

Southend New Local Plan Refining the Plan Options Public Consultation

Non - Technical Summary
July 2021

Looking Ahead Towards 2040

How Should We Plan for the Future?

Make Your Views Known

As we recover from the unprecedented impact of the Covid pandemic and face the significant challenges of climate change and meeting our future housing, economic and community needs it is important that we look positively forward to plan for how we want our town to develop and look over the next 20 years.

We first consulted on an issues and options document in early 2019 as part of the first stage in preparing a New Local Plan for Southend. Building on the valuable feedback you provided we are now once again seeking your comments and views on 'Refining the Plan Options' which looks in more detail at possible options for preparing a new strategy and plan for the Borough and identifies specific sites that could contribute to meeting future needs.

Your input will be invaluable in contributing to and ensuring that a New Local Plan for Southend has the support of the resident and business community.

Please make your views and comments by 17th Sept 2021.

The ways you can do this are detailed on the back of this summary document.

Refining the Plan Options

Refining the Plan Options represents the second stage in preparing a New Local Plan for Southend. The New Local Plan will identify land for housing, jobs, local services and supporting infrastructure to meet the needs of the Borough for the next 20 years. It will also set out planning policies to manage new development in a way that protects and enhances our natural and historic environment whilst meeting Southend’s aspirations for the future of the Borough.

Comments and views made at this stage will help shape a Preferred Approach document which will be subject to further public consultation next year and in 2023 when the Plan is then submitted to be examined by an independent Inspector.

Once adopted the Southend New Local Plan will be a key document in guiding and facilitating new development and growth in the Borough, helping to deliver some of the key aspirations of the Southend 2050 vision developed in 2018 in partnership with the local community, and acting as a catalyst to assist economic recovery from the Covid pandemic. When adopted, the New Local Plan will replace the existing suite of documents that currently comprise the Local Development Framework, including the Southend Core Strategy (2007), Development Management Document (2015) and Southend Central Area Action Plan (2018) and some policies within the Airport Joint Area Action Plan (2014)



Calendar Year (action listed commencing)

As an approximation, the period from submission to adoption may range from 9 to 12 months dependent on the scope of the plan, issues arising during examination and scheduling of meetings

Southend Borough

comprises 8 distinct neighbourhoods



82,000

Existing homes



Density 19.6 homes per hectare



23,620 homes required by 2040



529.9 hectares of protected greenspace

20,000+ Street Trees



15

Allotments

8

Nature conservation areas

Resident Population

183,100

7+ million day visitors per annum pre Covid-19



7 miles of coastline

Theme Park & Pleasure Pier



3 Theatres



Cultural facilities

2 nationally recognised art companies

1 International Airport



9 Train Stations



50+

Sport facilities and pitches



58 Schools

2 Colleges



1 University

64,700 jobs in Southend

48 Commercial Areas (93 hectares)



11,000 new jobs by 2040

20 Business/ Industrial Estates (118.3 hectares)



Extensive Bus Routes



1.09 cars per household

1.31 cars per house

0.65 cars per flat



Strengths and Opportunities

7 miles of coastline



32 parks,
36 play areas



Strong entrepreneurial culture.

86% of companies employ 10 staff or fewer



Employment Growth Sectors – digital, cultural and creative; healthcare technology; advanced manufacturing and engineering; and tourism

Recover and grow visitor economy

7m

Visitors
Per year



Expanding Airport and business park



Hub for culture and higher education



Low car ownership.

1 car per household on average



9 railway stations



Frequent bus routes



Expanding cycle network



99% of all development in last 15 years on brownfield land



Challenges

Average house price

10.6x annual salary of Southend residents



Low growth in housing compared to other large towns and cities



Need to deliver more family housing



Recovery from COVID-19



Traffic congestion on major routes in the AM/PM peak



Low wage economy (those working in Southend)



Need to improve the skills base of residents



Overreliance of retail in the High Street



10 years difference in life expectancy between residents of most and least affluent areas of Southend



1/3 Southend residents classed as physically inactive and at risk of ill health



Renewal and replacement of sea defences



Enhance the built and natural environment



Since we published the Issues and Options document for consultation in early 2019, there have been significant changes proposed by the Government to planning legislation as first outlined in the White Paper 'Planning for the Future' which proposed a package of measures seeking to radically reform the planning system including how local plans are prepared. If approved, the White Paper proposals will have a major impact on how the Southend New Local Plan is prepared and taken forward. The preparation of the 'Refining the Plan Options' document is therefore designed to provide a degree of flexibility so that the changes proposed in the White Paper can be satisfactorily accommodated, as appropriate, as the New Local Plan progresses.

In addition, last September the Government agreed to radical changes to the Use Classes Order which allow greater freedoms for changing retail use to other uses without the need to apply for planning permission. As a result, this has significantly impacted on current retail planning policy.

All these considerations together with the comments made on the Issues and Options document have been taken into account in preparing 'Refining the Policy Options'. **It does not set out a preferred strategy or criteria-based policies, rather it sets out draft proposals, potential development sites and possible interventions to generate further public feedback as the Local Plan is progressed.**

Other land use considerations and criteria-based policies that help to shape and manage the form and function of development, such as those that address housing tenure and climate change, have not been explicitly identified within the consultation document. They will be included in the next stage of the New Local Plan preparation.

The full document can be viewed at <https://localplan.southend.gov.uk/>. Its contents are summarised below.

Having an up-to-date Local Plan that is shaped through community engagement, provides an important tool to help manage future development proposals that would otherwise come forward without local policies guiding the type, scale and location of new development.

Summary of Contents

The Plan is divided into three Parts: 1. Aim and Objectives; 2. Spatial Strategy; 3. Southend Neighbourhoods. The primary focus of the consultation is seeking views on the Aim and Objectives and Spatial Strategy. The Neighbourhood sections set out the draft proposals in more detail for those wishing to focus on certain areas of the Borough or where they live.

Part 1. Aim and Objectives

The document sets out a draft Aim of where we want to be in 20 years' time and will be a key stepping stone to achieving the **Southend 2050 ambition**. The document also contains 7 draft Development Principles and 15 Spatial Objectives.

Part 2. Spatial Strategy

The Local Plan must set out a positive overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quantity of future development. The document identifies a draft strategy which seeks to satisfactorily accommodate future development needs, including new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure and services, whilst safeguarding the character and amenities of areas and the natural environment.

Economic Recovery and Meeting Employment Needs



The Borough will need to plan for around 11,000 new jobs over a 20 year period and identifies 'growth clusters' as having the potential to achieve future economic growth in Southend. These are the Town Centre, London Southend Airport and northern Southend corridor centred around the Progress Road, Airborne Close and Stock Road/ Temple Farm employment areas. Within these areas the principal growth drivers are identified as being the digital, cultural and creative; healthcare technology; advanced manufacturing and engineering; and tourism sectors. There is also potential within the Climate Change technology sector.

The document sets out options for safeguarding these important employment areas and identifies land for additional employment provision to meet future needs. It also considers the re-allocation of underutilised employment land to other uses, principally residential use.

All the sections of the New Local Plan will play an important role in facilitating job growth and economic recovery. The provision of new homes will provide construction jobs and attract investment and spending to the area, whilst a growing population will generate more jobs in schools and health related

services as well as shops, cafes and restaurants in our town, neighbourhood and local centres. Transport and access improvements will be vital for attracting economic investment and there remains considerable economic growth potential at London Southend Airport.



Providing Community Services and Infrastructure

Providing quality services for the future health, education, sports and leisure and community needs of the Borough's residents is fundamental in achieving a high quality of life.

Growth within Southend needs to be infrastructure led, ensuring key services and facilities are delivered when they are needed, taking account of existing capacity and the phasing of future development. The document asks what infrastructure provision is required in respect to new development and outlines that an Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be prepared to sit alongside the New Local Plan.



Providing New Homes

Housing is an important issue, particularly its affordability, not just for Southend, but nationally.

Housing in Southend, and South Essex as a whole, has become less and less affordable in recent years. Indeed for many, it is simply unaffordable. When compared to the national average, we have high rates of overcrowding, enforced house sharing, and homelessness. We continue to see rising house prices and private rents outstripping local wage levels. Not enough housing is being built in the area and the New Local Plan needs to facilitate a step-change in housing delivery in the future whilst protecting our parks, delivering new infrastructure, including schooling and transport and safeguarding the character of the Borough and fulfilling our Climate Change commitments.

Local Authorities must seek to meet its need in full as identified by the Government in its 'standard methodology' for calculating housing need. For Southend this identifies a need for 23,620 new homes over the next 20 years (1,181 homes per annum) which represents a significant increase on past development rates.

Housing Issues

Southend Population 183,100
Area 4175.6 hectares



82,000

Existing
homes

Density 19.6
homes per
hectare

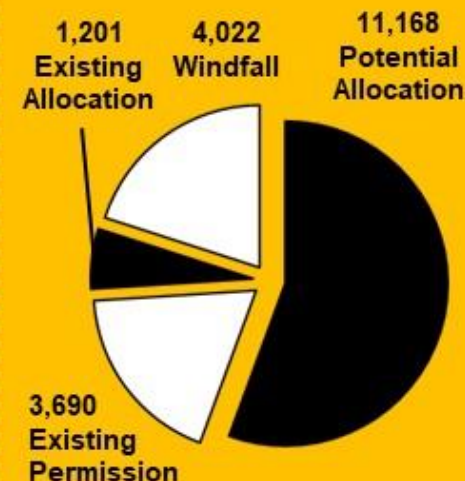


23,620 homes
required by 2040

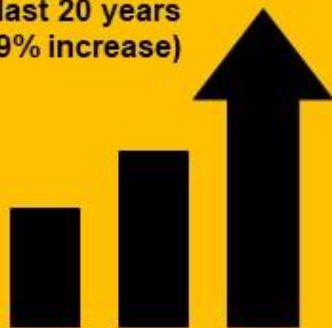


Supply - potential
number of new homes
within Southend

20,081



6,274 new homes built over
the last 20 years
(8.29% increase)



Of which 773 new affordable
homes built over the last 20
years



Around 570 – 650 new
affordable homes required
each year (SHMA 2016)

1,419 families on the
Southend Council housing
waiting list



2020 average house price
10.62X local earnings
(national average 7.84x)



2000 average house price
3.88X local earnings

Average age of first time
buyer

31



Low growth in housing
compared to other large
towns and cities

Need to
deliver
more
family
housing



Average price of a home has
increased 320% over the
last 20 years within Southend



National
average =
211%

Refining the Plan Options builds on the options put forward in the 'Issues and Options' consultation report and responses received and considers in further detail options for meeting our future housing needs by:

- **increasing urban capacity** – development within the existing urban area of Southend through windfall, existing allocations and sites located on previously developed land. This has the potential to contribute 10,648 new homes;
- **facilitating urban change** – housing regeneration on existing housing estates in public ownership that may benefit from some renewal, redevelopment or expansion; outmoded/under used employment land that could be better put to alternative residential use; and a small number of sites on green space and agricultural land within settlement limits that could be suitable for housing. This has the potential to contribute 2,259 new homes;
- **new neighbourhood** - development on the edge of the existing urban area of Southend that has the potential to create a comprehensive new neighbourhood including new jobs, supporting infrastructure, improved access and public green space. This includes 1,859 new homes at Fossetts Farm and an estimated 5,395 additional homes on land currently designated as Green Belt; and
- **new development outside the Borough** - Rochford District Council is preparing a new Local Plan and is also considering a range of spatial options and sites to meet its own development needs. One option that could contribute to meeting housing needs within both Rochford and Southend is through providing a **series of new neighbourhoods** on the north-eastern edge of Southend. These neighbourhoods could be created with distinct identities or be part of a comprehensive Garden Settlement delivering new jobs and infrastructure including education, health, new public open space forming a South Essex Estuary Park (SEE Park) and supporting community facilities to provide for sustainable communities. This has the potential to help meet housing needs in the area. A comprehensive development would also include all the land necessary to deliver new road links necessary to facilitate the delivery of land both within Southend and Rochford District.

If all the potential housing sites in Southend were to be delivered it could provide for a total of just over 20,000 new homes. A further 4,850 new homes could be delivered on the edge of Southend, within Rochford District, which would help towards meeting housing needs for the area over a 20 year period.



Retail Provision and Centre Hierarchy

To ensure we provide for healthy, complete neighbourhoods and encourage local employment opportunities, the document identifies a hierarchy of centres and proposes that we promote, enhance and where possible maintain a mix of commercial uses within these by defining each of them as “Commercial Areas”. The document also considers future retail needs.



Town Centre and Central Seafront

In the light of changing retail patterns there is a need to promote a greater mix of uses within our town and local centres, the town centre needs to be reimagined and refocused to ensure that it adapts and evolves.

In response to this the Local Plan sets a draft vision and presents options for updating the uncommitted site allocations contained in the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) that was adopted in 2018.

The document also invites feedback on a range of draft Opportunity Sites and Interventions that could transform and re-imagine the Town Centre and wider area.



Protecting and Enhancing Green Space and the Coastline

To provide protection against inappropriate development on green space and the coastline and to protect natural habitats, the document identifies sites to be safeguarded; supports in principle the ambition to create a Country Park to improve access to green space for residents in the north east of the Borough; and identifies areas of search where new and improved open spaces will be promoted within areas lacking access to local open space. It also identifies a small number of green spaces including agricultural land where there is potential for other uses, to deliver the objectives referred to above.



Transport and Access

The document identifies draft priorities for transport provision and considers accessibility to town and neighbourhood centres and tourism attractions. It also seeks views on the principle of creating a new sustainable link road from

the A127 to Shoeburyness to facilitate the development of new neighbourhood/s to the north of Southend.



London Southend Airport

Options for updating and reviewing policy provisions relating to the airport, its growth and economic potential to take account of existing runway capacity, environmental and noise issues together with transport implications are set out for comment.



Part 3. Southend Neighbourhoods

‘Refining the Policy Options’ sets out in Section 3 of the document a range of options and issues affecting the Boroughs eight defined neighbourhoods, namely Eastwood, Leigh, Prittlewell, Westcliff, Southend Central, Southchurch, Thorpe Bay and Shoeburyness. It sets out draft priorities and considers how complete each neighbourhood is in terms of community facilities and accessibility and identifies potential sites for various uses to meet local needs.

Making Your Views Known

It is important to tell us what you think is the best approach to take in developing Southend and its different places.

To guide your response to Refining the Plan Options, the document sets out a number of questions, many of which relate to specific sites in the Borough.

You do not need to respond to all the sections and suggested questions, you can focus on what interests you. For instance you may wish to focus on the neighbourhood you live in.

You can view and comment on the main document online and download questions at: localplan.southend.gov.uk

If you have any questions about the consultation or would like to discuss some of the issues, please do contact us.

How to Contact Us

You can email us at: planningpolicy@southend.gov.uk

Or write to us at:

Business Intelligence Officer,
Performance & Business Support,
Department for Place,
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council,
PO Box 6,
Civic Centre,
Victoria Avenue,
Southend-on-Sea,
SS2 6ER

You can also follow us on: [@PlanSouthend](#) and [@SouthendBCOfficial](#)

If you would like to be notified of future planning policy consultations you can sign up to our planning policy consultation database. Please contact planningpolicy@southend.gov.uk or telephone 01702 215408.