

Better Queensway interim consultation
report

**Produced by Copper Consultancy for Southend-on-Sea
Borough Council**

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1. Executive Summary

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is developing proposals to regenerate the Queensway area of central Southend-on-Sea, creating a new residential-led development made up of high quality housing, commercial space, improved public areas and a new road network.

Consultation activities included: press activity; social media and print and digital advertising to promote the consultation; posters around the town centre; mass-mailed letters; a dedicated project website with a feedback facility; a contact centre with a dedicated project email address, Freephone number and Freepost address to gather comments; a stakeholder preview reception; and two drop-in public exhibitions.

The public exhibitions were held at The Forum in the centre of Southend-on-Sea, and were attended by 300 people including political stakeholders, residents, local businesses and community organisations.

120 people provided written feedback on the proposals, doing so at the public exhibition, via post, online and email.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is grateful to those who took the time to engage with and respond to the consultation. Where people expressed concerns or made suggestions, the Better Queensway project team will take these into account before seeking and selecting a development partner for the site.

Respondents of the consultation were largely very positive about the Better Queensway development and its potential for transforming this area of the town centre.

There were, however, a number of concerns noted during the consultation, especially in relation to the proposed changes to the road network.

2. Introduction

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is developing proposals to regenerate the Queensway area of central Southend-on-Sea, creating a new residential-led development made up of high quality housing, commercial space, improved public areas and a new road network.

The plans include around 1,300 new homes with a minimum of 441 affordable housing units. The area marked for the Better Queensway development is situated at the northern end of the town centre and is split by the Queensway road. The site includes four high rise, residential tower blocks and 24 low rise maisonettes, two car parks (Essex and Short Street), and businesses on the northern side of Southchurch Road.

One of the main aspirations of the scheme is to reconnect communities separated by the Queensway road and improve access to the town centre, seafront, jobs and shops, helping to boost the local economy.

This report is an interim report, providing an overview of the consultation that was undertaken from 8th November 2017 to 15th December 2017 and the feedback received during that period. This report will support Southend-on-Sea Borough Council with responding to the consultation findings in advance of its February 2018 Cabinet report. A full consultation report, which includes details of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's response to consultation comments, will be developed, published and shared with the community in due course.

Feedback from the consultation will be included in the suite of documents provided by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to potential development partners for the scheme. A copy of the final consultation report will also be made available to them.

Appendices referenced during the course of this document can be found in the Better Queensway interim consultation report supporting documents.

2.1. About Copper Consultancy

Copper Consultancy (Copper) was commissioned by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to support with the communications and consultation for this stage of the Better Queensway scheme.

Copper delivers effective community and stakeholder consultation and engagement programmes to support planning, development and regeneration projects. Copper's experience spans both the private and public sectors for development projects of all sizes across the UK.

Copper has undertaken consultation on many projects over the years and always aims to exceed basic consultation requirements, seeking to deliver thorough and robust public consultation and engagement with communities.

2.2. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council adopted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in July 2013 subject to a public consultation in March 2013. The document sets out how the public and other interested parties may be consulted and become involved in the planning application process and key stages in the preparation of planning documents.

The document makes clear that Southend-on-Sea Borough Council expects engagement to exceed the minimum legal requirements for public consultation as set out in the Planning Acts and Regulations. In doing this, the SCI provides some general principles to apply to consultation, which include:

- Involvement will be open to all regardless of gender, faith, race, disability, sexuality, age and social deprivation;
- We will continue to co-operate with neighbouring boroughs and public bodies to ensure that strategic matters are appropriately addressed;
- We will seek views of interested and affected parties as early as possible;
- We will choose consultation processes which balance appropriately: cost and time constraints; community impact; and available resources;
- Consultation publications will be clear and concise and avoid unnecessary jargon, without understating the complexities of any decision;
- We will inform those who respond to a consultation of later stages in the process.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council advises effective community involvement to ensure members of the public are informed about development proposals and enabled to influence them as part of consultation process. The SCI advises that applicants should:

- Consult the local community on overall and specific aspects of the proposal;
- Consider the consultation responses received, and take them into account before making their planning application.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, with Copper's support, has gone above and beyond the recommended level of engagement set out in the Council's own SCI to ensure maximum community involvement in the Better Queensway consultation.

3. Overview of engagement and consultation activity

3.1. Briefings with members

Ahead of the launch of the consultation, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council arranged face-to-face briefings with elected members.

A briefing meeting was held with Victoria Ward councillors on Thursday 2nd November 2017 and was attended by:

- Councillor Ann Holland (Executive Councillor for Culture, Tourism and the Economy)
- Councillor Margaret Borton (Victoria Ward)
- Councillor David Norman MBE (Victoria Ward)
- Emma Cooney (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council)
- Gemma Webb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council)
- Andy Grant (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council)
- Annabel John (Copper Consultancy)

Immediately after this meeting, a briefing for all Council members took place to ensure that the full Council understood the proposals, the parameters of the consultation and had an opportunity to ask the project team questions in advance of the consultation launch.

3.2. Consultation promotion

Invitations

On Monday 23rd October 2017, an invitation letter (appendix 1) was sent to residents who live within the Queensway site to outline the proposals, invite them to a dedicated residents' preview of the public exhibition, the public exhibition events, and to offer an individual briefing meeting.

The letter was sent to each of the four high rise, residential tower blocks (Chiltern, Quantock, Malvern and Pennine) and the maisonettes on Sutton Road, which totalled 441 properties, and the residential properties on Southchurch Road, which totalled 42 properties.

On the same day, an invitation letter was sent to leaseholders of the tower blocks and Sutton Road maisonettes (appendix 2) to offer them a one-to-one briefing and invite them to the public exhibitions. A similar letter was sent to leasehold and freehold owners for properties situated along Southchurch Road (appendix 3) and included correspondence about the Better Queensway scheme that had previously been sent to the same properties (appendix 4). These were enclosed to remind freeholders and leaseholders of the previous correspondence they had received about the project.

A total of 51 letters were sent to the leaseholders of the tower blocks, and a combined 111 letters were sent to leaseholders and freehold owners for the properties on Southchurch Road. In some cases, more than one letter was sent in relation to a particular property to ensure that letters reached all relevant correspondence addresses.

On Monday 23rd October 2017, Copper posted an invitation to the public exhibitions (appendix 5) to local MPs and community stakeholders (see list below). A copy of the letter was also emailed (appendix 6) to stakeholders on Thursday 26th October 2017.

The political and community stakeholders invited to the consultation include:

- **Political representatives**, including all Southend-on-Sea elected Council members, MP for Rochford and Southend East, James Duddridge, and MP for Southend West, Sir David Amess.
- **Key community groups**, including The Business Improvement District; Southend Seafront Traders Association; Stockvale Group; Southend Tenants and Residents Federation; Queensway Residents Association; Victory Action Group; Victoria Tenants Association; The Royals Shopping Centre; University of Essex; South Essex College; Southend Tourism Partnership; Southend Ethnic Minority Forum; National Federation for the Blind; Essex Chamber of Commerce; South East Local Enterprise Partnership; Southend Business Partnership; Miller School of Dance; Southend Vineyard; Greater Anglia; c2c; Southend Youth Council; Southend Zimbabwe; Southend Community-in-Harmony; Southend Association of Voluntary Services; Essex and Southend Link; and Southend Transpire.

An additional letter was prepared for the wider community to introduce the plans and invite members of the public to the exhibitions (appendix 7). This was issued on Monday 23rd October 2017 to 1,057 properties around the boundary of the Better Queensway site (appendix 8).

Additional invitations

After the first public exhibition on Wednesday 8th November 2017, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council wrote to all South Essex Homes tenants (a total of 5,476 properties), to invite them to take part in the consultation and attend the next public consultation event (appendix 9).

An invitation was also sent to groups and organisations registered on Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's consultation database.

Media

On 31st October 2017, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council issued a press release to the local media (appendix 10). The purpose of this release was to announce the plans and raise awareness in the local community about the upcoming public exhibitions. It included details of the events and invited participation in the consultation. The release was issued to:

- Southend Echo
- BBC Essex
- Yellow Advertiser
- Essex Enquirer
- Heart Essex
- Radio Essex
- Leigh and Southend Times
- Your Southend social media site and a number of other hyper-local community sites

A media release was also issued on 7th November 2017 to promote the consultation events and process and on 8th December 2017 to further promote the consultation process with one week to go.

Advertising

The consultation was advertised using paid for print and digital adverts in the Echo (appendix 11). Three full colour quarter page print adverts ran in the Southend Echo on 25th October, 31st October and 7th November 2017 to promote the consultation, along with digital leaderboards online (www.echo-news.co.uk) for two weeks starting on 25th October 2017.

A targeted Facebook advertising campaign (appendix 12) ran from 25th October 2017 until 16th November 2017. It reached a total of 58,671 people during the duration of the campaign, generating 441 unique clicks through to the website.

Posters

Posters advertising the public exhibitions were put up around central Southend-on-Sea (appendix 13), including in:

- Local businesses
- Notice boards in Chiltern, Quantock, Malvern and Pennine
- The Victoria Shopping Centre
- Local cafes
- The Storehouse
- Southend Civic Centre.

Electronic copies of the posters were displayed on local bus stops to further advertise the public exhibitions (appendix 14).

Social media

The consultation was also heavily promoted via Southend-on-Sea's social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). Special graphics (appendix 15) were created to ensure that content was as engaging as possible to target a wide range of audiences.

3.3. Contact centre

Copper operated a contact centre, consisting of a dedicated Freephone number, Freepost address and email address, throughout consultation so that members of the public and key stakeholders could get in touch, ask questions and leave comments easily. Details of these were included on all public facing materials. All enquiries were promptly and comprehensively responded to.

3.4. Public exhibitions

A dedicated residents' preview exhibition was held on Tuesday 7th November 2017 for people who live within the Better Queensway site boundary, including the four tower blocks, Sutton Road maisonettes and Southchurch Road properties. The residents were invited to this preview session so they could see the materials, speak to members of the project team and ask questions ahead of the wider community.

Two, one-day public exhibitions were held at The Forum on Wednesday 8th November 2017 and Thursday 16th November 2017, from 2pm until 8pm. Between these times, members of the public could drop-in to view the plans, speak to the project team and leave feedback.

The events were held across different weeks and on different days to ensure people were able to attend at least one of them.

In addition, on the first exhibition day (8th November 2017) between 12pm and 2pm, a preview event was held for invited stakeholders to see the plans before opening the event to the wider community.

The Forum was chosen as a venue to ensure maximum participation from the local community. It is close to the Better Queensway site, well-known in the town and has good public transport links, being next to local bus stops and Southend Central and Southend Victoria train stations. The exhibition room was fully accessible and a risk assessment was undertaken ahead of the exhibition.

Members of the project team, including representatives from Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, South Essex Homes, Mott MacDonald (traffic consultants), 31ten Consulting (financial consultants), IBI (design consultants) and Copper Consultancy (community relations) were on hand to talk to people directly about the proposals, listen to feedback and answer their queries.

A series of exhibition banners (appendix 16), as well as plans and images on A4 laminates were on display around the room for attendees to view. Every attendee was handed a 12-page leaflet (appendix 17) which explained the proposals, included copies of the plans, provided contact details for the community relations team and instructions on how to leave feedback.

Although many attendees discussed the project with the team on the day, people were encouraged to submit feedback officially by completing a feedback form at the event or at home (appendix 18). The feedback form was also accessible online via the Better Queensway dedicated website (www.betterqueensway.co.uk).

3.5. Signage

On the day of the exhibition, an A-Board (appendix 19) was put up outside The Forum to direct attendees to the exhibition room. A second A-Board was placed on Southend High Street, close to the venue, to encourage additional footfall to the consultation. There was also signage throughout The Forum and outside the exhibition room, which included directional arrows pointing people towards the destination.

3.6. Participation

People who attended the public exhibitions were asked to provide their contact details as part of the voluntary signing in process (appendix 20).

The consultation events were attended by 113 people on Wednesday 8th November 2017 and 162 on Thursday 16th November 2017. The dedicated residents' exhibition preview on Tuesday 7th November 2017 was attended by 25 people, totalling 300 people across all

events.

3.7. Follow-up meetings with stakeholders

Although representatives/members of the Stockvale Group attended both public exhibition days, a meeting was arranged to further discuss the project in response to an offer of an individual meeting to key stakeholders. Copper facilitated the meeting, which took place on Wednesday 13th December 2017. Given that the date of the meeting was so close to the end of the consultation, an extension to Friday 22nd December 2017 was granted to the Stockvale Group to ensure they had sufficient time to collate a response.

Attendees included:

- Two members of the Stockvale Group
- Gemma Webb (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council)
- Neil Hoskins (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council)
- Martin McCrink (Copper Consultancy)
- Annabel John (Copper Consultancy).

The main topics discussed at the meeting included:

- Support for the principle of developing the Queensway site and boosting the local economy
- Concerns over the impact of the changes to the road network at Queensway, and the wider impact it will have on traffic in Southend-on-Sea
- Concern that the road scheme looks at too narrow and that the housing development is driving the infrastructure, when the infrastructure is critical to the wider economy, especially tourism.

3.8. Overview of the feedback received

Respondents were invited to submit their feedback about the proposals and the consultation process in a number of ways:

- At the exhibition via a feedback form
- By email to the dedicated email address (betterqueensway@southend.gov.uk)
- By phone to the dedicated project number (0800 046 3803)
- By post to the dedicated Freepost address (FREEPOST BETTER QUEENSWAY).

A total of 120 people provided feedback as part of the consultation. This was split between 53 hardcopy feedback forms, 50 feedback forms submitted online and 17 emails. A full list of all comments received to date during the pre-application consultation period can be found in appendix 21. This does not include verbal discussions held with members of the project team at the public exhibition – everyone who attended was encouraged to submit their ideas formally via a feedback form.

3.9. Process for analysing feedback

The feedback form was split into two parts. The first was seven questions about the Better Queensway development and the second was focused on the transport infrastructure linked to the development. All feedback was treated equally, regardless of where a person lived or what organisation they represent.

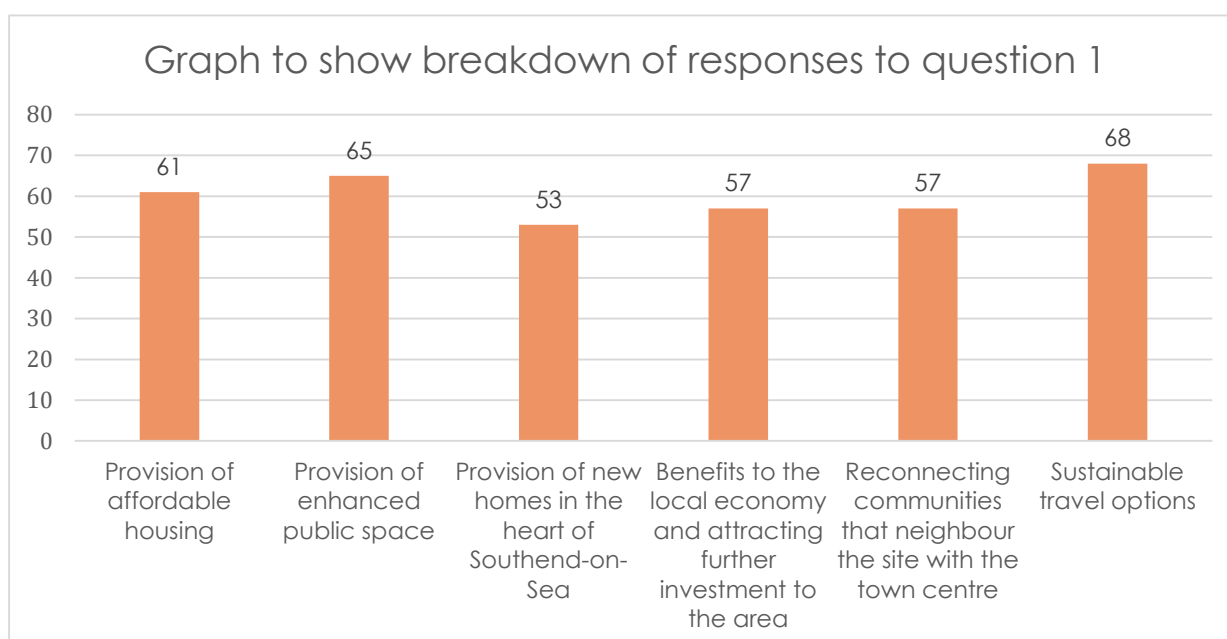
The next two sections provide a breakdown of responses to each question, categorised into recurring themes.

4. Feedback analysis – Section one: Better Queensway site

4.1. Question 1

Question 1 of the feedback form asked participants to indicate their views via a tick box chart of what interests them in the Better Queensway proposals. Respondents were able to tick multiple boxes. The table and graph below outlines the results of this question:

	Total
Provision of affordable housing	61
Provision of enhanced public space	65
Provision of new homes in the heart of Southend-on-Sea	53
Benefits to the local economy and attracting further investment to the area	57
Reconnecting communities that neighbour the site with the town centre	57
Sustainable travel options	68



The reasons respondents gave for choosing their answers is summarised below:

- Will benefit the community
- Will improve quality of life
- Will improve the local economy
- Will look more attractive than the existing area
- Improve pedestrian access
- Hopeful the project will increase safety.

Some respondents also stated some immediate concerns linked to the development:

- Transport scheme will cause congestion
- Affordable housing – what is meant by this? Will it actually be affordable?
- Profit put before people
- Scheme will divide up the business areas (pier-Southend)
- How will anti-social behaviour be addressed.

A number of people also suggested improving the overall area by including green space, trees, flowers, public toilets and public art, as well as CCTV, lighting and policing to ensure people are safe in the area. Using sustainable energy sources for the development was also suggested.

4.2. Question 2

Question 2 asked for people's overarching thoughts on the proposals to redevelop the Queensway site.

Overall, respondents were positive about redeveloping the site in principle, especially in relation to:

- Support for affordable housing
- Support for improving the aesthetics of the area
- Improving people's quality of life
- Boosting the local economy
- Support for carbon neutral homes and less pollution.

Some respondents also support Southend Borough Council's aspiration for making it safer for people to walk in the area and the provision of cycling routes.

There were, nevertheless, many concerns about the development, spanning a range of issues. Respondents were worried about:

- The strain a largescale new development would put on schools, doctors' surgeries and parking in the town
- The number of parking spaces being unrealistic (*context suggested it was too many*)
- Sewerage concerns and encouraging rats
- Outdoor space not being properly maintained
- What affordable housing means, questioning if it will really be 'affordable'
- The level of social housing – it should be increased
- The density of housing on the site
- Security in the development, including drug users, anti-social behaviour and vandalism, especially towards cars being damaged or stolen
- The impact on current Queensway residents, for example when they are moved into temporary accommodation which may be stressful. Protecting the needs of existing residents was noted as important.

A number of specific comments linked to transport, access and parking were also raised:

- There is a lack of car parking for shoppers and visitors, and removing the car parks will result in illegal and dangerous parking
- Victoria Avenue to the seafront needs to flow and access to Sutton and

Southchurch roads is very confusing

- The development will result in increased journey times, congestion, pollution and the cost of public transport
- Increased congestion will cause delays for emergency vehicles
- Removing the Queensway roundabout will destroy a multi-directional junction
- Improving access in and out of the town will ease congestion around Queensway.

In response to this question, there were also a number of suggestions from respondents for Southend-on-Sea to consider as it moves forward with the scheme and the process of selecting a development partner. This includes:

- Low-level flats and design which encourages a village-like atmosphere
- Disabled access, that is also dementia and learning difficulty friendly
- An environmentally friendly development
- Features that encourage lower levels of car ownership and car sharing
- Providing secure cycle storage, lockers and changing rooms
- Designing buildings to promote physical activity, for example making the stairs prominent, easy to access and attractive to use
- A community centre.

There were also suggestions for outdoor space which included small parks, table tennis tables, trees, fountains and public toilets. People wanted the space to be attractive and sociable, without using underpasses which creates safety and security issues.

There were also some comments linked to the consultation, including:

- There being a lack of enough detailed information to comment on the proposals at this stage
- There being a need to increase participation in consultation to include taxi drivers, local workers, all council tenants, the emergency services, disabled associations, charities and businesses.

4.3. Question 3

Question 3 asked for people's thoughts on what kind of public space they may like to see as part of the development.

There was clear support for creating an attractive environment, with benches, trees, water features, parks or pocket parks, dog walking areas, ponds and bird and butterfly feeding stations all referenced as ideas for the outdoor space. However, a number of respondents also referenced the need for ensuring that outdoor space did not encourage anti-social behaviour. People suggested installing CCTV or having 24/7 security. A minority of people were completely against the provision of public space because it causes anti-social behaviour, for example it was felt that there was sufficient provision from the seafront at Warrior Square.

In addition, there were suggestions for including public and community facilities:

- A community centre/facility
- Sports facilities, such as a swimming pool, chess tables, table tennis, tennis courts, a basketball court with football goals or a gym
- Safe play areas for children

- A skate park
- Space for public events, such as a small amphitheatre for summer music events or an arts centre
- A café
- Some commercial space, particularly for a convenience store and some restaurants / cafés. There was a suggestion that some commercial premises be run on a community basis by volunteers to help provide a sense of community spirit
- Public toilets.

Some people thought it was important that whatever is included in the development as public space must be well-maintained and is open to everyone. It was also noted by some respondents that any outdoor space needed to be fully accessible, with wheelchair access and smooth, level transit surfaces.

4.4. Question 4

As part of the Better Queensway proposals, there is the opportunity to enhance the area and create an attractive environment for people to enjoy. Question 4 asked for people's thoughts on what landscaping features they may like to see as part of the development.

Some of the responses were similar to Question 3, for example linked to preventing anti-social behaviour, including the removal of the underpasses, and community or sports facilities and public toilets.

Nature and landscape was very important to people, with suggestions including planted areas and flower beds, trees, a mindfulness garden, allotments and an environment that would encourage birdlife in the area.

Public art was also suggested, including art walls, street art and artwork made from safe materials that is suitable for children to climb and play on. One respondent suggested a graffiti art area which young people could be responsible for looking after. Another would like an iconic feature to be part of the landscaping, such as a bandstand or large water feature. Some respondents, however, felt that fountains would take up valuable space that could otherwise be used to engage young people. A key theme was making sure that whatever is included is child-friendly and accessible to all.

People also suggested:

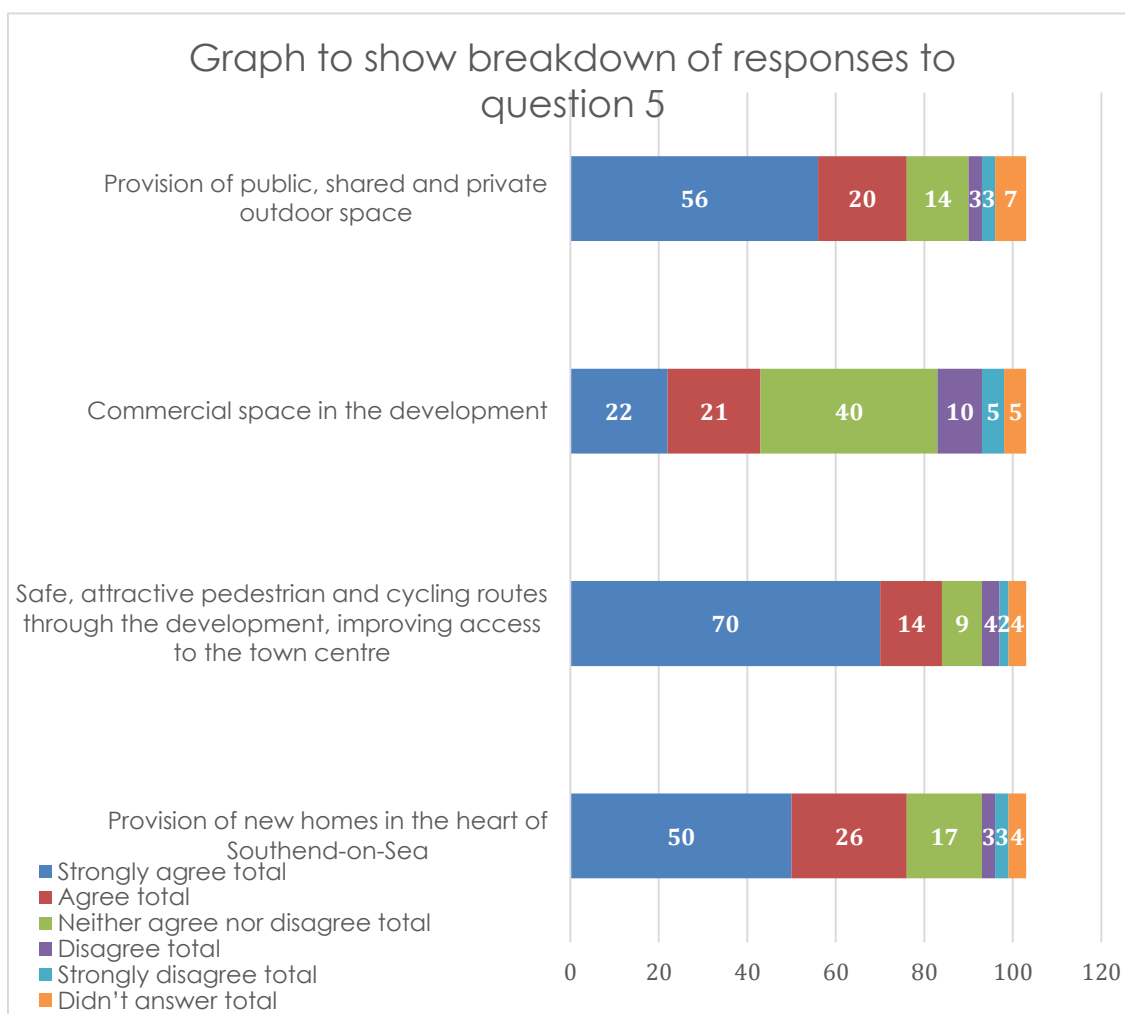
- Using minimal concrete in the outdoor space
- Involving local people, including schools and residents, in designing artwork
- Smoother and improved pavements
- Fines for people dropping litter
- Ensuring that maintenance of public spaces is a priority – there was some concern about any landscaping features becoming run down or vandalised and not repaired.

Well-lit public walk and cycle ways through the development were also referenced as important and it was felt that this would encourage integration and fluidity between the new and existing areas in Southend-on-Sea.

4.5. Question 5

Question 5 of the feedback form asked participants to indicate their views via a tick box chart (options ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree) on key features of the development. The table and graph below outlines the results of this question:

	Strongly agree total	Agree total	Neither agree nor disagree total	Disagree total	Strongly disagree total	Didn't answer total
Provision of new homes in the heart of Southend-on-Sea	50	26	17	3	3	4
Safe, attractive pedestrian and cycling routes through the development, improving access to the town centre	70	14	9	4	2	4
Commercial space in the development	22	21	40	10	5	5
Provision of public, shared and private outdoor space	56	20	14	3	3	7



The reasons respondents gave for choosing their answers is summarised below:

- Affordable housing for the people of Southend
- Proposals will make the area family-friendly and safe
- Proposals will enhance the area
- Support for cycle and pedestrian routes

Some respondents also referenced a number of concerns relating to the development proposals:

- Roads are more important than this development – roads won't cope with the amount of congestion
- Security concerns linked to the outdoor space
- Excessive number of homes will cause strain on amenities

There were also a number of suggestions for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to consider as it takes the development forward:

- Commercial space – shoe shops, post office, bank, convenience store, restaurants, pub
- Space for local enterprises and start-up businesses
- Community centre or community run spaces
- Homes should be for the people of Southend – place restrictions on resale and renting

4.6. Question 6

As part of the Better Queensway development, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is actively seeking to promote cycling, walking and public transport as sustainable travel options, and provide a parking space for every property. Respondents were asked for their views on this.

In terms of responses, there were a number of suggestions and support for making sustainable travel an easier choice:

- Pedestrian routes away from roads that provide easy access to the town centre and station
- Separate, safe cycle lanes away from vehicle traffic and to prevent cyclists cycling on pavements where pedestrians, buggies and wheelchair users are
- Increase cycle lanes throughout Southend more generally
- Public transport can only be promoted if Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has a say in bus and train fares / cheaper buses
- Buses need to run to where people live, for example North Shoebury
- Long term investment in trams as they are environmentally friendly
- Modelling new forms of transport, including trams, light rail, and car sharing schemes
- Make it safe to walk after dark
- Well sign-posted, well lit with cameras
- Consider the impact on people with disabilities
- Encourage schemes like ZipCar to reduce car ownership.

There were 22 references in responses to the importance of including provision for a parking space for every property, with some respondents suggesting that a ratio of one to one parking was not important. There were, however, a minority of comments suggesting

that people tend to own more than one car and therefore a space for every property was not sufficient.

Comments included:

- Agree an element of parking is required but one space per resident is crazy (*context indicates it is too high*)
- Indication car ownership and usage is declining
- Unrealistic to provide one to one parking
- Follow London and provide fewer parking spaces in high density housing schemes – only half of homes should have a parking space and those without one offered homes at a reduced price
- Need two parking spaces per household
- Need visitor, care working and service/deliver parking
- Removing car parking spaces from the town centre discourages shoppers.

There were also a number of comments linked to parking on the development more generally:

- Safe car parking with an entry system to prevent people going to the town centre from parking on the development
- Parking capacity needs to be right to prevent a knock-on effect on neighbouring streets
- Support for electric vehicle charging points and limiting space for fossil fuel cars to park
- Visitor parking to be available within walking distance to the homes and consider access for emergency services and domestic care providers.

There were also a number of comments linked to the road network and crossing in the context of sustainable travel:

- Safer pedestrian crossings are needed, especially from Chichester Road to the Victoria Shopping Mall
- Make 20mph zones in residential areas, 30mph limit throughout town, including underpass, abolish all 40mph speed limits, which should apply to west of the borough on the A127, outside the borough boundary
- Concern about increased traffic to Southchurch Road West and Chichester Road from Sutton Road and Southchurch Road East
- Need to get rid of cars quickly – this scheme will increase congestion
- Obsession with sustainable travel options is causing heavy traffic pollution and congestion, damaging economy and causing stress to residents
- Stop taking road space for cycling
- The plans claim to want to promote public transport, walking and cycling, and tackle toxic air, but policies do not support these objectives.

Two respondents felt that they had insufficient information to comment at this stage.

4.7. Question 7

Question 7 asked respondents how they thought the development of Queensway could improve quality of life and create opportunities for people living and working in and around Southend-on-Sea.

The majority of people were positive about the development, with comments centred around six main themes:

Quality of life

- Create better living conditions and a vibrant community fit for the 21st century
- Encourage community cohesion and improve social structure
- Re-energise the local area
- Smaller blocks can help with physical and mental health and social wellbeing
- Quality of life could be improved by the reduction of motorised traffic
- Create a destination where people want to live and work
- Build something for the community rather than for commercial reasons.

Housing

- Better quality housing appropriate for a modern society
- Opportunity to create more homes for young people and for first time buyers to get on the property ladder
- Affordable housing must be a main priority
- Opportunity for social housing and privately owned houses that ordinary working class people can afford
- Homes must be for single people, as well as families
- Opportunity to provide housing for the homeless
- Many residents have lost pride/ownership of homes/community due to accommodation being run down, damp and overcrowded
- Residents must have privacy in their homes and not be overlooked
- Flats have lounge/kitchen areas which are unappealing for residents who wish to live separately from their kitchens. Builders cram more flats into one space
- Proposals will generate a high proportion of north-facing single aspect homes, and we feel that greater consideration should be given to aligning the north-south to give aspects east and west and southwards towards the sea.

Environment

- Opportunity to improve the environment in an unattractive part of the town and make it more welcoming
- More green space and landscaping
- More open and improved land use.

Connectivity

- Opportunity to open the town centre up, helping people in the east of the borough become part of Southend
- Create easier links and better access to the town centre
- By making a non car centric area people will connect better with the area
- A better road network with more effective traffic flow
- Important the masterplan should include better integration and permeability with the Victoria Shopping Centre.

Safety

- Opportunity to improve safety and reduce anti-social behaviour
- Create a strong neighbourhood watch committee
- Opportunity for less dark, unwelcoming places
- Businesses need to feel less vulnerable to anti-social activities
- Policing needs to be helpful, approvable, friendly and affective by constructive interaction
- People need to feel safe at all times during the day.

Economic

- Opportunity to create job opportunities, especially if commercial space is included as part of the development
- Development is key to the future of the town centre and seafront's survival
- Regenerating this area will lead to regeneration of the surrounding area
- Help boost the economy in the local area
- Reducing cars and congestion will improve the economy and create more opportunities and jobs for residents.

However, some respondents felt that the development would not improve quality of life in the area, or that there was insufficient evidence to show how it would improve people's lives:

General

- The development will make life worse for residents and businesses in the town, far beyond the inconvenience during the demolition and building phase
- The Council needs to rejuvenate the town centre and look at parking charges and business rates.

Housing

- Existing homes should be refurbished, the area improved and properties managed properly
- It won't benefit those living in the existing tower blocks.

Opportunities for people in Southend-on-Sea

- The development won't create opportunities for people, just the rich
- What opportunities? It's about building housing, not lifestyle. Lofty ideas – just get on and build it.

Road network

- No opportunity to improve quality of life with the current road network proposal
- Unnecessary changes to the road layout will cause more chaos and uproar
- Development of the business/science park at Cherry Orchard Way will attract young talent to the town. This must be thought about in terms of the road network; it will be a disaster if access through Victoria Avenue is restricted and traffic is gridlocked across Southend and around Priory Park. Will spend millions in the future correcting a horrendous mistake
- The transport side of the development should be used to correct the disaster that is Victoria Gateway. Put back the roundabout and open the Deeping.

5. Feedback analysis – Section two: transport and access

5.1. Question 8

Question 8 asked for people's general thoughts on Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's proposed transport scheme. Overall, 14 respondents generally support the proposals, with five opposing it and three stating that there was not sufficient information to be able to comment.

There were a number of comments linked to the current road arrangement:

- The existing road arrangement is not fit for purpose and is dangerous
- Overloaded roads and blind spots cause accidents for pedestrians and cyclists
- The current transport links are adequate
- Chichester Road gets blocked
- There is currently a bottle neck at Victoria station and the changes at Victoria Gateway have made the situation worse.

Some respondents could see benefits with the proposals, although there were significantly fewer references to this than concerns about the plans. These include:

- The road scheme will be good for traffic and safety
- The removal of Southchurch Road roundabout and the pedestrian underpass is a good idea.

Relating to the transport proposals, people felt that there were many issues with it and each of the comments below were noted by multiple respondents:

- The scheme should look at a wider area – the main changes will be carried out on Short Street and this is too narrow a focus
- Concerns about parking issues that could be dangerous on Sutton Road and the Christchurch Road end of Wimborne Road
- Directing traffic into Southchurch Road and Sutton Road will only cause traffic pinch points elsewhere
- Congestion will increase and the traffic model is inaccurate (multiple comments from respondents linked to this issue)
- Objection to closing Queensway to Southchurch Road access
- Removing the Queensway roundabout will cause problems
- Chichester Road improvements will have negative knock-on effects on Victoria Avenue and traffic coming from the seafront
- Concerns about traffic accessing Southchurch Road via Chichester Road
- Concerned that the Milton Road intersection will become very congested
- Not being able to directly enter Southchurch Road from the west will create congestion in Southchurch Road and by the Seaways roundabout
- Concerned at how well the junction will work at Chichester Road/Queensway to keep traffic flowing at peak times. This is aggravated by the delays at the junction outside Victoria station
- Concerns that the plans will increase bottlenecks, especially in Sutton Road as traffic tries to avoid congestion at Victoria Plaza; and the junction at Chichester Road/Short Street will be a bottleneck for the whole area. The plans will prevent a good flow of traffic across town it will freeze up public transport and commercial traffic and there is no slip road or access for emergency services vehicles.

Respondents provided a range of suggestions as to how the transport scheme could be improved or changed. Many of these related to perceived wider issues in Southend-on-Sea, for example more car parks, improved bus services and access for buses, and improvements to the wider road network in the borough (not just Queensway). While all of these comments have been noted by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, they are not included in this document as they do not link directly to this consultation and the Queensway development.

Suggestions include:

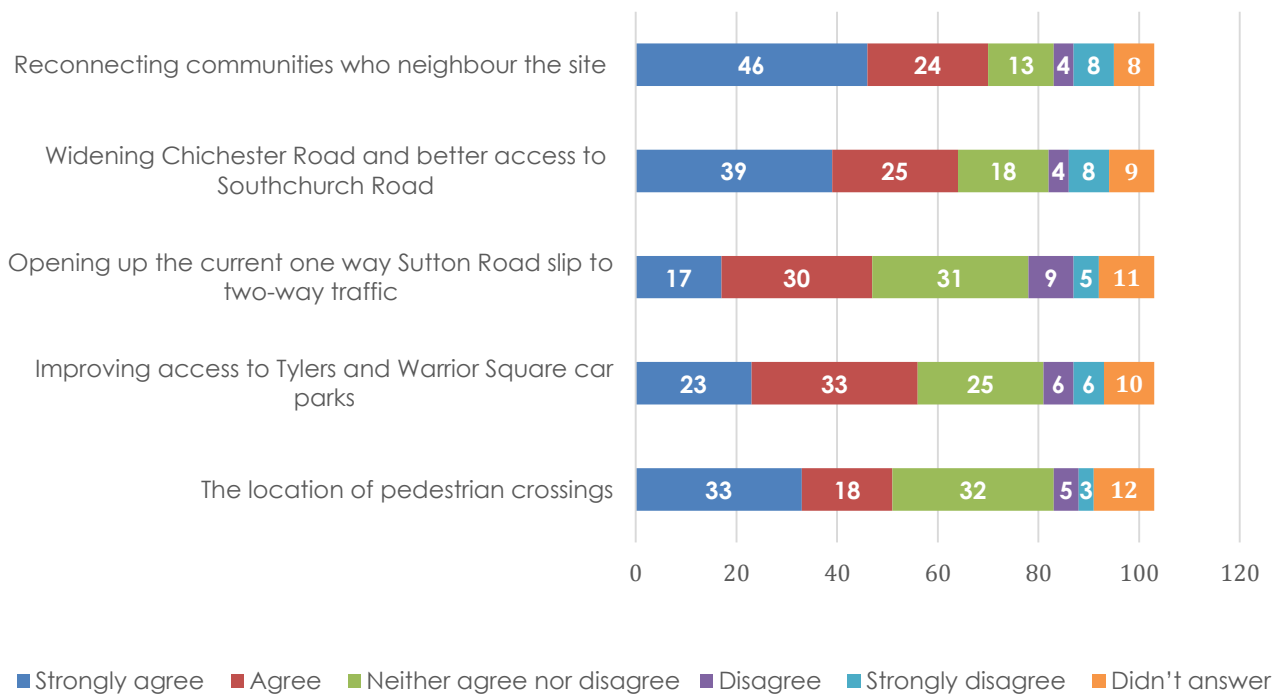
- The Deeping is currently closed off and, while there is a possible traffic safety concern linked to reopening this, it should be looked at as part of a wider strategy to alleviate congestion in the town centre
- Open up Whitegate Road to two-way traffic to improve flow of traffic
- Re-opening the Deeping would offer a bypass of the Queensway for traffic heading east - leaving only seafront bound traffic to use the Queensway underpass
- Introducing traffic calming and possibly another way of accessing the dual carriage way from Sutton Road, Southchurch Road and Chichester Road.
- Making the Sutton Road - Southchurch Road junction by the church two-way
- Adding in a second lane to turn left at Victoria Gateway to ease traffic flow here and move it along the free-flowing Queensway road
- Improving the flow of traffic at Victoria Gateway and get the pedestrian crossing with red/green lights co-ordinated with the traffic lights, present situation causes great confusion
- Trying to force traffic via Cuckoo Corner and make Sutton Road a dead end or consider an alternative route
- Considering slower speed limits along Queensway and make the 20 mph speed limit the norm in all residential areas. Make the 30 mph an absolute maximum limit within the town
- Allocating no more than 50% of car parking spaces to the homes
- Improving traffic flow around Priory Park by making it dual carriageway
- An opportunity to make the Southchurch Road roundabout a really beautiful urban circus, an eastern gateway to the town centre. This would maintain the dual carriageway to the seafront and the east-west Southchurch Road link. But it would avoid unnecessarily diverting east-west traffic into the town centre and create a beautiful arrival point for visitors, before moving onto the seafront. It would slow traffic otherwise rushing through the underpass (surely this is desirable) and could signal an urban transition between Southchurch and the town centre.

5.2. Question 9

Question 9 of the feedback form asked participants to indicate their views via a tick box chart (options ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree) on key features of the transport infrastructure linked to the scheme. The table and graph below outlines the results of this question:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Didn't answer
The location of pedestrian crossings	33	18	32	5	3	12
Improving access to Tylers and Warrior Square car parks	23	33	25	6	6	10
Opening up the current one way Sutton Road slip to two-way traffic	17	30	31	9	5	11
Widening Chichester Road and better access to Southchurch Road to create a more attractive place for people to walk along	39	25	18	4	8	9
Reconnecting communities who neighbour the site with the town centre, creating better access to jobs, shops and the seafront by covering over part of the Queensway underpass	46	24	13	4	8	8

Graph to show breakdown of responses to question 9



The reasons respondents gave for choosing their answers is summarised below:

- Welcome new ideas for the town but this is focussed on improving pedestrian access and leisure areas at the expense of squeezing traffic through Southchurch and Chichester Roads
- Support for pedestrian crossings, enabling residents to get to train stations faster
- Opportunity to create a positive community and doesn't segregate good and bad areas
- The underpass is currently underused and people prefer to walk over the road.

Some respondents also referenced a number of concerns relating to the development proposals:

- Roads are already at capacity and the effect of the proposed scheme on traffic flow has not been realistically assessed and appears to result in gridlock at the end of Southchurch Road, Chichester Road and Queensway
- Opposition to two-way traffic on Sutton Road – it is already difficult to cross the road and the slip road is narrow, meaning it will easily be congested
- Traffic will back up to Victoria Gateway and Victoria Avenue due to Sutton Road and Southchurch Road traffic coming via Chichester Road
- Points 1-3 indicate you admit there is a traffic problem. Cramming in over 1,000 homes will make the problem worse
- To change another roundabout is lunacy – Victoria Gateway caused chaos
- Opposition to the road network – the plans will restrict access from the town centre to Sutton Road and from Southchurch Road to the seafront
- Opposition to pedestrian crossings – there are already plenty, more will create a bottleneck
- Improvements need to be made in terms of permeability to pedestrians – spend money elsewhere as it will cause a traffic issue.

There were also a number of suggestions for improving the transport infrastructure:

Junctions

- No more traffic lights and open up the road with roundabouts
- Box junction restrictions to allow bus routes to flow
- Freeing up the flow both in and out of town needs to be a priority
- Bus stops in Victoria Plaza are chaotic at best – break them up and move further down towards Victoria.

Pedestrian crossings

- Opposite multiple storey car park in Chichester Road should be a proper pedestrian crossing
- We know from the Victoria Gateway project that pedestrian crossings delay traffic flows, so routing over the traffic flow is a safer and quicker way of travel
- Likely Southchurch Road and Chichester Road will be busier so thought given to crossings at first-floor level as was previously possible between Taylor Centre and Victoria Plaza
- Improve crossings in Sutton Road
- Would like to see the pedestrian underpass that links Grange Gardens to Warrior Square stay.

5.3. Question 10

The final question provided a free-flowing comment box for respondents to share any other thoughts that they would like Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to consider.

Many of the comments reflected those which had already been raised. There were 42 mentions of traffic, parking and road-related comments, including:

- Reconsidering the entire road plan
- Undertaking further consultation on the road plan
- More pedestrian crossing, bus lanes and cycle-friendly facilities
- Reducing speed limits and considering traffic calming measures, especially along Sutton Road
- Congestion concerns resulting from the road changes, especially on Southchurch Road, Chichester Road, Bournemouth Park Road and Southchurch Avenue
- No requirement for one to one parking.

The importance of public facilities, including a community youth centre, an education centre, sports facilities, a new swimming pool and an outdoor theatre were all referenced, along with water fountains, public toilets and seating. There were, however, concerns about the development's impact on health and education services in the borough as a result of the development.

The overall environment was important, and, as in questions 3 and 4, people reiterated their concerns about the maintenance and upkeep of outdoor space. Allowing natural light, preventing dog fouling and fly tipping and planting fruit and vegetable patches were all referenced as important.

Keeping the existing residents of the Queensway development informed, especially around the compulsory purchase process was noted as an important consideration as the development progresses.

There were also positive comments about the development as a whole, with people believing it is something the town can be proud of and that there should be more developments of this nature. There was also the suggestion that Southend-on-Sea Borough Council should get on with the development as quickly as possible.

6. Conclusion

A full and thorough public consultation exercise in line with the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement has been undertaken to involve the community at this early stage of development for the Better Queensway project.

The consultation and associated events were well-publicised, and those interested have had the opportunity to provide their feedback in person, online, by post and email.

Key local stakeholders, residents and local businesses were all given the opportunity to meet the project team and discuss the plans.

The consultation has demonstrated support for the principle of development on the Better Queensway site and for improving the area through the provision of high-quality homes and building design, affordable housing and public space. Members of the community are, however, deeply concerned about the implications of the changes to the road network and their wider impact on the town.

Furthermore, as Southend-on-Sea Borough Council continues to develop plans in partnership with a developer (once appointed), there is clear appetite from the community to get involved in further shaping the plans.

This report is an interim consultation report to support Southend-on-Sea Borough Council with responding to the consultation findings as part of its February 2018 Cabinet report. A full consultation report, which includes details of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's response to consultation comments, will be developed, published and shared with the community and potential development partners in due course.