

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for the Southend-on-Sea Local Plan

Planning for new Homes - The Big Debate Survey

IIA Annex

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

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Quality information

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) in support of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's emerging new Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Local Plan'). IIA fulfils the requirements and duties for Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

IIA explained

- 1.2 IIA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of IIA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts and maximising positive impacts. Through this approach, the IIA for the Local Plan seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.3 As identified above, the IIA seeks to fulfil the requirements and duties for SA, SEA, EqIA and HIA. The approach is to fully integrate these components to provide a single assessment process to inform the development of the new Local Plan. A description of each of the various components and their purposes is provided within the Interim IIA Report accompanying the Regulation 18 Local Plan that is currently on consultation.

Interim IIA Report

- 1.4 An Interim IIA Report is currently published for consultation and available for comment alongside the Refining the Plan Options document. The Refining Plan Options Consultation identifies four strategy options as follows:
- A. Increasing Urban Capacity:** sites that broadly accord to existing plan policies located on previously developed land.
 - B. Facilitating Urban Change:** sites that would likely require a change to existing plan policies to come forward or would include the redevelopment of some existing residential accommodation.
 - C. Provision of a new Neighbourhood:** comprising sites within the Green Belt and at Fossetts Farm within Southend Borough.
 - D. New Development Outside the Borough:** including sites that could provide expanded new neighbourhoods on the edge of Southend located within the Green Belt in Southend Borough and Rochford District or sites elsewhere in South Essex.
- 1.5 The Interim IIA Report sets out the IIA process in more detail and presents an assessment of the four broad spatial strategy options set out above.

This IIA Annex

- 1.6 This IIA Annex has been produced to accompany the Planning for new Homes - The Big Debate survey, which identifies the following two broad spatial strategy options:
- i. **Local Plan Options - as set out in the Refining the Plan Options Consultation** (Half the required new homes within existing Urban Areas and half within a new neighbourhood to the north of Southend on Green Belt). This option essentially combines Options A to D above that are presented in the Refining the Plan Options Document.
 - ii. **Alternative Option - Hypothetical Strategy** (Seeking to meet Government housing requirement within existing Urban Areas with no development on Green Belt). This option essentially extrapolates the principles of Options A and B above that are presented in the Refining the Plan Options Document to a point that they could meet the housing requirement figure. This option is hypothetical as at this stage the Council is not able to currently evidence how the full housing need could be delivered within the urban area.
- 1.7 A comparative assessment has been carried out for these two broad spatial strategy options against the IIA themes and the findings are presented within this IIA Annex. It is important to remember that the two broad spatial strategy options identified in the Planning for new Homes - The Big Debate survey above are a combination of the options identified in the Refining the Plan Options Document. As a result, there will be a difference in the findings of the IIA of these options compared to the findings of the IIA for the four strategy options presented in the Interim IIA Report.
- 1.8 This IIA Annex is structured as follows:
- Chapter 2 presents the assessment methodology;
 - Chapter 3 presents the detailed assessment of the two broad spatial strategy options under each IIA topic; and
 - Chapter 4 presents a summary of the assessment findings.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 A comparative assessment of the two broad spatial strategy options was carried out against the IIA framework. The assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives and themes identified through scoping (see Table 1.1 in the Interim IIA Report on consultation alongside the Refining the Plan Options document) as a methodological framework.
- 2.2 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the options under consideration. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how scenarios will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors would be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.
- 2.3 It is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the plan in combination with the effects of other planned or on-going activity).
- 2.4 Based on the evidence available a judgement is made if there is likely to be a significant effect. Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects on the basis of reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. The number indicates the rank and does not have any bearing on likely significant effects. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. For example, if an option is ranked as 1 then it is judged to perform better against that ISA theme compared to an option that is ranked 2.

3. Assessment of spatial strategy options

IIA Theme: Biodiversity

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	2	1
Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain
Discussion	<p>It is assumed that both options would deliver the same overall level of growth. Option i would deliver half the homes within the existing urban area of Southend and half the homes on greenfield/ agricultural land to the north of Southend and within Rochford District. Option ii would deliver all the homes within the urban area of Southend.</p> <p>It is assumed that neither Option would result in the loss of any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity. However, both options would deliver all the proposed housing growth within the Zone of Influence (Zol) for the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (the 'Essex Coast RAMS'). The Essex Coast RAMS identifies a programme of measures to mitigate the impact of new housing delivery and help avoid disturbing birds within the Essex Coast European protected sites. The Essex Coast RAMS was adopted through an SPD by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council in October 2020.¹ A payment for each net additional dwelling created in Southend and neighbouring Council areas will fund the measures set out in the Essex Coast RAMS. Given the established mitigation strategy and the adopted SPD, it is not possible to conclude that there are likely to be any significant effects as a result of either option or significant differences between them in terms of recreational impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There is also unlikely to be any significant difference in terms of impacts on European sites as a result of changes to water quality and flow, particularly given the sensitivities of the estuarine sites. The loss of greenfield land under Option i could potentially result in the loss of habitats that support species which are features of the Essex Coast European sites, in particular bird species that are features of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site. These issues will be explored in detail through the HRA process for the new Local Plan.</p> <p>No significant differences between the options are likely in terms of nationally designated sites compared to what is identified above, with relevant SSSIs also having similar boundaries and issues to the European sites.</p> <p>It is important to note that both brownfield and greenfield land can have little to significant biodiversity value, depending on a number of factors. For example, greenfield land if used for agriculture could have little biodiversity value depending on agricultural practices. Despite this, it is considered that Option ii is less likely to have impacts of significance on biodiversity at a local level compared to Option i. The loss of greenfield land under Option i is more likely to result in habitat loss and fragmentation as well as increased disturbance (recreation, noise and light) to local habitats and species compared to Option ii. It is likely to be more difficult to deliver biodiversity net gain (BNG) on sites delivered under Option ii given the increased densities (and possible development on existing green spaces); however, it would still be possible to deliver BNG off-site; however, this biodiversity might be outside and some distance from the borough.</p> <p>There are areas of National Habitat Network Enhancement Zone 1 to the north of the urban Southend area, where there is the potential for the creation of and links to primary habitats, including, in this case, traditional orchards. Development on greenfield sites to the north in Southend and within Rochford District should avoid development in these areas where possible, as well as seeking any opportunities to join up existing habitat patches and improve the connections</p>	

¹ <https://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/file/6848/essex-coast-rams-spd-adoption-statement>

IIA Theme: Biodiversity

between them in any network enhancement zones. Any development delivered to the north of the Southend urban area will also need to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure networks. In this respect the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2020) identifies opportunities for developing the green and blue infrastructure network across South Essex, including opportunities for a Southend Strategic Park and wider Regional Parkland. As a result, it is predicted that there would be a greater opportunity to deliver strategic biodiversity net gains through development proposed under Option i.

At this stage, it is predicted that Option ii is less likely to have a significant effect on biodiversity compared to Option i through the focus on the regeneration of brownfield land within the urban area. While there is a greater opportunity to deliver biodiversity net gain through Option i this is uncertain at this stage and dependent on further detailed evidence. There is likely to be more certainty around the delivery of biodiversity net gain once the Environment Bill becomes an Act of Parliament.

IIA Theme: Climate Change

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	1	2
Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain
Discussion	<p>For this IIA topic, both climate change mitigation and adaptation are relevant considerations. In respect of mitigation, a primary consideration is the need to minimise per capita emissions from transport by minimising the need to travel and supporting a modal shift away from car dependency, i.e. by supporting a shift to 'sustainable' modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport, electric vehicles). In this context, the regeneration of brownfield land within the urban area proposed under both options is likely to support modal shift early in the plan period through the delivery of new homes within walking distance or public transport to the excellent range of services, facilities and employment on offer within Southend.</p> <p>While Option i also directs growth away from the existing services/ facilities/ employment in the urban area, it also has the potential to deliver significant funding for the delivery of new infrastructure and provide opportunities for comprehensive new multi-modal transport and access routes. The key challenge will be to minimise the need to travel from these new neighbourhoods (by promoting a degree of self-containment, e.g. through providing local shops and services) and, if there is a need to travel into Southend or beyond, that the community has an opportunity to do this via walking and cycling routes and accessible and frequent public transport.</p> <p>Another consideration is the need to support delivery of low carbon infrastructure (e.g. a ground source heat network; or solar PV with battery storage) and/or high standards of sustainable design and construction, such that the development can achieve net zero or, at least, CO₂ emissions standards that exceed the requirements of Building Regulations. While it is recognised that there are barriers to this, the delivery of large-scale new neighbourhoods under Option i presents more opportunities for the delivery of low carbon infrastructure through economies of scale compared to Option ii.</p> <p>With regards to climate change adaptation, a key consideration is flood risk. None of the options propose to deliver significant growth in areas currently at high risk from fluvial or coastal flooding. There are areas of high surface water flood risk throughout Southend; however, this is unlikely to present a significant barrier to development under any option or significantly increase the risk of flooding elsewhere if appropriate mitigation measures are delivered alongside new development proposals, such as permeable surfaces and the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems. Climate change predictions suggest that, even under low emission scenarios, that there will be a rise in sea level and increased risk of flooding. This is clearly a significant issue for any development within Southend and the increased risk from flooding from the sea will need to be taken into account in the development process.</p> <p>At this stage, Option i performs better in terms of the climate change topic compared to Option ii as it directs growth to areas with good accessibility to existing employment, services and public transport as well as providing an opportunity to support the delivery of new and low carbon infrastructure.</p>	

IIA Theme: Landscape and historic environment

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	=	=
Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative
Discussion	<p>In terms of landscape and townscape character, Option i proposes the delivery of half of the required homes within the urban area and half in new neighbourhoods outside the urban area of Southend to the north and within Rochford District. Option i has the potential for a significant negative effect on the rural landscape character in the north of the borough and in Rochford District. Proposed development would fall within areas identified as having medium and medium to high landscape sensitivity and low to medium capacity to accommodate development in the Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2019). Option i also directs half the residential growth towards the urban area where there is the potential for impacts on the urban townscape and character of Southend. While the regeneration of previously developed land provides opportunities to enhance the townscape through the removal of derelict or underused buildings the impacts at this stage are uncertain and dependent on the design and layout of new development.</p> <p>In order to meet identified needs under Option ii, it is likely that significantly increased densities will be required and therefore taller buildings, alongside potential release of open space within the urban area for development. As a result, it is likely that there would be significant negative effects on the townscape and character of the urban area. While the regeneration of previously developed land provides opportunities to enhance the townscape through the removal of derelict or underused buildings, given the significantly increased densities required and likely loss of existing open space, the likelihood of delivering positive effects are diminished compared to Option i.</p> <p>In terms of the historic environment, there are designated heritage assets spread across Southend Borough, both within the urban area as well as in the greenfield/ agricultural land in the north and beyond into Rochford District. A number of areas within the urban part of the borough, including within the centres of Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea and Leigh-on-Sea, have a rich historic environment resource, with the largest concentration of listed buildings and other heritage assets in the borough.</p> <p>Option i could have impacts on the historic environment within both the urban area as well as the rural areas in the north of the borough and in Rochford District. In terms of the greenfield development in the north, there are a range of designated heritage assets within this area, including listed buildings and scheduled monuments. While the precise location of development is not known at this stage, development would result in the loss of greenfield and agricultural land within the vicinity of a number of designated heritage assets and so affect their <i>setting</i>. There is therefore the potential for a significant long-term negative effect. Effective masterplanning will be key to minimising impacts of development on the historic environment and designated heritage assets as well as identifying opportunities for enhancement. Significant negative effects are less likely in the urban area as it is assumed standard densities will be used given the scale of growth under Option i.</p> <p>While Option ii is not likely to have impacts on the historic environment in the north of the borough and in Rochford District, there is the potential for a significant negative effect on the historic environment of the urban area. Option ii will require significantly increased densities and possibly building heights along with the release of employment land and open space to meet housing needs. This has the potential to lead to significant impacts on the fabric and setting of key features and areas of cultural heritage interest.</p> <p>At this stage, it is predicted that both options are likely to have a significant effect on the landscape and historic environment. It is difficult to rank them at this stage as both options are likely to have a significant negative effect on the landscape and historic environment but in different areas of the borough.</p>	

IIA Theme: Environmental Quality

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	1	2
Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain
Discussion	<p>This IIA topic deals with a number of different issues, including air quality, water quality and contaminated land.</p> <p>Both options propose the redevelopment of brownfield land which offers an opportunity for the remediation of contaminated land. Option ii presents a greater opportunity for this given the focus of growth in the urban area.</p> <p>Development under either option could have impacts on water quality, with a number of water courses flowing through the Southend urban areas as well as in the north of the borough with them all eventually flowing into the River Roach. The Environment Agency has classified the River Roach as having a moderate water body status, and the reasons for not achieving good status are identified as sewage discharge as well as poor nutrient management as a result of agriculture. The River Thames flows to the south (Thames Lower catchment) and the EA has classified it as having moderate water body status, with the reasons for not achieving good status identified as sewage discharge, landfill leaching, contaminated land, land drainage and urbanisation. It will be important to have early discussions with Anglian Water on the capacity of waste water treatment works that will serve development and the potential need for infrastructure improvements and phasing of development to avoid impacts on water quality. Further to this, development under any of the options should seek to deliver sustainable drainage schemes and protect and enhance green infrastructure and so have potential positive effects on water quality. At this stage there are no significant differences between the options in terms of impact on water quality.</p> <p>In terms of air quality, within Southend there are issues with traffic congestion at key junctions, particularly along the A127 and A13, and around the town centre and on Sutton Road. In November 2016 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) centred at the junction between Prince Avenue, Holeythick Lane and Rochford Road (also known as "The Bell Junction"). It was then extended to include the roundabout where the A127 meets the A1159 (Cuckoo Corner). The AQMA was declared as a result of exceedances of NO₂ from road traffic. Further to this, an AQMA will also be declared in part of Victoria Avenue close to the junctions with Priory Crescent, East Street and West Street. The declaration of the AQMA follows a detailed assessment of nitrogen dioxide levels which exceed the national air quality goal.</p> <p>Development proposed under either of the options will have transport and therefore air quality implications, requiring a strategic approach to the delivery of new or enhanced infrastructure to address congestion and encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport. Taking the findings of the assessment under the transport topic into consideration, at this stage it is considered that Option ii is more likely to have a negative effect on traffic and therefore air quality in the borough. Option i directs half of the new homes towards the urban area with good accessibility to existing employment, services and public transport and half of new homes to large scale greenfield developments that provide an opportunity to deliver significant transport infrastructure improvements. In the long term, the lack of opportunities for infrastructure improvements could have significant negative effects on the existing road network as a result of Option ii (leading to increased congestion and poorer air quality). Further work is being carried out by the Council and the Association of South Essex Local Authorities to address the transport impacts of growth in the sub-region and consider potential mitigation measures.</p>	

IIA Theme: Land, Soil and Water Resources

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	2	1
Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Positive
Discussion	<p>There are no significant differences between the options in terms of water resources and neither is likely to have a significant effect. Both options propose the same overall level of growth, any increased demand would be addressed through other legislative and plan-making processes, in particular the development of regional and water company level water resource management plans.</p> <p>In terms of land and soil resources, Option ii performs better compared to Option i and is predicted to have a significant long-term positive effect through its focus on the redevelopment of brownfield land. While Option i also proposes the regeneration of previously developed land it also proposes development on greenfield and agricultural land in the north of Southend Borough and in Rochford District. There is the potential for a significant long-term negative effect on this IIA topic through the loss of greenfield and best and most versatile agricultural land. While Option ii would likely result in the loss of some green space and greenfield land, it would not be at the same scale as under Option i. Option i is also likely to result in the sterilisation of brickearth deposits and while they are not currently worked, the Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014) indicates that they could be in the future. Southend Core Strategy Policy CP5 addresses this issue in Southend.</p>	

IIA Theme: Population and Communities

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	1	2
Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Uncertain
Discussion	<p>Focusing growth within the urban area under Option ii is likely to deliver a number of positive effects in relation to population and communities. It would likely contribute positively towards maintaining and enhancing the vitality and vibrancy of existing urban communities through the regeneration of derelict and/or underused brownfield land and the wider public realm. The new homes would be delivered in areas with excellent access to existing facilities and services. Option ii may deliver homes quickly in the plan period to meet needs compared to large scale greenfield sites proposed under Option i which would have a longer lead-in time; however, there are significant uncertainties that full housing needs could be achieved under Option ii. The focus on the urban area also help to avoid the loss of Green Belt land to the north of Southend Borough and protect the identifies of existing communities in that area. Conversely, the regeneration of brownfield land is less likely to deliver significant new community infrastructure with needs being met through the expansion of existing community infrastructure where possible. Given the urban nature of Southend, there is likely to be limited opportunities for the expansion of existing community infrastructure and this will place increased pressure on existing services/ facilities with a long-term negative effect on this IIA topic. The regeneration of a large number of small-scale brownfield sites could also make it difficult to deliver a suitable mix of homes, in particular family and affordable homes, to meet needs across the population as well as homes with gardens. This has been demonstrated through previous strategies that have focused on urban renewal as the preferred approach.</p> <p>Option i directs half of new homes to the urban areas helping to meet the needs of existing communities, in particular earlier in the plan period. It also proposes the delivery of half the homes on greenfield and Green Belt land in the north of the borough and within Rochford District. The improved viability of development on greenfield land provides an opportunity to deliver significant new community infrastructure, including shops, schools and health facilities. There is also greater potential to deliver a wider mix of new homes, in particular affordable and family homes as well as specialist accommodation, e.g. for older people, to meet needs across the population. However, there are generally longer lead-in times associated with large scale greenfield sites, so new homes and infrastructure are likely to be delivered later in the plan period. Option i would also result in the loss of significant areas of Green Belt land and could result in coalescence with some existing communities.</p> <p>At this stage, Option i performs better compared to Option ii as it provides the best opportunity to deliver new homes, in particular affordable and family homes, and wider infrastructure to meet identified needs across the population. Option ii is less likely to meet the housing needs in full and the wider needs across the population and is less likely to deliver significant infrastructure improvements.</p>	

IIA Theme: Health and Wellbeing

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	1	2
Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Yes - Negative
Discussion	<p>Option ii will result in the loss of open/ green space within the urban area and the significantly increased densities needed to meet needs could also make it difficult to deliver new open/ green space on sites. This is likely to have long term negative effects on health and wellbeing in terms of access to open/ green space. In the long term, the lack of funding/ available land for transport infrastructure improvements could result in a significant increase in traffic and congestion within the urban area and at key junctions, which could have impacts on air quality and road safety and ultimately negative effects on human health. The uptake of electric vehicles may help to partly address air quality issues in the long term; however, there is still particulate pollution from tyre wear and tyre and road safety issues will still be a concern with increased congestion. Given the viability issues associated with brownfield development, it may also be difficult to deliver new health and recreational facilities under Option ii.</p> <p>Option i would result in the loss of significant areas of greenfield land/ countryside on the edge of the urban area, but it is understood that there is limited public access to these areas at present. Conversely, the proposed new neighbourhoods present an opportunity to delivery significant new areas of accessible open/ green space alongside new health and leisure facilities. There are also opportunities for the new neighbourhoods to link in with improvements being explored to the green infrastructure network across the sub-region through the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2020). This includes opportunities for a Southend Strategic Park and wider Regional Parkland. Alongside wider active travel network improvements, this could help to improve accessibility to the wider countryside. While it is recognised that Option i would still result in growth within the urban area, it would be at a scale that would avoid the significant loss of green/ open spaces.</p> <p>Option i offers greater potential to deliver significant new transport infrastructure, including a new link road (multi-modal) between the A127 and Shoeburyness that would by-pass some of the most constrained and congested junctions in the borough. In the longer term this would help to improve air quality and therefore the health and wellbeing as well as safety of existing communities in those areas.</p> <p>At this stage, while Option i would result in the loss of large areas of greenfield land and open space in the north of the Borough, these areas are not particularly accessible to the public. Furthermore, Option i would avoid the significant loss of green space within the urban area and presents an opportunity to deliver new accessible spaces for recreation, including new health and leisure facilities. There is also an opportunity through Option i to contribute and link in with wider green and blue infrastructure improvements in the sub-region. Option ii performs less well compared to Option i, as it would likely result in the significant loss of green space within the urban area and is more likely to have significant impacts on road traffic and safety due to less opportunities for infrastructure improvements with indirect significant negative effects on health and wellbeing.</p>	

IIA Theme: Equalities, diversity and inclusion

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	1	2
Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Uncertain
Discussion	<p>Option ii provides increased scope for delivering significant regeneration across the urban area, which could support and improve the quality of life of residents in more deprived parts of the borough (notwithstanding the likely loss of urban green space). However, urban and brownfield sites are generally less viable than greenfield sites and are therefore less likely to provide funding for infrastructure improvements and are less likely to deliver a suitable mix of homes and affordable housing for the borough's residents. Previous strategies of urban renewal have not delivered enough affordable and family homes to meet needs.</p> <p>Option i would deliver new neighbourhoods and therefore new communities in the north of Southend Borough outside the urban area and within Rochford District. Given economies of scale and developer contributions, these options are more likely to deliver significant new community infrastructure that would meet the needs of the new communities, potentially also serving some existing urban communities. There would also be greater scope to deliver a wider mix of new homes, in particular family and affordable homes, to meet a broader range of needs. This option would also help to regenerate urban communities but to a lesser extent compared to Option ii. The delivery of growth on greenfield land may direct investment away from the urban areas and slow the delivery of brownfield development but this is uncertain.</p> <p>At this stage, it is predicted that Option i is more likely to have a significant positive effect on this IIA topic compared to Option ii. Option i is more likely to meet needs of residents across the borough through the delivery of a greater mix of types of homes and affordable housing. It is also more likely to deliver significant infrastructure improvements.</p>	

IIA Theme: Transport and movement

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	1	2
Significant effect?	Uncertain	Yes - Negative
Discussion	<p>There are issues with traffic congestion within Southend Borough at key junctions on the road network, particularly along the A127 and A13, and around the town centre and on Sutton Road. The borough has a number of major bus routes that are all affected by traffic congestion and a lack of priority measures. There are a number of cycle routes but there are gaps in the provision of these, with limited north-south cycleways and a lack of an overall network. While tourism is important for the economy it also exacerbates congestion at certain points during the year.</p> <p>Development proposed under either option will have transport impacts and require a strategic approach to the delivery of new or enhanced infrastructure to address congestion and encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport. Both options propose the regeneration of brownfield land, which will deliver new homes in close proximity to existing services/ facilities/ employment which is likely to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and help reduce the need to travel early in the plan period. This will help to minimise impacts on the already congested road network.</p> <p>Option ii proposes the delivery of all growth within the urban area and this is unlikely to deliver any significant opportunities to improve transport infrastructure and there could be limited scope to expand/ enhance existing services/ facilities to meet increasing long-term needs. As a result, without these infrastructure improvements in the longer term there is the potential for significant impacts on the existing road network and increased levels of congestion.</p> <p>Option i proposes the delivery of half the required homes within the urban area and half in new neighbourhoods outside the urban area of Southend Borough to the north and within Rochford District. The significance of the impact as a result of Option i is dependent on a number of factors, in particular the level of services/ facilities and employment to be delivered as part of the new neighbourhoods and the opportunities for delivering improved transport infrastructure. The delivery of the new neighbourhoods under Option i provides greater scope to potentially improve transport infrastructure given the economies of scale. It is understood that there is the potential to deliver a new link road (multi-modal) between the A127 and Shoeburyness that would by-pass some of the most constrained and congested junctions in the borough. This could be complemented by an enhanced central “hub” location for bus/ rail/ rapid transit linkages (location to be determined) and potentially a hub at the Airport. There is also the potential to deliver comprehensive walking and cycle networks throughout the new neighbourhoods and beyond. At this stage, there are uncertainties over the delivery of transport infrastructure improvements and further work is being carried out by the Council and the Association of South Essex Local Authorities to address the transport impacts of growth across the sub-region.</p> <p>Further to the above, the large scale greenfield development proposed under Option i is more likely to deliver significant improvements in terms of new community infrastructure compared to Option ii. This includes the delivery of new schools and health facilities to serve the new as well as existing communities. In this context, the new neighbourhoods could provide a level of self-containment, which might limit the anticipated increase in commuters along the A127 and A13 corridors. However, this is unlikely in the early years of the plan when the number of homes built is likely to be too small to sustain a significant level of new community infrastructure; however in the longer-term self-containment will gradually improve.</p> <p>The Council is updating its multi-modal model to consider transport impacts and implications of different options for the delivery of growth to meet identified needs. It is understood that evidence base work has been commissioned by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities on transport issues to inform the South Essex Joint Strategic Framework. At a regional level, the Government</p>	

IIA Theme: Transport and movement

has established Transport East to address how transport can be improved across the whole of the East of England.

At this stage, it is appropriate to conclude that Option i performs better against this IIA topic compared to Option ii. Option i directs half the new homes towards the urban area with good accessibility to existing employment, services and public transport as well as half the new homes to large scale greenfield development that provide an opportunity to deliver significant transport infrastructure improvements. In the long term, under Option ii, the lack of opportunities for infrastructure improvements could have significant negative effects on the existing road network.

IIA Theme: Economy

Options	i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Rank	1	2
Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Uncertain
Discussion	<p>Either option would help to increase residential spending to support the local economy. Option i directs growth towards the urban area with good access to existing employment opportunities as well as delivering large scale greenfield development that would provide new employment land and opportunities. The delivery of half the growth in the urban area would help to support the economic vitality of retail centres within Southend Borough. Further to this, Option i offers the potential for significant improvements to transport infrastructure, including improved links to London Southend Airport. Any significant improvements to transport infrastructure, including rapid transport corridors would have a positive effect on the wider economy of the borough. It is expected that the new neighbourhoods would support the vitality of existing retail centres in Southend to a certain extent; however, this is more likely to apply to the larger centres, such as Southend Town Centre. It is expected that the new neighbourhoods will include some form of local centres to meet every day needs as well as new employment land and schools. Further to this, Option i will put less pressure to release existing employment land/ sites to deliver housing. It also offers a greater opportunity to deliver local touch down centres or flexible working spaces that allow residents to work locally instead of travelling into the office. In terms of tourism and the visitor economy, in the longer term once the new neighbourhoods have been built out there is the potential to provide visitors with access to new landscapes - including the potential Southend strategic park and wider Regional Parkland proposed through the South Essex Blue and Green Infrastructure Study.</p> <p>Option ii proposes the delivery of new homes in close proximity to existing employment opportunities within Southend, which supports accessibility on the part of residents to economic opportunities in the borough. Further benefits include indirect positive effects on the local economy through the regeneration of derelict and underused brownfield land, with associated improvements in the public realm. This would help to support the economic vitality of retail centres within Southend Borough. However, Option ii would require the release of existing employment land to meet housing needs and, given the constrained nature of the borough, it would be difficult to relocate/ find alternative land to meet employment needs.</p> <p>At this stage, it is considered that Option i performs better in terms of the economy compared to Option ii. Option i is more likely to meet the employment needs of the borough while also helping to support existing employment and retail centres.</p>	

4. Summary assessment of spatial strategy options

Summary findings and conclusions for Strategy Options

IIA Themes	Rank/ Significant effects	Categorisation and rank	
		i - Deliver around half of the required homes within the urban area of Southend and half on Green Belt land within Southend and Rochford District.	ii - Deliver all the required homes within the urban area of Southend (no growth on Green Belt land).
Biodiversity	Rank	2	1
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	No
Climate Change	Rank	1	2
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain
Landscape and Historic Environment	Rank	=	=
	Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative
Environmental Quality	Rank	1	1
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain
Land, Soil and Water Resources	Rank	2	1
	Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Positive
Population and Communities	Rank	1	2
	Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Uncertain
Health and Wellbeing	Rank	1	2
	Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Yes - Negative
Equality, diversity and inclusion	Rank	1	2
	Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Uncertain
Transport and Movement	Rank	1	2
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Yes - Negative
Economy	Rank	1	2
	Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Uncertain

4.1 At this stage Option i is predicted to perform better against the majority of IIA topics. It will deliver half of new homes within the urban area, helping to meet the need of existing urban communities and providing new homes in areas with excellent accessibility to existing employment, services and public transport. Alongside this, it will also deliver new homes at a number of large greenfield sites in the north of Southend Borough and within Rochford District. The increased viability associated with these greenfield developments provides an opportunity to deliver significant new employment opportunities as well as transport and community infrastructure improvements. These greenfield developments are also more likely to deliver a greater mix of homes, in particular the delivery of affordable and family homes, a key issue for the borough. Major greenfield developments also provide the opportunity to link in to and contribute to the delivery of green and blue infrastructure improvements being explored to across the sub-region, through the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2020). This includes opportunities for a Southend Strategic Park and wider Regional Parkland.

- 4.2 The loss of greenfield and agricultural land under Option i is identified as having the potential for significant negative effects under the land, soil and water resources topic as well as the landscape and historic environment topics. The loss of Green Belt land could result in coalescence with some existing communities and erosion of their identities.
- 4.3 Option ii focuses all new housing growth within the urban area. This is associated with a number of benefits, such as directing growth to areas with excellent accessibility to existing employment, services and public transport as well as avoiding the loss of significant areas of greenfield and agricultural land. There are also a number of drawbacks, such as the likely need for a significant release of open/ green space and loss of viable employment land for residential development within the urban area, as well as the need for significantly increased densities and possibly building heights on sites that could negatively impact existing amenity and character. This option is less likely to meet the employment, housing and community infrastructure needs of residents across the borough. Previous strategies of urban renewal have not delivered enough affordable and family homes to meet needs in the borough, a situation which would likely continue under this option. Finally, there would be less opportunity to deliver significant new transport infrastructure to mitigate impacts as well as fewer opportunities for new community infrastructure to meet needs.

