

# BASE

BASILDON · SOUTH EAST FOR INVESTMENT AND GROWTH

INDUSTRY  
INNOVATIONS:  
MODULAR HOUSING

OUT ON THE  
TOWN: GROWTH OF  
THE CENTRES

LESSONS FOR  
LIFE: LEARNING  
AND LIVING

Distinctive homes in  
thriving new communities.  
**It can only be Redrow**



Details correct at time of going to press. Images are indicative only.



## Style and quality as standard in Langdon Hills

Move to a Redrow home and enjoy your dream home built with high specifications throughout and designed to offer the best in modern living.

### **3, 4 & 5 bedroom homes**

Book your appointment today.

---

**Westley Green and  
The Avenues at Westley Green**  
Langdon Hills SS16 5NG  
Call: **01268 977350**

[redrow.co.uk](http://redrow.co.uk)

 **REDROW**  
A BETTER WAY TO LIVE





south essex college  
FURTHER EDUCATION

# OPEN EVENTS

5PM-8PM

## ▶ BASILDON CAMPUS

South Essex College, Nethermayne,  
Basildon, SS16 5NN

- Thursday 31st January 2019
- Wednesday 12th June 2019

## ▶ SOUTHEND CAMPUS

South Essex College, Luker Road,  
Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1ND

- Tuesday 19th March 2019

## ▶ THURROCK CAMPUS

High Street, Grays, Essex, RM17 6TF

- Wednesday 16th January 2019
- Tuesday 14th May 2019

## ▶ STEPHENSON ROAD

**MOTOR VEHICLE, ENGINEERING  
AND CONSTRUCTION ONLY**

No. 28 & No. 30 Stephenson Road  
(off Progress Road), Southend-on-Sea,  
SS9 5LY

- Wednesday 6th February 2019

[southessex.ac.uk/oe](http://southessex.ac.uk/oe)  
0845 52 12345\*



\*Calls cost up to 7p per minute and your phone company's access charge

# Contents

6

## News

Updates on education, retail, housing, engineering and sport.

12

## Sectors

Forecasters believe the UK is overcoming economic challenges and has a bright future: how is Basildon helping shape this projected progress?

18

## Housing

The housing crisis needs innovative solutions and modular is a leading industry example - *BaSE* visits Swan Housing Association's Basildon factory.

25

## Town Centres

What lessons can be taken from the Grimsey Review 2 and how is the council prioritising the future of its urban centres?

31

## Expansion

Why are investors excited by the potential of the A127 corridor, a key pillar of the council's developing Local Plan?

34

## Infographic

The figures stack up: Basildon is an attractive investment proposition.

36

## Environment

A high percentage of Basildon is still rural - *BaSE* takes a stroll around its nature hotspots.

40

## Map

Locating regeneration projects.

42

## Projects

Progress reports on development schemes across the borough.

# BaSE

**Editor-in-chief** James Renoux-Wood **News and digital editor** Natalie Vincent **Production manager** Christopher Hazeldine **Design** Kate Harkus **Business development director** Paul Gussar **Business development manager** Harry Seal **Project manager** Sue Mapara **Subscriptions manager** Simon Maxwell **Managing director** Toby Fox

**Subscriptions and feedback** Base-basildon.com  
**Published by** 3Fox International Sunley House, Beford Park, Croydon  
 CRO 2AP, O2O 7978 6840, 3foxinternational.com  
**Printed by** The Manson Group

**Cover image** Laindon Memorial Garden CGI by Pollard Thomas Edwards / Swan

**Images** Basildon Council, Pollard Thomas Edwards, PROCAT, Chris Reeve / Ford, Oakley Mobile, HORIBA MIRA, Johnnie Pakington Photography / BT, Chris Woodman Photography, Greg Balfour Evans / Alamy, Ink Drop / Shutterstock, Leonardo, Neil Phillips, Graham Dean (CC BY 2.0)

©2019 3Fox International Limited. All material is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without the written permission of 3Fox International Ltd is strictly forbidden. The greatest care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of information in this magazine at time of going to press, but we accept no responsibility for omissions or errors. The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of 3Fox International Ltd.

# News

## Community centre plan moves forward

The relocation and development of a community centre in Wickford has been granted conditional planning permission, as part of the town's regeneration plans.

The application was discussed at a meeting of Basildon Council's Planning Committee on 20 November and includes moving the centre from Market Road to Nevendon Recreation Ground.

It also includes the demolition of the One Step Ahead pre-school which will be incorporated into the centre.

Basildon Council's chairman of the regeneration committee, Anthony Hedley, said: "The existing centre is no longer fit-for-purpose and we are committed to working with the community association to ensure we give them a facility that will enable a greater range of activities. This will also unlock much-needed redevelopment on the site of the old centre."



## New campus for South Essex College approved

Basildon Council has approved South Essex College's planning application for a town centre campus.

The building, on the site of the former Basildon Market, will be a three-storey facility catering to IT, digital technologies and science students. The development will also include car parking, public open space, shops and landscaping.

David Dadds, vice chairman of Basildon Council's regeneration committee and mayor, said: "This state-of-the-art campus in Market Square will provide fantastic opportunities for

**A significant milestone in our ambitious regeneration plans**

young people from across the borough and beyond. We are committed to creating opportunities for all and doing all we can to support education and employment providers.

"This decision is a significant milestone in our ambitious regeneration plans for Basildon, which will bring more life into the town centre and boost the economy."



## Shopping centre under way

Work has started on-site at Laindon Shopping Centre, marking the beginning of a project to create a new town centre.

The scheme, to be known as Laindon Place, will transform the dilapidated shopping centre into a new high street including 224 homes, shops, a health centre and an office for housing association Swan Housing, which is behind the scheme.

Swan's executive director of development and regeneration, Geoff Pearce, was joined at a "groundbreaking" ceremony in November 2018 by MP for Basildon and Billericay, John Baron; Basildon council leader, Andrew Baggott; mayor of Basildon, David Dadds; and MP for Rayleigh and Wickford, Mark Francois.

Pearce said: "Swan has been operating in Basildon and Laindon for almost 25 years now and we manage over 1,500 homes surrounding the Laindon Centre. As a result, we have an unwavering commitment to seeing the successful regeneration of the centre.

"We've taken the time to widely consult local residents and stakeholders and this has meant that we are confident Laindon Place will really deliver for the local community."

The milestone celebrates the end of decades of failed attempts by various developers to regenerate the shopping centre.

Baron added: "My congratulations to Swan Housing, Basildon Council and all involved for their hard work in now moving this redevelopment forward."

## College merger could boost technical offering

Prospects College of Advanced Technology (PROCAT) is set to merge with South Essex College of Further and Higher Education (SEC).

Retaining the name PROCAT, the merging process must complete a number of stages before seeking the approval of the secretary of state for education. If approved, the project will start in early 2019 and the merged college will seek further investment towards developing the Basildon town centre campus as its headquarters.

PROCAT chairman David Sherlock said: "Our dream has been to create a technical university for Basildon. To do that we need larger scale and excellence.

"We are confident that this merger will provide that, establishing a

powerhouse of technical creativity for the thriving Thames Gateway."

The merger aims to train more people in construction and the technical industries to boost employment prospects in the Thames Estuary region.

SEC principal and chief executive, Angela O'Donoghue, said: "Our decision to merge with PROCAT has been underpinned by our shared commitment in providing technical training opportunities up to degree level to meet the skills needs in the Thames Estuary and beyond.

"The merger with PROCAT, alongside our upcoming Basildon town centre campus, present exciting times for all."



# Sporting stars honoured

**S**porting teams and individuals who have contributed to making Basildon a more active borough were recognised at an awards ceremony in November 2018.

The Active Basildon Sports Awards took place at Billericay restaurant Reids on 15 November, where winners scooped trophies across nine categories.

Among them included Basildon Athletics Club member Sam Bennett, who was named Sports Personality of the Year after winning gold in the 110m hurdles at this year's European Athletics U18 Championships; and racing driver Emily Linscott, who was named Young Sports Personality of the Year ahead of her Formula 4 debut in Malaysia.

The awards were presented by mayor of Basildon David Dadds, Basildon Council's chief executive Scott Logan and the director of Active Essex, Jason Fergus.



## Shared ownership homes snapped up

Ten shared ownership homes in a development led by Sempra Homes - a commercial arm of Basildon Council - have been reserved by local residents and key workers.

The two four-bed and eight two-bed homes are located in Sellars Way on the new St Nicholas Mews scheme off Ballards Walk and were developed by Redrow for Sempra. They were marketed to borough residents and key workers such as teachers, ambulance workers, firefighters, nurses and police officers.

Seven have been reserved by residents who have lived in the borough for more than five years and three taken by key workers.

Basildon Council's chairman of the housing committee, Don Morris, said: "These are stunning family homes and represent a great opportunity for borough residents and key workers to get on the property ladder in an affordable way, through the shared ownership scheme."



## Ford relocation welcomed by council

Leader of Basildon Council, Andrew Baggott, has welcomed proposals from Ford UK to move its headquarters and credit operations to the Dunton Technical Centre from Warley after 50 years.

The car manufacturer announced it is consulting on relocation plans, which could happen by the end of September 2019. The site on Eagle Way has been earmarked for 350 new homes.

Baggott said: "The proposals from Ford UK to expand its operations at Dunton Technical Centre are a strong





vote of confidence in the borough of Basildon as a place to do business, and further strengthen our position as the economic hub of South Essex.


"We look forward to continuing to work closely with Ford UK as the plans develop."

## Tricks of the trade

Basildon Council is leading the EU funded Go Trade project with 16 partners across Southern UK and Northern France. The €5 million project aims to support the regeneration and rejuvenation of town centre markets as community hubs and tourist attractions driving up footfall and contributing to the new face of town centres.

Basildon Market has already benefited from the funding and has from its new location and new stalls been able to offer a series of events to attract new visitors and boost sales.

Market traders have also benefited from specialist advice and mentoring from retail experts in areas such as display, marketing and accounting. Young market traders have benefited from dedicated support and training. Future plans include further events and installing of wifi and a digital corner to enable market traders to use social media to market their offer and 'Click and Collect' service.

 Young market traders have benefited from dedicated support and training

**We've spent 25 years helping people feel at home in Basildon... together we can do even more!**

**Swan Housing Association started out in Basildon in 1994, taking a transfer of around 2,000 homes from the Commission for New Towns, after being chosen by residents in a ballot. Today we own and manage over 11,000 homes across East London and Essex, but we've never forgotten our roots.**

**Fast forward to 2019, Swan's commitment to Basildon has enabled us to work in partnership with Basildon Borough Council and Homes England using our in-house developer and contractor NU living to...**



**"My congratulations to Swan Housing, Basildon Council and all involved for their hard work in now moving this redevelopment forward. It's a great plan and we now look forward to seeing it put into action."**

John Baron, MP for Basildon and Billericay



From left to right: Mark Francois MP for Rayleigh & Wickford, John Baron, MP for Basildon and Billericay, Geoff Pearce, Swan's Executive Director of Regeneration & Development, Cllr David Dadds, Mayor of Basildon

**...deliver new factory built homes to Beechwood continuing our regeneration of Craylands...**

swain



nu  
living



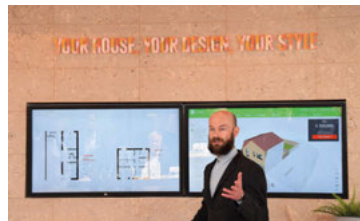
Beechwood West, Basildon

**...invest £3m in our factory**



*The Swan and NU living team with Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government*

**...create local jobs for local people**



**If you would like to work with us in Basildon please get in touch with our new business team: [newbusiness@swan.org.uk](mailto:newbusiness@swan.org.uk)**

Amalclubbike app

# Race with

THE ROLE



# Engineering success

New technologies and a surprising level of steady growth in the manufacturing and engineering sectors are giving national businesses confidence the country's challenges for employment growth can be overcome.

**Sarah Herbert** reports

**D**espite the dreaded Brexit uncertainty – making the future for trade and manufacturing undecided at the time of writing – and consequent variable forecasts for GDP growth, many forecasters are optimistic about the future of the UK economy, which could bring benefits to Basildon.

The Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC), for instance, reveals that 67% of UK staffing agencies forecast revenue growth in 2018, up from 60% in 2017, while the Confederation of Business Industry reveals 51% of companies are planning to grow their workforces.

With some commentators in some sectors predicting flat or minimal growth overall, the law of averages must mean a few sectors are going to be growing strongly. Such sectors include:

## **IT/Technology**

Demand for IT professionals is set to increase, according to the REC, particularly in areas such as cyber security, digital marketing and virtual reality (VR), in which Britain is already a prominent player. It is not just for gamers – VR is becoming increasingly important in the world of work too, for training, safety testing, therapy and marketing.

The virtual and augmented reality market is expected to be worth £120 billion globally by 2020, according to *Business Insider*.

## **FinTech**

A subset of IT, the financial technology industry is set to dominate the UK economy further in 2019 thanks to the aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008 as well as the uncertainties over Brexit.

A survey for the London Stock Exchange shows UK-based FinTech firms expect a whopping 88% growth over the next three years, helped by the government's ambition for the UK development to lead the world.

## **Manufacturing and engineering**

New data by the Confederation of British Industry revealed that growth within the manufacturing sector is at a 30-year high, and this good fortune is expected to continue.

While some of this can be attributed to the weak pound, meaning Eurozone economies are placing more orders with UK manufacturers, there is also a UK-wide focus on engineering, and the need for huge amounts of extra engineers to fill demand.

Other growth sectors include healthcare (particularly temporary nursing and medical staff), biotechnology – which raised £1.2 billion of investment last year – and construction, which is facing a continuing skills shortage coupled with increasing demand.

So how is Basildon set to profit from these economic shifts? With an economy worth £3.7 billion and a ▶

number of internationally recognised businesses, Basildon is the largest and fastest growing economy in Essex and a significant driver of regional and national growth. With 7,725 businesses employing 93,000 people, it has long been home to advanced technology companies within the engineering and ICT/digital sectors, with some of the UK's most advanced technical facilities at companies such as Ford, Horiba MIRA, aerospace and electronic firm Leonardo, DST Financial Services and Oakley Mobile.

While its unemployment is average for the UK, the borough has more jobs available per resident (0.82) than anywhere in south Essex.

Ford Motor Company has been in the Dunton area of Basildon since 1967 and employs 3,500 people in developing engine and drive-train engineering. Says Graham Hoare OBE, head of the Ford Technical Centre: "We have very specific requirements for engineers, and while many of the skills are available locally, for some specialisms, it is necessary to relocate people from around the UK. Essex's quality of life generally proves an attractive proposition for people."

Numbers at the centre are due to swell when Ford moves some of its UK headquarters from nearby Warley to Dunton by September 2019. This is great news for Basildon. As Councillor Andrew Baggott, leader of Basildon

Council, says: "The proposals from Ford UK to expand its operations at Dunton Technical Centre are a strong vote of confidence in the borough of Basildon as a place to do business, and further strengthen our position as the economic hub of South Essex."

Another firm operating in advanced engineering and poised to take advantage of its growth, is vehicle engineering specialist Horiba MIRA, which has one of Europe's largest environmental test facilities in Basildon.

Eamonn Martin, manager of component and environmental testing, says: "The location offers us access to many local engineering companies and gives us international kudos of being

Horiba MIRA (below) and students at South Essex College (right).



Our motivation is to develop first-class facilities for young people and adults in Basildon

Anthony McGarel, deputy principal and chief executive of South Essex College

near London. Basildon also has a high engineering skill set due to the location of so many large engineering companies and this in turn creates an engineering community.”

Away from manufacturing, but ready to take advantage of another growth sector – FinTech – DST Systems provides admin, tech and operational support for the financial services industry. Employing 1,000 people in Basildon – some of whom have swapped their lives in Canary Wharf or the City for a lower-cost but career-friendly life in Essex – the company has grown every year since its move to Basildon in 2002.

And finally, there is Oakley Mobile, at the forefront of VR and mobile technology, and thus perfectly positioned to take advantage of predicted growth in this sector.

First established in 1998, this multi-disciplinary developer and producer works across sectors to bring complex concepts to life. It has generated VR scenarios to show beneath-the-skin technology for concept cars, as well as training for emergency services, bringing museum collections to life and enabling visitors to meet first world war soldiers, build a tank or play games in a Victorian classroom. It also develops apps for use in the construction industry, for scheduling or documentation, automotive, and training and learning.

While it's relatively easy to recruit developers, not many are local. John Gladman, Oakley's managing director, says: “The nearby college in Colchester teaches Unity [a VR-enabled software engine] development, but it's not ideal for recruitment. However, I have had very constructive conversations with Basildon College, which is building a new facility here, and which asked for my input on the courses and requirements of business in the area. This should make the future easier.”

The facility Gladman is referring



## HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND

An agreement to roll-out superfast broadband to 1,500 premises in Basildon was reached in summer 2018, and all homes and businesses within a five-mile radius of the town will have fibre-enabled broadband.

Why does this matter? According to BT, superfast broadband helps business in three main ways:

### For existing firms

Improves performance, increases efficiency and allows greater development of new products and services. This is particularly true of knowledge-based industries, and the places where they are most concentrated.

### New businesses

Reduces barriers to entry in certain sectors, especially via cloud computing, which dramatically reduces the upfront

capital and ongoing support costs.

### Flexible working

Opens up new employment opportunities and enhances the productivity of existing staff.

According to research by BT Openreach, for a UK town, like Basildon, superfast broadband could mean:

- ✓ An annual increase in GVA of 0.5% per annum over 15 years. Every £1 a business invests in superfast broadband creates nearly £16 in additional GVA for the UK economy.
- ✓ One-hundred-and-forty business start-ups as a result of cloud computing and support for 1,030 home workers.
- ✓ Around 225 jobs created through business creation and improved business performance.

to is a new state-of-the-art campus in Basildon town centre for South East Essex College (SEC), the largest technical and vocational education and training provider in Essex, with more than 12,000 students and 1,000 staff, to be built on the current site of the town's market. The campus will have a strong

STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) presence, specialise in digital technologies and offer degree-level courses, a first for the college.

Anthony McGarel, deputy principal and chief executive of the college, said: “We can't wait to bring much-needed further education facilities to the

heart of Basildon. Our motivation is to develop first-class facilities for young people and adults in Basildon, in line with what employers need. We will not compromise on the quality of education we provide. The local community deserves the best and that is what we are going to deliver.”

This connection between employers and education will also be cemented by the proposed merger of SEC with Prospects College of Advanced Technology (PROCAT).

Specialist college PROCAT – with campuses in Basildon, Canvey Island and Ilford – was established to meet the workforce development needs of the engineering sectors, and specialises in providing apprenticeships. The merger, proposed for February 2019, would enable the two colleges to broaden the colleges’ skill offer, eliminate duplication of courses, and provide a one-stop-shop for employers’ training needs, benefiting local businesses such as Oakley, and the many other advanced engineering firms in the area.

According to Judith Abbott, chief executive and accounting officer at PROCAT: “The colleges are very driven by the needs of local employers, and use projections of future jobs and skills needs when planning their curriculum. Both have invested heavily in industry-standard equipment, to ensure their students acquire the skills that employers need.

What can be crucial to business is retaining graduates in the area after they qualify, something many areas of

**The Local Plan has also benefited from research by Essex County Council**

**Matthew Winslow, service manager, Basildon Council**

the UK battle with. Abbott doesn’t see that as a problem in Basildon. “The main challenge for the many employers offering high quality jobs and careers has been finding people with the right skills in the first place, not retaining them. Both colleges have therefore been part of the council’s Pathways to Success initiative, which focuses on ensuring that young people locally acquire the right skills to access quality jobs, with the opportunity to continue to learn and develop a proper career.”

The college merger has played a part in Basildon Council’s 2019 Local Plan, which has established a new strategic approach to education, skills and learning to support the borough’s growth, as part of a wider strategy for the region.

Matthew Winslow, service manager, strategic planning and housing strategy says of the Local Plan: “It has been a challenging task to cater for all the different opportunities and development needs facing the borough, considering the existing business areas, the sectors currently represented, or not, the need for supporting facilities such as roads, parking and education facilities and how the borough can deliver these in the



Specialist technology college PROCAT trains tomorrow's engineers.

future. As far as employment goes, the Local Plan is proposing to protect all of the employment areas. This is as well as providing more new land than is actually required by 2034 to help the economy grow.”

In drawing together the plan, the council had to consider the requirements of relocating businesses.

Winslow says: “With other local authority partners in South Essex, we undertook an economic development needs assessment, as well as carrying out our own employment land and premises study, to review economic objectives and establish a minimum amount of new land to provide.”

“Discussions with the Greater London Authority about the London Industrial Land Demand Study revealed a large shift in the manufacturing and utilities sector, with many companies seeking relocation outside London. The Local Plan will therefore propose to allocate a further 14ha of land to capture this displaced or unmet employment need.”

**CASE STUDY: WALKER PRECISION ENGINEERING**

Family firm Walker Precision Engineering has been manufacturing high-precision mechanical parts for the defence and space sectors, from heads-up displays in aircraft to components for satellites, in its Glasgow HQ since the 1970s.

One of its primary clients is Leonardo, and in early 2018, an investment from the British Growth Fund enabled Walker to take over Leonardo’s precision engineering facilities, and thus tap into Basildon’s advanced engineering sector.

Walker – a member of Sharing in Growth – will expand the capability of the plant over the next few months, cementing its world-leading position. Securing more than 50 jobs in Basildon, Walker has just taken on four new mechanical apprentices.





It also had to consider the needs of very small businesses and startups, which have increased faster in Basildon than anywhere else in Essex and the south-east. While this small enterprise base helps to spread risk in the economy (caused by an over reliance of larger businesses), it creates an interesting dynamic for the provision of employment space – whether that be industrial, commercial or retail – as businesses do well and seek to expand.

Says Winslow: “The Local Plan has also benefited from research by Essex County Council into the feasibility of providing ‘grow on space’. This highlighted market failure in providing small-sized office and industrial units for emerging small business. We are therefore proposing to allocate a further 9ha of land to cater for this currently unmet demand.”

These ambitions dovetail with those of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. In its Strategic Economic Plan 2014, which provides the economic context and conditions for economic

growth, SELEP’s ambition is to enable the creation of 200,000 sustainable private sector jobs between 2011 and 2021, an increase of 11.4% since 2011.

SELEP is also addressing skills provision and facilities, via a skills strategy, which includes a careers enterprise network linking education and industry with 160 secondary schools and employers, a £37 million capital programme delivering industry relevant training facilities, and £51 million of European Social Fund projects, supporting people into and in work.

It also runs a skills advisory group, to provide a holistic overview of skills strategy in the area. This work is alongside Essex County Council’s Employability and Skills Board, which aims to close the gap between the needs of employers and the choices learners make, by directing local public-private and EU funding to shape local skills programmes to address skills gaps and increase employment.

The council works in close partnership with SELEP and has

recently established ‘Pathways to Success’, an independent panel including schools, providers and employers.

The panels’ work is focused on providing links between schools and employers and to ensure young people in the borough have opportunities to access high technology jobs.

In addition, the council has opened a ‘pop-up’ careers and employment shop in Basildon town centre, working with partners to provide information on careers and skills opportunities to all residents.

Another interested party is the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) – made up of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Essex County, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, and Thurrock councils – which has drafted a ‘Statement of Common Ground’, setting out the next steps to transform transport connectivity, and open up spaces for housing, business and leisure development through a joint strategic plan and shape local labour and skill markets. ▮



Swan Housing Association is leading the modular housing revolution in Basildon.

# Living well

To fix the UK's housing crisis, innovative solutions are needed, and modular housing is being touted in the development industry as an exemplar. **Matt Ross** speaks to Swan Housing Association's executive director of regeneration and development, about the organisation's Basildon facility - and what these new ways of thinking could mean for homebuyers ▶



When people order a new car, says Geoff Pearce, they can select an engine, colour, interior and extras to suit their preferences. And now Swan Housing Association, where Pearce is executive director of regeneration and development, is making a similar offer to those buying new homes in Basildon's 750-home Beechwood development.

Much of Basildon's new towns-era housing, notes Pearce, was built to a handful of uniform designs; "but over the years, people have altered their houses so they all look different." And at Beechwood, those alterations can be made before the first foundation is laid: "We have an online configurator tool which people can use to choose their floor layout, select materials and colours – even add extra rooms," he explains. "No two homes will look the same."

This diversity is made possible by Swan's new modular housing factory,

which builds cross-laminated timber components that can be quickly assembled on-site. Unlike most housing associations, Pearce says, Swan has long managed construction projects itself: setting up the factory supports its "cradle-to-grave model of development", while stripping the risk out of building projects and freeing it from dependence on subcontractors.

Basildon's excellent road links and the council's supportive approach made the town a good location for Swan's new factory, Pearce explains. Then there's the town's setting at the heart of Swan's area of operations, and the housing association's local connections, as he notes: "we were born in Basildon".

The factory's estimated annual output of 300 to 400 homes will be split between Beechwood and Swan's other projects – including Basildon's Laindon scheme, where it is "demolishing the run-down shopping centre, and putting in a more traditional high street with 230

homes." Swan owns 1,500 homes around Laindon, Pearce explains, "so it made sense for us to regenerate the area on a break-even basis because of the positive impact for our residents."

In taking the plunge into modular housing, Swan is putting itself – and Basildon – at the cutting-edge of construction technology: there are just a handful of similar factories around the UK, all of them owned by private developers. As yet, Pearce acknowledges, the cost of materials is no lower than those for traditional construction.

So why take the risk? In part, to future-proof Swan's operations: construction has "an ageing workforce, and with Brexit there's a shortage of construction skills on the horizon; it's harder to get qualified tradespeople," Pearce responds. Modular construction depends more on factory production line skills, where Basildon's "strong manufacturing heritage" ensures a ready supply of labour.

There are environmental benefits, too. Energy efficiency is excellent, because the homes' one-piece wooden walls are air-tight. While the cement required in traditional construction emits large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, Swan's use of sustainably-forested timber makes its modular houses carbon-negative over the first two years. Vehicle movements and noise on the construction site are reduced. And with the Buildoffsite Property Assurance Scheme (BOPAS) and the Building Research Establishment (BRE), Pearce has worked to ensure the homes' longevity: "BOPAS's assurance extends to 60 years as standard, but we don't see why they shouldn't last 100," he says.

Swan's move into modular housing has been eased by recent developments in digital technology, "which means we can design things in three dimensions to a very detailed level in BIM [Building Information Modelling]". And the shift to a production line approach creates big

Smart interiors at Swan's Beechwood development (left) and a two-bed home on Sellars Way, delivered by Sempra Homes (right).





## SEMPRA HOMES

“We have residents who could be on the housing waiting list for years, but can’t afford to buy on the private market,” says Melanie Keys. “They’re pushed into private rent, which could be over 40% of their annual income.”

As the manager of Basildon Council’s special purpose vehicle (SPV) Sempra Homes, it’s Keys’ job to help local people – particularly keyworkers – onto the housing ladder, providing shared ownership properties along with units for affordable rent and private sale. Sempra mainly builds on under-utilised council land, she explains, replacing derelict buildings and dilapidated garage blocks with “new, attractive housing that meets the needs of residents, creates nice environments and pride in the area.” All of Sempra’s homes are designed to Essex Design Guide and National Space standards, and Keys’ team consults carefully with local residents: “This isn’t just about new housing; it’s about impact on the surrounding area,” she says.

Alongside its housing goals, Sempra is tasked with making a good return for Basildon Council – which borrowed to set the SPV up – and encouraging economic activity by commissioning local suppliers and providing training opportunities. Sempra’s work supports the Local Plan’s goals to boost affordable housing and reuse brownfield sites; the aim is for Sempra to deliver 584 homes, while repaying the loan and creating a sustainable business.

Sempra’s shared ownership properties – which benefit from Homes England grant funding – are made available first to local key workers, before being offered to other local people. “We’re trying to support recruitment and retention to key borough

services,” Keys says. “So we give top priority to hospital nursing and auxiliary, fire, police and education staff – schoolteachers and college lecturers.”

The SPV also builds homes for affordable rent, taking tenants from the council waiting list. And it’s careful to cap rents at the level of the local housing allowance rather than the government’s definition of ‘affordable’ rent, ensuring that if residents lose their job, then housing benefit will cover the rent – supporting tenancy sustainment. “Affordable housing is classed as 80% of market rent, but housing benefit is set at about 65%,” Keys points out.

Sempra has completed 32 properties so far; many are under construction or in pre-planning, while the SPV is negotiating land acquisitions to provide 200 more. “We’re at the 549 mark at the moment,” says Keys, who’s confident of hitting the 584 target.

The council’s backing has proved crucial, says Keys – and that’s persisted through three administrations. “Different leaders each time, she says, “but they’ve all been very supportive. “We’ve had tremendous cross-party support, and the current leader is very ambitious for Sempra to do more.”

That’s good news for Basildon’s key workers and other middle-income residents, keen to escape the rental market for their own property. Many of Sempra’s customers “wouldn’t normally be able to live in a brand new home. Now they can get a step on the housing ladder; and the combined rent and mortgage often ends up cheaper than renting privately,” says Keys. “They’re so pleased. You go in and they’ve done them up like show homes; they’re so proud of them.”

**//** We can design things in three dimensions to a very detailed level

**Geoff Pearce, executive director of regeneration and development, Swan Housing Association**

opportunities to drive up efficiency: “We don’t lose any time to weather or daylight, and because the factory’s in an industrial area we can work outside normal working hours,” he explains. “We can do two things at once – build the foundations at the same time as we create the modules – and in the factory, people are much more productive: our staff have a tool in their hand for about 75% of their time, compared to 25% on a traditional site.”

Taking a continuous improvement approach, Swan’s team are fast learning how to cut costs and speed up manufacturing. For example, says Pearce, “because our modules are precisely made, we can have wooden batons milled to the correct size rather than hand-cutting each and discarding the off-cut – so there’s no

waste.” And the housing association is pushing modularisation ever further – developing kitchens that can arrive on-site in a few big units rather than dozens of cabinet panels, and making radical plans to reshape electrical fit-outs. “Over time we’ll move to a wiring loom approach, where it’s built off-site and we’ll fit it as you would in a car rather than putting in the wiring on-site,” Pearce explains.

It’s been a steep learning curve. “A couple of months ago, getting a home off the line took 10 days; that’s come down to four days,” Pearce says. But he has a year plan to go much further: “It needs to come down to four hours.”

What advice does Pearce have for other developers considering the modular approach? Start considering the techniques’ requirements at the very beginning of the project, he says: architecture and planning teams will need to change the way they work. Allow plenty of time and resources for the design phase, when you’ll need to decide every detail of the homes’ construction. Make sure your supplier

## Modular construction is on the cusp of a tipping point

**Geoff Pearce, executive director, Swan Housing Association**

won’t go bust, leaving you unable to complete the scheme. And don’t test the water with a small-scale pilot: design costs must be spread across a large number of units.

Pearce is already considering how Swan’s hard-won expertise could support a move into producing modular homes for the wider market. “We’re starting to explore options around a second factory that would be a more commercial venture,” he says; to guarantee demand, “we’d be wanting to do that in partnership with a local authority or another developer.”

Modular construction is still in its infancy. And as Swan’s experience shows, there’s huge potential to streamline production methods – pushing costs below those of traditional

construction. When Henry Ford brought out his Model T Ford in 1908, Pearce points out, he was charging \$825 per car; by 1925, he’d got the price down to \$260. “Ford drove the costs out through product development and enhanced manufacturing techniques on his production line system,” he says. “Modular construction is on the cusp of a tipping point.”

Following in Ford’s tyre tracks, Swan is pioneering the use of production line manufacturing to transform an industry. Only this time, standardisation does not mean uniformity: unlike the Model T’s customers, with their famously narrow selection of colour options, Beechwood’s homebuyers have over a million configurations to pick from.

Basildon may have begun life as a new town built of pattern homes, but today it’s seeing the significant expansion of customer choice into the development industry. “People want to make their homes their own, and they want the quality of a new-build,” Pearce concludes. “This is the best of both worlds.”

Swan’s modular housing factory in Basildon (below) and how the properties might look (right).



# REGIONAL BUT UNRESTRICTED

**WITH A STRONG REGIONAL Foothold  
AND NATIONAL CAPABILITIES, WE'RE READY  
WHEN, AND WHEREVER, YOU ARE.**

Benefiting from Glenny's in-depth and unrivalled knowledge of the North East London and Essex property markets, our clients operating in Basildon can expect an exceptional service, whatever their requirements are.

Our full range of services are accessible through our central support hub in Stratford and strategically-located regional offices.

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT US AT [WWW.GLENNY.CO.UK](http://WWW.GLENNY.CO.UK)

ESSEX | EAST LONDON | NORTH LONDON & HERTFORDSHIRE | SOUTH EAST LONDON & KENT

**OUR TEAM:WORKING**

**WELL PLACED  
PROPERTY ADVISORS**

**GLENNY**

Basildon

Pitsea

Wickford



Investing across Basildon for over 20 years and delighted to continue our policy of long-term investment and regeneration in the area.



Laindon

Pipps Hill

Basildon



Edward Mileham BSc (Hons) MRICS  
Head of Asset Management  
0207 233 5255 | 07824 660465  
EMileham@lcpproperties.co.uk

**LCP**

**020 7233 5255**  
**www.lcpproperties.co.uk**



Julian Diamond BSc (Hons) MRICS  
Retail Director  
0207 233 5255 | 07767 221128  
JDiamond@lcpproperties.co.uk





# Talk of the town

Plans for Basildon town centre are well advanced, helping negotiate changing retail trends and putting the area on a firm footing, as **Shailja Morris** reports

According to the Grimsey Review 2, the high street as we know it will soon be consigned to memory. Bill Grimsey's update on the subject he originally reviewed in 2013 says that with the increase in online shopping and the demise of flagship high street retailers, local councils are keenly aware

of the fact that they need to revive the beating heart of their communities.

Basildon, the satellite town borne out of the housing shortage following the second world war, is well ahead of the curve. The ink was long dry on Basildon's town centre masterplan before Grimsey 2 was published in July 2018. ▶

Bluntly titled “The Vanishing High Street”, Grimsey 2 proposes that our town centres need to become flourishing community hubs with a mix of housing, offices, leisure and entertainment, with less reliance on retail.

Basildon’s town centre masterplan was first approved in 2012 to do exactly that, as well as stimulate a vibrant night time economy. The cornerstone of the regeneration programme is six new restaurants alongside the East Walk cinema project – a 10-screen cinema operated by Empire Cinemas. This is alongside significant public realm enhancements to East Square and the surrounding area.

Another key project now under way is the relocation of South Essex College from Nethermayne into the town centre. There is the potential for Basildon Hospital to relocate some non-acute services onto an adjacent site and work is under way to bring this forward. The repurposing of a nearby office block into mixed residential use will also breathe new life into the area.

Councillor Anthony Hedley, chairman of the Regeneration Committee for Basildon Council,

**Investors are sitting up and taking notice of our ambitious regeneration programme**  
**Councillor Anthony Hedley, Basildon**

explains. “There is a very real interest in Basildon and its surrounding areas such as Pitsea, Laindon and Billericay right now. The delivery of the town centre masterplan has been well-received by local residents, businesses and also investors, who are sitting up and taking notice of our ambitious regeneration programme.

“The masterplan was put in place after a lot of research and consideration for the local community and the town’s heritage. Everything we know and love about Basildon was developed after 1950. It was built due to a chronic shortage of housing. Some of the design was very avant garde and of its day but the Brutalist architecture from that era has not stood the test of time. We are trying to maintain the architectural heritage, while ensuring our buildings are fit for purpose and easy to maintain.



“In some respects we need to start again – but sympathetically and in collaboration with key stakeholders, not least local residents who we are consulting at every opportunity.

“Many retailers didn’t expect the downturn to be as severe as it has. They entered into long lease agreements with private landlords. So, there has been a



**Towngate Theatre** (this page), East Square (top) and the new South Essex College campus (right).



lot of work going on behind the scenes, a lot of negotiation and forward planning. It's all about evolution, not revolution.

“Basildon was once a key shopping destination in the region. All of the premium brands of the day were here, from Army and Navy, M&S and BHS. It had an open pedestrianised area with a lot of sculpture and new designs

but times have changed. The downturn in retail means we can no longer rely so heavily on shops. In terms of retail, we are competing with Lakeside, Chelmsford, Stratford, Bluewater and Mayflower Park – which are shopping destinations.

“People invest their time differently, so we have to get the right mix in terms

of shopping, entertainment and leisure, as well as giving people a pleasant experience in an inviting environment. We are working in collaboration with the architects, landlords and businesses, as well as police, local businesses and partners to make sure we provide spaces that are safe and well-designed.

“It all comes down to understanding your community, as well as a strong design concept. We have a great complex in the north of the town off Cranes Farm Road – the Festival Leisure Park, which has restaurants, a 12-screen cinema and a David Lloyd health and fitness club. However, we want to bring people back into the town and strengthen its offer. We already have our Towngate Theatre, which hosts a variety of shows, as well as pantomimes such as *Snow White* directed by Simon Fielding. It's local and competitively priced. Why shouldn't Basildon have a thriving arts and culture in its centre?”

In July, proposals to transform East Square with a 10-screen cinema operated by Empire Cinemas and six new restaurants were approved by the Planning Committee. The procurement of demolition and build contractors is under way and start on-site expected in February 2019.

This was followed in September by planning approval for the construction of the new college campus on the site of the former Basildon Market, which ▶



has been moved from Market Square into its new home in St Martin's Square.

The existing buildings on the land will be demolished to make way for the three-storey campus to be used by South Essex College, which will focus on IT, digital technologies and science provision. By bringing educational and non-emergency outpatient facilities into the town centre, as well as introducing a mix of office and residential spaces, there will be regular footfall in the town centre. The residential mix will also give it a very different feel, with families living in the heart of the town centre.

The development is also set to include car parking, public open space, a substation, shops, access and landscaping. The campus will be ready for students by September 2020.

Basildon has one of the largest number of 16-to-18 year olds within Essex, but also one of the lowest number of facilities for the education of those over the age of 16. As a result, many students have to travel outside of the borough to study.

As Gunilla Edwards, economic development team manager at Basildon Council, explains: "South Essex College

**// We are looking into establishing co-working spaces in the town centre**

**Gunilla Edwards, Basildon Council**

is vital to our future economy. With a new digital curriculum on offer, it will help serve this exciting sector. Basildon has 5,000 jobs within the digital creative sector from research and development, industrial design. ICT, software development. It is growing faster than London and Cambridge right now and the college will help service and expand this growth.

"It will also encourage digital startups within the town and again, will help shift the focus from retail into different sectors. We are looking into establishing co-working spaces in the town centre and thereby again introducing a new kind of footfall. Basildon's current mix of 60% retail is well above the 40% it should be."

Eastgate Shopping Centre is the primary retail location in Basildon, boasting shiny shopfronts of some

100 national retailers such as Debenhams and Superdry housed across 74,322sq m. Infrared Capital Partners bought the space in 2014 from British Land for a cool £88 million.

Infrared director of real estate, Kevin Butcher, explains: "We invested in Eastgate because of Basildon's strong transport links and we saw, and continue to see the benefits that

**LAINDON**

Prior to the creation of Basildon, Laindon was the largest town in the area, with a bustling high street and railway station. In recent years, this ancient parish north of Langdon Hills Country Park has suffered from decline, not least to its shopping centre, which has seen many retail units close over the last few years. Change is coming, however, to help revive Laindon and possibly turn it into a commuter's dream.

In October 2018, work started on a long awaited £50 million regeneration programme as Swan Housing



// Basildon Market at Christmas 2018.



the council is making to the town by creating a centre with a mixed range of uses. We want to reflect this in Eastgate and are considering how we can tie-in with plans to boost the night-time economy. We are in the process of delivering a new gym in the centre and will be introducing complimentary leisure uses, possibly indoor golf, as well as extending our opening hours.”



## PITSEA AND BILLERICAY

Association and partners officially broke the ground on the new shopping centre. Laindon will soon feature a health centre, 224 new homes, new supermarket and a high street style shopping parade.

The site will be fully demolished by spring 2019. Laindon station is on the C2C line, 20 miles from London’s Fenchurch Street station. It transports nearly two million people a year, with four trains an hour eastbound to the Essex coast and westbound to London. The average house price is £264,000.



Both Pitsea and Billericay lie on the outer fringes of Basildon – Pitsea to the east and Billericay (above) to the north-west.

Billericay is the decidedly affluent neighbour, its streets peppered with fine examples of Georgian and Victorian architecture. The high street and surrounding area is the largest conservation area in the borough of Basildon. There are 35 listed buildings, as well as a number of protected trees and listed telephone boxes.

Independent retailers and upmarket restaurants line the high street and newcomers have to align their shop fronts with conservation area guidelines. It is surrounded by several areas of historic woodland and parkland including the ancient 36.4-ha Mill Meadows, the charity-run Lake Meadows and the 70.8-ha Norsey Wood local nature reserve. The leisure offer will be boosted following the council’s announcement to build a £9 million swimming pool in Billericay. With trains to and from Billericay to London Liverpool Street in 30 minutes along the Greater Anglia mainline, many of its 35,000 residents work in the City and have a higher disposable income than their Pitsea neighbours. The average house price is £457,789.

Like Billericay, Pitsea is also recorded in the Domesday Book.

Its most prominent landmark is the tower of the 13th century church of St Michael, situated on Pitsea Mount and the town is flanked on either side by two manor houses, Great Chalvedon Hall and Cromwell Manor.

It is fair to say that Pitsea’s development has been piecemeal. It was connected by the new London, Tilbury and Southend line in 1855. The 1970s saw the town cut in half by the A13 flyover. Also during this decade, Pitsea’s new town centre was opened along Northlands Pavement as well as a Tesco which was then the largest supermarket in Europe.

In the early 80s, the Pitsea centre opened – a leisure centre and library, while nearby Eversley Leisure was opened in 1987. Pitsea is now in the midst of considerable commercial and urban regeneration – to the tune of £30 million. This has seen a new Aldi, revamped 100-stall market, refurbishment of existing buildings, and a new retail and office block, with further regeneration planned. Also surrounded by countryside, it is home to Wat Tyler Country Park and RSPB Bowers Marsh. All of this investment is making it an attractive prospect to the commuters who make up a large proportion of the area’s population. The average house price is £242,617.



KONICA MINOLTA



**YOU**

**WANT A PARTNER  
THAT ADAPTS TO YOUR  
BUSINESS NEEDS**

**WE**

**ARE INVENTING  
TODAY WHAT YOU  
NEED TOMORROW**

Structured business processes as well as a robust and secure IT infrastructure are fundamental to compete in today's markets.

Konica Minolta Business Solutions help you optimise your business processes and facilitate the use of information. Our portfolio entails of consultancy services, infrastructure implementation, and managed services for print, IIM and IT. With our support, you are able to concentrate fully on growing your business.

**TO BOOK A MEETING OR TO EXPLORE  
YOUR OWN JOURNEY, PLEASE  
CONTACT US:**

[www.konicaminolta.co.uk](http://www.konicaminolta.co.uk)  
[youandwe@konicaminolta.co.uk](mailto:youandwe@konicaminolta.co.uk)

**0800 833 864**

Giving Shape to Ideas



**BASILDON**

# Premier league

With around 100ha of land earmarked for economic development, the A127 corridor is set to become one of the UK's main industry hubs. **Noella Pio Kivlehan** takes a trip down the thoroughfare

Imagine 92 professional football pitches laid out together. It is a huge swathe of well-manicured grass. But, instead of playing host to, say, West Ham United (who many Basildon residents are supporters of), this is roughly the amount of space Basildon Council is proposing to release for new economic opportunities, as set out in its Local Plan.

The local authority's goals are thousands of new jobs, homes, a school

and space for expanding companies. And the A127 corridor is key to these ambitions.

"What the council is looking at proposing is that 92ha [upped last year from 49ha] is what we think the local economy needs to sustain itself and be successful locally," says Matthew Winslow, service manager, strategic planning & housing strategy for Basildon Council.

There are two main roads into Basildon: the A127 and A13 that pass north and south of the town respectively. While both are important trunk roads running from London to Southend, it is the former which has the potential to transform the area, and deliver the desired new jobs and homes. ▶

/// The A127 is "an absolutely vital artery to economic competitiveness

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Known as a “strategic corridor”, the A127 opened in 1924 as the Southend arterial road, is the industrial heartland of South Essex that provides many employment opportunities in a variety of sectors, but mainly in high tech engineering, research and development and digital.

The area is already home to some of the largest concentrations of advanced manufacturing companies in the UK, such as Ford Motor Company, Konica Minolta, and engineering company Leonardo. There is also a large presence of SMEs working in industries such as digital and creative.

But it is the proposals featured in the Local Plan – now approved by the council – that, if passed by the Planning Inspectorate in 2019, will be the catalyst for massive expansion. The council hopes to adopt the Local Plan, which has been worked on since 2014, by the beginning of 2020 at the latest.

**/// The council is looking at around 14,000 jobs being created in the A127 corridor by 2034**

**Matthew Winslow, Basildon Council**

“The Local Plan contains planning policies about how the council wants to manage various things in the future, with economic growth being one of them,” says Winslow. The council is looking at around 14,000 jobs being created in the A127 corridor by 2034.

One sticking point, however, is that some of the proposed new development land is currently in the green belt. While Basildon is proud of its open spaces, Winslow says: “As the council wants to provide new homes and business space, as well as make upgrades to infrastructure, it has had to carefully review where to set aside land and this has meant it has determined it will have to release some green belt if it is to take

those development ambitions forward”.

If the land proposed to be allocated for development in the draft plan does get approved by the planning inspector, “then the borough’s green belt coverage would reduce to 59% from 63%,” says Winslow. “The council has determined that reduction can be justified and is sustainable.”

According to Essex County Council’s A127 Corridor for Growth document, published in 2014, the A127 is “an absolutely vital artery to the economic competitiveness of the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region and



**/// Ford (left and below) and Leonardo (above and bottom right) based in the A127 corridor.**







indeed to the economy of the county of Essex and beyond.”

This is clearly shown by the huge multinationals currently based along the A127. Future development could bring opportunities to attract further investors and provide opportunity for indigenous companies to grow, the council stresses.

And with an eye on expanding firms, 9ha of the 92ha of new land, dubbed ‘grow on space’, will be dedicated to companies who need room to expand.

Businesses working in digital and ICT are predicted to be especially interested in the opportunities emerging, particularly with the strengthening of

broadband in industrial areas. Gunilla Edwards, economic development team manager says: “‘Grow on space’ is currently scarce and we are keen to support current companies to have the space to grow their business.”

Winslow points out that Basildon “is an example of an authority that wants to allocate more land than we actually need. This over-allocation is designed to help provide locational opportunities for industry being displaced by housing development in London. Basildon is looking to capture some of the opportunity as part of its growth plans.”

## SELEP

Basildon’s A127 corridor is identified by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) as important to the economic growth of the area, with the emphasis on securing investment in infrastructure.

SELEP is committed to supporting growth in Basildon,” says Christian Brodie, chairman of SELEP. He adds: “We are working hard, in partnership with the borough council, and our federal partner Opportunity South Essex to achieve this... and so it has been possible to unlock more than £41 million of funding for a number of important projects.”

Brodie adds: “Securing funding for the north-south and east-west routes in the Basildon area will have a positive impact on the performance of the local economy, support its business community and help unlock sites for further employment and housing.”

Added to this is SELEP’s portfolio of skills investments and projects up to 2020. There is a commitment to support key sectors and help local businesses recruit and retain the right workforce, as well as growing the economy through the recently launched skills strategy.

Among the investments and projects, SELEP’s funding of £366,705, led to the creation of a new construction facility that is linked with the development of new homes in the area.

Completed in partnership with Redrow Homes, it will offer 128 additional learner places per year, including apprenticeships.



**£60 million+**  
funds for Swan's Laindon investment



**18,000 homes**  
planned over the next 20 years

**2019 marks the 70th anniversary of  
Basildon's creation as a new town**

**50 hectares**  
the size of Wat Tyler Country Park

# BASE

**181,000**  
population

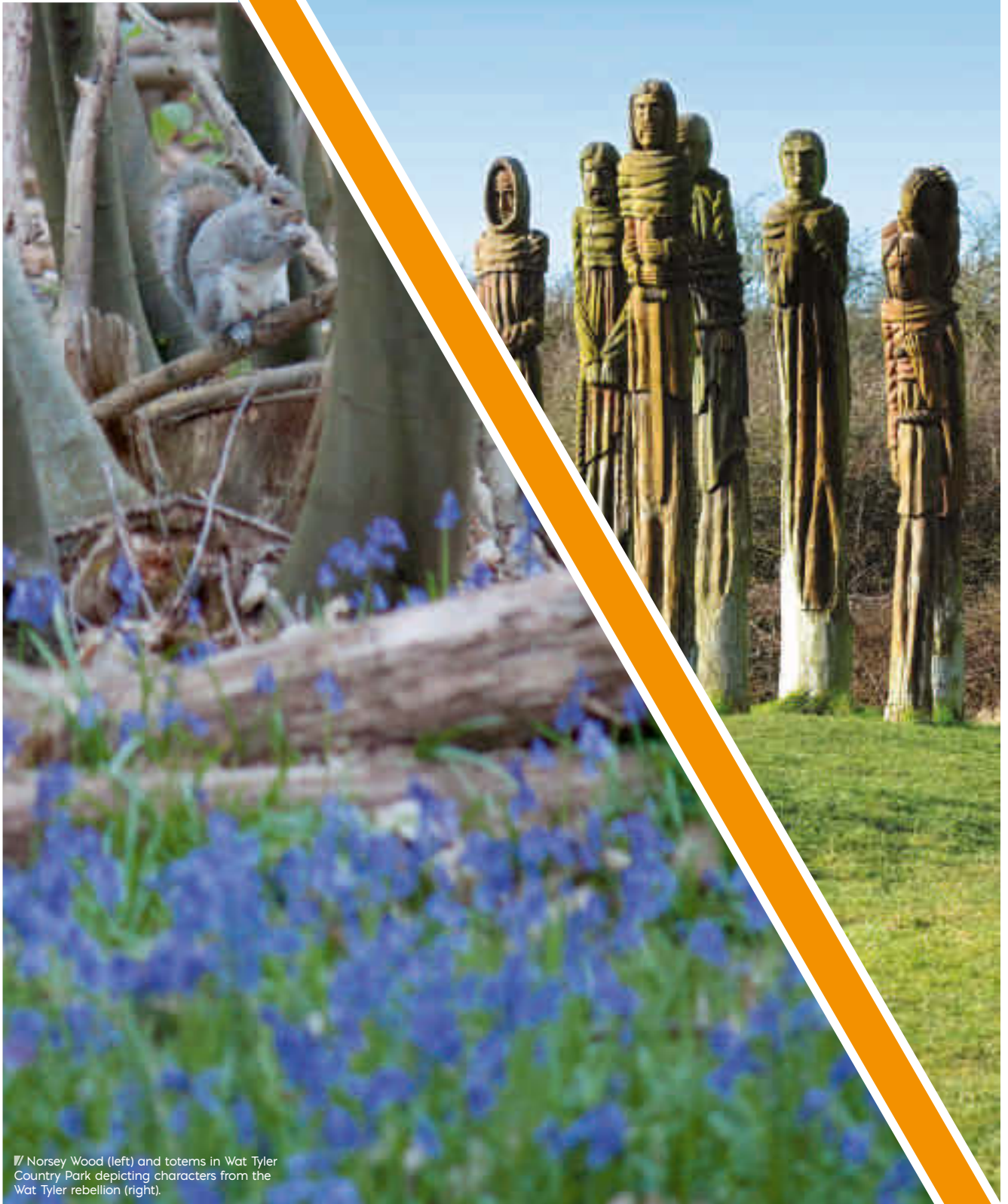
**14,000 jobs** to be created in the  
**A127 corridor by 2034**

Basildon has the largest economy in Essex, worth  
**£3.7 billion**

**92 hectares**  
of land will be released for economic development

**HOW BASILDON  
STACKS UP**

# LINE



/// Norsey Wood (left) and totems in Wat Tyler Country Park depicting characters from the Wat Tyler rebellion (right).

# Into the woods

Housing and urban development are key to the growth of Basildon, but what about the borough's green agenda?

**Jane Thynne** reports

It has taken a long time to achieve but it has been worth it," says Paul Brace, assistant director of public spaces at Basildon Council, referring to the recently created Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Langdon Ridge.

The site features the 6.7-ha Basildon Meadows in the south and a further 345.75ha of woodland, scrub, marshland and hedgerow that stretches for 4.5km across the landscape. "It's an excellent example of how the council can work with partner organisations and the community to make the area the best it can be," Brace adds. "Yes we need housing, but we want people in those houses to live well. Development should not just be about providing homes, but businesses, transport and open spaces."

Basildon has been transformed by urbanism, and today it is home to some of Essex's largest companies, not to mention a population totalling more than 181,000. But approximately 63% of Basildon is still currently rural, with some of the UK's most important marsh and woodlands within six SSSIs, country parks and three local nature reserves.

Designated by governmental advisory body Natural England, SSSIs are, according to the Woodland Trust, "a formal conservation designation for an area which is of particular interest

because of its fauna, flora or geological or physiological features".

The creation of the new SSSI means more land is protected against future development, leaving the council the hard task of balancing the provision of much-needed housing with its desire to preserve the ancient landscape.

The mixed-use approach is very much in evidence at the hugely successful Wat Tyler Country Park in Pitsea. More than 50ha has been preserved for the community to enjoy walks, the well-stocked adventure playground and an abundance of local wildlife.

Again, by working closely with partners, in this instance the RSPB, the borough has been able to preserve the gateway to the South Essex Marshes. Not only key to the area's ecological landscape, it is an important environment for countless species of birds, such as curlews, cuckoos and Cetti's warblers.

Once the nearby Veolia landfill site closes (expected in 2025), the council will work with partners to secure the open space, which according to Brace, will see the area becoming the borough of Basildon's "green lung".

But aside from the obvious eco-friendly benefits, Wat Tyler Country Park is also generating business in the area, through its conferencing facilities, its popularity as a wedding venue – couples can make use of the picturesque setting and the charming 100-seater heritage barn – and not to mention its importance as an employer providing jobs in education, catering and at the adjoining marina.

"Again it's about re-invigorating places – this was once an MoD [Ministry of Defence] site," says Brace. "We urge people to enjoy the outdoors, while at the same time preserving as much as we can. It's about instilling civic pride, maintaining the land appropriately and increasing biodiversity."

Another important eco space in the borough is Norsey Wood, which is one of the borough's other SSSIs, an ancient monument and a Local Nature Reserve. Bought in 1976 by Basildon Council to save it from developers, the 400-year-old, 66.7-ha site near Billericay, is one of only a handful of ancient managed woodlands remaining in the UK.

More than 60,000 visitors arrive each year to enjoy either a stroll, follow the nature trail or simply to marvel at its vast array of flora – the carpets of bluebells are said to be the best in the world.

"Again it's about providing not only a place to live but somewhere to enjoy," says Brace. "Health and wellbeing are very high on our agenda, and we are constantly looking at ways to improve our communities for our residents."

But what about the future? With the addition of more than 18,000 new homes over the next 20 years, how safe can the borough's open spaces be? "We are determined to shake off the 'concrete jungle' tag," explains Brace. "We are committed to investing in our environment. We don't just want open spaces, we want beautiful spaces, and by providing a measured, managed approach, we can make sure these spaces and new ones are safe for generations to come." ■

# BASILDON FOR BUSINESS



Invest in Basildon, the largest and fastest-growing economy in Essex and the second largest in the Thames Gateway area; only London's Canary Wharf boasts a more thriving economic profile. Basildon is already established as a centre of excellence for engineering and manufacturing, along with some of the most advanced technical facilities in the UK.

## **FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

---

### **NEW HOMES**

---

### **NEW COMMERCIAL SPACE AND LAND**

---

### **RETAIL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES**

---

### **IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE**

---





# BASILDON FOR BUSINESS

Join the many innovative companies already benefiting from being based in Basildon.

More than just a business location, this is a borough where people have the opportunity to develop further and be part of a buoyant economy. Well-connected with a sustainable skills base, Basildon is the perfect environment to work, live and grow.

## **B PART OF SOMETHING BIG**

Basildon is the largest economy in Essex

## **B IN WITH THE IN-CROWD**

New start-ups in Basildon are increasing faster than anywhere else in Essex

## **B AMBITIOUS**

Basildon companies produce 25% more value from their products and services than the average in Essex

## **B CREATIVE**

Creative industries have seen a 40% increase since 2009

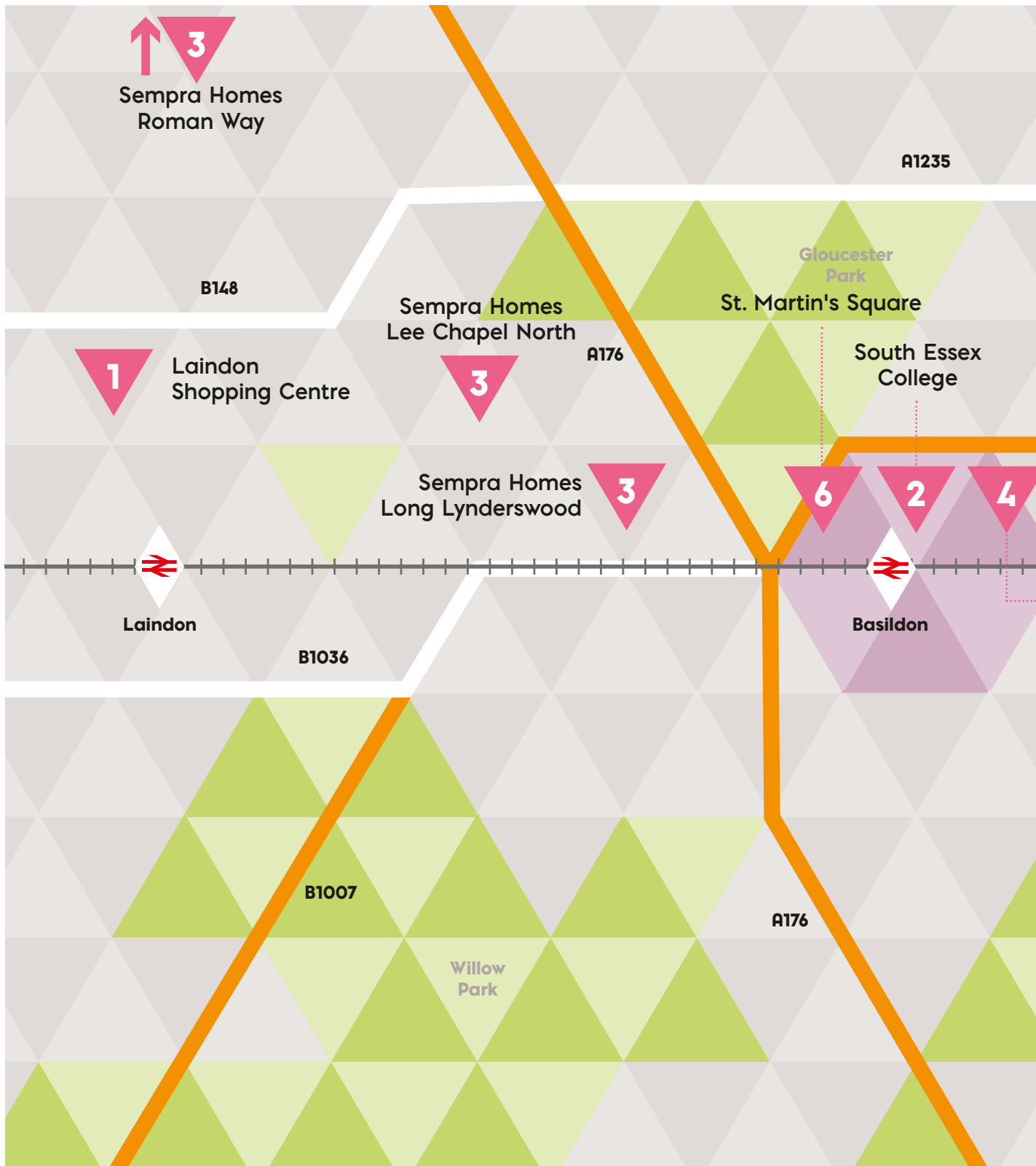
## **B CONNECTED**

Just 35 minutes from central London

**BUILDING ON OUR PAST,  
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

**For more information and to sign up for  
regular updates visit our brand new website:  
[basildonforbusiness.com](http://basildonforbusiness.com)**

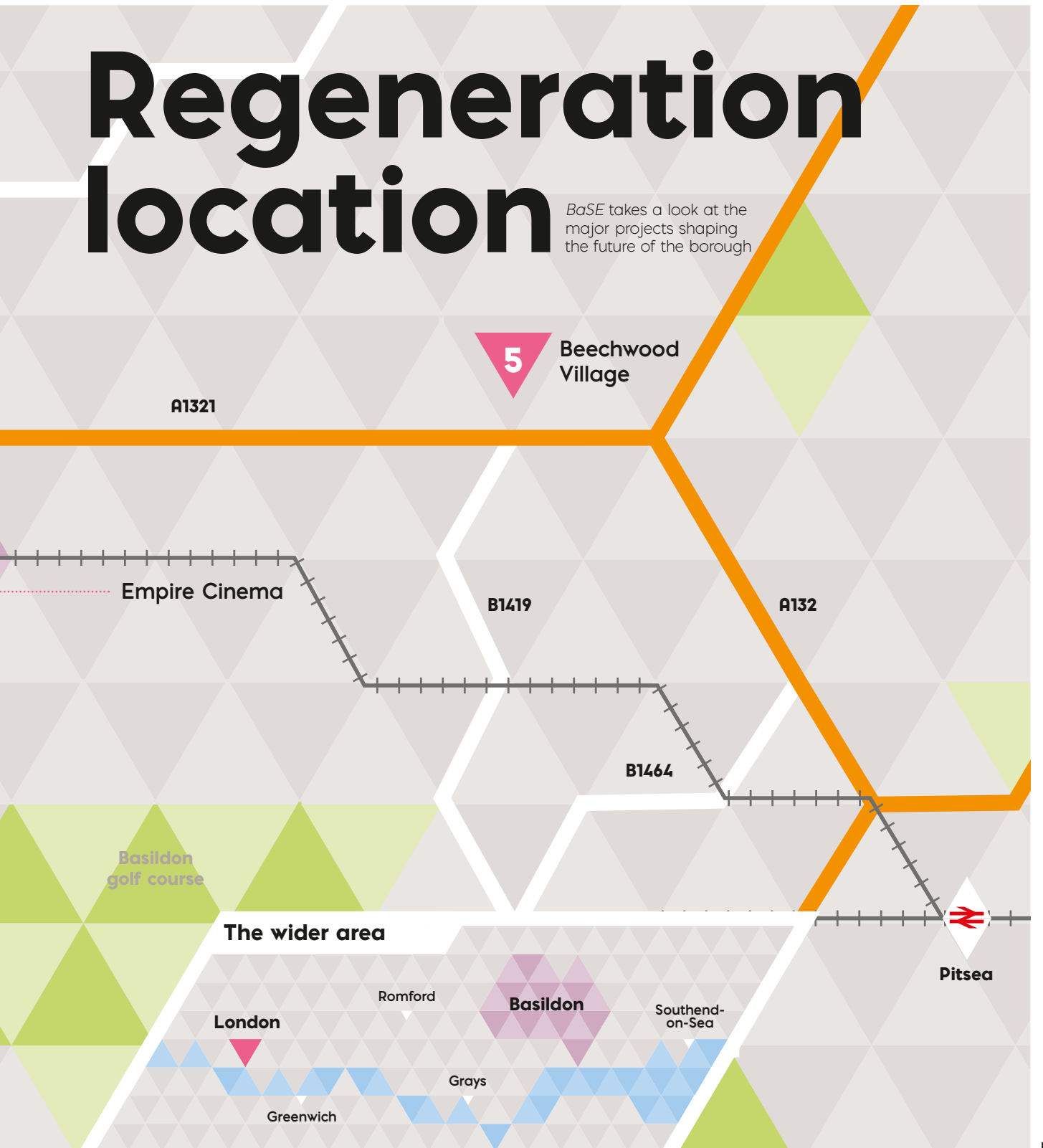






# Regeneration location

BaSE takes a look at the major projects shaping the future of the borough



# Projects



## LAINDON SHOPPING CENTRE

Swan Housing Association, which owns Laindon's shopping centre, started work on its redevelopment in October 2018.

Its Laindon Place project will transform what has been a dilapidated and unattractive inward-looking shopping centre into a new high street including shops, a new supermarket, health centre and new headquarters for

Swan, which intends to relocate 100 staff there from its Billericay site. There will also be 224 new homes.

Geoff Pearce, Swan's executive director of development and regeneration, said: "We have an unwavering commitment to seeing the successful regeneration of the centre. We've taken the time to widely consult with local residents and stakeholders and this has meant we are confident

Laindon Place will really deliver for the local community."

Swan has had more than 60 enquiries from individuals and businesses interested in leasing the new retail units.

The present shopping centre is expected to be vacated for demolition in February 2019, but temporary retail space will allow key services to still be provided.



## SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE

South Essex College has gained planning permission for its new campus in Basildon town centre on a site vacated by Basildon Market relocating to St Martins Square.

The new campus will be a three-storey building over approximately 3,200sq m, with teaching focused on subjects such as information and digital technologies and science. Up to 600 students and 589 staff are expected to use the new campus.

Situated on 0.55 ha near the town's bus and rail stations, the development will also include car parking, public open space, shops and landscaping. A council planning report noted the relocated college would create positive uplift for the economy of the town centre, as it would attract large numbers of new students and staff there who would likely spend money there.

Contemporary in design, the building is intended to contrast with the neighbouring terraced grid developments on Market Square

and Market Pavement, providing a continuation of more modern contemporary architecture in the town centre. This is in keeping with recent developments such as The Icon and recently approved cinema.

David Dadds, vice-chair of Basildon Council's regeneration committee and mayor, said: "We are committed to creating opportunities for all and doing all we can to support education and employment providers.

"This decision is a significant milestone in our ambitious regeneration plans for Basildon, which will bring more life into the town centre and boost the economy."

South Essex College's move to the town centre was secured as a result of the need for a new fit for purpose campus. The site of the existing campus being vacated and the adjacent 33 hectares of Homes England land has enabled the development of 725 new homes by Redrow. There will also be a new primary school and shops.

Anthony McGarel, the college's chief executive, said: "The college's new

development, which will specialise in certain sectors will bring much needed education, training and skills facilities to the local area."

South Essex College is preparing to merge in early 2019 with Basildon Prospects College of Advanced Technology (PROCAT) engineering college, although the latter will remain on its Luckyn Lane site north of Gloucester Park.

PROCAT chair David Sherlock said: "This exciting merger is the next step in our progress since changing from a private training provider to a further education college provider in 2014.

"Our dream has been to create a technical university for Basildon. To do that we need larger scale as well as excellence.

PROCAT provides advanced, higher and degree apprenticeships and specialises in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. Its courses also include advanced engineering, robotics, transport, logistics, construction and digital. ▶



## **SEMPRA HOUSEBUILDING SCHEMES**

Sempra Homes is a commercial arm of Basildon Council, which aims to create thriving and sustainable communities and address the need to build more quality homes for sale in the area.

Recently started projects include sites in Long Lynderswood, Lee Chapel North and Roman Way.

Long Lynderswood will see a development of 20 two-bedroom shared ownership apartments, along with

car and cycle parking and associated landscaping. These will be marketed to local key workers.

At Roman Way, there will be 15 semi-detached and terraced two-storey houses built in a combination of two, three and four-bedroom houses. Six will be for market rent, six for shared ownership and three for affordable rent.

The homes are being built by Wickford-based Indecon Building, which will offer work experience to pupils from Billericay School.

Expressions of interest were invited

for 10 new Sempra homes available for shared ownership and all have been sold subject to contract. The two four-bed and eight two-bed homes at Sellars Way, St Nicholas Mews were developed by Redrow as part of a s106 Agreement and are delivered by Sempra for key workers. Sempra will soon be offering 18 new homes at Glenmere, Vange, Rayside, Basildon and Nevendon Road, Wickford.

Any surplus made by Sempra is re-invested in the borough.

*See more on Sempra, page 21.*



## EMPIRE CINEMA, EAST SQUARE

Redevelopment of Basildon's East Square is to include a new 10-screen cinema operated by Empire Cinemas group. It will be part of what is planned to become a thriving night time economy, with restaurants and six units allocated for these in the square together with an improved public realm.

Justin Ribbons, chief executive of Empire Cinemas, said: "We are delighted to be partnering with Basildon Council and being a part of this exciting, innovative and forward-looking redevelopment project. We look forward to returning to Basildon and bringing our memorable cinema experience to East Square."

/// We look forward to bringing our memorable cinema experience to East Square

Regeneration committee chair Councillor Anthony Hedley said the council wanted to see East Square become "a destination of choice that is full of vitality and are committed to creating a vibrant town centre that has both a day and night-time economy".

Basildon's masterplan calls for a wider range of leisure activities with a cinema and restaurants complementing the revitalised Towngate theatre. ▶



## BEECHWOOD VILLAGE

Swan Housing Association is working with the council and Homes England on a £150 million project to redevelop the 1960s Craylands estate, transforming it into Beechwood Village.

Formerly one of the most deprived parts of the borough, Swan has built 400 homes and will deliver 570 more in Craylands. These will be built in its modular construction factory so that components are made off-site and buildings are then assembled. The factory has created 40 new jobs. A range of traditional construction methods were used for the early phases.

This approach is expected to attract buyers who are economically

active, lifting income levels in the area, within what is among the 30% of most deprived wards in the country.

There are five basic types of home known as Terrace, Avenue, Lane, Park Corner and Fryth, which fit into a masterplan by architect bptw.

The use of only five types allows the Swan factory to manufacture home components in large volume so utilising economies of scale.

John Synnuck, Swan’s chief executive, said: “At Swan, we understand the desperate need for quality new homes. We believe that off-site construction methods will enable us to deliver these much-needed homes quickly, designed to a high specification and with reduced impact on both local

residents and the environment.”

Meanwhile, progress at Beechwood has seen a new local supermarket, salon, and community building, and more jobs and economic activity created.

Local services are delivered from the community building to support economic growth. For example, there is after school care to allow parents to work. The next phase of 570 homes will create a mixed-tenure community, as 200 of these homes will be sold to buyers who will be able to customise their home as they choose.

Beechwood’s build cost will be £87.5 million over 10 years. When finished, there will be 994 homes, with 286 for social rent, 12 for shared ownership and 696 for private sale.

## ST MARTIN'S SQUARE

Basildon’s new market opened for business on 4 October 2018, relocating to St Martin’s Square, with 46 kiosks.

Its move is part of a reconfiguration of the town centre, linked to the move of South Essex College to the former market site. Basildon Council worked closely with Basildon Town Centre Management, which owns and operates the market – and contractor Thomas

Sinden – on the relocation project.

The new market has capacity for up to 40 pop-up stalls, to allow it to introduce themed events alongside day-to-day trading.

Market manager Paul Dawson said: “We are very excited about the new market, which is already attracting new traders and increasing footfall to the west end of the town.”

A specialised market study was carried out which concluded that it

needed to be more centrally located to create greater footfall and a better town centre retail circuit.

St. Martin’s Square and the vicinity were judged the most appropriate site as it would link to the cultural offer at the Towngate Theatre and act as a western ‘anchor’ to the retail core of the town centre, from which it had been isolated.

The square will be where the new pedestrian and cycle access route enters the town centre from Gloucester Park.

Distinctive homes in thriving new communities.  
It can only be Redrow



Details correct at time of going to press. Images are indicative only.



**SITEMATCH LONDON 2018:**  
221 delegates  
42 public sector landowners  
331 meetings

**The 2019 event is just  
around the corner**

Sitematch London 2019 will take place on  
**7 February 2019** at etc venues, 155 Bishopsgate,  
London, EC2M 3YD

Find out how you can get involved:  
Jake Westhead [jake@3foxinternational.com](mailto:jake@3foxinternational.com) or  
Paul Gussar [paul@3foxinternational.com](mailto:paul@3foxinternational.com)



TOWN SQUA

eastgate

# Shaping the future with new investment

£1.7m has been invested in new entrances at Eastgate

Encompassing more than half of the retail space in the town, and with 1,350 people employed in the centre, Eastgate has consistently invested in Basildon for the benefit of the whole borough.

We've attracted new destination retailers including Smiggle, Pandora and Accessorize - and are proud to welcome around 12 million shoppers to the centre each year.

With exciting new names being lined up for 2019, including a 24-hour PureGym, we're looking forward to a bright future.



# eastgate BASILDON

  [eastgatecentre.com](http://eastgatecentre.com)