



**SOUTHEND TODAY**

# THE BOROUGH OF SOUTHEND

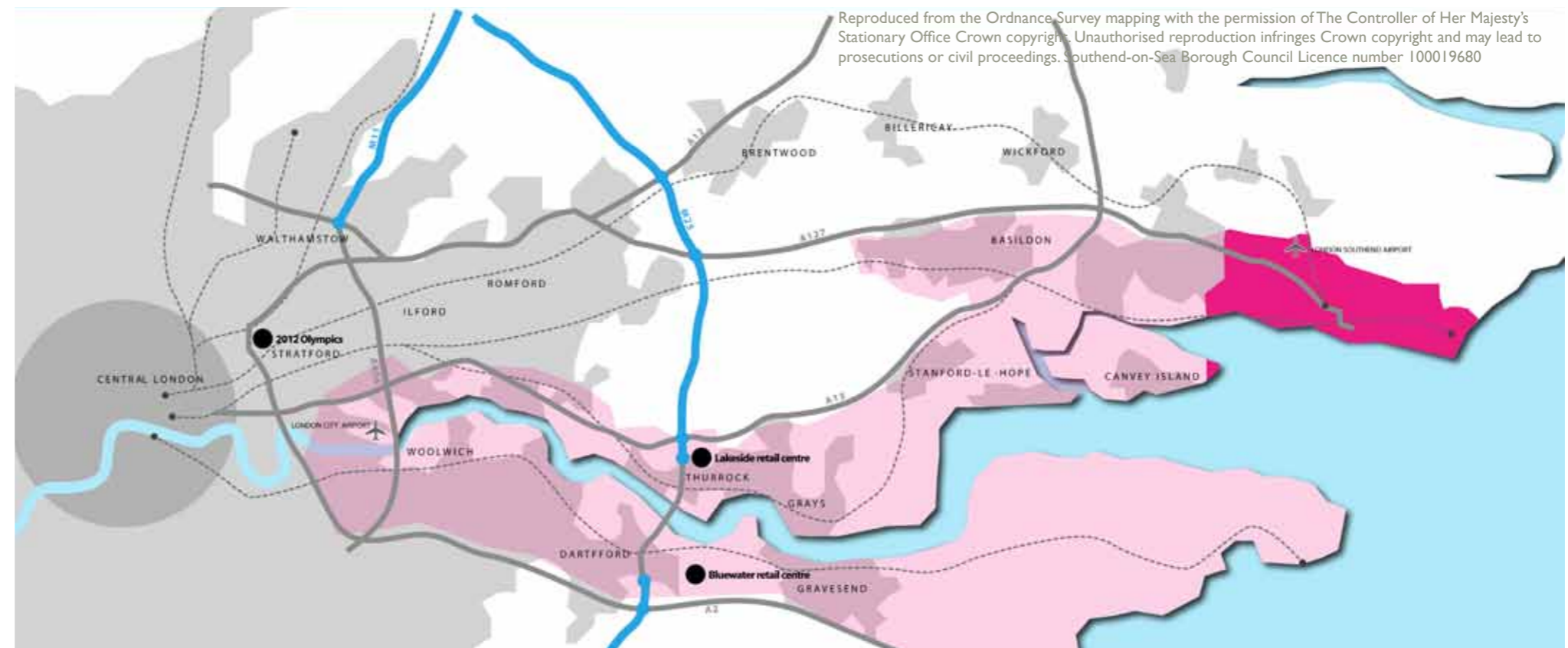
The Borough of Southend-on-Sea is the eastern-most extremity of the Thames Gateway, lying on the northern side of the Thames Estuary at the point where it meets the North Sea. It has a linear form lying along the coast and at roughly 13km by 4km is over three times as wide as it is deep. The Borough is bordered to the north by Rochford and to the west by Castle Point.

The central part of the modern Borough was originally designated a municipal Borough in 1892 and gradually increased by absorbing first Leigh in 1913 and then Shoeburyness and part of Rochford in 1933. Over time the Borough has varied between being under the sole control of the local council and under the control of Essex County Council. However, in 1998 it became a unitary authority once more and now controls all aspects of local administration.

Southend has its origins as the literal south end of Prittlewell and its rapid growth was largely stimulated by the railway line, which linked the Borough to London, and the access to the coast which this afforded, making Southend a convivial seaside destination for large parts of East London and beyond.

The fact that Southend sits on a shallow estuary effectively ruled out a viable existence as a shipping or fishing port. However, it did lead to one of the most noted features of Southend – the longest pleasure pier in the world, designed to provide access for boats regardless of the tides. This relationship between the town and the estuary has inevitably had a significant impact on its form, both in the way that important town centre uses are effectively

## Regional context (Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



clustered at the edge of the urban area on the waterfront, but also in the urban design of the streets, spaces and buildings close to the water. By contrast, Old Leigh, with its access for shallow-draft vessels along Leigh Creek owes its existence to a working waterfront.

The topography may also have played a crucial role in influencing the social morphology of Southend. Westcliff, with its elevated position and views over the estuary attracted higher quality development than land to the east of the pier. The bold sea front buildings and the attractive terraces behind them retain a strong

prestige, making it one of the more expensive neighbourhoods in the Borough.

Later development continued to place a premium on proximity or views to the estuary, influencing the patterns of growth through the twentieth century.

The advent of the railway and later widespread car ownership gave rise to modern suburban development with housing separate from workplaces, where the quality of the environment was prized alongside the quality of each home. Prefigured in the Edwardian period

but pursued with genuine vigour in the interwar period, suburban development in Southend traces the gradual shift from regular Victorian gridded blocks to gentle curving forms and more irregular patterns of later development. Whilst some elements of postwar development continued along similar lines the sixties and seventies in particular saw the emergence of newer alternatives to the traditional block structures including Radburn-style public sector housing and cul-de-sac developments. In more recent years the focus has once again been on town centres, with greater exploration of the potential for higher density, sustainable models of living.

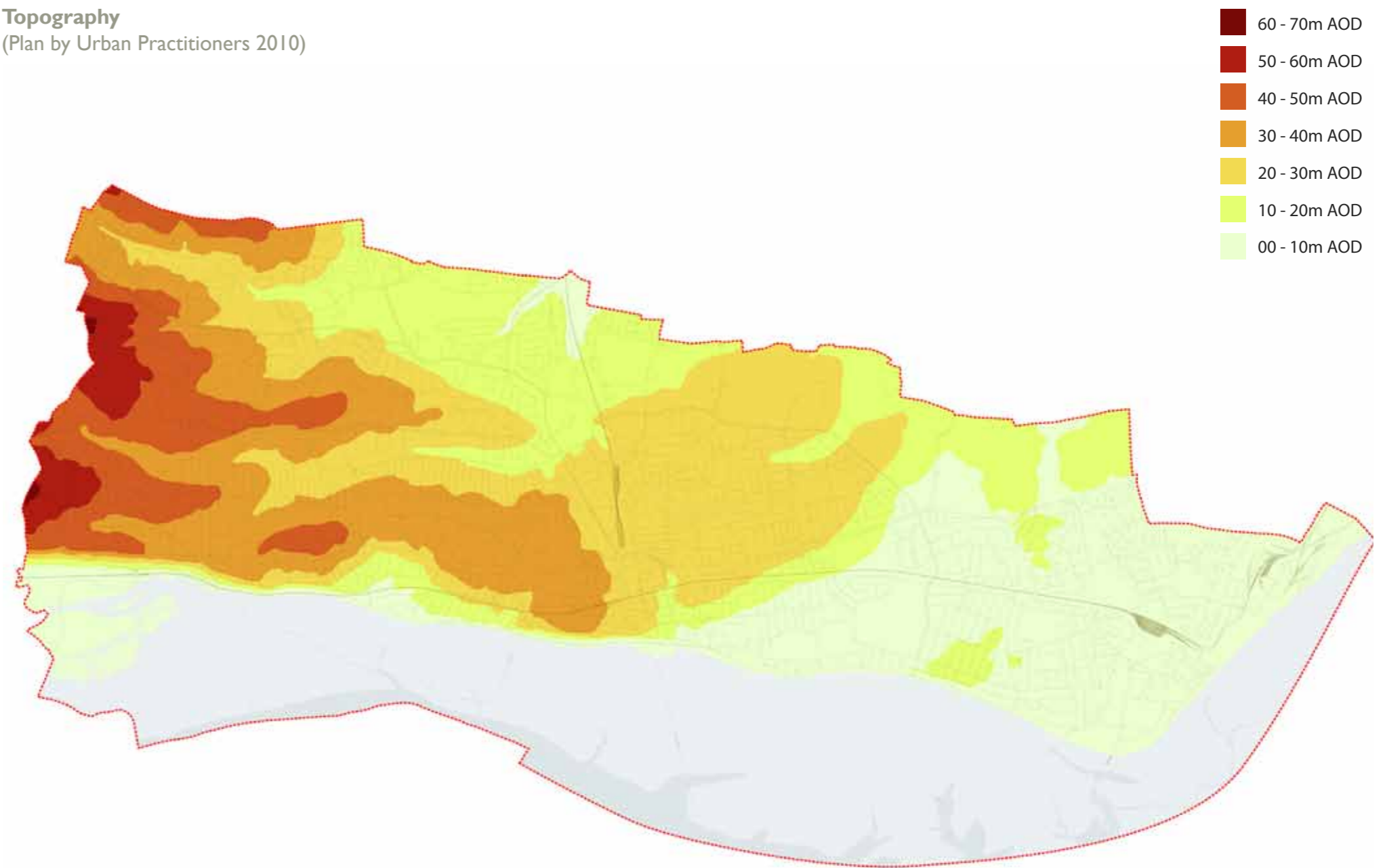
# TOPOGRAPHY

The eastern part of Southend-on-Sea Borough is generally very flat and lies at less than ten metres above sea level. The land rises gradually to the west, defined by three gentle ridges shaped by small watercourses, including Prittle Brook, which run east west before shedding north towards the Paglesham Reach. At the western end of the Borough the land rises to over 60m above sea level, affording wide open views across the Thames Estuary and out to sea.

Perhaps the most striking topographical feature is the strong escarpment found along large stretches of the sea-front in the western half of the Borough. These include the landscaped pleasure gardens between Southend and Westcliff but then also provide the dramatic setting for the hill-top church at Leigh-on-Sea, standing over the cluster of old cottages leading down to the historic fishing town of Old Leigh.

One notable feature of the east-west orientation of the landscape is that although it is impossible to be more than four kilometres from the water front it is very easy for the topography to deprive one of a view of the sea, making some areas such as Eastwood feel far more in-land than they might otherwise be.

**Topography**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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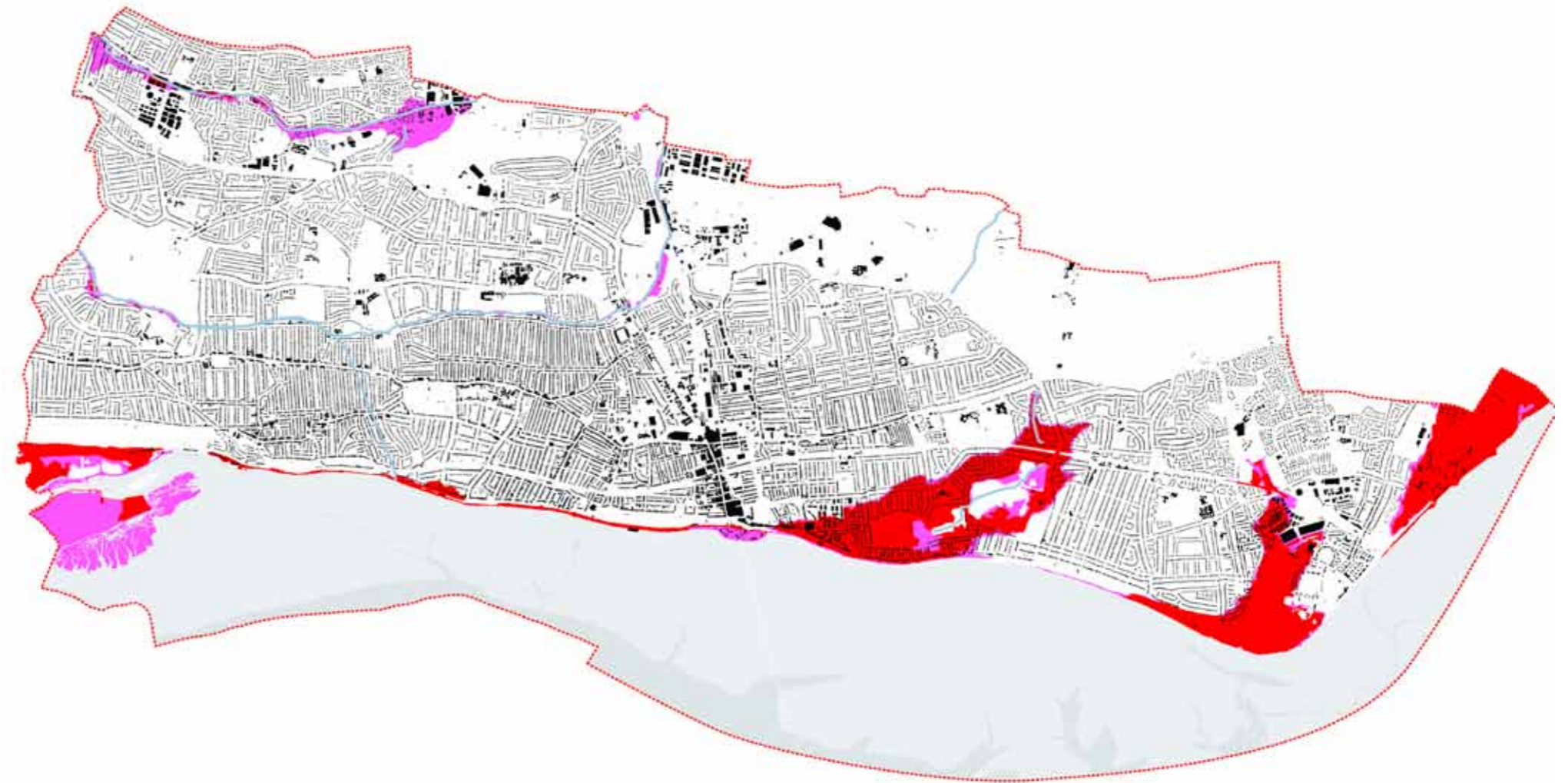


# FLOOD RISK

As might be expected of a coastal area, flood risk in the Borough largely relates to those low-lying areas which are at risk of inundation from the sea, particularly found towards the eastern end of the Borough. This includes the area between Shoebury Garrison and Cambridge Town and the New Ranges area to the very eastern end. Also of note is the category two flood risk area to the north in Eastwood which arises from proximity to Prittle Brook. A number of very small flood risk areas also lie along the Prittle Brook corridor.

**Flood Risk Areas**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)

- Category 2 flood
- Category 3 flood
- Main river line



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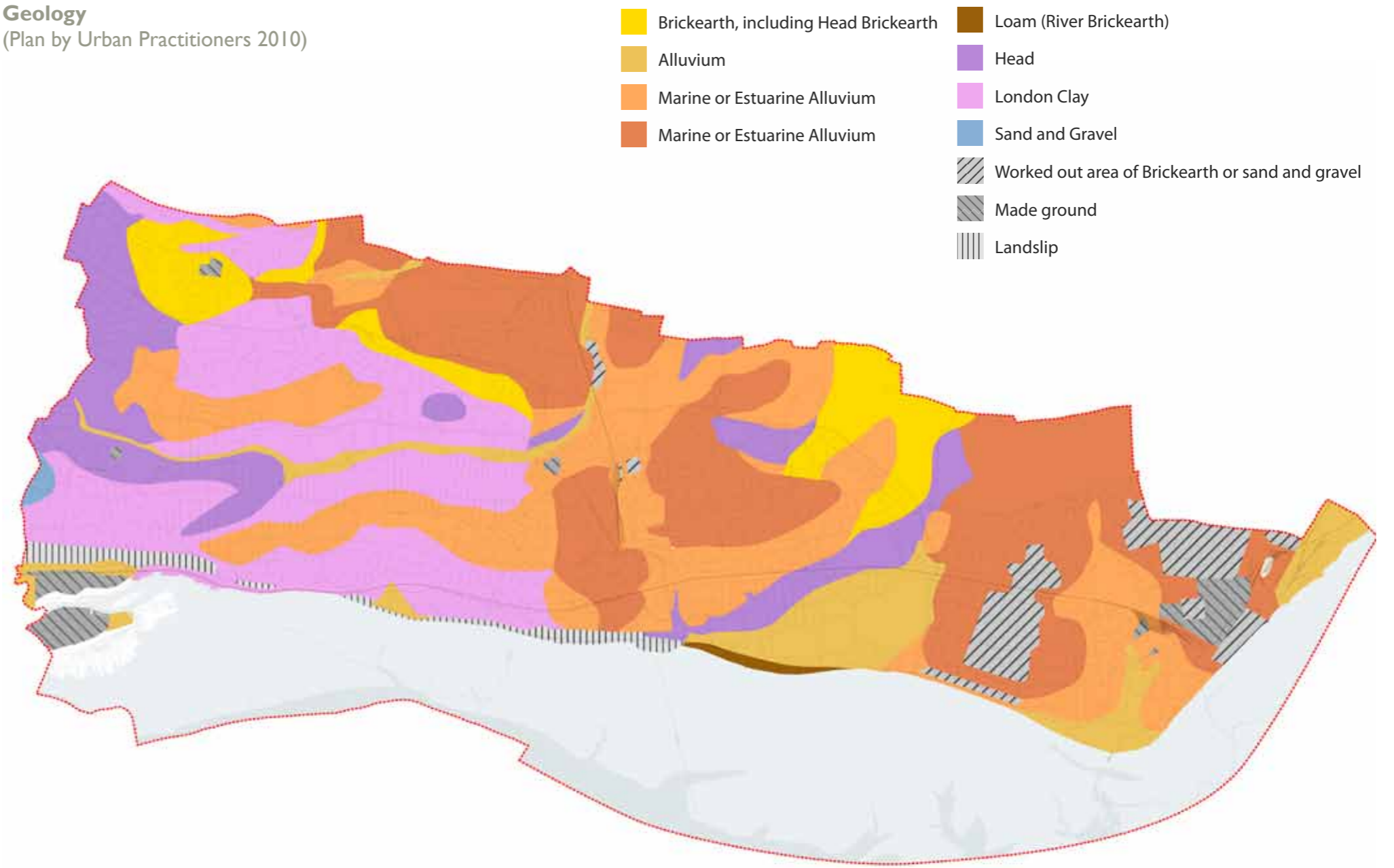


# GEOLOGY

This plan shows the varied geological layers found within Southend, ranging from London Clay in the higher ground to the west of the Borough through to marine and estuary deposits of silty alluvium in the east. Of particular note is the presence of Brickearth, as this can be used with little or no other materials required to make stock bricks, which are an important element of the Borough's built character.

The geological plan illustrates that significant areas of the eastern part of the Borough were worked to provide brickearth, sand and gravel as well as identifying the fragile condition of the seaward facing cliffs in the western part of the borough.

**Geology**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



- Brickearth, including Head Brickearth
- Alluvium
- Marine or Estuarine Alluvium
- Marine or Estuarine Alluvium
- Loam (River Brickearth)
- Head
- London Clay
- Sand and Gravel
- Worked out area of Brickearth or sand and gravel
- Made ground
- Landslip

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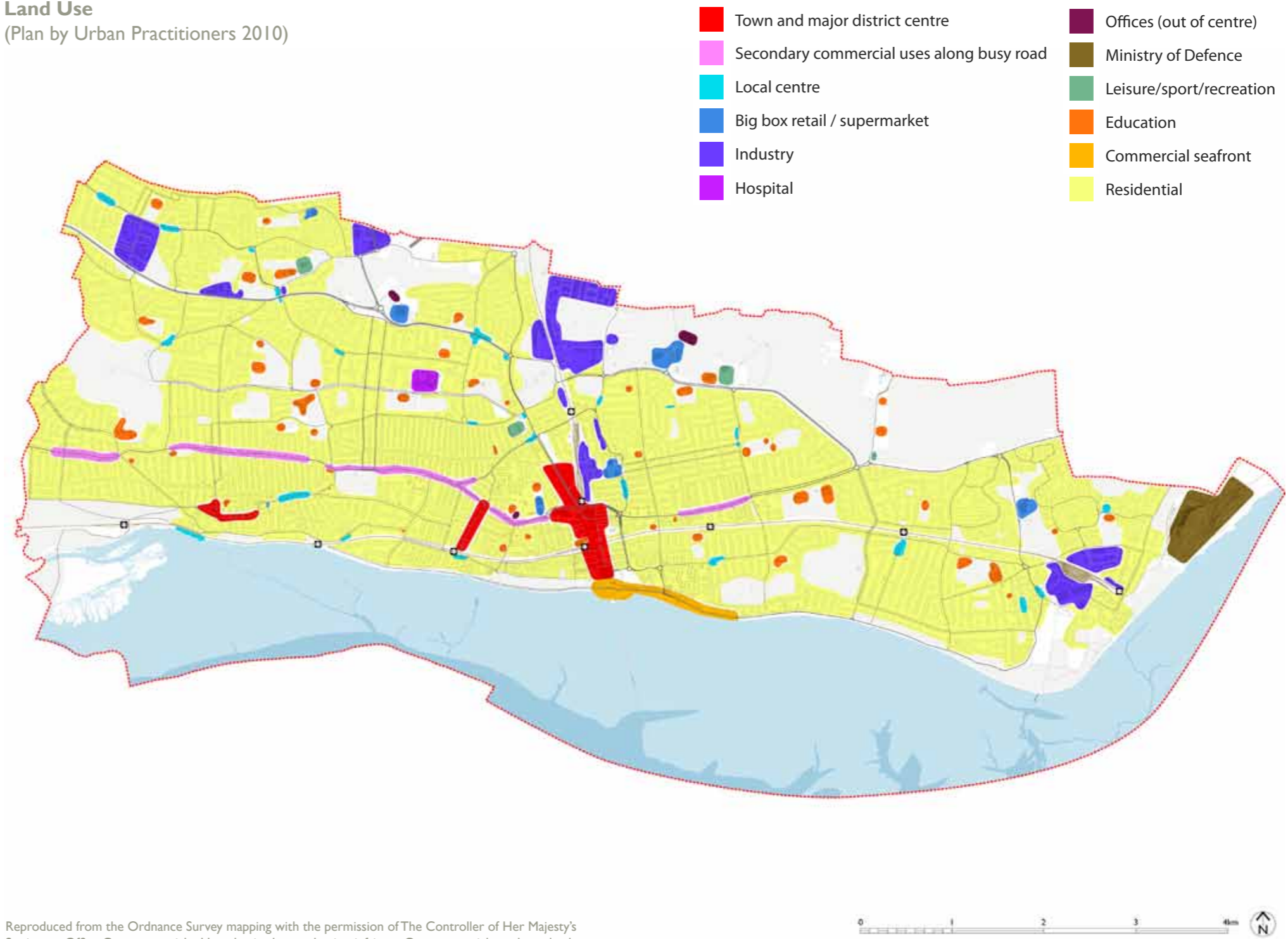
# LAND USE

The predominant land use in Southend-on-Sea is residential development (by a substantial proportion). It dominates every quarter of the Borough and it is notable for the way in which it has expanded as far as possible until constrained by physical barriers such as the seafront or other constraints such as the greenbelt or Borough boundary.

Beyond this, there are a number of other significant factors to note:

- The main retail and civic functions are focussed towards the seaward edge of the Borough, principally around Southend and Leigh-on-Sea but with the linking element of the London Road forming an almost continuous spine to the area;
- A significant area of industrial development is located at Shoeburyness where easy access by rail, and the availability of larger sites, presumably made it a logical location. Later business and industrial areas are located to the north of the Borough with access from the A127 (Arterial Road/Prince Avenue) which now provides the main route in and out of the area;
- Southend is rightly known for its leisure area along the seafront, a key feature of the town for over a century; and
- Although the forms of development found in the Borough are relatively low density when taken as an average, they cover a large proportion of the Borough's available land.

**Land Use**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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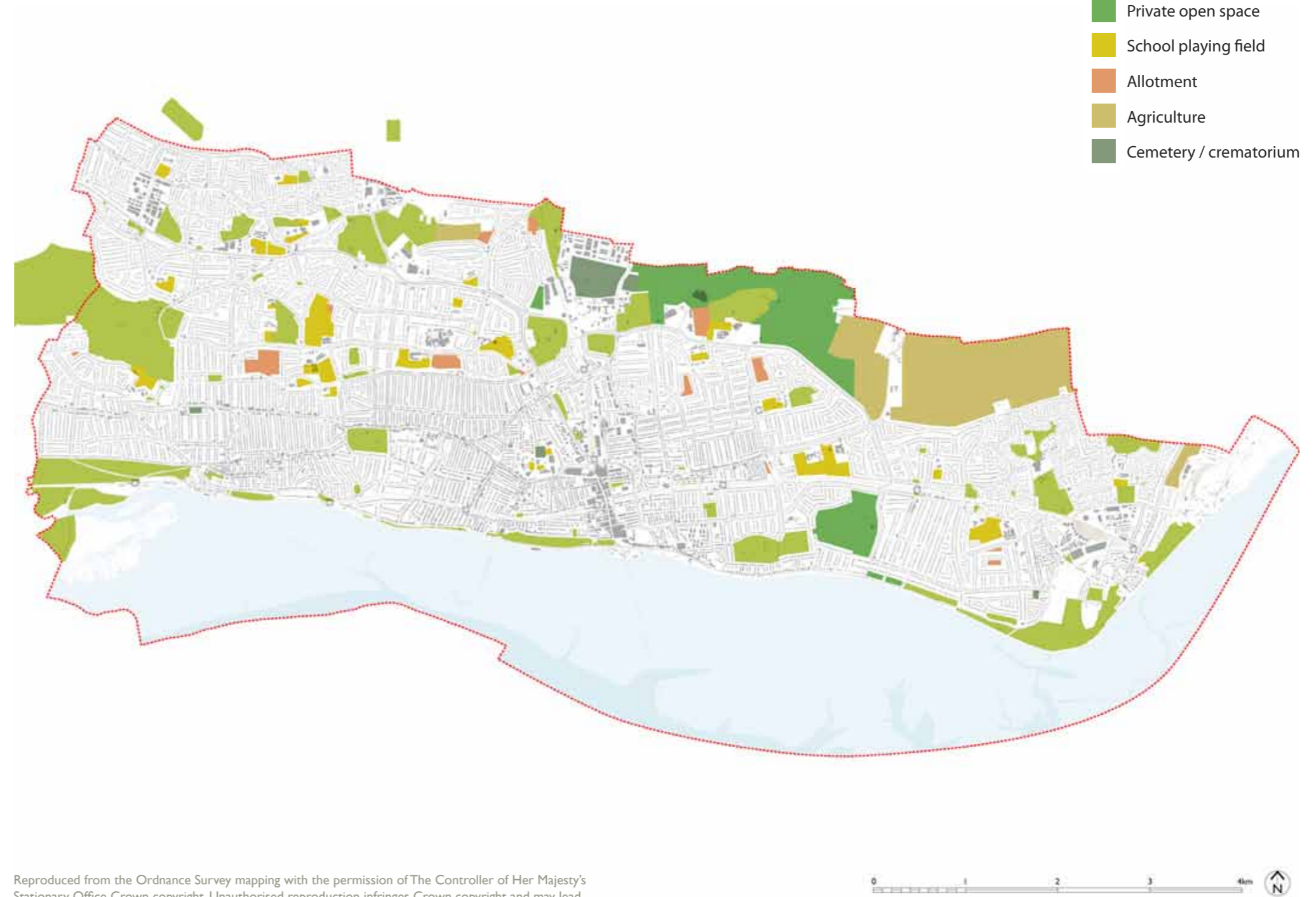
# TREES AND OPEN SPACE

As noted in the description of land uses in the Borough, relatively little of the available land remains undeveloped. This is partly due to the low density nature of much of the development which is spread across the Borough. However, despite this, the Borough's open spaces and trees play a key role in its character and identity and the general quality of the environment. The Thames Estuary and seafront form the dominant open space in the Borough providing a landscape which changes continually with the ebb and flow of the tide and providing an uplifting expanse of openness. Coupled with this, the Borough boasts an impressive wealth of high quality and well-maintained public open spaces including four parks with a Green Flag Award (2010): Priory Park and Southchurch Park in Southend, Belfairs Park and Nature Reserve in Leigh and Chalkwell Park in Westcliff-on-Sea.

Whilst the north and west of the Borough retain relatively large areas of green space, it is very noticeable how little green space is available in the very centre of the Borough. This accounts for many of the oldest areas of urban layout which feature relatively tightly planned streets of terraced housing. Although a similar lack of communal green space is also noted in the Edwardian and Interwar areas which followed, this is partly compensated for by being planned to layouts which feature significantly more private amenity space and with generous provision of street verges and trees.

The seafront areas provide a particularly unique form of open space which varies considerably from east to west as the local topography changes and creates differing relationships between the land and sea. At the western end of the Borough, striking cliffs provide

**Green Space**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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elevated views across the estuary. Linear parks have been created to allow this to be enjoyed with formal pleasure gardens on the clifftops changing to more informal spaces with scrub vegetation and meandering footpaths in some parts of the cliff sides. In the centre, Southend Cliff Gardens incorporate a blend of ornamental gardens and woodlands and a funicular railway on the cliffs which slope down to the Western Esplanade and the formal promenade along the seafront. At the eastern end of the Borough, the land is lower and in places the residential areas face directly onto the beach separated only by the Eastern Esplanade. Further east still, Thorpe Esplanade is the setting for formal gardens between the beachhead and the housing behind and includes a range of leisure facilities such as tennis courts and bowling greens. From all along the seafront, the famous pier provides a focal point, drawing the eye out towards the sea and to the Isle of Sheppey and Isle of Grain beyond.

In the north eastern corner of the Borough there is an area of open agricultural land which is designated as Green Belt. This forms part of a wider agricultural area extending either side of the Roach estuary across the District of Rochford. It is the only substantial area of open countryside in the Borough and plays an important role in separating the small villages to the north of Great Wakering, Little Wakering and Stonebridge from the urban areas of Southend. The area is gently undulating and comprises small rectilinear arable fields with scattered fragments of hedgerows.

Within the built up areas of the Borough, trees play a key role in the character of the streetscapes. The density of tree cover varies substantially across the Borough with some

areas such as the Clifftown Conservation Area having a dense framework of mature trees both along the streets and in private gardens. In many areas however, the density of tree cover is low with either few trees or, more commonly, a reasonable density of trees but a predominance of small varieties of trees such as cherries, flowering pears and ornamental hawthorns. These bring limited benefits in terms of biodiversity value, visual impact and the potential to mitigate the effects of climate change. The Council should continue to look for opportunities to plant larger varieties of trees (particularly native species and those suited to coastal areas).

The Borough has many attractive streetscapes and has particularly good examples of mature hedge verges comprising a wide band of ornamental shrub planting (mainly evergreen varieties) and mature trees which separates the road and pedestrian footway. These are mainly found in the Edwardian and early twentieth century areas such as Thorpe Bay and Chalkwell. They are generally well maintained and provide attractive green edges to the streets whilst also providing valuable cover and food sources for wildlife. Significant green corridors have also developed on Thorpe Hall Avenue and Southchurch Boulevard where the roads were originally designed as dual carriageways with a wide central reservation accommodating a tree-lined tram route. The tram lines have disappeared but a broad grassed central reservation with mixed trees remains and is a key landscape feature of the area.

The key areas and main features of the different types of open space within the Borough are briefly described below:



## Parks and open spaces

The Borough's main parks are popular with both residents and tourists/visitors alike. They help to define the character of Southend and contribute to its position as a leading and popular seaside resort. The largest parks in the Borough, (ie larger than approximately 20 hectares) are:

- Southend Cliffs;
- Belfairs Park, including Belfairs Golf Course;
- Chalkwell Park;
- Priory Park;
- Southchurch Park;
- Belton Hills/Marine Parade Gardens; and
- Gunners Park (which is being reshaped as part of the Garrison development).

Many of these are fine parks which are well maintained and with good quality facilities. They often have traditional style displays of annual bedding plants with seating areas and park cafes. Most also have children's play areas and other facilities for young people such as skate parks or ball courts. These have undergone significant investment in recent years and are seen as an important function of the parks. These large parks are well-used and act as popular meeting places for residents in the Borough and also as an attraction for tourists and other visitors.

Although these large parks are good quality and distributed across the Borough, there are several parts of the Borough which are poorly served in terms of not having a good-sized park within easy walking distance (eg St. Lukes, Prittlewell, St. Laurence, and Blenheim wards). Overall provision in terms of ha/1000 people is highest in the wards of Shoeburyness, West

Leigh and Belfairs wards and lowest in the wards of Westborough, Victoria and Kursaal.

As well as these main parks, the Borough also has many small local and neighbourhood parks. Some of these are hidden gems such as Churchill Gardens - a secluded park in a former quarry providing an oasis of peaceful greenspace just a minute away from the busy Victoria Avenue. Others are well known such as the formal ornamental gardens of Prittlewell Square at the centre of the Prittlewell Conservation Area. Most however are low key open spaces which perform an important role in providing easily accessible local green space and play facilities and forming a valuable element of the Boroughs green infrastructure.



Southend Cliffs Gardens



Chalkwell Park



Priory Park



Belton Hills/Marine Parade Gardens

**Private open spaces**

Much of the open space in the Borough is privately owned either in the form of private gardens or in the large private golf courses at Thorpe Hall golf club and the Essex Golf Complex at Garons Park. Although this open space is not publicly accessible it still has an important influence on the character of the Borough in terms of the contribution it makes to the overall tree cover in the Borough and in maintaining the biodiversity of the Borough. The Essex Golf Course is located in the greenbelt on the northern fringe of Southend providing a transition between the urban edge of the Borough and the open agricultural land to the north. Contrasting with this is The Thorpe Hall Golf Club which is one of the largest greenspaces in the Borough and set within the developed area of Thorpe Bay. Founded in 1907,

the golf course now contains a framework of established mature vegetation with an 18 hole course. It has been under threat of development but makes a valuable contribution to the green character and biodiversity of the area and so is important to protect.

A substantial proportion of the Borough's trees are located on this private land, the most important of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.



**Churchyards and cemeteries**

Churchyards and cemeteries are distributed across the Borough and are important both as areas for burials and cremations but also as areas of open space for informal recreation and as wildlife habitat in the Borough. Many of the historic parish churches such as St John the Baptist Church and Holy Trinity Church in Southend and St Mary's Church in Prittlewell have attractive churchyards with mature vegetation providing a focus for local communities. The Borough also has four cemeteries which are managed by Southend Council: Sutton Road Cemetery, North Road burial ground, Leigh Cemetery and a Jewish cemetery in Stock Road.



**Playing fields**

The Borough contains many playing fields most of which are either owned and managed by the Council as a public open space facility or as part of a school. A few however are privately owned and managed by a sports club. The 2004 Southend-on-Sea Playing Pitch Strategy estimated that at that time there were 123 pitches in the Borough. Provision per head of population was identified as being much better on the eastern, western and northern edges of the Borough, and worst in the very densely developed central and southern wards.



### Allotments

Allotment sites are well distributed throughout the Borough other than in the central area around Southend town centre and to the south of the A13 in Leigh and Westcliff-on-Sea where there is no provision. The allotment sites provide a valuable recreational resource for the Borough providing opportunities for residents to grow their own produce. The 2004 Open Spaces Study identified an average occupancy rate of 50%. However, this has increased significantly in recent years in line with a national trend of increased popularity of allotment sites and is now understood to be close to 100%.



### Natural and semi-natural greenspace

Although the Borough is relatively densely developed, it also contains areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace including areas of national and international importance such as the Leigh Marsh National Nature Reserve and the Benfleet and Southend Marshes Special Protection Area (which includes Two Tree Island). Designations include SSSI and Ramsar.

These are prominent areas which are popular with both visitors and residents alike and strongly influence the feel of the Borough. Other natural areas of local importance include the Belton Hills Local Nature Reserve on the cliff escarpment in Leigh and Shoebury 'Old Ranges' nature reserve in the south west corner of Gunners Park in Shoeburyness. These natural sites play an important role in



maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in the Borough and also in providing opportunities for education and informal recreation, although the SSSI in Gunners Park is not accessible to the public.

### Woodlands

The Borough contains few areas of woodland although formerly much of the local area was extensively wooded. The place names Leigh and Hadleigh for example are derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'leah' meaning a clearing or settlement in woodland indicating that the original settlements were established in a woodland area. The main area of woodland in the Borough is Great Wood in Belfairs Park which extends across the Borough boundary into Castle Point Borough. It is classified as Ancient Semi-natural woodland and parts date back to the twelfth century. A small area of mature woodland also exists in Oak Wood Park in Eastwood.



# CONSERVATION AREAS

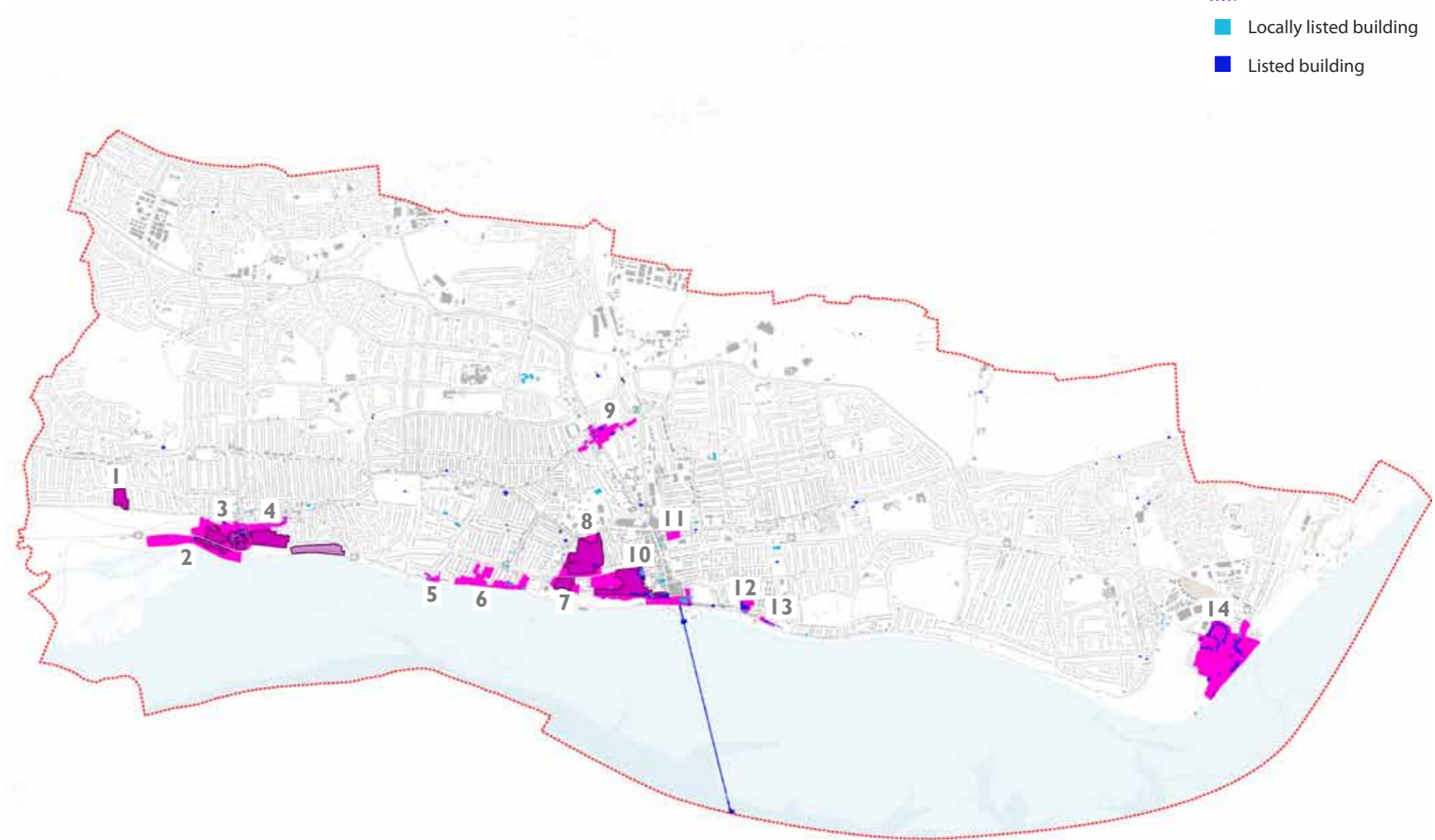
...‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’

Southend Borough Council currently identifies 14 conservation areas within the Borough. With the exception of the centrally placed Prittlewell these are all located along the southern fringe of the Borough and include a fine range of character types from the former garrison buildings of Shoeburyness to the Homes for Heroes development of the Chamanslord Estate.

Some conservation areas are designated to note and protect the character of unusual or special areas, such as the Kursaal, for example. However, some conservation areas are so defined because they are the best examples of their type, and in this they can provide particularly useful specimens which help us to understand the historical development of an area. This could relate to the particular building typology, but might also deal with particularly fine examples of materials and workmanship within the type. By their nature, conservation areas also tend to be those areas which have a higher retention and protection of original detailing and so provide a useful demonstration of a more cohesive approach to the overall street composition than is seen elsewhere.

The conservation areas are briefly described as follows:

**Conservation Areas**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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**1. Chapmanslord Conservation Area** of Canvey Road is the most recent conservation area in Southend, having been designated in September 2004.

A character appraisal of the area identified its special architectural and historic interest. It was an estate developed by the Chapmanslord Housing Society during the early 1920s as part of the Government's 'Homes for Heroes' campaign and has a distinctive and attractive character. Its special interest is:

- It was part of the 'Homes For Heroes' campaign after World War I;
- It is an example of early 20th century Garden City planning with a distinctive housing layout and street design;

- It has a distinctive townscape stemming from its planned layout - most of the area has an enclosed 'Arcadian' character with abundant informal and semi-informal landscaping (public & private);
- The estate combines Arts and Crafts architecture with a variety of house types having a cottage character; and
- The estate has design unity with a common palette of materials and features.

The loss of original features, such as windows, has eroded some of the character of the Champmanslord Conservation Area. However, the article four direction should help to protect and enhance the historic character in the future.



**2. Leigh Old Town Conservation Area** consists largely of one main street, constrained on one side by Leigh Creek and on the other by the railway. Despite its small size its townscape is diverse and with its variety of marine activities and industries squeezed almost at random into its small area - boat building and repair, sailing, fishing, cockle processing and retailing, together with pubs and houses - it has its own unique character as a vibrant working marine village and port.

Historically, the Old Town was densely developed with mostly small buildings packed close together in an informal layout. Despite some 20th century demolition and redevelopment, it has generally kept this close urban "texture" with buildings on the edge of the narrow High Street and narrow gaps providing glimpses of the Creek. With the

curved alignment of the High Street and varied building designs, this close texture has produced an attractive and lively townscape.

Its position overlooking Leigh Creek and the marshes to the south and backed by Leigh Hill to the north enables extensive views into and out of the area which adds to its townscape interest.



**3. Leigh Conservation Area** relates to that part of the settlement north of the railway rising up Leigh Hill to the parish church. It was designated a Conservation Area in 1971, and later extended.

The Conservation Area's special interest comes from its history as part of the working marine village, its varied traditional architecture and its fine position on the hillside overlooking the Estuary.

Historically, the village was centred on the waterfront at the foot of the hillside. Horse Hill (now Leigh Hill) was the main road from the village. The Parish Church in its prominent position at the top of the hill overlooking the Estuary was separate from the main settlement. Until the mid-nineteenth century, only a few higher status buildings were close to the

Church with sporadic buildings close to the road into the main village.

From the mid 19th century, the village spread up the hillside towards the Church with modest vernacular housing, schools, and a new lane to the Church (Church Hill). New houses in the Broadway were gradually converted to shops to supersede the Old Town as Leigh's shopping centre.

The Conservation Area contains a variety of architecture. Buildings are mostly on a small domestic scale with simple designs in uniform terraces and more loosely connected groups. Traditional buildings and materials predominate and help establish the area's character. Features include:

- Feather-edged weatherboarding - terraces on Church Hill and individual buildings on Leigh Hill are particularly important;
- Yellow stock brick; red brick detailing and frontages are evident in buildings from the late 19th century;
- Slate roofs - views over the Area from the hillside give roofs greater prominence; and
- Timber sliding sash windows.



**4. Leigh Cliff Conservation Area** is to the east of Leigh's historic centre. It was designated a Conservation Area in 1981. It marks the start of Leigh's transition from a village to a larger urban area in the late 19th century. Its special interest comes from its association with Leigh's expansion and changing role, its typical late Victorian and Edwardian architecture and its fine position on the hillside overlooking the Estuary.

Leigh Broadway is a thriving linear shopping centre which runs parallel with the coast. The perpendicular residential streets provide frequent views of the Estuary and there is a mix of converted late Victorian houses and more substantial purpose-built shops and flats dating from the early 20th century. Traditional shop fronts and upper floors in the Broadway

contribute to the area's character and are important to retain.

The Grand Hotel is the most notable building in the townscape on a prominent corner site. It is a richly decorated four storey red brick Edwardian style building, with distinctive shaped gables and chimney stacks.



**5. Crowstone Conservation Area**, designated in 1990, is focused on a striking corner property, Crowstone House, built in 1905. It has a significant role as a local landmark along the seafront in part due to the very strong corner tower which is topped by a copper dome.

It is a significant example of the grand properties of the era during Westcliff's heyday as a residential resort and shares much in common with the the Leas Conservation Area which is nearby but separated by modern developments.

30-35 The Leas are also included within this small conservation area. They are typical of the Edwardian seafront houses and represent the kind of fine-grain development which is at risk from the continuing pressure for intensification.

They are bracketed on either side by modern developments which clearly illustrate the threat posed to the seafront character.



**6. The Leas Conservation Area** includes the most prominent part of the Westcliff-on-Sea area, facing and close to the seafront. Despite some subsequent redevelopment and alterations, the area retains much of the character of the original residential resort. First designated as a Conservation Area in 1981, it has since been extended.

The area is largely residential in character, but with a strong emphasis towards the seafront. Indeed the buildings along the main front are angled to face south-by-south-west to make best use of the sun and views rather than sitting square on. This, as seen in other seafront conservation areas in the borough, creates a saw-tooth terrace and gives many more opportunities for flamboyant external decoration including balconies and bay windows. They represent one of the most decorative

groups of Edwardian buildings in the borough. Features contributing to this architectural interest include:

- Corner turrets;
- Bays and gables;
- Balconies with varied balustrade designs;
- Period windows ranging from timber sliding sashes to “Georgian” style timber casement windows; and
- Individual detailing to buildings such as terracotta panels, stained glass fanlights and decorative timber to balconies, bays and porches.

The overall effect of the conservation area is slightly marred by the introduction of later developments, not all of which are successful. The newer buildings on the site of the Overcliff

Hotel (now outside of the Conservation Area) do not relate well to their context. However, other example such as the flats at Homecove House provide a reasonable example of scale, massing and detailing.

Argyll House is another interesting element of the conservation area which, although not adhering to the prevailing Edwardian style, manages to secure landmark status through the quality of its design and detailing, including curved windows and corner balconies.

Palmeira Avenue also merits attention, featuring a particular ebullient variation on the Edwardian town house. The bay windows, porches and dormer windows are large in scale with bold detailing. The properties are wide, and feature an asymmetric arrangement of rooms on both sides of the front door and hallway. The

porches between the bays also provide a small balcony, making the most of the oblique sea views.





**7. Shorefields Conservation Area,** designated in 1981, is associated with the start of Southend's rapid growth as a seaside resort and residential centre between 1870 and 1900. During these decades, the national rise of holidays and day trip excursions and Southend's easy access from London by rail, and later by boat, made it increasingly popular as a resort and a residential centre.

The Shorefields estate was sold for piecemeal development as the resort expanded westwards from the earlier Cliff Town estate, along the top of the West Cliff. Architectural features which contribute to the area's interest include the various balcony designs exploiting sea views, the variety of porch and doorway design and decorative detailing to individual frontages, it also has a special relationship with the public gardens along the Cliff, which enhance its

setting, with the clifftop position providing it with prominent views across the estuary. There are mature street trees on Trinity Avenue and Marine Avenue. However, some appear to have been lost over time, and the remaining trees are no longer evenly spaced, leaving some areas of the streets feeling more open.

The Conservation Area contains the resort's oldest surviving hotel - the Westcliff Hotel built in 1890 which makes a significant contribution to the streetscene thanks to its prominent location and strong presence. Demand for accommodation also encouraged residents to open their homes to visitors. Some of the housing development in Shorefields was designed for this dual purpose. The west side of Trinity Avenue is a notable example and still retains Guest House uses.



**8. The Milton Conservation Area** covers a large area of Westcliff. It contains a range of architectural styles which illustrate the transition in Southend from formal gridded streets and restrained architecture of the mid-Victorian period to freer late Victorian and Edwardian development, from small terraces to large semi-detached houses with gardens, and from yellow London stock brick and slate to red brick and clay tiles as the predominant local building materials. The architectural and urban hierarchy is further reinforced by the pattern of street tree planting in the area.

Mid -Victorian properties built between 1870 and 1880 are generally yellow stock brick frontages and slate roofs. Most have bays of either one or two storeys and traditional sliding sash windows. Various architectural details such as curved window heads, arched porches and

decorative window and door surrounds are also evident on many of these buildings.

Late Victorian properties, built in the 1880's and 90's are also mainly stock brick, although some have red brick detailing, and the roofs are traditionally slate, often with patterned ridge tiles. Either sliding sash or casement windows are evident in buildings of this period, many with heavy looking surrounds. Two-storey bay windows with gable ends and restrained decorative details were also common feature in late Victorian houses in this area.

Edwardian properties supersede the earlier styles. These are mainly red brick, occasionally with stock brick flanks. They usually have one or two-storey bays with prominent gables or Dutch gables. The roofs of these properties are usually clay tiles, and some properties have

distinctive corner turrets. Windows are either timber sliding sash or casement, usually with heavy surrounds.

Whilst most of the architectural styles can be found elsewhere in different parts of the town, the Park and Vincent Estate's stand out in that they embody within a small area a cross-section of Southend's typical architecture at the time of its early growth. This helped give the area an attractive and unique character. Most of these estates now form the Milton Conservation Area.



**9. Prittlewell Conservation Area** was first designated in 1995. The former medieval village on the south slope of the gentle valley formed by Prittle Brook, is centred on St. Mary's Church at the 'T' junction of the ancient roads of East Street, West Street and North Street (now the north section of Victoria Avenue) which once formed the village's medieval market place.

Prittlewell's special interest remains, including St Mary's Church which, although predominantly 12th Century, is mentioned in the Domesday Book and contains elements of 7th Century masonry.

Prittlewell's buildings today display a wide variety of design and materials and have no dominant architectural character. But this variety illustrates to a limited extent the

evolution of the village from its Saxon origins, through medieval times to the rapid expansion of Southend in the late 19th century, to present, and shows typical materials and designs.



### 10. Clifftown Conservation Area,

Southend's oldest Conservation Area, was designated in 1968 (and later extended twice to its present boundaries).

It has an important place in the area's history - the Georgian Royal Terrace and the Victorian Cliff Town Estate mark the first major attempts to develop Southend as a seaside resort and as a residential town. Its building styles and planned layout overlooking the estuary give the area its own charm and character.

1-15 Royal Terrace and the Royal Hotel were built in the 1790's to be the nucleus of New South End, a fashionable seaside resort to rival Margate, Brighton and Weymouth. The Shrubbery fronting the houses was laid out as a private garden for residents and Royal Mews

to the rear provided their stables. The Terrace was named "Royal" following visits by Princess Caroline and for a short time attracted some of the fashionable society. But difficult access from London by road and river and other factors discouraged further development until construction of the railway in 1856. It was, therefore, the only Georgian terrace to be built in Southend. The London-Tilbury-Southend railway was completed in 1856 and provided the impetus for the next major step in the town's development. The railway developer leased 40 acres from Daniel Scratton for housing development between the new railway and the cliff top to be known as Cliff Town. This area extended from Royal Terrace westwards to Wilson Road and forms the remainder of the Conservation Area.



Scratton imposed strict design controls on the first phase of development which resulted in a unique example of mid-Victorian estate planning. Designed by Banks and Barry and built between 1859-1861, the estate provided five classes of terraced housing, including shops, with unified designs and materials. Its layout around open spaces, gardens and carefully aligned streets enabled estuary views from every house and many public parts of the estate. Despite later infill development and tree planting, these views remain an important component of the estate's character. The mature trees in streets away from the waterfront play a significant part in the character of the area and create a notable sense of scale.

The second phase of the Cliff Town Estate to the west of Prittlewell Square lacked the previous design control. The area was subdivided for piecemeal development on a grid street layout. A variety of Victorian and Edwardian residential architecture resulted which contrasts with the coherence of the planned estate.



## 11. Warrior Square Conservation Area

was designated a Conservation Area in 1990 and is associated with the period of Southend's rapid growth towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is one of only two Victorian residential squares built in Southend (the other being Prittlewell Square).

The south and west sides of the original Square have been largely redeveloped and the houses on the east side are of a later period. The Conservation Area, therefore, is confined to the surviving Victorian terrace on the north side and the central gardens which are now in public use.

Speculative housing around a central private garden was a common form of development in many urban areas in the 18th and 19th centuries, but not Southend. Warrior Square

is a very late example and its failure may have discouraged any further attempt in Southend.

The north side of the Square has not been greatly altered and presents an attractive façade of typical late Victorian terraced housing with appropriate detailing and materials. The houses were built in pairs with mirrored designs - central entrance doors, recessed porches and balconies over, on either side of which are two-storey bays. Consequently, the terrace has a good degree of design unity. But note the subtle variations in design.

Houses in the older part of the terrace are grouped in fours with square or canted bays, gables or hipped roofs to the bays and with different window designs typical of this period. Detailing such as panelled entrance doors with tiled and leaded lights surrounds, decorative

ridge tiles, fish scale slates to some of the bay roofs and balcony ironwork, also provide attractive features.

The setting of the conservation area is greatly enhanced by the mature trees in the square itself, which is presently undergoing a significant re-modeling to improve its accessibility and increase usage.



## 12. The Kursaal Conservation Area

was designated in 1989. It is a compact area associated both with Southend's origins and its later growth into a major resort. The most notable building is the Grade II listed Kursaal itself. This has a strong architectural character with soft red brick combining with stone detailing. A cast iron colonnade with glazed roof runs along the western elevation of the building which adds to the festive character. However, the most striking feature is the large glazed roof lantern topped with a lead dome. This gives the building its distinctive silhouette and makes it such a significant landmark.

Originating as the 'Marine Park', the first pleasure park in the world, laid out in 1894, the 'Kursaal' was designed by George Sherrin in 1896 as the grand entrance to the Park. It was completed in 1901. The "Kursaal" itself included

a circus, ballroom, arcade with amusements, dining hall and billiard room. The Marine Park was soon taken over by amusements and rides, to become the resort's premier attraction. Although the amusement park has been redeveloped for housing, much of the Kursaal building has been restored following many years of dereliction and is one of the Borough's most notable landmarks, bookending the eastern end of what is today known as Southend's 'Golden Mile'.

Also of note within the conservation area is the white building adjacent to the Kursaal, presently occupied as Tiffin's Lounge and Restaurant. This dates from 1792 and was originally built as Minerva House, the home of Abraham Vandervord, the principal local barge owner. It was in the centre of the hamlet at the time of its early development as a small resort.



## 13. Eastern Esplanade Conservation Area,

designated in 1989, is associated with the early period of Southend as a resort destination before the major expansion of the late 19th century.

The Conservation Area contains mainly domestic buildings and, in particular, a terrace of early to mid 19th century cottages reputed to have been built for local fishermen. Its main interest relates to the design and materials of this terrace. Important features include:

- Recessed raised porches in weatherboarding with some decorative timberwork;
- Timber weatherboarding or yellow stock brick for the front elevations;
- Weatherboarded rear elevations;
- Sliding sash timber windows; and

- Some original doors to the front entrances and side alleys.

The conservation area retains a particular appeal in the central part of Southend because it provides a clear sense of the ordinary domestic buildings which preceded the later Victorian development of the area. In this sense it shares key attributes with elements of Old Leigh, but has not been protected in the same way by the alignment of the railway. This means that it is potentially much more vulnerable to the impact of bulky or intrusive adjoining development.



**14. Shoebury Garrison Conservation Area**, designated in 1981, has two distinct sections. It is centred on the Garrison's barracks and associated accommodation. It also includes part of the High Street which provides a suitable Victorian setting for the entrance to the Garrison. Its history and archaeology give it national significance. Many of the Garrison's buildings are listed and have special architectural or historic interest in their own right.

The character of the Barracks is very special. Its architecture and layout remain largely as originally designed. Well spread out buildings, wide tree lined roads, open spaces and sea views give a feeling of space. Many mature trees within the Garrison enhance the setting of the buildings and positively contribute to the Conservation Area's character.

Most of the buildings date from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Their materials and common design elements give the area a unified appearance - yellow stock brick, slate roofs, timber sliding sash window. But distinct variations in building design, their position, size and decorative detailing, reflect the different status of the users. Compare Horseshoe Barracks, for instance, which have the simplest designs and provided accommodation for private soldiers, with the well-detailed married Officers quarters in The Terrace.

The buildings in Horseshoe Barracks are aligned in a horseshoe shape around a large parade ground. This is a unique example of the efforts during the nineteenth century to reform and improve barrack design. It also provides an important element of the townscape.

The High Street fronting the Garrison entrance was developed during the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the Garrison and the extension of the railway to Shoebury. The broad High Street was developed piecemeal with no overall design control. Originally a mix of houses and shops, it shows a variety of Victorian designs. Despite conversion of some of the shops to housing, buildings retain much of their Victorian character. Features of particular importance are the original timber sliding sash windows, slate roofs, parapet and cornice detailing and original shop fronts.

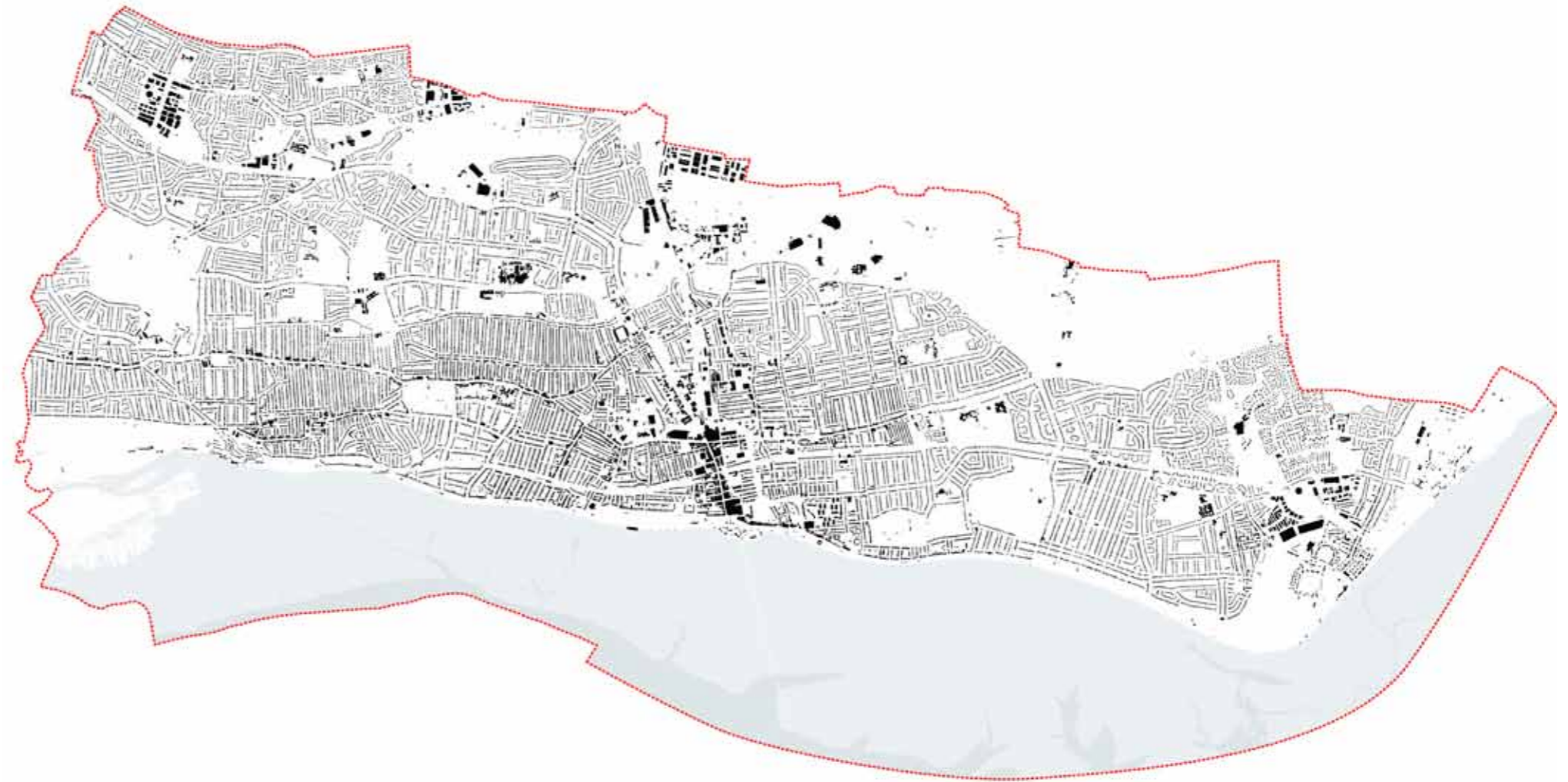


# URBAN MORPHOLOGY

The detailed character of the various urban forms found in the Borough is presented in greater detail later in this document. However, when considering the morphology of the Borough as a whole a number of key features become apparent:

- There is a strong presence of regular grids of streets, most typically running north-south, perpendicular between the key routes through the Borough;
- Inter-war areas of development feature perimeter block arrangements, but are more likely to be laid out in a looser grid or geometric arrangement than the rectilinear grids of the Victorian and Edwardian periods; and
- Several areas of post-war development including Eastwood and North Shoebury take a distinctly non-grid form, breaking with the predominant character of the Borough.

**Urban Morphology**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2009)



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# VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

Southend's location and geography means that the principal routes in the borough run east-west. Historically, the London Road (the A13) provided the most significant route through the Borough, and remains an important thoroughfare today for both local traffic and wider area connections. It continues to be an important focal point for local life, acting as a linear centre to much of the Borough, lined with a wide range of convenience and specialist shops and services. By contrast the A127, Southend's Arterial Road and main transport corridor, provides a more modern approach in to Southend in the form of a dual carriageway trunk road. However, despite the traffic-orientated design of the road, large portions of it still follow pre-existing historical routes.

Intermediate routes form a loose grid between these main roads, many of which also follow historic lanes. Of particular interest are Blenheim Chase/Kenilworth Gardens/Prittlewell Chase, Southchurch Boulevard and Thorpe Hall Avenue, all of which have a distinctive wide central reservation, planted with trees. These routes are the legacy of a former tram system that used to run along the central reservation but which was closed down around the time of the Second World War. They are a strong and distinctive element of Southend's street network.

**Vehicular Movement**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2009)



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# RAIL CONNECTIONS

Southend-on-Sea benefits from two mainline railway connections. The first is the line from London Fenchurch Street, which terminates at Shoeburyness, and the second is the line from London Liverpool Street, terminating at Southend Victoria. Both offer services which make it practicable to commute into London and surrounding towns on a daily basis.

Of the two lines, the Fenchurch Street line has probably had the greater impact on the growth and development of Southend, running through the width of the Borough west to east, with the introduction of intermediate stops in places such as Westcliff and Thorpe Bay designed to open up new areas of previously undeveloped land. The Liverpool Street line is presently undergoing development just outside the Borough boundary to introduce a new station that will serve London Southend Airport, connecting it to Southend, London and surrounding towns.

**Rail Lines**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



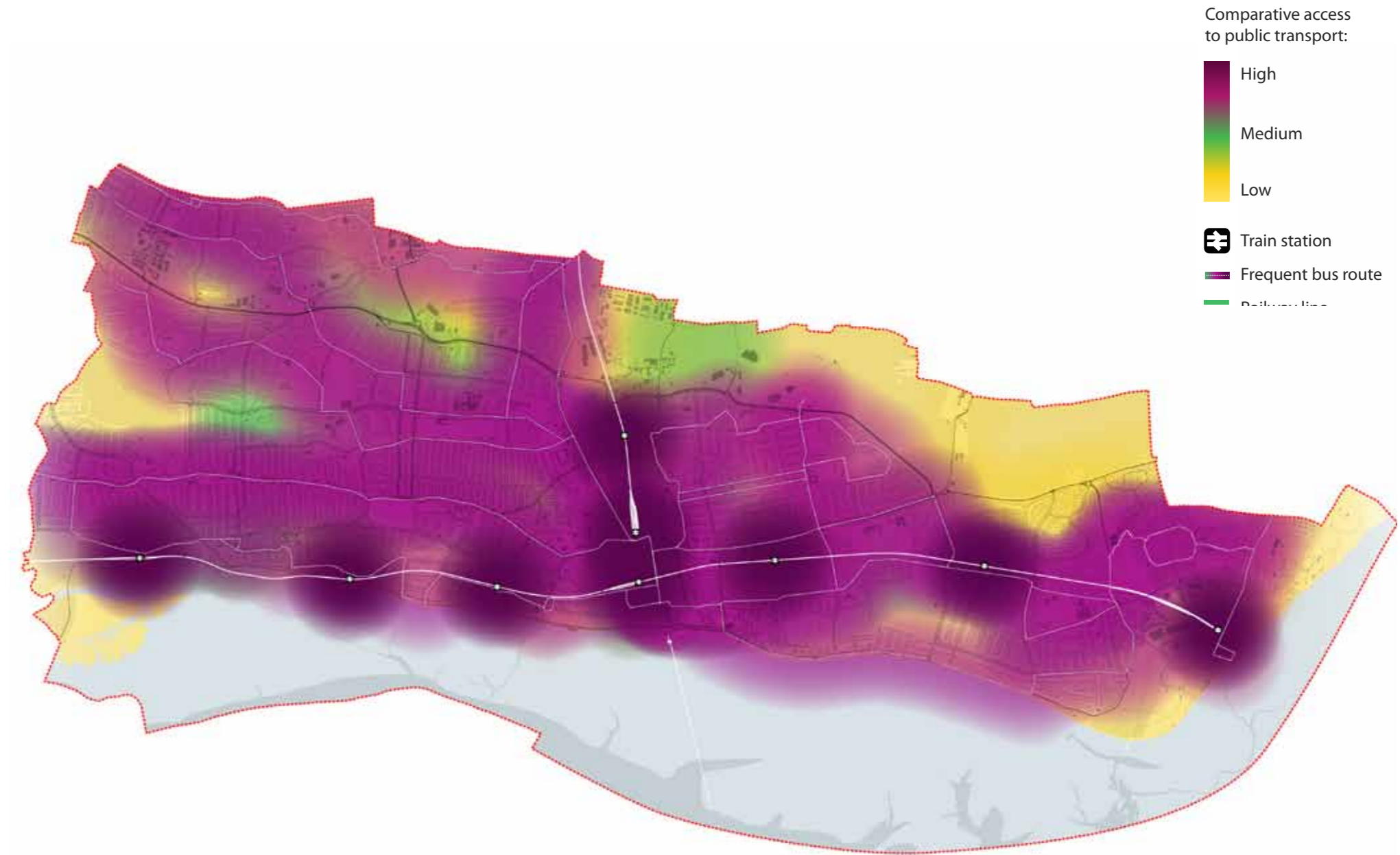
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# ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The plan prepared here provides an assessment of the relative levels of access to public transport across the Borough. The most dense colours indicate those areas of the Borough which are within a short walking distance of a railway station, usually regarded as those locations which are most likely to enable public transport use as part of a daily commute. The paler purple colours show those areas which are within easy walking distance of a bus route which offers a relatively high frequency of service (shown as a white dotted line) whilst areas in green or yellow beyond this show areas of poor public transport penetration.

It is particularly noticeable in the western half of the Borough that the arrangement for both bus and rail is predominantly east-west. Whilst there are infrequent local buses which make north-south connections, this makes it relatively hard to travel north-south within the Borough to facilities such as schools or the hospital without making a connection in central Southend. This character generally prevails across the Borough.

## Access to Public Transport



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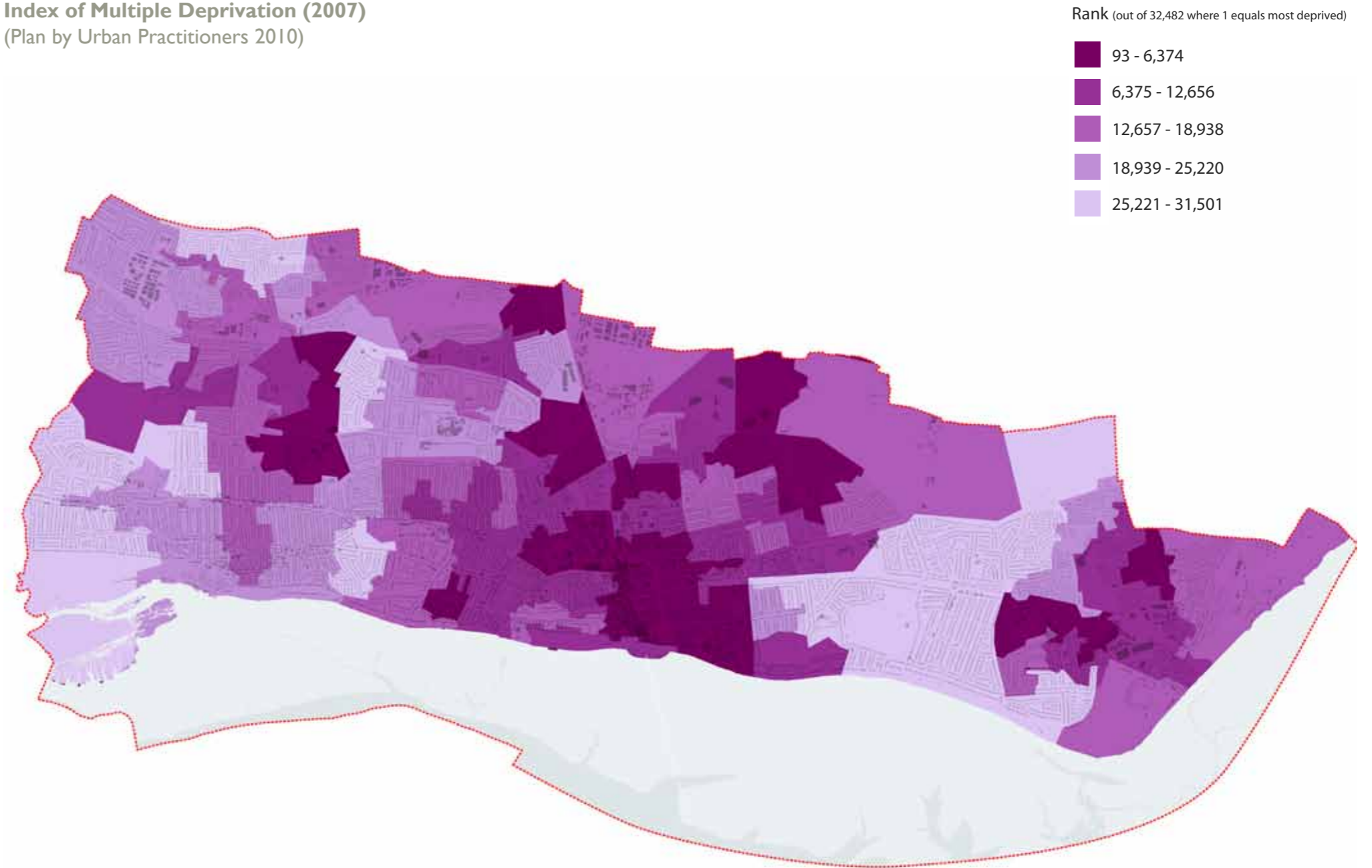


# SOCIETY

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a national government measure of the relative deprivation of areas, based on a number of factors including income, employment, health and disability, education/skills/training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime. These are shown relative to the national range of deprivation, here divided into five bands for ease of analysis.

This plan shows that within the borough of Southend there is a spread across all five bands, with areas of Prittlewell, Central Southend, northern Southchurch, and Shoeburyness falling within the poorest fifth nationally. By contrast, western areas of Leigh, Chalkwell, Noble's Green and Thorpe Bay all fall within the top fifth, showing a high degree of affluence.

**Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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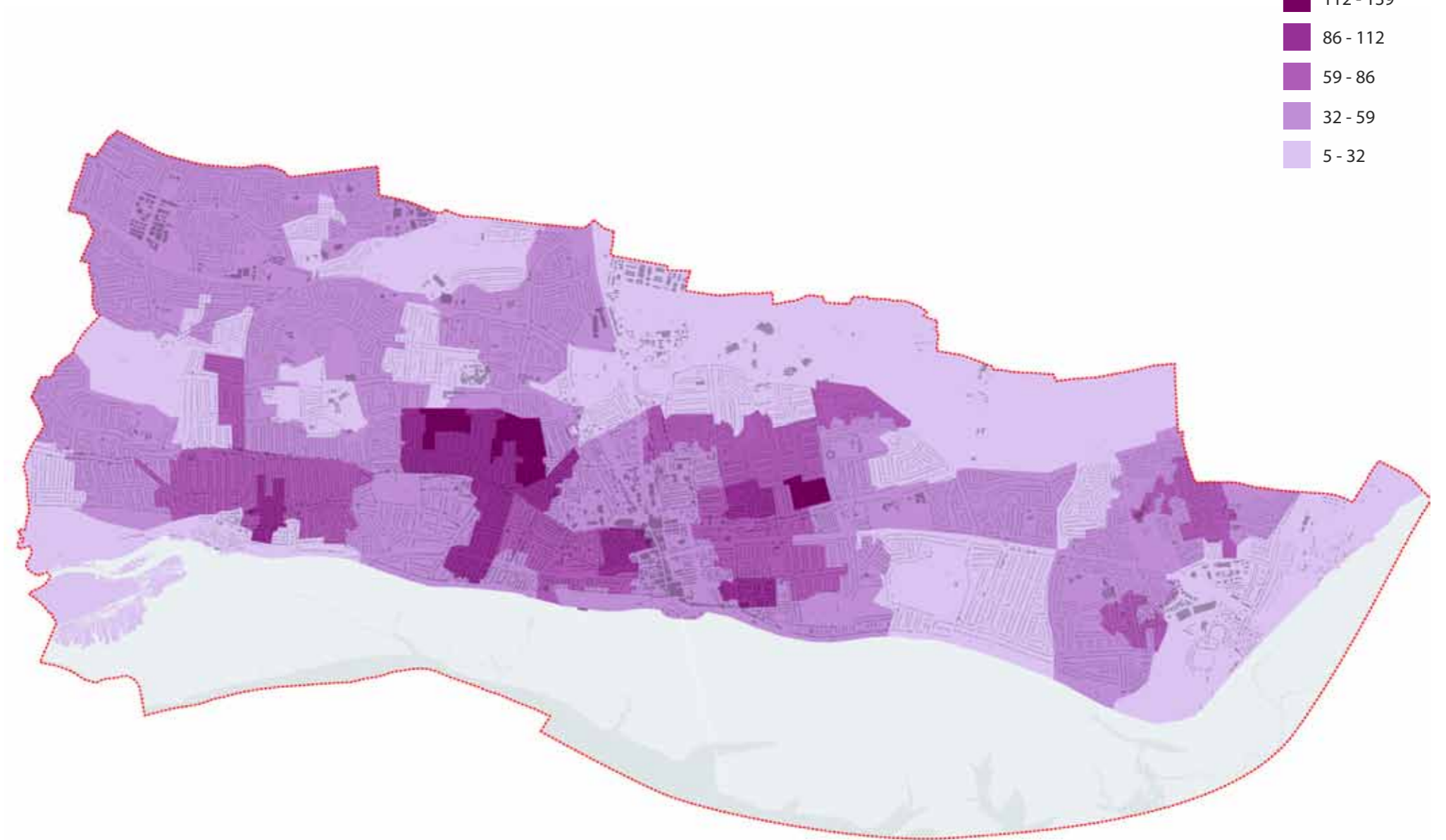


# SOCIETY

The plan showing population density helps to identify those areas of the Borough where housing is most densely arranged, taking account of the varied occupancy rates. This view notes that the most densely populated areas tend to be those with tightly arranged Victorian terraced streets such as the area around Brighton Avenue at the eastern side of Southchurch or certain areas of Westborough. These have in excess of 112 people per hectare. Areas with a high proportion of houses converted to flats are also likely to create high population densities.

By contrast, Thorpe Bay and areas of Leigh are the most sparsely populated of the developed areas, with the average density at less than a quarter of the most densely populated areas of the Borough. This is reflected in large individual building plots as well as in generous public realm.

**Population Density (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



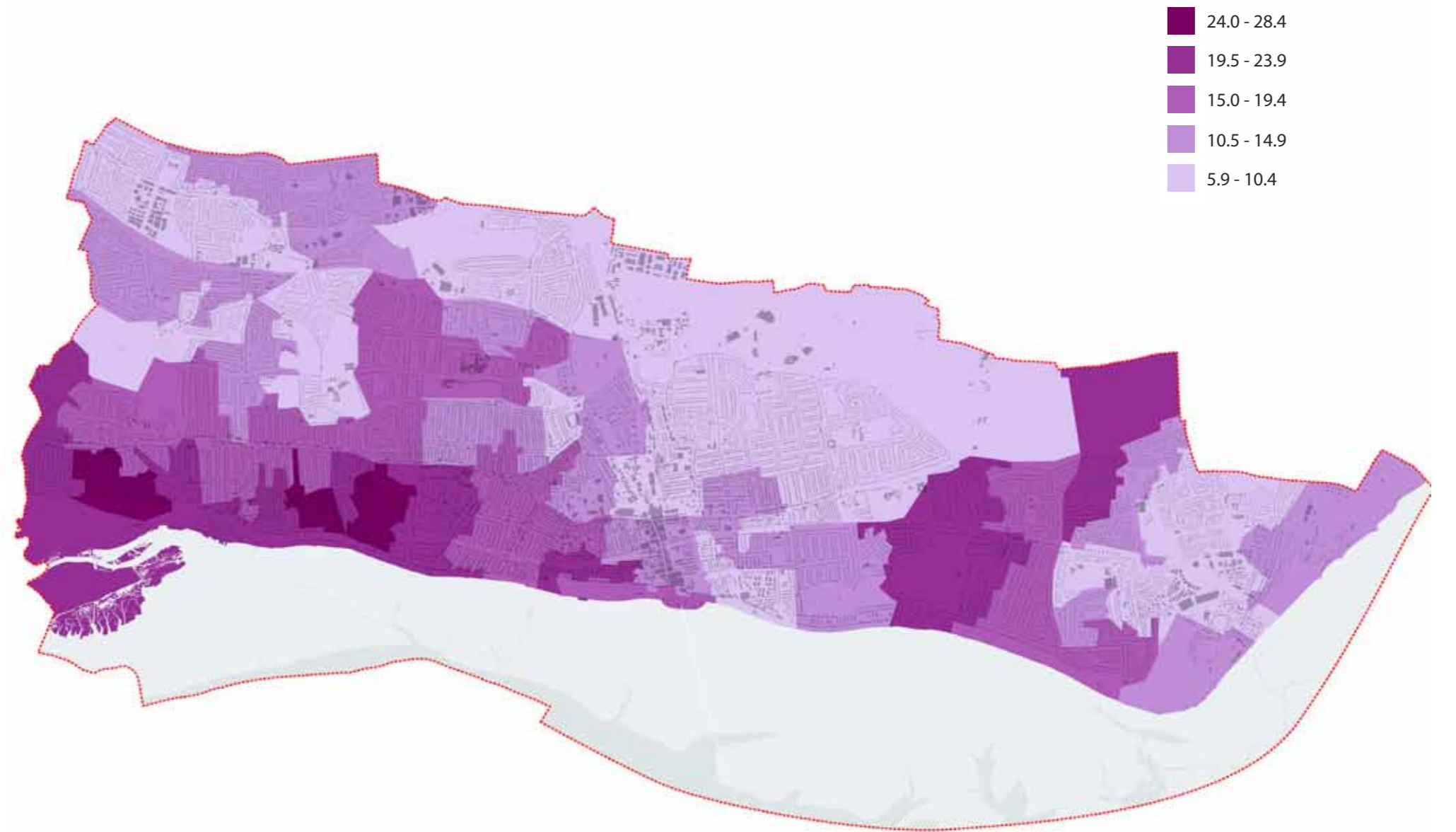
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# SOCIETY

The plan showing the incidence of people with higher level qualifications (degree level or above) provides two interesting comparisons. Firstly, high levels of higher qualifications relate relatively closely to those areas on the IMD plan which are most likely to be in the upper levels of affluence generally. However, an even closer correlation shows in the comparison with the plan which shows the proportion of people who commute to work by train. The two plans here are shown side-by-side for ease of comparison.

**Level 4 / 5 qualifications (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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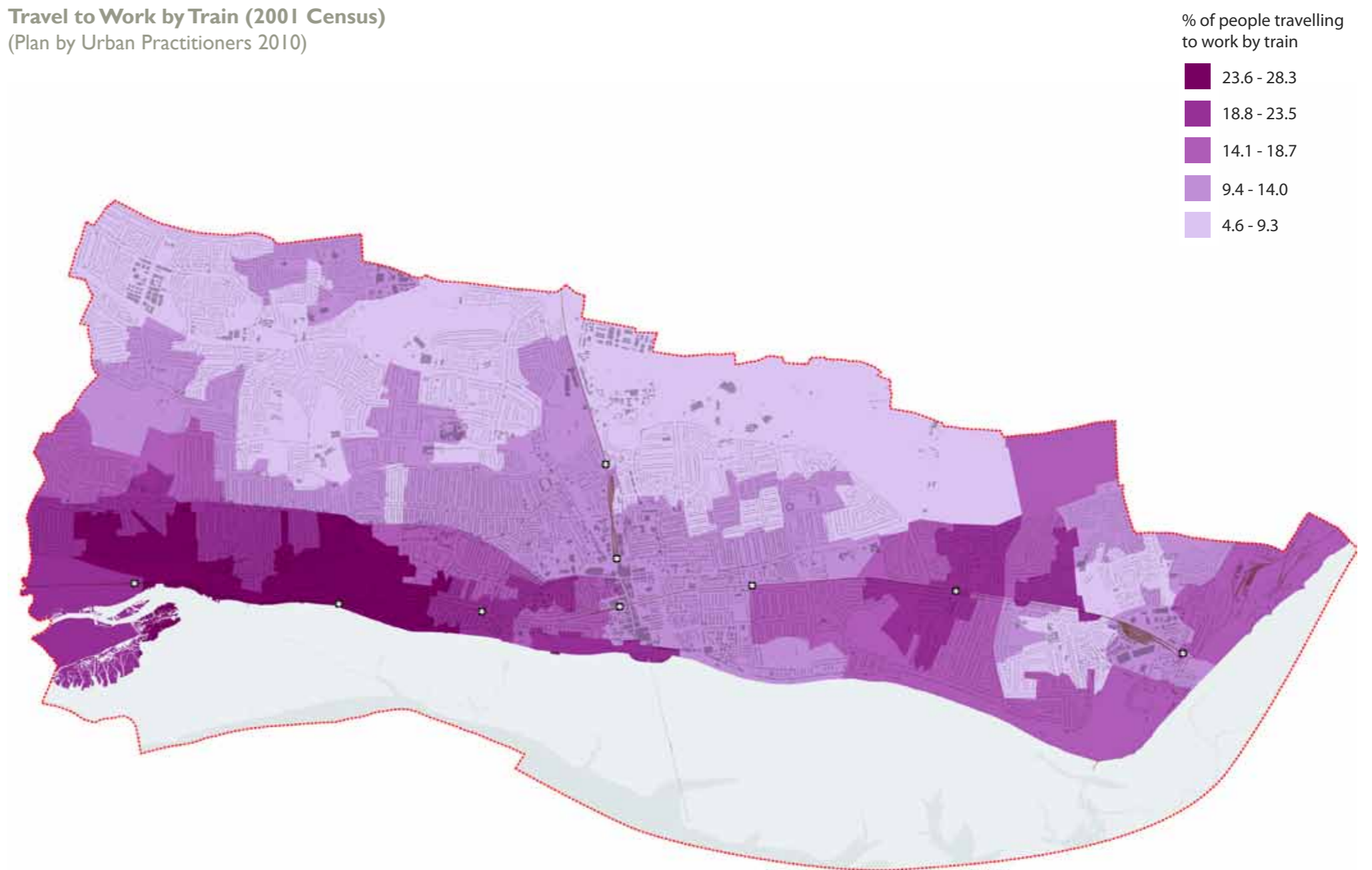


# SOCIETY

As has been noted, the incidence of people who travel to work by train closely correlates with those areas where there is the highest concentration of people with higher level qualifications. This can be rationalised in a number of ways, although these should not be read as direct proof of a causal relationship between the two strands.

- Firstly, people commuting by train from Southend are most likely to be commuting to London to higher value jobs which require a higher level of qualification;
- Secondly, people with higher earning power are more likely to be able to afford to live in the attractive older suburbs which lie close to the railway stations; and
- Thirdly, people who move to the area with the intention of commuting are most likely to try to locate somewhere close to a station which will enable a reasonably short connection from home.

**Travel to Work by Train (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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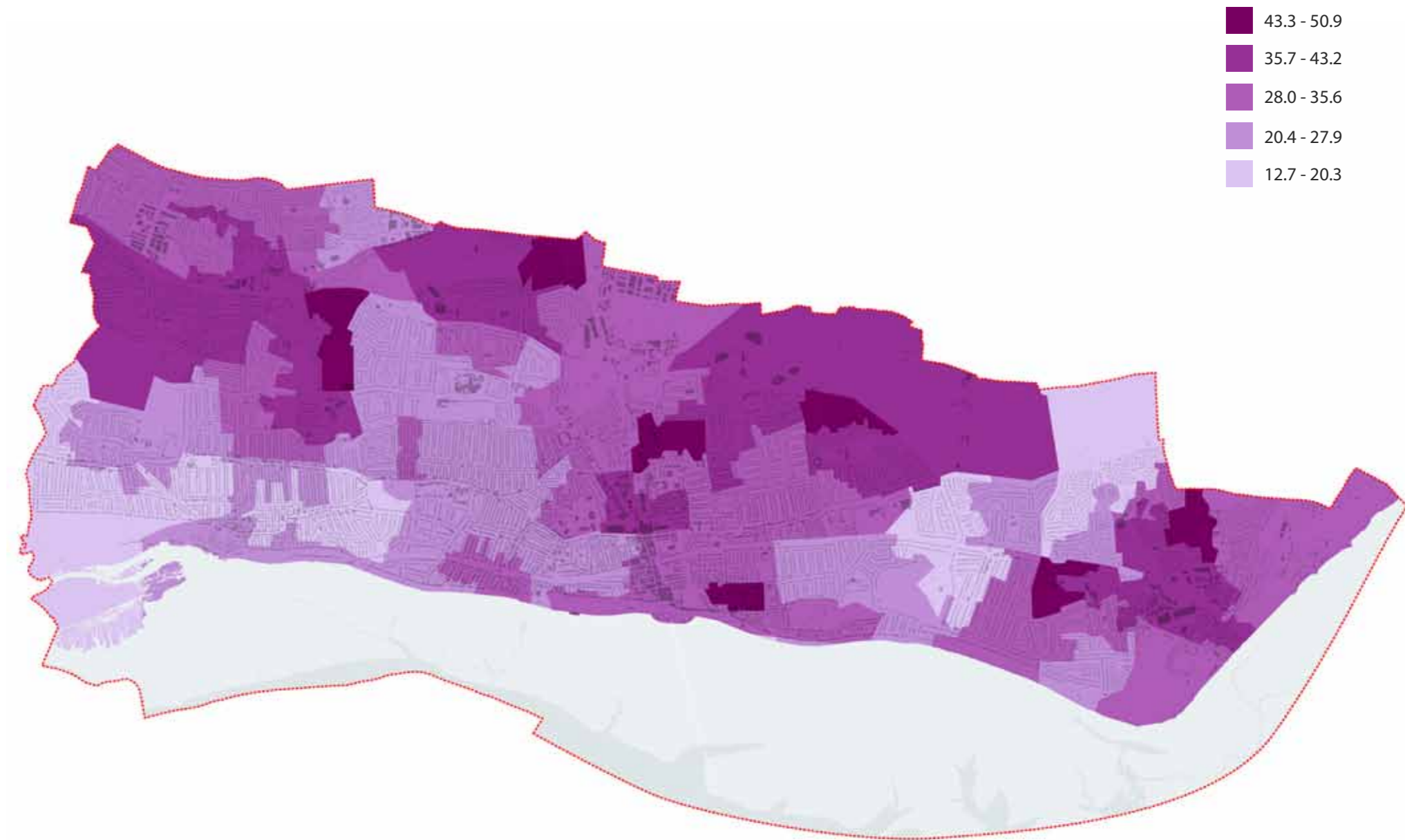


# SOCIETY

This plan shows the proportions of people living in each area who have no formal qualification, either academic or vocational. Given that this is often closely linked with access to employment this is a key issue in terms of improving the economic vitality of the Borough but it also makes individuals and families far more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty.

It is noted that there is an extremely close correlation between those areas where the lack of qualifications is highest and those areas where there is a high incidence of Council and Registered Social Landlord housing (see facing page).

**No qualifications (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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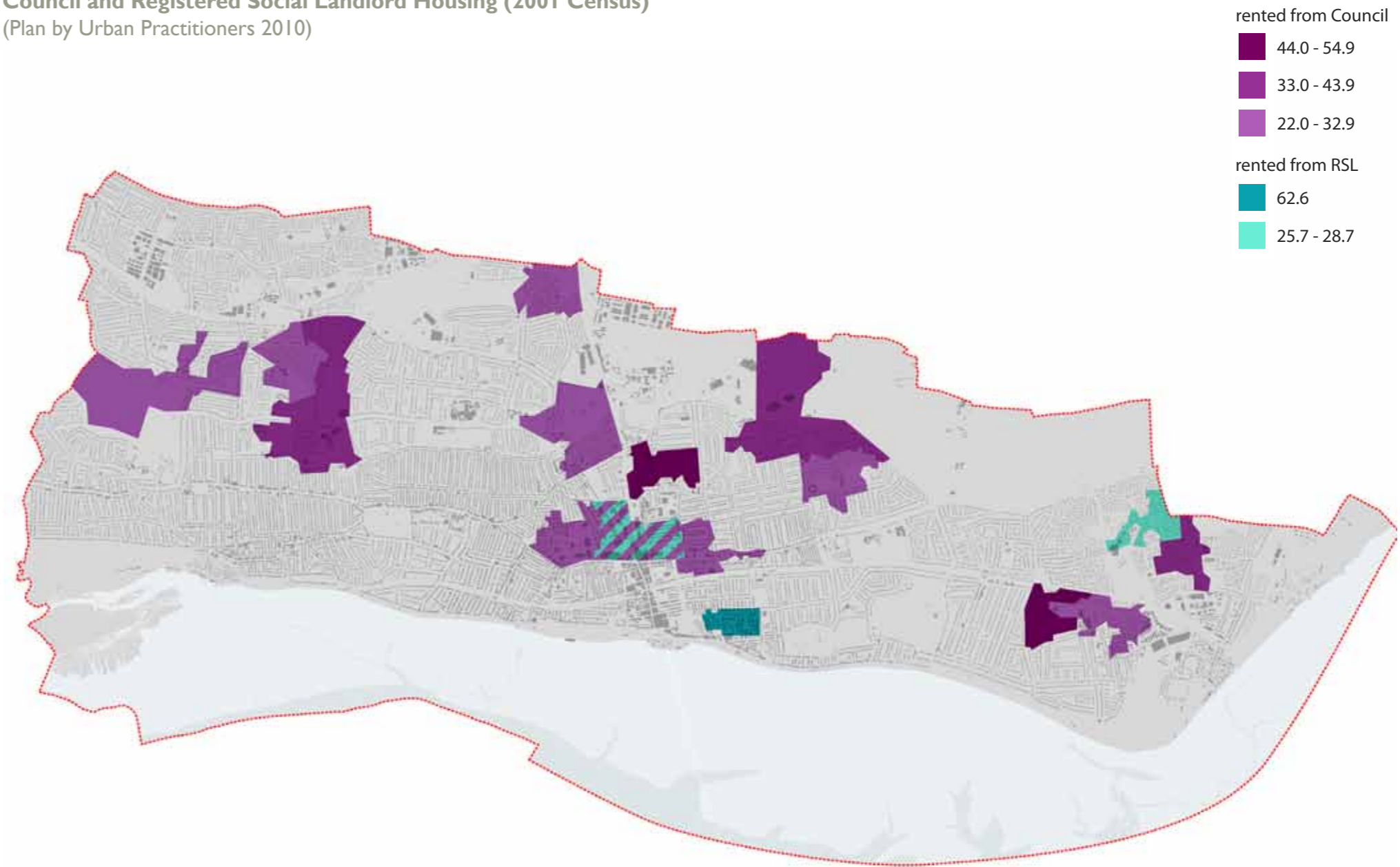


# SOCIETY

This plan shows the location of areas where people live in accommodation rented from either the Council or a Registered Social Landlord. This includes easily identifiable areas of public housing such as the Kursaal Estate in the centre of the Borough and the Somerset Estate.

It is notable that in the areas with higher proportions of properties that are rented from the Council, private ownership still accounts for around 50% or more of the homes with the notable exception of the Kursaal Estate where over 60% remain rented.

**Council and Registered Social Landlord Housing (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



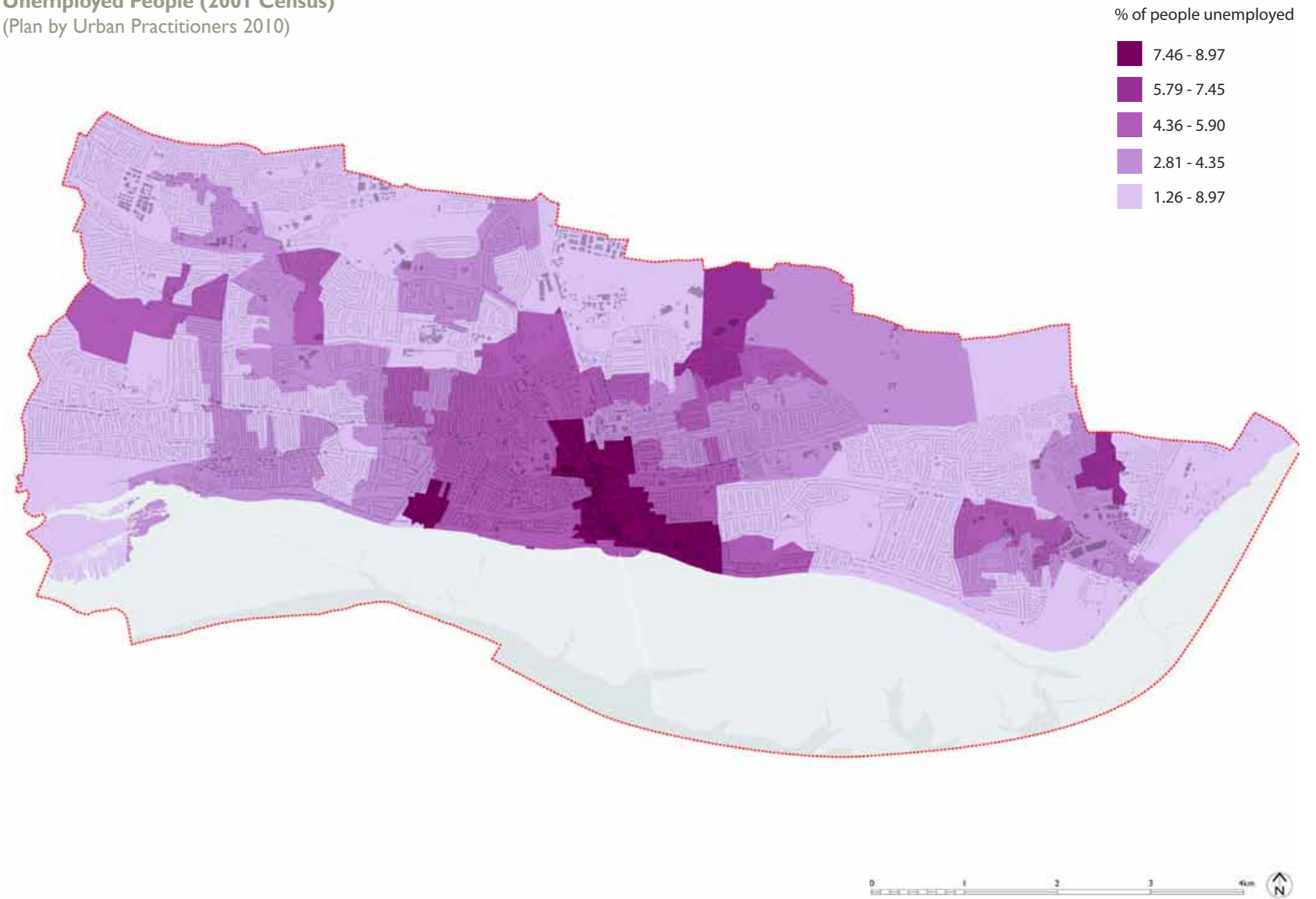
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# SOCIETY

The plan showing the relative levels of unemployment across the Borough bears close comparison with the plan showing high proportions of people living in socially rented housing. Whilst this will generally come as little surprise it is perhaps more noteworthy to highlight the particularly dense area of unemployment focussed around central Southend itself. This is likely to reflect the fact that what residential accommodation there is in the town centre is typically relatively poor quality.

**Unemployed People (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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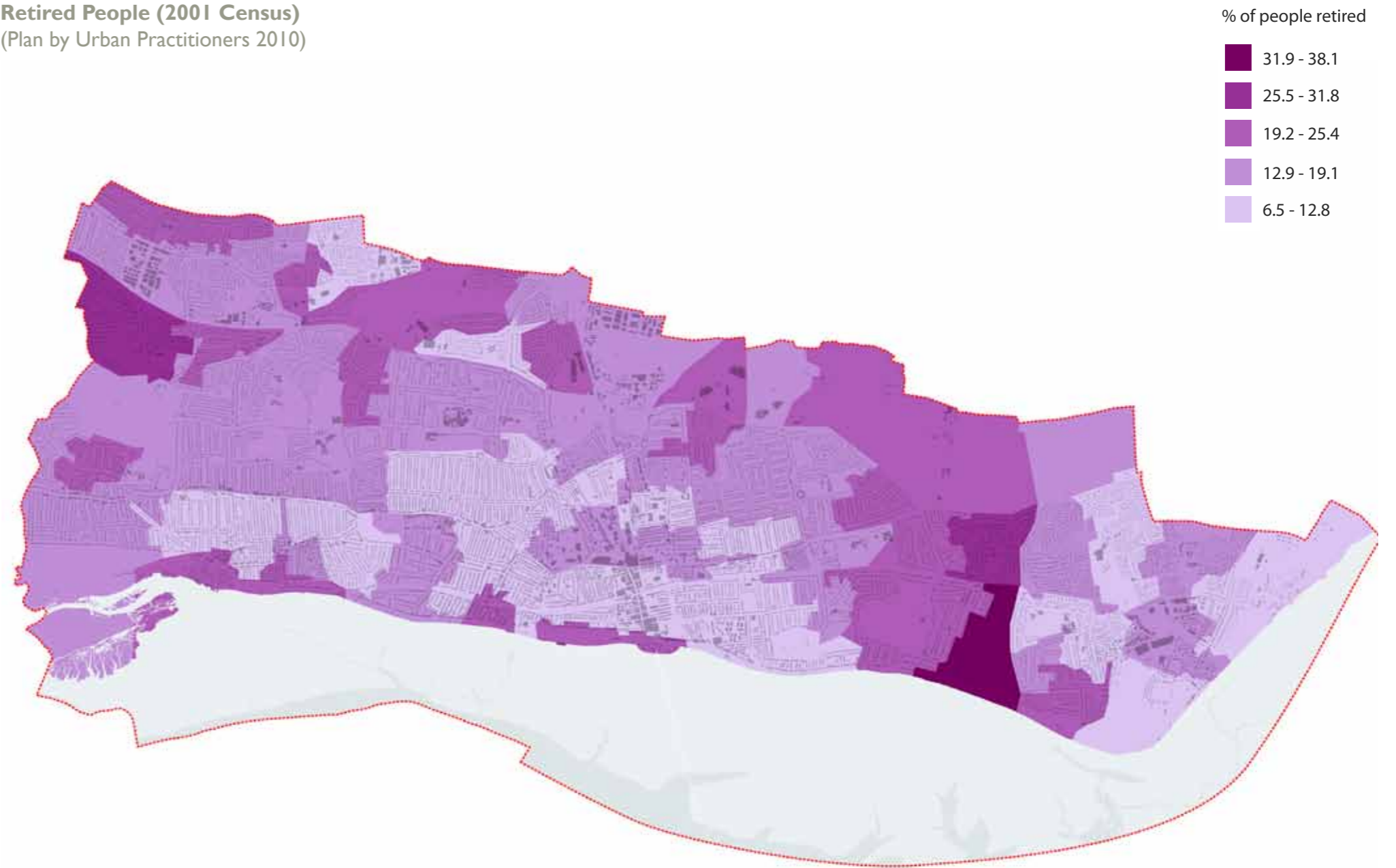
# SOCIETY

The plan showing the incidence of retired people in the Borough highlights two particular but overlapping characteristics:

- For the retired people in the Borough there is generally a move away from the areas most associated with rail commuting, perhaps seeking a quieter pace of life or perhaps reflecting lower house prices; and
- There is a low incidence of retired people living in those areas which predominantly include dense and more urban patterns of housing, particularly the Victorian and Edwardian terraces in Westborough, Southchurch and Leigh-on-Sea

The area with the highest proportion of retired people is the eastern part of Thorpe Bay, an area particularly known for its generous plots and high proportion of bungalows.

**Retired People (2001 Census)**  
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2010)



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