

Mr Steven Kearney of SKArchitects Ltd

SKArchitects provide architectural and planning consultancy to the Stockvale Group the main seafront business together with a number of other seafront and town centre businesses.

CS1/DS5

It is apparent from the manner in which the SCAAP has been compiled that there is a lack of understanding of the demographics of visitors to Southend on Sea and indeed the social economics of the wider catchment area of South Essex and East London.

Clearly Southend is a strong day visitor attraction which mainly caters for families from South Essex and East London. The majority of these visitors travel to the town by car and experience great difficulty in travelling into the town and indeed finding a parking space within proximity to the Central Seafront.

It is also clear that whilst tourism is a key strength the fragility of the tourist economy is dependent upon easy vehicular access into the town and parking arrangements once in the Central Seafront area. We believe that the Local Authority through the SCAAP have dramatically under represented the value of the tourist economy to the SCAAP area.

The SCAAP fails completely to have regard for the necessity of the Seafront businesses to operate to maximum capacity on the sunny days. Without maximizing the income on such days, there is a challenge to the very sustainability of the Seafront as an attraction and the associated Seafront businesses.

Whilst the Council would like to see the tourist economy increase and include longer stay visits, this to some extent negates the success of the day visits and the importance of those day visits to the local economy. The Local Authority's encouragement of staycation as opposed to day visits will potentially be to the detriment of the existing seaside offer. This is likely to see a decline of the family orientated day visits that Stockvale in the main have promoted and extensively invested in. Through the continued reinvestment by the Stockvale Group and other Seafront businesses Southend as a seaside town has seen significant regeneration and is now a safe, clean, high quality family destination of choice.

The SCAAP is primarily based on the residential intensification of the central area with development opportunities identified on existing public car parks. Through the SCAAP the Council want to see and encourage alternative modes of transport within the Central Area. This should be an aspiration for the new residents in the Town Centre and not day visitors. However in reality there will be a parking demand as a result of the proposed residential re-use and regeneration of the Central Area and this will be at further detriment to the already strained public car parking provision and in particular the southern part of the SCAAP area.

Whilst the Council have indicated no net loss, this is not an aspiration for growth! Indeed it has been made very clear to the Council through various consultations that their position of no net loss will see no further growth or investment from the seafront businesses. The seafront economy is already declining due to the constrained access and parking arrangements and the SCAAP does not encourage or indicate any improvement.

It is also apparent that the Council's approach towards consultation, has seen a total lack of any acceptance or awareness of the importance of the tourist economy to the Central Area and indeed

the difference between tourism and leisure. The Seafront businesses have gone to lengths to explain this difference to the Council through their consultation responses to-date which have been completely discarded. This has currently removed any confidence in those businesses to further invest and will, as suggested see a decline in the Seafront and tourist economy of Southend unless the Local Authority dramatically review the proposed SCAAP.

As part of the car parking study in the local transport plan 3 the Central Area parking demand is forecast to grow by 25% by 2021. The car park study undertaken by Steer Davies Gleave as part of the SCAAP takes no account of this projected growth and the Council's position in no net loss against their own local transport plan indicates a clear flaw in the SCAAP analysis of Public Car Parking Provision.

Summary

Through the SCAAP Southend on Sea Borough Council have failed to recognise the difference between tourism and leisure and indeed the importance of access and easy parking in close proximity to the Central Seafront for the tourist economy day visitor customer base.

The Council have identified a number of the surface car parks for redevelopment with a principle of no net loss of car parking spaces, however, this has been made clear through consultation that this a standstill position which will not encourage any further re-investment and growth in the tourist economy.

Southend is in a unique position in terms of the success of its tourist economy and Central Seafront. This relies heavily on its catchment area of South Essex and East London and the unique social economics and demographics of its geography and its proximity to London.

The Seafront economy is absolutely reliant on day visits. The day visits market is being and will further be discouraged by the sheer frustration of visitors' inability to easily access the town and to find convenient car parking facilities in close proximity to the Seafront.

If the Council do not engage in the concerns that have been raised by the Seafront businesses it is inevitable that the renewal and regeneration that has occurred over the last two decades will start to recede and the Seafront will decline like many other seaside towns around Britain.

Change to Plan

We believe that the SCAAP has not been positively prepared and is flawed in relation to the Council's understanding of the tourist economy and the difference between tourism and leisure. As a result there is lack of engagement with needs of Seafront businesses. The SCAAP needs to be comprehensively reconsidered in relation to the importance of easily accessible and convenient parking for the Seafront. This in particular needs to factor the number of very busy days when the sun is shining as opposed to a global approach of parking provision within the wider Central Area. Through the SCAAP parking provision needs to focus on periods of peak demand to reduce and improve upon the existing over capacity issues.

As has been clear with other plan making processes in seaside towns the importance of being able to cater for these peak days has been acknowledged. This is what seafront businesses in other seaside towns and the tourist economy rely upon to ensure their future sustainability.

- We believe that the document is unsound as it has not been positively prepared. The SCAAP has not engaged appropriately with the key economic driver of tourism within the Central Area. There has been a complete lack of understanding of tourism and the differences between tourism and leisure.
- The SCAAP has not been justified in relation to its previous consultation responses and the Council's complete dismissal of the concerns that have been raised by the primary economy.
- The SCAAP is not effective as it will not deliver growth within the tourist economy and completely neglects the importance of the tourist economy to the Central Area. Clearly the primary economy of tourism has a secondary impact on the High Street retail and associated offer.

We would like our representation to be considered as a written representation.

[REDACTED]

From: Southend-on-Sea Borough Council <southend@jdi-consult.net>
Sent: 16 December 2016 15:48
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Representation received. ID:2552

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Stockvale Group (MR Steven Kearney),

Thank you for your representation which we received as follows:

Stockvale Group (MR Steven Kearney) [483] represented by Stockvale Group (MR Steven Kearney) [483]
Representation ID: 2552
Document: Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) - Revised Proposed Submission 2016
Section: Approach to Car Parking Management, 132
Support/Object: Object

SKArchitects as planning consultancy to Stockvale Group and other seafront businesses.

CHANGE TO PLAN

See attached document

The document is unsound because it is not:

- i. Positively prepared
- ii. Justified
- iii. Effective

How you would like your representation to be considered at the independent examination: Written representation.

This email is acknowledgement of the receipt of your representation. It is NOT confirmation that the representation has yet been registered. You will not receive any further notification by email that your representation has been registered until the end of the participation period.