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WE MADE THAT  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

BASILDON TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN  
URBAN APPRAISAL - REVISION A 15-04-2020

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## Revisions tracker

Rev.	Date	Description
-	19-12-2019	Draft issue to client team
A	15-04-2020	Final Draft

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1.0  
INTRODUCTION &  
WIDER CONTEXT



## 1.1

### INTRODUCTION

#### About this project

Basildon Borough Council commissioned architects and urban designers We Made That and real estate consultants Cushman & Wakefield to develop a Masterplan for the future of Basildon Town Centre. The Masterplan aims to build on the current assets of the town centre and identify where there are opportunities for improvement and development. It sets out a clear vision for the town centre that will guide regeneration activity by the council as well as encourage investment into the town centre by landowners, investors, developers and other public sector bodies.

The Masterplan builds on current momentum for change generated by a 2012 masterplan for the town centre including the cinema development at East Square and the introduction of South Essex College into Market Square. It also sets out ambitions for improving the public realm and routes through, around and in and out of the town centre, making it better connected to surrounding neighbourhoods and to transport connections.

The masterplan will be guided by the views of the people who use the town centre to make sure that it serves the needs of local people. The design team is conducting public events on site and on-line through December in the early stages of the project to hear from people who use the town centre. This engagement will build on what the council has heard from the #Ourspace survey about what residents, workers and visitors want from their town centre. The team will run further themed workshops in the new year to hear thoughts on specific issues and opportunities.

The masterplan will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the Local Plan to inform the development of the town centre over coming years.

#### About this document

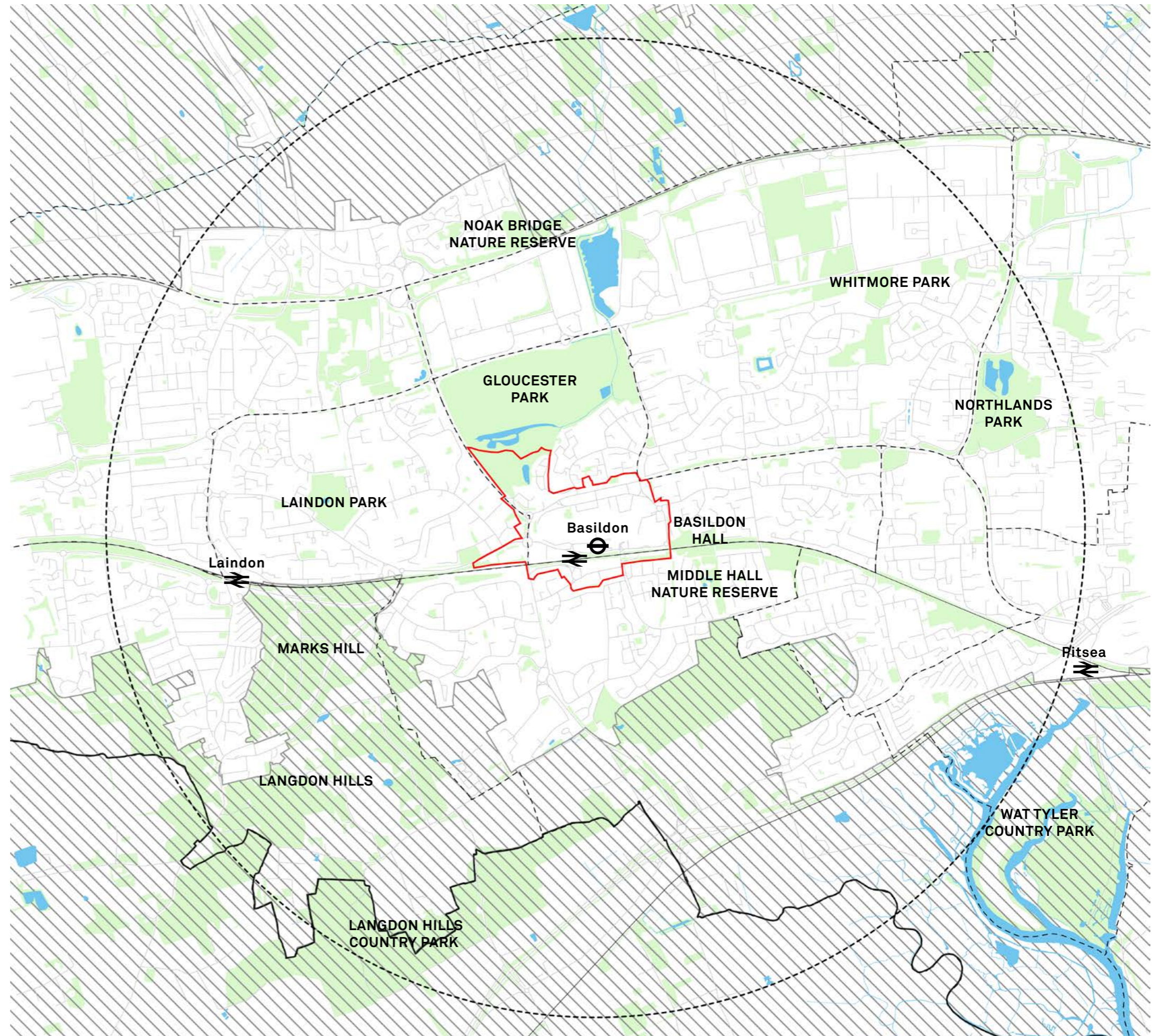
This Urban Appraisal document includes findings from desktop research of previous studies and consultation, as well as additional specific research aimed at better understanding the history, use and operation of the Basildon Town Centre. On the ground observational analysis forms a vital part of the Urban Appraisal, as it reveals more nuanced behavioural and qualitative aspects that are otherwise hard to capture. Conversations with local stakeholders from the community and the council are also summarised.

This Urban Appraisal will form the basis for the team to develop proposals within the Masterplan.

# 1.2 WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

## Location

Basildon is the largest town in the Basildon Borough with excellent rail and bus connections. It is set in the heart of the London Greenbelt and surround by open countryside within 2 mile radius of the Basildon town centre site.



**KEY**

- Ward boundaries
- County boundaries
- 2 mile radius
- Green spaces
- ▨ Green Belt boundaries
- Basildon Town Centre boundary

N  
0 600m

## 1.2 WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Relevant policies, studies and strategies

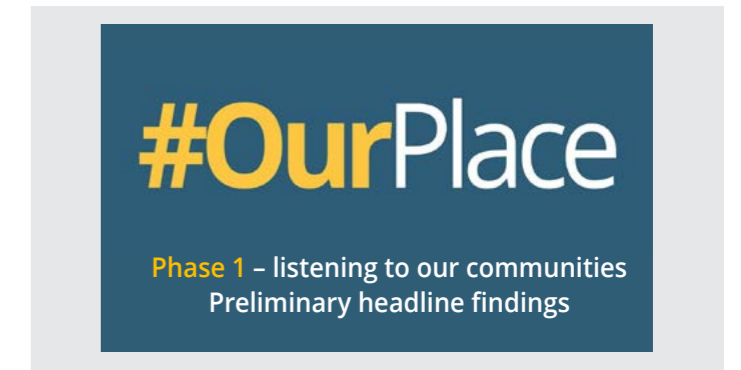
These documents and studies were reviewed as part of the appraisal process. Summaries can be found here, as well as key maps translated throughout this document.



**Basildon Town Centre Masterplan - December 2012**  
This interim Supplementary Planning document was produced by Basildon Council and their then development partners Barratt Wilson Bowden (BWB). The masterplan suggests a series of development sites which support a network of new or improved public spaces including an improved public space and transport hub, a new South Essex College building, relocation of the market and new cinema at East Square all of which are being delivered.



**Basildon Borough Revised Publication Local Plan - 2014 - 2034**  
The local plan is currently in draft. It sets out the borough council's aims and objectives for change and development in Basildon Borough between 2014 and 2034. The plans states that "We should be planning for at least 19,400 houses. We may have to give up 4% of our Green Belt. We believe in Infrastructure First."

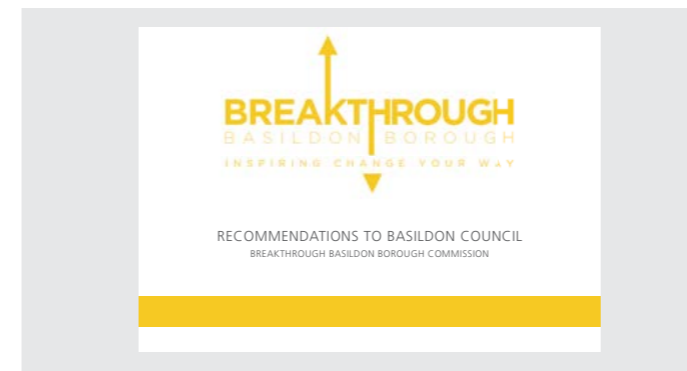


**#Ourplace**  
This was an online survey set up by Basildon Borough Council to understand how residents feel about Basildon as a borough, what they value and what improvements they find most important. The report compiles results from qualitative and quantitative surveys. More details provided overleaf.



**Basildon Town Centre Cultural Placemaking Strategy - Future City - July 2018**

This report was commissioned by Basildon Town Centre Management (BTCM) to develop a cultural placemaking strategy that builds on the opportunities presented by the Town Centre Masterplan (2012). The strategy suggests treating the whole Town Centre as a 'creative campus' which offers opportunities for self-expression, participation and creative learning to improve the employment prospects, education and skills of local people. More details provided overleaf.



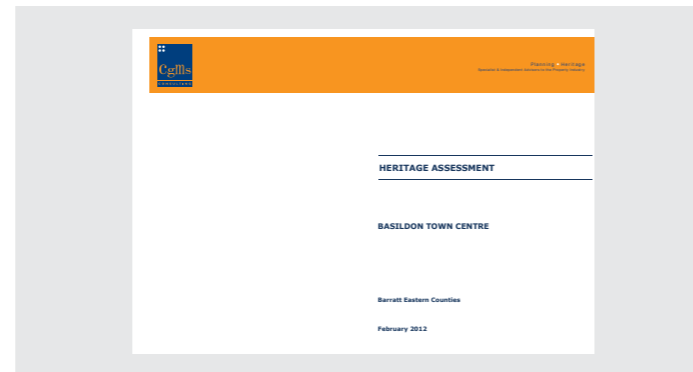
**Breakthrough Basildon Borough Commission - Recommendation to Basildon Council - 2019**

The Breakthrough Basildon Borough Commission was established in December 2017 by Basildon Borough Council as an independent review to provide strategic guidance to the council on how to enable sustainable, inclusive growth across the Borough. The report highlights the importance of strengthening Basildon's 'brand identity', both for local pride and outward perceptions. That this should build on Basildon's identity as a New Town and its status as a place of innovation, to enable sustainable employment in the borough. More details provided overleaf.

## 1.2

### WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Relevant policies, studies  
and strategies



#### **Heritage Assessment Basildon Town Centre - February 2012**

Commissioned by Basildon Borough Council to support the Town Centre Masterplan (2012) the assessment lists and describes only those features that are formally listed: Brook House, East Square and its elements, the raised pool and fountain to the west of East Square. There is no assessment of other buildings or features from the original New Town development such as canopies of colonnades.



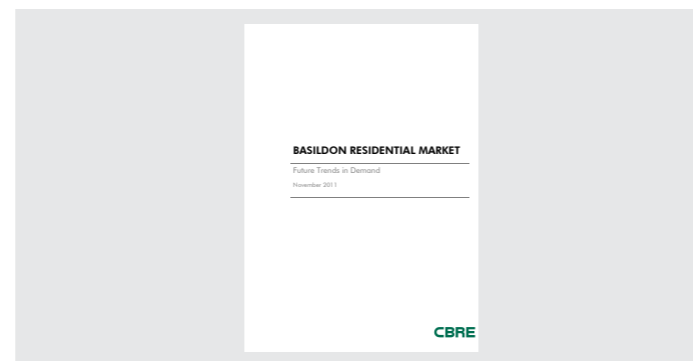
#### **Basildon Council Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study - November 2015**

Commissioned by Basildon Borough Council, to understand the retail and commercial leisure needs of Basildon Borough over the Local Plan period to 2035. The study identifies the important civic function of Basildon town centre, likely to be enhanced by the new college building, and also highlights its lack of leisure and evening economy offer.



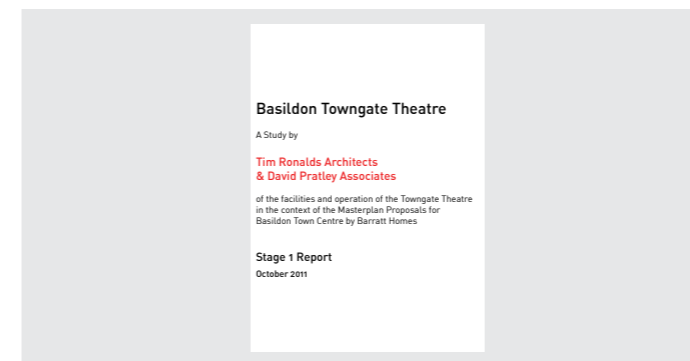
#### **Basildon Parking Capacity & Intervention Study 2017**

Commissioned by Basildon Borough Council to support the Town Centre Masterplan (2012) the strategy finds that parking facilities in Basildon town centre are largely underutilised. The exceptions are Towngate, Staples, Market Place, Times Square and Ashdon which may often reach full capacity at peak times. The remaining car parks function at a maximum capacity of 75% - even taking into account future growth.



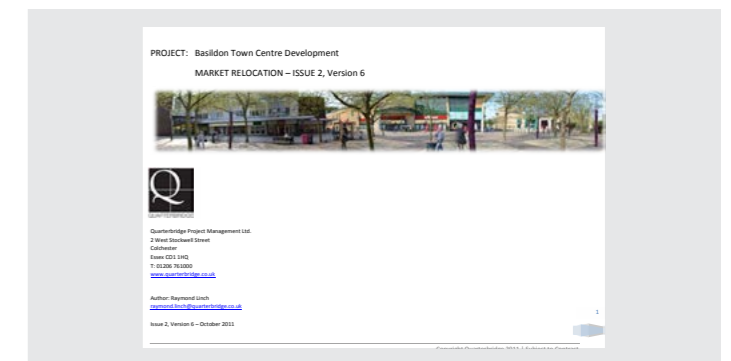
#### **South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment - May 2016**

The South Essex SHMA (2016) indicates that historic supply of new homes has fallen short of projected need. The Addendum to the South Essex SHMA (2017) has since recommended Basildon needs to deliver between 972 and 986 new homes per annum between 2014 and 2037 in order to deliver the necessary amount of housing to account for current and past demand.s



#### **Basildon Towngate Theatre Stage 1 Report - October 2011**

Commissioned by Basildon Borough Council to support the Town Centre Masterplan (2012) the suggests there is a latent audience that would need to be developed through participation and animation. The suggested way forward is to maintain the back of house areas (as these are seen to be valuable) but transform the rest of the theatre into a contemporary 'culture space' with more flexible performance space for a variety of activities.



#### **Basildon Town Centre Development Market Relocation - October 2011**

Commissioned by Basildon Borough Council to support the Town Centre Masterplan (2012) the report explores options for a new location for Basildon Market to allow for the development of a building for South Essex College as proposed in the Masterplan.

## 1.2

### WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

#### #OURPLACE SURVEY

This was an online survey set up by Basildon Borough Council to understand how residents feel about Basildon as a borough, what they value and what improvements they find most important. The report compiles results from qualitative and quantitative surveys.

##### **Most Valued Aspects of Basildon:**

- Green spaces
- Local shops
- Transport
- Neighbours.
- Convenient location and proximity to London
- The festival leisure park

##### **Most Important Improvements:**

- More police and reduced crime levels
- Road and pavement repairs and reducing congestion
- More activities for teenagers
- Better shopping facilities
- Cleaner streets
- Revamping the High Street



# #OurPlace

**Phase 1** – listening to our communities  
Preliminary headline findings



## 1.2

### WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

#### BREAKTHROUGH BASILDON

This was a commission set up by Basildon Borough Council to guide inclusive growth across the borough. The commission came to five key findings set out and summarised below.

##### 1. The Basildon brand:

- a legacy of architectural and design boldness,
- a history of radicalism and innovation,
- a place founded on the promise of a good home, a good job and opportunity for your children

##### 2. Civic pride and public engagement:

- invest in community engagement,
- rejuvenate civic spaces across the Borough for communities to use,
- bring together the council, CVS, faith groups etc

##### 3. The built environment:

- public space that inspires a sense of pride, community and opportunity,
- build on Basildon's unique features and not simply aspire to be like everywhere else

##### 4. The economy:

- deeper relationships with key employers e.g. Ford, New Holland
- Create spaces/incubator opportunities for start-ups
- provide local people with the right skills and opportunities

##### 5. Governance:

- consider moving to all out elections every four years to enable more long term strategic planning,
- develop a cross party narrative around the Basildon brand and its strengths,
- creation of a new civic catalyst board



## 1.2

### WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

#### Basildon Town Centre Cultural Placemaking Strategy

This report was commissioned by Basildon Town Centre Management (BTCM) to develop a cultural placemaking strategy that builds on the opportunities presented by the Town Centre Masterplan (2012). The strategy suggests treating the whole Town Centre as a 'creative campus' which offers opportunities for self-expression, participation and creative learning to improve the employment prospects, education and skills of local people.

#### Some key findings

- Basildon's £3.7bn economy is the largest in Essex and hosts the 9th highest concentration of business start-ups in the country.
- 31% More Digital Jobs per head than UK Average
- Highest Concentration of Computer Programming Jobs in Essex
- CAD most in demand skill among local employers
- A recent feasibility study into an Innovation Warehouse in partnership with the Essex Fablab has demonstrated the potential of an incubator for makers

#### Town Centre Principles

- Springboard: Offer Basildonians the space to launch and showcase their ambitions
- Experimentation: Fill the Town Centre with surprise
- Inclusive: Be a Town Centre for everyone
- Digital: Embrace new technologies

#### BasildON - Arts Council England Creative People and Places funding

Basildon has been awarded £1,289,002 from Arts Council England as part of Creative People and Places 2019-2023. Led by Things Made Public CIC, The BasildON Creative People and Places programme is designed to empower the whole community – businesses and residents alike – to create a cultural democracy, developing a wide-range of activities and projects that give everyone the opportunity to be involved in shaping Basildon's cultural and creative future.

# Basildon

## Basildon Town Centre Cultural Placemaking Strategy



FUTURE\CITY

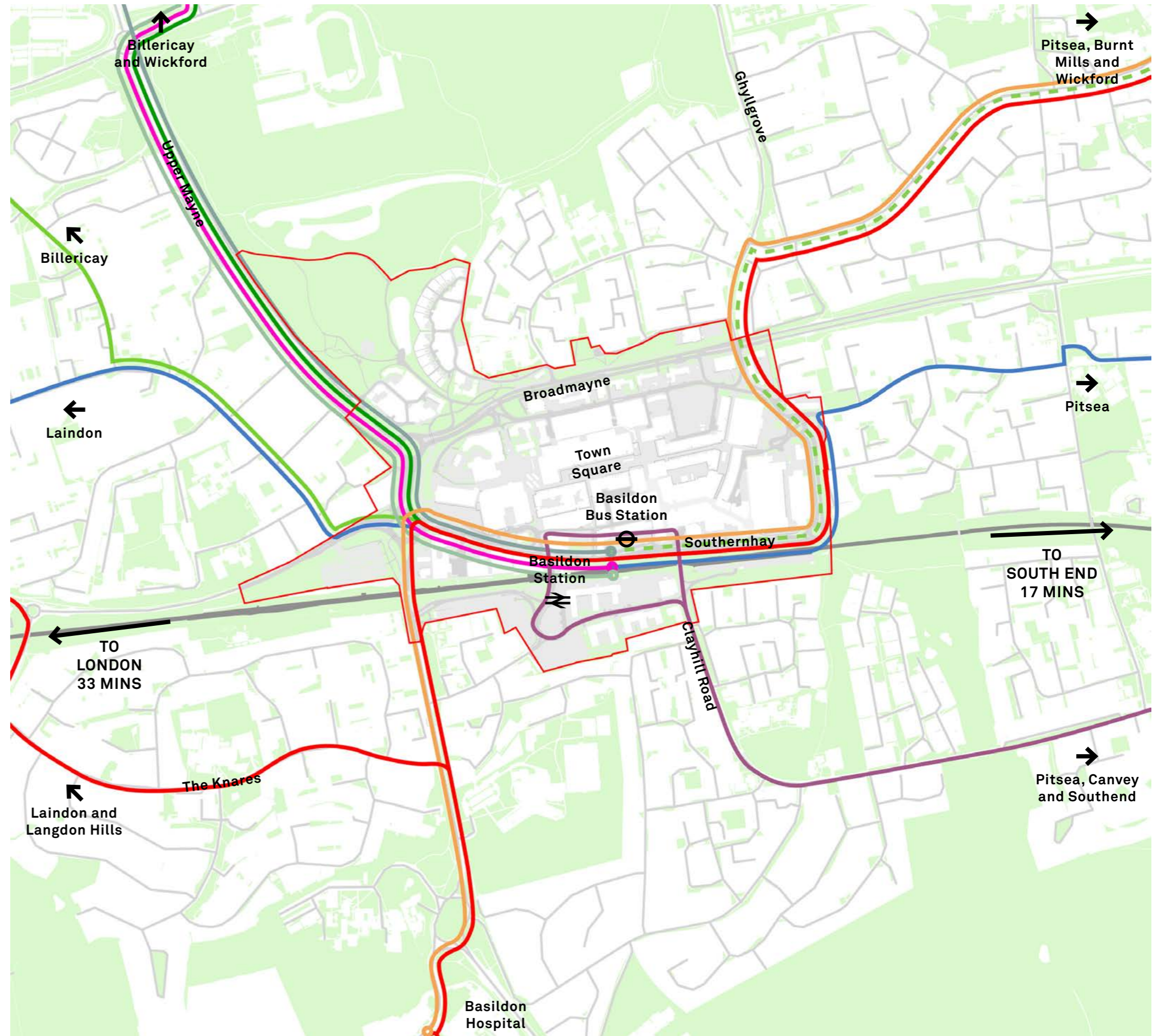
July 2018

## 1.2 WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### Bus and rail connections

Basildon is very well connected to the wider borough and beyond by bus services. From observations at the bus terminal, buses seem well used through the day. As a consequence of the good bus connections the bus terminal is a busy hub in the town centre with a fully occupied parade of retail units providing a range of services.

The C2C rail connection provide quick and regular services into London and to other parts of the Essex Thames Corridor



#### KEY

Basildon Town Centre Masterplan Boundary

Uses shown are indicative and observed only. These may not be the use as defined within the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

## 1.2 WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### Cycle network & routes

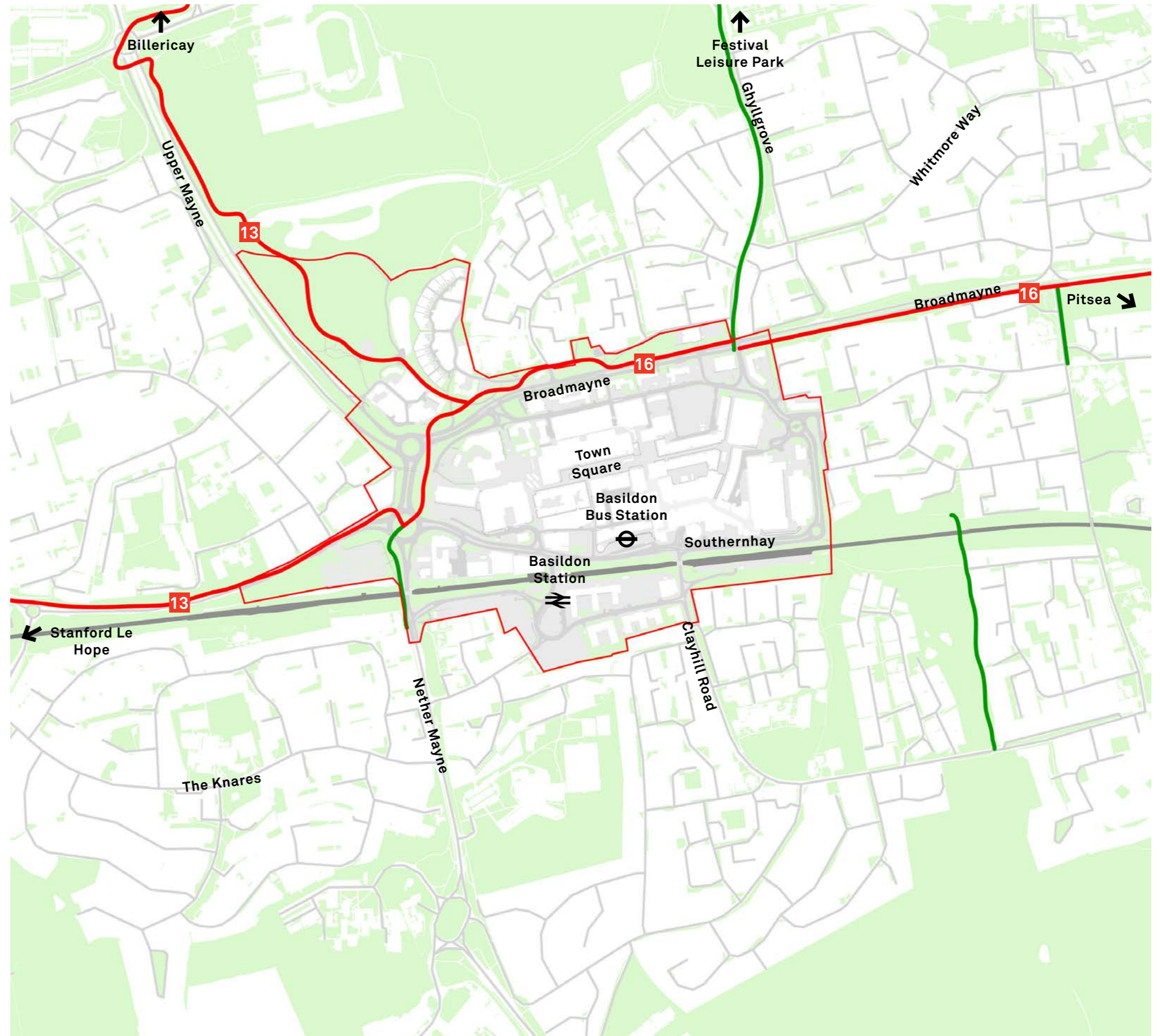
Basildon and its surrounds are served relatively well by a network of segregated cycle routes, especially to the north, but not so well to the south.

Part of this network forms part of the National Cycle Network connecting to nearby towns.

The segregation of cyclists and cars works well here for cyclists travelling around the town but forms part of the system of routes disconnecting the town centre from its surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

There are currently no routes connecting into or through the town centre itself.

Essex County Council are currently undertaking a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan



#### KEY

- Segregated cycle route
- National Cycle Network
- Basildon Town Centre Masterplan Boundary

Uses shown are indicative and observed only. These may not be the use as defined within the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

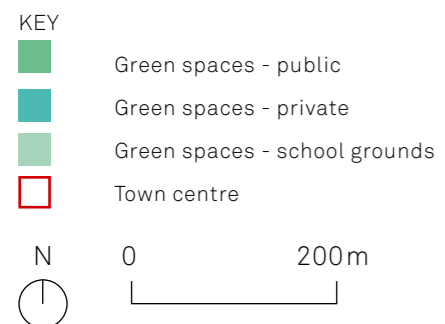


## 1.2 WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### Surrounding key Green spaces

The following parks are within 15min walk from the Basildon town square:

1. Gloucester Park
2. Basildon Hall
3. Middle Hall Nature Reserve



## 1.2

### WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

#### Surrounding key Green spaces

Basildon town centre benefits from very large areas of well maintained green space immediately adjacent to the town centre core. These spaces though are poorly connected to commercial centre.

The main park, Gloucester Park, is separated from the town centre not only by the multi-lane ring road, but also by a recent residential development. The potential connection does benefit from Church Walk acting as an axial route towards the park from St. Martin's Square; a route that seems like it is leading somewhere until you reach the ring road. The park itself has many facilities that would benefit town centre users such as a play space, skate park and lake.

Parks to the southeast have multiple impediments to access. Firstly the ring road compounded with the railway embankment which blocks any views of the green spaces. Then there is the fact that the Eastgate Centre has no routes through to the corner of the town centre edge, meaning even if someone knew where they were going, they would have to navigate the ring road for some distance before reaching the brick tunnel through to the park.



↑ Above: Gloucester Park, looking north.  
Below: Looking towards Gloucester Park.



↑ Brick tunnel linking the east end of the town centre to green spaces and neighbourhoods to the south.



↑ Above: Basildon Hall green space.  
Below: unnamed green space south of the railway.

2.0  
TOWN CENTRE APPRAISAL



## 2.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

### Historic development and New Town ambition

Basildon was one of the first New Towns built under the New Towns Act of 1946 and was official designated a New Town in 1949. It was planned as a bold vision looking forward to a utopian future. Set piece buildings and landscaping framed and articulated pedestrianised public spaces.





## 1.2

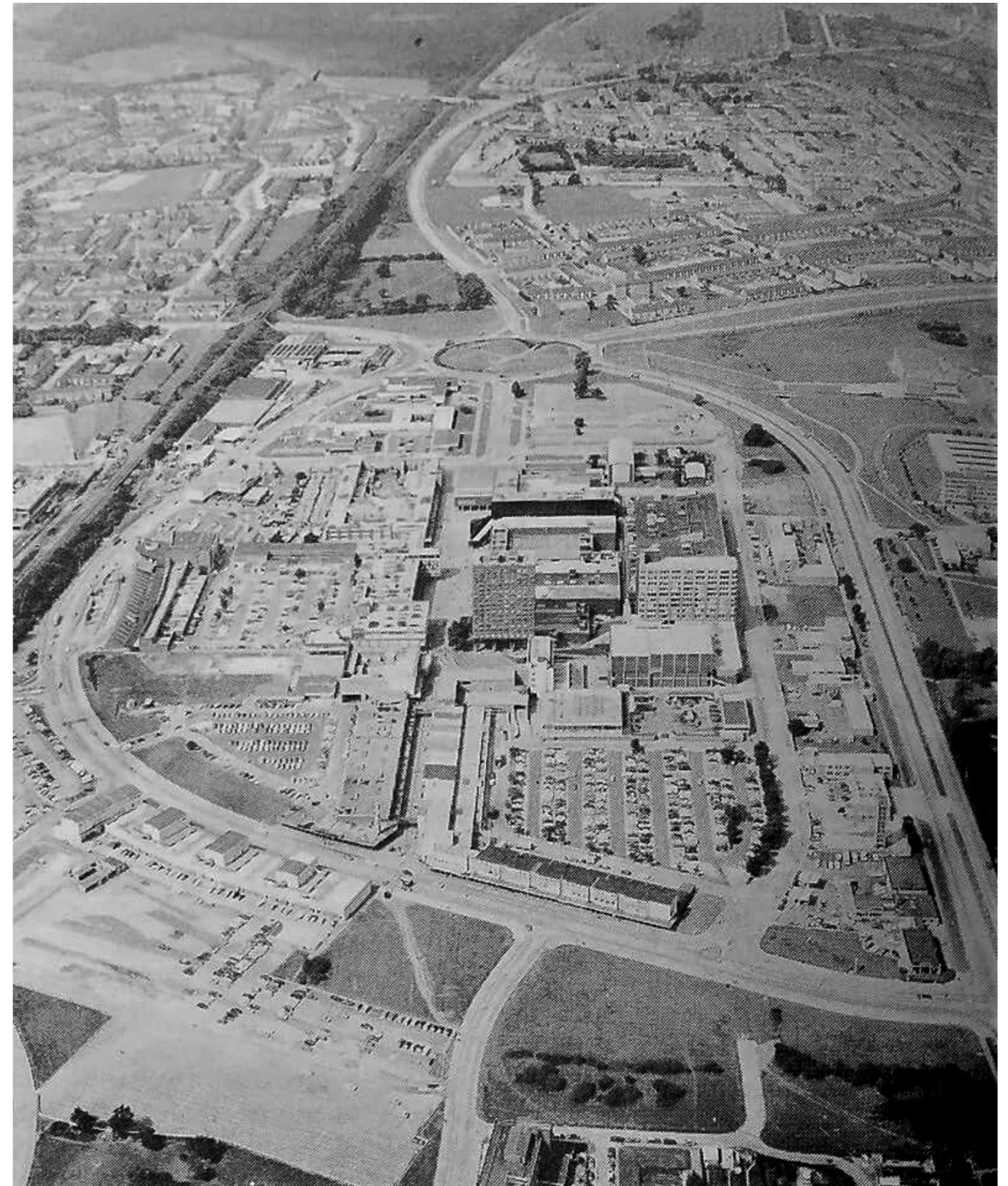
### WIDER CONTEXT

#### Historic development and New Town ambition

In its original incarnation, Basildon's town centre was open and outward looking, with a central retail spine that opened up to neighbourhoods at the east and west.

The parade of shops on Southernhay (now facing the Toys r Us building) faced outward to the residential neighbourhoods.

The market presented a bustling and colourful arrival from the south.



## 2.1

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Historic development:  
urban morphology

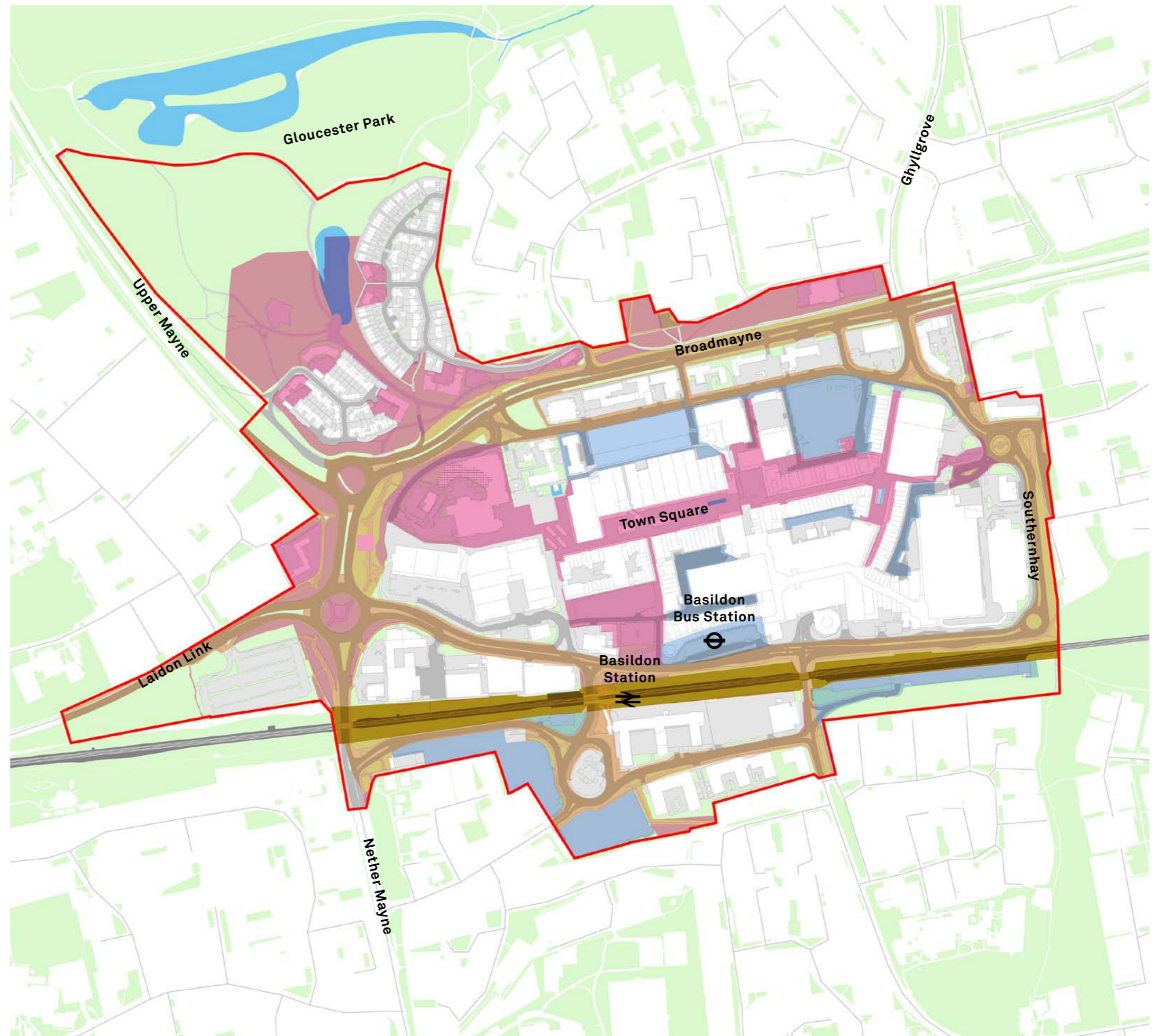
The original layout of Basildon town centre was notably smaller than it is today. The Roundacre roundabout marked the west end of the east-west spine route which terminated at the current location of the council buildings. The east end boundary was formed by Southernhay which formerly followed the route of the curved parade of shops in front of Asda; and is still marked as such on street signs.



## 2.2 CURRENT POLICY & DEVELOPMENT

### Basildon Council and BTCM land ownership

Basildon Council has a significant amount of ownership and control over the streets and spaces within the town centre spine area, however there are many key locations of the town centre which are under other ownerships.



- KEY
- Basildon Borough Council land ownership
  - Essex County Council land ownership
  - BTCM land ownership
  - Basildon Highways responsibilities
  - Network Rail land ownership
  - Town Centre boundary

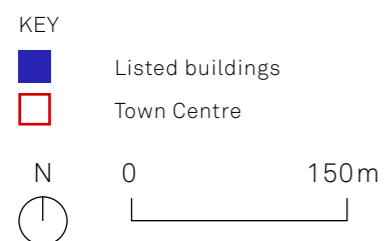
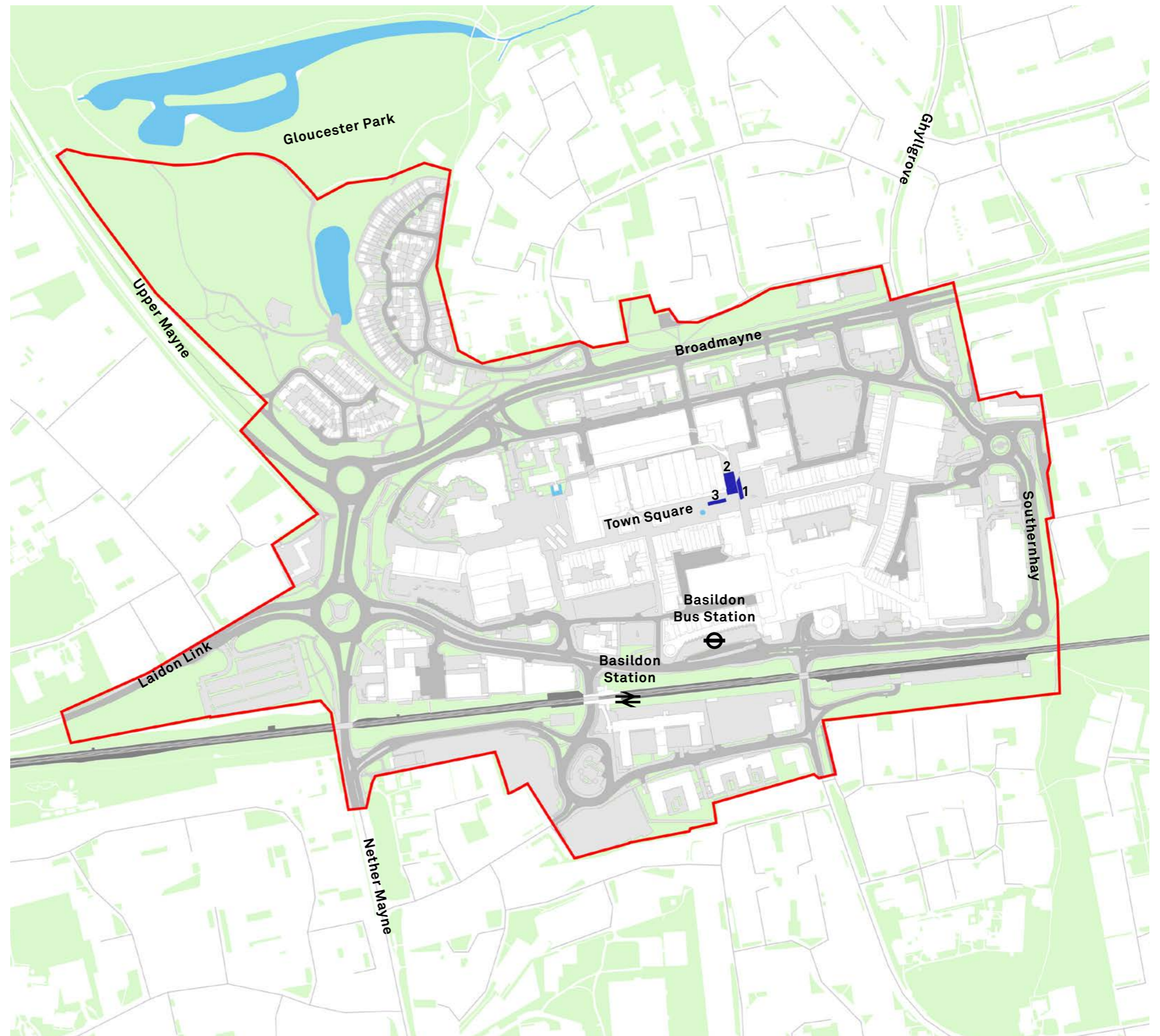


## 2.2 CURRENT POLICY & DEVELOPMENT

Policy considerations:  
Heritage and conservation

There are no Conservation Areas and only three listed assets in the area.

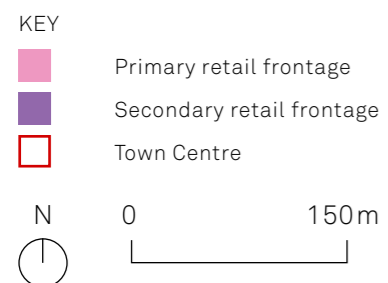
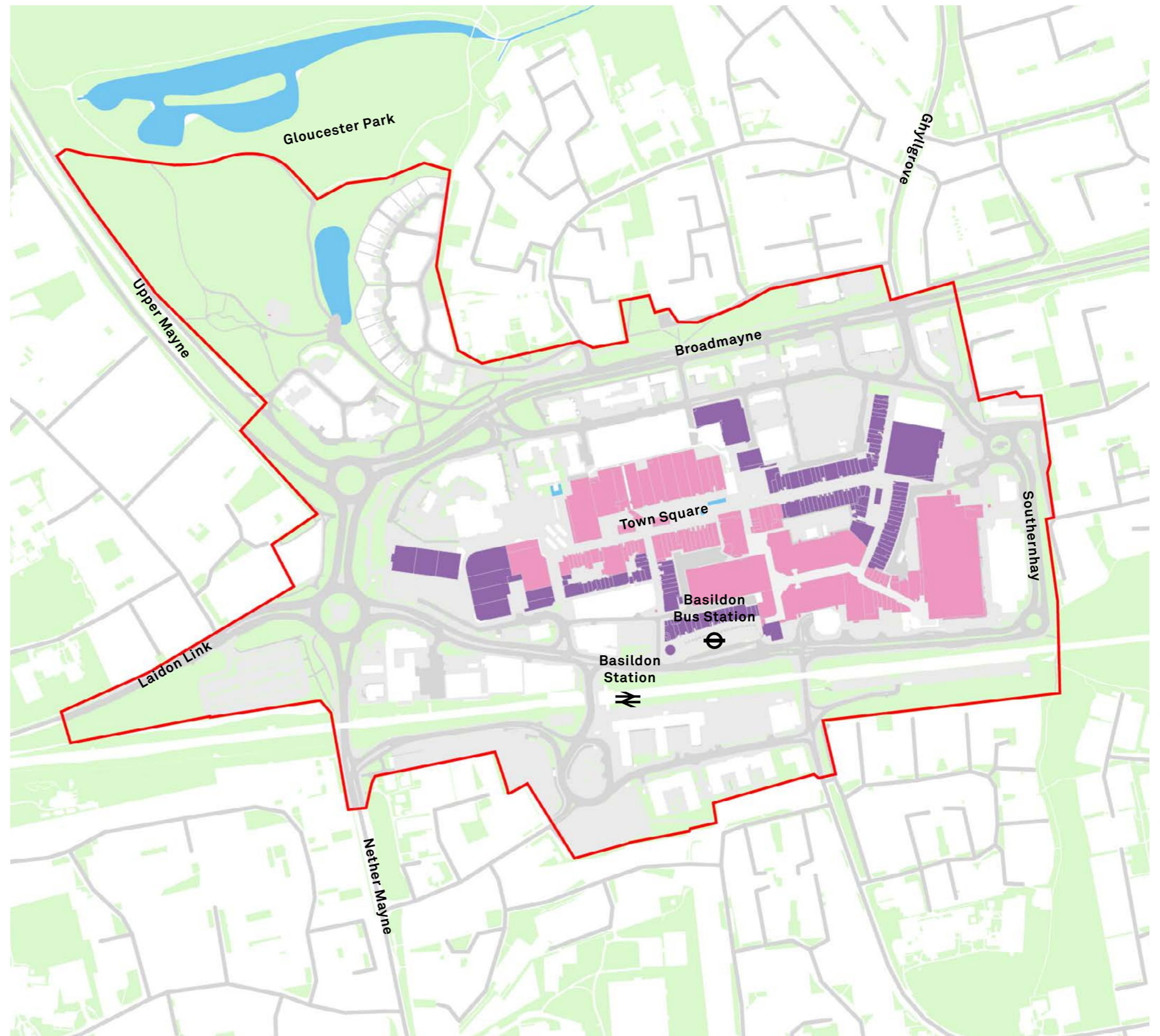
1. Retaining walls, ramp, steps, staircases, bench and raised paving
2. Brooke house
3. Raised pool and sculpture



## 2.3 CURRENT POLICY & DEVELOPMENT

### Policy considerations: retail frontages

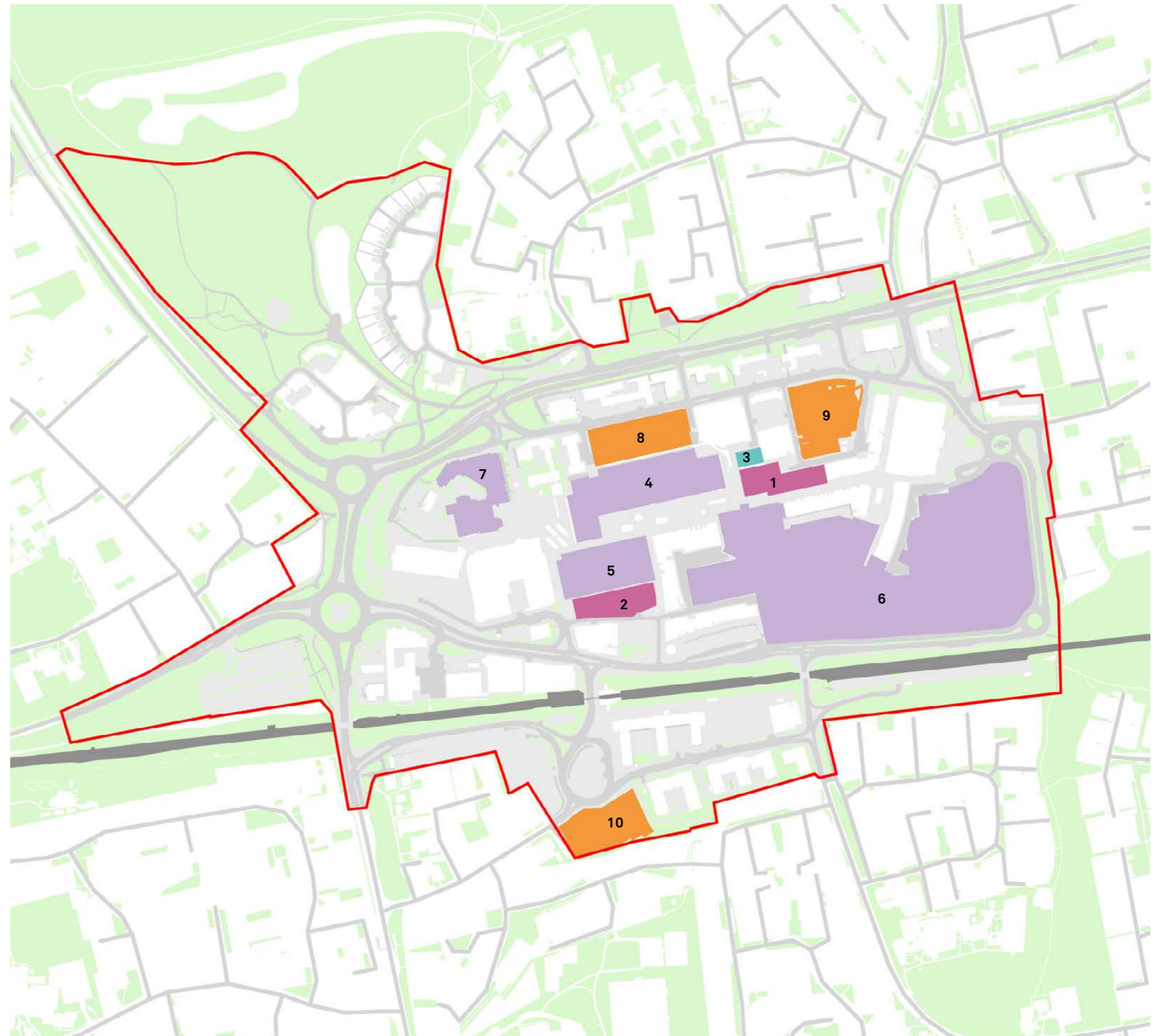
The Draft Local Plan states that the primary shopping area, which includes the primary and secondary frontages and the street market (highlighted in the map) should be protected, while the redevelopment and modernisation of existing premises, particularly around the periphery of the primary shopping area, will be encouraged to support the diversification of uses and the introduction of a night-time economy.



## 2.2 CURRENT POLICY & DEVELOPMENT

### Current and proposed developments

1. Empire multiplex cinema & food and beverage units development
2. South Essex College Development
3. Former Post Office building
4. Former Marks and Spencer site and Northgate House lower floors
5. Site to north of Market Square
6. Eastgate centre
7. Civic centre
8. Great Oaks Multi-storey car park
9. Great Oaks level car park
10. Car Park 12



- KEY
- Under construction
  - Consented for demolition
  - Proposals in discussion
  - Housing Infrastructure Fund bid sites



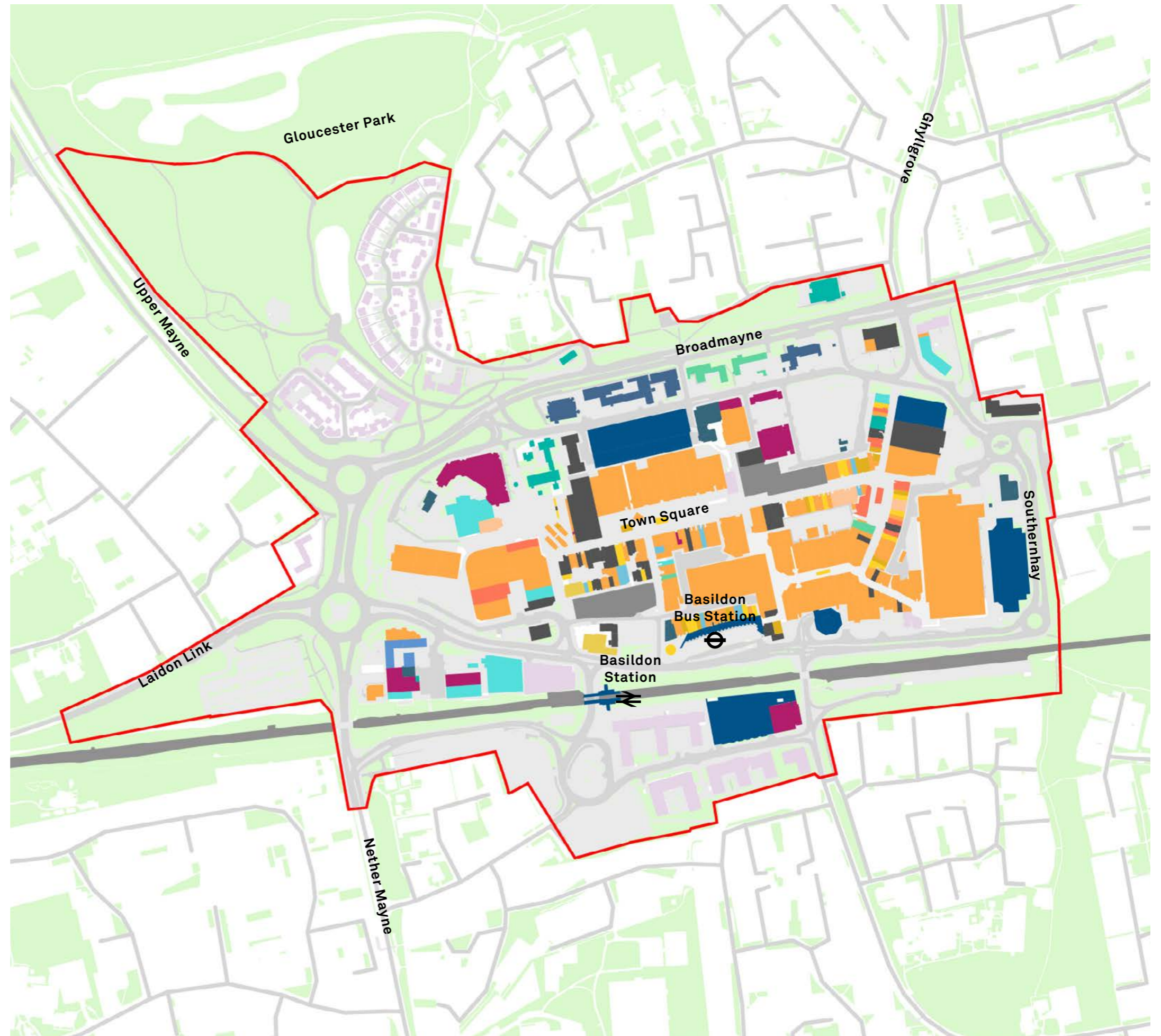
## 2.3 USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

### Ground floor land use

The town centre is dominated by retail use; A1 use classes accounting for 89.5% of the total floorspace of the town centre. Far higher than other towns of a similar scale which average at around 75%. There is a cluster of institutional buildings to the north and community, office and leisure use buildings are situated to the perimeter of town centre area.



Uses shown are indicative and observed only. These may not be the use as defined within the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.



## 2.3 USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

### Building heights

Buildings in Basildon town centre are predominantly four storeys or lower with the exception of three point towers within the ring road and a cluster of taller residential buildings around the building.

















## 2.3 USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

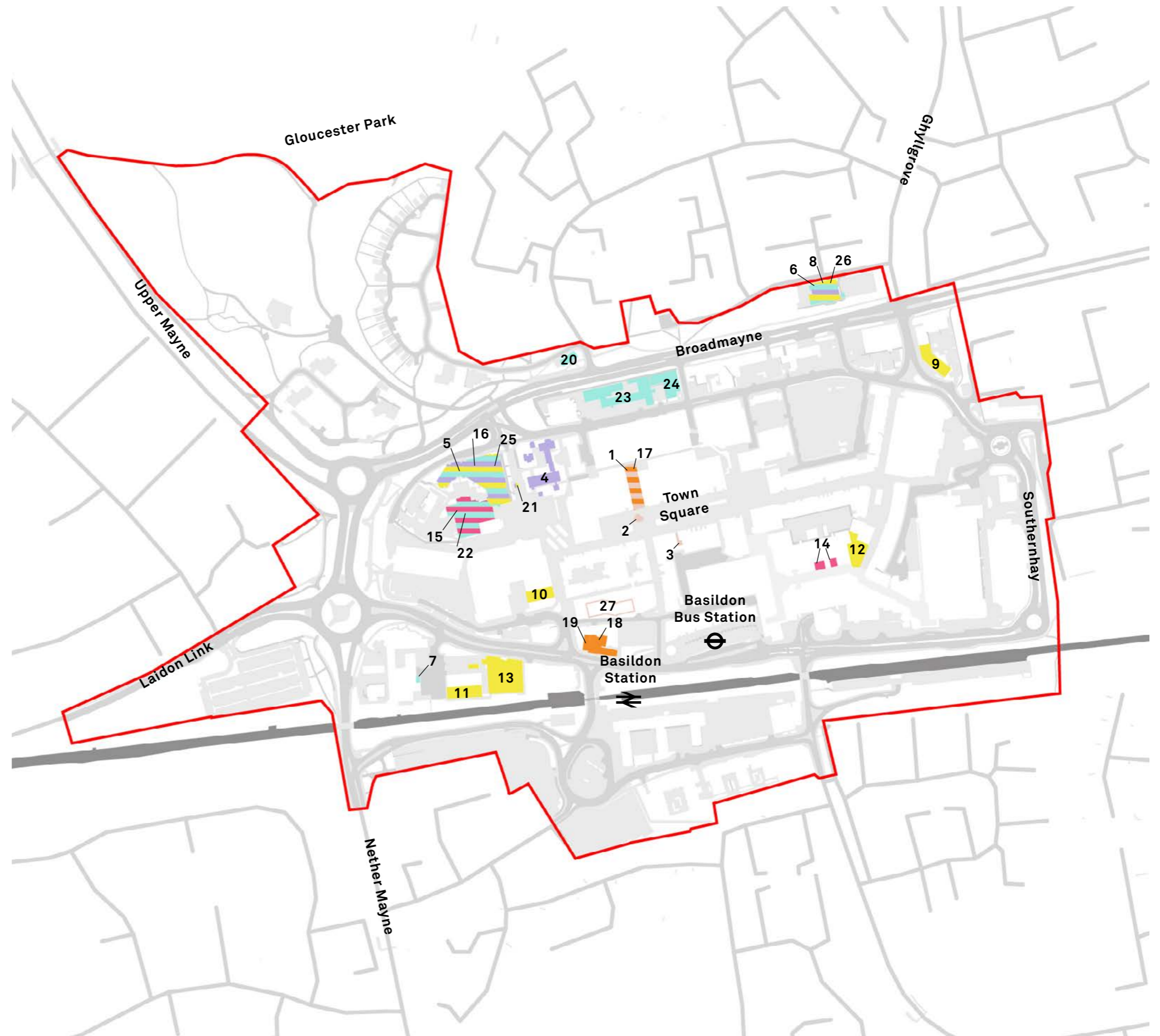
### Community, cultural and leisure uses

Basildon community and leisure assets are situated across the town centre, with a noticeable larger offer of community infrastructure uses lining station - Town Square route to the east.

#### KEY

- |                                                                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|    | <b>Education</b>                      |
| 1.                                                                                  | T.I.M.E Music Therapy                 |
| 2.                                                                                  | Townsq Learning Centre                |
| 3.                                                                                  | LifeSkills College                    |
|    | <b>Faith</b>                          |
| 4.                                                                                  | St Martin's Church                    |
| 5.                                                                                  | Christ Embassy Basildon               |
| 6.                                                                                  | Harmony Christian Centre Basildon     |
| 7.                                                                                  | Christian Growth Centre               |
|  | <b>Leisure</b>                        |
| 8.                                                                                  | Nachle Bollywood Dance School         |
| 9.                                                                                  | Energie Fitness Basildon              |
| 10.                                                                                 | easyGym Basildon                      |
| 11.                                                                                 | Snap Fitness 24-7 Basildon            |
| 12.                                                                                 | PureGym Basildon                      |
| 13.                                                                                 | Buzz Bingo Hall                       |
|  | <b>Arts</b>                           |
| 14.                                                                                 | Basildon Eastgate Art                 |
| 15.                                                                                 | Towngate Theatre                      |
| 16.                                                                                 | Basildon Library                      |
|  | <b>Music venues</b>                   |
| 17.                                                                                 | The Edge Bar & Kitchen                |
| 18.                                                                                 | Colors                                |
| 19.                                                                                 | Beehive Basildon                      |
|  | <b>Advice services/other</b>          |
| 20.                                                                                 | Basildon Community Resource Centre    |
| 21.                                                                                 | 'The Table' community support         |
| 22.                                                                                 | The Thalian Theatre Group             |
| 23.                                                                                 | Basildon Police Station               |
| 24.                                                                                 | Ingeus Employment services            |
| 25.                                                                                 | Basildon Civic Centre                 |
| 26.                                                                                 | Basildon Community Transport Services |
|  | <b>Coming development</b>             |
| 27.                                                                                 | South Essex College                   |

- |                                                                                               |                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Transport</b>                                                                              | <b>Other</b>                                                                                    |
|  Key roads |  Town Centre |
|  Rail      |                                                                                                 |
|  N         |  0 150m      |



## 1.2 WIDER & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### Car parking

A large proportion of space in the town centre is given over to car parking. This is particularly focussed around the edges of the town centre core which, combined with the ring road, creates an unattractive approach into the town centre from a number of directions.



- KEY
- Car parking at grade
  - Car parking - Multi-storey
  - Car parking - sasement
  - Basildon Town Centre Masterplan Boundary

Uses shown are indicative and observed only. These may not be the use as defined within the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.





## 2.3 USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

### Play facilities within the town centre

Play facilities within the town centre masterplan area are limited to those within Gloucester Park. There are no play facilities within the town centre core itself.

The play facilities in Gloucester Park are good and well used. They include a children's play park and a skate park for older children. The distance from the town centre means these facilities do not support activity in the town centre and are not overly accessible.



-  Children's play area
-  Skate park

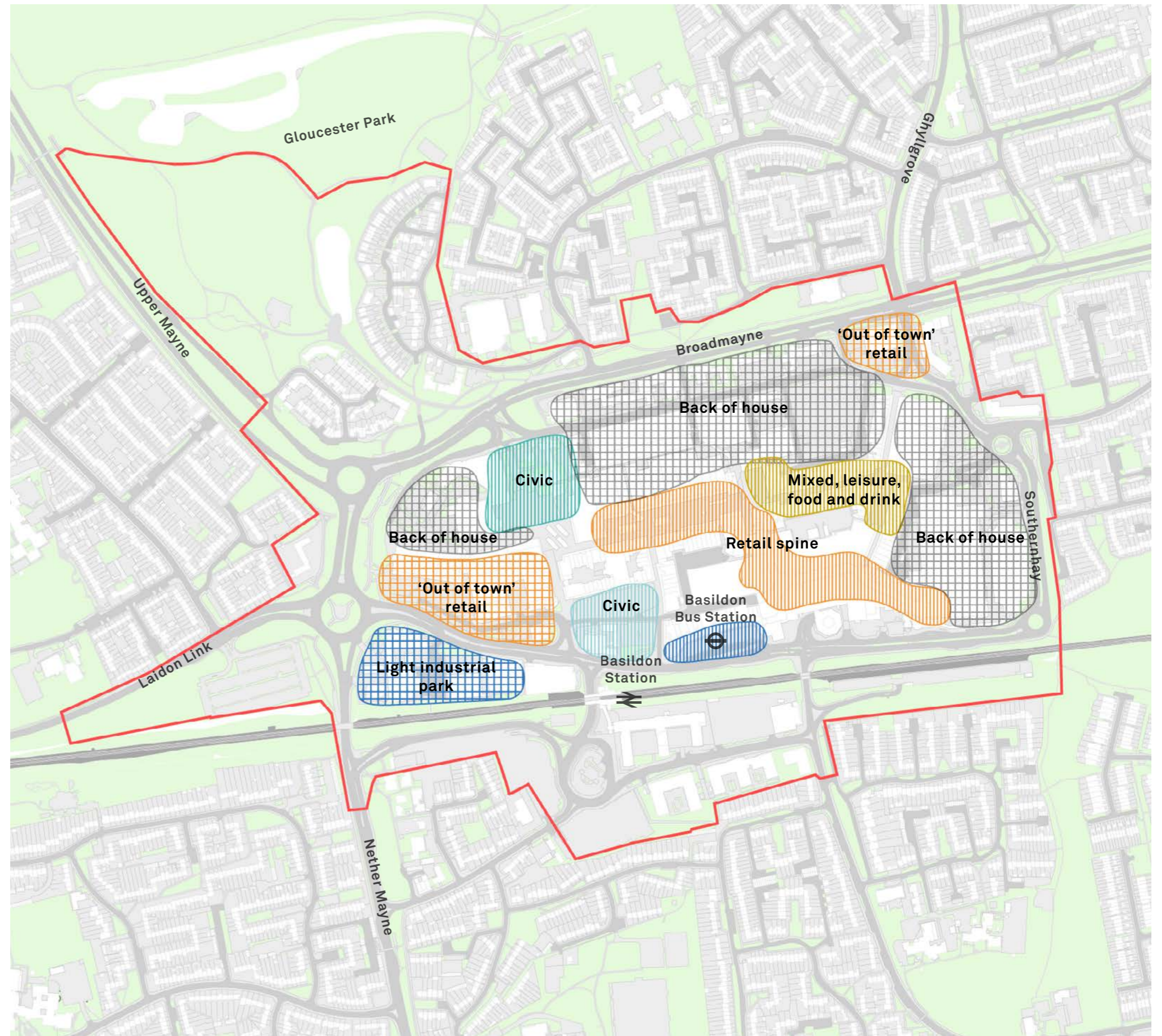


## 2.3 USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

### Town Centre Character areas

These character areas have been defined based on observational time spent on-site. The study also takes into account proposed developments that are already on site, such as the cinema and South Essex College building.

The study shows that a vast proportion of space is taken up by 'back of house' space. This is defined as spaces that serve the commercial centre but do not provide inviting pedestrian spaces.



#### KEY

 Basildon Town Centre Masterplan Boundary

Uses shown are indicative and observed only. These may not be the use as defined within the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.



## 2.3 USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

Character areas -  
retail spine



↑ Shop units in Eastgate Shopping Centre.  
Top image: oriental store.  
Bottom image: Basildon Community Arts gallery.



↑ View towards east of market square capturing  
dominance of chain retail.



↑ Social amenity provided by the retail spine  
character area.

2.3  
USES, ASSETS &  
CHARACTER

Character areas - mixed,  
leisure, food and drink



↑ Fruit and vegetable shop at the bottom of Southernhay street.



↑ A run of café and restaurant units along the north side of East Walk.

2.3  
USES, ASSETS &  
CHARACTER

Character areas - civic



↑ View towards the west side of St Martin's Church and the Millennium Bell Tower capturing civic building typologies.



↑ Social spaces within civic area.  
Top image: 'The Table' providing community support services in the Millennium Bell Tower.  
Bottom image: two women having a break St Martin's Church grounds.

2.3  
 USES, ASSETS &  
 CHARACTER

Character areas - 'out of town' retail



↑ Views towards Westgate Shopping Park.  
 Top image: blank façades lining west side of St. Martins Square.  
 Bottom image: Westgate Shopping Park approach.



↑ Passage through Westgate Shopping Park towards St. Martins Square.



↑ 'Big box retail' units facing onto car parks to the south west of Westgate Shopping Park.



2.3  
USES, ASSETS &  
CHARACTER

Character areas - light  
industrial park



↑ Bingo hall and online retail collection point adjacent to Roundacre road.



↑ Petrol station to the west of light industrial park character area.



↑ Images capturing building typologies within light industrial park character area.  
Top image: view towards furniture store adjacent to Roundacre road.  
Bottom image: view towards light industrial units within the area.

2.3  
USES, ASSETS &  
CHARACTER

Character areas - back of house



↑ Service roads  
Top image: Eastgate shopping center loading bay on Southernhay road side.  
Bottom image: Great Oaks House service road.

↑ View towards Basildon market service building adjacent to Towngate Theatre and The Basildon Centre.

↑ Car park dominance  
Top image: covered pedestrian walkway adjacent to Southernhay road linking car park and Eastgate shopping center.  
Bottom image: view towards north of town centre Car Park 2.

## 2.3

### USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

#### Evening character

The town centre empties out quite rapidly in the evening even before most of the shops and cafés are closed by 6pm. Activity is focussed to the east on the retail circuit along East Walk and through the Eastgate centre.

Many other areas suffer from poor lighting, either through neglect or bad design, such as the underpasses where contrast between the brightly lit tunnels makes entrance spaces feel dark and intimidating.

St. Martin's Square is well lit but suffers from the closure of the market at this time and lack of other activation.

- A. People walking to and from the Eastgate Shopping Centre
- B. Passing footfall in St. Martins Square
- C. Non fully functioning feature street lighting to the west of the Town Square
- D. Non-functioning canopy down lights on Town Square
- E. Overly lit subway corridor that creates ambush opportunities for the approach areas due to relatively dark landscape
- F. Non-functioning street light by the Asda car park approach



A



B



C



D



E



F

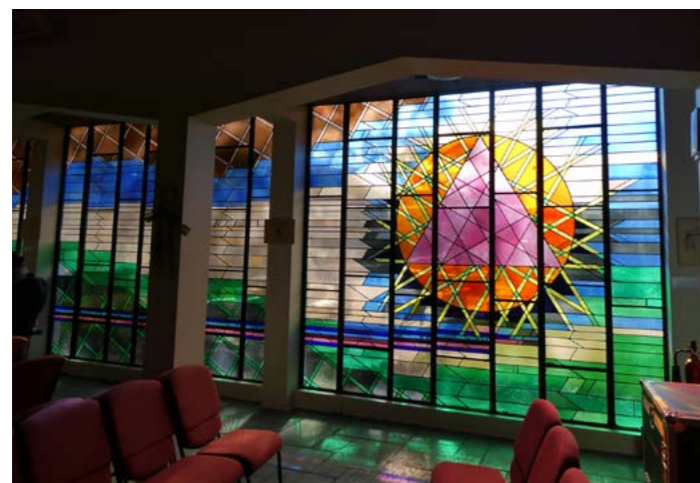
## 2.3 USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

### Heritage assets

Much of the architecture in Basildon's town centre is from the original development of the town. There are many built examples that embody the ambition and style of the New Town movement and era.

Colonnades and canopies from many of the retail paraded. Upper floors express concrete frames.

St. Martin's Church designed by local architect Trena M. Cotton is a fine example of New Town era architecture and includes a sculpture by T. B. Huxley-Jones above its porch and large stained glass windows designed by Joseph Nuttgens.



## 2.3 USES, ASSETS & CHARACTER

### Public art

The designers of New Towns made a commitment to using art as part of their development from the start as part of their aim to implement radical ideas and policies.

The art has been implemented in many forms: as part of buildings, adorning buildings, articulating the public realm or lining the landscape.

Some of the original pieces are well known and form an important part of the town's identity. Other pieces feel lost or unloved, such as the Geoffrey Clarke mural on Town Square opposite the M&S building. Others, such as the John Vernon clock are undermined by poor space planning with CCTV masts being over clad with lighting features blocking views to the clock.

Some of the mosaics and tile designs that line some of the buildings and landscape are easily missed but form an important subtle aspect of Basildon's identity and New Town heritage.



↑ Tile mosaic by Geoffrey Clarke (1924-2014) collaborator with Basil Spence



↑ Blenheim House mural circa 1960.



↑ Town centre clock (clashing with incased CCTV camera) designed by John Vernon in 1966.



↑ 'Mother and Child' bronze statue fountain by Maurice Lambert in 1962.



↑ Fibreglass sculpture of the figure of Christ by T Huxley-Jones in 1968.

2.3  
USES, ASSETS &  
CHARACTER

Public art -  
secondary locations



↑ King Edgar's Head, stone carving by Dave Chapple



↑ 'The Cats Cradle Pussiwillow III Clock' kinetic sculpture by Rowland Emett in 1981.



↑ 'The Armillary Sundial' metal sculpture by Wendy Taylor in 1989.



↑ Stone carving of St Martin sharing his cloak with a beggar statue by Peter Foster.



↑ 'Animal Fresco Underpass' by Wendy Taylor in 1985-1990



↑ Compass Bowl by Wendy Taylor in 1980.



↑ Mosaic on alleyway leading to by Car Park 2



↑ Partially removed 'Avenue of Trees Underpass' by Wendy Taylor in 1985-1990.

2.3

USES, ASSETS &  
CHARACTER

Public art -lost, stolen  
and relocated



↑ 'The Pineapple' corten steel water feature sculpture by William Mitchell in 1977 - stolen



↑ Eastgate shopping centre model in back of house area within the shopping centre.



↑ 'Homer' by Frederick Edward Williams in 1958 - stolen.



↑ 'The Woodsman Poacher' wood statue by Dave Chapple in 1996. Removed due to water damage.



↑ Aluminium sculpture on the side of former Freedom House 'Man Aspires' made by AJ Poole in 1957. Locally called the 'Treble Clef'. NOT THERE ANYMORE DUE TO REDEVELOPMENT

## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

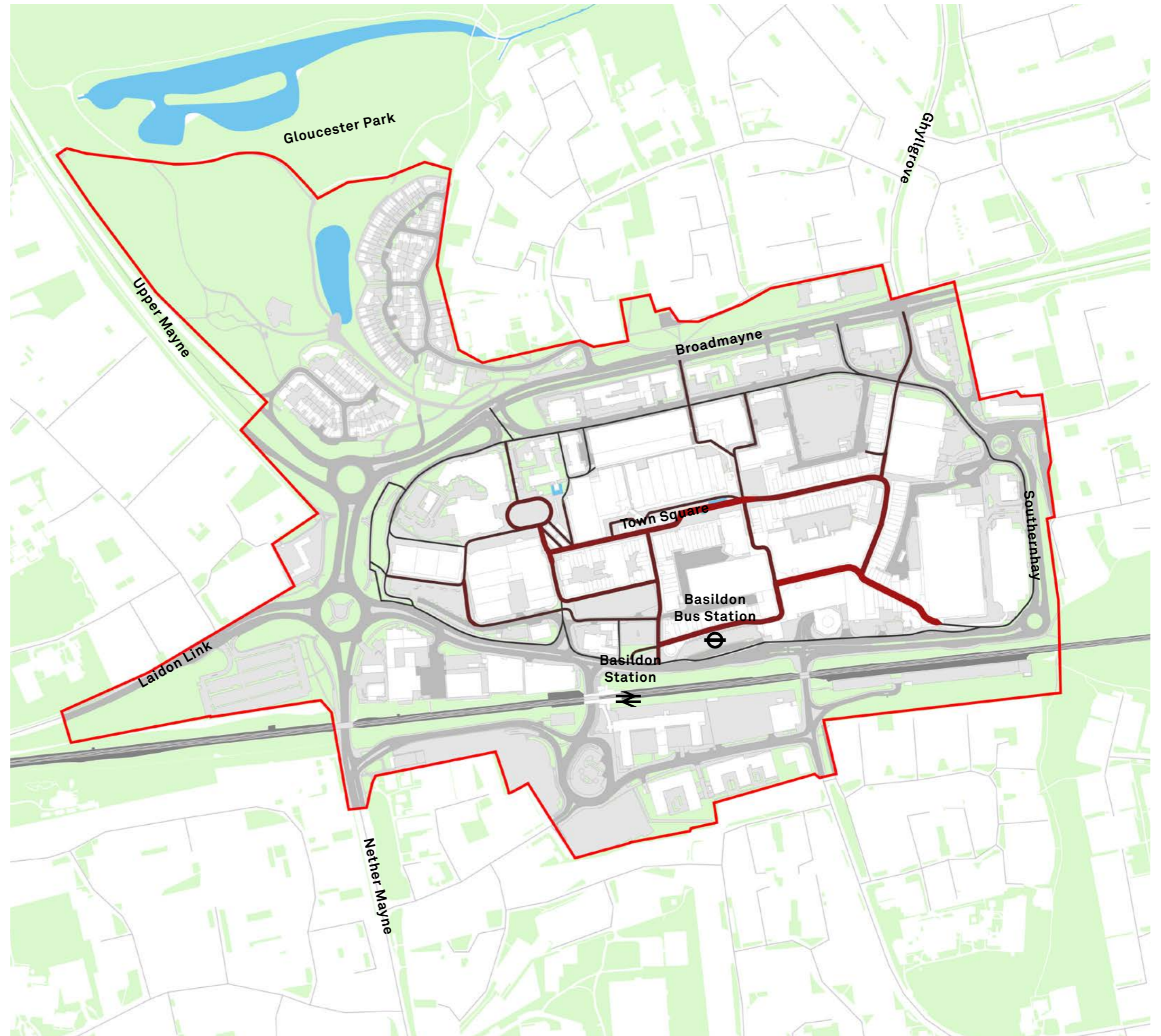
Perceived Pedestrian traffic  
on non-market day  
(9th October) 1pm-2pm

The main retail spines of Eastgate Shopping Centre, Town Square and East Walk are busy with people throughout the day.

As a consequence of the good bus connections the bus terminal is one of the busiest areas of the town centre with a fully occupied parade of retail units providing a range of services. The space also provides the most direct route into The Eastgate Shopping Centre

The market in St. Martin's Square receives some passing trade with shoppers entering the town centre from Fodderwick or people going to and from the council building.

Other pedestrian areas, particularly those connecting to surrounding neighbourhoods, can be nearly empty, creating an unwelcoming arrival to the town centre



### KEY

- █ Very busy
- █ Busy
- █ Some people
- █ Few people
- █ Empty
- █ Town Centre

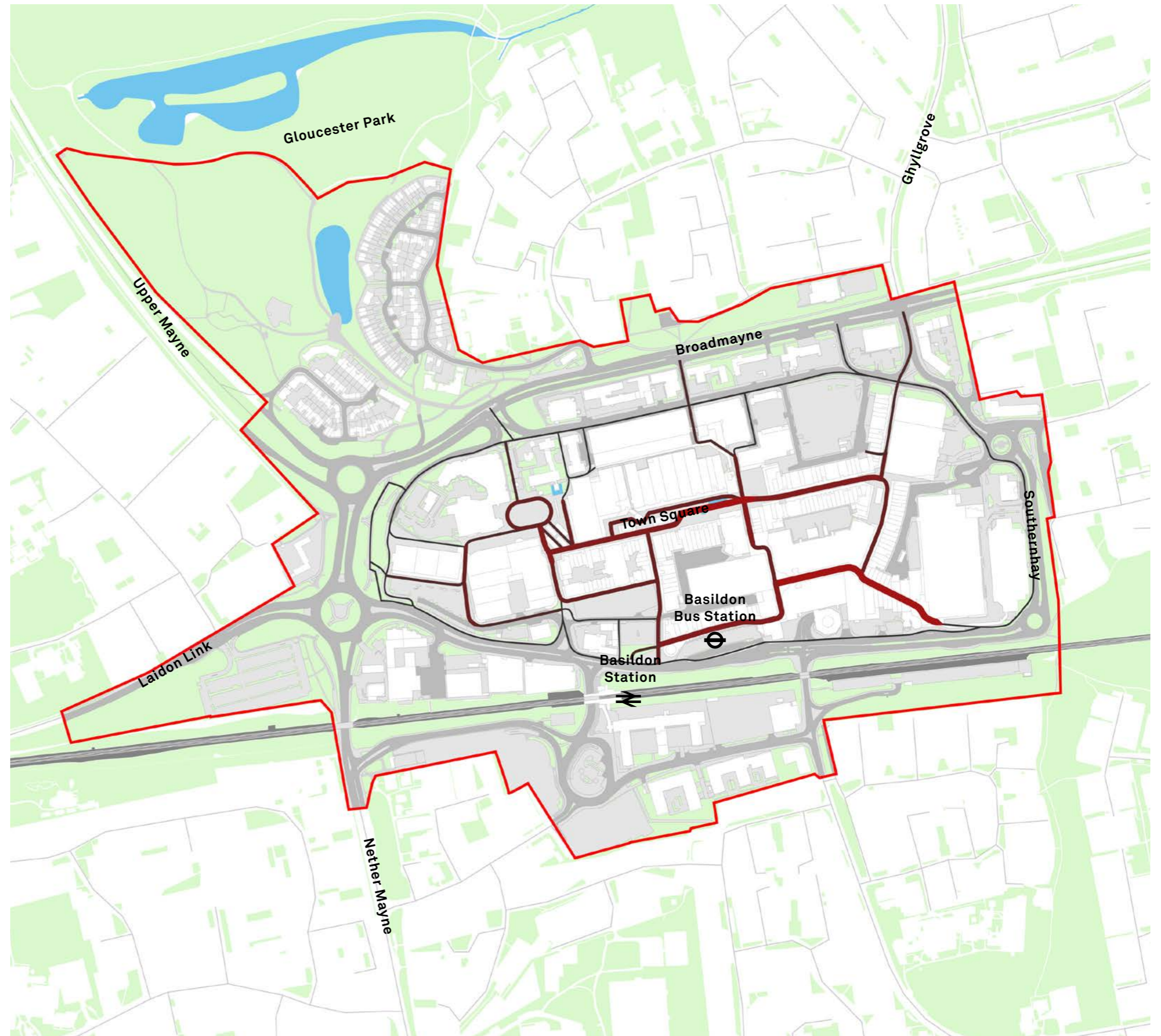




## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

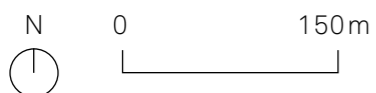
Perceived Pedestrian traffic  
on market day  
(10th October) 1pm-2pm

Market days present very little difference in footfall compared to non-market days, suggesting the market is not a significant draw to the town centre.



### KEY

- █ Very busy
- █ Busy
- █ Some people
- █ Few people
- █ Empty
- █ Town Centre



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Pedestrian movement

The bus terminal is one of the busiest areas of the town centre with a fully occupied parade of retail units providing a range of services.

The main retail spines (The Eastgate Centre and East Walk) are busy with people throughout the day.

Other spaces can feel desolate with very few people using them.



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Cycling in Basildon

Cycle provision at the west and north west of the town centre is very good with pleasant tree lined cycle routes away from roads., and are therefore very well used.

Cycling into the town centre itself is historically discouraged with 'no cycling' signs dotted around the centre.

On top of this there is an almost complete absence of formal spaces to lock bikes within the town centre.

Despite these hurdles people do use cycles as an easy way to access the centre and find ways to store their bikes while shopping.



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Cycling in Basildon: New Town ambitions

Cycling was a key part of the New Town vision, with segregated provision built into the plans. But with equally good provision for private car use, the easier choice was to take the car and the cycle networks were largely forgotten

The images to the left are from a 1981 study on cycling and pedestrian movement through and around the former Roundacre roundabout. Below is an excerpt from Ladybird's 1975 book *The Story of the Bicycle* praising Stevenage for its cycle planning.

**Stevenage**

- Cycleways
- Primary roads
- Shopping
- Industry

— Cycle priority route  
— Motorways  
— Access route for cycles and cars

**Cycling in towns and cities**

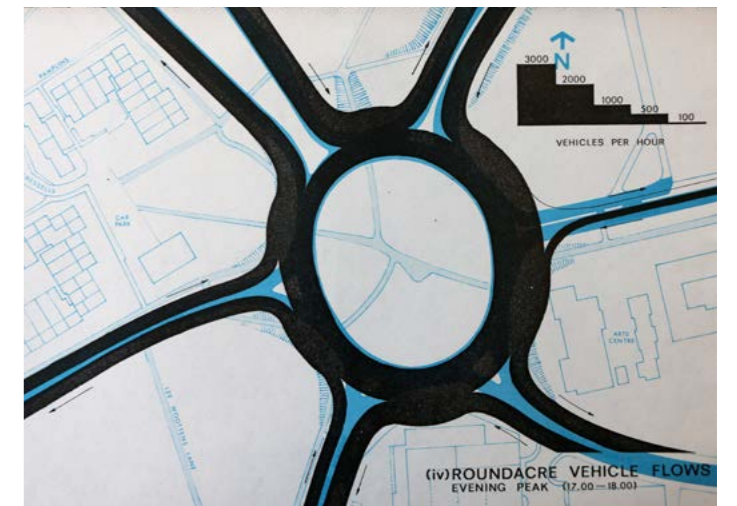
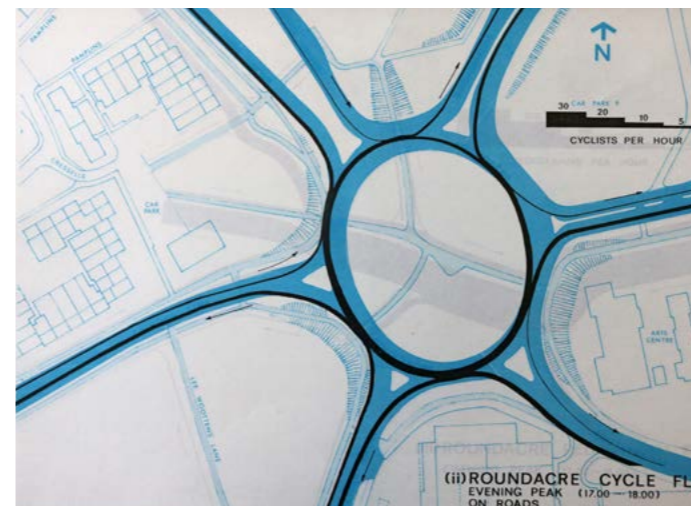
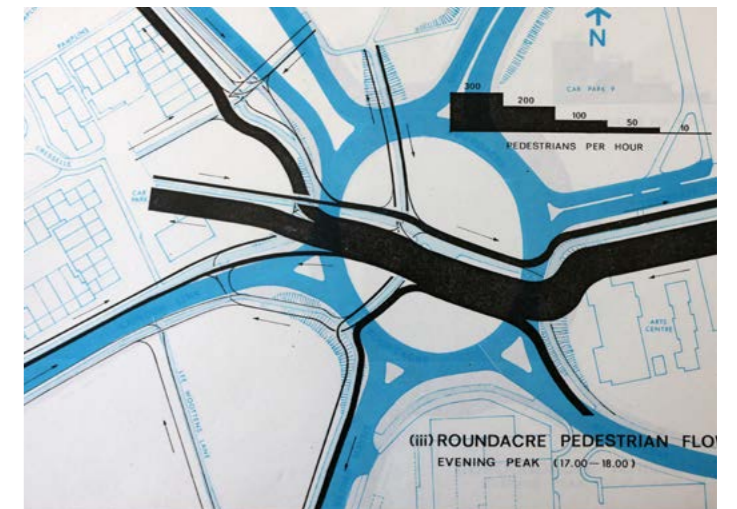
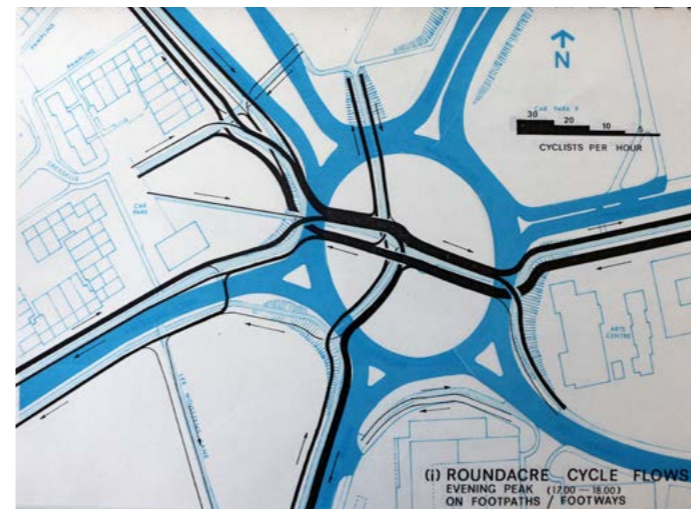
With the ever increasing popularity of the bicycle it would seem logical to improve and increase the facilities afforded to the cyclist. The dangers of mixing with heavy traffic on main roads can be overcome by the use of 'cycle only' roads, called cycleways.

Stevenage, a new town in Hertfordshire, is a good example of what can be done with careful planning. A network of cycleways from residential areas to schools, shops,

offices and factories is provided and it is estimated that Stevenage has saved £60,000 per annum in hospital expenses as a result of their scheme: a large saving both financially and in terms of human suffering.

The illustrations on this page are based on a plan for a 'Cycle Priority Route' in Nottingham, the idea being that certain roads would be open mainly to bicycles; other vehicles would have only limited access.

51



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Active frontages

Active frontage predominantly faces inward with few frontages facing out towards wider neighbourhoods.

The Westgate Shopping Park inverts this rule and turns its back on the town centre with its 'big box retail' units facing outward towards the car parks that serve it, and blank façades facing St. Martin's Square.



- KEY
- Active frontage
  - Development site
  - Basildon Town Centre Masterplan Boundary

Uses shown are indicative and observed only. These may not be the use as defined within the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Severance and key links

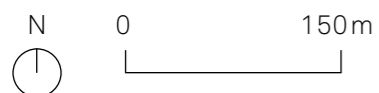
Basildon town centre suffers from a number of movement obstacles surrounding it.

The most obvious being the ring road, which was designed to carry large volumes of vehicle traffic efficiently into and out of town centre destinations. The side effect of this being that pedestrian movement is difficult across these roads, with very few crossing points, and the general environment is hostile to pedestrians.

The knock-on effect of this environment over time is that new developments have turned their back on these spaces, further exacerbating the hostile nature of these spaces and presenting an unwelcoming built form to surrounding neighbourhoods.



- KEY
- Significant blank frontage
  - Severance
  - Routes into the town centre
  - Routes across severance
  - Basildon Town Centre Masterplan Boundary
  - Basildon Town Centre Masterplan Boundary



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Severance and key links

Connections into the town centre from neighbouring areas are often poor; uninviting at best, physically impassable at worst. Connections to the south and east are particularly poor with the eastgate centre blocking almost all pedestrian access into the town centre on these sides (top right image, from Clay Hill Road).

The main axial route from the east is formed of a number of underpasses culminating in the black rear façade of the sports direct building (left image).

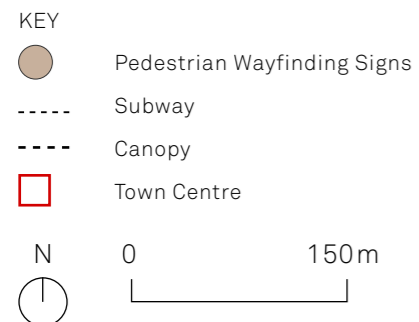
The ring road system is the most obvious severance problem, but this is compounded by the retail centre turning its back on these road spaces (bottom right image, Southernhay looking west).



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Pedestrian wayfinding

Pedestrian wayfinding signage is well distributed throughout the town centre but is inconsistent in style, often out of date, not necessarily useful, and often worn.





## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Pedestrian wayfinding

There is very little signage advertising the way into the town centre. A directional sign on an underpass wall for example, once signed the way to the town centre but is worn to the point of being illegible. The most prominent pedestrian signage is for Basildon Market which is still associated with its former location.

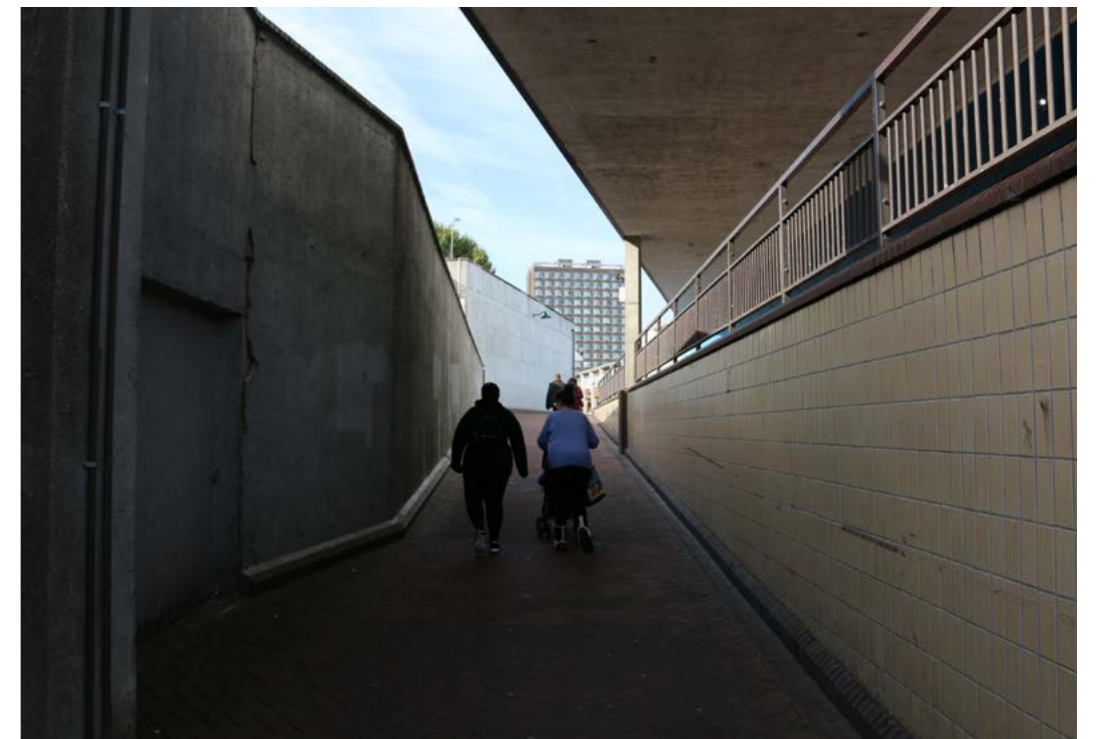
On arrival from the station and in many other areas, vehicle signage dominates. Where pedestrianised public realm has been upgraded at St. Martin's Square, new way-marking has been included and is effective, but is limited to that area.



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

Key views, landmarks  
and intuitive wayfinding

There are two very distinctive landmarks within Basildon Town centre, the St. Martin's Church bell tower, and Brook House. Both are prominent in the town-scape but both are undermined by road layouts around the town centre.



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

### Local knowledge

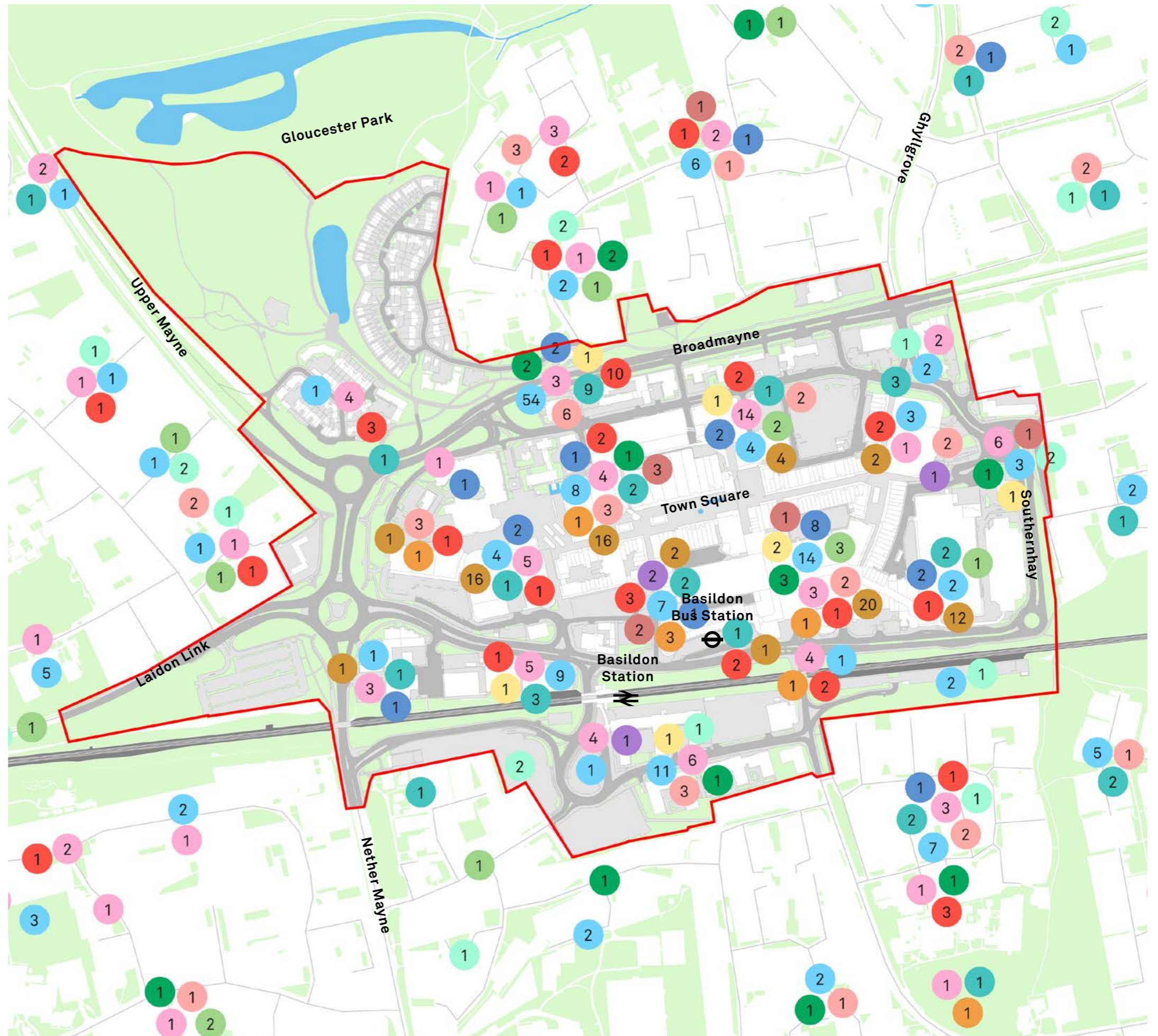
Despite some very uninviting environments surrounding the town centre, people still find routes through, either from surrounding neighbourhoods or from car parks. Often these routes take people through very hostile spaces, a gate under a raised walkway, servicing bays, access roads to car-parks etc. These routes require good local knowledge as there is no indication that they might lead anywhere. In fact the indications are that these spaces are not for pedestrians.



## 2.4 MOVEMENT, WAYFINDING & LOCAL ISSUES

Reported crime  
(July-August 2019)

As would be expected, there are higher levels of reported crime within the town centre than in neighbouring areas. Shoplifting is particularly highly reported, and there is a cluster of reporting around the police station, presumably related to activity within the building rather than the surrounding areas.



3.0  
AREA BY AREA ANALYSIS



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Arrival area from train station

This space, that marks the arrival into Basildon by train, is dominated by barriers and roads. Substantial brick walls against the road and underpasses are particularly oppressive. Footway space is often tight and is filled with street clutter such as bins and phone boxes.

The space to the south of the station differs to the north with a generous open space with well laid out street furniture. However there is no sign marking the presence of the station, and the station building is lined with wheelie bins.



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

Arrival area from train  
station street furniture

KEY

- CCTV Post
- Street Light
- Bollards
- Downlight
- Flag Pole
- Post Box
- Telephone Box
- Traffic Signs
- Waste Bin / Wheelie Bin / Grit Bin
- Wayfinding
- Street Cabinet
- Bench
- Bicycle Rack
- ▨ Pedestrian Crossing Points
- ▨ Subway
- ▨ Hoarding
- ▨ Brick Fence
- ▨ Metal Fence
- Planters
- - - Canopy

N  
0 20m



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Arrival area from train station street furniture

- A. Redundant street furniture such as doubled up lamp columns by the Southernhay subway approach
- B. Safety measures for traffic dominate the public realm along Station Way road
- C. Generous public space to the south of the train station entrance
- D. Street furniture clutters the public realm obscuring views to the train station
- E. Cluster of street furniture outside train station entrance
- F. Lighting in subway linking train station and town centre



A



B



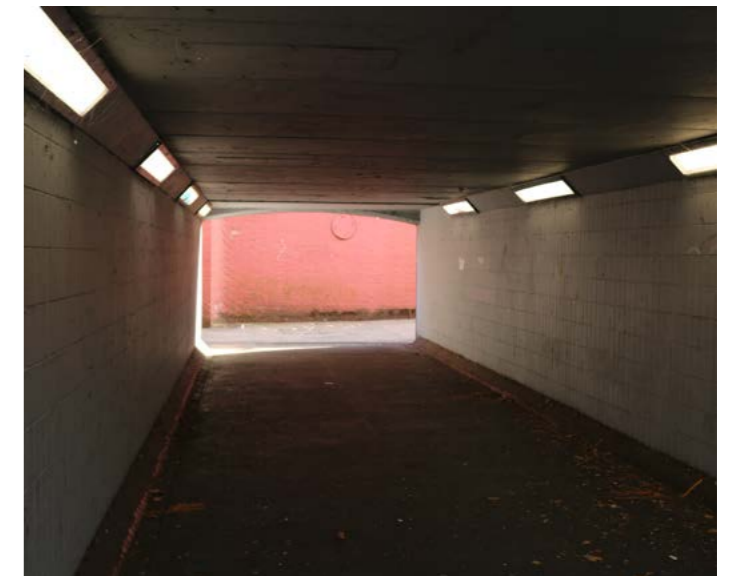
C



D



E



F



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Bus station area

The bus station area forms the entrance into the town centre from the train station. It is dominated by vehicle infrastructure, including carriageway space, road markings and signage. Pedestrian space is cluttered with a history of numerous additions to the street-scape such as bollards, barriers, lamp columns, obsolete signage and traffic signs.



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Bus station area street furniture

KEY

- CCTV Post
- Heritage Related Placemaking
- Street Light
- Bollards
- Flag Pole
- Telephone Box
- Traffic Signs
- Waste Bin / Wheelie Bin / Grit Bin
- Wayfinding
- Street Cabinet
- Bench
- Taxi Rank
- Shopping Cart Refuge
- Pedestrian Crossing Points
- Subway
- Hoarding
- Brick Fence
- Metal Fence
- Railings / Perimeter Railings
- Planters
- Canopy



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Bus station area street furniture

- A. Outdated branding highlights lack of investment in the public realm by the bus station approach
- B. The only seating within the station area is location inhospitable traffic island facing the back of bus station
- C. Overengineered pedestrian flow filters clutter up the station concours
- D. Taxi rank and trolley refuge island in front of the bus station
- E. Errent vehcile mittigation and canopy colonnade by the bus station approach
- F. Array of bollard typology to the north of the bus station approach



A



B



C



D



E



F

### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Southernhay and East Walk

At the junction of Southernhay and East Walk is a space that has all the component parts of a good public square. It connects two retail thoroughfares to two connecting routes into the town centre. It has trees, benches, cafés and restaurants. The street furniture is well planned and coherent. The surrounding buildings have canopies which bring a certain New Town character to the space.

The success of the space though is undermined by two main features. The main problem being the large shed housing an insurance company in the centre of the space. The second is the dominance of the partially vacant Toy R Us building with its large blank façades.



3.1  
PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY  
AREA

Southernhay and East Walk  
street furniture

- KEY
- CCTV Post
  - Street Light
  - Bollards
  - Downlight
  - Telephone Box
  - Traffic Signs
  - Waste Bin / Wheelie Bin / Grit Bin
  - Wayfinding
  - Street Cabinet
  - Bench
  - Bicycle Rack
  - ▬▬▬ Hoarding
  - ▬ Brick Fence
  - ▬ Metal Fence
  - - - Canopy
- N  
0 20m
- 



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Southernhay and East Walk street furniture

- A. Dilapidated phone boxes near Southernhay and East Walk street junction
- B. Typical canopy down-light in the north of Southernhay street
- C. Typical street lights found throughout the site
- D. A single wall mounted street light found near Asda car park approach
- E. Typical timber bench throughout the site
- F. A single wayfinding sign in the centre of Southernhay and East Walk street junction



A



B



C



D



E



F

### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Town Square

Town Square is a very large open space, which forms part of the main east-west axis route through the town centre. The space is articulated by a number of large structures: a water feature and two large kiosks.

There are benches on the north half of the square, which would have received good sunlight when originally conceived, but with the introduction of the kiosks which also face their backs to this part of the square, they feel shaded and out of the way.

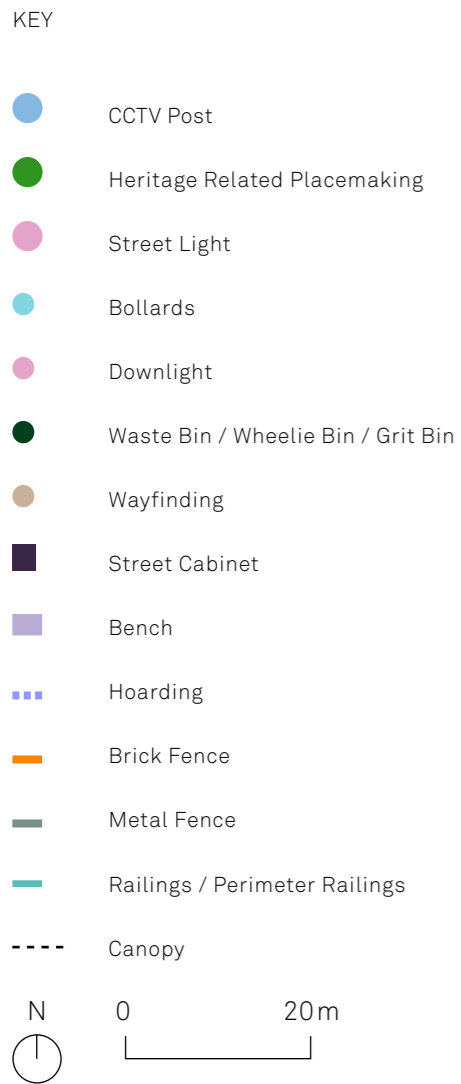
Town square has had relatively recent paving improvements. There is a lighting scheme which brings another level of order to the space, but is looking worn and many of the lighting elements do not function.

CCTV masts have been added to the arrangement of street furniture. They have been aligned with other elements in the square and an attempt has been made to disguise them with large stainless steel boxes with LED coloured lights. They are therefore quite bulky and obtrusive and one of them actually blocks the axial view to the clock sculpture.



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

Town square  
street furniture





### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### Town square street furniture

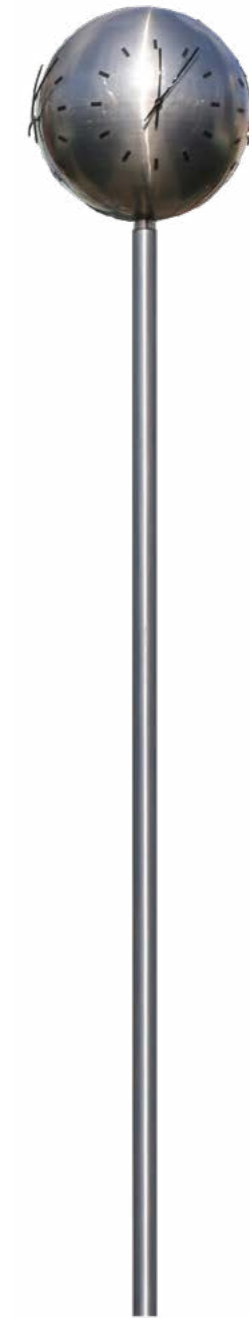
- A. A number of different street bins found throughout the site
- B. Feature street lights found throughout the site
- C. Town clock is the focal point of the Town Square but more of then than not is lost in visual clutter of other street furniture and recent buildings
- D. Bronze statue fountain is often used as meeting and gathering point
- E. Typical bench repeats along the north of the Town square
- F. A number of feature CCTV posts are found on-site



A



B



C



D



E



F

### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### St. Martin's Square

St. Martin's Square has recently been improved in conjunction with the relocation of the market. The space successfully integrates the church gardens with the main square with seating and planting. The design also incorporates lighting columns from an earlier design with new lighting features and furniture.

The paving and arrangement of furniture create a good setting for St. Martin's Church, the council buildings and theatre. The arrangement of the market could be improved and has a detrimental presence when the stalls are closed.

The western end of the square feels empty and desolate, but this is primarily because of the blank frontages that line both sides.

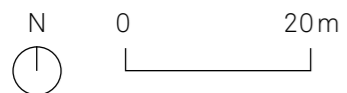


### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### St. Martin's Square street furniture

KEY

- CCTV Post
- Heritage Related Placemaking
- Street Light
- Bollards
- Downlight
- Waste Bin / Wheelie Bin / Grit Bin
- Wayfinding
- Street Cabinet
- Bench
- Bicycle Rack
- |||| Pedestrian Crossing Points
- Brick Fence
- Metal Fence
- Railings / Perimeter Railings
- Planters
- Canopy



### 3.1 PUBLIC REALM AUDIT BY AREA

#### St. Martin's Square street furniture

- A. A number of different street bins found throughout the site
- B. A single wayfinding sign to the left of market square
- C. Typical street lights found throughout the site
- D. Typical bollards found throughout the site used as errant vehicle mitigation
- E. A single post box within the inner town centre area situated on market square approach near Fodderwick road
- F. Typical benches found throughout the site



A



B



C



D



E



F

4.0  
KEY FINDINGS

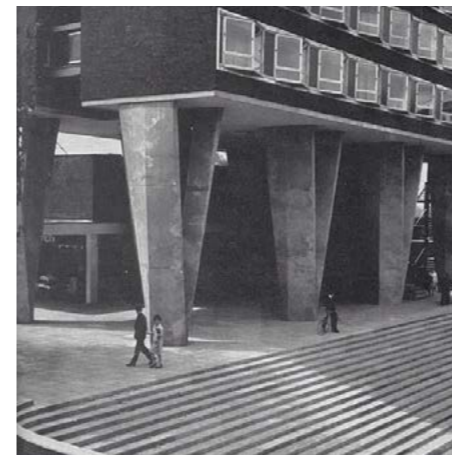


4.1  
KEY FINDINGS

Wider & strategic context

Historic development

Current policy & development



**Many ideas and opportunities.**

There have been a many studies, reports and strategies developed for Basildon town centre over recent years including the 2012 Masterplan for Basildon Council, a Cultural Placemaking Strategy for BCTM and the Breakthrough Basildon Commission.

**Well connected by transport but not by foot.**

Basildon town centre is well connected: into London and Essex by train and to surrounding neighbourhoods by bus. It also has some good cycling infrastructure that could be expanded and quality surrounding green space that could be better connected into the centre itself.

**Open and inviting in its original layout.**

In its early form, Basildon town centre had a central east-west spine which opened up at either end, with parades of shops facing onto Southernhay, which at that time formed part of the ring road.

**Set piece ambitious architecture.**

Basildon was planned as a bold vision looking forward to a utopian future. Set piece buildings and landscaping framed and articulated pedestrianised public spaces.

**Very little of the New Town heritage is formally recognised.**

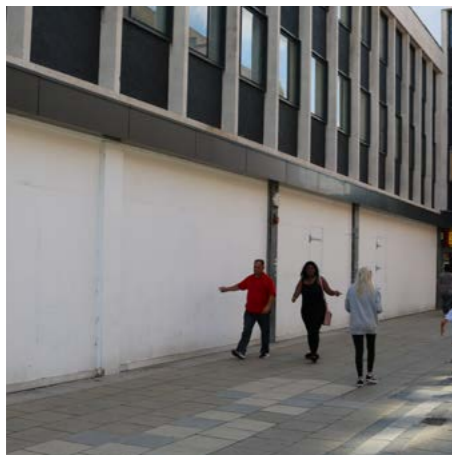
Brook House represents the only listed building in Basildon town centre along with some aspects of the public realm which are listed.

**Change is on its way.**

Two large changes to the town centre are currently underway: a new multiplex cinema on East Square, and a new building for South Essex College at Market Square. This has triggered a number of other conversations about other sites

## 4.1 KEY FINDINGS

Local assets,  
landmarks & uses



### Change in retail poses a threat to the town centre.

The current trend of shopping online rather than on the high street has already seen detrimental change in Basildon town centre and this change is set to continue. Basildon has an over-provision of retail floorspace: 89.5% of town centre floorspace compared to 75% in other similar centres, with 40% more space per visitor than other centres.



### The town centre is more mixed and vibrant than on immediate appearances.

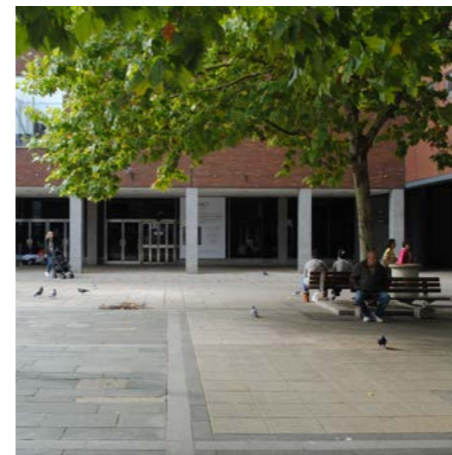
Despite losing some big name retailers in recent years, Basildon town centre remains busy with the relatively few vacant units confined mostly to a single block and the ominous M&S building.

Smaller units off the main retail spines have accommodated an eclectic mix of commercial uses.



### The local community has a strong and positive presence in the Town Centre.

The town centre has an important social function that is working well. Community groups make use of spaces such as St. Martin's bell tower and otherwise vacant units around the town. Cafés, pubs and open spaces are used as places to meet.



### Nowhere to play.

The nearest place for children to play is in Gloucester Park which is too far away to be considered part of the town centre. Even opportunities for informal play are lacking, despite the relatively safe environment



### Back of house dominates the town centre edge.

Roughly half of the core town centre area is car parking or servicing space and this also dominates many routes in. This is hugely detrimental to the town centre and that car parking has been shown to be an over-provision, even taking account of future growth.



### Built fabric brings character but needs renovation.

The architecture from the New Town era, though often in a tired state, is very distinctive, bringing a memorable character to the town centre. It is undermined by poor maintenance low quality development that has come along side it.

# 4.1 KEY FINDINGS

## Movement & wayfinding

## Public realm audit by area



### Town centre is strangled by the road network that serves it.

The road system surrounding the town centre is over-engineered to allow easy access into and out of the retail centre by car, but at the serious detriment to pedestrian access and experience.



### Cycling popular but not encouraged.

A number of factors mean that Basildon town centre is relatively well used by cyclists: the remnants of cycling infrastructure from the New Town development era, two National Cycle Network routes, and the often expansive car-free spaces within the retail centre itself. There is however no recent provision for cyclists such as places to lock bikes, and there are many signs banning cycling.



### Inward looking town centre.

Active frontages in the town centre almost all face inwards and only at Market Pavement do they reach the periphery. Many sides of the town centre are lined with car parks and servicing and the existence of the ring-road has meant development over the years has turned its back on surrounding neighbourhoods rather than creating connections.



### Many opportunities for improved connections.

People use many routes into and out of the town centre despite hostile environments of service yard and car parks. These routes provide opportunities to create much more inviting ways in to the town centre.



### Public realm design is inconsistent and of poorest quality at main arrival point.

People use many routes into and out of the town centre despite hostile environments of service yard and car parks. These routes provide



### Investment in public realm needs to be matched by planned development.

A large recent investment has gone into the improvement of St. Martin's Square which has made had positive visual impact. This investment has not been maximised by surrounding building uses and is undermined by the existing Westgate Centre façades and the blank façade of the former M&S building



4.2  
DRAFT GUIDING  
PRINCIPLES

A set of guiding principles have been drafted to guide the development of the masterplan. These will be developed as the programme of engagement progresses and the masterplan develops.



## 4.2

### DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Guide a step-change in growth



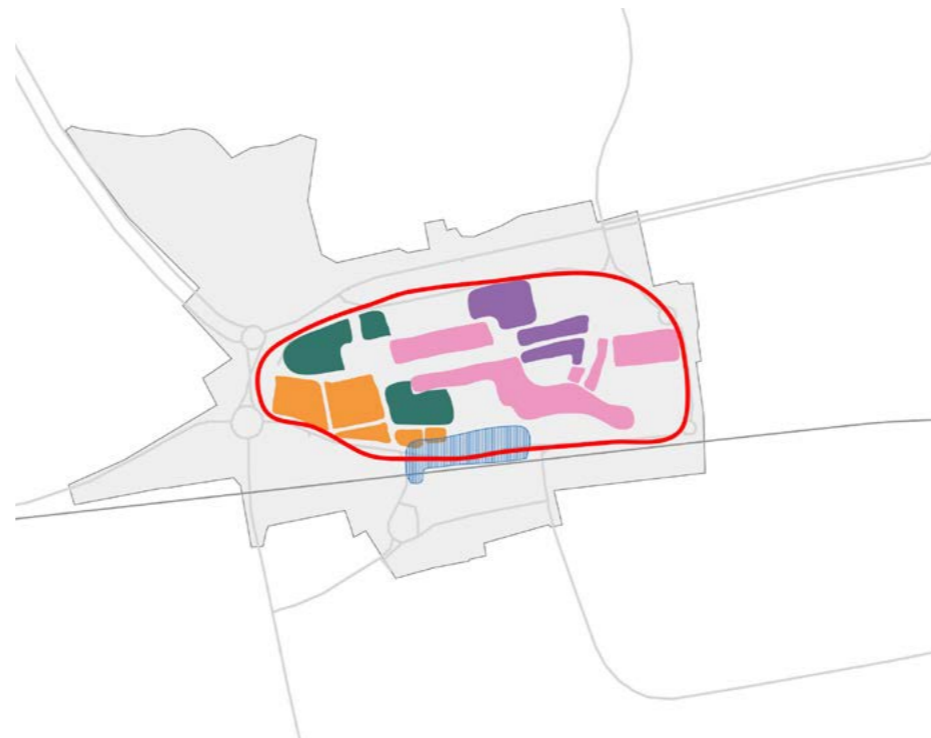
**Implement short and medium term measures to bring vibrancy to the town centre and that support the future success of the cinema and college developments**

- These will unlock the potential for longer term development opportunities

**Set a clear vision for the long term aspiration for the town centre to guide future development**

**Provide the new homes required by the draft Local Plan**

2. Make the town centre resilient to market and cultural change



**Bring a mix of uses into the town centre**

- Introduce a mix of uses into the town centre to ensure vibrancy is sustained through future changes in market trends
- Explore ways to utilise council owned assets to start to introduce new uses such as work space, leisure uses and evening/nighttime uses in the short term

**Create clusters of uses that complement one another**

- Plan uses to create different character areas and spaces within the town centre
- Plan uses to complement and strengthen cultural assets in the town centre

3. Change the outward perception and identity of Basildon to create a place where people want to live and work

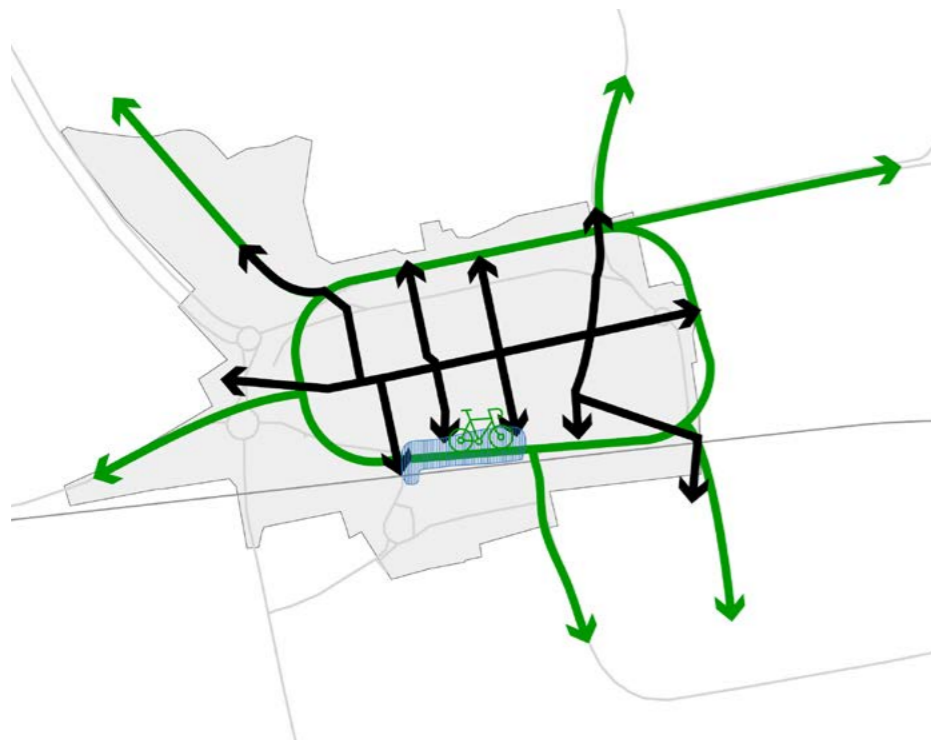


**Identify assets, both physical and cultural that can be amplified**

- Identify the better architecture from the New Town era and explore options to make it work to the benefit of the town centre, in the short term and the long term
- Create a public realm that can accommodate events and programming by cultural venues such as Towngate theatre and the new cinema
- Include space in new developments for an expanded cultural programme, to support the theatre and cinema and that might allow collaborations between venues and outside cultural organisations

## 4.2 DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4. Make sustainable transport an attractive option



### Create a transport hub that is a celebrated point of arrival

- Create a public realm that is a visual asset to the town centre as well as a practical one to make the most of the good transport links

### Make Basildon a 'cycle town':

- Create a useful and inviting network of cycle route which builds on the existing infrastructure
- Provide infrastructure within the town centre and around the transport hub that invites people to cycle there
- Create a 'cycle hub' as part of the transport hub: cycle hire, repairs, shop, training and guidance

### Make Basildon walkable:

- Create inviting links into the town centre and across it
- Make the edge an inviting a pleasant environment

5. Make more of green spaces and open spaces



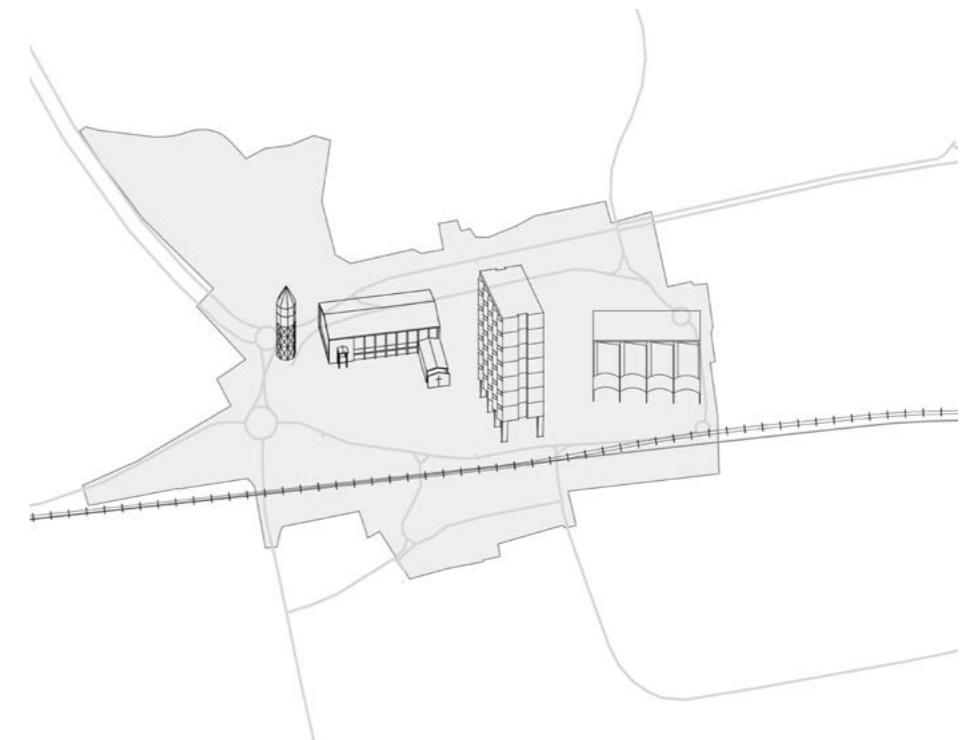
### Celebrate the generous open spaces within the town centre

- Improve the design of the main public space to be able to accommodate a number of conditions including events and performances.
- Ensure development surrounding the main public spaces is of a civic quality and ground floor uses activate the space appropriately

### Improve links into adjacent green spaces

- Explore options to bring greenery into the town centre
- Consider a 'green route' through the town centre linking the main green spaces
- Improve signage to green spaces

6. Celebrate architectural heritage of the New Town movement and complement this with bold future development



### Set ambitious design standards

- Set in place policies and mechanisms that ensure new development is meets the same level of ambition of the architecture of the New Town movement

### Identify and enhance existing architectural assets

- Identify buildings that can be refurbished or re-purposed to celebrate the character of the New Town architecture

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