



BERA

The Residents Association

1st December 2016

SCAAP CONSULTATION

Car parking and development overview

Having read the consultation document please see BERA's comments below regarding the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP).

It appears to me that there needs to be some clarification concerning parking. It has to be borne in mind that the more car parking spaces there are along Southend seafront, the more chance there is of substantial traffic flow problems throughout the town in high seasonal periods, including the seafront. It is on this basis that officers should be instructed to consider a number of options. These options should include having zone parking charges in individual car parks, depending whether they are north or south of the railway line, to encourage footfall along the High Street.

To try and alleviate problems in relation to the re-development of Queensway, Seaway car park, Marine Plaza and the town centre, proposals should be considered to multi-storey Tylers Avenue car park as a first stage, before developing the car parks in Clarence and Alexandra Street and of course Warrior Square. The aim should also include relocation of the bus station from its current position, to that of the rebuilt Tylers Avenue car park, to encourage greater use of the bus service. This could also boost the chances of Southend-on-Sea becoming a City in the future. Another phase to be considered would be the compulsory purchase of the old gas works site to enable car parking to take place while the Seaway car park and the town centre were being developed. Also we should be expediting the plans to build the 200 space car park for the new museum as a first stage of that development, replacing the unofficial car park on the Marine Plaza site, opposite the Kursaal.

Finally, the Council should be encouraging more use of the car parks in the eastern and western parts of town, a free of charge land train during the peak summer periods has to be considered, with the car parking ticket being used as the free ticket to ride. The planning and phasing of this would be in conjunction with whatever development proposals come through first. It is BERA's opinion that no matter how many car parking places are provided, there will, at some point during the year, be a potential for lack of capacity. What we cannot do, is have empty parking spaces for the majority of the year, which will have no financial benefit to the town at all. The plans should also consider maximising the use of public transport, with serious consideration especially given in encouraging people to use the Southend-bound trains. One thing is for certain, the Council should never contemplate putting a decked car park on the beach side of the sea front, as this would restrict sea views and create a narrowing effect on the promenade between any proposed decked car park and the beach.

Southend-on-Sea, over the next 10-15 years, has a fantastic opportunity to develop and be financially and economically stable, mainly because of the proposals of the growing business projects coming forward. The planning of all these opportunities will, instead of restricting our tourism industry, be crucial in creating opportunities in education, skills, jobs and infrastructure improvements.

I will now go into detail on the SCAAP document itself.

Below are the revised proposed amendments from the original consultation process.

As part of the local planning framework it would be useful to have an indication of likely timescales of the forthcoming aspects of the plan process. Specifically the new Local Plan will set out new long term growth targets which will include a review of SCAAP proposals but there is no indication of timescales. We have no idea at this stage of when SCAAP is expected to be adopted and therefore how long it may be valid.

The introduction also makes reference (1.2 para 7) to a joint assessment of needs for the housing market but, and this was asked at the consultation draft stage, no indication as to who the joint assessment will be with.

Context and Issues

Page 8 Housing

There seems to be a preoccupation with footfall to the extent that this supposed increase in footfall is the sole argument for providing more housing in the plan area. But the validity of this point is dubious. Residential areas are devoid of on street activity in the evening. The justification for more housing in the SCAAP area needs to be more robustly made. If greater footfall is required then leisure activities and housing are required, not solely housing.

Page 9 Access and car parking

The policy on accessibility appears to be skewed towards satisfying the demands of the residents of the Central area whereas additionally accessibility improvements must satisfy those wishing to access the area from outside. You appear to ignore the fact that a significant factor in determining car park usage overall and in particular the town centre and between individual car parks is the cost of parking, eg zoning.

Page 18 para 48/49

The reality is that the High Street no longer provides any unique shopping experiences. The lack of investment shows that there is little sign the retailers have any interest in boosting Southend. Already most disposable income of Southend residents for non-food shopping finds its way to the regional centres including Chelmsford because the quality of merchandise on offer in our high street is so poor.

Para 52

One way of encouraging a temporary uplift to empty units is to provide an example by dealing with the council's own property, and although it is not on the primary shopping frontage it is in a prime location. We are talking about the unit at the foot of the pier lift which has been empty since it was built. Perhaps the local college could be encouraged to join with businesses to provide visual displays.

Page 20 Policy DS1

Are you able to define in a planning context how a particular café/restaurant would contribute to the vitality of the town centre .Because Southend at present probably has as many restaurants/cafes/fast food outlets as anywhere in the country but the overwhelming majority are of poor quality. The prospect of more of the same potentially making up 40% of the High Street is an appalling prospect not a unique and diverse visitor/shopper experience you are seeking.

Map 3

It is difficult to see why the western side of the High street south of Alexandra Road has been downgraded to a secondary shopping frontage when a) the eastern side is primary and b) it is immediately at the meeting between the high street and the sea front. It seems to offer no less potential than the eastern side and is important in setting the scene for visitors from the sea side activities into the town. It should remain primary shopping frontage.

Page 60 Policy PA3

Para 2 sets out planning conditions which would need to be satisfied to grant consent for student accommodation. Conditions which it would be difficult to argue against for any development. So it begs the question as to why these planning conditions are being imposed here and not applied anywhere else. Why the inconsistency?

Page 25 para 69

A mix of housing types and sizes is essential but this paragraph does not appear to take into account the emphasis placed upon family housing stated in the strategic objectives on page 12. Moreover there is no analysis of the type/size/tenure of those houses which have already been built and those for which planning permission exists. Do they currently provide the mix which is being sought? In addition it is difficult to visualise there being family type accommodation anywhere in the central area other than in PA4.1

Page 27 paragraph 80

It is true that the supply of hotel accommodation could be improved in terms of quantity and quality, although the reference to the Premier Inn as offering quality accommodation is worrying if that is the benchmark being set. The last sentence of the paragraph is absolutely right that potential is there to harness the spending power of visitors to the town and the out commuting residents working in places such as London and should be applied with equal force to the areas shops and restaurants.

Page 56

Policy PA1 4d should read (as referred to in Policy Area CS1.3b)

Page 57

There is much scope for improving the environment of this part of London Road but there is also much scope for getting it wrong. This includes making it available for cyclists, pedestrians, seated café/restaurant users and a market. They are not all compatible.

Page 65/66

Warrior Square Policy PA5 There is no explicit mention of the need to enclose the Square. It seems common sense to provide housing on the current vacant south side to recreate a typical Victorian square. Neither is there mention of the current car parking or its future.

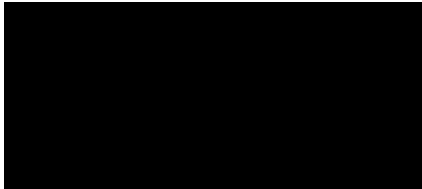
Page 67Clifftown policy area

The overwhelming area of Clifftown is residential so how the Aims can be started with the words Clifftown will be a vibrant area creating a lively setting, etc,etc is clearly wrong. Only the eastern end of Clifftown has the potential for the type of character referred to. Otherwise the residents should be told what to expect.

Again like Warrior Square there is no mention of the car parks at Clarence Road and Royal Mews. Surely these represent opportunity sites.

Page 81 Victoria Gateway

There is no mention of the Roots Hall site. Do we conclude that the redevelopment of the site is now outside the plan period or has it already been specified.



Ron Woodley

Independent Group Spokesman