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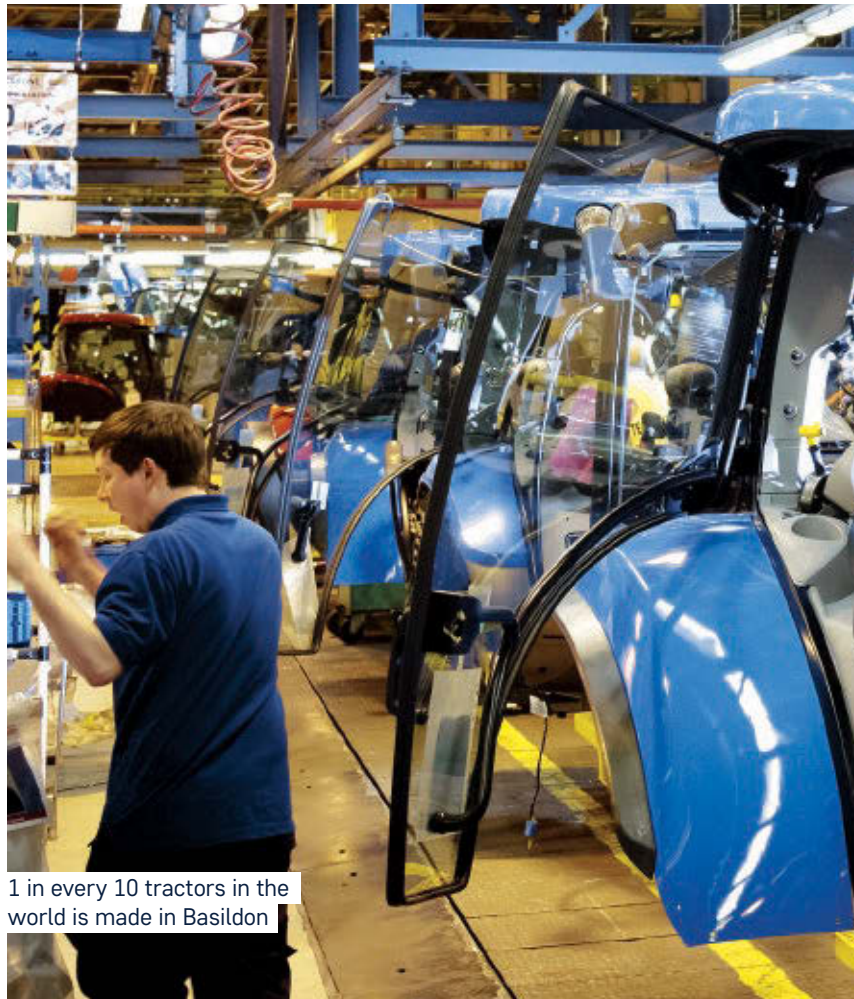
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BaSE

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News

Ambitions for housing

Basildon Council has produced a draft local plan, setting out its goals for housing and development over the next 20 years.

A target has been set for 15,260 homes to be developed in that time – 3,600 as affordable. This will help deal with a projected increase of 14% in Basildon's population.

The consultation period for the draft local plan ended in March; the council reported more than 500 responses.

The local plan must be produced by 2018 in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The objective is to contribute to sustainable development.

Figures published by the Department for Communities and Local Government at the end of May

show that Basildon is well on its way to meeting its ambitious targets for new homes in the area.

A report titled 'House building in England: January to March 2016' showed that the number of new homes completed in Basildon has soared by 279% from 2015 to 2016.

The same report found that nationally 139,690 new homes were completed in the year to March 2016 – a rise of 12% on the previous year.

Housing and planning minister Brandon Lewis said: "We've got the country building again and are seeing our housebuilding efforts paying off with this considerable increase."

In Basildon, 32% more homes were built than in London during the same period.



The number of new homes completed in Basildon has soared by 279% from 2015 to 2016

Park pavilion revamp

Constructor ISG is carrying out restoration work in Wickford Memorial Park, with completion scheduled for the end of July.

A sports and recreational centre is to be created in Rettendon View, which is home to three football and three cricket clubs. A cafe will be installed and changing rooms will be refurbished.

Funding for the project includes £320,000 from Veolia North Thames Trust and £128,000 from Sport England.

The latest restoration work follows other enhancements to the park in recent years, including improvements to the Wickford War Memorial and the Avenue of Remembrance, the creation of the Home Front Garden, the installation of a multi-use sports area and the upgrading of the tennis court.

Basildon rates for growth

Basildon offers higher wages and spends less on welfare than the average in 63 UK locations, according to a recent report.

Thinktank Centre for Cities' ninth annual Cities Outlook report in 2016 ranked Basildon ninth against the two measures.

The paper sought to discover whether the government is delivering a "high wage, low welfare" economy – plans the Conservative Party announced in the 2015 budget.

The measures set out to reduce the overall welfare budget by £12 billion in tax credits, as well as decrease working tax credits. A "national living wage" was also promised at the time.

Councillor Phil Turner, leader of the council, said: "Basildon's success is built on our strong local economy and the growth in higher value employment. As an attractive location for small companies and large global brands, such as Ford, Konica Minolta, Leonardo-Finmeccanica (formerly Selex ES) and New Holland Agriculture, many companies come here due to the affordable rents, skilled workforce and business-friendly support."

Centre for Cities' deputy chief executive, Andrew Carter, commented that the report's findings, given that Basildon is also one of the fastest growing populations in the UK, "bode well for the city's economic prospects".

Costa and Amazon sign up

Coffee giant Costa and multinational online retailer Amazon are bringing new facilities to Basildon.

Costa is opening a £38 million state-of-the-art roastery in Christopher Martin Road in early 2017, which will ship coffee beans to more than 3,000 Costa cafes in 31 countries.

Christopher Rogers, managing director for Costa, said: "Basildon is set to become the centre of our UK business network. The project is an opportunity for us to drive investment into the Basildon area."

Amazon will employ 20 people at its warehouse logistics centre, also in Christopher Martin Road. As many as 200 drivers could be employed by eight companies delivering parcels.



Work begins on college development

Work has begun on South Essex College's Basildon town centre site, with a view to a 2018 opening.

The Basildon campus is moving from its former base in Nethermayne, with preliminary resurfacing works under way on a section of the Basildon market area, which will allow work on the new college building to begin.

Digital technologies will be the focus of the facility, with the curriculum tailored towards STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) subjects in particular.

Anthony McGarel, deputy principal and chief executive of the college, said: "We are so happy to have finally started this project. It will bring much-needed further education facilities to the heart of Basildon.

"We also hope the new campus will kick-start the regeneration of the town centre; the increase of students in the area will help the town's economy like our other campuses in Southend and Thurrock have done."

Gallery finds Basildon home

Basildon welcomed a new art gallery at the end of February 2016, which opened on the site of the Woolwich bank in the Town Square.

The Eastgate Art gallery has moved from its former home in the Eastgate Shopping Centre to make way for toy store, The Entertainer.

Co-founder of the gallery, Vin Harrop, commented to *The Echo*: "The Basildon Art gallery is in a fabulous new location and we have great plans for using this space to support all forms of artistic activity."

The vision for the gallery is to create 'a sustainable community educational service' for the people of Basildon to meet gaps in the provision of access to the arts.



Sports operator wins award

Everyone Active, which runs Basildon Sporting Village with Basildon Council, has won the Facility Operator of the Year award.

It is the fifth time the operator has triumphed in the annual ASA Swimtastic awards. Areas assessed include the progress of children enrolled on swimming lessons at facilities, products and services delivered, as well as teacher training and development.

Everyone Active provides swimming lessons for 4,268 people at Basildon Sporting Village and Wickford Swim and Fitness Centre.

“We are thrilled to have won this prestigious award for the fifth time,” said Jacqui Tilman, group swim development manager at Everyone Active.

“We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all our communities and our swimming



programme is a huge part of this.”

The ASA’s fourth annual School Swimming Census recently revealed that 48% of children between the ages of 7-11 in the UK are unable to swim 25 metres.

“We will strive to reduce this figure even more going forward by encouraging as many children and adults as possible to learn this important life skill and get active through swimming,” added Tilman.



Local sports heroes honoured

Olympic gymnast Max Whitlock (pictured) and world snooker champion Stuart Bingham, both from Basildon, have been awarded the freedom of the borough.

They were given the honour by Basildon mayor Don Morris at the St George's Suite of the Basildon Centre,

St. Martin's Square in April 2016.

Bingham won the World Snooker Championship in 2015 and Whitlock won two bronze medals at the London 2012 Olympic Games.



Piazza gets go-ahead

Basildon Council has approved plans to redesign and upgrade public space around the Trafford House apartment block in Basildon.

The proposals include a landscaped piazza, improved lighting and a new crossing near Basildon station.

The owner of Trafford House has already completed work to transform the former office block, which was once the headquarters of Ford UK, into flats.





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// Basildon town centre is set for major regeneration.



On the town

With a new college campus, as well as an improved theatre, plans are afoot to transform Basildon town centre into a vibrant destination, and in the process create a night-time economy to rival the capital's, as **Kirsty MacAulay** finds out

A wish list for the perfect property location might include somewhere near the sea, or the city, a place with beautiful views, a buzzing town with shops and culture or a rural village. All of these things can be found in and around Basildon, which recently

topped CBRE's list of best-value commuter towns in the south-east.

One of Essex's more southerly boroughs, this hidden gem benefits hugely from its fantastic location and great connectivity; only 35 minutes by train from London (with five stations in the borough), and less than 13 miles ▶

- ▶ from the coast, it is well placed for the ports at Harwich and Felixstowe as well as Stansted airport and the M25. The area also has plentiful green spaces, great shopping and culture.

The borough of Basildon is made up of market towns and villages. Basildon, Pitsea, Laindon, Wickford and Billericay are the principal town centres and each has a distinct identity, which Basildon Council's local plan 2014–2034 aims to conserve, while improving the shopping, leisure, education and employment offer through mixed-use developments.

Basildon was designated a new town in 1949 and continued to expand, absorbing some of London's growing population – people priced out of north and east London have typically drifted into Essex. The town has a thriving business community. Basildon is currently the largest employment centre in Thames Gateway South Essex, and the A127 Enterprise Corridor has the largest concentration of employment in all of Essex.

The town centre is set for major regeneration, which will see South Essex College relocate into the heart of the town on Market Square, with the ▶



Billericay is one of the principal towns in the borough (above). The Cater Museum features displays on life in Billericay (above right). The Eastgate Shopping Centre in Basildon (right).





► market, which is currently located there, due to move to St. Martin's Square. It is anticipated that the college will breathe life into the town centre and provide new opportunities for both students and the local business community. Anthony McGarel, deputy principal and chief executive of South Essex College, comments: "The college's new Basildon campus is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the future of our young people. This campus will provide the inspiration and the industry-standard facilities that will enable our young people to realise their ambitions and achieve their potential. It is time young people in Basildon get the opportunities – and also the college – they deserve."

The council's big plans for East Square are still being refined; the aim is to create a new focus for the town, with new leisure and housing elements. To mark its commitment to the project, the council acquired the retail block in East Walk in April 2016, earmarking £500,000 to support the ongoing regeneration proposals. Public consultation on the plans were due to be held during the following months.



Basildon Council leader Phil Turner explains: "The proposals for East Square will deliver two very important economic factors. It is essential we drive greater diversity in our retail offering, especially with regard to our night-time economy. Here, retail and housing are symbiotic and our success at achieving these will ensure Basildon residents see a vibrant and sustainable environment for their enjoyment in the near future."

One of the big draws for the town's night-time economy is the Towngate Theatre, an important community asset which opened in 1989. After a period of part-closure it fully reopened in 2006 with a more refined programme offering a wide range of acts including ballet, pantomime, comedy and music.

Song and dance

Earlier in the year the theatre was showing the hugely successful *Ultimate Bowie*, a tribute to music legend, David Bowie, who died in January 2016. Ed Blaney leads an eight-piece band that takes you from Bowie's early years with hits such as *Starman*, through to songs like *Let's Dance* and *China Girl*.

The latest brochure for the theatre includes *Whitney – Queen of the Night*, *Rhythm of the Dance* with the National Dance Company of Ireland and *Giselle* by the Vienna Festival Ballet.

As well as the 548-seat auditorium and 188-seat studio theatre, there are rooms which can be hired for meetings, conferences and celebrations. The theatre's £1 million business plan for improvements was approved by the council in 2012 and many of the changes have already been put in place. The new Towngate Theatre Cafe Bar is up and running and the auditorium lighting and sound systems have been updated.

There has also been extensive refurbishment of the backstage areas, new lifts and the creation of the new Gielgud Room, the latest venue to be added to the hire facilities at the theatre, which will enable it to accommodate more corporate and private bookings.

The aim is to create a top-class venue, which offers a more diverse range of entertainment while also catering for local amateur dramatic groups and dance schools. ►



/// Norsey Wood is one of six sites of special scientific interest in the borough. The Sporting Village provides leisure and fitness facilities (left).

▶ The Eastgate Shopping Centre, another longstanding feature of the town, is also in line for major improvements. It currently has more than 100 retailers, including H&M, River Island, Primark and Pandora, as well as food outlets such as the award-winning Hilton's Fish Bar. The 70,000sq m site, which includes three office buildings, has an annual footfall of 14 million. Eastgate was bought by InfraRed Capital Partners for £88 million in 2014. They have £15 million plans for the shopping centre, which include improvements to entry points.

There are also plentiful sports options in the town – Olympic medal holder and current world champion gymnast, Max Whitlock, trains at Basildon Sporting Village. The £38 million facility opened in 2011 and has everything a sports fan could want: football, netball, cricket, hockey and badminton pitches. With a 50m pool and teaching pool, an indoor climbing wall,

/// One of the big draws for the night-time economy is the Towngate Theatre; an important community asset which opened in 1989

a 100-station gym, an eight-court sports hall, an athletics track and a creche on-site, fitness fans are kept happy.

While Basildon has plenty to keep everyone busy, those who prefer to approach life at a stroll might want to explore its more rural neighbour Billericay. The charmingly named Norsey Wood nearby has burial mounds that date back to the bronze age, and were the site of a massacre during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. The town centre has some attractive historic buildings. These include the Cater Museum, which has three floors of local artefacts and information including a second world war exhibition.

The community cinema, which is run by volunteers on a not-for-profit basis, was set up recently after receiving funding from the council. Located in the library, classic films are shown twice a week, creating a cheaper and more

personal setting than a multiplex cinema for those who don't want to, or are unable to travel to local cinemas.

Well over half of the borough of Basildon is green belt land and there are six sites of scientific interest, which are protected, making it the perfect destination for those who appreciate a bit of fresh air.

Wat Tyler Park has around 50 hectares of historic parkland with meadows, ancient hedgerows, waterways and salt marshes – there is evidence that salt was produced here back in the bronze age.

The park is a site of special scientific interest, and is one of the county's most important sites for wildlife. It is home to a broad range of animals and plants from reed warblers and scarce emerald damselflies to green-winged orchids and shrill carder bees.

And for those in search of fresh air with a tang of salt, the coast is a mere 15 minutes away on the c2c. Southend-on-Sea boasts the world's longest pleasure pier.

Those who catch the train to the end enjoy magnificent views, can visit the museum, and even catch a glimpse of Jamie Oliver at his pop-up restaurant, Jamie & Jimmy's cafe, on the pier. Adventure Island theme park offers arcades as well as fish and chips.

If you prefer a more sedate seaside experience then head for Shoebury East, Brightlingsea and West Mersea. Essex's saltmarshes, islands and mudflats offer a fabulous opportunity to appreciate the local wildlife as well.

It all adds up to make the borough of Basildon a place to watch and invest in – and one that caters for increasingly diverse tastes. //



/// The Towngate Theatre in St. Martin's Square has undergone a programme of improvements. Recent performances have included *Giselle*.





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Bellway

Steering the way

Basildon colleges are working with local employers to create a skilled workforce for the future. **Jessica Pickard** reports

Basildon is the second largest economy in the Thames Gateway outside Canary Wharf, thanks to a base of advanced engineering and finance companies. And it is hungry for skilled workers.

Alongside established businesses such as Ford, Leonardo-Finmeccanica (formerly Selex ES), IFDS Group, New Holland Agriculture and Gardner Aerospace, the last five years have seen an 88% growth in knowledge intensive services. These are companies that offer high value employment, for example in computer programming, architecture, engineering and technical testing. While this paints a positive picture for Basildon, it also represents a challenge: where are these skilled workers going to come from?

Local colleges believe they can help. “Market relevance is the test for all our curriculum development,” says Helen Russell, director of business development at Prospects College of Advanced Technology (PROCAT), based in Luckyn Lane in Basildon. “In terms of what gets taught, employers are in the driving seat here.”

PROCAT trains students for careers in construction and engineering, including aircraft, automotive, rail and electrical engineering. While the college

has a declared social mission – 52% of its students come from geographical areas defined as ‘deprived’ – another primary purpose is to serve employers through training young people to enter the workforce with highly developed technical skills. These twin priorities are reflected in its mission statement, which promises: “programmes and training which are driven by the economic and social needs of the local community and the skills needs of businesses”.

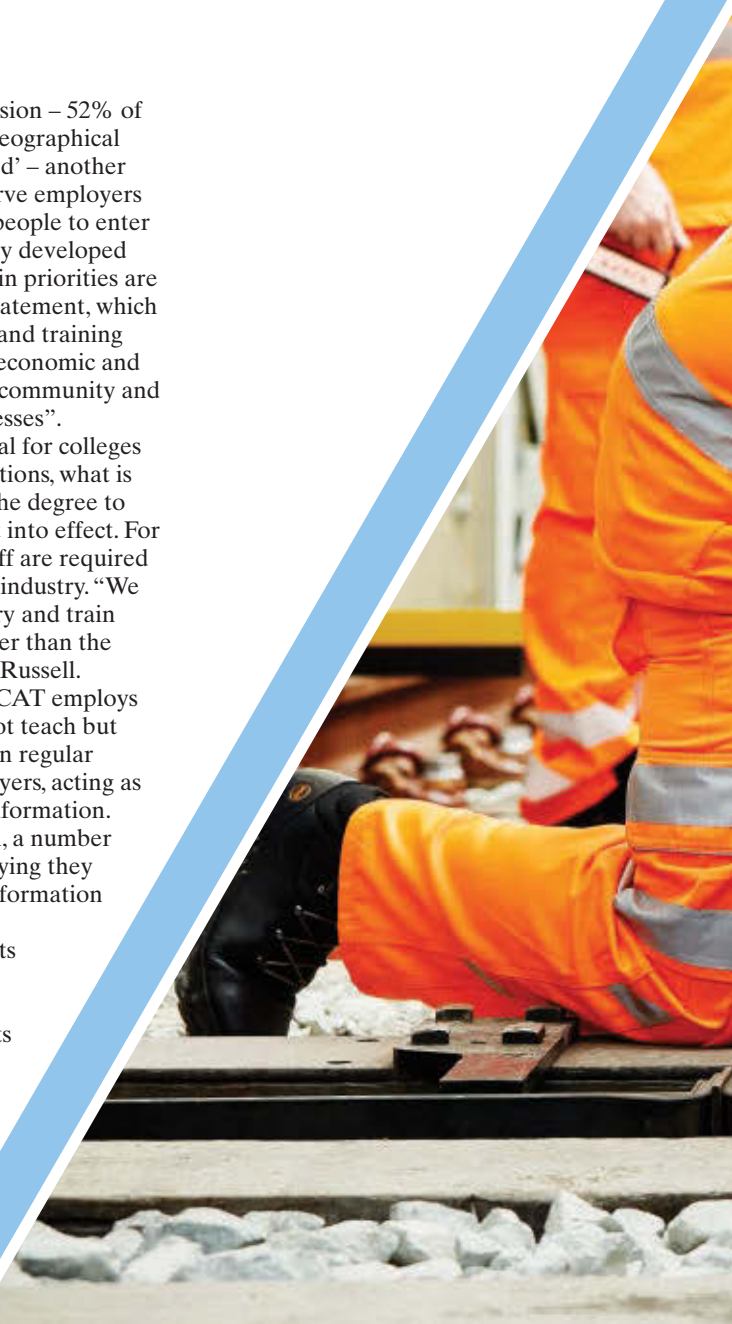
While it is not unusual for colleges to publicise similar ambitions, what is striking at PROCAT is the degree to which they are being put into effect. For example, all teaching staff are required to come from a relevant industry. “We take people from industry and train them to be teachers rather than the other way around,” says Russell.

As well as this, PROCAT employs specialist staff who do not teach but whose role is to remain in regular contact with local employers, acting as a two-way channel for information.

According to Russell, a number of employers are now saying they want ‘BIM’ – building information modelling – a method of planning building projects through digital images.

The UK government wants relevant parts of its supply chain to become ‘BIM-enabled’.

But, whereas the traditional college response might be ▶







► to wait for new qualifications to come online, PROCAT already has teaching plans for BIM, and senior staff have joined relevant government bodies to influence the discussion on it.

“We have to move into this space,” says Russell.

“Further education colleges can do this. Employers want skilled people in these new areas but they don’t always want graduates.”

One measure of PROCAT’s success is that 96% of its students find jobs. In fact, half of PROCAT’s 2,000 students are already employed because they are apprentices, which means they are carrying out paid work alongside their college studies.

These are students like Abigail Sampson, who first became interested in technical learning after a robot building project at school. “I wanted to

Market relevance is the test for all our curriculum development

Helen Russell

do an apprenticeship because it equips you with the workplace skills for going straight into a job,” she says.

Sampson enjoys the mix of college and work-based learning: “I am looking forward to using the new CAD/CAM suite at college and expanding my knowledge of isometric drawing. One day I would like to use 3D printing to cheaply produce a prosthetic limb. I feel that this will make a difference to people’s lives and the world.”

Greater integration between learning and work produces benefits for both the college and companies. The national housebuilder Redrow, for example, already has a good relationship with South Essex College and has plans to become more closely involved with the education of local students.

This summer, work started on the

first phase of the Nethermayne site, which Redrow Homes (Eastern) bought from the Homes and Communities Agency and the college. The company will build the first 181 new homes, which will eventually form part of a wider development delivering 725 new build properties and a primary school.

“People tend to think about construction in terms of bricks,” says Leigh Johnson, senior development manager at Redrow. “But we want young people to see it’s so much more than that. The industry needs plasterers, carpenters, electricians, engineers and project managers, plus there are skills shortages in new areas of knowledge such as thermal technology, sustainability and environmental issues.”

To get young people interested and to build local aspirations, Redrow staff offer talks to South Essex College groups; organise site visits; give advice to teachers on the curriculum; offer work placements and apprenticeships and attend careers days. They have even worked with young pupils on science competitions, including asking them to calculate how many bricks were used in a project in order to win an iPod.

Johnson concludes: “The Nethermayne site is a 10-year building project, and so a young student now could be looking at starting a good career close to where they live. It’s a whole life thing – a different way of looking at ‘sustainability’ if you like. People can study, have homes and jobs and spend their money in the same community. It’s got to be a better way of doing things.”



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Giving Shape to Ideas



// Bellway and Redrow are two of the developers creating new housing in Basildon.



The grand plan

With a new council-owned housing company, and plans to bring forward further development to appeal to all sectors of its demographic, Basildon Council is turning its vision for housing into reality. **Maria Shahid** meets Councillor Richard Moore to find out how it is delivering against the challenge of available land

Basildon's burgeoning population combined with a shortage of land makes housing one of the council's top priorities. A draft local plan was out for consultation earlier this year, and responses to it are currently being gathered.

Councillor Richard Moore, former portfolio holder for regeneration and planning in the council's cabinet, explains that the toughest challenge the borough faces is its location in the middle of the metropolitan green belt:

"The problem is how to move forward, now that we have developed all of our urban land. In forming our draft local plan we have had to consider how we can accommodate housing in the borough over the next 20 years."

The local plan includes a new homes target of 15,260 to cope with the expected 14% increase in Basildon's population over the next 20 years.

Moore explains that around 8,000 of these homes will need to be built in the green belt, requiring a reassessment of its boundary. "The green belt is understandably very precious to residents. In reality we're not giving up that much of it in the draft local plan."

Basildon is home to a number of innovative companies and Moore refers to the need to build housing that caters to the more aspirational demographic: "We're looking to build executive homes, as we already have a number of three-bedroom terraced houses. We want to attract businesses to establish themselves in the borough, ►

/// We need a housing offer that can accommodate a broad spectrum of requirements, with an emphasis on four and five-bedroom detached homes with garages

Councillor Richard Moore

- ▶ and to retain those that are already here. We need a housing offer that can accommodate a broad spectrum of requirements, with an emphasis on four and five-bedroom detached homes with garages. We need more of those, especially in the new town part of the borough. There is insufficient choice for the aspirational young to move up the housing ladder – a pretty major problem for us.

“Typically we prefer the more traditional, as opposed to contemporary, housing. We have had a lot of experience, due to being a new town, with what we call ‘new modern methods of building’. A lot of that housing stock is now coming to the end of its natural life.”

Moore is clear that the council needs to build housing that caters to all elements of the community, while meeting the expected growth in the population: “We need mixed tenure developments. In our plan, we’re looking for 3,600 affordable housing units. Our population currently stands at around 180,500, and we’re expecting this to grow to 205,000 by 2034.”

Sempra Homes, the council’s company, was set up in 2014 as its vehicle for building a diverse range of high quality homes in Basildon, and also in order to bring forward housing development on sites that will provide training and employment opportunities for local people.

“It is not the answer to all our housing issues, but it will certainly help the situation,” explains Moore.

“We plan to feed it with land opportunities from our existing housing stock. In Basildon we haven’t built council housing for a number of years. Using Sempra Homes we have the opportunity to do something ourselves, and leverage our own land holdings for

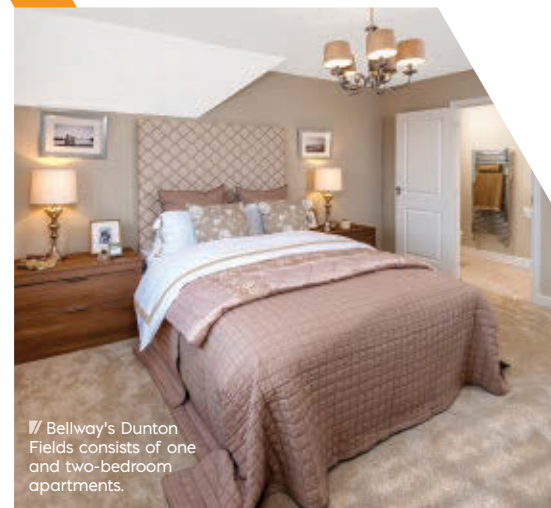
the benefit of the community. This helps us meet our housing targets, by a means that is nearly cost-free to the ratepayer.”

One of the council’s biggest successes in the last few years was the Sporting Village. Featuring an Olympic-sized swimming pool and running track, it was delivered just before the London 2012 Olympics. “A number of Olympic teams came here to train. We built the site against a lot of opposition from residents,” says Moore. “At the time, we had two ageing swimming pools that were well-used, but the cost of bringing them up to modern standards was so astronomical that we decided that it would be easier to replace them with one first-class pool, which is what we did. It’s been a great success – we have more than a million visitors to the pool each year.”

A new mixed-use scheme was created on the site of one of the old swimming pools in Basildon, known as Gloucester Park – a Barratt Homes development that is now fully occupied.

More recent housing schemes include Dunton Fields in Laindon, a Bellway Homes development consisting of one and two-bedroom apartments, two-bedroom coach houses, and two, three, four and five-bedroom houses. The scheme has been a success, with most of the units sold.

Construction has also started on St Nicholas Mews, a Redrow Homes (Eastern) development of 135 three and four-bedroom homes, of which 110 will be for private ownership and the remainder affordable. Inspired by the architecture of the Arts and Crafts movement, the homes will look traditional from the outside, with modern interiors. The developer has been selling off-plan and the first homes are due to be ready later in 2016.



/// Bellway's Dunton Fields consists of one and two-bedroom apartments.

Other schemes include a proposal for 725 executive homes, also by Redrow, at Dry Street. The developer bought the land from the Homes and Communities Agency and South Essex College, and received the green light to proceed in the middle of March. The first phase, consisting of 181 homes at Westley Green, started in May 2016. The development paves the way for the relocation of the college campus to a new state-of-the-art site based in the town centre.

Moore accepts that housing delivery in the borough, as elsewhere in the country, has to accelerate. The local plan, which is likely to be adopted by 2018, sets housing targets of around 767 homes per annum. With a clear vision for delivering the housing the borough needs, Moore believes that these are very achievable. **///**



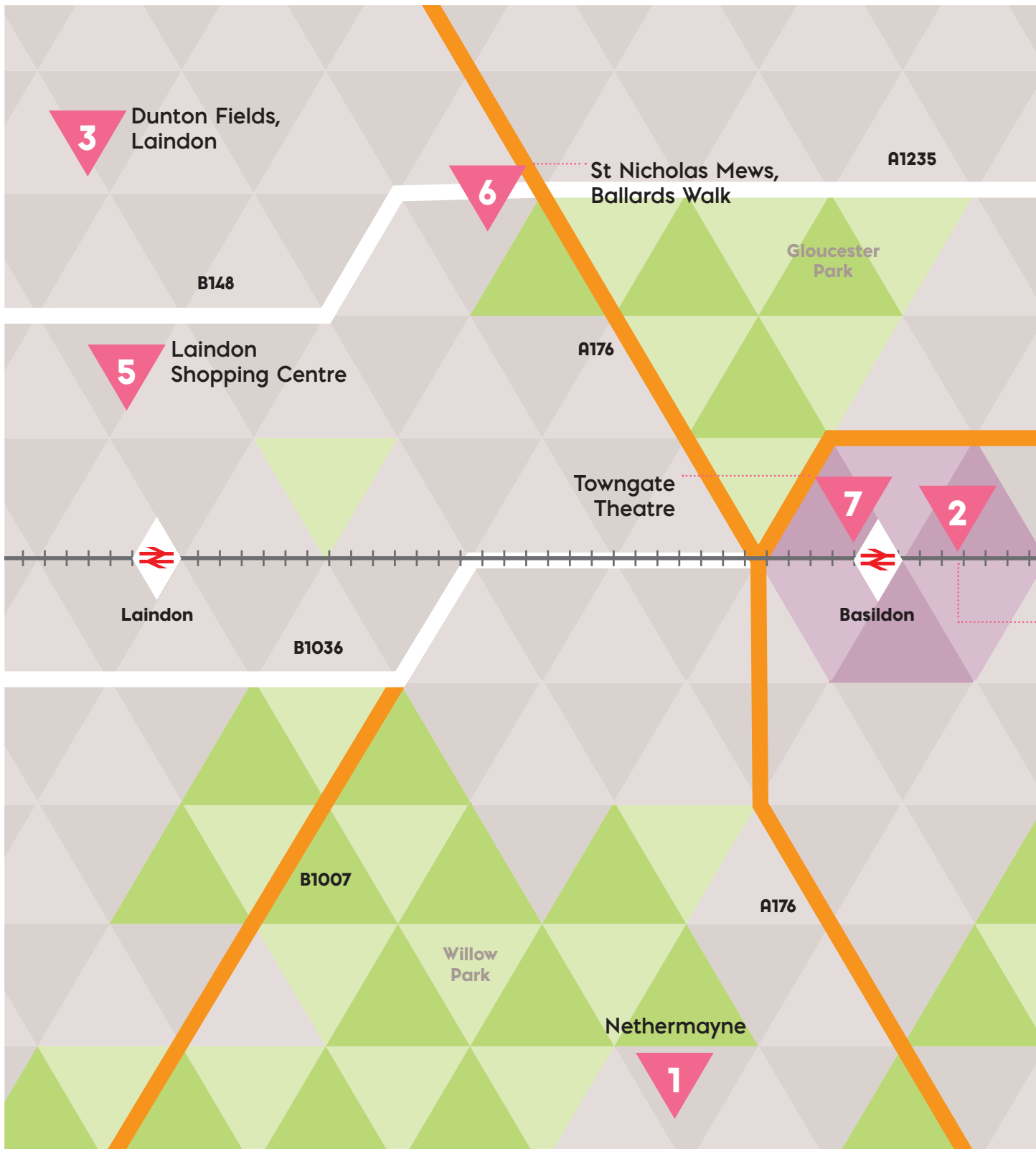
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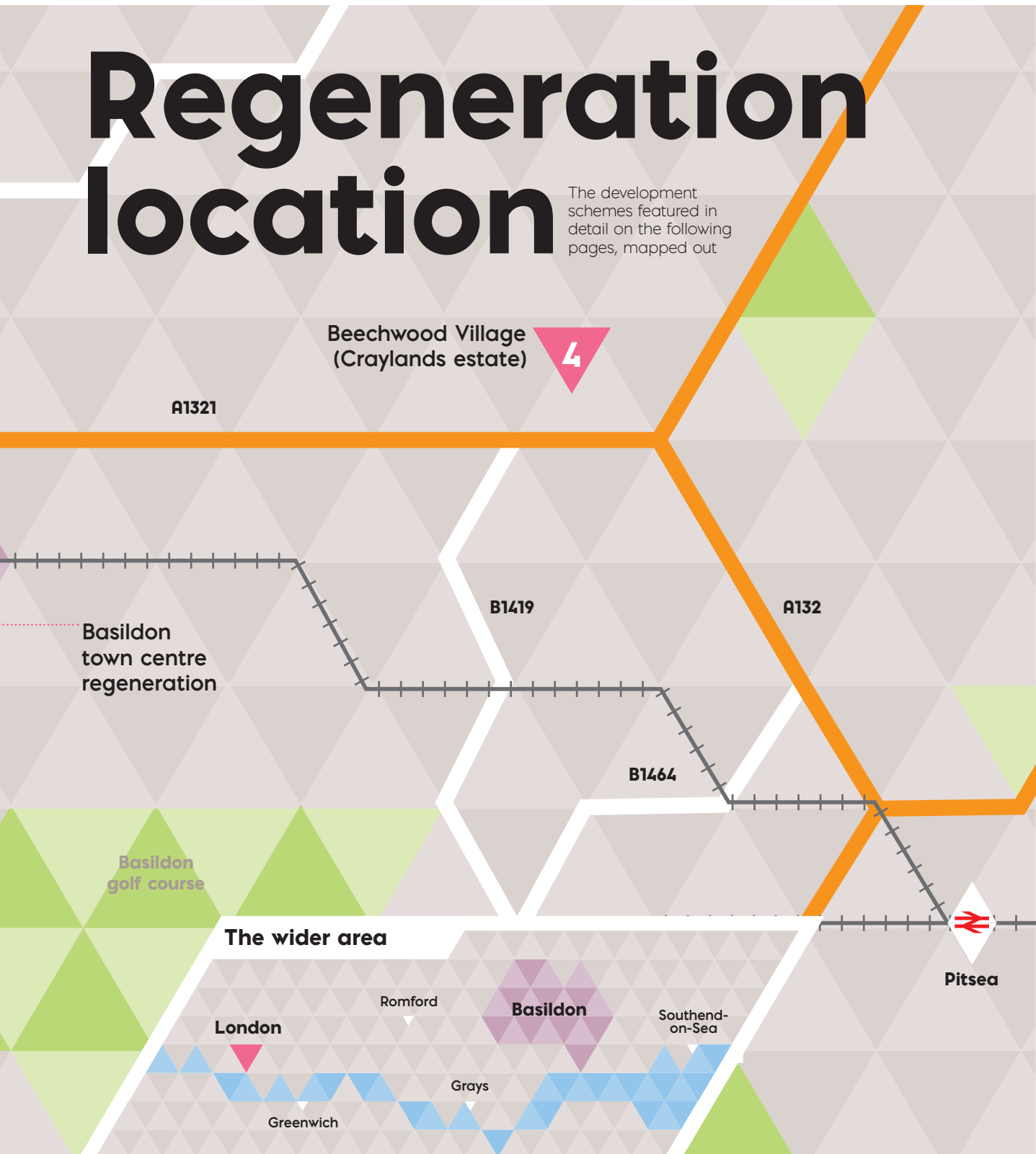
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Regeneration location

The development schemes featured in detail on the following pages, mapped out

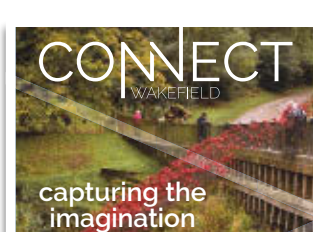




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Projects



NETHERMAYNE, BASILDON

Outline planning permission for up to 725 homes, a primary school, public open space and an area for wildlife at Nethermayne in Basildon was granted in December 2013.

In the same year, housebuilder Redrow Homes (Eastern) was selected as development partner by the Homes and Communities Agency and acquired the land.

The developer received detailed consent for the first 181 homes, to be built on a 9.25-ha site, in September 2015, and work started in May 2016. Plans also include widening Dry Street and improving the local highway system.

Ecological pastureland and public open space will also form part of the development.

The sale proceeds from the first phase will go towards some major town centre improvements including a new

college. The market will be relocated from Market Square to St. Martin's Square, and South Essex College – part of the development site – will move from Nethermayne to the Market Square location. This will pave the way for the construction of a modern college campus in Basildon town centre, which is expected to bring in students, boosting the local economy.

A new primary school will be a part of further phases of the development. ▶





BASILDON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

Basildon town centre is at the core of the council's 2012-2032 masterplan and is in line for major transformation, involving new housing on East Square, a new cinema offer, as well as the relocation of South Essex College and the market (an artist's impression of the scheme is pictured).

Basildon market will move from Market Square to St Martin's Square. This will pave the way for building a new college campus on the original market location and provide new opportunities for students and the local business community. Around £40 million will be invested in the schemes.

Significant improvements to the public realm have been built into the project plans that will enhance the amenity space, improve the look and feel of the town centre and support the local economy.

Basildon Council is developing plans for East Square, aiming to provide the town centre with new leisure and housing opportunities, as well as boosting the night-time economy. It is looking to introduce a cinema offer and restaurant complex into the town centre.

To mark its commitment to the project, the council acquired the East Walk retail block in April 2016. It has earmarked £500,000 to support the ongoing regeneration proposals.

Significant improvements to the public realm have been built into the project plans

Eastgate Shopping Centre is also in line for an upgrade. The 70,000sq m site, which enjoys an annual footfall of 14 million, currently has more than 100 retailers, as well as food outlets and three office buildings.

InfraRed Capital Partners acquired the shopping centre for £88 million in 2014 and has a £15 million development plan for the structure, which involves improvements to East Square and the bus station. ▶

DUNTON FIELDS, LAINDON

Bellway Homes has launched the third phase of its development at Dunton Fields in Laindon, comprising 167 homes, in a mix of one and two-bedroom apartments, two-bedroom coach houses and two, three, four and five-bedroom houses.

Its position, 30 miles from London and close to the A13 and the A127, is an advantage for those wishing to commute to the City and other parts of the capital.

The area has nurseries, primary and secondary schools, while South Essex College is also within easy reach.

There are several supermarkets within a mile of Dunton Fields, while the development is around eight minutes' drive from Basildon's main retail district, its shopping centre and market.

Its position, 30 miles from London and close to the A13 and A127, is an advantage for those wishing to commute to the City



BEECHWOOD VILLAGE

The regeneration of Swan Housing Association's Craylands estate, now known as Beechwood Village, is to provide hundreds of homes along with retail space and community facilities.

Work involving widespread demolition started in 2006, and developer NU living, part of the Swan Group, is now to complete 405 homes in partnership with architect bptw.

A retail outlet has already opened on the estate and work on a new community facility was approaching completion as *BaSE* went to press.

A planning application for a further phase of the development is due to be

submitted by Swan during summer 2016, following extensive public consultation events.

Swan said the next stage would take the total number of homes to 950 and involve the demolition of the maisonette blocks owned by Basildon Council.

Swan also anticipated that joint funding with Essex County Council and Basildon Borough Council would facilitate multimillion pound regeneration works to upgrade pavements, roads, street lights and green spaces on the estate.

If Swan's plans for the next phase of Beechwood Village secure planning consent, work is expected to start in early 2017.

Swan is now starting to consult on the emerging masterplan with the wider community

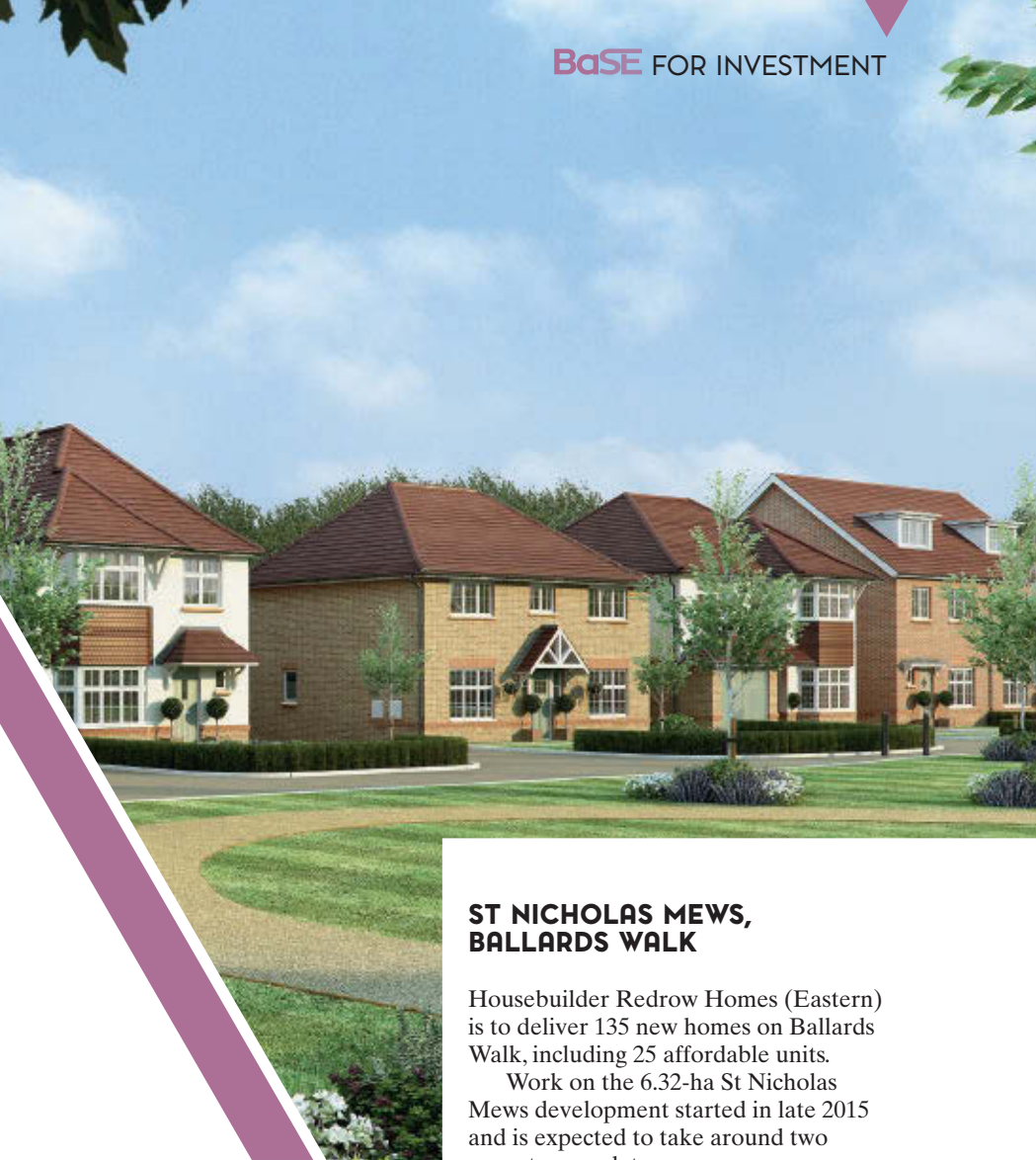
LAINDON SHOPPING CENTRE

Swan, a longstanding landlord in the area, acquired Laindon Shopping Centre in 2015.

The centre currently comprises around 27,737sq m of retail space, associated servicing areas and car parking. Swan plans to regenerate the retail area and create a new high street. This will replace the existing neglected shopping centre with retail and commercial units. It may also include a new Swan regional office, and possibly a new health centre.

Swan has been aware of the importance of delivering a good quality, well-maintained retail offer, and has communicated this to stakeholders, retailers and the local community during initial consultation.

The developer is the sixth in a long line of owners of the centre and is committed to bringing about the regeneration of the area. It is now starting to consult on the emerging masterplan with the wider community. The proposed plans will also deliver some new homes to the local area.



ST NICHOLAS MEWS, BALLARDS WALK

Housebuilder Redrow Homes (Eastern) is to deliver 135 new homes on Ballards Walk, including 25 affordable units.

Work on the 6.32-ha St Nicholas Mews development started in late 2015 and is expected to take around two years to complete.

The developer said that the three and four-bedroom properties, inspired by the architecture of the late 19th century Arts and Crafts movement, will look traditional from the outside and modern inside.

The first homes were released for sale off-plan in March 2016 via Temme English estate agents, with eight sold at the time of going to press and a show home due to open in June. Redrow said the first buyers will be able to move into their properties towards the end of 2016.

The surrounding area will also benefit from the new development. Redrow announced that £422,253 will be invested in education provision and £28,800 in the health service. A play area will also be created and £21,000 will be donated to the community hall. ▶





TOWNGATE THEATRE

Basildon Borough Council approved a £1 million business plan for improvements at Towngate Theatre in 2012, and many of the changes have already been put in place.

The aim is to create a top-class venue offering a wider range of entertainment while also catering for local amateur dramatic groups and dance schools.

The theatre currently has a 548-seat auditorium and a 188-seat studio, as well as several rooms available for hire.

A new Towngate Theatre Cafe Bar has opened. Lighting and sound systems have also been updated.

There has also been refurbishment of the backstage area, new lifts and a new hire facility, the Gielgud Room, enabling the theatre to accommodate more corporate and private bookings. ▮



ELSENHAM VALE

LIGHTERMANS PLACE

ROSEWOOD

Three New Communities In Essex

Home is where the heart is and, at Crest Nicholson, we couldn't agree more. Our customers are at the heart of everything we do, which is why we are dedicated to designing and building innovative homes to be enjoyed now and for years to come.

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*Train times are taken from National Rail and are approximate. Street scene photography taken at Finberry.



/// *Absolutely Fabulous: The Movie*, starring Kate Moss, shot scenes at the Underwater Studio.

At the dive-in

The Underwater Studio in Basildon attracts rock bands, film stars, world record breakers and scuba divers. **James Wood** finds out more ▶



▶ At first it's unclear why actor Joanna Lumley or indie rock band Stereophonics might visit an industrial site just off the A127 in Basildon.

But amid the recycling points and manufacturing firms, the Underwater Studio opened there in 2004, when Geoff Smith relocated the facility from

Enfield in north London: "We decided on Basildon not only because it was close to the M25 and the coast, but also as we have access to fantastic industry. We can call on the various engineering and manufacturing firms operating here when we need to."

Since the move to Basildon, the studio has been used for myriad feature

films, music videos and commercials, as well as world record attempts and near- nightly diving and scuba diving classes.

Most recently, singer, Birdy – whose songs have featured on the soundtracks of successful film franchise *The Hunger Games* and the Josh Boone romantic comedy, *The Fault in Our Stars* – made use of the facility for the music video of



/// Scenes from *Under the Skin*, featuring Scarlett Johansson, were filmed at the Underwater Studio (above). The studio also offers regular diving classes (left).

There's no geography underwater, so you can get away with a lot of things you wouldn't be able to on land

Mark Silk



her latest single, *Wild Horses*.

On set, Birdy grins as she slips into the water for the shoot – “I’ve always wanted to be a mermaid,” she says. Director Francis Wallis explains the concept behind the video: “We shot Birdy standing on top of the water. The narrative is that we see a whole sequence of a sailor getting dressed into a vintage diving suit. Meanwhile, Birdy is dressed as a mermaid and we essentially see the impossible love story between the two underwater.”

It’s not the first time the studio has been used for dramatic shoots. Jonathan Glazer’s acclaimed 2013 science fiction film, *Under the Skin*, starring Scarlett Johansson, about an alien on earth, needed an underwater scene to create the graphic illusion of a human body having its insides sucked out.

The cinematographer behind the shot, Mark Silk, told *Moviescope* magazine that filming underwater can be a painstaking process, with a 12-hour shoot often only producing four seconds of footage, but the advantages of such a facility from a filmic perspective make it a worthwhile exercise.

“There’s no geography underwater, so you can get away with a lot of things you wouldn’t be able to on land. It allows for a fluidity of shot, so you can rotate the camera as you’re filming an artist,” he told the publication.

Raising the roof

Sky Atlantic TV drama *The Tunnel* – a remake of the Danish show, *The Bridge* – makes use of an impressive feature at the studio, which allows the stage setting to be transformed from an indoor to an outdoor facility.

An enormous crane is used to lift off the roof and frame of the building, exposing the pool of water beneath to the elements. There is no other studio in the world with such capability.

Other notable films and TV programmes to be shot at the facility include a scene from the forthcoming *Absolutely Fabulous* movie, which will be released in cinemas in summer 2016; comic book caper *Stan Lee’s Lucky Man*, broadcast on Sky 1, which has received plaudits aplenty; popular Sky Living programme *Britain’s Next Top*

Model and Danny Boyle’s film, *Trance*, starring James McAvoy.

Bands to have taken a dive at the studio include Stereophonics, whose video shoot for the 2013 single *Violins and Tambourines* was directed by the group’s singer, Kelly Jones. Friendly Fires’ *Jump in the Pool* and The Maccabees’ *Marks to Prove It* music videos were also filmed there.

Breaking boundaries

The studio has also been hired for some memorable world record attempts.

In 2007, Essex FM (now Heart FM) radio station attempted the record for the longest underwater broadcast, breaking the one previously held by German radio presenter, Frank Niessen. This served as inspiration for others who have since broken it again, such as Australian station WFSM and even the British Armed Forces’ station.

One former soldier, who lost a friend to a diving accident and has suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, will attempt to break the record for the longest amount of time spent underwater – a record currently held by Ronny Frimann from Norway.

Mark Colman attempted the record in 2012, only being allowed out of the water every four hours for 20-minute food and water breaks. He is busy preparing for his next attempt in June 2017, again at the Underwater Studio, aiming for more than five days submerged and raising money for the Veterans in Action charity.

With such a range of complex and diverse purposes, those who run the studio also find time to offer diving classes run by the Orca Scuba Diving Academy and Waterfront Scuba, which are open to all abilities.

Perhaps one of the most surprising things about the Underwater Studio is how its profile and standing has managed to stay so low.

Famous names often have cause to quietly visit this part of Essex, but Geoff Smith feels no need to shout this from the rooftops – they know where he is, continuing to offer a unique and versatile location for underwater pursuits of all kinds in the most unlikely of places. ▮

1,948

Startups in the borough (2015)
The highest number in
Essex by district

15,260

New homes by 2034
Source: draft local plan

40.5%

Increase in company registrations in
Q1 of 2015 compared to Q1 of 2014
Source: Dypopt.co.uk



A global centre for products used worldwide:
1 in 10 of the world's tractors are produced by
New Holland Agriculture in Basildon

Most affordable location
for London commuters
Source: CBRE real estate report 2015

BASE



32%

Growth in micro firms since 2010.
Higher than the national average of 18%

The largest economy in Essex in 2012:
£3.9 billion of total economic output

Source: EEFY 2014



20%

Basildon generates
of jobs in Essex: 93,000 jobs in total in 2014



35 minutes from the centre of London
and 15 minutes from the M25

7th highest employment
rate in the UK

Source: Centre for Cities, Cities Outlook 2016

HOW BASILDON
STACKS UP

LINE





Boom town

Boasting the largest and fastest growing economy in Essex, and with the support of an avowedly pro-business council, Basildon has been a magnet for global brands, as **Huub Niewstadt** discovers

Over the past few years, the UK has been gradually recovering from the last economic downturn.

This upturn is not just being driven by London; smaller towns and cities are playing an equally important role, and Basildon is a prime example of this.

Just as the capital can be seen as the UK's economic powerhouse, so Basildon can be considered as such in Essex.

The district boasts some of the highest growth numbers in the county. In 2012, Basildon's economic output was worth £3.9 billion, larger than any other district in the whole of Essex.

Basildon's population is 180,500 and its land mass is around 110,000sq m.

The borough is not just performing well when compared with other local authorities in Essex, but also on a national scale. Research institute Centre for Cities compared the economic performance of the 63 largest towns and cities in the UK, called Primary Urban Areas – of which Basildon is one.

Performance-wise, Centre for Cities found it enjoys a high employment rating (ranked seventh with 76.9%), ▶

Basildon's economy is larger than that of any other district in Essex. Recently it has seen a shift from medium to high value manufacturing.

Basildon has the largest concentration of creative and digital companies in Essex

- ▶ a high ratio of business startups (ranked 13th, with around 55 startups per 10,000 people) and large business stock (ranked 10th with 364 businesses per 10,000 people).

In 2015, 93,300 people were employed in Basildon across a range of industries. Manufacturing was one of the largest sectors for employment in the borough (2012 figures), and was responsible for almost a quarter of the sector's total output in Essex as a whole.

More recently, there has been a noticeable shift in the borough's sector profile away from medium value to high value manufacturing through investment in research and development centres such as Ford's Dunton Technical Centre in Laindon.

Growth hub

According to Essex County Council, Basildon also has the largest concentration of creative and digital companies in the county.

There are natural synergies with Tech City in Stratford, which are being aided through the Innovation Warehouse, a managed workspace tailored to high-growth tech startups, as well as the council's work with the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence in Rainham, aimed at creating a similar facility in Basildon itself.

Employment in knowledge intensive market services has increased in the borough by 88% between 2009 and 2015. This will be further supported by the planned development of Basildon as an advanced technology hub for the whole of the south-east region.

The continuing influx of Londoners to Basildon is helping to support the growth of the capital.

A report entitled Future Proofing London by engineering and design consultancy Atkins Global cites an overheating London market, and the need for hubs of excellence outside the capital's centre to soak up some of its growth.

Basildon Council's inward investment service supports new investors, helping them to find land and a skilled workforce, as well as assisting existing investors to grow their business.

Its proximity to London has also been a great economic advantage: the capital is only a 35-minute train journey away and Stansted, Southend and City airports are all within an hour's drive. The area also enjoys affordable rents and low house prices compared with London, a skilled workforce and a council that is very supportive of business. These elements create a very attractive climate for new companies.

The government designated Basildon as a new town in 1949 to cope with London's expanding population. Grants were given to companies to locate in Basildon, and since then the area has been home to a large number, operating in a wide range of sectors.

The Basildon Enterprise Corridor, with its excellent transport connections, encompasses the main business hub in south Essex, and plays host to major international businesses such as Ford and New Holland Agriculture.





NEW HOLLAND AGRICULTURE

Established in Basildon in 1964, New Holland Agriculture is a global brand of agricultural machinery and part of the CNH Industrial Group, one of the largest capital goods groups in the world. New Holland's products include tractors, combine harvesters, balers, seeding equipment and grape harvesters.

The company was founded in 1895 by Abe Zimmerman in New Holland, Pennsylvania – initially repairing equipment, and then manufacturing machinery from 1903. In 1947, the company was acquired by the Sperry Rand Corporation, an American equipment and electronics company. In 1986, the Ford Motor Company bought New Holland to strengthen its position in the agricultural machinery sector. In 1991, Fiat purchased an 80% interest in New Holland. Since 1999, New Holland has been a part of the CNH Industrial Group, of which car manufacturer Fiat owns the majority share.

The 800 people the company employs in the Basildon facility are responsible for producing New Holland's range of T6 and T7 tractors, which range from 120 to 270hp.

Thanks to continued investment in the Basildon plant, it is one of the largest and most advanced tractor factories in the world. This fact is reflected in the multiple awards the Basildon site has won over the years, including two Tractor of the Year awards, three Golden Tractor for Design awards and three World Class Manufacturing awards. A recent investment of £1.2 million in the customer centre is designed to bring in more visitors, as well as customers, to the factory.

New Holland Agriculture benefits greatly from its Basildon location, with its excellent support network of suppliers and skilled workers that ensure businesses can thrive sustainably.



LEONARDO-FINMECCANICA

Leonardo-Finmeccanica is a global player in hi-tech. It operates in four sectors: aeronautics, helicopters, electronics, defence systems and space. The company employs more than 7,000 people in the whole of the UK and more than 47,000 worldwide.

The Basildon facility of the company is home to its airborne and space systems division. Originally this site housed the Marconi Company, a British telecommunications and engineering organisation, which moved to Basildon in 1952. Following a merger with the General Electric Company in 1968, and the subsequent sale in 1999 of the demerged Marconi Electronic Systems to British Aerospace, forming BAE Systems, in May 2005 BAE Systems and Finmeccanica combined their avionics businesses into a joint venture called Selex Sensors and Airborne Systems.

In 2007, BAE Systems sold all its shares in this joint venture to

Finmeccanica for £400 million, to become a company called Selex Galileo. It was eventually renamed Selex ES. This name ceased to exist from January 2016, when the company's activities were fully merged into Finmeccanica's Electronics, Defence and Security Systems division.

The Basildon facility of the former Selex ES was responsible for surveillance systems such as thermal imaging cameras that allow the pilots of British Army Chinook helicopters to fly in the middle of the night when there is no visibility. It has also produced a number of firsts including TICM, the UK's first military-standard production thermal imager, as well as contributions to the Phoenix unmanned military surveillance vehicle.

As a global company, Leonardo-Finmeccanica is dependent on Basildon's impressive and diverse range of transport links. ▶

► **FORD MOTOR COMPANY**

The largest facility of its kind in the UK, the Ford Dunton Technical Centre has been in operation since 1967. The car manufacturer is the second largest automotive research and development investor in the UK, spending almost £400 million annually.

Ford Dunton is the company’s global centre for excellence for powertrain and commercial vehicle design and engineering, and is where Ford’s new range of low emission diesel and petrol engines is being developed.

Notable achievements of vehicles produced at the plant include Ford’s one-litre, three-cylinder EcoBoost engine and the new Ford Transit Custom, winner of the 2013 International Van of the Year award. The facility employs around 3,000 skilled designers, engineers and support staff.

Located in the area for almost 50 years, the centre has forged close relationships with the community and Basildon Council. Mark Harvey, Ford Dunton’s testing and site manager, says: “Strong links in the community help when it comes to the recruitment, education and training of the calibre of personnel required for a high technology research and development facility.

“Ford’s relationship with Basildon Council is positive and they are supportive of a manufacturing and engineering agenda. This is encouraged through business networking events and innovation groups.”



KONICA MINOLTA

Japanese technology specialist Konica Minolta is a global manufacturer of industrial imaging products such as copiers and printers. The company was formed in 2003 after the merger of Japanese imaging firms Konica and Minolta.

While Konica Minolta has regional offices around the country, the Basildon office is the operational centre, housing the marketing, HR, finance, sales, customer administration and logistics departments. The company employs 900 people nationally, with 300 employees based in Basildon – 78% of whom are from the local area.

Accessibility is an important factor for the organisation. David Cotterill, director of marketing at Konica Minolta, says: “Being a nationwide organisation, it is key for us that our operations centre is easily accessible by road, train and air – the latter is helped by the increase in air traffic to London Southend airport.

“We have visitors from all across Europe and the UK so location is of paramount importance. Basildon gives us all this and more, as we have all our warehousing and logistics on-site too.

“This not only speeds up the internal communications process, but most importantly means we are able to service our customer base far more effectively than if we were spread over separate locations around the country.”

The council supports businesses such as Konica Minolta in a number of ways, one of which is the promotion of technical roles. Cotterill says: “Working with the council, we have committed to providing up to five work experience placements to those students with an interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects, with a particular focus on supporting girls’ careers.”



We build for a better society.



Woodlands School: designed, built and maintained by Skanska



Skanska's project teams build more than just schools, we create inspiring places for children to learn. Across Essex, we have provided thousands of much-needed school places and transformed the learning environment for numerous college students.

We designed and built the award-winning Woodlands School in Basildon, the Thurrock campus of South Essex College and Castle View School on Canvey Island.

We are committed to improving Basildon and investing in its future.

SKANSKA

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Gateway



With a council that understands the crucial role enterprise plays in the area's prosperity, growing businesses find a helping hand in Basildon - support is on offer to boost both domestic and international trade, as **Lucy Purdy** finds out

to the world

Basildon is perfectly positioned for growing and investing businesses. It lies just 35 minutes from the centre of London and only 15 minutes from the M25. Stansted, London City and Southend airports are between 20 and 40 minutes by car, while DP World London Gateway Port – with its state-of-the-art infrastructure and equipment – is just eight miles away.

But Basildon Council is not letting its enviable location do all the hard work: the authority is rolling up its sleeves to support businesses, helping them develop links at home as well as opening their horizons to new and lucrative markets. It seems to be paying off. There were 1,948 startup businesses in Basildon in 2015, the most in Essex by district, and a 32% increase in the number of ‘micro firms’ – those with nine or fewer employees – since 2010, nosing close to double the national average of 18%.

Karthik Durgaprasad, senior international development officer at Basildon Council, explains why the area is such a good place to grow a business: “Basildon is a first generation smart city, a post-war town. You have an

advanced manufacturing hub, as well as housing, defence and automobile giants here. It is also a financial services, back office and IT centre. Its proximity to DP World London Gateway Port and the Port of Tilbury, as well as access to the A12, A13 and the A127, have made the location a gem for the logistics industry. All the buzz, innovation and supply chains created by these industries make it natural for a Basildon-based SME to think internationally. Access to those markets, contacts and so on, is facilitated by the council.”

A global brand

Initially, the council offers free, in-depth advice on the overseas markets and opportunities relevant to a given company. The next stage is to provide access to both UK and EU-funded specialist advice in certain sectors, opening the door to overseas trade visits, market research and entry support. Finally, to make that sale happen, says Durgaprasad, introductions are made to trade associations, research organisations, B2B matchmaking events and joint ventures.

But with London on its doorstep, why does Basildon urge its businesses

to think globally? “There is always competition in business locally to capture the market,” explains Durgaprasad. “If an SME starts to expand overseas, the global British ‘brand’ and standard often means it can charge a premium price. This way, companies can achieve better margins and have less competition. Collectively, this contributes to longer term sustainability of the business – and to local economic prosperity.”

Over the past three years, Basildon Council has built an impressive record in delivery of business support projects and a desirable network of contacts. The authority has “strong” working relationships with governments, trade associations and overseas departments

// The authority is rolling up its sleeves to support businesses, helping them develop links

// Basildon is working with the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence in Rainham to build a similar facility in the borough.



of the UK government such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Bids to various pots of EU funding have been successful along the way, as well as UKTI funding that is designated to supporting UK SMEs in overseas business development.

Gunilla Edwards, economic development team manager at the council, says: “The council has made a substantial investment in economic development. Additionally, our team is actively in search of more funding from mainly European sources. This will increase the support and provide grants to businesses in the borough.”

Many local companies have benefited from this support. One of these, EnviroComms, works globally

in waste management and resource recovery. It operates in emerging economic regions, as well as working with more than 120 local authorities in the UK. Since 2010, Basildon Council has worked on developing links and promoting trade between Basildon and places in India.

EnviroComms director Stephen Bates explains how his company has benefited: “India was a market that had caught our attention previously but accessing it was known to be difficult and not without financial risk. We also knew little of the government structures and procurement processes there. With none of our existing partners operating in India, it remained low on our list of priority regions, though one known

to hold good potential. Basildon’s commitment to India, and the support they provided, allowed us to realign our priorities and explore the market potential further and more directly.”

The business was given first-hand access to principal regional government buyers in the country and helped in gaining necessary support. Says Bates: “We came up with a proposal to develop a major strategic waste strategy for the state of Kerala and this remains very much an active opportunity. Our name is now known in many client organisations there and while we have yet to secure projects in India, this is a matter of ‘when’ rather than ‘if.’”

So what difference did the council make? Standing side by side with the

DP World London Gateway Port is eight miles from Basildon.



Basildon Council is tapping into the borough's reputation for innovation by recreating workspaces such as the Innovation Warehouse in London and CEME in Rainham.



authority added “great credibility to our presence and offer”, says Bates.

“Their support and navigation through the process was exemplary and as such, we were very well informed when speaking to people there.”

Links have also been forged with China. Basildon Council hosted its first delegation from the city of Changzhou in 2010 with a memorandum of understanding being signed between the two.

Partners at Essex County Council have a longstanding relationship with the Jiangsu province in China with an office there to cater for companies aspiring to do business with companies based in the region.

It can be difficult to tackle the global market without first becoming established at home.

Basildon Council has a raft

of ideas to this end too. The authority has allocated land to cater specifically for business expansions and inward investment. The key employment areas in the borough are situated along the A127, a bustling route to and from London, and the M25, with its access to national road networks and international routes. These areas are, says Edwards, the greatest contributors to growth in Essex – Basildon has the largest economy in the borough.

“This includes global brands such as Ford Motor Company and [business solutions organisation] Konica Minolta, together with a large number of SMEs.”

Innovative thinking

The council is keen to build on Basildon's status as the innovation capital of Essex, and has introduced the South Essex Innovation Programme to support businesses in this way. It includes support tailored to startups, and tips on accessing technological expertise and supply chains. It will also tap into specialist facilities through the Innovation Warehouse: managed workspace to be available to high-growth tech startups and the first such facility in the south-east.

“We want to provide a space for innovators and entrepreneurs from all walks of life to turn their ideas into reality and commercial products,” says Edwards. “Entrepreneurs will have access to specialist equipment and mentoring, enabling commercial exploitation of ideas and intellectual property assets.”

FabLab Essex, which will be located within the Innovation Warehouse, will also provide specialist equipment to entrepreneurs, enabling ideas to be developed, prototyped and commercialised en route to market.

Edwards says: “As a business, it is very important to realise that innovation is not only about designing a new product or service to sell, but can also focus on existing processes and practices to improve efficiency, find new customers and trade opportunities, reduce waste and increase profits.

Drawing on best practice and professional networks, the South Essex Innovation

Programme offers support.”

Basildon is aiming to support growth in the capital by establishing itself as a centre of advanced technology excellence, and the council is currently working with the Centre of Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) in Rainham to develop a similar facility in Basildon, supporting the growth of this key sector.

The borough has the largest concentration of creative and digital in Essex, with a 40% increase since 2009. “We are particularly keen to develop and support this sector,” says Edwards. “The growth of startups in creative and digital has been higher than in most areas, and will help provide employment to future high-skilled workers.”

So, after a strong start at home, would EnviroComms encourage other local companies to explore global opportunities too?

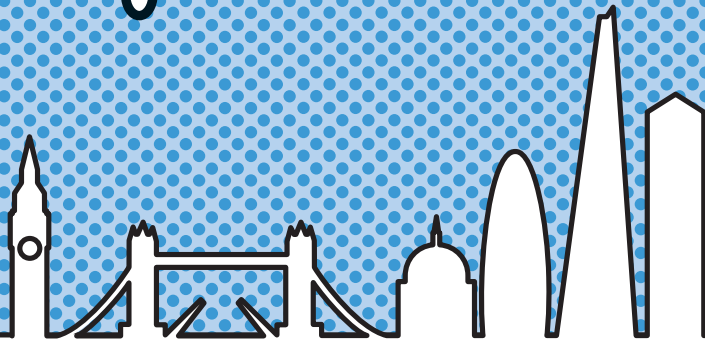
Says Bates: “The UK is still regarded as a premium provider of goods and services globally so there are many keen and potential customers around the world. It may seem strange but we often find it easier to win contracts in far-off lands than we do here in the UK. In addition, exporting can help to spread the risk of business, making it much more manageable.

“Our core UK market is made up of local authorities, and during the banking crisis and recession their spend dwindled to almost nothing. Had we relied solely upon our home market, we wouldn't be here today but as it was, we were working on several major international projects in Azerbaijan, eastern Europe and elsewhere. Together, these enabled us to weather the financial storm back at home.

“Trading globally expands horizons too. Different countries operate in different ways, and by trading internationally you can apply unique and added insight into how you do things at home.

“The fact that you can use your exporting activities in your sales pitches to UK customers is something that adds a layer of credibility to your company's credentials.

“In addition, it gives a different perspective on things.”



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To discuss partnership opportunities that can make a difference, contact Luke Riley, Projects Director, on **01277 314379** or lriley@swan.org.uk.

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