



# **Integrated Impact Assessment for Thurrock Local Plan**

## **Scoping Report**

### **Thurrock Council**

#### **Final report**

Prepared by LUC

June 2022

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1	Draft report	R Myerscough M Andrew H Ennis S Smith M Mc Ginley	J Pearson	J Pearson	27/04/2021
2	Final report for consultation	M Mc Ginley M Andrew	J Pearson	J Pearson	13/05/2022
3	Final report updated following consultation	M Andrew	J Pearson	J Pearson	27/06/2022



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Integrated Impact Assessment for Thurrock Local Plan

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**1.1** Thurrock Council (hereafter referred to as ‘the Council’) commissioned LUC in March 2022 to produce an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), comprising Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the emerging Thurrock Local Plan. For the purposes of this report, we refer to the IIA of the Thurrock Local Plan which should be taken as incorporating SA, SEA, HIA and EqIA.

**1.2** The purpose of this Scoping Report is to provide the context for, and determine the scope of, the IIA of the Thurrock Local Plan and to set out the assessment framework for undertaking the later stages of the IIA. This Scoping Report builds on the previous Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) of the Thurrock Local Plan undertaken in 2016 (Scoping stage) and 2018 (Issues and Options stage). This new Scoping Report is being issued for consultation in order to provide an updated economic, environmental and social policy context and baseline information, and to set out a refined method of approach to the IIA, drawing on the ISA work carried out to date. The refined method of approach is intended to strengthen the robustness of the IIA, and thereby the soundness of the Local Plan.

**1.3** This Scoping Report contains chapters on a number of sustainability topics, each of which starts by setting out the policy context of the Local Plan, before describing the current and likely future environmental, social and economic conditions in the plan area. This contextual information has been used to identify the key sustainability issues and opportunities that the Local Plan can address. The key sustainability issues and opportunities have been used to confirm or, if appropriate, update the IIA objectives proposed in the IIA Framework that will be used to appraise the likely significant effects of the constituent parts of the Local Plan, including strategic policies and development management policies. The criteria and assumptions proposed in the Site Assessment Framework have also been updated.

## The Plan Area

**1.4** Thurrock is located on the north bank of the Thames, twenty miles east of central London (see Figure 1.1). The Borough covers 165 sq. km and has a diverse range of land uses and associated environmental issues. More than half of the land in Thurrock is designated Green Belt and the Borough has over 18 miles of riverfront. There are a number of international, national and local biodiversity and geodiversity designations in Thurrock, including part of the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site in the southeast of the Borough. There are also large areas of the Borough at risk of flooding, particularly in the south, which could pose a constraint and/or risk to development. In addition, Thurrock contains a number of heritage assets, including nationally designated assets and locally significant assets, as well as areas of interest for archaeology, including Tilbury Fort and Coalhouse Fort. Coalhouse Fort is within Coalhouse Fort Park, which is a popular destination for recreation in the Borough.

**1.5** Much of the riverside area is highly urbanised with a mixture of industrial and residential development at the western and eastern ends of the Borough. Thurrock has a number of main settlements, including Grays, Corringham, South Ockendon, Stanford-le-Hope, Tilbury, Aveley and Socketts Heath. The more recently developed settlement of Chafford Hundred and the Lakeside Regional Shopping Centre are located west of Grays and east of the M25.

**1.6** Thurrock is a key regeneration area in the East of England, lying within the Thames Gateway, and a major growth area, due to the availability of large areas of former industrial land for redevelopment, its proximity to London and its good transport links. There is considerable investment planned in Thurrock to support this growth, and the identification and allocation of suitable sites for development will help to direct this investment to where it can achieve the most benefit for Thurrock and its residents. There are six major growth hubs in the Borough:

- London Gateway, the world's most modern port, alongside Thames Enterprise Park, the UK's largest logistics park;

- Major improvement schemes in Grays, Tilbury and Lakeside; and
- A transformation of Purfleet that will build upon the success of the internationally acclaimed cultural and creative industries centre at High House Production Park.

**1.7** National Highways is also proposing to construct a major highway through Thurrock, namely the Lower Thames Crossing.

**1.8** Current trends in relation to the various social (including health and equalities), economic and environmental issues affecting Thurrock are described in more detail in Chapters 2 to 9 of this Scoping Report.



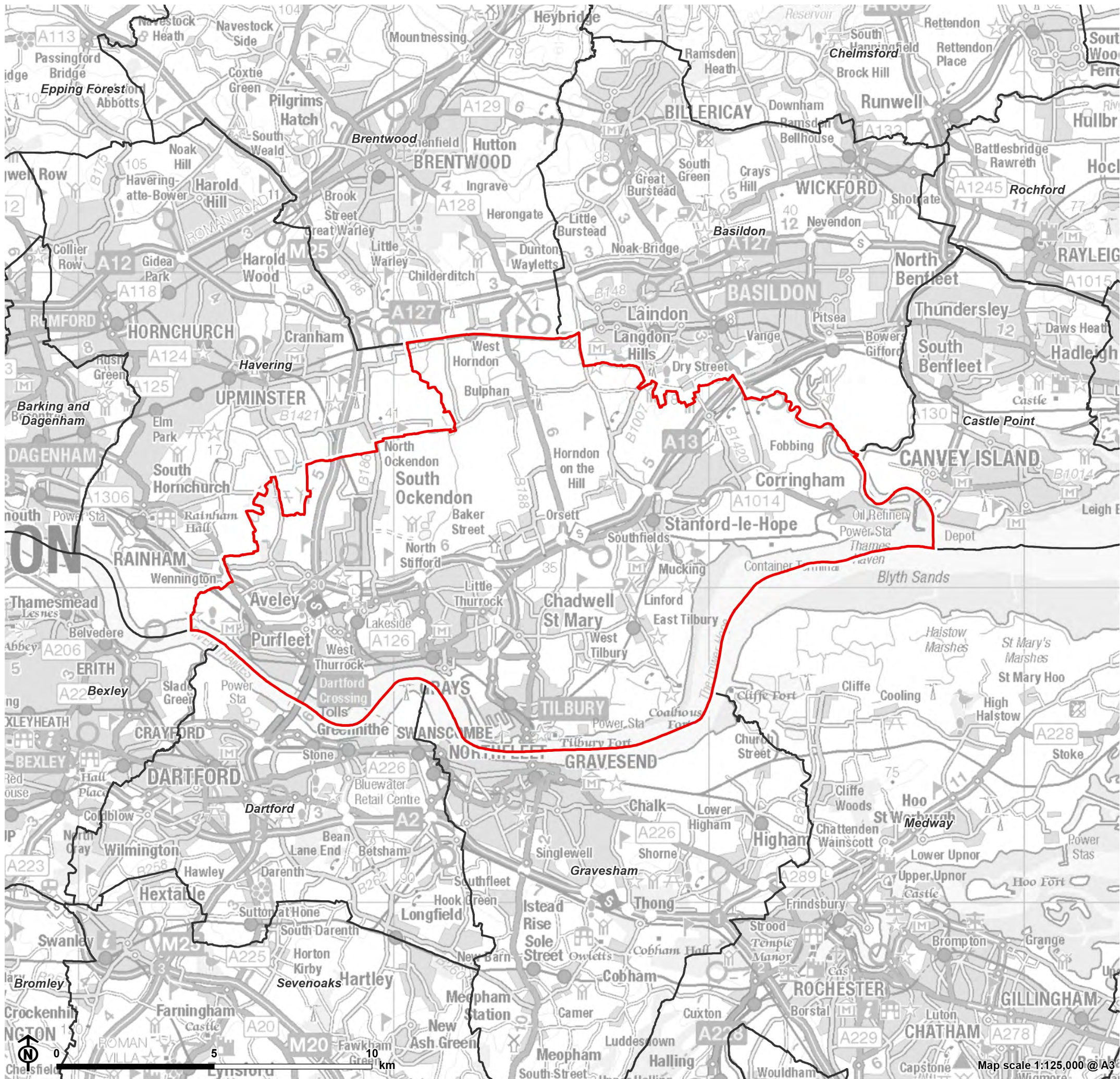


Figure 1.1: Location of Thurrock

- Thurrock Council boundary
- Neighbouring authority boundary





## Thurrock Local Plan

**1.9** The Council commenced work on its new Local Plan in February 2014 in order to respond to a number of issues including:

- The need for a more up-to-date statutory planning framework to coordinate the delivery of the Council's ambitious growth strategy for Thurrock;
- The revocation of the East of England Plan and the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake a fresh assessment of their future development needs;
- The need for the Council to identify a deliverable five-year housing land supply and bring forward more sites for development to support economic growth; and
- A need to consider the possible impacts of the route and location of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (LTC).

**1.10** The first Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) was published for consultation in February 2016 [See reference 1] while the second Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation took place from December 2018 to March 2019 [See reference 2]. Following on from this consultation, the Council piloted the Prince's Foundation Design Charette in Aveley in late 2019. In early 2020, the Council rolled out this process to other locations to work with local stakeholders to build a better understanding of the need and opportunities for growth and investment throughout the Borough. This exercise was severely delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and was formally completed in March 2022.

**1.11** The Council intends to undertake an additional two rounds of consultation under the Regulation 18 stage before proceeding to Regulation 19 consultation. The first Regulation 18 consultation is intended to commence in October 2022 and will look at the Council's preferred approach to the spatial strategy and strategic policies. The second Regulation 18 document will focus on detailed policies, spatial planning areas and individual sites – anticipated to take place in July 2023. The anticipated date for consultation on the Pre-Submission Local

Plan (Regulation 19) is July 2024 with the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State anticipated in autumn 2024.

**1.12** The Local Plan will be guided and underpinned by the following principles, as set out in the Issues and Options (Stage 2) document:

- Delivering the right infrastructure in the right place and at the right time;
- Delivering positive health and wellbeing impacts;
- Meeting Thurrock's housing needs;
- Protecting and enhancing the character of existing communities;
- Minimising carbon emissions;
- Maintaining an effective Green Belt;
- Protecting and delivering quality in the built environment;
- Meeting employment needs;
- Ensuring our town centres continue to thrive;
- Respecting the River Thames; and
- Managing waste.

**1.13** The Local Plan will set out the amount and location of new development across the Borough in the period up to 2040. It will address Borough-wide strategic issues such as the quantity and quality of new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure, as well as detailed planning issues such as allocating specific sites for new development.

## Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

**1.14** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a statutory requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 [\[See reference 3\]](#). SA is a mechanism to

promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging Local Plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives by avoiding and mitigating adverse impacts and maximising positive significant effects of the Local Plan. The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through better integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of the Local Plan.

**1.15** SA helps to identify and assess different policy and site options and helps advise on the most sustainable solutions. To be effective, an SA must be fully integrated into the plan-making process from the outset of its development. SA is an integral part of good plan-making and should not be seen as a separate activity. It is an iterative and systematic process that will be undertaken at each stage of the plan-making process.

**1.16** Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is also a statutory assessment process, required by the SEA Regulations [\[See reference 4\]](#) and amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232) [\[See reference 5\]](#). As set out in the explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments [\[See reference 6\]](#), they are necessary to ensure that the law functions correctly following the UK's exit from the EU. No substantive changes were made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime currently operates. Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Thurrock Local Plan to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

**1.17** The SEA Regulations require the formal assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment and which set the framework for future consent of projects requiring Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) [\[See reference 7\]](#). The purpose of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans.

**1.18** SEA and SA are separate processes but have similar aims and objectives. Simply put, SEA focuses on the likely environmental effects of a plan while SA includes a wider range of considerations, extending to social and economic impacts. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance [\[See reference 8\]](#) shows how it is possible to satisfy both requirements by undertaking a joint SA and SEA process, and to present an SA Report that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations. The SA and SEA of the Thurrock Local Plan is being undertaken using this integrated approach and throughout this report the abbreviation 'SA' should therefore be taken to refer to 'SA incorporating the requirements of SEA'.

**1.19** On 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 the Government published the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill [\[See reference 9\]](#), which sets out in detail the Government's proposals for reforming the planning system. Amongst other things, the Bill proposes the replacement of the current SEA regime with a new requirement for an Environmental Outcomes Report. The specific requirements will be set out in forthcoming regulations, along with information about transition arrangements; however, at present the requirement for SEA remains as set out in existing legislation. Any changes to the legal framework for carrying out SA/SEA will be addressed as appropriate as the Local Plan is prepared.

The main stages in SA are as follows:

- **Stage A:** Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.
- **Stage B:** Developing and refining options and assessing effects.
- **Stage C:** Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- **Stage D:** Consulting on the Thurrock Local Plan and the SA Report.
- **Stage E:** Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Thurrock Local Plan.

## Health Impact Assessment

**1.20** HIA is a non-statutory process that identifies the health and wellbeing impacts (both positive and negative) of a plan or development proposal. It ensures that the effect of development on both health and health inequalities is considered and responded to during the planning process. Public Health England's 2020 guidance on 'Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning' outlines that, as the SEA Regulations require consideration of 'human health' as a topic, it is possible to integrate an HIA within an SA/SEA, although it is for the local authority to judge whether a standalone HIA is needed or whether an integrated assessment is a more appropriate approach [See reference 10]. For the assessment of the Thurrock Local Plan, it is considered that an integrated assessment is proportionate to consider the social (including health), economic and environmental effects of the framework. Therefore, throughout this report, the term 'IIA' should be taken to refer to 'SA incorporating the requirements of SEA and HIA'.

**1.21** Different health effects will arise among different groups of people and individuals exposed to the same risk or hazard. This is because of differences in their exposure to the hazard, their sensitivity and their capacity to respond to events (i.e. their resilience) or to adapt in the long term. Data and priorities from relevant plans and strategies, including the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy, will be taken into account when identifying relevant environmental and socio-economic health determinants to inform the IIA Framework. The following environmental and socio-economic health determinants will form the basis for assessing potential significant effects of the Local Plan on human health:

- Housing quality and design;
- Access to healthcare services and other social infrastructure;
- Access to open space and nature;
- Air quality, noise and neighbourhood amenity;
- Accessibility and active travel;
- Crime reduction and community safety;

- Access to healthy food;
- Social cohesion and lifetime neighbourhoods;
- Minimising the use of resources; and
- Climate change and health.

**1.22** The Scoping Report will attempt to establish links between the identified environmental and socio-economic risk and their effects on public health in the context of the Local Plan, where possible. The Council will also strive through the IIA process to understand how health is affected by the proposed Local Plan so that, in assessing it, major relevant health issues are covered, maximising positive effects and preventing, offsetting or minimising negative ones, and promoting healthier planning. Health organisations will be effectively engaged in the process, with the health needs of the population being addressed in the IIA process.

**1.23** More details on the HIA process are provided in Chapter 10.

## Equality Impact Assessment

**1.24** The requirement to undertake formal Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of development plans was introduced in the Equality Act 2010 [See reference 11] but was abolished in 2012. Despite this, authorities are still required to have regard to the provisions of the Equality Act, namely the Public Sector Duty which requires public authorities to have due regard for equalities considerations when exercising their functions.

**1.25** In fulfilling this duty, many authorities still find it useful to produce a written record of equality issues having been specifically considered. Therefore, an EqIA will be carried out and presented in an appendix to the IIA Report, setting out how the Local Plan is likely to be compatible or incompatible with the duties that Thurrock Council must perform under the Equality Act 2010. The findings will be taken into account and highlighted within the IIA in relation to

sustainability objectives covering equality issues. More details on the EqIA process are provided in Chapter 10.

## Appraisal work undertaken to date

**1.26** This Scoping Report builds on the previous Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) of the Thurrock Local Plan undertaken in 2016 (Scoping stage) and 2018 (Issues and Options stage).

### Scoping

**1.27** The ISA process began with the production of a Scoping Report for the Local Plan by Thurrock Council in December 2016. The ISA Scoping Report was published for consultation between February and April 2016 with the three statutory consultees (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England) and other interested parties.

**1.28** The ISA Scoping Report was reviewed by LUC in January 2017, resulting in changes to the ISA Framework (presented in Table 6.2 of the Scoping Report) in order to reflect examples of good practice and to ensure the appraisal questions were appropriate and took into account consultation comments received on the ISA Scoping Report. Generally, the changes consisted of clarified wording and additional appraisal guide questions, rather than changes to the ISA objectives themselves. The updates to the objectives consisted primarily of merging objectives. The only deletion was of the deprivation topic, as it was considered that it was adequately addressed through other objectives that relate to specific types of deprivation. The review also resulted in changes to the Site Assessment Methodology (presented in Table 6.4 of the Scoping Report). These changes included removing the 'showstopper' criteria, as it was considered that such effects would render an option unreasonable and therefore such options need not be subject to ISA. The criteria were also amended to take account of the comments received as part of the consultation on the ISA Scoping Report, as well as taking account of



the data that was available at the time to inform the assessments and reduce subjectivity of the assessments.

## Issues and Options

### Stage 1

**1.29** In February 2016 the Council published an Issues and Options (Stage 1) Local Plan consultation document, setting out how the Local Plan would be prepared and what information would be used to inform the plan. This gave stakeholders and other interested parties a chance to comment on what they would like to see in the Local Plan, both in terms of a vision for the future of Thurrock and in relation to a number of key policy areas, including new homes, job creation and healthy and active communities. This document did not present any options per se, rather it asked open-ended and high-level questions about what consultees would like to see in the plan. As such, the document was not subject to ISA.

### Stage 2

**1.30** The ISA of the Issues and Options Stage 2 Local Plan appraised the vision, 20 strategic objectives, 10 policy principles, and the growth options for housing, employment, and retail and leisure in the Borough. The updated ISA Framework and Site Assessment Framework were set out in Table 2.2 and Appendix 4 of the ISA Issues and Options (Stage 2) Report.

**1.31** The vision and objectives were appraised as having positive sustainability implications, particularly as many of the draft objectives for the Local Plan directly address one or more ISA objectives.

**1.32** The housing growth options were expected to have a mix of both positive and negative sustainability effects. The assessments for the overall housing

quanta options, the housing growth options, and the Major Urban Extension options showed the most significant sustainability effects. In order to deliver the housing that Thurrock needs over the plan period within the Borough, the Local Plan is likely to require development of a substantial amount of greenfield land across the Borough. It was identified that this would be likely to have negative implications for many of the environmental ISA objectives, although it is possible that these could be minimised and mitigated through development management policies and site-specific allocation policies, for example by requiring good design, incorporating and enhancing blue and green infrastructure, and supporting developments that achieve net environmental gain. In addition, large-scale, new development presents opportunities for economic growth and provision of new services and facilities for residents. Similarly, better health outcomes could be designed into new development through including health and wellbeing policies in the Local Plan, the review of the Design Strategy and through implementation of the emerging Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

**1.33** There was also a mix of positive and negative effects expected with regards to employment options, although these were generally minor effects, with significant effects only being recorded against the ISA objectives relating to flood risk, landscape, townscape & visual, and economy & employment.

**1.34** The retail and leisure options looked at where retail and leisure facilities should be located in the future, with particular consideration as to how Lakeside and Grays town centre should develop. Many options considered whether a new approach to planning policy should be introduced. Generally, introducing the new approaches suggested in the Issues and Options (Stage 2) document was expected to perform better in sustainability terms than a 'business as usual' approach.

**1.35** The Development Principles section of the Issues and Options (Stage 2) document focused on seeking opinions on what aspects of Thurrock are important to respondents. Where options could be identified, inclusion of active design principles and requiring Health Impact Assessment were expected to have more positive effects than a 'business as usual' approach.

**1.36** The ISA Report identified that the implementation of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) would significantly alter the baseline against which the Local Plan policies will be appraised. While the LTC was appraised as likely to have some positive sustainability effects, a number of existing sustainability issues, notably health and well-being, could be exacerbated.

**1.37** The ISA of the Issues and Options (Stage 2) Report was published for public consultation in January 2019.

## Approach to scoping

**1.38** The main tasks associated with the scoping stage of the IIA (stage A) are as follows:

- **Stage A1:** Setting out the policy context for the IIA of the Local Plan i.e., key policies and strategies that influence what the Local Plan and the IIA need to consider.
- **Stage A2:** Setting out the baseline for the IIA of the Local Plan, i.e., the current and likely future environmental, social (including health and equalities), and economic conditions in Thurrock.
- **Stage A3:** Drawing on A1 and A2, identify the particular sustainability problems and/or opportunities ('issues') that the Local Plan and IIA should address.
- **Stage A4:** Drawing on A1, A2 and A3, develop a framework of IIA objectives and assessment criteria to appraise the constituent parts of the Local Plan in isolation and in combination.
- **Stage A5:** Consulting on the scope of the IIA.

**1.39** This Scoping Report sets out the scope for the IIA of the Local Plan for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities and other interested stakeholders. It fulfils the requirements set out above and provides the foundations for later appraisal of the likely effects of constituent parts of the Local Plan, as plan-making progresses. In accordance with the Government's

Planning Practice Guidance on SEA/SA, the Scoping Report is proportionate and relevant to the Thurrock Local Plan, focussing on what is needed to assess likely significant effects [\[See reference 12\]](#). It also takes account of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the emphasis it places on achieving sustainable development.

**1.40** This SA Scoping Report follows key legislation, policy and guidance including:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans, and programmes on the environment i.e. the SEA Directive [\[See reference 13\]](#);
- The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633) [\[See reference 14\]](#), as amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232) [\[See reference 15\]](#);
- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal National Planning Practice Guidance [\[See reference 16\]](#);
- A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive [\[See reference 17\]](#);
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment [\[See reference 18\]](#);
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal and the Historic Environment [\[See reference 19\]](#);
- Strategic Environmental Assessment: Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal for land use plans [\[See reference 20\]](#);
- Draft Guidance on Assessing Health Impacts in Strategic Environmental Assessment [\[See reference 21\]](#); and
- Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning: A guide for local authority public health and planning teams [\[See reference 22\]](#).

## Consultation with consultation bodies

**1.41** The three consultation bodies for SEA in England, namely Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency, were consulted from 17<sup>th</sup> May to 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022. Responses were received from Historic England and Natural England. A summary of their comments and LUC's responses to these are provided in Appendix A.

## Requirements of the SEA Regulations and where these are addressed in this Scoping Report

**1.42** The text in this section signposts the relevant sections of the Scoping Report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements (the reminder will be met during subsequent stages of the IIA of the Local Plan). This section will be updated and included in the full IIA Report at each stage of the IIA to show how the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met through the IIA process.

## Regulation 12 and Schedule 2

**1.43** The SEA Regulations require the responsible authority to prepare, or secure the preparation of, an 'environmental report', which in this case will comprise the IIA report. The environmental report must identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme and reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme (Regulation 12). The information required by Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations is set out below, indicating which part(s) of the IIA Scoping Report provide that information:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.
  - Covered in Chapters 2 to 9 of this Scoping Report.
- The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.
  - Covered in Chapters 2 to 9 of this Scoping Report.
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.
  - Covered in Chapters 2 to 9 of this Scoping Report.
- Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.
  - Covered in Chapters 2 to 9 of this Scoping Report.
- The environmental protection objectives established at international, community or national level that are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.
  - Covered in Chapters 2 to 9 of this Scoping Report. Chapter 10 describes the IIA Framework, which shows how the objectives have been taken into account.
- The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape, and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects).
  - This requirement will be met at a later stage in the IIA process. Chapter 10 describes the method by which significant effects will be identified.

- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.
  - This requirement will be met at a later stage in the IIA process.
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken, including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.
  - This requirement will be met at a later stage in the IIA process.
- A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Regulation 17.
  - This requirement will be met at a later stage in the IIA process.
- A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.
  - This requirement will be met at a later stage in the IIA process.

**1.44** The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process, and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Reg. 12(3)).

- This is addressed throughout the Scoping Report.

**1.45** When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report, the responsible Authority shall consult the consultation bodies (Reg. 12(5)).

- Consultation was undertaken on the IIA Scoping Report between 17<sup>th</sup> May and 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022 with the three consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England). A summary of comments received on the Scoping Report and LUC's responses to these is provided in Appendix A.

## Regulation 13

**1.46** Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public shall be given an effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Regulation 13).

- Public consultation on the Thurrock Local Plan and accompanying IIA Reports will take place as the Local Plan develops in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme (the timetable for preparing the Local Plan).

## Regulation 14

**1.47** Any relevant EU Member State must be consulted where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Regulation 14).

- The Thurrock Local Plan is not expected to have significant effects on EU Member States.

## Regulation 16

**1.48** Provision of information on the decision: When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Reg. 14 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed:

- The plan or programme as adopted;
- A statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report, the opinions expressed, and the results of consultations entered into have been taken into account, and the reasons for choosing the plan or



programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and

- The measures decided concerning monitoring.
  - To be addressed after the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted.

## Regulation 17

**1.49** Monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation.

- To be addressed after the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted.

## Quality assurance

**1.50** Environmental reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations.

- This Scoping Report has been produced in line with current guidance and good practice for SEA/SA and this section has demonstrated where the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met.

## Habitats Regulations Assessment

**1.51** The requirement to undertake HRA of land-use plans was confirmed by the amendments to The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 [See reference 23]. The currently applicable version is The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 [See reference 24] (hereafter referred to as the "Habitats Regulations"). When preparing a land-use plan, the competent authority is therefore required by law to carry out an HRA. The competent authority can commission consultants to

undertake HRA work on its behalf which is then reported to and considered by the competent authority.

**1.52** HRA refers to the assessment of the likely significant effects of a land-use plan on 'European sites' of nature conservation importance. European sites comprise Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), potential SPAs (pSPAs), candidate SACs (cSACs), Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) and Ramsar sites although these are designated at an international level.

**1.53** The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site. The competent authority will consider the HRA and may only progress the land-use plan if it considers that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site or have a significant effect on qualifying habitats or species for which the European sites are designated, or if Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) are identified.

**1.54** The HRA will be undertaken separately but the findings, once available, will be taken into account in the IIA where relevant, for example to inform judgements about the likely effects of potential development locations on biodiversity.

## Structure of the Scoping Report

**1.55** This chapter describes the background to the production of the Thurrock Local Plan and the requirement to undertake SA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this Scoping Report is structured around a set of subject areas designed to examine the full range of possible sustainability effects of the Local Plan, including all the SEA topics listed in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations.

**1.56** Each chapter sets out the policy context and baseline for one of these subject areas. The subject area chapters are as follows:

- Chapter 2: Population, health and wellbeing
- Chapter 3: Economy
- Chapter 4: Transport connections and travel habits
- Chapter 5: Air, land and water quality
- Chapter 6: Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Chapter 7: Biodiversity
- Chapter 8: Historic environment
- Chapter 9: Landscape

**1.57** SEA Guidance recognises that data gaps will exist but suggests that where baseline information is unavailable or unsatisfactory, Authorities should consider how it will affect their assessments and determine how to improve it for use in the assessment of future plans. Where there are data gaps in the baseline and forthcoming reports, these are highlighted in the text. The collection and analysis of baseline data is regarded as a continual and evolving process, given that information can change or be updated on a regular basis.

**1.58** Relevant baseline information will be updated during the IIA process as and when data is published.

**1.59** The end of each chapter identifies the key sustainability issues for Thurrock relating to that subject area, informed by the preceding policy context and baseline, and sets out their likely evolution without the Local Plan. Chapter 10 sets out the IIA Framework against which the effects of the Local Plan will be assessed and explains how this has been developed. Chapter 11 outlines the next steps in the IIA process. It is acknowledged that many of the sustainability topics, and therefore IIA objectives, overlap and interact. For example, as demonstrated in Chapter 10, health is a cross-cutting topic that is influenced, not just by access to GPs and physical exercise, but by job security, air pollution, noise levels, community interaction and more. Similarly, biodiversity is affected by climate change, air pollution and environmental pollution. In order to minimise repetition, enable assessment and highlight specific effects, the policy

review, baseline and IIA Framework is organised by topic, with the information most relevant to that topic included.

**1.60** Appendix A provides a summary of the consultation comments received and responses to these.

**1.61** Appendix B presents the draft Site Assessment Framework for carrying out the IIA of site options.

## Chapter 2

# Population, health and wellbeing

## Policy context

### International

**2.1 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (2015) [\[See reference 25\]](#): This initiative, adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Relevant to this topic are:

- SDG 1: No Poverty
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

**2.2 United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development** (the ‘**Johannesburg Declaration**’) (2002) [\[See reference 26\]](#): Sets broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

**2.3** United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the '**Aarhus Convention**') (1998) **[See reference 27]**: Establishes a number of rights of the public (individuals and their associations) with regard to the environment. The Parties to the Convention are required to make the necessary provisions so that public authorities (at national, regional, or local level) will contribute to these rights to become effective.

## National

**2.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) [See reference 28]** includes, as part of its social objective, the promotion of “strong, vibrant and healthy communities” by:

- “ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and
- by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural wellbeing.”

**2.5** Ultimately planning policies and planning decision making should “aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places”.

**2.6** The document states that strategic policies should set out the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for “housing (including affordable housing)... [as well as] community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure)”. Policies should reflect “the size, type and tenure of housing needed”. This policy approach is to include but should not be limited to housing requirements relating to affordable homes, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, those who rent their homes and people wishing to commission the construction of their own homes. Major developments that involve the provision of new housing planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of

the total number of homes to be delivered for affordable home ownership subject to conditions and exemptions.

**2.7** To help to diversify opportunities for builders, promote a better mix of site sizes and increase the number of schemes that can be built-out quickly to meet housing need, the NPPF states that at least 10% of the sites allocated for housing through a local authority's plan should be half a hectare or smaller.

**2.8** Where there is an identified need, development of sites not already allocated for housing to provide entry-level homes suitable for first-time buyers is to be supported by local planning authorities unless such need is already to be met at other locations within the authority area. These sites should comprise of entry-level homes that offer one or more types of affordable housing.

**2.9** The document also promotes a theme of enhancing healthy and safe communities which is to be achieved by creating places which “promote social interaction (and) enable and support healthy lifestyles”.

**2.10** As part of this approach social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs should be provided guided by planning policies which:

- “plan positively provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services;
- support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all sections of the community;
- help prevent unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.”

**2.11** Plan making through the guidance of the NPPF recognises the important role of access to open spaces and other facilities which provide opportunities for sport and physical activity has in terms of health and wellbeing of communities. The importance of delivering a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities is also recognised in the document and

local planning authorities should take a “proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement”.

**2.12** The NPPF also sets out that the standard method provided in national planning guidance should be used to undertake a local housing need assessment identifying the minimum number of homes needed. The **Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book** (2018) [\[See reference 29\]](#) provides this standard method allowing for calculation of objectively assessed housing need using government household forecasts adjusted for local house prices and local earnings. Unmet need from neighbouring areas will also need to be taken into account as part of the calculation.

**2.13** The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Housing needs of different groups** (2021) [\[See reference 30\]](#) – Provides advice on planning for affordable, private rented, self-build, student and rural housing needs.
- **Healthy and safe communities** (2019) [\[See reference 31\]](#) – Provides guidance on achieving healthy, safe and inclusive communities, estate regeneration and school place provision.
- **Housing supply and delivery** (2019) [\[See reference 32\]](#) – Sets out guidance on five-year land supply and Housing Delivery Test.
- **Housing for older and disabled people** (2019) [\[See reference 33\]](#) – Provides guidance on preparing planning policies for accessible and adaptable housing and inclusive design.
- **Noise** (2019) [\[See reference 34\]](#) – Advises on how planning can manage potential noise impacts in new development.
- **Light pollution** (2019) [\[See reference 35\]](#) – Advises on how to consider artificial light within the planning system.
- **Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space** (2014) [\[See reference 36\]](#) – Provides key advice on open space, sports, recreation, public rights of way, National Trails and Local Green Space designation.



**2.14 The Equality Act 2010** [See reference 37] requires public authorities to work to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in all their activities.

Under Section 149 of the Equality Act a public authority has a duty to ensure that all decisions are made in such a way as to minimise unfairness, and do not have disproportionately negative impacts on people because of their protected characteristics or background. It protects everyone against unfair treatment, on the basis of protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

**2.15 The White Paper Levelling Up the United Kingdom (2022)** [See reference 38] sets out how the UK Government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It comprises 12 UK-wide missions to achieve by 2030. Missions which relate to population, health and wellbeing state that by 2030:

- The gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years;
- Well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing;
- Homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas;
- Pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing;
- The number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third; and
- Renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the Government's ambition is for the

number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

**2.16 National Design Guide (2021) [See reference 39]:** sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

**2.17 Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care (2021) [See reference 40]** sets out the government's new plan for health and social care. It provides an overview of how this plan will tackle the elective backlog in the NHS and put the NHS on a sustainable footing. It sets out details of the plan for adult social care in England, including a cap on social care costs and how financial assistance will work for those without substantial assets. It covers wider support that the government will provide for the social care system, and how the government will improve the integration of health and social care. It explains the government's plan to introduce a new Health and Social Care Levy.

**2.18 COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan (2021) [See reference 41]** sets out the Government's plan to prevent, mitigate and respond to the mental health impacts of the pandemic during 2021 and 2022. Its main objectives are to support the general population to take action and look after their own mental wellbeing; to take action to address factors which play a crucial role in shaping mental health and wellbeing outcomes; and, to support services to meet the need for specialist support.

**2.19 Planning for the Future White Paper (2020) [See reference 42]:** Sets out a series of potential reforms to the English planning system, to deliver growth faster. The White Paper focuses on the following:

- Simplifying the role of Local Plans and the process of producing them;
- Digitising plan-making and development management processes;
- Focus on design, sustainability and infrastructure delivery; and

- Nationally determined, binding housing requirements for local planning authorities to deliver through Local Plans.

**2.20 The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper** (2020) [\[See reference 43\]](#) sets out the Government's actions to ensure residents in social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to redress when things go wrong.

**2.21 Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments** (2020) [\[See reference 44\]](#), **Addendum** (2021) [\[See reference 45\]](#) provides a framework and starting point for local authorities to clearly set out in local planning guidance how best to achieve healthy weight environments based on local evidence and needs, by focusing on environments that enable healthier eating and help promote more physical activity as the default. The Addendum provides updates on the implications for planning for a healthier food environment, specifically on the hot food takeaways retail uses, and sets out recommended actions in light of changes to the Use Class Order (UCO) in England from 1 September 2020.

**2.22 Public Health England, PHE Strategy 2020-25** (2019) [\[See reference 46\]](#): identifies PHE's priorities upon which to focus over this five-year period to protect people and help people to live longer in good health.

**2.23 A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment** [\[See reference 47\]](#): Sets out goals for improving the environment within the next 25 years. It details how the Government will work with communities and businesses to leave the environment in a better state than it is presently. Identifies six key areas around which action will be focused. Those of relevance to the topics of population growth, health and wellbeing are 'using and managing land sustainably' and 'connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing'. Actions that will be taken as part of these two key areas are as follows:

- Using and managing land sustainably:

- a) Embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing:
  - b) Help people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces including through mental health services.
  - c) Encourage children to be close to nature, in and out of school, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas.
  - d) 'Green' our towns and cities by creating green infrastructure and planting one million urban trees.

**2.24 Homes England Strategic Plan 2018 to 2023 [See reference 48]:** Sets out a vision to ensure more homes are built in areas of greatest need, to improve affordability, and make a more resilient and diverse housing market.

**2.25 The Environmental Noise Regulations [See reference 49]** apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

**2.26 The Housing White Paper 2017 (Fixing our broken housing market) [See reference 50]** sets out ways to address the shortfall in affordable homes and boost housing supply. The White Paper focuses on the following:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places – Higher densities in appropriate areas, protecting the Green Belt while making more land available for housing by maximising the contribution from brownfield and surplus public land, regenerating estates, releasing more small and

medium-sized sites, allowing rural communities to grow and making it easier to build new settlements.

- Building homes faster – Improved speed of planning cases, ensuring infrastructure is provided and supporting developers to build out more quickly.
- Diversifying the Market – Backing small and medium-sized house builders, custom-build, institutional investors, new contractors, housing associations.
- Helping people now – Supporting home ownership and providing affordable housing for all types of people, including the most vulnerable.

**2.27 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites [See reference 51]:** sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites, replacing the older version published in March 2012. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

**2.28 Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report Ready for Ageing? [See reference 52]:** warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report states "longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises". The report highlights the under provision of specialist housing for older people and the need to plan for the housing needs of the older population as well as younger people.

**2.29 Fair Society, Healthy Lives [See reference 53]:** investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is "overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities".

**2.30 Marmot Review 10 Years On** [See reference 54] revisits Fair Society, Healthy Lives. It found that, since 2010, life expectancy in England has stalled, which suggests society has stopped improving. In addition, there are marked regional differences in life expectancy – the more deprived the area, the shorter the life expectancy. Mortality rates are increasing in those aged 45-49, child poverty has increased and there is a housing crisis and rise in homelessness.

**2.31 Laying the foundations: A housing strategy for England** [See reference 55]: Aims to provide support to deliver new homes and improve social mobility.

**2.32 Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England** [See reference 56]: Sets out how the Government's approach to public health challenges will:

- Protect the population from health threats – led by central Government, with a strong system to the frontline;
- Empower local leadership and encourage wide responsibility across society to improve everyone's health and wellbeing and tackle the wider factors that influence it;
- Focus on key outcomes, doing what works to deliver them, with transparency of outcomes to enable accountability through a proposed new public health outcomes framework;
- Reflect the Government's core values of freedom, fairness and responsibility by strengthening self-esteem, confidence and personal responsibility; positively promoting healthy behaviours and lifestyles; and adapting the environment to make healthy choices easier; and
- Balance the freedoms of individuals and organisations with the need to avoid harm to others, use a 'ladder' of interventions to determine the least intrusive approach necessary to achieve the desired effect and aim to make voluntary approaches work before resorting to regulation.

## Regional and local

**2.33 Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy [See reference 57]:** The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy aims to reduce the number of private vehicles using the highway network and increase the use of more active and sustainable modes available to businesses, residents and schools within Essex. A key objective is to manage congestion during peak times and improve the environment by reducing the need to travel by car and potentially reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and other emissions.

**2.34 Transport East Active Travel Strategy [See reference 58]:** The vision for the region is that half of all journeys within towns and cities (up to three miles from the urban centre) will be made by walking and cycling. By 2050, half of all trips in the Transport East region will be made by walking or cycling. In Thurrock, a “Go Dutch” scenario (which applies Dutch rates for cycle commuting in England adjusting for distance and hilliness) would result in almost a twelve-fold increase of the population who could commute to work by cycle, to 24.9%.

**2.35 Transport East Draft Transport Strategy [See reference 59]:** The Draft Transport Strategy aims to outline a collective vision for the future of transport in the region and set out key investment priorities needed to deliver it. The overarching vision is underpinned by four strategic priorities: decarbonisation to net-zero, connecting growing towns and cities, energising coastal and rural communities, and unlocking international gateways. The four strategic priorities overlap and together form an integrated strategy for the region. The Draft Transport Strategy sets out the pathways and key goals needed for the delivery of their Vision, which include goals focused around improving sustainable and active travel options, reducing demand for travel via digital connectivity, encouraging behaviour change, increasing access for coastal and rural communities, improving efficiency of freight transport, and creating better connected ports and airports to unlock international gateways.

**2.36** Section 5 of the Draft Transport Strategy highlights place-based strategic corridors which link key destinations with the region. For Thurrock, this includes



improved links with South Essex, London, Basildon and Southend. The Strategy identifies the area as a major location for economic growth, particularly in relation to the major international ports at London Gateway, Purfleet and Tilbury (now Thames Freeport). At present, the area is heavily congested which acts as a major barrier to growth. The Strategy identifies the need for improved road, freight capacity, passenger rail and bus networks to support economic and population growth in the region.

**2.37 South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy: Resilient by Nature [See reference 60]:** This strategy sets out a vision for and integrated green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network across South Essex and sets out key objectives and projects to achieve this. This includes improving connectivity within and across the landscape through active travel links such as walking and cycling.

**2.38 Green Essex Strategy [See reference 61]:** This Strategy seeks to enhance, protect and create an inclusive and integrated network of high-quality green infrastructure in Greater Essex, to create a county-wide understanding of green infrastructure – its functions and values, and to identify opportunities for implementing green infrastructure. The Strategy promotes the use of the green infrastructure network for sustainable and active modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

**2.39 Thurrock Active Place Strategy [See reference 62]:** An Active Place strategy has been developed by Thurrock Council to inform the development of the Thurrock Local Plan. The strategy outlines three studies that present a planning related evidence base relating to the Borough's open spaces, indoor sports facilities and playing pitches. It also outlines an Active Travel Strategy for Thurrock which reviews the existing cycle network in the Borough. The strategy presents a number of detailed key objectives and recommendations for open spaces, indoor facilities, playing pitches, as well seven geographical priority areas where physical improvements to active travel routes should be made. Recommendations to address mental barriers to active travel in the Borough are also included in the strategy.



### **2.40 Draft Thurrock Transport Strategy** (internal draft, currently unpublished):

The Interim Draft Transport Strategy builds on the existing Transport Strategy (2013 – 2026), taking into account much of the rapid change Thurrock is undergoing, including major regeneration projects and proposed development which will fundamentally alter the way people and goods move around Thurrock and the wider region over the next 20 years. Key projects include Grays Town Centre regeneration, the port expansion of Tilbury and London Gateway, proposed development of a logistics ‘superhub’ at Thames Enterprise Park, the Thames Freeport, Purfleet regeneration, and the proposed construction of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC). The Draft Transport Strategy outlines key challenges and opportunities for Thurrock which include supporting sustainable economic growth, supporting the health and wellbeing of Thurrock’s residents and addressing the Climate Emergency. These factors inform the Transport Vision Statement (‘Connecting Thurrock’), as well as 10 interconnected overarching goals and nine strategic focus areas specified in the Draft Transport Strategy. The Draft Transport Strategy will be supported by a series of shorter-term delivery documents, setting out more specific actions that aim to achieve the overarching vision and goals.

**2.41 Thurrock Transport Strategy 2013-2026** [\[See reference 63\]](#): The strategy sets out the aims, objectives and policies for delivering transport improvements in Thurrock, including (but not limited to) to respond to large scale growth at Lakeside, Tilbury Port and London Gateway. The strategy focusses on the need to address the following key areas: Delivering Accessibility, Tackling Congestion, Improving Air Quality and Addressing Climate Change, Safer Roads and Facilitating Regeneration. This strategy also sets out the long-term approach to walking and cycling in the Borough.

**2.42 Thurrock Council Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25** [\[See reference 64\]](#): The strategy demonstrates Thurrock Council’s response to key changes to homelessness legislation, such as the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and sets out the strategic direction and key priorities from 2020-2025.

**2.43 2020/2021 Air Quality Annual Status Report** [\[See reference 65\]](#): The 2020/21 Thurrock Air Quality Annual Status Report provides the most recent

overview of air quality within Thurrock, as well as identifying actions that have been undertaken to improve it and the Council's future priorities. The report highlights that the main pollutant of concern in Thurrock is nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and to a lesser extent particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), both arising from road traffic emissions. NO<sub>2</sub> was monitored at 67 diffusion tube sites and three automatic monitoring sites across the Borough in 2020. The report notes the limitations of using 2020 data due to the travel restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and provides 2019 figures for reference. The Council plans to conduct a detailed and up to date assessment of all declared AQMAs across the Borough.

**2.44 Thurrock Air Quality and Health Strategy [See reference 66]:** The overarching aim of the strategy is to improve air quality in the Borough in order to reduce the health impacts of air pollution. The report outlines the baseline conditions for both air quality and health in the Borough, and highlights the correlation between the two. It highlights the dangers of certain pollutants and the need to act faster to reduce levels of harmful emissions due to impacts on public health. The report presents a strategy which includes to reduce transport emissions; tackle health inequalities; explore options for the implementation of clean air zones; and ensure air quality policies will be incorporated into future development, regeneration and planning guidance. The strategy also outlines the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for all AQMAs, as well as Borough-wide interventions. The implementation of the strategy will be monitored and progress on air quality assessed.

**2.45 Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy [See reference 67]:** The Strategy principles include reducing inequality in health and wellbeing; prevention is better than cure; and empowering people and communities. An update to the Strategy is currently in preparation for the period 2022-2026.

**2.46** As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, Thurrock Council is currently preparing/updating the following documents/strategies which will be taken into account in the next iteration of the IIA:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Transport Strategy

- Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- Strategic Growth Location Infrastructure Needs Assessment
- Housing Urban Capacity Study
- Housing Delivery Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Economic Development Needs Assessment Update
- Employment Land Availability Assessment

## Implications of the policy review for the Local Plan and IIA

In order to align with the international, national, regional and local policies outlined above, the Local Plan should seek to provide open space and green infrastructure of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of the Plan area; to encourage healthy and active lifestyles; to create fair, safe and inclusive communities; reduce inequality in health and wellbeing; and to improve the sustainable transport network within the Plan area. The Local Plan should seek to ensure the provision of goods, services, facilities, public functions, the disposal and management of premises, education and associations, meet the Equality Act 2010 requirements. The Local Plan should seek to create and maintain safe and attractive public spaces that encourage people to walk and cycle, promote a sense of place and reduce the need to travel. The Local Plan should seek to provide opportunities for education, skills and employment that will help all to succeed in life and advance equality of opportunity. The IIA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of IIA objectives relating to health and wellbeing, social inclusion, and sustainable transport.

## Baseline information

### Population

#### Current baseline information

**2.47** Thurrock lies within the East of England comprising of 165 sq. km. Thurrock is located on the north side of the River Thames, immediately to the east of London.

**2.48** The population of Thurrock in the 2011 Census was 158,300 [\[See reference 68\]](#) (note the results of the 2021 Census have not been published at the time of writing). The population of Thurrock was estimated to be 175,531 in mid-2020 [\[See reference 69\]](#). There are 67,200 households in Thurrock [\[See reference 70\]](#).

**2.49** The Borough has a number of main settlements, including Grays, Stanford-le-Hope, Corringham, South Ockendon and Tilbury. Thurrock also contains the relatively new community of Chafford Hundred and also the Lakeside Regional Shopping Centre, located west of Grays and east of the M25. With the exception of principal urban area of Thurrock, and the towns and villages, all of the land within the Borough is designated as Green Belt [\[See reference 71\]](#).

**2.50** Much of the population of Thurrock lives within and around Purfleet, Chafford Hundred, Aveley, Ockendon and Grays. These are mainly the settlements that are within closest proximity to London on the western edge of the Borough. Table 2.1 presents the most recent estimates of population by ward in Thurrock [\[See reference 72\]](#).

**Table 2.1: Estimated populations by ward in Thurrock**

Ward	Estimated Population (as of 2018)
Aveley and Uplands	10,082
Belhus	10,546
Chadwell St Mary	10,265
Chafford and North Stifford	8,338
Corringham and Fobbing	5,407
East Tilbury	6,724
Grays Riverside	13,277
Grays Thurrock	9,657
Little Thurrock Blackshots	6,260
Little Thurrock Rectory	6,067
Ockendon	11,248
Orsett	6,171
South Chafford	7,965
Stanford East and Corringham Town	8,493
Stanford-le-Hope West	6,850
Stifford Clays	6,776
The Homesteads	8,344
Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park	7,696
Tilbury St Chads	6,330
West Thurrock and South Stifford	13,277

**2.51** Thurrock has a higher proportion of people under the age of 65 (86.2%) compared to the national average (81.7%), however, has less people over the

age of 65 at 13.8% compared to the national average of 18.4% [\[See reference 73\]](#).

**2.52** White British is the most common ethnicity in Thurrock while 14.1% of people in Thurrock are black or from a minority ethnic background [\[See reference 74\]](#).

## Projected baseline information

**2.53** By 2043, it is estimated that the population of Thurrock will increase to 205,469, which equates to an approximately 17.0% increase from the 2020-estimate [\[See reference 75\]](#). The older population (over 65), is projected to grow significantly by 2031, moving more in line with the national average, placing additional pressures on housing and social care services.

## Housing

### Current baseline information

**2.54** The 2021 property price to earnings ratio for Thurrock is 10.20 which is higher than the average for England where full-time workers could expect to pay an estimated 8.77 times their annual workplace-based earnings on purchasing a home [\[See reference 76\]](#). The average price for a property in Thurrock in December 2021 was £314,813 which is a result of a fluctuating upward trend over the past 10 years. In 2011, the average property price was £162,713. In comparison to the regional average, the average property price in East of England in 2011 was £190,705 and in 2021 it increased to £339,502. Properties in Thurrock are therefore lower than the regional average price [\[See reference 77\]](#).

**2.55** Affordability of housing within Thurrock is an issue. Analysis of household income data indicates that 59.8% of Thurrock households have a gross income

of £40,000 or less. Further analysis of property purchase affordability indicates that a household income of £35,000-£40,000 is required for a first-time buyer to purchase a flat or maisonette in Thurrock. This means that approximately 52.9% of Thurrock households would not meet the affordability requirements to purchase the smallest types of property available on the housing market. For terraced houses, semi-detached houses and detached houses, the percentage of first-time buyers in Thurrock that would not be able to afford to purchase these types of properties are 76.6%, 84.2% and 92.4% respectively [\[See reference 78\]](#). Thurrock has nearly double the regional and national averages renting from the Council with a small minority renting from Registered Providers. Overcrowding is a problem in Thurrock, above the regional and national average for occupancy ratings, and indicates the need for larger homes to accommodate a growing population together with affordable accommodation for young people [\[See reference 79\]](#).

**2.56** The average weekly cost to rent in Thurrock has also increased over the past five years. In terms of rental income, Thurrock sits above the East of England median private rental costs for all housing categories (room, studio, one-, two-, three-, four- and more bedroom flats/houses). For example, the median monthly rent for a one bedroom flat in Thurrock was £756, which is slightly higher than the national average [\[See reference 80\]](#).

**2.57** Within the East of England as a whole, 7,050 households were assessed as homeless during July to September 2021. During the same period, 199 households in Thurrock were assessed as homeless which is above the East of England average [\[See reference 81\]](#).

**2.58** There were 493 net additional dwellings completed between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. 76.9% of the 493 dwelling completions that took place were on previously developed/brownfield land. 105 affordable houses were completed during 2020/21, 21% of the total number of completions. 100% affordable housing was provided at two Thurrock Council-built schemes – a total of 83 new dwellings. Housing provision in Thurrock has seen significant fluctuations between 2011 and 2021. Housing completions have dropped since an increase in annual completions between 2015 and 2018 [\[See reference 82\]](#).

## Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

**2.59** Table 2.2 shows the number of current Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches within Thurrock [See reference 83]. Currently there are 133 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 200 plots for Travelling Showpeople in Thurrock.

**Table 2.2: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches in Thurrock**

	Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	Travelling Showpeople Plot
Local Authority Pitches	64	79
Private Pitches	25	121
Temporary Permission	1	0
Tolerated	20	0
Unauthorised	23	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>200</b>

## Projected baseline information

**2.60** Thurrock needs to accommodate a substantial number of additional new homes over the period to 2040 in order to provide a 15-year supply to meet Government requirements (to be confirmed at time of writing).

**2.61** The Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment [See reference 84] identified that for the period 2013-2033 there is a requirement for 104 additional pitches in Thurrock to meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller households. In relation to Travelling Showpeople, an additional need of 165 pitches is identified between 2013-2033.



Table 2.3 sets out the identified need for additional pitches and plots for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households in Thurrock.

**Table 2.3: Additional need for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople households**

Years	2016-21	2021-26	2026-31	2031-36	Total
Gypsy and Traveller Households	49	17	18	20	104
Travelling Showpeople Households	131	11	11	12	165

## Health

### Current baseline information

**2.62** Health is a cross-cutting topic and as such many topic areas explored in this Scoping Report influence health either directly or indirectly.

**2.63** ‘Health’ in Thurrock is in the bottom 20% for England [\[See reference 85\]](#). Thurrock has an overall Health Index score of 97.2, which is down 0.2 points compared with the previous year. The area is ranked 250<sup>th</sup> most healthy out of 307 local authority areas in England.

**2.64** Thurrock performs worse than the East of England and national averages for the three main health domains: ‘healthy people’ [\[See reference 86\]](#), ‘healthy lives’ [\[See reference 87\]](#), and ‘healthy places’ [\[See reference 88\]](#). Health in Thurrock is strongest among measures relating to the ‘mental health’ subdomain (social, emotional and mental health, mental health conditions, self-harm and suicides). Thurrock remains in the bottom 40% for the ‘children and young people’ subdomain.

## Life expectancy

**2.65** Life expectancy at birth in 2019 in Thurrock was 79.2 years for males and 82.5 years for females, which is 'significantly worse' than the national average of 79.7 years and 83.2 years respectively [\[See reference 89\]](#). Life expectancy at birth in Thurrock was 8.7 years lower for men and 6.4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Thurrock when compared to the least deprived areas [\[See reference 90\]](#). This is lower than average for England where the gap in life expectancy at birth between the least and most deprived areas was recorded as 9.4 years for males and 7.7 years for females [\[See reference 91\]](#). The ratio of deaths from cancer, circulatory disease, coronary heart disease and respiratory disease are all 'significantly worse' than the England averages [\[See reference 92\]](#).

## Obesity

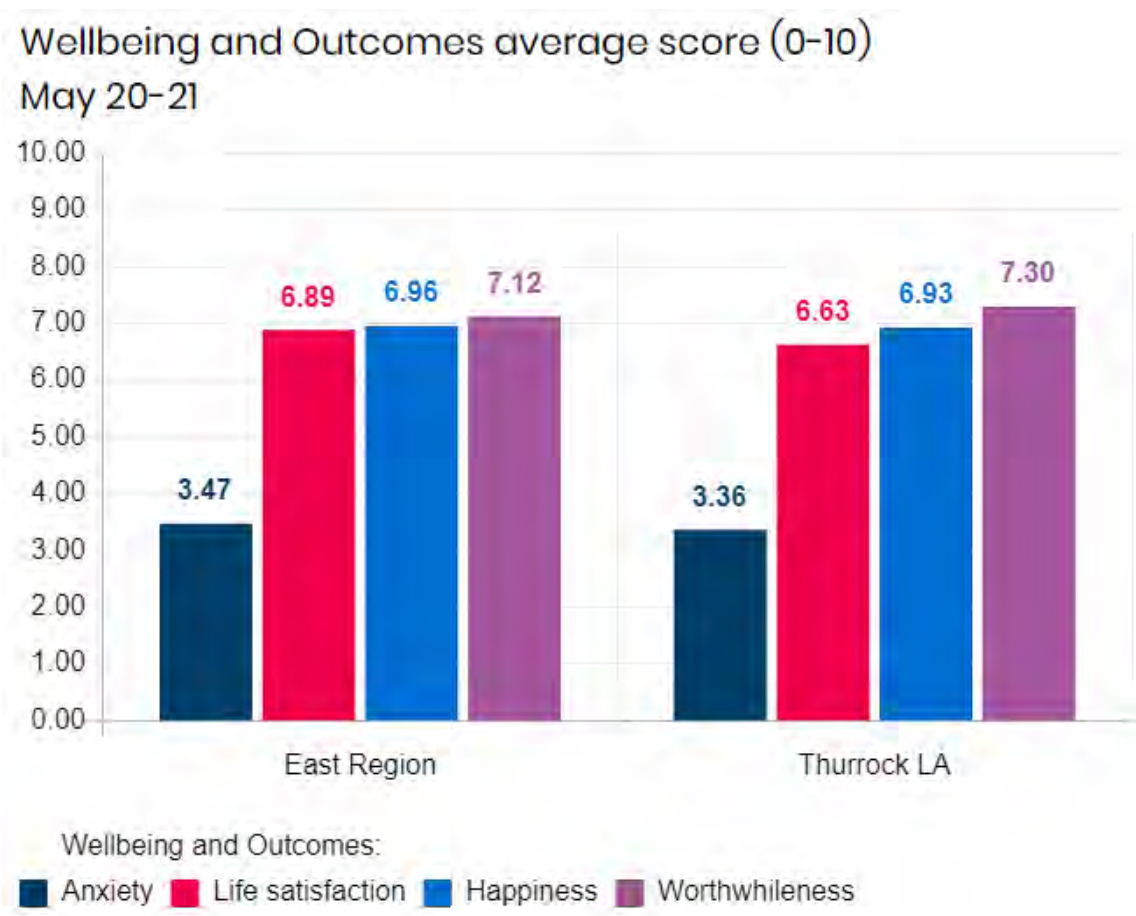
**2.66** Being overweight or obese carries numerous health risks, including increased likelihood of type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart and liver disease, stroke and related mental health conditions. It is estimated this health issue places a cost of at least £5.1 billion on the NHS and tens of billions on the wider UK society every year. In Thurrock, 69.4% of adults are classified as overweight or obese which is higher than the regional percentage of 62.3% and the national percentage of 62.8%. Prevalence of overweight including obesity in Year 6 children is higher in Thurrock at 38.9% than the national average of 34.6% [\[See reference 93\]](#).

**2.67** The number of hospital admissions with the primary diagnosis of obesity within Thurrock is 20 per 100,000 in 2018/19. This figure is slightly higher than the regional figure of 15 and equal to the national figure of 20 persons per 100,000 [\[See reference 94\]](#).

Perception of wellbeing

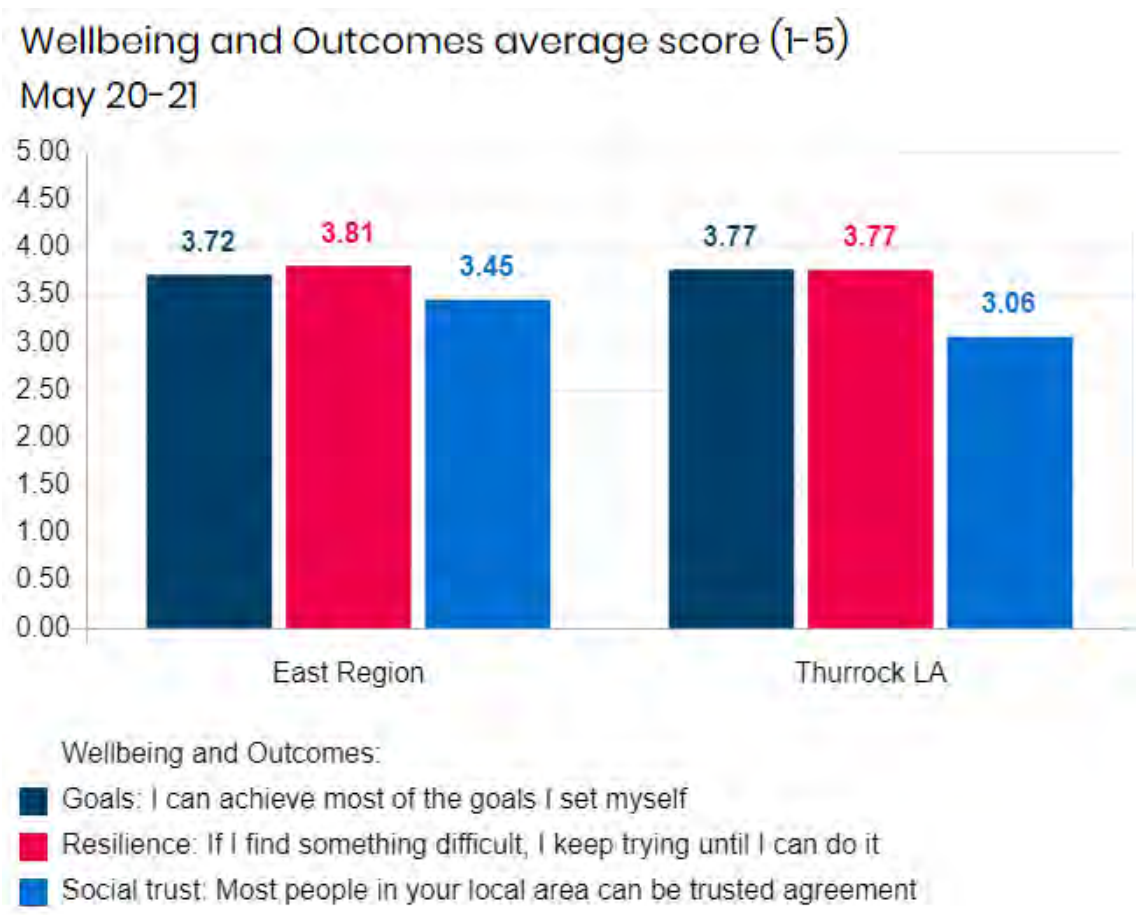
**2.68** Residents of Thurrock reported having slightly lower levels of life satisfaction (6.63 out of 10.00) and happiness (6.93) compared to the East of England averages for 2020/21. Thurrock recorded a higher average of people experiencing worthwhileness (7.30) compared to the East of England average (7.12). Average levels of anxiety recorded for the Borough at 3.36 were lower than the regional average of 3.47 (see Figure 2.1) [See reference 95] and [See reference 96].

**Figure 2.1: Wellbeing average scores for anixety, life satisfaction, happiness and worthwhileness for Thurrock and East of England**



**2.69** In terms of wellbeing outcomes, the population of Thurrock is slightly more goal oriented than the East of England average but are less resilient and have less social trust (see Figure 2.2) [\[See reference 97\]](#).

**Figure 2.2: Wellbeing outcomes for achieving goals, resilience and social trust in Thurrock and East of England**



**2.70** Nationally, the proportion of people reporting that they have a long-term mental health condition is on the rise. The number of people entering NHS funded treatment for mental health problems in Q2 2021/2022 in Thurrock was 1,315 which is a 29.6% increase since the previous year [\[See reference 98\]](#).

## Social isolation/loneliness

**2.71** The Office of National Statistics mapped loneliness rates by local authorities between October 2020 to February 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Areas with higher concentrations of younger people and higher rates of unemployment tended to have higher rates of loneliness during the study period. Local authorities in more rural areas had a lower loneliness rate than urban, industrial, or other types of areas. Unfortunately, Thurrock had too small a sample size to record this data [\[See reference 99\]](#).

## Overview of health indicators for the Borough

**2.72** Health indicators in which figures for Thurrock are significantly worse than national and regional averages are life expectancy at birth (males); killed and seriously injured casualties on England's roads; smoking prevalence in adults; percentage of physically active adults; percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese; Year 6: prevalence of obesity; and violent crime (hospital admissions for violence).

**2.73** The plan area performs significantly better than the national and regional averages in terms of suicide rate; emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm; and admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions (under 18s) [\[See reference 100\]](#).

**2.74** The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted health inequalities including the differences in people's health and well-being that result from the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, work and age. For example, the pandemic has impacted social and community networks, showing that lack of social contact has a detrimental impact on mental health (causing or facilitating anxiety and depression). It has also had a negative impact on individual lifestyle factors such as lack of exercise and unhealthy diet, causing other health issues.

## **Projected baseline information**

**2.75** Given that Thurrock has performed poorly for some health indicators against regional and national averages, it is likely it will continue to do so without substantial intervention. There are a range of potential changes in determinants that will affect health in the UK, and Thurrock, in the future including climate change. Summers are expected to become hotter and sunnier and this may increase the excess mortality rate for vulnerable groups.

## **Access to services and facilities**

### **Current baseline information**

**2.76** Services and facilities include hospitals and GPs, recreational resources, food retailers, employment and education centres, and other aspects of social infrastructure such as community centres and places of worship. Good and equitable accessibility and the provision of sufficient community facilities is a vital part of development's role in improving the health and well-being of a community.

**2.77** Development which alters access to services and facilities can affect health and well-being in a number of ways. It can have direct links in terms of providing access to healthcare facilities, it can encourage walking or cycling, which may help to prevent or reduce obesity and the risk of cardiovascular disease, or it can restrict accessibility by non-car modes of transport, which may be particularly detrimental for certain social groups. Having suitable access to employment, education, places of worship and community centres is also important for well-being.

**2.78** According to the most recent Department for Transport 'journey time statistics' [\[See reference 101\]](#), the average journey time taken to reach the nearest key services in Thurrock by car was 10.4 minutes, which is less than

the regional average for East of England (11.3 minutes) but marginally above the national average for England (10.3 minutes). The average journey time by public transport/walking was 18.4 minutes which is below the regional average for East of England (20.7) but again is above the national average (17.9 minutes). The same pattern exists for cycling, where the average journey time of 16.3 minutes was lower than the East of England average of 18.6 minutes but above the national average (15.6 minutes). The average journey time by walking was 31.4 minutes which is also below the East of England average (34.1 minutes) but is above the national average of 28 minutes.

**2.79** These results suggest that access to key services and facilities in Thurrock is above average for the East of England region but below the national average.

### Projected baseline information

**2.80** Access to key services and facilities could become more challenging as the population in Thurrock continues to grow and age.

## Open spaces, sports and recreation

### Current baseline information

**2.81** Thurrock has a variety of parks across the Borough, which include a number of Nature Parks; a variety of Riverside Parks; Langdon Hills Country Park and Belhus Woods Country Park. The RSPB maintains Rainham Marshes Nature Reserve, which consists of an ancient, low-lying grazing marsh that is important for wildlife.

**2.82** Friends of the Earth has used official data to map the availability of green space for people living in neighbourhoods across England. The map has been created by combining official data on public green space, garden space, and open access land such as mountain, moor, heath, down or common land, with

data on neighbourhood populations, ethnicity and income. Local authorities were assessed against the three categories and a rating from A to E was assigned. E rated neighborhoods are those most deprived of green space, including gardens and parks, whereas A rated neighborhoods get the health and nature benefits from plenty of green space.

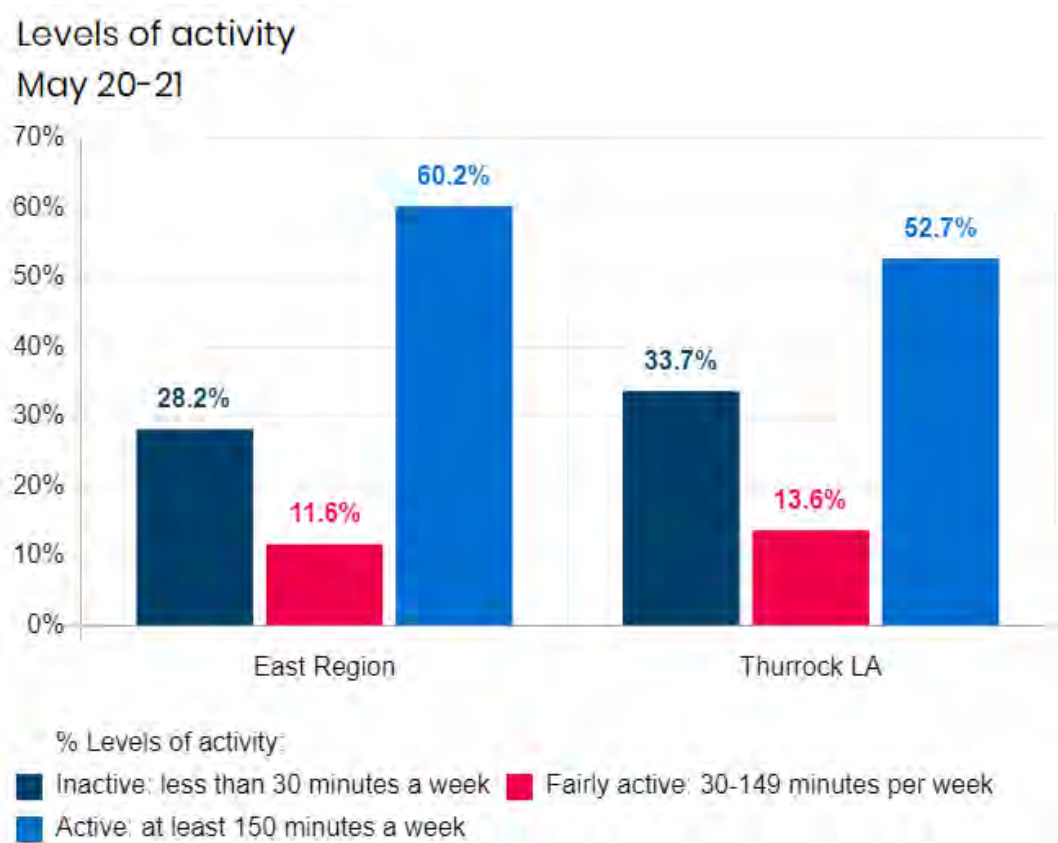
**2.83** Two areas within Thurrock (Orsett, Bulphan & Hordon-on-the-Hill and Corringham North & London Gateway) received an A rating. These areas fall within the more rural parts of Thurrock. The lowest rating given was a D at Purfleet, South Stifford & Lakeside; Tilbury; and Grays Town. Generally, the more urbanised areas within Thurrock received a lower rating [\[See reference 102\]](#).

**2.84** A further study conducted by Friends of the Earth identified adequate and equitable access to high-quality green and blue environments as an issue in Thurrock, with 22% of Thurrock neighbourhoods having poor access to nature and 47% having only moderate access, particularly affecting disadvantaged neighbourhoods [\[See reference 103\]](#).

**2.85** The most recent Active Lives Survey by Sport England (reporting for the period May 2020/21) estimated 52.7% of the population in Thurrock are active, 13.6% are fairly active, while 33.7% are inactive [\[See reference 104\]](#). As illustrated in Figure 2.3, the population of Thurrock are generally less active/more inactive than averages for the East Region.



**Figure 2.3: Active Lives Survey results for Thurrock and East Region**



**2.86** Between 64.1% of adults from the Borough walk at least once a week and between 6.1% cycle. The walking average was lower than the national average which was 71.1%. In terms of bicycle travel, Thurrock is lower than the national average of 11.2%. However, the percentage of the adult population cycling at least once a week is generally low across all authorities [\[See reference 105\]](#).

## Projected baseline information

**2.87** Development pressure could lead to the loss of some existing open space and sports/recreation facilities while projected population increases are likely to increase demand for such facilities.

## Crime

### Current baseline information

**2.88** The areas where most crimes are committed in Thurrock are recorded in Grays South, Grays North, Grays East, Grays West, Chafford Hundred, East Tilbury, Aveley, West Thurrock, Grays Central, Belhus and Ockendon, Upminster and North Ockendon, Corringham East, Corringham West, Stanford-le-Hope, Chadwell St Mary and Tilbury Town. Grays is the third major town in Essex with the highest level of recorded crime. The overall crime rate in Grays in 2021 was 101 crimes per 1,000 people. This compares poorly to Essex's overall crime rate, coming in 19% higher than the Essex average rate of 81 per 1,000 residents [\[See reference 106\]](#).

**2.89** Total recorded crime within Essex saw a decrease of 3.2% between September 2020 and September 2021. This period saw decreases in the total level of recorded crime in the East of England (4.3%) and England (0.6%). In Essex, the overall decrease in crime included decrease in drug offences (12.9%); robbery (5.8%); theft (14.0%); criminal damage and arson (12.6%) and possession of weapons offences (17.2%). During the same period, instances of violence against the person (3.9%); public order offences (6.0%); and sexual offences (20.1%) increased [\[See reference 107\]](#).

### Projected baseline information

**2.90** Crime rates are influenced by such a large number of variables that it is very difficult to anticipate future trends. Spatial variation that currently exists in relative crime deprivation across Thurrock is likely to remain for the foreseeable future, and for the most part will likely mirror overall deprivation trends.

## Education

### Current baseline information

**2.91** Across Thurrock there is a total of 51 schools (primary and secondary), with 70% of pupils meeting the ‘expected standard’ which is higher than the national average of 65% [See reference 108]. 86% of schools in Thurrock are achieving either ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’ Ofsted ratings, with six schools in the Borough ‘requiring improvement’ and one school assigned an ‘inadequate’ Ofsted rating [See reference 109]. There is a major sixth form centre at Palmer’s College, plus a state-of-the-art South Essex College campus for post-16 opportunities. Thurrock’s two special schools – Beacon Hill Academy, for children with learning difficulties, and Treetops School, for socially disadvantaged children – both achieve an ‘outstanding’ Ofsted rating.

**2.92** Pupils in the Borough perform slightly less favourably than the national average (50.2%) and East of England average (50.3%) for Attainment 8 scores at 49.7% [See reference 110]. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and disadvantaged pupils also perform less favourably for these subjects, than the national averages for these groups. 74% of students who enrolled for A-levels completed their programme of studies [See reference 111].

### Projected baseline information

**2.93** Higher skilled sectors such as advanced manufacturing and environmental technologies are expected to become more prevalent in Thurrock in coming years. Many companies within the area anticipate significant future growth, but many employers are already experiencing difficulties in attracting suitably skilled candidates and many report dissatisfaction with existing further education and higher education provision. Increasingly businesses are also referencing lack of numbers i.e. not enough people for the number of jobs that are being created, as a critical recruitment issue [See reference 112].

## Deprivation

### Current baseline information

#### Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD2019)

**2.94** The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD2019) [\[See reference 113\]](#) combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The domains are combined using the domains: Income Deprivation, Employment Deprivation, Education, Skills and Training Deprivation, Health Deprivation and Disability, Crime, Barriers to Housing and Services, and Living Environment Deprivation. The IMD2019 uses Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) to measure deprivation at local authority and county level.

**2.95** In the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Thurrock ranked 116 out of 317 local authorities in England (1 being the most deprived) in terms of overall deprivation (see Figure 2.4). The most deprived areas within Thurrock lie around the more built-up centres of South Ockendon, Grays and Tilbury. There are four LSOAs (Thurrock 018H, 018E, 018D and 006A) (4% of all LSOAs in the Borough) in the Tilbury St Chads and Belhus wards falling within the 10% most deprived areas in the UK. There are also seven LSOAs (7%) within the 20% most deprived areas including in the Belhus, Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park, Tilbury St Chads, Chadwell St Mary, Ockendon, and Little Thurrock Blackshots wards. The rural parts of Thurrock to the north and the east and parts of South Chafford fall within the least deprived areas. This includes 41 neighbourhood LSOAs. Thurrock 019D (South Chafford) is the only neighbourhood within Thurrock that's falls within the 10% least deprived.

## Income Deprivation Domain

**2.96** The income domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income including those out-of-work, and those that are in work but who have low earnings.

**2.97** Thurrock ranked 109<sup>th</sup> out of 317 local authorities for the income deprivation domain (see Figure 2.5). Of the 98 LSOAs in Thurrock, 15 were among the 20% most income deprived in England including the wards of Little Thurrock Blackshots, Grays Riverside, Belhus, Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park, Chadwell St Mary, West Thurrock and South Stifford.

## Employment Deprivation Domain

**2.98** The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market. This includes people who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.

**2.99** Thurrock ranked 146<sup>th</sup> out of 317 local authorities for the income deprivation domain (see Figure 2.6). Of the 98 LSOAs in Thurrock, 12 were among the 20% most employment deprived in England including the wards of Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock, Tilbury St Chads, Belhus, Little Thurrock Blackshots, Chadwell St Mary, Ockendon, and Stanford East and Corringham Town. The wards most affected by income and employment deprivation generally correspond.

## Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain

**2.100** The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.

**2.101** Thurrock performs particularly poorly under the education, skills and training deprivation domain, ranking 24<sup>th</sup> out of 317 local authorities (see Figure 2.7). There are 28 LSOAs within the 20% most deprived for this domain (28% of all wards in Thurrock). A further 25 LSOAs are within the top 30% most deprived (26%). Conversely only five LSOAs are within the top 30% least deprived (5%).

### Health Deprivation and Disability Domain

**2.102** 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 domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.

**2.103** Thurrock ranked 173<sup>rd</sup> out of 317 local authorities for the health and disability domain (see Figure 2.8). Of the 98 LSOAs in Thurrock, none were in the 10% most deprived and only six were in the 30% most health deprived in England including the wards of Tilbury St Chads, Belhus and Stanford East and Corringham Town.

### Crime Domain

**2.104** The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.

**2.105** Thurrock ranks poorly under the crime domain ranking 75<sup>th</sup> out of 317 local authorities (see Figure 2.9). Of the 98 LSOAs in Thurrock, 11 LSOAs are within the 10% most deprived, nine are within the 20% most deprived and a further 16 are within the 30% most deprived, resulting in a total of 36% of LSOAs in Thurrock being within the top 30% most deprived in relation to crime. However, this is an improvement on the 2015 figure of 55%.

## Barriers to Housing and Services Domain

**2.106** The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability and homelessness.

**2.107** Thurrock ranks poorly under the Barriers to Housing and Services domain ranking 76<sup>th</sup> out of 317 local authorities (see Figure 2.10). Of the 98 LSOAs in Thurrock, seven LSOAs are within the 10% most deprived, 14 are within the 20% most deprived and a further nine are within the 30% most deprived, resulting in a total of 30% of LSOAs in Thurrock being within the top 30% most deprived in relation to barriers to housing and services. More wards are now within the top 30% most deprived in relation to barriers to housing and services than in 2015 (increase of 11%).

## Living Environment Deprivation Domain

**2.108** The Living Environment Deprivation Domain measures the quality of the local environment. The indicators fall into two sub-domains. The 'indoors' living environment measures the quality of housing, while the 'outdoors' living environment contains measures of air quality and road traffic accidents.

**2.109** Thurrock performs well under the Living Environment Domain ranking 191<sup>st</sup> out of 317 local authorities (see Figure 2.11). Out of the 98 LSOAs in Thurrock, only five are within the 20% most deprived in relation to living environment conditions. A total of 39 LSOAs are within the 30% least deprived for this domain.



## Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index

**2.110** The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.

**2.111** Thurrock performs poorly under the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index ranking 81<sup>st</sup> out of 317 local authorities (see Figure 2.12). There are six LSOAs in the 10% most deprived, 13 in the 20% most deprived and a further 16 in the 30% most deprived in relation to income deprivation affecting children (total of 35% of LSOAs), including the wards of Tilbury St Chads, Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park and Chadwell St Mary.

**2.112** According to Public Health England, around 17.7% (6,590) children live in low-income families within Thurrock. It is estimated that 344,779 out of 2,616,126 households live within fuel poverty within the East of England. This equates to 13.2% of the population [\[See reference 114\]](#).

**2.113** Low income households are at a greater risk of fuel poverty, contributing to social and health inequalities. Cold homes can affect or exacerbate respiratory, circulatory and mental health problems. Cold homes can also affect wider determinants of health, such as educational performance among children and absence from work. Vulnerable groups such as young children, older people and those with pre-existing health problems are particularly susceptible to cold-related illnesses [\[See reference 115\]](#).

## Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index

**2.114** The Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) measures the proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

**2.115** Thurrock ranks 107<sup>th</sup> out of 317 local authorities under the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (see Figure 2.13). There are five LSOAs in the 10% most deprived, 10 in the 20% most deprived and a further 14

in the 30% most deprived in relation to income deprivation affecting older people (total of 29% of LSOAs), including the wards of Belhus, Tilbury St Chads, and Grays Riverside.

**2.116** Among older people, cold temperatures can increase the likelihood of strokes, circulatory problems, respiratory problems, hospital admissions, and lower strength and dexterity leading to falls and accidental injuries. In addition to the general risks associated with deprivation, older people are at more risk of being admitted to hospital or dying if they suffer from “fuel poverty” in the winter months [\[See reference 116\]](#).

### Projected baseline information

**2.117** Thurrock’s overall deprivation rank has worsened from 125<sup>th</sup> in 2015, to 116<sup>th</sup> in 2019 (1 being most deprived) in overall deprivation in the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Levels of deprivation continue to vary spatially across the Borough, with the east generally experiencing less relative deprivation than areas in the west.



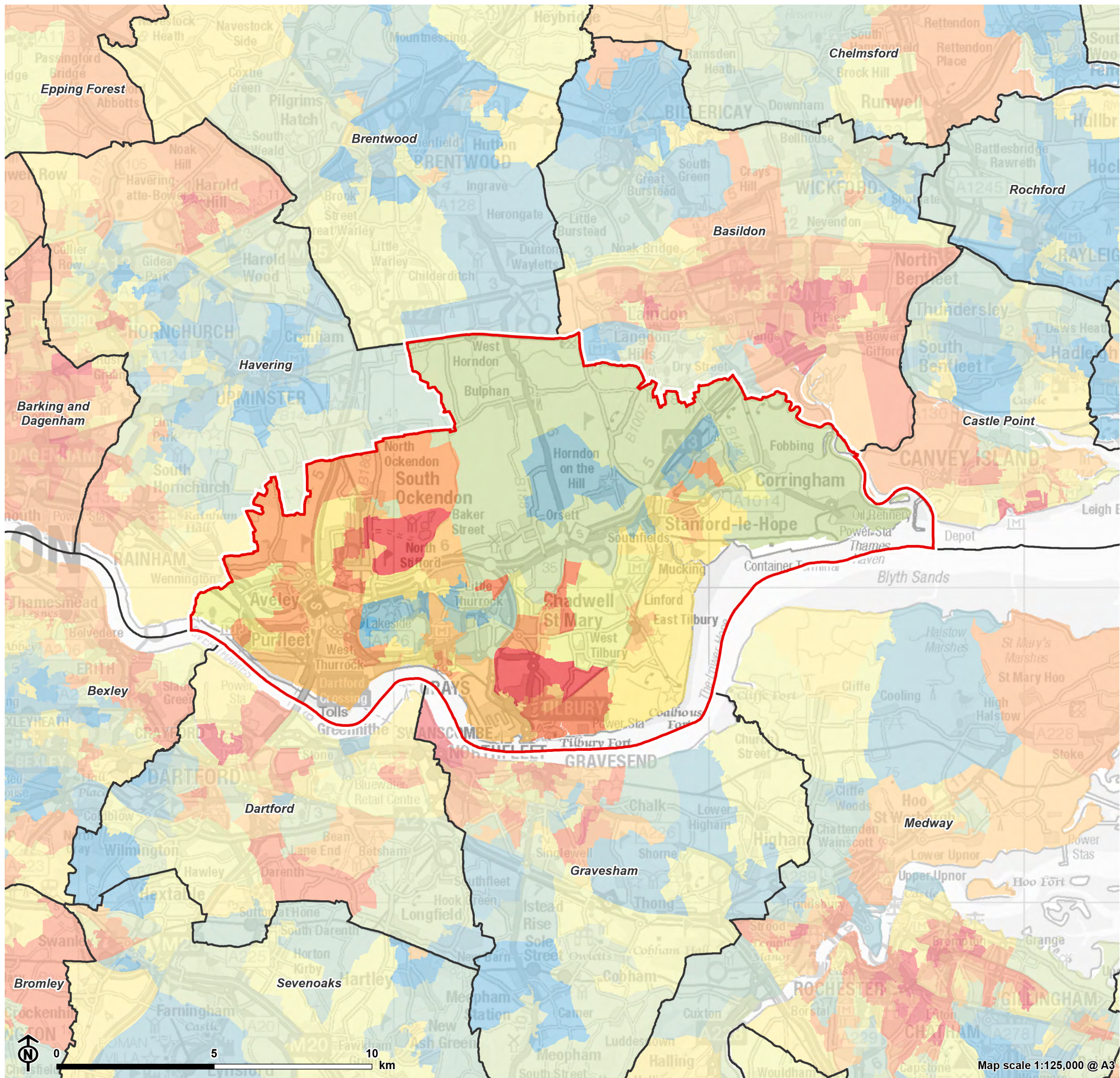


Figure 2.4: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Overall)

- Thurrock Council boundary
- Neighbouring authority boundary

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

Overall Score

- 1 (most deprived)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (least deprived)



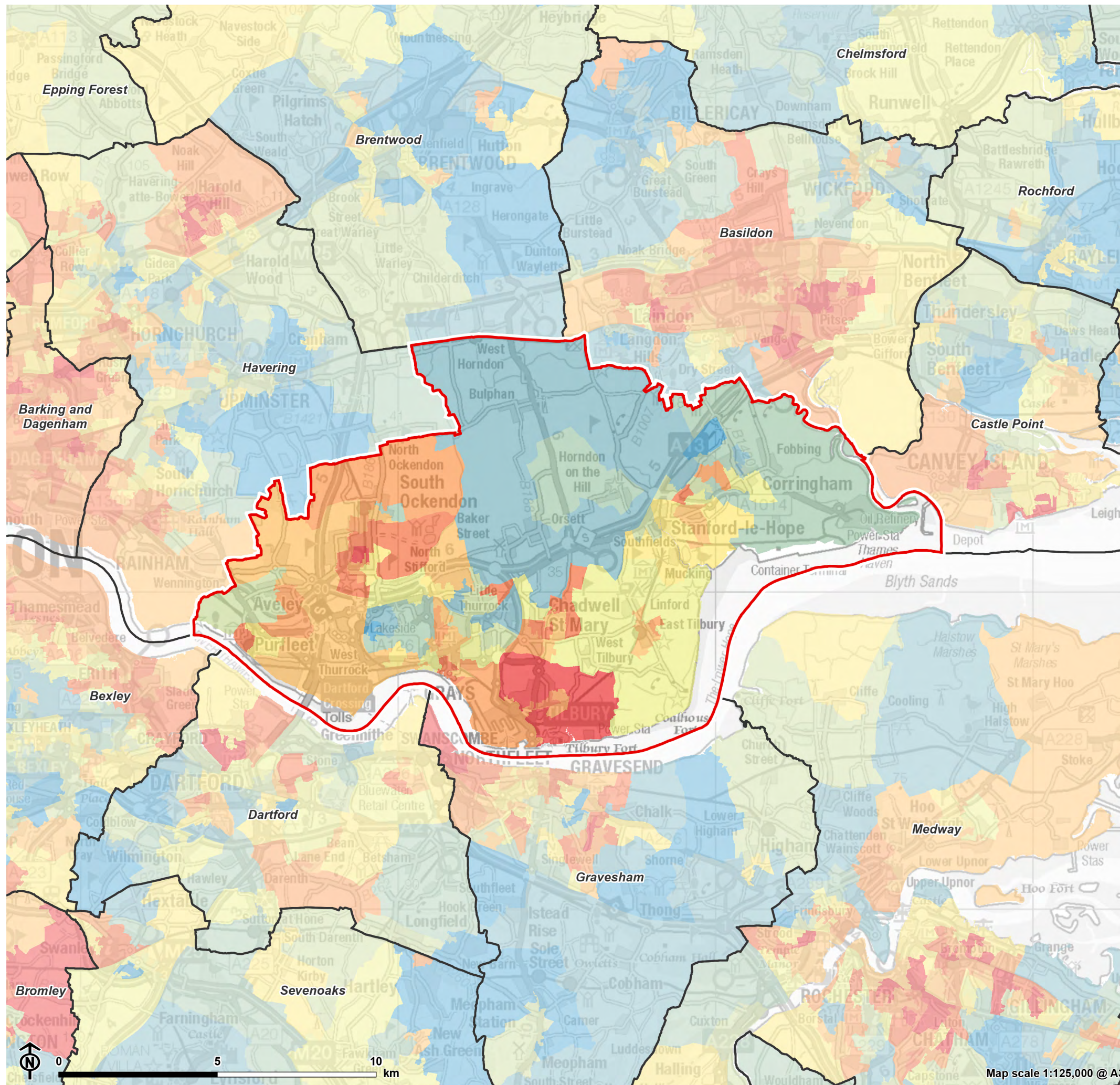


Figure 2.5: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Income Domain)

- Thurrock Council boundary
- Neighbouring authority boundary

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

Income

- 1 (most deprived)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (least deprived)



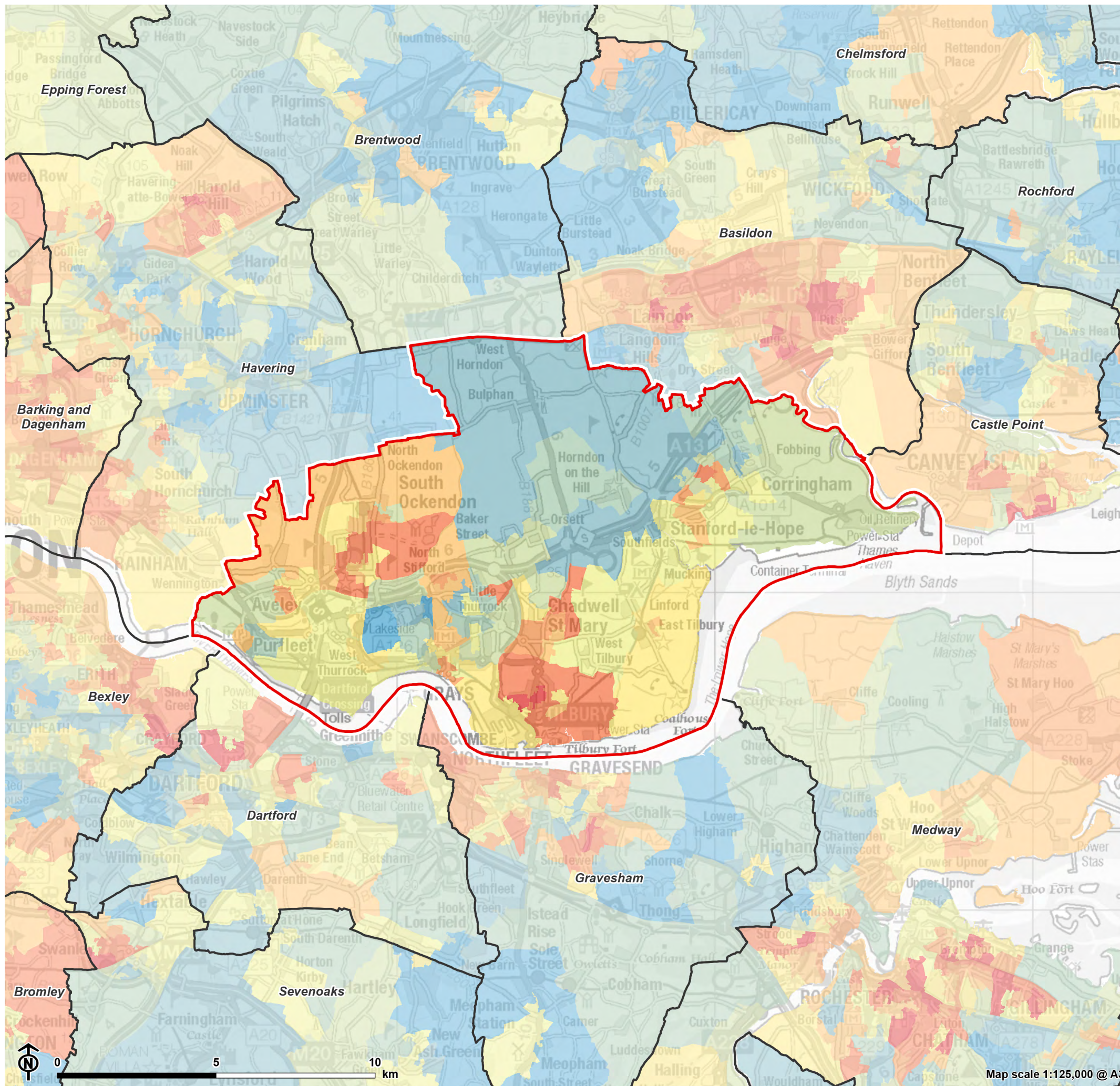


Figure 2.6: Index of Multiple Deprivation  
(Employment Domain)

- Thurrock Council boundary
- Neighbouring authority boundary

**Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019**

*Employment*

- 1 (most deprived)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (least deprived)



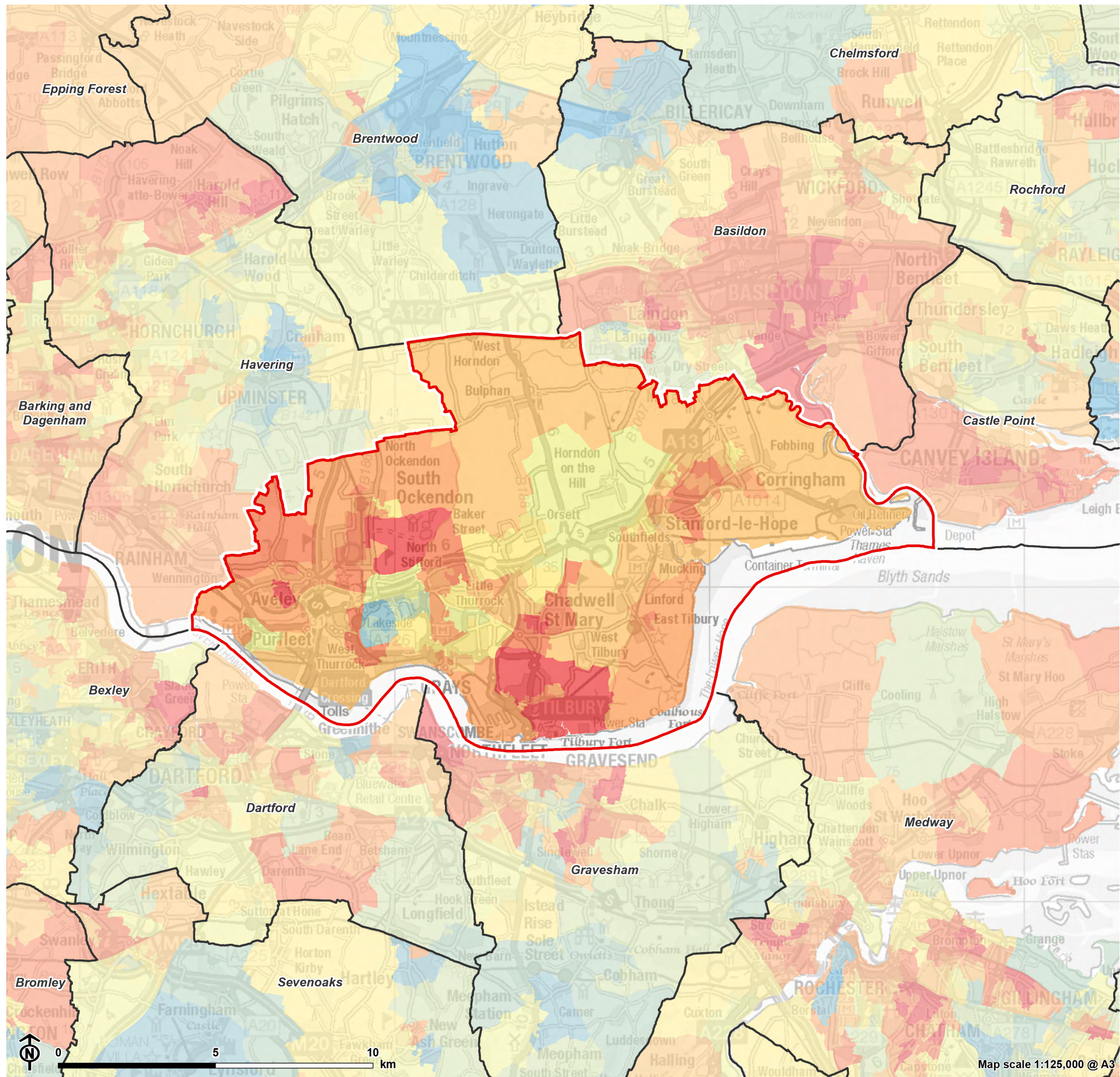


Figure 2.7: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Education and Skills Training Domain)

- Thurrock Council boundary
- Neighbouring authority boundary

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

Education and Skills Training

- 1 (most deprived)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (least deprived)



Figure 2.8: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Health Deprivation and Disability Domain)

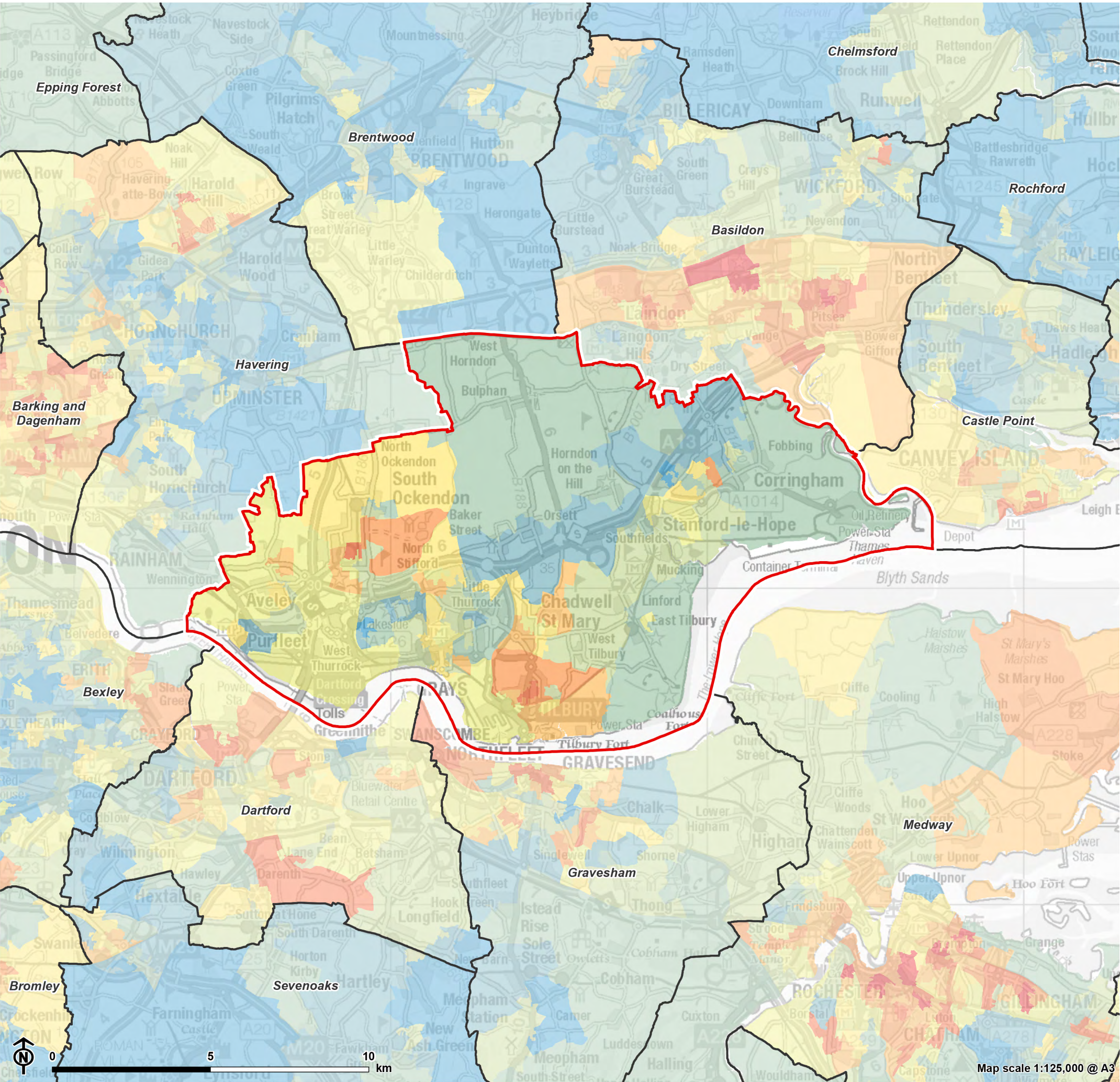
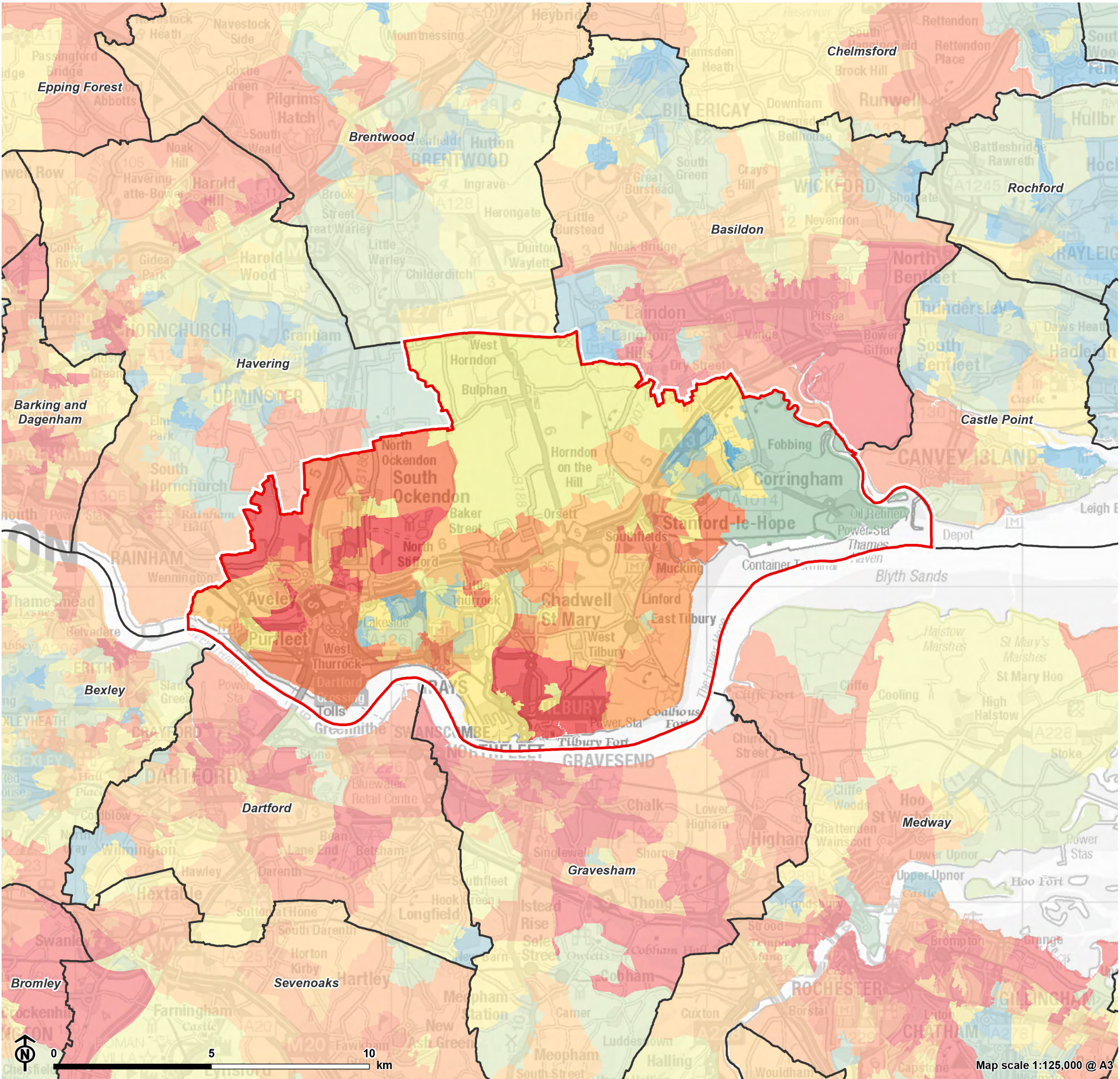




Figure 2.9: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Crime Domain)





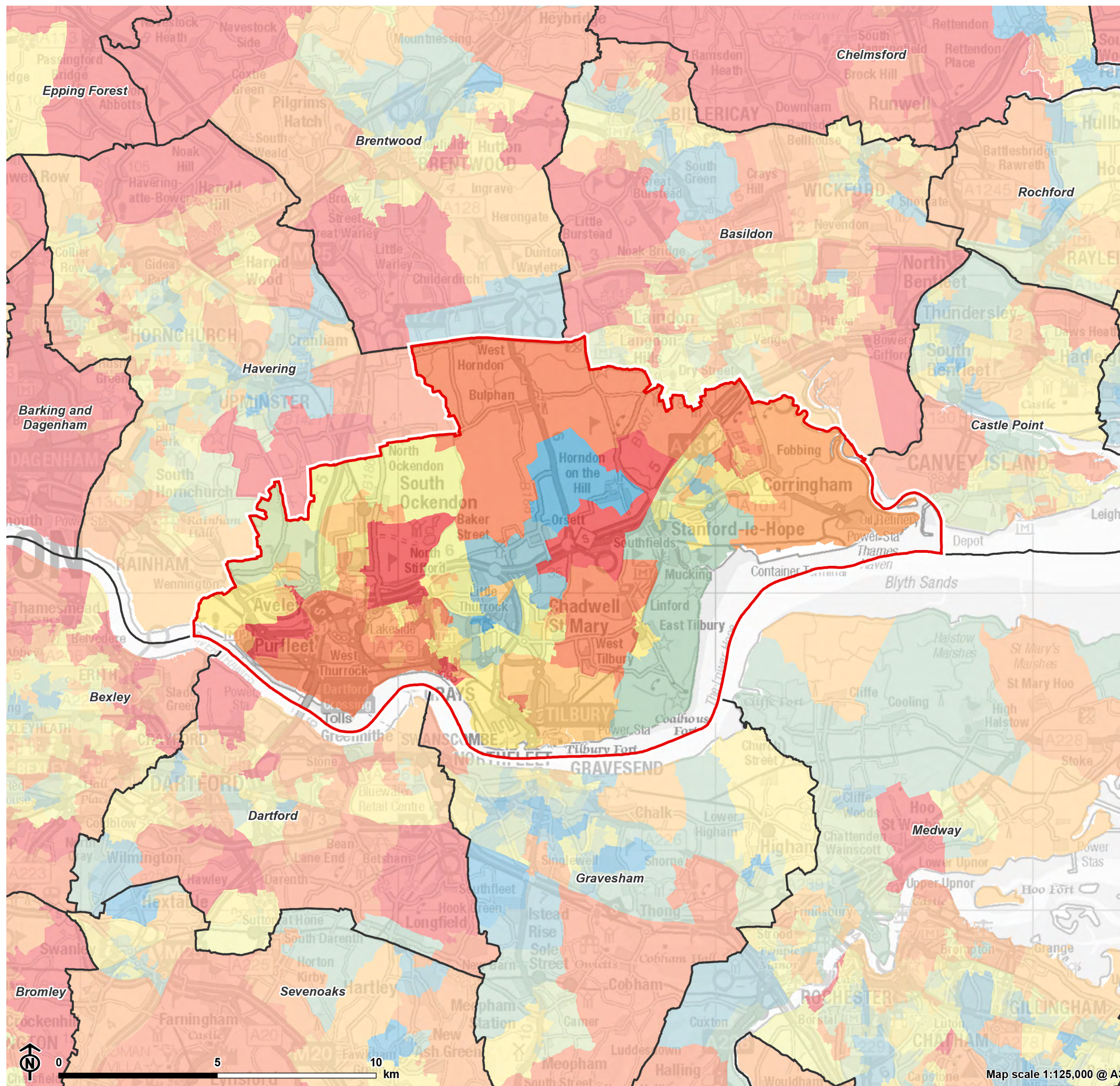


Figure 2.10: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Barriers to Housing and Services Domain)

- Thurrock Council boundary
- Neighbouring authority boundary

**Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019**

*Barriers to Housing and Services*

- 1 (most deprived)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (least deprived)



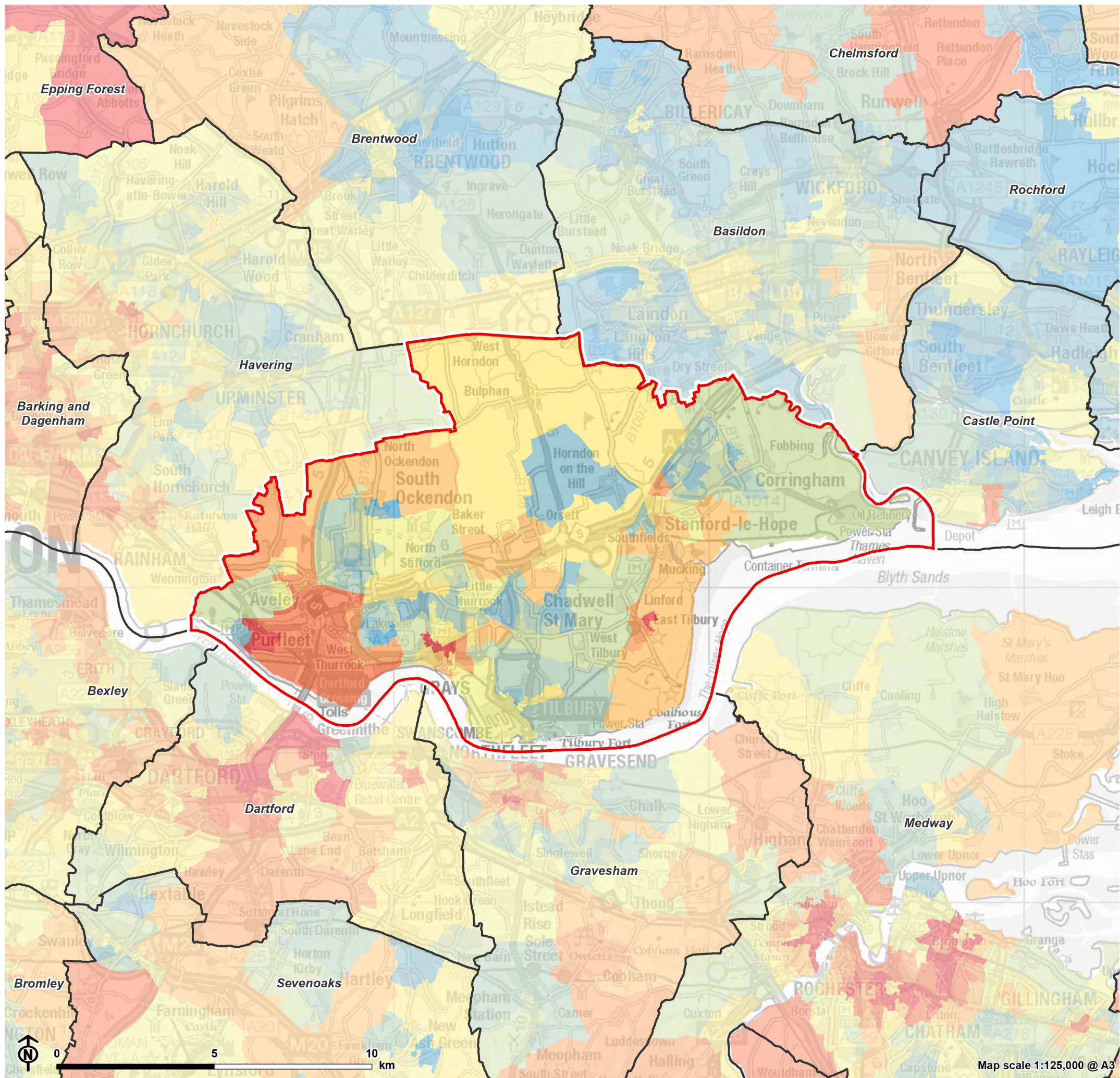


Figure 2.11: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Living Environment Domain)

- Thurrock Council boundary
- Neighbouring authority boundary

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

Living Environment

- 1 (most deprived)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (least deprived)



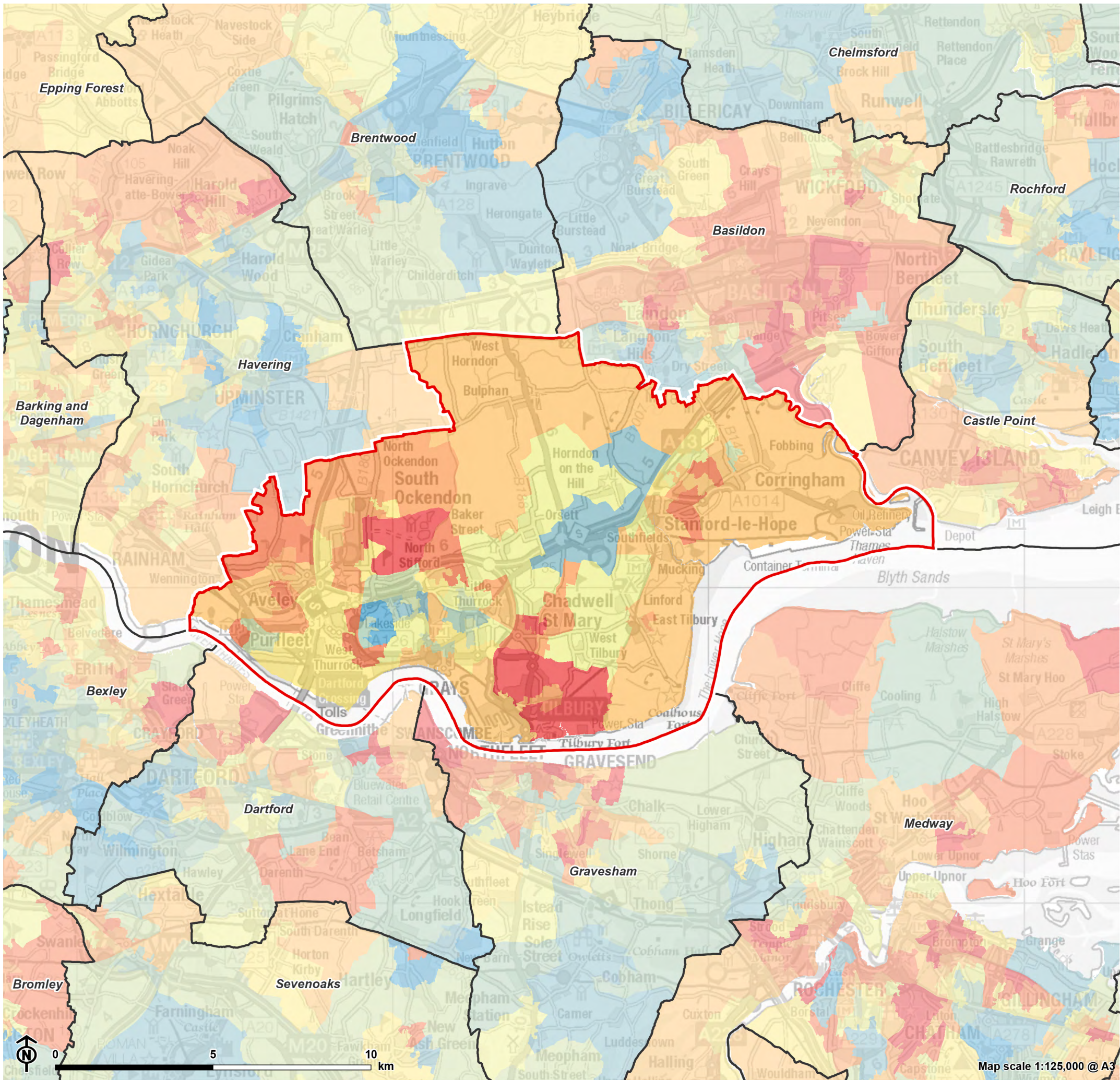
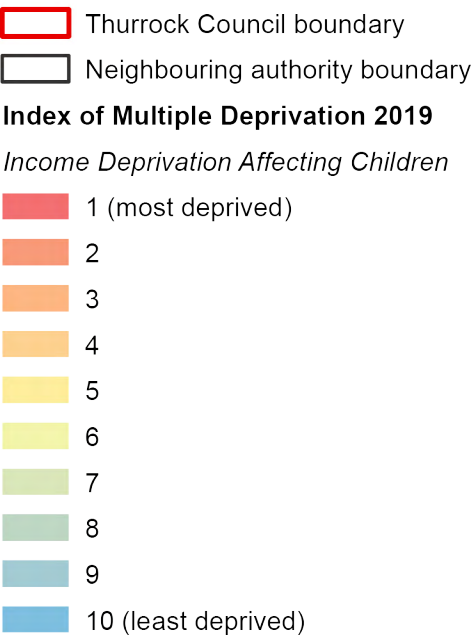


Figure 2.12: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Income  
Deprivation Affecting Children Index)





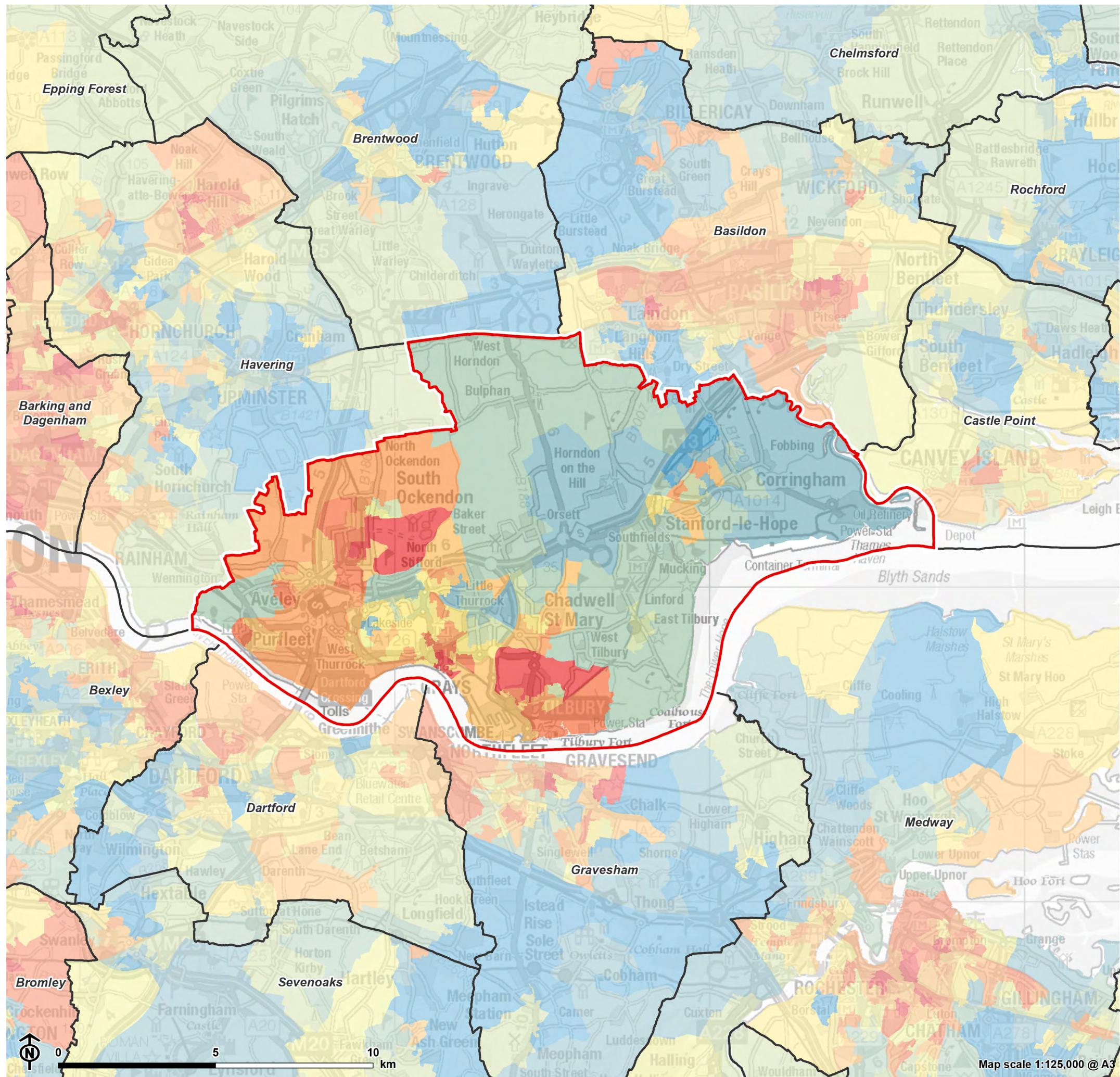


Figure 2.13: Index of Multiple Deprivation (Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index)

- Thurrock Council boundary
- Neighbouring authority boundary

**Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019**

*Income Deprivation Affecting Older People*

- 1 (most deprived)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (least deprived)



## Equalities

### Current baseline information

**2.118** The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine ‘protected characteristics’ and seeks to protect people from discrimination on the basis of these characteristics. It presents three main duties: to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The nine protected characteristics identified through the Act are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex; and
- Sexual orientation.

**2.119** The potential effects of the plan in relation to groups covered by the nine ‘protected characteristics’ will be assessed separately in addition to the SA. This work will comprise the EqIA which will be presented in an appendix to the IIA Report.

**2.120** While socio-economic status is not a characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010, the Council is committed to also considering the effects that the plan will have on groups affected by these types of issues. The EqIA will therefore also consider the potential effects on socio-economic groups not limited to but including the following:

- People on low incomes;
- Young and adult carers;
- People living in deprived areas/rural areas; and
- Groups suffering multiple disadvantages.

## Age

**2.121** The median age for the plan area based on mid-2020 figures was 36.9 years. The median age for Thurrock for mid-2020 was lower than the median age for both the UK (40.4 years) and for the East (41.8 years). Based on figures from the mid-2020, the age profile for Thurrock was broadly similar to that for England as a whole. A more detailed breakdown of the estimated age make-up of the population for Thurrock in mid-2020 is provided in Table 2.4 [\[See reference 117\]](#).

**Table 2.4: Estimated breakdown of Thurrock's mid-2020 population by age group**

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
19 and younger	25,051	23,819	48,870
20-34	16,150	17,322	33,472
35-49	18,677	19,698	38,375
50-64	15,613	15,103	30,716
65 and older	11,063	13,035	24,098



## Disability

**2.122** The 2011 census presented figures on people with disabilities in the UK. Of Thurrock's population, 84.1% stated that their daily activities are 'not limited' by a long-term illness, while 8.3% are 'limited a little' and 7.2% are 'limited a lot' by an illness [\[See reference 118\]](#).

## Marriage and civil partnership

**2.123** From the 2011 census data, 47.6% of the population were married and 33.9% of the population were single. Of those who are married, 0.1% were in a registered same-sex civil partnership [\[See reference 119\]](#). In 2018, a total of 544 marriages occurred with seven of these marriages of same-sex couples [\[See reference 120\]](#).

## Pregnancy and maternity

**2.124** In 2020 there was a total of 2,290 live births in Thurrock which is the lowest since 2013 [\[See reference 121\]](#). In recent years, the number of births to mothers over the age of 35 has started to slowly increase from 2013. While the number of births which have occurred outside of marriage has remained steady since 2009.

## Race

**2.125** There has been substantial movement of people from London to Thurrock, particularly from geographically close boroughs, including Havering, Barking and Dagenham and Newham. The London boroughs as a whole account for over 50% of all internal migration into Thurrock. Since 2001, ONS has estimated that international migration into Thurrock has varied from about 500 people annually in 2001, rising to a peak of 1,300 in 2006/7, before decreasing to 940 in 2013/14.

**2.126** In 2011 there were 1,142 Thurrock residents who arrived in the UK in the previous year. Almost 40% of these residents were born in a European Union Accession Country (2001 to 2011). The second largest group at 23% were born in an African country (predominantly Western African countries). This was followed by Middle Eastern and Asian countries of birth for 17.5% of this group.

## Religion/belief

**2.127** In 2018, the majority of Thurrock's population considered themselves to be Christian, with 100,447 residents falling within this classification. The second largest group within Thurrock is 53,332 residents who classify themselves as having no religion. The below table shows the breakdown of all recorded religions within Thurrock in 2018. These figures demonstrate that for the five-year period beginning in 2013, the number of residents reporting to have no religion grew (from 46,152 residents) and the number of residents recorded as Christian fell slightly (from 107,048 residents) [\[See reference 122\]](#).

**Table 2.5: Religion breakdown in Thurrock in 2018**

Religion	Number of people
No Religion	53,332
Christianity (all denominations)	100,447
Buddhist	779
Hindu	5,932
Jewish	*
Muslim	4,722
Sikh	806
Any Other Religion	5,296

\*Sample sizes are too small to provide reliable estimates

## Sex

**2.128** Based on figures from mid-2020, there are 86,554 males (49%) and 88,977 females (51%) in Thurrock.

There is little baseline information available that is directly relevant to other protected characteristics including gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

## Projected baseline information

**2.129** A review of the baseline information suggests that Thurrock has an aging population, growing ethnic and religious diversity, and a low birth rate but with an increase in mothers over the age of 35.

**2.130** It is expected that the ratio of those residents over the age of 65 will increase in the future across the UK. Thurrock presently has a relatively low old age dependency ratio at 220.8 compared to the East of England ratio (325.4) which indicates that the number of people of state pension age per 1,000 people of working age is comparatively lower. In Thurrock, this figure is expected to rise to 240.4 by 2043, while the East of England figure is expected to increase to 400.3 by this time [\[See reference 123\]](#). An aging population will put additional pressure on health and social care infrastructure in the Borough.

## Implications for health

**2.131** Some areas of the Borough experience significant health challenges, with high levels of obesity and risk of associated health problems. The UK Chief Medical Officers advise that for good physical and mental health, adults should aim to be physically active every day. Over the course of a week adults should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity; or 75 minutes of

vigorous intensity activity day; or even shorter durations of very vigorous intensity activity; or a combination of moderate, vigorous and very vigorous intensity activity [\[See reference 124\]](#).

**2.132** Similarly, open spaces and recreational facilities provide residents space in which they can undertake physical activity to the benefit of public health, including lowering the risk of specific health conditions such as depression, anxiety, cortisol, blood pressure, pre-term birth, low birthweight, and type 2 diabetes. There is generally positive evidence relating to the impacts of activities in natural environments on children's mental health and their cognitive, emotional and behavioural functioning. These health benefits are thought to arise through a range of pathways, including providing opportunities and safe spaces for physical activity, for restoration and relaxation, and for socialising with friends and family. Exposure to green and blue space is also associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. Impacts appear to differ according to socio-economic status and other demographic factors such as age or gender.

**2.133** Similarly, encouraging active travel, such as walking and cycling can have a wider range of positive implications for health, including increased physical activity and opportunities for social interaction. In addition, an increase in active travel would be associated with a decrease in vehicular transport and an associated decrease in air pollutants that can be harmful to human health.

## **Key sustainability issues and likely evolution of these issues without the Local Plan**

### **Population**

**2.134** Population growth and demographic change will place additional demand on key services and facilities such as health, education and social care.

Additionally, an aging population will place additional pressures on housing, health and social care services. Without the Local Plan it is likely that services and facilities will still be delivered. However, it is less likely that these will be in appropriate locations, or of sufficient quality and quantity to keep pace with demand arising from new residential development. The Local Plan offers an opportunity to deliver these in a coherent, sustainable manner alongside development.

## Housing

**2.135** Affordability of housing within Thurrock is an issue. The Borough's growing young population will create additional demand for larger family homes, while relatively low levels of income will need to be taken into account through the provision of affordable accommodation. There is a need to provide for housing to meet the needs of the aging population, such as lifetime homes, adaptable dwellings and supported living. Substantial spatial variation exists in housing deprivation across Thurrock. There is a need to provide an additional 104 pitches and 165 plots for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households in Thurrock (up to 2033). Without the Local Plan, the objectively assessed need for new housing and the appropriate mix of housing types in Thurrock will not be delivered and the current trends will continue. The Local Plan offers the opportunity to facilitate and expedite the delivery of a variety of housing, including affordable housing and housing to meet the needs of an ageing population. The Local Plan also offers the opportunity to target residential development in areas where the barriers to housing are greatest.

## Health

**2.136** 'Health' in Thurrock is in the bottom 20% for England, ranking 250<sup>th</sup> out of 307 local authority areas. Life expectancy in Thurrock is lower than the national averages, with life expectancies significantly lower in the most deprived areas of the Borough. The ratio of deaths from cancer, circulatory disease, coronary heart disease and respiratory disease are all 'significantly worse' than the

England averages. In Thurrock, 69.4% of adults are classified as overweight or obese which is higher than the regional percentage of 62.3% and the national percentage of 62.8%. The population of Thurrock are generally less active/more inactive than averages for the East of England. The Local Plan has an important role to play in encouraging active lifestyles through the provision of sufficient quality open spaces/recreational resources and active travel routes. Without the Local Plan, the current negative trends may continue.

## Access to services and facilities

**2.137** Thurrock performs well against regional averages on journey times to key services via a range of transport modes but is still below the national averages. Access to education and local services are two areas where improvements are particularly needed (identified in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019). The Local Plan provides an opportunity to ensure that future developments, particularly those which will provide large numbers of jobs or key services are accessible to all. Without the Local Plan, this issue may be less well addressed.

## Open spaces, sports and recreation

**2.138** Thurrock has a variety of parks and open spaces however, adequate and equitable access to high-quality green and blue environments is an issue, with 22% of Thurrock neighbourhoods having poor access to nature and 47% having only moderate access, particularly affecting disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Without the Local Plan, it is likely that the deficit of high-quality open spaces will remain. The Local Plan offers the opportunity to address this by ensuring that the accessibility and quality of open spaces is high and new green and blue infrastructure is planned alongside new development.

## Crime

**2.139** The crime rate in certain areas of Thurrock, particularly Grays, compares poorly to Essex's overall crime rate. Anti-social behaviour and violence and sexual offences are two principal contributors of crime in Thurrock. There is also a direct correlation between crime and the most deprived areas in Thurrock. While the Local Plan is not likely to affect crime directly, some of the causes of crime can be addressed by the Local Plan, for example by providing for development opportunities that generate jobs and affordable housing within more deprived communities. Furthermore, the Local Plan presents an opportunity to contribute to reducing crime through policies which aim to make the local environment and streets safer, for example by 'designing out' crime. Without the implementation of the Local Plan, this issue may be less well addressed.

## Education

**2.140** A skills and education gap exists in Thurrock as it performs particularly poorly under the education, skills and training deprivation domain, ranking 24th out of 317 local authorities (1 being the most deprived). This has created challenges for businesses looking to grow, who have found it difficult to recruit sufficiently skilled staff. The Local Plan presents an opportunity to improve the accessibility and provision of high-quality education and training facilities in the Borough. By improving levels of educational attainment there could be wider social benefits and improvements to the local economy.

## Deprivation

**2.141** There is a need to reduce inequality between those living in the most deprived areas of Thurrock and those living in the least deprived areas of the Borough. Thurrock experiences particularly high levels of deprivation under the education, skills and training domain; the crime domain; the barriers to housing



and services domain; and the income deprivation affecting children index. Without the Local Plan, it is possible that the gap between the most and least deprived areas in the Borough will remain. The Local Plan presents an opportunity to close the gap through spatial planning, particularly with a view to encouraging new development that will provide jobs, raise income levels, support education/skills/training, reduce crime, and barriers to housing and services.

## Equalities

**2.142** The Local Plan should provide and promote opportunities for all of the Borough's residents, including those with protected characteristics. A review of the baseline information suggests that Thurrock has an aging population, growing ethnic and religious diversity, and a low birth rate but with an increase in mothers over the age of 35.

## Chapter 3

## Economy

### Policy context

#### International

**3.1 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)** [\[See reference 125\]](#): This initiative, adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Relevant to this topic are:

- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

**3.2** There are no specific international economic policy agreements relevant to the preparation of the SEF and the SA, although there are a large number of trading agreements, regulations and standards that set down the basis of trade with the European Union and other nations.

#### National

**3.3 The NPPF (2021)** [\[See reference 126\]](#) contains an economic objective to “help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity”. It also requires that planning seeks to “create the conditions in which businesses can invest,

expand and adapt” with policies required to “set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth”. Policies addressing the economy should also seek “to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment”.

**3.4** Of particular relevance is the requirement for planning policies to “recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations”.

**3.5** Planning policies are also required specifically to address support for the rural economy. Sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas should be supported, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings, while the diversification of the rural economy and promotion of sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments is also supported.

**3.6** The NPPF also supports the role of town centres as functioning at the heart of local communities. This support is required to provide for a “positive approach to [town centres’] growth, management and adaptation”. Included within this support is a requirement to “allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development needed, looking at least ten years ahead”.

**3.7** The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Town centres and retail (2020) [See reference 127]** – Provides guidance on planning for town centre vitality and viability, permitted development, change of use and out of town centre development.

**3.8** The **White Paper Levelling Up the United Kingdom (2022) [See reference 128]** sets out how the UK Government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It comprises 12 UK-wide missions to achieve by 2030. Missions which relate to economy and employment state that by 2030:

- Pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing;
- The number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas;
- Domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth; and
- Every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

**3.9 Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth (2021)** [\[See reference 129\]](#): Sets out a plan to ‘build back better’ tackling long-term problems to deliver growth that delivers high-quality jobs across the UK while supporting the transition to net zero. This will build on three core pillars of growth: infrastructure, skills and innovation.

**3.10 Agriculture Act 2020** [\[See reference 130\]](#): sets out how farmers and land managers in England will be rewarded in the future with public money for “public goods” – such as better air and water quality, thriving wildlife, soil health, or measures to reduce flooding and tackle the effects of climate change, under the Environmental Land Management Scheme. These incentives will provide a vehicle for achieving the goals of the government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and commitment to reach zero emissions by 2050. The Act will help farmers to stay competitive, increase productivity, invest in new technology and seek a fairer return from the marketplace.

**3.11 Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 [See reference 131]:** aims to drive competitiveness, increase productivity, reduce carbon emissions, and generate fairer returns across the agricultural industry. The Transition Plan introduces several new schemes to improve the environment, animal health and welfare, and farm resilience and productivity (e.g., grants will be available for sustainable farming practices, creating habitats for nature recovery and making landscape-scale changes such as establishing new woodland and other ecosystem services).

**3.12 UK Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2018) [See reference 132]** lays down a vision and foundations for a transformed economy. Areas including artificial intelligence and big data; clean growth; the future of mobility; and meeting the needs of an ageing society are identified as the four 'Grand Challenges' of the future.

## Regional and local

**3.13 Levelling Up Essex: An Essex White Paper [See reference 133]** In line with the UK Government announcing its 'Levelling Up' agenda, which sets out to spread opportunity more equally across the UK, Essex County Council has produced its own Levelling Up White Paper. While Essex is a relatively affluent region in the south east of England, the strategy aims to tackle inequalities that exist within the country and spread opportunity and support across all areas. It presents five main focus areas for the agenda, which are: the economy, the environment, health and wellbeing, education and skills, and families and communities. The strategy outlines the Council's role in delivering the agenda, the role that devolution of powers down to local government and local communities will play, and how progress will be monitored and evaluated over time.

**3.14 South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment [See reference 134]:** This assessment provides an evidenced, guidance compliant analysis of the economic and employment land opportunities and challenges for

South Essex and establishes a strategic, multi-authority strategy for realising the area's economic opportunity.

**3.15 South Essex Productivity Strategy [See reference 135]:** The strategy sets out four programmes to improve productivity across South Essex over a five-year period. These programmes are as follows: Vibrant Places; Enterprise Growth; Future Work; and Data Transformation.

**3.16 Backing Thurrock: A roadmap for economic recovery, resilience and a return to growth [See reference 136] and action plan [See reference 137]:** Part 1 of 'Backing Thurrock' provides a roadmap for the Council's approach to economic growth in the Borough, following the COVID-19 pandemic. The roadmap provides a snapshot of the local economy and sets out a vision for economic prosperity in Thurrock, as well as a number of short, medium, and long-term actions intended to reach these goals. The strategy is underpinned by five 'foundations':

- Offering business advice and support to the community and strengthen networks;
- Addressing skills gaps and encouraging lifelong learning;
- Targeting key sectors and developing strong local supply chains;
- Responding to climate change and drive opportunities for green growth; and
- Build on ways of engaging people to encourage civic pride.

**3.17** A longer-term aim of the strategy is to develop resilience in the economy and ensure adaptability to change is embedded. Part 2 of 'Backing Thurrock' provides an action plan for delivery of the strategy. The action plan sets out three main goals: 1) enabling economic recovery, 2) building resilience in the economy; and 3) a return to growth. The Action Plan also sets out a number of priorities for the following 12-months which will assist in achieving these goals. These include, but are not limited to, providing financial support and advice to the local community and local businesses; improving education, training and

careers advice; supporting the development of the bid to form a Thames Estuary Freeport; and strengthening local supply chains.

# Implications of the policy review for the Local Plan and IIA

In order to align with the international, national, regional and local policies outlined above, the Local Plan should support the sustainable growth of income and employment as well as the enhancement of productivity and investment within the Thurrock economy. The IIA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of IIA objectives relating to economic growth and employment.

## Baseline information

### Economy and employment

#### Current baseline information

**3.18** The economy within Thurrock has been growing. In 2013, the GVA (Gross Value Added) of the Thurrock economy was around £2.8billion. This has increased to around £4.1billion in 2019 **[See reference 138]**. Thurrock is at the heart of global trade and logistics, with no fewer than three international ports. Thurrock is well positioned on the M25 and A13 corridors, with excellent transport links west into London, north and east into Essex, and south into Kent **[See reference 139]**. Thurrock is the largest regeneration area in the UK with its riverside location and transport links, it has the fastest growing economy supported by major developments. The area falls within the Thames Gateway



Redevelopment Zone. The major projects are concentrated on six growth hubs. Each hub is crucial to the economy of the Borough. Their programmes are underpinned by a vital economic development, community engagement and environmental initiatives that will ensure growth is sustainable and beneficial regeneration. The six growth hubs are:

- Purfleet-on-Thames – Home of High House Production Park.
- Lakeside and West Thurrock – Already a major retail and leisure destination and set to expand to become a regional town centre.
- Grays – The administrative hub of Thurrock will build upon the current projects to improve economic growth and enhance the public realm.
- Tilbury – A new vision will build on the strengths of the close community and expansion of the port.
- London Gateway – The largest inward investment project in the UK saw DP World's high tech deep-sea container port open in 2013 and become home to a high-tech logistics business park, creating thousands of new jobs.
- Thames Enterprise Park – Creating an Environmental Technologies and Energy Hub alongside a new import/export and blending facility for oil products on the site of the former Coryton Oil Refinery, it will include the world's first bio jet fuel plant converting landfill waste into jet fuel in a partnership between Solena Fuels and British Airways.

**3.19** As part of the Thurrock Employment Land Review [\[See reference 140\]](#), 33 of the 36 employment clusters within Thurrock were surveyed. The 36 employment clusters included approximately 250 separate business and industrial sites, occupying an approximate total area of 1,386 ha of land. Of the 36 surveyed employment clusters, 22 were considered to be in good or very good condition. The main industrial estates in Thurrock are:

- Stanhope Industrial Estate;
- Thurrock Park Industrial Estate;
- Purfleet Industrial Park;

- Milehams Industrial Estate;
- Aveley Industrial Estate;
- Magnet Works Industrial Estate;
- Frogmore Industrial Estate;
- Motherwell Way Industrial Estate; and
- Riverside Industrial Estate.

**3.20** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported a growth rate of 1.8% in 2020 for businesses in Thurrock with a 10.1% growth rate across the East of England [\[See reference 141\]](#). Thurrock contains a range of businesses in sectors including those in the professional, scientific and technical, retail, construction, information and communication, and health sectors. Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of employee jobs by industry within Thurrock, which is predominantly dominated by transportation and storage and wholesale retail [\[See reference 142\]](#).

**Table 3.1: Employee jobs by industry in Thurrock**

Industry	Number of Employees
Mining and quarrying	10
Manufacturing	3,000
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	200
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1,250
Construction	6,000
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	16,000
Transportation and storage	17,000
Accommodation and food service activities	4,500

Industry	Number of Employees
Information and communication	1,000
Financial and insurance activities	600
Real estate activities	600
Professional, scientific and technical activities	2,250
Administrative and support service activities	6,000
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	2,500
Education	5,000
Human health and social work activities	6,000
Arts, entertainment and recreation	900
Other service activities	800

**3.21** In 2014/15 there were around 80,000 residents in employment. This has increased to nearly 85,000 in 2019/20. In the meantime, the number of workless households dropped from 15.2% (7,800 in 2015) to 11.3% (5,900 in 2019). The number of jobs in Thurrock has also increased from 68,000 in 2014 to 78,000 in 2018 and the jobs density increased from 0.64 to 0.72 – albeit still lower than the East of England or Great Britain average [\[See reference 143\]](#).

**3.22** Between October 2020 to September 2021, the rate of economically active residents in Thurrock was 80.9%. During the same period, the figure for East of England was 80.5%. In Thurrock, the unemployment rate between October 2020 and September 2021 was 4.9%, which is slightly higher than East of England's unemployment rate at 4.1%. Furthermore, 11.6% of economically active were self-employed, and in terms of the ratio of labour demand there was 64% of full time and 35.5% part-time jobs. The proportion of adults self-employed has also increased from 7.9% in 2015 to 11.6% in 2020 [\[See reference 144\]](#).

**3.23** The claimant count increased from 2.1% in Jan 2015 to 3% in Jan 2020. However, by November 2020 the figure had increased to 7% or more than 7,600 people. This is significantly higher than the claimant count for the east of England (5.4%) or for Great Britain as a whole (6.3%). Jobs in Thurrock have been less resilient to the economic shock and groups who have traditionally found it harder to access jobs have been disproportionately affected [\[See reference 145\]](#).

**3.24** In 2021, gross weekly pay in Thurrock was around £584.50. The regional average during that year was £519 and the national average was £509.30, demonstrating that Thurrock has higher average pay than the regional and national averages [\[See reference 146\]](#).

**3.25** Table 3.2 shows the number of people employed by occupation within Thurrock between October 2020 and September 2021. The most significant employee jobs by occupation are professional occupations; administrative & secretarial; and process plant & machine operatives [\[See reference 147\]](#). Some parts of Thurrock have particular issues with broadband connectivity making it more difficult for businesses and for employees to work remotely. There are relatively low rates of home working.

**Table 3.2: Employee jobs by occupation in Thurrock**

Occupation	Number of Employees
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	6,800
Professional Occupations	15,000
Associate Professional and Technical	10,500
Administrative and Secretarial	11,100
Skilled Trades Occupations	7,500
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	7,600
Sales And Customer Service Occupations	8,100

Occupation	Number of Employees
Process Plant and Machine Operatives	11,100
Elementary Occupations	8,400

**3.26** As of 2020, there were a total of 7,945 active businesses within Thurrock. Of which, 1,135 were new businesses established in 2020 [\[See reference 148\]](#). The number of enterprises in Thurrock has been rising. Over a five-year period between 2015 and 2020 the number has increased much faster than for Great Britain or the East of England. The vast majority of businesses in Thurrock are small businesses employing fewer than nine people equating to roughly 90% of businesses in 2021. As of 2021, there are no businesses within Thurrock employing for than 250+ employees [\[See reference 149\]](#).

**3.27** Thurrock falls within the 40% most deprived areas in England for employment deprivation (ranking 116 out of 317 local authorities), with the south and west of the Borough being the most deprived (among the 10% most deprived) and the central areas of the Borough being the least deprived (among the 20% least deprived areas in England) [\[See reference 150\]](#).

The full economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will not be known for some time and there are many different forecasts about the severity and duration of the downturn, the impact it is having on particular businesses and on jobs, and how long the impacts will last. However, certain issues have emerged:

- Different sectors of the economy have been impacted in different ways. Retail, hospitality, culture and the arts, leisure and aviation are some sectors that have been badly hit. The most resilient parts of the economy are those where workers are most able to work from home.
- Some sectors and businesses have grown during the pandemic. The move to online retail and impact on the distribution industries are of particular note to Thurrock.

- Some parts of Thurrock have particular issues with broadband connectivity making it more difficult for businesses and for employees to work remotely. There are relatively low rates of home working.

## Projected baseline information

**3.28** According to data from the East of England Forecasting Model [See reference 151] Thurrock's Gross Value added is forecast to grow by an average of 1.7% per annum between 2020 and 2045, and total employment by an average of 1.0% per year, equating to 20,900 jobs.

**3.29** Potential investments in the local economy, particularly associated with identified economic hubs such as the London Gateway, Port of Tilbury and Lakeside, offer the potential for faster jobs growth in the coming years.

**3.30** As noted above, the full economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will not be known for some time. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that office-based staff will work remotely/at home more frequently, consequently businesses are likely to reduce their office space.

## Town centres and retail

### Current baseline information

**3.31** Much of the riverside area of Thurrock is highly urbanised, with a mixture of industrial and residential development at the western and eastern ends. The Borough has a number of main settlements, including Grays, Stanford-le-Hope, Corringham, South Ockendon and Tilbury, together with a number of villages in the Green Belt. Thurrock also contains the relatively new community of Chafford Hundred.

**3.32** Within Thurrock, Grays is the major town centre. Grays was the dominant retail centre in the Borough until the opening of Lakeside Shopping Centre in 1990. Lakeside Shopping Centre has ten times more floorspace than Grays. Grays is the administrative centre for Thurrock and for service and cultural facilities. Of the local centres, Corringham and South Ockendon are the largest.

**3.33** Town centres, and particularly retail, were severely affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the week ending 26 June 2020, retail footfall across the UK was 75% of the equivalent week in 2019.

**3.34** The overall retail unit vacancy rate in the UK at the end of 2021 was 14.4%, with shopping centre vacancies at 19.1%, high street vacancies at 14.4%, and retail park vacancies at 11.3%, making it the location with by far the lowest rate [\[See reference 152\]](#). This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating a shift towards online shopping with shopping centres being hardest hit.

**3.35** Total UK footfall decreased by 15.4% in March 2022 with footfall on the high street declining by 17.8%, in retail parks by 7.3%, and in shopping centres by 35.8% [\[See reference 153\]](#).

**3.36** Thurrock Council monitors the number of empty retail units in Thurrock's town centres and neighbourhoods, and also changes to the total retail floorspace. The status of retail units was most recently checked in December 2016 and June 2017. Table 3.3 shows the retail unit vacancy rates in Thurrock's town centres [\[See reference 154\]](#). Tilbury and South Ockendon had the highest number of vacant retail units in 2017. Table 3.4 shows the change in retail floorspace as a result of planning applications completed from 2015 to 2017. Overall, retail floorspace has decreased within Grays town centre and all other local centres. The largest decrease in retail floorspace is within A1, however, there was an increase in A3 retail use class. It is likely that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will have altered these figures, however, there is no data available to reflect the current situation in Thurrock.

**Table 3.3: Number of vacant units in Thurrock's town centres**

Town Centre	Vacant Units December 2016	Vacant Units June 2017
Grays town centre	13 (5.7%)	13 (5.7%)
Aveley local centre	3 (12.5%)	3 (12.5%)
South Ockendon local centre	9 (18.8%)	8 (16.7%)
Corringham local centre	3 (4.9%)	2 (3.3%)
Socketts Heath local centre	3 (8.3%)	3 (8.3%)
Stanford-le-Hope local centre	11 (11.2%)	9 (9.2%)
Tilbury local centre	12 (14.0%)	15 (18.3%)

**Table 3.4: Changes to retail floorspace from 2015-2017**

Retail Use Class	Change in Floorspace in Grays Town Centre (square metres)	Change in Floorspace in Other Local Centres (square metres)
A1	-534	-149
A2	-65	0
A3	495	100
A5	0	45
<b>Total change</b>	<b>-104</b>	<b>-4</b>

## Projected baseline information

**3.37** As previously noted, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted the health of town centres, exacerbating long-term trends of increased empty retail units and reduced footfall. However, long-term impacts following the pandemic



are uncertain. Town-centres in the Borough may see some improvement with a renewed focus, new investment and regeneration schemes (e.g. Grays Town Centre Framework) targeted at revitalising town centres.

## Implications for health

**3.38** Employment and job security influence mental health and levels of stress. Income can also influence physical health, in terms of the quality and location of accommodation that people can afford. A strong local economy will help open up more job opportunities, contribute to greater job stability and raise the quality of life for local people, resulting in improved health outcomes.

## Key sustainability issues and likely evolution of these issues without the Local Plan

**3.39** Thurrock has a high potential for future growth. Its strategic location, transport connections, labour force and land assets can enable the Borough to capture a greater share of Essex's and London's ongoing growth, while also delivering employment opportunities driven by existing businesses and a growing residential population. The plan area needs to ensure a future supply of jobs and continued investment to deliver economic growth. The primary industries in Thurrock are transportation and storage, and wholesale and retail trade. The economy in Thurrock is heavily reliant on relatively low-paying service jobs, particularly in logistics and retail. Further work is needed to make the economy more resilient and improve the productivity of employment in the Borough. Changes to the job market without the implementation of the Local Plan are difficult to predict. Some degree of change is inevitable, particularly given the uncertainties posed by Brexit and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, without the Local Plan, the need for new employment space in Thurrock will not be reflected in the existing Local Plan and the new quantum of jobs may not be delivered. The new Local Plan offers the

opportunity to create new high value jobs and safeguard local jobs through the allocation and promotion of new employment land and employment generating uses.

**3.40** Thurrock falls within the 40% most deprived areas in England for employment deprivation (ranking 116 out of 317 local authorities), with the south and west of the Borough being the most deprived (among the 10% most deprived). As part of its approach to addressing disparity in the Borough, the new Local Plan should seek to promote access and opportunity to employment for all, which will help tackle the pockets of employment deprivation in Thurrock.

**3.41** Thurrock's town centres, and particularly retail, were severely affected during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the pandemic accelerating a shift towards online shopping, with shopping centres being hardest hit. The Local Plan presents an opportunity to resist the loss of existing or allocated retail and commercial land and floorspace to help sustain the vitality of the town centres and, in particular shopping centres.

**3.42** Some parts of Thurrock have particular issues with broadband connectivity making it more difficult for businesses and for employees to work remotely. The new Local Plan presents an opportunity to improve broadband connectivity which will support the trend for increased home working.

## Chapter 4

# Transport connections and travel habits

## Policy context

### International

**4.1 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) [See reference 155]:** This initiative, adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Relevant to this topic are:

- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 13: Climate Action

### National

**4.2 The NPPF (2021) [See reference 156]** requires that “transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making”. The scale, location and density of development should reflect “opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure”. To help reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health the planning system should focus significant development “on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes”. The draft revised framework also requires that planning policies support an appropriate mix of uses across an area to further help reduce the

need to travel as well as the provision of high-quality walking and cycling network.

**4.3** While the framework promotes the use and development of sustainable transport networks it also requires that “where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development” should be identified and protected.

**4.4** The NPPF is supported by planning practice guidance relating to:

- **Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking** (2015) [\[See reference 157\]](#) – Provides guidance to help local authorities assess and reflect transport needs in Local Plan making.
- **Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements** (2014) [\[See reference 158\]](#) – Provides advice on when Transport Assessments and Transport Statements are required, and what they should contain.
- A target on ambient PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations.

**4.5** The **White Paper Levelling Up the United Kingdom** (2022) [\[See reference 159\]](#) sets out how the UK Government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It comprises 12 UK-wide missions to achieve by 2030, which includes the following key mission relating to transport and travel:

- By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.

**4.6** The **Environment Act 2021** [\[See reference 160\]](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles.

**4.7 Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021) [See reference 161]** The Decarbonisation Transport Plan (DTP) sets out the Government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It follows on from the Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge report published in 2020. The DTP commits the UK to phasing out the sale of new diesel and petrol heavy goods vehicles by 2040, subject to consultation, in addition to phasing out the sale of polluting cars and vans by 2035. The DTP also sets out how the government will improve public transport and increase support for active travel, as well as creating a net zero rail network by 2050, ensuring net zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040, and a transition to green shipping.

**4.8 Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020) [See reference 162]** sets out the strategic priorities for the new Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021. It sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. This document acknowledges that while there have been recently published strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in individual transport modes, transport as a whole sector needs to go further and more quickly, therefore the TDP takes a coordinated, cross-modal approach to deliver the transport sector's contribution to both carbon budgets and net zero.

**4.9 The Road to Zero (2018) [See reference 163]:** Sets out new measures towards cleaner road transport, aiming to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles. It explains how cleaner air, a better environment, zero emission vehicles and a strong, clean economy will be achieved. One of the main aims of the document is for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040.

**4.10 Transport Investment Strategy [See reference 164]:** Sets out four objectives that the strategy aims to achieve:

- Create a more reliable, less congested, and better connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it;

- Build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities;
- Enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

### 4.11 Highways England Sustainable Development Strategy and Action

**Plan** (2017) [See reference 165]: This strategy is designed to communicate the company's approach and priorities for sustainable development to its key stakeholders. Highways England aims to ensure its action in the future will further reduce the impact of its activities seeking a long-term and sustainable benefit to the environment and the communities it serves. The action plan describes how Highways England will progress the aspirations of their Sustainable Development and Environment Strategies. It describes actions that will enable the company to deliver sustainable development and to help protect and improve the environment.

### 4.12 Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport

**integration** (2013) [See reference 166]: Focuses on four core areas which need to be addressed so that people can be confident in choosing greener modes of transport. These are as follows:

- Accurate, accessible and reliable information about different transport options;
- Convenient and affordable tickets;
- Regular and straightforward connections at all stages of the journey and between different modes of transport; and
- Safe and comfortable transport facilities.

**4.13** The strategy also includes details on how the Government is using behavioural change methods to reduce or remove barriers to the use of sustainable transport and working closely with stakeholders to deliver a better-connected transport system.

## Regional and local

**4.14 Essex Transport Strategy [See reference 167]:** The Essex Transport Strategy outlines the County Council's priorities and strategic objectives for improving the transport network across Essex, including by encouraging a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling over single occupancy car journeys. The Plan supports the use of cleaner, lower carbon transport technologies, and car share schemes.

**4.15 Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy [See reference 168]:** The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy aims to reduce the number of private vehicles using the highway network and increase the use of more active and sustainable modes available to businesses, residents and schools within Essex. A key objective is to manage congestion during peak times and improve the environment by reducing the need to travel by car and potentially reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and other emissions.

**4.16 Transport East Active Travel Strategy [See reference 169]:** The vision for the region is that half of all journeys within towns and cities (up to three miles from the urban centre) will be made by walking and cycling. By 2050, half of all trips in the Transport East region will be made by walking or cycling. In Thurrock, a "Go Dutch" scenario (which applies Dutch rates for cycle commuting in England adjusting for distance and hilliness) would result in almost a twelve-fold increase of the population who could commute to work by cycle, to 24.9%.

**4.17 Transport East Draft Transport Strategy [See reference 170]:** The Draft Transport Strategy aims to outline a collective vision for the future of transport in the region and set out key investment priorities needed to deliver it. The overarching vision is underpinned by four strategic priorities: decarbonisation to net-zero, connecting growing towns and cities, energising coastal and rural communities, and unlocking international gateways. The four strategic priorities overlap and together form an integrated strategy for the region. The Draft Transport Strategy sets out the pathways and key goals needed for the delivery of their Vision, which include goals focused around improving sustainable and

active travel options, reducing demand for travel via digital connectivity, encouraging behaviour change, increasing access for coastal and rural communities, improving efficiency of freight transport, and creating better connected ports and airports to unlock international gateways.

**4.18** Section 5 of the Draft Transport Strategy highlights place-based strategic corridors which link key destinations with the region. For Thurrock, this includes improved links with South Essex, London, Basildon and Southend. The Strategy identifies the area as a major location for economic growth, particularly in relation to the major international ports at London Gateway, Purfleet and Tilbury (now Thames Freeport). At present, the area is heavily congested which acts as a major barrier to growth. The Strategy identifies the need for improved road, freight capacity, passenger rail and bus networks to support economic and population growth in the region.

**4.19 South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy: Resilient by Nature [See reference 171]:** This strategy sets out a vision for and integrated green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network across South Essex and sets out key objectives and projects to achieve this. This includes improving connectivity within and across the landscape through active travel links such as walking and cycling.

**4.20 Green Essex Strategy [See reference 172]:** This Strategy seeks to enhance, protect and create an inclusive and integrated network of high-quality green infrastructure in Greater Essex, to create a county-wide understanding of green infrastructure – its functions and values, and to identify opportunities for implementing green infrastructure. The Strategy promotes the use of the green infrastructure network for sustainable and active modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

**4.21 Thurrock Active Place Strategy [See reference 173]:** An Active Place strategy has been developed by Thurrock Council to inform the development of the Thurrock Local Plan. The strategy outlines three studies that present a planning related evidence base relating to the Borough's open spaces, indoor sports facilities and playing pitches. It also outlines an Active Travel Strategy for



Thurrock which reviews the existing cycle network in the Borough. The strategy presents a number of detailed key objectives and recommendations for open spaces, indoor facilities, playing pitches, as well seven geographical priority areas where physical improvements to active travel routes should be made. Recommendations to address mental barriers to active travel in the Borough are also included in the strategy.

### **4.22 Draft Thurrock Transport Strategy** (internal draft, currently unpublished):

The Interim Draft Transport Strategy builds on the existing Transport Strategy (2013 – 2026), taking into account much of the rapid change Thurrock is undergoing, including major regeneration projects and proposed development which will fundamentally alter the way people and goods move around Thurrock and the wider region over the next 20 years. Key projects include Grays Town Centre regeneration, the port expansion of Tilbury and London Gateway, proposed development of a logistics ‘superhub’ at Thames Enterprise Park, the Thames Freeport, Purfleet regeneration, and the proposed construction of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC). The Draft Transport Strategy outlines key challenges and opportunities for Thurrock which include supporting sustainable economic growth, supporting the health and wellbeing of Thurrock’s residents and addressing the Climate Emergency. These factors inform the Transport Vision Statement (‘Connecting Thurrock’), as well as 10 interconnected overarching goals and nine strategic focus areas specified in the Draft Transport Strategy. The Draft Transport Strategy will be supported by a series of shorter-term delivery documents, setting out more specific actions that aim to achieve the overarching vision and goals.

**4.23 Thurrock Transport Strategy 2013-2026** [\[See reference 174\]](#): The strategy sets out the aims, objectives and policies for delivering transport improvements in Thurrock, including (but not limited to) to respond to large scale growth at Lakeside, Tilbury Port and London Gateway. The strategy focusses on the need to address the following key areas: Delivering Accessibility, Tackling Congestion, Improving Air Quality and Addressing Climate Change, Safer Roads and Facilitating Regeneration. This strategy also sets out the long-term approach to walking and cycling in the Borough.

**4.24 2020/2021 Air Quality Annual Status Report [See reference 175]:** The 2020/21 Thurrock Air Quality Annual Status Report provides the most recent overview of air quality within Thurrock, as well as identifying actions that have been undertaken to improve it and the Council's future priorities. The report highlights that the main pollutant of concern in Thurrock is nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and to a lesser extent particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), both arising from road traffic emissions. NO<sub>2</sub> was monitored at 67 diffusion tube sites and three automatic monitoring sites across the Borough in 2020. The report notes the limitations of using 2020 data due to the travel restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and provides 2019 figures for reference. The Council plans to conduct a detailed and up to date assessment of all declared AQMAs across the Borough.

**4.25 Thurrock Air Quality and Health Strategy [See reference 176]:** The overarching aim of the strategy is to improve air quality in the Borough in order to reduce the health impacts of air pollution. The report outlines the baseline conditions for both air quality and health in the Borough, and highlights the correlation between the two. It highlights the dangers of certain pollutants and the need to act faster to reduce levels of harmful emissions due to impacts on public health. The report presents a strategy which includes to reduce transport emissions; tackle health inequalities; explore options for the implementation of clean air zones; and ensure air quality policies will be incorporated into future development, regeneration and planning guidance. The strategy also outlines the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for all AQMAs, as well as Borough-wide interventions. The implementation of the strategy will be monitored and progress on air quality assessed.

**4.26 Thurrock Highways Asset Management Strategy [See reference 177]:** The purpose of this strategy is to set out strategies for investment in key highways asset groups, define affordable service standards, improve how the highway asset is managed, enable more effective and efficient value for money highways services, and align asset management practices to the corporate plan and vision for Thurrock Council.

**4.27 Thurrock Climate Change Scoping Study [See reference 178]:** The Thurrock Climate Change Scoping Study was commissioned in 2019 to inform

the integration of climate change into the Council's planning policy, in accordance with NPPF. The study's aims are to provide a baseline assessment of the Borough's current climate impacts (emissions) and risks (hazards); summarise existing climate change legislation and policy; review existing documents, local plan processes, policy and operation; outline initiatives to focus on in the Local Plan; and to define what the requirements should be if a climate change strategy were to be developed for the Borough. The study provides a series of recommendations and next steps for the process including stakeholder engagement and establishing timescales and accountability. It also highlights core focus areas and priorities for the Borough including land-use and access issues, carbon emissions relating to buildings, retail and industry, transport infrastructure, natural resources, the environment and waste.

**4.28** As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, Thurrock Council is currently preparing a **Climate Change Strategy, Transport Strategy, Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy** and **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** which will be taken into account in the next iteration of the IIA.

## Implications of the policy review for the Local Plan and IIA

In order to align with the international, national, regional and local policies outlined above, the Local Plan should encourage sustainable modes of transport in order to improve air quality, minimise climate change and reduce congestion. The Local Plan should also encourage walking and cycling as alternative modes of transport by locating key services and employment opportunities close to where people live and by providing safe and attractive walking and cycling infrastructure, as well as recognise the multiple benefits they bring in terms of physical and mental health, reducing carbon emissions and reducing air pollution. The IIA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of IIA objectives relating to the mitigation of

climate change, improving air quality, public health and wellbeing, and the provision of sustainable transport.

## Baseline information

### Public transport network

#### Current baseline information

**4.29** The transport network in Thurrock Borough is shown in Figure 4.1.

**4.30** Public transport in the Borough offers a range of connections provided by bus and train services. In general, there are good levels of accessibility by public transport to key services in Thurrock compared to the East of England region, but journey times are greater than the national average (see Access to services and facilities for further details).

**4.31** There are seven train stations in Thurrock located at Purfleet, Ockendon, Chafford Hundred, Grays, Tilbury Town, East Tilbury, and Stanford-le-Hope, providing services between Southend-on-Seas and London. The rail line forms part of Network Rail's Anglia region. The Essex Thameside route runs from London Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness, carrying a mixture of commuter and leisure traffic, along with container traffic to and from the ports at Tilbury and London Gateway. However, overall capacity of the rail network is nearing capacity, including potential issues on freight services from Tilbury Port and London Gateway in future. Plans are underway for the redevelopment of Stanford-le-Hope railway station, which will comprise improved access for connecting buses and other travel links to and from the station. The redevelopment scheme will enhance access to new jobs at London Gateway and Thames Enterprise Park, as well as local residential need [\[See reference 179\]](#).

**4.32** Commuting patterns between the Borough and surrounding areas has been considered in the climate change adaptation and mitigation chapter. However, it is also worth considering the flow of commuters by train in and out of the Borough. More people commute out of Thurrock than commute in. The inflows and outflows of commuters in 2011 are outlined in Table 4.1. The top three outflow destinations generally are Basildon, Westminster and Havering. However, the top destinations by train are Westminster (-4,226 net change) and Tower Hamlets (-1,327 net change) [\[See reference 180\]](#).

**Table 4.1: Commuting inflows and outflows in Thurrock**

	Inflow	Outflow	Net Change
Total (all modes)	21,813	35,032	-13,219
By Train	1,262	9,648	-8,386

**4.33** Bus networks in the Borough are focused around the densely populated areas and routes between them. This translates to a high frequency network in the south and west of Thurrock, and across the centre to Stanford-le-Hope. On average, at least 5% of travel to work trips are made by bus in these areas. The less densely populated areas in the north and southeast of the Borough have limited access to both bus services and rail, resulting in generally poor public transport accessibility in these areas [\[See reference 181\]](#).

**4.34** There is a regular foot passenger ferry service on the River Thames that operates Monday to Saturday, connecting the town and port of Tilbury with Gravesend, Kent [\[See reference 182\]](#).

## Projected baseline information

**4.35** The effects of climate change are predicted to result in increased disruption to transport infrastructure and services in the future. For instance, this

could possibly include reduced capacity of the rail network due to hot track conditions.

**4.36** There are likely to be lasting changes to how often people commute to work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Anecdotal evidence suggests that office-based staff will work remotely/at home more often thereby reducing the need to travel to offices.

**4.37** The predicated growth of Thurrock's population will increase pressure on the Borough's public transport systems.

## Walking and cycling

### Current baseline information

**4.38** In Thurrock, 67% of employed people travel to work via car (including passengers) **[See reference 183]**. In Thurrock, walking levels are significantly below the average for neighbouring local authorities and the national average for England. 2011 Census data revealed that people in Thurrock were only half as likely to travel to work by foot or bike (7.6%) in comparison to the East of England average (14.5%), even though 27.4% of Thurrock residents live less than 5km from their workplace **[See reference 184]**.

**4.39** Thurrock has a fragmented walking and cycling network. Route analysis identified that Thurrock has 156km of public footpaths and 17km of bridleway, as well as 293km of cycle ways (categorised as advisory (158km), bridleway (11km), cycle lanes (11km), official (26km) and traffic-free (87km)) **[See reference 185]**.

**4.40** Progress has been made to invest in more sustainable transport options in the Borough. In particular, the Council has implemented a range of cycle improvement schemes through the £5 million Cycle Infrastructure Delivery Plan

between 2014-19, and more recently the £3.3 million South Essex Active Travel Programme and the £900,000 Emergency Active Travel Fund.

### Projected baseline information

**4.41** Given that active travel levels in the Borough have performed poorly relative to regional and national averages for a number of years, it is likely that this will continue unless there is substantial intervention. Many new jobs created in the Borough in coming years, such as at London Gateway, are located away from the main urban areas, limiting the opportunities for associated active travel.

## Road network

### Current baseline information

**4.42** Thurrock's location at the edge of Greater London means that it is a key location in terms of the strategic highway network, with the M25 and A13 acting as a crossroads of national importance.

**4.43** The key components of the road network in Thurrock are:

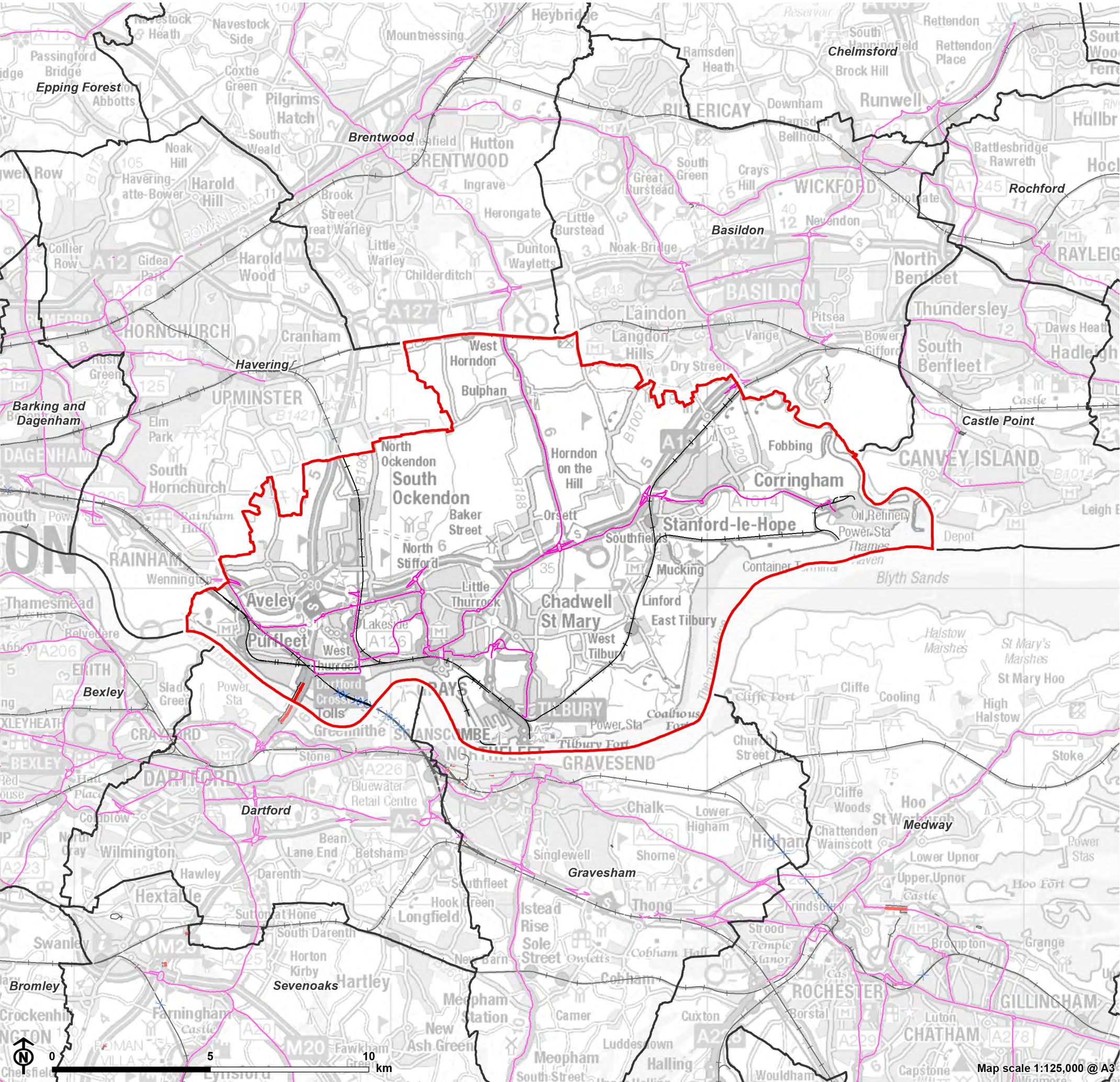
- The M25 (London Orbital Motorway) passes through the west of Thurrock, connecting the Borough with the major road network encircling most of Greater London.
- The A13 is an important route that links Central London with south Essex, passing through Thurrock.
- The M25 and A13 intersect in the west of the Borough, forming a crossroads of both national and regional importance (the Mar Dyke Interchange).

- The A282 creates a link between the M25 (north of the River Thames) and M25 (south of the River Thames). It connects at the M25/A13 crossroads and connects Thurrock with Dartford and areas south of the River via the Dartford Crossing.
- The A1090, A126, A1012, A1013 connect the urban areas of Purfleet and Grays with the surrounding major road network.
- The A1089 connects the town of Tilbury and Tilbury port with the A13.
- The A128 connects the village of Bulphan with the A13 to the south and the A127 to the north.
- The A1014 connects areas of Stanford-le-Hope, Corringham and London Gateway with the A13, in the east of the Borough.
- The remainder of the road network in Thurrock comprise primarily B roads and rural roads.

**4.44** Thurrock suffers from congestion on its strategic road network in certain areas, particularly along the A13. This is largely because a high proportion of the workplace and resident population travel by car. In addition, there is a high proportion of HGVs on the network. The M25 and A13 are routes of national and regional importance. Adverse traffic conditions on these routes often have knock-on effects on local roads, leading to localised gridlock on occasion and impacting negatively on economic productivity. The Dartford Crossing adds an additional element of traffic risk, as the bridge and tunnels are more sensitive to accidents and congestion, which leads to widespread effects on Thurrock's local road network [\[See reference 186\]](#).



Figure 4.1: Thurrock transport network





## Air quality

**4.45** In 2020, 1.00 billion vehicle miles were travelled in roads in Thurrock. Since 2003, vehicles miles within Thurrock for all vehicles have been gradually increasing up to 2019 when there was a sudden drop in vehicles miles from 1168.3 million miles to 996.1 million miles in 2020. This sudden drop in vehicle miles between 2019 and 2020 is likely due to travel restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic [\[See reference 187\]](#).

**4.46** Air quality and its impact on public health are considered in the air, land and water quality chapter. In summary, Thurrock has 18 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) [\[See reference 188\]](#). These are located mainly in the west of the Borough, close to major transport routes such as the M25 and A13 and are a result of traffic related pollution along busy roads used for commuter traffic or logistical purposes. The routes are often saturated with traffic during peak hours and there are many areas where there is relevant public exposure, predominantly in the form of residential dwellings in close proximity. Thurrock only has AQMAs declared for road traffic-based emissions; there are no industrial based AQMAs. The AQMAs are all declared for exceedance of the long-term objective for NO<sub>2</sub> (40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>).

## Noise

**4.47** High levels of road freight in Thurrock contribute to issues of transport-related noise. Noise is a common problem arising from transport, and studies have shown it can have major negative direct and indirect effects on health and well-being, on quality of life and on wildlife. Exposure to noise can increase stress levels, disrupt communications and disturb sleep. There is scope for noise emissions from transport to be reduced including through reducing the number of cars on the road, shifting road freight to sustainable alternative, and by installing noise road surfacing and noise barriers.

## Road safety

**4.48** Historic collision data indicates a downward trend in the number of people killed or seriously injured in Thurrock in the last twenty years. However, the downward trend has not continued in recent years, with a slight increase since 2015. Collisions are concentrated in urban centres in the south and west of Thurrock, with the proportion involving vulnerable road users; pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclist increasing and those involving motorised vehicles having decreased. The Council has committed to achieving 'Vision Zero' by 2040, which aims to eliminate road deaths and serious injury [\[See reference 189\]](#).

## Projected baseline information

**4.49** Thurrock and South Essex have seen major investment in recent years, including the opening of the DP World London Gateway port and logistics facility. There are a number of major schemes proposed that will influence the development of transport networks in Thurrock.

**4.50** There are several notable transport projects, that are either planned, programmed or underway in Thurrock, including:

- Lower Thames Crossing led by National Highways as a NSIP, expected in 2029/30.
  - Section A: South of the Thames in Kent, to include works along the M2/A2 corridor, the proposed junction with the M2/A2, and all other carriageway works as far as (and including) the proposed Thong Lane North Bridge over the new road.
  - Section B: To the north of Thong Lane North Bridge, as far as the proposed Tilbury Viaduct. This includes the works to build the tunnel and its approaches south and north of the Thames.

- Section C: From (and including) the proposed Tilbury Viaduct, as far as (and including) Green Lane, north of the proposed A13/A1089 junction with the new road.
- Section D: North of Green Lane, to include works through the Mardyke Valley, along the M25 corridor and around junction 29 of the M25.

The scheme will potential introduce new challenges but aims to relieve congestion west of the Borough by reducing demand at the existing Dartford Crossing.

- A13 Widening (A128 to A1014) led by Thurrock Highways, work underway, near completion.
- London Gateway Port led by DP World, via a Local Development Order, expected in 2023 or beyond.
- Tilbury Link Road – Led by National Highways (no longer part of the LTC NSIP, now a standalone project), the Council is exploring opportunities for a Tilbury Link Road, which would improve access to the Tilbury Growth Area. The scheme would provide connection between port activities in Tilbury and the proposed LTC route.
- A13 East Facing Slip Road – Installation of the East Facing Access Road on the A13 will provide access improvements between Lakeside and A13 East and will enhance capacity at J30 of the M25, reducing congestion issues in the area. The project is a long-held ambition for the Council and will improve operation of the local road network.

**4.51** Such major transport developments in Thurrock, alongside the expansion of London Gateway and the Borough's ongoing regeneration programme, could significantly alter the transport network. Whilst some projects aim to ease traffic congestion and improve road safety, other changes will increase traffic volumes (e.g. the number of HGVs on the road).

**4.52** Thurrock's location 20 miles east of central London means there are competing pressures for land in the Borough, including housing, employment and transport infrastructure. The predicated growth of Thurrock's population will increase pressure on the Borough's transport systems, increasing congestion

and road maintenance requirements [See reference 190]. Further to this, the effects of climate change are predicted to result in increased disruption to transport infrastructure and services in the future. Potential impacts include deterioration of road surfaces, impacting local transport networks and businesses.

**4.53** Future changes in noise and air quality are difficult to predict. In broad terms, there is a relationship between noise and air quality levels and traffic growth. This will be experienced with new development, increasing population levels, and major infrastructure projects in the Borough.

## Implications for health

**4.54** There is concern for the lack of sustainable and active travel options in relation to negative impacts on public health. Some areas of the Borough experience significant health challenges, with high levels of obesity and risk of associated health problems. Thurrock has the highest proportion of adults who are classified as overweight and obese in the South East of England region, at 76%, almost 14% above the England national average [See reference 191]. Encouraging active travel, such as walking and cycling can have a wider range of positive implications for health, including increased physical activity and opportunities for social interaction. In addition, an increase in active travel would be associated with a decrease in vehicular transport and an associated decrease in air pollutants that can be harmful to human health.

## Key sustainability issues and likely evolution of these issues without the Local Plan

**4.55** Thurrock suffers from congestion on its strategic road network, mainly in the west of the Borough, particularly along the A13 and M25. Thurrock currently

has 18 AQMAs, all of which are declared for road traffic-based emissions. This is largely because a high proportion of the workplace and resident populations travel by car, with active travel levels significantly below the average for neighbouring local authorities and the national average for England. Adverse traffic conditions on these routes often have knock-on effects on local roads, leading to localised gridlock on occasion and impacting negatively on economic productivity. The Dartford Crossing adds an additional element of traffic risk, as the bridge and tunnels are more sensitive to accidents and congestion, which leads to widespread effects on Thurrock's local road network.

**4.56** Road traffic in the Borough is a significant source of noise pollution. In particular, highly congested roads with high traffic volumes and large volumes of HGVs can cause substantial levels of noise and vibration for nearby residents.

**4.57** Road collisions are highest in urban centres in the south and west of Thurrock, with the proportion involving vulnerable road users; pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclist increasing and those involving motorised vehicles having decreased.

**4.58** Thurrock has a fragmented walking and cycling network which is a barrier to active travel. 2011 Census data revealed that people in Thurrock were only half as likely to travel to work by foot or bike (7.6%) in comparison to the East of England average (14.5%), even though 27.4% of Thurrock residents live less than 5km from their workplace.

**4.59** In the absence of the Local Plan, the policies in the NPPF would apply. These support measures to improve traffic and travel management; to develop and enhance green infrastructure; and to direct new development to sustainable locations which limits the need to travel and offer a choice of transport modes. However, without targeted action at the Borough-level, it is anticipated that traffic congestion and air and noise pollution will continue to increase with the rising population and car dependency will continue to be high. The implications of air pollution for human health and the natural environment are described in Chapter 5: Air, land and water quality. The location of transport infrastructure

development also presents risks to the natural environment (at protected sites and more generally). The Local Plan provides an opportunity to reduce the demand on the transport network and to improve adverse effects by:

- Locating development and tailoring densities sustainably (with good access to shops, services and sustainable transport modes) and prioritising access to such destinations by sustainable modes;
- Supporting and prioritising sustainable travel choices (e.g. requiring sustainable modes to be available on occupation of new homes and workplaces);
- Supporting the uptake of electric vehicles and e-bikes through the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
- Specifying a requirement for applications for major development to include an assessment of their air quality impacts as part of their Transport Assessments/Statements; and
- Specifying a requirement for major developments that may impact on areas at risk of exceeding EU limit values to provide for ongoing air quality monitoring that confirms the effectiveness of proposed mitigation of the traffic and air quality impacts of development.