



# EIGHT

## Open Environment and Nature Conservation

### Strategic Objectives for Open Environment and Nature Conservation

- 8.1** The Adopted Sutton UDP (2003) sets out the following objectives in relation to the Open Environment and Nature Conservation:
- To protect and enhance the quality of the Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and other areas of open space within the Borough; and
  - To protect areas of nature conservation value, encourage new wildlife habitats and promote a greater awareness of nature conservation issues.
- 8.2** Appendix 8.1 provides a summary of the relevant UDP policies, indicators and targets in relation of each of the above strategic objectives.
- 8.3** The Council's preferred spatial strategy for the future development of the Borough, set out in Sutton's 'Core Planning Strategy: Preferred Options' document (November 2007), seeks to achieve "An environmentally sustainable suburban Borough, building on Sutton's reputation as greener, cleaner Borough and working towards the Council's long-term goal of 'One Planet Living' by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change, promoting built energy efficiency and renewables, cutting pollution, reducing waste, managing flood risk and protecting habitats and species diversity" under the theme of 'Achieving Environmental Sustainability'. The following revised strategic objective is proposed:
- SO5** To control urban sprawl and protect Green Belt land and open spaces.
- SO14** To promote a safe and attractive living environment by improving the design and layout of buildings and public spaces throughout the Borough

### Green Belt

- 8.4** 616 hectares (ha) of the open space in the Borough is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The Sutton Green Belt consists of 2 areas: Little Woodcote (510 ha) and Cuddington (106 ha) (Map 8.1).
- 8.5** The Sutton Green Belt is characterised by fairly extensive development. 2 former hospitals (Cuddington and Queen Mary's) along with the former Medical Research Centre have been redeveloped for housing in recent years. The Orchard Hill site, occupying half of the former Queen Mary's site, is designated as a major developed site in the UDP. There are a number of further institutional/ research establishments in the Green Belt that are coming to the end of their operational life and where redevelopment is likely to be sought.

### Metropolitan Open Land

- 8.6** 530 ha of the open space in the Borough is designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The following 21 sites are designated on the basis of their strategic significance for openness, leisure, recreation, sport, landscape, nature conservation or heritage (Map 8.1):
- Bandon Hill Cemetery and Allotments (11.9 ha);
  - Beddington / Mitcham Area (196.8 ha);
  - Beddington Park and Carew Manor (68.0 ha);
  - Cheam Park and Recreational Ground (26.4 ha);
  - Green Lane Primary School playing fields and adjoining land (11.4 ha);

- Grove Park and Carshalton Ponds (8.0 ha);
- Land North of Goat Road, Beddington Corner (2.12 ha);
- Mill Green (4.85 ha);
- Poulter Park and Playing Fields (20.5 ha);
- Reigate Avenue Recreation Ground (6.3 ha);
- Rosehill Recreation Ground (20.2 ha);
- Rosehill Park East (12.9 ha);
- Roundshaw Park, Downs and Playing Fields (59.4 ha);
- St Elphege's Primary School playing field (0.8 ha);
- St Helier Open Spaces (3 parts) (21.75 ha);
- Surrey Tennis and Country Club (outdoor facilities) (1.0 ha);
- Sutton Cemetery and land north of proposed Link Road (13.5 ha);
- Sutton Common Recreation Ground (6.4 ha);
- Thomas Wall Park and Playground (6.75 ha);
- Wilson's School Playing Fields (6.55 ha); and
- Worcester Park Sewage Works, Buckland Way Rec. Ground and allotments (24.5 ha).

## Green Chains

**8.7** Land forming green chains within the Borough consists of 24 sites (some of which are MOL) (Map 8.2). The following main areas of green chain form an important part of a much wider network of strategically located open land stretching through South London:

- the eastern arc extending from the Roundshaw Open Spaces through Beddington Farmlands and Poulter Park into the network of open spaces along the River Wandle;
- the north eastern arc linking into the open spaces along the south and west of Merton;
- the open spaces to the west of the Borough which connect with the Green Belt in Epsom and Ewell via Nonsuch Park.

## Public Open Space

**8.8** There is a total of 518.01 ha of public open space (with unrestricted access) on 244 sites within the Borough (Map 8.3). These areas consist of:

- 2 Metropolitan Parks providing a total of 125.99 ha;
- 3 District Parks providing a total of 80.32 ha;
- 36 local parks providing a total of 217.84 ha; and
- 203 small areas of public open space providing a total of 93.86 ha.

**8.9** 6 of these sites (19.53 ha) are located within the Green Belt, and 23 sites (281.39 ha) are located within MOL. Since 2003 an additional area of public open space (approx. 9.3 ha) has been created at the former Worcester Park Sewage Treatment Works. An additional 45 sites (68.25 ha) with restricted public access identified in the UDP as 'Urban Green Space'.

**8.10** The Sutton Open Space Study 2005 shows that the overall Borough-wide provision of unrestricted public open space is 2.88 ha per 1000 population, well in excess of the NPFA 'Six Acre Standard' of 2.43 ha. However, the provision of public open space in Sutton is significantly lower than in comparable outer London Boroughs such as LB Merton (4.0 ha per 1000 population) and LB Croydon (4.3 ha per 1000 population).

**8.11** The amount of open space varies widely between Wards, the lowest quantity being found in Wallington South and Sutton South with 0.14 and 0.15 ha per 1000 respectively. At the upper end of the scale, Beddington North, Beddington South and Carshalton South and Clockhouse have over 6 ha per 1000. Two-thirds of Sutton's Wards fall below the Borough average.

**8.12** The Sutton Open Space Study shows that a high proportion of the Borough has access to at least one open space of Metropolitan importance, although there is some deficiency in access to Metropolitan Open Spaces in parts of the north, central and southern areas of the

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Borough. The Study concludes that the following areas are deficient in both Metropolitan and District level provision:

- St. Helier Ward (north west portion);
- Stonecot Ward (north east portion);
- Sutton North Ward (majority of ward);
- Sutton Central Ward (central portion running north south); and
- Carshalton South & Clockhouse Ward (southernmost area).

**8.13** The following key areas are deficient in Access to Local or Small Local Open Spaces:

- Beddington North: Resulting from the location of two lines of severance (road and rail) adjacent to the area, restricting access to Beddington Park;
- Cheam: Much of this ward has deficiency in access to open space due largely to the location of Cheam Park/ Nonsuch Park in the north of the ward and the effect of two severance lines (road and rail). However the total amount of open space provision is close to the Borough average. The ward has low deprivation and therefore the demand for open space in this area may be less;
- Sutton Town Centre: This area covers several Wards that are deficient in both access and quantity due to a low number of sites and multiple lines of severance; and
- Wallington South: Within the west of the ward there is poor provision of open space and poor access to local open space, however there are large gardens in this area.

**8.14** Open space deficiencies within the Borough in terms of access to sites of Metropolitan, District and local/ small local level are shown in Maps 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6.

## **Amount of Open Space Managed to Green Flag Award Standard**

### **CORE OUTPUT INDICATOR 4c**

**8.15** As of December 2007, there are currently 3 open spaces within the Borough managed to Green Flag Award standard. In July 2007, Green Flag accreditation was achieved for Grove Park (7.9 ha), the Ecology Centre grounds (1.24 ha) and Margaret's Pool in Carshalton, which were judged to be among the top parks/ open spaces in the country for their welcoming, safe and well-maintained environment. This has exceeded the Council's target to achieve 1 Green Flag Award by 2007.

**8.16** The Council has set a further target to achieve Green Flag accreditation for at least 5 open spaces by 2010, including Manor Park, Cheam Park and Recreation Ground, Oaks Park and Elms Pond.

## **Landscape Quality**

**8.17** The Council's 1997 Landscape Appraisal showed that the Borough has a rich mix of open landscape character areas such as down land, river corridors, woodland and parkland. The quality of these areas ranges from mature parkland of very good to exceptional quality e.g. parts of Beddington Park, Roundshaw Downs and areas of the Green Belt), to poor landscape quality e.g. parts of Beddington Farmlands (Map 8.7).

## **Nature Conservation and Biodiversity**

### **CORE OUTPUT INDICATOR 8a**

**8.18** The Borough contains several important habitats, including important chalk grassland sites such as Roundshaw Downs and Woodcote Park Golf Course. A number of sites, for example Cuddington Way Grassland require on-going management to maintain and enhance their biodiversity value. The Wandle supports many excellent plant communities with several rare species. However, backgardens represent the biggest single habitat.

**8.19** There are 49 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in or adjacent to the Borough, which are listed in Appendix 8.3. According to the Greenspace Information for Greater London (GIGL) database<sup>66</sup> maintained by the London Wildlife Trust, there are:

- 5 sites of 'Metropolitan Importance' occupying a total area of 313.97 ha and 7.18% of the total area of the Borough, comprising The Upper River Wandle (M091), Beddington Farmlands (M092), Mitcham Common (M093), Roundshaw Downs (M119) and Woodcote Park Golf Course (M121). (However, it should be noted that the Sutton UDP divides these areas into 9 sites of Metropolitan Importance);
- 30 sites of 'Borough Importance' occupying a total area of 326.47 ha and 7.47% of the total area of the Borough, comprising 13 Grade 1 and 17 Grade 2 sites (including 3 sites adjacent to the Borough boundaries with LB Merton and LB Kingston); and
- 14 sites of 'local importance' of particular value to people nearby, such as residents or schools, occupying a total area of 36.01 ha (including 1 site adjacent to the Borough boundaries with LB Merton).

**8.20** Over the last year, between 2006 and December 2007, there has been no change in the total area or status of SINC's within the Borough.

**8.21** The GiGL database identifies 10 Local Nature Reserves within LB Sutton, occupying a total area of 48.04 ha and 1.1% of the total area of the Borough (Appendix 8.4). However, in October 2006, the Council declared 2 new local nature reserves, at Belmont Pastures and Anton Crescent Wetland<sup>60</sup>. Located on the outskirts of Sutton Town Centre, Belmont Pastures is a semi-natural grassland site with some large, fairly old horse chestnut trees with plenty of dead wood, which is an ideal habitat for small birds and invertebrates. The meadow is home to a variety of wildflowers, butterflies and moths, as well as the scarce Roesel's bush cricket. Anton Crescent Wetland in North Sutton is a mixture of habitat types, dominated by reedbed, willows and open water. The site is a valuable resource in an area of high-density housing, providing food and shelter for common bird species, invertebrates and small mammals. A pond-dipping platform will enable local schools to use the site for environmental education under guidance from Council staff.

**8.22** Map 8.8 shows all accessible Metropolitan or Borough grade SINC's within the Borough and Areas of Deficiency based on updated information provided in November 2007 by GiGL. Areas of Deficiency, which amount to a total area of 904.63 ha or 20.69% of the Borough, are defined as built-up areas more than one kilometre (km) actual walking distance from an accessible Metropolitan or Borough site. Areas of low accessibility to nature conservation sites exist to the south of Wallington and in the north-west of the Borough.

**8.23** Since 2006, there has been a very small overall increase in the total area of deficiency of 0.05 ha from the 2006 figure of 904.57 ha.

**8.24** Appendix 8.5 provides details of priority habitats within the Borough and the GLA's 'Change Analysis'.



**8.25** Appendix 8.6 sets out details of priority species within the Borough, their protection status and the best available data on records/ counts over recent years provided from the GiGL database, including:

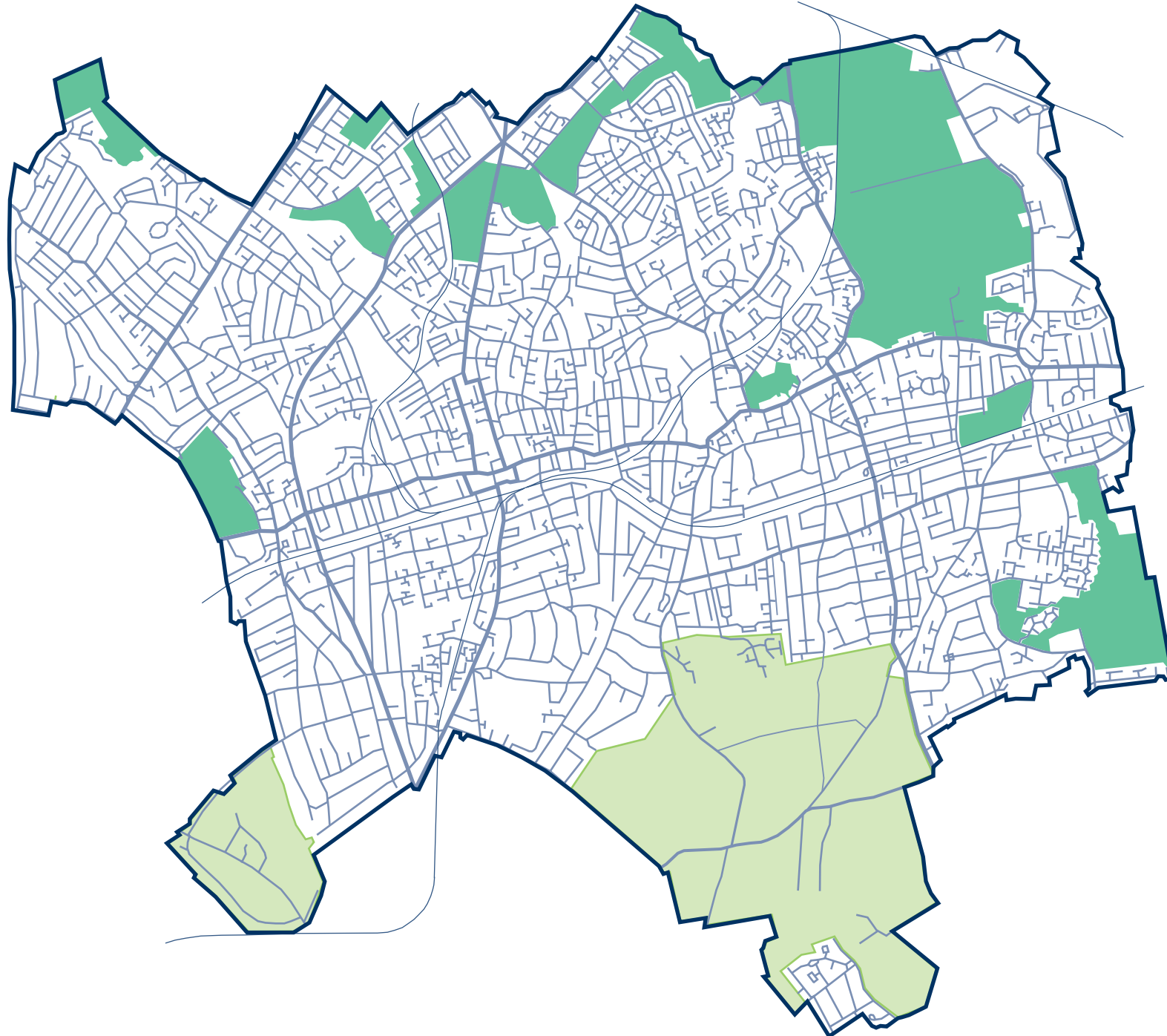
- National BAP priority species (as revised 2007);
- London BAP priority species;
- nationally threatened (Red Data listed) species with native or long-established naturalised populations in Greater London;
- declining nationally scarce species with significant native or long-established naturalised populations within Greater London; and
- species with native or long-established naturalised populations that are known to have undergone a recent significant decline in Greater London, or for which Greater London holds the majority of the known UK population.



# Map 8.1

## Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land

-  Metropolitan Open Land
-  Green Belt



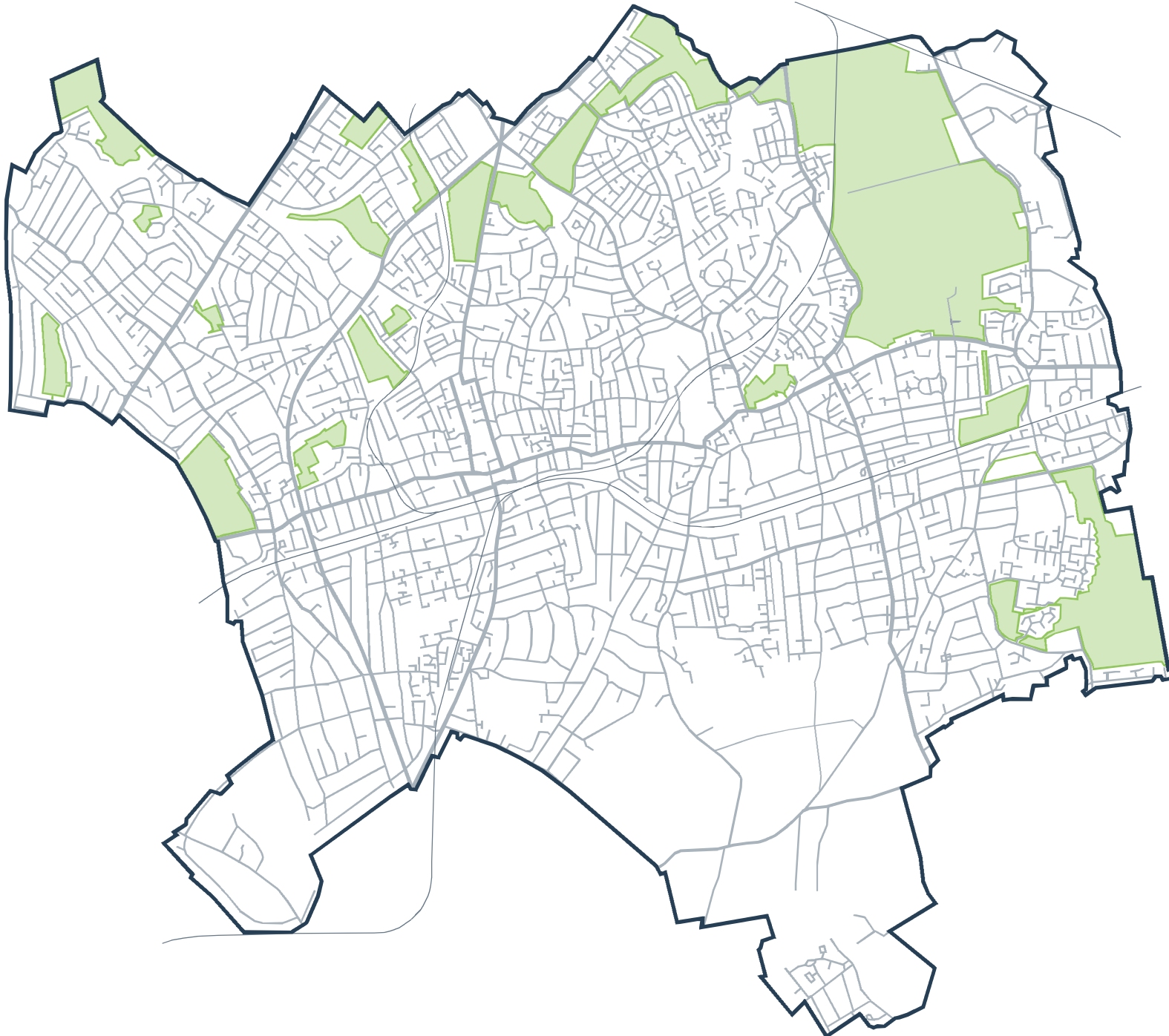
December 2007

Not to Scale

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# Map 8.2

## Green Chains



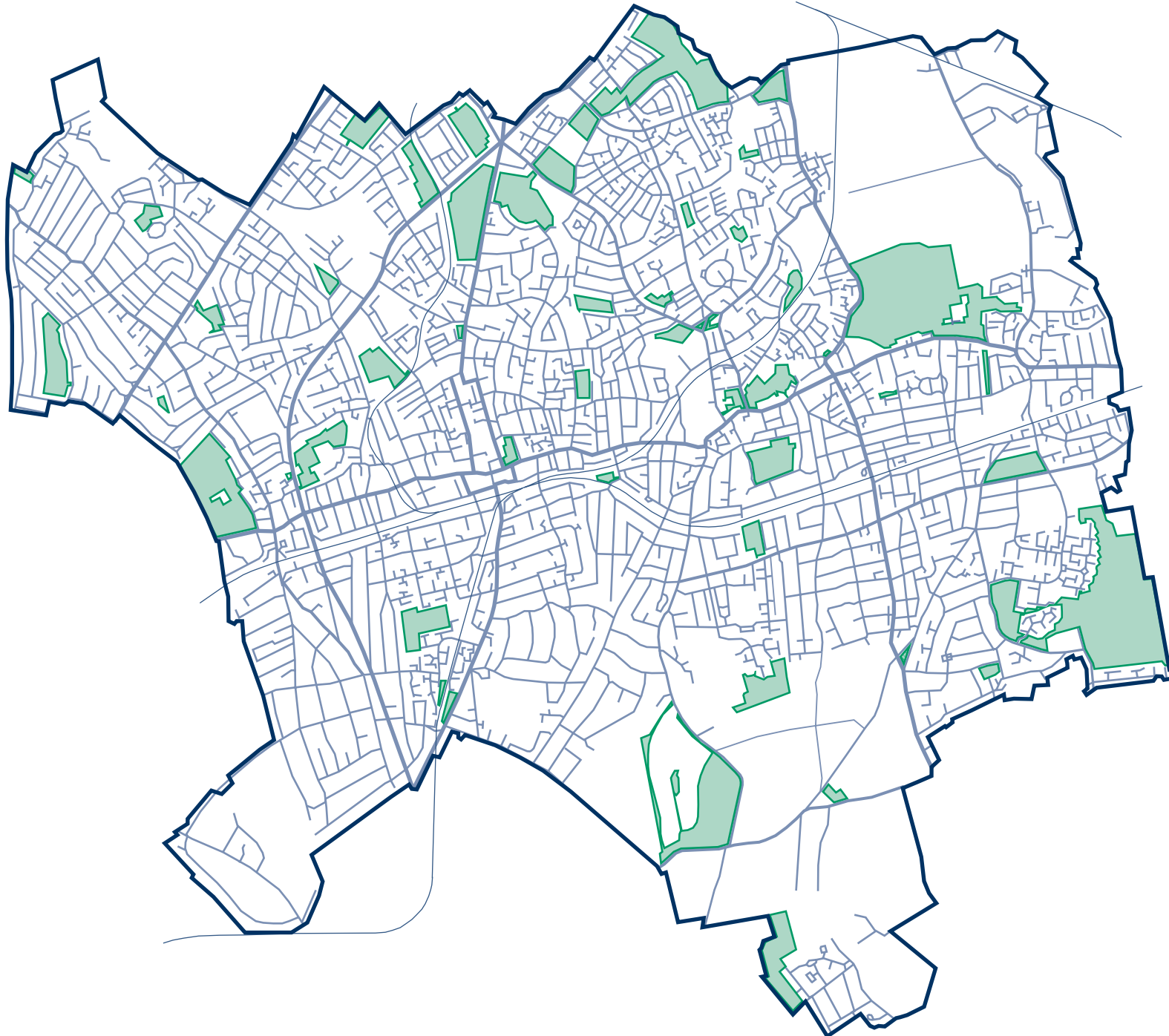
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# Map 8.3

## Public Open Space






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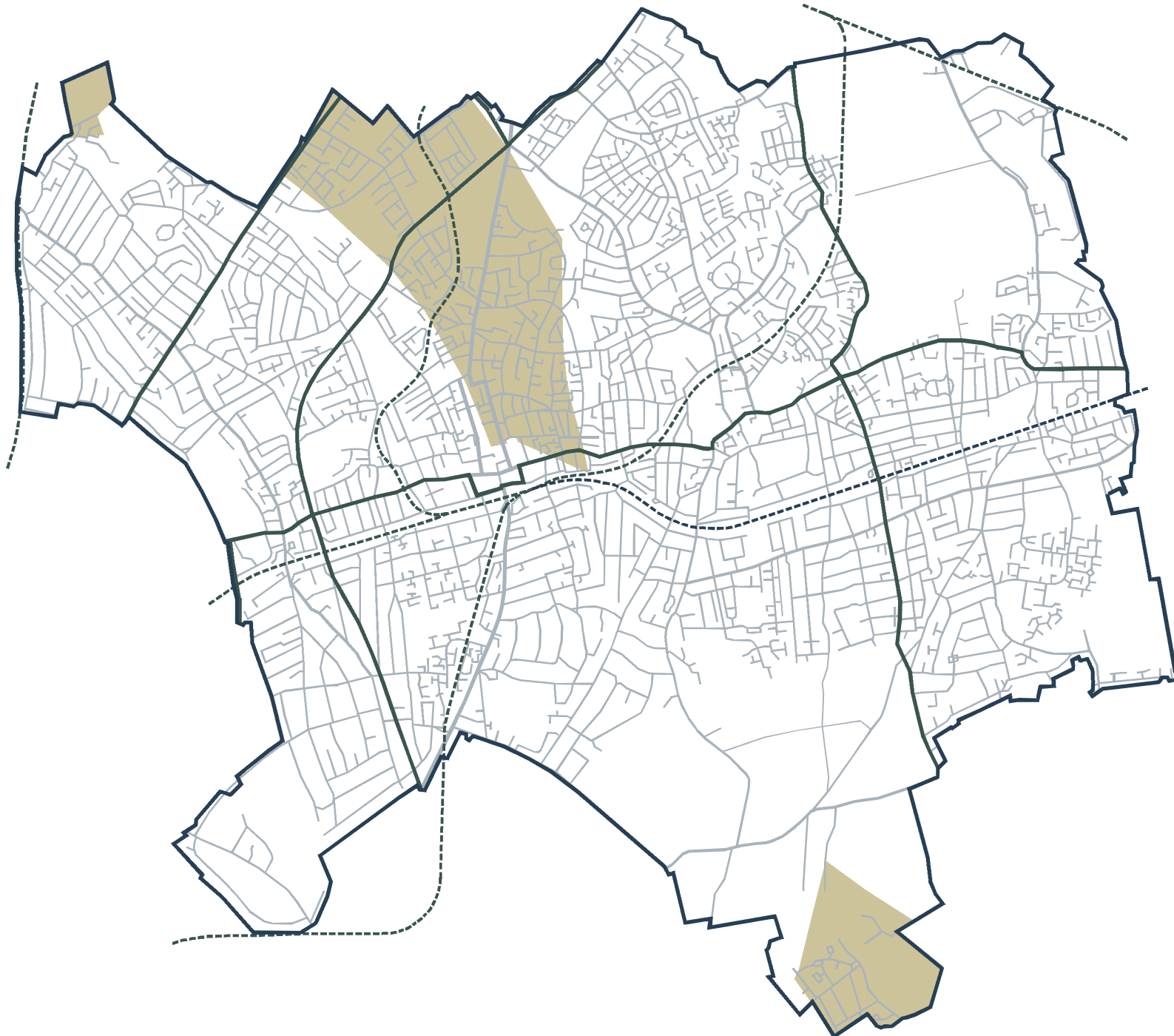
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# Map 8.4

## Areas of Open Space Deficiency 3.2km or more from sites of Metropolitan Importance

-  Areas 3.2km or more actual walking distance from Sites of Metropolitan Importance
-  Main Road
-  Railway



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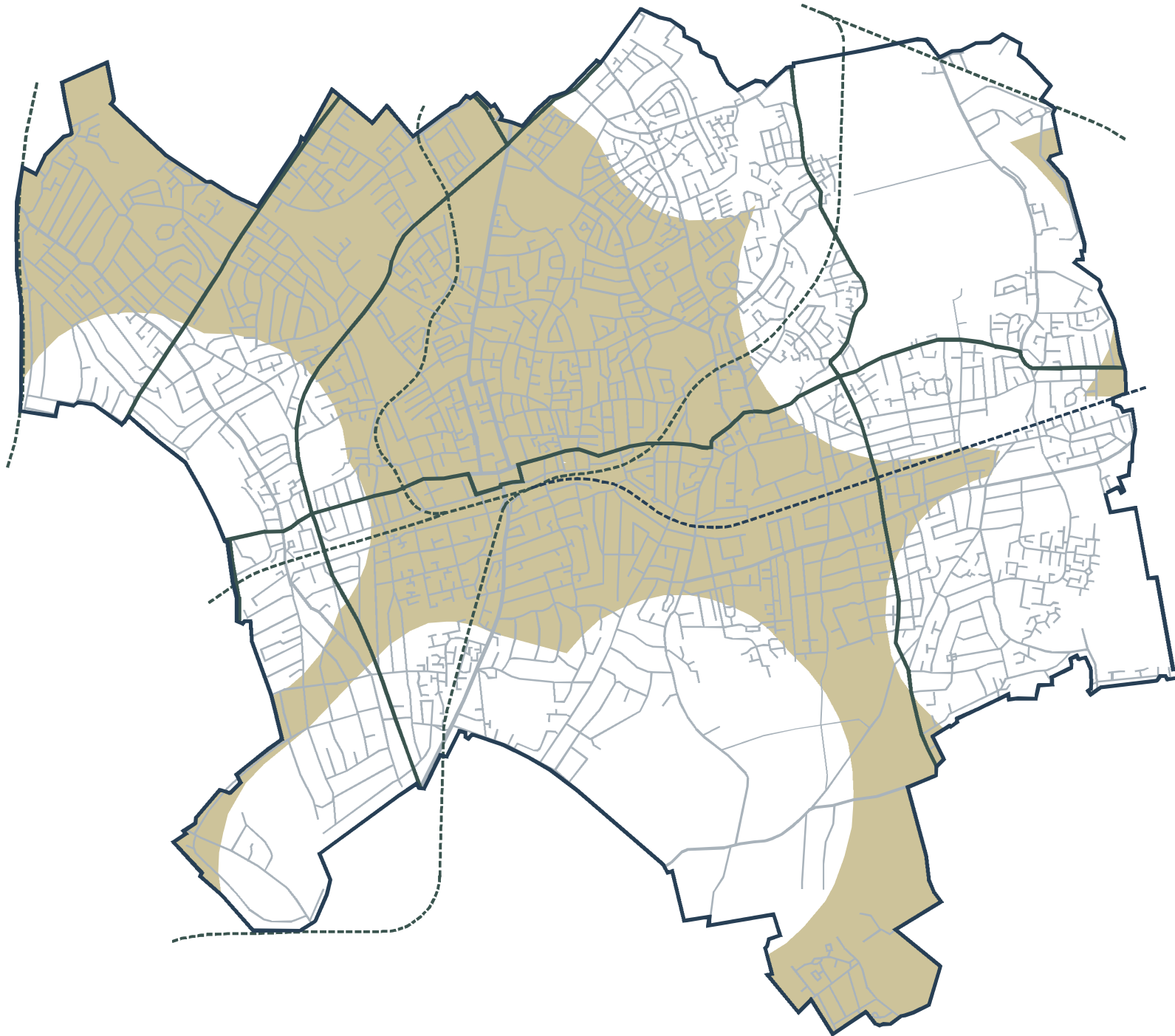
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# Map 8.5

## Areas of Open Space Deficiency 1.2km or more from Sites of District Importance

-  Areas 1.2km or more actual walking distance from Sites of District Importance
-  Main Road
-  Railway



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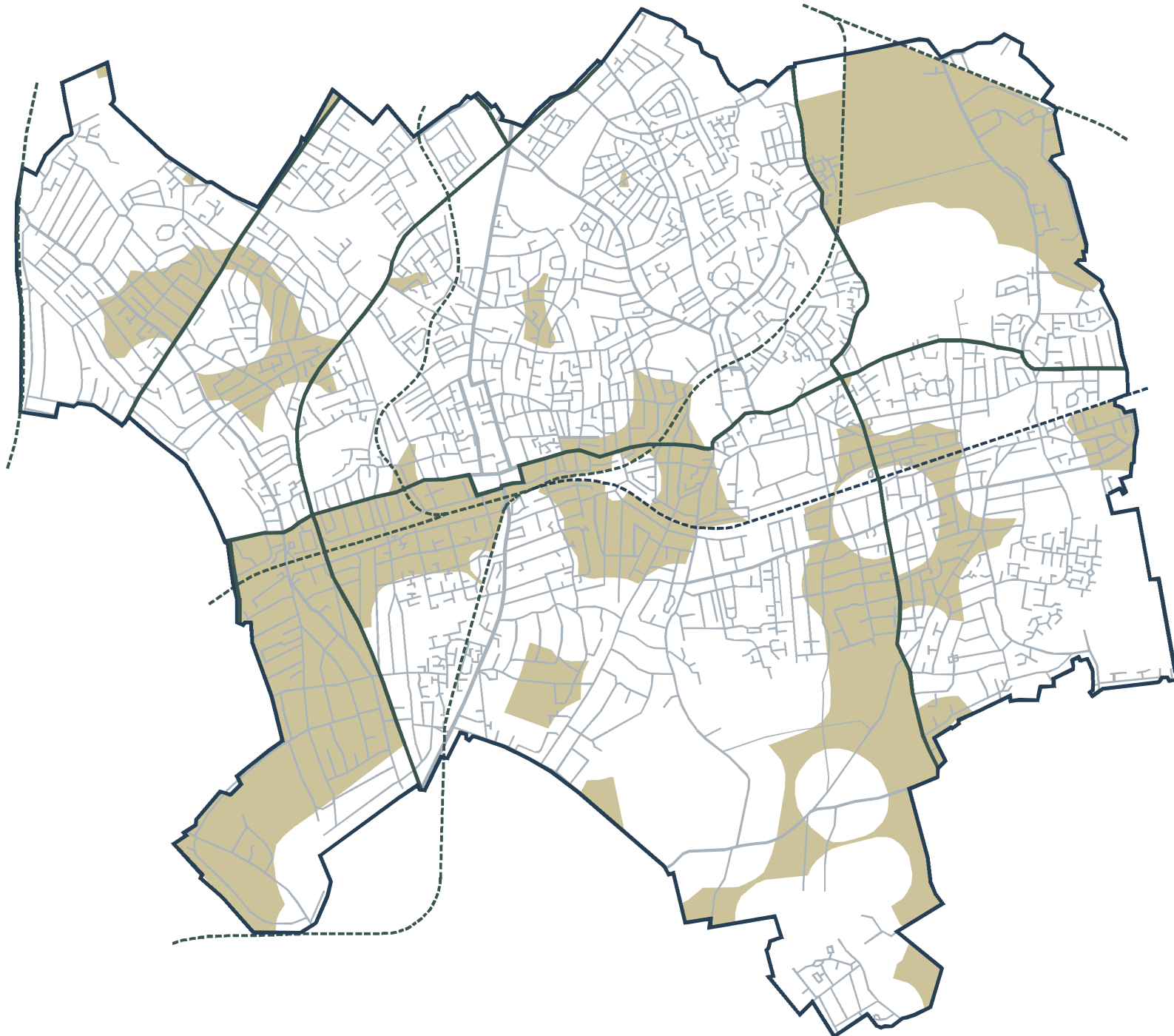
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# Map 8.6

## Areas of Open Space Deficiency 400m or more from a publically accessible open space

-  Areas 400m or more actual walking distance from a publically accessible open space
-  Main Road
-  Railway



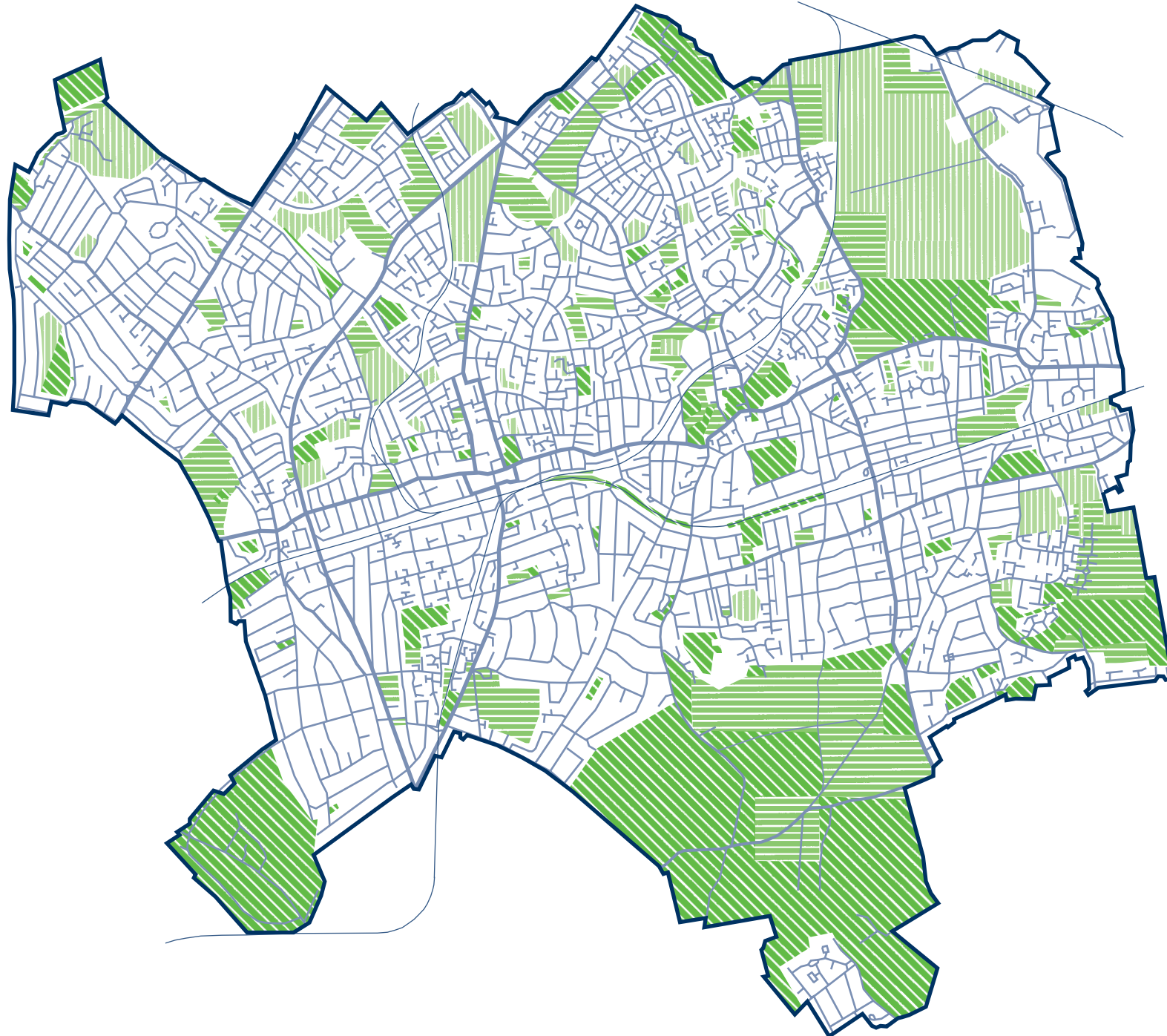
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# Map 8.7

## Landscape Quality



- High Quality
- Average Quality
- Poor Quality



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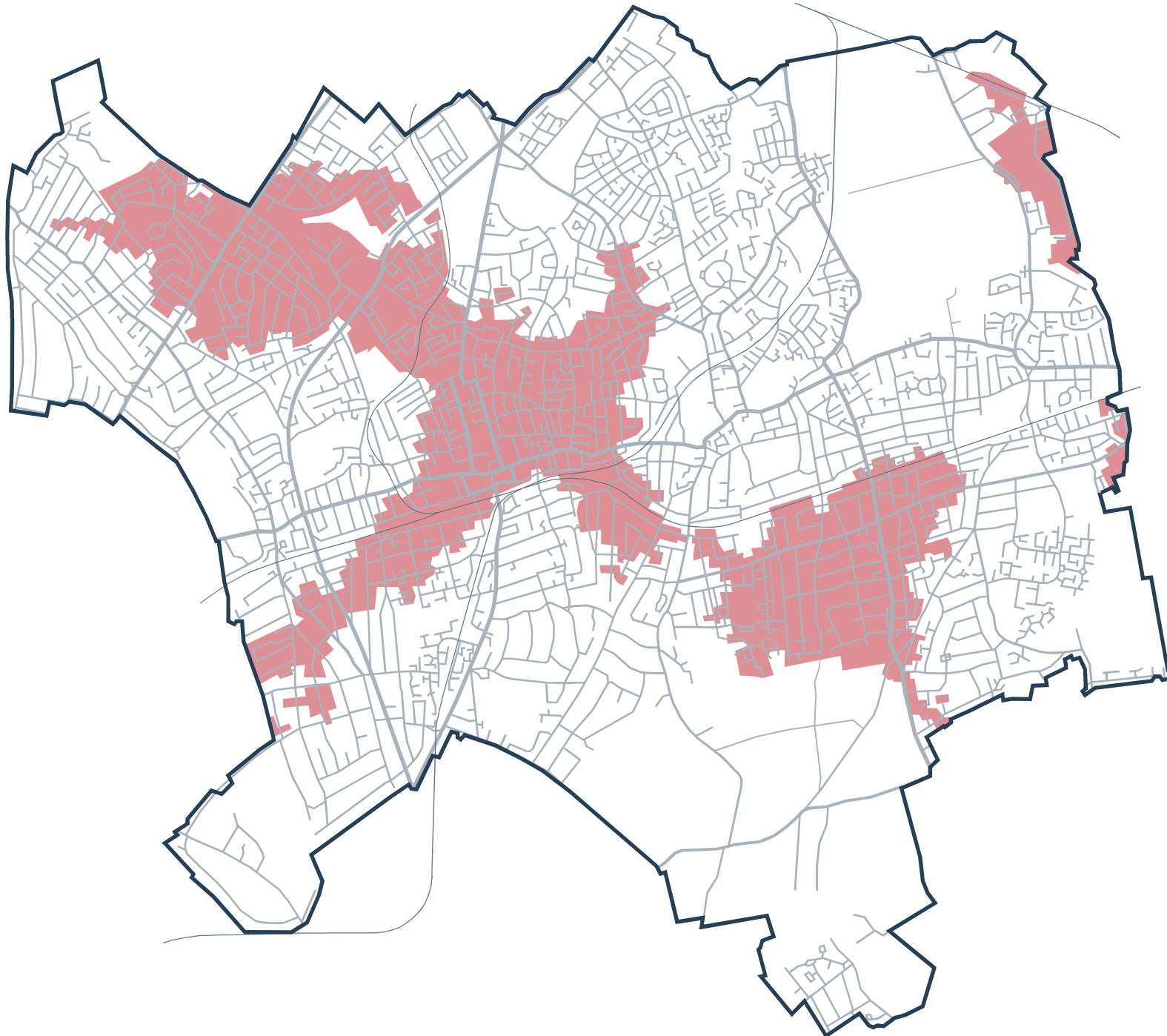
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# Map 8.8

## Access to Nature Conservation Areas

 Area of deficiency



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