



# On Ilford's High Road

Site research and analysis

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## Foreword

Ilford provides a fascinating insight into the pressures of contemporary urban development. Brought to the fore by Crossrail, this relatively small town centre on the eastern edge of London has become a focal point for developers. The station now sits in the shadow of a cluster of high rises, where once it was surrounded by vacant lots and underused office blocks from the previous century.

This rapid change has left its mark on the suburban skyline, now considerably more urban than rural. This has also engendered a new dynamic in the centre, a place traditionally reserved for retail and commercial activities. Residents are moving into the completed apartment complexes, a place they now call home. As the demographic of the community shifts from a strong Southern Asian ethnic majority to a more multicultural mix, it must be asked if the social and civic infrastructure continues to be able to support the neighbourhood.

Community projects are also on the list for Ilford's facelift, including a market and a temporary art space which will occupy the vacant space behind the Town Hall. The Council's ambitious plans to revitalise the decaying centre also extend along the High Road, addressing the parking lots and abandoned buildings that punctuate the lively and garish shop frontages.

How can we understand this linear urban fragment, with all of its histories, activities and people? This diverse and eclectic habitat is also the most vulnerable portion of the neighbourhood. It has seen the most drastic changes and is guaranteed to feel the brunt of gentrification. The challenges are wide ranging but bring with them the opportunity to rethink key spaces within the urban tissue that can ensure the resiliency of this **'Urban Coral Reef'**.





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# Introduction

## Location

The site of investigation is located in the London Borough of Redbridge in the East of the capital. Stretching the width of the southern boundary of the borough, the Redbridge Crossrail Corridor is part of the wider infrastructure project that spans from Heathrow in the West to Shenfield in the East.

Within the wider context, the corridor sits on the boundary of the Metropolitan Area of London and the County of Essex. It is a gateway to the East of the country. However, it is not one of the principle arteries serving the city centre. Further south, the Barking to Stratford connection supports most of the traffic coming from the ports of Dover and the Thames Estuary.







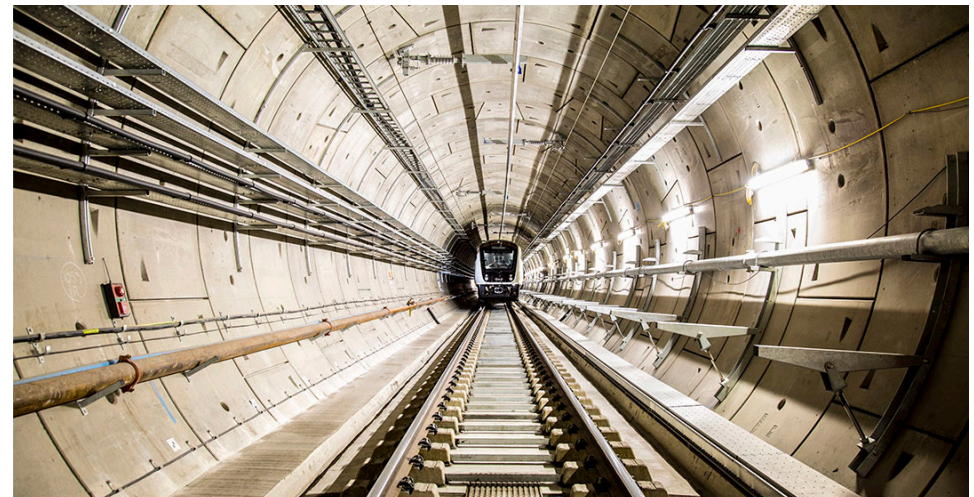
**Infrastructure**

# Crossrail

Crossrail is Europe's largest infrastructure project within a city. On completion, it will link Reading in the West to Shenfield in the East, serving 41 stations along 120 km of dedicated express track. The project will de-congest the existing network and boost the economy local hubs. It will generate new opportunities for businesses and attract development in centres across the suburban belt such as Ilford.



Proposed overhaul of Ilford Station (© Crossrail Ltd 2020)



Tunnelling below London, the fifteen billion pound railway line (© Crossrail Ltd 2020)

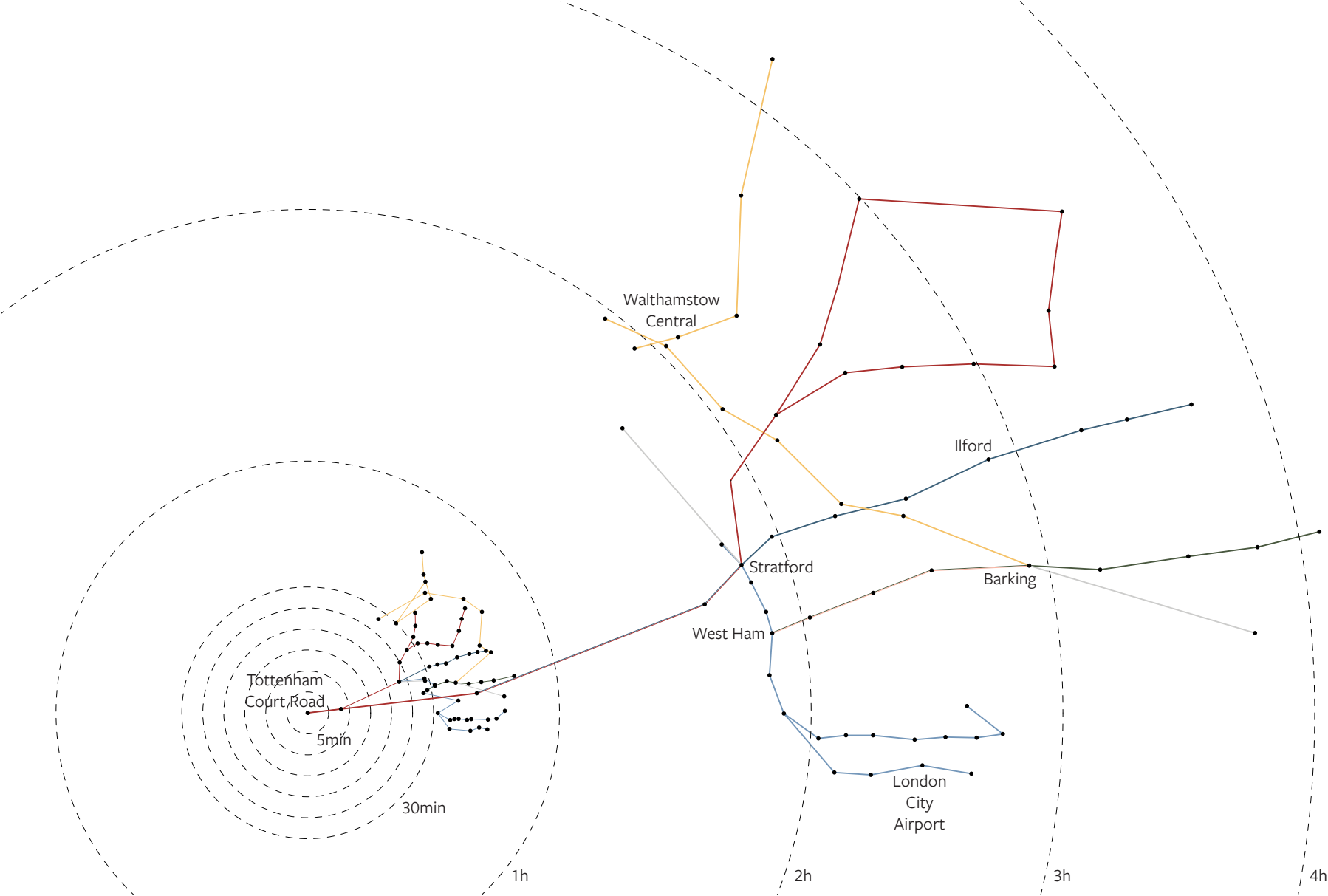




**Key**

- Elizabeth Line (CR1)
- Stations

# Contracting Space





Service area of each station in the Redbridge Crossrail Corridor in a radius of 10min walking distance

# Traffic Flow

London has inherited the belt and spoke road system with three concentric rings (inner, North-South circular and M25), which are connected by radial arterial A-roads.

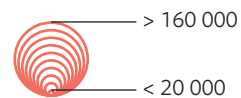
To the North of Ilford, the A12 connects Brentwood and Newbury Park to Stratford, while to the South the A13 links the Thames Estuary to Barking and the City. These are the main routes for freight and car traffic.

The A118 is an old Roman road between Ilford and Romford that has been extended to connected local town centres. It sees far less traffic than its neighbours

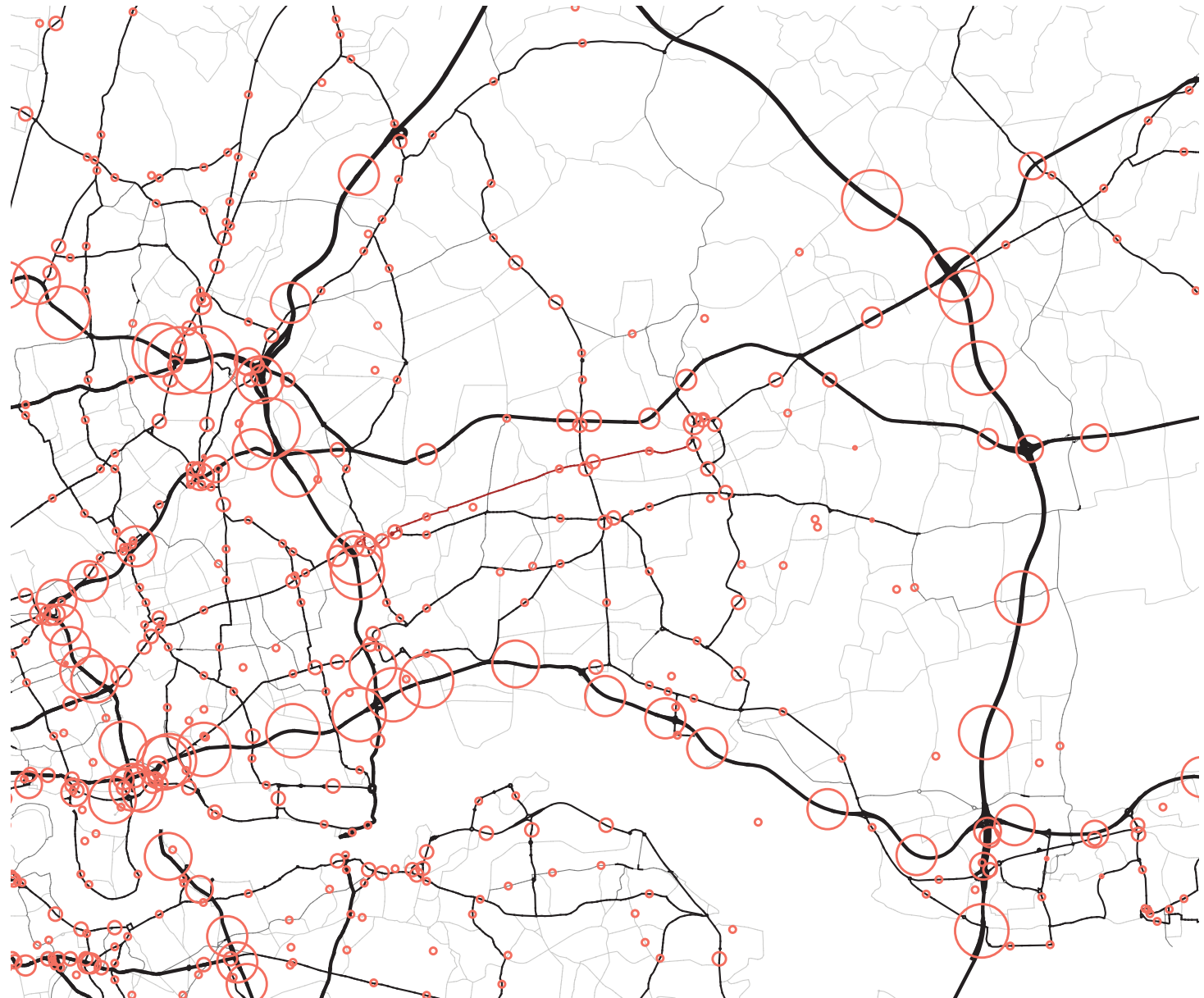
## Key

- Motorway
- Primary Road
- A Road
- B Road
- Minor Road

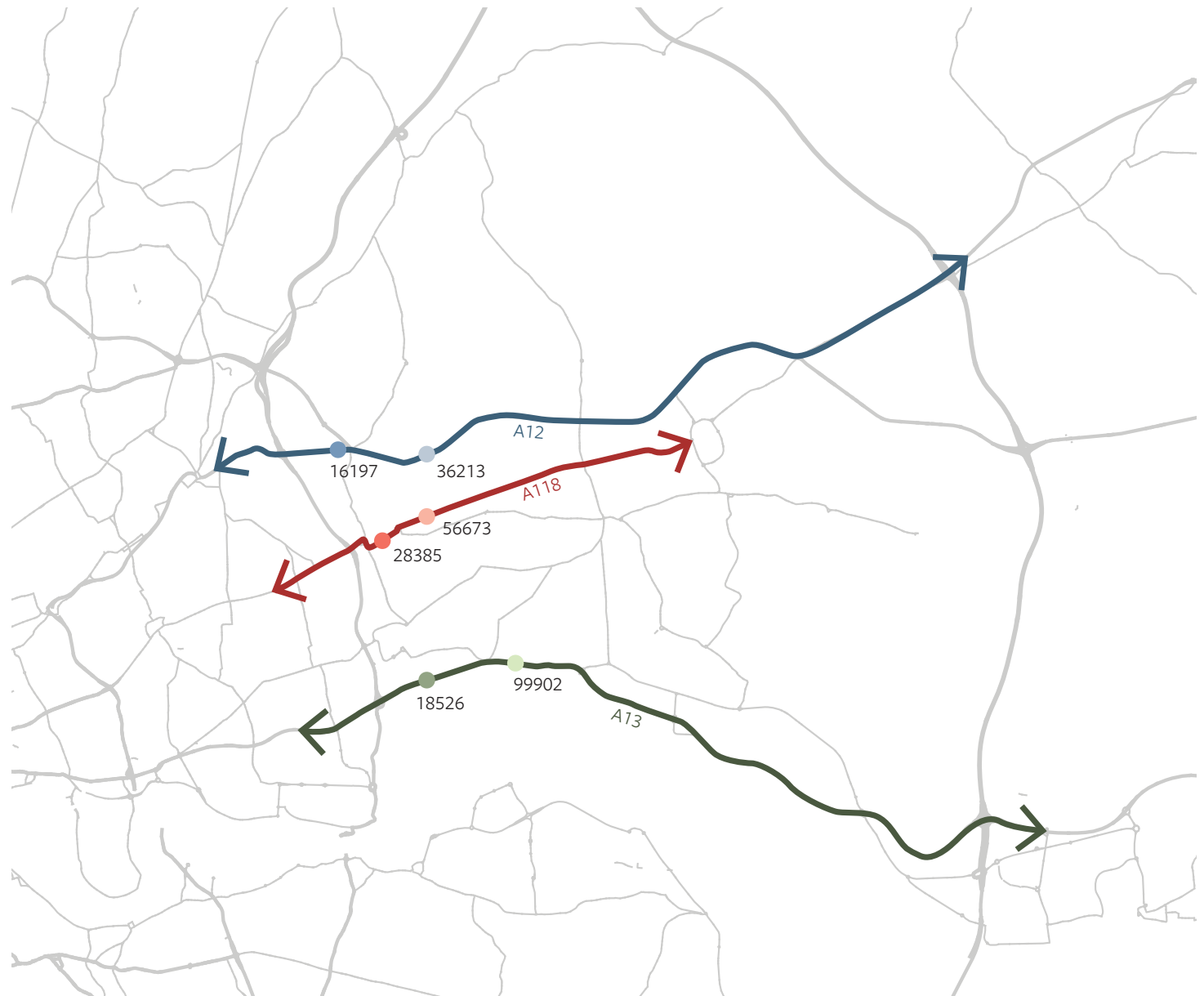
Average traffic flow in both directions(per day)



Data source: Department for Transport, 2019



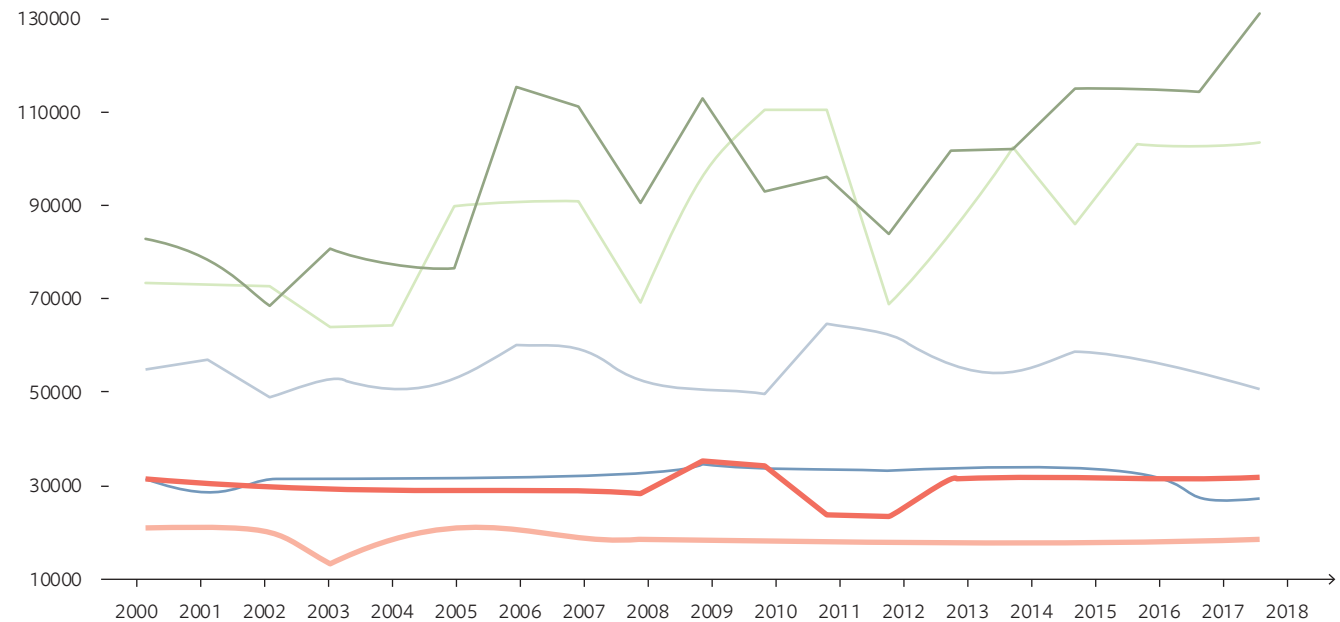
To understand the trend in traffic volume, we will look at the three key arteries. Using data from traffic counters, we will can draw a picture of the traffic intensity over the last twenty years.



# Traffic Trends

## All Motorised Vehicles

The evolution of traffic volume over the last twenty years shows a net increase along the A13 arterial compared to the A12 and A118. This is most likely due to an increase in activity along the river where new development is occurring and the Thames Estuary port is growing.



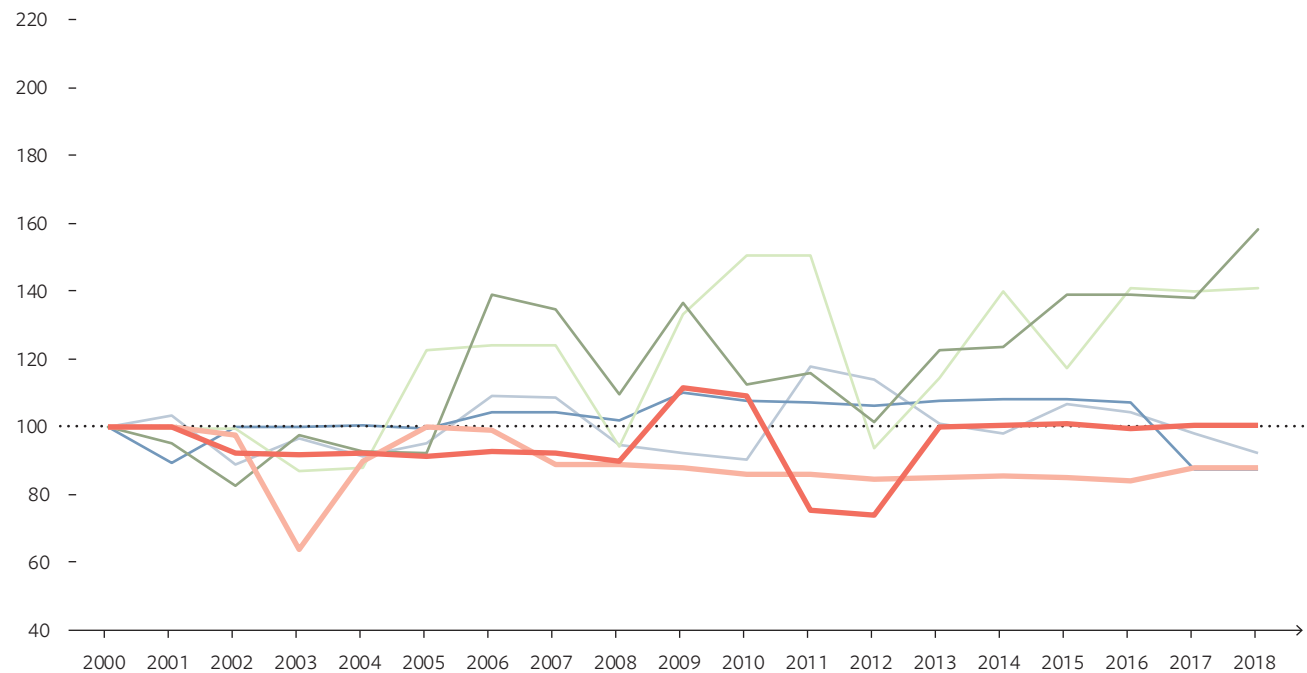
Traffic flow in both directions taken on an average day between 2000 and 2018 (source: Department for Transport, 2019)

## Key

- A118 (28385)
- A118 (56673)
- A12 (16197)
- A12 (36213)
- A13 (18526)
- A13 (99902)

### Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) (base 100)

The steady increase in HGVs along the A13 is directly tied to the logistics and industrial activities of the Thames Estuary. Conversely, there has been a stagnation and, in places, a decline in HGVs on both the A12 and A118 which are not connected to logistic hubs



Traffic flow of HGVs between 2000 and 2018 (base 100) (source: Department for Transport, 2019)

### Light Good Vehicles (LGVs) (base 100)

Unsurprisingly, the A13 has seen an increase in the volume of LGVs in the last twenty years, linked to the intensification of logistic activities along that corridor. However, there is also an increase in these vehicle types on the A118 running through Ilford, which probably linked to both high street retail and online shopping deliveries.



Traffic flow of LGVs between 2000 and 2018 (base 100) (source: Department for Transport, 2019)

### Key

- A118 (28385)
- A118 (56673)
- A12 (16197)
- A12 (36213)
- A13 (18526)
- A13 (99902)



### Cars and Taxis (base 100)

The final marker is private transport, which is a good indication of changes in habits over time. In the case of Ilford, the volume of cars has stagnated and is beginning to decline. This trend is also occurring along the A12 to the north.

This is probably linked to an improvement in public transport and an overall decrease of car ownership.



Traffic flow of Cars and Taxis between 2000 and 2018 (base 100) (source: Department for Transport, 2019)

## Accident Clusters

Speed comes at a cost. The busiest roads in and around Ilford are also the ones with the highest accident numbers. The most acute point for pedestrians and cyclists is the Ilford Hill Gyratory, which feeds into the busy North Circular junction to the west. Poor pedestrian routing and island crossings together with wide multi lane roads makes this space extremely susceptible to collisions.

The Ilford Hill Gyratory with the North Circular junction in the background.







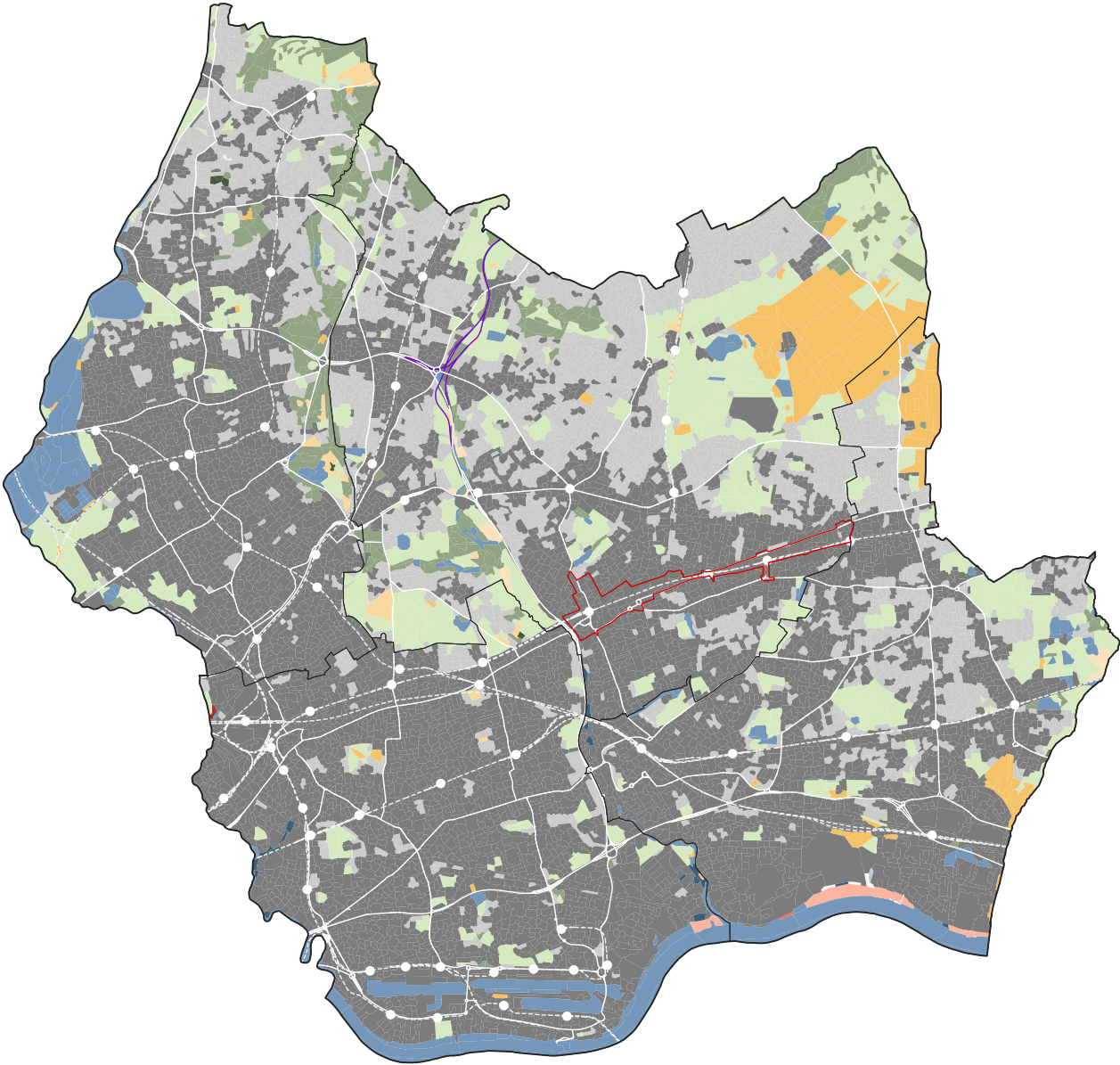
# Physical Geography

# Environmental Context

## Land Cover

- Key**
- Urban
  - Suburban
  - Coniferous Woodland
  - Broadleaf Woodland
  - Improved Grassland
  - Arable and Horticulture
  - Heather
  - Neutral Grassland
  - Inland Rock
  - Littoral Rock
  - Littoral Sediment
  - Saltmarsh
  - Freshwater
  - Fen, Marsh and Swamp
  - Road
  - Railway
  - Station

Data source: Ordnance Survey 2015



Risk Factors

**Key**

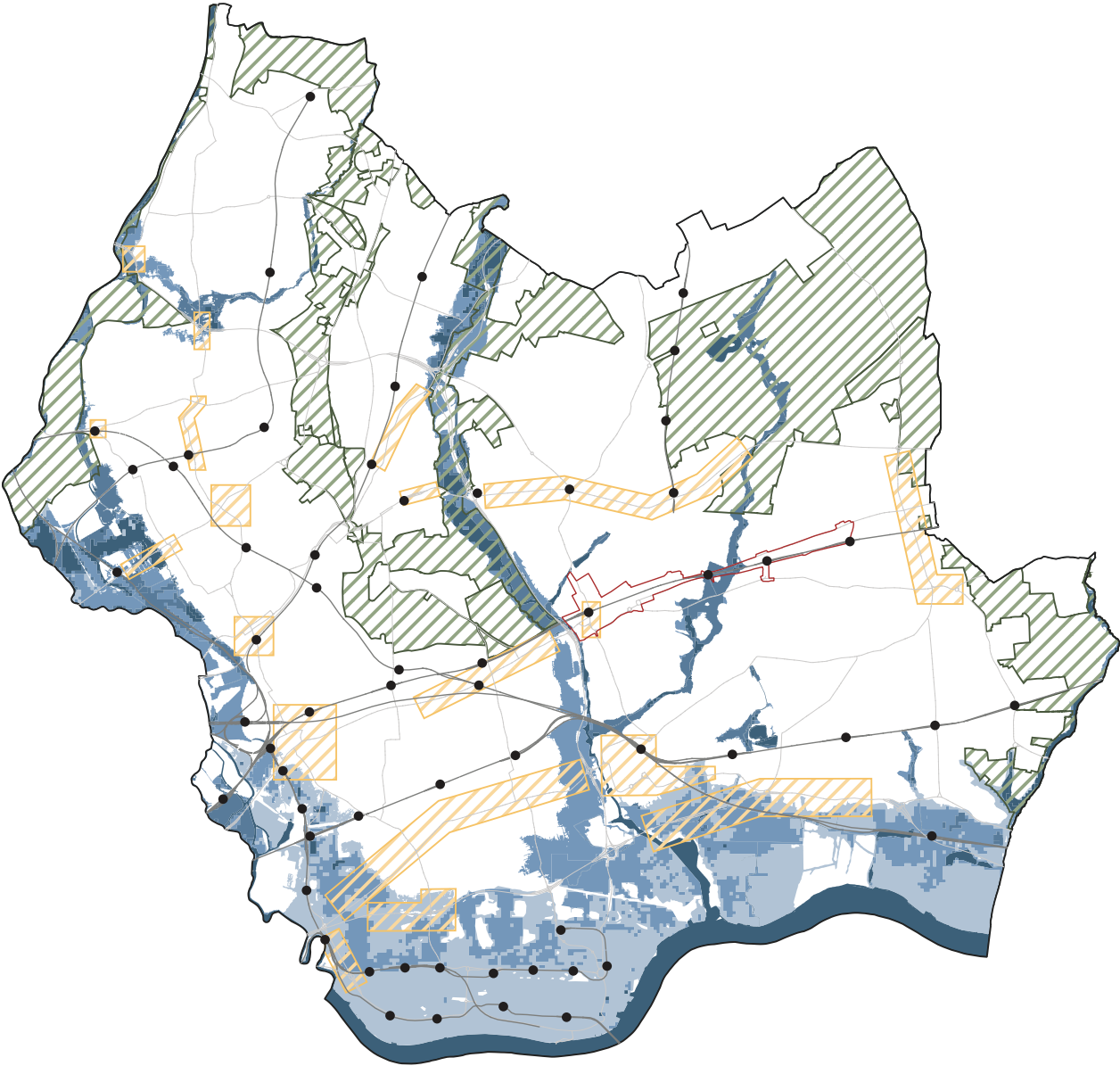
Flood Risk

- Very Low
- Low
- Medium
- High

Green Belt

London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (LAEI)

Data source: Ordnance Survey,  
Environmental Agency



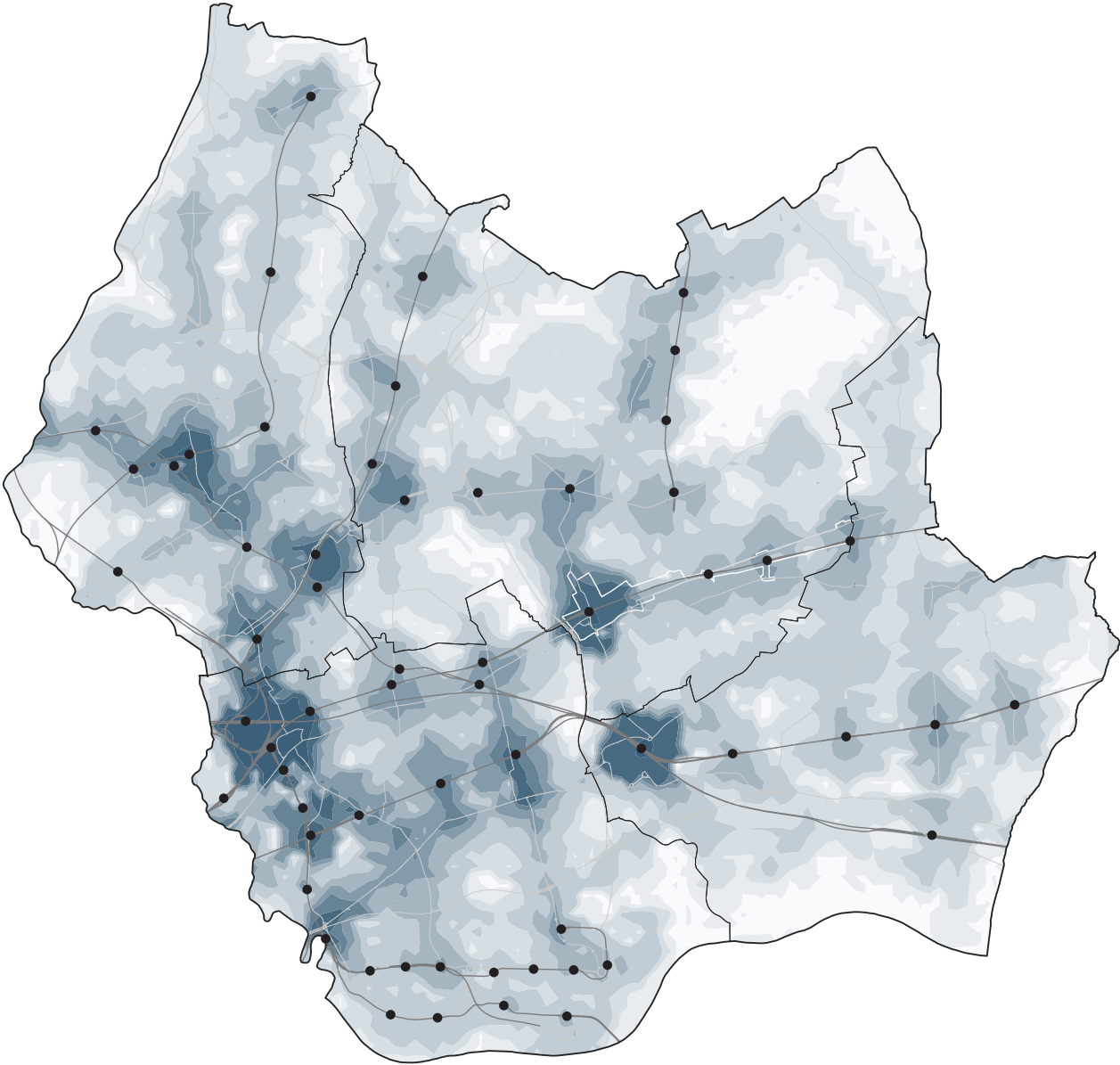




Urban Density

# Accessibility

Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL)



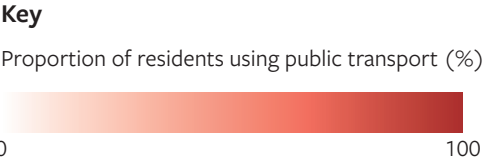
**Key**

Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL)

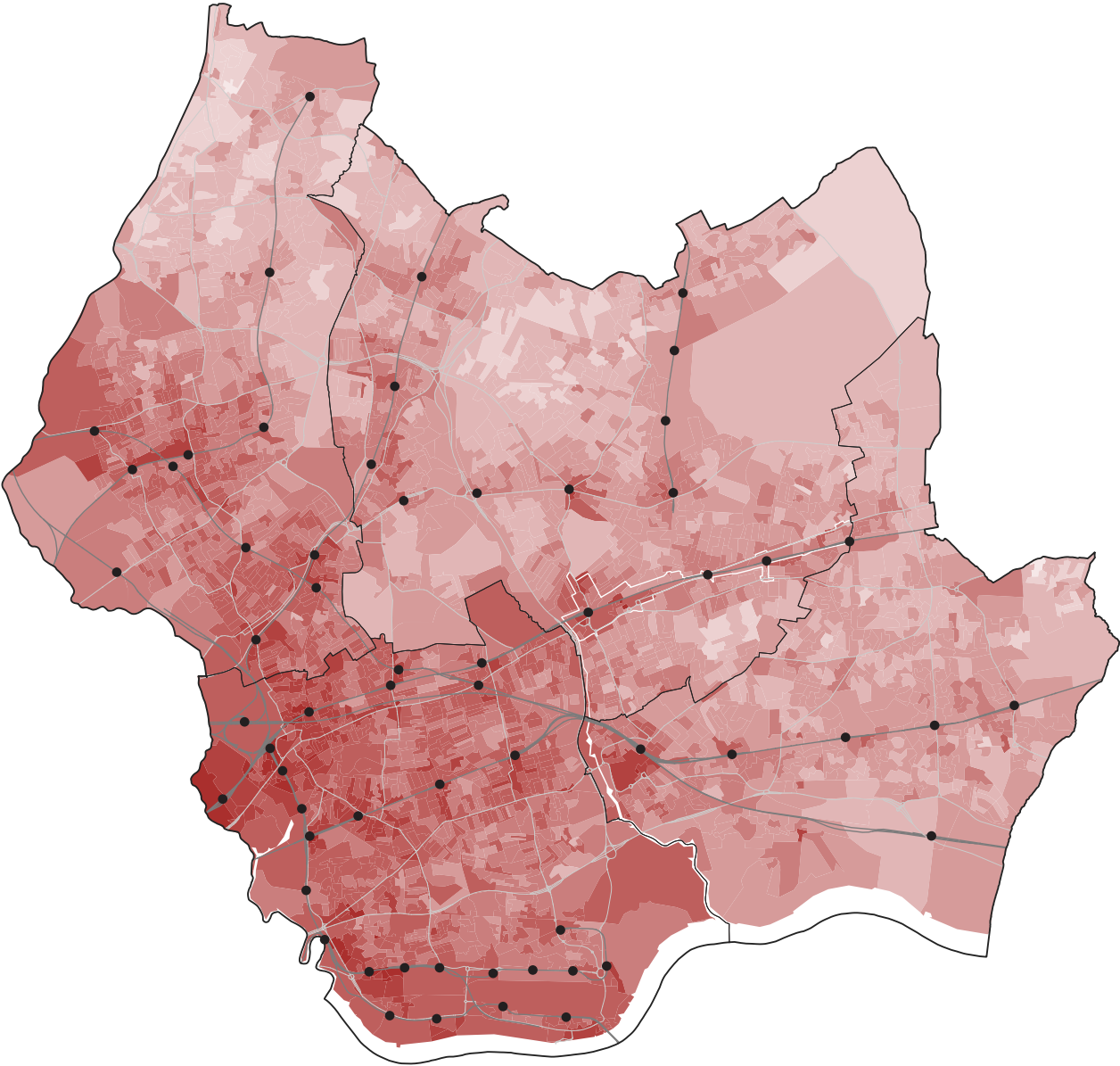


Data source: Nomis Census 2011

Mobility Habits



Data source: Nomis Census 2011

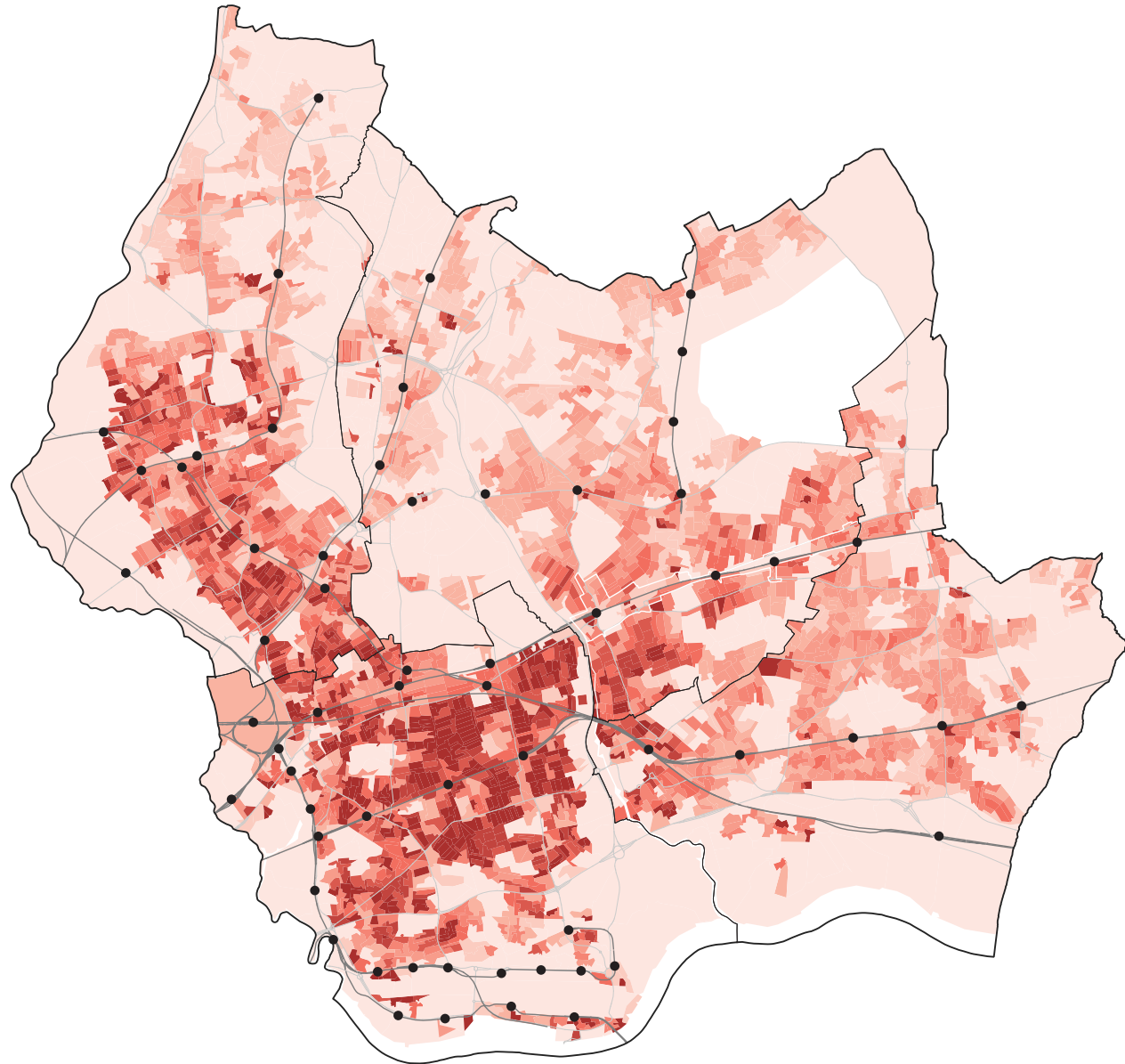


# Densities

## Current population clusters

Density broadly follows the lines of infrastructure, with a lower density on the suburban edge of London. However, local centres remain sparsely populated due to the presence of primarily retail and commercial functions. The most densely populated areas are usually at an intermediary distance to the town centre - around 400m.

With a projected intensification of town centres it is likely that centres will include a much larger proportion of housing.



### Key

Population densities in 2018 (p/km<sup>2</sup>)



Data source: Nomis Census 2011

## Intensification

The demographic evolution shows a general move from the suburbs to the local town centres. Stratford and Barking Riverside have shown the greatest increase because of substantial investment in the last decade. However, smaller centres such as Ilford, Gants Hill and Walthamstow have also seen an influx.

The emptying of suburban areas raises questions as to whether sprawling urbanisation is now regressing.

### Walthamstow

Town centre regeneration  
500 homes  
350 jobs

### Stratford

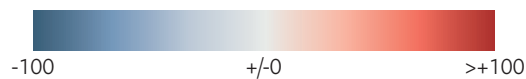
Olympic Park regeneration  
10 000 homes  
20 000 jobs

### Canning Town

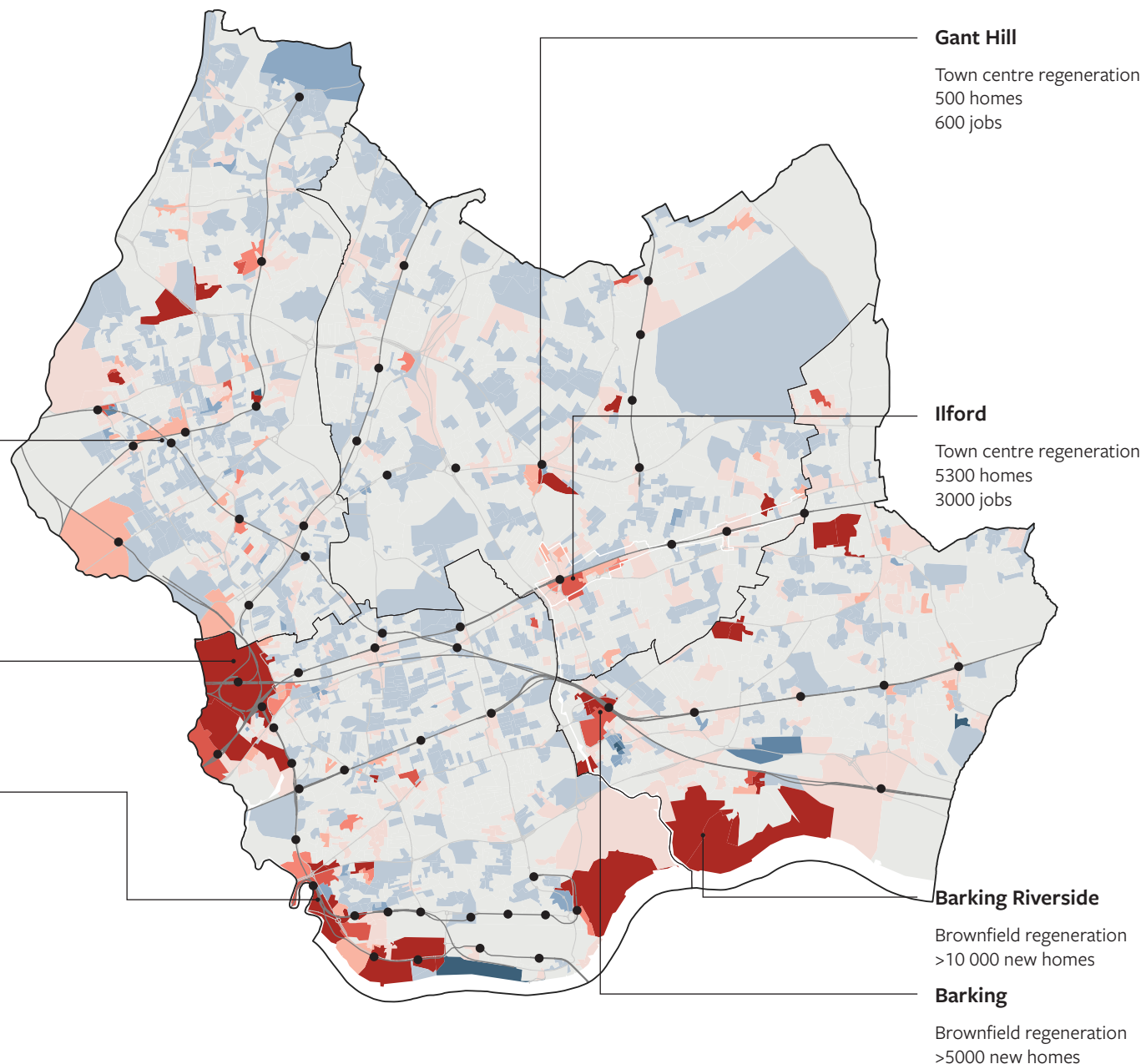
Dockland regeneration  
10 000 homes

### Key

Proportion population change 2011 - 2018 (%)



Data source: Nomis Census 2011





# Ethnography

# Ethnic organisation

## Cultural clustering

There are two principle ethnic groups in and around the site. White British communities live on the suburban fringes of the boroughs while the Asian Indian communities cluster around the town centres of Ilford and East Ham.

Key

White British

White Other

Asian Pakistani

Asian Indian

Asian Bangladeshi

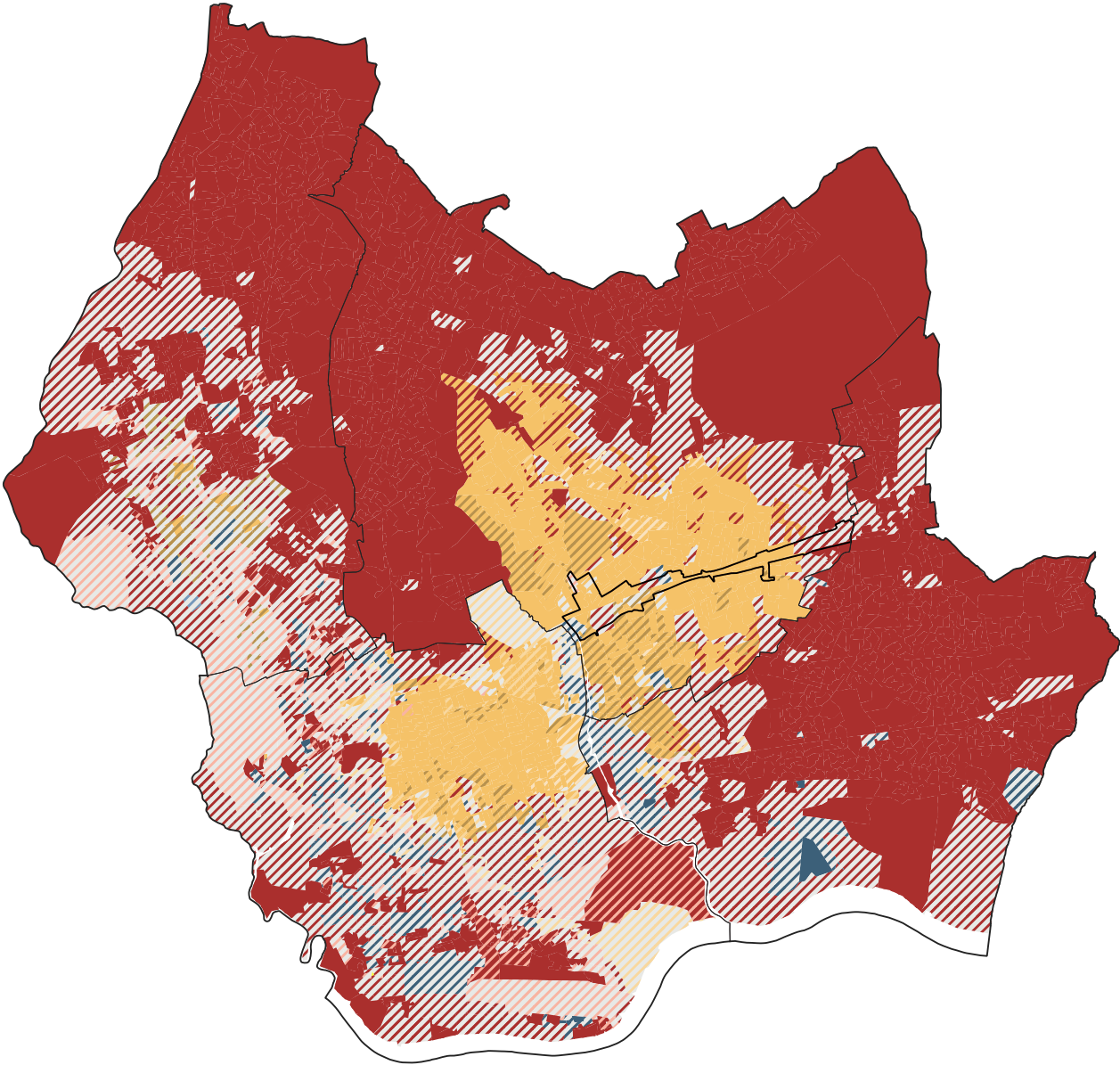
Asian Other

Black African

Black Caribbean

Fill: clear ethnic majority

Hatch: largest ethnic minority



Data source: Nomis Census 2011



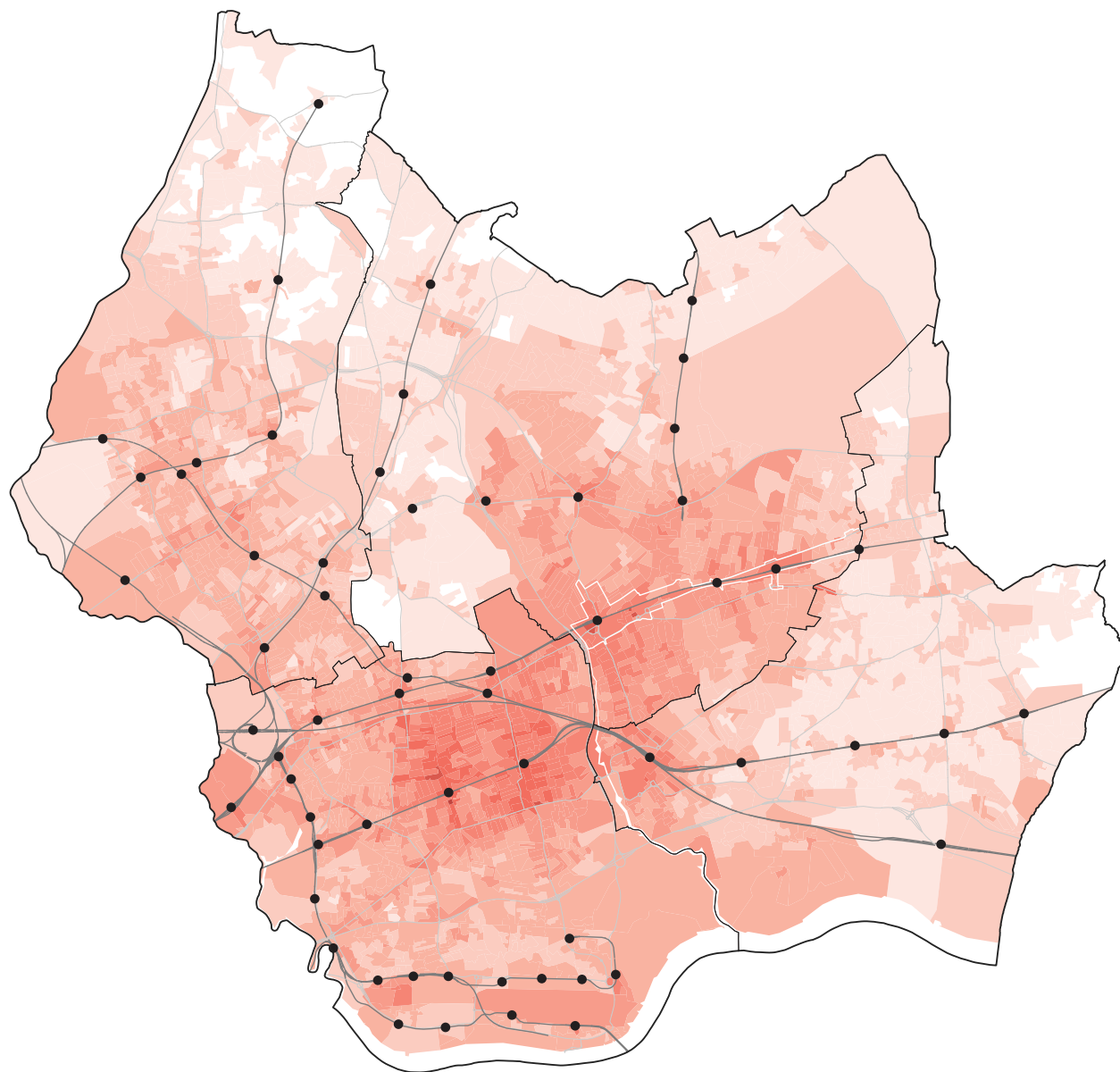
## First generation inhabitants

### Key

Proportion of residents born outside  
the United Kingdom (%)



Data source: Nomis Census 2011









**Archaeology**



# History of Suburbia

Local history explained at the museum in Ilford

## From Farmland to Suburbia

The depression in the 1870s and 1880s lead to many of the farms being sold off to developers. This farm land became the new commuter suburbs built in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

Today Redbridge sends commuters into London, but 100 years ago it sent food. Ilford was well known for it's potatoes. Market gardens once populated the fields around the town centre, producing a wide variety of crops to be sold on the markets of London.

Before the railways were built in the mid 1900s there were two main ways of getting food to London markets - by road or by river. It was common to see Thames barges sailing up the River Roding taking food from the local farms to London. As well as food, the barges carried bricks, coal and building materials. Return journeys carried night soil (London excrement) - used as fertiliser on the fields.

## Suburban Life

Ilford grew from a village into a town between the years 1900 and 1929. The Town Hall was built in 1901 as a symbol of civic pride and the increased power of the Council. The construction of sewage pipes, the new roads, telegraph poles and electric street lights were all signs of a new world.

Other infrastructure including hospitals, churches and schools were quick to follow. Large factories were built on what was once farmland, including Howards Chemical Works, Kelvin Hughes, and Plessey.

Plush department stores catering to every need opened in Ilford, including Bodgers, Harrison Gibson and Fairheads. Clubs and societies were set up by new residents who wanted to create a network of friends and acquaintances. Sports clubs, social clubs and cultural organisations catered to every interest. The newly opened Wanstead Park and Valentines Park attracted many to move to the area.



Display case showing items from early 20th Century suburban life (Museum of Redbridge, Ilford)

# Historical Expansion





1890



1920

Ilford Town Hall  
1899



Ilford Town Hall (built 1899)

RPPC Cinema (demolished)

Church  
(demolished)

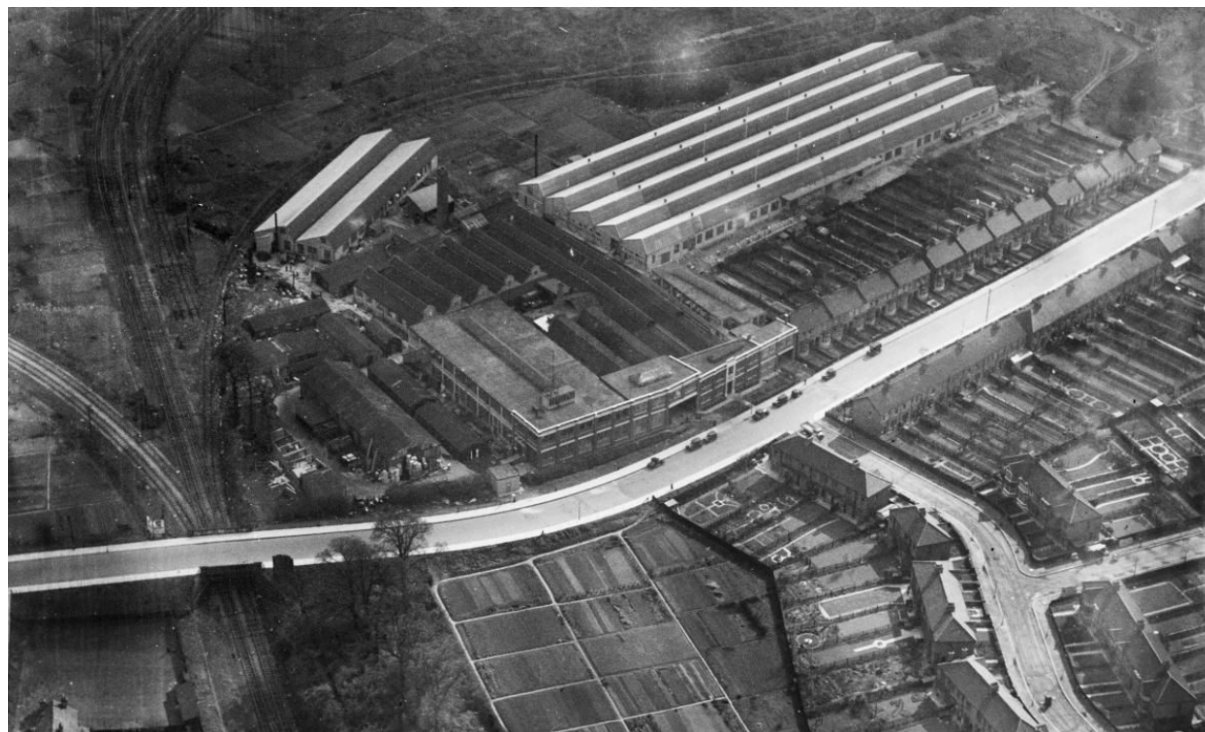


The RPPC Cinema in the High Road, Ilford, 1928. [www.britainfromabove.ork.uk](http://www.britainfromabove.ork.uk) ©Historic England

1950

The Plessey Co Ltd Electrical  
Engineering Works  
1925





[EPW044031] The Plessey Co Ltd Electrical Engineering Works alongside Vicarage Lane, Ilford, 1934. [www.britainfromabove.ork.uk](http://www.britainfromabove.ork.uk) ©Historic England

1970





2010



# Listed Heritage







[EPW024242] Ilford railway station and environs, Ilford, 1928. [www.britainfromabove.org.uk](http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk) ©Historic England






# Contemporary Development

# Planning

Decades of suburban housebuilding have emptied town centres, a literal 'hollowing out' of the traditional heart of civic and economic activity. Today, the process is likely to be reversed as town centres are being earmarked for high density housing development.



## Key

-  Site Allocation
-  Brownfield Register
-  Housing Zone

Data source: London Datastore



## Local Objectives

3.4.2 The Crossrail Corridor includes three distinct centres at Seven Kings, Goodmayes and Chadwell Heath. Each area has its own context and characteristics.

3.4.3 Seven Kings is a linear town centre focused around the High Road and the mainline railway. There is only one bridging point over the railway which can create a busy junction in the vicinity of Seven Kings Station. The central buildings are a key feature, particularly the landmarks of the station, the Seven Kings Methodist church and various commercial buildings surrounding the junction.

3.4.4 Goodmayes is primarily a residential area served by a series of local shopping parades and centres. [...] Goodmayes Retail Park sandwiched between the High Road and the railway east of Goodmayes Road is undistinctive with poor levels of continuity and enclosure. This area operates as a separate retail park due to the deficient levels of accessibility and integration into the urban layout. Goodmayes suffers from a lack of distinctiveness, with no clear neighbourhood boundaries.

3.4.5 Chadwell Heath centre contains a mix of uses, characterised by residential flatted development in upper floors above parades with retail and other uses

at the street level. Beyond the centre, residential properties are generally suburban in character, buildings are generally arranged in short terraces with relatively simple detailing.

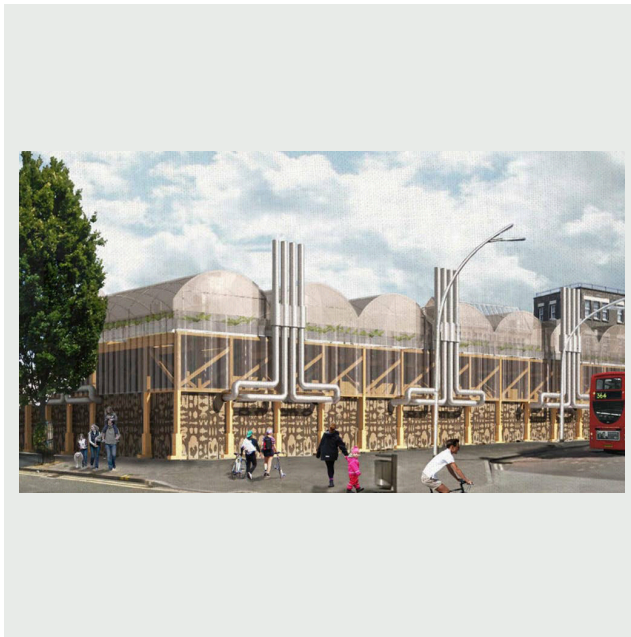
London Borough of Redbridge Local Plan 2015-2030.(2018). *The Crossrail Corridor Investment and Growth Area*. 26



# New Development

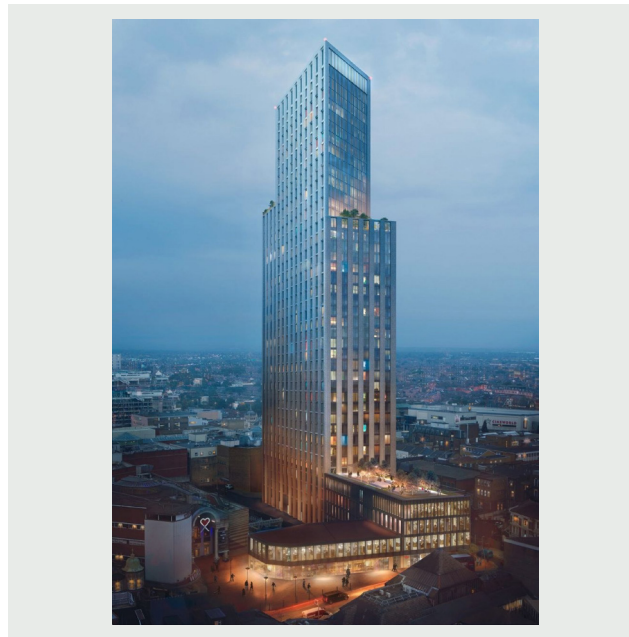


## Future Development



### Ilford Community Market

Architect: Interrobang Architects  
Client: Mercato Metropolitano  
Status: Planning Approved



### One Station Road

Architect: Collado Collins  
Client: Access Self Storage  
Status: Planning Submitted



### 822 High Road

Architect: Russ Dange  
Client: Weston Homes & Tesco  
Status: Planning Submitted





Deconstruction

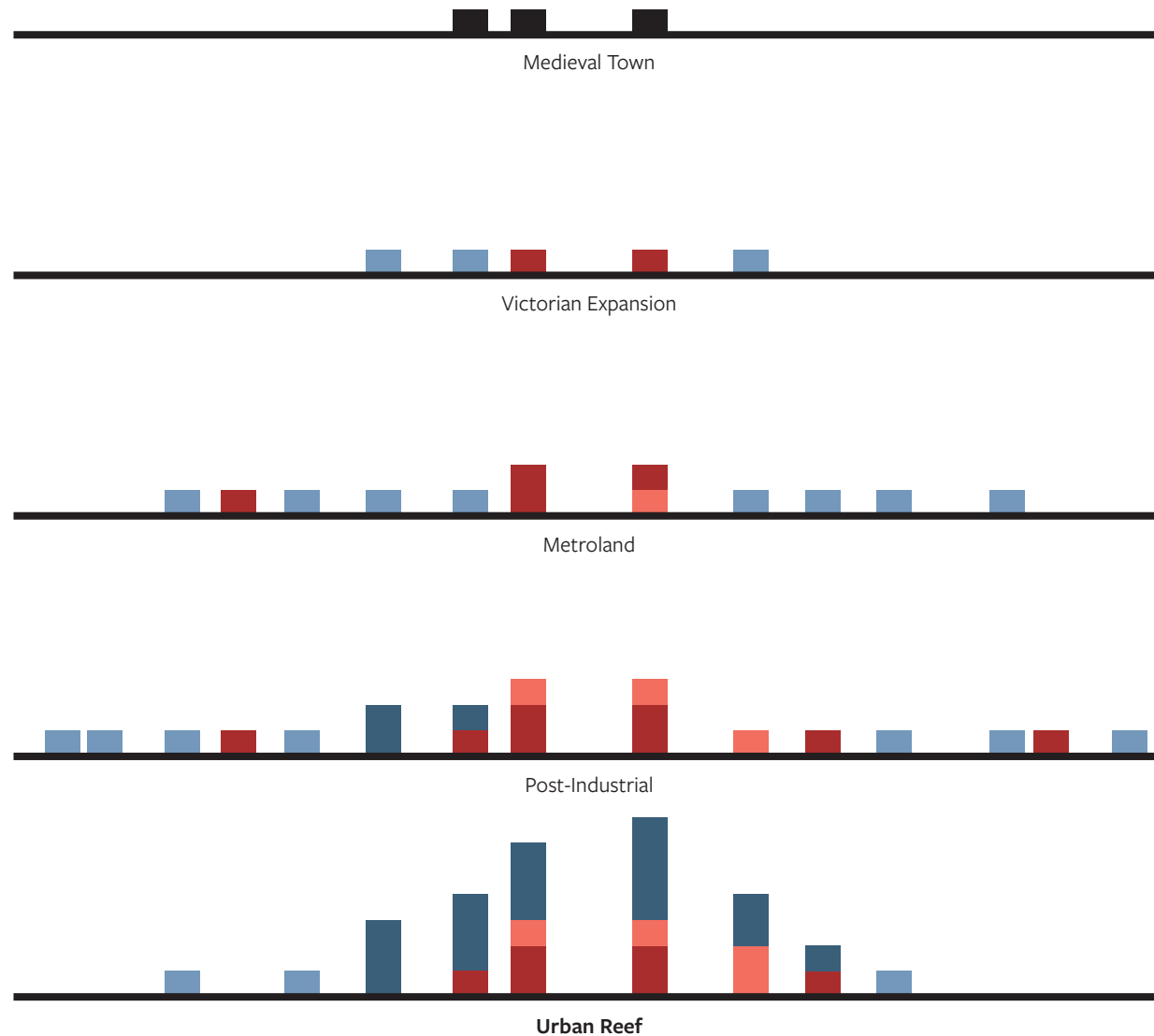
# Formation

First, we moved our homes out past the traditional idea of what constituted a city. [...]

Then we wearied of returning downtown for the necessities of life, so we moved our marketplaces out to where we lived. [...]

Today, we have moved our means of creating wealth, the essence of urbanism - our jobs - out to where most of us have lived and shopped for two generations.

Garreau, Joel. *Edge City : Life on the New Frontier*. [in English] New York: Anchor Books, 1992 : 4.

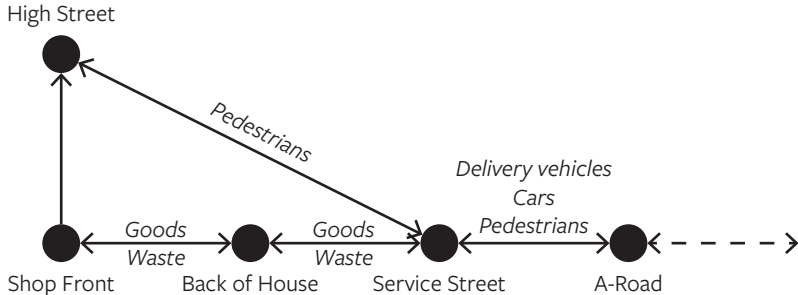


## Key

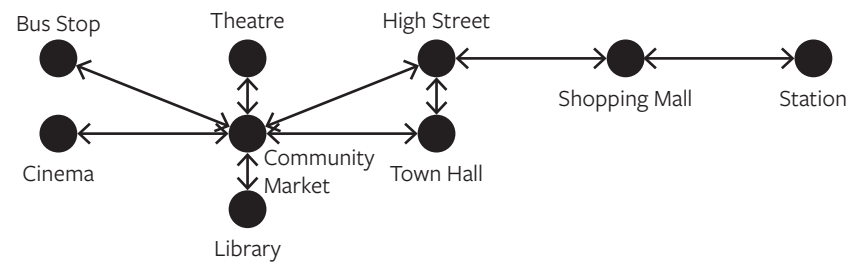
- House
- Flatted Block
- Commercial
- Retail

# Topologies

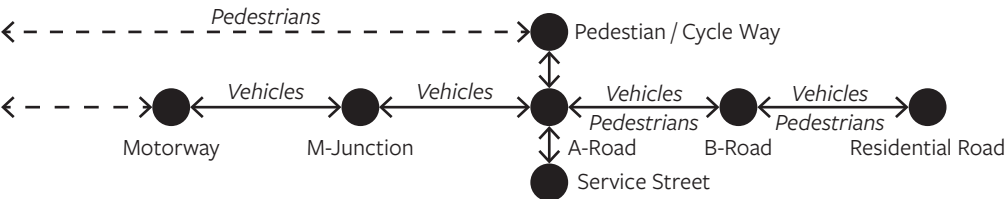
## High Street Consumerism



## Civic City



## Infrastructure Focus



## Commuter Habits

