on-Crouch.

visual appraisal

The visual impact of the proposed development will be limited due the well screened nature of the site. Those from the lower valley to the north are shielded by extensive tree belts and small woodland copses indicative of local character. Juvenile planting along the eastern boundary will in time soften the impact of the business park on the site.

The robust network of hedgerows, trees and woodland copse plantations as well as the large scale existing built form enclose the site. Although there are some limited views from the north the distance of some 1-1.5km is such that the proposals will be imperceptible against the background of the existing development. There are only close views from the south to the existing sports complex.

Generally the existing sports and recreational complex is well integrated into the landscape with existing significant planting. The proposed additional development will have limited perceivable impact on the degree of openness of the site. With appropriate mitigation the proposal will retain the open nature of the green belt and will not fundamentally change the character of the area.

The current environment and urban renaissance policy looks to create and maintain a green grid of high quality, which looks to contribute to and help develop the Thames Gateway Green Grid.

landscape strategy

- Retain and enhance the existing public footpaths/ cycleway network
- Mitigate the proposals with high quality landscaping that embraces the surrounding landscape character of small cope plantations and mature hedgerows.
- Enhance the biodiversity of site
- Supplement fragmented hedgerows with additional planting with suitable species
- Create a high quality, exciting exemplar design that enhances the Thames Gateway Green Grid
- Preserve the open character and function of the green belt where possible
- Promote prominent existing landscape features
- Champion the use of local public art to help develop a sense of place and local distinctiveness
- Additional planting on the northern boundary creating a woodland belt and planting on the driving range to mitigate the visual impact of development in views from the north.
section 7
development parameters
section 7

development parameters

The proposed development at Garon Park has the potential to create a high quality and well designed complex that enhances the area and its surroundings. Following good practice guidance is essential to deliver an exemplar development and create a coherent scheme.

a/b - areas for additional sports facilities

Development in these perimeter areas should have regard to views to and from the surrounding areas and open landscape. Buildings to be a maximum 2 storey in height. These facilities should be served by the general parking for the development. Any buildings must consist of essential facilities to support outdoor sport and recreation.

c - 6 no 5 aside courts

Artificial surface with lighting. Lighting should be designed to minimise light pollution, with fully cut off fitments to prevent light spillage and low lux levels and in accordance with Essex County Council requirements and good practice guidance.

d - third generation all weather adult soccer pitch with lighting

Lighting should be designed to minimise light pollution, with fully cut off fitments to prevent light spillage and low lux levels and in accordance with Essex County Council requirements and good practice guidance.

e - complete football and cricket centre

Any buildings to be designed in order to minimise its height impact. Scheme for planting along southern boundary should be submitted along with planting application and be coherent with other planting schemes throughout the site.

f - area for additional future parking and/or open/temporary sports related facilities

Lighting should be designed to minimise light pollution, with fully cut off fitments to prevent light spillage and low lux levels and in accordance with Essex County Council requirements and good practice guidance.

g - low key overspill parking/ coach parking

Grasscrete or similar with screen planting along eastern boundary. Lighting should be designed to minimise light pollution, with fully cut off fitments to prevent light spillage and low lux levels and in accordance with Essex County Council requirements and good practice guidance.

h - 100 bed hotel

Mainly up to 3 storey, with low profile buildings forming a transition into the Greenbelt/ car park

i - relocated kids kingdom

Predominantly single storey with some 2 storey elements if necessary to replicate existing provision.

j - Flagship headquarters building complementary to the Development

Building to be of good design and quality materials reflecting its prime location along the main frontage of the site. 5574 m² - Up to 3 storey

A landscape scheme for the entire proposed planting along access road should accompany the first planning application to be submitted in order to be coherent. Implementation of the landscape scheme for the whole road should come before development takes place. The option for shared car parking should be examined. Car parking areas should be well landscaped, with adequate trees and hedge planting, following design guidance and best practice.

energy efficiency

Development in Southend must contribute to creating quality sustainable environments and all new buildings must ensure that they are sited, laid out and designed in such a way that it reduces the use of natural resources; promotes the use of renewable and recycled resources (including water and energy) in accordance with the Government’s objectives on carbon dioxide emissions, energy and resources. The adopted Core Strategy Policies KP2 and CP4 require all new development in the Borough to include appropriate measures in design, layout, operation and materials to achieve these aims including the provision of at least 10% of energy needs from renewable sources (and/or decentralised low carbon energy sources). The Council also aspires to BREEAM excellent ratings. The development also needs to make provision for the storage and collection of re-useable and recyclable waste. Sustaintable drainage should be an integral part of the development and consideration should be given to the inclusion of rainwater harvesting and techniques such as green roofs which reduce run off and may be compatible with this location.

Proposals should also make a contribution to the ecology and biodiversity of the site in a way that is compatible with the sporting activities, and opportunities for promoting sustainable modes of travel should also be considered.

All sustainable measures should be integral to the building’s design and need to be considered at the outset to ensure that they can be adequately accommodated and do not compromise the design quality of the development.
section 8
transport

A Transport Assessment has been undertaken by Atkins to provide an assessment of the potential transport impact of the proposed development at Garon Park. This considers the proposed uses to come forward in the future including a 100-bed quality hotel, 5-a-side football facility, football and cricket centre, residential youth activity centre, sports related research and development office uses [not assessed], martial arts centre and Kids Kingdom activity centre.

The current transport network including road junctions, bus provision and cycle network all operate within their operational capacity. Any additional trip movements to and from the site would impact upon the network and so mitigation measures, to include access improvements, would be likely as the result of the proposed development. This will include the junction arm off the existing roundabout to increase capacity. As a large proportion of the trips will be outside peak hours, additional improvements to upgrade the junction to traffic light controlled are not necessary.

green travel plan

A framework travel plan has been produced for the site. It will actively encourage sustainable travel to the site for all site users including staff and visitors. The travel plan will link in to improvements to walking, cycling and public transport provision envisaged as part of the overall improvements to the highway and on site infrastructure.

public transport

The operation of the existing bus routes to and from the site will be extended. Currently the 27/27A routes through the site and this will be extended into the evening and at weekends in consultation with the bus operator. On site improvements to the bus stop to include real time information will be incorporated.

events

Public and sporting events at Garon Park have the potential to cause additional disruption to the local highway network. Event management plans, detailing temporary and event traffic management proposals will be included with facilities on site to accommodate overflow parking also linked in to the use of existing public car parks with pedestrian and cycle links through to the site.

The Transport Assessment undertaken is based on the proposed uses, not including the proposed office uses. Further amendments to the detailed transport assessment studies may be required to accommodate any change in the proposed uses.
section 9
planning submission requirements and section 106 obligations

planning submission documents

It is envisaged that any application will be supported the following documents, subject to site specific requirements:

- Site plans, drawings etc
- Design and Access Statements
- Environmental Statement*
- Supporting Planning Statement, including Green Belt justification
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Transport Assessment/Statement
- Car Parking Management Strategy
- Green Travel Plan
- Planning Obligation Details (see SPD for further details of submission requirements)
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Drainage Strategy
- Sustainability Appraisal/Energy Statement
- Recycling/Waste Management Strategy
- Lighting Strategy
- Tree/Ecology Survey
- Ventilation/Extract Details
- Crime and Disorder Assessment
- Executive Summary of Supporting Documents
- Event Management Strategy (as appropriate)

* Subject to EIA Screening which should be done ASAP.

section 106 matters

In November 2010 the Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled “Planning Obligations – A Guide to Section 106 & Developer Contributions”. This document now forms part of the Southend-on-Sea Local Development Framework (LDF) and together with other LDF documents is taken into account when planning applications are considered by the Council. The SPD should be referred to for further guidance in respect of potential developer contributions in respect of development at Garon Park. Although developer contributions under Section 106 are negotiated on a case by case basis they are likely to include contributions and/or provisions for the following:

- Highways, public transport and accessibility
- Green Travel Plan
- Public art
- Natural environment, open space and conservation
- S106 administration and monitoring