



6. KEY GUIDANCE AND PRINCIPLES

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Whilst the Masterplan does not represent formal policy guidance, there are a number of specific principles which underpin the scale of vision and ethos of the document. Chapter 6 provides a series of concise principles which are implicit to the delivery of the Masterplan and the future regeneration and sustainability of the town centre and seafront. The guidance focuses on:

- **Overarching guidance for the Central Area;**
- **Sustainability principles; and**
- **Design principles.**

The guidance draws on the national planning policy hierarchy and good practice. They also seek to reflect the emerging policies in SSBC's Local Development Framework, particularly the Core Strategy and the Design and Townscape SPD.



Cliffs Gardens



Aerial photo of Southend in the context of the Thames Estuary a

6.1 Overarching guidance for the Central Area

The Masterplan is underpinned by the following overarching principles:

Delivery of the Urban Renaissance and Thames Gateway agenda

In the context of Southend's strategic location in the Thames Gateway, the Masterplan provides an opportunity to act as a catalyst in the delivery of sustainable development and urban regeneration of Southend. Central to the regeneration and sustainable development of the Central Area are principles such as good design and a sense of unique place identity.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a common theme running through the guiding principles in Chapter 6. Sustainable development is defined by the triple bottom-line of social, physical and economic sustainability, and the Masterplan seeks to embody best practice in all three dimensions.

From a social and community perspective, the Masterplan supports enhancements in quality of life, inclusion, safety and accessibility. In relation to the physical and built environment, the Masterplan promotes conservation, biodiversity, careful use of natural resources and

consideration of flood risk and climate change. In economic terms, the report provides a spatial response to the objectives of the Regeneration Framework, promoting Southend's role as a regional centre and the growth of key sectors.

Environment

The Masterplan supports the protection and enhancement of the environment - particularly the Thames Estuary and the biodiversity and ecosystems supported by the estuarine environment. Southend's environmental setting has been a major driver in the growth of the town and continues to be a major asset which local people and visitors identify with. In addition, the Masterplan also seeks to promote the enhancement of public spaces and landscape in the Central Area - both enhancing the quality and usage of existing spaces and routes and creating new destinations.

Good design

A fundamental element of the Masterplan is the definition of an attractive, high quality environment for people to live, work and play. In line with the Design and Townscape SPD, section 6.3 sets out a series of broad principles which should underpin development proposals and planning briefs. Above all, the Masterplan will seek to create places of character and distinction which are accessible, sustainable and secure.



Watersports on Southend seafront

6.2 The Central Area - design principles

General Design Principles

This section defines the overarching Masterplan design principles. The fundamental concept of the Masterplan is to capitalise on Southend's assets and create a green city by the sea.

Connectivity and Character

The town centre is currently structured in a narrow linear form stretching from Victoria Avenue in the north to Pier Hill and the Pier in the south.

The aim of the Masterplan is to expand this into a series of quarters forming the branches off the central spine. At the southern end, the urban form opens out in celebration of the estuary and seafront.

Working from north to south, the main components of the Masterplan can be summarised as:

- The "Victorias" to north of and including the area around Southend Victoria Station. Proposals enhance the boulevard character of Victoria Avenue with a series of green streets and sees the rejuvenation of this area as a mixed use living and working quarter.
- Regeneration of London Road and Queensway/Southchurch Road to provide a mixture of employment, leisure, retail and living uses. This quarter creates the opportunity to strengthen the area around Victoria Circus and to improve north-south connections between the Victorias, Warrior Square and Farringdon.
- The education campus at Farringdon will be a lively destination with cultural activities in vibrant public spaces. Warrior Square will be improved through enhancements to the Gardens and new high quality mixed use office residential development which could include a new health facility under the LIFT programme.
- The southern end of the Central Area will be developed as a major retail mixed use quarter capitalising on the existing Clifftown area and developing a new mixed use retail /living quarter, St Johns, linking town to sea and opening up as a balcony to the estuary.
- The seafront will be improved to build on its existing themes of the seaside and the Cliffs.

Structure of Public Space

The emphasis in the Masterplan is upon the creation of a network of urban and green spaces which people are comfortable to move through and linger. There will be a greater emphasis on the concepts of shared space and space as a focal point of surrounding development

Enhancing existing green spaces:

- Warrior Square,
- Victoria Avenue,
- the Cliffs.

New green spaces:

- Ecclesiam Square

Urban spaces

- Revitalisation of existing spaces such as Victoria Circus
- The creation on new spaces e.g. Farringdon, Pier Hill Piazza
- New routes such St John's Boulevard

Shared space

- Victoria Station roundabout.
- Clifftown

Living spaces

Green living in St Johns

Victoria Avenue - green mixed use quarter

Public Realm Design Principles

There is a direct relationship between buildings and the quality of the spaces that they enclose and define. enhancements to public realm and urban structure will be supported by the development of more sustainable movement patterns. Pedestrian movement through streets and spaces will be supported through the use of high quality buildings, active ground floor frontages and the creation of a variety of building textures and massing to add visual interest.

Southend has a strong heritage and assets such as the Cliffs and seafront, Warrior Square, the Conservation Areas and Victoria Avenue form a lasting legacy which the Masterplan will seek to celebrate. Public realm improvements will stitch component parts together contributing to the creation of a new centre, pleasing to residents, visitors and businesses.

Achieving excellence in architectural design, and building maintenance and management are equally important. Building materials should be high quality, hard wearing and easy to maintain and replace.

An interactive, integrated and co-coordinated approach to the provision of public art will add to the quality and diversity of the town centre experience.

Attention will focus on the ambience and microclimate

within public spaces and delivering high quality architectural design around them.

The nature of streets and public realm is determined by the activities, which take place in them, and as such the Masterplan incorporates the following principles:

- Active uses throughout the day and evening will be encouraged;
- Adaptable spaces used for variety of uses;
- Provide locations for temporary and permanent activities;
- Activity, which spills out onto public spaces will be encouraged; and
- In the town centre, both within the public and shared spaces we wish to encourage the opportunities for play.

Buildings

The design principles set out here will be supplemented and expanded by more detailed Design Codes both for the overall Masterplan area and the quarters.

The quality of the town centre as a whole and the spaces and routes within will be determined by the quality of the buildings that define them.

Building Design

Southend is a seaside town with areas of heritage and history which act as exemplars for the future form and expression of the town centre. In order to be the destination of choice for culture, leisure and living within the Thames Gateway, Southend needs to be recognised for the quality and distinctiveness of its location and environment.

High quality buildings should be of an appropriate scale, respecting their context within the town and their potential visual and microclimatic impacts.

The character of the town centre should be defined by buildings of good design which are of a distinctive contemporary design and respect the scale and form of surrounding buildings.

Roofscape and exterior building materials should add to the visual interest and variety of the town centre. Where appropriate they should respect adjacent traditional buildings

Buildings should be flexible - both internally and externally to maximise the sustainability of the town centre.

Palettes of materials will be selected on the basis of their

appropriateness and durability both in visual and life cycle terms.

Parking

Wherever possible, multi-level car parks should be designed to fit seamlessly with the topography of the town centre. Underground car parks have been proposed under the Farringdon and Tylers Avenue sites. Multi-storey car parks are limited in location and should be designed to minimise their visual impact to create environments in which people feel safe and at ease. Where appropriate consideration should be given to 'skinning' car park structures with other uses or with elevations of contemporary design.

Where surface car parking is provided it should be as part of a landscaped setting or within a building enclosure

Servicing

Service access should be provided where possible from the rear of buildings or dedicated service areas. However, it is recognised that the Masterplan should not be compromised by ground level front servicing in a managed environment.

Plant

Care should be taken not to discharge plant areas onto public areas or routes and all roof-top plant should be limited and contained within screening structures, which are an integral part of the building design. Such structures should also consider the views from taller buildings.

Movement

Pedestrian Movement

The importance of a street environment within which people feel at ease and happy moving around with a sense of familiarity and security cannot be understated. The structure of the public realm, buildings and spaces will play a role in orientating people within the town centre without resorting to large amounts of street clutter in the form of signage.

The Masterplan encourages the provision of pedestrian priority in a hierarchy of shared spaces whilst still allowing controlled vehicular movement. Streets and pedestrian routes should be well lit and in a style that adds to the quality of the environment.

Cars

The Masterplan seeks to regain the centre of the town for people whilst maintaining provision for the car. It is proposed that this is achieved by locating parking areas within a circumference of 5 minutes walking time from the High Street.

Public Transport

The Masterplan is predicated upon the development of an integrated public transport facility embracing South Essex Rapid Transit (SERT), buses, trains and taxis. Important aspects are the creation of more effective interchanges at Southend Central Station and Victoria Station.

6.3 Sustainability principles

The Natural Environment in Southend, as for much of South Essex, is a valuable asset that should be celebrated, protected and enhanced. Enabling residents and visitors to have good access to a range of open spaces is important, as well as recognising the inherent value of habitats rich in biodiversity. The Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid strategy sets out the concept of the Harlequin Landscape, which recognises that different 'green places' have varied roles, some in more urban settings, some rural, but all complementary. The concept of the Greengrid connected by strategic links across administrative boundaries is a vision that should be supported, and Southend has unique assets that are central to the whole Greengrid vision.

Recent work led by Communities and Local Government (CLG) has conceived the Thames Gateway Parklands concept, which sets out an ambition to 'transform the environment in a way that creates a new identity for the Gateway'. This very much fits the ambition for Southend, identifying and celebrating major locations and destinations that will combine to create a unique pan-Gateway Parklands offer.

Southend has award winning parks and seven miles of seafront, but there is room for improvement in terms of improving access for all to these open spaces, particularly in the east of the Borough. Better promotion of these assets can lead to a greater sense of Southend's attractiveness as a destination. More can be made of what currently exists. Barriers to open space access from urban areas, such as Royal Artillery Way (A1159), which cuts off the built up areas east of the Borough to open space to the north, can be overcome through a range of measures.

The foreshore that spans Borough boundaries is an area of international importance, which poses the challenge of combining the promotion of this valuable natural habitat, as well as recognising its sensitivities. The Southend and Benfleet Marshes Special Protected Area (SPA) represents an exceptional amenity and place-making asset, particularly in relation to the town centre. Foulness SPA offers the same for Shoeburyness. Development and increased access to these sensitive areas can have a detrimental effect, and all partners will work through the statutory planning processes to ensure that a proper balancing of priorities is achieved.

Through the Green Infrastructure Key Priority, we set out specific interventions that can be made to improve visitor facilities, or access to open space. Projects at Belfairs and Gunners are about improving what is already there, and Two Tree Island is aimed towards encouraging access and habitat improvements. Other areas such as Priory Park which is the closest public green space to the town centre, or Belton Hills, a local nature reserve in Leigh with a number of rare and declining plants and

insects, are all important elements in Southend's local and regional distinctiveness.

Across the Thames Gateway, flood risk management is also an issue to be considered when developing plans for regeneration and growth. The Environment Agency is leading on a Gateway-wide strategy, Thames Estuary 2100, which will provide guidance on the future of flooding, and the investment that may be required to maintain defences. Southend does not have extensive areas at risk of flooding, but climate change may create increased pressure on some areas. Therefore it is essential that all partners work closely and consult with the Environment Agency as specific projects develop.

Renaissance Southend recognises that a coherent and strategic approach is required for the delivery of new, and the enhancement of existing, open spaces across the Borough. We will work alongside SSBC and other organisations such as RSPB, Essex Wildlife Trust and CABI Space to achieve this.

In delivering the vision for the Central Area, the Masterplan places a significant emphasis on the principles of sustainable development, to ensure that the triple bottom line of social, physical and economic sustainability is achieved.

The following principles have been developed with consideration for the spatial sustainability considerations outlined in the emerging Core Strategy in the pre-ambles to Policy KPI: Spatial Strategy and wider planning policy and good practice guidance:



BedZED - example of sustainable development

Re-use of land and buildings

The Masterplan promotes the optimal use of Previously Developed Land and buildings within the existing urban area. The efficient use of developable land should be maximised based on local context, design principles, open space provision and public transport capacity. Where practicable, buildings should be re-used or converted. There is scope for innovative re-use of roof space for outdoor space or to enhance biodiversity.

Development patterns which respond to public transport accessibility

Higher density mixed use development will be promoted in the town centre, particularly in those areas which are accessible to public transport interchanges.

Consideration of flood risk

In the context of climate change and the estuary situation of Southend in the Thames Gateway, consideration of flood risk and a sequential approach to the selection of development location is a priority for the Masterplan.

Delivery of urban renaissance and regeneration

High quality design and the principles of urban renaissance are central to the ethos of the Masterplan. Specifically, development should embrace a mix of town centre uses including retail, learning / education, culture and leisure and residential dwellings. The Masterplan encourages the safeguarding and enhancement of buildings, public spaces and open space. Proposals are encouraged to make reference to the SSBC Design and Townscape SPD in this respect.



Community engagement - a key building block for sustainability

Conservation of the built environment

The Masterplan places an emphasis on conservation of the built and physical environment. Parts of the town centre such as Clifftown have an attractive historic form and character, which along with assets such as the Cliffs, the beaches and the Thames Estuary play a major role in shaping Southend's unique sense of place.

Conservation of biodiversity and the natural environment

Access to open space and water are vital components in defining a good quality of life and form an important focus for recreation, relaxation, social and cultural uses. They also perform an invaluable function as a setting for a significant number of species and habitats. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity, in areas such as the Thames Estuary for example, is a priority. The Masterplan also aims to give practical support and expression to the concept of the Green Grid and the creation of new and enhanced spaces and routes through the town centre and along the seafront.

Conservation of energy, materials, water and resources

Resources should be conserved as far as possible through the application of a wide range of interventions. Energy use should be more sustainable based on the principles of using less energy, using renewable energy and supplying energy efficiently. Specification of materials should consider impacts associated with infrastructure, external cladding, insulation materials, windows, flooring, paints and landscaping materials. In terms of water use, development should incorporate water saving devices, make use of alternative water sources and incorporate low water use landscaping and gardens.

Adapting to climate change

There is scope to minimise the need for mechanical ventilation, heating and cooling. Buildings should incorporate a degree of flexibility with respect to projected uses. Other interventions include mitigation against hot dry summers and wet mild winters. Developers should be encouraged to work towards best practice in delivering zero emissions development.

Harnessing natural systems

Resource use should be minimised and user comfort maximised by taking advantage of location, urban design, passive solar design, natural ventilation and the relationship between façade and internal depth.

Promotion of sustainable waste treatment

In the wider sub-regional and local context development should contribute to sustainable waste management and promotion of waste reduction and recycling.

Sustainable construction and design techniques

The scale of change envisaged in Southend implies a number of construction projects on key sites, and it is important that the construction techniques employed are sustainable with mitigation against adverse effects on the quality of the site and its surroundings.

Reducing noise, pollution, flooding and microclimate effects

The promotion of increased densities and a mix of uses will require proactive mitigation against potential adverse effects such as noise, pollution, flooding and microclimate. In terms of flooding, there is scope to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems as a means of reducing the total amount, flow and rate of surface water running into rivers and stormwater systems. Techniques might include pervious pavements, swales and basins, ponds and wetlands, infiltration trenches or green roofs.

Development focused on community infrastructure

The Masterplan encourages the provision of high quality community facilities to respond to the needs of the existing community and future residents. In addition to the provision of specific facilities, the Masterplan also promotes opportunities to support community activities and community networks. Good inter-relationships between community-based organisations and individuals can raise the level of 'social capital' in the town.

Community support and engagement

The results of community engagement have been a major influence in shaping the proposals in the Masterplan. It is essential that future strategies, policies and development proposals are underpinned by rigorous consultation, drawing on Council guidance set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

Social inclusion, security and accessibility

The principle of inclusion of all sections of the Southend community is a key principle in the Masterplan. Development should be secure and inclusive, and promote the highest standards of accessibility, both in terms of ease of physical access to buildings, and ability to take advantage of social and economic opportunities.



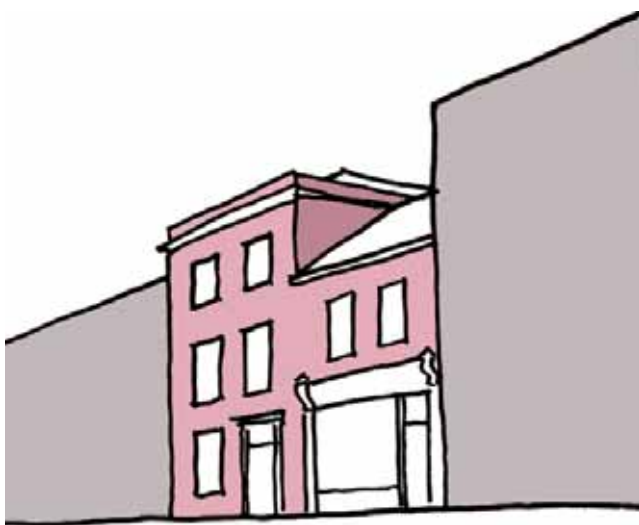
Providing social infrastructure and community facilities

6.4 Urban design principles

Design quality is at the forefront of the Masterplan, and development should be encouraged to embody good practice. Proposals are encouraged to make reference to a range of guidance documents, alongside the planning policy hierarchy outlined in Chapter 1. Key documents are listed as follows:

- Southend-on-Sea Design and Townscape Guide SPD (SSBC, 2006);
- Urban Place Supplement (Essex County Council, 2006);
- Urban Design Compendium (English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation);
- Delivering Great Places to Live (CABE, 2004);
- Shifting sands: design and the changing image of English Seaside towns (EH & CABE, 2003);
- Building sustainable communities: actions for housing market renewal (CABE, 2003);
- Better Neighbourhoods: making higher densities work (CABE, 2005);
- Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM, 2004);
- Better Civic Buildings and spaces (CABE, 2002); and
- Better places to work (CABE, 2006).

The primary reference point from a local planning perspective is the SSBC Design and Townscape SPD which has been drawn upon in preparing the following design principles:



Excellence in building design

An extended town centre

In creating a 'city by the sea', a fundamental principle is the broadening of the town centre, both in terms of function and urban character and quality. The Masterplan envisages a series of urban quarters with distinct destination qualities and a range of town centre uses.

Engaging with the Masterplan

The Masterplan is an expression of RSL's vision and aspiration for the town centre. It is intended to be a clear term of reference for engaging with SSBC, landowners, developers, local stakeholders and residents and other interested parties. It is anticipated that the Masterplan will form a platform for further design work on key sites and the creation of development briefs by RSL and other parties.

Site context and site appraisal

Proposals should make detailed reference to site context. In particular, proposals should give consideration to site assets and constraints, topography and natural features, character and context, potential for enhancing character and the assessment of capacity.



Encouraging a more vibrant street culture

Design concept

This is a vital aspect of the design process and encompasses a number of detailed issues. Proposals should reflect and respond to the following issues:

- Building form - density, scale, height, massing, appropriateness of tall buildings, position on site, and legibility.
- Relationship with neighbours - overshadowing, overlooking and privacy and noise.
- Accessibility and Community Safety - connectivity, permeability and integration, access for all and Secured by Design.
- Streetscene - focal points, gateways, views and vistas, proportions and visual cues, continuity and enclosure, public realm and public art.

Sustainable development

As noted above sustainability is at the heart of the agenda for the transformation of the town centre. In tandem with the sustainability principles set out in section 6.2, proposals should consider a number of issues including:

- (i) Merits of redevelopment or refurbishment;
- (ii) Resource minimisation;
- (iii) The need for flexibility;
- (iv) Site layout and orientation;
- (v) Built form;
- (vi) Renewable Power Generation;
- (vii) Mix of uses;
- (viii) Maximising travel choice;
- (ix) Biodiversity;
- (x) Provision of affordable housing.

Historic environment

Southend's historic environment is a major asset and proposals should respect historic context and seek to protect and enhance the historic environment, particularly Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

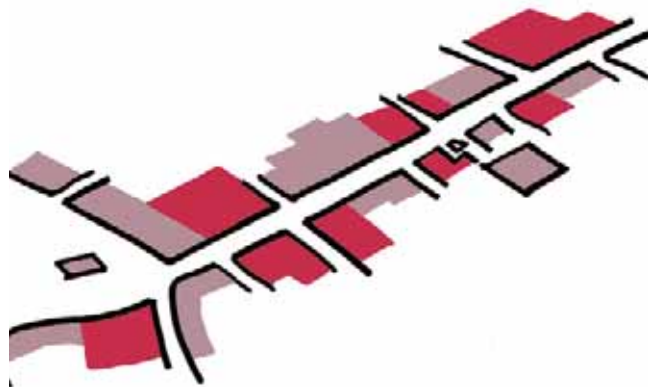
More detailed guidance relating to the principles above and more detailed requirements for specific schemes is set out in the SPD. Chapter 7 of the Masterplan incorporates more specific guidance for key areas.



Encouraging sustainable movement patterns



Greening the public realm



Intensification

6.5 Public realm, open space and landscape principles

General approach to public realm

New or refurbished public realm projects should adhere to the strategic guidance in this document, and to other guidance such as the Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid and Southend's forthcoming Area Action Plans and Open Space Strategy, to ensure that detailed proposals promote the overarching aim of a co-ordinated and well-connected sequence of vibrant streets, squares and green spaces which underpin a successful city and foster civic pride. The design approach must place people at its heart to create a delightful and memorable environment for residents, visitors and businesses alike.

Public realm and new development

Proposed buildings of all types must be conceived in accordance with best urban design principles to make a positive contribution to public and communal space and to the townscape, with careful attention to the interface between structure and surrounds, particularly for developments in high-profile locations and with public access.

Specific principles for new development

Development proposals for open spaces and buildings should be underpinned by the following principles:

- Design should maximise the physical and visual relationship with Southend's natural and built environment, especially the major asset of its seaside location.

- Continuity should be combined with change, creating consistency throughout the city whilst respecting and reinforcing the different characters of both new quarters and Southend's historic legacy.
- Proposals should promote clarity & legibility, through a network of well-defined spaces linked by clear routes to destinations.
- Design should be aspirational using high-quality materials of appropriate and restricted palettes and reduce clutter.
- Development should maximise the opportunity to animate the public realm by creating pleasant microclimate and 'designing in' active frontages and natural surveillance from routes and overlooking windows, supplemented by active management and encouragement of social and cultural outdoor activities, festivals, markets and the like.
- Proposals should seek to create an attractive and safe setting for the night-time economy, maximising footfall through an imaginative city-wide lighting strategy and design of public space sympathetic to café culture and evening activities.
- Public realm should contribute to improved accessibility and sustainable movement patterns. This should be encouraged by avoiding severance of different quarters by wide roads; reducing the dominance of public space by vehicles and conventional highway paraphernalia; and exploration of potential for integrated 'shared surfaces' sympathetic to the aspiration of an attractive, connected, walkable city where cycling and public transport.



Use of water features in bringing spaces to life



Greening the public realm

- New development should be accessible to all.
- Proposals should incorporate planting of trees in accordance with a town-wide street-tree strategy, using a restricted palette of appropriate species to delineate space, reinforce character and improve microclimate.
- Wherever possible, new development should enhance sustainability and biodiversity through cutting-edge techniques such as green roofs and water-sensitive design [sustainable urban drainage], planting and habitat creation.
- Applicants should be encouraged to liaise closely with SSBC to ensure that proposals are achievable and that maintenance and management are aided with materials which are durable, robust, replaceable and easily maintained.
- Applicants should also liaise closely with SSBC to ensure that their proposals are co-ordinated with play, youth, sports, art, tree and landscape strategies.
- New development should offer all new housing units easy access to private, communal or public outdoor areas, with boundary treatments clearly delineating public from private zones - incorporating well-located and imaginative play provision as appropriate.
- Public art should be promoted in accordance with a Southend-wide strategy to enhance key locations, create a memorable experience and reinforce a town-wide signage and lighting strategy.
- Not least, there is significant potential to engage the local community in the design and management of their spaces and make links with the blossoming educational institutions and creative enterprises. For example, the students of nearby Writtle College, which specialises in horticulture and land-based courses and partner of the University of Essex, could hone their skills in horticultural excellence on 'contemporary Victorian' plantings at the Cliffs.



Creating explorable landscapes



Green roof biodiversity



Innovative lighting and illumination