



# Romford Town Centre Development Framework

London Borough of Havering

June 2015



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH



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# Contents

<b>1 Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>	Southern Approach	71
<b>2 Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>	Eastern Fringe	72
Purpose of this Report	7		
Background and Context	8		
Summary of Previous Work Undertaken	12		
Methodology	13		
Structure of this Report	14		
<b>3 Town Centre Context</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6 Key Sites</b>	<b>74</b>
Planning Policy Context	16	Como Street	75
Key Land Ownerships	19	Angel Way	77
Property Market Review	21	High Street and Brewery	80
Urban Design Appraisal	28	Station Quarter North	82
Existing Positive Influences	32	Atlanta Boulevard and Nightclub	84
Existing Negative Influences	34	Bridge Close	86
Engineering Summary	36	Homebase Site	89
<b>4 Town Centre Strategy</b>	<b>39</b>		
Strategic Objectives	40		
Town Centre Development Guidance	42		
Romford Town Centre Vision	43		
Towards a Strategy	45		
Public Realm and Pedestrian Links	48		
Urban Design Framework	50		
Building Heights	52		
Social Infrastructure Provision	54		
<b>5 Character Areas</b>	<b>59</b>		
Northern Approach	60		
North Riverside	61		
Historic Core	62		
Civic Quarter	65		
Retail Quarter	66		
Station Quarter	67		
South Riverside	69		



# 1 Executive Summary



***Romford Town Centre has huge potential for economic growth – delivering thousands of new homes and jobs, attracting more shoppers and leisure visitors to spend more of their money, and to capitalise on property demand and value growth driven by the arrival of Crossrail. This Development Framework sets out an ambitious physical vision for the town and the mechanism by which it will be delivered.***

***London Borough of Havering (LB Havering) is committed to this plan, and invites its public and private partners to rise to the joint delivery challenge to make Romford a fantastic place to live and do business.***

Romford Town Centre has long performed two roles - one as the primary retail and leisure destination for the LB Havering, and the other as one of London's Metropolitan Centres. This Development Framework provides a strategic vision and delivery plan to strengthen both of these roles - enhancing Romford's character as a market town around its historic crossroads, as well as introducing more contemporary urban development along its northern and southern approaches and around the rail station.

The Framework sets out a positive course for the town centre over the next 20 years and beyond. Six strategic objectives agreed upon by key stakeholders involved throughout its preparation recognise and address Romford's social, economic and environmental opportunities and challenges – providing an overarching framework to guide the future development of the town centre. More detailed proposals for each of the character areas and key opportunity sites have been underpinned by urban design analysis, viability appraisal and analysis of development constraints, to ensure that any barriers to delivery can be overcome within the requisite timescales.

Market Place, one of Romford's greatest assets, will be rejuvenated by the delivery of a new public square providing a flexible civic space for cultural events and specialist markets, surrounded by a new cluster of cafés and restaurants leading to longer dwell times and additional footfall in the north of the town centre. Improved facilities and a rationalisation of parking will support the traditional street market and shops in this area.

New public spaces in three other character areas and the opening up of the River Rom to provide a high quality waterside environment will provide a focus for new development in these areas. Coupled with longer shop opening hours and a safe, higher value evening economy in the Station Quarter, Romford will begin to recapture greater retail and leisure expenditure from its catchment area.

Proposed guidance on development densities provides opportunities for residential-led mixed use schemes, providing high quality urban living for an economically active community, whilst new social infrastructure brought forward in parallel with development will better serve the needs of existing residents in the town centre and beyond.

Romford's function as a focus for employment will be retained by the modernisation of its office space to cater for the changing needs of businesses, as well as providing flexible accommodation suitable for other forms of employment along key frontages.

Romford's excellent public transport links by bus and rail will be complemented by new pedestrian and cyclist routes, particularly linking Romford's landmark churches in the North Riverside area, and improving access to amenities for the new communities to the west of the ring road. The experience of arriving by public transport will be greatly enhanced by the creation of a new boulevard through the Station Quarter, and reconfigured bus stands and public realm surrounding the rail station itself.

The Framework establishes significant potential for growth, much of which will be delivered through private sector investment. However, public sector investment and resources - not only from the Council, but also from the GLA, government departments and external agencies - will need to be secured to unlock specific sites, deliver infrastructure and invest in placemaking projects and activities.

LB Havering is committed to working constructively with landowners, developers and investors to deliver this ambitious and long-term vision, by playing the essential roles of co-ordinator, champion and enabler, as well as planning authority. Through careful investment planning, it will seek to recover its initial investment through land sales, developer contributions towards community infrastructure and increased taxation from an economically active community. Through a programme of ongoing consultation and communication, it will build the necessary support of local residents and businesses in order to realise Romford's potential for all of its stakeholders.





# 2 Introduction

## ■ Purpose of this Report

This Development Framework has been devised to help shape the future development of Romford. Its intent is to secure Romford's growth and improve the town as a successful place to live, work and visit.

It provides a strategic vision for the town centre, identifies character areas within it and makes recommendations on the form and scale of future development.

Key current factors which have been taken into account include:

- Maximising the opportunities of Crossrail, with an anticipated completion of 2018
- The opportunity for increased development density in line with the London Plan, where this is of high quality, accessible and inclusive.
- Ensuring that retailers are well positioned to thrive on the competition from Lakeside and Stratford
- Improving the lives of Romford's residents in terms of health, economic and social wellbeing
- Providing office stock which meets the changing needs of businesses
- Strengthening Romford's leisure offer
- The opportunity to develop high quality new homes to help meet housing demand and need

This document is intended to form part of the evidence base for the new Havering Local Plan. It therefore includes recommendations to help inform future site allocations and policy.

This development framework takes a holistic view of the town centre and its key character areas, rather than solely concentrating on the individual development opportunities.

Urban design analysis of the town centre as a whole has led to a clear definition of distinct areas or quadrants, each with their own characteristics and opportunities. This has provided the basis for a town centre wide framework that strengthens Romford, helping it to become more legible, coherent and prosperous.

This town centre wide strategy has revealed key opportunity sites and guidelines for their redevelopment derived through stakeholder consultation are set out including their massing, density, land use and development requirements.

It is intended that this approach ensures that each site supports both the economic vitality and quality of the town centre as a whole as well as each particular character area.

Development recommendations are underpinned by urban design analysis, viability appraisals and analysis of development constraints, to ensure that as far as possible they are deliverable, or that delivery barriers are identified and understood. A number of separate baseline technical reports have been prepared as part of this commission which form part of the evidence base of this framework. These technical reports have been reviewed by and agreed with Council officers.

# Background and Context

Romford is a historic market town, and is now the principal town in the LB Havering. It is identified as a metropolitan centre in the London Plan. It is equidistant between the towns of Brentwood and Stratford and Ilford is also a nearby centre. Romford is located 5 miles from the M25, which makes it particularly accessible to national road links.

Within LB Havering, Romford is the main retail destination, while Hornchurch is the Borough's destination for arts and cultural uses.

Romford Town Centre functions in a dual capacity. On one hand, it is an important retail destination - one of 13 designated Metropolitan Centres in Greater London (the second-highest level in London's retail hierarchy). On the other hand, it acts as a local centre for its direct hinterland. Therefore, Romford has to balance the objectives of a predominately suburban community and its wider role serving the requirements of London and surrounding communities.

Shoppers can enjoy Romford's modern shopping malls complemented by its more traditional street market. It also serves as a leisure and workplace destination and increasingly a residential centre. Much of its once thriving nightlife has lost out to competing centres such as Hornchurch, the main centre of cultural and leisure uses in the Borough. However, Romford has a local cultural offer such as the Brookside theatre, and an alternative art scene is slowly developing, such as the emerging art program at the Quadrant Centre. Romford's retail and food and drink offer is dominated by the mid-to-lower end offer with a lack of affluent and higher price point shops and restaurants.

Market Place continues to operate as a street market on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and is used for car parking at other times. In the run up to Christmas, Romford Market opens every day including Sunday.

The town centre is home to five shopping centres: The Brewery (large-format stores, edge of centre), The Liberty and The Mercury Mall (indoor malls with emphasis on national multiples and high street fashion), and the Quadrant Arcade and Romford Shopping Hall (both offering space for smaller, independent traders).

Romford Office Quarter is located north of the railway, east of South Street. This comprises a number of purpose

built office buildings typically constructed from the 1960's through to the 1990's, some of which are not easily converted to modern occupier needs. Vacancy levels are increasingly an issue and conversion to residential via permitted development rights is beginning to occur. There is an industrial estate located on Bridge Close, in the south-west of the town centre, although this now contains a mix of activity including low cost leisure and faith based uses.

Historically housing in and around the town centre has been mainly low-rise terraced, semi and detached housing, apart from a few tower blocks to the west of the town centre. More recently, medium to higher rise apartments have been provided including schemes above the ASDA store on Mercury Gardens, featuring towers of up to 14 storeys, a scheme by Swan Housing Association at Angel Way and a major development of the former Oldchurch Hospital.

There are twelve surface and multi-storey car parks around the town centre, offering almost 6,000 spaces at weekends. Road transport presently dominates visitor access with the main means of access by car and by bus.

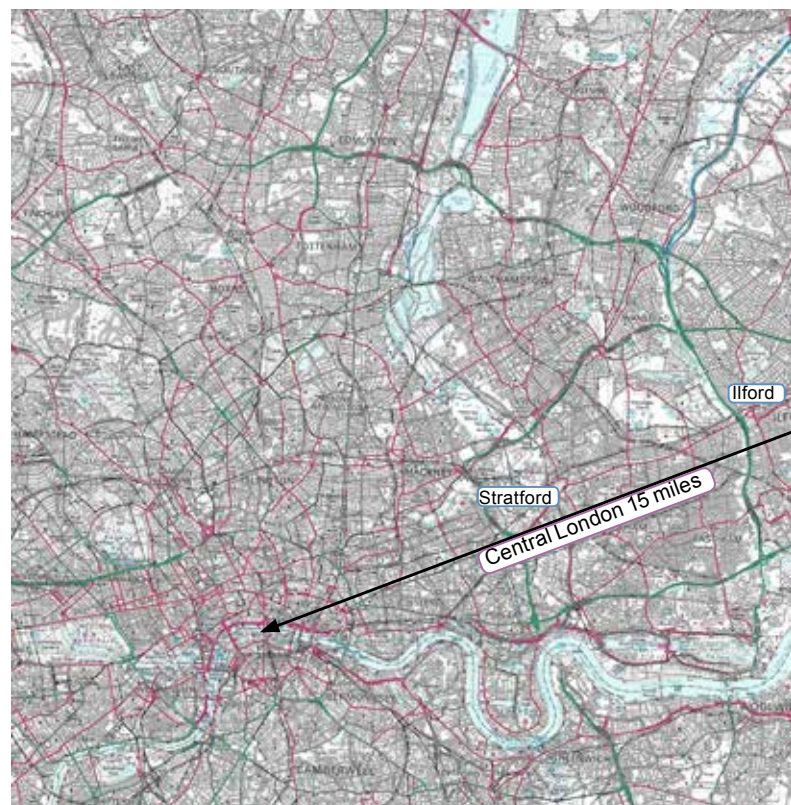


Fig 1.1

With its frequent rail service to London and over 20 bus routes, most of the town centre is within Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) 6a and 6b.

In 2018 Crossrail will stop here, which will enhance connections with central London (and therefore it's enhanced potential as a commuter town) as well as with other neighbouring centres and London's airports.

There is a lack of green open space within the town centre. The only such space within the ring road is St. Edward the Confessor Church's churchyard. However, there are a number of nearby parks a short walk beyond the ring road; these include Lodge Farm Park off Main Road, and Cotton Park at Mark's Road.

Just to the southeast of the town centre and located off Rom Valley Way is Queen's Hospital, providing acute healthcare needs and also acting as a major source of employment and transport trip generation.

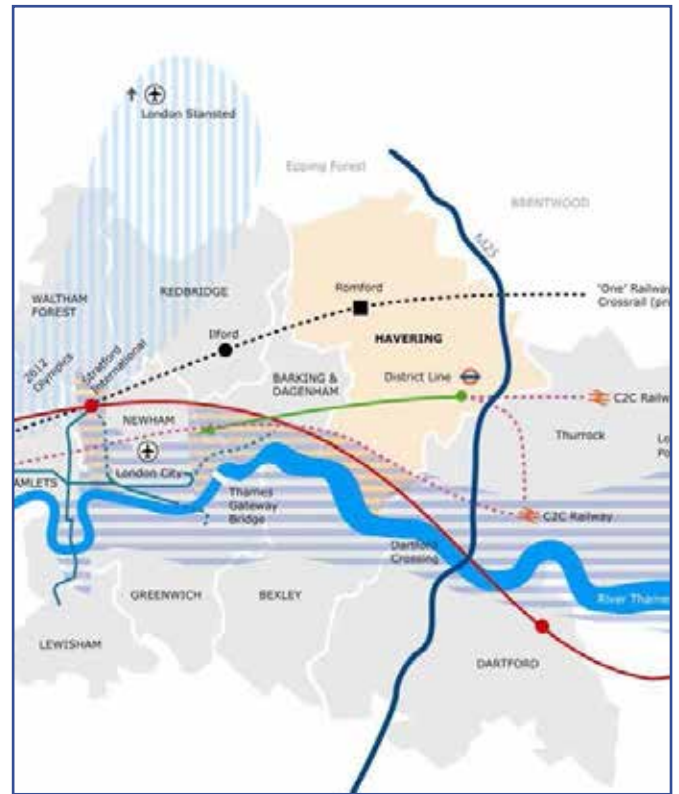
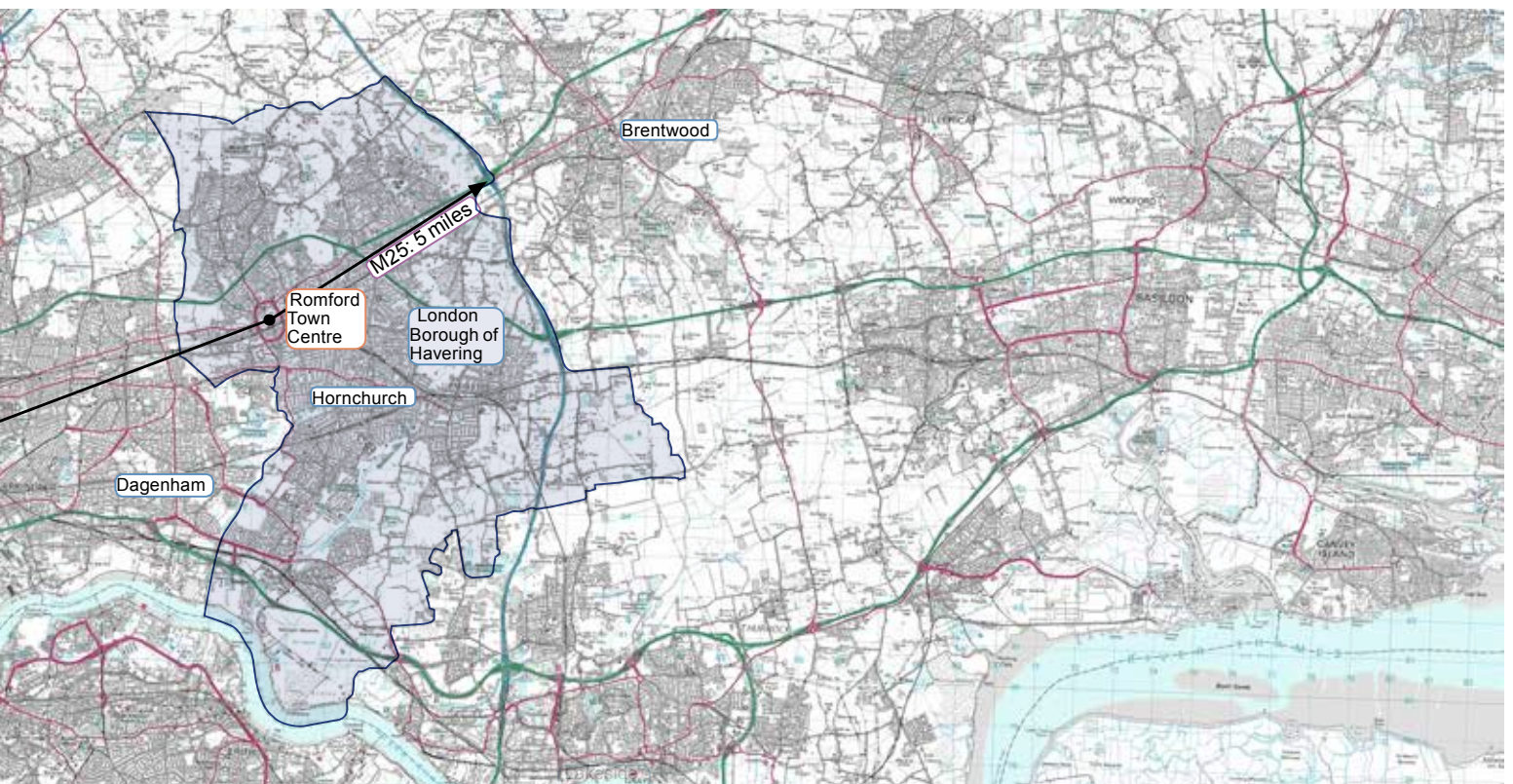


Fig 1.2



# Background and Context

## Romford Town Centre: The Study Area

The Romford town centre study area for this Development Framework has been taken from the 2008 Romford Area Action Plan (Fig 1.4).

This boundary mainly runs around the perimeter of the ring road that encloses the town centre, and extends in parts to include the town's civic buildings, as well as some key opportunity sites.

Some of the key shopping and parking characteristics are illustrated below (Fig 1.3)

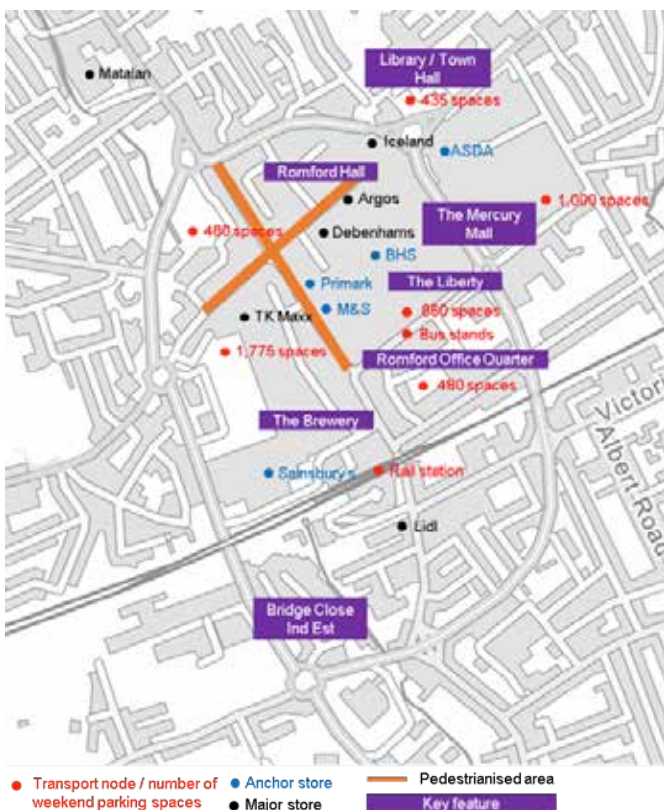


Fig 1.3



North Street

Market Place

The Mercury Mall

The Liberty

High Street

South Street

Western Road

Eastern Road

London Road

The Brewery

Romford Rail Station

Victoria Road

Fig 1.4

# Summary of Previous Work Undertaken

Over the years Romford Town Centre has been subject to a number of studies. The most relevant that have influenced this Development framework are:

Romford Urban Strategy (2005): Strategy provides an economic and physical framework for the development of Romford Town Centre, to guide the future growth and prosperity of Romford over the next 10 to 15 years.

Romford Town Centre - Public Realm Masterplan Study (2011): This report presents the initial fact-finding, commentary and analysis and preliminary ideas for the creation of a masterplan to guide future public realm improvements of Romford's town centre.

Romford Movement Study (2010) and the Angel Way Masterplan (2008).

A number of factors have affected Romford Town Centre since some of the existing studies and current planning policy was prepared:

- Economic and property market conditions have become more challenging, largely as a result of the global financial crisis of 2007, although we are now beginning to see signs of a sustained recovery and growth in property prices.
- There has been an increasing trend towards online retail which has resulted in tougher trading conditions for retailers.
- Stratford's retail and office market has thrived as a result of regeneration linked with London's Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, increasing competition for retail expenditure from east London.
- Lakeside shopping centre also has plans for considerable expansion of its retail offer.
- Romford's night-time economy has declined, with the rise of Hornchurch as a cultural and dining destination, and Brentwood as a destination for bars and nightclubs.
- Construction of Crossrail is underway, with the first trains due to arrive in Romford in 2018.

- National planning policy allows conversion of office to residential via permitted development rights, and the first schemes of this type in Romford are beginning to come forward.

# Methodology

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## Baseline research

The consultant team prepared baseline reports summarising key findings from previous work complemented by additional primary research and discussions with stakeholders.

The following baseline reports are annexed:

- Character and urban design analysis (Tibbalds)
- Planning Policy Update (Tibbalds)
- Property Market Review (BBP Regeneration)
- Engineering and transport baseline (CampbellReith)

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## Development of town-centre wide strategy

The baseline analysis led to a draft set of strategic objectives for Romford town centre along with draft planning objectives for the town centre as a whole. These outputs were developed in consultation with Havering cabinet members and officers, and later refined incorporating feedback the stakeholder workshop.

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## Development of character area strategy and planning objectives

The town centre-wide strategy guided the development of character areas covering the full extent of the town centre, each with a draft set of planning objectives. These character areas recognise the distinct character, functions and opportunities of different parts of the town centre.

Again, these outputs were developed in consultation with Havering cabinet members and officers, and later refined incorporating feedback the stakeholder workshop.

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## Options appraisal and viability testing

The character areas and planning objectives informed our options appraisal for individual opportunity sites – whilst ensuring that each option supported the strategic vision for the town centre as a whole. To understand the scale and massing and the combined impact of a number of opportunity sites, Tibbalds prepared a 3D CAD model of the town centre.

Through an iterative process considering design, market and viability and development constraints, options were derived for each opportunity site. Where a policy compliant scheme was not immediately viable, we assessed the alternative development and policy options, and market conditions required to deliver a commercially viable scheme. Through stakeholder discussion we refined these options to achieve an acceptable balance between commercial, design, community and planning requirements.

Whilst many of the sites were shown to be viable, some are not with current values and existing land use constraints. Therefore in some instances public sector intervention, a flexible approach to affordable housing or developer contributions and / or a rise in values may be required to allow the preferred option scheme to be delivered. The Council considers that bringing forward “development at all costs” is inappropriate and some sites may have to be delayed to achieve the necessary market conditions and/or interventions to facilitate delivery. This represents a series of choices and compromises that we have explored through stakeholder consultation and the Development Framework process.

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## Stakeholder workshop

Key stakeholders including representative landowners, developers, property agents, officers from the Greater London Authority, and officers and Councillors from LB Havering were invited to a workshop on 24th September 2014 at Romford central library. This workshop was used to steer and refine the emerging Development Framework.

# ■ Structure of this Report

The remaining chapters of the report are structured as follows:

- Town centre context – Provides summaries of the technical baseline reports that were undertaken in support of this framework.
- Town centre strategy – Provides the strategic objectives for Romford town centre, and analyses the public realm, physical and social infrastructure requirements.
- Character areas – Explores the character, function and opportunities of each area in turn, with accompanying development recommendations and planning objectives.
- Key opportunity sites – Explores the characteristics and constraints of each key opportunity site, outlines the preferred option, and sets out the key deliverables, interventions and conditions required to deliver it.

The outcomes of this report have been informed by high level viability testing, with findings provided in a separate technical report provided to the Council. However, as this report contains commercially sensitive information, it cannot be made available to the public.



# 3 Town Centre Context

# ■ Planning Policy Context

This Development Framework has been informed by national, London wide and local policy. The key policy documents that influence this study are:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), DCLG (2012)
- The London Plan, GLA (2015)
- Town Centres SPG, GLA (2014)
- Draft Social Infrastructure SPG, GLA, 2014
- Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Submission Development Plan Document, Havering (2008)
- Romford Area Action Plan Development Plan Document, Havering (2008)
- Landscaping SPD, LB Havering (2011)
- Heritage SPD, LB Havering(2011)
- Shop front Design SPD, LB Havering(2013)

Below is a summary of the high level policies that have set the principles for the preparation of this Development framework.

## **The NPPF asks local planning authorities to ensure the vitality of town centres and in doing so to:**

- Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
- Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
- Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
- Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;
- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres.

- Recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites; and
- Where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.

## **The London Plan, GLA (2015):**

- **Town Centre:** The London Plan identifies Romford as a Metropolitan Centre that serves a wider catchment with a significant offer of retail, leisure and services. It is identified as a centre with moderate levels of demand for retail, leisure or office floor space and with physical and public transport capacity to accommodate it. It also is a Regional / sub-regional centre for night time economy.
- **Housing:** Taking into account local context and character, and public transport capacity, development should optimise housing output for different types of location within the relevant density. Romford falls within the Central area and combined with a PTAL rating of 4-6 required densities in Romford Town Centre are 215-405 u/ha.
- **Tall buildings:** In line with GLA policy tall buildings should improve legibility, emphasis a point of civic or visual significance and improve the legibility of the wider area. Tall Buildings should be located in areas whose character would not be affected adversely by the scale, mass or bulk of a tall or large building and relate well to their surroundings.

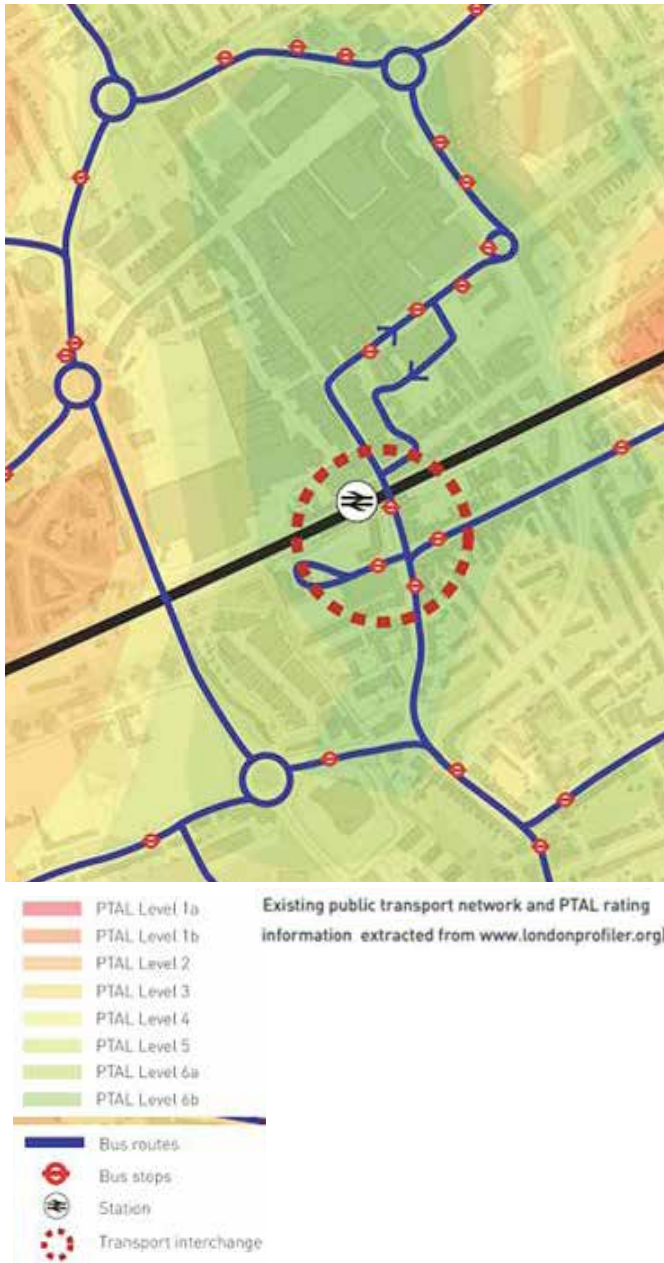


Fig 2.1

### Core Strategy, LB Havering

The vision for the Core Strategy identifies that over 3,000 people will be living in Romford Town Centre and that town centre will be built upon its traditional character, and have a safe, diverse, culturally rich and well managed evening economy offering a range of activities for people of all ages.

Strategic objectives of the Core Strategy include:

- Make Havering a place where people will want to live and where local people are able to stay and prosper, by ensuring that local and subregional housing need is addressed whilst maintaining and enhancing the character of Havering's residential environment which makes the borough such an attractive place to live.
- Ensure the housing needs of the borough's more vulnerable people are met.
- Support the continuing urban renaissance of Romford Town Centre.
- Promote Romford as a leading Metropolitan Centre serving Essex, East London and the Thames Gateway.
- Promote the diversification of the borough's evening economy for the safe enjoyment of all sections of the community, particularly in Romford Town Centre.
- Make Havering a healthier place, addressing spatial inequalities in health and ensuring the provision of health facilities to meet existing and forecast demand. Maintaining Havering's reputation as a centre of excellence for education, and ensuring that other essential social infrastructure is planned to meet demands of existing and new communities.
- Integrate planning and transport to reduce the need to travel, by concentrating major trip generating development in the borough's main centres.
- Create safe, liveable, accessible environments with distinct characters through high quality design-led development.

In summary Romford Town Centre has been identified as

- A metropolitan Centre, which will continue to be the main focus for retail growth.
- An area with the potential to bring forward high density residential and mixed use development.
- A focus for office development within Romford Town Centre. The majority of which is included in the Office Quarter and the preferred location for large scale office development.
- An area to promote cultural and arts uses to diversify the evening economy.
- An area where accessibility should be increased by considering the potential to introduce a Park and Ride facility as part of a wider strategy to encourage modal shift.

***Romford Area Action Plan Development Plan Document, Havering (2008)***

The AAP provides the current planning policy context for development in the town centre. However, the policies included in the AAP are currently under review. Therefore, they have influenced this study only preliminary and in respect of the opportunity sites.

# Key Land Ownerships

Land ownership information was derived from a variety of sources including council officer, stakeholder and local agent knowledge and land registry data held by LB Havering. We have not carried out land registry searches to independently verify these data sources.

There are a number of significant landowners within Romford Town Centre, those which most affect Development Framework are shown in Figure 2.2:

## Public / Infrastructure Company ownership

- LB Havering (land edged blue) - Includes the Town Hall, library, High Street retail units with residential apartments above, and a number of car parks: Como Street CP, Angel Way CP, Slaney Road CP; Town Hall CP and Market Place.
- Network Rail (Site L, west of Waterloo Rd) This is the ROC which is the signalling centre for across East Anglia and Crossrail.
- UK Power Networks (Site G). Major electrical substation which is likely to remain.

## Shopping Centres

- Quadrant Arcade (Site B) – owned by Quadrant
- The Liberty (Site C) – owned by Cosgrave Group
- The Mercury Mall (Site D) - recently sold by Rockspring (current owner unknown)
- The Brewery (Site E) – owned by Henderson Group
- Romford Shopping Hall - owned by Land Management

## Potential Development Sites

- **Site A** comprises the **Angel Way** Decathlon site, a vacant car park, and **North Street** site, an incomplete development currently at concrete frame stage following insolvency of the previous developer. Both are now owned by Regency Homes who are seeking to bring forward high density mixed use development including residential, hotel and retail.

- **Station Site North: 108 – 116 South St (Sites H & I).** Multiple private ownerships including former nightclub owned by Luminar Group.
- **Station Site South / Atlanta Boulevard:** Network Rail own a large tract of land (Site L), the majority of which is undevelopable being live train track or a maintenance depot, however this site includes the bus stand located on Atlanta Boulevard between Sites K and M and is subject to a licence to the bus operator. The bus stand has previously been earmarked for redevelopment as part of the wider redevelopment of this area, subject to the re-provision / relocation of bus stand facilities. Other land ownerships include LIDL UK Ltd (Site M) south of Atlanta Boulevard which is partly a food store and associated car park, and part let to Fitness First as a gym, with associated parking north of Atlanta Boulevard. A parade of shops fronting both South St and Atlanta Boulevard have residential units above are in multiple freehold and leasehold ownerships including Rom Capital who have been exploring development options for this area and are working on delivering a development agreement with Lidl.
- **Bridge Close:** numerous freehold and leasehold property interests. **Site O** comprises freehold land owned by MNO Investments, a property investment company, which includes three warehouses (subject to leasehold interests) and the private road and drainage. MNO have engaged a property agent who, for some years, has been seeking to secure options over adjoining land interests to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment but this has failed to materialise and they have now concluded that piecemeal development is more likely. The council understands that other parties may also be seeking to assemble land in this area for redevelopment.
- **Office Quarter:** We understand that **Site J** which comprises Chaucer House, Hexagon House and associated car park on Grimshaw Way is controlled by Morrisons supermarket and forms part of a land deal with London Borough Havering to deliver a new leisure centre comprising swimming pool and ice rink predominantly located on the car park but also requiring the demolition of part of Chaucer House. It is unclear what will happen to the remainder of Chaucer House and Hexagon House but we assume they will remain as offices.

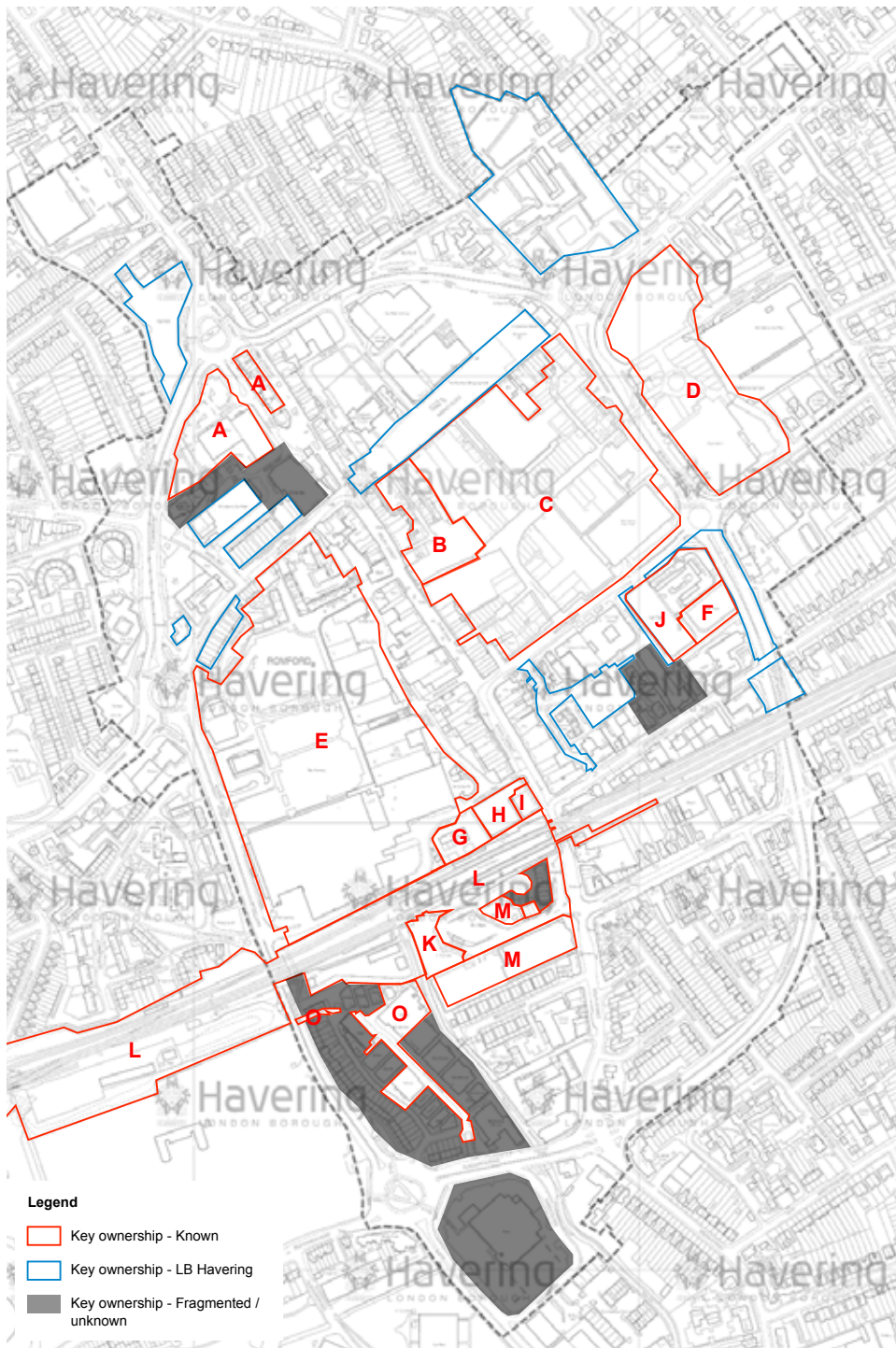


Fig 2.2

# Property Market Review

A property market review was undertaken as part of this commission and has been provided as separate baseline report that draws together evidence gathered from previous reports, published data, and primary research including discussions with local residential and commercial agents. Here we present the key content of that report.

## Residential property market

- The LB Havering has followed national and regional trends and has a high level of housing need and consumer demand, in a rising property market.
- The London Plan 2015 suggest a target housing supply for Havering of 11,701 homes from 2015-2025, averaging 1,170 homes per annum. This represents an increase in households of approximately 12.0% across the Borough and is more than double the average delivery rates over the past 10 years. It is also higher than the peak delivery of 711 homes in 2005/06, and the Council's own target housing supply of 970 homes per annum.
- Housing needs assessment suggests that future market housing delivery should be split 50% small (1- and 2-bedroom units) and 50% large (3+ bedrooms) units. However stakeholders have recognised that there is little market demand for high density family sized apartments in the town centre.
- In July 2014, the waiting list for social homes totalled 2,323. Housing needs assessment shows that 75% of new affordable housing provision should be 1- and 2-bedroom units, with the majority providing 2-bedrooms.
- There are 6,490 concealed households in Havering, 55% of which would prefer to live in Romford, and 50% of which would require affordable housing<sup>1</sup>.
- Romford Town Centre has significant potential to help meet this housing demand.
- Conversations with local property agents indicated the following range of values may presently be expected:
  - 1 bed flat: £140,000 - £180,000; average £157,000 without parking at £3,120 / sq m, £290 / sq ft.
  - 2 bed flat: £180,000 - £220,000; average £195,000 without parking at £2,800 / sq m, £260 / sq ft.
  - 3 bed flat: rare in this location and low level of demand. Possibly up to £230,000. £2,420 / sq m, £225 / sq ft.
  - 2 bed house: £225,000 - £280,000; £250,000 stamp duty threshold will be important role at this price point and we may therefore expect to see prices around or just below this value. £3,000 / sq m, £280 / sq ft.
  - 3 bed house: £250,000 - £320,000; average £298,000 at £3,110 / sq m, £290 / sq ft.
  - 4 bed house: £350,000 - £400,000; average £375,000 at £3,500 / sq m, £325 / sq ft.
- Based on New Build sales market comparables we estimate that properties in and around the town centre are currently asking £290-320 / sq ft for flats, and £250-340 / sq ft for houses.
- In addition to benefiting from the 'ripple' effect from Central London, a number of factors may accelerate increases in values in Romford such as the arrival of Crossrail, the provision of well-conceived new housing stock, public realm improvements and an increased evening activity such as twilight shopping activity and non-family dining.
- There are numerous reasons to be positive about the potential for continued residential value growth in central Romford, particularly if the Development Framework vision can be successfully implemented.

**Table 1:**  
Average land registry data for RM1 and RM7 postcodes obtained from Zoopla.

Property type	RM1 (Majority of Town Centre)		RM7 (Small Western Area of Town Centre)			
	Avg. current value (£)	Avg. (£ / sq ft)	Avg. number of beds	Avg. current value (£)	Avg. (£ / sq ft)	Avg. number of beds
Flats	189,383	304	1.7	170,990	271	1.8
Terraced	271,796	271	3.0	248,024	249	3.0
Semi-detached	335,926	281	3.2	269,536	258	3.1
Detached	495,222	303	3.7	333,467	245	3.1

Source: Zoopla, 5 August 2014

<sup>1</sup>(Housing report commissioned by LB Havering in 2012)

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## Retail property market

- Nationally, high street retailing is struggling. There has been a seismic shift in retail and consumer spending patterns in recent years with the move to online, mobile and out-of town shopping being key factors. Commentators suggest that reinvention and innovation are essential to secure a successful new future for town centres.
- In 2011, there was a total of 230,000 sq m of commercial floorspace within Romford Town Centre across 595 units.

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## Convenience goods

- In 2011, there was 21,500 sq m of convenience floorspace within Romford Town Centre, representing 9.5% of the total floorspace. These stores include ASDA, Sainsbury's, Iceland and Lidl. Convenience goods turnover in the Romford catchment area 2013 was £470m. This is close to the average UK spend per person for the population of the catchment area. The most notable competition for convenience goods shopping are the out-of-centre Tesco stores at Gallows Corner and Hornchurch Road.
- Retail and leisure data gathered by LB Havering in 2012 predict an increase in expenditure on convenience goods of 19% across the Borough to 2027, which equates to demand for 5,746 sq m of net convenience floorspace. In 2013, Morrisons was granted planning permission for a 7,600 sq m (81,500 sq ft) store on Rom Valley Way. The new Morrisons store should therefore cater for additional convenience demand to 2027.
- Conversations with local commercial agents suggested the following values could be ascribed at present to different areas of Romford Town Centre:
  - South Street – £645 / sq m (£60 / sq ft) ITZA
  - Market Place – Not as popular as it used to be, although still an important retail area that benefits the town - £400 / sq m (late £35 - £40 / sq ft) ITZA
  - High / North Street – Tertiary retail area, units are difficult to let - £215 / sq m (£20 / sq ft) ITZA

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## Comparison goods

### Current Provision

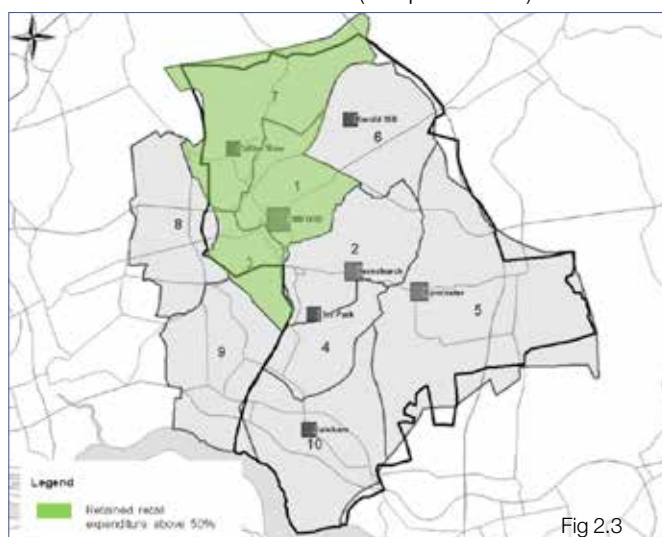
- In 2011, there was 116,000 sq m of comparison floorspace within Romford Town Centre, representing 51% of the total floorspace – well above the national average of 37%. Almost two-thirds of comparison space offers clothing and footwear.
- The Liberty and Mercury Mall shopping centres offer reasonably sized, modern units within a modern, quality shopping centre environment. The Brewery offers modern units in a retail park format, providing larger-format stores. Romford Shopping Hall has been recently refurbished, although the environment remains less light and open.
- There is a mix of store sizes along South Street and North Street including smaller units suitable for independent retailers.
- Retail and leisure data gathered by LB Havering in 2012 identify a number of weaknesses in Romford's comparison retail offer.
- The town centre would benefit from "a more cohesive strategy to consolidate the primary shopping area" and raising the diversity and quality of the retail and leisure offer.
- The town centre has a relatively limited quality or niche independent offer.
- The orientation of retail units in The Brewery mean that they turn their back on the rest of the centre.
- The retail fringe areas are less attractive, and detract from the attractiveness of the centre.
- Despite the high levels of footfall along South Street, the retail offer is less cohesive and the accommodation is of poorer quality, with some unattractive vacant units, and poorly maintained frontages.
- Stewards Walk and Laurie Walk within The Liberty shopping centre could be improved to better integrate them with external shopping streets.



- The 2005 Urban Strategy identified a lack of retail activity in the twilight hours between 6pm and 8pm, reinforced by our discussions with local agents who highlight this as the prime period for commuters returning to the town centre.
- We note that the town is well represented in budget and mid-range multiples but generally lacks higher end and luxury goods offer. The 2013 Town Centre Future Report forecasts predicts that by 2020 the consumer profile will include wealthy professionals, creating demand for arts and culture and luxury items.

### Catchment and competition

- Experian's 2013 Town Centre Future Report refers to a primary catchment population of 253,000 (107,000 households) however, the majority of the Borough primarily shops elsewhere, with only Zones 7, 1 and 3 directing over 50% of their comparison retail expenditure within Romford Town Centre (see plan below).



- A Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment completed in 2006 and further data gathered by the council in 2012 show a decline in Romford's market share of one-sixth over the intervening six years.
- The 2013 Town Centre Future Report shows that whilst Romford remains the principal retail centre accounting for 13% of expenditure in the study catchment area, Stratford has grown to be a key competitor for comparison expenditure, on a par with Lakeside (each

accounting for 8% of expenditure in the study catchment area).

- A contraction in market share and competition from elsewhere has diminished Romford's previously dominant role in the subregion.

### Need and supply

- Vacancy levels fell from 72 units (representing 12% of both units and floorspace) in 2011 to 28 units (8% of total units) in December 2012. EGi showed 33 units available in Romford Town Centre, totalling almost 11,000 sqm (9.5% of total comparison floorspace) in June 2014.
- In August 2014, EGi's retail requirements database showed a total of 33 comparison retail requirements for space in Romford Town Centre totalling 9,857-16,876 sq m. This represents around 8-15% of current comparison floorspace, slightly ahead of current vacancy levels.
- Retail and leisure data gathered by LB Havering in 2012 predict an increase in expenditure on comparison goods of 69% across the Borough to 2027 which equates to a net additional floorspace requirement of 28,080 sq m. However, this assumes a constant market share of growth and does not take into account potential increases in sales density of the existing stock.
- It is noted that Romford Town Centre's sales densities are currently lower than comparator areas (£3,500 / sq m, compared to almost £7,000 / sqm for a well-performing centre such as Gallows Corner). The report therefore suggests that much of the capacity within the Borough could be absorbed by improved performance of existing floorspace, recommending that "the strategy for the centre should continue to be one of consolidation to reinforce the primary shopping area".
- Discussions with retail developers revealed very limited appetite for further expansion beyond existing proposals by the Liberty for the refurbishment of the former Littlewoods store and minor additions at the Brewery. This is because they do not perceive sufficient operator demand to make speculative development worthwhile and agree that secondary and tertiary retail areas have significant absorption capacity.

**Table 2:**  
**Typical retail rents in Romford town centre.**

Source: BBP Regeneration (2014) Based on discussions with local agents and comparable evidence

Street	Typical retail rent (£ / sq m ITZA)	Typical retail rent (£ / sq ft ITZA)
<b>South Street / The Liberty</b>	645	60
<b>Market Place</b>	375+	35+
<b>North Street / Victoria Road</b>	215	20

### Values

- Based on discussions with local agents and comparable evidence we place retail rents across the town centre as shown in Table 2.

### Leisure property market

#### Current provision

- In 2011, there was 63,000 sq m of service floorspace within Romford Town Centre, representing 28% of the total floorspace – considerably below the national average of 38%.
- Retail and leisure data gathered by LB Havering in 2012 identified three key areas for leisure activity:
  - The Brewery** - Value family dining including Pizza Express, Frankie & Bennys, Cosmo, La Tasca and Nando's. Family entertainment including Vue cinema, Ten Pin Bowling, Virgin fitness, and Kidspace on the south side of the Brewery
  - South Street, North and south of the railway station** - Young adult drinking and entertainment sector centred on a selection late night bars/nightclubs alongside a number of pubs
  - Victoria Road** - Take-away sector
- There is a further leisure cluster around High Street, including pubs and Havering Museum.
- The Needs Assessment identified a number of weaknesses in Romford's leisure offer:
  - The leisure offer is "fairly basic, and only really addresses the budget family and core youth markets".
  - Whilst 60% of those surveyed do most of their household's fashion shopping in Romford, linked

trips are uncommon, with only 38% of those surveyed combining shopping with other activities.

- The first floor leisure uses at The Brewery are poorly integrated with the rest of the shopping centre or wider town centre.
- There is potential to support further eating uses within the town centre, especially where outdoor seating was possible, for example Market Place – which was "not currently fulfilling its potential as a large public space".
- Further research was required to develop a cultural strategy based around the town's brewing legacy and traditions, potentially incorporating an annual beer and food festival.
- The street market could be "gently nurtured towards providing a mix of goods that is unique among competing markets in the area".
- The Needs Assessment also recognises the lack of swimming pool facility in this part of the Borough, although this is soon to be addressed with the provision of a new public leisure centre on Western Road.
- A key message received time and again from stakeholder engagement is the lack of high quality restaurants, for which there appears to be considerable pent up demand for both recreation and business entertaining.

#### Need and supply

- Retail and leisure data gathered by LB Havering in 2012 predict an increase in expenditure on leisure activities of 24% to 2027. The café/restaurant subsector (representing 64% of total leisure expenditure) was forecast to grow by the same amount.
- In August 2014, EGi's retail requirements database showed a total of 43 food, drink and leisure requirements for space in Romford Town Centre totalling 6,806-

10,063 sq m. This represents 11-16% of current leisure floorspace. Around one-third of requirements are in the range 85-140 sq m, whilst 38% of requirements are for 300-375 sq m.

- The Needs Assessment suggests that there is realistic scope for Romford to continue to reinforce its overall leisure offering over the plan period, however discussions with local agents suggest that the strong clustering of dining and entertainment dissuades new operators from opening up in other parts of the town.
- There are a number of barriers to the introduction of food and drink establishments to Market Place or South Street:
  - Planning and licensing policy – Designated retail frontages and the Council’s saturation licensing policy discourage new bar and restaurant uses. The 2012 retail and leisure data recommended that “where it is apparent that A1 retail uses are unlikely to be a viable option, the Council could adopt a degree of flexibility to allow other, appropriate uses to come forward which will contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre”.
  - Environment – Market Place is an under-utilised space. The Council has taken a tough stance on anti-social behaviour in recent years, and this must be maintained
  - Occupier confidence - Restaurant operators are reluctant to be the first operator in a new cluster.
  - Suitable premises – There are a handful of properties in this area that have floorplates of less than 150 sq m; smaller than a typical bar or restaurant requirement
- A planning application for a new 2,800 sq m public leisure centre fronting Western Road and featuring a 25m swimming pool and ice rink was permitted in 2012. The development is led by LB Havering and is being funded with contributions from a new Morrisons store on the former ice rink site on Rom Valley Way. This would represent a 4.5% increase in leisure provision across the town centre.

## Values

Permitted development rights introduced in May 2013 allow temporary change of use from A1 (shop) to A3 (restaurants and cafes) without planning permission, and therefore values for such uses are converging across much of the town centre e.g. South Street (see previous section for retail values). Food and drink units in The Brewery let for around £320-485pa / sq m (£30-45pa / sq ft).

Comparable evidence places values for A4 (drinking establishment) uses at around £140-200pa / sq m (£13-18.50 / sq ft), with average yields around 9.5%

Assessing hotel values is challenging and we have had to look at a much wider catchment area for transactional evidence; this suggests that budget hotel values in Romford could achieve between £65,000 and £90,000 per room capital value. Four-star hotels could be higher depending on turnover, demand and room rates.

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## Office property market

### National and regional trends

- Demand for office space across the UK in 2013 was at its highest level since 2008. Take-up within the M25 sector is predicted to reach 2.7m sq ft in 2014, outperforming the 10-year annual average.
- The M25 North and North East subsectors are performing less favourably. The M25 North subsector experienced a drop in take-up of 17% year on year. The M25-North East subsector saw no take-up in Q1 2014, with a forecast of just 200,000 sq ft in 2014, and no development activity in the past 12 months.
- There has been a growing emphasis from occupiers on operational effectiveness over status, as organisations have needed to drive down occupier costs. Demand for smaller, lower specification offices is under increasing competition from serviced offices, co-working spaces, home working and remote working locations.

- The role of design will become more important in office buildings as organisations appeal to a younger generation of workers who are increasingly interested in flexibility, choice and variety in the workplace.
- Speculative funding has returned to London and the South East. Overseas capital, particularly from Asian investors, is set to play an important role in the coming years.

### *Local supply and demand*

- Romford Office Quarter is the primary office location within the Borough. Historically typical occupiers have been, and to some extent remain, large companies requiring a regional base or back office function, or SMEs.
- One local agent remarked that Romford had better quality stock than Barking or Ilford, although much of this stock is still 20-30 years old (Grade C), and would require significant investment to refurbish – beyond the cost and risk that current values would support.
- However a report looking at the availability of employment land commissioned by LB Havering in 2012 assessed that take-up rates of office floorspace had been slow in recent years, and demand was not strong. This outlook was confirmed by local commercial agents who stated that there is virtually no interest in speculative office development at this time.
- Agents explained that today organisations with requirements greater than 2,500 sq ft were likely to look outside of Havering – perhaps towards Chelmsford or Brentwood, which are perceived to be more pleasant environments with better amenities, despite poorer transport links. However, larger transactions in Romford do happen every few years.
- There is, however, demand for serviced workspace to meet the needs of start-ups and growing businesses, with good occupancy levels where this exists. We understand that there is around 2,800 sq m (30,000 sq ft) of serviced office space within Romford Town Centre at the present time.

- The ELR forecast a net requirement of between 11,500 and 17,700 sq m of office floorspace across the Borough to 2027.
- At the time of the ELR, vacancy rates for dedicated office floorspace across the Borough were 8% (12% for space under 2,500 sq ft). Short-term leases were generally offered, with most businesses content with such tenure arrangements in the economic climate at the time.
- Our assessment is that whilst there appears to be a sufficient quantity of office floor space in Romford Town Centre to meet current demand, much of the space is inflexible and cannot easily or cost effectively be upgraded to modern standards or partitioned to meet the needs of smaller businesses. This, combined with limited demand from larger corporate occupiers, has led to some buildings being used for less economically active uses such as disaster recovery (space that sits under occupied for much of the time) or being considered for conversion to residential via permitted development rights e.g. Scimitar House.

### *Values*

- The 2013 Commercial Opportunities Study highlights that Romford has experienced a significant fall in rents from around £287pa / sq m (£26.70pa / sq ft) in 2007 to £115pa / sq m (£10.70pa / sq ft) in 2012.
- Current evidence points to second hand stock in Romford Office Quarter (dating from around 1990), now achieving values up to £135pa / sq m (£12.50pa / sq ft). Headquarters-type space would usually be secured on a bespoke, pre-let basis and may reach £140 (£13pa / sq ft) if the occupier's requirements were niche. Lower quality space typically achieves around £97pa / sq m (£9pa / sq ft).
- Comparable evidence from within the IG, RM and CM postcode areas suggests that new build / high quality second hand stock achieves £160pa / sq m (£15pa / sq ft) further afield. Brentwood, a more desirable office location, achieves new build / high quality secondhand rents of £170-250pa / sq m (£16-23pa / sq ft).

- One local agent suggested that freehold purchases are desirable in this market. Limited comparable evidence from Romford suggests capital values around £1,700 to £2,000 / sq m (£160-185 / sq ft).

### ***Industrial and logistics property market***

- Within Romford Town Centre there is a cluster of approximately 16 mixed industrial, warehouse and ancillary office units at Bridge Close, which are now somewhat dated and now provide affordable commercial space for a variety of employment, leisure (gym) and faith based activities. This includes an ambulance station at the southern end.
- Planning policy is clearly established for a change of use of this area away from industrial and logistics and as such we have not focussed on demand and values for re-provision.
- In terms of existing use agents have estimated capital values of between £50 and £70 / sq ft derived from rents of between £4.50pa and £6.50pa / sq ft and yields of approximately 9%.

# Urban Design Appraisal

Urban design analysis of the town centre as a whole has led to a clear definition of distinct areas or quadrants, each with their own characteristics and opportunities. This has provided the basis for a town centre wide framework that strengthens Romford, helping it to become more legible and coherent.

While the town used to be made up of small vertical plots and narrow streets, focused around Market Place and the High Street. Historically the heart of Romford was located at the cross-roads of North Street, South Street High Street and Market Place. This historic core is where the town's oldest and most attractive buildings are located, which is recognised in the Romford Conservation area.

Romford's current layout is dominated by buildings with large floorplates and wide vehicular carriageways, which separates the town centre from the surrounding housing.

The key destinations within the study area are Romford rail station, the market and the shopping centres, including The Brewery, Liberty and Mercury Mall.

With three large shopping centres and a historic street market dating back to 1247, Romford is significant as a shopping destination. Additional leisure facilities include two cinemas, a fitness centre and a number of national restaurant brands in the Brewery centre.

Many visitors to Romford arrive by car, which is encouraged by the ring road that surrounds the town centre and provides access to many town centre car parks and servicing areas for the shopping centres. Buses and the rail station provide good public transport access to the town centre and in the near future Crossrail will also stop here, enhancing Romford's connection with central London as well as with other neighbouring centres.

## Character Analysis

Character analysis work has been undertaken and reported in full detail in a separate technical report as part of this commission; it has identified the following seven character areas.

**The Historic Core:** The historic heart of the centre that includes Market Place, High Street and South Street.

This area is formed around Romford Conservation area and lined by continuous frontages. Buildings are 2 - 5 storeys in height. Plots still largely follow the historic pattern with small individual plots that are narrow fronted and deep. This results in a more varied townscape with little coherence between the buildings in terms of their roof form, style, quality and level of maintenance.

Apart from street furniture and advertising that disrupt the public realm, the streets they are relatively open and straight for views ahead.

This is the most distinct area in Romford Town Centre and any future development should reinforce the historic character and contribute to the vitality of the area.

**The Retail Area:** The retail area is mainly made up of Romford's shopping centres: The Brewery, The Liberty, Quadrant Arcade, Romford Shopping Hall, and Mercury Mall. It also overlaps with the middle section of South Street. This street currently contains the highest percentage of vacant units. Whilst it has a good footfall at its southern end, this reduces towards the northern end. The quality of the public realm also deteriorates towards the historic crossroads with Market Place.



The shopping centres are inward-looking retail environments that have little relationship to the surrounding town.

The buildings here are the equivalent of 3-5 storeys in height, but the façades are mainly blank on the street edges. Most frontages have a horizontal emphasis. The Liberty is tucked in behind the historic plots on South Street and is better integrated.

In the short term, this area has little scope for large scale changes due to landownership and the historic nature of South Street. Comprehensive redevelopment of all or part of shopping centres may provide opportunities in the future.

**The Office Quarter:** The Office Quarter is set within two of the oldest streets in Romford; Western Road and Eastern Road. Before the WW2, the area was residential.

Eastern Road has a distinct and positive character, with regular mature trees and buildings generally set back from the pavement edge. Generally buildings are separate from one another with 'gaps between them, setting up a rhythm along the street frontage. There is no continuous building line, and a mix of boundary treatments. Buildings are 2-6 storeys in height and the majority have brick façades and flat roof and large, deep floor-plates, typical of commercial development of that time.

Given that the building stock is aging this areas is likely to undergo significant change. There is an opportunity to draw on the positive characteristics of Eastern Street and create a stronger identity for the area.

**The Civic Quarter:** A cluster of post war civic buildings and a cemetery just north east of the ring road, along Main Road.

The character of the buildings is formal and they are spaced far apart as standalone objects. Buildings are generally significantly stepped back from the street edge, and so the townscape feels quite open. Regularly planted mature trees further add to the formality of this area.

Buildings in this area range from the 1930's through to the 1970's and are generally are 2-3 storeys in height. The majority of the buildings have a flat roof, are made from brick and have large floor-plates.

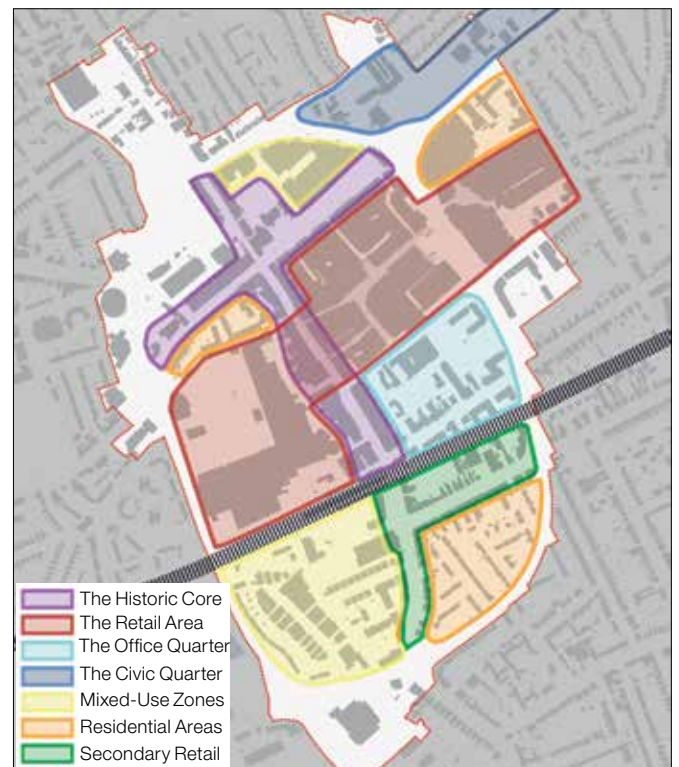


Fig 2.4

Fig: character area analysis

This area serves a clear function and is clearly defined. Apart from potential infill developments and the redevelopment of individual buildings there is little scope for change.

**Mixed-Use zones** : The mixed use area to the south of the rail line contains a mixture of retail, transport infrastructure, housing, industry and offices.

The building types, their plots, boundaries and the spaces between them are very varied in their nature, size and type that the area appears relatively informal and fragmented. The relationship of buildings to streets varies depending on their use. Regarth Avenue is a residential street of very consistent character while Bridge Close and other non-residential uses are varied.

Currently this area has no consistent characteristics and there is an opportunity to develop a new distinct quarter that is clearly defined and contributes to the vitality of the town centre as a whole.

**Residential Areas**: There are three areas that have a focus on housing; two in the north and one in the south. They are all of very different styles and quality; however, common characteristics are that the streets are straight with a formal and regular pattern.

The area to the south of the railway is characterized by repeated semi-detached houses with slim gaps between them. Streets are relatively wide, as houses are stepped back with good sized front gardens enclosed by either low fences, walls or surface changes. Most buildings are post-war houses with pitched roofs, bay windows and constructed from brick. Predominant storey heights are two storeys.

The areas to the north of the railway are more mixed in character, including a range of flats and houses. Their character is less suburban.

Given the location of the areas, there is the opportunity to develop these at a greater density, through infill and redevelopment of existing houses.

**Secondary Retail**: The south part of South Street and Victoria Road, which include secondary retail, services, cafes and some residential at upper levels.

The building frontage onto Victoria Street is relatively consistent with regard to its building line. The wide set back

of buildings creates a distinct character. On the contrary, the bottom of South Street is relatively inconsistent with various plot sizes and buildings.





### Public Realm analysis

- The key pedestrian area in Romford is South Street, which provides a north-south link through the town centre, linking the rail station and historic crossroads. The quality of this route is variable. The southern area has recently been improved while the northern sections is led down by a clutter of street furniture and advertisement boards and tired looking materials.
- Contrary to the historic street pattern of the town centre, pedestrian flows appear to be strongest moving east-west due to the location of the three large shopping centres, which are all linked. Research by The Liberty shopping centre has shown that the majority of people enter the centre from South Street and Mercury Mall. Traditionally, the east-west route along High Street and Market Place was a key connection to the surrounding residential areas, but it is restricted at each end by subways and the new Tollgate House building.
- There are a number of pedestrian links linking the shopping centres to South Street, Unfortunately, most of them are of poor quality and fronted by façades that have little or no activity.
- Links beyond the town centre are generally restricted by the presence of the ring road. Some connections are made at surface level, which is preferable but many are made as subway diversions which puts pedestrians in an inferior position to vehicles and reduces the sense of permeability.

The following key opportunities have been identified:

- Market Square – to provide a high quality civic space that caters for a variety of activities
- Station forecourt (north and/or south)
- Improvements to Western Street
- A new vehicular link through the office quarter.

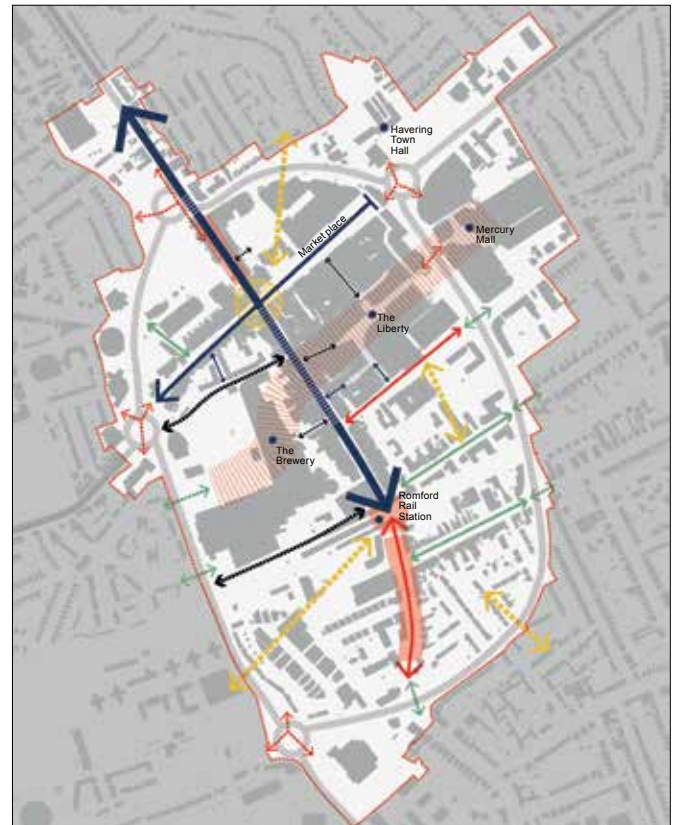


Fig 2.5

Fig: public realm analysis

#### KEY

- Key pedestrian route
- Positive route
- Ground level crossings
- Subway crossings
- Break or clutter in key pedestrian route
- Key pedestrian links in traffic heavy streets
- Pedestrian links with blank façades
- Poor quality public realm
- Retail movement
- Missing routes and links
- Missing focus
- Destinations

# Existing Positive Influences

## Positive influences:

Overall, the central town centre of Romford has wide (in some places pedestrianised) streets, human scale buildings and a range of retail offers including some shopping centres that are, to some extent, integrated within the historic town centre. There are a number of particularly 'positive' urban design elements, which can be identified as:

- The Conservation Area, listed buildings and historic core, as well as non-listed but attractive buildings such as an old brewery building (Havering Museum), Trinity Methodist Church and the public library.
- The Market Place, a large open space in the town centre, dating back to 1247. A wide space for congregating and the tri-weekly historic market.
- The central location of the rail station and soon-to-be Crossrail hub, meaning that the town is well connected to Central London.
- The historic plot pattern on South Street and the crossroads, which is largely retained and provides a distinct character, although a number of the buildings are of poor quality.
- The presence of the River Rom within the town centre. Whilst largely in culvert now, there is the potential for the River to become a more positive feature of the town.
- The tree-lined Eastern Road in the Office Quarter.
- The views of the steeple of St. Edward the Confessor Church act as an attractive wayfinding device.
- The green open space behind the St. Edward the Confessor Church, providing the only green space within the town centre.
- A recently improved public library adjacent to the Town Hall and the potential for a new leisure centre and Ice rink on Western Road.



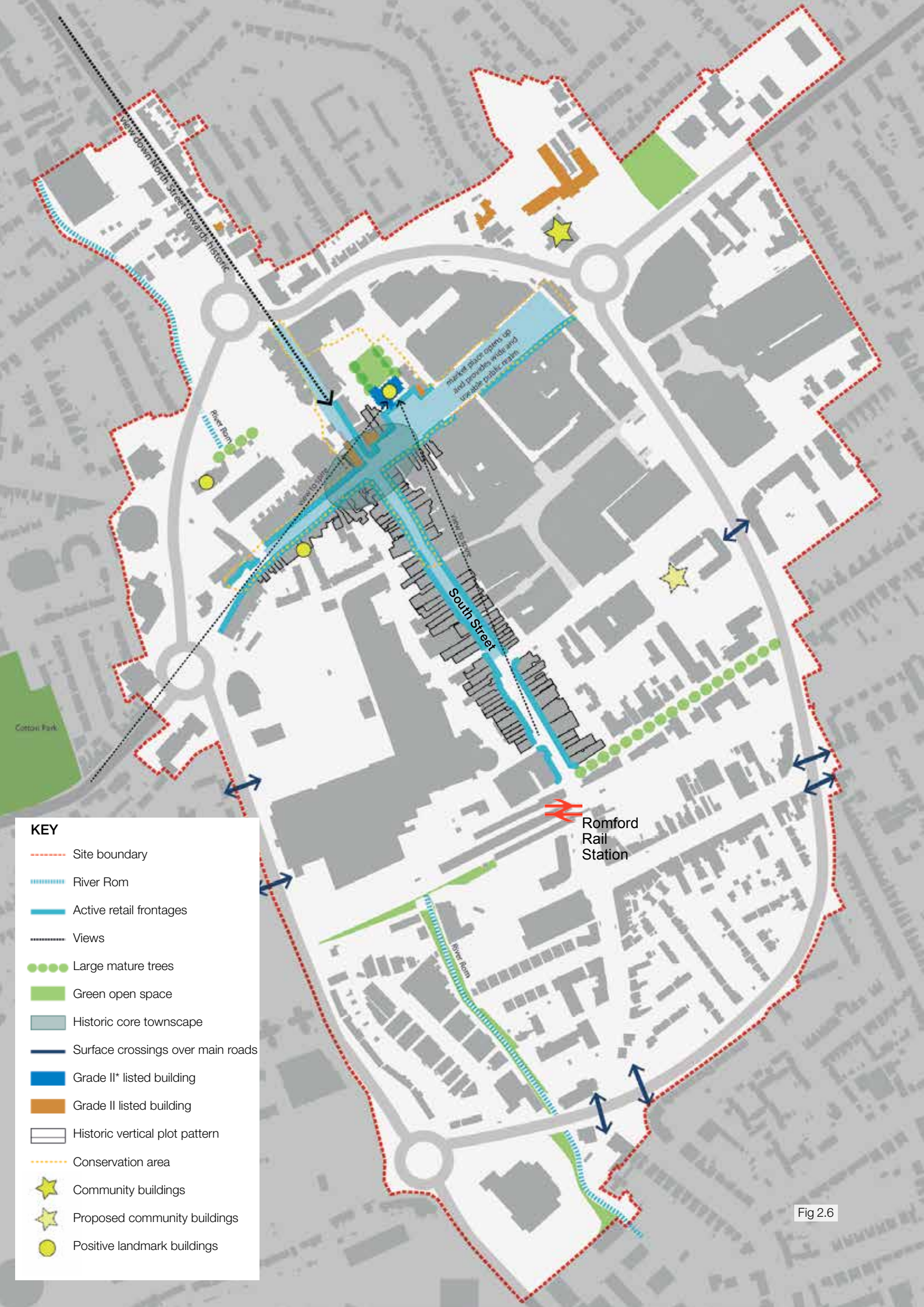
The Market Place with the church spire in the background



The crossing point of South Street/North Street and Market Place in the centre of the Conservation Area



Eastern Road



**KEY**

- Site boundary
- River Rom
- Active retail frontages
- Views
- Large mature trees
- Green open space
- Historic core townscape
- ↔ Surface crossings over main roads
- Grade II\* listed building
- Grade II listed building
- Historic vertical plot pattern
- Conservation area
- ★ Community buildings
- ★ Proposed community buildings
- Positive landmark buildings

Fig 2.6

# Existing Negative Influences

## Negative influences:

Romford has undergone much change over the last 50 years and the historic urban grain has been affected by the construction of a substantial four-lane ring road and some large shopping centres and offices. Whilst obviously towns do grow and adapt some of the changes in Romford have masked the positive influences of a historic town centre and for many the experience of Romford is that of a ring road and the backs of large buildings and car parks. Some of the more negative urban design influences that currently stand out are:

- The presence of the ring road and the island effect caused to the town centre, in particular the subway access points for pedestrians, under the ring road as an arrival and departure point to the town centre.
- The numerous exposed rear and service areas and numerous blank façades. Many of which front onto key pedestrian links and key gateways into the town, in particular Chandlers Way. This is the main approach by bus and currently a very poor gateway to the town centre.
- A range of negative landmark buildings, which include the Angel Way multi-storey car park, the office block over The Liberty shopping centre, and the housing block to the rear of Atlanta Boulevard.
- The inward-looking nature of the shopping centres.
- The overall lack of permeability throughout the town centre due to the configuration of the two main shopping centres. The River Rom is currently a block for permeability and cohesion.



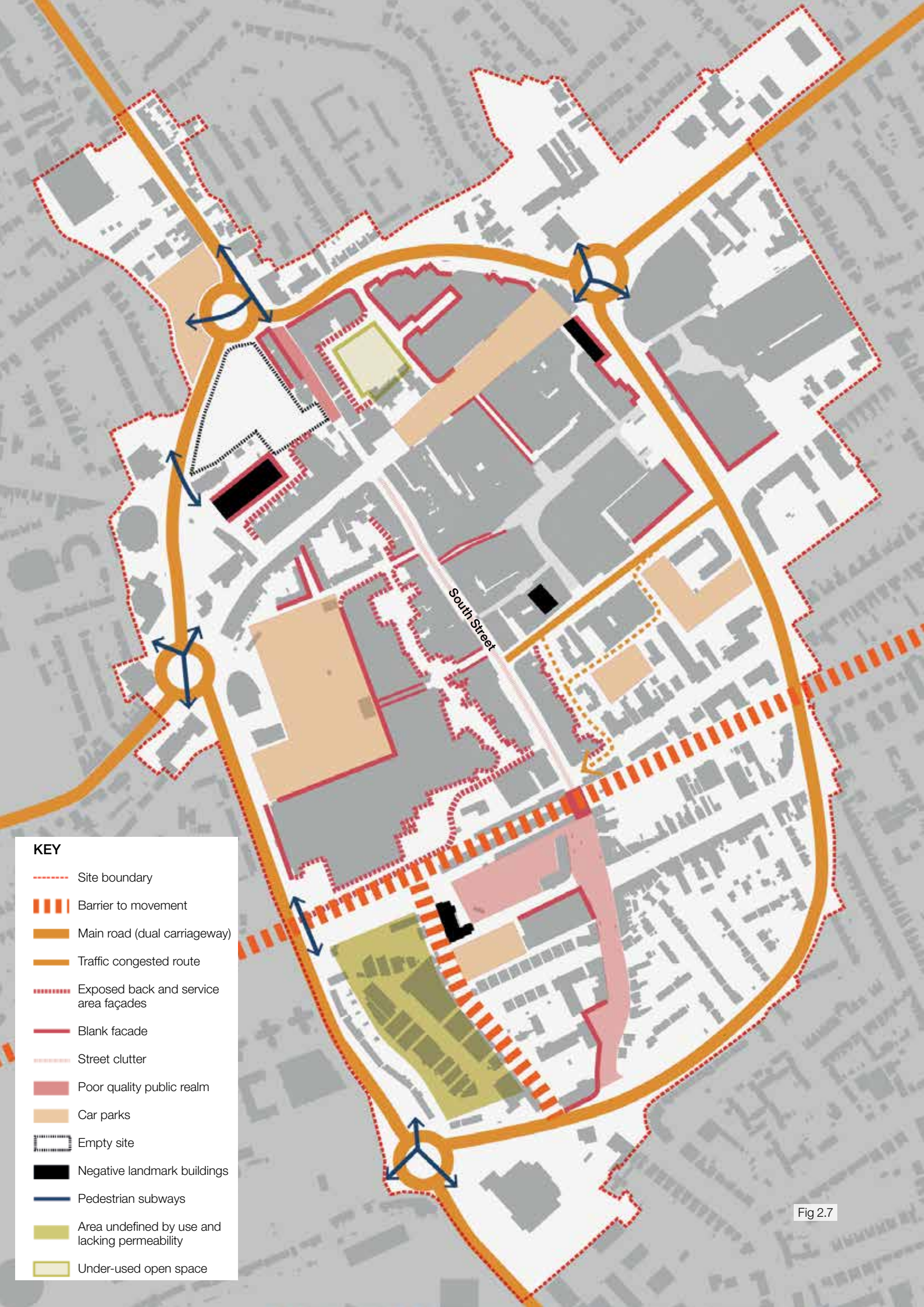
The Ring Road (St Edwards Way) and large underused office buildings on a key gateway to the town



The Brewery Shopping centre has a large surface car park as its primary focus



The ring road has very few surface crossing points - most pedestrian crossings are accommodated by subways.



**KEY**

- - - - Site boundary
- - - - Barrier to movement
- Main road (dual carriageway)
- - - - Traffic congested route
- - - - Exposed back and service area façades
- Blank facade
- - - - Street clutter
- Poor quality public realm
- Car parks
- Empty site
- Negative landmark buildings
- Pedestrian subways
- Area undefined by use and lacking permeability
- Under-used open space

Fig 2.7

# Engineering Summary

Engineering, environmental and transport reviews were undertaken as part of this commission and have been provided as separate baseline reports. These outline the background evidence on the technical issues underlying the Romford Development Framework. The baseline reports have been developed largely from existing reports, but further research has been carried out on the historical nature of constraints within the study area. The key issues relevant to the framework are summarised below.

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## Transport

- The town centre road hierarchy is designed to keep traffic away from the town centre allowing pedestrianisation of parts of the road network allowing only buses and service vehicles access to many areas. Similar design principles are followed on the edge of the centre where developments are accessed directly off the ring road or associated minor roads.
- Public transport accessibility is high with PTAL ratings of between 6a to 6b with a large number of bus stops around the ring road. Bus services are excellent but services within the ring road are limited. There are excellent rail services from Romford to London and Essex and East Anglian destinations, although the railway itself acts as a partial barrier to north-south travel. Taxi provision is good.
- The town centre has a well-developed pedestrian network with access to the central core via either existing pedestrian crossings or pedestrian subways. The latter, although reasonably well designed and maintained, are still a barrier to pedestrian and in particular cycle movements.
- Although this study is not a transport study, initial assessments have been made of likely trip generation and options proposed for access to all development sites allowing in generic terms, initial cost assessments for highways infrastructure to be inputted to the report. Possible options were discussed with the LB Havering's Transport Team and a series of measures were agreed that could, with due design development; support the proposed development of Romford Town Centre and Mitigate against the increased car use.
- Options identified include the allocations of low or zero car parking on central sites; prioritisation of pedestrian and cycle provision, planning from inception for delivery and service vehicles, no new access provision from the ring road, and the development of a series of measures to encourage sustainable transport as set out in the Romford Area Action Plan DPD. New pedestrian/cycle crossing of the ring road and promotion of low car ownership are seen as key mitigation measures to be taken forward and developed.
- Initial assessments of primary highway/ transportation infrastructure has been made to inform the development environmental appraisal contained elsewhere in this report.

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## Environment

- The town centre is covered by an area wide Air Quality Management Area which was declared on the 11th September 2006 in relation to Nitrogen Dioxide and particulate matter. All potential development sites have been assessed against the AQMA criteria and potential mitigation has been identified. Preliminary costs have been provided elsewhere in this report.
- The sites have also been assessed against other environmental considerations including noise, cultural heritage and water resources with key mitigation identified and offered for further development and study. Preliminary costs of mitigation have been provided elsewhere.
- The Romford Conservation Area and an Archaeological priority area requiring consultation with the Greater London Archaeological advisory service prior to any development cover much of the town centre. The issue of retention of conservation assets is dealt with elsewhere in this report but all development should aim to minimise below ground disturbance in case of archaeological remains. Detailed assessment and appraisal will be required and a preliminary assessment of appropriate cost allowances had been made.

- The area is covered by a developing Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that identifies fluvial flooding to the Romford area largely as a result of the River Rom flowing approximately north to south and Black Brook flowing east to west that intersect near Exchange Street. Large parts of the network through Romford are culverted as a result of historical build-over and a requirement of the development plan will be to design for opening up of old culverts where appropriate and practical. They will be a key requirement from the Environment Agency in any future developments and will deliver biodiversity, cost and hydrological benefits. Costs for partial deculverting have been provided elsewhere.
- Initial assessments of potential contamination have been made and initial estimates of costs made.
- Infrastructure drawings have been obtained from the utility providers. As would be expected in a complex urban environment these are widespread and need to be taken into account in any detailed development plans. Loss of development space and initial estimates of potential diversion and reinforcement costs have been identified and included elsewhere.





# 4 Town Centre Strategy

Based on the background studies and urban design analysis, the following strategic objectives and town centre strategy have been developed in partnership with LB Havering Officers, Members and key stakeholders.

The town centre strategy sets out:

- Town centre wide guidance and development principles;
- Character areas and their specific function and role for Romford Town Centre as a whole;
- Key frontages and edges; and
- Urban design principles aiding legibility and a coherent building height strategy.

The emerging strategy was discussed in two Members workshops, one stakeholder workshop, two officers' workshops and a series of focussed meetings with officers and key stakeholders to discuss issues ranging from land ownerships, development aspirations and social infrastructure provision.

These consultation workshops led to the definition of six strategic objectives that provide the basis for the Town Centre Strategy.

The strategy itself defines an overarching spatial strategy for Romford Town Centre and development and design principles.

This guidance applies to any development coming forward within the town centre, whether or not they are an identified opportunity site.

# Strategic Objectives

## SO1 – To strengthen Romford’s role as a Metropolitan Centre by better serving the retail and leisure needs of local and neighbouring communities

A diverse range of daytime and evening activities and an enhanced cultural offer will generate additional employment and economic activity, and will maintain Romford’s position as a destination of choice for shoppers and leisure visitors in outer east London. Longer opening hours and the provision of a safe, higher value evening economy will result in the capture of a greater market share of the retail and leisure expenditure currently lost to competing centres.



## SO2 - To promote an economically active and sustainable community, delivering residential development that is integrated within the town centre and that contributes significantly to the Borough’s housing need

Deliver strong residential growth that capitalises on the town centre’s potential, in particular its excellent transport links and connectivity to central London. Create an urban environment that will attract economically active residents and concentrate spending power to support local businesses and boost the town centre economy. Romford will make a significant contribution to meeting the Borough’s existing housing and community needs, particularly through the provision of apartments to achieve appropriate densities and reflecting market demand, and by responding flexibly to affordable housing need.



## SO3 - To remain an important employment centre, attracting inward investment and supporting businesses to grow or locate in the town centre

Developing a dynamic, modern environment that caters for the changing needs of businesses from within the Borough and beyond. Providing a framework for retaining and modernising office provision focussed around the rail station building upon the opportunities presented by Crossrail, as well as delivering opportunities for other forms of job creation. Recognising that lower density employment may need to be relocated to accommodate growth.



**SO4 – To build on the distinct character and fabric of the town centre bringing new vibrancy and activity to Romford’s historic crossroads and market area whilst respecting and capitalising on its heritage**

Redefining this area as a focal destination for high quality dining and leisure set in excellent public realm and supporting activities on the street throughout the day and into the evening. These activities will complement and reinforce the street market and enhance visitor appeal, providing a distinct offer from the existing cluster of bars pubs and nightclubs that will thrive around the rail station.



**SO5 - To portray a modern and vibrant aspirational identity for Romford’s future whilst retaining its distinctiveness**

Creating a step change in the quality of new buildings and public open space, embracing urban design and higher densities where appropriate, particularly around the rail station and at other focal points. Establishing a palette of modern and more traditional materials to define different character areas.



**SO6 - To deliver a high quality well-connected public realm and improve access by public transport, walking and cycling**

Reducing car dependency by providing high quality alternative transport options whilst being mindful of the need to maintain an appropriate level of parking to support visitor and business activity. This will allow a greater density of development and concentration of economic activity in addition to providing environmental benefits. Enhanced public realm will provide a pleasant and safe experience to encourage visitors to spend more time and more money in the town, and support high quality development by reinforcing aspirations and values.



# Romford Town Centre Vision

Crossrail provides an opportunity to create a real step change for Romford, in particular around the station. However, the historical and distinctive character must not be overshadowed.

The two main focal points within Romford town centre, the historic crossroads and a contemporary station quarter will be linked by an uplifted and invigorated South Street, providing the central zone of activity.

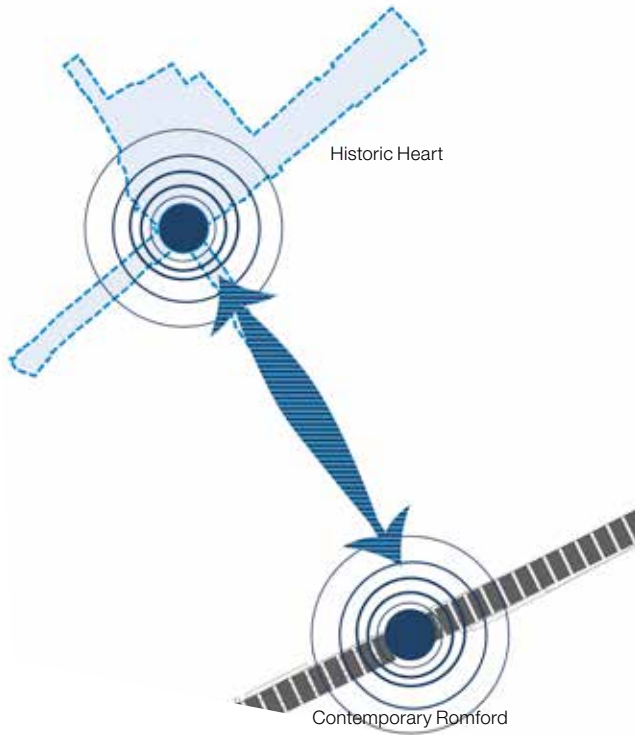
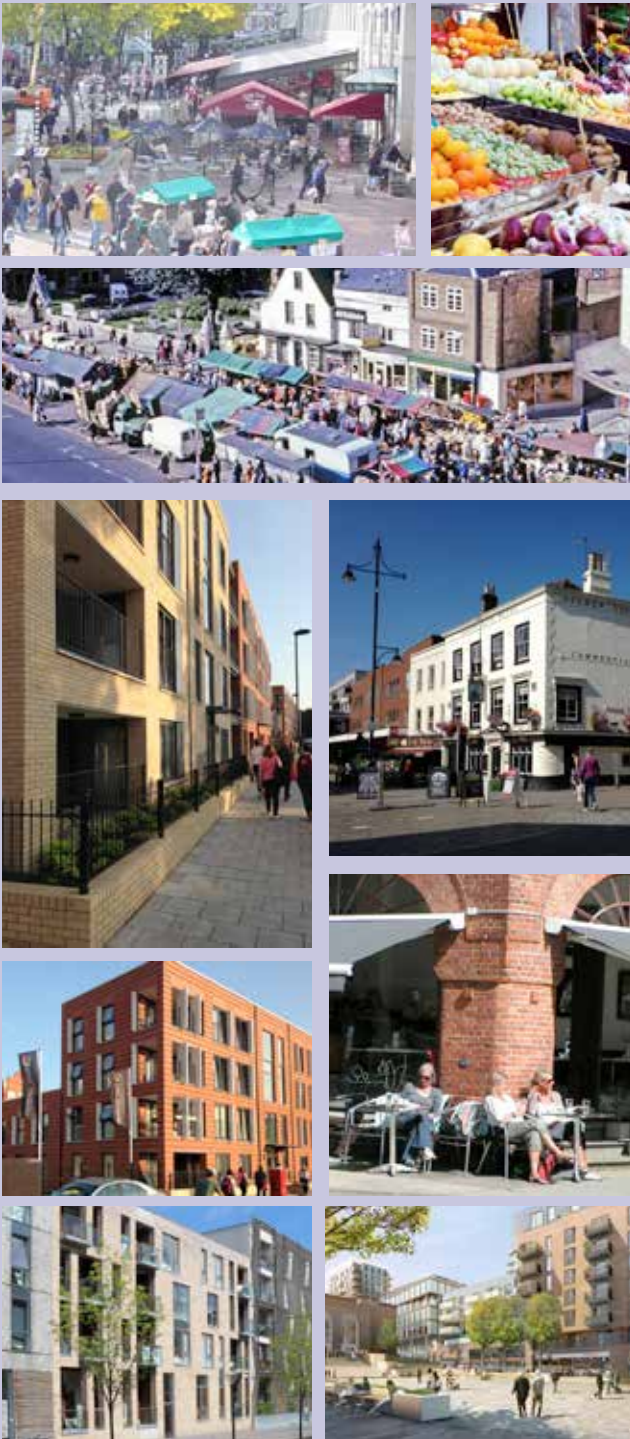


Fig 3.1

## A Place for a inclusive and sustainable community.



## Building on the existing historic context of Romford



## Capitalising on the opportunity for a new contemporary hub as part of the new Crossrail development



# Town Centre Development Guidance

In support of the strategic objectives, development proposals in Romford Town Centre should:

- Be of distinct character relating to Romford, of high quality design and construction, using long lasting materials.
- Create active and attractive frontages onto existing and proposed pedestrian routes and generally improve the pedestrian environment and accessibility of the town centre.
- Reduce the barrier effect of the ring road, making the town centre more accessible for pedestrian and cyclists, provide attractive frontages and improve the image of Romford Town Centre when arriving by car or bus.
- Seek the introduction/densification of residential and employment uses on upper floors.
- Comprise tall buildings in Southern and Northern Approach, with the tallest buildings located in Station Quarter Core and South.
- Respect the Conservation Area and have regard to the historic fabric of Romford, strengthening Romford's character as a historic Market Town while introducing a more contemporary character around the Station Quarter.
- Support, with appropriate uses, the two key points of activity: the historic crossroads at the northern end of South Street and the area around Romford rail station.
- Ground floor floor-to-ceiling heights on active frontages should be built to ensure suitability for non-residential uses. A guide height is 4m, which would allow any residential ground floor units to be converted for non-residential use if such demand increases in the future.
- Utilise opportunities to increase the number of people living in the town centre and provide them with appropriate levels of social and community facilities, including schools, nurseries, health care and GPs and community facilities.
- Provide appropriate levels of car parking in line with GLA standards, accepting car free living, consolidating town centre car parking and ensuring that commercial uses have access to appropriate levels of car parking to make them commercially viable.

## Key Opportunity sites

The analysis of positive and negative influences and stakeholder discussions led to the identification of several key opportunity areas, chosen for a variety of key reasons: -

- They are currently underused or empty;
- They are already earmarked for development as part of the Romford AAP or have planning consents in place;
- They are in council ownership and could be brought forward for development, assisting the regeneration of Romford Town Centre; and
- Those that whilst currently in use are of low density and non-town centre uses.

The sites are:

1. Como Street Car Park (incorporating AAP site ROMS SA3). Owned by the Council, and a key site just north of the Ring Road;
2. Angel Way (incorporating AAP site ROMS SA1 and SA4). Joint ownership between the Council and a private landowner. Current application live on part of the site.
3. The High Street (AAP site ROMS SA5) and Brewery Car Park. A council owned site of poor quality mixed use development and huge underused underdeveloped surface car park predominantly serving the Brewery shopping centre.
4. Station Quarter North. Location of the new leisure centre, a number of lower density commercial uses and car parking. Multiple ownerships.
5. Atlanta Boulevard and nightclub (AAP site ROMS SA6). Proposals for the expansion of the rail station for Crossrail and aspirations for a step change in image around the rail station. Multiple ownerships.
6. Bridge Close and surrounding areas (incorporating AAP site ROMS SA2). An area of lower density employment uses that could be relocated elsewhere. Also a key location to facilitate an east-west link to the rail station from the growing residential areas to the west of the town.

7. Homebase. An area occupied with a large retail warehouse and associated car parking. It is located in a prominent location and in close proximity to the town centre.



Fig 3.2

# Towards a Strategy

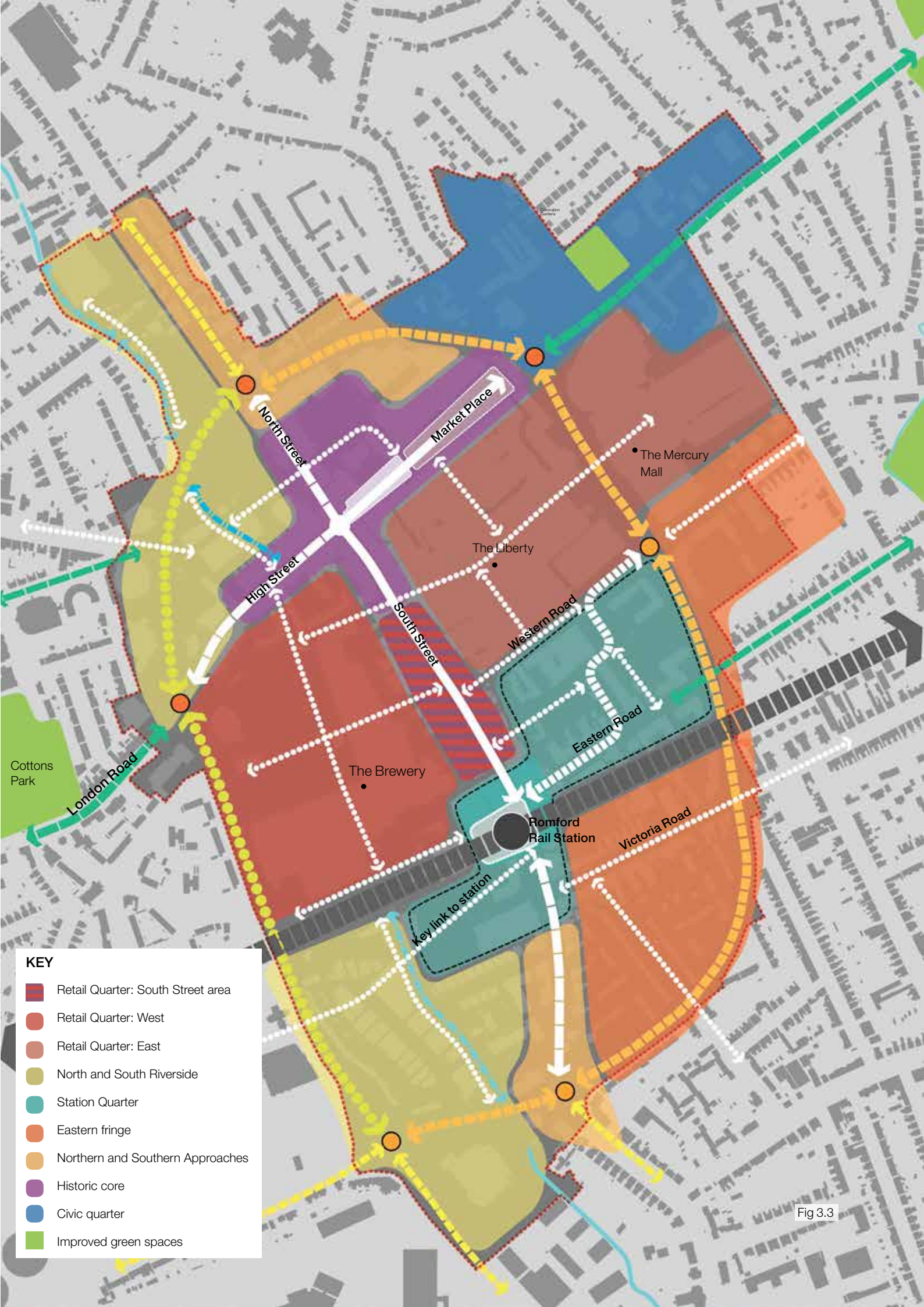
## Character Areas

The spatial aspect of the Development Framework is guided by overlaying a series of quarters or character areas on the town centre. The aim of these areas is to redefine and strengthen existing functions and characteristics and make the town centre more coherent, legible and distinct. Each of these quarters has specific guidance and principles that control and regulate new development in the areas.

The quarters broadly cover:

- Northern and Southern Approaches to the town centre, particularly in the north and south from North Street and South Street and crossing the barrier of the ring road - Key considerations include how to address the transition from suburban residential areas to the town centre and how to address the ring road.
- North and South Riverside - New residential quarters, focused around opportunities for waterside living within the Town Centre boundary beside the River Rom.
- Civic Quarter - Defined by the existing cluster of civic buildings in the north east of the town.
- Historic core, formed around the existing Conservation Area and dedicated to strengthening and improving the historic heart of the town - The attractive townscape in this area provides the opportunity to create a focal point for the town centre as a whole.
- Retail Quarter - The focus of the town centre has shifted southwards to respond to the large retail malls, but consolidation and connections are key as is improving the pivotal axis of South Street. South Street, south of the Conservation Area, has similar physical characteristics to the historic core and indeed forms a continuous street. However, the role and function of this section of South Street varies from that of the Historic Core. It needs to be seen as a key link between the main retail areas, the crossroads and the rail station.
- Station Quarter - Building on Crossrail, it incorporates the former Office Quarter and is focused on the enhanced public transport connectivity and establishing a new vibrant, mixed use area around the rail station. The existing office area of Romford is under threat but has the potential to be revitalised and diversified within the wider Station Quarter.





**KEY**

- Retail Quarter: South Street area
- Retail Quarter: West
- Retail Quarter: East
- North and South Riverside
- Station Quarter
- Eastern fringe
- Northern and Southern Approaches
- Historic core
- Civic quarter
- Improved green spaces

Fig 3.3

# Public Realm and Pedestrian Links

Key opportunities identified by the Urban Realm Workshop organised by LB Havering and this study are to:

- Introduce high quality public open space into the town centre;
- Enhance tired-looking public realm, in particular along key streets, improve general management / maintenance.

In addition to these general opportunities the study has identified a number of key pedestrian links and potential new open spaces.

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## New and improved open spaces

### *The Market Place*

As already identified in the Public Realm Masterplan, this space provides the key opportunity to provide a civic space within Romford. Through the consolidation of car parking and reorganisation of the market space can be made available for a high quality public square for activities and events.

### *Focal spaces*

The framework identifies a focal space for each of the character areas. These could be delivered either as part of the development of opportunity sites or through public intervention. These spaces vary in their form and function, according to the area they are in. All of them need to be of high quality, include either some soft landscaping or tree planting and provide space for sitting and meeting. There are also opportunities to include public art that is functional (i.e. street furniture or lighting) and developed in partnership with the local community. Those focal spaces that are in the new residential quarter should incorporate opportunities for informal play. In contrast, the space in Station Quarter North should provide opportunities for people to sit out at lunchtime, cafés that cater for employees to spill out into the space and, above all, a space that creates a distinct identity for this area, reflecting the mix of professional uses.



### *New pedestrian / cycle links*

**Bridge Close east-west link.** This link will make a substantial contribution to the regeneration of this part of the town centre and create a direct link from residential developments to the west to the rail station and town centre.

**Church link.** This pedestrian route connects the Angel Way opportunity site to currently poorly connected areas of the northern town centre such as the poorly used pedestrian route to the green space at the rear of St. Edward the Confessor Church and Trinity Methodist Church. Should the buildings to the north of the High Street be redeveloped in the future, a north-south link between Church Link and the High Street should be provided.

**River Rom link.** The River Rom is an underutilised asset in the town centre. Future development fronting onto the river must provide a public pedestrian / cycle route alongside it. North of the High Street where the river is currently culverted, it is a long-term aspiration to provide a connection between Church Link and the High Street.

### *Improving existing pedestrian routes*

Existing routes, in particular North Street, South Street and High Street should be improved by decluttering and improvements to existing public realm.

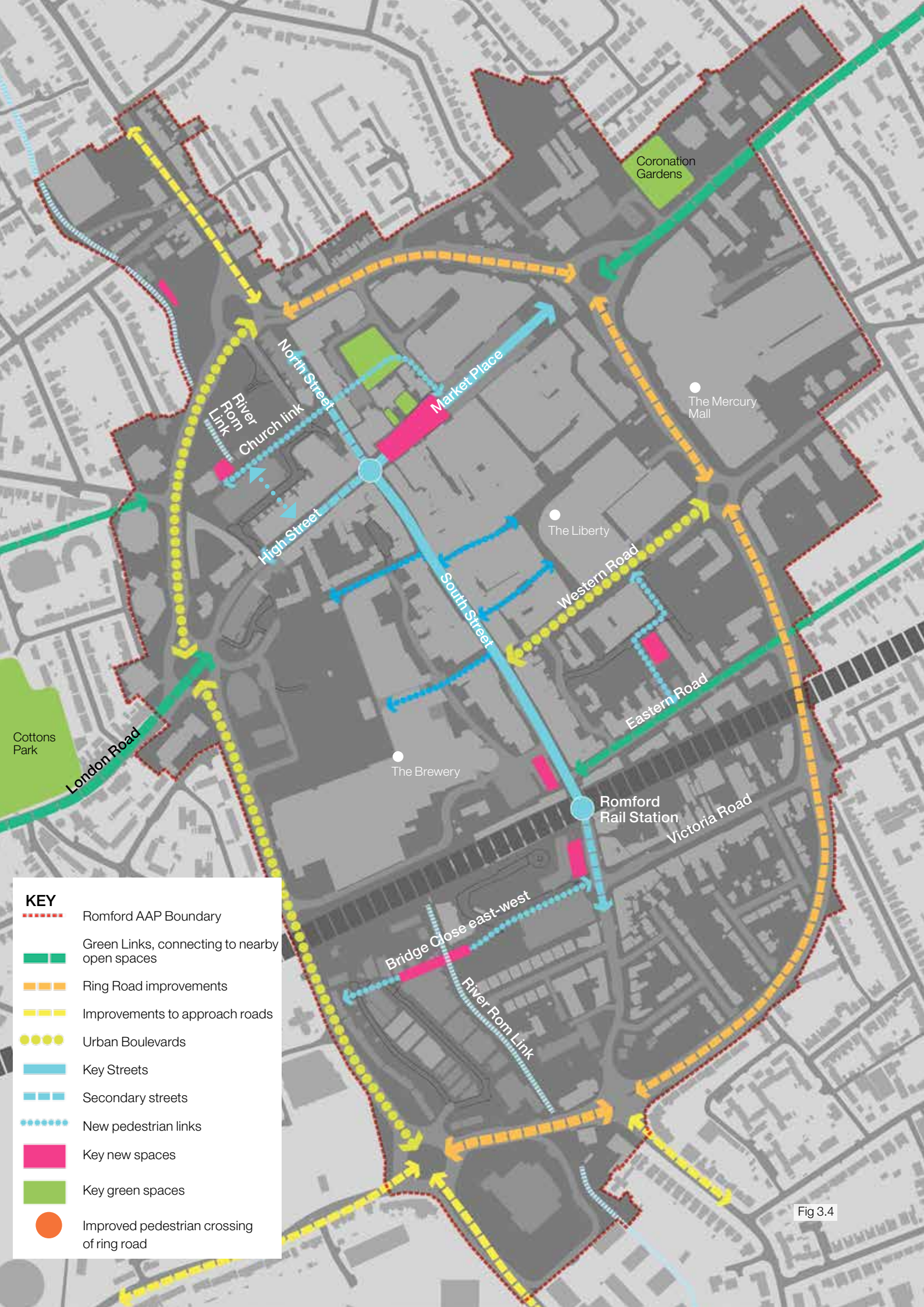
East-west connectivity must be improved by creating positive frontages, screening of service yards and minimising blank walls.

Pedestrian connections to Station Quarter North are important to facilitate a well-connected employment area and encourage existing and future employees to use the rail station as well as the wider town centre facilities.

### *New and improved vehicular routes*

Chandlers Way has been identified as a very poor quality approach to the town centre and rail station. A new north-south bus link through Station Quarter North could provide a more positive approach, as well as the opportunity to create a more outward-facing employment area. Due to landownerships and existing buildings, this may be difficult to deliver, but it should remain a long-term aspiration to be considered as opportunities become available.

Western Road is currently of poor quality and should become the focus of public realm improvements, in particular extending the green character of the eastern part of Western Road into the town centre through street tree planting. The ring road neither provides a good pedestrian environment nor creates a positive approach to the centre. It should be improved by boulevard planting, public realm works such as taking away barriers, and creating surface level crossing points.



**KEY**

- - - - - Romford AAP Boundary
- — — — — Green Links, connecting to nearby open spaces
- - - - - Ring Road improvements
- - - - - Improvements to approach roads
- ● ● ● ● Urban Boulevards
- — — — — Key Streets
- - - - - Secondary streets
- ● ● ● ● New pedestrian links
- Key new spaces
- Key green spaces
- Improved pedestrian crossing of ring road

Fig 3.4

# Urban Design Framework

The Urban Design Framework (Fig 3.5) sets out development principles for the town centre as a whole from a place making perspective, including key frontages and edges, landmark locations and gateways.

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## Key frontages and edges

One of the issues in the town centre is that many frontages onto key pedestrian routes are not very attractive and do little to encourage pedestrian flow around the centre. This is particular the case for routes connecting the shopping centres to South Street

The overarching principle for the town centre as a whole is that:

- All ground floor units along identified frontages should be designed to be flexible and adaptable to a range of uses, including retail, residential, community and office space.
- All pedestrian links must be lined by active frontages and areas of blank walls must be avoided to ensure an attractive environment that encourages footfall through the town centre and in particular on South Street.
- Frontages onto the ring road must make a positive contribution to the environment. Buildings shall not turn their back and opportunities for greening, attractive screening and public art shall be explored where frontages are of poor quality, such as multi-storey car parks or blank walls.

In order to encourage appropriate uses and animation, the following frontages have been defined:

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## Key Frontages

These frontages are located along key streets, emphasizing the historic urban structure and re-focusing activity to South Street, High Street and Market Place. Any future development should ensure that ground floor uses activate these edges and attract footfall. Shop fronts should be of the highest quality. Residential and commercial uses are encouraged on upper floors. Specific character area guidance (see Section 5) sets out what uses may be



appropriately clustered along these edges to support the wider town centre strategy.

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## Other Important Frontages

These are important frontages located along major routes and key spaces, such as North Street, High Street, Victoria Road, the southern section of South Street, as well as Church Link and Bridge Close link. These have an important role to play in encouraging footfall into and around the town centre, and therefore should be of high quality and as active and animated as possible. In residential areas this may be achieved through a mix of ground floor uses, including employment, social and community, faith and residential uses. Flexible planning consents that allow uses to swap between certain use classes without the need for planning permission may encourage a vibrant mix of independent retail, cafes and cultural uses as well as small businesses and workshops – enabling new character areas to develop organically, minimising voids whilst they become established.

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## Existing Shop Frontages

These are key retail frontages included within the shopping centres. They are likely to remain a focus for retail uses. In line with the NPPF and informed by recent town centre data, the emerging Havering Local Plan will define the extent of Romford Town Centre and Primary Shopping area, including primary and secondary frontages.

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## Active Frontages

These are frontages that are important in urban design terms and that needs to be positive, avoiding blank walls .

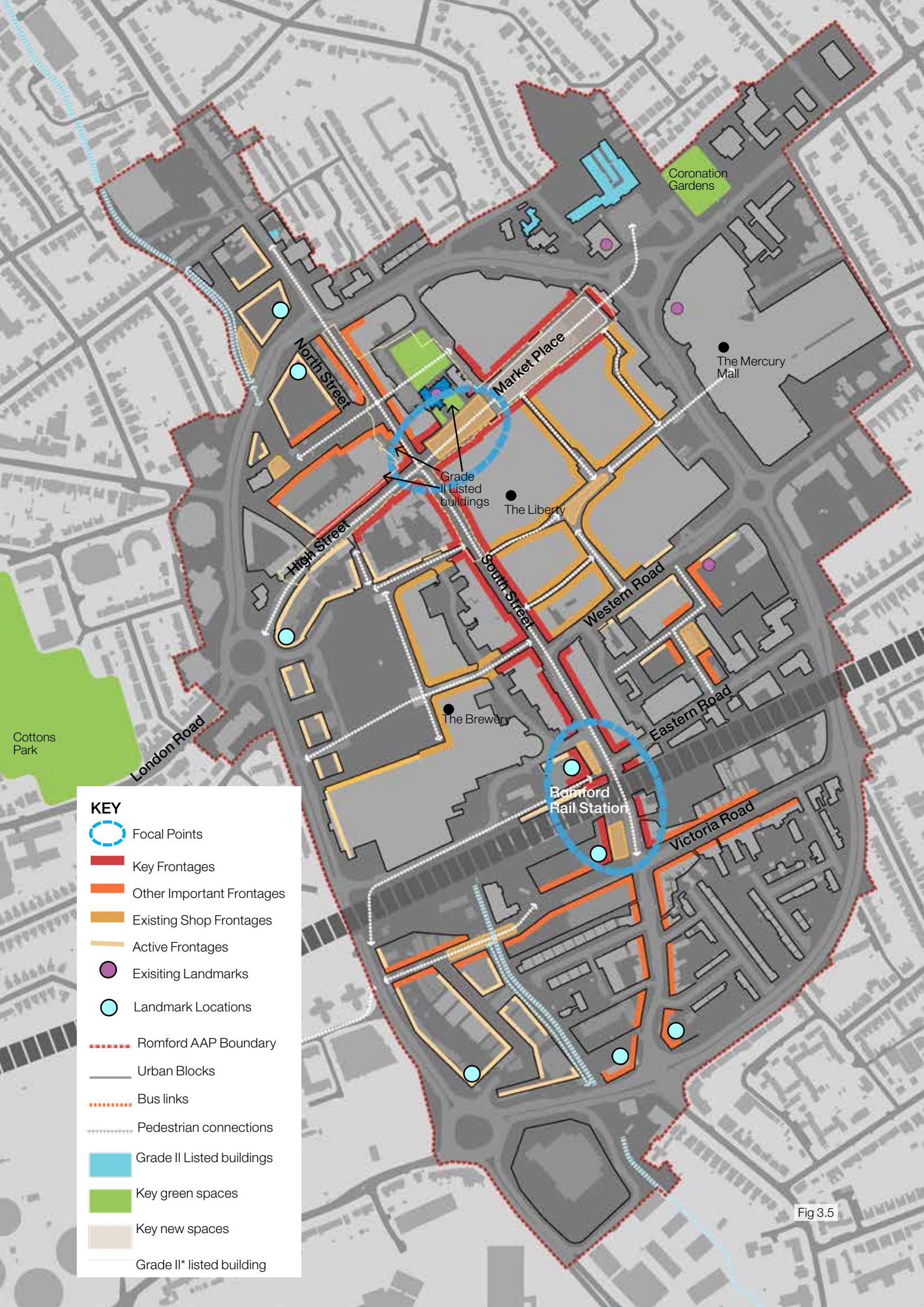
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## Landmark locations and focal points

To encourage a more legible environment, this Urban Design Framework identifies (Fig 3.5) a series of landmark locations and focal points.

Landmark locations provide opportunities for buildings that are of outstanding quality, emphasising these key locations. Landmarks do not necessarily have to be tall, and the wider urban context needs to be carefully considered.

Focal points identify the two most distinct areas in the town centre. These should become destinations, and will have to accommodate increased pedestrian activity. Buildings and public realm must be of the highest quality in these locations, in order to convey a positive image of Romford.



**KEY**
















-  Focal Points
-  Key Frontages
-  Other Important Frontages
-  Existing Shop Frontages
-  Active Frontages
-  Existing Landmarks
-  Landmark Locations
-  Romford AAP Boundary
-  Urban Blocks
-  Bus links
-  Pedestrian connections
-  Grade II Listed buildings
-  Key green spaces
-  Key new spaces
-  Grade II\* listed building

Fig 3.5

# Building Heights

The development densities required by the London Plan and the objective of creating a resilient, mixed use town centre incorporating a sustainable residential community will require a step change in terms of development heights as well as leading to a greater number of 'tall buildings'.

The building heights strategy set out below has been developed in line with GLA guidance on tall buildings, taking into account Romford's particular townscape and heritage qualities. This Development Framework applies the following definition of tall buildings, based on GLA policy: 'tall and large buildings are those that are substantially taller than their surroundings and cause a significant change to the skyline.' The following chapter identifies areas that may be appropriate, sensitive and inappropriate locations for tall buildings. However, this is not a detailed tall building study, but provides guidance for the development of design principles for key opportunity sites.

Following the London Plan methodology, opportunities for tall buildings have been identified:

- In areas suitable for intensification and that have good access to public transport i.e. near the Crossrail station;
- In areas whose character would not be affected adversely by the scale, mass or bulk of a tall or large building;
- Where individually or as a group, they would improve the legibility of an area, by emphasising a point of civic or visual significance where appropriate, and enhance the skyline and image of London;
- Where they would contribute to improving the permeability of the site and wider area, and;
- Where they would make a significant contribution to local regeneration.

Where tall buildings are proposed, they should raise the bar in terms of quality of materials and architectural aesthetic, emphasising the high aspirations of the town centre.

They should provide a distinct focal point that helps people orient themselves and, over time, they should become much loved local assets.

The Havering Core Strategy sets out the following guidance for tall buildings which this framework endorses: All tall buildings should be of exemplary high quality and inclusive design and, in particular, they must:

- Ensure that the proposed density is suited to the site and to the wider context in terms of proportion, composition, relationship to other buildings, streets, public and private open spaces, the waterways or other townscape elements;

- Be attractive city elements as viewed from all angles and, where appropriate, contribute to an interesting skyline, and;
- Create a well-defined public realm with a human scale, with continuity of frontage and accessible entrances from street level.

In addition any tall buildings should demonstrate that they:

- Articulate the lower floors of the building to reflect the character of the street and have ground floor activities that provide a positive relationship to the surrounding streets;
- Use materials that responds to surrounding buildings;
- Do not adversely affect the environmental quality of surrounding areas in terms of microclimate, wind turbulence, overshadowing, noise, reflected glare, aviation, navigation and telecommunication interference, and;
- Incorporate a mix of uses to reinforce activity within the public realm by ensuring that the lower floors of tall buildings have some community/public function or active use (retail, commercial, cafe, leisure).

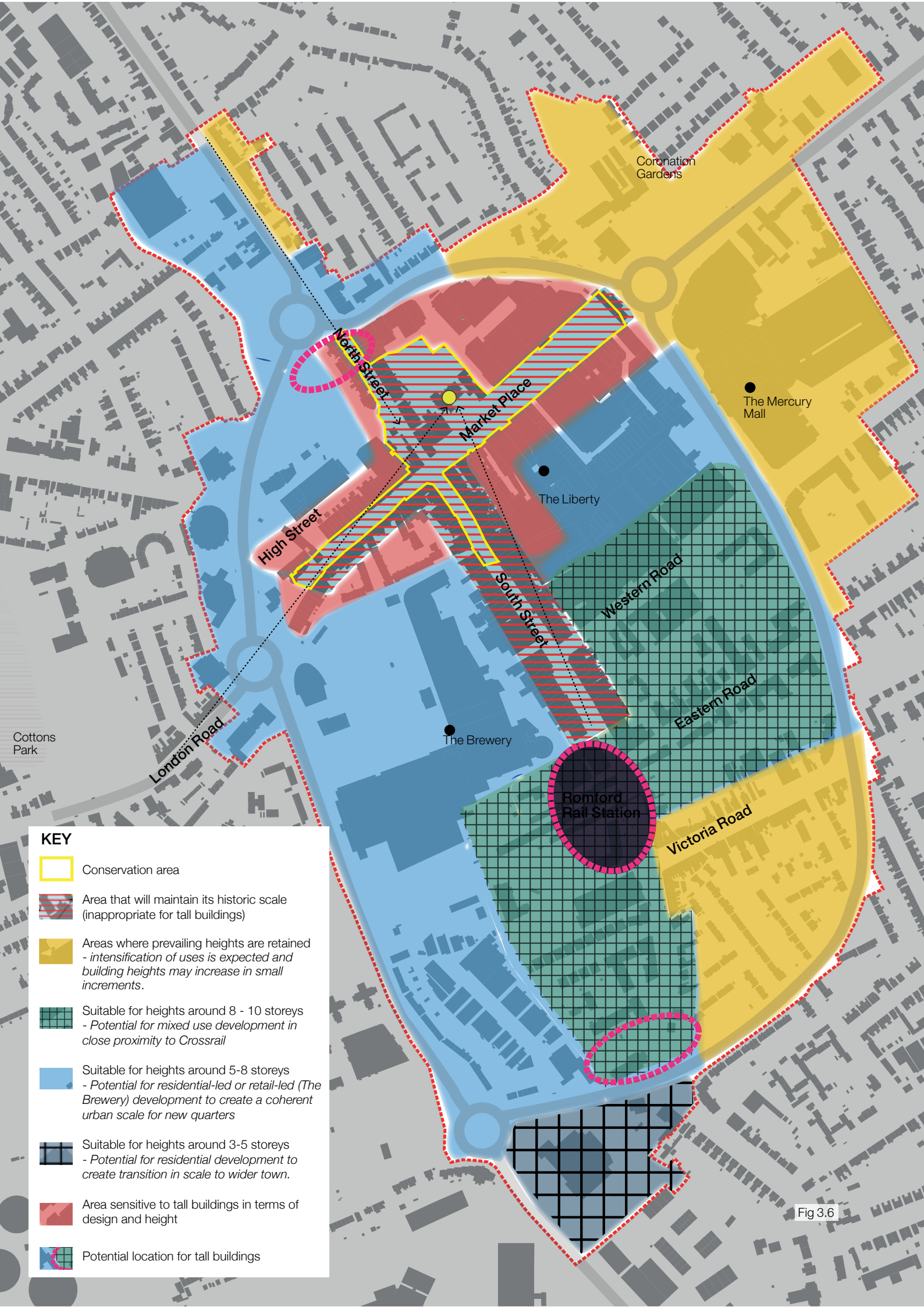
All planning applications for tall buildings should be accompanied by visualisations of the tall building in its context. Views towards St. Edward the Confessor Church and along South Street towards the historic crossroads are particularly important.

Romford rail station, especially due to the arrival of Crossrail, provides a prime location for tall buildings. A cluster of tall buildings of varying heights is appropriate around the station, making the most of immediate public transport interchange and regeneration opportunities. A single solitary tower is less appropriate in terms of catering for growth, and in urban design terms would be more difficult to sensitively design and integrate into the townscape.

The Station Quarter North as a whole is an area for densification, and building heights up to 10 storeys are generally acceptable, provided that they incorporate commercial uses and contribute positively to create a high quality sense of place.

The Northern and Southern Approaches also provide opportunities for tall buildings. In these locations, tall buildings would enhance the legibility of the town centre, in particular the north-south axis of South Street.

The Historic Core and South Street are areas that are sensitive to tall buildings in regard to their historic fabric and tall buildings are inappropriate in these areas.



**KEY**

- Conservation area
- Area that will maintain its historic scale (inappropriate for tall buildings)
- Areas where prevailing heights are retained - intensification of uses is expected and building heights may increase in small increments.
- Suitable for heights around 8 - 10 storeys - Potential for mixed use development in close proximity to Crossrail
- Suitable for heights around 5-8 storeys - Potential for residential-led or retail-led (The Brewery) development to create a coherent urban scale for new quarters
- Suitable for heights around 3-5 storeys - Potential for residential development to create transition in scale to wider town.
- Area sensitive to tall buildings in terms of design and height
- Potential location for tall buildings

Fig 3.6

# Social Infrastructure Provision

Consultation undertaken to inform the Development Framework revealed two key areas of social infrastructure need that must be addressed: education and healthcare.

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## Education provision

Local schools are already at capacity and the Council is undertaking an ambitious programme of school expansion to accommodate existing and projected future need from population growth. However, this programme does not provide for additional child places arising from the redevelopment / densification of the town centre as described in this Framework.

Therefore, additional schools will need to be delivered to accommodate this growth. Initial child yield estimates suggest a need for:

- Four forms of primary school places
- Four forms of secondary school places

The Council has a legal duty to ensure that Havering has sufficient school places for all children who live in the borough and might require one. The additional school places required as a consequence of the redevelopment of Romford Town Centre could be provided through a variety of options:

- Through expansion of existing Havering schools- this option has been exhausted for expanding primary provision on schools' existing sites
- Existing Havering schools sponsoring new free schools
- External sponsors opening new free schools
- Considering whether existing schools could become all-through schools

The Council is presently in the process of assessing site options for locating new schools to serve the town centre, which include greenfield sites located around Romford outside of the ring road. In addition, the framework highlights two opportunity sites within the town centre that could potentially accommodate high density urban primary schools:

- Angel Way
- Bridge Close

Due to the development potential of these sites, the associated land cost of acquiring sites in these locations for school provision could be high; however, they offer a number of non-financial benefits such as reducing walking distances, minimising traffic congestion, and placing the schools at the heart of the community they serve. The proximity of reputable, high performing schools is also an important factor in attracting young couples and families to move to a new area.

Greenfield sites could be considered for expanding existing schools on an additional site (satellite schools/split site schools). However DfE statutory guidance on school expansions is clear that where proposers seek to expand onto an additional site they will need to ensure that the new provision is genuinely a change to an existing school and not a new school.

It is essential that a site is secured to accommodate a new secondary school in the Romford area, the Council is projecting a deficit of seven forms of secondary school places by 2018/19, which is likely to be met by expansion of existing secondary schools. Therefore the additional pupils produced as a direct result of the redevelopment/ densification of the town centre will need to be accommodated in a new secondary school.

Where a LA considers there is a need for a new school in its area it must seek proposals to establish an academy/ free school. The LA is responsible for providing the site for the new school and meeting all associated capital and pre-/ post-opening costs.

Havering is preparing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and developer contributions via the levy will be available for use towards the cost of this provision, although is unlikely to cover the full cost of the required infrastructure, so public funds will also be required.

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## Healthcare facilities

Further work is required in conjunction with national and local health and social care commissioning bodies to assess the need arising from the proposed growth and assessing how this relates to current capacity or shortfalls in the provision of existing services.



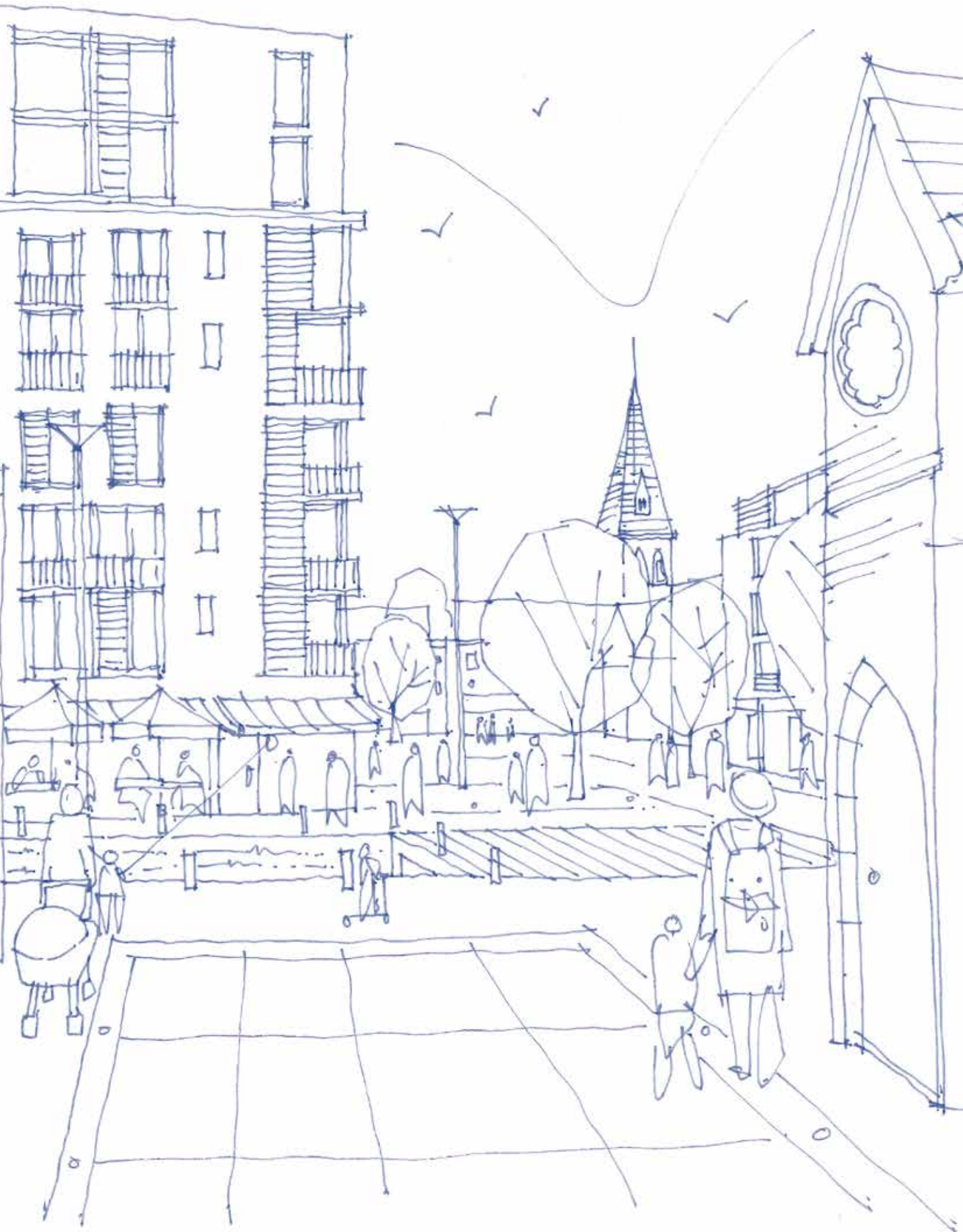
Initial dialogue suggests that at least two medium-sized GP surgeries - accommodating around five doctors plus support facilities - may be required, located in different areas of the town centre in close proximity to the residential dwellings that they serve. Locating one surgery within Bridge Close was particularly favoured to be close to the hospital and help accommodate non-emergency cases that are presently arriving at A&E.

It is reported that there is also an existing need for a community based sexual health clinic.

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### **Nursery and childcare facilities**

There is also likely to be a demand for nursery and childcare places; however, it is anticipated that these will be provided by private operators in response to market demand, and can be accommodated in various locations spread across the town centre within ground floor commercial space.



# 5 Character Areas

The following section describes each character area and sets out development and design principles for each of them.

# Character Areas: Northern Approach

**1** Opportunity site:  
**Como Street**  
See page 72

The Northern Approach is located around the main access road from the north, including North Street, parts of St Edwards Way and the northern roundabout. The function of this area is to provide a high quality approach to the town centre and a transition from suburban areas to the north. This area performs as a local centre for the immediate surrounding neighbourhood in addition to accommodating town centre fringe uses. The recommendations for this area are as follows and future proposals should:

- Improve the existing frontages with high quality buildings that incorporate active ground floor uses where possible with residential above. Limiting the size of commercial units may help to discourage uses that would be more appropriate elsewhere in the town centre.
- Increase building heights towards the roundabout on the northern side and the opportunity for tall buildings in key landmark locations inside the ring road, as defined in this Development Framework.
- Improve the public realm and reduce severance by the ring road, improving pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre.



# Character Areas: North Riverside

- 1** Opportunity site:  
**Como Street**  
See page 72
- 2** Opportunity site:  
**Angel Way**  
See page 74

This area incorporates the northwestern section of the ring road, providing the opportunity to reduce its barrier effect. The function of this area is to provide the northern town centre edge with a good quality open space corridor with pedestrian access, overlooked by high quality housing.

The recommendations for this area are as follows and future proposals should:

- Improve the ecological and environmental qualities of the River Rom and provide high quality open space that provides focal points for the area.
- Develop the area predominately for residential uses of medium to high density (4-8 storey) with the opportunity for taller buildings in key landmark locations (as defined on framework plans Fig. 3.5).
- Design buildings so that they avoid residential units on the ground floor facing the ring road and single aspect units that only look out over the ring road.
- Improve the edge to the ring road with high quality development that is set back behind a line of trees.
- Integrate the existing church into development proposals.
- Improve the public realm and reduce the severance by the ring road by improving pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre.

This area is the most anticipated area for redevelopment, with readily available opportunity sites. The majority of the area already has planning consent for a high density proposal with heights up to 16 storeys. It is essential that proposals here adhere to the London Plan densities, while integrating with the neighbouring historic core context.



Fig 4.2



# Character Areas: Historic Core

2 Opportunity site:  
**Angel Way**  
See page 74

The Historic Core incorporates the Conservation Area and the historic crossroads at Market Place. It is the area of Romford that is the most historic in character and retains a number of listed and locally listed buildings. This historic fabric provides the opportunity to strengthen Romford's identity as an historic market town. The function of this area is to provide Romford Town centre with a high quality environment that acts as focal point for leisure and cultural activities. Hornchurch is and will remain the cultural centre for the Borough; however, the leisure offer in Romford must improve in order to serve its own increasing population. Romford's focus should be on complementing rather than competing with Hornchurch, nurturing its fledgling contemporary art scene and promoting community and grassroots activities such as at Brookside Theatre.

We have identified four regeneration aims for Market Place:

1. A new main civic space for Romford
2. Creating a cluster of quality cafes and restaurants
3. To strengthen the historic market
4. To rationalise car parking

The recommendations for this area are that future proposals should:

- Improve the quality of the public realm by decluttering and improved management, to ensure that advertising boards and outdoor seating does not negatively impact on the quality of the space.
- Create a new public space or town square that serves as the main civic space within Romford Town Centre – Market Square. This space shall be able to accommodate events and activities that attract a range of people and encourage people to visit and spend time in Romford. The space should act as a destination at the northern end of South Street and be flexible enough to accommodate market stalls on additional days / specialist markets specialist markets and town centre events.
- Consolidate the main market and car parking areas on Market Place to the east of Market Link to create room for the above public space and include landscaping and improve the overall environment.



- It is recommended that a detailed design and consultation process is undertaken to develop a comprehensive public realm improvement scheme to secure the above outcomes. This should be a high priority for public landscaping expenditure, which initial estimates suggest could cost in the region of £1.5-£2.5m, although this could vary depending on the spatial extent, design details, quality and cost of materials used. Careful thought needs to be given to the configuration of



Fig 4.4 Illustrative sketch of Market Square and surrounding area

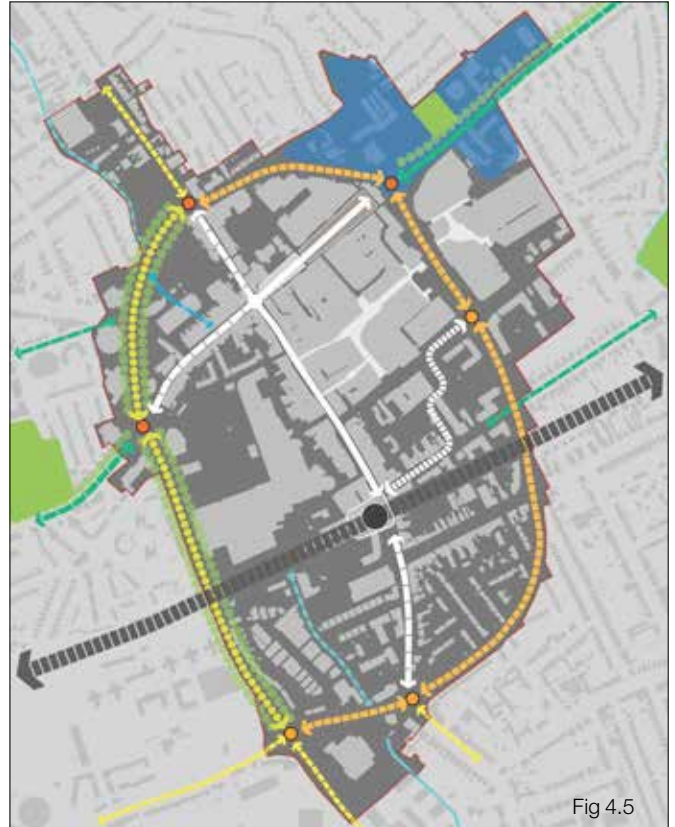
- utilities to allow efficient market stall layouts and flexible use of the public space including outdoor performances.
- Improve the appearance of the existing historic buildings around the crossroads and ensure high quality architecture in and adjacent to the Conservation Area.
- Encourage a café culture, with restaurants and cafés allowed to spill into the public realm.
- Implement a holistic strategy to develop a new cluster of upmarket restaurants, cafés and independent shops
- Provide a mix of uses with an emphasis on independent retail, culture and leisure uses with residential above. A long-term vision is to relocate the theatre to this area.
- Improve existing pedestrian links between North Street and the Church Yard (via Church Link) and create new ones alongside the River Rom and through the Angel Way opportunity area.
- Buildings should maintain the prevailing heights and positively relate to the Conservation Area in terms of materials and vertical emphasis of façades. On South Street and around the crossroads, ensure buildings are of similar heights to the existing (3-4 stories) and maintain the historic scale.
- Improve the frontages around Market Place and utilise opportunities to provide additional activity in the form of residential uses (including hotels) above retail. Landscape enhancement is needed to define strategic area use. Also, the historic urban grain and layout should be referred to, in order to reconsider links, frontages and permeability in the area.

# Character Areas: Civic Quarter

This area is predominately defined by the public uses that are located in this area. As a result of these this area is an important destination. The area straddles Main Road and the northern side of St Edwards Way. The function of this area is to provide a pleasant environment for visitors and employees and create a positive approach into Romford Town Centre. As result of existing uses there is limited scope for change in this character area.

The recommendations for this area are as follows and future proposals should:

- Retain and improve the existing avenue planting along Main Road.
- Improve the pedestrian environment and accessibility of this area.





# Character Areas: Retail Quarter

3

Opportunity site:  
**The Brewery**  
See page 77

The Retail Quarter consists of three sub areas, East (Liberty and Mercury Malls), West (The Brewery) and South Street. The function of this area as the main retail area for Havering must be retained and nurtured to ensure that Romford Town Centre continues to attract people and stay commercially competitive. The overarching objective is to make South Street yet again the spine of activity within the town centre and improve and diversify the existing retail environment, by:

- Improving the public realm, de-cluttering South Street, improving the maintenance and introducing high quality materials and street furniture.
- Continue to introduce modern retail units that are attractive to a variety of retailers, by refurbishing existing units and introducing new ones when demand requires. New retail must be located where it supports a wider town centre retail 'loop'.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle links and continue to offer appropriate levels of car parking and good accessibility by public transport. Improve pedestrian connections throughout the town centre to enhance legibility and encourage footfall through South Street.
- Improve the look and maintenance of service courts and reduce their negative impact onto the town centre environment.

Future proposals in this area should:

### South Street:

- Create a high quality retail frontage with other uses such as residential or commercial above. Commercial and residential uses on upper floors are encouraged.
- Retain or introduce the vertical rhythm and variation of elevations typical for this historic street.
- Improve the appearance of existing buildings. New buildings should maintain the prevailing heights and positively relate to the historic character of this street in terms of materials and vertical emphasis of the façade.
- Create high quality and active edges to existing pedestrian links.

### East and West:

- Improve existing pedestrian links with active frontages and proactively encourage a pedestrian flow through the town centre as a whole.
- Re-orientate existing inward looking retail environments to create attractive street frontages.
- Provide residential (including hotel) development above retail uses.
- Improve the frontages along the ring road with active frontages, higher quality materials, public art, planting and attractive signage.



Fig 4.6



# Character Areas: Station Quarter

This area is focused around Romford rail station and incorporates what was formerly known as the Office Quarter. It is split into three sub-areas. The function of this area is to act as a gateway to Romford and focal area for a vibrant mix of commercial and residential uses.

It will utilise the opportunities presented by Crossrail and create an attractive arrival point for the town centre. This area will be a key destination with a high number of people passing on a day to day basis. Therefore, the public realm and building quality will need to be exceptional within this area creating a distinct identity and external image, by:

- Introducing high quality public spaces and public realm that accommodates the increased flow of people.
- Create a cluster of tall buildings around the Station Core and Station Quarter South.
- Ensuring buildings are of the highest quality and distinct in character, by requiring proposals to go to design review and engaging in a constructive pre-application process.



Future proposals in this area should:

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## Station Quarter South:

- Create a high density mixed use development that incorporates a range of uses, including commercial and residential uses as well as other active ground floor uses.
- Provide a cluster of tall buildings as part of a mixed use development. The tallest buildings within the town centre should be located in this area to make the best use of future transport connection. All tall buildings have to contribute positively to the Station Cluster and must be of the highest architectural quality. In exceptional circumstances where development provides additional high quality public space very tall buildings may be acceptable.
- Provide an accessible, safe and attractive pedestrian / cycle link from the rail station to the west across the River Rom. Proposals will have to demonstrate how this link will meet proposals/opportunities in the South Riverside area to ensure that proposed routes link up and are direct, convenient and safe.
- Improve the environmental and ecological quality of the River Rom.
- Provide public open space that serves as focal point for Station Quarter South.
- Rationalise and improve the bus station and waiting area.

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## Station Core:

- Create a high quality arrival point for Romford Town Centre and improve the legibility and way finding around the rail station.
- Improve the existing rail station and its access by introducing public space to the north of the station.
- Contribute to a well-considered cluster of tall buildings around the station as part of a mixed use development. In exceptional circumstances where development provides additional high quality public space tall buildings may be acceptable.
- Create a high quality public realm and an attractive pedestrian environment with active ground and lower floors.

4

Opportunity site:  
**Station Quarter N.**  
See page 79

5

Opportunity site:  
**Atlanta Boulevard**  
See page 81

### Station Quarter North:

- Introduce a new bus link through the area – instead of Chandlers Way - connecting Western Road and Eastern Road, providing an attractive approach into Romford Town Centre and the rail station. Provide a new public open space and avenue that acts as focal point for the area and gives it a distinct identify and character.
- Provide mixed use developments with an element of employment space on the lower floors. The existing amount of office floors space should be retained to ensure that Romford retains its position as Havering’s focus for office employment. In exceptional circumstances other employment uses may be considered provided the same employment density is achieved. Ancillary uses such as cafes or small shops should be accommodated on ground floors.
- Continue to provide the appropriate amount of car parking spaces supporting a vibrant and healthy employment area.
- Provide buildings of increased height, with the opportunity for taller buildings in key landmark locations as defined in this Development Framework and in association with new public open space.
- Improve the environment of Chandlers Way, through screening of service yard and improved maintenance.



# Character Areas: South Riverside

6

Opportunity site:  
**Bridge Street**  
See page 83

7

Opportunity site:  
**Homebase site**  
See page 86

This area is focused around the River Rom and the opportunities this brings for the area. It incorporates the southwestern section of the ring road providing the opportunity to reduce the barrier effect. It is acknowledged that this area is likely to come forward on a step-by-step basis over time, with Bridge Close being a short-term regeneration priority. Although most parts of the character area are likely to be delivered incrementally, comprehensive development at the northern end of Bridge Close to secure and east-west link between Waterloo Road and Atlanta Boulevard will be important. The function of this area is to provide good quality town centre homes with supporting community infrastructure.

The recommendations for this area are as follows and future proposals should:

- Improve the ecological and environmental qualities of the River Rom and provide a high quality open spaces that provides a focal points for the area.
- Create an east-west pedestrian/cycle route linking the ring road pedestrian crossing, to the River Rom and to the rail station via Atlanta Boulevard. Proposals will have to demonstrate how this link will meet proposals/opportunities in the Station Quarter to ensure that proposed routes link up. This pedestrian route should be well overlooked, safe and lined with active uses as far as possible.
- Provide a public open space alongside the above pedestrian/cycle route.
- Develop the area predominately for residential uses of medium to high density with the opportunity for exceptional buildings in key landmark locations as defined in this Development Framework.
- Allow for a phased regeneration of the Bridge Close area, however, comprehensive development of the northern part of Bridge Close may be important to ensure the delivery of the pedestrian/cycle link described above. Securing this link is of the highest priority for any development proposals in this area and will require firm policy support and if necessary direct public sector intervention to deliver. The Council may need to actively land assemble or use CPO powers to deliver a comprehensive development. Any development needs to be comprehensive and applications will need to ensure

that the proposals do not prejudice the implementation of this new pedestrian / cycle route. For example this could be through the provision of a buffer zone reserving land for this link. The link would then be provided when the adjacent sites are brought forward for development. Any buffer zones should extend across the full width of the site linking the boundary of adjoining plots, so no ransom strips are created.

- Design residential buildings so that they avoid residential units on the ground floor facing the ring road and single aspect units that look out over the ring road.
- The Council is already investigating a location for a new primary school that may also serve the town centre population. However, given the potential increase of population within this character area and its proximity to residential development at Oldchurch Hospital and other potential sites outside the town centre boundary, opportunities should be investigated to provide further primary school and/or health facilities. These could be incorporated within mixed-use buildings.
- Improve the edge to the ring road with high quality development that is set back behind a line of trees.
- Improve the public realm and reduce the severance by the ring road improving pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre.

The opportunity site located in this area, is currently a mixed-use area which needs to respond to it's proximity to the evolving station hub as well as provide the basis for a sustainable town-centre residential community. As the River Rom runs through the area, it provides an attractive feature from which to base the environment and style of any new development. Permeability through the site and beyond is an issue of high priority.



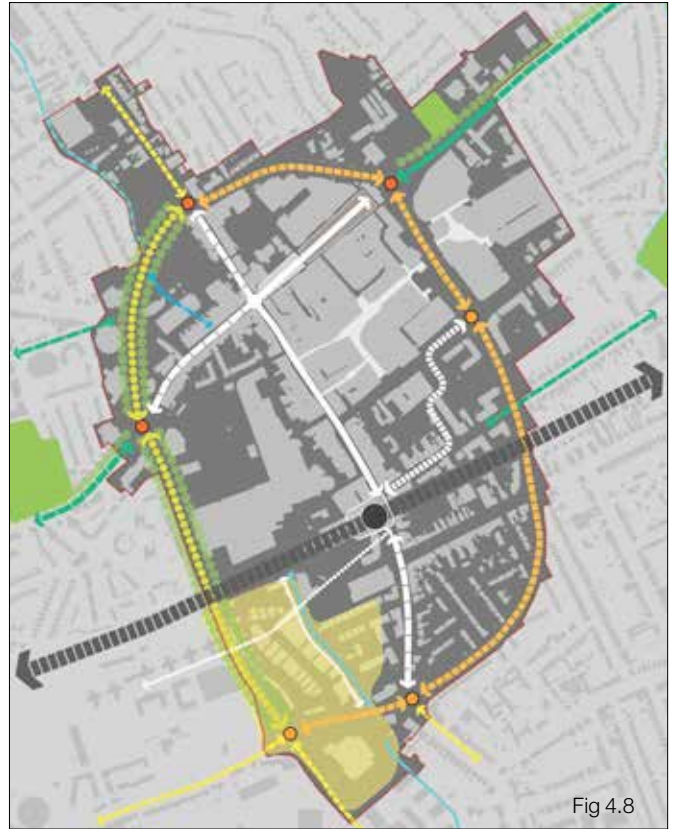


Fig 4.8



# Character Areas: Southern Approach

**6** Opportunity site:  
**Bridge Street**  
See page 83

This area is formed around the southern section of South Street and its junction with the ring road. There is an opportunity to make better use of land and replace existing development with medium density development. The function of this area is to create a high quality approach to the town centre and rail station.

The recommendations for this area are as follows and future proposals should:

- Improve the street, its environment and frontages by high quality development and public realm improvements, incorporating cluster of street trees where possible.
- Improve the existing frontage lined by high quality buildings that incorporate commercial uses (appropriate for the town centre fringe) on the ground floor and residential above.
- Increase building heights towards the junction with 4-5 storeys along South Street and the opportunity for taller buildings in key landmark locations (as defined on framework plans Fig. 3.5) near the junction.
- Improve the public realm and reduce severance by the ring road, improving pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre.



# Character Areas: Eastern Fringe

This existing area of mainly residential use has the opportunity to be improved in terms of the public realm and building quality as well as increase residential densities. The function of this area remains as existing to provide opportunity for commercial (appropriate for a town centre fringe location) and residential uses.

The recommendations for this area are as follows and future proposals should:

- Retain and consolidate the commercial activity on Victoria Road and provide residential uses above where possible.
- Increase residential densities to respond to the town centre location, in particular along South Street, Victoria Road, Western Road and the ring road, through redevelopments and back land infill.
- Create streets that are lined by consistent medium density development and continuous frontage where possible. Buildings should be broadly in line with the prevailing building heights, while assisting a densification of the area.
- Retain the green character and street tree planting on Western Road.







# 6 Key Sites

This section provides more detail on each of the opportunity sites that have been identified following the analysis of the existing Romford Town Centre.

For each of the sites the report identifies, ownership, constraints, design and development principles and key deliverables.

**1:** Como Street (North Approach and Riverside): This site is a surface car park in council ownership. It will serve an important function of making the transition from suburban areas to the town centre and potentially delivering an improved junction.

**2:** Angel Way (North Riverside and Historic Core): This site offers the most available area of development. It is in multiple ownerships and has the opportunity to provide a new residential quarter.

**3:** High Street and the Brewery Car Park (Retail Quarter). A council owned mixed-use block and a privately operated surface car park serving predominantly the Brewery shopping centre.

**4:** Station Quarter North. Multiple ownerships and proposed location for the new Leisure Centre/Ice Rink and focus of office space.

**5:** Atlanta Boulevard and 108-116 South Street. Proposals for the improvement of the rail station in conjunction with the arrival of Crossrail and aspirations for a step change in image around the station. Multiple ownerships.

**6:** Bridge Close and surrounding areas (South Approach and South Riverside). An area with the opportunity for densification, which currently comprises a range of non-town centre uses. A key area to facilitate an east-west link to the rail station from the growing residential areas to the west of the town.

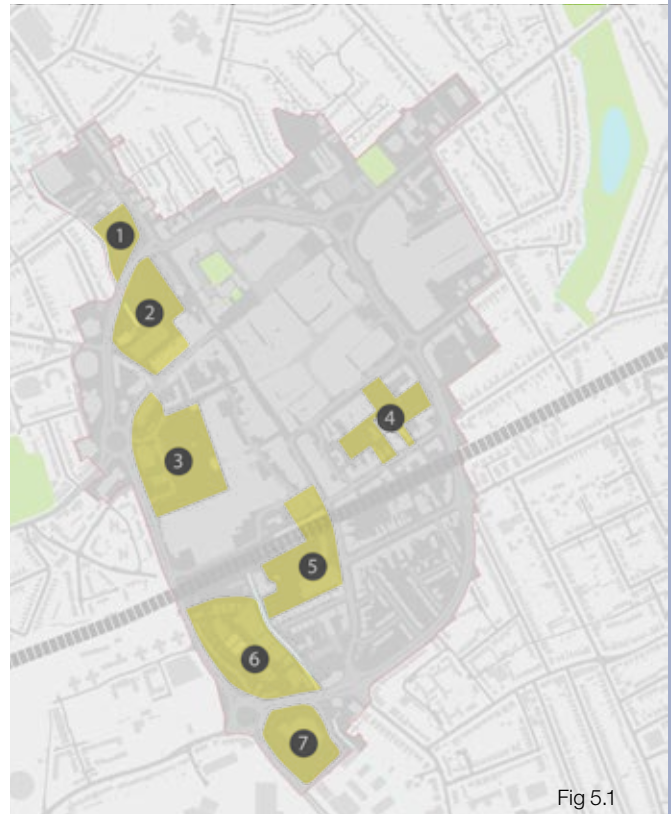


Fig 5.1

**7:** Homebase Site (South Riverside). The site comprises a large retail warehouse (Homebase) with associated parking and surface storage. The size of the site provides the opportunity to create a new residential quarter in the future.

For sites 1, 2 and 5 a comprehensive development approach is strongly encouraged to make the most of the given opportunities. Other areas may come forward on an incremental basis, provided they provide the key deliverables and do not stifle future opportunities.

# 1 Como Street

Site Area	0.5 ha (0.7 extended area)
Uses	Residential: around 100 - 200 units
	Open space: 500 sqm

## Current Use, Ownership and Constraints

180-space public car park owned and operated by LB Havering. The least well used town centre car park with occupancy levels below 50% even at weekends.

Being narrow and triangular in shape makes efficient redevelopment of this site challenging. It is bounded by the River Rom to the west and hard against A125 North Street and St Edwards Way roundabout so that traffic noise and air pollution are significant issues. Residential development on the ground floor facing North Street and the roundabout should be avoided.

Part of the site is located in Flood Zone 2 which is likely to be affected by an extreme flood event. The Environment Agency should be consulted and the avoidance of ground floor residential in this area may be advised.

As part of this study, we considered the opportunity of reconfiguring the adjacent North Street roundabout to a signal controlled traffic junction. This would have improved pedestrian connectivity to the town centre and delivered a larger and better-configured development site of approximately 0.7Ha, with taller development enabled by the additional distance from existing housing. However, previous traffic flow modelling work undertaken by LB Havering showed that the reconfiguration of the junction would have an adverse impact on traffic flow both locally and on the strategic road network. Unfortunately, the required wider road network improvements and modal shift to mitigate this impact are unlikely to be achieved within the development timescale for the site, and therefore, this option was not pursued.

## Consultation Feedback



Market interest is for the site to be redeveloped for residential apartments and this accords with extant planning policy and the Councils ambitions for the site.

Stakeholder consultation endorsed redevelopment for residential providing it can be demonstrated that there is alternative car parking capacity to meet visitor demand.

Works to improve pedestrian connectivity to the town centre will assist sales and may improve values.

## Site Parameters

- **Uses:** Predominantly residential with the opportunity for a small quantum of non-residential uses on ground floor facing North Street.
- **Density:** This site lies in the London Plan 'Urban Setting' with a PTAL level of 5, densities should be on the upper range of between 210-290 u/ha.
- **Access and Parking:** Access should be provided from Como Street in the north and parking provided in the form of well integrated undercroft and surface car parking.
- **Scale and Massing:** Taller development should be located on the south and east sides, reducing towards to the north and west where it meets lower suburban housing. While GLA parking standards are the requirements, these may be applied flexibly to take account of the central location and close proximity to the rail station.
- **Key Design Considerations:** The River Rom is a key and attractive feature of this site and development should overlook and create a positive edge to it. Development onto the ring road and north street must provide a robust edge and consider the residential amenity with all flats having dual aspect.

	Character area: <b>North Riverside</b> See page 59
	Character area: <b>Northern Approach</b> See page 58

**Key Deliverables**

- Improving the natural environment of River Rom with pedestrian and cycle access.
- Delivery of public open space adjacent to river.
- Opportunities for improving connectivity and integration with town centre should be investigated.

**Key Actions**

Recent town centre car parking data has determined that there is sufficient capacity to release this site for redevelopment. As landowner the Council can control this site being bought forward for redevelopment. It should:

- Determine a land disposal/development strategy and select a development partner as appropriate.

**Indicative Delivery Time-scale**

- Short term: <5 years to complete.
- As a readily developable and viable site work to bring forward the delivery of homes should commence as soon as possible.
- Consideration should be given to achieving a site start to coincide with the arrival of Crossrail to benefit from potential uplift in values.



Fig 5.3

**Urban Design Framework**

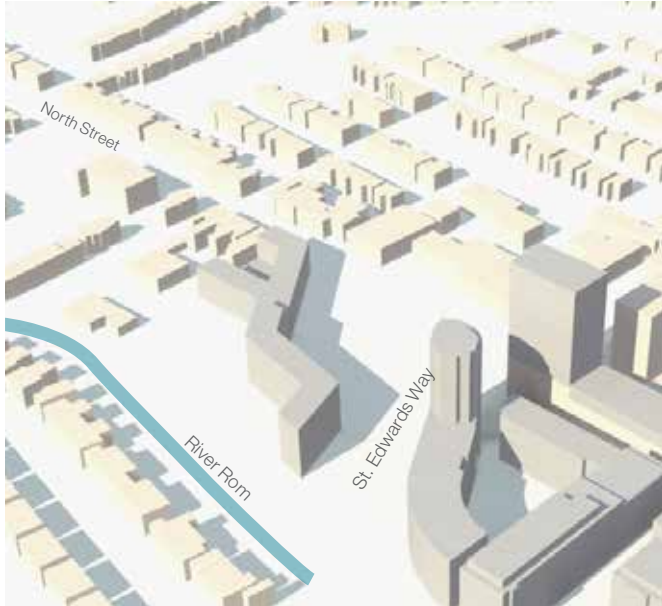


Fig 5.2

## 2 Angel Way

Site Area	2.51 ha
Uses	Residential: around 440 units
(Excluding existing planning consents)	Commercial: 9,700 sqm
	Community: 1,200 sqm
	Open space: 1,700 sqm

### Current Use, Ownership and Constraints

The opportunity site comprises several distinct ownerships and uses.

The 0.95Ha Former Decathlon site to the north now comprises a disused car park with previous retail units having been demolished. Owned by developer Regency Homes, the site has planning permission for 379 residential units (60 affordable), a 63-bed hotel and 3,800 sq m of mixed retail in blocks varying from 4 to 16 storeys. This permission sets a high residual land value and is likely being developed out, and therefore provides the current context for further development in the area.

The Council owns and operates the multi-storey Angel Way Car Park, which provides 480 spaces. The Council has confirmed its intention to bring this site forward for redevelopment.

The Council also owns a number of retail units on High Street, which have residential units above. These properties are subject to numerous leases, which, along with existing use value, pose a significant constraint on redevelopment.

The River Rom runs through the site, part of which falls into Flood Zone 2 so is likely to be affected by an extreme flood event. The Environment Agency should be consulted on development proposals and the avoidance of ground floor residential uses in this area may be advised.

St Edwards Way forms the northwestern boundary of the site. This is a source of significant traffic noise and air pollution, and residential development on the ground floor facing it should be avoided.

### Consultation Feedback

A primary concern of stakeholders is that car parking capacity within the town centre is not adversely affected by the redevelopment of the multi-storey Angel Way Car Park.

Providing that parking is not adversely affected, there is widespread support for high density residential-led mixed-use development, including the creation of a new character area linked to the historic core and centred on its own public space adjacent to the River Rom. This was seen as an exciting opportunity for Romford, and there was support for this to be brought forward on a comprehensive basis.

Stakeholders warned against an overprovision of retail space, suggesting that alternative ground floor uses such as community facilities, faith and health facilities should be provided to avoid vacant units facing the ring road. Although not the council's preferred option, part of the site could be considered for an urban primary school if other appropriate sites are not found.

Adjacent landowners have indicated its desire to work with LB Havering to deliver a coherent approach to developing the former Decathlon and Angel Way Car Park sites, providing that it is commercially advantageous to do so and does not detract from the value generated by the extant planning permission, which they intend to implement.

### Site Parameters

- Use Classes: Residential (C3) on upper floors with some ancillary commercial (B1, A3 and limited A1 independent retail) uses on the ground floor. Community (D2) and Non-residential institutions (D1), such as health centres and education uses, should also be considered to meet the needs of an increased population. A 63 bedroom hotel (C1) is included within the extant planning permission for the former Decathlon site.

	Character area: <b>North Riverside</b> See page 59
	Character area: <b>Historic Core</b> See page 60

- **Density:** This site in the 'Central Setting', with a PTAL level of 4-5, should achieve the upper end of GLA densities around 300-405 u/ha.
- **Access and Parking:** Vehicular access should be considered from Angel Way, to allow the closure of the direct link to the roundabout. Car parking should be provided in the form of undercroft or underground parking. In the first instance, existing Council parking standards should be met; however, with appropriate evidence, these may be reduced to take account of the central location.
- **Scale and Massing:** Urban scale (5-8 storeys), with the opportunity for tall buildings located on the ring road. Storey heights should reduce towards the Conservation Area. Development should create blocks that define new streets and spaces. These should create active street frontages and more private landscaped courtyards.
- **Key Design Considerations:** The link between Trinity Methodist Church and St Edward the Confessor Church is key to integrating the new development on the Angel Way site to the wider town centre. A new open space should be created on this link. The ecological and environmental quality of the River Rom should be enhanced in this area, and development should address this positively, creating a safe and secure environment. The frontage onto the ring road should be treated sensitively, using trees and a set back building line to reduce the impact of traffic on the development. Development should not adversely affect the neighbouring conservation area, with applicants required to submit visualisations of views from key points around the historic crossroads in order to support the planning determination process.

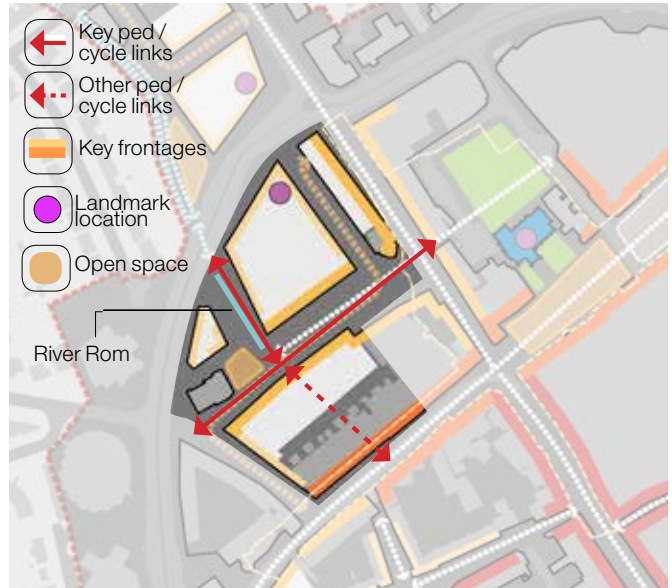


Fig 5.4

*Urban Design Framework*

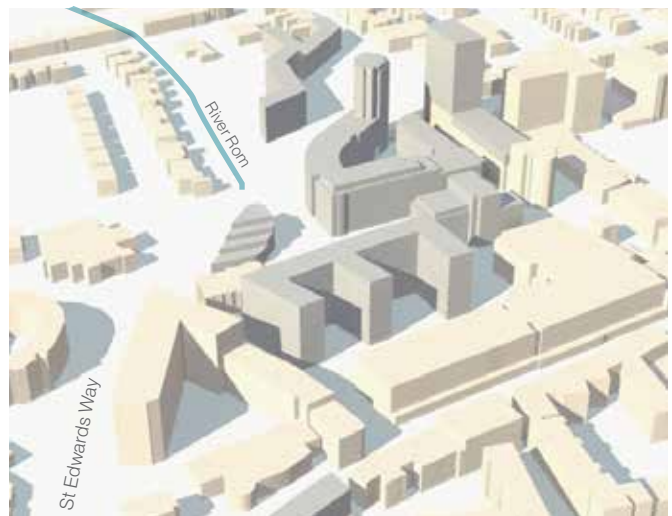


Fig 5.5

### **Key Deliverables and Interventions**

- Creating a new public square with active frontages.
- Provision of space for community infrastructure such as a doctors' surgery.
- Creating the southwest-northeast route, linking Trinity Methodist Church and St. Edward the Confessor church and a route alongside the River Rom. If possible, creating north-south links to the High Street.
- Improvement works to the River Rom, in terms of environmental and ecological quality.

### **Key Actions**

Recent town centre car parking data has determined that there is sufficient capacity to release this site for redevelopment.

- Undertake a condition survey of retail and residential properties on High Street in order to determine whether this should be brought into redevelopment proposals, or whether this should be seen as a long term prospect for a later phase.
- The Council should explore possible joint venture or other co-working development arrangements with other landowners in order to seek comprehensive redevelopment of the Angel Way Car Park site alongside the extant planning permission for the Former Decathlon site. Comprehensive redevelopment may represent the best opportunity for a fully integrated scheme that improves public realm and linkages with the surrounding area.

- Alternatively, the Council may be able to work with the landowner to seek amendments to the extant planning permission in order to improve the physical integration of the identified redevelopment sites, including consideration of active frontages and the creation of a quality public realm - which should be priority requirements for any further negotiations with the developer.
- If the landowner elect to build out the extant planning permission in its existing form (without further amendment) then the Council should concentrate on delivering the key public realm and links within its own land ownership, although such opportunities would be more constrained in both spatial and viability terms.
- Identify River Rom and public open space improvement work as a priority landscaping project for CIL and public expenditure.

### **Indicative Delivery Time-scale**

Short - Medium term: <10 years to complete.

Landowners have confirmed that it is their intention to implement the current planning permission for the Former Decathlon site, but aim to time the development in order to be on sale shortly after the arrival of Crossrail in 2018 in order to benefit from potential uplift in values.

# 3

## High Street and The Brewery

Site Area	2.65 ha*
Uses	Residential: around 95 units*
	Commercial: 1,700 sqm*

\* These numbers refer to High Street infill only. A comprehensive expansion of the Brewery site would deliver substantially more capacity.

### Current Use, Ownership and Constraints

The Brewery comprises circa 49,000 sq m of modern retail and leisure units, 1,774-space multi-storey car park built around a 628-space surface level car park. Owned and managed by Henderson Real Estate, the site has a high existing use value and lease arrangements that preclude the existing buildings from being readily redeveloped.

There is significant development potential associated with the surface level car park, although this is one of the most popular and well used town centre car parks.

The Council owns a number of shops fronting High Street, with residential units above them. Viability assessment suggests that whilst it may be possible to bring forward a small but landmark residential building on the land to the western end of the High Street, refurbishment of existing buildings including recladding may be a more deliverable option to improve the townscape in this area.

### Consultation Feedback

Being within the Retail Quarter identified by this framework, development should be retail focused; however, market sentiment suggests that there is little to no demand for speculative retail development in Romford (other than ancillary to a major residential scheme) at this time.

Henderson confirmed that beyond a few relatively minor 'infill' proposals including a fast-food drive-through, they currently have no plans for major expansion due to insufficient occupier demand. They confirmed that leisure outperforms retail in this location and that well-positioned restaurants are easy to let, although occupiers are very selective and less well-located units can remain vacant for some time.

It was widely acknowledged that The Brewery car park should be the preferred location for a major expansion of the town centre retail offer should need arise in future, and could accommodate a further major shopping mall with residential or office units above, proving that parking could be adequately re-provided and links to South Street improved. This was thought to be unlikely for a number of years.

### Site Parameters

- Use Classes:
  - High Street: Residential (C3) with retail and (B1, A3 and limited A1 independent retail) uses on the ground floor fronting onto the High Street.
  - The Brewery site: Retail (A1) on ground floor with potential for residential (C3) or office (B1) above.
- Density: This site lies in the 'Central Setting' with a PTAL of 3-5, densities on the lower GLA level of 215-260 u/ha should be achieved.
- Access and parking: Access will be provided from the High Street. In the first instance, existing Council parking standards should be met; however, with appropriate evidence, these may be reduced to take account of the central location.
- Scale and Massing: A medium height (4-6) frontage onto the High Street with potentially a taller element marking the junction of the High Street and ring road.
- Key Design Considerations: Active frontages onto the High Street as well ring road where possible.

### Key Deliverables

It is recommended that development proposals should:

- Improve the east-west link across The Brewery site to enhance pedestrian flow towards South Street.
- Provide active frontages where pedestrian links intersect Exchange Street.
- Enhance the townscape of the High Street.
- Be retail-focussed especially on the ground floor.
- Optimise densities by delivering residential or commercial floorspace on upper floors, particularly considering opportunities to provide prominent office units fronting the ring road.
- Ensure that retail capacity and densities elsewhere in the town centre are realised before providing expanded retail floorspace in this area.
- Not prejudice the long term potential for comprehensive redevelopment of The Brewery car park for retail and leisure uses.

**Key Actions**

- Develop planning policy to preserve opportunity for longer term retail development on The Brewery car park
- Work with Henderson to maximise opportunities for ‘infill’ development at The Brewery e.g. pop-up units or within the existing mall, which does not prejudice long term redevelopment of the car park.
- Undertake a condition survey of Council-owned properties on High Street in order to determine whether there is a need for replacement (in which case, plan for demolition and replacement with a higher density scheme), or whether they are suitable for refurbishment to improve values and streetscape.
- Consider bringing forward a small but landmark residential scheme adjacent to the roundabout at the western end of High Street.

**Indicative Delivery Time-scale**

Short term <3 years small scale infill development

Long term 10+ years major retail development of Brewery car park.

The Henderson Group have confirmed that it is their intention to proceed with small scale ‘infill’ development, but do not intend to bring forward a major redevelopment of the car park at the present time.

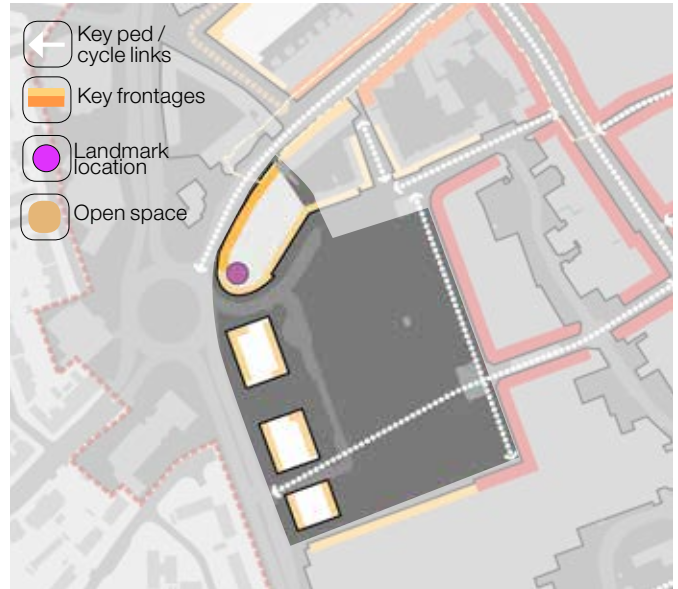


Fig 5.6

**Urban Design Framework**

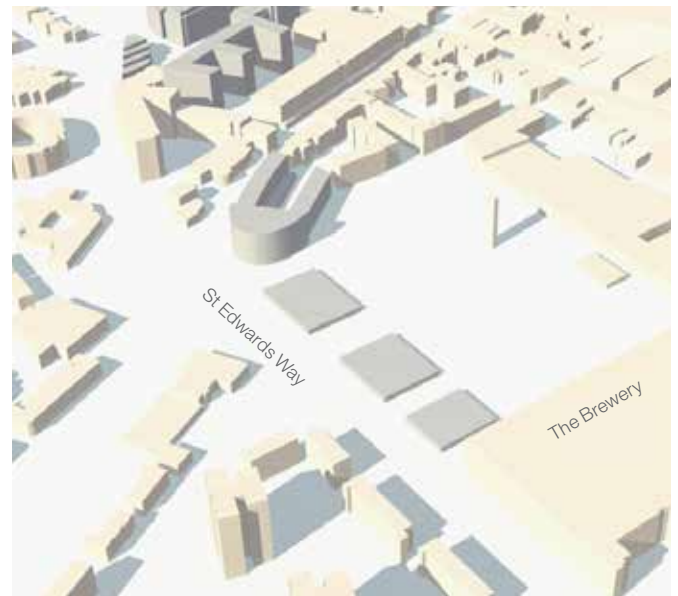


Fig 5.7



# 4

## Station Quarter North

Site Area	0.58 ha
Uses	Residential: around 100 - 150 units
	Commercial: around 5,500 sqm

### Current Use, Ownership and Constraints

Existing development density (notably medium rise office buildings) present a significant development constraint in this area. Although many of the existing office buildings are now dated, may require high levels of maintenance, and may not be ideally configured to modern office demands, they are still have considerable existing use value that must be overcome if the market is to bring forward redevelopment.

Land in the ownership of the Council at Slaney Road car park and three low rise-low density buildings – Community House, War Memorial Social Club and Brookside Theatre - represent the most readily developable land in the area, being in public ownership and/or having existing low density uses.

Slaney Road car park comprises 100 spaces, is highly used and serves the surrounding offices. Chaucer-Hexagon House is served by a surface car park that accommodates approximately 75 spaces. Both sites may be relatively deliverable if alternative car parking solutions can be found either within or in close proximity to the Quarter.

The provision of adequate, suitably priced and accessible parking is critical to the success of this mixed use employment area.

Blacks Brook flows across the site in culvert. If this were opened up it would increase flood risk and should therefore be retained as is.

Noise from the railway and ring road is unlikely to present a significant development constraint for Slaney Road as this is mitigated by existing buildings.

### Consultation Feedback

Stakeholders were very supportive of proposals to deliver a new bus route to improve visitors' arrival experience and perceptions of the town.

There was widespread recognition that a quality public space would help define the Quarter and provide a much needed focal point, as well as outdoor space for workers to spend time during their lunch breaks.

Severe concerns were expressed with regard to the loss of parking at Slaney Road car park, as this provides essential

worker and visitor parking; alternative provision is therefore essential before the closure of this car park occurs.

The potential loss of community facilities in this location was not considered by stakeholders to be a strong enough reason to prevent redevelopment, although the Council should work with developers to ensure these are either retained or re-provided elsewhere within the town centre

Agents and property developers confirmed there is currently no appetite for speculative development of major office buildings in Romford Town Centre. Re-provision would need to be cross-subsidised by alternative uses unless demand and values increase substantially. There is more demand for serviced offices or flexible workspace than traditional 'headquarters' single occupier space.

Stakeholders are keen to preserve and enhance employment uses within Station Quarter North, but recognise that this will need to be in a variety of forms and in a mixed use setting, including new homes on upper floors. As Havering's primary office centre, a net loss of office space should be avoided.

### Site Parameters

- **Use Classes:** Mixed-use developments with employment uses including offices (B1) on ground and lower floors with residential (C3) on upper floors. The existing quantum of office space (B1) should be retained. A limited amount of ancillary retail (A1) and cafe (A3) uses are acceptable to service the local businesses. Existing community uses must not be lost, but be relocated within the town centre or retained. Opportunities for education uses - in particular, colleges - should be explored to contribute towards animating frontages and creating a more vibrant mix of uses.
- **Density:** This site lies in the 'Central Setting' with a PTAL level of 6, densities on the upper GLA density level of 350-405 u/ha should be achieved.
- **Access and Parking:** The provision of adequate, suitably priced and accessible parking is critical to the success of this mixed use employment area. Existing parking spaces must be re-provided. New business space must be provided with car parking that is policy compliant. For residential uses, in the first instance existing Council parking standards should be met; however,

with appropriate evidence, these may be reduced to take account of the central location. Opportunity to consolidate existing and new car parking in a new multi-storey car park located within or in close proximity to the Quarter should be considered.

- **Scale and Massing:** Opportunity to increase building heights (8-10 storeys), with the opportunity for taller buildings to deliver a new public space. Taller buildings should be located in the centre of Station Quarter North.
- **Key Design Considerations:** A new bus link through the area is a long term aspiration in order to enable a step change in this area as well as providing a higher quality entrance and departure into the town centre. A new public space within the centre of Station Quarter North would provide a focal point and should have active edges. The public realm should be improved where possible, particularly Western Street and Chandlers Way.

### Key Deliverables

- The Council could actively pursue opportunities to re-provide car parking, possibly in the form of a multi-storey car park, within or in close proximity to Station Quarter North as this will allow Staney Road car park to be redeveloped to provide residential and commercial uses, whilst providing net additional parking capacity to support market-led redevelopment without the need for under croft parking which would create undesirable inactive frontages.
- A central public space as a new heart to this Quarter in order to enhance vibrancy and provide a new focal point for the area, around which to orientate new commercial and residential development.
- A new bus route linking Western Road way and Eastern Road.

### Key Actions

- Deliver the leisure centre and ice rink.
- Develop planning policy to:
  - Secure the re-provision of office space
  - Safeguard the proposed bus route and public open space
  - Identify land for the provision of a multi-storey car park

- Identify re-alignment of the bus route as a medium term transport project for both public and CIL expenditure
- Identify the provision of public open space as a medium term landscape project for both public and CIL expenditure
- Council to consider acquisition of the three low-rise community buildings most readily available for redevelopment. Work with community groups to identify possible alternative locations within the town centre for their activities and deliver vacant possession.

### Indicative Delivery Time-scale

Longer term 10+ years to complete.

There are more pressing and more easily delivered development areas to focus on, whilst viability in this area remains a challenge. The area may benefit from value uplift associated with Crossrail and wider town centre initiatives, making delivery more viable in the future.

Appropriate short term redevelopment opportunities proposed by the market should be given due consideration within this context.

# 5

## Atlanta Boulevard and 108-116 South Street

Site Area	1.9 ha and 0.25 ha
Uses	Residential: around 500- 670 units
	Commercial: around 11,200 sqm
	Open space: 1,000 sqm

### Current Use, Ownership and Constraints

North of the rail station: Numbers 108-116 South Street comprise multiple private ownerships including some vacant retail units for which we understand there is some retail letting and/or hotel conversion interest, and the Cameo and Fiction nightclub owned by Luminar Group. Although the buildings are generally in a poor state of repair, existing use values based on refurbishment options will remain high and pose a significant development constraint, requiring high density redevelopment to overcome this.

South of the rail station/Atlanta Boulevard: Key landownerships are Network Rail, which includes the bus stand, and; Lidl, who own and operate a medium sized food store with associated parking, and who let part of their building to Fitness First for use as a gym. Fitness First's parking is located adjacent to the bus stand north of Atlanta Boulevard. There is a parade of shops fronting both South Street and Atlanta Boulevard, which have residential units above and are in multiple freehold and leasehold ownerships, with some owned by Rom Capital who have been exploring development options for this area with Lidl. The number of ownership interests and existing use value pose a significant development constraint, requiring potential public sector intervention to aid land assembly, and high density redevelopment to overcome this.

Alternative locations for the bus stand have failed to emerge and therefore this will need to be re-provided on site, with careful reconfiguration to make more efficient use of land.

The site is adjacent to the railway line; noise levels, particularly for residential development, should be considered and mitigated.

Blacks Brook flows across the site in culvert. If this were opened up it would increase flood risk and should therefore be retained. The land north of the railway falls within Flood Zone 3, and so the Environment Agency should be consulted on development proposals and the avoidance of ground floor residential in this area may be advised.

New development will need to consider access to, and rights of light associated with, an existing residential block located to the rear of the bus stand on Atlanta Boulevard.

Historical uses including a gas works site and electricity depot indicate a high risk of ground contamination, which should be investigated and may increase development costs.

### Consultation Feedback

The opportunity to create a high quality and high density and high rise mixed use scheme centred on the rail station was agreed. This includes the opportunity for one or more tall buildings, possibly very high towers, and a contemporary palette of materials.

Residential-led development was considered appropriate on upper floors providing that there are commercial uses on lower floors and active frontages to the rail station, South Street and Atlanta Boulevard.

A key concern is creating high quality public realm adjacent to the rail station on both the southern and northern sides.



Stakeholders recognised the importance of creating an east-west pedestrian and cycle link across the River Rom giving improved access to the station from the west.

Network Rail have indicated their willingness to work with the Council to deliver a comprehensive scheme.

Lidl has confirmed that its primary concern is to continue to operate a food store in the town centre and preferably on this site, therefore this would need to be re-provided (including parking) before the existing store is closed. Lidl also wish to retain Fitness First as a tenant so the gym would also need to be accommodated within a revised scheme.

### Site Parameters

- **Use Classes:** Mixed-use development that incorporates a mix of residential (C3) and business (B1) uses on the upper floors and a range of uses on the ground floor promoting active frontages. In case of a comprehensive development of Atlanta Boulevard the existing bus station must be re-provided.
- **Density:** This site lies in the 'Central Setting' with a PTAL level of 6, densities on the highest GLA density level of 350-405 u/ha should be achieved.
- **Access and Parking:** Access will be provided from Atlanta Boulevard or Exchange Street. Access directly from South Street should be avoided. Access and egress for buses must be retained. In the first instance existing Council parking standards should be met, however with appropriate evidence, these may be reduced to take account of the central location and proximity to the rail station.

	Character area: <b>Station Quarter North</b> See page 65
	Character area: <b>Station Quarter South</b> See page 64

- **Scale and Massing:** Area for tall buildings that deliver new public realm in the form of a new station forecourt. A mix of urban blocks and taller buildings should contribute to a cluster of tall buildings.
- **Key Design Considerations:** Development must create active ground floor frontages onto South Street, the rail station and Atlanta Boulevard, including a new east-west pedestrian link across the River Rom.
- Consider the impact of tall buildings onto one another, in terms of day/sun light and ensure that they create an attractive composition. A high quality public realm is essential to pull the whole site together to make a contemporary hub.
- Should comprehensive development not come forward, any redevelopment or refurbishment of existing buildings must positively address the rail station and not block the opportunity to create improved public realm and station entrances. Buildings must positively address and overlook existing and future pedestrian routes.

**Key Deliverables**

- Improvements to the rail station and the public spaces next to it, ideally this would include both southern and northern access points to the station with new public forecourt each.
- An east-west link bridging Bridge Close, across the River Rom and onto Atlanta Boulevard.
- A reconfigured bus stand.

**Key Actions**

- LB Havering work with Network Rail, TfL and train operating companies to secure further funding for, and deliver, rail station improvements.
- Develop planning policy to secure further public realm improvements (beyond those currently associated with Crossrail) and east-west pedestrian link as developer obligations.
- Council to open dialogue with Network Rail regarding joint working and delivery arrangements.
- LB Havering and Network Rail engage with Lidl regarding delivery of comprehensive scheme and agree developer procurement and land assembly process. Consider phasing to allow Lidl and Fitness First to be retained.

**Indicative Delivery Time-scale**

Medium Term: 5-10 years to complete

Strategically one of the most important sites in Romford - being highly visible and forming the gateway to the town - this should be a priority area for public sector investment and intervention.

The process of developing joint working relationships and agreeing land acquisition and delivery mechanisms should start immediately, but the scale and complexity of the project means that delivery will inevitably take a number of years.

Parts of the scheme, notably any towers, may need to see residential prices rise further before they are viable, and as such should be planned as later phases to take advantage of uplifted values derived from the wider scheme.

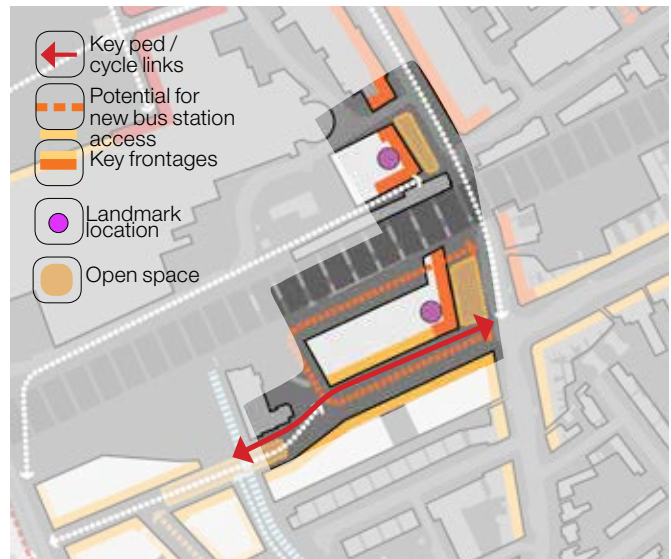


Fig 5.8

**Urban Design Framework**



Fig 5.9

# 6

## Bridge Close

Site Area	1.41 ha
Uses	Residential: around 460 units
	Commercial: around 950sqm
	Open space: 960 sqm

### Current Use, Ownership and Constraints

The site ownership pattern is complex but offers short term redevelopment potential and as such should be seen as a priority regeneration area for immediate action. It comprises numerous freehold and leasehold commercial property interests, as well as residential dwellings facing Waterloo Road. At least three or four houses would need to be acquired and demolished in order to deliver access from Waterloo Road, which is highly desirable in urban design and accessibility terms.

MNO Investments, a property investment company, owns the freehold of three warehouses (subject to leasehold interests) and the subsoil of the private road and drainage. MNO has engaged a property agent who, for some years, has been seeking to secure options over adjoining land interests to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment but this has failed to materialise.

The site is bounded to the north by the railway line, and to the south and west by the Romford ring road, so traffic noise and air pollution are significant issues to be considered for residential development near to these boundaries.

The River Rom runs along the eastern boundary of the site and part is located in Flood Zone 2, so is likely to be affected by an extreme flood event. The Environment Agency should be consulted on development proposals and the avoidance of ground floor residential in this flood area may be advised.

### Consultation Feedback

The provision of an east-west pedestrian and cycle link connecting development sites west of Waterloo Road to the rail station and town centre via Atlanta Boulevard was considered a top priority.

Stakeholders were supportive of residential led redevelopment of this area, although were mindful that existing occupiers should be given assistance to relocate out of the town centre or, where appropriate, alternative accommodation provided on site. The re-provision of space for faith groups was considered particularly important.

The need for comprehensive redevelopment across the site was acknowledged, particularly in the northern area adjacent to the east-west link, and the Council may have an enabling role to play in facilitating this for both the initial and subsequent phases. However, agents warned against being overly prescriptive in terms of requiring comprehensive redevelopment across the whole of the site due to the number and complexity of freehold and leasehold interests. A phased approach was therefore considered to be the best way forward.

Some agents suggested that warehouse conversions should be considered, but this idea was not supported by a number of stakeholders including planning officers who noted that the architectural merit of the existing warehouses is low.

The provision of a doctors' surgery or other medical facility should be considered, as the site is well located to serve increasing demand from surrounding residential development and relieve pressure on nearby hospital facilities.

Although not the council's preferred option, part of the site could be considered for an urban primary school if other sites do not emerge. Through the Local Plan process, the Council should explore whether it is appropriate to adopt planning policy requiring the provision of land at Bridge Close for a new primary school as a prerequisite for residential redevelopment coming forward.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to explore a secondary access to the rail station directly from Bridge Close up to the platforms, but we understand that Network Rail are not prepared to support this option for operational reasons.

### Site Parameters

- Use Classes: Residential (C3), with ancillary community uses and consideration of Non-residential institutions (D1), such as health centres and education uses, to meet the needs of an increased population in the area.
- Density: This site lies in the 'Central Setting' with a PTAL level of 5, densities on medium GLA density level of 250-350 u/ha should be achieved.
- Access and Parking: Access will be provided via the existing access point on the ring road. Additional access opportunities off the ring road and a potential vehicular link to the east may be investigated. In the first instance existing Council parking standards should be met, however with appropriate evidence, these may be reduced to take account of the central location and proximity to the rail station.
- Scale and Massing: Consistent urban scale (5-8 storeys), with the opportunity for taller buildings in key landmark locations on the ring road, as defined in this Development Framework. It is expected that smaller sites will come forward gradually in this area as there are various land owners. The existing streets should be maintained and east-west connections improved. Blocks should be designed with active frontages to optimise these links. Massing should increase in scale towards the town centre and also more height can be achieved facing onto the ring road, especially on the southern edge.
- Key Design Considerations: The ecological and environmental quality of the River Rom should be enhanced, and development should address this positively, creating a safe and secure environment. The frontage onto the ring road should be treated sensitively, using trees and a set back building line to reduce the impact of traffic onto the development. Development must positively address the new open space and east-west pedestrian/cycle route with active frontages at ground floor where possible and well designed residential entrances.

### Key Deliverables

- Create east-west link from the ring road to the rail station and town centre across the River Rom.
- Carry out improvement works to the River Rom to provide new, riverside public realm.
- Incremental development of sites into an active, residential-focused area is key to improving and populating this part of Romford Town Centre.

### Key Actions

- Due to its short term redevelopment potential, this area should be seen as a high priority for immediate action. If necessary, the public sector should intervene to unlock high quality development with supporting community infrastructure, particularly in order to secure comprehensive development at the northern end of Bridge Close.
- The Council may need to play a proactive role in land assembly if necessary using its CPO powers to support the delivery of a comprehensive redevelopment, particularly to deliver the east-west connection described above in the northern area of the site. The delivery of this link and associated public realm should come forward and be largely funded by adjacent development. The Council may also have a longer term role enabling land assembly and therefore suitably configured phases to come forward across the rest of the site to avoid piecemeal development. Any development needs to be comprehensive and applications will need to ensure that the proposal does not prejudice the implementation of this new pedestrian/ cycle route. For example this through the provision of a buffer zone reserving land for this link. The link would then be provided when the adjacent sites are brought forwards for development. Any buffer zones should extend across the full width of the site linking to the boundary of adjoining plots, so no ransom strips are created.
- Work with community and faith groups to understand needs for re-provision.

	Character area: <b>South Riverside</b> See page 66
	Character area: <b>Southern Approach</b> See page 68

- Assess school and medical needs to clearly define required provision on Bridge close.
- Planning policy should be developed to ensure the provision of faith, medical and other community facilities and provide active frontages on the east-west link.
- Planning policy should be developed to allow a flexible approach for new build residential in appropriately-sized phases across the remainder of the site, including the redevelopment of houses fronting Waterloo Road for higher density apartments.
- Set up a framework with local agents to help businesses affected by development identify alternative premises within Havering.

**Indicative Delivery Time-scale**

Short term <5 years – northern area including east-west link.

The delivery of a pedestrian/cycle link and adjacent development should be a high priority project for the Council and land assembly (with a development partner or directly) should commence as soon as possible.

Market led redevelopment of the remainder of the site will occur over the longer term (10+ years to complete). However, short term redevelopment opportunities that comply with the Development Framework should be supported and bought forward as early as possible.

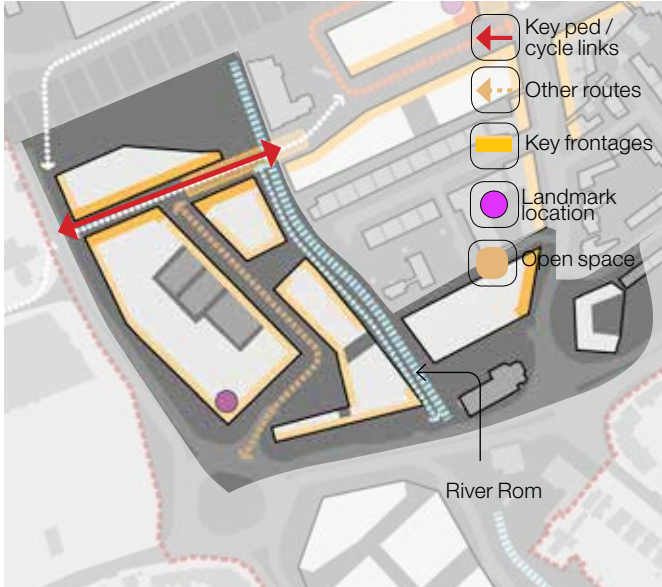


Fig 5.10

**Urban Design Framework**

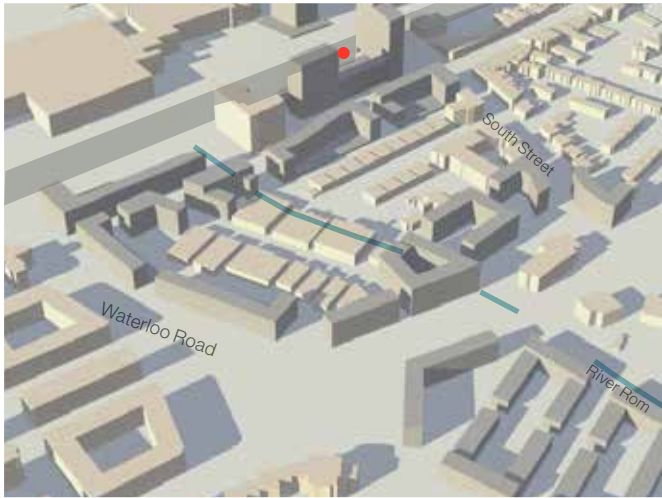


Fig 5.11

# 7 Homebase Site

Site Area	1.56 ha
Uses	Residential: around 150-180 units

Character area:  
**South Riverside**  
See page 66

## Current Use, Ownership and Constraints

The site comprises a large retail warehouse (Homebase) with associated parking and surface storage. The store benefits from good accessibility by car, and prominent road frontages. The existing use value of a well-positioned retail warehouse with an established occupier is high. This is a significant development constraint that makes the site unlikely to come forward for development in the short to medium term.

Being adjacent to Oldchurch Road and Rom Valley Way means that traffic noise and air pollution are likely to be significant issues to be considered and development may need to be set back behind planting strips to provide a measure of mitigation.

## Consultation Feedback

Stakeholders support the redevelopment of the site for residential use, but are keen to see a proportion of family accommodation including townhouses.

However there is widespread recognition that this long term proposition as Homebase have shown no indication of wishing to relocate.

## Site Parameters

- Use Classes: Residential (C3).
- Density: This site lies in the 'Urban Setting' with a PTAL level of 5, densities of medium GLA density level of 120-200 u/ha should be achieved.
- Access and Parking: Access will be provided from Davidson Way. Additional access opportunities off the ring road and Rom Valley Way are unlikely. In the first instance existing Council parking standards should be met.
- Scale and Massing: 3-6 storeys, with taller buildings on the ring road and Rom Valley Way and lower buildings towards the suburban development in the east. This is also an opportunity for urban housing, in the form of townhouses and terraces.
- Key Design Considerations: The northern edge of the site facing onto the ring road should be sensitively considered to minimise traffic noise. Tree planting would be a preferable buffer.

## Key Deliverables

A high quality residential scheme with excellent landscaping

## Key Actions

Develop Local Plan policy to support redevelopment for residential

## Indicative Delivery Time-scale

Long term – the site is unlikely to come forward until Homebase relocate/ close or if residential values very significantly increase ahead of retail values to offer significant redevelopment premium some time in the future.

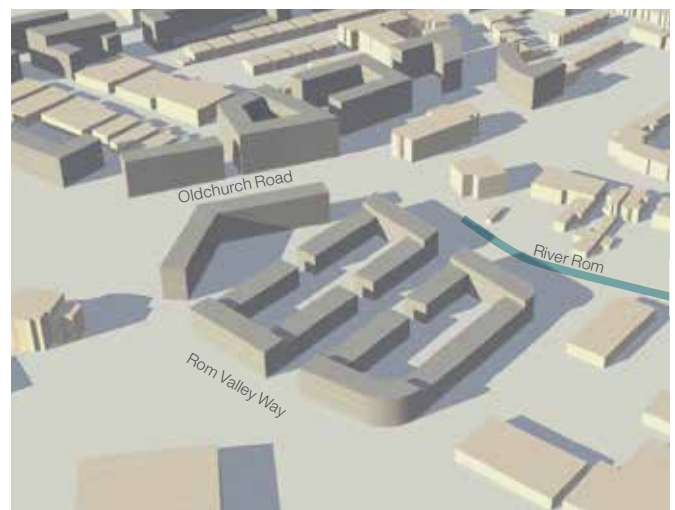


Fig 5.12





