



Basildon Retail & Commercial Leisure Capacity Study

Volume 1

On behalf of

Basildon Council
BASILDON • BILLERICAY • WICKFORD

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Contents

- 1 Introduction and structure of report 1**
 - 1.1 About this study 1
 - 1.2 How the study is structured 2
 - 1.3 The national policy context..... 3
 - 1.4 The local policy context 4
 - 1.5 Changes to Permitted Development Rights 7
- 2 How town centres are changing? 9**
 - 2.1 Introduction 9
 - 2.2 Published Research 9
 - 2.3 Market Context 11
 - 2.4 Economic Context 14
 - 2.5 What this means for the Borough’s network of centres..... 17
- 3 How are the town centres performing? 18**
 - 3.1 Introduction 18
 - 3.2 Basildon town centre 19
 - 3.3 Billericay town centre..... 23
 - 3.4 Laindon town centre 25
 - 3.5 Pitsea town centre 27
 - 3.6 Wickford town centre 29
 - 3.7 Out-of-centre retail provision in the Borough 30
 - 3.8 The surrounding network of centres..... 31
- 4 Where are residents currently shopping? 34**
 - 4.1 Introduction 34
 - 4.2 Definition of Study Area..... 34
 - 4.3 Current & Future Spending in Study Area..... 35
 - 4.4 Patterns of Comparison Goods Spending..... 36
 - 4.5 Patterns of Convenience Goods Spending 41
- 5 Need for retail floorspace 43**
 - 5.1 Introduction 43
 - 5.2 Claims on expenditure..... 44
 - 5.3 Over-Trading of Floorspace 45
 - 5.4 Comparison Goods Needs Assessment 46
 - 5.5 Convenience Goods Needs Assessment..... 47
 - 5.6 Qualitative Need Assessment 48
 - 5.7 Summary of Retail Need 51
- 6 The need for new commercial leisure floorspace..... 53**
 - 6.1 Introduction 53
 - 6.2 Expenditure Growth in the Leisure Services Sector..... 53

6.3	Restaurants and cafes	54
6.4	Cinema and theatre provision	57
6.5	Gym & Leisure Centres	58
6.6	Family Entertainment	59
6.7	Games of Chance.....	60
6.8	Hotel Provision	60
6.9	Summary of commercial leisure needs	60
7	Strategic housing growth.....	62
7.1	Introduction.....	62
7.2	Quantitative need	63
7.3	Where should the need be met?	65
8	Recommendations	68
8.1	Need for new floorspace	68
8.2	Policy recommendations	69

Figures

Figure 2.1 - 'C store' formats operated by Tesco and Sainsbury's	12
Figure 2.2 – UK supermarkets' market share.....	13
Figure 2.3 - Southwater, Telford.....	14
Figure 2.4 — Forecast of non-store retailing ('Special Forms of Trading') market share to 2030	15
Figure 2.5 — Top 20 e-commerce websites in the UK, 2013	16
Figure 3.1 – Main centres in Basildon Borough	18
Figure 3.2 – Health check indicators	19
Figure 3.3 – East Walk, Basildon	20
Figure 3.4 - High Street, Billericay.....	23
Figure 4.1 — Study area	35
Figure 4.2 — Spending to Basildon town centre and retail parks by zone	40

Tables

Table 3.1 – Basildon health check summary.....	20
Table 3.2 – Billericay health check summary	24
Table 3.3 – Laindon health check summary.....	25
Table 3.4 – Pitsea health check summary	27
Table 3.5 – Wickford health check summary	29
Table 3.6 — Main out-of-centre retail and leisure floorspace provision in Basildon	31
Table 4.1 - Study area zones	34
Table 4.2 – Comparison goods expenditure growth in study area.....	36
Table 4.3 – Convenience goods expenditure growth in study area	36
Table 4.4 – Summary of comparison goods spending patterns by zone	37
Table 4.5 — Summary of most popular comparison goods shopping destinations, by zone	40
Table 4.6 — Summary of most popular convenience goods shopping destinations, by zone.....	42
Table 5.1 — Summary of expenditure retention in study area and Borough 2014.....	43
Table 5.2 — Sales density growth rates.....	45
Table 5.3 — Summary of comparison goods floorspace requirements to 2035.....	47
Table 5.4 — Summary of convenience goods floorspace requirements to 2035	48
Table 6.1 — Summary of growth in commercial leisure sectors to 2035.....	53
Table 6.2 — Summary of retention of food and drink spending in study area	56
Table 6.3 — Indicative A3, A4 and A5 floorspace requirement for the study area to 2035	57
Table 6.4 - Gym and Leisure Centres in Basildon Borough.....	58
Table 7.1 – Retail capacity generated by key strategic housing sites – unadjusted.....	64
Table 7.2 – Retail capacity generated by key strategic housing sites – adjusted.....	64
Table 8.1 – Quantitative need for retail floorspace	68

Appendices — see Volume 2

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1 Introduction and structure of report

1.1 About this study

1.1.1 Basildon Council has commissioned Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to undertake a study of the retail and commercial leisure needs for Basildon Borough over the Council’s Local Plan period to 2035. The study comes at an important time in retailing and town centres, both for the local area, with the Council’s aspirations for the regeneration of Basildon town centre as well as the smaller centres in the Borough, and in the wider context, where town centres are facing unprecedented challenges and there is a general consensus that many town centres will need to adapt in order to ‘futureproof’ to ensure their long-term vitality and viability.

1.1.2 This study therefore seeks to respond to five key issues:

<p>How are town centres changing?</p> <p>The study needs to have full regard to the wider trends in retailing and town centres, including the changing role of town centres, their mix of uses, and the involvement of the public sector in delivering change.</p>
<p>What are the opportunities and challenges?</p> <p>The study needs to provide a refreshed appraisal of the regeneration and development ambitions of Basildon Borough Council for each of their centres, including a clear understanding of current and planned retail and commercial leisure developments over the course of the study period.</p>
<p>What is the evidence saying?</p> <p>The study needs to provide a revised appraisal of the role and function of existing centres, the qualitative and quantitative needs for additional retail, leisure and other town centre uses; and a broad assessment of development opportunities within each of the main centres.</p>
<p>What will the impacts be?</p> <p>If the quantitative assessment identifies surplus capacity for additional retail and commercial leisure floorspace, what will the impact of this be, inter alia that of other planned retail and commercial leisure development in the sub-region?</p>
<p>How should this be planned for?</p> <p>The study needs to provide recommendations on where floorspace needs should be accommodated, as well as strategy recommendations on how town centres can change, and policy recommendations on the hierarchy of centres and suitable floorspace thresholds.</p>

1.1.3 As a local authority, the Council need to plan for their retail and leisure needs forward to 2035, in sync with the ongoing regeneration of Basildon, Wickford, Laindon and Pitsea. This study will form part of the Council’s evidence base for its Local Plan and supporting documents. It will also assist the Council in the determination of future planning applications for new retail

and leisure floorspace in the Borough. The study provides a full update to the previous Borough-wide evidence base studies, namely the **Basildon District Retail Capacity Study** (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners for Basildon Council, 2007) and the **Leisure, Arts, Culture and Tourism Study** (White Young Green for Basildon Council, 2010). Since the production of these studies there have been significant changes in the national and local context for town centres, which this study has full regard to.

1.2 How the study is structured

1.2.1 Our study responds to the challenges above by considering the following:

- The remainder of this section briefly summarises the national and local policy context within which this study has been prepared;
- **Section 2** sets out our view on how town centres are changing, providing important context to the remainder of the study;
- **Section 3** sets out a summary assessment of existing retail and leisure provision in each of the five main town centres in the Borough — Basildon, Billericay, Wickford, Pitsea and Laindon, including a ‘health check’ assessment of their current performance, as well as a summary of out-of-centre retail and leisure development in the Borough;
- **Section 4** sets out a summary of where residents in the Borough are currently undertaking their spending on retail and leisure goods, informed by the findings of a household survey of spending patterns undertaken in support of the study;
- **Section 5** sets out the quantitative need for additional retail floorspace, split between convenience (food) goods and comparison (non-food) goods, and also discusses the qualitative need for additional retail floorspace in each of the main centres in the Borough;
- **Section 6** sets out a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the need for additional commercial leisure uses (such as cafes and restaurants, cinemas and health and fitness facilities); and
- **Section 7** considers the retail implications of BBC’s strategic housing sites, in terms of whether there is a need for further provision and, if viable, any impact that might have existing provision;
- **Section 8** draws together the findings of the previous sections to set out a series of recommendations, both Borough-wide and specific to each centre. The recommendations summarise:
 - How much floorspace is needed; the type of floorspace which is needed; and where it could be accommodated;
 - Key areas where each centres need to improve against vitality and viability indicators, and possible options for improving underperforming parts of centres;
 - A high-level overview of the main development opportunities in each of the centres;
 - Key policy recommendations in respect of the hierarchy of centres, suitable impact assessment thresholds, and the consideration of applications for new retail development not within a defined centre; and

- Advice on monitoring the future vitality and viability of centres in the Borough over the course of the Council's Plan period,

1.2.2 This report is supported by **Volume 2** of the study, which contains appendices to the study as follows:

- **Appendix A** summarises the Core Strategy consultation responses that relate to retail and town centre matters;
- **Appendix B** contains full 'health check' assessments of the town centres of Basildon, Billericay, Wickford, Laindon and Pitsea (building on the summaries set out in Section 3 of Volume 1);
- **Appendix C** provides a schedule of the Council's 39 local centres in the Borough;
- **Appendix D** provides a plan of the study area which we have used as the basis of our assessment;
- **Appendix E** sets out quantitative retail capacity data tables;
- **Appendix F** provides a summary of our methodology for calculating quantitative retail need;
- **Appendix G** provides a summary of the technical inputs into our retail and leisure capacity forecasts; and
- **Appendix H** sets out quantitative commercial leisure capacity data tables.

1.2.3 Finally, **Volume 3** of the study sets out the detailed household survey tables which have been used to inform the recommendations and outputs of this study.

1.3 The national policy context

The National Planning Policy Framework

1.3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government in March 2012 and replaces all previous Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for plan-making this means that:

- "local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
- Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted." (paragraph 14)

1.3.2 In order to be considered sound, Local Plans should be positively prepared (i.e. based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements), justified (i.e. the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives), effective (i.e. deliverable and based on joint working) and consistent with national policy (paragraph 182).

- 1.3.3 Paragraph 23 states that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres. This includes a requirement that 'needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability'. This introduces a challenge for local authorities to maximise central opportunities.
- 1.3.4 The NPPF also requires Local Plans to be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. In terms of a retail evidence base, paragraph 161 states that they should assess:
- the needs for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail and leisure development;
 - the role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of the centres;
 - the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development;
 - locations of deprivation which may benefit from planned remedial action.

The Planning Policy Guidance

- 1.3.5 In March 2014 the Government published the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The PPG provides further guidance on and support to the policies contained within the NPPF. The PPG is a web based resource, which will be actively managed by the DCLG in order to allow for any necessary updates to be issued as soon as possible. The guidance is a "live document" it will continue to be subject to a regular review process.
- 1.3.6 The PPG is set out thematically. Matters associated with town centre uses are set out in the section 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres'. This section states that a positive vision or strategy for town centres, articulated through the Local Plan, is key to ensuring successful town centres, which enable sustainable economic growth and provide a wider range of social and environmental benefits. It also states that any strategy should be based on evidence of the current state of town centres and opportunities to meet development needs and support their viability and vitality. Strategies should also identify changes in the hierarchy of town centres, including where a town centre is in decline. In these cases, strategies should seek to manage decline positively to encourage economic activity and achieve an appropriate mix of uses commensurate with a realistic future for that town centre.
- 1.3.7 The PPG also provides further guidance in terms of the interpretation of the NPPF's sequential and impact tests (discussed above), including how they should be applied to both plan-making and decision-taking. A stage-by-stage guide to undertaking an impact test is also provided.

1.4 The local policy context

- 1.4.1 In this section we briefly summarise the relevant local planning policy context within which the study has been prepared. We do not discuss these in detail, as it is assumed the Council is familiar with its own policy context. Wider readers of the study should refer to <http://www.basildon.gov.uk> for further details on the documents summarised below

Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies

- 1.4.2 A number of policies under the Adopted Basildon District Local Plan were saved by the Council in 2007 under the direction of the Secretary of State. As such the saved policies are

treated as adopted planning policies. Policies BAS SH1 to BAS SH9 relate to retail development and regeneration strategies for the Borough.

- Policy BAS SH1: Proposes that retail development should be concentrated within the urban areas of Basildon, Billericay and Wickford. The sequential test will be applied to retail development proposals located in out of centre locations.
- Policy BAS SH3: This policy identifies opportunity areas for retail development within Basildon, Pitsea and Wickford town centres. These are Car Park Two at Greateaks and a site at Fodderwick in Basildon, a site at Station Avenue in Wickford and the rear of Tudor Mansions at Pitsea.
- Policy BAS SH4: Allows for the change of use of the ground floor retailing units within the primary Shopping Frontages from A1 to A2 (Financial and Professional Services) or A3 (Food and Drink) provided that the change of use does not result in material harm to the retailing function of the Primary Shopping Frontage.
- Policy BAS SH5: Allows for the change of use of ground floor retail units within the town centre but outside the Primary Shopping Frontage to A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Food and Drink) or any other appropriate use provided the proposed use adds to the character of the town and does not cause material harm.
- Policy BAS SH6: The change of use or partial change of B1, B2 or B8 buildings on industrial estates to retail use will be allowed provided that it does not harm the viability or vitality of town centres or result in a significant loss of employment.
- Policy BAS SH7: Within shopping centres permission will be granted for new local shopping centres, expansion to existing local shopping centres and individual shops as long as there is no significant loss to residential amenity.
- Policy BAS SH8: Non-class (A1) uses will be allowed in local shopping centres as long as they do not take away from the local centres ability to cater for the needs of the residents and, in the case of A3 (Food and Drink) uses, they do not harm residential amenity.
- Policy BAS SH9: Planning permission will be granted to temporary retail uses such as car boot sales and Sunday markets subject to various conditions including the ability of the surrounding infrastructure to cope with increased traffic and, that the use should not negatively affect the residential amenity of an area or result in the erection of permanent buildings.

1.4.3 The adopted town centre boundaries established under the Local Plan are included at **Appendix B** for reference.

Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

- 1.4.4 The Council is progressing with preparation of its Local Plan, and recently undertook a period of consultation on the **Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Report** (CSRPOR). Within this document, of particular note is Policy PADC1, Basildon Town Centre. This policy establishes a number of principles to guide redevelopment such as increasing connectivity and improving the variety and quality of the retail offer, along with recommending specific areas suitable for redevelopment such as St Martin's Square and Broadmayne.
- 1.4.5 The policy states that it intends to introduce up to 2,000 new homes, 40,000m² of A1-A4 retail space and D1-D2 leisure space and 25,000 m² of B1 office space into Basildon town centre over the course of the Council's Plan period. In addition it identifies an ambition to encourage a 150 bed hotel, a further education unit, street markets and a new transport interchange. The

- policy focuses on improving the quality of the town centre offer as opposed to the quantity, and has a particular interest in strengthening the evening economy.
- 1.4.6 In order to deliver these objectives the Basildon Town Centre Masterplan is of particular importance and the policy states the intention that this document is periodically revised in order to maintain its relevance.
- 1.4.7 Core Policy 8: Securing Centre Vitality acknowledges Basildon as a regional town centre in the retail and commercial leisure hierarchy. It then identifies Billericay, Wickford, Pitsea, and Laindon as town centres (our study responds to these designations by principally focusing on these five centres), followed by 39 other locations identified as local centres. The policy further outlines seven out of centre retail warehouses, leisure parks and large superstores as completing the Borough's retail offer. These 7 centres are Pips Hill retail Park, Mayflower Retail Park, Festival Leisure Park, Cricketers Way retail Park, Vange Retail Park and the 2 Tesco superstores, Tesco Laindon and Tesco Extra Pitsea.
- 1.4.8 The policy identifies ambitions to regenerate Basildon along with the three other town centres in line with the Core Strategy objectives and area specific masterplans. The policy also identifies the importance of delivering development in accordance with the sequential approach as outlined in the NPPF. The Council has received a large number of responses to the Core Strategy consultation and we make reference to these where appropriate throughout the remainder of the study (**Appendix A**).
- 1.4.9 Policy PADC 2 outlines Laindon town centre's regeneration scheme. The redevelopment plan will focus on replacing the old, dilapidated shopping centre in Laindon with a mixed use plan. While there have been long standing proposals to redevelop the shopping centre, the plan has never materialised. The council will support and facilitate the development of the proposal. The scheme will therefore include:
- A new health facility to be delivered through contributions from the West Basildon Urban Extension.
 - At least 150 new homes
 - At least 2,500m² of A1 foodstore
 - Replacement A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 retail units
 - A new car park
- 1.4.10 Policy PADC8 sets out the phased regeneration of Wickford's town centre. The redevelopment scheme includes:
- At least 50 residential units
 - Up to 1,000m² of A1 foodstore retailing space and 6,300m² of comparison floorspace.
 - Refurbished gym and swimming pool
 - A new car park, public realm improvements and landscaping.
- 1.4.11 In December 2014, the Council agreed through cabinet approval to revise its Local Development Scheme, and produce a combined Local Plan. A combined Local Plan will set out the overall strategic approach to growth in Basildon, as well as the necessary allocation policies and development management policies to deliver that growth. The strategic growth locations identified within the Core Strategy Further Preferred Options Report will therefore be

considered in more detail in order to identify specific locations for housing and economic development.

Basildon Town Centre Masterplan

- 1.4.12 The **Basildon Town Centre Masterplan** informs the strategic planning and regeneration of the Basildon Masterplan Area, covering an area of approximately 72 ha within Basildon town centre. It is used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the masterplan area. The Masterplan was approved in December 2012, and sets out the scope for one of the largest town centre redevelopment projects in the country. As the Masterplan has been published prior to the adoption of the development plan document, it has initially been approved as an Interim Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which forms part of the emerging Local Plan for the Borough.
- 1.4.13 The Masterplan identifies St Martin's Square, Station Square, East Square, Westside North and Broadmayne as the key developments sites within Basildon town centre. It also identifies six key 'drivers for change' in the town centre:
- **Accessibility:** the plan identifies opportunities to improve pedestrian access with the redevelopment of streets leading into the centre;
 - **Retail & Leisure:** research undertaken in support of the Masterplan identifies an overprovision of retail units (use class A1) and an under-provision of leisure uses (A3). It is also identified that the centre suffers from a relatively high vacancy rate. The plan encourages a focus on quality rather than quantity, suggesting that the retail offer could be diversified rather than necessarily expanded. The plan perceives the retail environment as relatively disjointed, and accordingly creating a coherent retail circuit is a key ambition for masterplan, which also makes suggestions for redevelopment of the market. One area in particular that the centre is perceived as being relatively weak is in regard to the evening economy. The plan suggests that the regeneration of the Towngate Theatre and the provision of a cinema and associated leisure units could help rectify this current deficiency;
 - **Residential:** in line with national trends, there is a perennial underlying demand for housing in Basildon. The masterplan confirms that proposals for housing in the town centre should be welcomed, particularly for smaller homes and family homes, for which Basildon has a particular need.
 - **Offices:** the masterplan notes that there has been very little office space developed in the centre in previous years. Increasing office space is an aspiration 'for later phases of the masterplan period', with the objectives of improving the attractiveness of the centre as a primary consideration.
 - **Education:** the plan encourages the proposal for South Essex College to move into a more central location, as this will bring approximately 2,000 students to help the vibrancy and sustainability of the centre.
 - **Physical Development Opportunities:** the plan encourages development at a higher density. In terms of the public realm, the plan identifies the centre as 'inward-looking', and proposals should help incorporate the more neglected 'outer ring' area.

1.5 Changes to Permitted Development Rights

- 1.5.1 The Coalition Government took steps to reform the planning system in order to support sustainable development. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 came into force on the 15th of April 2015. This order amends the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. The new Permitted Development Rights extend the rights put in place since May 2013 and amended in April 2014.

- 1.5.2 A number of minor changes are included in the General Permitted Development Order (2015). This includes the change of use of an A1 use to A2 use without the need for planning permission or prior notification to the Council. The PDR also allow the change of use of amusement arcades and casinos to C3 residential, subject to prior approval. The floorspace area must not exceed 150 sqm.
- 1.5.3 The new rights allow the change of use of shops (A1) and financial and professional services (A2) uses to assembly and leisure (D2), subject to prior approval. The floorspace is capped at 200sqm. It also allows the change of use of A1 and A2 uses, betting offices, pay day loan shops and casinos to restaurants and cafés (A3), subject to prior approval and provided the floorspace does not exceed 150 sqm. The order also designates betting offices and pay day loan shops as 'sui generis' rather than A2. Planning permission will therefore be required to change to either of these uses.
- 1.5.4 The Permitted Development Rights now allow 'click and collect' facilities to be provided within the curtilage of a shop. It also allows loading bays for shops to be increased in size, subject to conditions. Finally, the new Permitted Development Rights allow the change of use of B8 (storage and distribution) to residential, subject to prior approval and provided that the floorspace does not exceed 500 sqm.
- 1.5.5 As with previous Permitted Development Rights, the new Permitted Development Rights (2015) do not cover all areas of England. In designated areas, Permitted Development Rights are more restricted. This includes Conservation Areas, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, Local Authorities may use Article 4 Directions to restrict the Permitted Development Rights in areas the council deems vulnerable to adverse change.

2 How town centres are changing?

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Study is being prepared in the midst of a renewed focus on the role and function of the high street, in the context of the recent, sustained economic downturn, continued attraction of out-of-town facilities as alternative shopping destinations, and the increasing popularity of online shopping. A number of independent studies have recently been published considering the future role and function of the high street, most significantly The Portas Review (2011), The Grimsey Review (2013) and Beyond Retail's 'Redefining the Shape and Purpose of Town Centres' (2013); we briefly summarise each of these below. We then continue to review the key trends which are likely to influence the demand for new retail floorspace over the study period.

2.2 Published Research

The Portas Review (2011)

2.2.1 In May 2011, retail expert Mary Portas was appointed by the Government to lead an independent review into the future of the high street, largely in response to the stagnation and decline of town centres nationally, seen as a consequence of reduced spending on the high street. The report, published in December 2011, suggest a number of measures to tackle the further decline of the high street.

2.2.2 Amongst 27 separate recommendations in the report, there was a call to strengthen planning policy in favour of 'town centre first' following the publication of the draft NPPF. The core recommendations included:

- **Run town centres like businesses:** by strengthening the management of high streets through 'Town Teams', developing the 'Business Improvements Districts' (BID) model and encouraging new markets;
- **Get the basics right:** by looking at how the business rate system could better support small businesses and independent retailers, encouraging affordable town centre car parking and looking at further opportunities to 'deregulate' the high street and relax local authority restrictions that hold local businesses back.
- **Level the playing field:** by making explicit within the NPPF a presumption in favour to town centre development, introduce Secretary of State 'exceptional sign off'; and encouraging large retailers to show their support for high streets by mentoring local businesses;
- **Define landlords' role and responsibilities:** by encouraging a 'contract of care' between landlords and their commercial tenants, looking at disincentives for landlords leaving properties vacant, and empowering local authorities where landlords are negligent and making proactive use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers; and
- **Give communities greater say:** by including the high street in neighbourhood planning, directing more developer funding to supporting community groups, and, encouraging innovative community uses of empty high street spaces.

Government response to the Portas Review (2012)

2.2.3 The Government published its formal response to the Portas Review in March 2012, which accepted virtually all of Portas' recommendations. It announced that 24 'Portas Pilot' towns

secured funding to set up Town Teams to create plans for the future of their high streets and trial some of the recommendations made in the Portas Review. In addition, the Government will provide investment to help BIDs access loans for their set-up costs, as well as funding for a High Street Innovation Fund (to help bring entrepreneurs back to their communities) and also a 'Future High Street X Fund' (to reward towns which are delivering innovative plans to bring their town centres back to life).

- 2.2.4 The Government however did not support the call to introduce Secretary of State 'exceptional sign off' for all new out-of-town developments and require all large new developments to have an 'affordable shops' quota. The Government states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are best placed to understand local needs and 'exceptional sign off' is contrary to the Government's ethos of devolution. As such, the Government will continue to use its call-in powers sparingly.

The Grimsey Review (2013)

- 2.2.5 Bill Grimsey, the former boss of DIY chain Wickes and food retailer Iceland published his report 'The Grimsey Review: An alternative future for the High Street' in September 2013. This report was developed as an 'alternative response' to the recommendations of the Portas Review. The report makes a total of 31 wide-ranging recommendations, including encouraging more people to live in town centres, appointing a High Streets Minister, and freezing car parking charges for a year.

Beyond Retail: Redefining the Shape & Purpose of Town Centres (2013)

- 2.2.6 Arising from the key recommendations in the Portas Review, the Government supported the establishment of an industry 'task force' to analyse retail property issues relating to town centres. The task force included representatives from the banking, property, retail and public sectors, and the findings of the task force's report were presented in the 'Beyond Retail' report published in November 2013.

- 2.2.7 The report outlines a 'future vision' of high streets, based on five key observations:

- Market polarisation, resulting in **three broad types of town centre offer** (strong centres with a wide retail and leisure offer; convenience food and service-based centres with an element of fashion and comparison goods; and localised convenience and everyday needs-focussed centres);
- A local authority will have a '**clear vision**' of the role and function of their town centres, and the position of their respective retail offers in the hierarchy of centres;
- **Active intervention** on the part of the local authority should be encouraged by a more flexible planning environment, including reduced regulation and a mix of public and private sector funding models;
- A '**re-basing**' of **occupational costs** (in terms of rents and rates), to encourage an improved retail and leisure mix of profitable multiple and independent operators, supported by local employment and residential development in close proximity to town centres, and providing a flexible approach to car park pricing to assist in completion with out-of-town developments.
- **Technology** as a critical enabler of future town centre relevance and vitality.

- 2.2.8 Based on this 'vision', the report makes a number of recommendations, and the most pertinent to this study are considered to be:

- Develop **strong and dynamic leadership**, led at the local authority level but also including business and community involvement, to bring about long-term change in town centre functions;
- Undertake bold, **strategic land assembly**, to assemble redevelopment opportunities of scale and worth;
- Provide **greater flexibility** in the planning system to enable redundant retail premises to be converted to 'more economically productive uses';
- Consider the mechanisms to **address funding gaps** to encourage local authorities to commit to long-term planning for town centres; and
- Town centres must take advantage of **technology** to assist in marketing, driving footfall, and assisting independents and SMEs; and
- The **business rate system** should be reviewed, and new retail valuation guidance should be published.

2.3 Market Context

2.3.1 The market context for town centres, and retail in particular, is evolving. The role of the town centre is not as black and white as it has historically been, and indications are that the town centres which have weathered the recent economic downturn (discussed further below) are those which have a diverse range of uses. In this section we discuss the key changes in the retail market which are considered likely to have the biggest implications on centres in Basildon Borough over the study period.

Key trend: polarisation to higher-order centres

- 2.3.2 The '**polarisation trend**' refers to the preference of retailers to concentrate trading activities in larger schemes, within larger centres. Retailers recognise that greater efficiency can be achieved by having a strategic network of large stores offering a full range of their products, rather than a network of smaller-format stores which are only able to offer a limited range of products. Other trends discussed in this section, in particular the economic downturn and the growth in online shopping, have further amplified the need for retailers to have fewer physical stores. The 'polarisation trend' is also driven by customers, who have become more discerning and are increasingly prepared to travel further afield. There is therefore a concentration of comparison goods expenditure in a smaller number of larger centres. CBRE estimated that by 2008 half the population shopped in just 70 or so major locations, down from 200 locations 30 years ago¹.
- 2.3.3 Centres such as Basildon are particularly vulnerable to this trend, and this is likely to become increasingly the case as surrounding centres such as Lakeside and Chelmsford enhance their offer — although Basildon town centre already has a good critical mass of comparison goods retailers (discussed further in the following section) which will help to ensure it remains an attractive shopping destination. However, this trend does mean that smaller centres may be required to potentially refocus their role and function away from solely being shopping destinations to incorporate a much broader retail, leisure, culture and residential offer.
- 2.3.4 The result of this trend, according to Deloitte², is that retailers are beginning to reassess their store portfolios: '*The increasing costs of operating stores, changes in consumer behaviours, and the growing online opportunity, coupled with the rise of shopping centres with larger*

¹ CBRE UK Retail Briefing, September 2008

² Deloitte, 'The Changing Face of Retail', 2011

catchment areas and improvements in infrastructure facilitating travel suggest that retailers will need fewer stores in the future'

- 2.3.5 The implications for this on town centres is that many retailers will, in the medium to longer term, seek to downsize their portfolios, particularly in smaller centres. Deloitte consider that this will have three principal impacts on retail property:
- Firstly, **increased availability** of property as vacancy rates increase;
 - Secondly, **decreasing prime retail rents** (with the exception of central London); and
 - Thirdly, **increased flexibility in rental terms**, with retailers demanding better terms, including shorter leases, rent-free periods, earlier break clauses, and monthly rental arrangements.

Key trend: growth of the convenience goods sector

- 2.3.6 The **convenience goods** sector has, during the economic downturn, become a key driver of growth. The sector has traditionally been dominated by the 'big four' supermarket operators of Asda, Morrisons, Tesco and Sainsbury's, but increasingly both higher-quality operators (Waitrose, Marks & Spencer) and discount retailers (Aldi, Lidl) are making inroads into the market share of the 'big four'. The discount retailers have posted significant year-on-year growth in recent years and beginning to emerge as increasingly important forces in the convenience goods market. We expect these retailers to continue to take market share from the 'big four' supermarket operators in future years.
- 2.3.7 The sector has often been the beneficiary of floorspace becoming available in town and city centres as a result of comparison goods retailers entering administration. For example, Iceland acquired 57 former Woolworths stores in early 2009, and recently Morrisons acquired a number of stores formerly operated by Blockbuster as part of their 'M Local' network of smaller-format stores. Tesco Express, Sainsbury's Local, and Waitrose have significantly expanded store numbers in recent years.
- 2.3.8 Large foodstores (i.e., typically those with a net retail area of at least 25,000 sq.ft / 2,300 sqm) have historically been the primary driver of growth in the convenience goods sector. However, there is evidence of an increasing move by convenience goods operators away from opening larger-format stores towards smaller supermarkets and establishing a network of 'top up' convenience goods shopping facilities (often referred to as 'c-stores'), often located in town centres, or district/ neighbourhood shopping parades. Both Sainsbury's and Tesco now have more c-stores than large supermarkets³ and the 'big four' operators with the exception of Morrisons following the disposal of their convenience stores earlier this year, appear to be favouring these formats over large supermarkets. In summer 2014, Tesco announced plans to develop 4,000 houses on land formerly earmarked by the company for supermarkets, mostly in the south-east of England⁴.

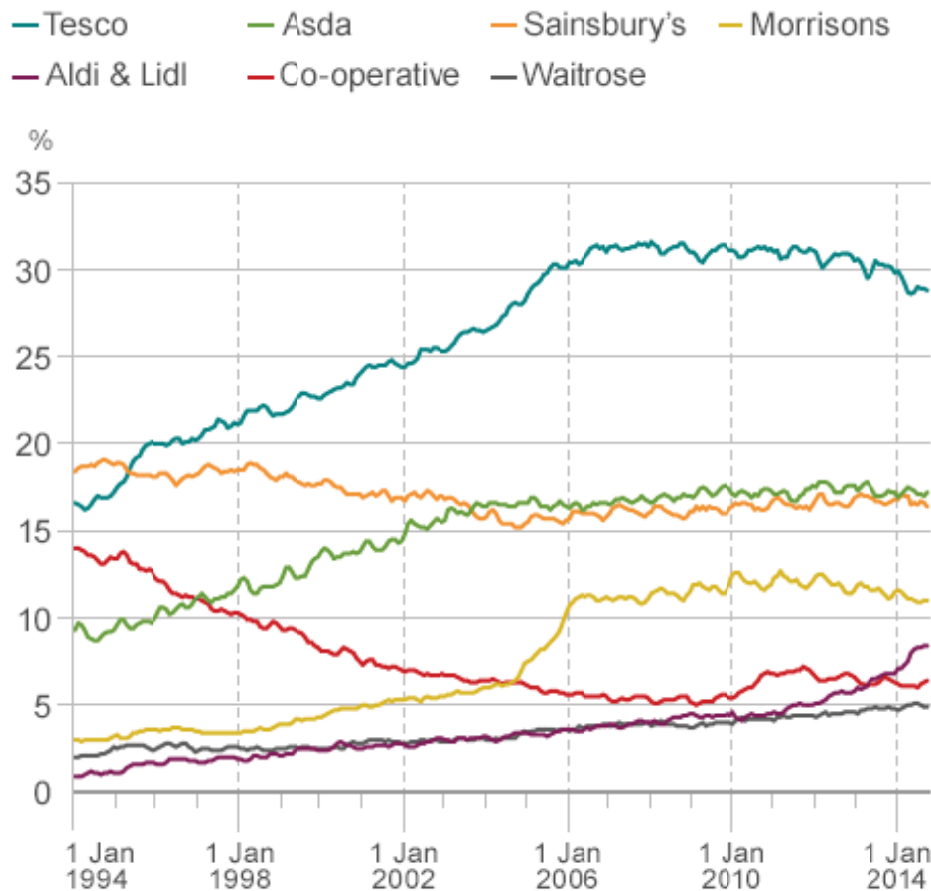
Figure 2.1 - 'C store' formats operated by Tesco and Sainsbury's



³ Daily Telegraph, 12 January 2014

⁴ Daily Telegraph, 18 July 2014

Figure 2.2 – UK supermarkets' market share



Source: Kantar Worldpanel

- 2.3.9 Verdict Research⁵ comment that: *'The second dip of the double-dip recession in 2012 has knocked consumer confidence and shoppers are sticking more tightly than ever to their budgets. They are shopping little and often and sticking more tightly than ever to their budgets... increasing fuel prices, deterring out-of-town trips, and the move towards online food shopping each feed into this trend towards top-up shopping. Out-of-town space is increasingly difficult for grocers to make profitable'*.
- 2.3.10 Verdict consider that the proportion of convenience goods floorspace which will be accounted for by 'smaller stores' will increase from 37.6% in 2007 to 41.6% by 2017. The majority of floorspace will continue to be accounted for by 'superstores' (53% of floorspace by 2017), with 'food specialists' and off-licences continuing to have their market share reduced. Industry body IGD predicts that the convenience goods market will grow by 29% between 2012 and 2017, from £33.9bn to £43.6bn, and the main retail operators are responding quickly by opening new stores.

Key trend: growth in commercial leisure

- 2.3.11 Most commentators predict that **commercial leisure**, such as cafes, bars, restaurants and cinemas, will constitute a growing share of town centre floorspace. This is partly a replacement activity for reduced demand for space for traditional retail, and partly driven by demand the shift to leisure expenditure as discretionary household expenditure rises.

⁵ Verdict Research 'Food & Grocery Retailing in the UK' Market Report

- 2.3.12 When considering leisure expenditure available to households, spending on food and drink typically accounts for upwards of 50% of total leisure spending, compared to around 15% on 'cultural services' (e.g. going to the cinema, theatre, art galleries or live music) and under 10% on hotels, 'games of chance' (such as bingo) and recreation/sporting services.
- 2.3.13 There is scope for town centres to capitalise on this, redefining their function as 'destinations' in their own right. This, in turn, can have wider positive implications on the performance of the town centres in question: residents and visitors spend longer in the centre, undertake 'linked trips' between retail, leisure and other uses, and increase their dwell-time in the centre. The development of a strong commercial leisure offer can also help to increase footfall outside of retail hours, for example in early evenings, particularly if the leisure offer also includes facilities such as cinemas. **Figure 2.3** shows Southwater in Telford, an example of a commercial leisure-led town centre development comprising cinema, restaurants and a hotel, which opened in summer 2014.

Figure 2.3 - Southwater, Telford



2.4 Economic Context

- 2.4.1 The recent downturn in the economy had a number of clear changes on the retail landscape in the UK, with a series of high-profile retailers entering administration, and a general trend towards discount retailers increasing their representation — both in the comparison goods sector (for example, Poundland, 99p Stores and Wilkinson) and the convenience goods sector (for example, the continued expansion, and strong trading performance of, 'deep discount' retailers such as Aldi and Lidl). The downturn also affected consumer spending, with a greater reluctance to spend amongst consumers on non-essential goods. As a result, forecast levels of growth in consumer spending remain generally subdued, particularly in the short term.
- 2.4.2 It has been widely documented that online shopping has increased at a rapid pace in recent years — particularly in the comparison goods sector. Online shopping is perceived to offer a number of significant advantages over 'traditional', high street-format shopping — including lower prices (as there are lower operating 'overheads' for online retailers compared with those in a town centre), a wider variety of choice, and the ability for customers to easily search out bargains — including second hand goods. While unfavourable economic conditions are forcing many retailers to scale back on physical retail space, their online operations allow them to reach a much wider customer base. However, the competition is not as straight forward as 'online shopping versus the high street'; new technologies are promoting an

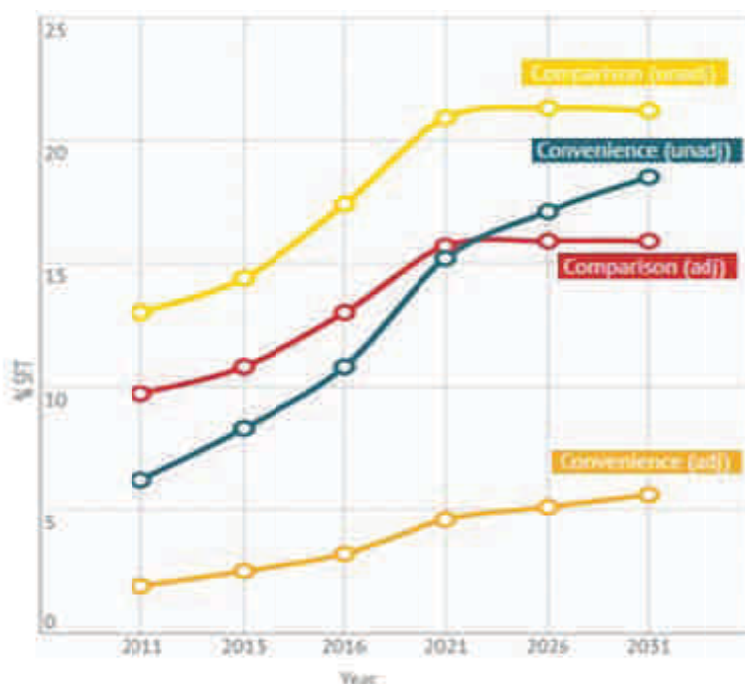
integration between the two shopping channels, to the point where a town centre that embraces digital technologies can find itself in a strong position.

2.4.3 Returning to the bigger picture, Internet sales have been rising much more rapidly than general retail sales in recent years. The average value of weekly retail sales on the internet was forecast at £844m in December 2012. The ONS forecast that online sales accounted for 9.4% of all retail sales in October 2012, which increased to 10.5% in October 2013 (equivalent to a year-on-year increase of 1.1 percentage points). Experian consider that this pattern is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future, commenting in their Retail Planner Briefing Note (October 2013) that:

'We retain our assumption that non-store retailing will increase at a faster pace than total retail sales well into the long term. There were 52.7 million internet users in the UK (representing 84.1% of the population) in mid-year 2012... growth momentum will be sustained as new technology such as browsing and purchasing through mobile phones and the development of interactive TV shopping boost internet retailing'.

2.4.4 However, Experian consider that at the turn of the next decade, growth in online shopping is expected to begin to plateau, stating that they expect *'the SFT⁶ market share [to] continue to increase over the forecast period⁷ although the pace of e-commerce growth will moderate markedly after about 2020'.*

Figure 2.4 — Forecast of non-store retailing ('Special Forms of Trading') market share to 2030



Source: Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 11, October 2013, Appendix 3. SFT includes spending on online shopping, mail order / catalogue shopping, and markets. 'Adjusted' figures include a reduction for store-picked online transactions.

2.4.5 The outputs of this study specifically take into account this anticipated growth in online shopping — based on the most up-to-date Experian guidance we remove the proportion of total expenditure which is expected to be diverted towards online shopping, before presenting

⁶ 'Special Forms of Trading', which includes online shopping as well as sales from markets and mail order.

⁷ Experian currently project up to 2030.

the final updated quantitative floorspace requirements for the Borough⁸. In **Figure 2.4** we show the projected growth in online comparison and convenience goods shopping over the course of the study period to 2026, based on the forecasts provided by Experian. For reference, both the 'unadjusted' and the 'adjusted' figures are shown⁹, although for the purposes of our study we solely rely on the latter set of figures.

- 2.4.6 This forecast growth in online spending does not equate to a redundant future for 'bricks and mortar' stores. There is a role for physical outlets to act as 'showrooms' for online retailers¹⁰. A physical presence on the high street improves the visibility of businesses; 12 out of the top 20 e-commerce businesses in the UK have a physical presence on the high street (**Figure 2.5**).

Figure 2.5 — Top 20 e-commerce websites in the UK, 2013



Source: IMRG Experian Hitwise Hot Shops List, 2013

- 2.4.7 The growth in the 'Click & Collect' method of online shopping is a further relatively new trend, but one which looks set to play an increasing role over future years. Like 'showrooming', it is also one where the physical outlet of the store can still be used to drive footfall. The 'click & collect' concept is such that a customer orders and pays for the desired product online, and then collects the product from the nearest large branch of the retailer in question. This approach is being rolled out by an increasing number of retailers. Recent research by the British Retail Consortium indicates that 60% of 'click & collect' transactions result in an additional purchase in the store.
- 2.4.8 Recent trends indicate that major retailers are becoming more willing to embrace the challenge posed by online and mobile technology, putting into place technology such as better mobile websites, offering free in store Wi-Fi, or in-store technology points where a customer can order a product online which may be sold out or not available within the store. This may be particularly applicable for smaller town centres — Billericay, and to a lesser extent Basildon for example — where many retailers' stores are quite small and may not be able to carry the full range of products available.
- 2.4.9 There is, therefore, a role for 'bricks and mortar' stores, but there is an acute challenge for middle-order centres such as Basildon which will need to be embraced. The role and function

⁸ The figures which we use are Experian's 'adjusted' comparison (non-food) and convenience (food) goods forecasts, which make a deduction on Experian's 'baseline' figures in order to take account of internet goods sales from store space (such as through 'Click & Collect', as discussed in paragraph 2.4.7). For comparison goods, Experian apply a discount of 25% to calculate the 'adjusted' figure, and for convenience goods this figure is 70%. The latter figure is particularly high because many online food shopping transactions placed with Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda and Waitrose are 'picked' from the shelves of the nearest large store of the retailer. Convenience goods retailers are increasingly choosing to instead fulfil orders from warehouses known as 'dark stores' — although this trend remains in its infancy.

⁹ See footnote to Figure 2.1

¹⁰ This is where customers visit 'bricks and mortar' stores to look at / try on a product, before using technology such as smartphones to check whether the product is available elsewhere (in another store, or online) for a cheaper price.

of high streets — particularly those outside the higher-order shopping centres — are likely to need to consider uses beyond that of traditional retail activity in order to remain vital and viable.

2.5 What this means for the Borough's network of centres

- 2.5.1 There is little doubt that recent years have seen challenges to 'traditional' store-based shopping on a scale never previously witnessed. These challenges will continue to grow over the Council's Plan period, and in order for the centres in the Borough to perform strongly and meet local needs, the centres will need to adapt to, and embrace, these challenges. However, it is quite clear that there remains a role for store-based shopping — and for town centres. Experian forecast that store-based shopping is still expected to expand at an average of 1.9% per annum in capita terms to 2030, and online sales will begin to plateau.
- 2.5.2 In our view, the most successful town centres will be the ones that adapt to the changes in shopping habits, which move away from solely being shopping destinations to those which offer a broad range of retail, leisure, cultural and civic services to enable residents to have multiple reasons to visit a town centre, and to spend longer amounts of time in the centres. Successful town centres will need to embrace and work alongside multi-channelling retailing, through the availability of free wi-fi, promotional offers, 'click & collect' hubs, and so on. There will need to be a willingness for the higher-order centres in the Borough to embrace the wider changes in shopping and spending patterns, and capitalise on them rather than compete with them.
- 2.5.3 There will also be an important role for niche / curated retail destinations, which are able to compete with advances in online / mobile technology because they offer a different experience, one based around high standards of customer service, and a unique retail offer which cannot be matched online. This is already taking place to a degree in Billericay, for example, which has a large number of specialist and boutique retailers, and a vibrant restaurant scene. Such an offer and experience is different to replicate in an online environment.
- 2.5.4 Related to this, we therefore expect that place marketing and 'selling' the offer of a town centre will become of increasing importance.

3 How are the town centres performing?

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Council’s emerging Local Plan identifies a hierarchy of centres for Basildon Borough, as follows:

- Regional town centre: Basildon
- Town centres: Billericay, Laindon, Pitsea and Wickford
- Local centres: 39 local centres

3.1.2 Basildon and the town centres are shown on Figure 3.1 below, together with the competing centres outside the Borough.

Figure 3.1 – Main centres in Basildon Borough



3.1.3 In this section, we set out a summary of the performance of the five highest-order centres in the Borough – the regional town centre of Basildon, and the town centres of Billericay, Laindon, Pitsea and Wickford. For each centre we review their performance against indicators of town centre vitality and viability set out in the **Planning Practice Guidance**, which can be summarised as follows:

Figure 3.2 – Health check indicators



Source: Planning Practice Guidance (section: 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres', para 005)

- 3.1.4 Further details of our approach, and a more detailed assessment, are set out at **Appendix B** of **Volume 2** of our Study. In our assessment below, we provide a brief summary of the performance of each centre against each of the PPG indicators, using a 'traffic light' system which is designed to identify areas where a centre is performing particularly strongly – or alternatively is considered to be underperforming.
- 3.1.5 **Appendix B** also includes a summary of the how the Borough's centres rank in relation to each other and in the context of other centres in the East of England, using VENUESCORE ranking. In addition, the rankings of competing centres located outside the Borough but that draw trade from residents are also provided. An explanation of VENUESCORE is provided as part of that appendix.
- 3.1.6 The scope of our study does not extend to considering the 39 Local Centres also identified in the emerging Local Plan. However at **Appendix C** of **Volume 2** we provide a schedule of those centres which is taken from 2015 Update audit of the 39 local by Basildon Council and considers the provision of facilities at each of these smaller centres in further detail.

3.2 Basildon town centre

- 3.2.1 Basildon town centre is the highest-order centre in the Borough, and is designated as a regional town centre. The VENUESCORE ranking (summary provided at **Appendix B**) indicates that Basildon is ranked at 94, catering to the lower middle of the market, functioning at a level below Southend-on-Sea (88) but above Bedford (105). The centre is pedestrianised throughout, with the retail offer clustered around Town Square and the covered Eastgate Shopping Centre. There are a range of department stores and foodstores in the centre which act as 'anchor' stores.
- 3.2.2 The town centre also plays an important civic function. This is likely to be enhanced by the introduction of the college into the town centre as part of the redevelopment of the Market Square, which is expected to begin in 2016. Not only will this secure the physical redevelopment of part of the town centre and prompt the relocation of the market itself to St Martin's Square, but the introduction of the college will introduce significant additional footfall into the centre.

Figure 3.3 – East Walk, Basildon



Table 3.1 – Basildon health check summary

PPG indicator	Summary for Basildon town centre	Traffic light score
Diversity of uses	<p>The centre has a good diversity of uses, with a mixed retail offer oriented towards comparison goods. Clothing and fashion retailers are principally concentrated in the Eastgate Centre, with key department stores including Marks & Spencer and BHS in Town Square. There is also a large Asda supermarket at the eastern end of the town centre (within Eastgate) and a market, both of which clearly act as footfall generators.</p> <p>While retail diversity is strong, the town centre offers very limited leisure and evening economy options – a fact that is noted in the representations made to the council on its emerging Core Strategy consultation. The Towngate Theatre is the only cultural venue within the town centre and there is a noticeable absence of family dining options.</p>	

PPG indicator	Summary for Basildon town centre	Traffic light score
<p>Proportion of vacant street level property</p>	<p>There is quite a bit of fluidity in units becoming vacant and subsequently let. Since the Experian Goad Survey was carried out in March 2014, there has been a noticeable decline in the number of vacant units around Town Square and the Eastgate shopping centre. Our updated analysis identifies a vacancy rate of 11.5%, slightly below the current UK average of 12.3%. There are some parts of the centre – mostly noticeably East Walk – where the vacancy rate appears to have increased and this should be carefully monitored. Similarly, the upper floors of the Eastgate Centre have low footfall and have seen a clear increase in the number of vacant units.</p> <p>While vacancies have been falling, we noted an increase in the number of discount stores throughout the centre. This trend needs to be carefully monitored as it may contribute to a negative perception of the centre.</p> <p>We also noticed a small decline in the number of market stalls in operation during our site visit. In particular, the South Western corner of the market saw minimal footfall with most of the activity focused around Market Pavement. The proposed move of the market at St Martin’s Square could potentially improve the market’s profile.</p>	
<p>Retailer representation and intentions to change representation</p>	<p>Retailer representation is, for the most part, geared towards national multiple retailers, and these act as the anchor stores – Marks & Spencer, Primark, Debenhams and Asda can be considered the principal anchors. There is a lack of a clear anchor store at the western end of the town centre. Other key retailers in the centre include H&M, Topshop/Topman and River Island. The retail offer is generally middle to lower market, with many of the recent openings towards the “value” end of the spectrum.</p> <p>Analysis of the FOCUS Commercial Property database suggests that there is limited demand for retail premises in Basildon town centre from national retailers.</p>	
<p>Commercial yields</p>	<p>The commercial property market in Basildon has been relatively active in recent years with consistent yields being achieved. The most notable deal involved the sale of the Eastgate Shopping Centre by British Land to Infrared Capital in January 2014. The sale achieved a price of £88.6 million and had a yield of 6.93% making it the biggest retail transaction in Basildon.</p> <p>These compare positively with average comparison yields in the order of 7.5%. In relation to convenience yields, local developers/agents indicate that typical levels are 5% for larger supermarkets and 5.5% for smaller convenience stores.</p> <p>Other notable transactions, albeit outwith the town centre, include the sale of Mayflower Retail Park to Scottish Widows by British Land in March 2011. The sale achieved a price of £51 million and a yield of 6.3%.</p>	

PPG indicator	Summary for Basildon town centre	Traffic light score
Commercial rents	In relation to rents, it is noted that average rents in the town centre are between £180 and £240/sqm but with prime rents occasionally being significantly higher. This compares to averages of between £200 to £230 for larger out-of-town units. Rents for convenience units are noted to be in the order of £170/sqm.	
Pedestrian flows	The pedestrianised town centre encourages pedestrian flows around the town centre. Based on our observations, pedestrian flows are strongest within and surrounding the Eastgate Shopping Centre, Town Square and Market Square. Quieter areas were St Martin's Square, Southernhay and Westgate Retail Park. Generally however the town centre benefits from a good level of pedestrian activity, although this is likely to be less applicable outside of retail trading hours.	
Accessibility	The town centre has Basildon's main bus station as well as the train station with good connections to London and other towns both within and outside the Borough. Parking provision within the town centre appears to be generous.	
Perception of safety/occurrence of crime	The town centre generally appears to be safe. The landscape is free of litter and graffiti and many parts of the town centre appear to be well used. However, since the town has a very limited evening economy and little residential use there is likely to be a decrease in pedestrian flows at night. This may heighten perceptions of crime.	
State of town centre environmental quality	The town centre benefits from generally good environmental quality. There is no traffic congestion/ pollution within the centre which enhances the environment. The centre is clean and well maintained, and much of the centre benefits from wide pedestrianised shopping streets. However there is little architectural diversity and significant areas of green space. The centre can therefore feel somewhat 'stark' in parts. Some softening of the visual landscape would be beneficial. We are aware of plans to relocate the market and bring the college into the town centre; this may result in improvements to the streetscene, as well as the anticipated increases in footfall associated with the more prominent location of the market and the addition of a significant student population.	

Source: PBA assessment, Experian Goad, FOCUS Commercial Property Database

- 3.2.3 On the whole, Basildon town centre demonstrates positive indicators of vitality and viability. The retail mix is generally positive, with a good range of 'anchor' stores located throughout the centre, albeit with a weaker offer towards the western end. The Eastgate Centre has a good range of national retailers and can be considered the focus of the centre's clothing and young fashion offer. Marks & Spencer is an important anchor on Town Square. The vacancy rate in the centre appears to be decreasing, with a number of lettings having taken place since the most recent Experian Goad centre survey – although many of the lettings are to discount / value retailers, particularly outside of the Eastgate Centre. This does, however, reflect a trend seen in many similar-sized centres across the country. The quality of the retail property offer is

generally good, with retailers able to trade from good-sized, relatively modern premises. While the market appears to be well supported we found evidence of its relative decline, with a number of units in the south western corner of the market being vacant.

- 3.2.4 Pedestrian flows in the town centre are good, and it is clear the centre is well-supported. The pedestrianised nature of the town centre is a positive asset to the centre, as is the market and presence of civic facilities. Whilst environmental quality is reasonable, some 'softening' of the appearance of the centre through investment in suitable public realm would be beneficial.
- 3.2.5 The principal area of concern in respect of Basildon town centre is the qualitative gaps in its commercial leisure offer. In particular, the absence of a cinema and a very limited family dining offer. The absence of such facilities means that the centre principally operates solely as a retail destination, and does not have a sufficiently diverse mixture of uses to ensure it is an attractive destination outside of retail trading hours. As town centres in general move away from having a pure retail focus, addressing this qualitative shortfall will be an important priority for the Council over the study period.
- 3.2.6 Looking forward, we are aware of plans to relocate the market from Market Square to St Martin's Square as part of the Town Centre Masterplan. The proposed market is designed to be a qualitative improvement to the existing market both in terms of the improved market stalls as well as the goods on offer. The new market will also occupy a more prominent position in the town centre. Following this move, Market Square will be redeveloped as a new campus for South Essex College.

3.3 Billericay town centre

Figure 3.4 - High Street, Billericay



- 3.3.1 Billericay is a smaller town centre which sits to the north west of the Borough. It has a focus on higher-end national retailer and leisure operators, and appears to cater for a relatively affluent catchment area. The centre is based around a linear High Street, with the railway station sitting at the northern end and a Waitrose supermarket acting as the main anchor, towards the central/southern end of the town centre.
- 3.3.2 **Appendix B** shows that Billericay is ranked 601 by VENUESCORE, as a major district centre catering to the middle market.

Table 3.2 – Billericay health check summary

PPG indicator	Summary for Billericay town centre	Traffic light score
Diversity of uses	There is a good diversity of uses in the town centre. There is a strong emphasis on comparison goods retailing but also well used convenience good offering. The leisure offer is particularly strong, with a range of cafes and family restaurants. The convenience goods offer is also good, with branches of Waitrose (which acts as the 'anchor' to the overall retail offer of the centre), Iceland and Marks & Spencer Simply Food are all present within the centre, although the latter is divorced from the primary shopping area as it is part of a BP petrol filling station.	
Proportion of vacant street level property	Only 2% of units were observed to be vacant at the time of our visit to the centre, which is considerably lower than the current UK average of 12.3%	
Retailer representation and intentions to change representation	<p>Retailer representation in Billericay town centre can be considered to be strong, with a good range of national multiple retailers being balanced out by a well-developed independent retail and leisure sector. Key national retailers present include Waitrose, Marks & Spencer Simply Food, Iceland, Boots, Superdrug, Poundland and Argos. There is also a good level of representation from café and restaurant operators, such as Costa and Pizza Express.</p> <p>Demand from national retailers appears to be relatively limited but this may be related to the small size of many of the retail premises in the town centre.</p>	
Commercial yields	Commercial retail sector in Billericay has mostly been subdued; however, some transactions have taken place which indicate that yields are improving from the 2008 level of 6.75%, with yields in the order of 7.8% and 6.6% being achieved. Mayflower House and The Walk, including 10 retail units, is currently on the market and could achieve yields in the region of 7.3%.	
Pedestrian flows	Pedestrian flows in the town centre are generally good due to the linear nature of the centre and a strong retail and leisure mix throughout. However, relatively high levels of vehicle traffic can make it difficult to cross the High Street.	
Accessibility	The town centre is close to the train station with connections to London and surrounding towns (although there is no direct train service to Basildon). A number of bus routes also run through the town centre. Parking in the town centre appears to be heavily used and there are capacity issues.	
Perception of safety/ occurrence of crime	The town centre appears to be well cared for. The high number of restaurants indicates that there is still a significant night time population. We do not expect this to be a particular area of concern.	

PPG indicator	Summary for Billericay town centre	Traffic light score
State of town centre environmental quality	The town centre environment is of high quality though there is very little public space. The town centre has a good diversity of buildings which adds to the centre's character.	

Source: PBA assessment, Experian Goad, FOCUS Commercial Property Database

3.3.3 Billericay clearly represents a different (and indeed complementary) town centre offer to that of Basildon. The retail offer is higher-end, with a greater emphasis on specialist comparison goods retailers, and the food and drink sector. Whilst there are a range of day to day services to meet many residents' local needs, the fact that much of the town centre is given over to more niche uses does mean that expenditure loss to larger surrounding centres is inevitable. It is positive to note that vacancy rates are extremely low, and the centre appears well supported throughout the length of the linear High Street. Overall, the centre is performing well and does not present any significant areas of concern.

3.4 Laindon town centre

3.4.1 Laindon is a purpose-built district centre on the western side of the Basildon urban area. The district centre comprises of the Laindon Centre, and there is also a separate standalone Lidl store nearby. Laindon Centre is clearly an area in need of regeneration, a fact which has been acknowledged by the Council for some time. Basildon Council appointed Swan Housing Association in June 2015 to bring forward the centre's regeneration. There is a large surrounding residential community which would, if suitable facilities were to be provided, be able to look towards the Centre to meet their day-to-day shopping needs.

Table 3.3 – Laindon health check summary

PPG indicator	Summary for Laindon town centre	Traffic light score
Diversity of uses	Meets some resident's day to day needs. The centre has a small Co-Operative supermarket and a limited mix of comparison goods retailers as well as a bank and post office and pub. Many residents are likely to have to look elsewhere for their shopping needs. In the representations made to the Council concerning Laindon, some residents felt that the viability of redeveloping the site would be low given the close proximity the centre has to Lidl Supermarket.	
Proportion of vacant street level property	The proportion of empty units is very high. Our site visit revealed that 35% of the retail units were vacant compared to the current UK average of 12.3%.	

PPG indicator	Summary for Laindon town centre	Traffic light score
Retailer representation and intentions to change representation	<p>The centre has a Lloyds Bank, a Co-Operative supermarket, a Co-Operative pharmacy, Lloyds Pharmacy and a post office. The supermarket is small and suffers from a dated internal and external appearance. We would expect demand for representation in the centre to be generally weak, although should redevelopment of the centre come forward this would be expected to improve.</p> <p>Outside the centre itself, there is a Lidl supermarket located on West Mayne, which is separated from the rest of the Centre but accessible via a pedestrian walkway over Laindon High Road.</p>	Orange
Commercial rents and yields	<p>There is limited evidence in relation to commercial yields and rents in Laindon, in large part because the centre is in the process of coming forward for redevelopment/regeneration.</p>	White
Pedestrian flows	<p>Pedestrian flows in the centre are generally poor. The stores appear lightly used.</p>	Red
Accessibility	<p>Pedestrian accessibility to the shopping centre could be improved although there is a pedestrian foot bridge linking the centre to surrounding residential areas. Car parking appears to be adequate though the car park itself is in need of resurfacing. The centre is served by two bus stops which link Laindon with the town centre and surrounding residential areas. Wayfinding in the surrounding area could be improved.</p>	Orange
Perception of safety/ occurrence of crime	<p>The high number of vacant units makes the centre feel unsafe which we consider to be a particular concern outside retail trading hours. Architecturally speaking, the shops face away from the road and the main pedestrian promenade is dominated by large chimney structures that obstruct the line of sight.</p>	Red
State of town centre environmental quality	<p>The overall quality of the Laindon Centre is generally poor. The run-down nature of the centre and the high number of vacant shops amplify the poor environmental quality. The progress on the redevelopment of the centre has stalled, and the hoardings in place further compromise the environmental quality of the centre. There is little in the way of green planting, or public realm. The quality of the paving is poor, and the shop fronts are in need of updating. The owners of the centre should be encouraged to improve these matters where possible whilst the long-term options for the redevelopment of the centre are assessed.</p>	Red

Source: PBA assessment, Experian Goad, FOCUS Commercial Property Database

3.4.2 Laindon is clearly struggling for vitality and viability and needs considerable investment and improvement in order to be in a position where it meets the shopping needs of its surrounding residential community. The offer of the centre is limited (but enough to meet some day-to-day needs), but the anchor supermarket is dated and underinvested, and other units only offer a limited range of goods.

- 3.4.3 It is the environmental quality of the centre which gives biggest cause for concern. It suffers from a dated, uninviting external appearance, and the lack of public realm and poor visual appearance do not encourage visitors to stay in the centre. The high numbers of vacant units and low levels of footfall both indicate that it is not widely used by local residents, despite being in a relatively accessible location surrounded by housing.
- 3.4.4 Whilst planning permission exists for the redevelopment of the centre, it is unknown whether implementation is likely to be realised. The Council's current development partner, Swan Housing Association would be the sixth developer in almost two decades. In light of this uncertainty, it is recommended that the Council prioritises the redevelopment of the Laindon Centre, encouraging short term aesthetic improvements (this may include removing the concrete columns and canopies) as well as developing a long-term vision for the centre which will enable it to better fulfil its role and function.

3.5 Pitsea town centre

- 3.5.1 Pitsea town centre lies on the eastern side of the Basildon urban area, at the intersection of a number major intra and inter-urban roads. The centre is dominated by the presence of a Tesco Extra supermarket – the largest supermarket in the Borough and one of the 20 largest supermarkets in the country. A significant programme of regeneration is underway in the 'traditional' element of the town centre, involving the creation of a new Morrisons supermarket, a relocated and enlarged Aldi supermarket, and the development of a new market square. Once complete, these redevelopment works are expected to significantly enhance the town centre.

Table 3.4 – Pitsea health check summary

PPG indicator	Summary for Pitsea town centre	Traffic light score
Diversity of uses	<p>The retail offer in Pitsea town centre is skewed towards convenience good retailing as well as meeting some day-to-day comparison and service needs. The centre contains a large Tesco Extra supermarket alongside branches of Lidl and Aldi. A Morrison's supermarket is under construction as part of regeneration works currently underway. There is also a popular and well-supported market which is now held in the newly-created Market Square. Despite this, there is a clear under-provision in the comparison goods and services offer of the centre, with gaps in the offer including clothing and footwear, electronics and furniture retailers.</p> <p>There are a large number of take-away/fast food restaurants in the centre, which limits the diversity of uses and also serves to bring the overall feel of the centre somewhat downmarket.</p>	
Proportion of vacant street level property	<p>The proportion of vacant property stands at 1.8% which is significantly lower than the current UK average of 12.3%. Majority of the units identified as vacant in the Goad survey (March 2013) were demolished as part of the centre's regeneration. An additional vacant unit adjacent to the proposed Morrison's was consolidated as part of a casino.</p>	
Retailer representation and intentions to	<p>National retailer representation is dominated by the national convenience goods retailers mentioned above. There are also a number of banks and a large number of national fast food chains</p>	

PPG indicator	Summary for Pitsea town centre	Traffic light score
change representation	including Pizza Hut, Dominos, KFC, McDonalds and Greggs. Generally speaking the quality of the retail offer is relatively downmarket.	
Commercial rents and yields	Analysis of recent deals on EGi indicates that the Broadway, High Road, Northlands Pavement and The Parade are the main focus of commercial investment activity. Rents achieved in the last two years, all for premises of less than 60 sqm, range between £210 to £250 per sqm. The largest unit of 130 sqm gross, although achieving a lower rent (£154/sqm), has been let for a longer lease of 15 years as opposed to the standard 10 year leases.	
Pedestrian flows	The town centre is quite fragmented and dominated by the elevated A13 highway and a network of wide surface level streets with fast moving traffic. Pedestrian flows are therefore restricted to using unattractive underpasses. In general the town centre appears to favour cars more than pedestrians. The pedestrian links between the various parts of the town centre are therefore poor. The newly-created Market Square goes some way to providing a focal point for pedestrian activity.	
Accessibility	Accessibility to the town centre is fairly good. The A13 gives motorists direct access to the town centre, the Tesco supermarket and the retail park. The train station is however difficult to get to on foot as it includes using a pedestrian underpass. Bus service provision is generally good.	
Perception of safety/ occurrence of crime	The amount of footfall within the town centre falls outside of retail trading hours due to the limited evening economy. The pedestrian underpasses may also attract criminal activity and can lend the area a feeling of unsafety.	
State of town centre environmental quality	The fragmented nature of the town centre, and the extent to which traffic movements dominate, both compromise the environmental quality of the centre. The regeneration scheme, with the creation of the new market square, clearly represents positive investments in improving the centre's environmental quality, but there is a need for improvements to the appearance and public realm to be extended over a wider area.	

Source: PBA assessment, Experian Goad, FOCUS Commercial Property Database

- 3.5.2 Pitsea town centre is clearly in transition as the regeneration works continue, but the completion of these works will undoubtedly deliver an uplift to the overall vitality and viability of the town centre. There remains however a need to diversify the retail mix in the centre, particularly in respect of improving representation from comparison goods retailers, and reducing the number of fast food / takeaways in the centre. There also remains a need for the different components of the centre to be better linked together, or alternatively, for the Council to define the boundary of the centre more tightly and focus further regeneration within this area.

3.6 Wickford town centre

- 3.6.1 Wickford town centre, in the north-east of the Borough, has also been the subject of a number of recent regeneration initiatives, albeit on a more limited scale than those presently underway in Pitsea. The centre, whilst relatively small in size, contains two shopping centres and two supermarkets. The non-retail offer of the town centre is limited.

Table 3.5 – Wickford health check summary

PPG indicator	Summary for Wickford town centre	Traffic light score
Diversity of uses	The town centre contains two large supermarkets, operated by Co-Operative and Aldi. The town centre also has two small shopping centres, the Ladygate Centre and The Willows. The retail offer is generally medium to down market, and the clothing/fashion retail offer in the town centre is particularly limited. There are a number of independent retailers, and a good range of service providers such as banks and chemists. Leisure options are limited to a small number of restaurants and take away establishments, and the town centre is unlikely to have a significant evening economy. Representations made to the council over the emerging Local Plan seem to suggest that the town centre has reached its capacity and is therefore in need of expansion and improvement.	Orange
Proportion of vacant street level property	The proportion of vacant properties in the town centre is 5% which is lower than the national average of 12.3%. The vacancy rate in the town centre has decreased from the figure of 8% observed at the time of the most recent Experian Goad survey of the centre in 2013.	Green
Retailer representation and intentions to change representation	A fairly good representation of convenience good retailers which include Aldi and the Co-Operative as well as a small Iceland store. There are also a number of banks. Comparison goods retailers present in the centre include New Look, Peacocks, Superdrug and Dorothy Perkins. The food offer is limited to Subway and Pizza Hut in terms of national retailers. We would expect demand for representation to principally be from local/independent retailers, although demand from national retailers may arise for the more modern retail floorspace, e.g. in The Willows.	Orange
Commercial rents and yields	As with the other smaller centres, commercial data on retail premises is limited. However, based on properties currently on the market, there is some evidence on the performance of the town. New build retail floorspace at the Capricorn Centre is currently being marketed at £65 per sqm, achieving yields of 7.6%. At the more centrally located Riverside Place, further new floorspace is being marketed at £174 per sqm and for sale on the basis of 8.4% yield.	Orange
Pedestrian flows	Pedestrian flows are good as the town centre is linear in shape although the northern section of the town centre has less pedestrian footfall than the south. The railway viaduct which	Orange

PPG indicator	Summary for Wickford town centre	Traffic light score
	bisects the town centre acts a visual barrier which interrupts the line of sight.	Orange
Accessibility	Accessibility is fairly good. The train station is not far from the town centre, although improved wayfinding from the station to the centre would be beneficial. There are also a number of bus routes passing through the town centre, which provide frequent connections to Basildon and the greater Essex area. There also appear to be adequate parking provisions provided by both Aldi and the adjacent to the Co-Operative supermarket in the Ladygate Shopping Centre.	Green
Perception of safety/ occurrence of crime	Perception of crime in the town centre can be said to be moderate. The area underneath the railway viaduct is perhaps considered to have the highest perception of crime.	Orange
State of town centre environmental quality	The quality of the town centre public realm could potentially be improved in order to make the two halves of the town centre more cohesive. The architectural quality of the town centre is also generally low. We note the recent investments by Basildon Council in improving the public realm, which include new public toilets, an improved market, improvements to the High Street public realm and a refurbished leisure centre. These make a positive contribution towards improving the overall environmental quality of the town centre.	Orange

Source: PBA assessment, Experian Goad, FOCUS Commercial Property Database

- 3.6.2 Wickford town centre can generally be considered to be performing adequately at present. The retail offer is satisfactory but limited in terms of variety, and it is notable that there is no major 'big-four'-operated supermarket either within the town centre or wider urban area. The recent investments in the town centre public realm are beneficial but further investment is needed to make the town centre more cohesive. It is positive to note the vacancy rate is low.

3.7 Out-of-centre retail provision in the Borough

- 3.7.1 Not all of the retail provision in the Borough is concentrated in the network of town centres. In common with elsewhere in the country, the established town centres compete for expenditure with retail parks and freestanding retail warehouses, as well as a network of large format out-of-centre convenience goods floorspace. Typically this floorspace offers 'bulky goods' retailing, such as DIY goods and furniture – although there is increasing demand from 'high street' retailers to take space in such developments where planning restrictions allow (or can be relaxed).
- 3.7.2 Basildon also has a large purpose-built out-of-town leisure destination, Festival Park, which includes a cinema and complementary leisure uses. The majority of the Borough's out-of-town floorspace is concentrated in the Basildon urban area and centres such as Billericay do not include significant amounts of out-of-centre floorspace.

Table 3.6 — Main out-of-centre retail and leisure floorspace provision in Basildon

Centre	Store / Retail or Leisure Park Name	Main retailers / Operators
Basildon	Mayflower Retail Park	Homebase, Harveys, Sports Direct, Next, Mothercare, Choice, Boots, KFC, McDonalds and Pizza Hut, Tesco
	Pipps Hill Retail Park	Asda, B&Q, Currys/ PC World, Argos, Carphone Warehouse
	Festival Leisure Park	Empire Cinemas, Pizza Hut, Nandos, Pizza Express, McDonalds, Toby Carvery, Envy and Liquid nightclubs.
	Heron Retail Park	Asda, Halfords,
	Vange Retail Park	Homebase
Pitsea	Pitsea Retail Park*	McDonalds, KFC, Lidl, Pets at Home

Source: PBA research *Pitsea Retail Park functions as an extension of Pitsea town centre

3.8 The surrounding network of centres

3.8.1 Surrounding the Borough there is a network of centres which provide competition to the centres within the Borough for expenditure. The principal centres which can be expected to compete with destinations in the Borough — and particularly Basildon town centre — are considered to be **Brentwood**, **Chelmsford**, **Lakeside** and **Southend**, whilst the Council will also be aware that the retail and leisure offer at **Stratford** in East London has also been significantly strengthened through the opening of the Westfield Stratford City development in 2011. We consider the competing centres below.

Brentwood

3.8.2 Brentwood is the main town in the borough of Brentwood and is defined as a town centre in the Brentwood Local Plan. The centre has a good convenience goods provision, which includes a Sainsbury's, Co-op and Iceland as well as independent specialist retailers. The comparison goods offer is also adequate, with a reasonable provision of clothing and footwear retailers, including small branches of Marks & Spencer and Next. Whilst the offer is, like Basildon, largely focussed on meeting day-to-day shopping needs, we would expect that it to provide an alternative shopping destination for residents in the northern part of the Borough.

3.8.3 The retail provision in the centre is supported by a good provision of services uses, including a range of coffee shops and restaurants such as Starbucks and Zizzi. National restaurant operators in the town centre include Nandos, Pizza Express, Prezzo and Chimichanga. Hotel options in Brentwood are however limited but include the budget chain Premier Inn within the town centre. The Brentwood Theatre is the only entertainment venue in the town. It offers a mix of theatre productions and live music gigs. There are no bowling alleys or cinemas in Brentwood.

Chelmsford

3.8.4 Chelmsford is a strong regional shopping destination, with good representation from national retailers, and a significant civic, cultural and leisure destination. We expect Chelmsford could post increasing influence over shopping patterns of residents in the Borough over the plan

period, with the recent commencement of construction of a new retail and leisure development in the city centre, anchored by a John Lewis department store, alongside 25 further retail outlets, a cinema and new restaurants. The scheme is expected to commence trading in 2015, and we expect it to reinforce Chelmsford's position as a regional-level shopping centre.

- 3.8.5 Chelmsford has a number of national hotel chains present within the town centre and the edge of centre. This includes the budget chain Travelodge as well as 2 hotels operated by Best Western. Chelmsford also has an 8-screen Odeon cinema with the independent Chelmsford City Theatres screening additional art house films as well as being the city's main live music and theatre venue. Additional family entertainment includes the 36 lane, Tenpin bowling alley. The facility includes a pool hall, a laser tag room and a café. Chelmsford has a strong representation of national multiple restaurant operators in the town centre. This includes representation from Pizza Express, Prezzo, Pizza Hut, Zizzi's, Café Rouge, Giraffe and Nandos.

Lakeside

- 3.8.6 Lakeside is designated as a new regional centre in the Thurrock Core Strategy. The Core Strategy supports the transformation of the northern part of the Lakeside Basin into a new regional centre. Lakeside incorporates the Lakeside Shopping Centre (LSC), Lakeside Retail Park, Junction Retail Park and a number of large, freestanding stores including Ikea, Costco and Tesco Extra. There is a strong and established retail offer, which benefits from good levels of accessibility from the national road network.
- 3.8.7 The main role of Lakeside at present is as a comparison shopping destination; and LSC in particular is a fashion and department store-led established comparison goods shopping destination. The shopping centre is anchored by large branches of House of Fraser, Marks & Spencer, Debenhams and Primark with an extensive range of supporting clothing & fashion retailers, ranging from budget to upmarket. The retail parks also have a good representation of national retailers, and whilst this is principally 'bulky goods' in nature there is a shift towards 'town centre'-format retailers establishing a trading presence here; for example Lakeside Retail Park includes representation from Next, Sports Direct and Costa Coffee, whilst Junction Retail Park has TK Maxx and 'outlet' stores from Marks & Spencer and Gap.
- 3.8.8 LSC has benefited from recent improvements to its food and drink offer in this respect through the creation of an exterior family dining destination overlooking the central lake. There are a number of coffee shops located in LSC, and drive-through restaurants in the vicinity of the retail parks. Lakeside offers extensive family entertainment and dining options (all of which are run by national multiple operators). This is designed to complement the retail offering and reinforce LSC's role as a comprehensive retail and entertainment venue. Restaurant operators within the shopping centre include Las Iguanas, Nandos, Strada, Café Rouge, Giraffe and Wagamama. Elsewhere in the centre there are branches of Pizza Hut, Yo Sushi, Gourmet Burger Kitchen and Taco Bell.
- 3.8.9 However, Lakeside scores poorly in terms of representation in other service sector categories, such as banks/building societies, hair & beauty salons, travel agents and dry cleaners. This reflects Lakeside's current role as a comparison goods shopping-led destination, rather than a 'traditional' town centre. As with Chelmsford, the future development of Lakeside towards becoming a fully-fledged town centre is likely to represent significant competition for expenditure within Basildon Borough over the course of the plan period.

Southend-on-Sea

- 3.8.10 Southend is the main town in Southend Borough and is defined as a town centre in the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy defines Southend town centre as the first preference for all retail developments in the borough and the centre acts as a sub-regional comparison shopping destination.

- 3.8.11 The town centre features two shopping centres, The Victoria and the Royals, in addition to the high street. The two shopping centres offer a similar retail mix offering a mid-market retail offer with an emphasis on comparison goods retailing. The Victoria includes branches of Argos, Wilkinson, Boots, HMV, Deichmann, Next, New Look and Peacocks in addition to such retail services as banks, a hairdresser, a travel agent and an optician. The Royals includes outlets on Poundland, TK Maxx, Primark, Toni & Guy, Vision Express and Pandora as well as specialist shops. Whilst we do not consider there to be a significant difference in the scale and quality of the retail offer in Southend relative to Basildon, its close proximity to the Borough means there may be some scope for expenditure to be lost.
- 3.8.12 Southend offers a host of dining and leisure options in comparison to Basildon. Southend Pier continues to be a popular local attraction. The pier includes a museum as well as a small amusement park. The city centre hosts an eight screen Odeon Cinema in addition to a number of theatres such as the Palace Theatre, Cliffs Pavilion, and Clifftown Theatre and Studios. A bowling alley completes the family leisure options within Southend. While Southend has a number of dining establishments, there are relatively few national multiple operators within the town including. The offer includes Pizza Hut, Pizza Express, Bella Italia, Ask and Frankie & Benny's. The town centre also hosts budget hotel chains Premier Inn and Travelodge as well as the mid-range hotel chain Park Inn by Radisson.

4 Where are residents currently shopping?

Read this section alongside:

- Volume 2, Appendix D (Study Area plan)
- Volume 2, Appendix E (Quantitative retail need tables – Tables CM1 to CM5 and CV1 to CV5)
- Volume 3 (Household survey results)

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 In this section we set out where residents in Basildon Borough are currently undertaking their spending on convenience (food), comparison (non-food) and leisure goods, establishing how much is spent at centres in the Borough and how much 'leaks' to destinations further afield. We also set out the study area which has been used as the basis of our assessment, and assess the extent of growth in spending on retail and leisure goods which can be expected to come forward over the course of the study period.
- 4.1.2 The findings of this section are informed by a household telephone survey of shopping and leisure patterns, which was undertaken by NEMS Market Research during July 2014. The NEMS data is provided in full at **Volume 3** to this study. The approach to these studies is described in full below.

4.2 Definition of Study Area

- 4.2.1 In order to establish where residents in different parts of the Borough are currently undertaking their retail and leisure spending, it is necessary to firstly define a study area; and secondly split this study area into zones in order for a sufficiently fine-grain of analysis of spending patterns to be provided. Because the geography of the administrative boundaries of the Borough is such that the highest order centres, particularly Basildon, can be expected to draw trade from residents in neighbouring authority areas, we adopt a study area that is wider than the administrative boundaries of the Borough. **Figure 3**¹¹ shows the boundaries of the studies we have adopted for the purposes of our study, which are unchanged from those used in the Basildon Retail Capacity Study (2007).
- 4.2.2 Figure 4.1 also shows how the study area has been sub-divided in order to get an accurate indication of spending patterns for residents in different parts of the Borough, and shows a total of five survey zones, as follows:

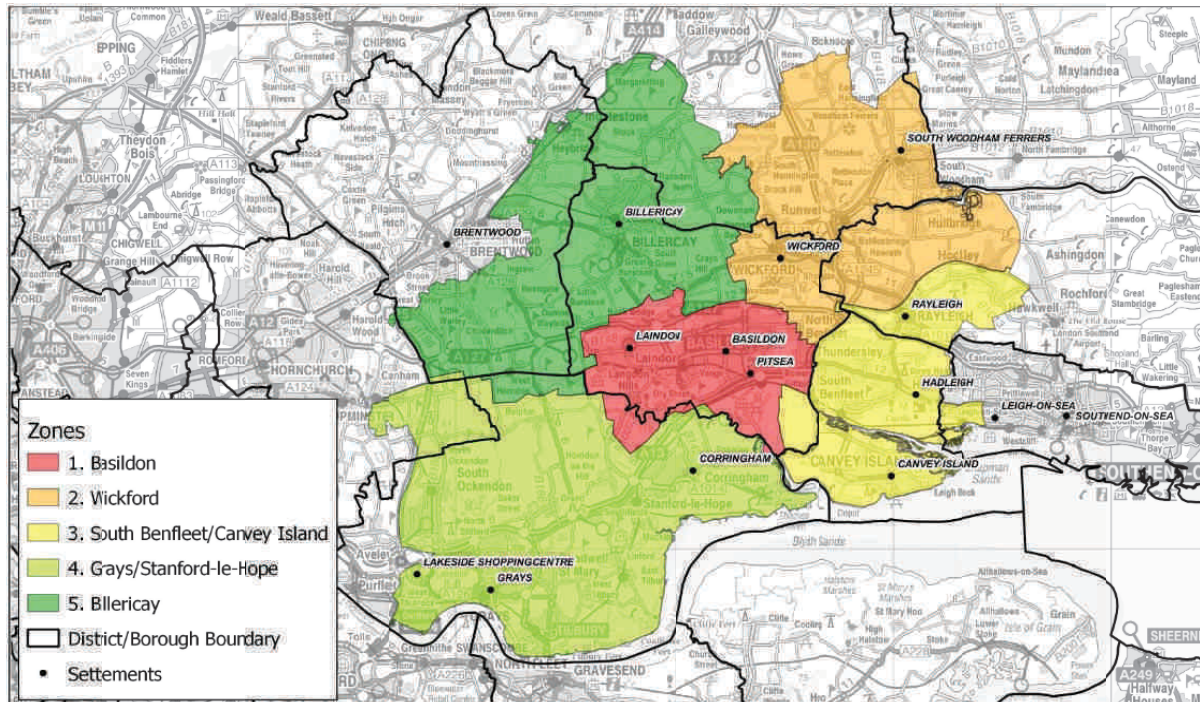
Table 4.1 - Study area zones

Zone	Main centres (zone name in bold)
Zone 1	Basildon (including Basildon town centre, Pitsea and Laindon)
Zone 2	Wickford
Zone 3	South Benfleet, Rayleigh and Canvey Island
Zone 4	Grays , Stanford-le-Hope, Corringham, Chafford Hundred (also includes Lakeside Shopping Centre)
Zone 5	Billericay

¹¹ A larger version of the plan shown at Figure 4.1 is provided at **Appendix D**

- 4.2.3 We therefore use these study zones as the basis of our assessment in the remainder of this report. The zones which contain all or parts of the administrative area of Basildon Borough are zones **1, 2 and 5**, and therefore – reflecting the nature of this study as an evidence base document for the Council – it is in these zones which we focus our attention.

Figure 4.1 — Study area



4.3 Current & Future Spending in Study Area

- 4.3.1 **Appendix E** (Volume 2) sets out the growth in population and expenditure on comparison and convenience goods in the study area, over the study period to 2035. **Table CM1** (for comparison goods) and **Table CV1** (for convenience goods) both show that:

- The study area population at 2014 is 530,646 persons
- This will increase to 537,948 persons by 2016; 557,887 persons by 2021; 577,846 by 2026; 596,829 by 2031; and 611,962 by 2035
- This is an overall growth in population of 82,171 persons.

- 4.3.2 **Table CM2** shows the per capita expenditure on comparison goods across the study area. Annual personal spending on comparison goods differs across the study area, ranging from £2,782 in zone 1 (Basildon), to £4,133 in zone 5 (Billericay) at 2014.

- 4.3.3 **Table CM3** multiplies the population forecasts in Table CM1 by the per capita expenditure forecasts in Table CM2. It shows that, having made allowance for 'special forms of trading' (SFT) (such as online shopping, and using SFT discount rates set out in Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 13), there is currently £1,054m of comparison goods expenditure available to residents in the catchment area. This will increase over the course of the study period as shown in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2 – Comparison goods expenditure growth in study area

Interval	2014	2016	2021	2026	2031	2035
Total comparison goods expenditure, inc SFT deduction (£m)	1,054.15	1,061.90	1,092.52	1,128.60	1,162.58	1,188.95

Source: Table CM3, Appendix E

- 4.3.4 **Table CV3** of **Appendix E** multiplies the population forecasts in Table CV1 (which are identical to those presented in Table CM1) to the per capita spending on convenience goods shown in Table CV2. Per capita spending on convenience goods ranges from £1,873 in zone 1 to £2,369 in zone 5, at 2014. Having made allowance for SFT, Table CV3 shows that total convenience goods expenditure will increase as summarised in **Table 4.3**:

Table 4.3 – Convenience goods expenditure growth in study area

Interval	2014	2016	2021	2026	2031	2035
Total convenience goods expenditure, inc SFT deduction (£m)	1,528.95	1,661.21	1,935.03	2,340.71	2,842.47	3,316.65

Source: Table CV3, Appendix E

4.4 Patterns of Comparison Goods Spending

- 4.4.1 The household survey identifies where residents in the study are currently undertaking their shopping. **Table CM4** (Appendix E) sets out where residents are undertaking their comparison goods shopping in percentage form, and **Table CM5** converts these percentages into monetary values, by applying the percentages in Table CM4 to the total expenditure figures in Table CM3.
- 4.4.2 Of importance is the proportion of expenditure which is retained within the study area, as it is this proportion which is used to inform our estimates of future retail capacity. The row 'total for study area' in Table CM5 shows that, of the total £1,529m of comparison goods expenditure available to residents in the study area, £1,307m is retained by centres and stores within the study area, whilst £222m 'leaks' to destinations outside the study area. That is to say, the study area retains 85% of total available comparison goods expenditure. Given the presence of a higher-order town centre (Basildon) and a major regional shopping centre (Lakeside) within the boundaries of the study area, we consider this to represent a good level of expenditure retention.
- 4.4.3 Table CM5 identifies that within the study area:
- **Basildon town centre** draws a total comparison goods turnover of £322m, or 21% of total comparison goods expenditure;

- The **retail parks in Basildon** also draw significant amounts of comparison goods expenditure — in particular Pipp's Hill (turnover £129m) and Mayflower (turnover £81m) retail parks. There is some overlap in the types of the retail offer between here and stores in the town centre and therefore to an extent they are in direct competition with the town centre for expenditure;
- **Lakeside** is clearly a significant shopping destination for residents of entire study area, with Lakeside Shopping Centre drawing £219m of spending and the adjacent retail parks and other stores (such as Ikea) drawing a further £276m of spending;
- **Wickford** and **Billericay** town centre attract similar levels of turnover at £27m and £26m respectively, with both centres having a catchment area that is principally restricted to their 'local' zones (zones 2 and 5 respectively);
- **Pitsea** district centre draws £35m of comparison goods spending, with two thirds of this (£25m) accounted for by the Tesco Extra store;
- **Laindon** district centre has a low comparison goods turnover of just £3m, with a further £1m of spending going to the nearby Tesco store at Laindon Hills;
- **Rayleigh** (including Rayleigh Weir) attracts £65m of spending, and **Canvey Island** a further £20m

Expenditure leakage

- 4.4.4 The remaining £222m of comparison goods expenditure is spent at destinations outside the study area, with most popular destination being Southend-on-Sea, which attracts £94m of spending; followed by Chelmsford town centre (£45m), destinations in London (including the West End, Westfield Stratford City, Ilford, Romford and Upminster) (£37m) and Brentwood town centre (£10m).

Spending patterns by zone

- 4.4.5 Clearly, spending patterns are not uniform across the study area. **Table 4.4** summarises where residents in each part of the study area are undertaking their comparison goods spending. This helps to determine the extent of catchment areas of individual centres within the study area.

Table 4.4 – Summary of comparison goods spending patterns by zone

Zone	Principal comparison goods shopping destination	Summary of patterns of spending
Zone 1 Basildon	Basildon town centre	<p>Basildon town centre draws comparison goods spending from across all five study area zones, amounting to £322m in total. £141m of this spending comes from residents in its 'local' zone, zone 1, and the town centre is by some distance the most popular comparison goods shopping destination for residents in this zone.</p> <p>The two main retail parks – Pipp's Hill and Mayflower – account for £40m and £12m of spending from residents in zone 1 respectively. This makes them (combined) the second most popular destination for spending.</p>

Zone	Principal comparison goods shopping destination	Summary of patterns of spending
		<p>Excluding the major supermarket developments, Pitsea town centre attracts a turnover of £6m and Laindon £2m, from residents in zone 1, suggesting the latter is likely to be underperforming. Laindon does not draw any significant amounts of trade from beyond zone 1, whereas Pitsea draws over £1m (each) of trade from three of the four remaining survey zones.</p> <p>Stores at Lakeside attract a total of £37m from residents in zone 1. Whilst this is not an insignificant amount, it is the lowest trade draw to Lakeside from any of the five survey zones.</p> <p>There are only limited flows of comparison goods spending from residents of Basildon to Billericay town centre.</p> <p>In total, of the £263m comparison goods spending available to residents of the zone, £221m is spend at stores and centres within Basildon – equivalent to a 'localised retention rate' of 81%. We consider this to be a reasonably strong performance when taking into account the competition from destinations such as Lakeside.</p> <p>96% of comparison goods expenditure available to residents of zone 1 is retained in the study area. Only £11m of comparison goods expenditure 'leaks' outside the study area, suggesting that the majority of residents are able to meet their comparison goods shopping needs without travelling significant distances. Most of the expenditure leakage is to destinations in London.</p>
Zone 2 Wickford	Basildon town centre	<p>Residents in this zone split their comparison goods spending between Basildon town centre and Lakeside – the two locations attract £50m and £49m respectively of spending from residents.</p> <p>In total, a further £62m is spent at Basildon's retail parks (£32m at Mayflower, £30m at Pipp's Hill), and therefore in total these are drawing more turnover from residents than Basildon town centre.</p> <p>Wickford town centre draws £25m of spending from residents in zone 2. There are only modest amounts of inflow to Wickford town centre from elsewhere in the study area.</p> <p>A further £13m of spending is directed towards stores in Rayleigh / Rayleigh Weir</p> <p>85% of comparison goods expenditure available to residents of zone 2 is retained in the study area. £15m of expenditure 'leaks' to Chelmsford and £11m to Southend.</p>
Zone 3 Rayleigh	Lakeside	<p>Again, Basildon and Lakeside compete for expenditure for residents in this zone. Stores at Lakeside attract £76m of spending, whilst stores in Basildon town centre attract £69m. The retail parks in Basildon attract a further £31m of spending.</p>

Zone	Principal comparison goods shopping destination	Summary of patterns of spending
		<p>Rayleigh town centre and stores at Rayleigh Weir combined account for £48m of spending, suggesting that some residents do not travel significant distances for their comparison goods shopping. In addition a further £19m is spent in Canvey Island town centre.</p> <p>There is considerable expenditure leakage to destinations in Southend (£78m), reflecting the fact that many residents are closer to facilities here than they are to higher-order destinations within the study area (i.e. Basildon or Lakeside). The extent of expenditure leakage is such that Southend is the most popular comparison goods shopping destination for residents in this zone.</p>
Zone 4 Grays	Lakeside	<p>The majority of residents in zone 4 look towards Lakeside for their comparison goods shopping. In total stores at Lakeside draw £298m of spending from residents in this zone.</p> <p>Flows to destinations in Basildon are quite limited in comparison, amounting to £46m in total, of which £26m is spent in the town centre.</p> <p>There are also some flows of expenditure to Tilbury (£17m) and Grays (£13m).</p> <p>95% of comparison goods expenditure is retained within the study area.</p>
Zone 5 Billericay	Basildon	<p>£41m of spending is directed towards stores at Lakeside, making this the most popular comparison goods shopping destination for residents in the zone.</p> <p>Basildon town centre attracts £35m of comparison goods spending. Again therefore, the two locations compete for expenditure to a significant extent.</p> <p>The combined turnover of the retail parks in Basildon from residents in zone 5 (£52m) is greater than that of the town centre (£35m).</p> <p>Therefore whilst Basildon in total draws £94m of spending from residents in zone 5, only £35m of this is accounted for by the town centre.</p> <p>Although Billericay is centrally located within the zone, it does not attract such a significant comparison goods turnover, but nevertheless the town centre attracts £25m of spending from residents in the zone. Billericay does not attract significant volumes of spending from elsewhere in the study area.</p> <p>76% of comparison goods spending is retained in the study area. Most of the expenditure 'leakage' is accounted for by Chelmsford, which draws £24m of spending from residents in the zone.</p>

Source: Table CM5, Appendix E

4.4.6 Drawing all of the above information together, **Table 4.5** summarises the top three most popular comparison goods shopping destinations for each of the survey zones (market shares are shown in brackets):

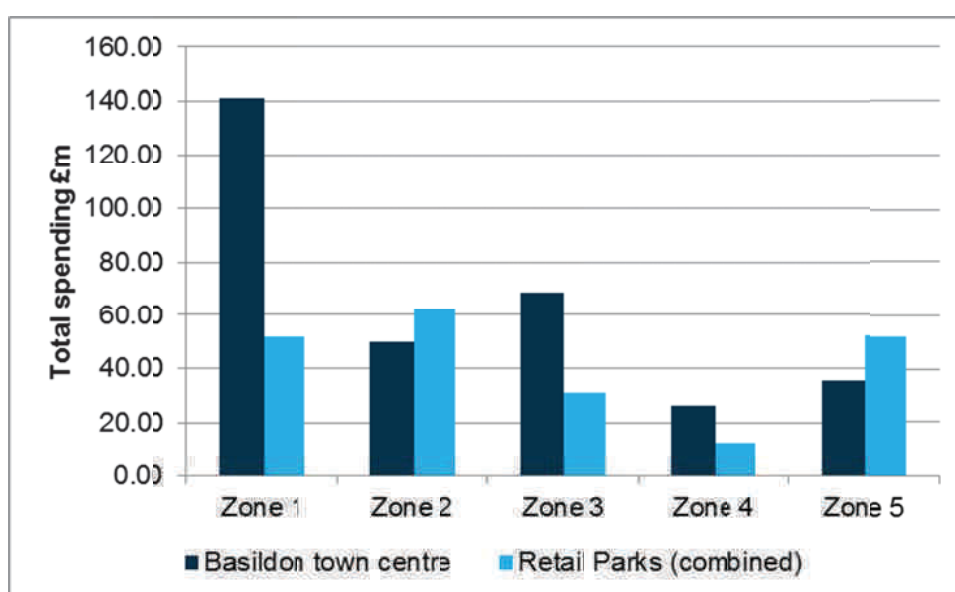
Table 4.5 — Summary of most popular comparison goods shopping destinations, by zone

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
Most popular	Basildon – town centre (52%)	Basildon – town centre (20%)	Southend-on-Sea (20%)	Lakeside (74%)	Lakeside (19%)
2 nd most popular	Basildon – Pipp's Hill Retail Park (15%)	Lakeside (20%)	Lakeside (20%)	Basildon – town centre (7%)	Basildon – town centre (16%)
3 rd most popular	Lakeside (14%)	Basildon – Mayflower Retail Park (13%)	Basildon town centre (18%)	Tilbury (4%)	Basildon – Pipp's Hill Retail Park (16%)

Source: Table CM4, Appendix E

4.4.7 From our analysis of the spending patterns it is apparent that Basildon’s ‘core catchment’ area, in which the majority of residents look towards stores in the town to meet their comparison goods shopping needs, is restricted to zone 1 – i.e. the Basildon urban area. From this zone Basildon town centre attracts a comparison goods market share upwards of 50% (Table CM4, Appendix E). Basildon town centre’s secondary catchment area – from which it attracts market shares of between 10 and 40% - is zones 2, 3 and 5. In each of these zones the town centre faces significant competition for expenditure from Lakeside. Indeed, it is apparent from the findings of the household survey that the presence of Lakeside restricts the extent of what can be considered to be the ‘core catchment’ area of Basildon town centre.

Figure 4.2 — Spending to Basildon town centre and retail parks by zone



Source: Table CM5, Appendix E

- 4.4.8 It is also apparent that whilst Basildon town centre is the dominant retail destination for residents in zone 1, it does face competition from its retail park facilities. The graphic shown in **Figure 4.2** indicates that, for residents in zones 2 and 5, there are greater amounts of spending to the retail parks in Basildon than there are to the town centre – considerably so in the case of zone 5. For zones 3 and 4, the town centre manages to attract a turnover approximately double that of the retail parks, and for zone 1 this figure is close to three times the amount.
- 4.4.9 Our analysis also indicates that none of the other centres in the Borough act as significant comparison goods shopping destinations in their own right, although Pitsea could possibly be considered to be ‘punching above its weight’ on account of the presence of the Tesco Extra store which in itself attracts £9m of comparison goods spend from both zones 1 and 3. Billericay draws £25m of comparison goods spend from its local zone (zone 5), equivalent to an 11% market share, but this is less than residents in this zone spend in Basildon or Lakeside, and the household survey also confirms that some residents in this area look towards Chelmsford for comparison goods shopping. Similarly, Wickford clearly appears to meet some local residents’ needs — it attracts an 11% market share from residents in zone 2 — but has limited appeal as a comparison goods destination beyond this.

4.5 Patterns of Convenience Goods Spending

- 4.5.1 The household telephone survey also assessed patterns of convenience goods shopping across the study area. Convenience goods shopping is generally a more localised activity, although residents are sometimes prepared to travel further afield if they have preference for a particular supermarket brand. There is a good network of foodstores across much of the Borough, and particularly in Basildon.
- 4.5.2 **Table CV5** of Appendix E shows that of the £1,054m convenience goods expenditure available to residents in the study area, £984m is spent within the study area and £70m is spent outside the study area. This is equivalent to a retention rate of 93%, which clearly represents a high level of expenditure retention.
- 4.5.3 A more useful analysis is to look at ‘local’ retention rates – i.e. how much of the expenditure available to residents in each of the five survey zones is actually spent in those survey zones, or whether residents are travelling longer distances to undertake their convenience goods shopping. The ‘localised’ retention rate can be seen in Table CV4, by looking at the row ‘sub-total’ for each survey zone. Table CV4 shows that:
- **Zone 1 (Basildon)** has a localised retention rate of 94%, meaning that virtually all residents who live in the Basildon urban area undertake their convenience goods shopping at stores within Basildon. There is some limited expenditure leakage to the Morrisons store in Canvey Island – this may be because there is currently no Morrisons store trading in Basildon, and thus the planned opening of the Morrisons store in Pitsea may reduce this expenditure leakage further.
 - **Zone 2 (Wickford)** has a localised retention rate of 50%, of which 20% is accounted for by the Aldi store in Wickford town centre. It is noteworthy that none of the ‘big four’ supermarket operators (Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury’s and Tesco) have a store in the Wickford area at present, and therefore many residents travel to supermarkets on the northern side of Basildon.
 - **Zone 3 (Rayleigh)** has a localised retention rate of 68%, with a number of large supermarkets trading in this area, chiefly Sainsbury’s at Rayleigh Weir and Morrisons at Canvey Island. The remaining spending on convenience goods goes to stores in Basildon and Southend.

- **Zone 4 (Grays)** has a localised retention rate of 81%. Residents in this area do not look towards foodstores in Basildon Borough to a significant extent, with the exception of some limited expenditure flows to Tesco Extra at Pitsea.
- **Zone 5 (Billericay)** has by some distance the lowest localised retention rate, at 39%, of which 25% is accounted for by Waitrose in Billericay town centre – the only large supermarket in the town. Foodstores in Basildon account for most of the remaining spending (44% in total), in particular Asda at Pipp's Hill. Some residents also travel to Brentwood to undertake their convenience shopping.

4.5.4 Drawing the above analysis together, **Table 4.6** summarises the most popular convenience goods shopping destinations by zone.

Table 4.6 — Summary of most popular convenience goods shopping destinations, by zone

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
Most popular	Asda, Basildon Eastgate (17%)	Aldi, Wickford (20%)	Morrisons, Canvey Island (17%)	Asda, Tilbury (26%)	Waitrose, Billericay (25%)
2 nd most popular	Tesco Extra, Pitsea (17%)	Tesco Extra, Basildon Mayflower (13%)	Sainsbury's, Rayleigh Weir (13%)	Tesco Extra, Lakeside (11%)	Asda, Basildon Pipp's Hill (14%)
3 rd most popular	Asda, Basildon Pipp's Hill (12%)	Sainsbury's, Basildon (12%)	Morrisons, Hadleigh (10%)	Morrisons, Grays (11%)	Tesco Extra, Basildon Mayflower (11%)

Source: Table CV4, Appendix E

4.5.5 Having identified where residents in the study area are currently undertaking their shopping, the next step of the study is to assess the quantitative need for additional retail floorspace, and we consider this in the following section.

5 Need for retail floorspace

Read this section alongside:

- Volume 2, Appendix E (Quantitative retail need tables)
- Volume 2, Appendix F (Quantitative retail need methodology)
- Volume 2, Appendix G (Summary of technical inputs)

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 In the previous section we set out the current patterns of retail spending in the study area, based on the findings of the household telephone survey of shopping patterns. Having considered this, in this section we set out the ‘need’ for additional retail floorspace over the course of the study period to 2035, having regard to both quantitative capacity forecasts (**Section 5.3 to Section 5.5**) and qualitative observations (**Section 5.6**). At the outset we emphasise that capacity forecasts should be subject to regular review throughout the Council’s Plan period, in order to ensure an up-to-date evidence base which is based on accurate economic and market trends. We also advise that longer-term quantitative forecasts set out in this assessment (post-2021) should be treated as indicative.
- 5.1.2 We therefore firstly consider the quantitative need for retail floorspace in the Borough over the study period. Our assessment is based on a standard methodology (see **Appendix F** of Volume 2 for a summary of our approach), and is based on up-to-date empirical forecasts.
- 5.1.3 The quantitative need forecasts are derived from the total amount of comparison and convenience goods expenditure which is retained within the Borough. In the previous section we have identified the total amount of expenditure which is retained within the study area — but for the purposes of our quantitative forecasts this needs to be adjusted further to remove those parts of the study area which are outside the administrative boundaries of the Borough. Therefore, for the purposes of our quantitative need assessment, we adopt the total expenditure retained within zones 1, 2 and 5, as these contain all of the principal shopping destinations within the Borough. **Table 5.1** summarises the expenditure retention from these zones, relative to that of the wider study area.

Table 5.1 — Summary of expenditure retention in study area and Borough 2014

	Expenditure retained within study area (£m)	Expenditure retained within study area (%)	Expenditure retained within Basildon Borough (zones 1, 2, 5) (£m)	Expenditure retained within Basildon Borough (zones 1, 2, 5) (%)
Comparison goods	1,307	86	644	42
Convenience goods	984	93	520	48

Source: Table CM5, Table CM6, Table CV5, Table CV7, Appendix E. Note: Zone 2 excludes stores in Rayleigh / South Woodham Ferrers

- 5.1.4 Therefore the purposes of our assessment we adopt the retention rates shown in the final column of Table 5.1 – i.e. 42% for comparison goods and 48% for convenience goods. We assume that these retention rates will remain unchanged over the study period; this is considered a robust approach to take in light of the planned additional comparison goods floorspace which is expected to come forward in Lakeside (which lies within the study area in

zone 4) and Chelmsford (which lies a short distance to the north of the study area) over the course of the study period.

5.2 Claims on expenditure

5.2.1 We have set out in the previous section that SFT such as online shopping is removed from our baseline expenditure forecasts, in line with current forecasts of growth in this sector set out in Experian's Retail Planner Briefing Note 13. The total expenditure figures summarised in Table 5.1 make allowance for this.

5.2.2 In addition to SFT, there are two further claims on expenditure growth which need to be taken into account in our capacity projections: commitments to new retail floorspace (which are schemes under construction at the time of the household survey, or extant planning permissions which would result in additional retail floorspace); and sales density growth (which is the growth in turnover for existing retailers within the study area).

Commitments to new retail floorspace

5.2.3 As part of our assessment we have made allowance for the following planning commitments:

- **New Morrisons store, Pitsea** — this store has a gross area of 6,755 sq.m including mezzanine. We estimate the net sales area of this store will be in the region of 4,400 sq.m. Documentation submitted as part of the planning application suggests that the convenience goods floorspace will achieve a turnover of £39.00m¹², and whilst no figure is provided for the comparison goods floorspace, by applying company average floorspace splits to the estimated net sales area we estimate that the comparison goods sales floorspace will achieve a turnover of £9.34m¹³;
- **Block C, Pitsea** — as part of the regeneration of the Pitsea Market a block of three new retail units is under construction, with a gross area of 2,336 sq.m. We estimate these units will achieve a turnover of £8.18m¹⁴, and we assume that all of the floorspace will be used for the sale of comparison goods.

5.2.4 We therefore use these turnovers as deductions on the total amount of comparison and convenience goods expenditure available to the study area.

Sales density growth

5.2.5 Sales density growth (also known as floorspace productivity growth) is the amount of expenditure which is 'ring fenced' for existing floorspace to improve its turnover each year. Allowances for sales density growth are linked to expenditure growth; **Table 5.2** summarises the expenditure growth rates we have used for the purposes of our assessment. It should be noted that, owing to the low forecast levels of expenditure growth for the convenience goods sector, we do not forecast any sales density growth in this sector until 2016 onwards.

¹² D2 Planning Retail Statement, Appendix 1

¹³ Verdict Research estimate that 23% of a typical Morrisons foodstore is used for the sale of comparison goods, with a sales density (turnover per sq.m) of £9,232 per sq.m. These figures are therefore applied to the overall estimated net sales area of the store of 4,400 sq.m, generating a comparison goods net sales area of 1,012 sq.m and an estimated comparison goods turnover of £9.34m.

¹⁴ Based on a gross: net ratio of 70%, generating a net sales area of 1,635 sq.m, and based on a sales density (turnover per sq.m) of £5,000 per sq.m.

Table 5.2 — Sales density growth rates

	Comparison goods sales density growth (% per annum)	Convenience goods sales density growth (% per annum)
To 2016	1.5%	0%
2016 onwards	1.5%	0.3%

Source: Table CM6, Table CV7, Appendix E

5.2.6 This is a blanket sales density growth for all floorspace in the Borough. Inevitably, different types of floorspace have different ability to absorb expenditure growth – relatively modern floorspace (for example much of that in Basildon town centre) is better equipped than the older property stock (for example some of the stock in Billericay town centre). As this is a Borough-wide study, a blanket approach is considered robust.

5.3 Over-Trading of Floorspace

5.3.1 ‘Over-trading’ refers to the both the performance of centres and stores within a catchment when related to ‘benchmark’ (i.e. expected) turnovers, as well as more qualitative indicators such as overcrowding and congestion in stores. It is therefore both a quantitative and qualitative indicator of need.

5.3.2 Quantitatively, for comparison goods floorspace, we do not consider it appropriate to make allowance for the over-trading of town centre floorspace. For convenience goods floorspace, we have undertaken a detailed trading assessment of each of the principal foodstores across the Borough (principally foodstores with a net sales area upwards of 500 sq.m), and compared their trading performance with an expected ‘benchmark’ turnover (that is, the turnover the store would be expected to achieve if trading at company average turnover per sq.m rates). Although this exercise is reliant on the use of operator average data in terms of the split between convenience and comparison goods floorspace within the stores (except in some stores where we have adjusted this based on our own estimate of sales mix from having visited the stores), and is based on national average sales densities, it nevertheless provides a robust, and industry-accepted, method of assessing current trading performance.

5.3.3 Our assessment of foodstore trading performance is set out at **Table CV6 of Appendix E**. This shows that, on aggregate, foodstores across the Borough are presently trading strongly, with a handful of foodstores trading significantly in excess of company average levels. Table CV6 shows that:

- Foodstores in the Basildon urban area (zone 1) are, on aggregate, trading at £38m above average. Stores which are performing particularly strongly include Asda at Pippis Hill (£20m above average) and Aldi at Pitsea (£14m above average). The Tesco Extra store at Pitsea is identified as trading approximately £9m below average¹⁵. Perhaps unsurprisingly given our observations on the wider performance of the centre, the Co-Operative store in the Laindon centre is also shown to be under-trading.
- Foodstores in the Wickford area (zone 2) are on aggregate over-trading by approximately £36m above average. This is principally on account of the very strong trading performance of the Aldi foodstore on Wickford Broadway.

¹⁵ The replacement Aldi store in Pitsea town centre commenced whilst the household survey was underway. It is possible that there may have been a spike in trading performance associated with the opening in this store, which may also reflect the corresponding under-trading of the nearby Tesco Extra store.

- Foodstores in the Billericay area (zone 5) are on aggregate over-trading by £17m above average, which is largely accounted for by a strong trading performance by the Waitrose store in Billericay town centre (£13m above average).

5.3.4 Therefore on aggregate, foodstores across the Borough are over-trading by approximately £91m and we factor this into our capacity assessment.

5.4 Comparison Goods Needs Assessment

5.4.1 Drawing the above inputs together, **Table CM6** (Appendix E) shows the quantitative need for additional comparison goods floorspace in the Borough over the study period to 2035, based on current shopping patterns, and making allowance for sales density growth as discussed above. The table is structured as follows:

- **Row A** shows the total population of the study area at the interval years of 2014, 2016, 2021, 2026, 2031 and 2035.
- **Row B** shows the total comparison goods expenditure available to the study area at the same interval years.
- **Row C** shows the proportion of comparison goods expenditure which is retained within centres in Basildon Borough, which, as shown in Table 5.1, amounts to 42% of total comparison goods expenditure. This is shown in monetary terms in **Row D**, at the base year of 2014 and equivalent figures for each of the interval years under a 'no development' scenario (i.e. assuming that current shopping patterns remain unchanged over the duration of the study period);
- **Row E** shows the amount of expenditure which 'leaks' to destinations outside the District, and is the product of Row B minus Row D;
- **Row F** and **Row G** show in percentage terms (Row F) and monetary terms (Row G), the amount of inflow into the Borough. We have made no allowance for inflow of expenditure into our capacity forecasts and therefore these rows remain blank.
- **Row H** shows the total comparison goods turnover of destinations in the Borough (i.e., the retained expenditure, plus the inflow). This is held constant over the study period to 2035, and the growth in retained expenditure (the 'initial surplus') is shown in **Row I**. Row I therefore shows that by 2016 there will be £55m of surplus comparison goods expenditure in the Study Area, and by 2035 we forecast this figure to increase to £754m.
- **Rows J and K** summarise the 'claims' on comparison goods expenditure, as summarised in **Section 5.2**. Row J shows that sales density growth accounts for £19m by 2016 and £237m by 2035. Row K shows that the comparison goods commitments discussed above amount to a 'claim' of £18m at 2016 and we increase the turnover of these in line with sales density growth rates. **Row L** is a summary of Rows J and K.
- **Rows M to R** finally summarise the surplus expenditure capacity available in the study area for new comparison goods floorspace, and convert this expenditure to physical floorspace requirements:
 - **Row M** shows the 'initial surplus' of comparison goods expenditure which is available to the Borough over the period to 2035 (as per Row I)
 - **Row N** then subtracts the total 'claims' on capacity (as per Row L)
 - **Row O** shows the residual expenditure, in monetary terms, which is available to support new comparison goods floorspace. There is a positive residual for each of the

interval periods – so there is surplus capacity to support new floorspace for each interval period.

- **Row P** shows the sales density, i.e. the turnover per sq.m, which is used to translate the residual expenditure to a floorspace requirement. For the purposes of our assessment we have used a turnover of £5,000 per sq.m at 2014, which increases in line with our sales density growth estimates, to £6,835 per sq.m by 2035.
- **Row Q** shows the net comparison goods floorspace for the Borough, by applying Row O to Row P. Finally, using a gross:net ratio of 70%, **Row R** translates the net requirements to a gross figure.

5.4.2 For ease of reference, **Table 5.3** summarises the quantitative need for additional comparison goods as identified in Table CM6 of Appendix E. The requirements summarised in Table 5.3 are cumulative, and are based on the assumption that current patterns of shopping will remain unchanged for the duration of the study period.

5.4.3 Therefore based on the findings of Table 5.3, the Council needs to plan for up to 15,300 sq.m net additional comparison goods retail floorspace by 2021, and 72,200 sq.m net additional comparison goods floorspace by 2035; although, as advised previously, we would recommend that forecasts beyond 2021 are treated as indicative.

Table 5.3 — Summary of comparison goods floorspace requirements to 2035

Interval	2014	2016	2021	2026	2031	2035
Comparison goods floorspace req't (sqm net)	0	3,540	14,592	<i>32,660</i>	<i>53,669</i>	<i>72,162</i>
Comparison goods floorspace req't (sqm net, rounded)	0	3,500	14,600	<i>32,700</i>	<i>53,700</i>	<i>72,200</i>

Source: Table CM6, Appendix E. Figures are cumulative. Figures in italics are indicative.

5.4.4 These figures should be kept under regular review throughout the study period.

5.5 Convenience Goods Needs Assessment

5.5.1 **Table CV7** of **Appendix E** sets out the quantitative requirements for additional convenience goods floorspace for the Borough over the study period to 2035. The structure of the table follows that of Table CM6, so we do not repeat our description of the steps here. There is an additional row in the table (Row O) which builds in the trading performance of existing foodstores into the capacity projections, in order to take into account the over-trading of the foodstores across the Borough which we have identified above.

5.5.2 **Table 5.4** summarises the quantitative convenience goods floorspace requirements, and identifies that, based on the current shopping patterns and trading performance of foodstores, there is a quantitative need for 6,700 sq.m net convenience goods floorspace in 2014, which then decreases to 3,900 sq.m in 2016 once allowance is made for the opening of the committed Morrisons store at Pitsea. The capacity requirements then increase to 4,300 sq.m net in 2021 and up to 5,900 sq.m by 2035. These represent significant requirements which are likely to require a network of new foodstore developments over the course of the study period.

If no allowance was made for the trading performance of existing foodstores, the requirement would reduce to approximately 5,900 sq.m by 2035.

Table 5.4 — Summary of convenience goods floorspace requirements to 2035

Interval	2014	2016	2021	2026	2031	2035
Convenience goods floorspace req't (sqm net)	6,719	3,891	4,349	<i>4,990</i>	<i>5,522</i>	<i>5,899</i>
Convenience goods floorspace req't (sqm net, rounded)	6,700	3,900	4,300	<i>5,000</i>	<i>5,500</i>	<i>5,900</i>

Source: Table CV7, Appendix E. Figures are cumulative. Figures in italics are indicative.

5.6 Qualitative Need Assessment

- 5.6.1 Both the NPPF and the PPG are silent on the weight to be attached to qualitative retail floorspace needs, and how such needs should be assessed. We therefore revert back to the guidance in the preceding CLG Practice Guidance, which advises that qualitative factors to take into account include identifying gaps in local provision; consumer choice and competition; over-trading; 'location-specific issues', and quality of existing provision. Below we therefore present a discussion of these criteria, which largely overlap with one another, informed by our health check assessments of the town centres (**Section 3**) and our review of the current patterns of shopping (**Section 4**).

Qualitative Comparison Goods Needs

- 5.6.2 Gaps in provision are ultimately subjective; what one particular shopper may consider a gap in provision may not be of particular concern to another. Ultimately, centres need to be able to meet as many day-to-day shopping needs of local residents as possible, to help minimise expenditure leakage and promote sustainable patterns of shopping.
- 5.6.3 The relative lack of comparison goods expenditure leakage from **Basildon town centre** suggests that it is already meeting many residents' needs – but nevertheless there is some leakage of expenditure, particularly to Lakeside, and this will only be exacerbated if proposals for the enhancement of Lakeside's retail offer and its transformation into a 'town centre' come to fruition. The town centre cannot therefore afford to stand still. There are no major sectors which are conspicuously absent from the town centre: clothing and fashion are generally well-represented and there are a good number of anchor stores (Primark, M&S, Debenhams), trading from reasonably-sized units, which drive footfall and are likely to play an important role in the wider vitality and viability of the town centre. The loss of one or more of these anchor stores would be likely to be detrimental to the overall vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 5.6.4 It is apparent that the retail offer of the town centre is towards the value / downmarket end, particularly outside the Eastgate Centre, with some value retailers having two branches in the town centre. The lack of a broader quality retail offer may be what is forcing some residents to travel to locations such as Lakeside, where the retail mix is more varied. There is little for the Council to do in this respect as it cannot control tenant mix in existing units. Moreover, the provision of 'value' retail in the town centre is not, in itself, a bad thing: per capita spend on comparison goods is lowest in zone 1 (which covers all of the Basildon urban area) of all of the survey zones, suggesting that the presence of value retailers is, in fact, catering to local

needs. But without a broader retail mix, Basildon will have a limited ability to pull in expenditure from its surrounding hinterland, which will continue to look towards Lakeside and Chelmsford for its shopping needs – perhaps to a greater extent than they are at present.

- 5.6.5 Reflecting the trends seen in the wider retail sector, with many comparison goods retailers concentrating their activities in a finite number of higher-order comparison goods shopping destinations, we expect demand for comparison goods retail representation – particularly from the mid-market operators – will remain limited, given the proximity of Lakeside. But demand is linked to quality of provision; with the development of modern, larger-floorplan retail floorspace (which could involve the modernisation / amalgamation of existing retail premises), we would expect that there is scope for further retailers to be attracted to the town centre, particularly if opportunities are provided within/adjacent to the existing primary shopping area based around the Eastgate Centre. Therefore, we expect that the attraction of an improved comparison goods offer to the town centre over the course of the study period to be dependent on the provision of new / enlarged floorspace within Basildon town centre.
- 5.6.6 The floorspace across the town centre is relatively modern, although in some secondary areas of the town centre, particularly around the Market Square and South Walk, is beginning to look visually dated and in need of modernisation. Amalgamation of units to provide larger-floorplate units more desirable to modern retailers could likely be achieved across much of the town centre, including in the Eastgate Centre where some units are quite small by modern standards. The most recently-constructed units are at the western end of the town centre, around Towngate / Westgate Retail Park, however most of the units here turn their back on the town centre and therefore contribute little to its overall vitality and viability.
- 5.6.7 The market is an important asset to the town centre, and its relocation will give it greater prominence and assist in providing Basildon with a unique selling point against its competing higher order centres. Unusually, there is no area within the town centre where independent operators dominate with most shopping streets within the town centre given over wholly or partly to national retailers. The provision of smaller-format shop units, coupled with encouraging flexible leasing arrangements, may help to foster a greater independent retail sector presence in the town.
- 5.6.8 Basildon's main qualitative shortcoming lies in the lack of a leisure offer and we discuss this further in the following section.
- 5.6.9 Billericay town centre does not, at present, act as a significant comparison goods shopping destination. Whilst it draws a total of £25m of comparison goods spending from its local zone (Table CM5, Appendix E), this represents just 11% of the total comparison goods expenditure available to residents of zone 5, with the remaining expenditure going to Basildon's town centre and various retail parks, as well as Chelmsford, Lakeside and to a lesser extent Brentwood. We are satisfied that Billericay town centre does a reasonable job of meeting basic day-to-day comparison goods needs (the town centre contains branches of Superdrug and Poundland for example), and at the opposite end of the scale has a reasonably established and high-end independent/ boutique retail sector, there are gaps in the mid-market offer which is what is causing it to lose expenditure. Given the surrounding competition, this is not entirely surprising, particularly when considered alongside the wider trends within the retail sector which this report has discussed.
- 5.6.10 Whilst there are gaps in the retail offer in Billericay (and particularly in the clothing and footwear sectors which are key drivers of footfall) it is difficult to see how these can be easily remedied. The stock of retail floorspace in the town centre is relatively limited, and there are no obvious directions in which the town centre can expand — aside from the well-used surface car parks, there are no obvious development opportunities within or on the edge of the town centre. We therefore consider it likely that Billericay will continue to maintain its function as meeting day-to-day and specialist comparison goods needs; that said applications which are appropriate to the setting of the town centre which provide modern floorspace should be encouraged. We expect that these will be largely piecemeal in nature, however.

- 5.6.11 In **Wickford** we are satisfied that the centre performs reasonably well, and meets day-to-day needs, and there are no over-riding qualitative needs aside from encouraging further diversification of the retail offer and modernisation of the existing unit stock as and when suitable opportunities arise. We do not expect significant amounts of comparison goods floorspace to be promoted in **Pitsea** or **Laindon**, but in the latter it is clearly important that as part of any redevelopment of the centre, the provision of modern units which attract a good diversity of uses to the centre is provided.
- 5.6.12 For all centres, reflecting national planning guidance, any new development should be directed towards town centres in the first instance.

Qualitative Convenience Goods Needs

- 5.6.13 The Borough is served by a reasonable network of foodstores, which our assessment has shown are for the most part trading strongly. The identified over-trading in itself is an indication that there is pent-up demand for additional provision and that some residents may be travelling some distance to undertake their convenience goods shopping.
- 5.6.14 **Basildon town centre** benefits from the provision of a large Asda supermarket which acts as one of the anchor stores to the Eastgate Centre. The store appears generally busy and well supported, although our assessment identifies it as trading slightly below company average levels. However, this store aside, there are no other supermarkets in the town centre, with the exception of a small Iceland store on Market Square, which has a relatively limited product offer. The centre would benefit from a further supermarket to promote customer choice and competition. Whilst it is not considered that additional provision needs to be of the size of the existing Asda store, the provision of a 'metro'-style or discount supermarket on the western side of the town centre would help to improve consumer choice and drive footfall to the more lightly-used western side of the town centre where there is currently no 'anchor' store. We would suggest that a foodstore of up to 1,000 sq.m net would be sufficient in this respect.
- 5.6.15 Elsewhere in the Basildon urban area, there is a clear opportunity to improve convenience goods provision for residents in **Laindon**. Whilst there is a reasonable-sized Tesco store at Langdon Hills serving the western side of Basildon, it operates as a standalone store and is some distance for most residents of the Laindon area to access. The small Lidl store on West Mayne is likely to be insufficient to meet many residents' convenience shopping needs, and this store is also over-trading. There is therefore a qualitative gap in provision for residents in the Laindon area, resulting in many residents travelling further distances to meet their food shopping needs. Allied with the need for significant improvement to the Laindon Centre, there is therefore a clear opportunity for a foodstore-led redevelopment of the Laindon Centre which will provide enhancement of local provision for residents in the Laindon area, and support the wider redevelopment of the Centre.
- 5.6.16 There is not considered to be a qualitative need for additional provision in the **Pitsea** area, with the Morrisons (once built), Aldi and Tesco Extra stores providing sufficient consumer choice.
- 5.6.17 **Billericay** town centre would also benefit from the introduction of a second supermarket to improve consumer choice and reduce the dominant trading position of the Waitrose store. However, as identified above, scope for this to be provided is likely to be limited given the constrained nature of the town centre, and it is more likely that enhancement of provision will come in the form of one or more 'c-stores' operating from existing units. Therefore applications which seek to modify or amalgamate units to provide additional convenience goods shopping choice within Billericay town centre should be considered positively.
- 5.6.18 Additional foodstore provision for **Wickford** may be beneficial to reduce the over-trading of the Aldi store, and the Co-Operative and Iceland stores in the town centre are also trading strongly. Again however, there are few opportunities for outward expansion of the centre, and therefore any improvements to provision can be expected to be principally small-scale in

nature. Given there are three supermarkets currently serving the town centre the qualitative need for additional provision is not considered to be pressing.

5.6.19 Generally speaking, the quality of provision of existing foodstores across the Borough is reasonable. Most supermarkets offer satisfactory shopping environments and relatively modern stores (the exception being the Co-Operative store in the Laindon Centre).

5.7 Summary of Retail Need

5.7.1 Our capacity assessment has identified quantitative requirements for the following amounts of floorspace:

- **Comparison goods:** up to 14,600 sq.m net by 2021, increasing to 72,200 sq.m net by 2035.
- **Convenience goods:** up to 4,300 sq.m net by 2021, increasing to 5,900 sq.m net by 2035.

5.7.2 In **Section 7** we discuss the spatial recommendations for the distribution of this identified requirement across the Borough.

5.7.3 Our qualitative assessment identifies that, for comparison goods provision, there is a need for the quality of the retail offer to be improved in Basildon town centre. This is necessary in order for the centre to fulfil its role and function as the highest order centre in the Borough, and to fully meet the shopping needs not just of residents of Basildon, but also the surrounding network of centres such as Wickford and Billericay. A repositioning of the offer away from the 'value' end will assist in reducing expenditure leakage to destinations such as Lakeside, where the retail offer is more evenly balanced. There may also be a need for internal refurbishment / amalgamation of units to ensure they are attractive to a broad scope of retailers. Modernisation and improvement of the retail property stock in the secondary areas of the centre should be considered a priority.

5.7.4 Elsewhere in the Borough, the qualitative need for additional comparison goods floorspace is considered more limited and is – in the case of Billericay and Wickford – also constrained by the lack of sites which could accommodate any significant expansion of the retail offer. The redevelopment of the Laindon Centre will need to make provision for a sufficient quantum of comparison goods floorspace so as to enable local needs to be better provided for than is currently the case.

5.7.5 Turning to qualitative convenience goods needs, when assessing current provision within centres and the patterns of shopping identified in the household survey, we consider there is a qualitative case for:

- Additional foodstore provision in Basildon town centre, to provide improved consumer choice and competition to the Asda store. It is recommended that this take the form of a medium-sized supermarket in the region of 1,000 sq.m net, and be located towards the western end of the town centre;
- Additional foodstore provision in Billericay town centre, although this is likely to be constrained by a lack of suitable sites. Applications for smaller-format 'c-store' developments in the town centre should be considered favourably.
- A new large-format supermarket in the Laindon area, ideally as an anchor to a redeveloped Laindon Centre.

5.7.6 There is no qualitative requirement for additional foodstore provision in the Pitsea area, and whilst foodstores in the Wickford area are over-trading, there is a good level of consumer

choice and so, when considered alongside the shortage of possible development sites, it is not considered that additional provision in this part of the Borough is a priority.

6 The need for new commercial leisure floorspace

Read this section alongside:

- *Volume 2, Appendix G (Summary of technical inputs)*
- *Volume 2, Appendix H (Quantitative leisure tables)*

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 In this section we provide a summary of the scope for additional commercial leisure and other town centre uses which can be supported in the study area. Our findings are informed by an assessment of the growth of expenditure on leisure goods spending which is expected to come forward in the study area over the period to 2035, supported by the findings of the household survey of shopping and leisure patterns, as discussed previously in the report. The comments set out in this section should be read in conjunction with the leisure capacity quantitative tables set out at **Appendix H to Volume 2**.

6.2 Expenditure Growth in the Leisure Services Sector

6.2.1 Experian provide 2013-based per capita spending on the following key commercial leisure sectors:

- Accommodation services (e.g. hotels, room hire);
- Cultural services (e.g. cinema, theatre, museums, TV subscriptions);
- Games of chance (.e.g. lottery, bingo, bookmakers);
- Hairdressing salons and personal grooming / beauty establishments;
- Recreational and sporting services; and
- Restaurants and cafes

6.2.2 By applying the per capita figure to the projected population growth in the study area, the amount of total expenditure growth in each of these sectors can be identified. This is summarised in **Table 6.1**.

Table 6.1 — Summary of growth in commercial leisure sectors to 2035

	Spending, 2014 (£m)	Spending, 2021 (£m)	Spending, 2035 (£m)	Growth in spending, 2014-35 (£m)
Accommodation services	71.11	83.37	110.85	39.74
Cultural services	159.45	187.00	248.72	89.27
Games of chance	97.60	114.50	152.37	54.76
Hairdressing & beauty	50.84	59.57	79.15	28.31
Recreational & sporting services	51.25	60.07	79.84	28.59
Restaurants & cafes	586.61	687.76	914.46	327.85

Source: Table LC3, Appendix H.

- 6.2.3 Table 6.1 shows that the majority of growth in the commercial leisure sector will come forward in the restaurants and cafes category, which will experience growth of over £300m over the course of the study period. Spending in cultural services and games of chance will increase by £89m and £55m respectively, and each of the commercial leisure sectors will experience growth of over £25m. There, there represents considerable opportunity for centres in the Borough to capitalise on this growth in expenditure, particularly in the case of Basildon where our health checks have identified a shortage in commercial leisure facilities (we discuss this further below).
- 6.2.4 As with the retail sector, it is possible to assess patterns of commercial leisure spending through the household survey of spending patterns which was undertaken in support of this study. An estimate of the quantitative need for new food & drink floorspace can also be forecast.

6.3 Restaurants and cafes

Review of existing provision

- 6.3.1 The borough has a varied mix of restaurant and café provision. Provision is however skewed towards A5 (fast food and takeaways) uses within some of the Borough's centres; Billericay and the Festival Leisure Park being the notable exceptions (although the latter is not a defined centre). Festival Leisure Park can be considered to contain the bulk of the Borough's commercial leisure offering.

Basildon town centre

- 6.3.2 In total there are 25 A3 and A5 units within the Basildon Town Centre. There is a limited range of eating establishments within the town centre. Notable operators present in the town centre include Nandos, Costa, Starbucks, McDonalds, Burger King and Wimpy's. The range and quality of the offer is low. Furthermore, the majority of dining options are fast-food/ take away outlets. The town centre has only three drinking establishments – a bar (the Edge) and two pubs. A third pub: The Towngate closed in the period between the March 2013 Experian Goad Survey and the time of our assessment.
- 6.3.3 Our assessment has identified that there is an under-provision of eating and drinking establishments in Basildon town centre – especially considering the size of the town centre and its status as the highest order centre in the Borough. With this in mind, we are aware of the Borough's regeneration plans for the town centre which seeks to expand the night-time economy by encouraging more A3 and A4 uses. The household survey identifies that only 8.9% of Zone 1 (which covers the Basildon urban area) residents spend money on restaurants within the town centre as opposed to the 30.1% that chooses to dine at the Festival Leisure Park. There is therefore a high leakage of spending away from the town centre. Similarly, only 16.3% of Zone 1 residents spend money in cafes, pubs and bars within Basildon town centre. The number of visitors using the pubs, bars and cafes facilities in Basildon town centre from the surrounding zones is negligible.

Festival Leisure Park

- 6.3.4 Festival Leisure Park has a better mix of eating establishments. In total there are 13 A3 and A5 units within this location. While the centre has no cafes, the range of restaurants available is considered to be varied. There is only one A5 unit (McDonalds) with the rest being A3 units which include mid-range, family-oriented restaurants such as Nandos, Pizza Express, Harvester and TGI Fridays. Recently, Planning permission has been granted for the change of use of one of the nightclub (Sui Generis) units to A3 and D2 use and the re-provision of a smaller nightclub floorspace (Application 14/01184/FULL).

- 6.3.5 Relatively high numbers of Zone 1 (30.1%) and Zone 2 (22.1%) residents spend their money on restaurants within the facility. In addition, 8.5% of Zone 5 residents also spend money on restaurants within the Leisure Park. The facility therefore draws trade from across the whole of Basildon Borough.

Billericay

- 6.3.6 Billericay has the greatest proportion of A3 and A5 uses in the Borough when considered as a proportion of total town centre uses; in total there are 21 units in the town centre. These units consist mainly of restaurants including mid-range chains as Ask Italian, Prezzo and Pizza Express. There are also a high number of independent cafes. A5 operators include McDonalds, Wimpy and Subway. A4 provision is also the highest in the borough with five pubs and one bar in the town centre. Importantly, Billericay retains a high proportion of its local residents spend with its town centre: 50.9% of Zone 5 residents use the A3 and A5 facilities in the town centre. In addition, the centre attracts a modest amount of spend from Zone 1 (3.4%) and Zone 2 (8.2%). Billericay also manages to retain high proportion of spending on pubs, bars and cafes by its residents: 51.5% of Zone 5 residents spend their money in cafes and drinking establishments within the town centre. Billericay can therefore be considered to be performing well in respect of its A3 and A5 uses and this can be expected to contribute to a strong evening economy in the town centre.

Wickford

- 6.3.7 Wickford has 23 A3 and A5 units within its town centre. The bulk of the provision is however A5 uses. There are a high number of takeaways within the town centre, most units are independently operated. The diversity of restaurants on offer is also quite narrow, typically consisting of Indian and Chinese restaurants. There are no national A3 operators within the town centre. In terms of A5 provision, the operators include Subway, Dominos Pizza and Pizza Hut. The A4 offer consists of only two pubs. Based on the household survey results, only 13.9% of Zone 2 residents dine within the Wickford town centre, and the centre does not attract a significant amount of spending from other zones in the study area. The town centre does however appear to attract a higher proportion of spending on pubs, bars and cafes: 26.5% of Zone 2 residents spend money at on cafes and drinking establishments within Wickford town centre.

Pitsea

- 6.3.8 Pitsea has no A3 provision with its town centre. Its entire food provision consists of take-aways and fast food restaurants which amount to 13 A5 units. Operators in the town centre include KFC, Subway, McDonalds and Pizza Hut. The majority of the units are however independently operated. There are no cafes located within the town centre nor are there drinking establishments located within the town centre; there are therefore a number of qualitative gaps in the food and beverage offer.

Laindon

- 6.3.9 Laindon benefits from very limited representation in either the restaurants sector or the cafes and pubs sector. Aside from the public house within the Laindon Centre, there are no other facilities of note which serve the needs of local residents.

Growth in spending

- 6.3.10 Compared to retail, food and drink spending is much more mobile, due to the trend for people to travel longer distances to socialise, and since there are no constraints connected with transporting goods to the home. **Table 6.2** sets out the extent of expenditure retention of the study area in terms of the different types of food and drink spending.

Table 6.2 — Summary of retention of food and drink spending in study area

	Spending, 2014 (£m)	Spending, 2014 (%)
Total spending in Basildon Borough	237	40%
Total spending at centres outside Borough	349	60%
Overall total	587	100%

Source: Table LC6, Appendix H

- 6.3.11 On aggregate, destinations in Basildon Borough retain 40% of the total food and drink spending which is available to residents of the study area. Given the study area also includes Lakeside this is an acceptable performance, but nevertheless it is considered that there remains scope for improvement. The figures need to be considered in the context of the fact that people tend to spend more on food and drink when they are visiting destinations (for example, on a day trip). Therefore, we would not expect the study area to retain 100% of available expenditure.
- 6.3.12 In **Appendix H**, we set out summaries of spending patterns on the two different types of food and drink spending:
- **Table LC4a** shows the market shares for spending on restaurants, and **Table LC4b** shows 'adjusted' market shares which strip out survey responses for 'don't know / don't undertake this type of activity'; and
 - **Tables LC5a and LC5b** show the base and 'adjusted' market shares for spending in pubs, bars, cafes and coffee shops

Indicative need for additional provision

- 6.3.13 As set out above, there is a total of £587m of expenditure available to residents in the study area for spending on food and drink in 2014. **Table LC3 of Appendix H** shows that this will increase to £688m in 2021 and £914m in 2035. We have estimated that 40% of this expenditure is retained by facilities within Basildon Borough, and we therefore use this retention rate as the basis for calculating an indicative floorspace requirement for A3, A4 and A5 floorspace.
- 6.3.14 Both our health check assessment and the results of the household survey confirm that Basildon town centre is under-provided for in terms of commercial leisure floorspace, with a lack of family dining facilities apart from some limited provision in the Eastgate Centre. It is therefore considered that the identified requirements should be directed towards Basildon town centre in the first instance. Whilst development in other centres in the Borough should also be supported, we would expect that this would be more limited in size and can therefore be considered on individual merits. In order to protect the future vitality and viability of the town centre, further expansion of facilities at Festival Leisure Park, or other out-of-centre commercial leisure floorspace, should be resisted (such a strategy would also be supportive of the aims and objectives of the Council's masterplan).
- 6.3.15 As with the retail capacity forecasts, we advise that forecasts beyond 2021 are considered indicative. The capacity forecasts shown in **Table 6.3** apply to development in use classes A3, A4 and A5.

Table 6.3 — Indicative A3, A4 and A5 floorspace requirement for the study area to 2035

Interval	2014	2016	2021	2026	2031	2035
Food & drink floorspace req't (sqm gross)	0	2,090	5,453	9,097	12,971	16,629
Food & drink floorspace req't (sqm gross, rounded)	0	2,100	5,500	9,100	13,000	16,600

Source: Table LC6, Appendix H. Figures are cumulative. Figures in italics are indicative.

- 6.3.16 **Table 6.3** shows that there is a requirement for 5,500 sq.m gross additional food and drink floorspace by 2021, increasing to an indicative requirement of 16,600 sq.m gross by 2035. We recommend that this requirement should, in the first instance, be principally met by a leisure based development on a suitably-located site in Basildon town centre, to broaden the diversity of uses in the centre and meet the aims and objectives of the Council's masterplan. Basildon's principal shortcoming is the absence of a good family dining offer, and the attraction of operators to address this deficiency should be considered a priority. These operators are increasingly attracted to centres as part of wider commercial leisure developments which often include, for example, a cinema.
- 6.3.17 The restaurant / evening dining market in Billericay is well-established and clearly contributes to the wider vitality and viability of the centre. Applications to enhance this further should be considered on their merits as it is unlikely that a significant amount of additional commercial leisure floorspace could be accommodated within the centre. We would anticipate that national operator demand for the centres of Wickford, Pitsea and Laindon will be limited, but diversification of the food and beverage offer within these centres should be supported.

6.4 Cinema and theatre provision

- 6.4.1 There is only one cinema in the Borough at present, which is the 18-screen multiplex operated by Empire Cinemas at Festival Leisure Park. The results of the household survey confirm that this cinema has a dominant effect — attracting market shares of 52.8% of Zone 1 residents, 61.7% of Zone 2 residents and 62.1% of Zone 5 residents (**Table LC7, Appendix H**). The principal competing facility is the Vue Cinema at Lakeside, which attracts a market share of 43.53% from zone 4, but draws very limited trade from residents of the Borough itself.
- 6.4.2 Cinema operators make use of 'screen density' in order to make decisions on expansion or where to locate. Within Basildon there is one cinema complex at Festival Leisure Centre (Empire Cinemas) which has 18 screens. The population of Basildon Borough is 178,500 residents. This gives a screen density of 10.1 screens per 100,000 people for residents in the Borough — above the UK average of 6.0 screens per 100,000 people. However, clearly Basildon's trade draw is not restricted to the Borough's administrative boundaries, and if we assess cinema provision within a twenty-minute drive time, then the population figure increases to 330,000, representing a screen density of 5.5.
- 6.4.3 Furthermore, there is clearly a qualitative need for additional provision. The Empire facility occupies a monopolistic position, and its location on the Festival Leisure Park means that there is no scope for any of the Borough's town centres to benefit from the popularity of this facility (for example in terms of linked trips to cafes, restaurants or shopping). The provision of additional cinema facilities — ideally located within Basildon town centre — would therefore

provide improved consumer choice and competition, as well as offering the potential to, when combined with the underprovision of the family dining offer, provide a considerable contribution to a greater diversity of uses within the centre.

- 6.4.4 We understand that Infrared Capital have submitted a planning application for the partial demolition and redevelopment of Eastgate Shopping Centre to include a 10-screen cinema and additional flexible A1 and A3 retail floorspace (Application number: 14/01433/FULL). Although a resolution to grant planning permission has been made, the decision of the application is still pending the completion of a S106 agreement and no cinema operator has been identified by the developer.
- 6.4.5 The Towngate Theatre is located within Basildon's town centre in St Martin's Square. The theatre runs a varied programme which includes concerts and variety shows. This is an important facility and one which is likely to benefit from an improved evening economy in Basildon town centre. Theatre visits do not attract the same levels of patronage as cinema visits: only 1.9% of Zone 1 residents visited the theatre compared to 1.3% of Zone 2 residents and 0.3% of Zone 5 residents. It is therefore unlikely that additional facilities of this nature will be required over the course of the study period.

6.5 Gym & Leisure Centres

- 6.5.1 There are 12 gyms and leisure facilities located within the Borough. Most of them are located within out of centre locations rather than within town centres. The quality and type of activities on offer as well as the location of the facilities are outlined in **Table 6.4**.

Table 6.4 - Gym and Leisure Centres in Basildon Borough

Gym/ Leisure Centre	Location	Type	Facilities
Gym 4 All	Basildon Town Centre	Private	Fitness suite, spinning, Zumba, Boxing/ MMA
Basildon Sports centre	Basildon	Public	Badminton court, Squash Court, Fitness suite
Basildon Sporting Village	Basildon	Public	Swimming Pool, Gymnastics Centre, Fitness Suite, Climbing Wall, Studios, Netball Courts, Football Pitches, Cricket Pitches, Athletics Stadium, Sports Hall for indoor games
Fitness First Basildon	Festival Leisure Park	Private	Fitness Suite, Steam, Sauna, Spinning, Cardio, Sunbed, Aromatherapy
David Lloyd Basildon	Festival Leisure park	Private	Gym, Physiotherapy, Pool, Fitness Suite, Studio, Tennis, badminton and Squash courts, Cafe
Fitness First Billericay	Billericay	Private	Sauna, steam, fitness suite, swimming pool, group exercise studios, spinning
Studio 360 Fitness	Billericay	Private	Fitness suite, Studios, Massage rooms
Agila Gym	Billericay	Private	Fitness suite, Sauna, Boxing and dance studio

Gym/ Leisure Centre	Location	Type	Facilities
Gymophobics Pitsea	Pitsea	Private	Fitness suite
The Place	Pitsea	Public	Fitness suite, children's play area, snooker room, table tennis room, dance studio, café
Eversley leisure Centre	Basildon	Public	Fitness suite, badminton courts, indoor football courts, activity halls
Wickford Swimming Pool*	Wickford	Public	Swimming pool, leisure centre coming soon including fitness suite, studios, group cycling

Source: PBA desktop research, August 2015

- 6.5.2 Spending on health and fitness appears to be largely localized within individual zones. For instance, Zone 1 respondents were split between Basildon town centre (5.1%), Festival Leisure Park (4.7%) and other locations within Basildon such as the Basildon Sporting Village (6.7%). For Zone 2, 8.2% of the respondents used gyms within Wickford; however 6.7% went to Festival Leisure Park. Similarly, Zone 5 residents spent the highest proportion within Billericay (16.9%) however a significant proportion also used gym facilities at the Festival Leisure Centre (7.4%).
- 6.5.3 The Business in Sport and Leisure (BISL) handbook (2009¹⁶) states that 12% of the UK population has gym membership. The resident population of the borough is 178,500. Assuming that gym memberships are in line with the national average, there are a total of 14,875 gym memberships in the Borough. As detailed in Table 6.4 above, there are currently 12 gyms and leisure centres in the Borough. This gives an average of 1,240 members per facility.
- 6.5.4 The BISL handbook states that at March 2008 there were 5,775 private facilities with a membership base of 7.2 million members. This gives an average of 1,251 members per facility. In this regard the average number of members per facility within the Borough is slightly lower than the national average. This means that there is no clear quantitative need for additional capacity within the Borough as the current facilities adequately meet the borough's need.
- 6.5.5 The current facilities on offer are of good to high quality. Some centres such as the Basildon Sporting Village are of regional significance and from our assessment appear to offer a wide range of high quality facilities. Whilst much of the offer appears geared towards privately-operated facilities, we note that the Council has recently invested in its own facilities, for example by extending and refurbishing The Place in Pitsea town centre as part of the wider regeneration initiatives in the town centre.
- 6.5.6 As with the retail provision, we note that residents' access to leisure facilities in the Laindon area is poor, with no Council operated or private facilities with easy access for residents.

6.6 Family Entertainment

- 6.6.1 'Family entertainment' (which includes facilities such as ten-pin bowling and ice-skating) provision in the borough is fairly limited and split between Basildon town centre and Festival Leisure Park. Until recently (September 2015) there are two bowling facilities: the Basildon Bowl & Quasar Centre in Basildon town centre, which included a ten-lane bowling alley, and

¹⁶ The 2009 publication remains the most recent

Hollywood Bowl at Festival Leisure Park, which includes a 26-lane bowling facility as well as outdoor wakeboarding. However, the former has now closed and, whilst its future has yet to be confirmed, press reports indicate that it is unlikely to reopen as bowling lanes.

- 6.6.2 As expected, Festival Leisure Park is the single biggest family entertainment venue for residents in the Borough. According to the household survey the figures were 34.1% for residents of Zone 1, 44.8% for residents of Zone 2 and 21.4% for residents of Zone 5.
- 6.6.3 Whilst residents of the Borough are considered to be reasonably provided for in respect of family entertainment facilities, the closure of the town centre facility means that there is no provision within any of the town centres. The fact that facilities are concentrated within the Basildon urban area (and corresponding absence of facilities in any of the Borough's other town centres) means that some residents will invariably be travelling a distance to access them; however, facilities of this nature typically only locate in larger population centres and thus the scope for their introduction into the smaller centres is likely to be more limited. It is considered that opportunities to enhance provision in Basildon town centre should be supported.

6.7 Games of Chance

- 6.7.1 Compared to the other commercial leisure sectors discussed here, games of chance is a relatively niche activity and the results of the household survey confirms that most residents in the study area do not participate in it.
- 6.7.2 There are two bingo halls within the Borough, one in Basildon town centre and the other in Pitsea. Spending on bingo, casinos and bookmakers is somewhat localised. 8.9% of Zone 1 spends most of their money within Basildon town centre. Southend-on-Sea is a popular alternative with 5.0% of Zone 1 residents choosing to spend their money there. Similarly, 5.5% of Zone 2 residents spend their money within Wickford town centre however, 7.9% spend it in Southend-on-Sea. This trend is similarly echoed in Zone 5 where 2.9% of the residents spend their money in Billericay as compared to 4.7% in Southend-on-Sea.
- 6.7.3 Whilst there may be some limited potential for expenditure claw-back, it is not considered that this represents a priority area of concern, particularly as activities of this nature are increasingly undertaken online.

6.8 Hotel Provision

- 6.8.1 The Borough has a good provision of mid-range and budget hotels. Hotel Provision within Basildon town centre includes the Holiday Inn, Premier Inn at Festival Leisure Park, Premier Inn in East Mayne and the Travelodge Hotel. Other hotels within the Borough include the Premier Inn in Wickford.

6.9 Summary of commercial leisure needs

- 6.9.1 We have undertaken a quantitative and qualitative assessment of commercial leisure needs for the Borough, which has identified the following:
- There is scope for a considerable qualitative enhancement of the A3 and A4 offer within Basildon town centre and to a lesser extent, Pitsea and Wickford. Accordingly it is recommended that the majority of the identified floorspace capacity of 5,500 sq.m gross A3, A4 and A5 floorspace by 2021, and 16,600 sq.m gross by 2035, is directed towards improving provision in Basildon town centre to enable it to genuinely compete with the current facilities at Festival Leisure Park and elsewhere outside the Borough.
 - There is a qualitative need to provide additional cinema facilities, as current facilities at Festival Leisure Park enjoy a monopoly over visitor spending and do not contribute to the

vitality and viability of any town centres. Allied with the identified requirement for additional A3 / A4 facilities, we consider the ambitions of the Masterplan for a leisure-based scheme in Basildon town centre to remain an appropriate ambition.

- The provision of gym and leisure facilities within the borough appears to be adequate at the moment.
- There is potential to expand the family entertainment offer outside the Festival Retail Park but this would need to be carefully considered. Any additional provision should be concentrated in Basildon town centre.
- Expansion / intensification of facilities at Festival Leisure Park should be resisted.

7 Strategic housing growth

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Section 5 set out quantitative need for further retail floorspace within the Borough of the following order:

- **Comparison goods:** up to 14,600 sq.m net by 2021, increasing to 72,200 sq.m net by 2035.
- **Convenience goods:** up to 4,300 sq.m net by 2021, increasing to 5,900 sq.m net by 2035.

7.1.2 In addition, the following qualitative conclusions were reached:

- Additional foodstore provision in Basildon town centre, to provide improved consumer choice and competition to the Asda store. It is recommended that this take the form of a medium-sized supermarket in the region of 1,000 sq.m net, and be located towards the western end of the town centre;
- Additional foodstore provision in Billericay town centre, although this is likely to be constrained by a lack of suitable sites. Applications for smaller-format 'c-store' developments in the town centre should be considered favourably.
- A new large-format supermarket in the Laindon area, ideally as an anchor to a redeveloped Laindon Centre.
- No qualitative requirement for additional foodstore provision in the Pitsea area;
- In relation to Wickford, given the level of consumer choice and shortage of development sites, additional provision in this part of the Borough is a priority.

7.1.3 However, in coming to recommendations on the distribution of additional floorspace, it is also relevant to consider the anticipated distribution of housing growth within the Borough, primarily because this growth is likely to require extensions to existing settlements and potentially the creation of new settlements within Basildon Borough.

7.1.4 The CSRPOP sets out three spatial options for growth within the Borough, namely:

- Proportionate distribution to the main towns (Spatial Option 2A);
- Growth focused on Billericay and Wickford (2B);
- Growth focused on Basildon (2C)

7.1.5 Following the public consultation of that stage of the Core Strategy, BBC are currently considering 29 strategic sites across Basildon Borough, including several that could form part of a new settlement which straddles the Borough's western boundary with Brentwood, Dunton Garden Suburb. The broad distribution of growth of growth is summarised as follows:

- North Benfleet/Bowers Gifford: c. 325 ha of land to the east of Basildon which could accommodate in the order of 5,000 new homes;
- South Billericay: 265 ha of land to the south of the town, particularly focused around Little Burstead which could accommodate in the order of 2,000 new homes.

- South Wickford: 150 ha to the south of the town which could accommodate in the order of 750 new dwellings
- West Wickford: three sites to north and south of London Road, together with a further site to the north of the railway line which could accommodate up to c. 1,400 homes.
- Dunton Garden Suburb: c.140 ha of land to the west of Laindon which could form part of a larger settlement which would include land within Brentwood.

7.1.6 It is acknowledged that this does not include all the identified locations for growth; however, these are considered to be the main clusters of additional housing, whereas other sites are more closely related to the existing settlements. In the context of the purpose of this report, it is the former which are considered in detail.

7.1.7 This section of the report provides an appraisal of those sites in terms of the need for any retail provision and whether that provision might be viable, as well as the impact that provision might have on the existing network of centres.

7.2 Quantitative need

7.2.1 As set out in Section 5, the preceding assessment of quantitative need took account of population growth across the Borough with an additional 77,500 residents anticipated in the period to 2035. In order to apportion this growth across the main areas of growth, it is relevant to the need that might be generated by those extensions in isolation. In doing this, it should be noted that these estimations are need are already included within the global figures set out above for the Borough as a whole and should not be treated as additional to those estimations of quantitative need.

7.2.2 This assessment is based on the following inputs:

- The existing average household size in Basildon Borough, derived from ONS-based population estimates (2013) has been applied to the urban extensions to establish future population;
- Average per capita expenditure estimates for convenience and comparison goods derived from Experian Retail Planner MMG3 for the Study Area;
- Expenditure forecasting based on ERPBN have been applied to project available expenditure forward to 2035;
- An allowance for special forms of trading (SFT), derived from ERPBN, has been made and deducted at source;
- It is assumed that all strategic sites will be completed by the end of the plan period i.e. 2035;
- Sales densities as set out in Appendix E in 2035 are applied to provide a potential net floorspace figure;
- No account is taken of phasing of development.

7.2.3 Table 7.1 below summarises need generated by the identified strategic sites set out at paragraph 7.1.5. It should be reiterated that, because these figures rely on expenditure growth predictions over a 21-year period from the 2013 base data, these capacity figures should be treated with caution.

Table 7.1 – Retail capacity generated by key strategic housing sites – unadjusted

	Units	Population	Convenience goods (£M)	Net sales (sqm)	Comparison goods (£M)	Net sales (sqm)
North Benfleet	5,050	12,053	£24.01	1,837	£66.98	10,401
South Billericay	2,000	4,774	£9.51	727	£26.53	4,119
South Wickford	1,150	2,745	£5.47	418	£15.25	2,368
West Wickford	1,380	3,294	£6.56	502	£18.30	2,842
Dunton	2,040	4,869	£9.70	742	£27.06	4,201

7.2.4 The table above does not factor in landscaping constraints associated with the strategic sites. In most instances, this reduces the capacity of the sites.

Table 7.2 – Retail capacity generated by key strategic housing sites – adjusted

	Units	Population	Convenience goods (£M)	Net sales (sqm)	Comparison goods (£M)	Net sales (sqm)
North Benfleet	1,975	4,714	£9.39	718	£26.20	4,068
South Billericay	1,270	3,031	£6.04	462	£16.84	2,616
South Wickford	870	2,077	£4.14	316	£11.54	1,792
West Wickford	1,160	2,769	£5.52	422	£15.39	2,389
Dunton	890	2,124	£4.23	324	£11.80	1,833

7.2.5 Irrespective of the specific residential capacity of the sites, it must be borne in mind that it would not be reasonable to expect all the need generated to be met through new retail floorspace provided as part of these strategic sites, nor would it, having regard particularly to existing comparison goods provision, be reasonable to expect that all this expenditure would be absorbed by facilities within Basildon given the presence of larger competing centres outside the Borough.

7.2.6 The following section examines the context of each of the five strategic sites (adjusted capacity) in order to provide robust recommendations on the quantum of development that might be accommodated as part of any development.

7.3 Where should the need be met?

- 7.3.1 In considering any additional facilities to be provided as part the anticipated extensions, it is important to take account of:
- The effect any new provision would have on existing town centres;
 - The size of the existing town and the existing town centre i.e. in terms of whether any new need generated by the urban extensions would be most sustainably met through the enhancement of an existing centre;
 - The type of need that any facilities in the urban extension would be expected to meet;
 - The extent to which it is reasonable to expect new spending associated with the urban extensions to be met through any new facilities within those extensions;
 - Whether the needs of any the existing population near the urban extensions could be more sustainably served by new facilities as part of a planned local centre;
- 7.3.2 Having regard to the aspiration that the urban extensions should be sustainable, it is expected any new provision should be focused on meeting a proportion of the day-to-day needs of local residents. It is not intended that any development should act as an 'attractor' beyond the local area; nor is it intended that any local centre or parade should prejudice the hierarchy of centres already in place. On this basis, retention of 5-10% of comparison need could be regarded as sustainable.

North Benfleet/Bowers Gifford

- 7.3.3 This is located to the east of Pitsea; whilst the southern extent of the sites are estimated to be two kilometres from the existing centre, the sites extend up to the A127 (c. 4km).
- 7.3.4 Although the conclusions in relation to qualitative need indicated that there was no requirement in Pitsea, given the scale of potential new housing at North Benfleet, it is considered prudent to plan for further retail provision as part of any strategic housing growth.
- 7.3.5 As set out in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 above, new residents could generate in the order of £26m of convenience goods need and £57m of comparison goods need. Whilst the proximity of the strong convenience offer at Pitsea, together with the out-of-centre Sainsbury's store is likely to curtail the potential to retain expenditure, may serve to limit commercial interest, the corollary of this is that any new provision at North Benfleet is unlikely to prejudice the function of Pitsea.
- 7.3.6 On this basis, it is considered that it would be pragmatic to plan for a small local centre, focused on convenience and service uses as part of an urban extension in this location. However, having regard to the separate sites and therefore potential uncertainty about the amount of floorspace that could come forward, BBC should be mindful of allowing too much floorspace at the outset. It is suggested that drawing on further intelligence on the likely delivery of the strategic sites, BBC should formulate a strategy for the location and timing of retail provision at North Benfleet. Based on the projected capacity, it is recommended that this should be capped at 1,000 sqm net, with no individual unit exceeding 300 sqm net.

South Wickford

- 7.3.7 The adjusted capacity for South Wickford suggests that in the order 870 units could be accommodated, generating expenditure to support up to 320 sqm of convenience floorspace and 1,790 sqm of comparison floorspace; however, much of this expenditure will be absorbed by existing facilities elsewhere in the Borough.

- 7.3.8 Whilst this is located within close proximity of the North Benfleet site, the A127 presents a barrier to movement that is not likely to be overcome. The likelihood of forming meaningful linkages with development at North Benfleet is low such that it is not realistic to expect that future residents at South Wickford would look to North Benfleet to meet every day local shopping needs.
- 7.3.9 Any provision as part of an extension to the urban area should be balanced against the recommendation to improve convenience shopping provision in Wickford, which in terms of the main grocers, comprises a 1,970 sqm net Co-op and 373 sqm Iceland. Accordingly, whilst it may be appropriate to plan for small amount of convenience and retail service provision, this should not prejudice improvement to the offer in Wickford itself. The risk is that the commercial accessibility, due to its southern boundary on the A127, could result in development of an inappropriate scale that is catering towards non-local retail requirements. Any development should therefore be carefully controlled.
- 7.3.10 The urban extension could support a modest shopping parade capped at 400 sqm net to ensure the development is sustainable. Any retail floorspace proposed as part of a planning application should be subject to impact testing and the sequential approach to ensure that any development does not prejudice aspirations for Wickford.

West Wickford

- 7.3.11 Up to 1,160 units could be accommodated across four strategic sites to the west of Wickford, generating expenditure in the order of £20m. Again though when deductions are made for the majority of comparison expenditure to be focused on Basildon and Wickford town centres, as well as leaving the Borough entirely, the amount that could be sustainably supported in the local area is more limited.
- 7.3.12 It should be noted also that one of the strategic sites is separated from the other three by a railway line as well as open countryside. This serves to reduce the critical mass of new housing in this part of the Borough.
- 7.3.13 Given the aspirations to improve Wickford town centre itself, it is considered that there is no overriding need to make special allowance for new retail floorspace in the west of Wickford. Any application that might include such floorspace should be considered on its merits, including demonstrating compliance with the sequential approach.

South Billericay

- 7.3.14 The adjusted capacity for the strategic sites indicates that in the order of 1,270 dwellings could be accommodated across a number of sites. Whilst this is a substantial amount of housing, it should be noted that the sites are spread across the southern fringes of the existing settlement.
- 7.3.15 Given the limited potential to address overtrading through the provision of a new store within the town centre, planning for some day-to-day retail space would be sensible. However, the fragmented nature of the strategic sites means that there is no clear critical mass where activities for new residents would logically be focused. Furthermore, there is a risk that if the sites are being promoted separately, each developer will seek to introduce commercial provision which in cumulative terms could be detrimental to vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 7.3.16 It is recommended that there may be scope for introducing retail provision of a limited scale as part of small local centre or parade. This should be focused in one location; this could be on one of the strategic sites to the south west of the existing built up area where the majority of housing is focused. It is recommended that floorspace should not exceed 500 sqm (net) and that this should be provided over a number of units, primarily comprising convenience or

service uses. Any application should be subject to assessment in sequential terms, including considering the relative benefits of other strategic sites around the town as well as Billericay town centre. Applicants should also be required to demonstrate that there is no likelihood of a significant adverse impact on Billericay town centre.

Dunton Garden Suburb

- 7.3.17 Basildon and Brentwood Councils consulted on the potential for cross-boundary development on land west of Laindon, Basildon and east of West Horndon, Brentwood in January 2015. The development could accommodate between 4,000 to 6,000 homes. More recent capacity work indicates that the adjusted capacity on those sites located within Basildon Borough is c.900 units.
- 7.3.18 In the event that significant development is pursued as part of a garden suburb, it is recommended that provision should be made for a sustainable level of retail floorspace. However, this cannot be done in isolation and requires co-operation with Brentwood to determine the most appropriate location and size of a local centre. The key consideration will be the impact that might have on regeneration in Laindon which includes securing a new foodstore.
- 7.3.19 Based on the information above and the strategic sites within Basildon Borough, it is not considered appropriate at this juncture to forecast an amount of retail floorspace. This should be progressed in more detail in consultation with Brentwood.

8 Recommendations

8.1 Need for new floorspace

8.1.1 The NPPF (para. 161) requires evidence on quantitative and qualitative needs for retail development over the plan period. Quantitative need refers to how much floorspace is required whereas qualitative need introduces a requirement to consider what type of floorspace is required. Both elements have been considered in order to understand policy formulation.

8.1.2 Table 8.1 summarises the comparison and convenience retail need identified across the study period.

Table 8.1 – Quantitative need for retail floorspace

	2016	2021	2026	2031	2035
Comparison goods					
Net (sqm)	3,540	14,592	32,660	53,669	72,162
Gross (sqm)	5,057	20,845	46,656	76,670	103,088
Convenience goods					
Net (sqm)	3,891	4,349	4,990	5,522	5,899
Gross (sqm)	5,986	6,691	7,676	8,496	9,076

8.1.3 Whilst the quantitative assessment of needs for retail floorspace is formulaic and rather standardised, the approach to qualitative needs can be more flexible and take into account local factors such as quality of existing provision.

8.1.4 The following qualitative needs have been identified for Basildon Borough

- Additional foodstore provision in Basildon town centre, to provide improved consumer choice and competition to the Asda store. It is recommended that this take the form of a medium-sized supermarket in the region of 1,000 sq.m net, and be located towards the western end of the town centre;
- Additional foodstore provision in Billericay town centre, although this is likely to be constrained by a lack of suitable sites. Applications for smaller-format 'c-store' developments in the town centre should be considered favourably;
- A new large-format supermarket in the Laindon area, ideally as an anchor to a redeveloped Laindon Centre;
- There is scope for a considerable qualitative enhancement of the A3 and A4 offer within Basildon town centre and to a lesser extent, Pitsea and Wickford. Accordingly it is recommended that the majority of the identified floorspace capacity of 5,500 sq.m gross A3, A4 and A5 floorspace by 2021, and 16,600 sq.m gross by 2035, is directed towards improving provision in Basildon town centre to enable it to genuinely compete with the current facilities at Festival Leisure Park and elsewhere outside the Borough;

- There is a qualitative need to provide additional cinema facilities, as current facilities at Festival Leisure Park enjoy a monopoly over visitor spending and do not contribute to the vitality and viability of any town centres. Allied with the identified requirement for additional A3 / A4 facilities, we consider the ambitions of the Masterplan for a leisure-based scheme in Basildon town centre to remain an appropriate ambition;
- There is potential to expand the family entertainment offer outside the Festival Retail Park but this would need to be carefully considered. Any additional provision should be concentrated in Basildon town centre;
- Expansion/intensification of facilities at Festival Leisure Park should be resisted.

8.1.5 In addition, the strategic recommendations for the Borough are as follows:

- The majority of additional retail floorspace should be directed to Basildon town centre;
- A specified amount of comparison goods floorspace could be allocated for the provision of out of centre bulky goods retail development (limited to the sale of specific goods) subject to sufficient controls to ensure no significant adverse impact;
- In areas of significant residential growth it will be important to test whether existing centres meet local needs (for convenience and services) and to allocate additional floorspace as required; and,
- Retail developments or extensions which improve the quality of provision in Borough and Local centres should be encouraged provided that they are of an appropriate scale. Applications should be considered on their individual merits.

8.2 Policy recommendations

8.2.1 The NPPF requires a definition of a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic change. Based on the evidence we have collected, we suggest retaining the current Borough-wide retail hierarchy.

8.2.2 The NPPF is clear in its requirement for the sequential test to be applied and impact assessment to be undertaken when considering applications for main town centres uses that are not in an existing centre and not consistent with an up-to-date Local Plan. However, the NPPF also provides local authorities with flexibility to set its own policies “for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. In PBA’s view, the Council should take this opportunity to set its own policies taking into account some of the local circumstances we have identified in this study.

8.2.3 The established NPPF tests for a sequential test and impact assessment should be included in policy, as set out in paragraphs 24 and 26 in the NPPF. However, it is also considered that a further local impact test should be introduced into policy. Thus, as well as the NPPF impact test, the policy should require impact assessments for proposals outside town centres to consider the following:

- The extent to which the market profile of the development proposed will compete with existing facilities in town centres
- The potential for relocation of businesses currently trading in town centre to locations out of centre
- The impact on linked trip spending between different town centre uses or businesses

- The cumulative effect of more than one development coming forward at the same time
 - The impact through trade diversion on the role and function of a town centre
- 8.2.4 We consider that the local impact considerations ought to be scoped out carefully with the community to ensure that they protect town centres but also provide a robust basis against which to judge planning applications for town centre uses that are outside town centres.
- 8.2.5 Finally, it is appreciated that the NPPF provides an opportunity to set a local impact threshold (with the default being 2,500 sqm). In our view 2,500 sqm is too high for Basildon given that units of around 500 sqm could meet the requirements for various national retailers and could therefore cause a significant adverse impact on Basildon and other centres depending on the occupier and location. Using the default would mean such developments would not need an impact assessment under the NPPF. Therefore, we consider that the impact threshold should be as follows:
- Outside Regional/Town/District Centres: 500 sqm
 - Outside Local Centres: 200 sqm
- 8.2.6 It will be important that policy is drafted to ensure clarity on where the threshold applies. The threshold should be based on the nearest centre to the site in question. To avoid cumulative developments that exceed this threshold, it is considered that an impact assessment should be required if the threshold is breached in any one year by more than one planning application.
- 8.2.7 As set out in Section 2, there is a drive towards greater flexibility in the planning system to support high streets, particularly to enable a faster response to the wider retail which have meant that there is an oversupply of retail floorspace that is not fit for purpose and that there is increased demand for retail services and leisure floorspace within town centres.
- 8.2.8 The permitted development regime therefore now allows, subject to prior approval from the local planning authority, the conversion of existing retail and financial service (Use Classes A1 and A2) floorspace into food and drink (Use Classes A3 to A5) uses, leisure uses (Use Class D2) and residential (Use Class C3). Whilst it is acknowledged that these rights are subject to floorspace caps, given the typical unit sizes within the Borough's centres, the majority of retail floorspace within the centre would be below the upper threshold. This is material when considering the effectiveness of a policy which sought to retain the degree of restriction imposed by the current development plan policies.
- 8.2.9 Furthermore, it should be noted that under the prior approval process, the development plan is not a material consideration; instead, local authorities are obliged to consider whether the loss of existing use would have an 'undesirable impact' on the provision of that type service/use and/or if, located within a key shopping area, the sustainability of that shopping area. In addition, it is important to note that 'key shopping area' as set out in the GPDO 2015 is not the same as any of the NPPF definitions of town centre, primary shopping area or shopping frontages. Similarly, the definition of 'undesirable impact' is not specified so is considerably more wide ranging than the 'significant adverse impact' set out in the NPPF providing the Council with powers to consider prior approval applications on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.2.10 As such, given the focus of the NPPF on ensuring the vitality and viability of town centres, PBA consider that allowing flexibility within the town centre is critical to ensuring its longer-term health and imposing controls on the proportion and concentration of A1 uses within the centre would fail to recognise the current trends and issues faced by town centre and so would not assist in achieving this objective.

8.3 Monitoring recommendations

- 8.3.1 This study provides the Council with its floorspace needs requirements to 2035. To establish whether the requirements for new floorspace (by type) are being met and more generally to monitor the performance, the Council should monitor:
- planning permissions for retail floorspace - by type, amount (sqm gross and net), location and retailer;
 - completions of retail floorspace - by type, amount, location and retailer;
 - mix of uses, including vacancies; and
 - health checks of designated centres
- 8.3.2 The monitoring recommended above is relatively straightforward and should be conducted on a rolling basis for the first two items and annually or every two years for the latter two items. Time series data can thus be produced and continually updated, starting with this study. Contingent on the timetabling of the Local Plan, such updating will prove to be valuable when this evidence is tested at examination in public.
- 8.3.3 This report provides a robust indication of the current position. The recommendations set out in this report may need to be adjusted, in the future, due to changing market conditions, demographic changes and the impact of developments elsewhere. They may also need to be adjusted if standard assumptions, in particular those relating to expenditure growth and e-tailing, change. The role of monitoring is crucial in highlighting changes in the assumptions that underpin this study and we recommend regular monitoring to the Council.