



Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment

Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment
(OSANA)

Thurrock Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment

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Chapter 1

Executive Summary

Purpose of this study

1.1 Thurrock Council commissioned LUC to undertake an Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment (OSANA) to support decision making processes in relation to open space within the borough.

1.2 Thurrock is a unitary authority area in Essex, with a population of just over 176,000. The area forms part of the Thames Gateway regeneration area and supports a broad variety of natural areas and open spaces which make up Thurrock's distinctive character.

1.3 Thurrock has significant differences in deprivation across the area, with over half of all households deprived in one or more dimensions. This deprivation has a knock-on effect resulting in higher rates of obesity, poorer air quality and lower than the average life expectancy for both males and females in the East of England.

1.4 Thurrock is also one of the fastest growing economies in the country, supported by major development and investment. There is an increasing pressure on housing and employment space, with Thurrock's population exceeding regional and national growth since 1991. Therefore, open space provision across Thurrock is essential for providing opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and quality of life.

1.5 The main objectives of this study are to:

- update the evidence base for informal open space and play in the area;
- set out the wider benefits of open space and play for Thurrock residents;
- audit and assess the quantity, quality, accessibility and value of open space and play facilities now and into the future, spatially identifying deficits and surpluses and setting appropriate local standards; and
- provide evidence within a strategic context to inform any future related strategies, planning policy and developer contributions.

1.6 The methodology for the assessment of open spaces in Thurrock reflect the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and has been

informed by local policy and recognised guidance on planning for open space and play space.

Approach to the study

1.7 There were 262 potential open space sites that were visited as part of this open space assessment. 21 sites were discounted as they were no longer deemed to be open spaces or there was no public access, leaving a total of 241 sites to audit. Overall, this equates to 2009.85 hectares of open space across the Borough. Within this selection of sites, 98 play audits were also conducted where play equipment was present. During site audits, three sites could not be accessed, which meant 238 sites were used for the quality and value analysis.

1.8 Of the total quantity of open space, 1092 hectares are considered freely accessible. In addition to this, there are 30.41 hectares of allotments in the Borough.

1.9 Sites were given scores for:

- 'Value' – the presence of various features and facilities, and value to the local community; and
- 'Quality' – aspects relating to management and the condition of features and facilities.

1.10 The 'quantity' of sites (the overall amount of a particular typology) was also calculated to highlight any oversupply, sufficiency or deficiencies. Figure 1.1 shows the sites by typology.

Typologies

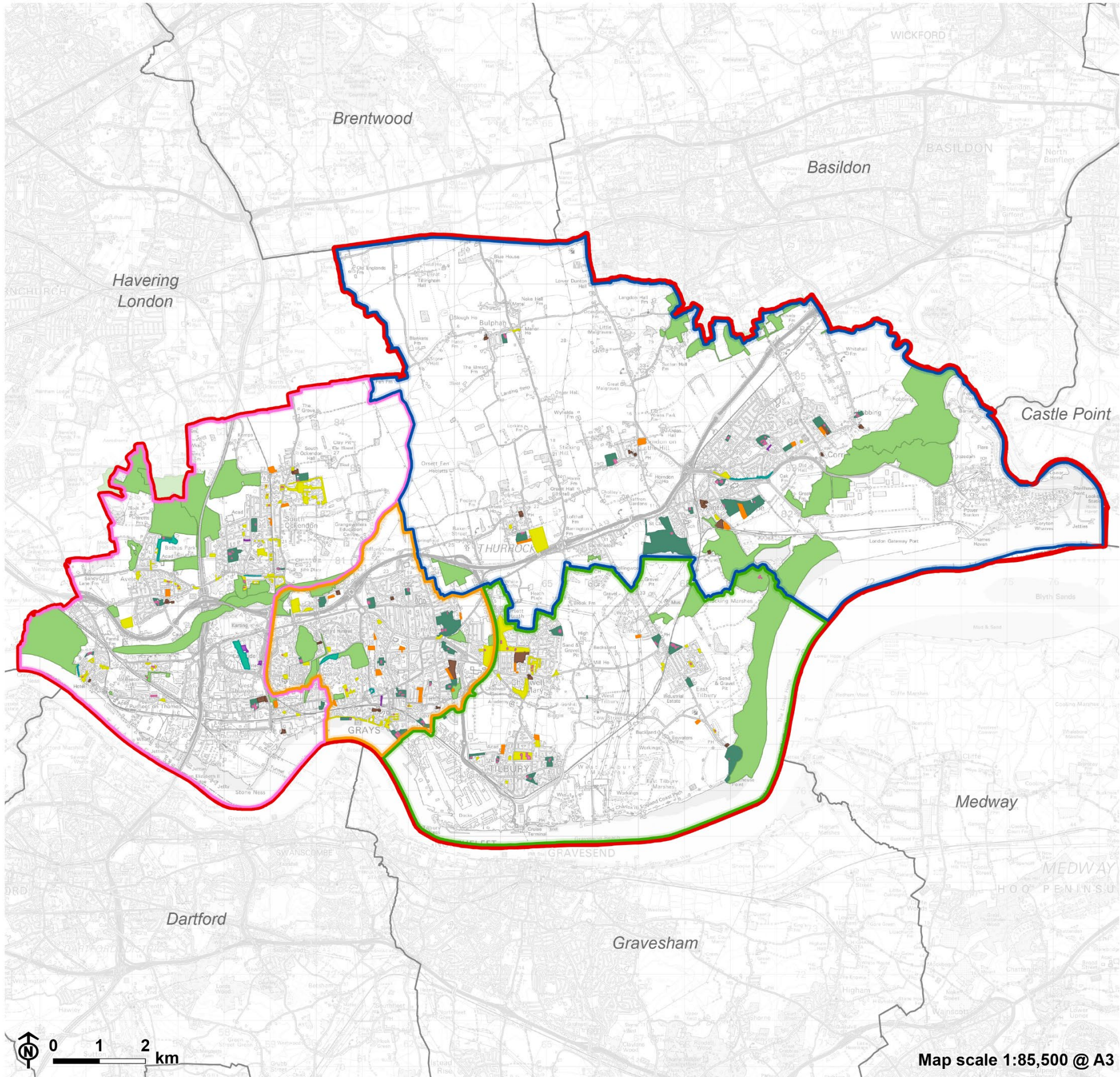
- Parks and gardens
- Natural and semi-natural greenspace
- Amenity greenspace
- Allotments
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Civic spaces
- Green corridors

- Provision for children and teenagers (as a primary and secondary typology)
- Outdoor sports provisions (as a secondary typology)

1.11 Open space was assessed by area based on the four Primary Care Network areas (PCNs):

- Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet
- Grays
- Stanford le Hope & Corringham
- Tilbury & Chadwell

Figure 1.1: Open Space Primary Typology



Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs
Assessment
Thurrock Council



Figure 1.1: Open Space Primary Typology

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Open space typology**
 - Allotment
 - Amenity greenspace
 - Cemeteries
 - Childrens play areas
 - Civic space
 - Green corridors
 - Parks and gardens
 - Natural and semi natural greenspace

Key findings

Accessibility

1.12 Thurrock as a whole has relatively good access to open space. Most of the borough either had good access to all levels of the open space hierarchy or is only deficient in access to one or two levels of the hierarchy. However, there are some areas deficient in access to all levels of the hierarchy, predominantly these are around Bulphan in the north and around Tilbury in the south.

1.13 Access to allotments (within 1.2km) was generally high across the borough, with the exception of the north of Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN around Bulphan and in the south of Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN around Purfleet-on-Thames.

1.14 Access to neighbourhood playable space was high across the borough, particularly in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN and Grays PCN. Access to open space within Tilbury & Chadwell PCN and Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN were focused around the main settlements. Access to local playable space was evenly spread across each PCN area. Pockets outside of the access catchment included the centre of Grays, north of Stanford le Hope and West Thurrock. Similarly, access to doorstep and small doorstep playable space was evenly spread across each PCN area. Pockets outside of the access catchment included West Thurrock, centre of Grays, east of Aveley and north of Stanford le Hope.

1.15 There was no access to youth space within Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN. Access across the other PCN areas was limited with areas within access catchments restricted to Tilbury, Chadwell, East Tilbury, Little Thurrock, Purfleet-on-Thames and south-east of Grays.

Quantity

1.16 Application of the quantity standard using Thurrock's 2025 population and current population projections for 2044 in the upcoming local plan found that there was an overall Thurrock deficiency in the provision of amenity greenspace and provision for children and teenagers. Provision of different typologies varied across each PCN area, with provision of allotments exceeding the standard in three out of four PCN areas and no PCN area meeting the proposed standard for provision for children and teenagers.

Quality and Value

1.1 In general, the borough forms a patchwork of differing quality and value open spaces. Overall, Grays PCN had the highest percentage of open spaces meeting both quality and value standards (60%), with Tilbury & Chadwell PCN having the biggest percentage of sites not meeting either standard (52%). Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN had the highest percentage of play spaces meeting both standards (56%), and Tilbury & Chadwell PCN with the lowest percentage (24%). More play spaces tended to meet the quality standard and not the value standard.

Developing a framework for providing healthy, active open space and play space in Thurrock

1.2 The importance of good access to high quality open space and play space to the health and well-being of communities is well recognised. There are also economic benefits of parks and green spaces in terms of creating employment, promoting economic activity and encouraging inward investment across an area by providing a draw and destination for visitors.

1.3 Parks and open spaces should be managed to provide for the diverse needs of the whole community. They should be multifunctional in design to accommodate a range of uses.

1.4 As any new development proposals in the borough come forward the Council will need to ensure that development addresses any potential impact arising from additional pressure on existing open space and play provision and provides for the needs of the growing and changing population.

1.5 This study sets out the key characteristics that should be provided within open spaces to ensure they are welcoming to all. Many of the principles focus on low key interventions which could be applied to a range of sites of varying size. These principles will help ensure open spaces in the Borough offer opportunities for play and informal recreation for people of all ages and abilities.

1.6 The results of the open space audit can be scrutinised in several ways to identify specific sites or broad geographic areas where enhancement of open space and play space would provide the greatest benefits for the communities they serve.

1.7 In order to prioritise areas for enhancement the following evidence, as developed through this study, should be considered and cross referenced:

- Performance of open spaces and play spaces against the proposed quality and value standards.
- Areas with poor access to open space (based on the accessibility standards), especially in areas where open spaces perform poorly against the quality and value standards.
- Areas with an under provision of open space in terms of quantity.

Chapter 2

Introduction

Background

2.1 Thurrock Council commissioned LUC to undertake an Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment (OSANA) to inform the Council's decision-making in relation to open space provision. The aim of this document is to present a comprehensive and evidence-based open space assessment that provides strategic recommendations that support the protection and enhancement of open and play space management across Thurrock.

2.2 The findings will build upon the Council's previous open space work and the Open Spaces Strategy (2006-2011).

2.3 Thurrock is a unitary authority area in Essex, with a population of just over 176,000. The area forms part of the Thames Gateway regeneration area, and its location along the north bank of the River Thames contributes to its industrial and commercial landscape. Thurrock boasts a variety of natural areas, including coast, estuary, rivers, woods, parks and open spaces which together make up Thurrock's distinctive character.

2.4 Thurrock has significant differences in deprivation across the area, with over half of all households deprived in one or more dimensions. This deprivation has a knock-on effect resulting in higher rates of obesity, poorer air quality and lower than the average life expectancy for both male and females in the East of England. There is also an increasing pressure on housing and employment space, with Thurrock's population exceeding regional and national growth since 1991.

2.5 Therefore, open space provision across Thurrock is essential for providing opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and quality of life.

Study aims and objectives

2.6 The main objectives for this study are to:

- Update the evidence base for informal open space and play in the Borough;
- Set out the wider benefits of open space and play for Thurrock residents;

- Audit and assess the quantity, quality, accessibility and value of open space and play facilities now and into the future, spatially identifying deficits and surpluses and setting appropriate local standards; and
- Provide evidence within a strategic context to inform any future related strategies, planning policy and developer contributions.

Structure of this report

2.7 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 3** sets out the study methodology.
- **Chapter 4** sets out the planning policy framework within which this study has been undertaken and sets out the strategic context for the assessment.
- **Chapter 5** provides detail on the socio-economic and demographic context in Thurrock to build up a picture of the needs of Thurrock's residents.
- **Chapter 6** sets out the findings of the open space and play space quantity assessment.
- **Chapter 7** sets out the findings of the condition and function assessment; informed by site surveys undertaken in March, April and September 2025.
- **Chapter 8** provides an approach to developing local standards for Thurrock and then sets out the results of applying these standards.
- **Chapter 9** sets out the approach to developing a framework for providing healthy, active open space and play space in Thurrock.

2.8 This report is designed to be accessible and compliant with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations. The report has been written in plain English and supported by GIS mapping, an executive summary, and detailed appendices.

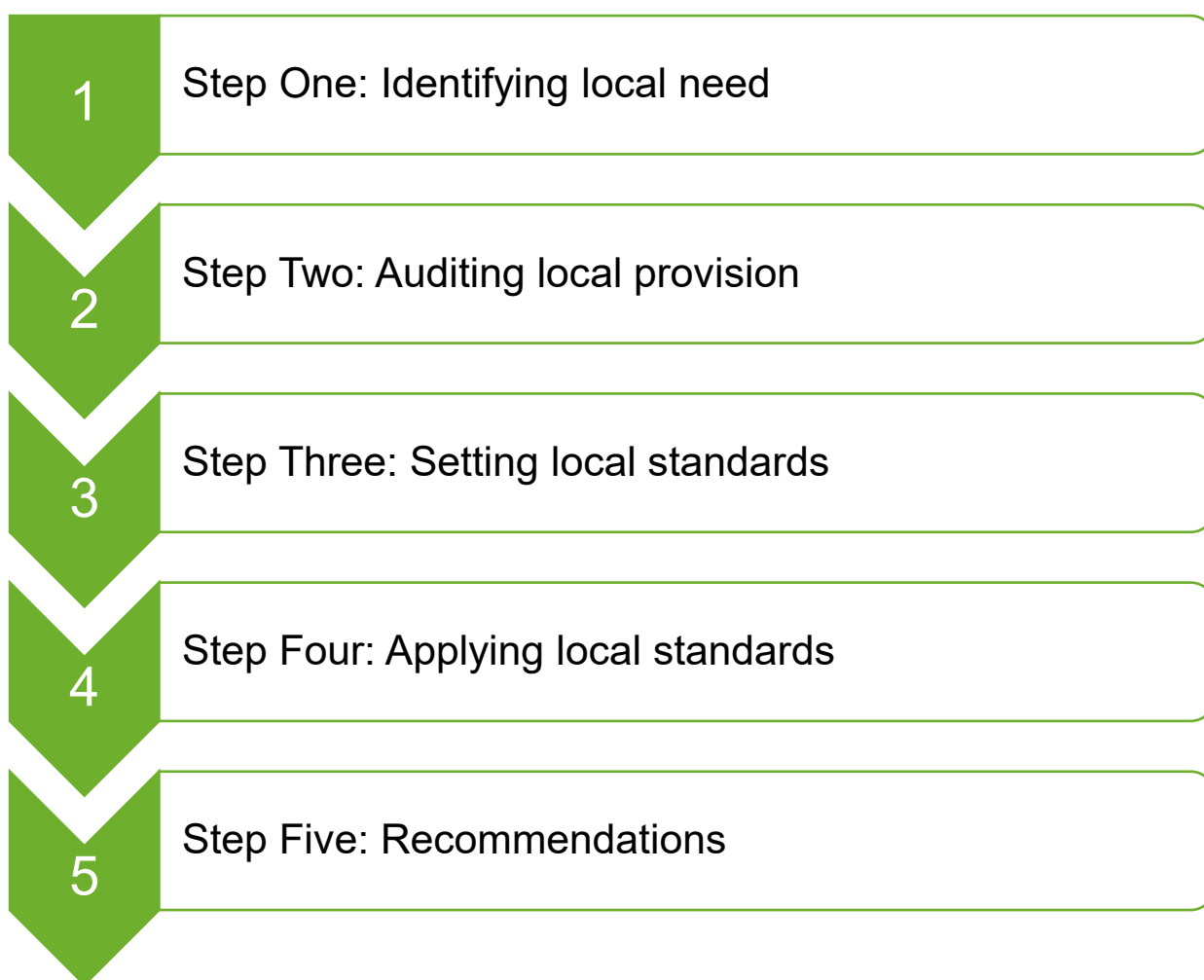
Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 The methodology for this assessment of open spaces in the Borough reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) and has been informed by recognised guidance on planning for open space and place space.

3.2 The following section sets out the five step approach taken to complete this Open Space and Needs Assessment (OSANA) study. Each step is described in more detail below.

Figure 3.1: Open space and play space methodology



Step 1: Identifying local need

3.3 An assessment of local evidence was undertaken to develop an understanding of the local population. Evidence on existing social and health inequalities, and how these correspond to access to open space, was reviewed with specific consideration given to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Analysis was carried out for geographical areas of deprivation, as well as for socio-economic groups at a disadvantage and groups with protected characteristics.

3.4 The assessment included:

- Analysis of estimated population growth and the pattern of development and growth in Thurrock, including housing projections;
- Review of the characteristics of the population, including health data (such as Sports England's Active Lives Survey) and demographic data;
- Review of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) alongside other health and wellbeing indicators;
- Analysis of the age profile, using data from Public Health England (PHE); and
- Development of a play needs index.

3.5 The findings were used to provide an overview of the implications for open space provision in Thurrock and are presented in Chapter 5. Key challenges identified include persistent health and wellbeing inequalities, increasing pressure for economic and housing growth, the need to respond to the climate emergency, and ensuring equality in both access to and experience of open space. Commentary was provided on the existing approach of Thurrock Council, with recommendations benchmarked against national and regional guidance.

3.6 A play needs index was also developed for the Borough. The following four data sets fed into the play needs index:

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Income deprivation affecting children (IDACI)
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Population density of dependent children aged 15 and below
- Public Health England: Obesity in reception age children (4-5 years)
- Public Health England: Obesity in year 6 children (10-11 years)

3.7 The four individual indices were normalised and combined. This generated a total score between 0 and 40 for each Lower Super Output Area (LSOA); higher values indicating higher need for play and lower values indicating areas of lower need.

Step 2: Auditing local provision

Audit preparation: Identifying sites to be included in the quantitative analysis

3.8 In preparation for the open space audit, a GIS dataset of open spaces was developed in consultation with the council. Each site was given a typology in accordance with the typologies outlined in CABI Open Space guidance and PPG17 guidance. Sites were categorised based on the primary 'functions' of the open space, but also categorised according to hierarchy, based on the size of the open space.

3.9 Play sites were captured as a secondary typology and mapped separately. Where these were located within a wider site, such as a park, the play site area was removed from the area of the park to ensure no double counting of areas when assessing amounts of each open space typology.

Thurrock Open Space Typologies

- Parks and gardens
- Natural and semi-natural greenspace
- Amenity greenspace
- Allotments
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Civic spaces
- Green corridors
- Provision for children and teenagers (as a primary and secondary typology)

3.10 The original open space datasets were reviewed and then cross-referenced with other source of information to ensure comprehensive coverage

of open spaces across the borough. This involved using aerial imagery, OS Greenspace layers, planning application data, internet research, and local knowledge to update and validate the open space dataset. The process also involved cleaning of existing site boundaries which were digitised to OS Mastermap where possible to ensure accurate area statistics could be generated.

3.11 New open spaces and play sites were also identified and added, while sites lost to development or have no public access were removed. Once the dataset was finalised, sites were categorised both by typology and by hierarchy following best practice, allowing for a deeper understanding of open space provision and how expectations around provision and accessibility vary across the borough.

Auditing local provision

3.12 Audits of open spaces across Thurrock were undertaken by experienced field surveyors within the consultant team and were based on an audit form agreed with the Council (see **Appendix A**). This task included an initial day on site as a group to audit a range of typologies, ensuring consistency in scoring across all team members. The open space audits assessed sites in terms of quantity, quality, and value of provision. This provided a robust and objective assessment of the different types of open and green spaces. Site visits also allowed for 'ground-truthing' of site typologies and the recording of any obvious changes to site boundaries that were not captured through the earlier data review.

3.13 This task included:

- Preparation of audit forms on mobile devices/tablets and the development of templates for individual site reporting;
- Desk-based review of available information for each site, including accessibility, environmental designations (such as biodiversity and cultural heritage), and connectivity; and
- Site audits, with an allowance made for up to 15 sites to be audited per day.

Analysis of accessibility

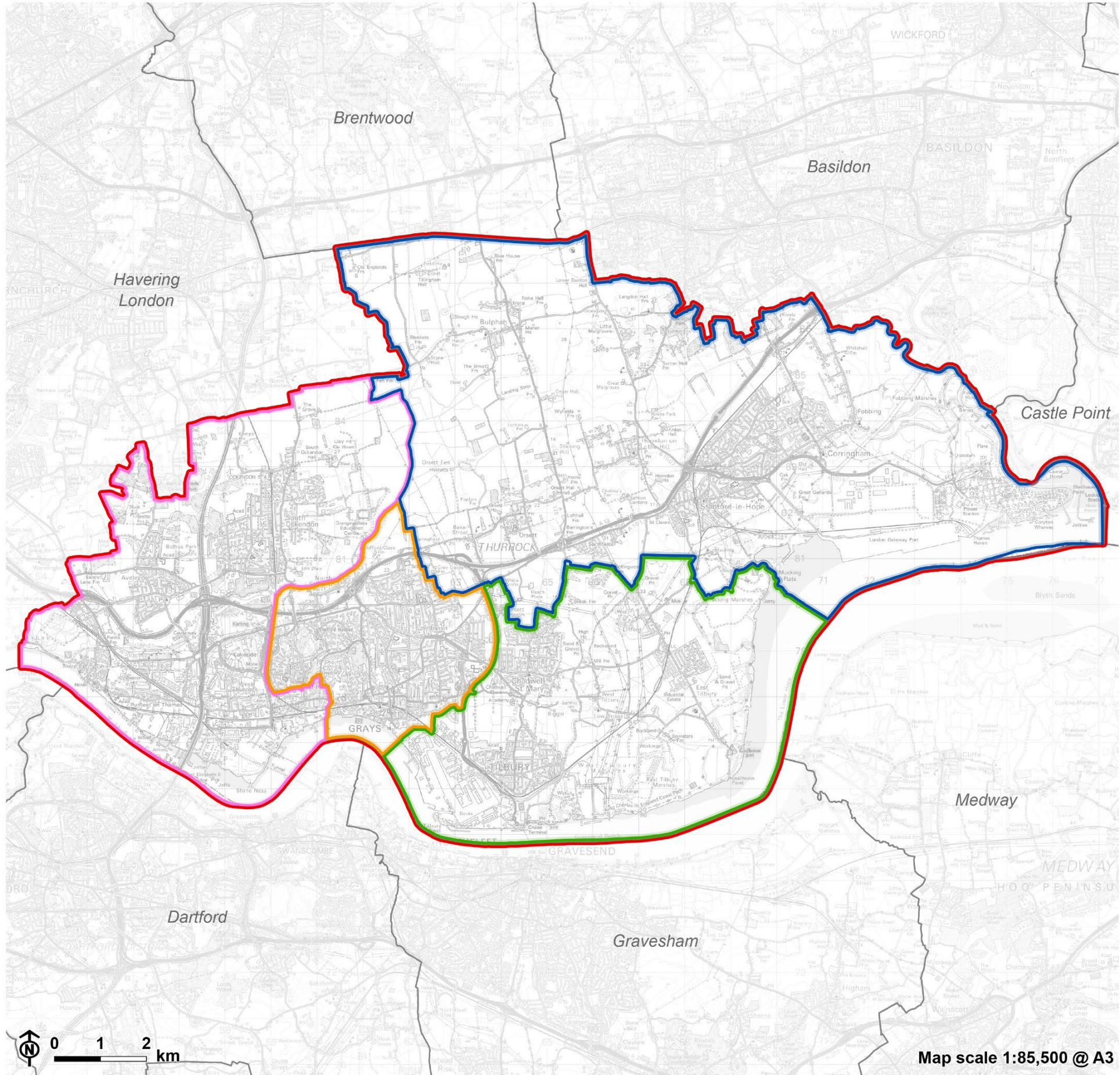
3.14 The findings of the audit were used to undertake a review of accessibility by Primary Care Network (PCN) areas across the borough (see Figure 2.1). This considered the distribution of provision in relation to areas of deprivation, and reviewed accessibility for groups experiencing social and health inequalities, as well as for groups with protected characteristics. The assessment also considered current open space provision against up-to-date population forecasts to inform future demand for open space use.

Figure 3.2: Primary Care Network Areas



Figure 3.2: Primary Care Network Areas

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN



Setting and applying quality and value criteria

3.15 As there is no nationally defined set of quality standards for open space and play within planning policy, a range of recognised guidance sources were considered to establish 'benchmark' standards. These included the Green Flag Award guidance, the Accessible Greenspace Standards (AGS), Fields in Trust's 'Creating Great Spaces for All', Natural England's Country Park Accreditation, and Play England guidance.

3.16 An established framework for assessing the quality and value of open spaces was applied, based on Green Flag Award criteria and adapted to reflect the local context. This framework encompassed the following key themes:

- A Welcoming Place;
- Healthy, Safe and Secure;
- Clean and Well Maintained;
- Sustainability;
- Nature conservation and heritage;
- Community Involvement;
- Marketing and culture; and
- Play and Recreational Value.

3.17 This framework, previously used to conduct quality and value assessments of open spaces for over 30 local authorities, was adopted as the baseline to establish assessment criteria for Thurrock. The final approach to quality and value audits was agreed with the client team, ensuring the collection of additional information to support a robust assessment of open space provision.

3.18 The LUC audit form was used to collect information on the range of features present (value criteria) and to assess the condition of features, facilities, and maintenance standards (quality criteria). Points were assigned to each feature or rating, resulting in a quality score and a value score for each site. The audit form scoring system is outlined in **Appendix B**.

3.19 A GIS-linked database was developed to capture information during fieldwork, allowing for close integration with GIS systems. This database provides a resource for the ongoing management of open space information following completion of the study.

3.20 The audit gathered information to highlight any changes relating to areas of deficiency and over-provision. Data was collected in a format that supports benchmarking and the measurement of the success of sites.

Typology and hierarchy

3.21 Following the completion of the open space audits, a final review of the typologies was undertaken. In consultation with the client team, updates to site functions were made where appropriate. Based on experience from previous open space audits, particular attention was given to accurately reflecting the multiple functions that some open spaces serve, while avoiding double counting that could distort the quantity assessment.

Outputs from open space audits

3.22 Data from the open space audits was collected using ESRI Field Maps and Survey123 using our bespoke audit form, based on the Green Flag criteria. This approach generated both quality (based on the condition of features within each open space) and value scores (based on the functionality and types of facilities on offer). The audit form also included fields for identifying potential enhancements at each site, aligned with the wider benefits promoted through the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework (NEGIF) principles.

3.23 The findings from the open space audits were presented for each site in both Excel format and as GIS shapefiles and a database. The data was organised by Primary Care Network (PCN) (see Figure 3.2) and other relevant geographies, including areas of deprivation, to support spatial analysis and interpretation. The borough is comprised of four PCNs:

- Aveley, South Ockendon and Purfleet;
- Grays;
- Stanford le Hope & Corringham; and
- Tilbury & Chadwell.

Step 3: Setting local standards

3.24 This stage defined standards to guide the management and enhancement of the open space network, including establishing levels of provision to be delivered through new development. To ensure these standards were robust,

their development were informed by national best practice guidance, relevant local examples, the results of the needs assessment, and audit data. This process was undertaken in liaison with relevant officers from Thurrock Council and other key stakeholders, as appropriate.

3.25 Standards were set for quantity, quality and accessibility for each type and hierarchy of open space. In addition, value standards were developed to reflect the functional importance of spaces to communities and their contribution to the wider green infrastructure network. The standards took into account the need to address identified geographical, social, and health inequalities, as well as the need to support Thurrock's resilience to climate change. The approach reflected up-to-date thinking on open space provision. This level of analysis enabled the identification of open spaces that may be surplus to requirements, underutilised, or at risk of becoming so in the future.

Setting quantity standards

3.26 Quantity standards were defined for each typology and hierarchy of open space, expressed as hectares per 1,000 people. These were informed by the outcomes of the needs assessment, national best practice, and comparative benchmarks from other local authorities. Consideration was also given to establishing bespoke quantity standards in areas identified as requiring additional provision due to projected residential growth, as outlined in the emerging New Thurrock Local Plan.

Setting accessibility standards

3.27 Accessibility catchments were developed for each open space typology and hierarchy, based on either straight-line walk distances or actual walking routes, in agreement with the client team. These catchments were informed by good practice guidance, needs assessment results, and standards applied by other comparable authorities.

3.28 Any barriers to accessing open space, physical and perceived (e.g. concerns about safety), were plotted to provide a more accurate understanding of the true accessibility of open spaces. Additional criteria embedded within LUC's audit form were used to assess these accessibility factors and capture elements that may deter potential users.

Setting quality and value standards

3.29 Standards were set for quality and value, providing a benchmark against which each site can be assessed. Quality and value standards have been set for each typology and level of the size hierarchy (where appropriate), which ensure that sites are compared 'like for like' with sites that would be expected to provide a similar 'offer'.

3.30 The quality and value standards were developed through an understanding of what should be expected of each type of open space in Thurrock and are intended to be both aspirational yet realistically achievable.

Step 4: Applying local standards

3.31 Following the testing of the standards outlined in the previous stage and in alignment with Natural England's 'Process Journey for Local Planning Authorities', the integration of these standards into wider green infrastructure (GI) policies was explored. This included a detailed critique of emerging policies within the New Thurrock Local Plan. Based on this review, policy recommendations were developed for the incorporation of bespoke open space standards. For the purpose of understanding spatial variation across Thurrock, the area has been divided into four spatial analysis areas based on Primary Care Networks (PCNs), shown in Figure 3.2 (p.22).

Applying quantity standards

3.32 The defined quantity standards were applied and analysed across Thurrock, expressed as hectares per 1,000 population. Results were presented using tables and graphical outputs supported by explanatory text. The analysis included a benchmarking exercise comparing current provision levels in Thurrock with those of neighbouring and demographically (size and type) comparable authorities. Future provision needs were also projected based on anticipated population growth to understand the implications for open space demand over time.

Applying accessibility standards

3.33 Accessibility was assessed through a series of GIS-mapped outputs illustrating which areas of Thurrock were within catchment distances for each open space typology and hierarchy. This spatial analysis enabled the

identification of populations located outside of access catchments for multiple open space types. The findings were further broken down by defined analysis areas to provide a more detailed understanding of spatial inequalities in open space provision.

Applying quality and value standards

3.34 In consultation with the client team, quality and value benchmark scores (standards) were established for each type of open space and across different levels of hierarchy. The audit form results for open and play spaces were then compared to the relevant quality and value benchmarks set and categorised as one of the following:

Higher Quality / Higher Value	Higher Quality / Lower Value
++	+-
Lower Quality / Higher Value	Lower Quality / Lower Value
--+	--

3.35 The findings were presented using tables and suite of GIS maps to visually represent the performance of sites against the two standards.

Step 5: Recommendations

3.36 The findings from the previous steps were brought together to provide recommendations on:

- Addressing future open and play space needs through planning;
- Highlight areas that would benefit from improvements to open space provision; and
- A framework to support decision-making around prioritisation for investment and development contributions.

3.37 Chapter 9 sets out planning policy approaches for addressing future needs through planning in Thurrock. It includes recommendations for quantity, quality, value, and accessibility standards for each open space typology and hierarchy. The chapter summarises the results of applying these standards to both current and future needs, taking into account projected development in the emerging New Thurrock Local Plan. It also provides clear guidance for calculating both

on-site and off-site open space requirements, offering a basis for developer contribution policies.

3.38 Opportunities were identified for new, innovative, and high-quality green spaces that would support environmental mitigation, adaptation, and climate resilience. Where appropriate, site-specific recommendations were provided to improve the functionality and performance of existing spaces. Areas where investment would be most beneficial were also highlighted, helping to direct resources toward the most impactful interventions.

Chapter 4

Planning policy and strategic context

4.1 The following section sets out the strategic context for the study as well as a review of relevant national, regional and local policy and guidance.

National context

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) [\[See reference 1\]](#) outlines the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF sets out requirements for open space assessment, including the importance of considering open space, green infrastructure and sports provision in the development of local plans.

- **Paragraphs 96 and 98** require that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places; referencing safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities and high quality public space as a means to achieving this. Emphasis is placed on positive planning for the provision and resilience of shared spaces and community facilities, such as sports venues and open spaces.
- **Paragraph 103** states that *“access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.”*

The paragraph also specifies that up-to-date, robust assessments of open space need will be required to support planning policies. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine open space provision needs and subsequently “plans should seek to accommodate” this need.

- **Paragraph 104** outlines circumstances in which open space can be developed for different uses. It sets out that existing open space should not be built on unless:
 - an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
- **Paragraph 106** provides a mechanism by which local authorities can protect some open spaces under a 'Local Green Space' designation. It is stipulated that areas under this designation should be managed by policies which are consistent with those for the Green Belt.
- **Paragraph 188** states that a strategic approach to plan making should be undertaken to ensure that, within the plan area, networks of habitats and green infrastructure are maintained and enhanced. This approach should also be taken when planning for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

National Planning Practice Guidance

4.3 National Planning Practice Guidance provides further detail on the development and implementation of policies within the NPPF [\[See reference 2\]](#). Guidance on natural environment and open space includes:

- **Natural environment:** this section highlights green infrastructure as a network of natural capital assets (including parks and open space, woodlands, allotments etc.) that provide multiple environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Guidance is provided regarding the use of GI in planning, including how GI can be considered in planning decisions and examples of how GI can help in the delivery of specific goals such as building a strong economy, achieving well-designed places, promoting healthy and safe communities, conserving and enhancing the natural environment and mitigating climate change.
- **Open space, sport and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space:** this section emphasises that planning authorities and developers should have regard for the duty to cooperate where open space serves a wider area. The document defines open space as the following: "open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure". Guidance covers how open space should be incorporated into planning, including signposting to

information surrounding needs assessment, local PRow networks and Local Green Space Designation. The guidance also advises that authorities and developers refer to Sport England Guidance in assessing the need for sports and recreation facilities and that they may need to consult Sport England where development has the potential to impact upon such facilities.

Environmental Improvement Plan (2023)

4.4 The 2018 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) [\[See reference 3\]](#) sets the direction for the Environment Act, including long-term targets for environmental improvement. It sets a commitment to a national GI framework, a network of 'nature recovery areas' and to embed the principle of 'environmental net gain' to development. The 2023 Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) [\[See reference 4\]](#) is the Government's first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the 25YEP vision, setting out how government will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each goal for improving the environment. It highlights actions that will help nature recovery, reduce environmental pollution, mitigation of climate change and use of resources. Specifically, it sets out the Government's support for habitat creation, multi-functional sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs), and natural spaces close to where people live and work. This is matched with interim targets to measure progress.

4.5 The EIP reinforces the importance of securing long term positive action to improve people's lives and the environment. A key delivery mechanism proposed in the plan is the planning system, which will involve the system integrating 'Biodiversity Net Gain' into development. The plan also seeks to improve access to high quality greenspaces:

'This Environmental Improvement Plan supports our levelling up goals, including how we will improve the equality of access and quality of green space in over 100 neighbourhoods across the UK, and align our planning system with the priorities in this document.'

The Environment Act (2021)

4.6 The Environment Act [\[See reference 5\]](#), published in 2021 sets out provisions to make targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment. The Act requires the development of targets by the Government to facilitate change and drive a landscape-scale, nature-recovery led response.

4.7 The Act sets out four ‘priority areas’ of water, air quality, biodiversity and resource efficiency/waste reduction. The Act also outlines Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and states the responsibility of local authorities to review all policies regarding nature conservation every five years.

Regional context

Fit for the Future: Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Essex, Southend and Thurrock 2021-31 (2021)

4.8 This strategy encourages organisations and individuals across Essex to take action to increase the access and opportunities for physical activity [\[See reference 6\]](#). The strategy has five key objectives which are outlined below:

- **Strengthening communities** - all communities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock use the power of physical activity and sport to develop connection, inclusion and resilience.
- **Active environments** - to work collectively to develop and provide attractive, accessible spaces that meet the specific needs of the local community to become active.
- **Children and young people** - to ensure every child has the best start in life, so they can lead healthy, active and happy lives.
- **Levelling up health and wellbeing** – utilise the power of physical activity to change behaviours and enable people to do things for themselves and their local community.
- **Sport and physical activity** - to support the recovery, development and growth of the sport and physical activity sector to build a highly skilled and diverse workforce and tackle identified inequalities in the sector.

4.9 The strategy identifies open spaces as key areas for physical activity and having access to local spaces as essential to delivering the objectives of the strategy. It also identifies the negative impact Covid-19 had on physical activity levels and the importance of raising the profile of physical activity opportunities across the area since the pandemic.

Local context

4.10 There are several key strategies, plans and policies that support open space considerations in Thurrock's local context. These are outlined below.

Thurrock Local Plan Core Strategy (2015)

4.11 The Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (2015) [See reference 7] sets out the spatial vision for strategy and planning policies for Thurrock on an array of topics, including open space. Strategic Spatial Objectives are set out to achieve the Spatial Vision for the Borough of Thurrock. Those relating to open space include:

- "Create a safe, healthy, accessible and inclusive environment for the community of Thurrock through high quality design led development and open space."
- "Protect and enhance the natural, historic and built environment including biodiversity, landscape character, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and other heritage assets and open space through positive improvement."
- "Develop the Greengrid network of biodiversity sites, historic sites, green infrastructure and open spaces linking existing and new communities, the urban areas, countryside and access to the river. Provide new open spaces, improve the accessibility of existing open spaces and ensure safe connecting routes and corridors linking them."

4.12 The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for Thurrock which will replace the Core Strategy. The Local Plan will set out where future development in Thurrock will be located and state the policies which will be used to assess future planning applications. The new Local Plan will also identify specific sites for development for a wide variety of uses including open spaces.

4.13 The current Core Strategy includes Environment Core Strategic Thematic Policy 'CSTP20 – Open Space', which sets out the requirement for the maintenance and enhancement of a network of high-quality, accessible public open spaces. These include natural and equipped play and recreational spaces to meet the needs of the local community. Open spaces should be planned, designed and managed as areas that support multiple functions, including:

- "strategic functions (buffering and linkages);

- biodiversity;
- climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- historic interest;
- urban quality;
- health and well-being;
- sustainable transport and movement;
- productivity of land (food production, allotments);
- community use (places for congregating and events) and
- visual amenity.”

4.14 The Core Strategic Spatial Policy 5: Sustainable Greengrid ‘CSSP 5: Sustainable Greengrid’ also requires the Council and its Partners to deliver the Greengrid Strategy [\[See reference 8\]](#) and promote and protect local green spaces identified in local plans. The key elements of the Greengrid are open spaces (such as parks and recreational grounds), biodiversity (including features such as grassland, reedbeds, hedgerow and woodland) and green infrastructure (such as private gardens, street trees, green roofs, PRow and greenways and churchyards and cemeteries). The policy recognises the need to improve green access links between open spaces and outlines how to deliver this.

4.15 Other relevant policies to open space include:

- **Policy CSSP3** – Sustainable Infrastructure;
- **Policy CSTP9** – Well-being: Leisure and Sports;
- **Policy CSTP18** – Green Infrastructure; and
- **Policy PMD5** – Open Spaces, Outdoor Sports and Recreational Facilities.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022-2026)

4.16 Thurrock Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022-2026) [\[See reference 9\]](#) sets priorities for reducing inequalities and improving health and well-being Thurrock’s residents. The vision of ‘Levelling the Playing Field’ aims to tackle issues related to poor health across Thurrock, which includes ensuring equal access to green and open spaces.

4.17 The strategy identifies how inequalities in health and well-being can be addressed and embedded into local plans and strategies. It sets out priorities under Thurrock Council's corporate priorities 'People, Place and Prosperity' which includes "improved accessibility and equity of access to [...] green spaces through walking and cycling infrastructure and improved public transport."

4.18 The strategy also identifies access to green and open spaces as an opportunity to achieve **Goal 5D** "Regeneration and future developments will seek to improve physical and mental health, reduce exposure to air pollution and to build community resilience and reduce antisocial behaviour."

4.19 Lastly, the strategy identifies the significant increase in use of open space during Covid-19 lockdown and the importance of good quality, accessible outdoor space for people. Covid-19 lockdown was identified as creating a shift in people's mobility and routine activities with the use of parks and green open spaces significantly increasing. Therefore, the strategy intends to continue supporting accessible outdoor space, which should help mitigate negative impacts of lockdown such as obesity, isolation and overall health outcomes.

Health in All Policies Approach to Place-Shaping (2023)

4.20 The Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach [\[See reference 10\]](#) is a mechanism for Thurrock Council to achieve their collaborative place-based approach. 'Place shaping' is defined as 'creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its residents'. The approach refers to natural environments, food systems and neighbourhood design as providing important benefits to health and wellbeing outcomes. The HiAP approach represents Thurrock Council's aspirations for healthy place-shaping and provides guidance on how to deliver short-, medium- and long-term recommendations to support the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy (2025)

4.21 A Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy has been produced to replace the previous 2020 study [\[See reference 11\]](#). The report presents the supply and demand of playing pitch and outdoor facilities across Thurrock. It aims to provide a robust and objective justification for future playing pitch provision and enhancement throughout Thurrock.

4.22 The findings have been grouped under type of sport provision and can be summarised as follows:

- **Football:** since the 2020 study there are ten fewer community available pitches, with several disused. 72% of pitches were either in good or standard quality. There are currently shortfalls across adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch types within Thurrock which is expected to increase with future demand.
- **Third Generation (3G) turf:** there is insufficient supply of 11v11 size 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future football demand in Thurrock.
- **Rugby Union:** current supply is insufficient to meet demand, however the shortfall is likely to be solved by better utilisation of existing stock.
- **Hockey:** current supply is sufficient to meet demand, but quality issues need to be addressed to maintain supply.
- **Cricket:** a shortfall of natural turf cricket squares reported, with significant shortfalls identified within the Stanford-le-Hope & Corringham area. Shortfalls expected to worsen with future demand.
- **Tennis:** current supply is insufficient to meet demand, both club and non-club demand. Capacity issues have arisen from poor-quality pitches with lack of lighting and easy accessibility. Provision of padel is recommended across the Borough.
- **Netball:** current supply is sufficient to meet demand, but quality improvements are required to maintain supply. Increase in accessible and community courts are recommended.
- **Bowls:** current supply is sufficient to meet demand with facilities in good condition.
- **Athletics:** current supply is sufficient to meet demand. Further enhancement of provision is recommended to encourage additional and/or alternative types of demand.

Indoor Sports Assessment & Strategy (2025)

4.23 An Indoor Built Facilities Strategy for Thurrock Council has been produced to provide evidence and support an updated Thurrock Local Plan [\[See reference 12\]](#).

4.24 Sport halls were found to be well located in areas of higher population density and spare capacity identified at some educational sites could be

sufficient to meet future demand. Limited capacity to take on additional learn to swim members for swimming pools were identified, with most main population areas having access to above average pool provision, with the exception of Tilbury.

4.25 Supply of health and fitness facilities were meeting current demand but an increase in provision will be required with projected future demand. Squash, indoor tennis and indoor bowls facilities were meeting current demand but a dedicated gymnastics and trampolining facilities was recommended to accommodate demand.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022/23) update

4.26 Thurrock Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy update sets out a vision and objectives that reflect recent changes to the quality of the GBI network and baseline. The strategy also provides recommendations for embedding GBI within the emerging Local Plan.

Vision

By the end of the Local Plan period, Thurrock will be an attractive riverside Borough, where people want to live, work and visit. It will have a multifunctional network of inter-connected green and blue infrastructure that encourages people to be active, allows wildlife to thrive, conserves distinctive landscapes and historic assets, and helps to mitigate and reduce the effects of climate change.

4.27 The updated GBI Strategy (2022/23) objectives relevant to open space include:

- **Objective 1: Health and wellbeing and access to nature:** Help residents to live healthy lives by improving air quality, improving inclusivity, enabling easy access to high-quality recreational opportunities in green spaces and improving the living environment of Thurrock.
- **Objective 5: Biodiversity:** Maintain and enhance Thurrock's biodiversity and maximise connections between biodiversity sites aiding nature recovery.
- **Objective 6: Green Belt:** Promote positive use of Thurrock's Green Belt by improving its multifunctionality and increasing opportunities for outdoor

recreation and access to nature, especially where development occurs in or near Green Belt.

Public Land Maintenance Strategy (2021)

4.28 The Public Land Maintenance Strategy [\[See reference 13\]](#), recently published by Thurrock Council, aims to ensure all public open space is effectively maintained, facilitate the securing of funding for improvements and ongoing maintenance, and increase biodiversity. The strategy highlights six key methods of delivery to improve the quality of public land and open spaces, with identified actions for six different land types: formal parks and spaces, natural/Natural and semi-natural greenspace greenspace, amenity green space, grass verges and roundabouts, cemeteries and churchyards, and outdoor sports.

Open Spaces Strategy (2006-2011)

4.29 Thurrock Greengrid Strategy [\[See reference 14\]](#) introduces the principle of putting the natural environment at the centre of land use management and development. The Open Spaces Strategy was Thurrock Council's first strategic plan for accessible open spaces to achieve community aspirations. Whilst this is the latest publication of an open space strategy for Thurrock, there have been more recent versions of the Core Strategy and Local Plan, which include policies on open spaces.

4.30 The Open Space Strategy includes recommendations that help Thurrock and its Partners to deliver the first phase of a 20-to-30-year process to deliver a high-quality and accessible open space network.

4.31 The strategy identifies standards and improvements for different types of open spaces, alongside good practice examples and case studies.

4.32 Policy recommendations within the strategy include:

- Existing open space should be protected within the Local Development Framework and no development should result in a loss of open space.
- The Local Development Framework should include open space standards to ensure developers understand the required provisions within new developments.

Open Space Reviews

4.33 Since the publication of the Open Spaces Strategy, the council has periodically reviewed its open space provision with audits in 2017 and 2020. Both reviews identified challenges in terms of the amount of high-quality open space, recognising deficiencies in the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in the borough.

4.34 In 2017, a community consultation was also carried out. The consultation responses indicated that open space was highly regarded by the local community and made a significant contribution to local quality of life. It found:

- Parks are a local resource to be accessed on foot, and areas were identified in Thurrock where provision was insufficient to meet this.
- Country parks are highly regarded but exclude locals, with no independent transport.
- Natural greenspace is not evenly distributed across the Borough, particularly the central area, which is most deprived.
- Amenity spaces tended to be small in scale.
- Quality and quantity of children's play space varied across the Borough, with concerns in certain areas about the condition of equipment.
- Outdoor sports provision is variable, and some high-quality sites are in private ownership.

4.35 The data from the most recent review was used to inform this assessment.

4.36 More recently, Natural England has published GBI mapping [\[See reference 15\]](#) that shows variation in access to open spaces, geographically and in relation to patterns of deprivation. The findings of these relevant to Thurrock are summarised below.

Quantity of open space

Parks and gardens

4.37 Areas identified as being deficient in access to parks and gardens from past audits are:

- South Aveley;

- Purfleet west of M25;
- Northern part of Grays/Chafford Hundred (south of A13) & North Stifford;
- Central area north of A13 (plus Southfields) - Orsett, Horndon on the Hill, Bulphan (note this area is in 70-90% least deprived in terms of health); and
- West Tilbury/very south of Chadwell St Mary/very east of Tilbury.

Natural/semi-natural greenspace

4.38 Thurrock currently has a deficiency in Local Nature Reserves based on Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) and would require an additional 41.87 hectares of LNR to achieve the standard. There are currently two local nature reserves (LNRs) accounting for 9.35ha in Thurrock. These are Grove House Wood (2.46 ha) and Linford Wood (6.89 ha).

4.39 Additional detail on accessibility to accessible natural greenspace is available from the Natural England mapping site [\[See reference 16\]](#). The mapping shows which areas of the borough meet the various ANGSt standards:

- Small doorstep standard (greenspace of at least 0.2ha within 100m):
- Doorstep standard (greenspace of at least 0.5ha within 200m): patchy coverage, with significant gaps at West Thurrock, much of Grays, Stanford-le-Hope and Ockendon.
- Local standard (green space of at least 2ha within 300m): the areas that meet this standard are mainly in rural areas and not where the majority of people in the borough live.
- Neighbourhood standard (greenspace of at least 10ha within 1km): West Thurrock, Purfleet, Corringham, and most of Grays do not meet this standard.
- Wider Neighbourhood standard (greenspace of at least 20ha within 2km): Purfleet-on-Thames, the east of Grays, East Tilbury, Bulphan, and the south of Corringham do not meet this standard.
- District standard (greenspace of at least 100ha within 5km): most of the borough meets this standard, but there is a gap in coverage at the east of Grays, Chadwell St Mary, Tilbury and East Tilbury.
- Sub Regional standard (greenspace of at least 500ha within 10km): nowhere in the borough meets this standard.

4.40 The Natural England mapping overlays the ANGSt standards onto IMD. Parts of the east of Grays, South Ockendon, Purfleet on Thames and the edges of Chadwell St Mary have both high levels of deprivation and poor access to natural greenspace (accessibility depends on the standard used, as above). The east of Grays has high deprivation and scores poorly in terms of access across all standards.

Amenity greenspace

4.41 The previous open space audits suggested that Thurrock has a sufficient quantity of amenity greenspace.

Designating Local Green Space Guidance (2022)

4.42 Thurrock Council's Designating Local Green Space Guidance (2022) [\[See reference 17\]](#) sets out the Council's approach to identifying, assessing and designating sites as Local Green Spaces, which will help inform the new Local Plan. The guidance sets out how the NPPF criteria for Local Green Spaces should be interpreted at the local level and sets out sub criteria to be met for qualification.

Local Green Spaces Study (2023)

4.43 Thurrock Council's Local Green Spaces Study assessed 91 sites considered for designation as Local Green Spaces, with 42 meeting the criteria. It was recommended that these sites were designated, to have a broader geographical spread of Local Green Spaces sites.

Local Wildlife Sites Review (2022)

4.44 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Development Plans to identify locally designated sites for biodiversity as a measure to protect wildlife-rich habitats and maintain local ecological networks. A Local Wildlife Site review was completed to help prepare Thurrock's new Development Plan.

4.45 The review reported a net increase of one site and 411.3 hectares, since the last review in 2016. However, the review identified spatial inconsistencies in wildlife sites across Thurrock, with a significant area around Bulphan lacking Local Wildlife Sites, suggesting a lack of semi-natural habitat in this area.

4.46 The review highlights the importance of accessible natural green space to local communities and the need for management focussed on nature conservation outcomes to avoid lower-quality experiences for local visitors.

Chapter 5

Understanding the need for open space and play space

Population & social context

5.1 This chapter provides an overview of Thurrock's demographics and areas of deprivation including factors relating to current and projected population, health and well-being, and existing open spaces.

Population change

5.2 The population of Thurrock in the 2021 Census was 176,000, this is an increase of 11.6% from around 157,700 in 2011. This is higher than both the overall increase for England (6.6%), the East of England (8.3%) and nearby areas like Brentwood (4.6%) and Havering (10.4%) [\[See reference 18\]](#).

5.3 Between 2011 to 2021 there has been an increase of 19.4% of people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 8.9% in people aged 15 to 64 and an increase of 16.2% in children aged under 15 years [\[See reference 19\]](#).

5.4 Thurrock has a higher proportion of people under the age of 65 (86.4%) compared to the national average (81.6%) and therefore less people over the age of 65 at 13.6% compared to the national average of 18.4% [\[See reference 20\]](#). Settlements towards the riverside have a younger population compared to areas further east, which have older demographic profiles. The demographics of residents from Grays and further north tend to be older as well.

5.5 The rate of growth of Thurrock's population has, in fact, exceeded regional and national growth since 1991. By 2043, it is estimated that the population of Thurrock will increase to 205,469, a 17% increase from the 2020-estimate [\[See reference 21\]](#).

5.6 There are a number of drivers contributing to population growth [\[See reference 22\]](#). Two key drivers are:

- Rising house and office prices are pushing people out of London, particularly from eastern boroughs such as Newham, Havering and Barking and Dagenham. A significant proportion of Thurrock residents commute out of the Borough for work, with London a particular draw.

Thurrock's proximity to the capital means that it will continue to be an attractive location for those who want to live outside of but close to London.

- Employment opportunities in Thurrock, which are concentrated in a few core sectors such as transport and logistics, port functions, and retail. The strength of these sectors reflects two of Thurrock's main economic advantages - its geography and relatively low labour costs. Thurrock's close proximity to London, and its international ports make it an attractive proposition for inward investment. In addition, Greater Essex overall is up to 20% cheaper with regards to labour costs for a typical logistics operation compared to London. Also, up to 50% cheaper with regards to labour costs for a typical sales/administration services operation [\[See reference 23\]](#).

5.7 As of 2021, Thurrock is the 12th most densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas [\[See reference 24\]](#). Thurrock's growing population will need to be supported by significant increases in housing and employment space which is being planned for in the New Thurrock Local Plan. Current population density is shown in Figure 5.1.

5.8 As of early 2022, there were around 69,535 dwellings in Thurrock [\[See reference 25\]](#). Thurrock's Core Strategy, which is the current adopted statutory planning document for the Borough until the new Local Plan is adopted, stated that at least an additional 4750 dwellings should be delivered between 2021 to 2026 [\[See reference 26\]](#).

How good quality open space can address population, household and economic growth:

- Open space can improve the aesthetic quality of an area, which in turn supports inward investment, attracts businesses and customers, and encourages people to spend more time and money locally.
- Open space can also increase the value of property and therefore make new development more viable. Having well-managed green space nearby results in property value premiums of 2.6% to 11.3% [\[See reference 27\]](#).
- Additional open space will be needed to meet the needs of a growing population and manage pressures on existing greenspaces. Consultation carried out by Thurrock Council in Summer 2024 revealed that local residents are more likely to use open spaces if there are more

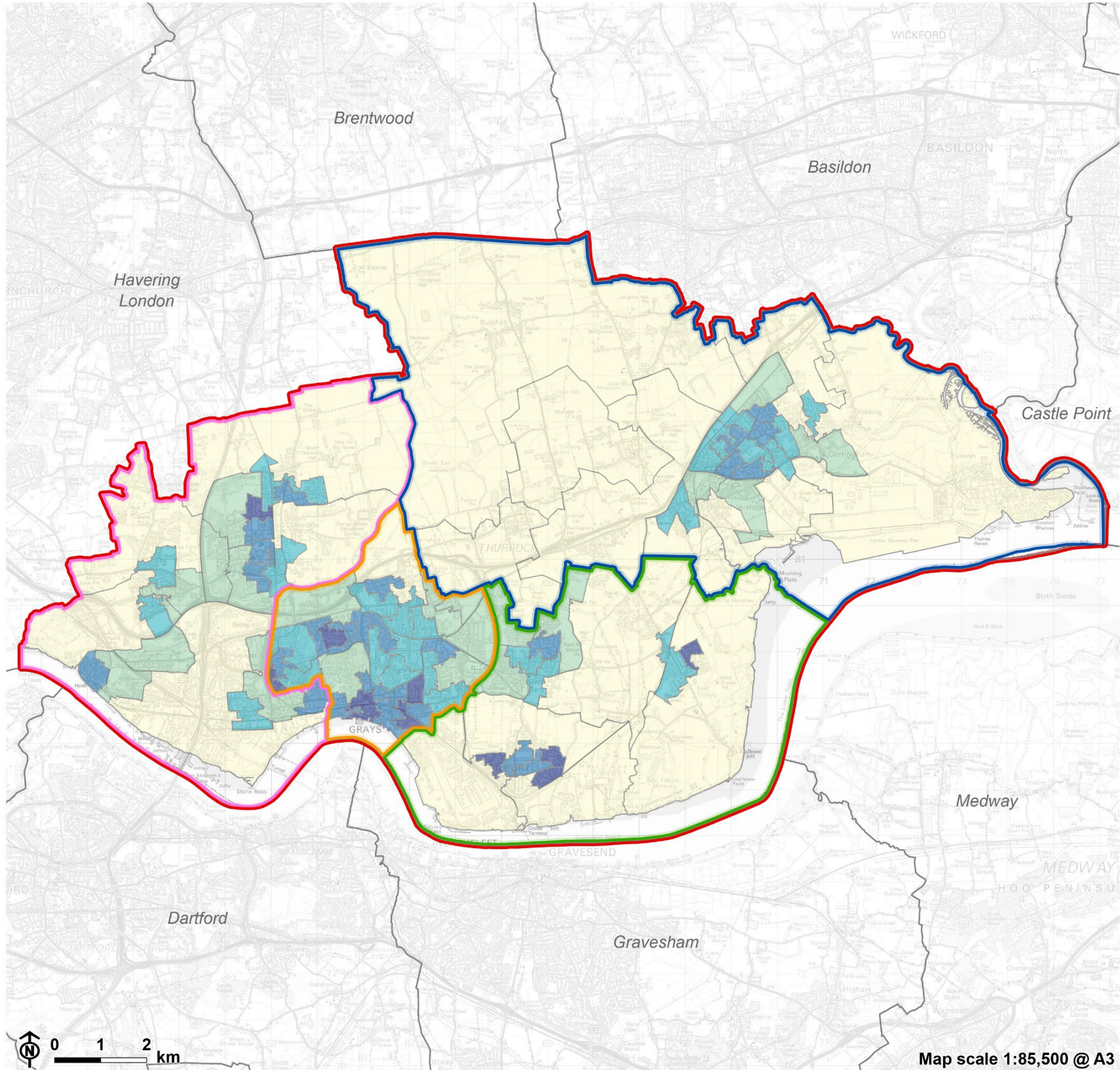
accessible footpaths, especially the elderly and those with long term health conditions (LTHC). Open space in Thurrock will therefore need to be designed to cater for a wide range of users, taking into account the changing demographic profile.

Figure 5.1: Population Density



Figure 5.1: Population Density

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Population density (number of people per square kilometre)**
 - 52 - 1,000
 - 1,000 - 3,500
 - 3,500 - 5,500
 - 5,500 - 8,000
 - 8,000 - 12,000



Deprivation and Health & Wellbeing

Deprivation

5.9 In the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Thurrock ranked 116 out of 317 local authorities in England (1 being the most deprived) in terms of overall deprivation [\[See reference 28\]](#). Deprivation varies across the area as shown in Figure 5.2.

5.10 There are significant differences in deprivation across Thurrock. Across the borough, 45.7% of households are deprived in one or more dimensions [\[See reference 29\]](#). The dimensions of deprivation used to classify households are based on the following four characteristics:

- Education: where a household is deprived if no one has at least level 2 education and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student.
- Employment: where a household is deprived if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability.
- Health: where a household is deprived if any person has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled in line with the Equality Act (2010) definition of a disabled person.
- Housing: where a household is deprived if the accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating.

5.11 The further breakdown of household deprivation across Thurrock suggests 34.9% of households are deprived in one dimension, a further 15.4% in two dimensions, 3.8% in three dimensions and 0.3% in all four dimensions. Areas with notably high levels of deprivation include parts of South Ockendon, Tilbury, Stanford le Hope and Grays. Areas with a higher level of living environment deprivation include parts of Tilbury, Grays and Purfleet on Thames. Areas with a higher level of health and disability deprivation include parts of Tilbury and South Ockendon.

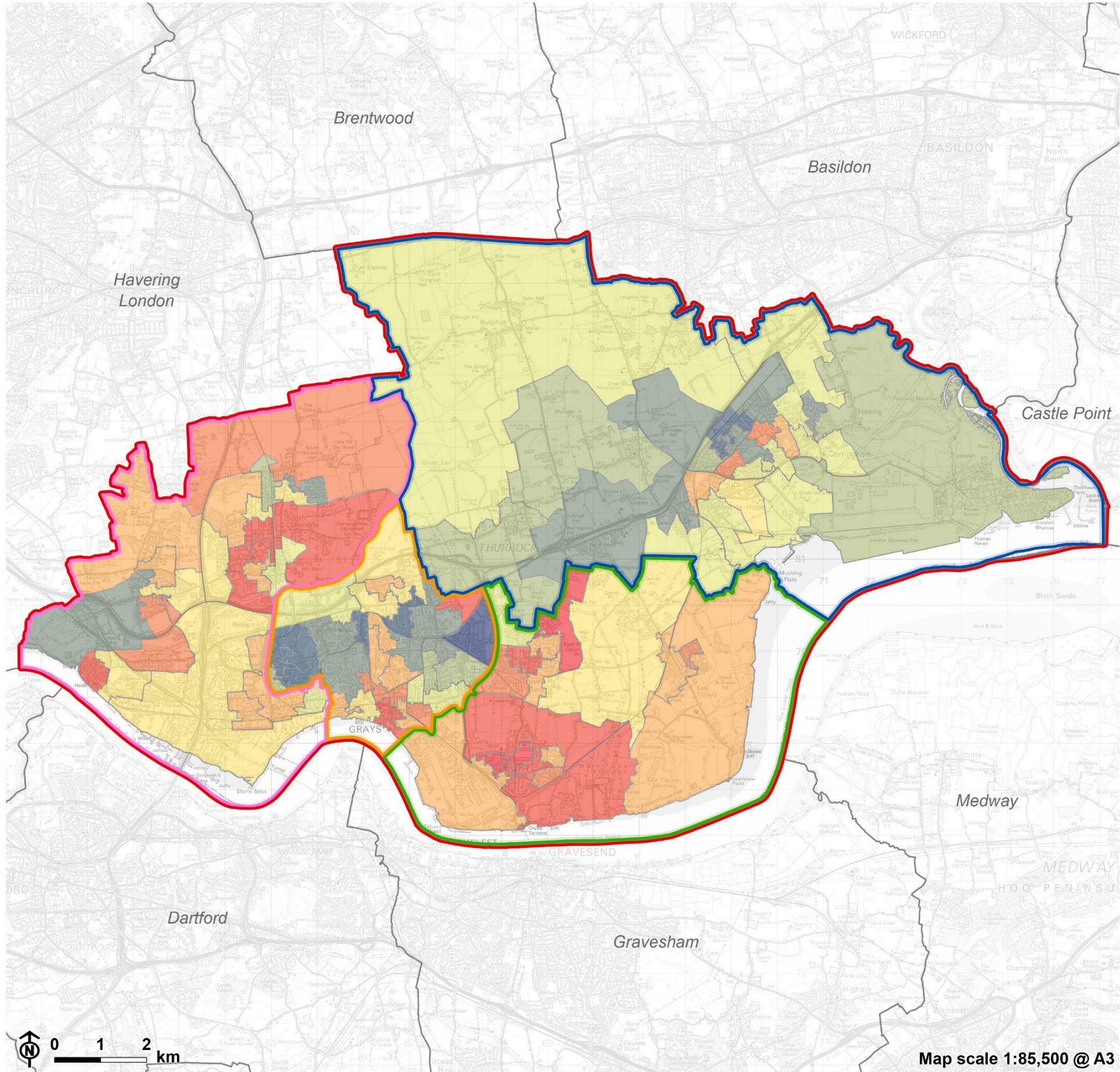
5.12 In 2019, 18.6% of children 0 to 15 years, were recorded to be living in income deprived families in Thurrock [\[See reference 30\]](#).

Figure 5.2: Index of Multiple Deprivation



Figure 5.2: Index of Multiple Deprivation

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Index of Multiple Deprivation (Decile)**
 - 1 (Most deprived)
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
 - 6
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10 (Least deprived)



Health and wellbeing

Life expectancy and mortality

5.13 Life expectancy at birth in 2023 in Thurrock was 78.7 years for males and 83.1 years for females, which is lower than the East of England average (males: 80.1 years, females: 83.8 years) and England average (males: 79.3, females: 83.2) [\[See reference 31\]](#). In Thurrock, deaths from all causes, all cancers, circulatory disease, coronary heart disease, respiratory diseases and from causes considered preventable are all higher than the standardised mortality ratio (SMR) for England [\[See reference 32\]](#). In addition, Thurrock's 2023 under 75 mortality rate from all causes (value = 351.9), cardiovascular disease (v=79.6) and cancer (v=146.8) are all 'significantly worse' than the averages for both East of England (v=310.9, 68.6 and 113.4 respectively) and England (v=341.6, 77.4 and 120.8 respectively) [\[See reference 33\]](#).

5.14 However, life expectancy was not consistent Thurrock. Areas that had lower life expectancy below the national average for both males and females included Grays, Purfleet on Thames, South Ockendon and Tilbury [\[See reference 34\]](#). Whereas, Corringham, Stanford le Hope and Orsett, Bulphan & Hordon-on-the-Hill had the highest life expectancies for males and females combined.

Obesity

5.15 Obesity continues to be a major problem in Thurrock as well as nationally with the Government's 2020 Obesity Strategy identifying tackling obesity as one of the greatest long-term health challenges the country faces. In Thurrock, 24.6% of children in Year 6 are obese, which is greater than the national average of 22.2% [\[See reference 35\]](#). In addition, 69% of adults in Thurrock are classed as overweight or obese, higher than both regional (62.1%) and national (62%) figures. Some 59.5% of adults in Thurrock are physically active, which is less than the national average of 66.3% [\[See reference 36\]](#).

5.16 Prevalence of obesity in Year 6 children varies by ward and PCN. Highest prevalence of obesity in Year 6 Children is found across Ockendon, Belhus and The Homesteads wards, and more generally around Grays and Tilbury and East Tilbury [\[See reference 37\]](#).

Physical activity

5.17 Sport England's Active Lives Adult Survey asks people over 16 across England about their participation in sport and physical activity [See reference 38]. A review of the 2023/24 results indicates that 31.6% of residents are considered to be 'inactive' and participate in less than 30 minutes physical activity a week compared to 25.1% for England as a whole. 10.7% were considered to be 'fairly active' (30-149 minutes), a slightly lower percentage than England as a whole (11.2%). 57.8% of residents were reported to participate in at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week (compared to 63.7% for England).

5.18 For children and young people, 42% of the population were found to be less active (less than an average of 30 minutes a day) which is considerably higher than the national average of 29.5% [See reference 39]. Similarly, 34.5% were found to be active (an average of 60+ minutes a day) which was lower than the national average of 47.8%. 30.2% of children and young people were found to be active on average 30+ minutes a day outside, compared to a Greater Essex average of 47.7% and national average of 44.6%.

Mental health

5.19 Data based on self-reported measures of wellbeing [See reference 40] indicates that Thurrock has slightly lower levels of satisfaction and happiness, when compared to the regional and national averages. It also has slightly higher levels of anxiety.

Access

5.20 Health and wellbeing may be adversely affected by poor access to services and facilities, including centres of employment, primary and secondary schools, further education institutions, GPs, Hospitals, food stores and town centres. Average journey times in Thurrock by public transport are, though, less than the England average, suggesting good access to key services (e.g. schools or employment) relative to regional and national averages [See reference 41].

5.21 However, analysis of 2021 census data reveals that 50.3% of Thurrock's resident population travel to work by driving a car or van and a further 4.1% as passengers in a car or van, compared to 12.3% by public transport (underground, metro, light train, tram, train, bus, minibus or coach). The percentage of those travelling to work by car or van has increased from the

2011 census by 10.3%. There are also significant barriers to access, including busy roads, rail lines and industrial areas that discourage active modes of travel.

5.22 42.3% of households were recorded in 2021 to have at least one car or van, 29.4% two and 11% three or more [\[See reference 42\]](#). This highlights that 17.3% of households will be relying on public transport, this is greatest around South Ockendon, Tilbury and Grays.

5.23 In Thurrock, 24.5% of residents work mainly at or from home.

Air quality

5.24 Air quality is a significant issue in Thurrock, with adverse effects on health and wellbeing. Air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. The concentration of fine particulate matter in Thurrock is one of the highest in East of England ($7.8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), and in the bottom quintile in England [\[See reference 43\]](#)

5.25 The Borough currently has 16 Air Quality Management Areas [\[See reference 44\]](#), all of which have been designated for road transport pollutant emissions. Roads, industry and construction work can also contribute to high noise levels.

5.26 Thurrock is also part of the Greater Essex Air Quality Strategy which aims to improve air quality in Essex through a proposed action plan [\[See reference 45\]](#).

How open space can address health and wellbeing [\[See reference 46\]](#)

- The open space network can play a key role in supporting improved health outcomes as part of a holistic 'Natural Health Service'.
- Enhancing access to and providing spaces for recreation, near to where people live, can encourage physical activity thereby improving wellbeing and helping to reduce obesity and its related health issues.
- Providing safe, attractive routes to key services and facilities, such as GPs and higher educations can help to encourage the use of those facilities, which in turn encourage positive health outcomes.

- Creation of high-quality open spaces can help to reduce health inequalities related to income and health deprivation.
- Trees and plants can help to absorb pollutants helping to improve air quality and create a buffer between people and sources of air pollution or noise.
- Natural environments play an important role in providing mental wellbeing benefits.

Play needs assessment

5.27 A Play Needs Index was created to highlight the overall need for play across Thurrock. This tool combined IMD population data with IMD Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), and IMD Health Deprivation and Disability domains. The IMD population data is a collection of population estimates and projection for all ages. The IDACI measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The IMD datasets measure markers of deprivation for individual LSOAs across Thurrock.

5.28 The findings of the Play Needs Index are shown in Figure 5.3. Areas demonstrating the highest need for play are located within:

- Southern area of Grays along the riverside;
- Chadwell St Mary and Tilbury; and
- South Ockendon.

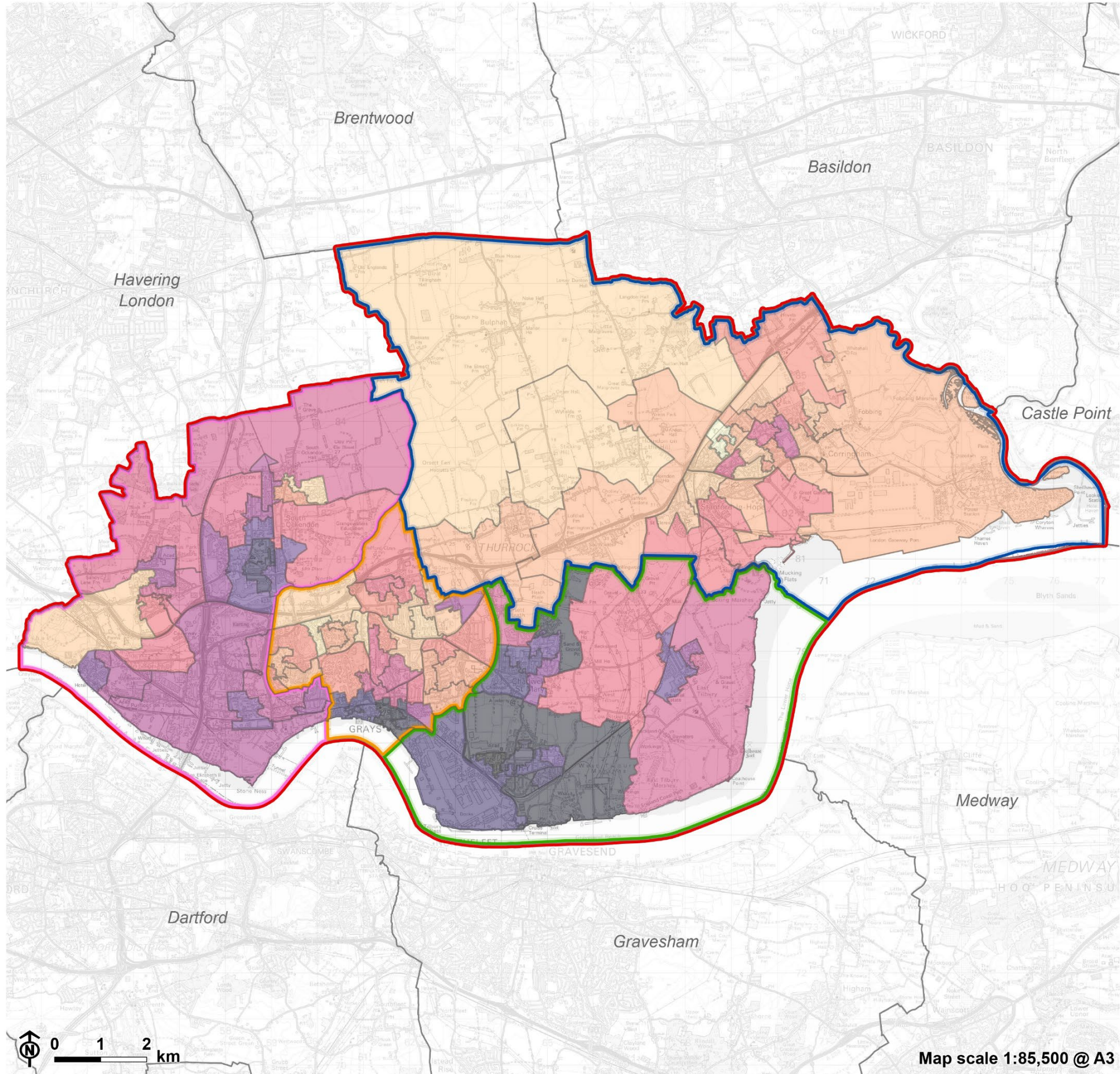
Figure 5.3: LUC Play Need Index

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Figure 5.3: LUC Play Need Index

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- LUC Play need index**
 - Greater need
 - Lower need



Chapter 6

Quantity assessment

6.1 It is critical that an assessment of open space and play space is underpinned by accurate spatial data. It was therefore essential that the 'baseline' data held by Thurrock Council was verified and updated to reflect current provision.

Updating the baseline

6.2 The Council's open space datasets were made available to the project team along with the OS Mastermap Greenspace as a starting point for establishing the baseline data. These datasets were reviewed, and open spaces were added to the master GIS layer where relevant.

Verifying and updating site boundaries

6.3 In addition, the following data sources were used to review and refine the baseline open space dataset:

- OS Mastermap; and
- OS Mastermap greenspace.

6.4 Once a set of open space boundaries were assembled, the following tasks were completed for each open space:

- Boundary accuracy was reviewed and adjusted to match OS Mastermap where possible;
- Names were added if not already present;
- Access information was added; and
- Typology was also added (more information below).

Categorisation of sites by typology

6.5 Each site was assigned a primary typology based on key characteristics and functionality, as set out below. The typology for each site was reviewed during an initial desk study and amended following site visits as appropriate.

6.6 All the open spaces identified in Thurrock are shown in Figure 6.1 by primary typology.

Figure 6.1: Open Space Primary Typology

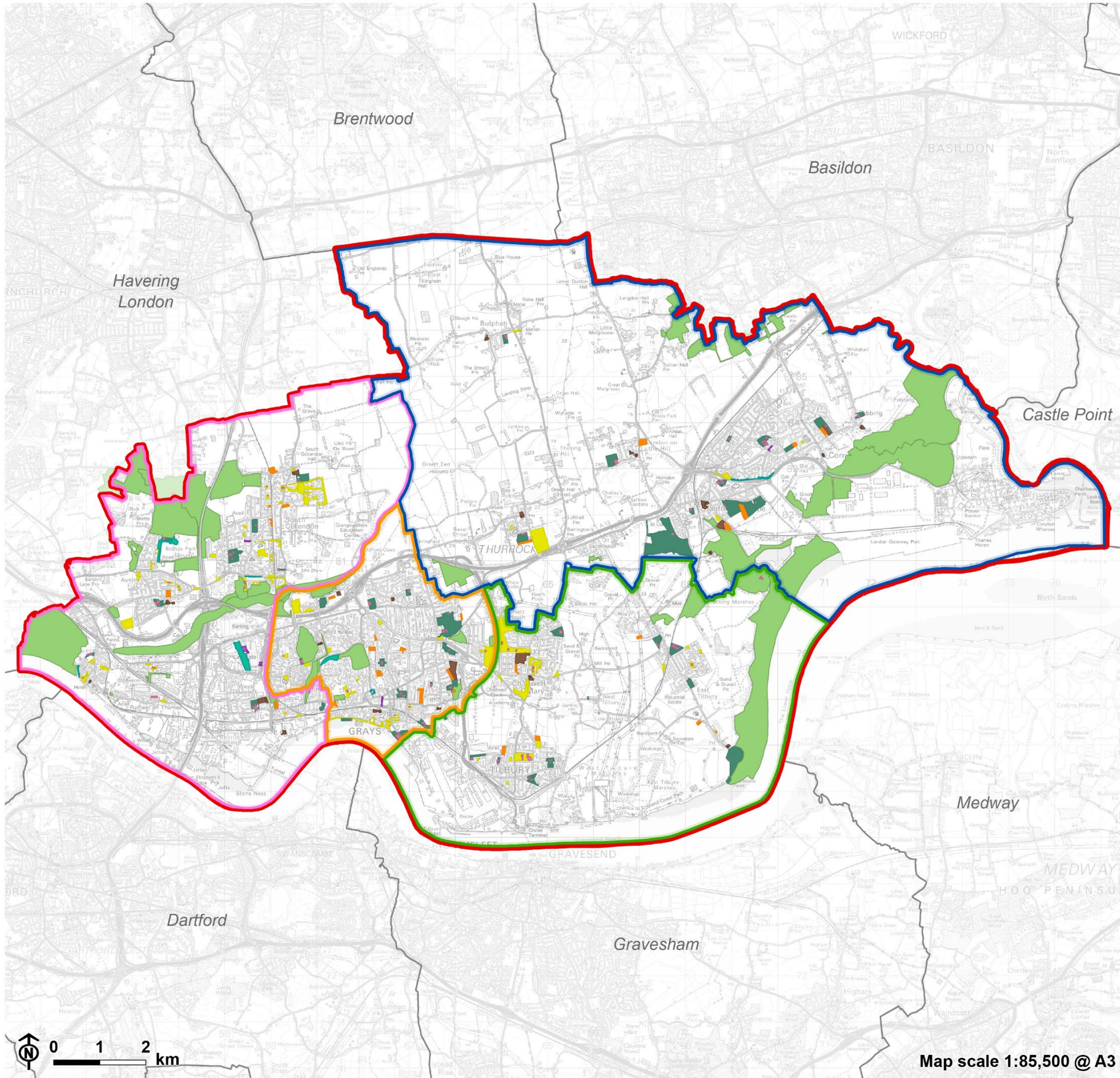


Figure 6.1: Open Space Primary Typology

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
- Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
- Grays PCN
- Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
- Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Open space typology**
- Allotment
- Amenity greenspace
- Cemeteries
- Childrens play areas
- Civic space
- Green corridors
- Parks and gardens
- Natural and semi natural greenspace

Open space typology descriptions

6.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines open spaces as: *'All open space [i.e. outdoor space] of public value, including not just land but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity'* **[See reference 47]** .

6.8 Each site was assigned a primary typology based on key characteristics and functionality, as set out below.

Parks and Gardens

6.9 Accessible, high-quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. More multi-functional than other open space, offering space for quiet relaxation as well as a range of amenities and activities for visitors. Parks and gardens may also contain equipped children's play, teenage facilities and/or outdoor sports facilities. These open spaces would normally be expected to have a more formal character. They may be important for hosting community events.

Natural and Semi Natural Green Space

6.10 Open spaces with a primary function of providing access to nature, wildlife conservation, management for biodiversity and environmental education (which may or may not be formally designated for wildlife value). This can include woodlands, urban forestry, scrub grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows), wetlands, open and running water. This typology includes country parks. This typology could also include areas of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) within them.

Green and blue corridors

6.11 Multi-functional well-defined corridors which provide traffic-free routes for active travel and the movement of wildlife between habitats. Examples include river and canal banks, cycleways, rights of way, brooks, streams and rivers.

Amenity greenspace

6.12 Open spaces which provide opportunities for informal activities. Amenity greenspace provides a less formal greenspace experience than parks and

gardens, with few amenities and facilities than a recreation ground. They may include some more biodiverse elements, for example areas of relaxed mowing. It does not include roadside verges or strips of land adjacent to hedges. They provide important greenspace close to where people live and work. This definition focusses on open space that provides a meaningful recreational offer and would not include incidental or 'left over' areas of grass that would not realistically be used by the community.

Allotments

6.13 Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. These may be publicly accessible to all, or restricted to members or tenants.

Cemeteries and Churchyards

6.14 Burial space and areas for quiet contemplation and reflection. Cemeteries may also include a range of habitats, and offer similar opportunities for access to nature and sitting and relaxing as other types of open space

Civic Spaces

6.15 Areas of open space, generally more closely integrated into the built environment than other typologies. Civic spaces are generally located around key community hubs and areas of activity, providing landscaped areas to meet, sit, benefit from shade and provide aesthetic value. These spaces generally have less extensive areas of vegetation such as grass, and focus more on hard landscaping with trees and planting incorporated within.

Provision for Children and Teenagers

6.16 Open spaces which are designed primarily to provide play and social interaction for children and young people. This includes areas of equipped play facilities, Multi-Use Games Areas, wheels parks, BMX tracks and single basketball hoops. This may also include areas of social seating or performance spaces, including the types of designs highlighted within the Make Space for Girls campaign.

Outdoor Sports Provision

6.17 Open spaces which focus predominantly, or wholly, on the provision of formal sports, such as tennis courts, bowling greens, or private football clubs. Access to these open spaces may be restricted and require membership or prior booking to access.

Developing a hierarchy

6.18 To develop a framework for the analysis of sites and to set appropriate standards, a detailed hierarchy has been developed. For the purpose of this assessment, a combination of the size of sites and open space typologies has been used. The hierarchy recognises that open spaces of different sizes would be expected to provide a different 'offer' to users. For instance, users will be more likely to travel further to reach a larger site with more facilities than a small area of amenity green space with no facilities. Established, recognised guidance for England has been referred to in developing the hierarchy and adapted to be appropriate to the Thurrock context [See reference 48]. This is shown in **Table 6.1**.

6.19 A hierarchy has also been developed for equipped play facilities, which is primarily based on the age ranges catered for, as shown in **Table 6.2**.

Table 6.1: Developing an open space hierarchy

Typolog y	Small doors tep	Door- step	Local	Neigh bour- hood	Wider neighb - ourhoo d	Distri ct	Sub- regional
Parks and Gardens							
Size threshold (area ha)	<0.5 ha	0.5 – 2.0 ha	2.1 – 10.0 ha	10.1 – 20.0 ha	20.1 – 100 ha	100.1 – 500 ha	500+
Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace (area ha)							

Typology	Small doors tep	Door-step	Local	Neighbourhood	Wider neighb - ourhood	Distri ct	Sub-regional
Size threshold (area ha)	<0.5 ha	0.5-2.0 ha	2.1 – 10.0 ha	10.1 – 20.0 ha	20.1 – 100 ha	100.1 – 500 ha	500+
Green Corridors							
Size threshold (area ha)	N/A PPG17 Companion Guide suggests that standards cannot be expressed but reference should be made to Greengrid Strategy						
Amenity Greenspace							
Size threshold (area ha)	N/A The division of Amenity Greenspace into a hierarchy was not deemed appropriate for the purposes of this assessment. This is predominantly local provision and the majority of sites within Thurrock are relatively small in size.						
Allotments							
Size threshold (area ha)	N/A Further division of Allotments into a hierarchy was not deemed appropriate for the purposes of this assessment as this type of open space performs the same function and 'offer' regardless of size.						
Cemeteries and Churchyards							
Size threshold (area ha)	N/A The division of Cemeteries and Churchyards into a hierarchy was not deemed appropriate for the purposes of this assessment.						

Typolog y	Small doors tep	Door- step	Local	Neigh bour- hood	Wider neighb - ourhoo d	Distri ct	Sub- regional
Civic Spaces							
Size threshold (area ha)	N/A The division of Civic Spaces into a hierarchy was not deemed appropriate for the purposes of this assessment. This is predominantly local provision and the majority of sites within Thurrock are relatively small in size.						
Provision for Children and Teenagers							
Equipped Play Facilities	N/A	Doors tep playa ble space	Local playab le space	Neigh bour- hood play space	N/A	N/A	N/A
Classific ation/ Criteria	See Table 6.2						
Other play and youth space	Further division of 'Other play' was not deemed appropriate for the purposes of this assessment.						
Outdoor Sports Provision							
Size threshold (area ha)	PPG17 Companion Guide and Sport England Guidance suggests that sports provision is demand-led, and standards will vary in urban and rural areas to reflect local aspirations. Refer to Thurrock's Playing Pitch Strategy.						

Table 6.2: Criteria for play hierarchy

Criteria	Small doorstep	Doorstep play space	Local play space	Neighbourhood play space	Youth space
Age group	One age group e.g. 0-5	One age group e.g. 0-5	Two age groups e.g. 0-5 & 5-11	All ages	11+
Guideline size (m ²)	<100	100	300	500	200

Current provision

6.20 Following the assignment of a primary typology and hierarchy to each of the sites, and after site audits were carried out, a final list of sites was prepared. This final layer also involved the removal of some sites which, after audit, it was deemed were not open space. A total of 262 open space sites were included in the list of sites to be audited. After audits, 21 sites were discounted as they were no longer deemed to be open spaces or there was no public access, leaving 241 total open space sites in Thurrock.

6.21 The sites removed included;

- 85 - Herd Lane Recreation Ground, which is now thought to be a private sports club.
- 179 - Adam Road Allotments in Stanford-le-Hope, which was visited but appeared disused and was inaccessible.
- 119 - Great Palmers Shaw is a semi / natural greenspace in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 125 - Hangman's Wood is a semi / natural greenspace in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 126 - Arena Essex is a semi / natural greenspace in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.

- 133 - Orsett Fen (Common Land) is a semi / natural greenspace in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, which was visited but found to be an agricultural field.
- 148 - Lower Horse Green Corridor in Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 149 - Varge Creek Green Corridor in Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN, which was visited but found to only have public footpaths with no open space.
- 152 - Stifford Green Corridor in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 153 - New Covert Green Corridor in Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN, which was visited but found to only have public footpaths with no open space.
- 154 - Mar Dyke South Green Corridor in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 155 - Little Malgraves Green Corridor in Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN, which was visited but found to be a private woodland.
- 156 - Cawder Hall Green Corridor in Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 157 - Oakway Lodge Green Corridor in Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 159 - Coalhouse Green Corridor in Tilbury & Chadwell which was visited but found to have no access.
- 217 - Orsett Rd/ Dell Rd in Grays PCN, which was visited but found to be fenced with no public access.
- 220 - St John's Rd/ Furness Close in Tilbury & Chadwell which was visited but found to have no access.
- 265 - Purfleet Chalk Pits West is a semi / natural green space in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 266 - Purfleet Chalk Pits East is a semi / natural green space in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN which was visited but found to have no public access.

- 272 - Brannetts Wood is a semi / natural greenspace in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.
- 275 - Mar Dyke West Green Corridor in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, which was visited but found to have no public access.

6.22 A full list of sites included in the audit can be found in Appendix C.

6.23 Table 6.3 summarises the quantity of provision by typology and hierarchy within the study area. This does not include sites which were removed after audit. **Table 6.4** breaks down the provision of open space by primary typology in each PCN Area (in hectares). **Figure 6.2.1-6.2.4** shows all open spaces in each PCN area coloured by their hierarchy category.

Table 6.3: Open space by primary typology and hierarchy

Primary typology/ hierarchy	Count	Sum of area (ha)
Allotments		
Small doorstep	4	1.53
Doorstep	20	20.58
Local	3	8.30
Allotments total	27	30.41
Amenity greenspace		
Small doorstep	42	14.27
Doorstep	35	30.24
Local	7	32.19
Neighbourhood	3	43.42
Amenity total	87	120.13

Primary typology/ hierarchy	Count	Sum of area (ha)
Cemeteries		
Small doorstep	11	3.55
Doorstep	11	11.14
Local	3	12.60
Cemeteries total	25	27.29
Civic spaces		
Small doorstep	4	1.29
Doorstep	1	1.16
Civic spaces total	5	2.45
Green corridors		
Small doorstep	3	1.08
Doorstep	1	1.95
Local	3	15.76
Green corridors total	7	18.78
Parks and gardens		
Small doorstep	6	2.15
Doorstep	17	22.48
Local	21	76.25
Neighbourhood	3	43.44

Primary typology/ hierarchy	Count	Sum of area (ha)
Wider Neighbourhood	1	44.88
Parks and gardens total	48	189.20
Natural and semi natural greenspaces		
Small doorstep	1	0.33
Doorstep	5	926.80
Local	3	4.59
Neighbourhood	15	68.78
Wider Neighbourhood	6	84.44
District	12	536.65
Natural/ semi natural greenspaces total	42	1621.59
Combined total	241	2009.85

Table 6.4: All open space by primary typology and PCN

Typology	Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN (ha)	Grays PCN (ha)	Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN (ha)	Tilbury & Chadwell PCN (ha)
Allotments	5.16	9.14	10.93	5.17
Amenity greenspace	37.93	25.70	18.15	38.36

Typology	Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN (ha)	Grays PCN (ha)	Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN (ha)	Tilbury & Chadwell PCN (ha)
Cemeteries	4.82	7.10	8.83	6.54
Civic Spaces	1.84	0.39	0.22	0.00
Green corridors	13.55	3.29	1.95	0.00
Parks and Gardens	21.66	43.76	88.96	34.82
Semi / Natural greenspaces	584.22	90.47	621.82	325.09
PCN Area Totals	669.18	179.83	750.86	409.98

6.24 Table 6.5 provides an overview of sites audited and unable to be audited by PCN. Three sites could not be audited for the following reasons:

- 115 – Heronry Shaw: No public access.
- 116 – Ron Evans Memorial Field: Not able to access safely.
- 218 – Warren Close: Not accessible with site overgrown with dense scrub and trees.

Table 6.5: Number of sites audited and unable to be audited by PCN

Audit status	Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN	Grays PCN	Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN	Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
Completed audit	89	62	46	41
Unable to complete audit	0	1	1	1

6.25 Sites not able to be audited were included in the quantity and accessibility analysis but excluded from the quality and value analysis.

Accessible open space

6.26 For the purposes of this assessment, sites categorised as 'accessible' are those that fall under the following access categories:

- Freely accessible to the public
- Freely accessible to the public: opening hours

Sites were also mapped under the following access categories but are not included in quantity analyses or classed as accessible open space;

- Restricted access: members/tenants only
- Restricted access: other

6.27 **Table 6.6** shows the quantity of open space and its accessibility. Accessibility for each site is listed in **Appendix D**. **Table 6.7** shows how freely accessible open space is distributed between the PCN. **Figure 6.3** shows all open spaces coloured by their access category.

Table 6.6: Open space (area in hectares) categorised by accessibility

Primary typology	Freely access-ible to public	Freely access-ible to public: open hours	Restricted access: members/tenants only	Restricted access: other
Allotments			30.41	
Amenity greenspace	103.29		0.25	16.58
Cemeteries	7.19	19.44	-	0.66
Civic spaces	2.45	-	-	-
Green corridors	18.78	-	-	-
Parks and gardens	177.27	11.16	0.77	-
Natural/semi natural greenspace	517.81	234.58	-	869.20
Total	826.8	265.2	31.4	886.4

Table 6.7: Freely accessible open space by primary typology and PCN area

Primary typology	Aveley, South Ockendon and Purfleet PCN	Grays PCN	Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN	Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
Allotments	-	-	-	-
Amenity greenspace	37.93	24.35	2.91	38.10
Cemeteries	4.82	6.79	8.48	6.54
Civic spaces	1.84	0.39	0.22	0.00
Green corridors	13.55	3.29	1.95	0.00
Parks and gardens	21.66	43.47	88.96	34.33
Natural and semi natural greenspaces	480.83	83.86	178.72	8.97
PCN Total	560.64	162.15	281.24	87.94

Figure 6.2.1: Open Space Hierarchy – Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN

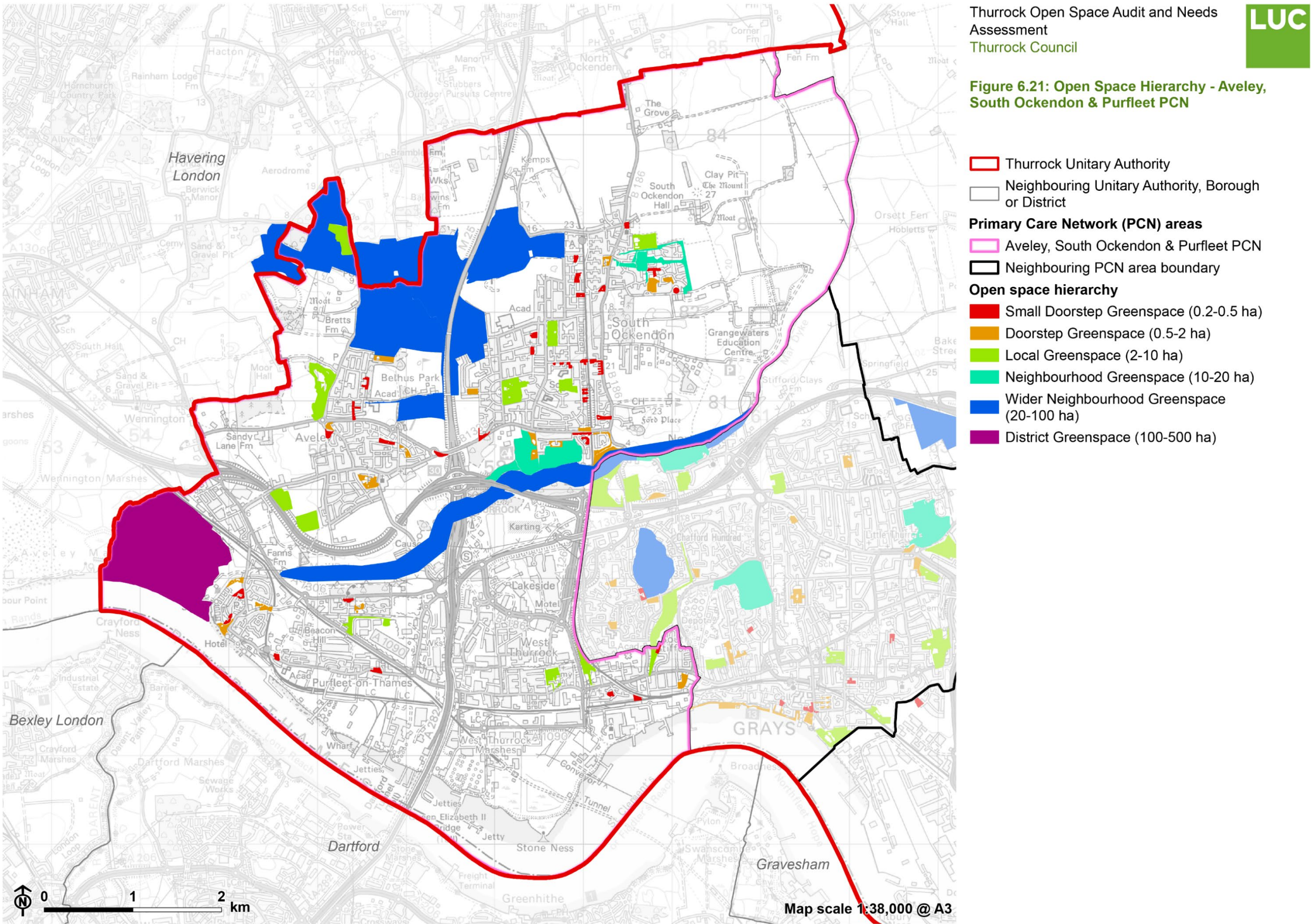
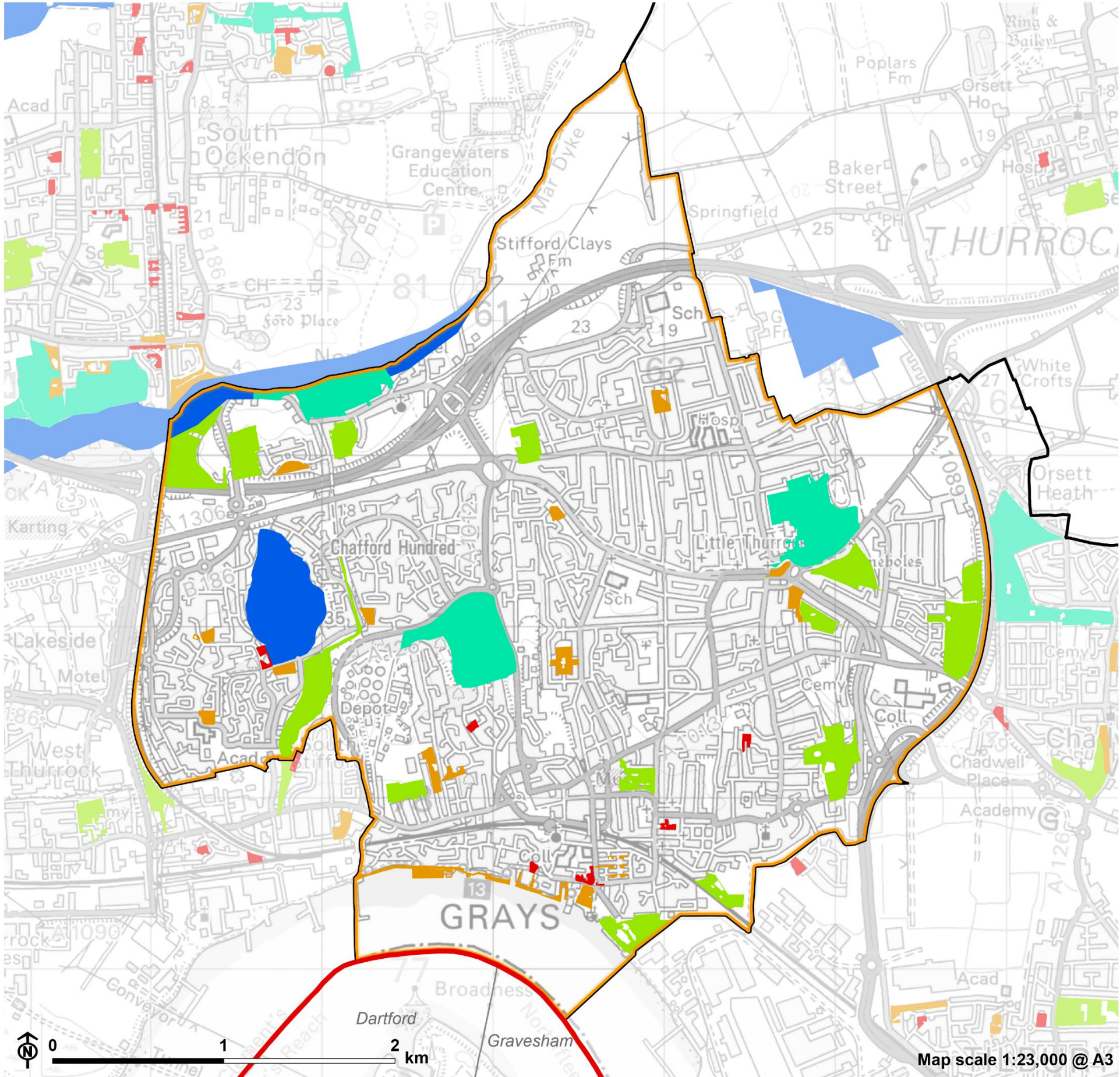


Figure 6.2.2: Open Space Hierarchy – Grays PCN



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Figure 6.22: Open Space Hierarchy - Grays PCN

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
- Grays PCN
- Neighbouring PCN area boundary
- Open space hierarchy**
- Small Doorstep Greenspace (0.2-0.5 ha)
- Doorstep Greenspace (0.5-2 ha)
- Local Greenspace (2-10 ha)
- Neighbourhood Greenspace (10-20 ha)
- Wider Neighbourhood Greenspace (20-100 ha)
- District Greenspace (100-500 ha)

Figure 6.2.3: Open Space Hierarchy – Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN

Figure 6.23: Open Space Hierarchy - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
- Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
- Neighbouring PCN area boundary
- Open space hierarchy**
- Small Doorstep Greenspace (0.2-0.5 ha)
- Doorstep Greenspace (0.5-2 ha)
- Local Greenspace (2-10 ha)
- Neighbourhood Greenspace (10-20 ha)
- Wider Neighbourhood Greenspace (20-100 ha)
- District Greenspace (100-500 ha)

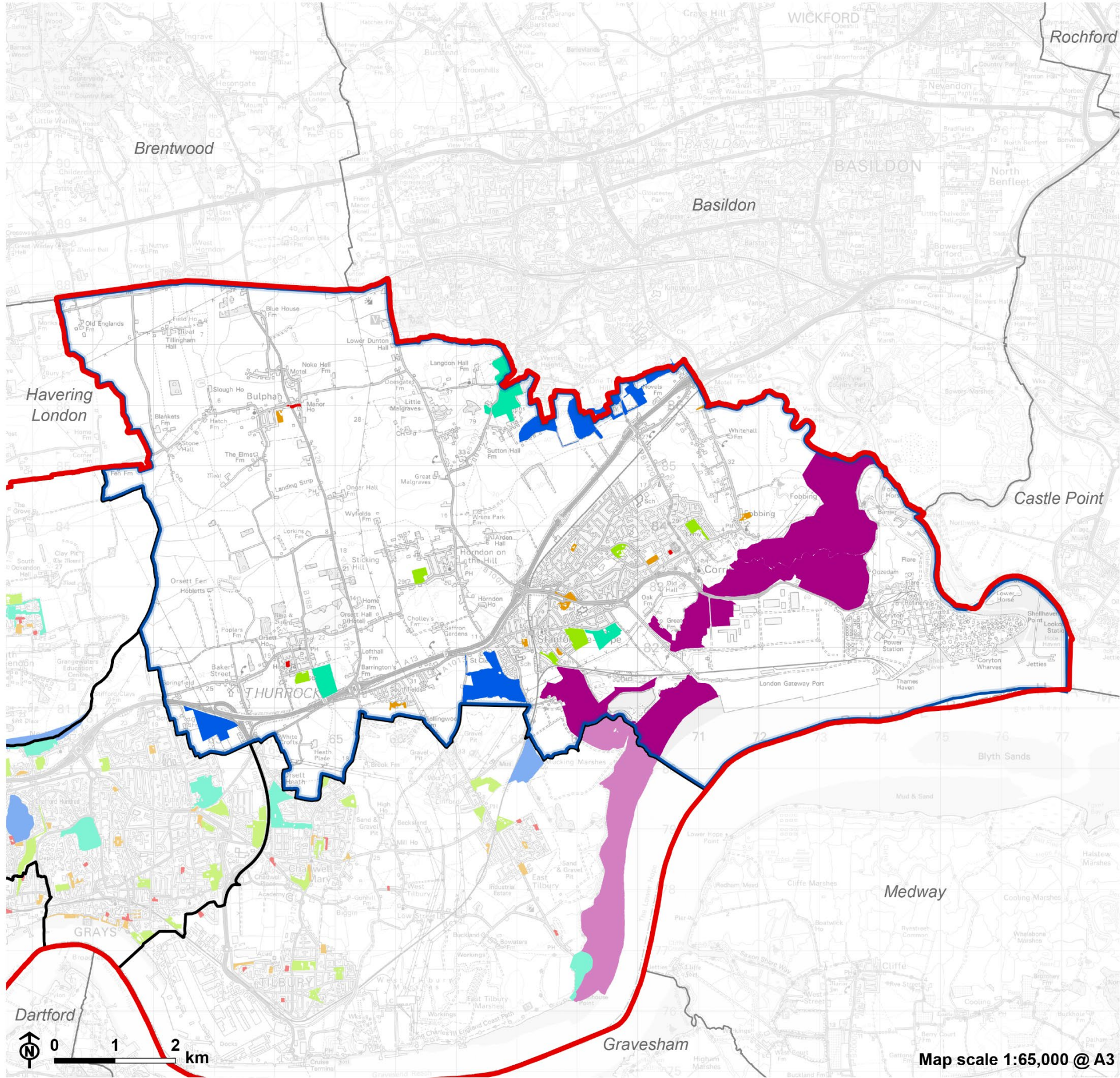
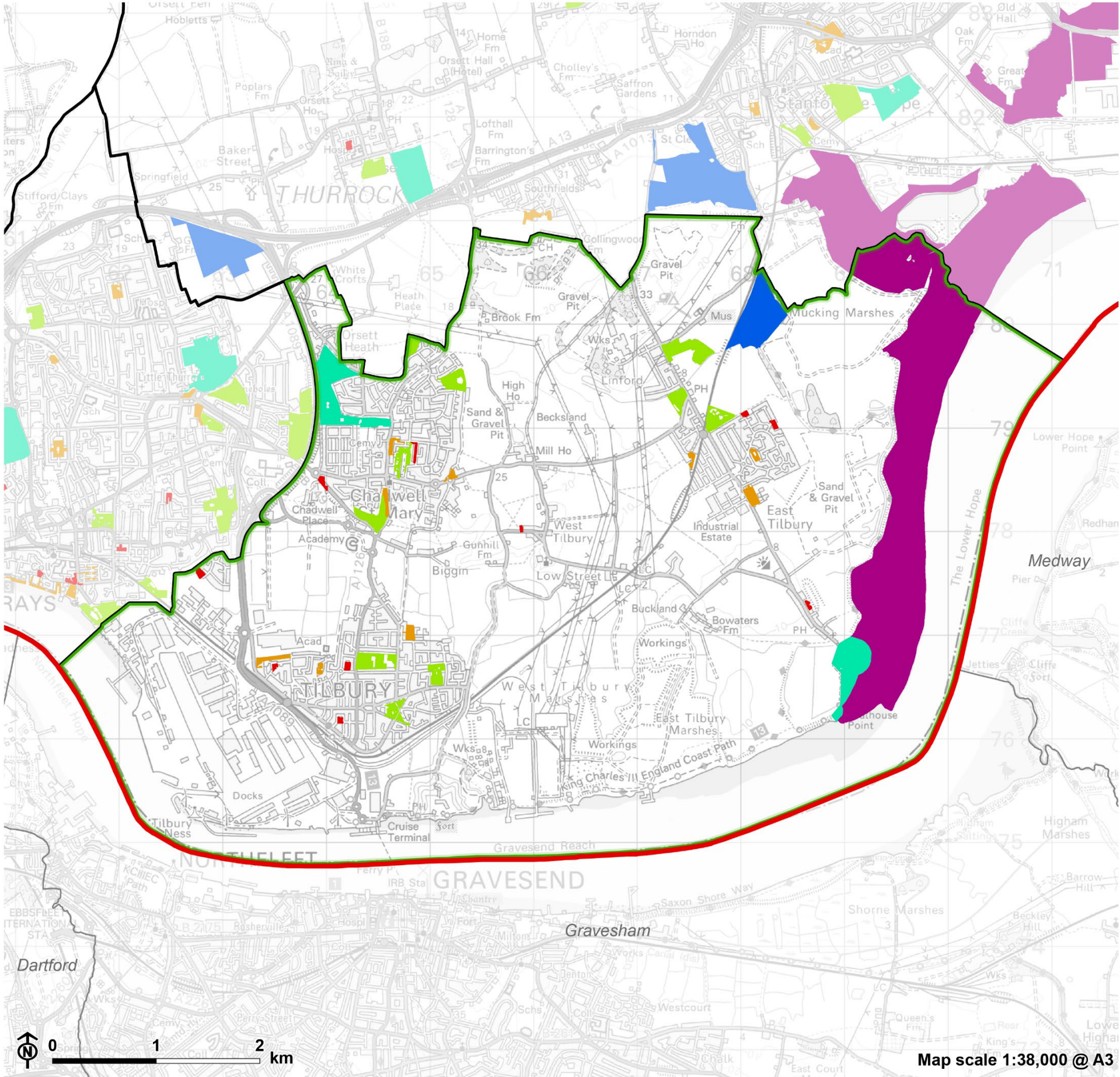


Figure 6.2.4: Open Space Hierarchy – Tilbury & Chadwell PCN



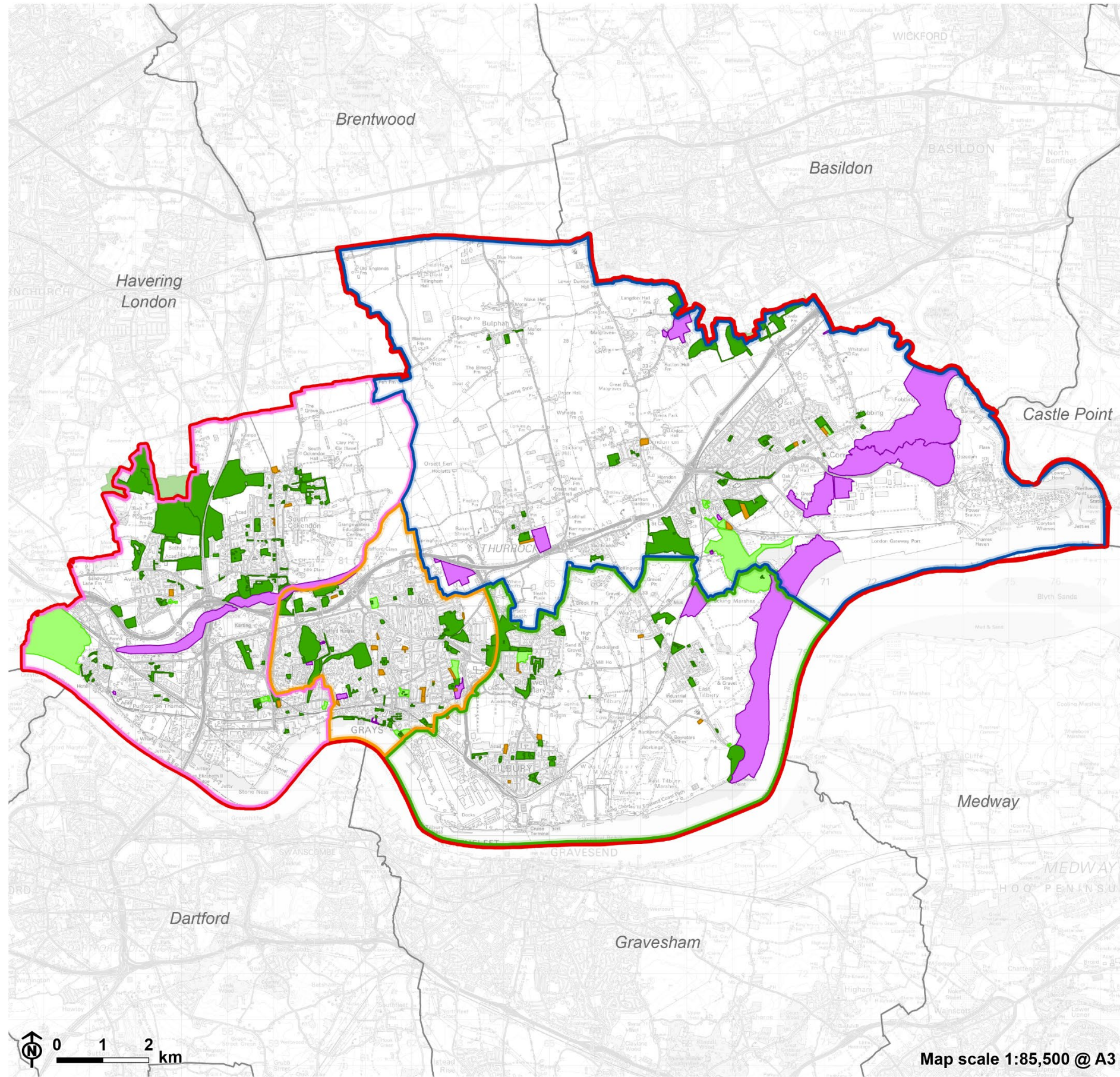
Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment
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Figure 6.24: Open Space Hierarchy - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
 - Neighbouring PCN area boundary
- Open space hierarchy**
 - Small Doorstep Greenspace (0.2-0.5 ha)
 - Doorstep Greenspace (0.5-2 ha)
 - Local Greenspace (2-10 ha)
 - Neighbourhood Greenspace (10-20 ha)
 - Wider Neighbourhood Greenspace (20-100 ha)
 - District Greenspace (100-500 ha)

Figure 6.2: Open Space Access Category



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Assessment
Thurrock Council



Figure 6.3: Open Space Access Category

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Access category**
 - Freely accessible to public
 - Freely accessible to public: opening hours
 - Restricted access: members/tenants only
 - Restricted access: other

Play provision

6.28 98 play sites were audited across Thurrock (**Figure 6.4**). Of these, two have a primary typology of 'Children's play areas'. The remainder of the equipped play provision is found within other typologies, as shown in **Table 6.8**. Where there is more than one play space associated with a site, the primary typology has only been counted once (for example, play areas 101a and 101b are associated with site 101 which has the primary typology of 'amenity greenspace'. Amenity greenspace has been counted once for these play areas). Hence, the total number of play areas in **Table 6.8** indicates the number of unique sites with at least one play area.

Table 6.8: Number of play areas by primary typology

Primary typology	Number of play areas
Allotments	0
Amenity greenspace	20
Cemeteries	0
Civic spaces	0
Green corridors	0
Parks and gardens	42
Natural and semi natural greenspaces	3
Total	65

6.29 **Table 6.9** shows the number of other play areas by primary typology. These were identified in the open space audit forms as additional play opportunity. Of these, 24 sites listed 'other' provision in terms of other play areas. These were picked up by the surveyors during audits and often consisted of single basketball hoops and goals. Zip lines, parkour and rock-climbing areas, games painted on concrete, teen shelters, health route circuits, NEOS wall and street snooker games were also present on at least one of these sites.

Table 6.9: Number of other play areas by primary typology

Primary typology	MUGA	Wheels/ skate park	Gym	Trim trail/ obstacle course	BMX track	Other
Allotments	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amenity greenspace	5	1	1	1	1	5
Cemeteries	-	-	-	-	-	-
Civic spaces	-	-	1	-	-	-
Green corridors	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parks and gardens	19	3	18	4	2	18
Natural and semi natural greenspaces	-	-	-	-	-	1
Provision total	24	4	20	5	3	24

6.30 Table 6.10 shows the distribution of play spaces by PCN. The numbers vary between PCN which is likely influenced by the variable size of each PCN. **Figure 6.5.1-6.5.4** shows the location of play sites coloured by their hierarchy category in each PCN area.

Table 6.10: Audited play spaces by PCN

Hierarchy	Aveley, South Ockendon and Purfleet PCN	Grays PCN	Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN	Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
Small doorstep	-	-	1	-
Doorstep	7	8	-	1
Local	6	1	2	6
Neighbourhood	13	16	12	12
Youth space	1	5	-	7
PCN Totals	27	30	15	26

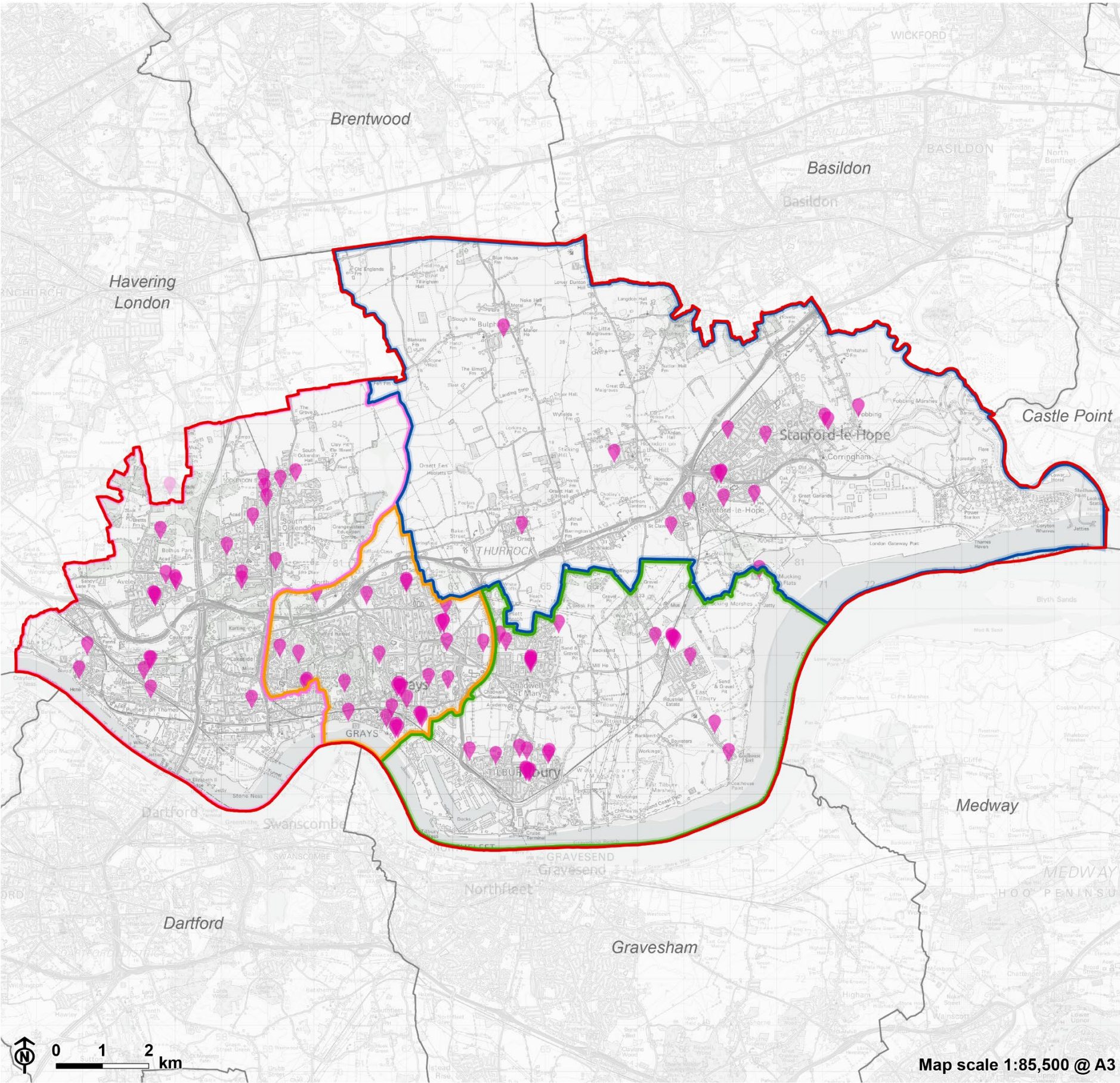
6.31 Table 6.11 shows the ages catered for by play spaces within each PCN. Some play sites were counted more than once if they were found to cater to more than one age range.

Table 6.11: Audited play space by PCN

Primary Care Network (PCN)	Under 5s	Age 5-11	Age 11+
Aveley, South Ockendon and Purfleet PCN	21	21	8
Grays PCN	20	21	17
Stanford le Hope PCN	11	11	8
Tilbury & Chadwell PCN	13	18	22

Primary Care Network (PCN)	Under 5s	Age 5-11	Age 11+
Play space totals	65	71	55

Figure 6.3: Locations of play spaces audited



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Figure 6.4: Play Spaces

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Play space

Figure 6.4.1: Play Space Hierarchy – Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN

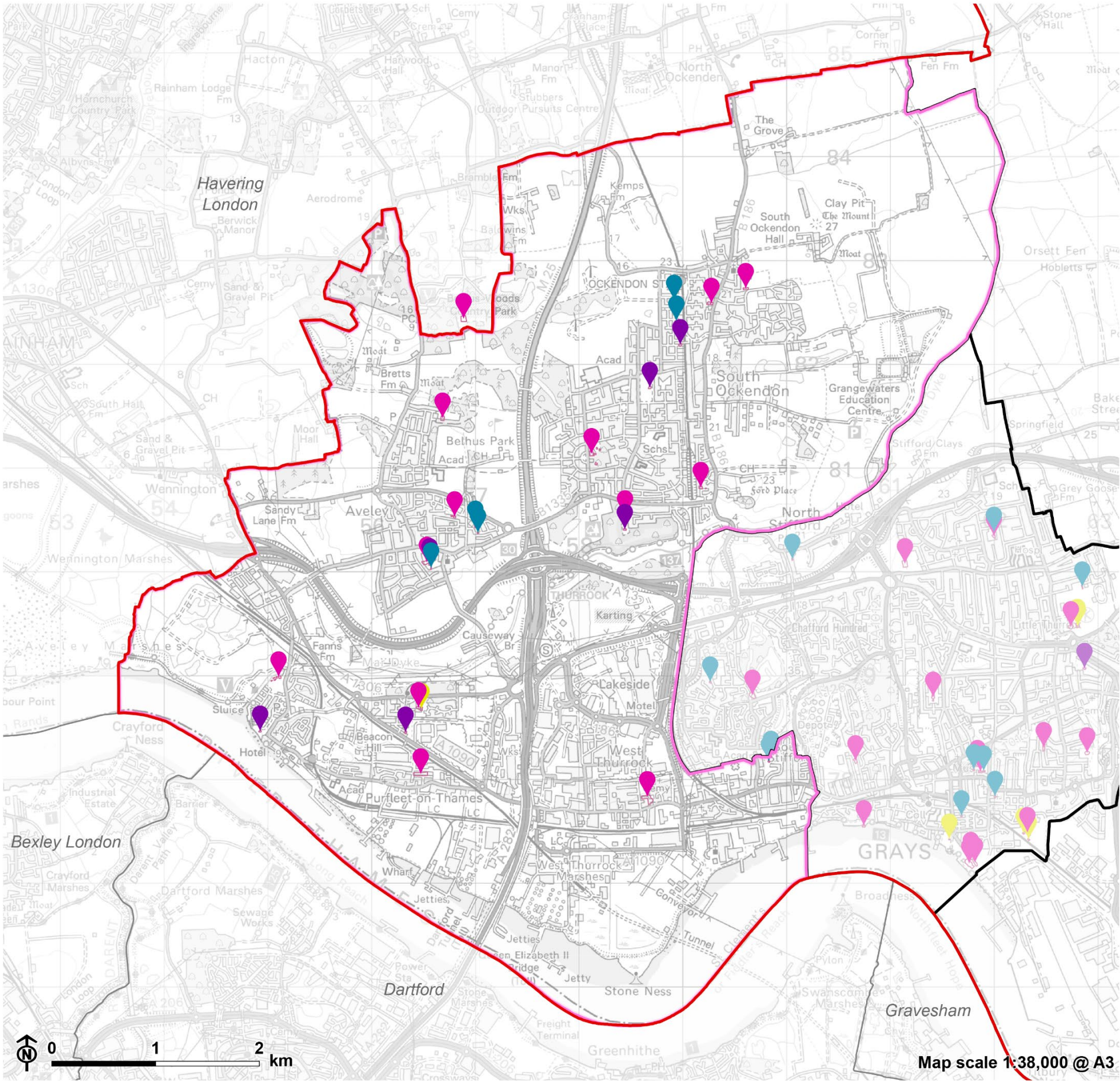


Figure 6.51: Play Space Hierarchy - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN

- Thurrock Unitary Authority

Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**

Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN

Neighbouring PCN area boundary
- Play space typology**

Doorstep Play Space

Local Play Space

Neighbourhood Play Space

Youth Space

Figure 6.5.2: Play Space Hierarchy – Grays PCN

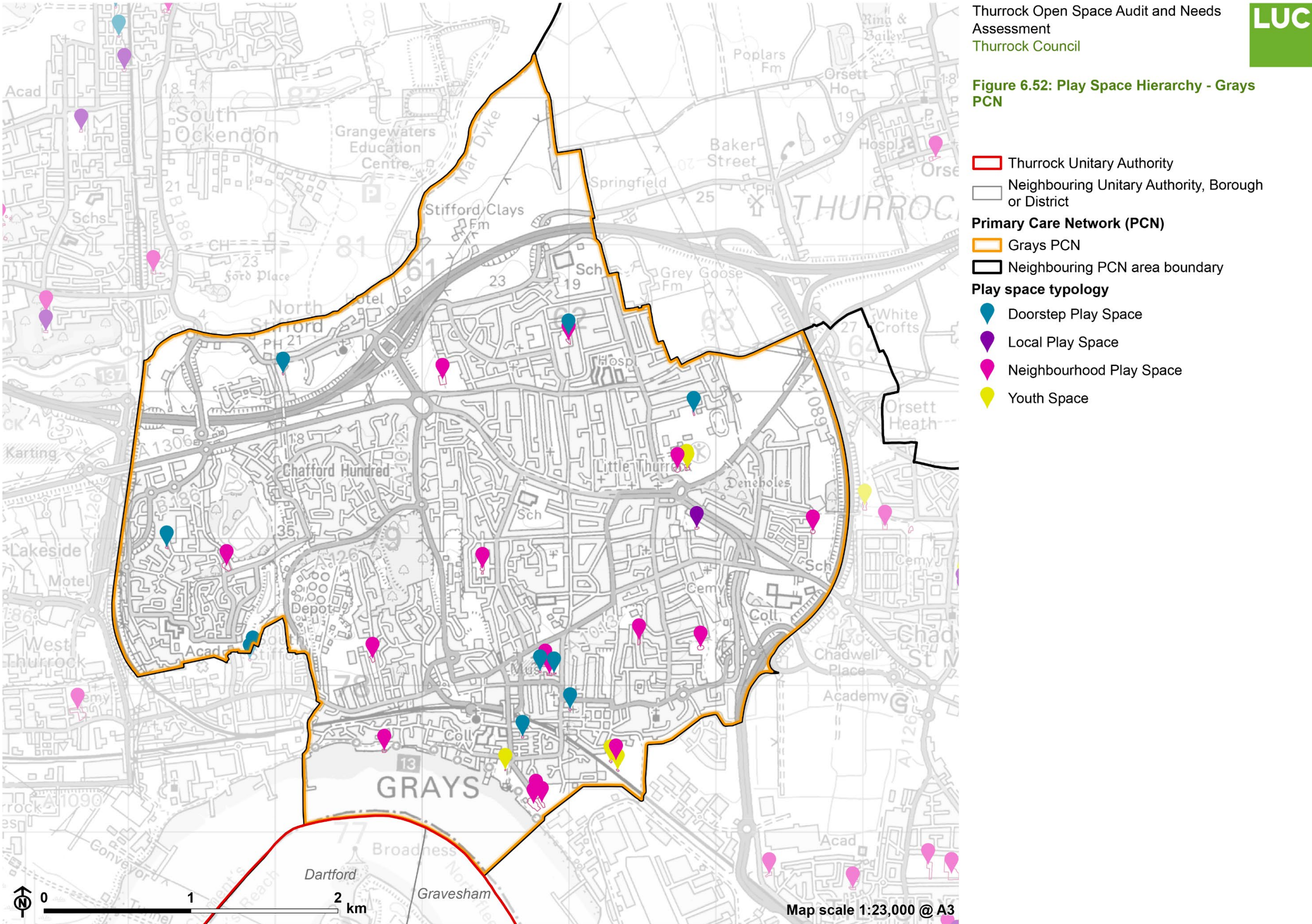
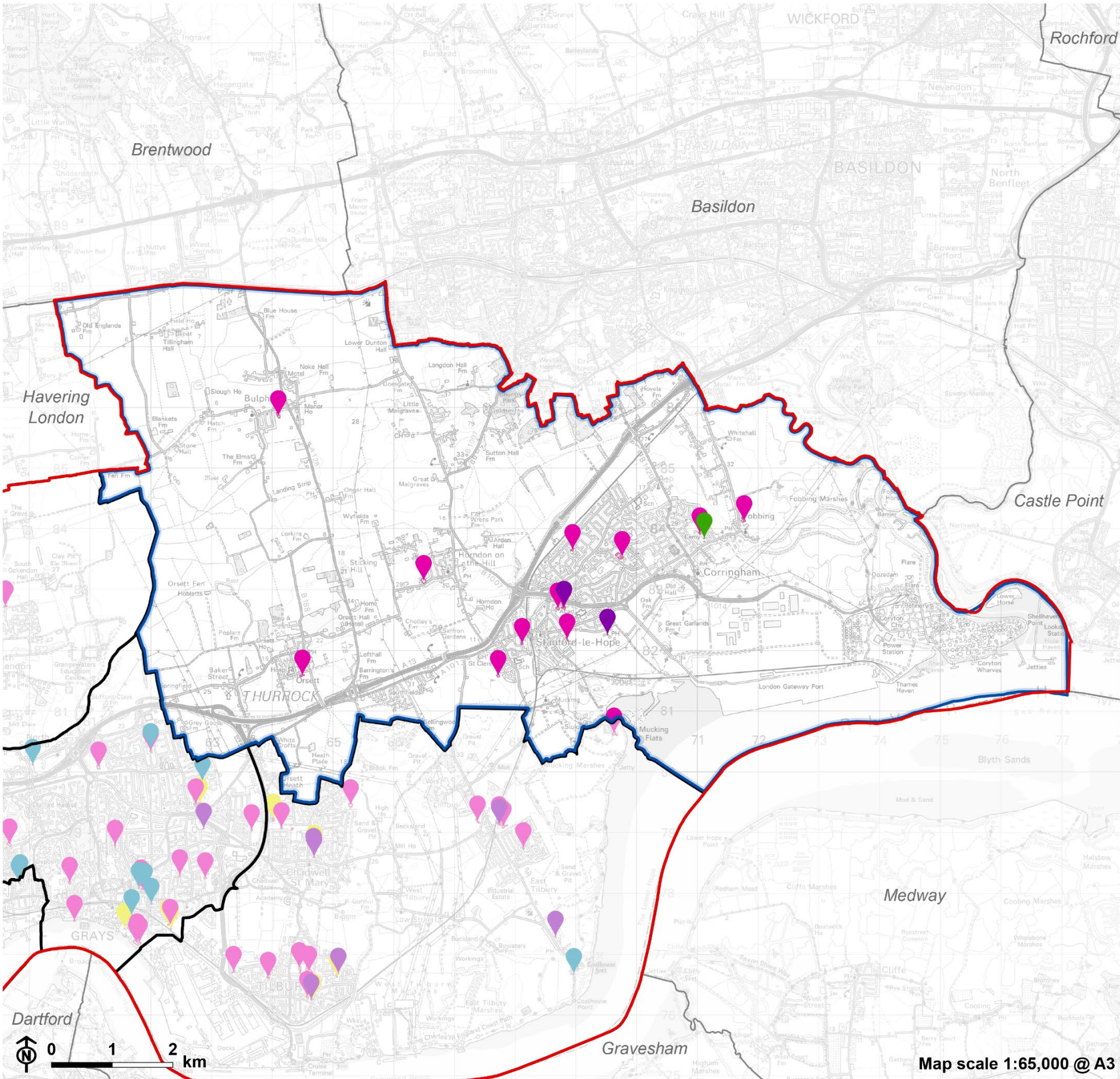


Figure 6.5.3: Play Space Hierarchy – Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN



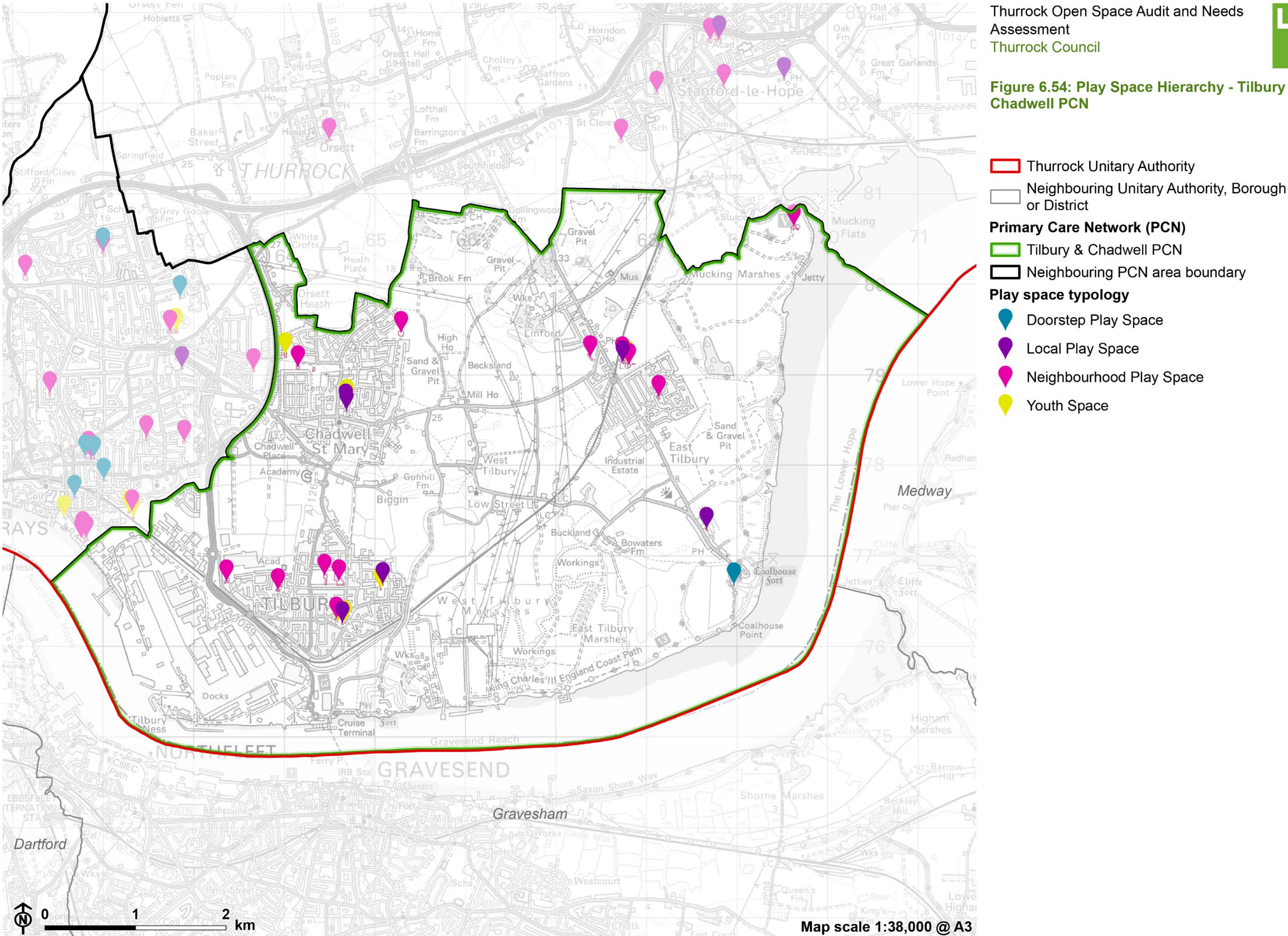
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Figure 6.53: Play Space Hierarchy - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Neighbouring PCN area boundary
- Play space typology**
 - Small Doorstep Play Space
 - Doorstep Play Space
 - Local Play Space
 - Neighbourhood Play Space
 - Youth Space

Figure 6.5.4: Play Space Hierarchy – Tilbury & Chadwell PCN



Chapter 7

Quality and value assessment

7.1 This chapter summarises the results from the site audits that were undertaken as part of the study. A total of 241 open space sites were visited across the study area. Of these, 238 were surveyed completely, three were visited but unable to be surveyed. Therefore, the 238 open space sites that were able to be surveyed have been included in the analysis for this quality and value assessment.

7.2 In addition, 98 play spaces were visited throughout Thurrock and were subject to a detailed audit based on the Green Flag Award themes. The full audit form can be found in **Appendix A** and scoring system in **Appendix B**.

7.3 The Green Flag Award is a recognised benchmark standard for open space management in the UK and internationally. Detailed criteria have been developed that are suitable for Thurrock's context and have been categorised as relating to either:

- 'quality' (aspects relating to management and the condition of features and facilities); or
- 'value' (the presence of various features and facilities, and value to the local community).

The following assessment themes were applied to the site audit form (based on green flag award criteria:

- **A Welcoming Place:** Welcoming, good & safe access, signage, equal access for all.
- **Healthy, Safe and Secure:** Safe equipment & facilities, personal security, dog fouling, appropriate provision of facilities, quality of facilities.
- **Clean and Well Maintained:** Litter & waste management, grounds maintenance & horticulture, building & infrastructure maintenance.
- **Sustainability:** Environmental sustainability, waste minimisation, arboriculture & woodland management.
- **Nature Conservation and Heritage:** Conservation of nature features, wild flora & fauna, conservation of landscape features, conservation of buildings & structures.

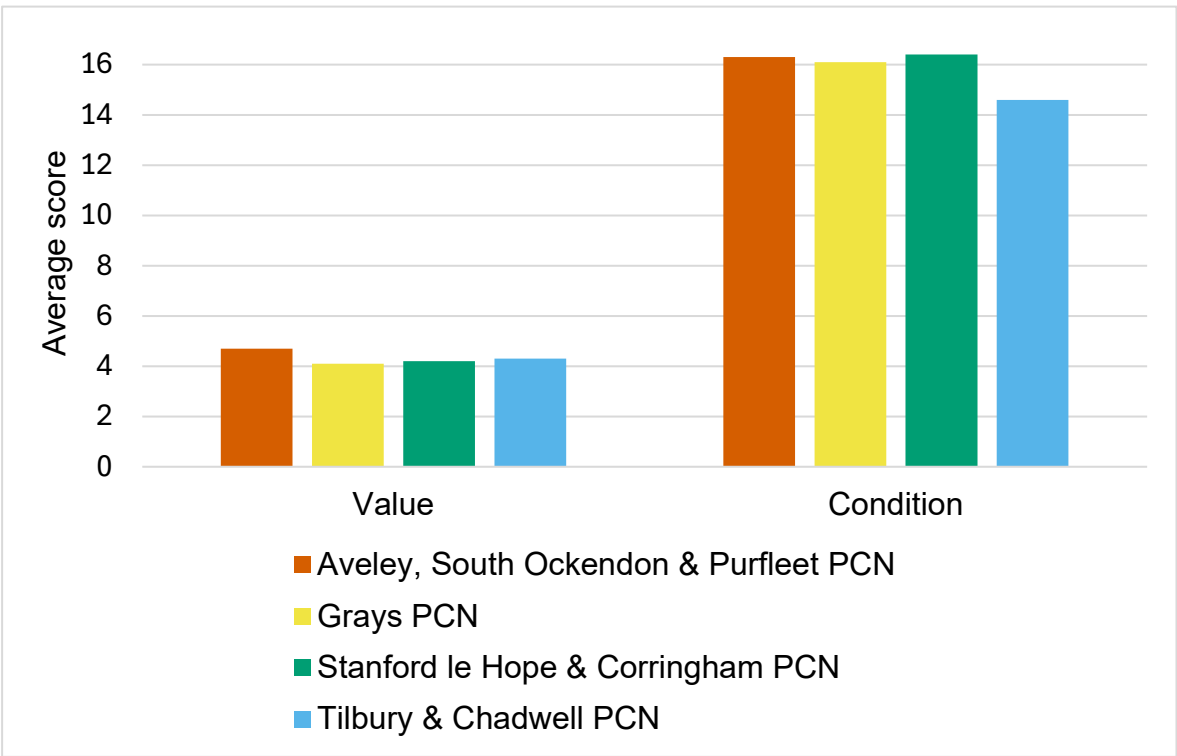
- **Community Involvement:** Community involvement in management & development including outreach work, appropriate provision for the community.
- **Marketing and Culture:** Marketing & promotion, provision of appropriate information, provision of appropriate educational interpretation/information.

7.4 An additional section has been added to cover the assessment of play spaces (play and recreational value).

A welcoming place

7.5 Sites scored well for overall value scores within this theme (4.4 average out of 5), which can be expected as the audit focused on open spaces that should be fully accessible to the public. Average overall quality score was 16.0 out of 25. Tilbury & Chadwell PCN open space sites scored slightly lower than the other areas for average condition, whereas Grays PCN scored slightly lower than the rest in overall value score (**Figure 7.1**).

Figure 7.1: Overall average welcoming place quality and value scores per PCN



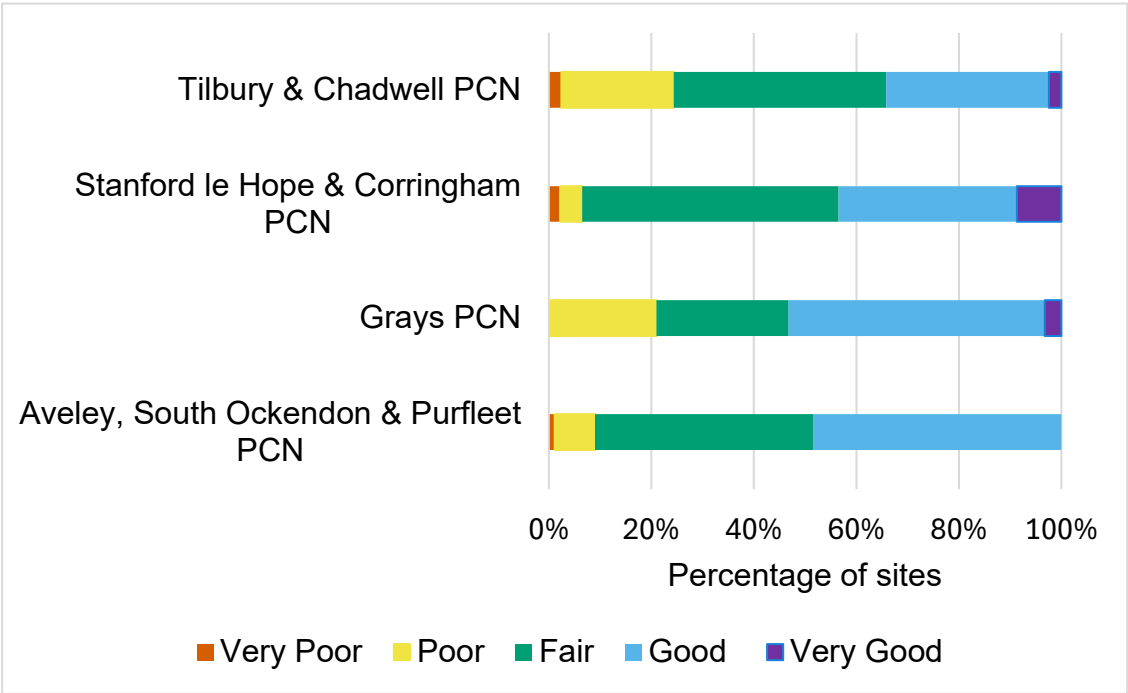
Entrances

7.6 Entrances should be easy to find, open and inviting as they can play an influential factor in how sites are perceived by local residents and potential visitors.

7.7 The results of the site audit indicate that quality of entrances did not vary significantly across the typologies. Only 3% of sites were reported to have ‘very good’ scores, for each typology cemeteries and civic spaces had the highest proportion of sites with entrances in ‘good’ condition. Amenity greenspaces tend to not have easy to find, signed entrances and the majority of sites (55%) within this typology scored ‘fair’. Allotment sites had the highest proportion of ‘very poor’ and ‘poor’ scores, accounting for 30% of the sites.

7.8 Grays and Tilbury & Chadwell PCN had the greatest proportion of sites with quality of entrances scored as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ (**Figure 7.2**). However, Grays PCN also had the highest proportion of ‘good’ scores for this criterion.

Figure 7.2: To what extent are the entrances well presented?



Signage

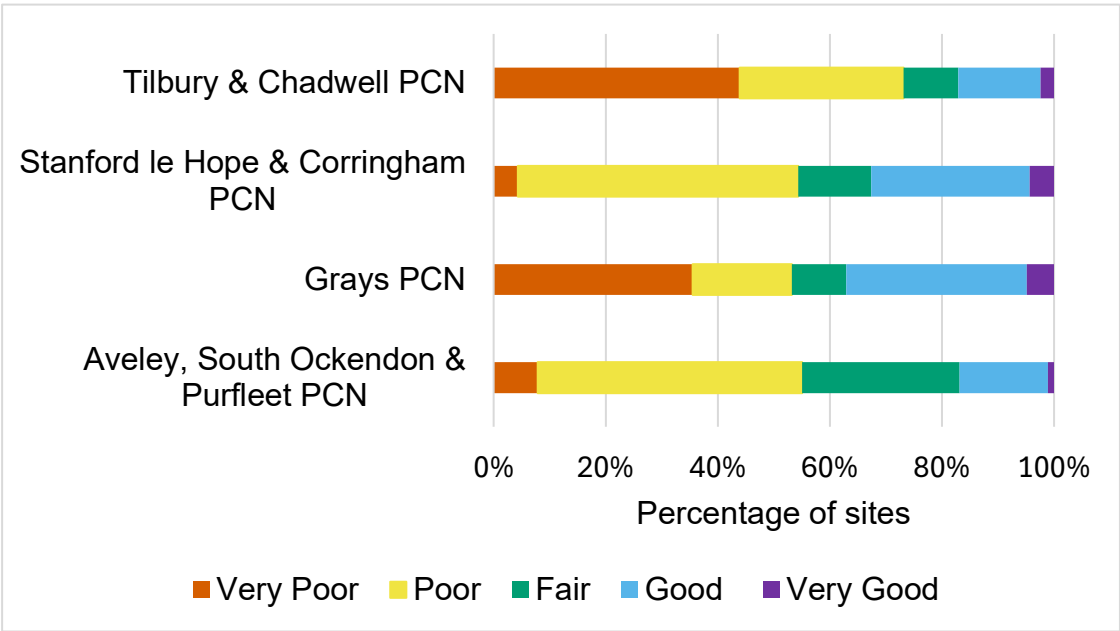
7.9 Up to date, clear and informative signage that is accessible for a range of users can provide an assessment of whether a site is well-maintained and can improve the user experience for new and regular visitors.

7.10 The results of the site audit indicate that quality of signage for the vast majority of cemeteries scored either 'good' (72%) or 'fair' (16%) for this criterion. 35% parks and garden sites were scored as 'poor' and 17% 'very poor', which is not to be expected as this typology would expect to have facilities and walking/cycle routes where signage can play an important role in providing information.

7.11 Amenity greenspaces had the lowest quality score, with 85% of sites scored as either 'very poor' or 'poor'. Most sites have few facilities and limited diversity of habitats, so signage may not always be appropriate or necessary. Allotments were also frequently scored as 'poor' or 'very poor' (59% of sites), but these are private, members only sites where signage may not be necessary for users who are familiar with the site.

7.12 Grays PCN had the highest quality of signage with 37% of sites scored as 'good' or 'very good' for this criterion (**Figure 7.3**). However, it also had the second highest proportion of sites scoring 'very poor'. Tilbury & Chadwell and had the highest proportion of sites scored 'very poor' within the PCN. Stanford Le Hope & Corringham PCN had the highest proportion of sites where quality of signage was scored as 'poor'.

Figure 7.3: What is the overall provision of welcoming signage?



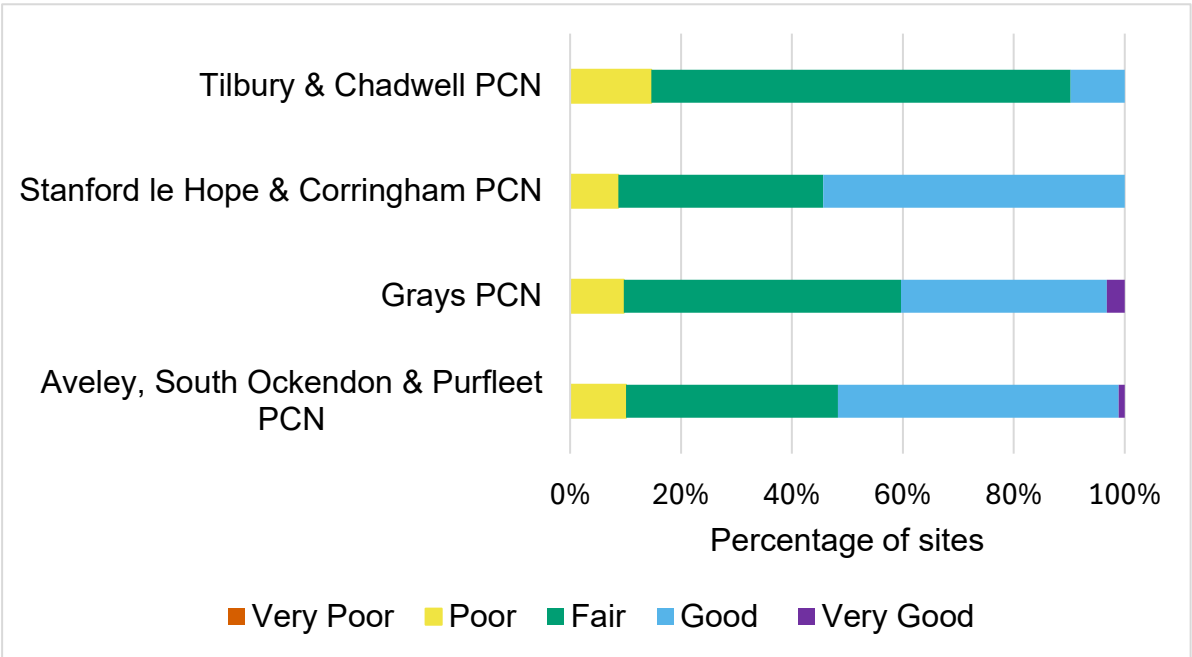
Quality of access

7.13 The quality of access to open space will be influenced by factors such as availability of public transports, provision of car parking, cycle paths and cycle parking.

7.14 Civic spaces performed better than other typologies with 80% of sites scoring ‘good’ for quality of access to the open space and 20% as ‘very good’. Half of parks and gardens open spaces scored ‘good’ for this criterion and 40% ‘fair’. Due to the range of facilities that can be provided, parks and garden open spaces should provide good access for all, including elderly, infirm and people with physical disabilities. Amenity greenspaces also scored highly with 86% of sites scoring ‘good’ or ‘fair’. Most natural and semi-natural greenspace and green corridor sites may not have easy access via public transport so the majority of sites were scored as ‘fair’.

7.15 Tilbury & Chadwell PCN had the greatest proportion of sites that were scored for quality of access to open space as ‘fair’, ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ (**Figure 7.4**). The remaining PCNs had a similar proportion of ‘good’ quality scores for access to open spaces.

Figure 7.4: What is the overall quality of access and accesses for people travelling to open space?

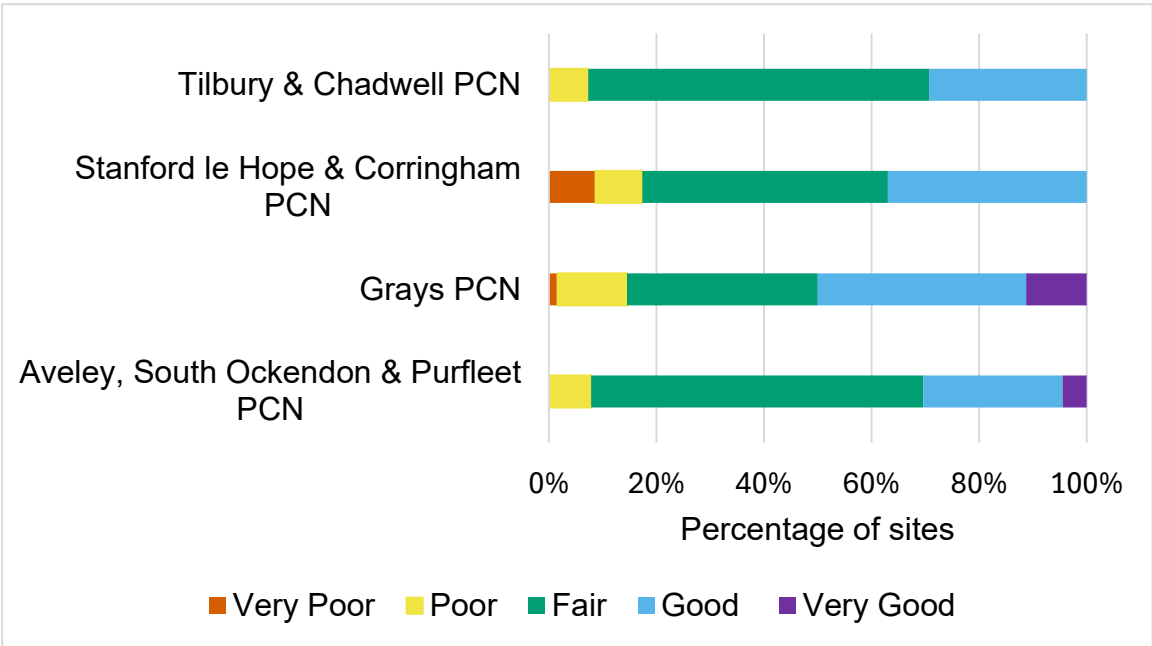


7.16 In terms of quality of access within open spaces, civic spaces and parks and gardens also performed better than other typologies with 46% of parks and garden open spaces scored as ‘good’ and 40% as ‘fair’. Amenity greenspaces performed slightly worse for access within open spaces compared to the scoring for accessing the open space. 59% of amenity greenspaces scored ‘fair’ and 27% as ‘good’. Green corridors had the highest proportion of ‘poor’ scores for this aspect. Footpaths and easy access through green corridors were not common, with most sites presenting no clear public access and dense vegetation which was impassable.

7.17 Despite natural and semi-natural greenspace sites often having natural, non-surfaced paths, sites scored relatively well with 63% scored as ‘fair’, but 23% of sites were scored as either ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

7.18 Stanford Le Hope & Corringham PCN had the greatest proportion of sites that scored ‘very poor’ for quality and value of access within open spaces (**Figure 7.5**). Whereas, Grays PCN had the highest proportion of sites that were scored as ‘good’ and ‘very good’ for this criterion.

Figure 7.5: What is the overall quality of access and accesses within and through the open space?

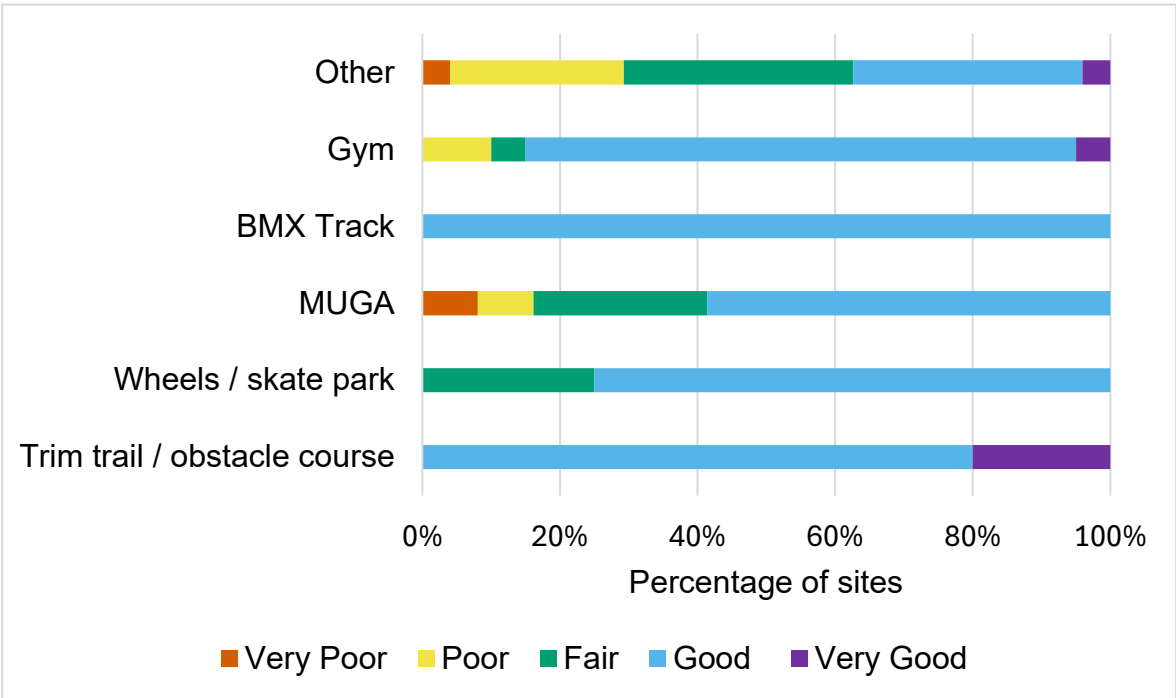


Healthy, safe and security

7.19 The number and type of features or facilities present within the open spaces were used to calculate value scores for this theme. Facilities and amenities were identified at 156 sites. The most common features being litter bins and seating, which were recorded at 87% and 67% of audited sites, respectively. Out of the 156 sites with facilities and amenities, amenity greenspace sites represented the greatest proportion (55%), followed by parks and gardens (31%). 300 amenities and facilities were audited across the sites with 67% found to be in 'good' or 'very good' condition, only 4% were found to be in 'poor' condition.

7.20 Sports provision was generally limited to parks and gardens and amenity greenspace. Most sports provision (73%) was scored as either in 'good' or 'very good' condition, MUGA and green gyms were the main types of sport provision provided (**Figure 7.6**).

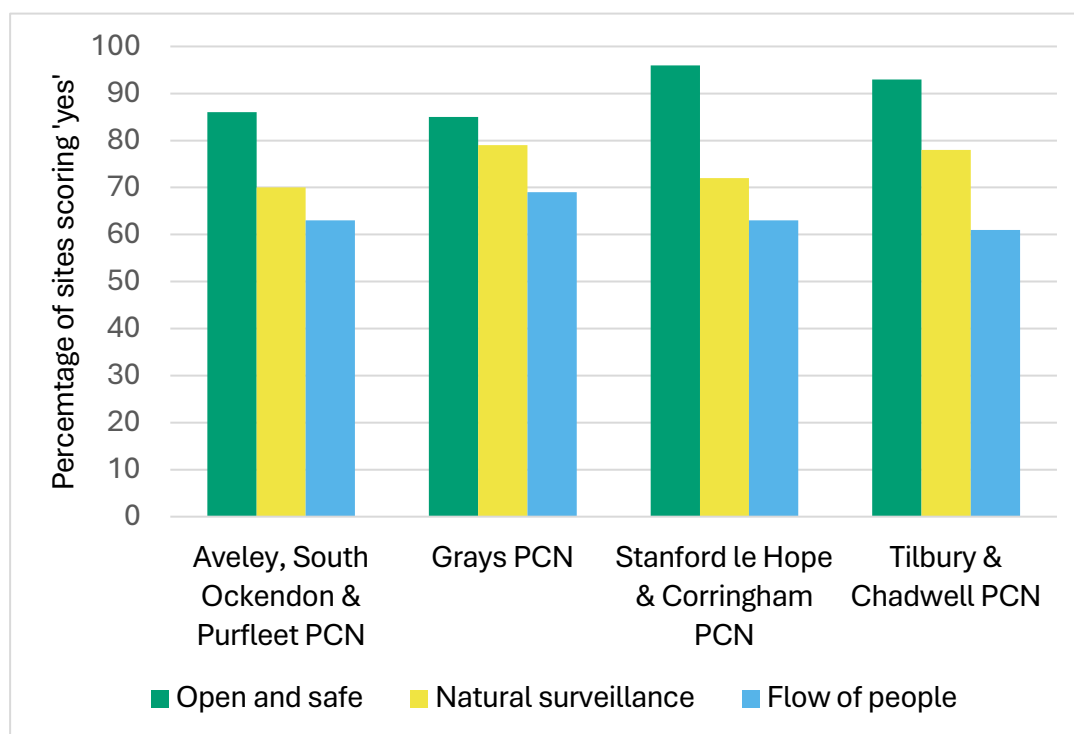
Figure 7.6: What is the overall condition of other sport provision?



7.21 76% of sites audited were found to provide informal recreation. Parks and gardens had the highest proportion of sites scored as providing ‘good’ (70%) or ‘very good’ (9%) informal recreation provision. Walking and dog walking were the most common types of informal recreation recorded, reported at 67% and 55% of sites, respectively. All civic spaces were scored with providing ‘some’ informal recreation. There was no PCN that clearly performed better in the provision of informal recreation.

7.22 In terms of safety and security scores, all areas had over 85% of sites scoring ‘yes’ for sites feeling open and secure. There was very little difference in the proportion of sites scored as feeling open and secure across the PCNs (**Figure 7.7**). Grays and Tilbury & Chadwell PCN had a slightly higher proportion of sites with natural surveillance.

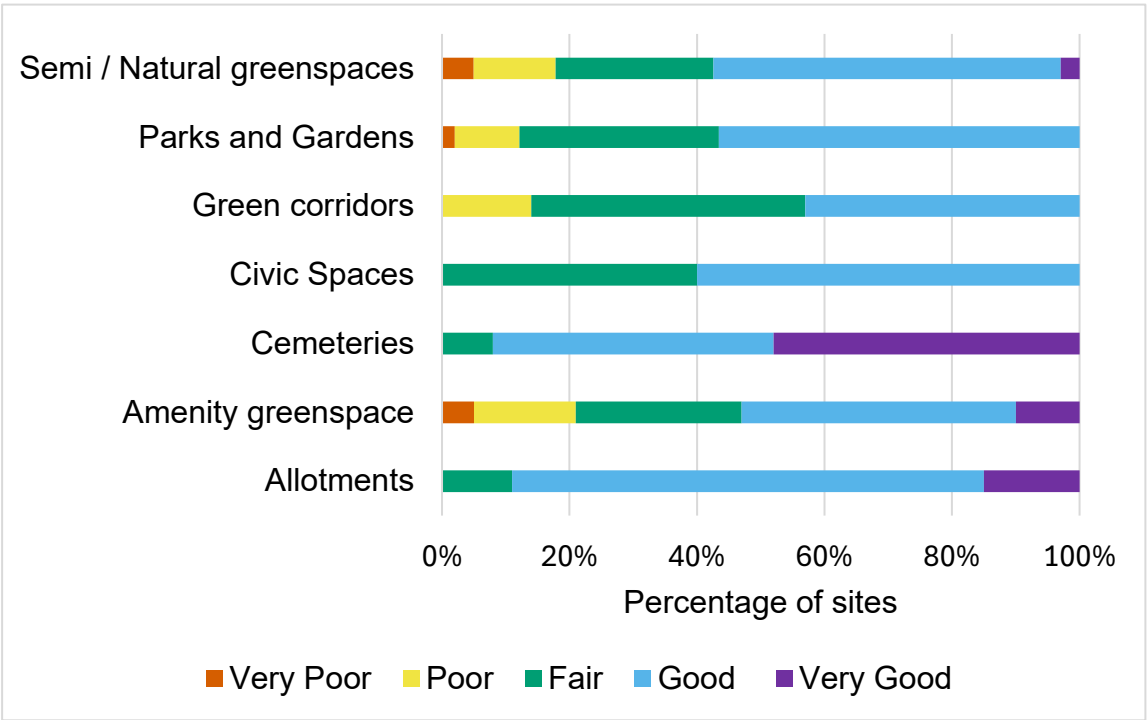
7.23 Parks and gardens, amenity greenspace, cemeteries and civic spaces scored well for feeling open and secure and having natural surveillance. Natural and semi-natural greenspaces performed slightly lower for these criteria, as they tended to be larger sites with no clear paths, entrances or lighting.

Figure 7.7: Community safety and sense of security quality scores

Clean and well-maintained

7.24 Overall, open spaces scored relatively well for this theme with 63% of sites scoring 'good' or 'very good' for overall cleanliness. Cemeteries performed the best with most sites scoring 'good' (44%) or 'very good' (48%) (**Figure 7.8**). Overall cleanliness across amenity greenspaces varied, with 21% of sites scored as either 'poor' or 'very poor'.

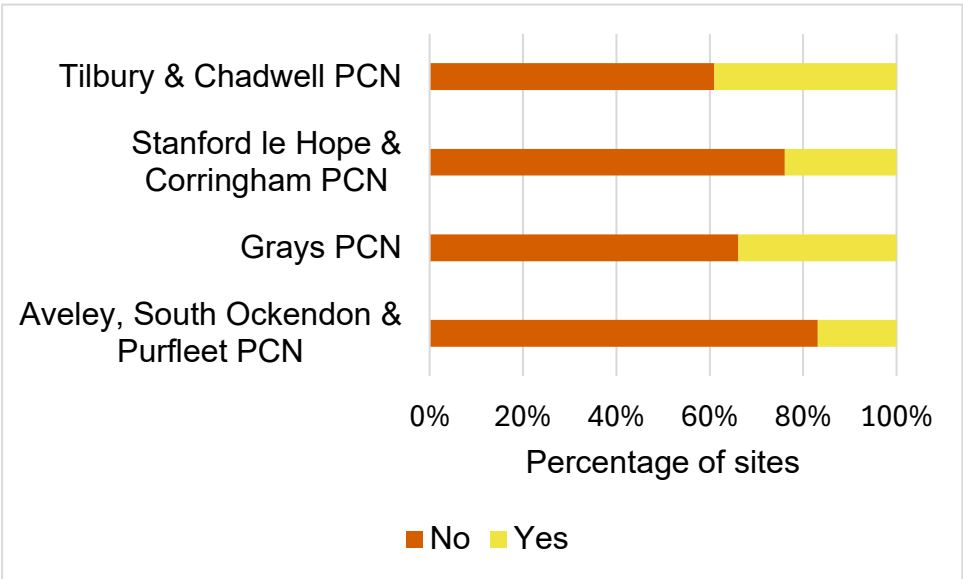
Figure 7.8: Overall cleanliness?



7.25 Vandalism was reported only at 4% of sites, three sites in the Grays PCN , three sites in the Tilbury and Chadwell PCN and two sites in the Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN.

7.26 Graffiti was recorded most frequently at sites audited within the Grays and Tilbury & Chadwell PCN (**Figure 7.9**). Graffiti was noted across multiple typologies, this was found within 56% of parks and gardens sites, 43% of green corridor sites, 35% of natural and semi-natural greenspaces and 20% of amenity greenspaces.

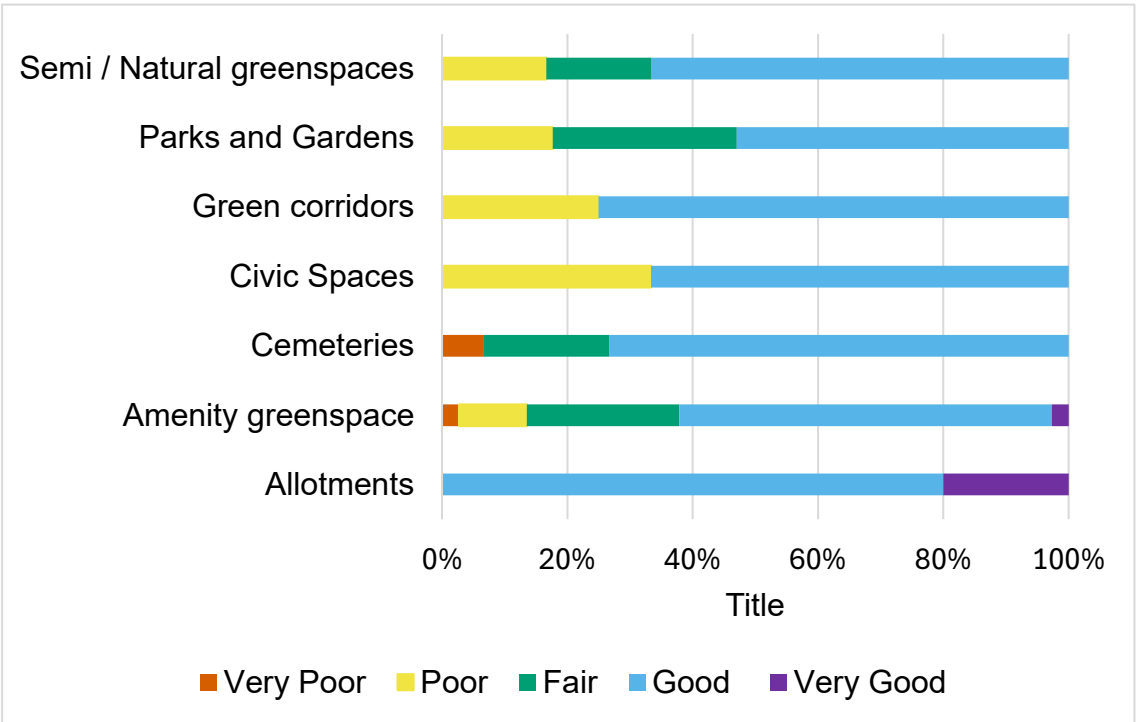
Figure 7.9: Evidence of graffiti



Planting and grass area

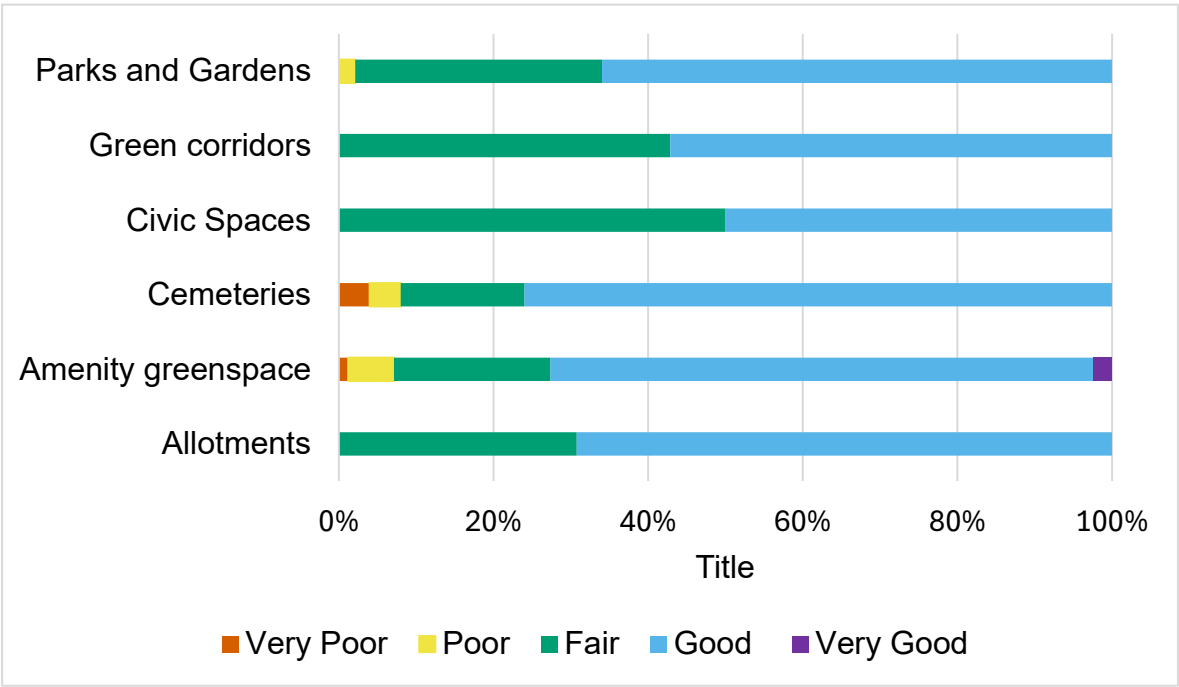
7.27 Overall, features tended to be scored as either in ‘good’ or ‘fair’ condition. **Figure 7.10** and **Figure 7.11** show audit results for overall condition of planted and grass areas. Most sites did not contain planted areas, the highest proportion were found within amenity greenspaces, with 59% of these areas scored as ‘good’. Allotments, cemeteries, civic spaces and parks and gardens also were found to have most planted areas scored as ‘good’, 80%, 73%, 67% and 53% respectively.

Figure 7.10: Overall condition of planted areas



7.28 Areas of grass across all typologies were generally found to be in good condition, with 70% of sites scoring 'good' and 24% 'fair'. Natural and semi-natural greenspaces and cemeteries had the highest proportion of sites with grass areas in 'good' condition. Only 5% of audited sites with grass areas were scored in 'poor' or 'very poor' condition.

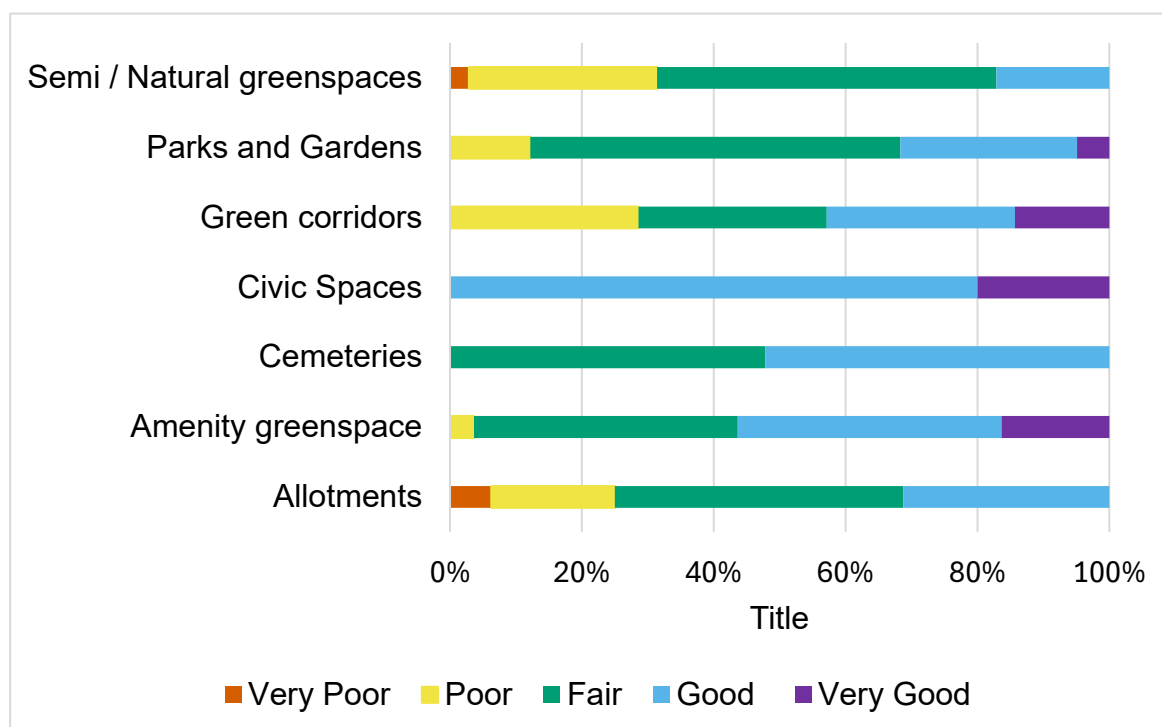
Figure 7.11: Overall condition of grass areas



Footpaths

7.29 Condition of footpaths varied across typologies, with only 7% of sites audited scored as ‘very good’. Most sites, regardless of typologies, were scored as ‘good’ (34%) or ‘fair’ (45%) (**Figure 7.12**). Only civic spaces, amenity greenspaces and cemeteries had over 50% of sites scored as footpaths being in ‘good’ or ‘very good’ condition.

7.30 As expected, natural and semi-natural greenspaces had a high proportion of sites scored as ‘fair’ (51%) with 32% scored as either ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Footpaths across these sites tend to be natural surface, which can reduce accessibility. Grays PCN had a significantly higher proportion of sites (69%) with footpaths assessed as in ‘very good’ condition, there was no significant difference between condition of footpaths across the other PCNs.

Figure 7.12: Overall condition of footpaths

Allotments

7.31 Condition of allotments were reported for all 27 open spaces visited. 85% of allotments were scored as being in 'good' condition, with only one site scored as being in 'fair' and 'poor' condition. All allotments were reported with having 76-100% of plots in use. Quality of allotments across all four PCNs were similar, with only one allotment scored as 'poor' in Tilbury & Chadwell PCN.

Sustainability

7.32 Sustainable management practices can be implemented across a wide range of open spaces, which can perform a range of functions. Management practices can include composting, solar or wind power, recycling, water harvesting and drought tolerant planting.

7.33 All allotment sites were found to have sustainable management practices present, however overall, 81% of total sites audited showed no evidence of sustainable practices.

7.34 Tree and woodland management are an important part of sustainable management for sites to ensure their longevity and resilience. For most sites audited (93%), tree and woodland management was reported. No typology or PCN was found to have a higher proportion of sites with tree and woodland management.

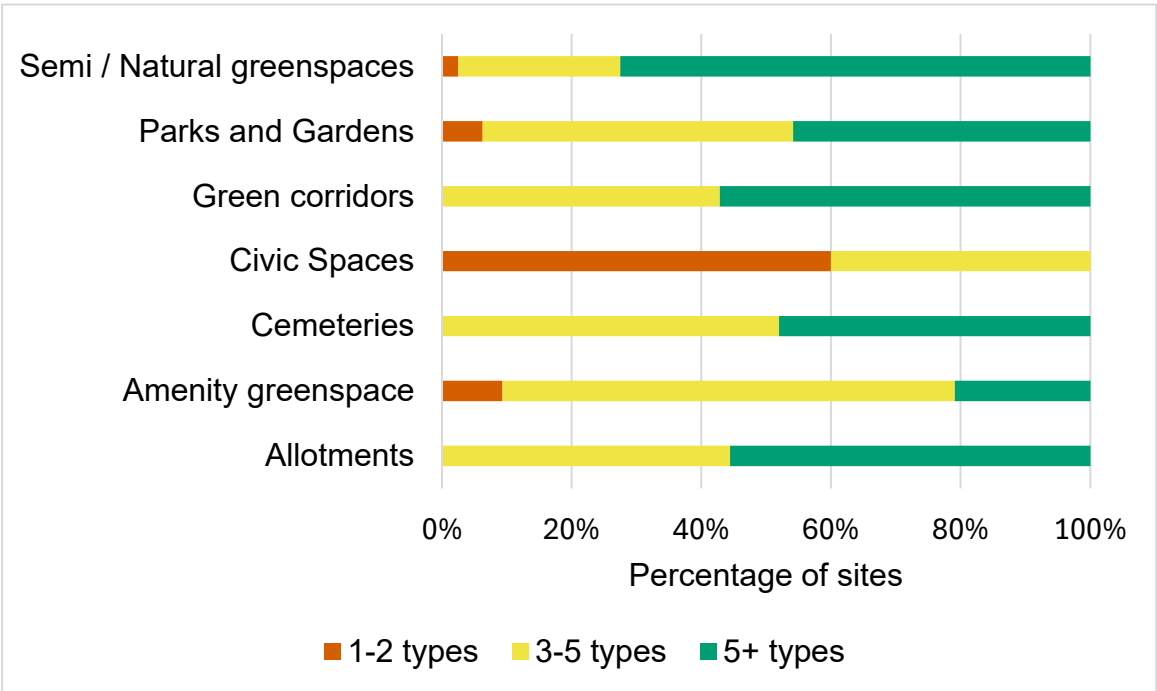
7.35 SuDS and swales were only identified within 2% of sites, three within amenity grasslands and one within a park and garden open space and one within a natural and semi-natural greenspace.

Nature conservation and heritage

7.36 For most typologies evidence of natural features being managed for nature conservation were rarely recorded, with only 13% of sites found to show evidence of nature conservation. 52% of these sites were natural and semi-natural greenspaces. This is to be expected as one of the main purposes of these sites is to protect and conserve natural features.

7.37 Natural and semi-natural greenspaces were found to have the greatest diversity in habitat types, with 73% of sites found to have greater than five vegetation types present (**Figure 7.13**). Allotments and green corridors also had a high proportion of sites with more than five vegetation types, 56% and 57% respectively. All other typologies contained at least one site that had between three to five vegetation types. No PCN was identified as having a greater amount of habitat diverse open spaces.

Figure 7.13: How many vegetation types does the site support?

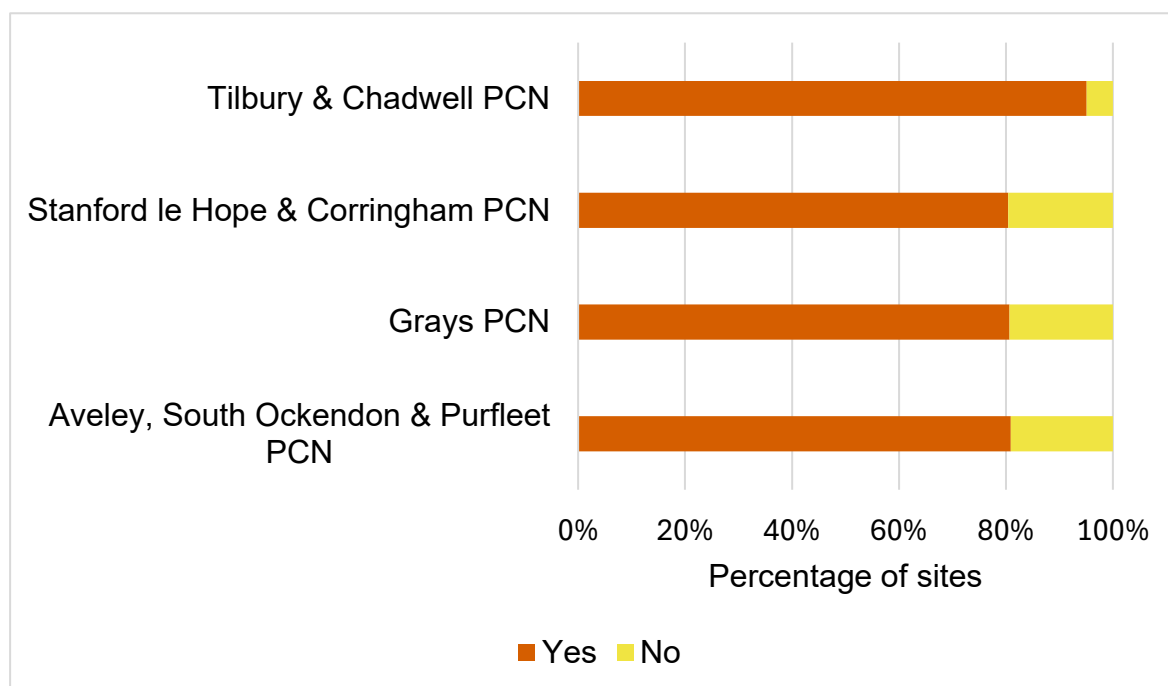


7.38 Overall, 82% of sites were seen as contributing to the setting of the immediate local area and 93% viewed as visually attractive. Only civic spaces were identified as not having any sites that contributed to local settings. Amenity greenspaces, parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural greenspaces reported a high number of sites that contribute to the setting of the immediate local area.

7.39 There was no significant difference across PCNs in the number of sites audited as being visually attractive or contributing to the setting of the immediate area.

7.40 At a landscape-scale, a similar pattern was found across typologies with 83% of sites found to form part of a wider network of greenspaces and corridors. Similarly, no civic open spaces were reported to contribute to green networks as the level of vegetation and connection to nearby other spaces were very limited. There were no significant differences in the number of open spaces contributing to a wider network across the PCNs, but Tilbury & Chadwell had a slightly higher proportion of sites contributing to a green network that the other three PCNs (**Figure 7.15**).

Figure 7.14: Percentage of sites that form part of a wider network of green spaces and corridors.

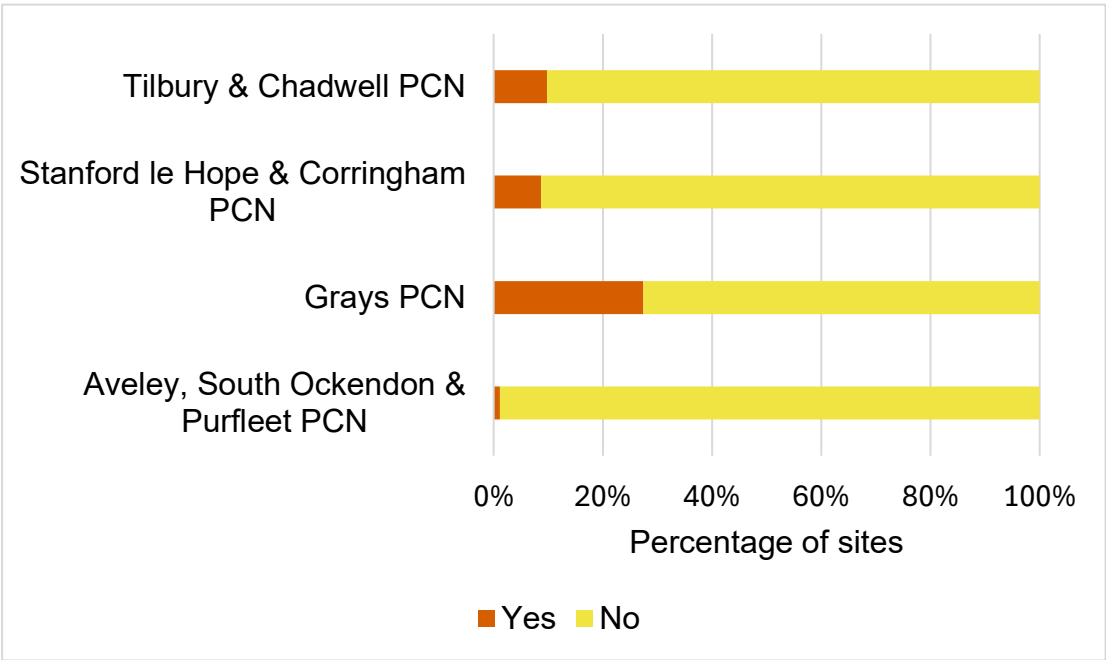


Community involvement

7.41 Evidence of active community groups were reported for six out of the seven typologies, with only green corridor open spaces not showing any evidence. Overall, 11% of sites audited were found to involve active community groups, with most associated with allotments (46%), cemeteries (23%), and parks and gardens (19%).

7.42 Grays PCN had the greatest proportion of its sites showing evidence of an active community group, Stanford le Hope & Corringham and Tilbury & Chadwell had a similar proportion and only 1% of Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet sites were found to have an active community group (**Figure 7.16**).

Figure 7.15: Evidence of an active community group



Noticeboards

7.43 Typologies with the greatest number of sites with a permanent notice board included 60% of cemeteries, 48% of allotments, 29% of parks and gardens and 25% of natural and semi-natural greenspaces. Noticeboards are an opportunity for allotments to share information with members and for cemeteries to parish communities. 75% of public noticeboards were found to present up to date notices, however only 50% of parks and garden notices were up to date.

Educational opportunities

7.44 Open spaces are a chance for users to connect with nature, culture and heritage through educational opportunities such as interpretation boards and educational facilities. Educational opportunities were found to be greatest in natural and semi-natural greenspaces, followed by green corridors (**Table 7.1**). Natural and semi-natural greenspaces generally have a more diverse habitat structure and support greater biodiversity which provides more opportunities for educational interest.

Table 7.1: Summary of sites per typology that provided educational interest or opportunities.

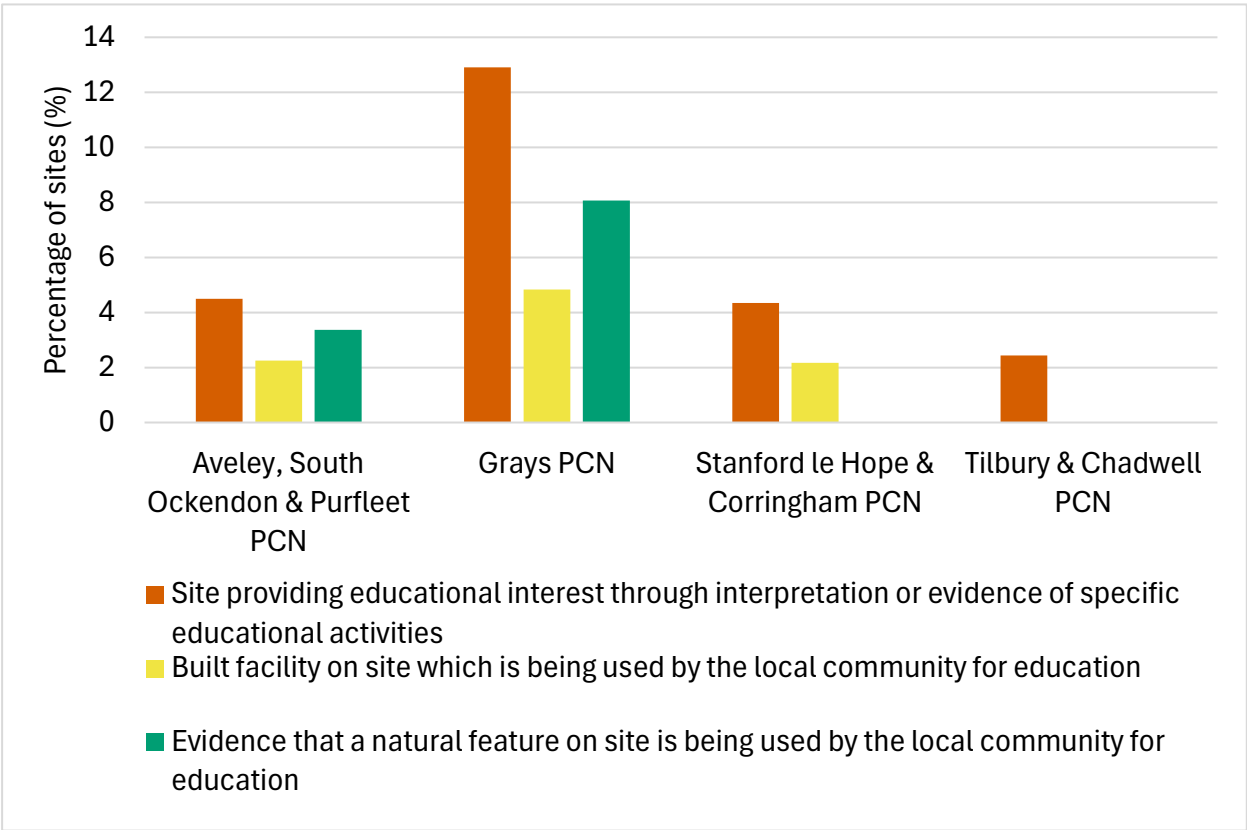
Typology	Percentage of sites (%)		
	Educational interest through interpretation or evidence of specific educational activities	Built facility on site which is being used by the local community for education	Natural feature on site is being used by the local community for education
Allotments	0	0	0
Amenity greenspace	0	0	0
Cemeteries	4%	8%	0
Civic spaces	0	0	0
Green corridors	29%	0	14%
Parks and gardens	4%	0	2%
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	25%	10%	15%

7.45 Overall, total number of sites per PCN that were found to provide educational opportunities were low for all areas (**Figure 7.17**). Educational opportunities included either:

- providing educational interest through interpretation;
- evidence of specific educational activities; or
- built facility on being used for education or a natural feature being used for educational purposes.

7.46 Grays PCN did have the highest number of sites that were found to have educational opportunities, 26% of total sites audited. Tilbury & Chadwell PCN had the lowest percentage of total sites.

Figure 7.16: Educational opportunities



Marketing and culture

7.47 84% of sites audited did not contain public art, with only two open spaces found to contain art.

7.48 32% of sites audited were found to be located next to a social or business facility. Most of these open spaces were within typologies that tend to be found

in built-up areas, where social and business facilities are more frequent. Amenity greenspaces had the highest number of open spaces (24 sites) adjacent to facilities. Whereas green corridors and natural and semi-natural greenspaces tended to be in more rural areas.

7.49 A small proportion of open spaces audited (13%) were immediately adjacent to a school, with parks and gardens and amenity greenspaces being the most common typology.

Play and recreational value

7.50 Equipped play facilities were audited using a separate play audit form found in **Appendix A**. The Council have a duty under sections 3 and 4 of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure the health and safety of users, so far as is reasonably practical. Therefore, it should generally be expected that play facilities will be in good, safe condition and the audit did find most equipped play facilities to be in a generally good state of repair.

7.51 The overall condition of play facilities was generally considered to be good with 66% scored ‘good’ for condition and 23% ‘fair’, only 7% of play sites were scored either ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ (**Figure 7.18**). Grays PCN had the greatest percentage of play sites in ‘good’ condition and Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN with the greatest percentage of play sites in ‘very poor’ condition (**Figure 7.19**).

Figure 7.17: What is the overall condition of play sites?

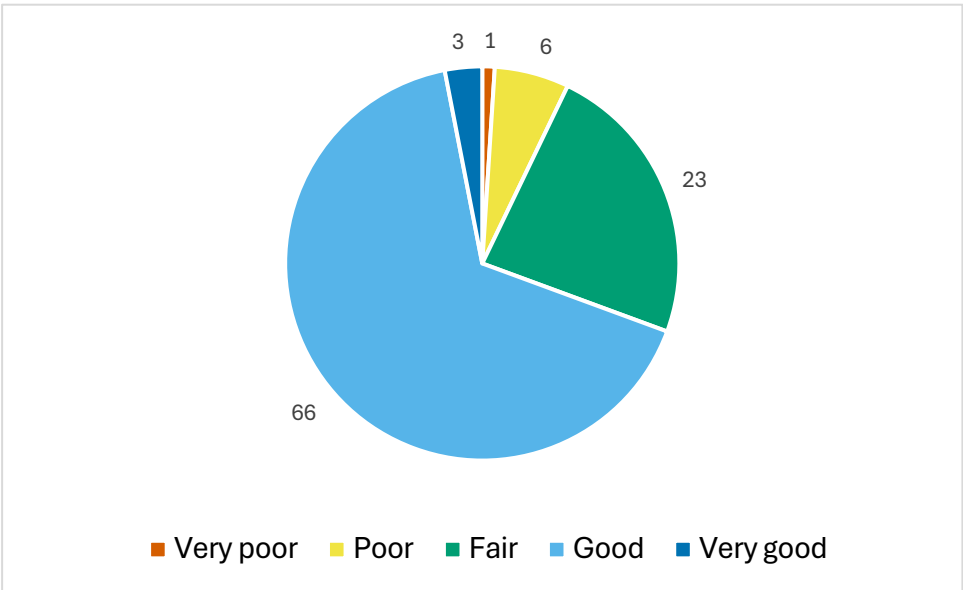
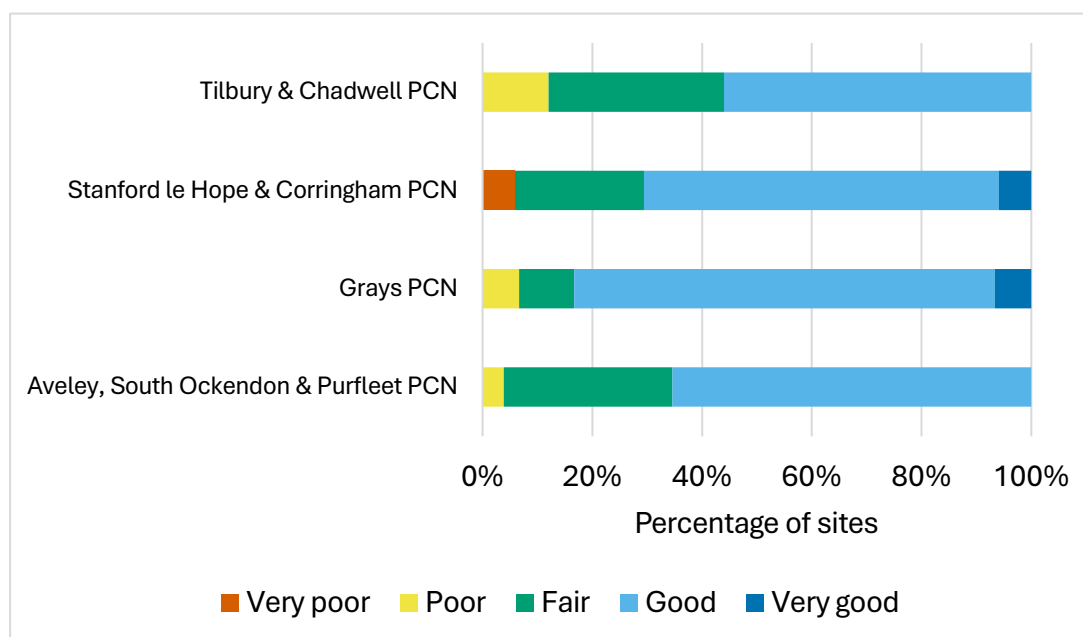
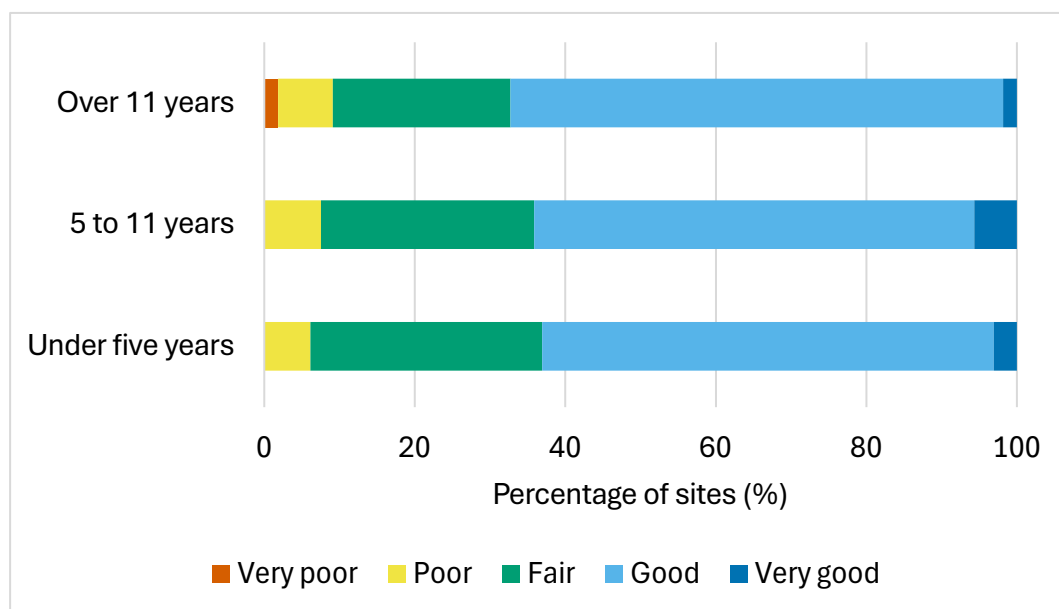


Figure 7.18: What is the condition of play sites per PCN?

7.52 Most play sites for each group were scored as in 'good' condition (**Figure 7.20**). Only 2% of over 11 years play sites were scored as 'very poor'.

Figure 7.19: What is the condition of play sites for each age group?

7.53 The vast majority of play spaces also had benches (84%) and litter bins (76%) within the area or adjacent to equipment. Benches are an important part of health & safety for play areas where children playing can be easily supervised and the provision of litter bins can ensure that areas are kept clean

and free of litter. However, only a third of play areas had a notice at the entrance stating dog free, children only and emergency contacts.

7.54 Inclusive play with equipment that provides a wide play offer for children was limited across the play areas. No play area was scored 'good' or 'very good' for provision of inclusive play. Most sites (74%) were scored 'very poor' with no equipment for children with disabilities.

Chapter 8

Development and application of proposed open space and play standards

8.1 This chapter recommends open space and play space provision standards. These have been defined through review of the existing provision of open space as well as consideration of nationally recognised provision standards. There are three types of open space standards:

- **Accessibility:** The maximum distance residents should be required to travel to use an open space of a specific typology;
- **Quantity:** The provision (measured in number of sites or hectares) of each open space typology (or groups of typologies) which should be provided as a minimum per 1,000 population; and
- **Quality and Value:** The quality and value expected of open spaces in each typology, assessed using the Green Flag criteria.

8.2 Accessibility and quantity standards have not been set for Cemeteries,, Green Corridors, or Civic Spaces. No standards have been set for Outdoor Sports Facilities either, as the Thurrock Playing Pitch Strategy should address these in more detail.

Accessibility assessment

8.3 The development of access standards draws on established guidance for England, set out in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework (NEGIF). Existing standards set as part of the 2011 Thurrock Local Plan (amended in 2015) have also been taken into consideration.

8.4 Accessibility standards have been set for the following types of open space:

- Parks and Gardens;
- Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace;
- Amenity Greenspace;
- Equipped Play Facilities; and
- Allotments.

8.5 Where appropriate, separate accessibility standards have been proposed for each level of the open space hierarchy (see **Chapter 6, Table 6.1**).

8.6 Accessibility standards are expressed as average walk time distances converted into straight line 'buffers' measured from the boundary of each site. Guidance produced by Fields in Trust (FiT) has been used as the basis of calculating walk time distances [See reference 49]. This is shown in **Table 8.1**.

8.7 The standards that have been set to reflect the generally accepted principle that people are willing to travel varying distances to reach different types of open space and are generally willing to travel further to sites which have a wider 'offer' and range of facilities. Larger sites will generally provide more variety in terms of opportunities for recreation, access to nature and act as a more significant 'destination' for potential visitors.

8.8 The proposed accessibility standards and rationale are shown in **Table 8.2** for relevant open spaces, **Table 8.3** for equipped play facilities and **Table 8.4** for allotments.

Table 8.1: Converting walk time distances into straight line 'buffers' (as suggested by Fields in Trust (FiT))

Straight line distance	Walking time (minutes)
250 m	2 to 3
400 m	5
800 m	10
1.2 km	15
1.6 km	20

Table 8.2: Proposed public open space accessibility standards

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed accessibility standard	Rationale
Parks and gardens		

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed accessibility standard	Rationale
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	100m (1min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	200m (2min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	300m (4min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Neighbourhood 10.1 - 20.0 ha	1km (13min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Wider neighbourhood 20.1 – 100.0 ha	2km (25min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Natural and semi natural greenspace		
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	100m (1min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	200m (2min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	300m (4min walk)	Guidance from ANGSt and NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Neighbourhood 10.1 - 20.0 ha	1km (13min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed accessibility standard	Rationale
Wider neighbourhood 20.1 – 100.0 ha	2km (25min walk)	Guidance from ANGSt and NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
District 100.1 – 500.0 ha	5km (1hr walk)	Guidance from ANGSt and NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Sub-regional 500+ ha	10km (2hr walk)	Guidance from NEGIF, walk time based on FiT
Amenity greenspace		
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	100m (1-2min walk) Without the need to cross the road	Guidance from NEGIF and Thurrock Local Plan 2011, walk time based on FiT
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	200m (2min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF and Thurrock Local Plan 2011,
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	300m (4min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF and Thurrock Local Plan 2011,

Table 8.3: Proposed equipped play facilities accessibility standards

Type of play space	Proposed accessibility standard	Rationale
Small doostep (<100m ²) Ages 0-5 or 5-11	<100m (<1min walk)	Guidance from Thurrock Local Plan 2011, walk time based on FiT

Type of play space	Proposed accessibility standard	Rationale
Doorstep (100m ²) Ages 0-5 or 5-11	100m (1min walk)	Guidance from FiT and Play England, walk time based on FiT
Local (300m ²) Ages 0-5 and 5-11	400m (5min walk)	Guidance from FiT, Play England and Thurrock Local Plan 2011, walk time based on FiT
Neighbourhood (500m ²) All ages	1km (13min walk)	Guidance from FiT and Play England, walk time based on FiT
Other play and youth provision (200m ²) Ages 11+	700m (7min walk)	Guidance from FiT and Play England, walk time based on FiT

Table 8.4: Proposed allotment accessibility standards

Allotment type/ size	Proposed accessibility standards	Rationale
Over 100 plots	1.2km (15min walk)	Guidance from NEGIF and Thurrock Local Plan 2011, walk time based on FiT <i>Everyone should live within 15 minutes walk</i>

Quantity assessment

8.9 Quantity standards have been proposed for:

- Parks and Gardens

- Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace
- Amenity Greenspace
- Provision for Children and Teenagers; and
- Allotments.

8.10 The proposed standards are set out alongside their justification in **Table 8.5** for open spaces.

8.11 Standards have not been set for cemeteries as these are considered informal open spaces and do not contribute to local need in the same way. Outdoor sports provision is excluded from the quantity standards table below and the Thurrock Playing Pitch Strategy should be referred to for information on this type of provision.

Table 8.5: Proposed open space quantity standards

Typology	Proposed quantity standard <i>per 1,000 population</i>	Rationale
Parks and gardens	0.8 ha	The proposed standards have been set based on guidance from Fields in Trust, which suggests a minimum of 3.2 ha of greenspace per 1,000 population (32m ² per person). Similarly, NEGIF suggests local authorities have at least 3 ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population.
Natural and semi natural greenspace	1.8 ha	
Amenity greenspace	0.6 ha	

Typology	Proposed quantity standard <i>per 1,000 population</i>	Rationale
Allotments	0.125 <i>Based on an average plot size of 250m²</i>	Guidance from the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG)
Provision for children and teenagers, including equipped play areas within the following hierarchies: ■ Small doorstep ■ Doorstep ■ Local ■ Neighbourhood	0.25 ha	Guidance from FiT
Informal play provision including provision within the following hierarchy: Other play and youth provision	0.30 ha	Guidance from FiT

Quality and value assessment

8.12 Open spaces in the Borough have been subject to a site audit based on the Green Flag Award criteria (see **Appendix A**). In order to assess the sites consistently the audit forms were completed using the scoring system shown in **Appendix B**.

8.13 The audit criteria were separated into factors relating to 'quality' and 'value', resulting in each site being assigned a quality score and a value score. As set out by the (former) Planning Practice Guidance 17 (PPG17) Companion Guide "quality and value are fundamentally different and can be completely

unrelated". For example, an open space may be of higher quality but if it is not accessible it is of little value, while if an open space is poor quality but has a wide range of facilities it is potentially of higher value.

Quality

8.14 As part of the site audit, the condition of various features and facilities of each site were rated on a five-point scale ('very poor', 'poor', 'fair', 'good', 'very good'). This assessment was then transposed through a scoring system into a total quality score for the whole site.

8.15 In order to develop a quality standard which is appropriate for the type and function of open spaces in Thurrock, the existing quality of provision was reviewed by typology and the associated hierarchy level (where relevant). Through reviewing the range of quality scores, it was possible to form a quality threshold score, i.e. a minimum level of quality which should be achieved at any open space. A threshold score has been defined for each typology and each level of the hierarchy reflecting the ideal score scenario for a good quality site (see **Table 8.8** and **Table 8.9**).

Value

8.16 Value is fundamentally different from quality; a space can be valued for a range of reasons even it is of low quality. As set out in PPG17 Companion Guide, 'value' mainly relates to the following:

- **Context:** for example, an easily accessible space is higher value than one that is inaccessible to potential users. Equally, the value of a space may diminish if it is immediately adjacent to several others which provides the same function.
- **Level and type of use:** the primary purpose and associated use of a space can increase its value - well used spaces are of higher value to people, similarly spaces with diverse habitats can be well used by wildlife and can be interpreted as having a higher value.
- **Wider benefits:** that is, the benefits a space generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment, including the following: landscape, ecological, education, social inclusion, health benefit, cultural and heritage, amenity benefits, 'sense of place' and economic benefits.

Setting benchmark standards

8.17 Open space standards have been set for quality and value. These standards provide a benchmark against which each site may be assessed. Applying these standards provides a high-level overview of how open spaces are 'performing' across the study area. Quality and value standards have been set for each typology and level of the size hierarchy (where appropriate), which ensures that sites are compared 'like for like' with sites that would be expected to provide a similar 'offer'.

8.18 Development of the standards has taken into account what can reasonably be expected from open space and play space within Thurrock and also recognised national standards for parks and open space and play (e.g. Green Flag and Play England guidance). The intention is that the benchmark standards are aspirational (to promote improvements where required), yet realistically achievable.

8.19 The proposed quality and value standards are set out in **Table 8.8** and **Table 8.9**. Quality and value standards have not been set for outdoor sports provision.

Table 8.6: Proposed open space quality and value standards

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed quality standard	Proposed value standard
Allotments		
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	28	9
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	32	10
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	33	11
Amenity greenspace		

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed quality standard	Proposed value standard
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	30	13
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	33	14
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	34	18
Neighbourhood 20.1 – 100.0 ha	40	19
Churchyards and cemeteries		
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	40	14
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	42	14
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	45	14
Civic spaces		
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	42	13
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	56	15

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed quality standard	Proposed value standard
Green corridors		
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	34	15
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	20	7
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	21	10
Wider neighbourhood 20.1 – 100.0 ha	22	11
Parks and gardens		
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	47	18
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	46	20
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	51	23
Neighbourhood 20.1 – 100.0 ha	56	27
Wider neighbourhood 20.1 – 100.0 ha	61	23

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed quality standard	Proposed value standard
Natural and semi natural greenspace		
Small doorstep <0.5 ha	24	6
Doorstep 0.5 - 2.0 ha	23	9
Local 2.1 – 10.0 ha	25	15
Neighbourhood 20.1 – 100.0 ha	29	16
Wider neighbourhood 20.1 – 100.0 ha	41	21
District 100.1 – 500.0 ha	39	17

Table 8.7: Proposed play space quality and value standards

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed quality standard	Proposed value standard
Provision for children and teenagers		
Small doorstep Ages 0-5 or 5-11 (<100m ²)	4	8

Typology/ hierarchy	Proposed quality standard	Proposed value standard
Doorstep Ages 0-5 or 5-11 (100m ²)	10	22
Local Ages 0-5 and 5-11 (300m ²)	10	21
Neighbourhood All ages (500m ²)	13	30
Other play and youth provision Ages 11+ (200m ²)	8	10

8.20 The open and play sites can then be tested against the relevant benchmarks to indicate where they 'sit' against an agreed standard for quality and value. Site are then identified as falling into one of the following four categories:

- Higher quality, higher value (+ +);
- Higher quality, lower value (+ -);
- Lower quality, higher value (- +); and
- Lower quality, lower value (- -).

8.21 The categories can provide a broad indication of the type of management approach that may be needed across any given area or site (summarised below).

8.22 Whilst some play sites may be 'higher quality' they may not provide a broad range of play opportunities, therefore resulting in a 'lower value' score, and vice versa.

Higher Quality / Higher Value (++)

8.23 These sites represent the best open spaces within the borough, offering the greatest value to local communities. Future management should seek to

maintain the standards to ensure sites continue to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

8.24 These sites would likely not be considered a priority in terms of future enhancement, however, improvements and enhancement to these sites may still be appropriate.

High Quality / Lower Value (+ -)

8.25 The audit found these sites to be achieving a sufficient standard for quality, most likely with sufficient levels of maintenance. Features and facilities are likely to be in good condition, or a good state of repair. Value for these sites fall short of what should be expected. For instance, through a lack of suitable features, facilities, and opportunities for informal recreation.

8.26 These sites should be prioritised for future works to enhance the sites value, for instance through the provision of appropriate features and facilities and implementing appropriate design interventions.

Lower Quality / Higher Value (- +)

8.27 These spaces meet or exceed the proposed standard for value but fall short on the proposed quality standard. These sites will most likely contain the features and attributes that is expected of an open space, but their condition may be poor and the site may be failing to achieve the expected standards of management and maintenance.

8.28 These sites provide most opportunity for 'quick wins' of improving open space provision through enhanced management and maintenance and repair of features. A lack of good management and maintenance can also impact perceptions of safety; therefore, work should also be undertaken to ensure open spaces are welcoming and feel safe for use by the local community.

Lower Quality / Lower Value (- -)

8.29 Enhancing both the quality and value of these sites should be considered a priority, particularly in areas which suffer from a deficiency in access to, or quantity of, publicly accessible open space.

8.30 A colour coding system has been applied as part of strategic mapping exercises to understand any spatial patterns of the performance of sites and to identify priority areas for enhancement.

Symbol and colour coding	Description
++	Higher quality / Higher value
+-	Higher quality / Lower value
-+	Lower quality / Higher value
--	Lower quality / Lower value

Application of the proposed quantity standards

8.31 Table 8.10 sets out the results of applying the quantity standards proposed in the previous section. **Table 8.10** uses population projections from the upcoming local plan which proposed 28,880 new homes by 2044. The project population assumes that 2.4 people will reside in each of these new homes and adds this to the current population figures used to calculate current quantities per 1000 people. Since the spatial distribution of these homes isn't yet known, the projected quantities can only be provided over the whole of Thurrock.

8.32 For quantity analysis of parks and garden, natural and semi-natural greenspace and amenity greenspace open spaces, only sites that were freely accessible have been used.

8.33 The table shows current provision against the standard in each PCN area and anticipated Borough-wide provision in 2044. Those cells coloured orange fall below the quantity standard. Those in green meet or exceed the quantity standards.

Table 8.8: Current quantity of open space in Ha per 1000 people (at 2021 census) by PCN area. Quantities for 2044 are projected and assume no increase in quantity of open space typologies.

Typology	Proposed standard	Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN in 2025	Grays PCN in 2025	Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN in 2025	Tilbury & Chadwell PCN in 2025	Thurrock Overall in 2025	Thurrock Overall in 2044
Allotments	0.125	0.11	0.16	0.30	0.16	0.17	0.12
Amenity greenspace	0.6	0.81	0.41	0.08	1.15	0.59	0.42
Provision for Children and Teenagers	0.25	0.06	0.04	0.07	0.09	0.06	0.04
Parks and Gardens	0.8	0.46	0.74	2.41	1.03	1.07	0.77
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	1.8	9.09	1.40	3.78	1.25	3.92	2.81

Allotments

8.34 Application of the standards shows that all PCNs are performing above the expected quantity standard for allotments (0.125 hectares per 1,000 population) both in 2025 and 2044, with the exception of Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN which falls below the standard at 0.11 ha per 1,000 population.

Amenity greenspace

8.35 There is variation in performance against the quantity standard across PCN areas. Both Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN and Tilbury & Chadwell PCN are performing above the quantity standard (0.6 hectares per 1,000 population), with provision of amenity greenspace in Tilbury & Chadwell nearly double the benchmark standard at 1.15 hectares per 1,000 population.

8.36 Provision within Grays PCN falls below the benchmark standard at 0.41 hectares per 1,000 population. Provision within Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN for amenity greenspace was found to be significantly lower than the standard at 0.08 hectares per 1,000 population. Similarly, the overall provision across Thurrock was found to be slightly lower than the standard, and the borough will fall short of the provision standard by 0.18 ha per 1,000 population by 2044.

Provision for Children and Teenagers

8.37 Provision across all PCNs for children and teenagers were found to be below the standard, including the overall provision for Thurrock and under population projections for 2044. The greatest deficiency was found to be within Grays PCN, which was falling below the quantity standard by 0.21 hectares per 1,000 population.

Parks and Gardens

8.38 Similar to amenity greenspace, application of the standard shows a variation across PCN areas. Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN exceeded the provision standard by 1.8 hectares per 1,000 population and by 0.23 hectares per 1,000 population within Tilbury & Chadwell PCN.

8.39 However, Grays PCN fell just below the quantity standard by 0.6 hectares per 1,000 population but provision within Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet

PCN was significantly below the standard. Overall provision within the borough was found to exceed the standard, but the borough will fall short of the provision standard by 0.03 ha per 1,000 population by 2044.

Natural and semi-natural greenspace

8.40 Application of the standard shows that Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN and Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN exceeded the provision standard. Whereas, provision within Grays PCN and Tilbury & Chadwell PCN fell below the proposed standard. Overall provision within the borough was found to exceed the standard by 2.12 hectares per 1,000 population, and the borough will exceed the standard by 1.01 hectares per 1,000 population by 2044.

Application of the proposed quality, value and accessibility standards

8.41 A series of figures in this section shows the application of the quality, value and accessibility standards by typology. The findings are discussed per typology per PCN. The full list of sites with their quality and value rating is shown in **Appendix D**.

Accessibility – open spaces

8.42 Figures 8.2 to 8.8 map the application of the accessibility standard for the different levels of hierarchy of greenspace. This analysis was used to indicate areas which have poor access to different hierarchies of open space. Figure 8.1 shows areas of deficiency across the whole of Thurrock and for all levels.

8.43 Figure 8.1 shows the areas of deficiency not meeting accessibility standards across all levels. Areas deficient in access to all levels of the hierarchy include in the north areas around Bulphan and in the south area to the west of Tilbury. Areas that were high in accessibility for five or more levels of the hierarchy were focused around main settlements including South Ockendon, Aveley, Grays, Corringham, Stanford le Hope, Tilbury, Chadwell and East Tilbury.

8.44 The findings of the analysis in more detail can be summarised as follows:

District level

8.45 Natural and semi-natural greenspace at Rainham and Averley Marshes in the west and Thameside Nature Park in the east provide the only district level greenspaces in the Borough (**Figure 8.2**). The centre of the borough falls outside the access catchments of the two sites. Considerable areas of Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN, Tilbury & Chadwell PCN and Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN fall within the access catchment at the district-level catchment scale, but the majority of Grays PCN falls outside. Access to district-level greenspace is also not met in areas around Bulphan and east of South Ockendon.

Wider neighbourhood level

8.46 There are several wider-neighbourhood level greenspaces which are found in all PCN's with the exception of Tilbury & Chadwell PCN (**Figure 8.3**). Access to wider neighbourhood open space in each PCN is generally well met with the exception of Tilbury & Chadwell PCN and areas around West Thurrock, east of Grays PCN and around Bulphan and Orsett in Stanford Le Hope & Corringham PCN.

Neighbourhood level

8.47 A significant area of Grays PCN and the north of Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN fall within the access catchments for neighbourhood level open space (**Figure 8.4**). The majority of Tilbury & Chadwell PCN fall outside the access catchment of neighbourhood level open space, specifically around Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary. Within Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN, access to neighbourhood open space is limited to Stanford le Hope, with Corringham, Horndon on the Hill, Bulphan and Orsett all falling outside of the neighbourhood catchment scale.

Doorstep and local level

8.48 A number of doorstep and local accessible open spaces are found within each PCN (**Figure 8.5 and 8.6**). Access to local / doorstep accessible open space in Grays PCN and Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN is generally well met with the exception of west of Grays, west of Little Thurrock and West Thurrock. Access to local / doorstep accessible open space within Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN and Tilbury & Chadwell PCN is limited to villages, but

areas falling outside of the access catchments include the west of Tilbury, south of East Tilbury and north of Stanford le Hope.

Small doorstep level

8.49 Access to small doorstep open spaces is found in only residential areas within each PCN (**Figure 8.7**). Large areas showing no access include around West Thurrock and west of Little Thurrock.

Allotments

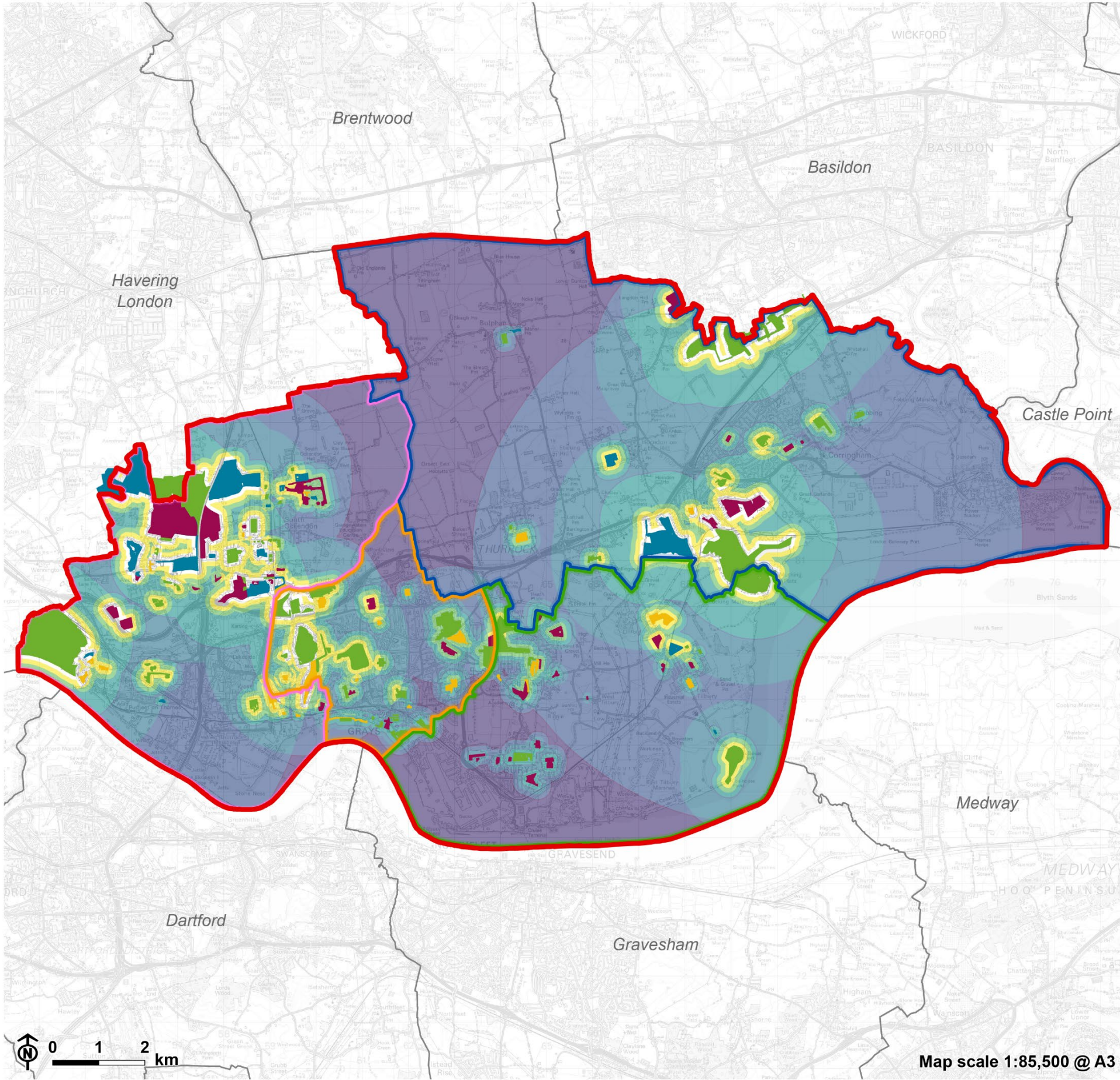
8.50 Access to allotments (within 1.2km) was generally high across the borough, with the exception of the north of Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN area around Bulphan and in the south of Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN around Purfleet-on-Thames (**Figure 8.8**).

Barriers to access

8.51 **Figure 8.9** identifies potential barriers to open space provision within the borough including major roads, primary roads, railway tracks and watercourses. All PCNs are shown to have some potential barriers to access. These are most apparent in:

- A13 bisecting the borough between north and south; and
- Railway line from east to west and from Grays north through South Ockendon and Stanford le Hope.

Figure 8.1: Open Space Area of Deficiency (AoD)



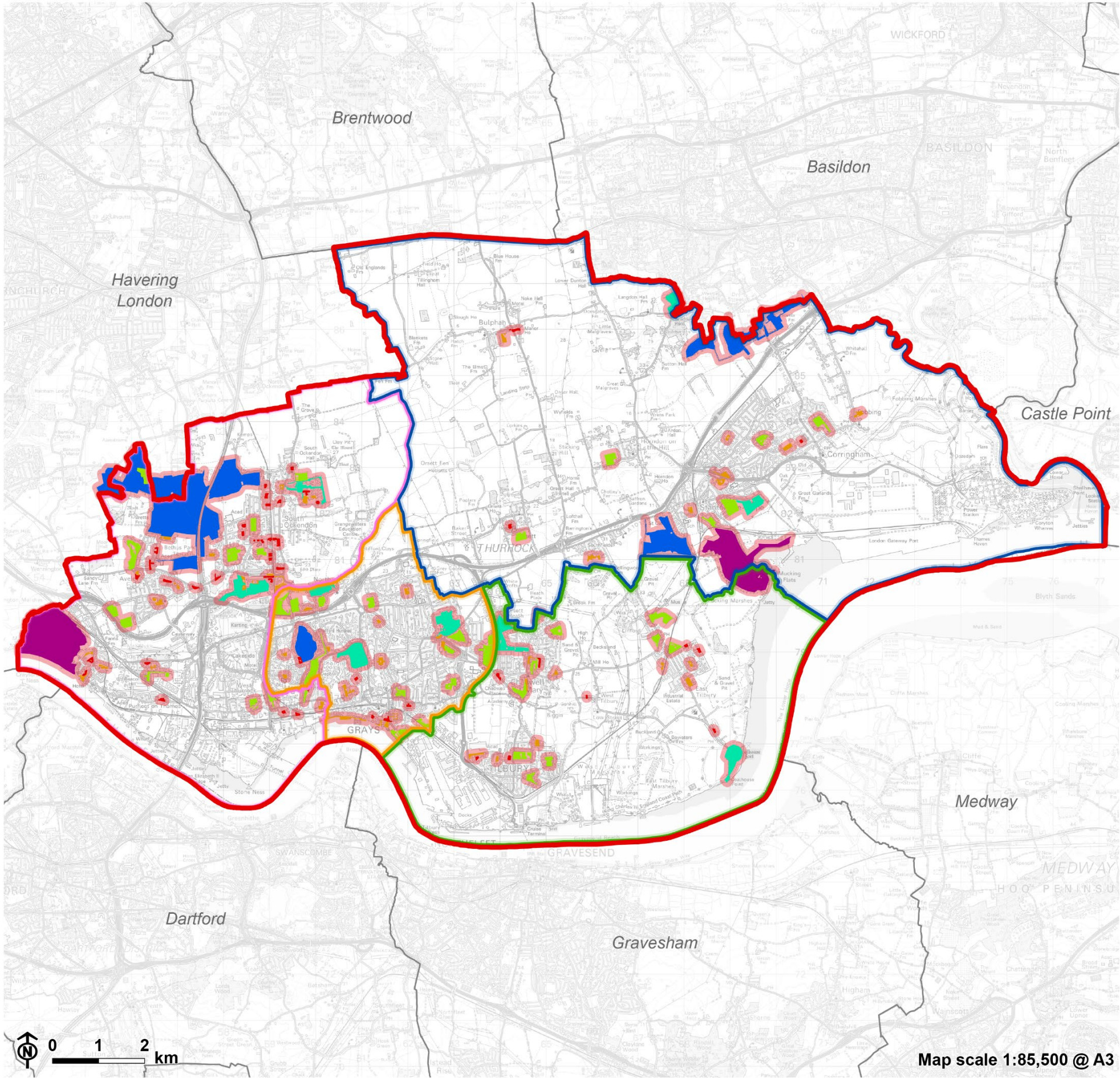
Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment
Thurrock Council



Figure 8.1: Open Space Area of Deficiency (AoD)

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Open space quality & value**
 - Higher quality, higher value
 - Higher quality, lower value
 - Lower quality, higher value
 - Lower quality, lower value
- Areas of Deficiency (AoD) in access to open space**
 - Deficient in 1 level of the hierarchy
 - Deficient in 2 levels of the hierarchy
 - Deficient in 3 levels of the hierarchy
 - Deficient in 4 levels of the hierarchy
 - Deficient in 5 levels of the hierarchy
 - Deficient in all levels of the hierarchy

Figure 8.2: Open Space Access Catchments: Small doorstep



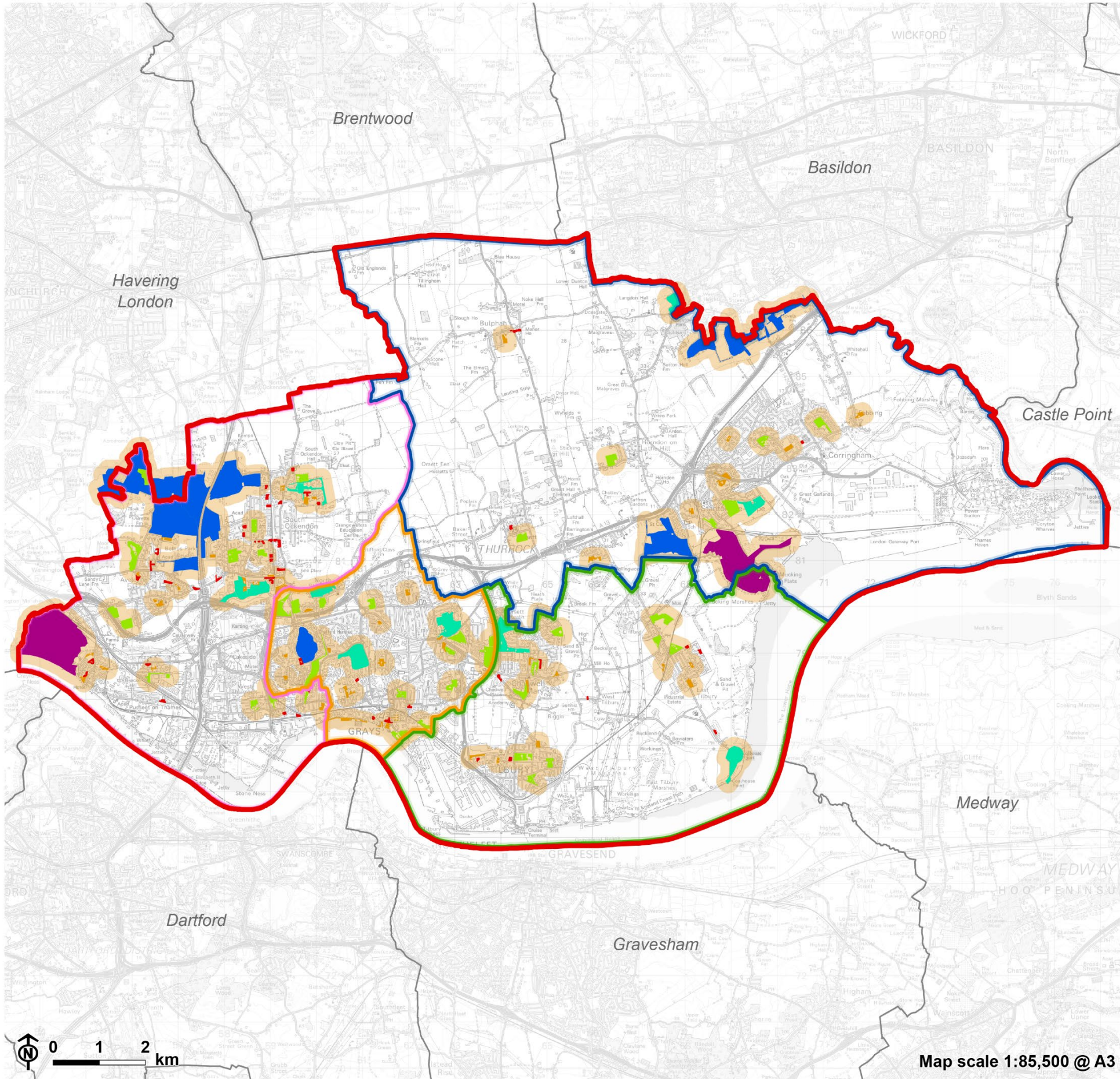
Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs
Assessment
Thurrock Council



Figure 8.2 Open Space Access Catchments: -
Small doorstep

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Accessible open space - hierarchy**
 - Small Doorstep Greenspace
 - Doorstep Greenspace
 - Local Greenspace
 - Neighbourhood Greenspace
 - Wider Neighbourhood Greenspace
 - District Greenspace
- Open space access catchment**
 - Access to small doorstep open space (within 100m)

Figure 8.3: Open Space Access Catchments: Doorstep



Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment
Thurrock Council

LUC

Figure 8.3 Open Space Access Catchments: - Doorstep

Thurrock Unitary Authority

Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District

Primary Care Network (PCN) areas

Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN

Grays PCN

Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN

Tilbury & Chadwell PCN

Accessible open space - hierarchy

Small Doorstep Greenspace

Doorstep Greenspace

Local Greenspace

Neighbourhood Greenspace

Wider Neighbourhood Greenspace

District Greenspace

Open space access catchment

Access to doorstep open space (within 200m)

Figure 8.4: Open Space Access Catchments: Local

Figure 8.4 Open Space Access Catchments: - Local

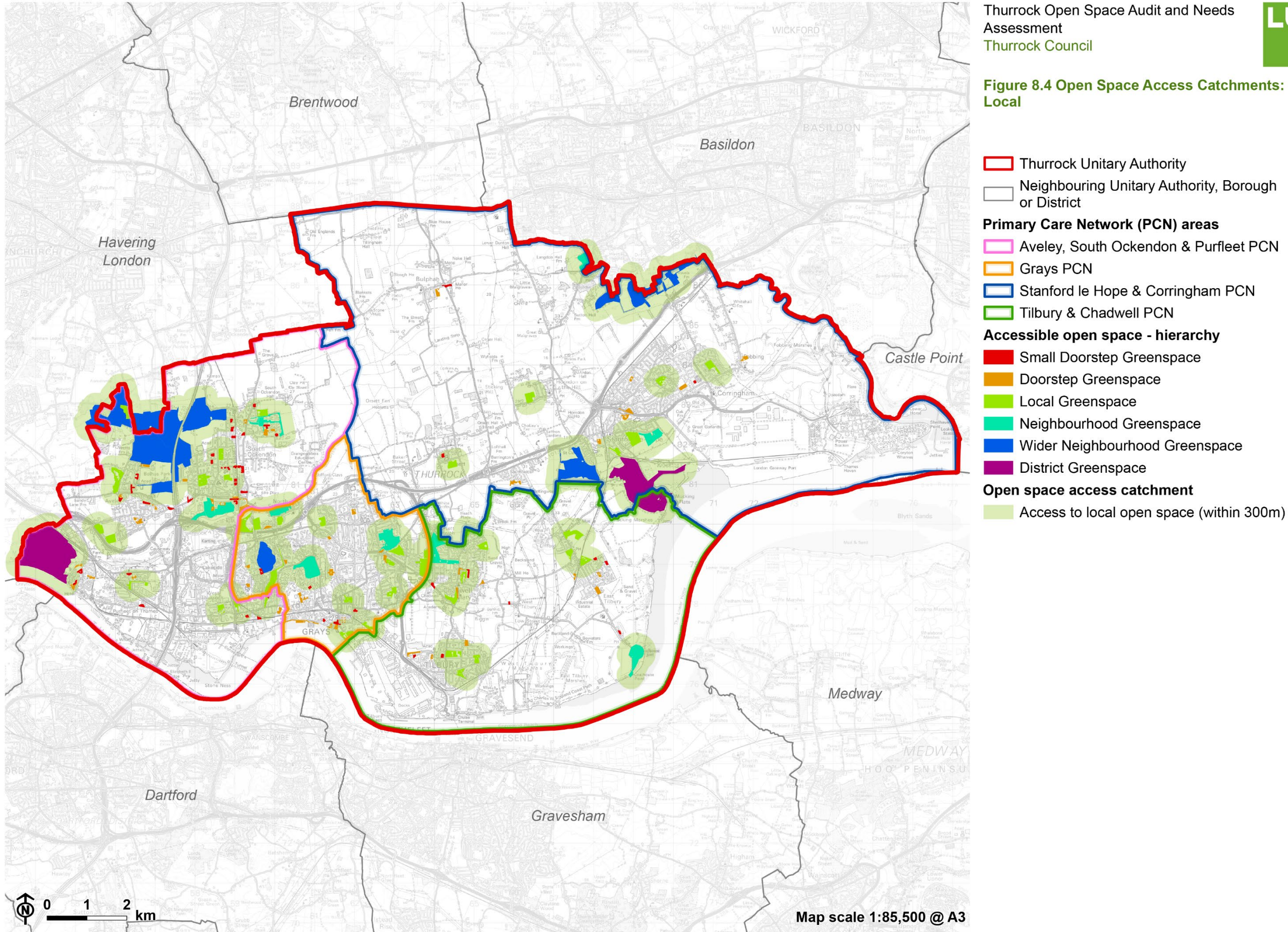


Figure 8.5: Open Space Access Catchments: Neighbourhood

Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment
Thurrock Council



Figure 8.5 Open Space Access Catchments: - Neighbourhood

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Accessible open space - hierarchy**
 - Small Doorstep Greenspace
 - Doorstep Greenspace
 - Local Greenspace
 - Neighbourhood Greenspace
 - Wider Neighbourhood Greenspace
 - District Greenspace
- Open space access catchment**
 - Access to neighbourhood open space (within 1km)

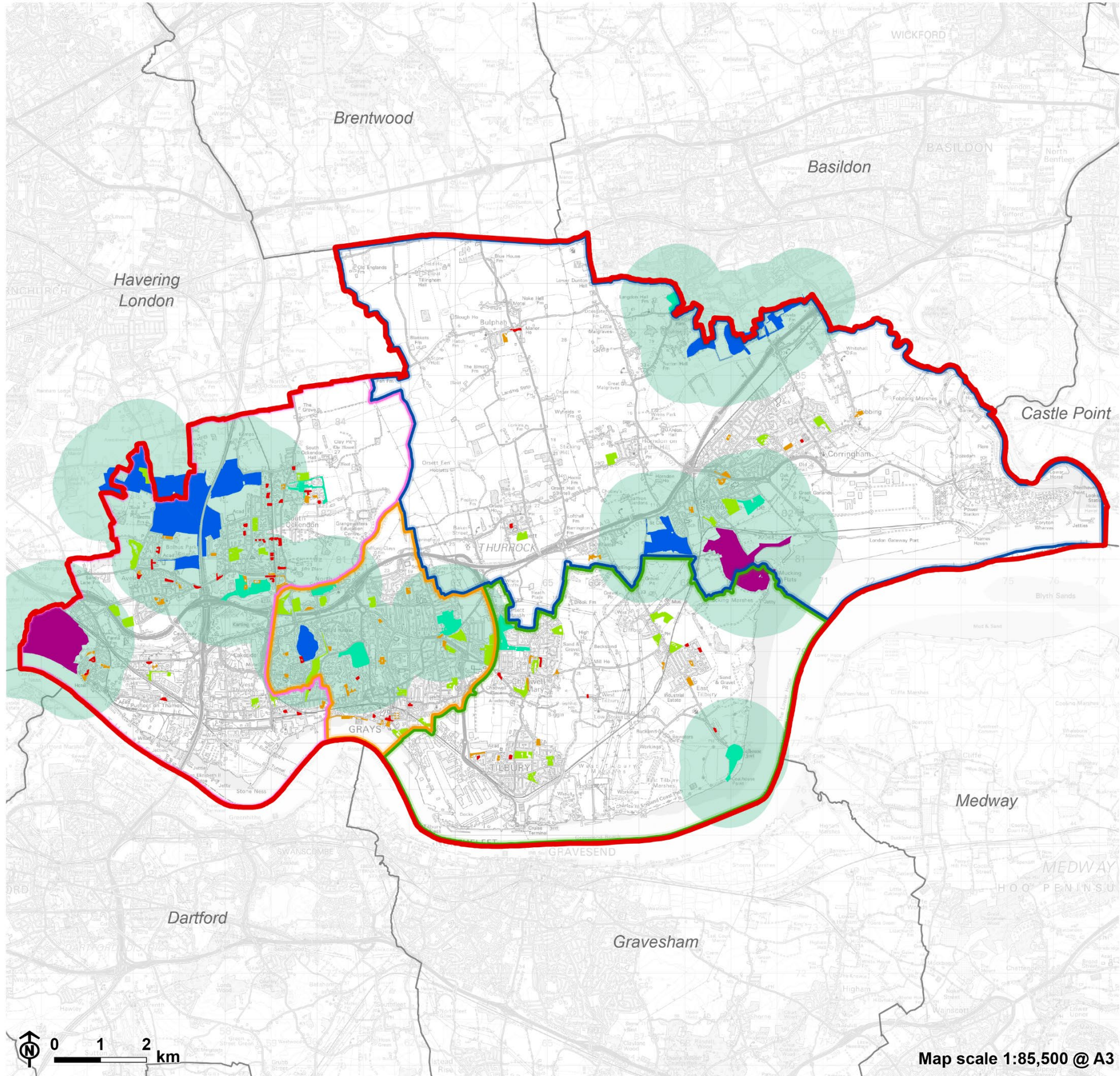


Figure 8.6: Open Space Access Catchments: Wider neighbourhood

Figure 8.6 Open Space Access Catchments: - Wider neighbourhood

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
- Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
- Grays PCN
- Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
- Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Accessible open space - hierarchy**
- Small Doorstep Greenspace
- Doorstep Greenspace
- Local Greenspace
- Neighbourhood Greenspace
- Wider Neighbourhood Greenspace
- District Greenspace
- Open space access catchment**
- Access to wider-neighbourhood open space (within 2km)

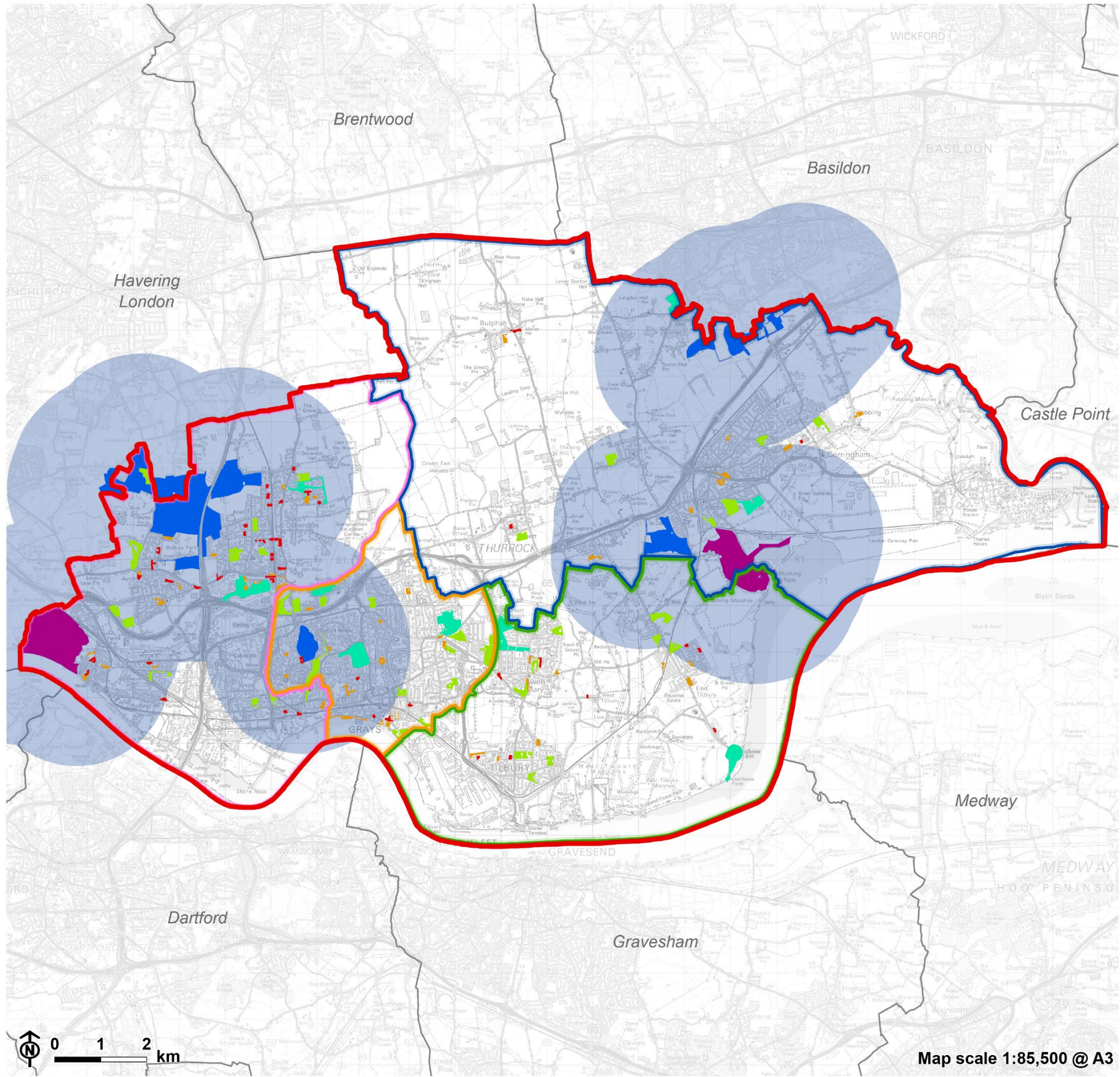


Figure 8.7: Open Space Access Catchments: District

Figure 8.7 Open Space Access Catchments: - District

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
- Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
- Grays PCN
- Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
- Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Accessible open space - hierarchy**
- Small Doorstep Greenspace
- Doorstep Greenspace
- Local Greenspace
- Neighbourhood Greenspace
- Wider Neighbourhood Greenspace
- District Greenspace
- Open space access catchment**
- Access to district open space (within 5km)

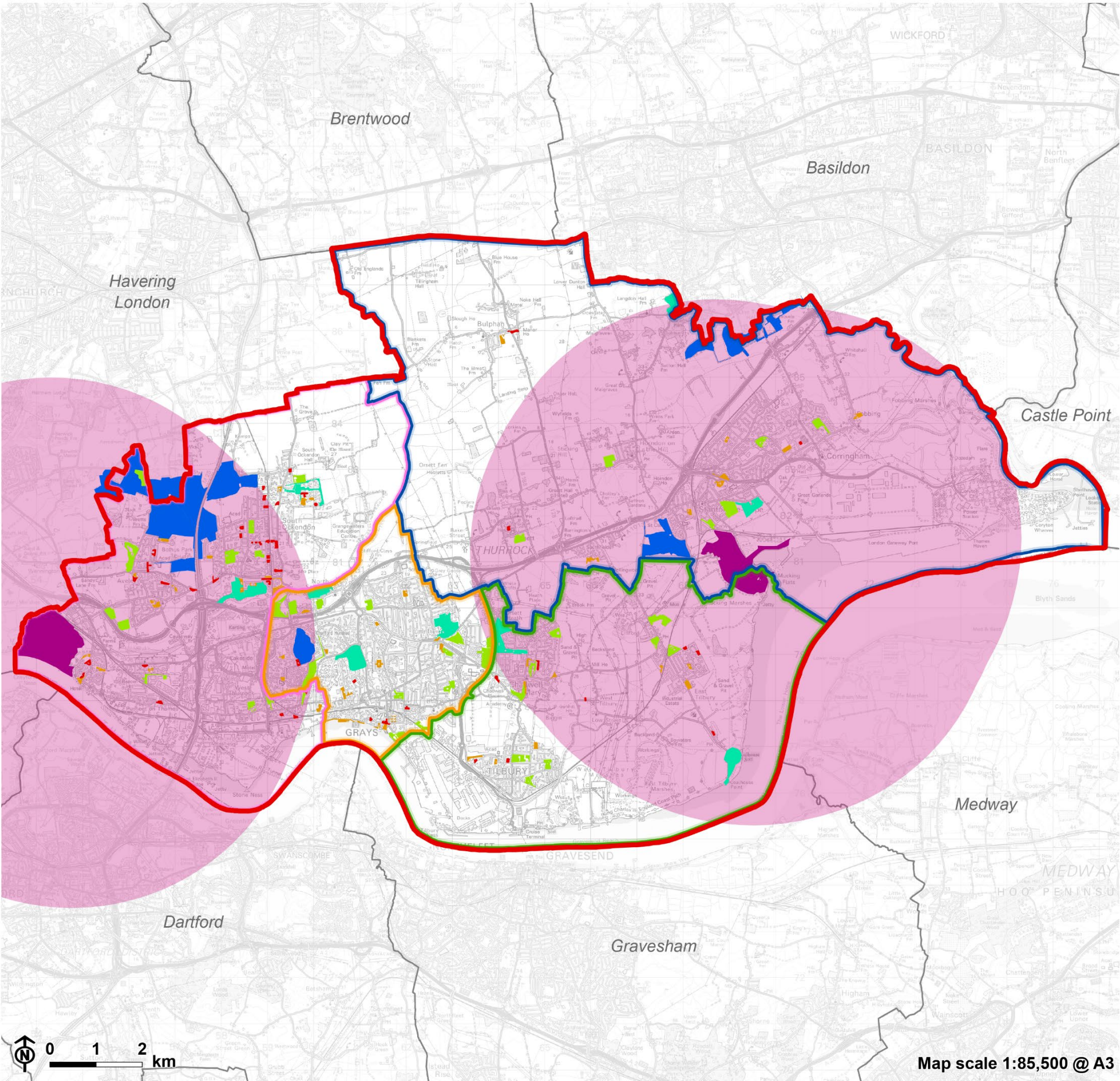


Figure 8.8: Allotment Catchment Access

Figure 8.8: Allotment Access Catchments

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
- Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
- Grays PCN
- Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
- Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Open space**
- Allotment
- Access to allotments (within 1.2km)

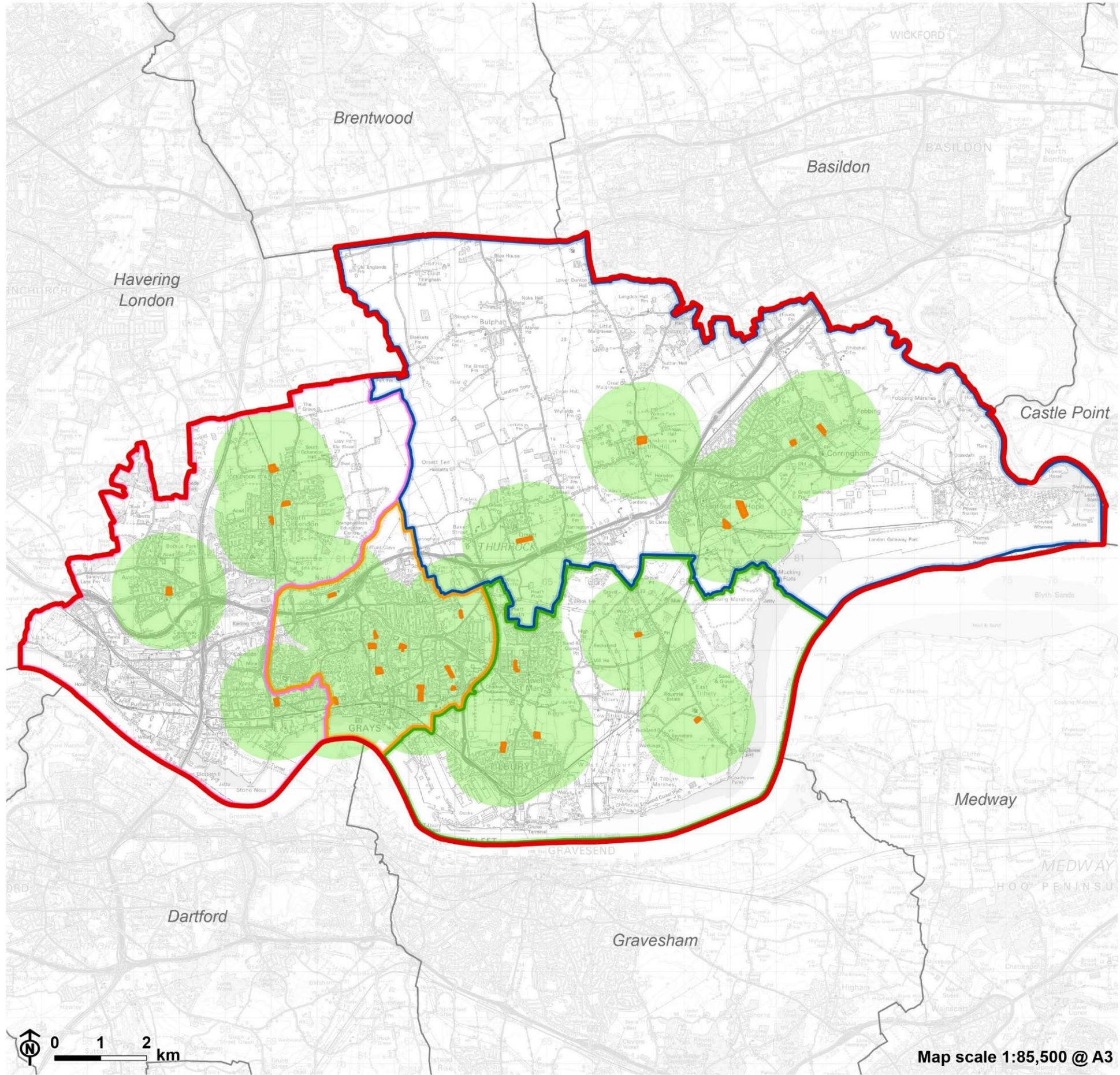


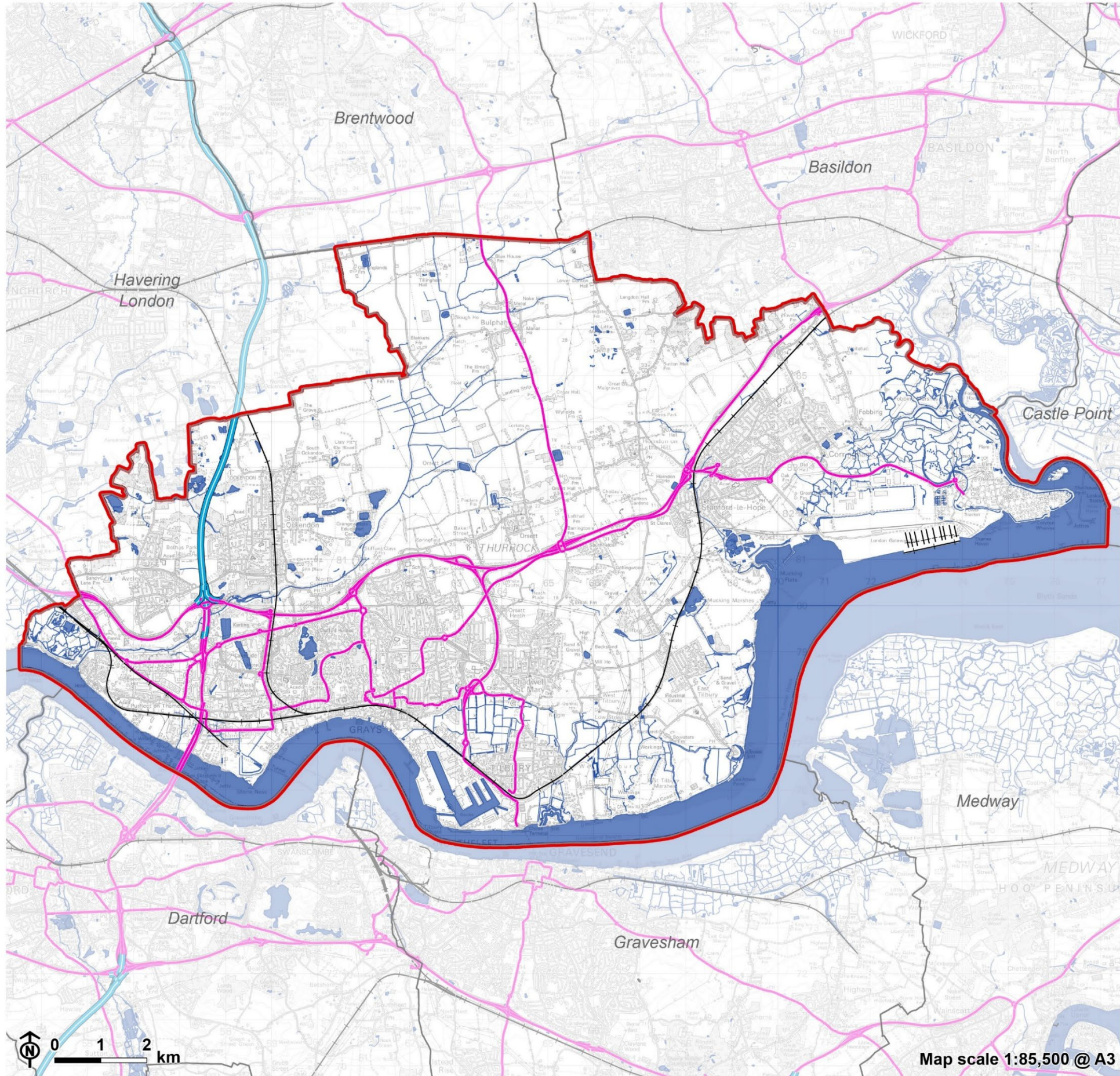
Figure 8.9: Barriers to Access for Open Space

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Figure 8.9: Barriers to Access for Open Space

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Railway
- Motorway
- A Road
- Surface water



Accessibility – playable spaces

8.52 Figures 8.10 to 8.14 map the application of the accessibility standard for the different levels of hierarchy of playable spaces. This analysis was used to indicate areas which have poor access to different hierarchies of playable spaces. The findings of the analysis can be summarised as follows:

- Access to neighbourhood playable space was high across the borough (Figure 8.10), particularly in Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN area and Grays PCN area. Access within Tilbury & Chadwell PCN area and Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN area were focused around the main settlements.
- Access to local playable space was evenly spread across each PCN area (Figure 8.11). Pockets outside of the access catchment include the centre of Grays, north of Stanford le Hope and West Thurrock.
- Similarly, access to doorstep and small doorstep playable space was evenly spread across each PCN area (Figure 8.12 and 8.13). Pockets outside of the access catchment included West Thurrock, centre of Grays, east of Aveley and north of Stanford le Hope.
- There was no access to youth space within Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN area (Figure 8.14). Access across the other PCN areas was limited with areas within access catchments restricted to Tilbury, Chadwell St Mary, East Tilbury, Beacon Hill, south-east of Grays.

Figure 8.10: Play Space Access Catchments – Small doorstep playable space

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Thurrock Council



Figure 8.10: Play Space Access Catchments - Small doorstep playable space

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Play space typology**
 - Small Doorstep Play Space
 - Doorstep Play Space
 - Local Play Space
 - Neighbourhood Play Space
 - Youth Space
- Play space access catchment**
 - Access to small doorstep playable space (within 100m)

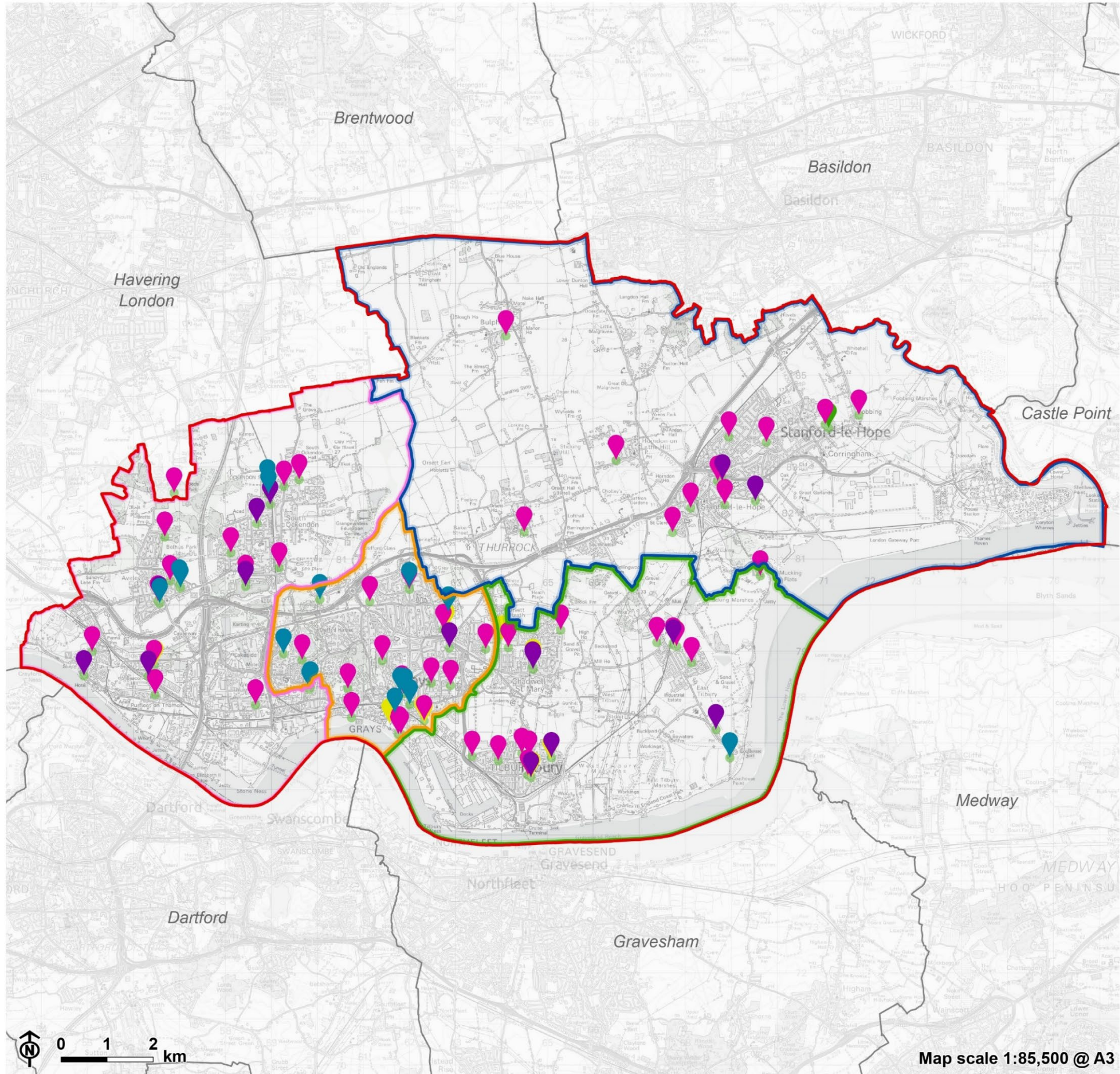
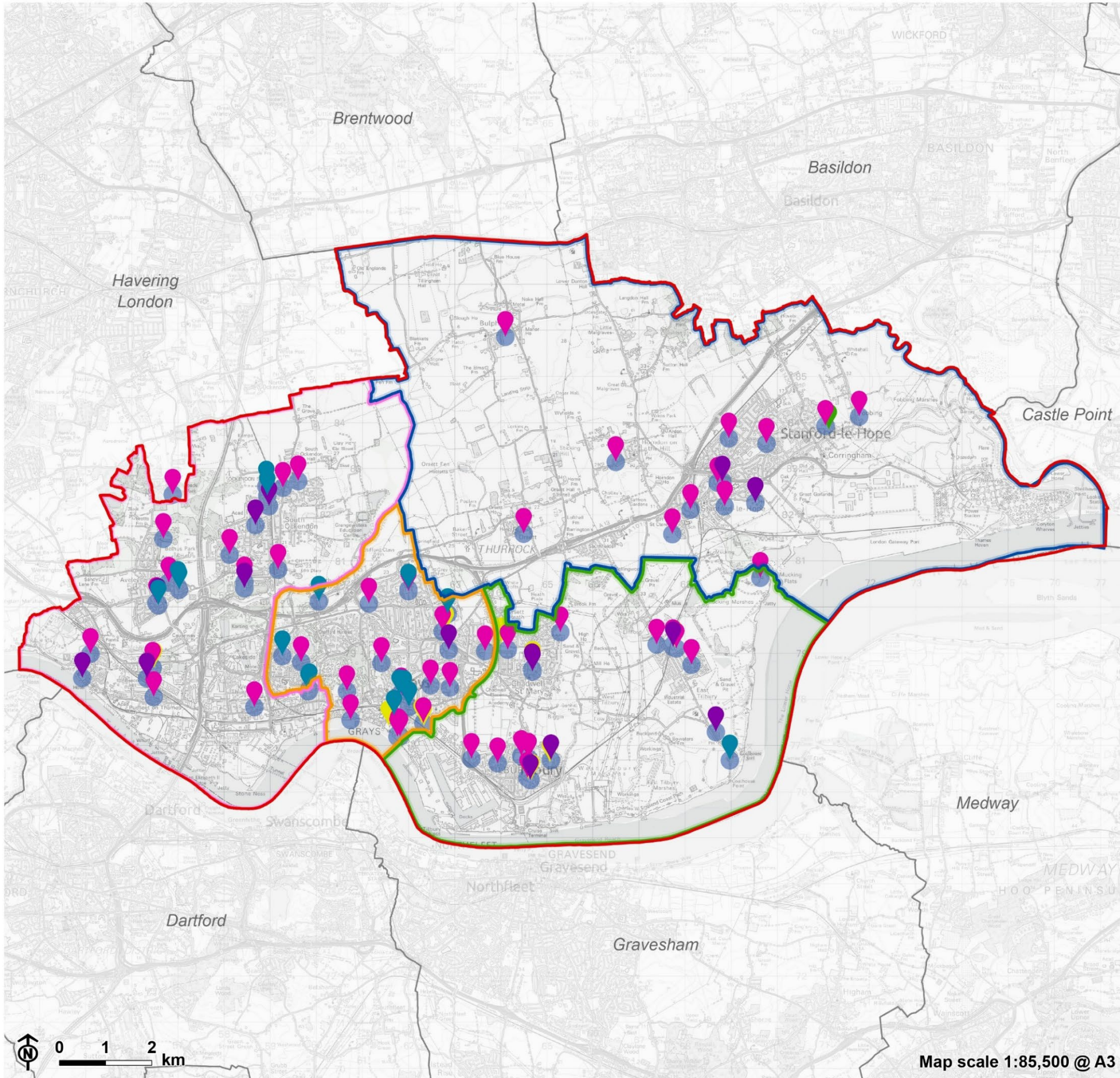


Figure 8.11: Play Space Access Catchments – Doorstep playable space



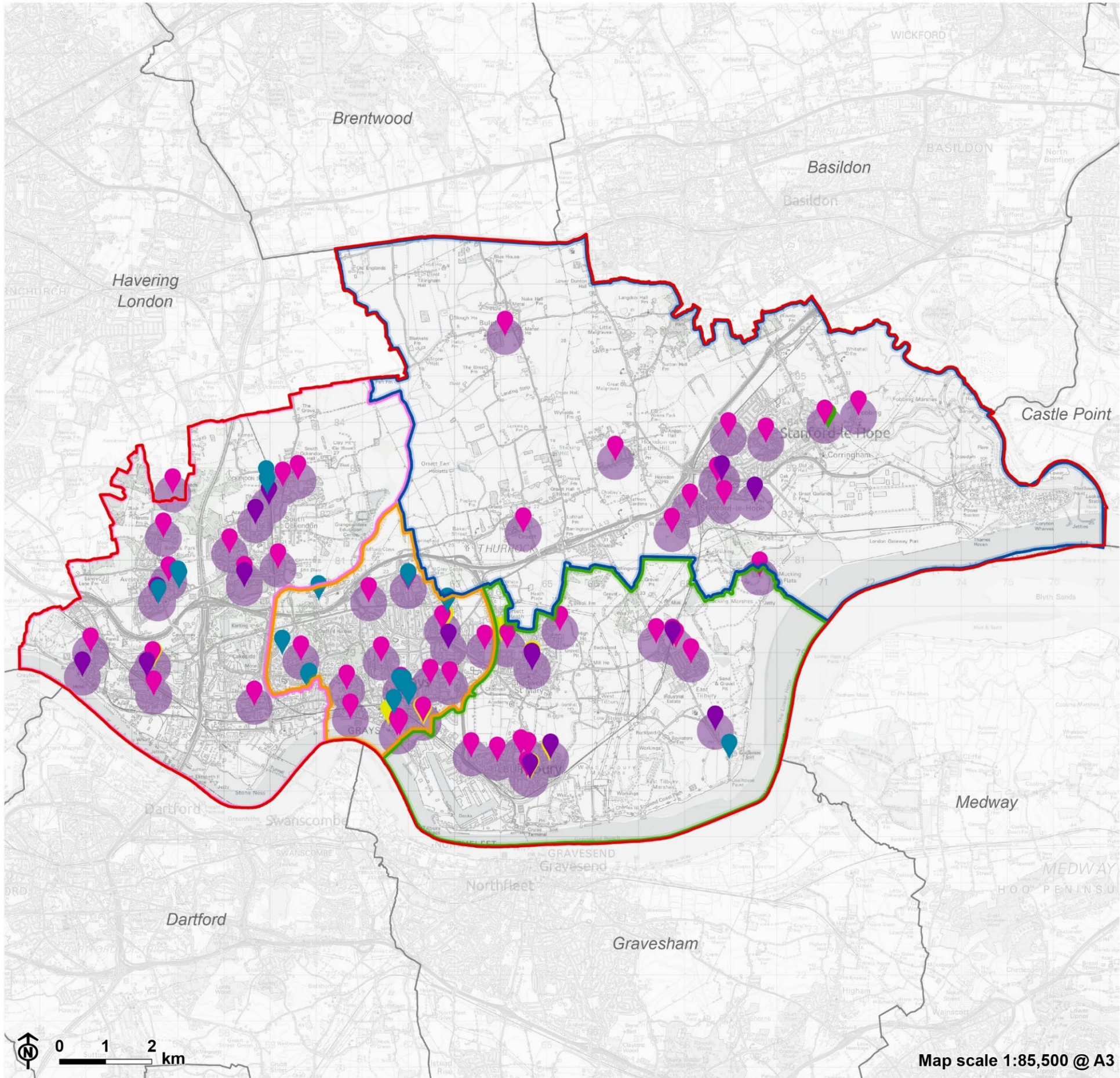
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Figure 8.11: Play Space Access Catchments - Doorstep playable space

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Play space typology**
 - Small Doorstep Play Space
 - Doorstep Play Space
 - Local Play Space
 - Neighbourhood Play Space
 - Youth Space
- Play space access catchment**
 - Access to doorstep playable space (within 200m)

Figure 8.12: Play Space Access Catchments – Local playable space



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Thurrock Council



Figure 8.12: Play Space Access Catchments - Local playable space

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Play space typology**
 - Small Doorstep Play Space
 - Doorstep Play Space
 - Local Play Space
 - Neighbourhood Play Space
 - Youth Space
- Play space access catchment**
 - Access to local playable space (within 400m)

Figure 8.13: Play Space Access Catchments – Neighbourhood playable space

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Figure 8.13: Play Space Access Catchments - Neighbourhood playable space

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Play space typology**
 - Small Doorstep Play Space
 - Doorstep Play Space
 - Local Play Space
 - Neighbourhood Play Space
 - Youth Space
- Play space access catchment**
 - Access to neighbourhood playable space (within 1km)

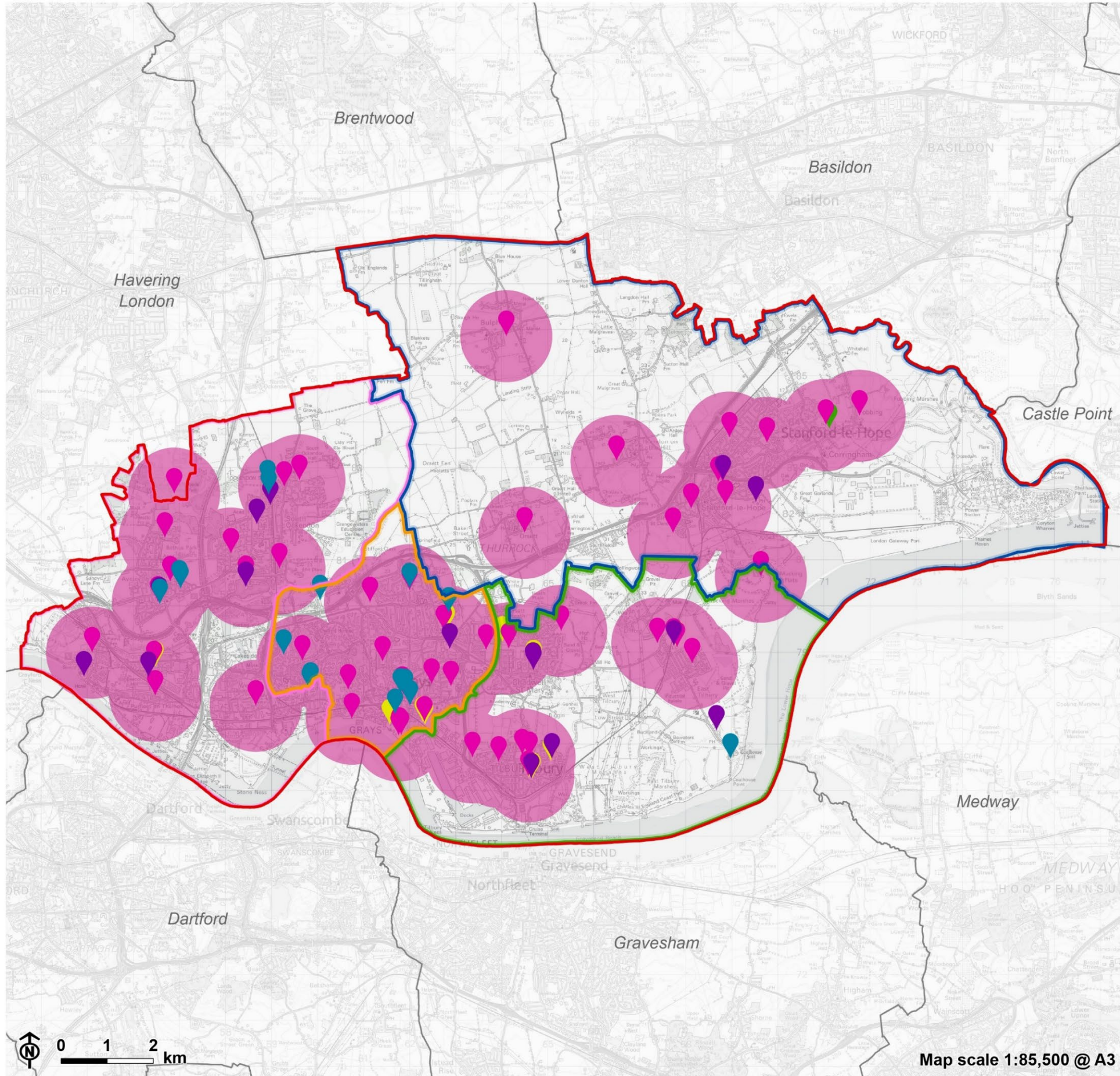
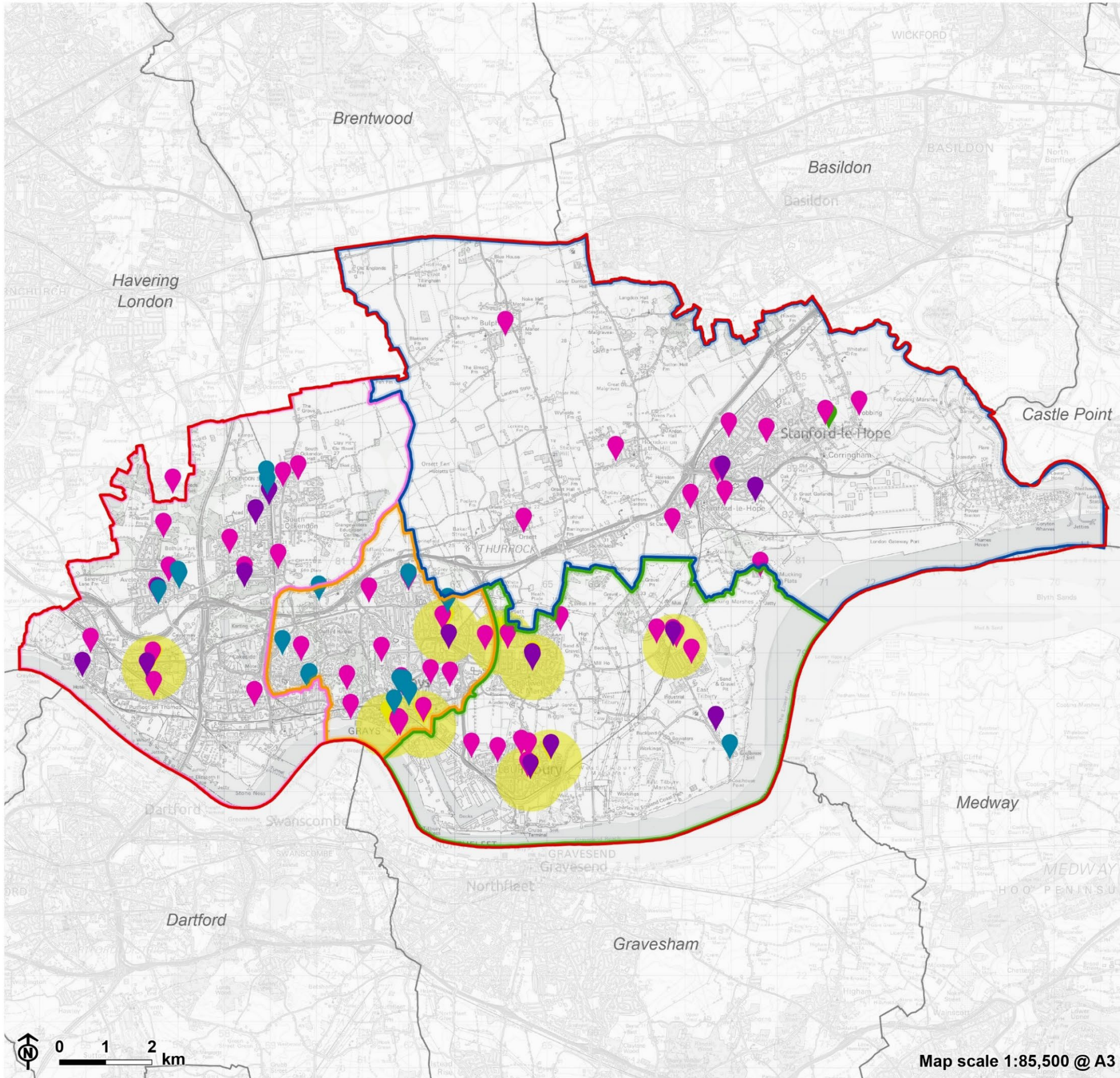


Figure 8.14: Play Space Access Catchments – Youth playable space



Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment
Thurrock Council



Figure 8.14: Play Space Access Catchments - Youth playable space

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Play space typology**
 - Small Doorstep Play Space
 - Doorstep Play Space
 - Local Play Space
 - Neighbourhood Play Space
 - Youth Space
- Play space access catchment**
 - Access to youth space (within 700m)

Quality and Value

8.53 Figure 8.15 presents the performance against the quality and value benchmark standards across Thurrock for open spaces. A full list of all audited sites and their performance against the standards can be found in **Appendix D**. Visual examples of different performances from a variety of typologies can be found in **Appendix E**.

8.54 In general, the borough forms a patchwork of differing quality and value open spaces. Performances against the quality and value standard per PCN are summarised in **Table 8.11**. Overall, Grays PCN had the highest percentage of open spaces meeting both quality and value standards (60%), with Tilbury & Chadwell PCN having the biggest percentage of sites not meeting either standards (52%).

Table 8.11: Open spaces performance against quality and value standard by PCN

PCN	Percentage of open spaces (count)			
	++	+-	-+	--
Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet	37% (37)	26% (23)	13% (12)	24% (21)
Grays	60% (38)	3% (2)	21% (13)	16% (10)
Stanford le Hope & Corringham	43% (20)	21% (10)	6% (3)	30% (14)
Tilbury & Chadwell	21% (9)	10% (4)	17% (7)	52% (22)

8.55 Figure 8.16 presents the performance against the quality and value benchmark standards across Thurrock for play spaces. Performances against the quality and value standard per PCN are summarised in **Table 8.12**. Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN had the highest percentage of play spaces meeting both standards (56%), and Tilbury & Chadwell PCN with the lowest percentage

(24%). More play spaces tended to meet the quality standard and not the value standard.

Table 8.12 Play spaces performance against quality and value standard by PCN

PCN	Percentage of open spaces (count)			
	++	+-	-+	--
Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet	48% (13)	15% (4)	27% (7)	11%% (3)
Grays	43% (13)	20% (6)	10% (3)	27% (8)
Stanford le Hope & Corringham	56% (9)	0% (0)	13% (2)	31% (5)
Tilbury & Chadwell	24% (6)	36% (9)	4% (1)	36% (9)

Figure 8.15: Open Space Quality and Value

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Thurrock Council



Figure 8.15: Open Space Quality and Value

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN)**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Open space quality & value**
 - Higher quality, higher value
 - Higher quality, lower value
 - Lower quality, higher value
 - Lower quality, lower value
 - Not surveyed

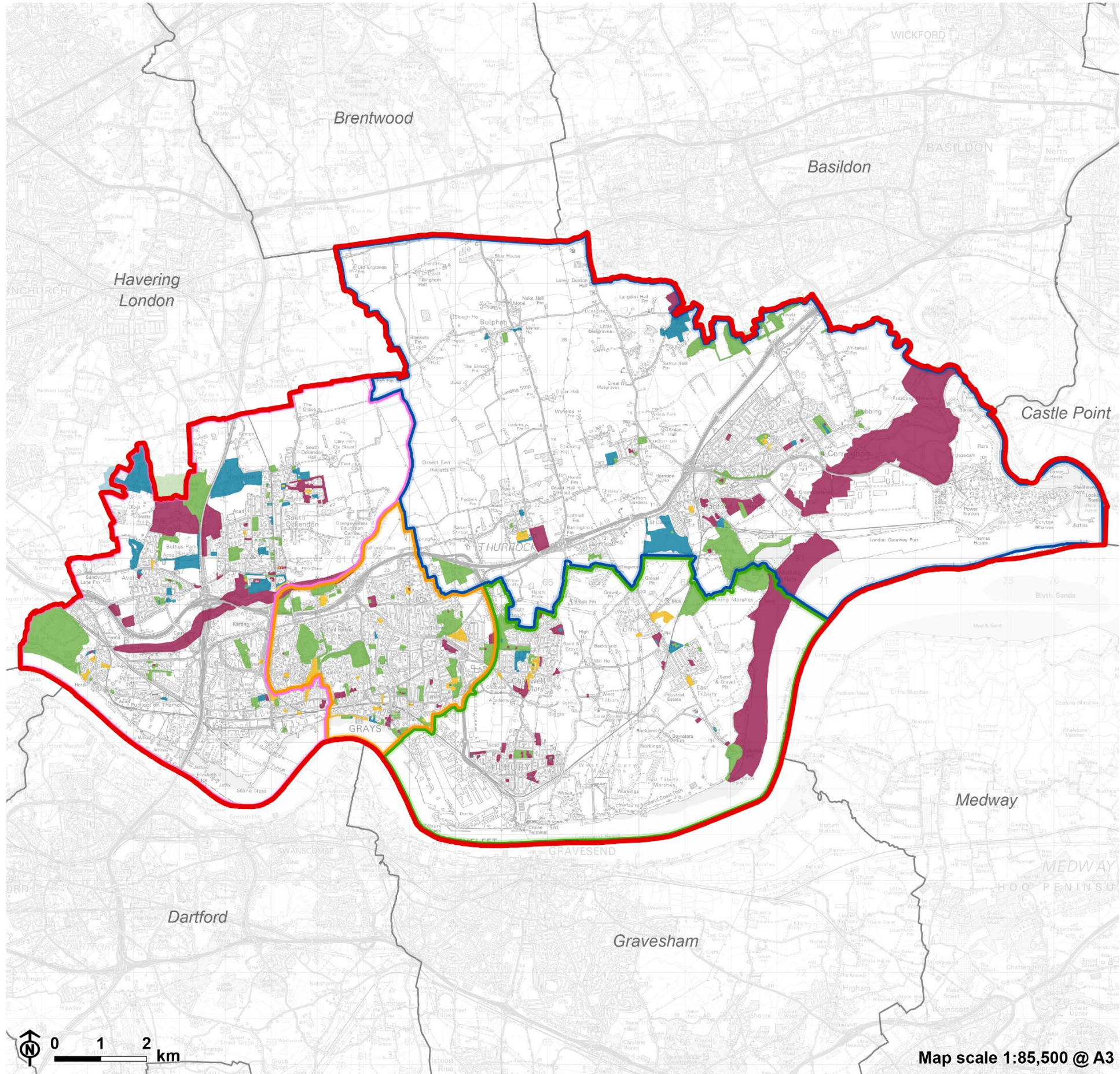


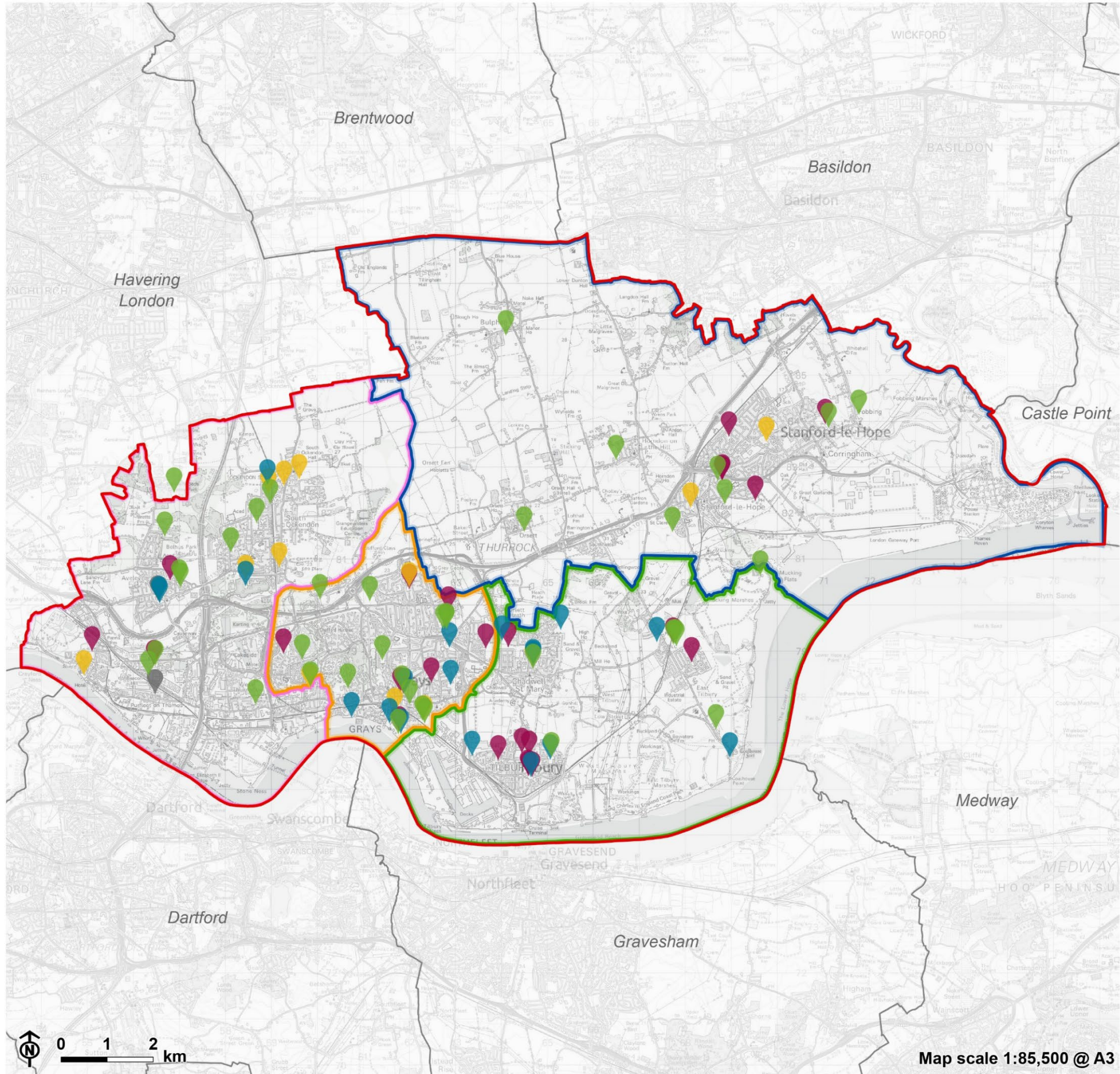
Figure 8.16: Play Spaces Quality and Value

Thurrock Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment
Thurrock Council



Figure 8.16: Play Spaces Quality & Value

- Thurrock Unitary Authority
- Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District
- Primary Care Network (PCN) areas**
 - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
 - Grays PCN
 - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
 - Tilbury & Chadwell PCN
- Play space quality & value**
 - Higher quality, higher value
 - Higher quality, lower value
 - Lower quality, higher value
 - Lower quality, lower value
 - Not surveyed



Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN

8.56 Performance of open spaces within Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN against the quality and value standard are presented in **Figure 8.17** and **Table 8.13**. Performance against the quality and value standards varied within each typology with no clear pattern. The majority of parks and gardens (60%) met both the quality and value standard or either one of the standards (20%), with only two sites not meeting either standard. 35% of amenity green spaces were found to meet both the quality and value standard, with 40% of sites meeting one standard. All green corridor open spaces and 66% of natural and semi-natural green spaces met at least one standard. Of the 21 sites not meeting either standard, 52% were amenity green spaces and 29% natural and semi-natural green spaces.

8.57 Performance of play spaces within Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN against the quality and value standard are presented in **Figure 8.18**. Play spaces performed well against the standards, with 70% of sites meeting at least one standard and 48% meeting both. For spaces meeting only one standard, there were a greater number of sites meeting the value standard.

Figure 8.17: Open Space Quality and Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access - Aveley, South Ockendon and Purfleet PCN Area

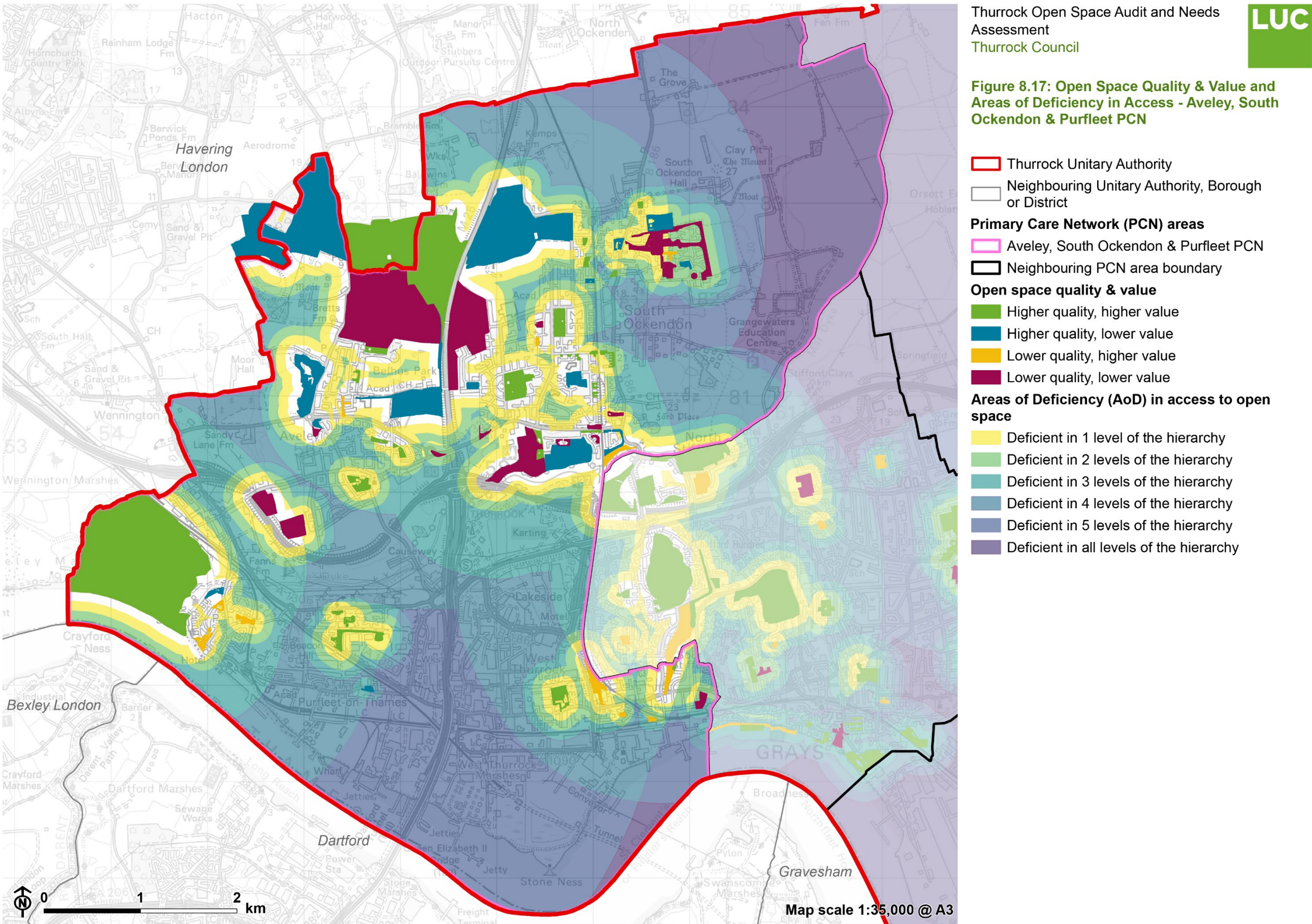
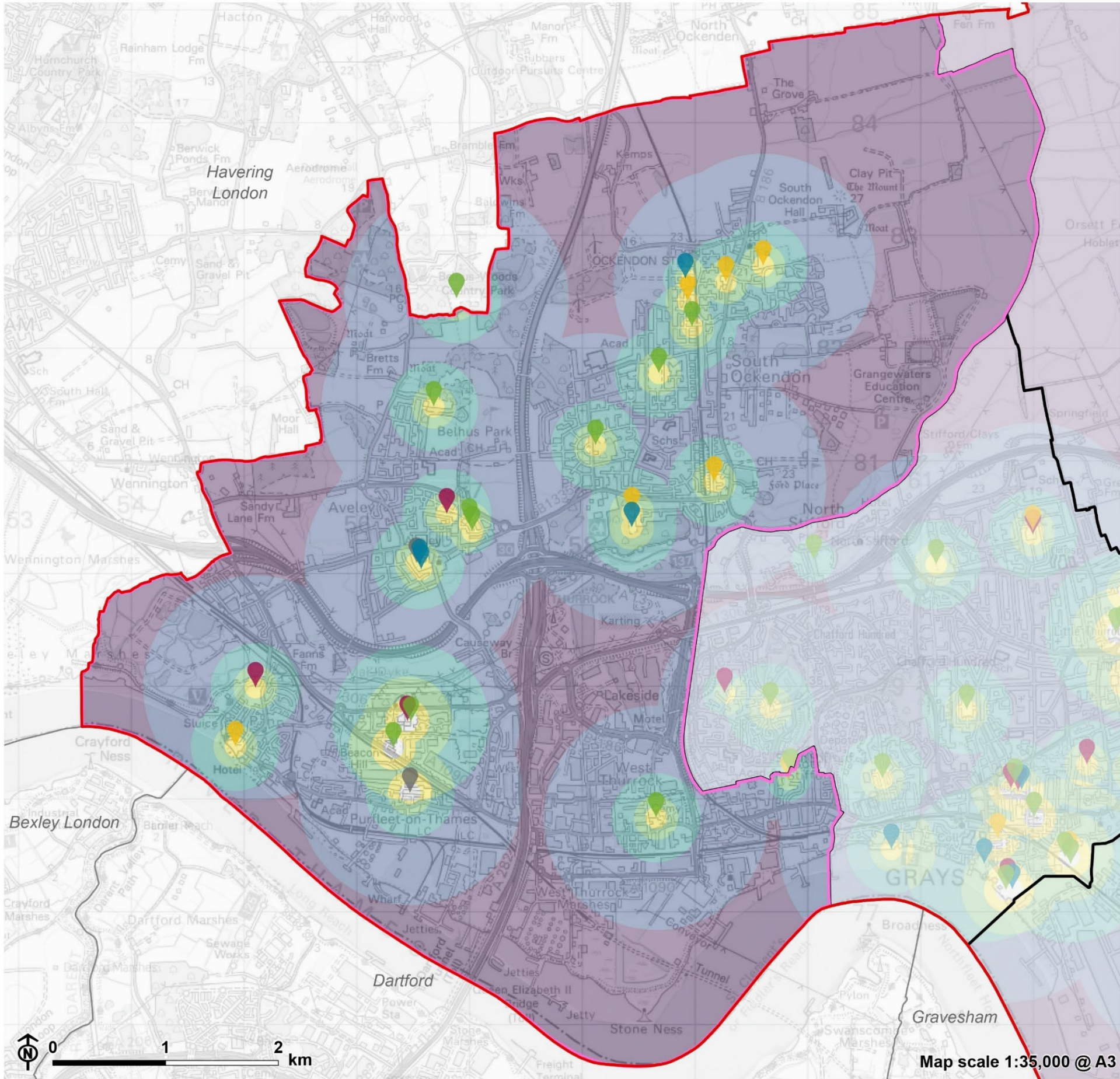


Figure 8.18: Play Space Quality and Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access - Aveley, South Ockendon and Purfleet PCN area



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Figure 8.18: Play Space Quality & Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access - Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN

Thurrock Unitary Authority
Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District

Primary Care Network (PCN) areas
Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
Grays PCN
Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
Tilbury & Chadwell PCN

Play space quality & value
Higher quality, higher value
Higher quality, lower value
Lower quality, higher value
Lower quality, lower value
Not surveyed

Areas of Deficiency (AoD) in access to play space
Deficient in 1 level of the hierarchy
Deficient in 2 levels of the hierarchy
Deficient in 3 levels of the hierarchy
Deficient in 4 levels of the hierarchy
Deficient in all levels of the hierarchy

Grays PCN

8.58 Performances of open spaces within Grays PCN against the quality and value standard are presented in **Figure 8.19**. Most typologies performed well against both standards with 100% of green corridors, 80% of allotments, 67% of cemeteries, 60% of natural and semi-natural green space, 55% of amenity greenspaces and 50% of parks and gardens meeting both standards. However, 29% of parks and garden sites did not meet either standard and 30% of amenity green spaces only met one standard.

8.59 Performance of play spaces within Grays PCN against the quality and value standard are presented in **Figure 8.20**. Play spaces tended to perform well against at least one standard with 73% of play spaces meeting at least one standard. For spaces meeting only one standard, there were a greater number of play sites meeting the quality standard.

Figure 8.19: Open Space Quality and Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access - Grays PCN area

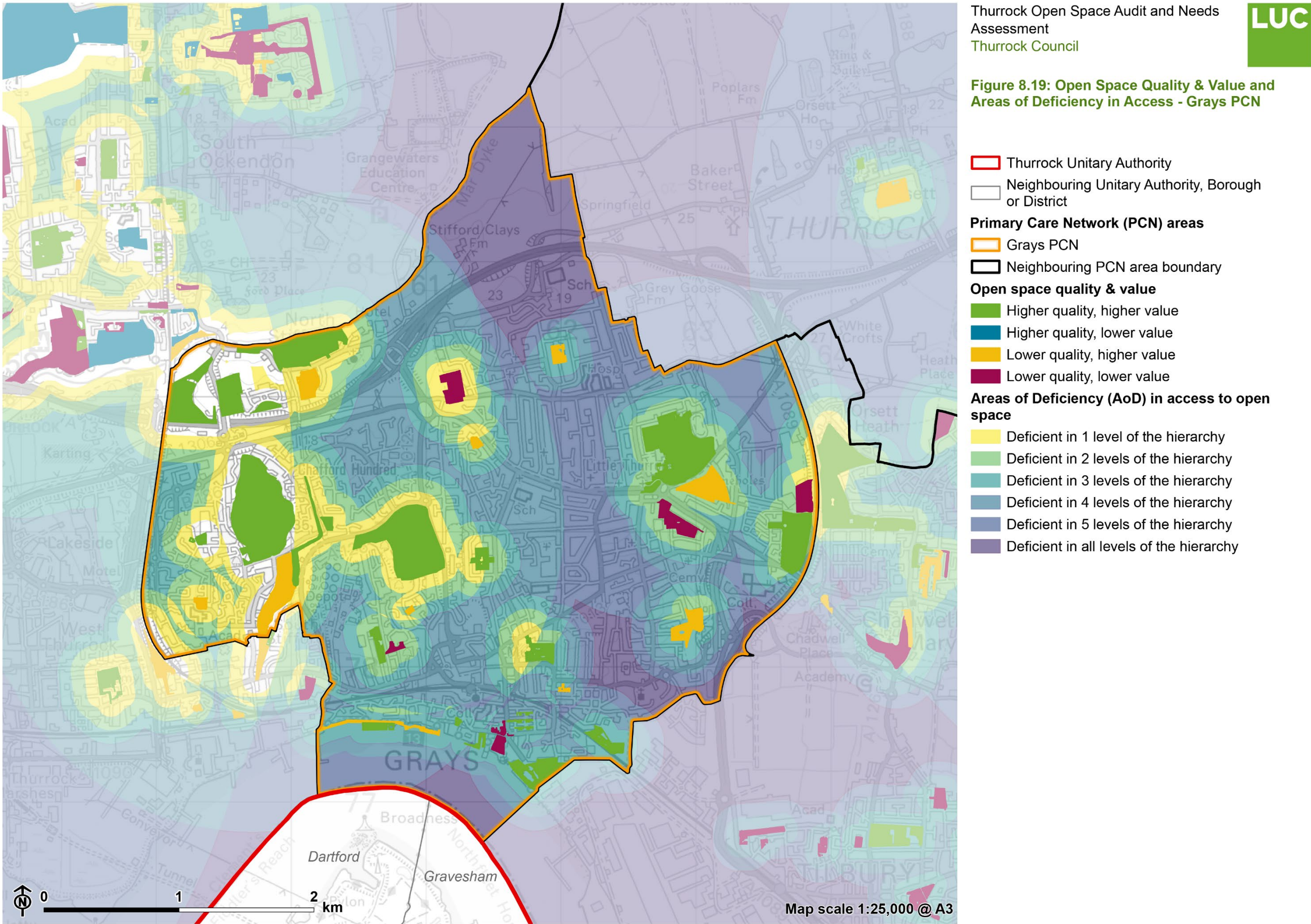
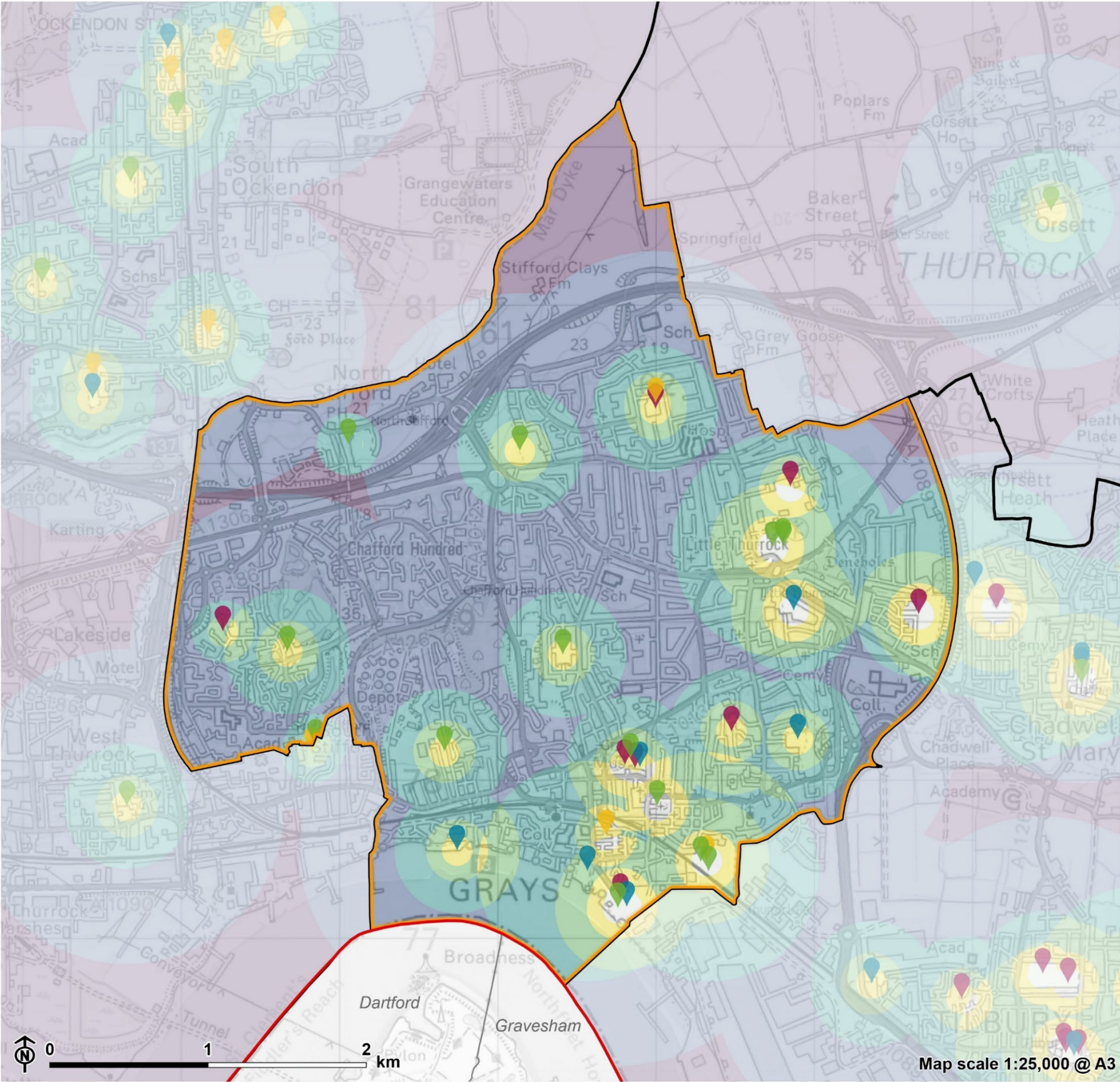


Figure 8.20: Play Space Quality and Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access - Grays PCN area



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Figure 8.20: Play Space Quality & Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access - Grays PCN

Thurrock Unitary Authority
Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District

Primary Care Network (PCN) areas
Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN
Grays PCN
Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN
Tilbury & Chadwell PCN

Play space quality & value
Higher quality, higher value
Higher quality, lower value
Lower quality, higher value
Lower quality, lower value
Not surveyed

Areas of Deficiency (AoD) in access to play space
Deficient in 1 level of the hierarchy
Deficient in 2 levels of the hierarchy
Deficient in 3 levels of the hierarchy
Deficient in 4 levels of the hierarchy
Deficient in all levels of the hierarchy

Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN

8.60 Performance of open spaces within Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN area against the quality and value standards are presented in Figure 8.21.

Performance of each typology varied with 100% of green corridors, 67% of allotments, 50% of natural and semi-natural green spaces, 38% of parks and gardens, 33% of amenity green spaces and 30% of cemeteries met both standards. Whereas, 50% of amenity green spaces, 40% of natural and semi-natural greenspaces, 31% of parks and gardens and 30% cemeteries did not met either the quality or value standard.

8.1 Performance of play spaces within Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN area against the quality and value standard are presented in Figure 8.22. Most play spaces either met both standards (56%), or no standards (31%). Of the 2 sites that only met one standard, the value standard was achieved.

Figure 8.21: Open Space Quality and Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access – Stanford le Hope and Corringham PCN

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Thurrock Council

Figure 8.21: Open Space Quality & Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access - Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN

Thurrock Unitary Authority

Neighbouring Unitary Authority, Borough or District

Primary Care Network (PCN) areas

Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN

Neighbouring PCN area boundary

Open space quality & value

Higher quality, higher value

Higher quality, lower value

Lower quality, higher value

Lower quality, lower value

Areas of Deficiency (AoD) in access to open space

Deficient in 1 level of the hierarchy

Deficient in 2 levels of the hierarchy

Deficient in 3 levels of the hierarchy

Deficient in 4 levels of the hierarchy

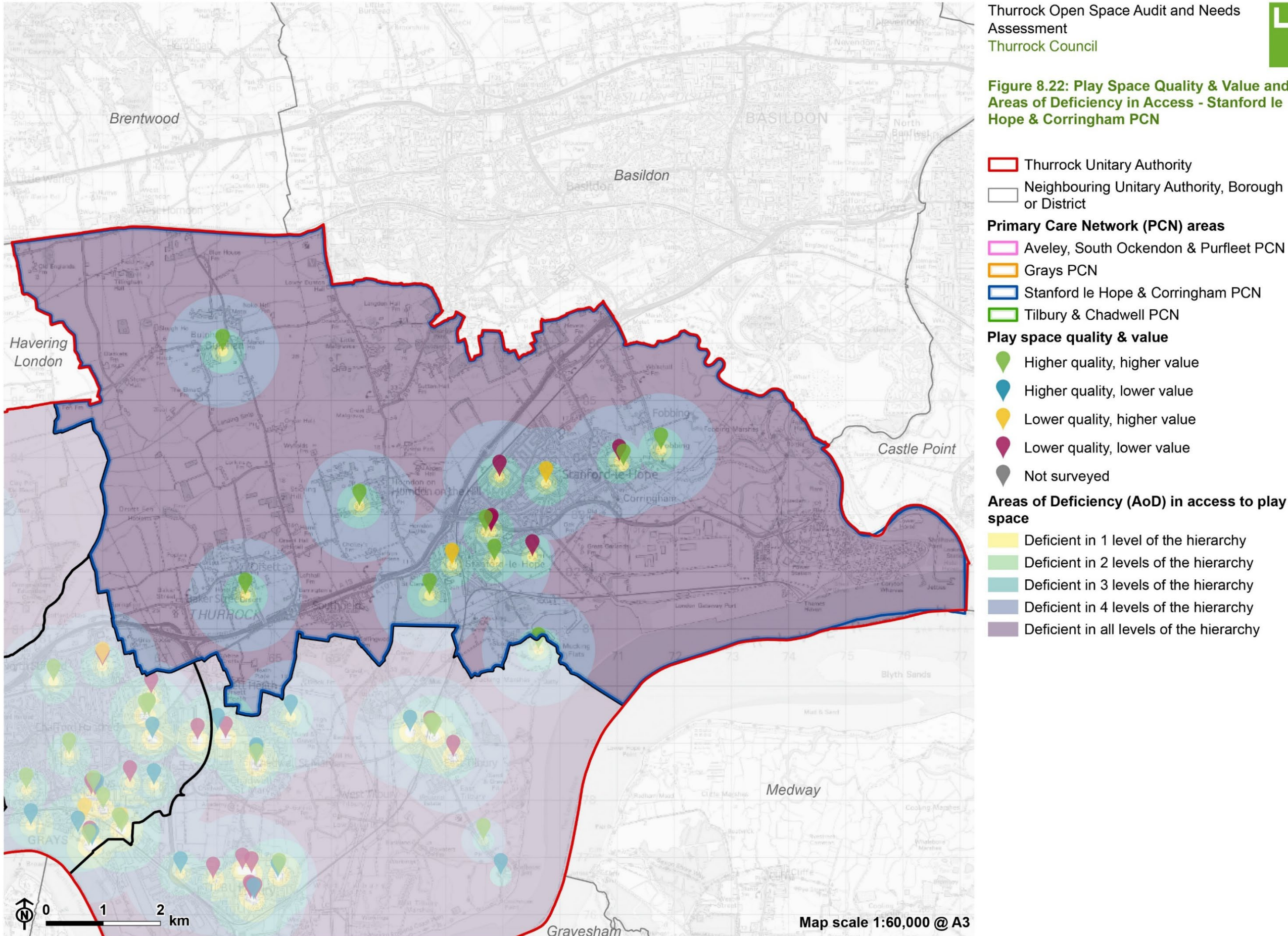
Deficient in 5 levels of the hierarchy

Deficient in all levels of the hierarchy

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FIG8-xx_13180_r1_Thurrock_Open_Space_PCN_A3L 05/01/2026

Figure 8.22: Play Space Quality and Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access - Stanford le Hope and Corringham PCN



Tilbury & Chadwell PCN

8.2 Performance of open spaces within Tilbury & Chadwell PCN against the quality and value standards are presented in **Figure 8.23**. Most typologies did not meet either the quality or value standards including 64% of parks and gardens, 50% of amenity greenspaces, 50% of allotments, 50% of natural and semi-natural greenspaces and 33% of cemeteries. Of the remaining sites most failed to meet one standard, with only 17% of allotments, 28% of amenity green spaces, 25% of natural and semi-natural greenspaces and 18% of parks and gardens meeting both standards.

8.3 Performance of play spaces within Tilbury & Chadwell PCN against the quality and value standard are presented in **Figure 8.24**. Performance against the two standards varied but most sites (64%) met at least one standard. The quality standard was met more frequently than the value standard.

Figure 8.23: Open Space Quality and Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access – Tilbury and Chadwell PCN

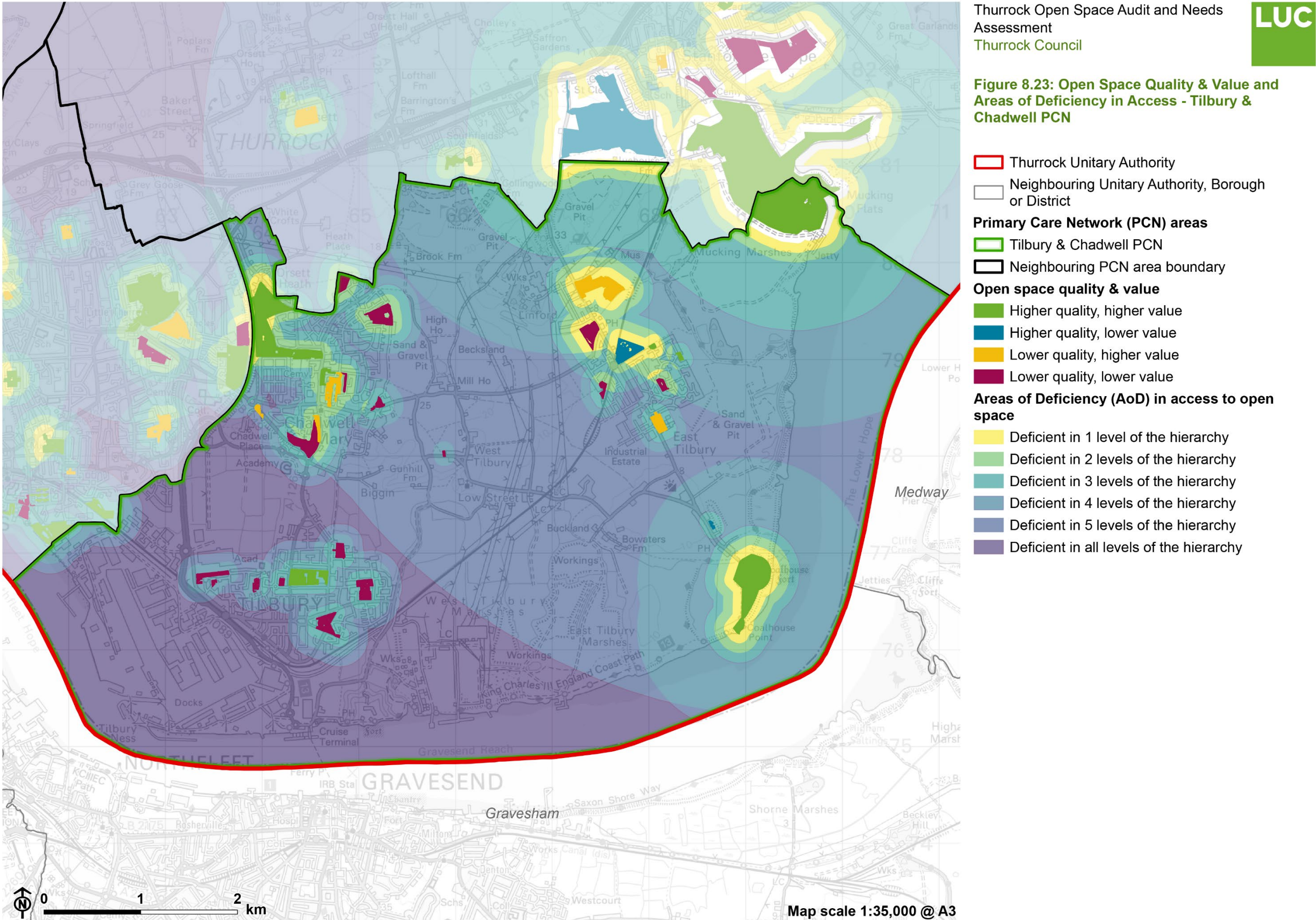
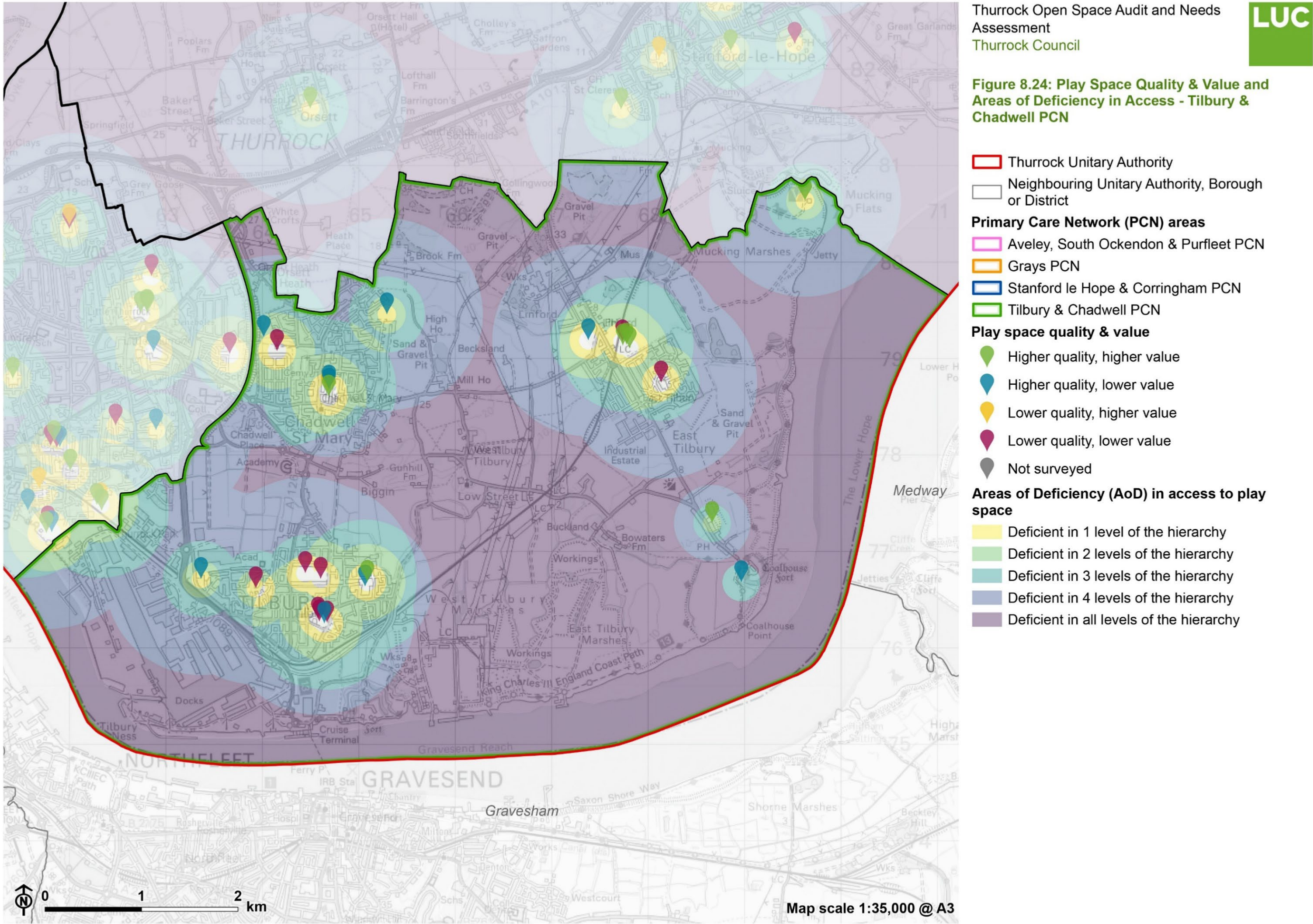


Figure 8.24: Play Space Quality and Value and Areas of Deficiency in Access – Tilbury and Chadwell PCN



Chapter 9

Developing a framework for providing healthy, active open space and play space in Thurrock

The value of open space and play space to health and well-being

9.1 The importance of access to high quality open space and play space to the health and well-being of local communities is well recognised. A review and synthesis of research relating to health, well-being and other social benefits of open space include [\[See reference 50\]](#):

- Physical health, mental well-being and life satisfaction are enhanced through access to and use of parks and green spaces.
- Parks create important opportunities for social integration.
- Parks provide opportunities for community engagement.
- Local communities value opportunities to be involved in improving their local green spaces.
- There is evidence that the quality of parks and green spaces is worse in areas of lower income and minorities are often marginalised in terms of access to green space.
- Experiencing, interacting and learning about nature through access to open spaces is associated with a sense of gratitude and helps people recover from stress and mental illness.

9.2 Parks and green spaces also generate economic benefits by creating jobs, encouraging local economic activity, and attracting inward investment. They act as destinations that draw in visitors, helping to boost the wider area. A recent Public Health England report highlights the potential contribution of green infrastructure—alongside other interventions—to revitalising High Streets. Reporting by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Defra further indicates that homes located close to functional green spaces, such as parks or golf courses, tend to achieve higher property values. This is in addition to the potential for open spaces to support increased business revenue.

9.3 Particularly relevant for planning open spaces in areas like Thurrock, regional policy such as the Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Fit for the Future and local policy such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlight that access to parks and green spaces can play an important role in meeting national, regional and local policy objectives related to reducing obesity, diabetes and heart disease, as well as supporting mental well-being. However, evidence shows that the quality of open spaces has a greater influence on health outcomes than simply the amount of space available.

Defining the characteristics of healthy, active open spaces for play and informal recreation in Thurrock

9.4 Open spaces should be managed to provide for the diverse needs of the whole community. They should be multifunctional in design to accommodate a range of uses.

9.5 The following section sets out the key characteristics that should be provided within open spaces to ensure they are welcoming to all. The principles outlined below focus on low impact interventions which can be applied to a range of sites of varying size. These principles will help ensure open spaces in the borough offer opportunities for play and informal recreation for people of all ages and abilities.

‘Playable’ spaces

9.6 The council own and manage a range of equipped play facilities in the borough. While there are gaps in accessibility to ‘playable’ spaces, priority should be given to ensuring existing provision are conducive to intergenerational play and informal recreation for all.

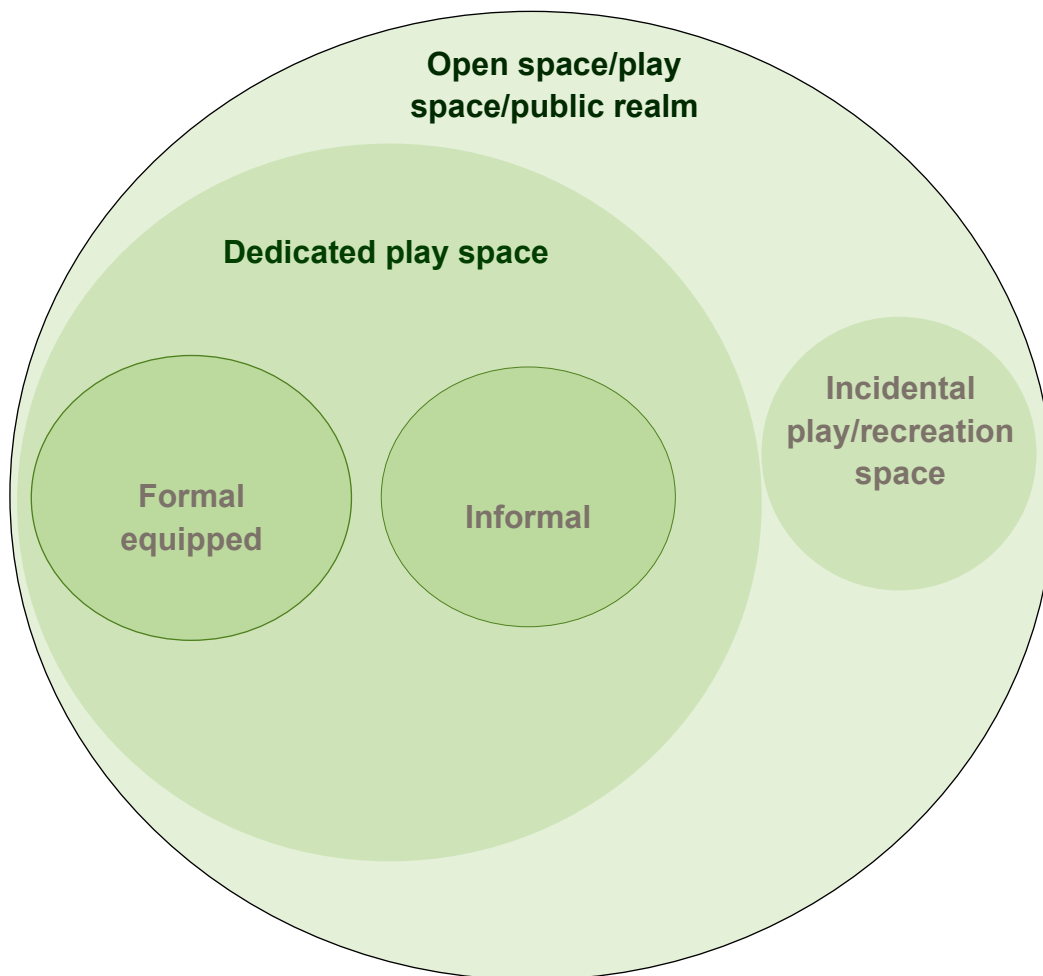
9.7 Dedicated play space should be delivered within development sites with a focus on interventions that promote play widely, ensuring that spaces provide the appropriate ‘cues’ to indicate to children and young people that they are welcome to play, hang out and relax.

9.8 This approach may include the integration of stimulating and engaging play features (such as land forming, boulders, water play, logs and/ or trails) and should recognise the value of high quality incidental areas for play alongside dedicated play space.

9.9 Implementation will require a bespoke high quality approach at each site with a focus on the application of good design principles rather than relying on the installation of 'off the shelf' play equipment.

9.10 Playable spaces within Thurrock could comprise a combination of formal (equipped), informal and incidental play spaces, see **Figure 9.1**.

Figure 9.1 Layout of formal (equipped), informal and incidental play spaces.



9.11 Comprehensive guidance on the design of play spaces is set out in guidance documents published by Play England [\[See reference 51\]](#). The design of play spaces should follow the ten principles set out in the guidance for designing successful play spaces which required spaces to be:

1. Bespoke;
2. Well located;
3. Make use of natural elements;
4. Provide a wide range of play experiences;
5. Are accessible for both disabled and non-disabled children;
6. Meet community needs;

7. Allow children of different ages to play together;
8. Build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge;
9. Are sustainable and appropriately maintained; and
10. Allow for change/evolution.

9.12 Locating areas for play is also an important element with successful, well used play spaces located:

- so that children and their adults can travel there with ease, with good walking and cycling links, avoiding physical barriers such as busy roads.
- with good natural surveillance; either overlooked by residential development or other facilities where there are other people about.
- near other facilities where possible, such as libraries, schools, café's and toilets in order to help draw people there and encourage them to stay.

9.13 The categorisation and hierarchy of play spaces set out in the Fields in Trust Standards (2024) has been adopted for the purpose of setting standards. The guidance should be referred to in determining the type of play offer that should be expected from different types of spaces and to help identify appropriate enhancements. **Table 9.1** below provides a summary description of each level of the play hierarchy.

Table 9.1: Play hierarchy as set out in the Fields in Trust Standards [See reference 52]

	Local Areas for Play (LAPs)	Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)	Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)
Description	A small area of open space specifically designed and primarily laid out for very young children to play close to where they live interwoven within the development. A LAP requires no play equipment as such, relying more on demonstrative features indicating that play is positively encouraged.	An area of open space specifically designed and laid out with features including equipment for children who are beginning to play independently with friends, without accompanying adults, and for adults with young children	This is an area of open space specifically designed, laid out and equipped mainly for older more independent children who go further from home but potentially with play opportunities for younger children or siblings as well.
Minimum size recommendation	100 sq m	400 sq m	1000 sq m
Example age groups	0-5	0-11	All ages
Examples of facilities	■ Landscaping ■ Climbable objects	■ Landscaping to create natural feel, including	■ Landscaping to create natural feel, including

	Local Areas for Play (LAPs)	Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)	Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)
	■ Fixed equipment ■ Seating for carers ■ Sand and water feature (if possible)	changes of level ■ Equipment integrated into the landscaping, that allows children to swing, slide and climb ■ Multi-games/ball walls ■ Kick about area ■ Basketball nets ■ Seating area away from equipment ■ Sand (if possible)	changes of level ■ Equipment integrated into the landscaping, that allows children to swing, slide and climb ■ Seating area away from equipment ■ Bike, skate and skateboard facilities ■ Kick about area ■ Basketball nets ■ Hard surface area if possible ■ Sand if possible ■ Water feature if possible ■ Shelter plus basketball net, small

	Local Areas for Play (LAPs)	Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)	Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)
			wheeled facility or climbing wall/boulder for young people
Location	■ Residential areas including housing estates ■ Pocket Parks ■ Public Squares	■ Residential areas including housing estates ■ Local Parks	■ Larger residential areas and housing estates ■ Local Parks ■ District Parks ■ School playgrounds

Welcoming, safe and secure spaces

9.14 Welcoming open spaces should invite visitors into them and should impart a sense of feeling safe and secure. This is achieved through ensuring good visual appearance, the range of facilities, ease of access, good maintenance standards and natural surveillance. Key design and management factors that need to be considered include:

- Well located entrances with clear sightlines in and out.
- Signage on arrival to indicate what visitors can expect to find within the site.
- Routes within and through sites that are suitable for a variety of users.
- Ensuring that spaces for gathering and seating are well located to reduce the likelihood of antisocial behaviour.
- Easy access through the provision of good public transport links, road crossings, well located entrances and cycle parking.

- Dog control measures that are appropriate to the site.
- Ensuring appropriate layout to provide busy areas, 'hubs' of activity and quieter areas for quiet contemplation, where space allows.
- Provision of planting and landscape features for interest and to provide a welcoming environment that is stimulating for children.

Accessible for all and inclusive

9.15 In order to encourage the use of open spaces by the whole community, facilities within open spaces should be inclusive and reflective of the needs of local residents and visitors. Equality of access should enable people to use an open space without anxiety and excessive effort. Whilst not all areas need to be fully accessible to all visitors, the design and location of key facilities (e.g. play spaces, access points and seating) should have regard for the needs of all users. Open space improvements should have regard to the Equality Act 2010.

Prioritising areas for enhancement

9.16 The findings of the open space audit can be analysed in multiple ways to identify specific sites or broad geographic areas that enhancement of open and play spaces would have the greatest impact for local communities. In order to prioritise areas for enhancement the following should be considered:

- Performance of open spaces and play spaces against the proposed quality and value standards.
- Areas with poor access to open space (based on the accessibility standards), especially in areas where open spaces perform poorly against the quality and value standards.
- Areas with an under provision of open space in terms of quantity.
- Application of the Play Needs Index developed as part of the audit.

9.17 Where broad areas or individual sites are identified as falling below quality and value or have achieved a low informal recreation score, individual audit forms should be scrutinised to further understand what aspects of any given site may need improving.

9.18 **Table 9.2** and **Table 9.3** outline the key considerations to identify priorities for enhancement and to identify potential development sites. Appendix E presents visual examples of the quality and value categories.

Table 9.2: Application of the proposed open space standards to prioritise areas for enhancement; key considerations

Area of assessment / Data	Key considerations / management approach
Quantity standard	In areas where the quantity of open space falls below the proposed standard (both in terms of current population and projected growth): ■ Seek to ensure open spaces and play spaces are resilient to increased use through ensuring the use of appropriate materials and the delivery of maintenance operations. Ensure open spaces support a range of facilities for formal and informal recreation. ■ Seek opportunities to incorporate new open spaces/ play spaces within new development or improve off site open space/ play space. ■ Consider improvements to public realm/ streetscapes to ensure they are family friendly, provide areas to sit, encourage active travel and provide opportunities for socialising and quiet contemplation. The quantity standard may be used as one indicator to assist in identifying areas of search for potential housing/employment land. This would need to be cross referenced with other open space standards, site/ landscape constraints and local need.
Accessibility	Residents should have access to a range of different types of open spaces. In terms of prioritising areas for improvement, similar principles to the above apply. However, further consideration should also be given to: ■ Improving connectivity between open spaces and enhancing active travel routes and public transport connections. ■ Improving entrances/providing new entrances at key open spaces to reduce travel time. ■ Where possible addressing or designing out issues around barriers to access (e.g. busy roads, water courses).

Area of assessment / Data	Key considerations / management approach
	Areas with good local accessibility to multiple sites may be used as one indicator to assist in identifying areas of search for potential housing/employment land. This would need to be cross referenced with other open space standards, site/landscape constraints and local need.
Quality and Value	Application of the proposed quality and value standards provides a broad indication of the type of management approach that may be needed across any given area or site.
	Higher quality / higher value + +
	These sites are the best open spaces in the Borough; offering the greatest value to the surrounding local communities. Future management should seek to maintain the standards and ensure they continue to meet the communities they serve
	Higher quality / lower value + -
	The audit has found these sites to be achieving a sufficient standard for quality, most likely with sufficient levels of maintenance. Value for these sites falls short for the sites typology and level of the hierarchy, for instance through a lack of suitable features and facilities. Wherever possible, the preferred management approach should be to enhance the value of the site in terms of its present primary typology through the provision of additional features, facilities or implementing appropriate design interventions. If this is not possible, the next best policy approach is to consider whether the site would be considered as high value if managed for another primary open space purpose. For instance, reviewing site priorities to manage a park and garden as an amenity green space or natural and semi-natural green space.
	Lower quality / higher value - +
	These spaces meet or exceed the proposed standard for value but fall short on the proposed quality standard. These

Area of assessment / Data	Key considerations / management approach
	sites will include the features, facilities and attributes that is expected of the type and size of open space but their condition may be poor and the site may be failing to achieve expected standards for maintenance and management. These sites provide most opportunity for 'quick wins' in terms of improving open space provision through focussing management on quality improvement and seeking opportunities to ensure open spaces are welcoming and safe for use by the local community. Lower quality / lower value -- Enhancing both the quality and value of these sites should be considered a priority, particularly in areas which suffer from a deficiency in access to or quantity of publicly accessible open space. Potential alternative uses should also be explored for these sites where it can be demonstrated that loss of a lower quality/ lower value space will not result in a local area falling below the open space standards, but will result in a gain for an area of undersupply. Lower quality / lower value sites may be used as one indicator to assist in identifying areas of search/sites for potential housing/employment land. This would need to be cross referenced with other open space standards, site/landscape constraints and local need.

Recommendations for future open space provision

9.19 Future management should aim to create a joined up and multi-functional network of publicly accessible open space within walking distance of homes within each PCN area across Thurrock. Opportunities should be considered to ensure existing open spaces are of a high quality and provide a broad range of features and facilities to support the health and wellbeing of the borough's residents.

9.20 The findings of this study should also be used to inform priorities for future investment. **Table 9.3** sets out the process for assessing open space provision within each PCN.

Table 9.3: Key stages for applying the standards

Stage	Description	Options / considerations for prioritising areas/sites for enhancement
1	Compare quantity standard (ha/1,000) with provision across each of the Analysis Areas	■ In areas which fall below the required quantity standard, consideration should be given to: ■ Ensuring existing open spaces meet the required quality and value standards. ■ Existing open spaces are accessible to the Borough's communities. ■ Creating new open spaces to meet deficit. Typology of open space to be informed by the application of the quantity standards. ■ In areas which exceed the quantity standard, consideration should be given to: ■ Projected population change to ensure adequate provision to meet potential need. ■ Potential barriers to accessing open spaces. ■ Importance of open space to the wider green infrastructure network.
2	Assess accessibility standards per typology and level of the hierarchy	■ Assess combined deficiency mapping to identify areas deficient in good access to multiple levels of the size hierarchy. ■ In areas which are deficient in good access to open space, consideration should be given to: ■ Ensuring existing open spaces meet the required quality and value standards.

Stage	Description	Options / considerations for prioritising areas/sites for enhancement
		■ Addressing any potential barriers to existing open spaces. ■ Creating new open spaces to meet deficit in accessibility. Typology of open space to be informed by the form of deficiency.
3	Consider quality and value standards and Informal Recreation Score	■ Consider options for applying management approaches to address poor performance against the quality and value benchmarks. ■ Focus improvements on sites with a low Informal Recreation Score.
4	Consider the Borough's Play Needs Index	■ Focus improvements / enhancements on low quality and value sites within areas of high play need.
5	Scrutinise site audit forms	■ Use audit forms to provide detail on quality, value and informal recreation scores. Develop outline list of potential interventions / enhancements.

9.21 The following recommendations have been set out to address the deficiencies in provision, accessibility and quality and value identified in Chapter 8. Example sites have been identified with suggested enhancements.

Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN

9.22 Standards for provision of open spaces within Aveley, South Ockendon & Purfleet PCN were met for amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspaces, but a deficiency in provision of allotments, provision for children and teenagers and parks and gardens were identified.

9.23 Access to more than one level of the open space hierarchy was generally well met across the PCN, with the exception of Purfleet-on-Thames which showed limited access to only one or two levels of the hierarchy.

9.24 Performance against the quality and value standards varied with more sites meeting the quality standard. Allotments, cemeteries and natural and semi-natural greenspace open spaces performed poorly against the value standard. Civic spaces also performed poorly against both the condition and value standard.

9.25 As a result of these findings the following recommendations have been suggested:

- Review the possibility of including food growing opportunities within freely publicly accessible sites, for example community orchards or allotments.
- Consider adding new play equipment to amenity green spaces such as Brannetts Wood or Springhouse Road Recreation Ground to increase the provision within the area and value scores.
- Consider how the value of open spaces, particularly civic spaces and amenity greenspaces within the PCN area can be improved. This could include installing cycle parking to encourage active travel, new planting (hedgerows, shrubs, tree, wildflowers, horticultural planting), installation of public art and ensure sites have sufficient seating and bins where appropriate.
- Specific sites that could be targeted for enhancement include:
 - Site ID 270: Derwent Parade South Ockendon improve condition of planted areas and consider creating new planted areas with tree and horticultural planting or an area of grass to create a variety of habitats across the site.
 - Site ID 83: Springhouse Road Recreation Ground improve signage so it is welcoming and provides information about the site and direction to other nearby open spaces. Provide bins to mitigate issue of dog fouling and litter.
 - Site ID 37: Enbourne Green/Elan Rd consider adding seating and more bins.
 - Site ID 95: East Street Recreation Ground and Site ID 94: Cruick Avenue improve condition of permanent notice board and ensure it is kept up to date. Consider adding seating.

Grays PCN

9.26 A deficiency in provision was recorded for amenity greenspace, provision for children and teenagers, parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural

greenspaces. Access to more than one level of the open space hierarchy was generally not well met across the PCN, with significant areas in the centre and south-east of the PCN being deficient in access to four, five or all levels of the open space hierarchy.

9.27 Both the quality and value standards were met by over 60% of open spaces within Grays PCN. However, over 40% of parks and garden open spaces within the PCN did not meet the quality standard.

9.28 As a result of these findings the following recommendations have been suggested:

- Explore the opportunity to create small pocket parks and greenspaces within pedestrian crossing areas and roundabouts.
- Ensure there are active travel routes and signage from spaces such as Warren Gorge and Grays Chalk Quarry to other nearby natural and semi-natural greenspaces outside of the PCN area such as Mardyke River Valley.
- Review condition of planted and grass areas to ensure high-quality habitat is maintained and ensure there are sufficient bins and seating across open spaces.
- Ensure parks and gardens have even-surfaced, level paths with an appropriate amount of seating and bins relevant to size. Consider the use of the site for local users and if these needs are met e.g. play equipment, food growing opportunities, spaces for community events and groups.
- Specific sites that could be targeted for enhancement include:
 - Site ID 52: Butler House Shirfield Road improve condition of grass area and consider adding seating with a bin to encourage walking.
 - Site ID 81: Recreation Area include seating and address fly tipping issue.
 - Site ID 212: Gunning Road Little Thurrock improve quality of paths, restore boundary and provide improve signage and interpretation.
 - Site ID 89: St Thomas Place / Henry Street address erosion around play areas as well as shrubs/beds.
 - Site ID 92: Long Lane Recreation Ground provide additional bins, particularly near car park to avoid overflowing of bins. Add welcoming signage with relevant information about the site.

Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN

9.29 A deficiency in provision was recorded for amenity greenspace and provision for children and teenagers. There were no youth spaces within this PCN. Access to at least one level of the open space hierarchy was generally well met across the PCN, however areas to the north of Stanford le Hope and west of Corringham showed deficiency in four levels of the hierarchy.

9.30 Performance against the quality and value standards varied with 51% of sites not meeting the value standard. Specifically, amenity greenspaces, parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural greenspace performed poorly against the value standard.

9.31 As a result of these findings the following recommendations have been suggested:

- Consider where new youth spaces could be incorporated into existing provision and future developments.
- Explore the idea of creating natural play spaces within natural and semi-natural greenspaces, for example Langdon's Hill Country Park.
- Ensure parks and gardens have even-surfaced, level paths with an appropriate amount of seating and bins relevant to size. Consider the use of the site for local users and if these needs are met e.g. play equipment, food growing opportunities, spaces for community events and groups.
- Specific sites that could be targeted for enhancement include:
 - Site ID 41: Laburnham Drive consider enhancing the natural value of the site by improving the quality of the grassland and plant a variety of shrubs. Consider adding seating with a bin.
 - Site ID 6: Balstonia Park restore paths and add seating and welcoming signage. Consider including inclusive play equipment for disabilities and provide seating within play area.
 - Site ID 199: Stanford Recreation Ground improve condition of grass and provide more bins and seating.
 - Site ID 132: Grove House Wood level out paths and widen where appropriate to improve accessibility for a wide range of users.

Tilbury & Chadwell PCN

9.32 A deficiency in provision of open space was recorded for provision for children and teenagers and natural and semi-natural greenspace. Access to at least one level of the open space hierarchy was generally well met, but significant areas of Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary show a deficiency in either five or four levels of open space hierarchy.

9.33 Open spaces performed poorly against both the quality and value standards with 52% of sites not meeting either. Specifically, 64% of parks and garden and 50% of allotments, amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace.

9.34 As a result of these findings the following recommendations have been suggested:

- Explore the idea of creating natural play spaces within natural and semi-natural greenspaces, for example expanding the play area in Thameside Nature Park.
- Ensure parks and gardens have even-surfaced, level paths with an appropriate amount of seating and bins relevant to size. Consider the use of the site for local users and if these needs are met e.g. play equipment, food growing opportunities, spaces for community events and groups. Noticeboards should be up to date and provide relevant local information about the site and events.
- Review the use of amenity greenspaces and the requirements of local communities. This could be through a public consultation to understand how the value of sites could be improved. E.g. more food growing opportunities, educational interpretation, greater access to play or sports provision.
- Specific sites that could be targeted for enhancement include:
 - Site ID 39: Northview Avenue / Central Avenue clear graffiti and vandalism, improve condition of grass and planted areas.
 - Site ID 197: Anchor Fields Park Tilbury provide welcoming signage with relevant information about the site. Improve the condition of seating, clear graffiti and vandalism. Provide more bins to mitigate issue of litter. Repair and restore teen shelter, MUGA and play equipment.
 - Site ID 276: Secret Swings Park remove graffiti and improve condition of paths and grass areas.

- Site ID 11: Koala Park improve play equipment condition and replace missing equipment. More bins to mitigate issue with litter and replace broken gate.

Addressing future needs through planning

9.35 As any new development proposals in Thurrock come forward, the Council will need to ensure the development addresses any potential impact arising from additional pressures on existing open space and play provision.

Consideration should also be made regarding how open space and play provision, both existing and new, will be able to sustainably provide for the needs of the growing and changing population.

9.36 The council should consider the following for inclusion in future planning policies:

- Protect overall existing open space as an important community, nature conservation and heritage resource.
- Use the standards set out in this document to guide improvement to existing provision and to guide provision of new open spaces in the future particularly in areas which currently fall below the required standards for quantity and accessibility. Where possible, all residents should be able to walk to a high quality and high value open space. This is of particular importance for communities which may not have access to private open space.
- Provide open spaces that positively welcome people in terms of physical and social access.
- Ensure a healthy, safe and secure experience for users.
- Ensure sites which have been identified as falling below the thresholds for quality and/ or value are prioritised to ensure open spaces are well-maintained and meet the needs of the communities they serve. The site audit forms in Appendix A provide a 'checklist' of possible enhancements that would increase the overall quality or value score of a site.
- Promote the environmental qualities and the sustainability of open spaces through carrying out appropriate management practices.
- Manage the Borough's parks and open spaces to help support communities to respond to the challenges of the Climate Emergency.

- Maintain and enhance the landscape character and nature conservation value of open spaces whilst ensuring provision for contemporary uses.
- Celebrate the importance of open spaces to the character and cultural heritage of the Borough and promote the significance of the Borough's parks to the tourist industry.
- Ensure all residents and visitors are able to access the riverfront promenade with appropriate infrastructure and facilities provided to allow access to the shoreline. With the potential for significant shoreline change over the Plan period (as a result of coastal processes), access to the shoreline should not override the need for other green space.
- Provide opportunities to increase community use and involvement in the management of open space (e.g. through events, education, interpretation and developing partnerships).
- Ensure effective promotion of the open space network in the Borough and the surrounding area.
- Seek to strengthen the open space network through close working with other land management organisations in the Borough.
- Ensure the importance of the Borough's open spaces to the wider green infrastructure network is fully understood, conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Recommendations on wording and structure of replacement policies

9.37 Providing strong policies for the protection, enhancement and creation of open space and play opportunities are fundamental to the delivery of high quality open space and the wider green infrastructure network.

9.38 Frontloading the planning process, that is, providing planners and developers with relevant information, and setting clear expectations early on in the planning process, is vital. Development proposals should appraise likely effects on open space and play provision and make these clear during pre-application consultation and within planning submissions

9.39 Existing open space and play provision should be clearly defined and mapped within the new Local Plan to ensure that it can be protected. A digital version of this should be maintained in GIS and included on the Council's

website as part of the policies map, so that it can be updated as new open spaces are created.

Providing clarity for developers

9.40 For all development proposals including new residential units it is recommended that an assessment is undertaken to determine whether they are within an area of open space deficiency (including quantity, quality/value and accessibility) as set out in this study. Such assessments should also determine which open spaces / play spaces are accessible when local accessibility standards are applied in order to determine the appropriate approach to ensuring high quality open space and play provision is safeguarded from impacts or provided. For site specific policies this should be made explicit.

9.41 In determining planning applications, sufficient weight should also be given to design considerations in order to ensure that open space and play space achieves the standards set out in recognised good practice guidance.

Recommendations for securing funding through development

9.42 There are two main mechanisms by which financial contributions to open space and play provision can be secured from new development through the planning process: Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Section 106 (of the Town and Country Planning Act) can be used when it can be reasonably demonstrated that a development directly affects a community or open space/play feature, therefore investment in open space/play is needed as part of the mitigation package. The Community Infrastructure Levy was introduced through the Planning Act (2008) as a levy payable by developers towards the cost of local and sub-regional infrastructure to support development. CIL funds are administered by the charging authority (usually the council) and neighbourhood groups and can be applied to strategic council-wide projects, which may not be directly related to the proposed development.

Section 106 agreements

9.43 Developer contributions under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provide a mechanism for securing funding for the Council's Green Infrastructure priorities. Section 106 agreements are a tool which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, when it would not

otherwise be acceptable. There are three legal tests which must be met, in order for a Section 106 agreement to be appropriate:

- Must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Must be directly related to the development; and,
- Must be reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Community Infrastructure Levy

9.44 The Council has the opportunity to allocate CIL funds to open space and wider green infrastructure projects in the CIL Infrastructure Funding Statement.

Appendix A

Open Space Audit Form

A.1 The open space and play audit forms show all the desk and field-based assessment questions completed for each play and open space as well as the quality and value scores for each question. The forms are provided as separate attachments. Please refer to 'APPENDIX A - Thurrock Open Space Audit Form.docx'.

Appendix B

Scoring guidance

Scoring guidance for Sections 1 – 3:

See footnote for guidance on scores of 2 and 4.

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
1. Welcoming place		
To what extent are the entrances well presented?	5	Easy to find, with a welcome/advisory sign, appropriate size, clear, clean, tidy, well maintained and inviting
	3	Obvious, open inviting and clean
	1	Apparent as an entrance, but otherwise poor presentation and maintenance
To what extent are the boundaries well defined and maintained?	5	All clearly defined and well maintained
	3	All clearly defined – maintenance 'patchy'
	1	All clearly defined – maintenance needed
Overall quality of access and accesses within open space?	5	Suitable materials, level for safe use, edges well defined, surfaces clean and debris and weed free, good disabled access throughout

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
	3	Suitable materials, level for safe use, some disabled access
	1	Road/paths in correct place, but in need of obvious repair, disabled access poor and very restricted
Overall quality of access and accesses to open space?	5	Good public transport links which are suitably located, provision for pedestrians to cross busy trafficked roads, cycle parking within or adjacent to site and disabled parking adjacent to site.
	3	May have some public transport links but these may not be suitably located. Provision for pedestrians to cross busy trafficked roads, may have cycle parking and/ or disabled parking within or adjacent to site
	1	No public transport links, provision for pedestrians to cross busy trafficked roads, cycle parking or disabled parking.
Overall quality of signage provision?	5	Information available for locals and visitors (could be on boards or leaflet form) in some detail
	3	Limited information about the park made available
	1	No information about the park made available

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
2. Health, safety and secure		
Age ranges catered for	1	Under 5s – play offer & equipment generally only offers an engaging play experience / challenge for those under 5.
	1	5-11 years – play offer includes some equipment which will likely be engaging for those up to 11 years old.
	1	Over 11 years – play offer includes some equipment which will likely be engaging for those over 11 years old.
Condition of play equipment?	5	High quality play equipment which is fit for purpose with paint work/woodwork in good physical condition, and suitable safety surface, good play appeal, attractive to existing and potential users.
	3	Generally fit for purpose but some evidence of vandalism or signs of rust on paintwork or damage to woodwork, small areas of damage to safety surface. Average play appeal which may not be attractive to all potential users.
	1	Obvious damage to equipment through vandalism or lack of maintenance, surfacing not adequate for safety and/or showing major signs

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
		of disrepair. Very limited play appeal, not very attractive to users.
Play facilities appropriately located?	3	Well located to encourage play. Located near other facilities (café, toilets, features of interest). Site has a good level of informal oversight by adults, for example views are unobstructed, site is in an area with people frequently passing by or through it or in full view of local housing.
	2	Site has some informal oversight by adults but passers-by are few, or only at certain times.
	1	Play facilities not conveniently located to encourage children to play. Site has obstructed lines of sight, few passers-by at any time.
Play facilities designed for the site / integrated into the landscape?	3	The play space is an attractive place, with a distinctive and welcoming character, and located with regard to its setting. Makes use of land forming and natural features to add play value.
	2	Some attempt has been made to integrate the play equipment and features.
	1	The play space stands out and does not look attractive. No attempt has been made to design the space to complement the settings.

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
Inclusive play – access?	3	Very good public transport links and / or obvious available disabled parking nearby. Those with physical impairments can access the play area easily and access most features / equipment. Disabled and non-disabled children and young people are able to use the space together.
	2	Access within and through the play space is reasonably good, with most areas easily accessible but not all equipment. Limited access via public transport / parking.
	1	Access to the site is poor and / or access to and around equipment is poor. Access via public transport / parking is likely to significantly limit access for some users.
Inclusive play - equipment and wider play offer?	3	Features are designed for a range of abilities and impairments including sensory and physical impairments and behaviours. Disabled and non-disabled children and young people are able to use the space together. The majority of equipment is fully inclusive.
	2	Limited offer to children and young people with physical or sensory impairments. Disabled children and young people and non-Disabled children and young people are unlikely to use the space &

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
		equipment together. Some inclusive equipment (3 or more items).
	1	Very limited offer for children and young people with sensory or physical impairments. 1 or less item of fully inclusive / accessible play equipment.
Areas to retreat and observe?	3	There are a range of different areas for children to observe activity, sit and reflect, lie down or feel 'cocooned'. (a range of seating, play 'hammock', covered seating, min 'dens', willow tunnels, log seating, quiet areas to explore etc)
	2	The site has children's seating or a quiet area that provides views to the wider play area.
	1	There are no quiet places to observe and reflect, no children's seating or areas to feel enclosed and safe.
Challenging / exciting play offer?	3	Features (including equipment, natural features and landscaping) are advanced in nature and add significantly to play value e.g. loose parts, places to hide/for reverie, good integration and use of natural environment, a range of textures, planting, use of contours, challenging, risk, cooperation needed, and attention paid to all the senses.

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
	2	Features (including equipment, natural features and landscaping) are more than basic and adds to play value, but does not do so significantly.
	1	Features (including equipment, natural features and landscaping) are at basic level only and adds little to play value.
Imaginative play offer?	3	The site is deliberately designed to provoke and engage children and young people's imagination, encourage fantasy and roleplay eg through changes in level and texture, loose parts, sculptures, natural features and imaginative signage. Features may include huts, kitchens, vehicle / animal structures, boats, castle themes etc.
	2	The site has limited design features to provoke the child's imagination, fantasy or role play (e.g. kitchens, features as vehicles, castles etc).
	1	The site has no design features to provoke the children and young people's imagination, fantasy or role play
Encouraging teenage play? Including young women and girls.	3	A combination of generous social space and facilities with an activity focus are provided. Activities may include wheeled sports facilities, ball court but also more social activities

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
		(such as an outdoor 'stage' for performance play/interaction) Spaces are located near circulation routes for teens to 'see and be seen'. Play spaces may be designed to provide space for intergenerational play for both children and adults, whilst also providing separate areas aimed primarily at younger children.
	2	Encouraging teenage play is limited to the provision of facilities for informal sports (i.e. a MUGA), but opportunities for social play and a range of other activities / active play are lacking.
	1	The site does not actively encourage, or may exclude older children, teenagers or young women and girls through a lack of appropriate facilities or spaces to socialise. Teenage facilities may be limited to caged MUGA or similar facilities.
Encourages natural play?	3	The play area provides a range of natural features (e.g. trees, bushes, plants, shrubs, wild flowers and long grass, sand, water, rocks) and a variety of levels; and a range of visual and sensory stimuli. There is opportunity to use the natural environment in play and it has been considered as part of the play offer.

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
	2	Landscaping and planting is minimal and offers limited provision for exploring the natural environment. There is a surrounding open space that provides access to the nature.
	1	Landscaping and planting either actively discourages play or no opportunities are available to engage with the natural environment within or adjacent to defined play areas.
	5	Other facilities are fit for purpose, in good physical condition, good play appeal, attractive to existing and potential users.
	3	Generally fit for purpose but some evidence of vandalism or deteriorating physical condition. Average play appeal which may not be attractive to all potential users.
	1	Obvious damage to equipment/facilities through vandalism or lack of maintenance, showing major signs of disrepair. Very limited play appeal, not very attractive to users.
	n/a	Definition guidance: ■ Wheels park – formally laid out facilities for wheels (e.g. skateboarding and roller skating).

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
		■ BMX track – formally laid out facilities for BMX/cycling only. ■ Trim trail – obstacle course.
Provision for informal recreation	3	Open space offers a broad range of opportunities to support informal recreation e.g. footpaths, seating, areas for quiet contemplation etc.
	2	Open space offers some opportunities for informal recreation
	1	Open space offers limited opportunities for informal recreation
Condition of basic amenities (all categories are listed below)		
■ Toilets	5	Provided within or adjacent to the park, easy to access, signed and well maintained. Fully accessible.
	3	Provided within or adjacent to the park, difficult to find, maintenance/condition is good/average
	1	Provided within the park or adjacent to it, but in very poor condition and generally avoided by park users, temporary toilet provision for events only

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
■ Cafe	5	Building in good condition, clean and inviting. Accessible toilets provided.
	3	Building in fair condition, clean and inviting. Toilets provided.
	1	Building in poor condition, clean and inviting. No toilets provided.
■ Bins	5	Numerous and in good condition
	3	Adequate number in good/average condition
	1	Insufficient number in poor condition
■ Seats	5	Numerous for the size of the site and in good condition
	3	Adequate number in good/average condition
	1	Insufficient seats in poor condition
■ Personal rescue equipment	5	Lifbelts easily identifiable and located in an appropriate location. Lifbelts clean and appear to be in good working order with no signs of vandalism.

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
	3	Lifebelts easily identifiable and located in an appropriate location. Lifebelts appear to be in good working order with no signs of vandalism.
	1	Lifebelts not easily identifiable or located in an appropriate location. Lifebelts appear not to be in good working order and/ or signs of vandalism.
■ Cycle parking	5	Located appropriately with good natural surveillance. Fit for purpose and in good physical condition.
	3	Located appropriately but limited surveillance, fit for purpose and in fair physical condition.
	1	Poorly located with no natural surveillance. Not fit for purpose and in poor condition.
■ Other basic amenities	5	Other facilities/provision is fit for purpose and in good physical condition.
	3	Generally fit for purpose but some evidence of vandalism or deteriorating physical condition.
	1	Obvious damage to facilities through vandalism or lack of maintenance, showing major signs of disrepair.

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
3. Clean and well maintained		
Graffiti / vandalism	5	No evidence of graffiti / vandalism
	3	Only isolated areas of graffiti / vandalism
	1	Numerous and/or large areas of graffiti / vandalism
Overall cleanliness	5	No evidence of litter, dog fouling or graffiti or vandalism
	3	Predominately free of litter
	1	Wide spread distribution of litter
Overall condition/quality of planted areas (trees, shrubs, floral areas etc)	5	Numerous planting, with appropriate mix of plants, installed and maintained to a high standard
	3	Limited range of plants, maintenance acceptable
	1	Limited planting with limited maintenance
	5	Full grass cover throughout, dense sward, good colour and cleanly cut

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
Overall condition/quality of grass areas	3	Full grass cover throughout main area but some 'thin' patches evident; some bald areas discreet; grass cut frequently but length excessive between cuts, cut quality good (no tearing)
	1	General grass cover poor, wear has led to patchy and poor cover with little or no serious attempts to correct the problem, clippings obvious and cut quality poor
Overall condition/ quality of footpaths	5	Fit for purpose, good condition with surface clean, intact and no evidence of disrepair.
	3	Generally fit for purpose, fair condition with surface clean, and largely intact and little evidence of disrepair.
	1	Obvious damage to surfacing or showing major signs of disrepair.
Quality of water and associated edge treatment	5	Water appears clear, free of any surface weed, algae or leaf litter/ debris. Effective and visually appropriate edging to water feature. Evidence of water aeration/ circulation i.e. presence of pumps (if still water presence on site)

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
	3	Water appears slightly murky with some evidence of surface weed growth or algae or silt build up. Edging to water features unattractive or showing signs of deterioration. Little evidence of water aeration (if still water present on site).
	1	Water very cloudy with significant encroachment by invasive weed growth or algal bloom or depth of water significantly affected by silt build up. No evidence of aeration or circulation, water stagnant.
Condition of buildings or built structures?	5	Fit for purpose, good condition (brickwork in good condition, roofing in sound condition, gutters clear and intact, painted surfaces clean/intact, windows clean and undamaged, no evidence of vandalism.)
	3	Generally fit for purpose but some evidence of vandalism or deteriorating physical condition (brickwork or roofing showing evidence of damage/deterioration or paintwork/woodwork deteriorating or gutters not operating fully or windows dirty/minor cracks evident).
	1	Obvious damage to buildings/structure through vandalism or lack of maintenance, showing major signs of disrepair (e.g. brickwork or roofing unsound or damaged paintwork, rotting

Audit question	Score	Condition / Functionality Scoring Criteria
		woodwork, gutters blocked, broken glass.)
Allotments: Number of plots in use (to give an estimate of how full/empty the allotment is, not the number of plots) and overall condition of allotment site	5	Over 75% of plots are operational, allotment site includes facilities for community use including green waste recycling, water points, footpaths and some raised beds. Boundaries and entrances in good condition and welcoming.
	3	Over 50% of plots are operational, allotment site contains some facilities including water points, footpaths. Boundaries and entrances in good condition and welcoming.
	1	Less than 50% of plots are operational, allotment site contains few or no facilities. Boundaries and entrances in a poor condition and unwelcoming.

Guidance for Sections 4 – 9:

Sections 4-9 mainly consider the presence or absence of features (mainly aspects relating to functionality not condition); most questions require ticking the box if a feature is present (i.e. the answer is yes) and leaving it blank if a feature is absent (i.e. the answer is no). Guidance is therefore only provided below for technical terms or for further explanation or examples where necessary.

Audit question	Guidance / definitions
4. Sustainability	
Sustainable management practices	Examples include: minimise waste including green waste, avoid/reduce chemical use, water & energy efficiency, air quality improvements, minimize water & noise pollution.
SuDS	Sustainable drainage systems - designed to manage stormwater locally, to mimic natural drainage and encourage its infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment.
Is there evidence of tree / woodland management	For example, pollarding, coppicing, management of newly planted / young trees, thinning
5. Nature conservation and heritage	
Is there an indication that natural features are being managed for nature conservation?	For example, presence of wildflower meadow, relaxed mowing regimes, tree works to regenerate ground flora, areas of undisturbed habitat etc.
Vegetation cover / type	Scored question - select the correct option (1 or 2, 3-5, over 5) based upon the types listed in the bullet points that are present on site. Unscored question - please put a tick next to each vegetation type present on site.
What threats/ disturbances/ issues are affecting the attractiveness of the site?	Lack of landscape management /maintenance – this does not include grass areas under a relaxed mowing regime (i.e. longer grass with mown paths).
6. Community involvement	
Is there evidence of an active community group?	For example, signs and/or notice boards, physical presence in the park, events, designated area managed by a group.
7. Marketing and culture: community, leisure and culture facilities	

Audit question	Guidance / definitions
n/a	
8. Potential themes for enhancement	
Please indicate which of the following benefits/ services should be prioritised for future management or enhancement	Try to base selection on evidence rather than a subjective view. Select as many options as is relevant, providing further information on your selection using the secondary drop-down boxes for each option.
9. Comments	
Please add any further information on open space	Further comments to expand on information / selections made elsewhere in the audit form and / or for information that is important about the open space but has not fit within a previous question.

Appendix C

Open spaces by typology and audit status

C.1 Table C.1 shows the number of sites audited (Y) and unable to be audited (N) for each primary typology within the four PCN. The table does not include the two sites that were removed from the final open space layer after audits. These two sites were removed as they were deemed to no longer be open spaces during auditing.

Table C.1: Primary typologies audited by PCN Area

Primary typology	Aveley, South Ockendon and Purfleet PCN			Grays PCN			Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN			Tilbury & Chadwell PCN		
	N	Y	Total	N	Y	Total	N	Y	Total	N	Y	Total
Allotments	-	5	5	-	10	10	-	6	6	-	6	6
Amenity greenspace	-	43	43	1	19	20	-	6	6	-	18	18
Cemeteries	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	10	10	-	3	3
Civic Spaces	-	3	3	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
Green corridors	-	4	4	-	2	2	-	1	1	-	-	-
Parks and Gardens	-	10	10	-	14	14	-	13	13	-	11	11
Semi / Natural greenspaces	-	18	18	-	10	10	1	9	10	1	3	4

Primary typology	Aveley, South Ockendon and Purfleet PCN			Grays PCN			Stanford le Hope & Corringham PCN			Tilbury & Chadwell PCN		
Total	-	89	89	1	62	63	1	46	47	1	41	42

Appendix D

Site quality and value ratings summary

D.1 A full list of the open and play space quality and value ratings have been summarised in a Table and organised by PCN. The tables are provided as separate attachments. Please refer to 'APPENDIX D and E - Thurrock Open Space Site Quality and Value Ratings and examples.docx'.

Appendix E

Quality and Value categories: visual examples

E.1 Examples from site audits of the four quality and value categories within Thurrock are provided for each typology and level of the hierarchy. The pictures are provided as separate attachments. Please refer to 'APPENDIX D and E - Thurrock Open Space Site Quality and Value Ratings and examples.docx'.

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