

# Topic Paper 3

## Tourism



**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA**  
**NEW LOCAL PLAN**

*Planning for Growth and Change*

Topic Paper	Local Plan Issue/s covered
Topic Paper 1 Housing	Covers issue 2 of the Southend New Local Plan
Topic Paper 2 Economy	Covers issue 3 of the Southend New Local Plan
Topic Paper 3 Tourism	Covers issue 4 of the Southend New Local Plan
Topic Paper 4 Retail and Town Centres	Covers issue 5 of the Southend New Local Plan
Topic Paper 5 Providing for a Sustainable Transport System	Covers issue 6 of the Southend New Local Plan
Topic Paper 6 Design, Healthy Living & Built Heritage	Covers issue 7 of the Southend New Local Plan
Topic Paper 7 Social & Community Infrastructure Needs	Covers issue 8 of the Southend New Local Plan
Topic Paper 8 Green & Blue Infrastructure & Climate Change	Covers issues 9 & 10 of the Southend New Local Plan

# Tourism Topic Paper

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## What is this topic paper about?

The Council is making a new Local Plan that will cover the period up to 2038. As a comprehensive and up to date evidence base is essential for plan preparation, the Council has undertaken a range of studies, both in house and with external consultants to support this process.

This Tourism topic paper summarises the latest available evidence from these studies and other sources. Reflecting the wide scope of this topic there are a number of overlaps between this paper and others including the Transport and Retail topic papers.

To view all the topic papers and the latest update on the Local Plan evidence base please visit our website. Please note all internet links are up to date at the time of publication.

[localplan.southend.gov.uk](http://localplan.southend.gov.uk)

## Can I comment on this document?

The Local Plan topic papers are factual in nature and set out the national planning policy context, current situation in Southend, and some potential ways of dealing with the local issues raised, but they do not include any planning policies or site allocations. As such we are not seeking comment on these publications.

However, there will be opportunities to comment on the content of the New Southend Local Plan at various stages of its development. The Council will be undertaking public consultation on the **New Southend Local Plan Issues and Options** during early 2019. This will be followed by public consultation on **Preferred Options** and **Proposed Submission**. See our website for more details [localplan.southend.gov.uk](http://localplan.southend.gov.uk)

If you wish to be kept informed of forthcoming consultations you can email [planningpolicy@southend.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@southend.gov.uk) with your contact details.

# Tourism

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## Introduction

This topic paper has been prepared to assess the national and local policy context for Tourism, to consider what should be incorporated into the new Local Plan, covering the period to 2038.

It covers a broad range of issues affecting tourism including its impact on the town centre and local economy and transport and summarises the latest available evidence relating to these matters. It also suggests how the Local Plan could deal with any important issues.

## National Planning Policy

Local planning authorities are required to address the requirements set out in National planning guidance in preparing their local plans, namely the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2018) and supporting National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

The NPPF does not specifically refer to tourism. The economic benefits of tourism are enshrined in general statements on economic development.

Planning guidance for tourism was published on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2006. However, this was withdrawn on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The only specific planning guidance on tourism is now contained within the NPPG on 'ensuring the vitality of town centres.' A section is included specifically on tourism entitled '*what should local planning authorities consider when planning for tourism?*'

The NPPG also notes that local planning authorities may also want to consider guidance and best practice produced by the tourism sector. Visit Britain is the national tourism agency, responsible for marketing Britain worldwide and developing Britain's visitor economy. It works with UK Trade & Investment as well as airlines, travel operators, global brands and the official tourism bodies for London, England, Scotland and Wales. It regularly publishes statistics on tourism including visitor numbers and stays (see [www.visitbritain.org](http://www.visitbritain.org)). The

Tourism Society is the professional membership body for people working in all sectors of the visitor economy and provides useful information, including definitions of different type of visitors (see <http://www.tourismsociety.org/>)

**Table 1** summarises the requirements of the NPPF and NPPG in relation to tourism.

Table 1 Summary of National Planning Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Support economic growth - planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future (paragraph 80).
Locational requirements - planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors (paragraph 82).
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Articulate a vision in the Local Plan.
Consider specific needs including particular locational or operational requirements.
Examine broader social, economic, and environmental impacts.
Analyse the opportunities for tourism to support local services, vibrancy and enhance the built environment.

## Existing Local Planning Policy

The existing local policy context is set out in the Southend Core Strategy (2007), Development Management Document (2015) and Southend Central Area Action Plan (2018). These adopted plans cover the period to 2021. **Appendix 1** sets out how the tourism related policies relate to national planning policy guidance. These policy provisions need to be updated to cover the time frame to 2038 and to take account of changing circumstances and changes to national planning policy.

## Southend Tourism Context

### Evidence Base

The existing and emerging tourism evidence base that will support the preparation of the Southend New Local Plan, identifying which key issues should be addressed by policy, is set out in **Table 2**. A number of these studies have been commissioned by the Association of

South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA<sup>1</sup>) to assist in the preparation of a South Essex Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) which will in turn inform local plan preparation.

Table 2: Evidence Base Provisions

Current Evidence	Comments	Reference
Southend Hotel Futures Report 2010		<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>
Economic Development & Tourism Strategy 2010	<i>See Economic Topic Paper</i>	<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>
Southend Cultural Strategy 2012-2020		<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>
Economic Impact of Tourism – Southend Borough 2017 Destination Research		<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>
Southend Tourism Strategy (Destination Southend) 2017	Incorporates a tourism vision for the Borough	<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>
South Essex Retail Study – Peter Brett Associates 2017	Identifies considerable potential for growth in the food and drink sector and capacity for additional cinema provision <i>See Retail and Town Centres Topic Paper</i>	<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>
South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) – GV Grimley 2018	<i>See Economic Topic Paper</i>	<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>
Parking and Access Strategy	Identifies accessibility and car parking issues and potential solutions including the provision of park and ride. <i>See Transport Topic Paper</i>	<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>
<b>Proposed/being Prepared Evidence</b>		
South Essex Recreation, Leisure and Tourism Growth Study	Study being commissioned by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities as	<a href="http://www.southend.gov.uk/">www.southend.gov.uk/</a>

<sup>1</sup> ASELA partnership comprises the local authorities of Thurrock, Brentwood, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Essex.

	evidence to the preparation of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan	
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All of these evidence base documents recognise the tourism potential of the Southend Borough. The tourism links to economic, transport and environmental considerations are also considered in separate topic papers on these issues.

### Characteristics and Value of Tourism

The tourism economy in Southend has witnessed growth, particularly in its attraction to day visitors. With its 7 miles of foreshore and beach/recreational facilities, range of quality tourism and leisure facilities including The Pier, Adventure Island Theme Park, Sea Life Adventure Centre, regional entertainments venue at the Cliffs Pavilion, theatres, casinos, cinema, indoor bowling, cafes, bars and restaurants, the town has a strong tourism and leisure offer. The town has seen a growth in tourist accommodation in recent years offering a range of facilities from self-catering, guest houses and budget to 4\* hotel facilities.

The tourism characteristics of Southend having regard to recent evidence base studies and national research are summarised in **Table 3** below.

**Table 3: Southend Tourism – Main Study/Research Findings**

Characteristics	Main Study Findings
Role	Southend is a major resort and tourist destination
Attractiveness	7.3 million day visitors a year (this compares to over 11 million day visitors in Brighton). Over 250K staying trips (this compares to over 450K in Brighton)
Demand	Day visitors have increased by over 7% compared to 2016 Staying trips have remained constant compared to 2016.
Value to Local Economy: Spend	Tourism is currently estimated to be worth nearly £438m to the local economy (including indirect spend). Day visitors generate a spend of over £280m (over 7% increase since 2016) Overnight visitors generate a spend of over £50m Leisure turnover of the town is expected to increase by £127m in the period to 2037, with the majority of this growth in the food and drink sector
Value to Local Economy: Jobs	Local tourism supports around 6,980 full time equivalent jobs. Total actual tourism related employment is over 9,500 jobs (16% of total employment)

Attractiveness to Investors	There is evidence of investment in the town, with a number of leisure-led schemes either with permission or being promoted including proposals for major leisure development (including hotel and cinema) at Seaway as promoted in the adopted Southend Central Area Action Plan.
Expenditure Capture	Food and drink spending, which accounts for the vast majority of tourism/leisure spending, is largely retained within the Borough.

### Potential of Tourism

There is significant potential to increase the tourism offer in Southend building on the traditional day visitor offer, developing a longer season and more staying visitors including overseas visitors. This is recognised in the recently adopted Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) and the Southend Tourism Strategy.

The Southend Tourism Strategy (Destination Southend) has been prepared in partnership with tourism and other business partners and aims to provide direction to the private, public and third party sector for a united ambition for Southend to become *'England's leading coastal tourism destination'*. The strategy identifies five key themes for taking forward the strategy namely: marketing and communications; infrastructure; product development; make Southend sparkle and culture events.

The tourism strategy links to other developing council strategies including Digital/Smart City an initiative to introduce planning itineraries, pre-booked parking, destination apps; and to skills linking with a new tourism degree working with the Edge Hospitality school at Essex University to equip students with practical projects. It also connects closely to a refreshed Cultural Strategy with galleries and museums linking more closely in to the wider visitor offer.

The recent South Essex Retail Study identifies the potential long term growth prospects for the food and drinks sector and that commercial leisure uses will constitute a growing share of town centre floorspace driven in part by the increase in household leisure expenditure and reduced demand for retail space in secondary centres. It also identifies the demand for additional cinema facilities. There is therefore the opportunity to develop a combined town centre/tourism strategy to promote and enhance the town's leisure facilities and improve the town centre offer.

Improving wider accessibility to Southend across the sub-region will be vital to realising the tourism potential of the town, particularly the A127, key junctions and rail services. This will



need to be pursued as part of the preparation of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan – see Transport Topic Paper.

The Southend Central Area Action Plan identifies a package of measures to improve the accessibility of the central seafront area including improved signage, improved real time information, web provision, park and ride etc Transport policy will be key to tourism growth, particularly accessibility to the tourism areas and car/coach parking provision.

There is also the potential to build on the ‘knock on’ local tourism benefits of having a successful international airport attracting additional tourists from home and abroad by enhancing links between the airport and the central leisure and tourist facilities of the town and by ‘selling’ the Southend tourism offer abroad.

The Southend New Local Plan needs to provide the policy framework necessary to bring these proposals forward to facilitate the tourism and leisure potential of the town.

### Issues the Southend New Local Plan Needs to Address

The Southend New Local Plan needs to be clear and proactive in its approach to tourism. It needs to facilitate the tourism growth potential of the town and set out in a clear strategy and policy approach as to how this is to be achieved in a sustainable manner.

The issues raised in the recent tourism studies and data analysis, the requirements of national planning policy and the need to update current planning policy are set out in **Table 4** below. Potential solutions to these issues are also highlighted. However, these are not considered to be mutually exclusive and other issues and solutions may be identified in due course as a result of public consultation on the Southend New Local Plan.

Table 4: Southend New Local Plan – Tourism Issues and Potential Solutions

Policy Issues Identified	Potential Solutions
Support economic growth - recognise and embrace the potential of tourism.	Incorporate specific Strategic Objectives into the new local plan identifying the potential of tourism to facilitate growth and prosperity building on the SCAAP strategic objectives
	Make clear in policy provisions that Southend is 'open' for tourism related business.
	Promote new tourism initiatives – City Beach Phase 2.
Address specific locational requirements - identify new sites needed to facilitate tourism growth / protect sites and routes which could be critical to tourism growth	Build on DMD and SCAAP policies
	Identify new sites for tourist facilities.
Articulate a vision for tourism in the Local Plan	Embrace the role of Southend as a Major Resort and incorporate the tourism potential/growth as an integral part of the Plan's Vision building on the SCAAP vision
	Incorporate the Tourism Strategy ambition for Southend to become ' <i>England's leading coastal tourism destination</i> ' within the new local plan.
Engage with representatives of the tourism industry.	The Borough Council is already proactive in engaging with tourism interests through the Tourism Partnership and it will be essential that this partnership approach is integral to the preparation of the Southend New Local Plan.
Examine the broader social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism	This is being examined as part of the South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) and South Essex Recreation, Leisure and Tourism Growth Study 2018/19. Their findings and recommendations will be incorporated into the preparation of the Southend New Local Plan.
Analyse the opportunities for tourism to	Improve highway and public transport

support local services, vibrancy and enhance the built environment	accessibility to Southend – this will need to be pursued as part of the preparation of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan
	Improve accessibility to the town centre through a package of measures as identified in the Central Area Parking and Access document – links to transport policy.
	Introduce new policy provisions to enhance the tourism link between the airport and the town's tourism/leisure offer – links to transport policy.
	Recognise the growth potential for more leisure uses in the town centre, particularly food and drink facilities. Revisit SCAAP policies to enhance opportunities for 'food and drink' developments - links to retail policy.

## Appendix 1 Existing Adopted Local Planning Policies

Policy Issues Identified	Existing Adopted Local Planning Policy		
	Core Strategy	Development Management Document	Southend Central Area Action Plan
Support economic growth - recognise and embrace the potential of tourism.	Policies KP1 and CP1		
Address specific locational requirements - identify new sites needed to facilitate tourism growth / protect sites and routes which could be critical to tourism growth	Policy KP1	Policies DM6, DM10 and DM12	Policy CS1
Articulate a vision for tourism in the Local Plan, including identifying optimal locations for tourism			Vision, Aim and Strategic Objectives
Examine the broader social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism		Policy DM6	Policies DS1and CS1
Analyse the opportunities for tourism to support local services, vibrancy and enhance the built environment	Policies KP1and CP1	Policies DM6, DM10 and DM12	Policy CS1

