

Tuesday 13th December, 2016

Re: Southend Central Area Action Plan, revised proposed submission November 2016

Dear Sir/ Madam

I write in regard to Southend Central Area Action Plan (revised proposed submission November 2016) and wish to raise some observations and concerns for consideration on behalf of Southend Business Partnership:-

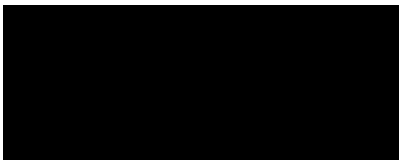
- We are broadly supportive of the Strategy, Criteria based Policies and proposed Opportunity Sites subject to there being no detrimental impact to parking access and capacity particularly south of the Southend to Fenchurch St railway line
- In regard to parking aspects we would comment further:-
 - Southend Borough Council's Business Survey 2016 clearly showed that businesses rated "Parking" as their biggest concern *"negative factors impacting on the performance of your business"* - (Q14)
 - Southend Business Partnership's response to the Thames Estuary Growth Commission 2050- Call for Ideas highlighted the need for *"New underground parking provision within the town centre"* commenting *"Southend's tourism offer is strong and has shown persistent growth during the last 5 years. However, on busy days, the number of people that can access the seafront and town centre is restrained by the number of car parking spaces available. New, subterranean parking provision will reduce the congestion created by motorists trawling the parking spaces; enable the tourism industry to further expand whilst preserving the utility of the surface land for development"*.
 - Opportunity South Essex's (formerly South Essex Growth Partnership) new Growth Strategy indicates that there will be significant job creation and housing growth across South Essex including Southend. This will inevitably result in more people visiting Southend as a tourism and leisure destination; provided our offers remain fit for purpose, with the need for having the capacity in place both parking and infrastructure access to welcome them. This means our parking provision and access to it needs to

be improved from now on as otherwise our tourism and leisure destination attractiveness will be compromised and future investment could be jeopardised. We need to continue to be able to retain and enhance the existing core tourism seafront offer which attracts thousands of people to the town whilst widening the range of our offers to attract new visitors to the town.

- Notwithstanding the above observations re access to and capacity of car parking we do feel that the supplementary document “Car Parking Study for the Central Area of Southend” does go some way towards proposing mitigating measures however measures indicated “in the medium term “2-5 years” (page 2 of recommendations) do in our view need to be fast tracked and implemented within a 2-3 year period. We do identify with increasing parking supply for peak periods through a weekend and public holiday Park & Ride (train) but additionally broadening it to potentially to include Benfleet and Pitsea stations in addition to Leigh on Sea.

However in the immediate term we would ask the Council to actively monitor the capacity and accessibility of parking, particularly at known busy times (Bank Holidays/summer weekends), and committing to taking earlier action if there is seen to be a worsening situation.

Yours faithfully,



Murray Foster

Chair, Southend Business Partnership