

Opportunity Area Portrait

Romford



Introduction

List of acronyms and abbreviations

- OA: Opportunity Area
- LP: London Plan
- GLA: Greater London Authority
- TfL: Transport for London
- OAPF: Opportunity Area Planning Framework
- CAZ: Central Activities Zone
- LESD: London Employment Sites Database
- SHLAA: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- LB: London Borough
- RB: Royal Borough
- AAP: Area Action Plan
- SPD: Supplementary Planning Document
- SIL: Strategic Industrial Land
- LSIS: Locally Significant Industrial Sites
- BID: Business Improvement District
- CEZ: Creative Enterprise Zone

Introduction

Purpose of this document and clarifications



What is a pen portrait:

- A strategic analysis/ summary of an OA.
- We collected a series of data on delivery of homes, jobs, town centres and high streets, transport, land use and industrial land to assess local change at a strategic level, to better understand places in the OAs, and evaluate how they are performing against the expectations in the London Plan 2021.



How will this information be used?

- This evidence base supports the OA propositions in the Towards a new London Plan document.
- The OA propositions include:
 - change in the status of the OA to reflect the housing and/or infrastructure delivery since 2019
 - highlight opportunities to review the OA boundary and/ or OA designation.



Data sources and clarifications

Homes

- The London Plan 2021 identifies indicative homes capacities (10 year, 22 year).
- The indicative homes capacities are based on the SHLAA 2017.
- The monitoring year for the London Plan 2021 starts in 2019.
- This document includes an overview on the progress against the SHLAA 2017 to understand what has happened in the OA.
- Acknowledging that a lot has changed since 2017, including the adoption of new development plans, the current document provides an overview of site allocations based on the latest publicly accessible information.
- All spatial data is available in the London Datastore, unless stated otherwise.
- All data relating to development progress is available via the Planning Data Hub, unless stated otherwise.

Introduction

Purpose of this document and clarifications

Data sources and clarifications

Jobs



- The LESD is a database that records recently completed employment developments and those in the pipeline in London to produce an estimate of London's additional employment capacity.
- Since the adoption of the London Plan 2021, a new London Employment Sites Database was produced in 2021. This provides up to date estimates by OA.
- A jobs dashboard has been produced to monitor the jobs' performance in the OAs.

Local Plan status



- Local Plan status information is based on publicly available data, or information received by the boroughs.

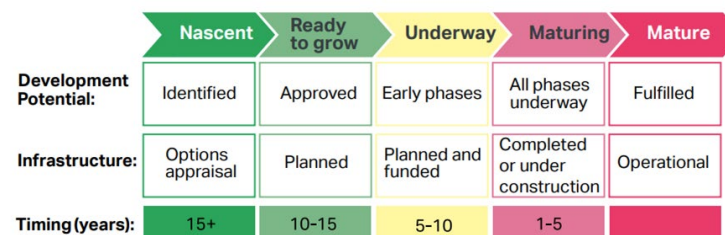
OA boundaries

- The London Plan designates OAs, whilst the boundary can be adopted through development plans. See more on [OA boundaries](#).

OA status - London Plan 2021

- The OA categorisation in the Key info refers to the London Plan 2021 Figure 2.2 - OAPF process diagram, also shown below:

Figure 2.2 - OAPF process diagram



Additional resources

- Growth Corridors: [Engagement summaries from Planning for London events \(November/December 2024\)](#)
- Opportunity Area monitoring GLA [webpage](#).

Introduction

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Transport
and
connectivity

Delivery of
homes

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Development
activity 2021
and 2024

Jobs

Town Centre
and High
Streets

Industrial
Land

Place
strategies*

Moving
forward

* This section refers to existing/ emerging strategies for the OA.

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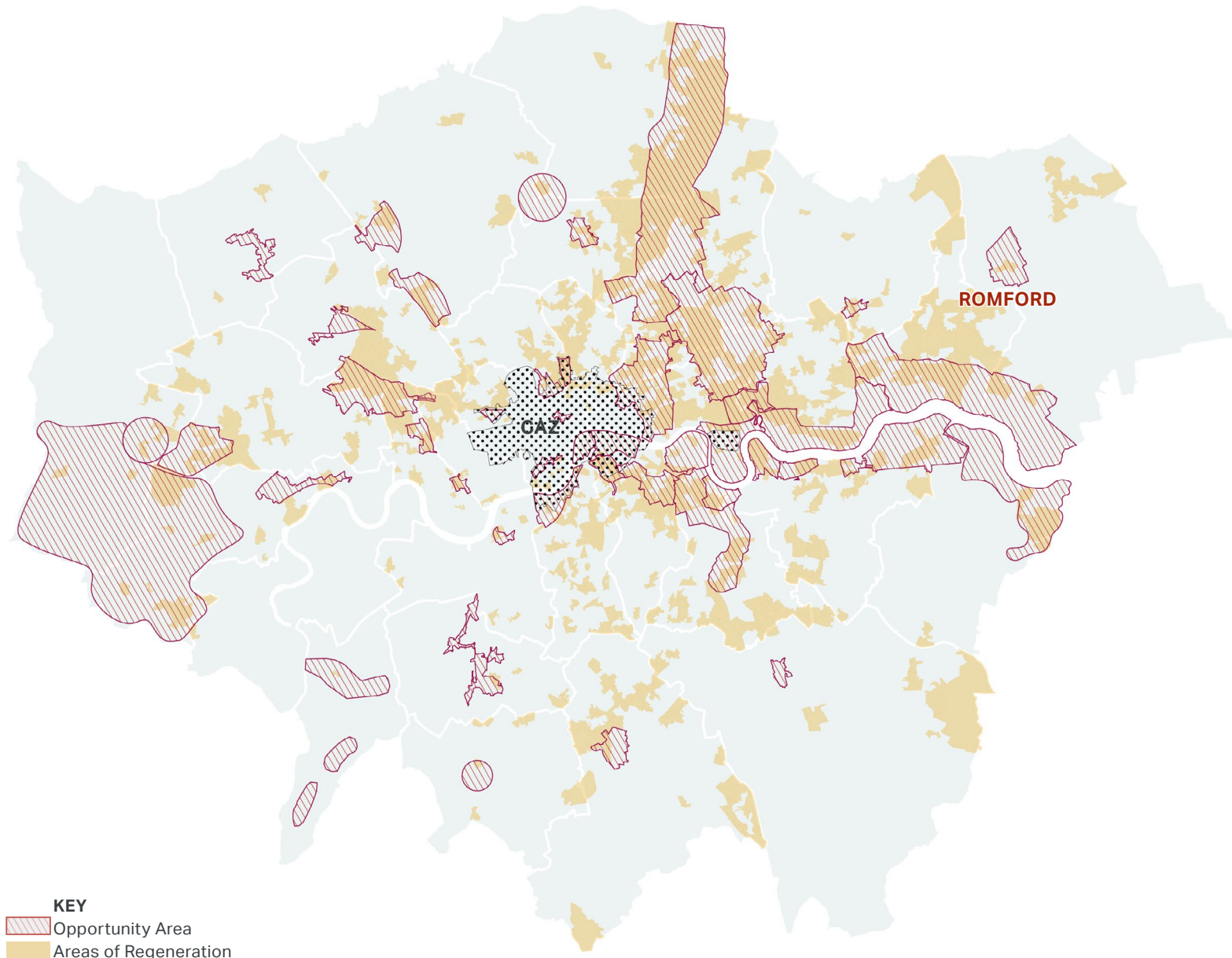
Context

OAs in the CAZ

- King's Cross (Maturing)
- Tottenham Court Road (Maturing)
- Victoria (Maturing)
- Waterloo (Maturing)
- London Bridge/ Bankside (Maturing)
- Euston (Ready to Grow)
- VNEB (Underway)
- Elephant & Castle (Underway)
- Part of City Fringe/ Tech City (Underway)
- Paddington (Underway)

Areas of Regeneration

The Romford OA overlaps with an area of regeneration.



Source: Areas of Regeneration as per London Plan 2021

Romford

Context

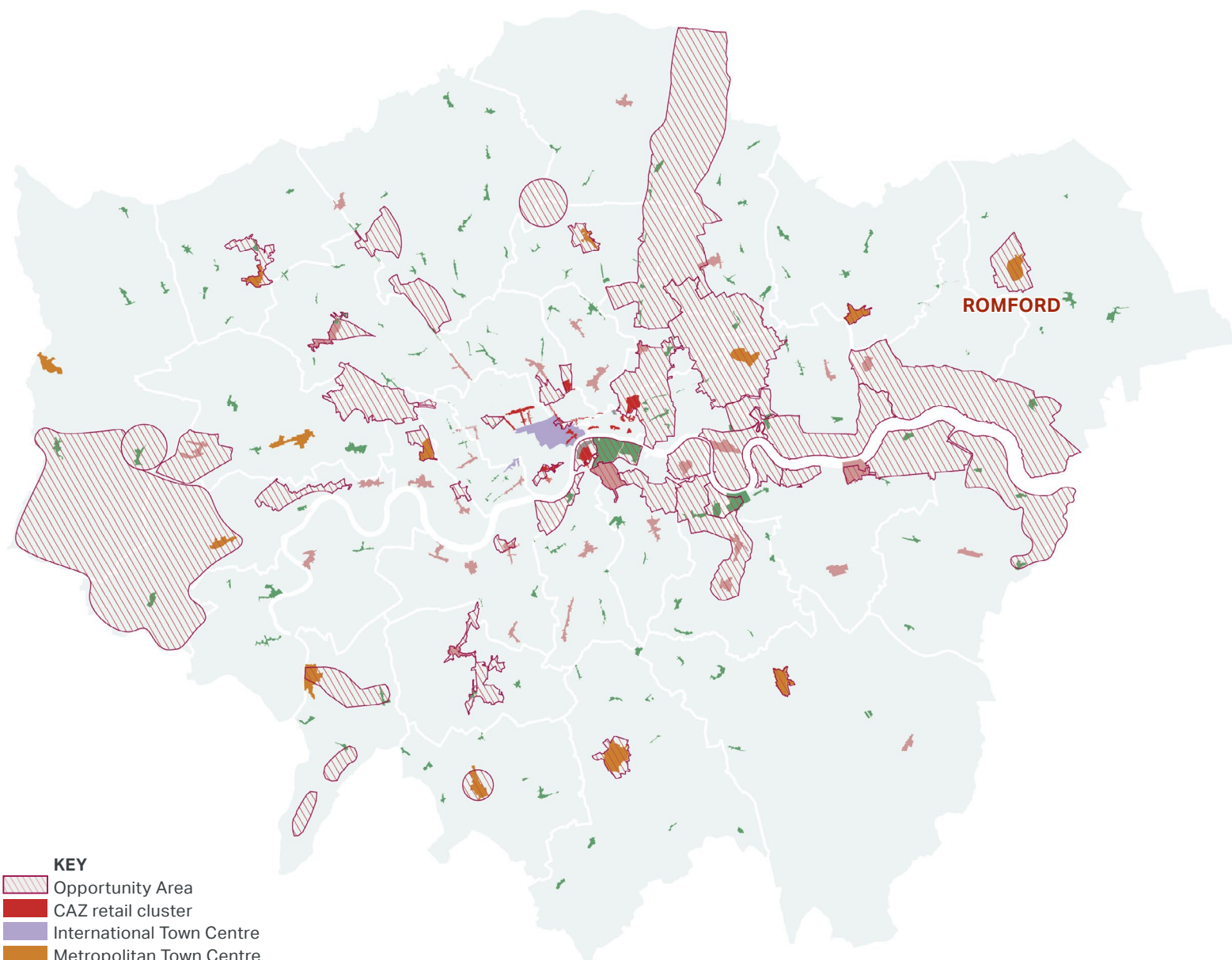
OAs and Metropolitan Town Centres

- Olympic Legacy (Maturing)
- Harrow & Wealdstone (Underway)
- White City (Underway)
- Croydon (Ready to grow)
- **Romford (Ready to grow)**
- Ilford (Ready to grow)
- Wood Green (Nascent)
- Kingston (Nascent)
- Bromley (Nascent)
- Sutton (Nascent)

The OA has an emerging boundary (which is the Strategic Development Area in the Havering Local Plan 2021).

Romford Metropolitan Town Centre sits within the Strategic Development Area.

Romford has many celebrated assets and much heritage, such as the Market Place and its market, St Edward the Confessor Church, and a conservation area at its heart.

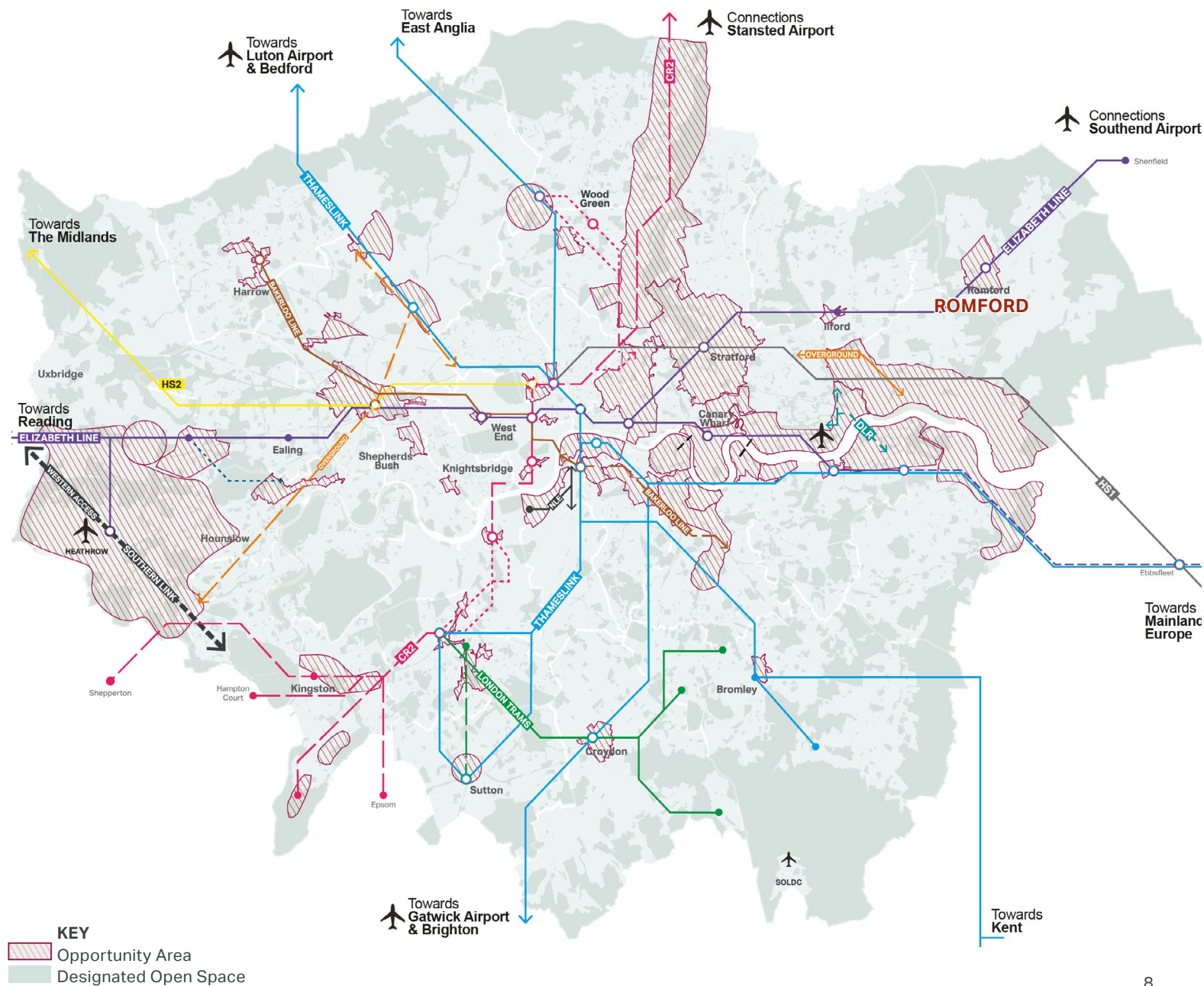


Source: Planning Data Map

Romford Context

Transport and Growth Corridors

- Elizabeth Line has opened since the adoption of the London Plan in 2021.



Source: Planning Data Map

Romford

Key info

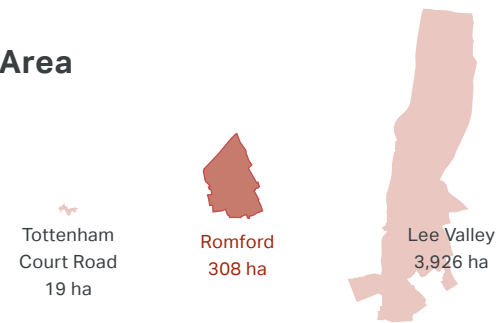
London Plan Designation Year

2004	2008	2011	2016	2021
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Borough

LB Havering

Area



OA specific plans

Romford Town Centre
Masterplan SPD (2025)

Local Plan status

Adopted in 2021

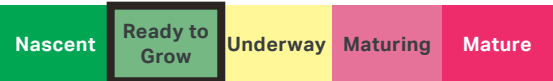
Growth Corridor

Elizabeth Line East

Housing Delivery Test 2023

Presumption

OA status (London Plan 2021)



London Plan 2021 capacities by 2041



Source: Google Earth

KEY
Opportunity Area

*Note that the LESD (2021) increased the capacity to 700 new jobs

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Transport and connectivity

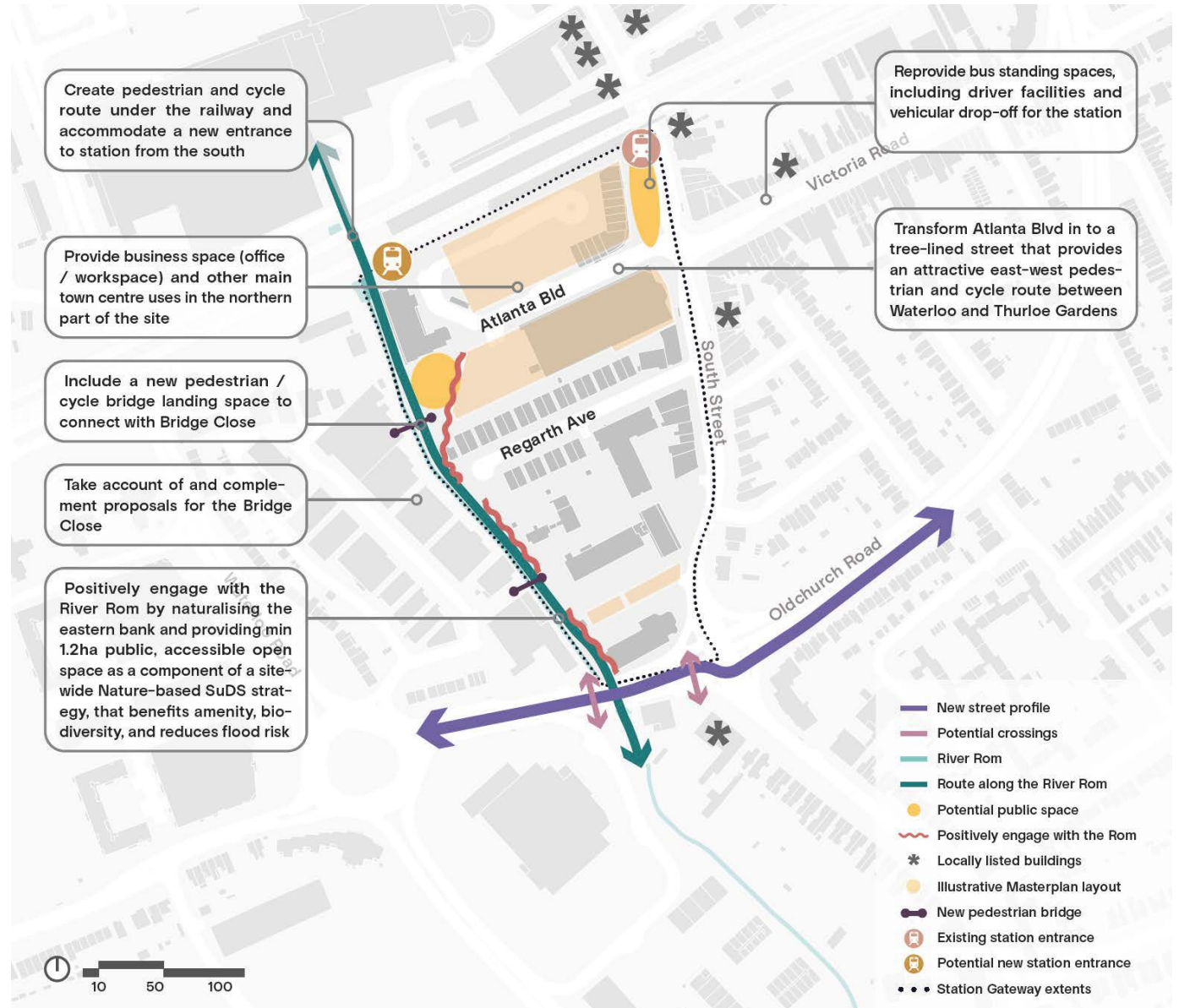
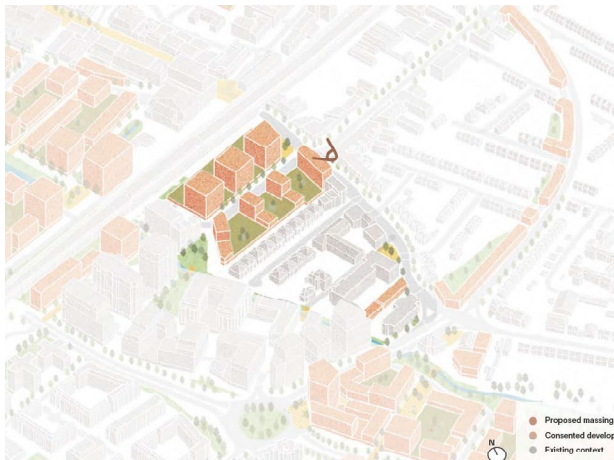
- No sites are identified by TfL where transport is holding back development.
- Elizabeth Line (completed in 2022) is the key transport intervention in the OA.
- The recently adopted Romford Town Centre Masterplan SPD proposes **infrastructure improvements to the ring road, public transport and active travel facilities.**
- The masterplan states the Council will maximise transport funding from:
 - Network Rail - Elizabeth Line improvement works at Romford Station
 - TfL's Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme for the ring road
 - TfL Local Implementation Plan funding and TfL's COVID-19 response Streetspace project



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Transport and connectivity: Romford Masterplan

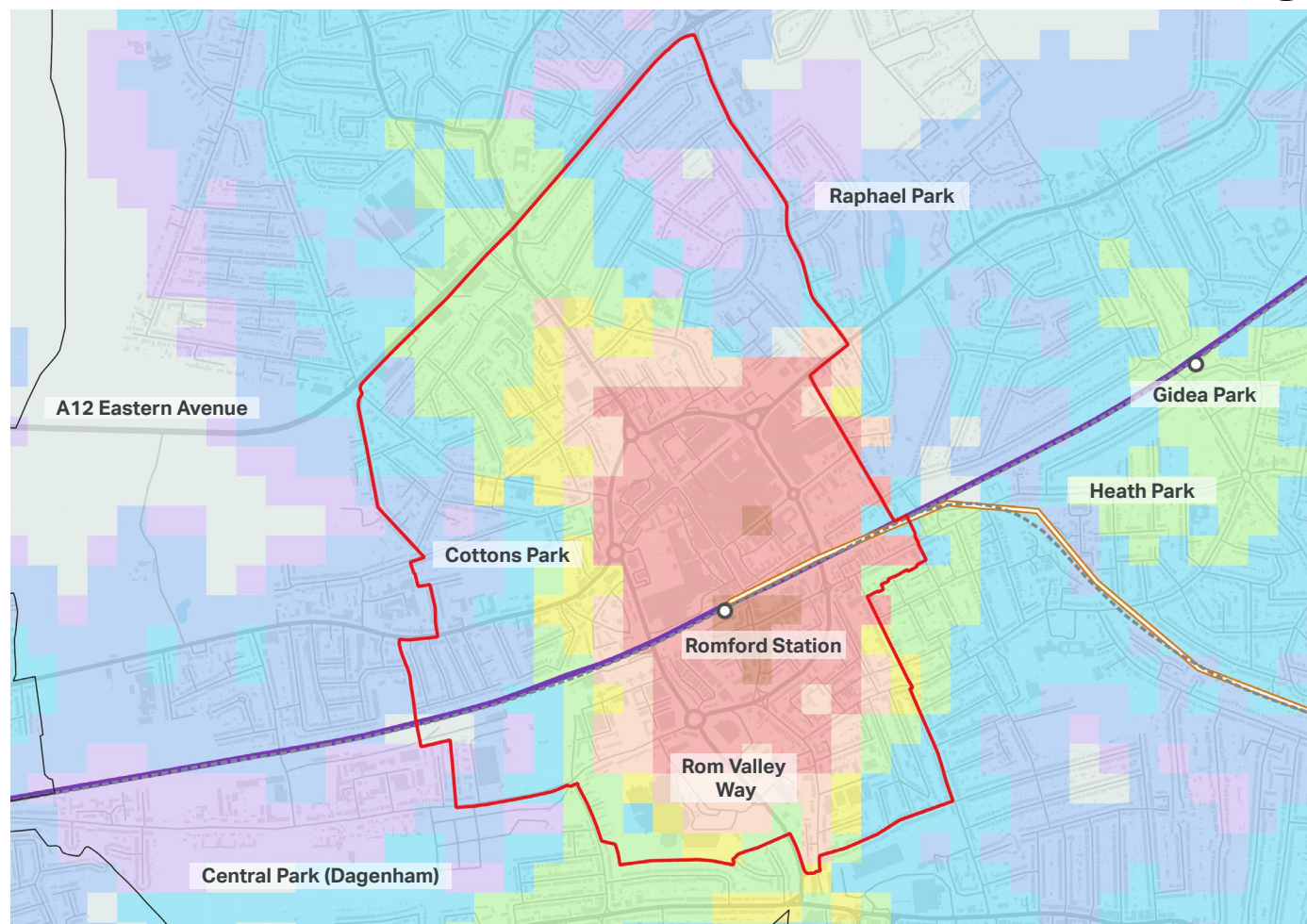
- A new station entrance 'Station Gateway' is proposed as part of the emerging masterplan.
- Proposal aims to deliver:
 - Deliver an employment use focus around the station in front of the railway lines
 - Deliver additional homes at the northern part of station site
 - Improved internal streets and active travel routes



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Transport and connectivity: PTAL 2031

- The western boundary of the OA is forecast to have a low rating of 1a, most likely due to the close proximity to the Green Belt.
- The centre of the OA is forecast to have a high PTAL rating of 6a and 6b - the best accessibility ratings.
- The town centre benefits from infrastructure such as the station that operates Elizabeth Line, London Overground and National Rail services plus multiple bus stops.
- Bus services shown represent a 3% uplift in frequencies.
- Only TfL's committed and funded public transport network schemes are considered in this scenario.



Source: Transport For London

KEY

0 (worst)
1a
1b

2
3
4
5

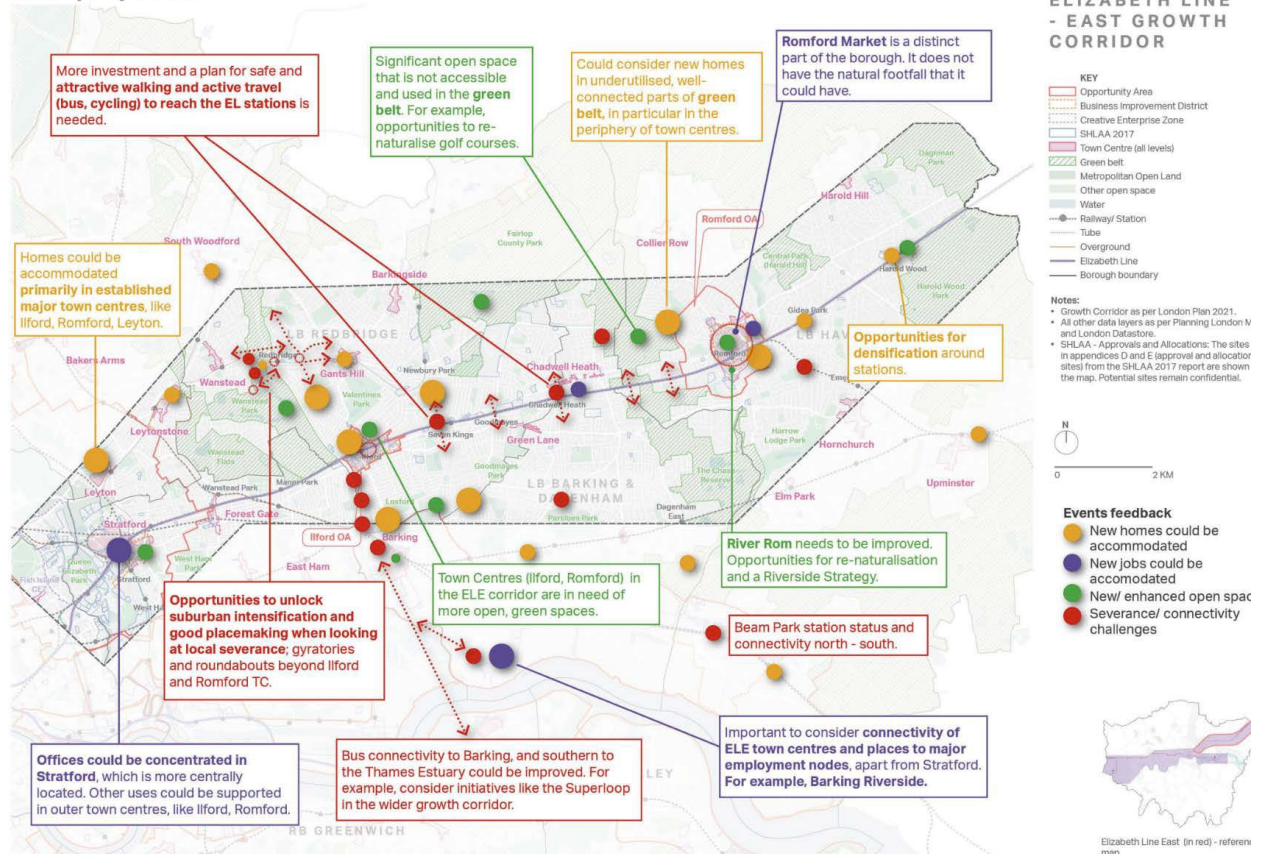
6a
6b (best)

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Transport and connectivity: Growth Corridors Engagement

- Stakeholder engagement for the Elizabeth Line East Growth Corridor was carried out as part of the Planning for London Programme.
- A need for a strategic long-term vision for Romford OA was discussed.
- Participants highlighted opportunities for:
 - More green spaces in the town centre and leading to employment areas.
 - Specialist housing, intergenerational living or older people's accommodation in Romford.
 - New jobs to be accommodated at the Romford Market area.
 - A riverside strategy for River Rom - potentially with the help of GLA.

What people said...



Romford

Delivery of homes

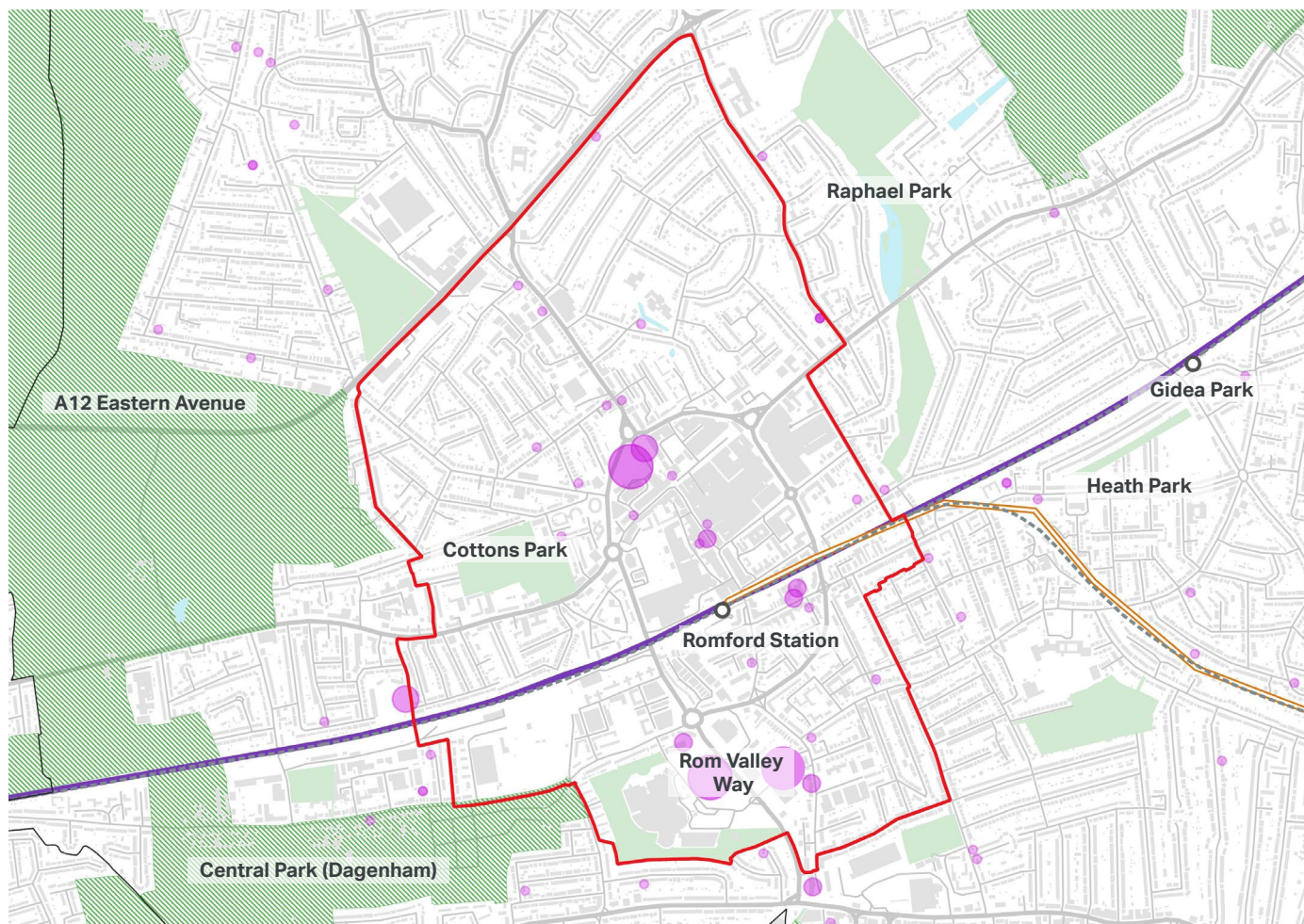
Delivery post - 2019 (London Plan 2021)

Progress against 22yr, 10 yr capacity

22 yr	5,000
10 yr	4,501
Completed	373
Pipeline	5,499

The OA was designated in 2021. Since 2019/2020 and until 2023/2024, 373 new homes have been completed in the OA. This is 75 homes/year. The London Plan indicative homes capacity rate is 410 homes/ year. Considering the completions alone the OA has met 8 per cent of its 10-year indicative homes capacity (Note that the 10-year indicative homes capacity for the OA is set at 4,501 homes by 2031).

When adding the completions and the current pipeline, the performance of the OA is more positive. Worth noting that construction has started for more than 900 homes in the pipeline.



KEY
 [Red outline] Opportunity Area
 [Purple circle] Pipeline (Planning Datahub, May 2023). Size of circle is proportionate to the number of homes.

*[Completions](#) account for all types of supply between 2019/2020 to 2023/2024.

** [Residential Pipeline in 2023/2024](#)

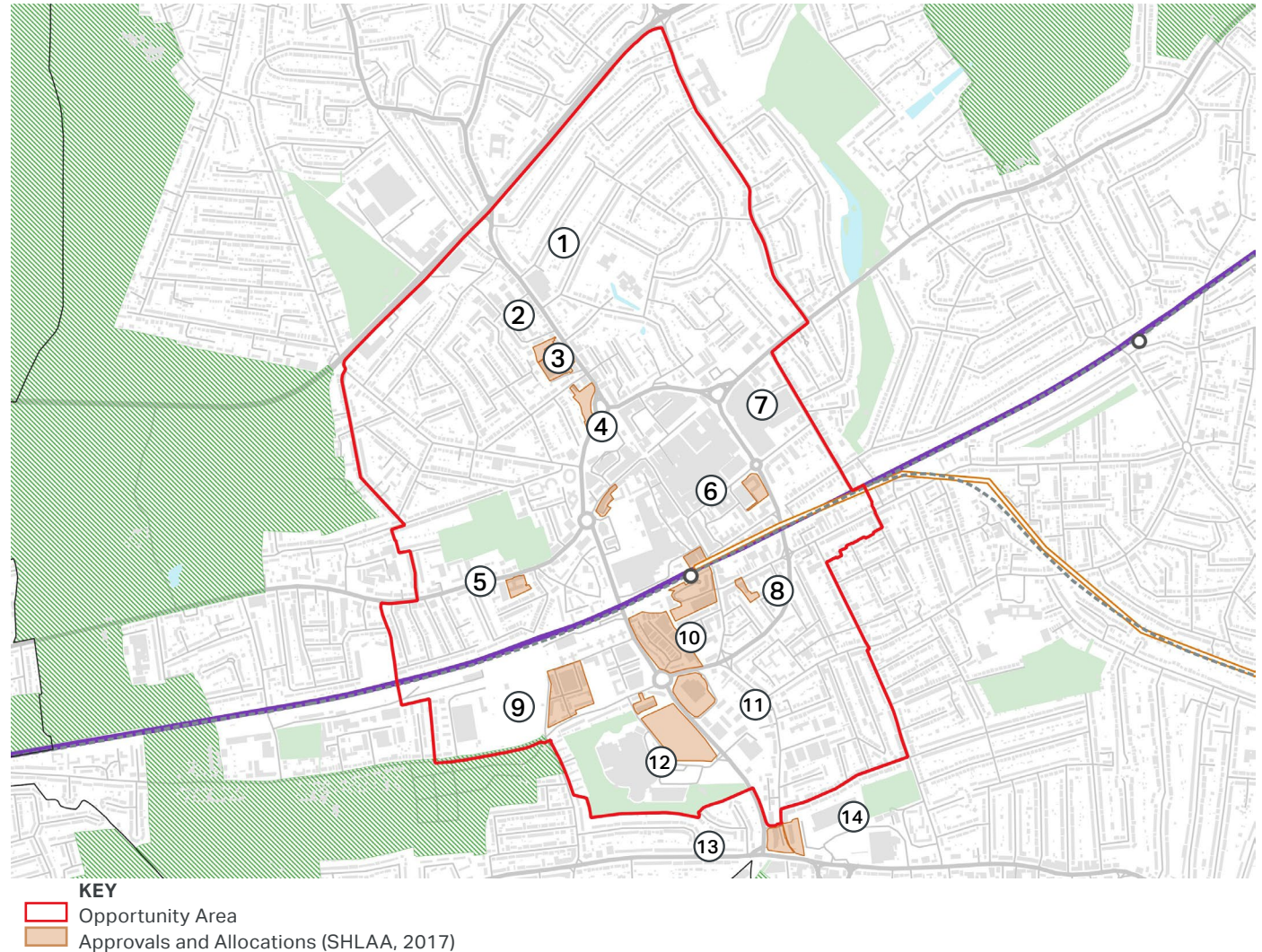


Romford

SHLAA 2017: Approvals and allocations

The 15 sites that were identified in SHLAA 2017 are shown on the map.

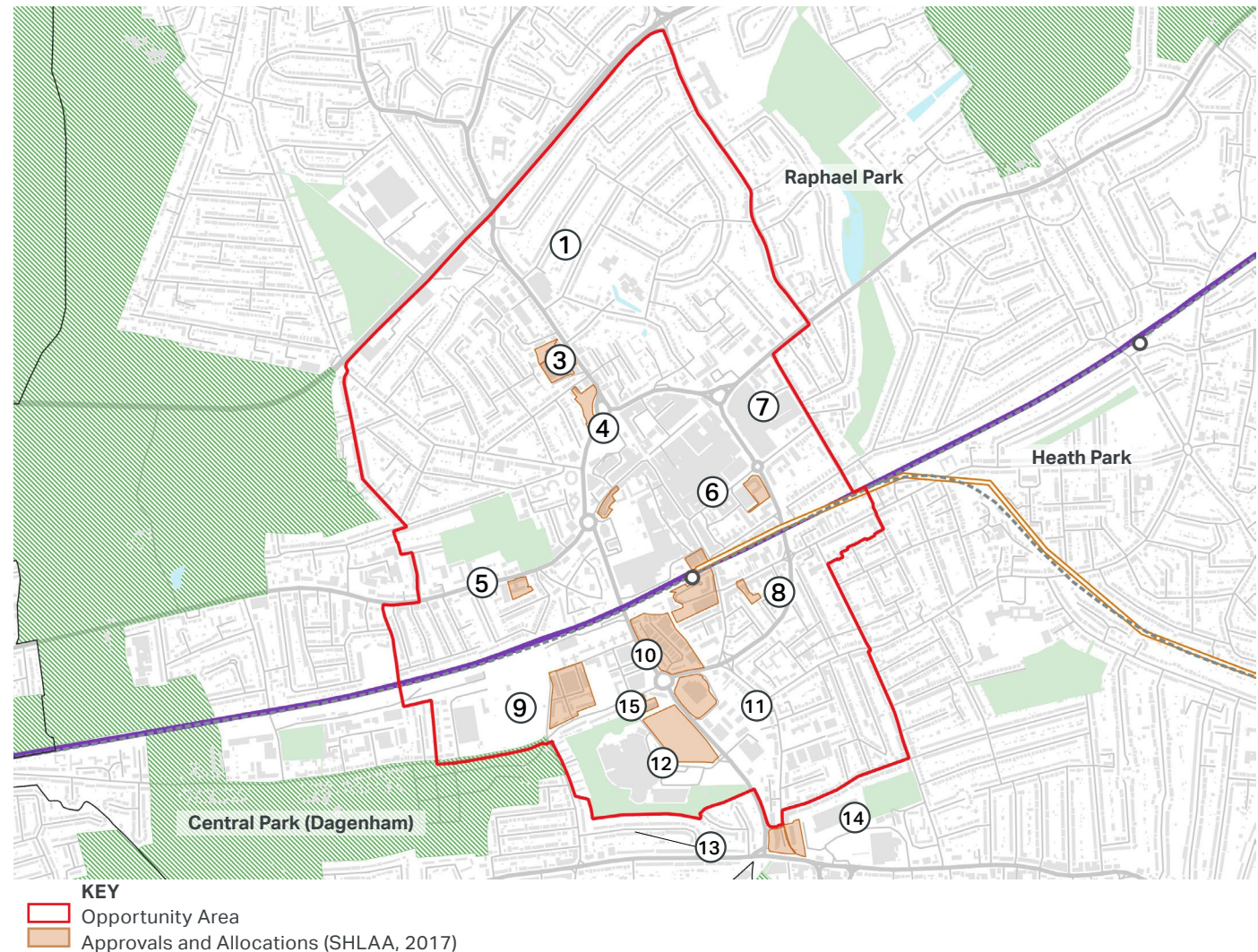
- Majority of low probability and unsuitable sites identified in SHLAA 2017 was in the metropolitan open land.



Romford

SHLAA 2017: Approvals and allocations

- ① **143 North Street:** Approval granted in 2019 for 40 residential units.
- ⑤ **St. Edward's Court:** Approval granted in 2019 for 95 units - delivered.
- ⑦ **Chaucer House and Hexagon House, Mercury Gardens:** Approval granted in 2015 for 115 units - delivered since as Verve Apartments.
- ⑧ **Portman House:** Approval granted in 2020 for 2 three storey units.
- ⑫ **Former Ice Rink:** Approval granted in 2023 for 972 units as part of a mixed use development.
- ⑬ **Site at Roneo Corner:** Approval granted in 2017 for 141 flats - delivered since as Vickers House.
- ⑭ **Neopost House:** Approval granted in 2019 for 109 units.
- ⑮ **69 Oldchurch Road:** Approval granted in 2018 for 34 units.



Romford

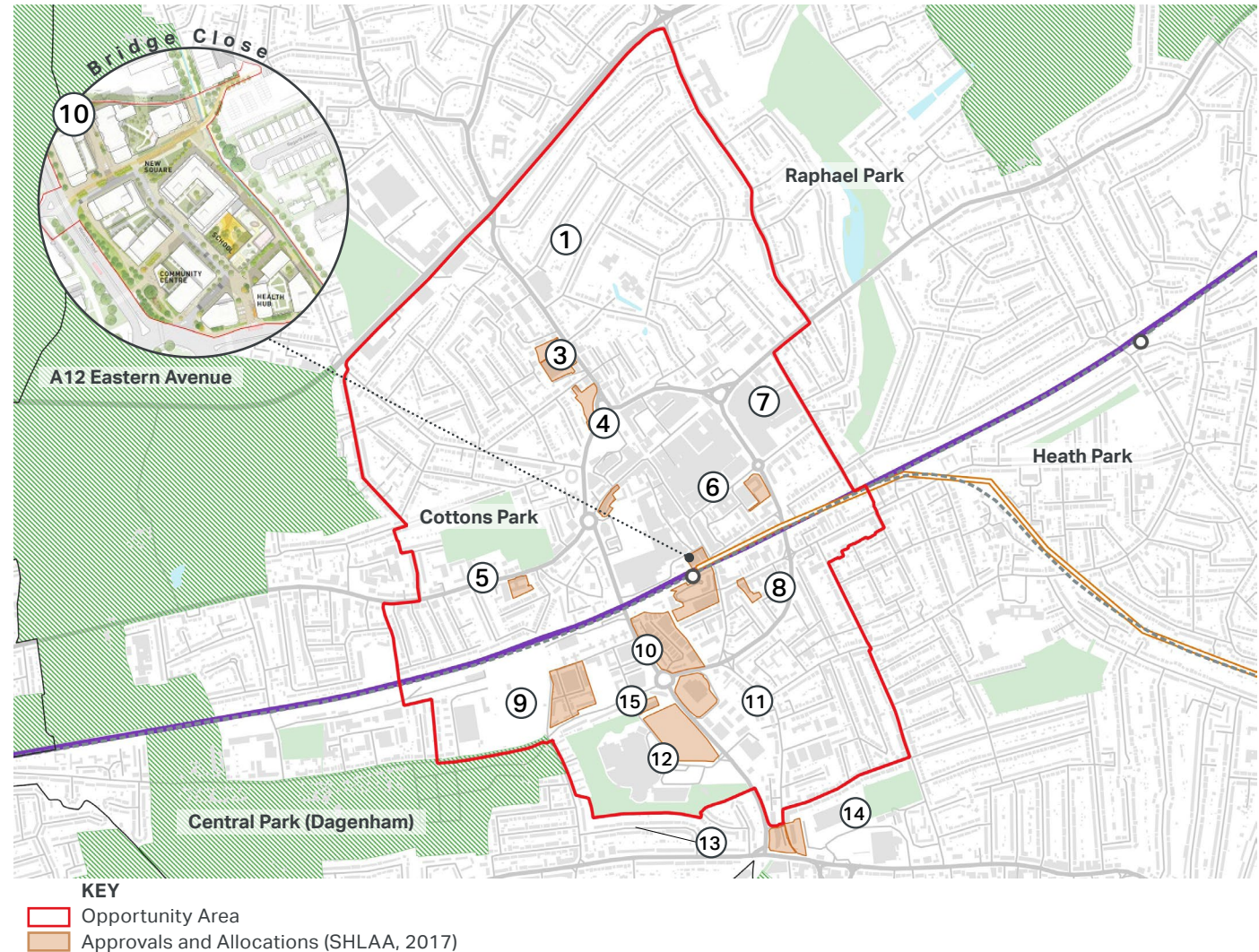
SHLAA 2017: Approvals and allocations



- ⑩ **Bridge Close Regeneration:** Planning application submitted December 2023 for 1070 homes.
- **Council regeneration scheme** - homes will be offered to locals first.
 - **Bridge Close is a former industrial area** close to Romford station within the Romford ring road.
 - Provision of **both affordable and private homes**.
 - Business/ work spaces are proposed.
 - Public realm and infrastructure improvements for Romford are proposed e.g. a school, health hub, green space and community centre.



Visualisation of the proposed school



Romford

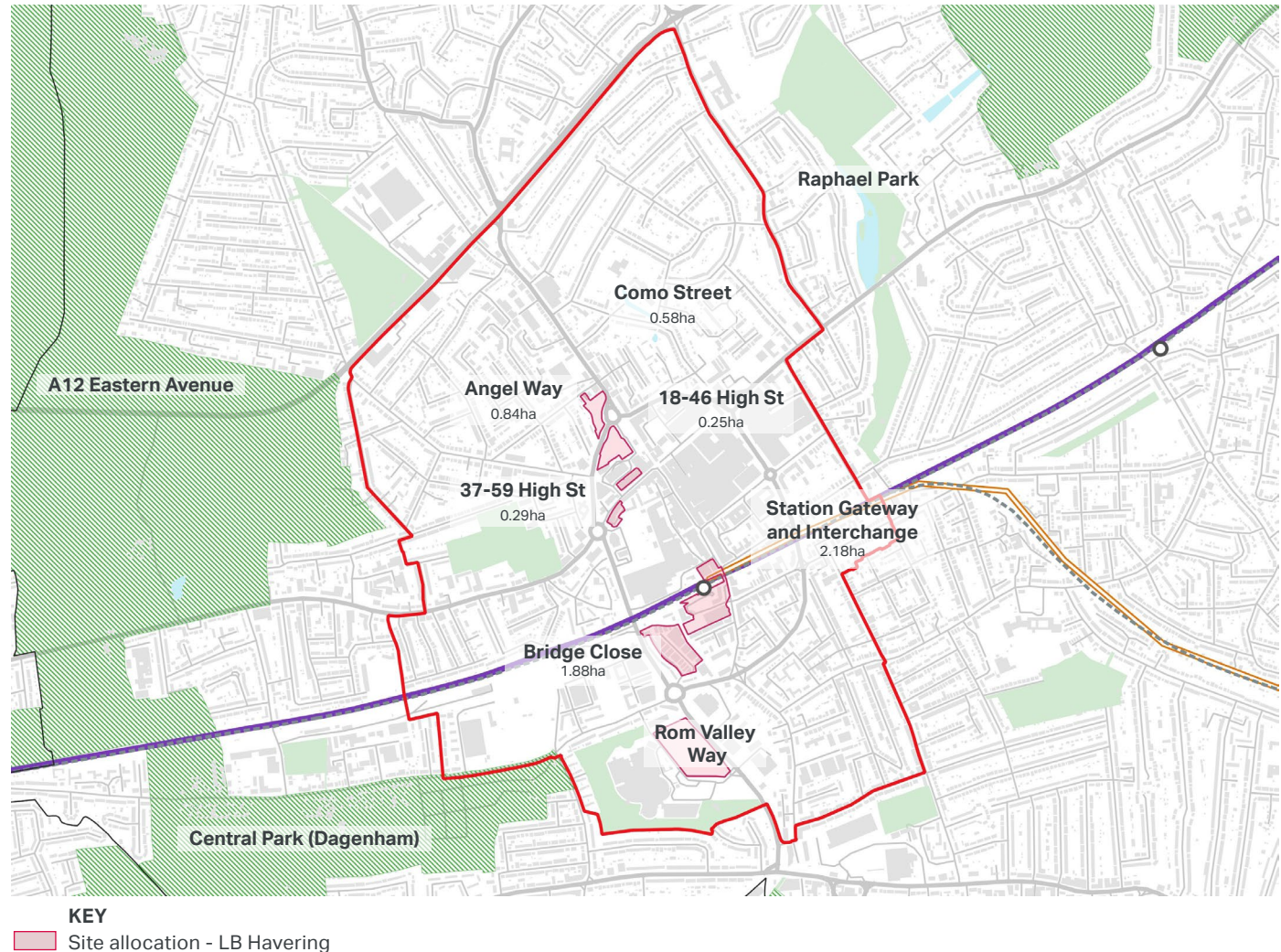
Site allocations: Havering Local Plan

Havering Local Plan 2016 - 2031 was adopted in 2021.

Specific opportunity sites within the Romford SDA are detailed in the Site Specific Allocations Local Plan and the Romford Area Action Plan DPD - both adopted in 2008.

The site allocations are shown in the adjacent map.

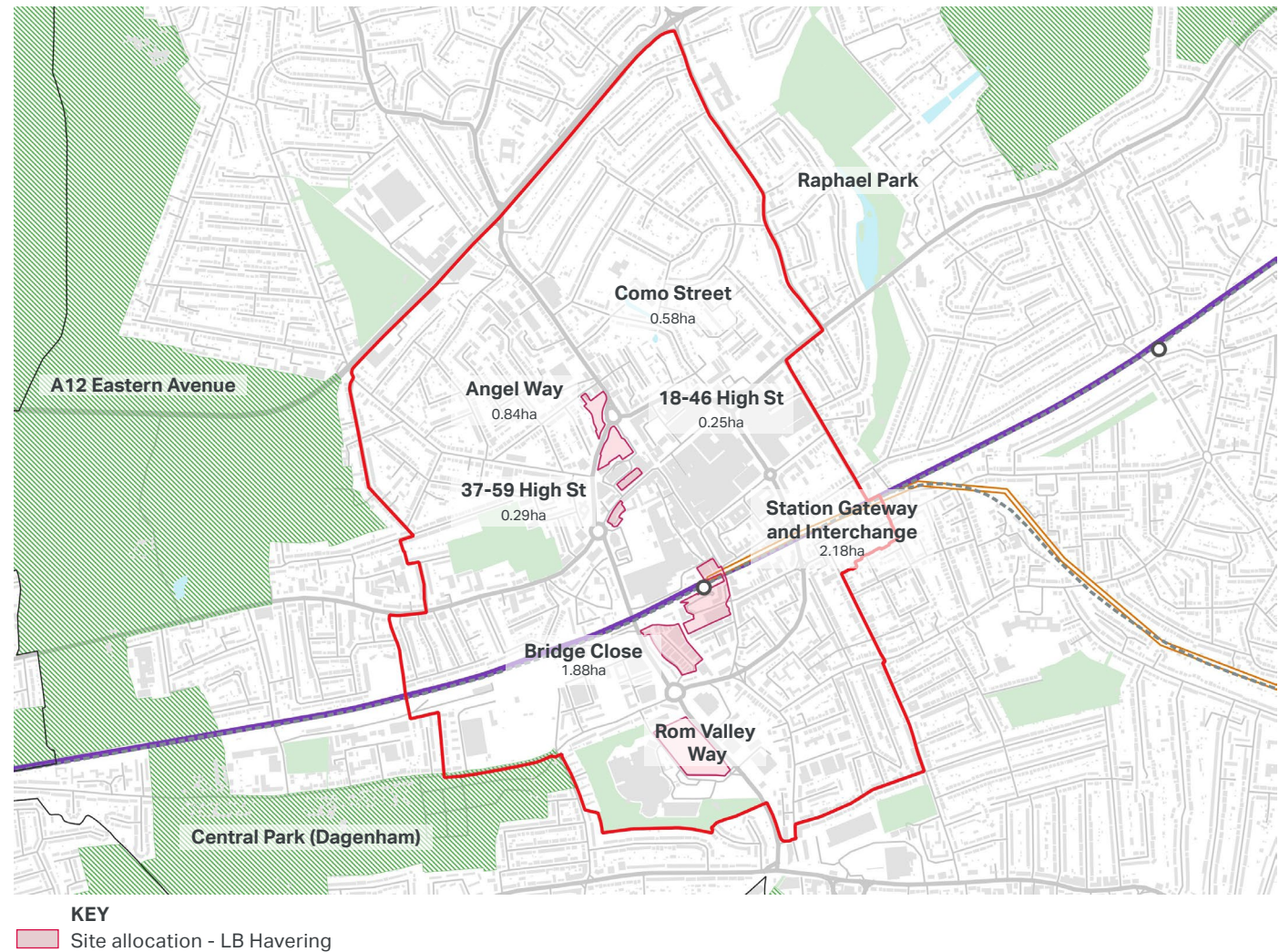
- **Angel Way:** Privately owned. Site allocated for mixed use development. 463 homes and a hotel currently under construction.
- **Bridge Close:** Multiple ownership. Site allocated for residential use with some commercial. Bridge Close Regeneration application submitted.
- **Como Street:** Council owned former car park. 170 homes and commercial space proposed but undecided.



Romford

Site allocations: Havering Local Plan

- **18-46 High Street:** Allocated for residential, retail and commercial use.
- **37-59 High Street:** Publicly owned. Allocated for residential, retail and commercial use.
- **Romford Station Gateway and Interchange:** Details of progress shown in the Transport chapter.



Romford

Development activity 2021



Source: vu.city

KEY

- Consented
- Under Construction
- Completed
- Opportunity Area

Romford

Development activity 2024

- Two major schemes approved in the south part of the OA (more than 1,800 new homes in total).



Source: vu.city

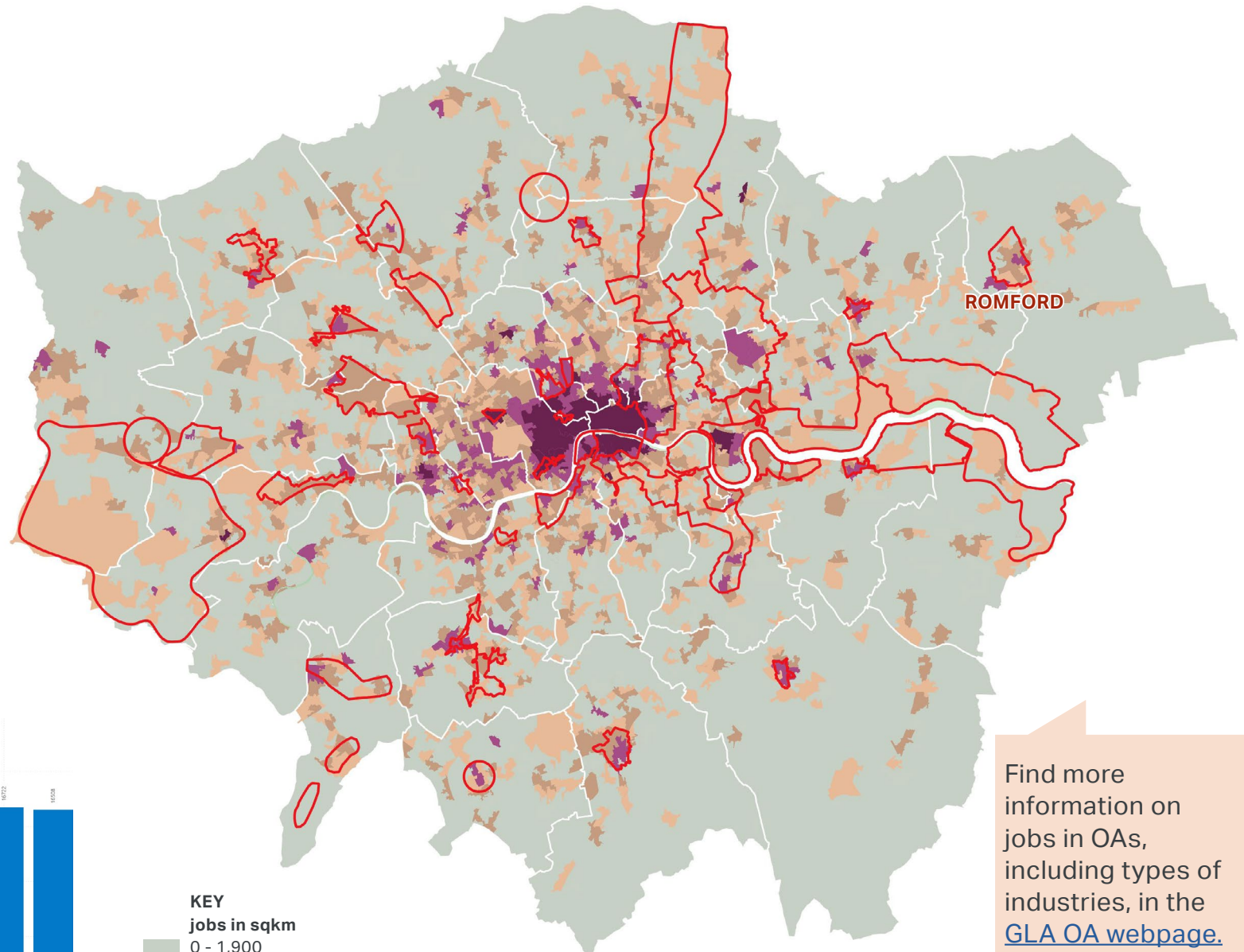
KEY

- Consented
- Under Construction
- Completed
- Opportunity Area

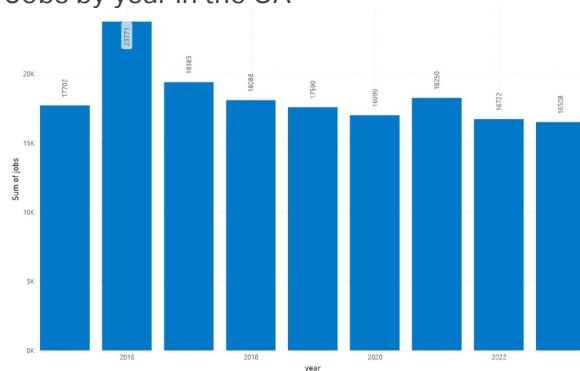
Romford

Jobs

- High jobs density in Romford Town Centre - hotspot outside of Central London as shown in the map.
- In 2023, there were 16,502 jobs in Romford OA which accounts for 18 per cent of the jobs in Havering.



Jobs by year in the OA



Source: Census, Business Register

KEY
jobs in sqkm

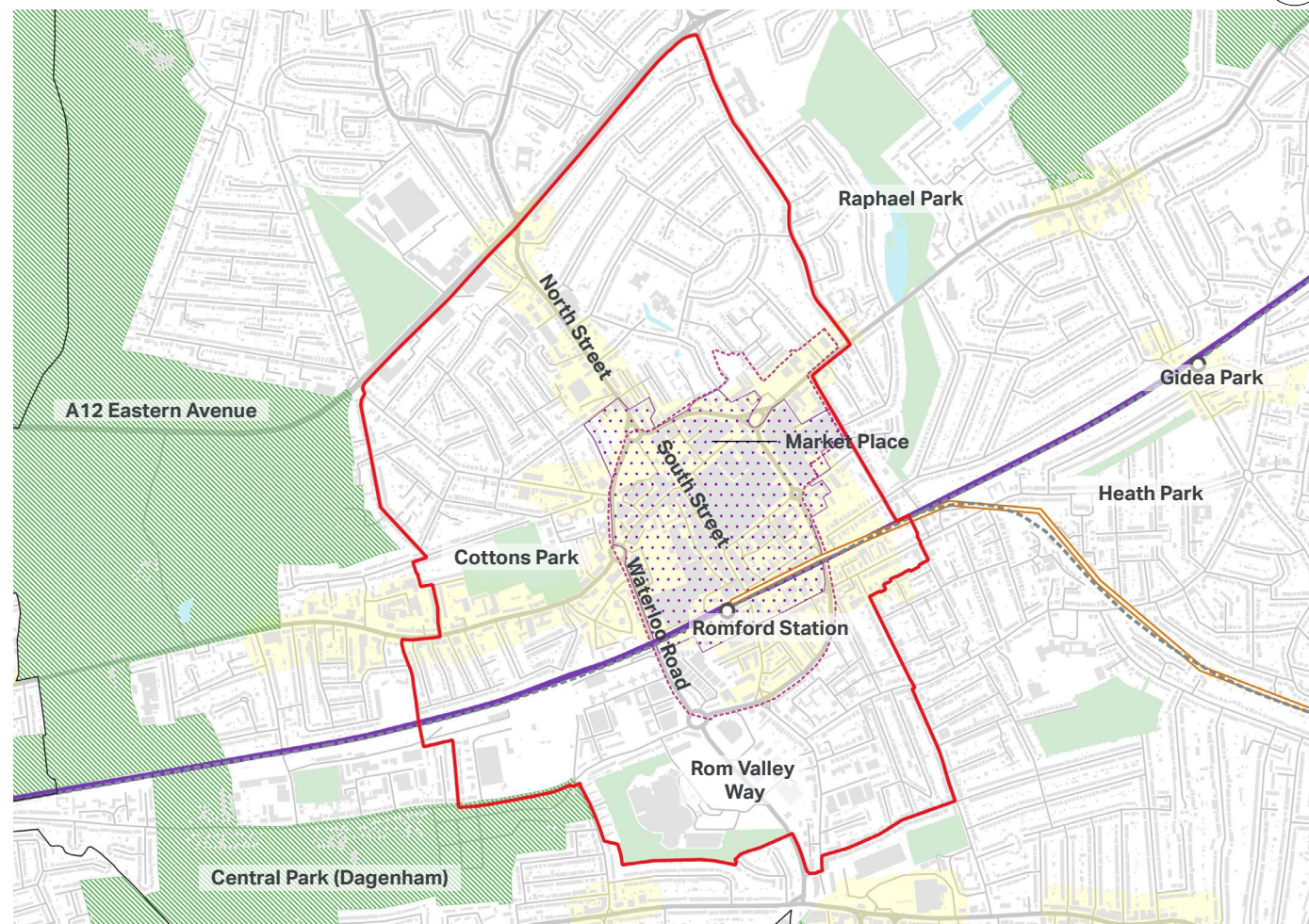
- 0 - 1,900
- 1,900 - 4,000
- 4,000 - 13,000
- 13,000 - 60,000
- above 60,000

Find more information on jobs in OAs, including types of industries, in the [GLA OA webpage](#).

Romford

Town Centres and High Streets

- Romford town centre is a metropolitan town centre and Havering's largest town centre.
- Retail, employment (B1 Office) and residential are main uses in the centre
- The Local Plan seeks to:
 - Reinforce retail uses on South Street
 - Deliver at least 5000 new homes over the first 10 years of the plan period
 - Improve active travel links to Bridge Close, Waterloo Road and the station

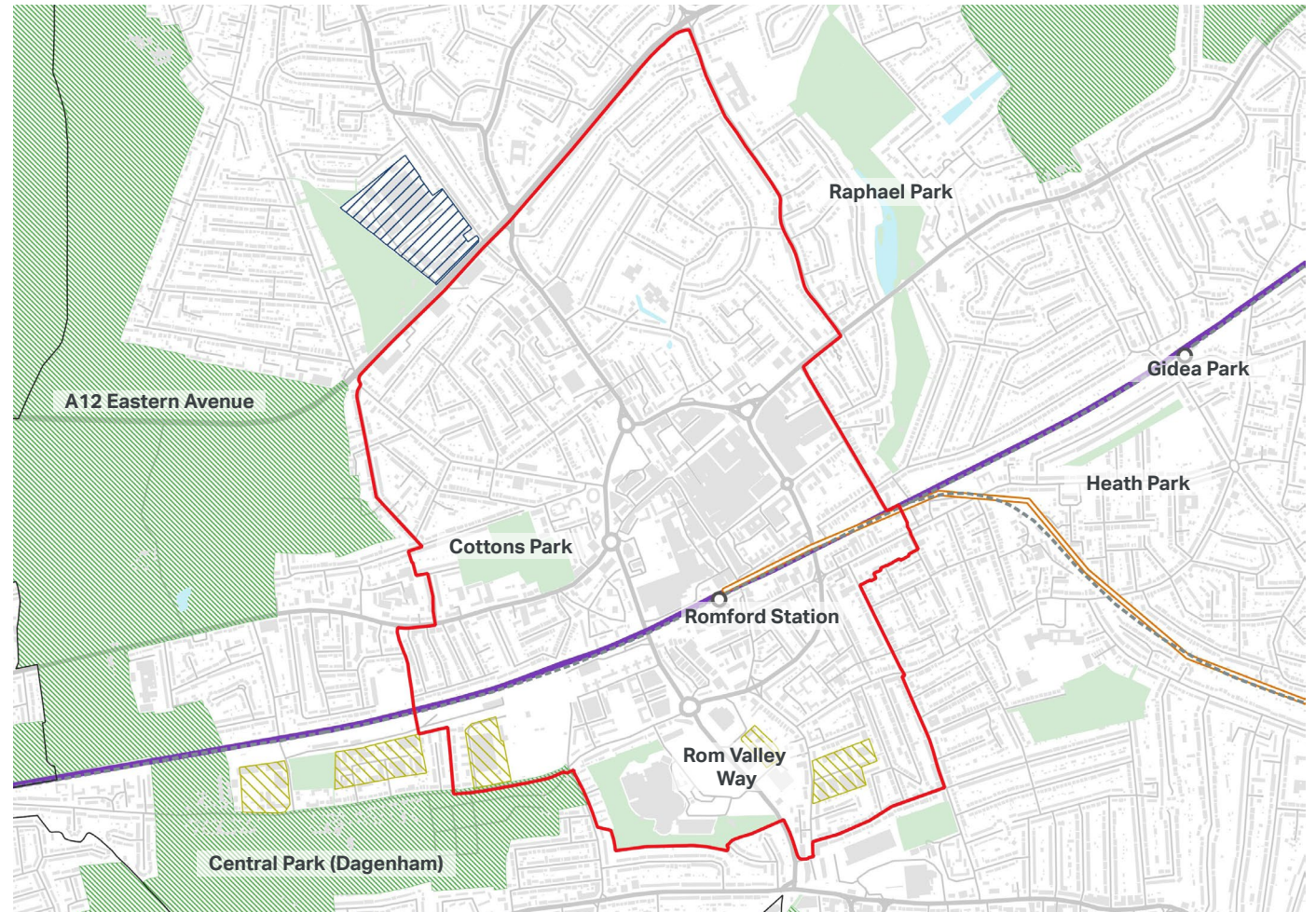


- KEY**
- Town Centre
 - High street
 - Business Improvement District (BID)

Romford

Industrial land: Protected Industrial land

- Two LSIS located along the south and south west boundary of the OA.



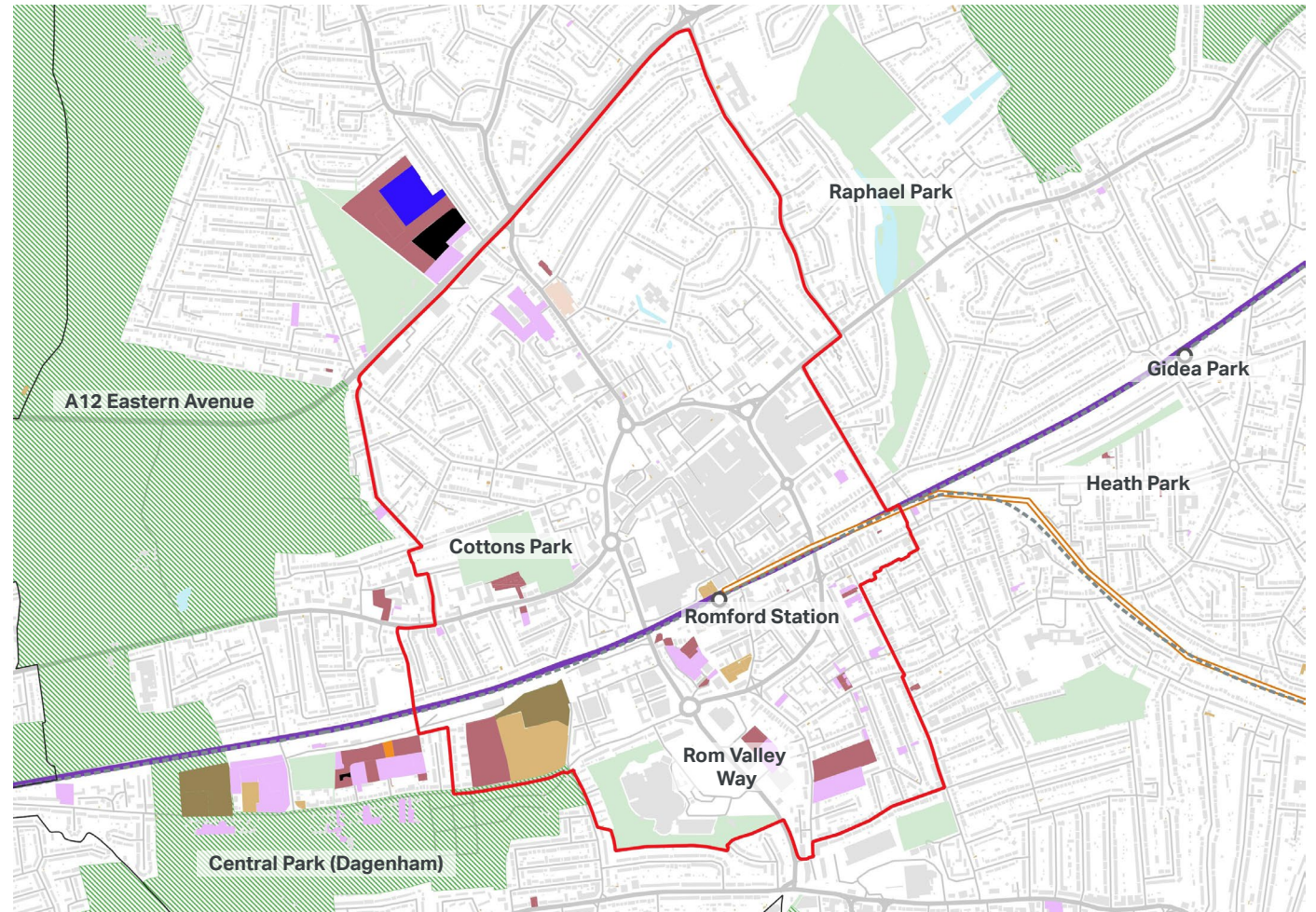
Source: London Industrial Supply Study

KEY
SIL
LSIS

Romford

Industrial land: Type of industry

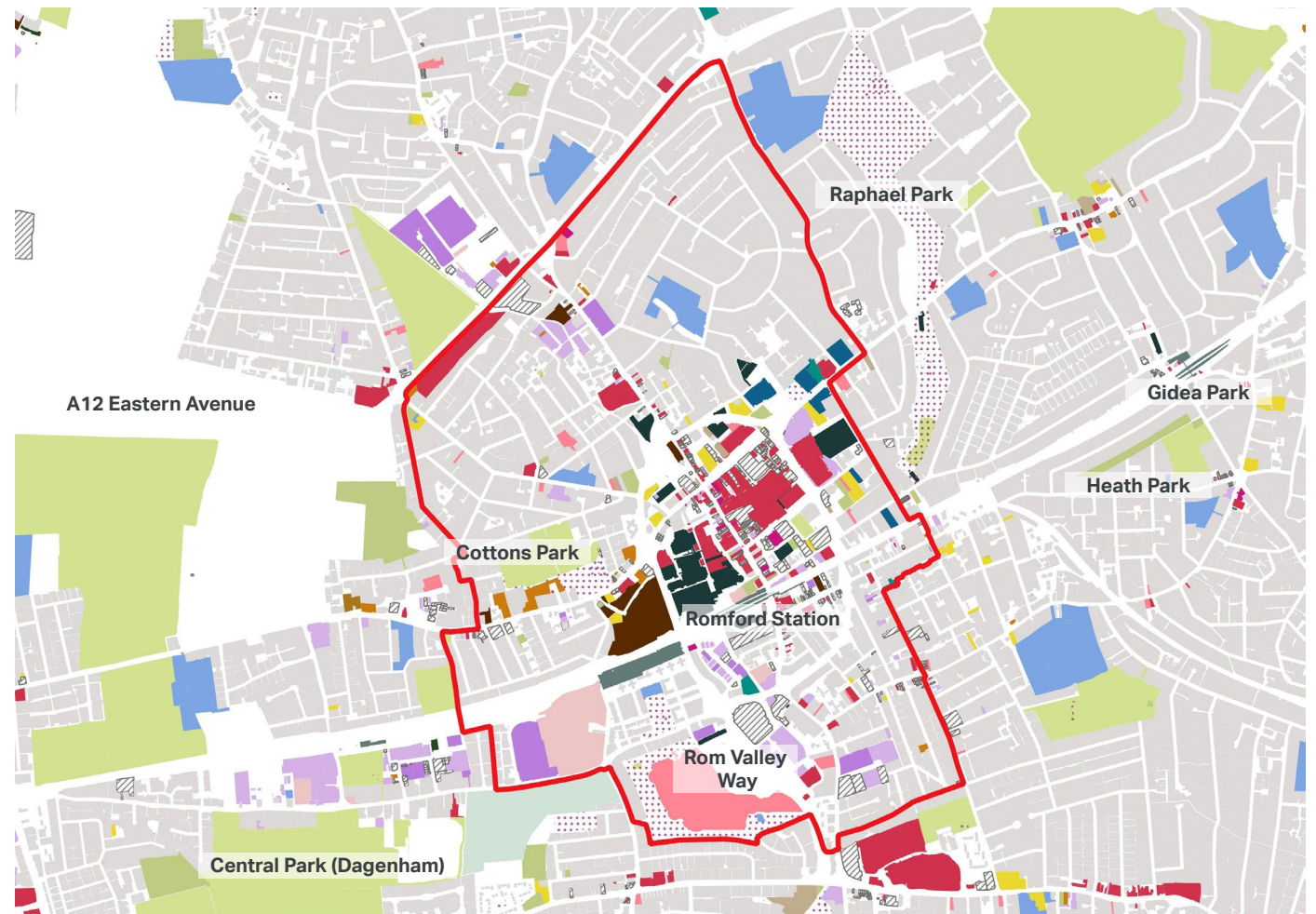
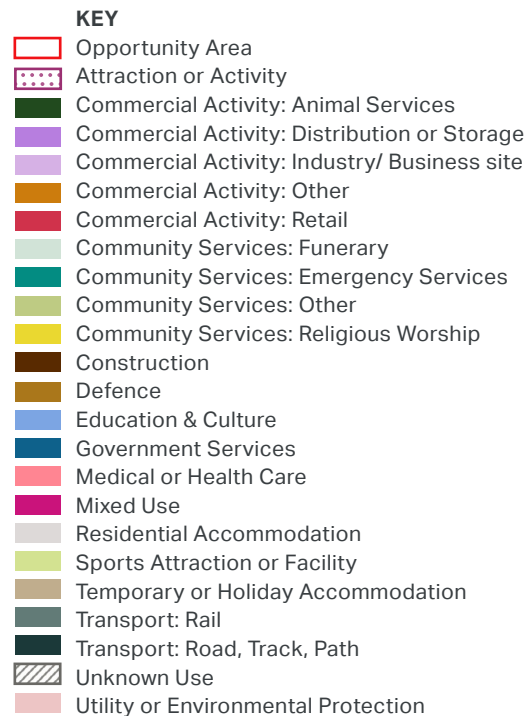
- KEY**
- Data centre
 - General Industry
 - Community Services
 - Land for buses
 - Open storage
 - Utilities
 - Vacant industrial land
 - Warehouse



Source: London Industrial Supply Study

Romford

Land uses

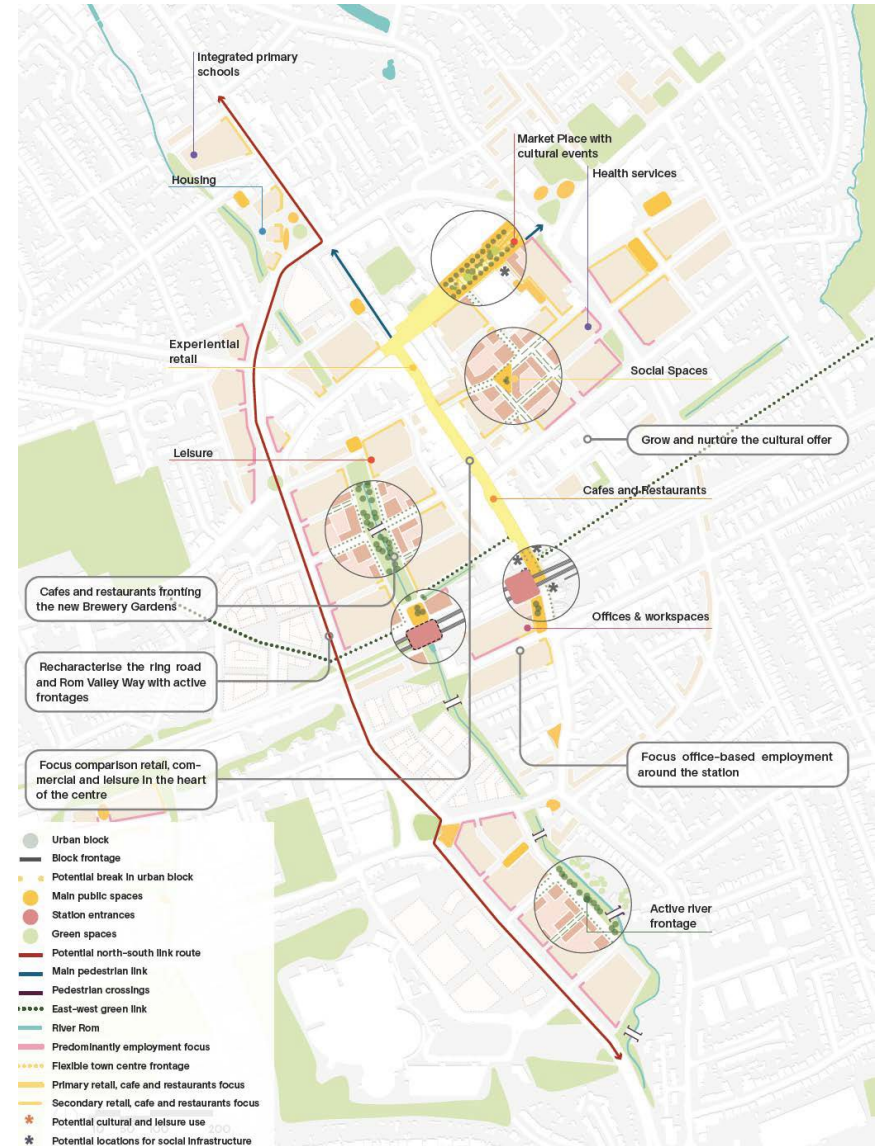


Source: OSNGB, City Intelligence Unit (GLA)

Romford

Place strategies: Romford Town Centre Masterplan

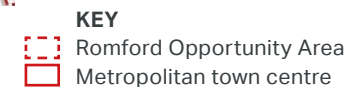
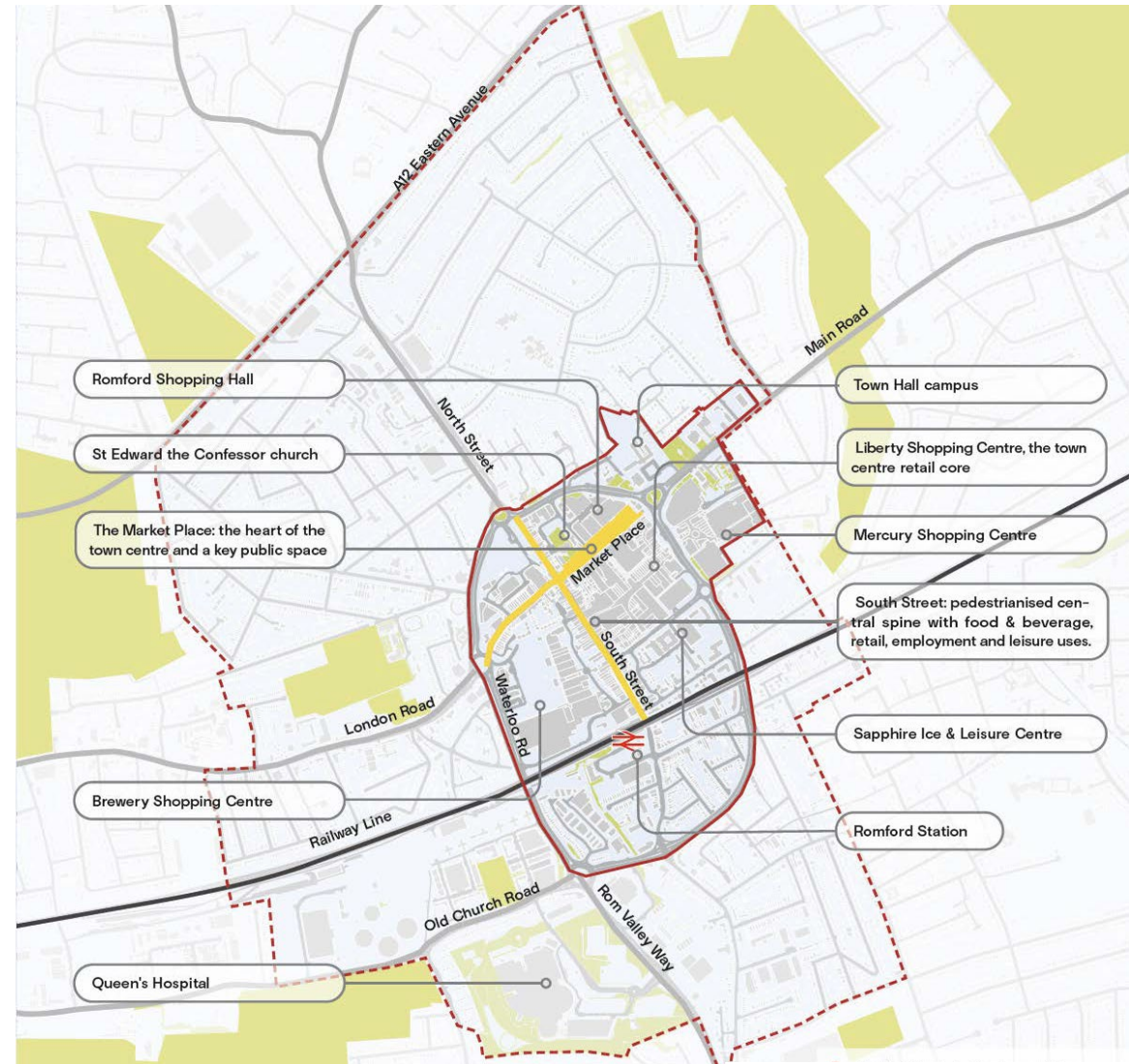
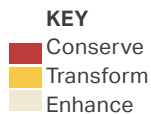
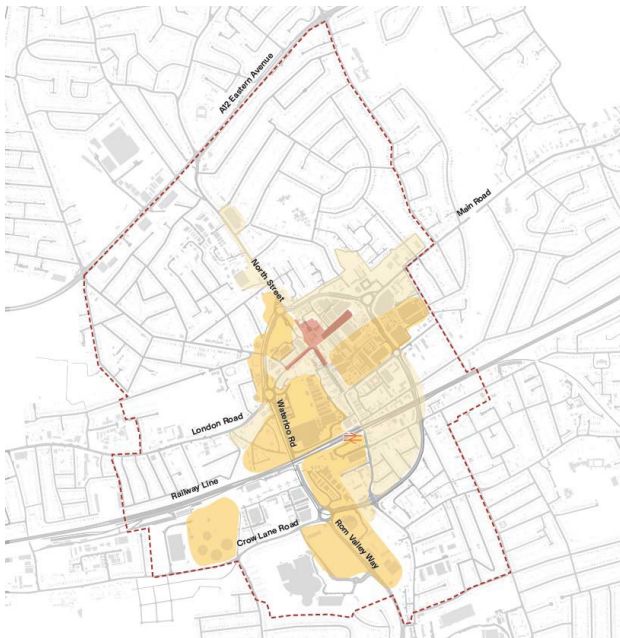
- LB Havering adopted a masterplan for the Town Centre in 2024.
- The masterplan follows an **infrastructure-led approach** for the town centre.
- The plan is confident that Romford will deliver **at least 2,000 additional jobs by 2041**.
- Includes 5 key projects:
 1. A new station entrance
 2. Re-characterising ring road
 3. Town centre public space creation
 4. Rejuvenate Romford Market Place
 5. River Rom public realm and active travel
- Ideas that received the most public support during engagement were rejuvenating The Market Place, improving the public realm and addressing anti-social behaviour in the town centre, and opening up and creating a high quality public realm at River Rom.



Romford

Place strategies: Romford Town Centre Masterplan

- The masterplan covers the Romford OA (also considered the Strategic Development Area (SDA)) and the Romford metropolitan town centre.
- Employment and business space new provision focused around Romford Station, Waterloo Road and Rom Valley Way.



Romford

Moving forward

Homes Delivery

- The OA is a relatively new one (adopted in 2021).
- There are a **number of opportunity sites allocated** within the OA to accommodate housing growth, with a couple strategic schemes recently receiving approval.
- Considering the completions alone, the OA has met 6 per cent of its 10-year indicative homes capacity - less than the London OA average rate.
- The OA has a **high pipeline at 5,000 new homes**. Most homes in the pipeline can be attributed to Bridge Close Regeneration (1,070 units) and the Former Ice Rink site (972 units) which are **located in Romford town centre**.

Economy

- Romford is one of **London's Metropolitan Centres**, and Havering's largest retail centre.

Transport

- Recent development progress shows that the OA is getting some momentum following the Elizabeth Line completion.
- The masterplan prioritises actions to allocate streetscape more equitably in the ring road.

Communities

- In 2021, Romford town centre was made up of pockets of families in social rented sector and city support workers occupying the southeast and north west directly outside of the ring-road.
- 50 per cent of the population in Romford Town Centre was born outside the UK, whilst 20 per cent is under 15 years old.

Proposition

- OA to be de-designed, and growth to be supported through a robust town centre policy.
- Positive development trends and recent town centre framework to support growth are in place to support growth.

