

Developer Contributions to Southport Visitor Infrastructure

Supplementary Planning Document

Scoping Report

January 2024

Developer Contributions to Southport Visitor Infrastructure SPD (January 2024)

Sefton Council is preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to set out why, where, and how it intends to secure development contributions towards the provision or improvement of public infrastructure that supports the visitor and tourism economy in Southport. This will be consistent with the planning policies in the Sefton Local Plan (www.sefton.gov.uk/localplan).

We are inviting you to comment at this early stage to help us decide what level of guidance and background information should be contained in the SPD.

Comments should be made by Monday 15th April 2024.

We are seeking views from developers, organisations, businesses, individuals and others who are involved or have an interest in the visitor and tourism economy. This scoping report identifies some key issues. Please let us know if you agree with these and whether there are additional issues you would wish the SPD to cover.

What is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)?

SPDs give more detailed guidance to policies in the Adopted Local Plan. They are subject to public consultation under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Once adopted SPDs are material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

Policy Background

Government planning policy and how it is to be applied is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2). The NPPF requires each council to have robust and comprehensive policies that support the delivery of high-quality sustainable and inclusive development.

Sefton Local Plan was adopted in April 2017. The Local Plan includes a range of policies, which conform to national planning policy, to shape the future of Sefton. It sets out how new development will be managed in the period from 2012 to 2030, encouraging sustainable development and economic growth and giving current and future generations more opportunities to live and work in Sefton's outstanding environment.

The proposed Developer Contributions to Southport Visitor Infrastructure SPD will support the following Local Plan policies:

Policy IN1 sets out that *'Social, community, environmental and physical infrastructure will be protected, enhanced and provided where there is an identified need to support sustainable communities'*.

'Where appropriate, contributions will be sought to enhance and provide infrastructure to support new development. This may be secured as a planning obligation through a legal agreement, through the Community Infrastructure Levy or through other agreements.'

'Developer contributions may also be sought in appropriate locations to assist with regeneration objectives set out elsewhere in the plan.'

Policy ED5 identifies Southport Seafront and Central Area as one of four strategic tourism locations in Sefton.

Policy ED6 identifies that *'Southport Central Area and Seafront as set out in Policies ED7 and ED8, including the redevelopment of the Marine Park site'* are regeneration areas.

Policy ED7 sets out that Within the Southport Central Area (shown on the Policies Map) *'development proposals should be consistent with, and make a positive contribution to, the economic function of the area, the quality of the environment and maintain the significance of heritage assets and their settings'*.

Development in the Southport Central Area should also *'take opportunities to enhance heritage assets and their settings including securing their re-use, repair and restoration where appropriate.'*

Policy ED8 sets out that *'Development that would be detrimental to the historic and landscape character of the Seafront or its function as a regionally important centre for tourism will not be permitted'*.

Policy ED9 sets out that *'the redevelopment of this site [Marine Park] must provide appropriate compensatory open space and green infrastructure within the site'*.

Suggested Role and Scope of the Developer Contributions to Southport Visitor Infrastructure SPD

The SPD will set out an approach to secure financial contributions from certain types of developments in the Southport Central and Southport Seafront Areas (as shown at Appendix A). The financial contributions will be used to provide, improve and maintain tourist and visitor infrastructure within the same areas.

Consultation Question

Do people consider that the area to be covered by this SPD is correct?

The types of development that may be subject to the charge are:

- hotels, bed & breakfast accommodation, short stay lets and other holiday accommodation.
- Bars, restaurants and hot food takeaways, including outside seating areas outside of these premises
- Theatres, cinemas, nightclubs, exhibition centres, comedy clubs etc
- Arts and cultural attractions
- Visitor attractions
- New large retail uses (500m²+) outside of the Primary Shopping Area (but within the wider Central and Seafront areas)

The reason for the development types above being identified is that they are considered the types of development that benefit from the tourism and visitor economy in Southport and which therefore have an interest in ensuring the wider public infrastructure that supports the tourism and visitor economy is provided, improved or maintained.

Consultation Question

Do people consider that the types of development to be subject to the developer contributions are correct?

The monies collected through this approach will be used for the following:

- Improvement and upkeep of public open spaces in the Central and Seafront Areas
- Improvement and upkeep of Southport Pier, Promenade and Sea Wall
- Improvement and upkeep of Lakeside infrastructure (paths, bridges, street furniture, lighting etc)
- Provision, improvement and upkeep of public toilets in the Central and Seafront Areas
- Provision, improvement and upkeep of street furniture (benches, bins, information signs etc) and public art in the wider Central and Seafront Areas
- To help meet any other tourism infrastructure needs in the Central and Seafront Areas identified as priorities during the 'lifetime' of the SPD

Consultation Question

Do people consider the priorities for spending, as set out above, are correct?

Calculating the Developer Contributions

There are a number of ways of potentially calculating the charge. Probably the clearest way is to estimate the following:

- The total floorspace of development types (as set out above) expected to be approved in Southport Central and Seafront Areas over a set time period (say 15 years); plus
- The total amount of funding required to fund a list of visitor/tourist infrastructure improvements (this may not be the total amount but just the portion reasonably expected from developer contributions). This should be over the same period as above.

From this, a cost per m² charge can be calculated to be applied to the qualifying development types. This will be subject to a viability test so that we don't make proposals undeliverable.

If this approach (or another) is taken forward, the figures will be included in the first draft of the Supplementary Planning Document for comment.

Consultation Question

Do people consider the approach to calculate the developer contributions for qualifying development acceptable? Is there another method that would be clearer and more equitable?

Relationship with other developer contributions

One of the existing key developer contributions that we already secure is in relation to mitigating the recreational impact of new development on Sefton's protected and vulnerable coast. This is based on the premise that new development creates more residents and users and therefore more potential visitors to Sefton's vulnerable coast.

The Council already secure contributions for mitigating visitor pressure on the coast from new residential proposals (10+ homes). This can be spent either on the vulnerable coast by ensuring visitors use the area in a way that does not disturb nature; or it can be used on suitable alternative natural greenspaces that help attract residents/users of new developments away from the protected and vulnerable sites.

Some other types of development including some tourism development listed above and other tourism development may also increase visitor pressure on the coast and if so will be required to mitigate these impacts. This may include a financial charge or other measures. The draft Supplementary Planning Document will set out how these two regimes work with an emphasis on making sure that there is no double charging. That is, if there are a number of developer contributions required as a result of development, then the Council will

prioritise them if viability is an issue. However, the requirement to mitigate for increased visitor pressure on the Sefton Coast is legally required under the Habitats Regulations¹, and so cannot be removed or reduced due to viability. The draft SPD will set out how these relationships will work together.

Consultation Question

Do you have any comments on how different developer contributions will work together?

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

National planning policy indicates that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are not required for an SPD unless it is considered that there are likely to be significant environmental effects or exceptional circumstances.

This SPD builds on policies in the adopted Local Plan, all of which have been subject to SA and SEA and detailed scrutiny at the Examination. Furthermore, the criteria in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been taken into consideration and it is the view of Sefton Council that these have not been triggered to the extent that it is necessary to for an SEA of this SPD.

Consultation Question

Do you believe Strategic Environmental Assessment is required? If so, please set out what the exceptional circumstances are requiring one to be undertaken as part of your response.

How to comment

Comments on whether you agree with the scope of this SPD and/or whether there are other things that should be included should be sent to:

SPD@sefton.gov.uk

Planning Department
Magdalen House
Trinity Road

¹ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as amended.

Bootle L20 3NJ

Please include the name of the SPD you are commenting on in the subject line.

Comments must be received by Monday 15th April 2024.

What happens next?

An indicative SPD timetable is provided below:

Prepare Draft SPD, considering comments made to the scope	March/April 2024
Approval from Cabinet Member to publish draft SPD for eight weeks public consultation.	May 2024
Publish draft SPD for eight weeks consultation.	May/June 2024
Prepare draft SPD for adoption, considering comments made.	July/August 2024
Approval from Cabinet to adopt the SPD	September/October 2024

Data Protection

- All comments, including personal details, received will be logged securely.
- Comments from private individuals will be published online. Names will be published online unless a specific request to remain anonymous is made. However, we may not be able to give the same weight to anonymised comments.
- Comments from groups, organisations and companies will be published online giving name of group, organisation and company only.
- No contact details will be published online, including home address, email or telephone number
- The Council may need to contact you to request further information or clarification in relation to the comment(s) made.
- Personal details will be used for the purposes of SPD production only.

For full data protection rights in planning please see: www.sefton.gov.uk/PlanningGDPR

Appendix A

Areas covered by Developer Contributions to Southport Visitor Infrastructure SPD

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