



THURROCK COUNCIL INDOOR SPORTS ASSESSMENT & STRATEGY

NEEDS ASSESSMENT – FINAL REPORT OCTOBER 2025

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) was appointed to produce an Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy (IBFS) for Thurrock Council. This work will provide a key piece of evidence to support the development of an updated Thurrock Local Plan. The stated objectives for this are to:

- ✦ Undertake a local authority wide assessment of indoor sport and recreation facilities, building upon existing information, to establish the quantity and quality of existing provision and any additional provision required to meet future needs to 2044. However, please note for this assessment ONS projections are only available to 2043.
- ✦ Identify particular requirements for sport, recreation and open space, in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.
- ✦ Develop a strategy and action plan for indoor sports provision. The action plan will be prioritised and realistic in recognition of diminishing public resources and limited budgets.
- ✦ Follow best practice advice including Sport England's "Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance" (ANOG).
- ✦ Provide a robust evidence base to ensure the timely, sound preparation of the Thurrock Local Plan and other planning policy documents and to provide parameters for developing a toolkit for the Council/developers.
- ✦ Provide clear direction on where future investment or funding derived from external sources should go in the Thurrock area.
- ✦ Provide clear and justified conclusions.
- ✦ Provide advice and guidance on how to maintain an up-to-date record of existing provision in terms of condition, demand, aspirations of clubs etc.
- ✦ Enable Thurrock Council to plan appropriately to protect and/or enhance existing sport, recreation facilities and to identify any sites that may provide surplus provision, could support new provision or facilities that merit refurbishment within future local plan priorities.
- ✦ Enable Thurrock Council to make strategic proposals for local authority-controlled facilities, such as investment in new and enhanced leisure centres or rationalisation, including cross-boundary co-ordination of local authority provision, if appropriate.
- ✦ Identify the potential for a strategic approach to the role of schools/colleges in meeting community needs in addition to recommendations for individual sites.
- ✦ Identify whether existing infrastructure is fit for purpose to deliver local priorities, corporate priorities and wider health and wellbeing outcomes in an efficient way, now and in the future over the lifetime of the emerging local plans.
- ✦ Help direct expenditure of any future Section 106 monies or other planning contributions (including CIL should this become relevant)
- ✦ Provide a robust, transparent, and effective means of justifying requirements so that they can be successfully defended for at future reviews of the emerging local plans - and to make strategic decisions on investment, ensuring that any planning gain monies are focused on the relevant local authority areas in which they are collected.
- ✦ Identify possible external capital or revenue funding opportunities for sport, physical activity, and recreation facilities, including open space provision.
- ✦ Identify opportunities for efficiency savings at council-owned facilities and for alternative governance via charities, trusts, or community-run organisations, where appropriate.
- ✦ Identify a mechanism for appropriate monitoring and review - to ensure an up to date and robust strategy.

This replaces the previous (2019) IBFS. Its scope included assessment of all sports halls larger than three courts, swimming pools, health and fitness suites, indoor bowls, indoor tennis, squash and village/community halls. Since that time there have been numerous changes to provision along with increasing demand. This report is, therefore, a detailed assessment of current

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provision of indoor and built sports facilities in Thurrock, identifying need (demand) and gaps (deficiencies in provision). Evidence about provision and overall need will incorporate:

- ✦ A clear picture of the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of facilities serving the area within the local authority and adjacent authorities.
- ✦ A clear understanding of existing and future demand for facilities considering local population data, local and national participation rates, unmet, latent, dispersed and future demand, local activity priorities and sports specific priorities.
- ✦ The resultant required level of provision in quantity, quality, accessibility and availability terms and develop key findings and facility implications that could be used by the Authority with reference to a toolkit for provision.

The audit was conducted between November 2024 and January 2025. Where site access was not available KKP carried out non-technical quality assessments via desk research. Where possible this was supplemented utilising virtual 'walk arounds' of the relevant facilities or videos and photos present on operators' websites or in discussion with operators.

A separate playing pitch strategy is concurrently being developed. The inter-relationship between the portfolio of planning documents must be noted as some of the sports covered by the PPS also access indoor facilities for matches/training or use such areas on an informal basis. Similarly, there are indoor sports venues which feature playing pitches and/or other outdoor facilities.

1.2: Scope of the project

This report provides detail as to what exists in the Authority, its condition, location, availability and overall quality. It considers demand for facilities based on population distribution, planned growth, and takes into consideration multiple and health deprivation (IMD). The facilities/ sports covered include sports halls (and associated indoor sports), swimming pools, health and fitness, dance/aerobic studios, squash, gymnastics and trampolining, indoor tennis, indoor bowls and village halls/community centres. In delivering this report KKP has:

- ✦ Individually audited identified sports halls (conventional i.e., 3+ court halls) swimming pools (minimum size 20m+ in length), health and fitness facilities (including, within reason, dance studios) and the wider range of facilities identified above.
- ✦ Analysed supply and demand to identify gaps and opportunities to improve provision.
- ✦ Sought to identify the extent to which delivery of leisure facilities is undertaken with full reference to the corporate strategies of the Council and other relevant strategic influences.
- ✦ Identified good practice/opportunities for improved service to drive up participation levels.

This evidence-based report provides a quantitative and qualitative audit-based assessment of the facilities identified above. It is a robust, up-to-date assessment of need and identifies opportunities for new, enhanced, and rationalised provision. Specific deficiencies and surpluses are identified to inform the provision required.

The specific objectives are to:

- ✦ Review relevant Council strategies, plans, reports, corporate objectives.
- ✦ Review the local, regional, and national strategic context.
- ✦ Demographic analysis of the local population at present and in the future (up to 2043, in line with the current and future Local Plan timeframes).
- ✦ Audit indoor facilities provided by public, private, voluntary and education sectors.
- ✦ Consider potential participation rates and model likely demand.
- ✦ Analyse the balance between supply of, and demand for, sports facilities plus identification of potential under and over-provision – now and in the future.
- ✦ Identify key issues to address in the future provision of indoor sports facilities.

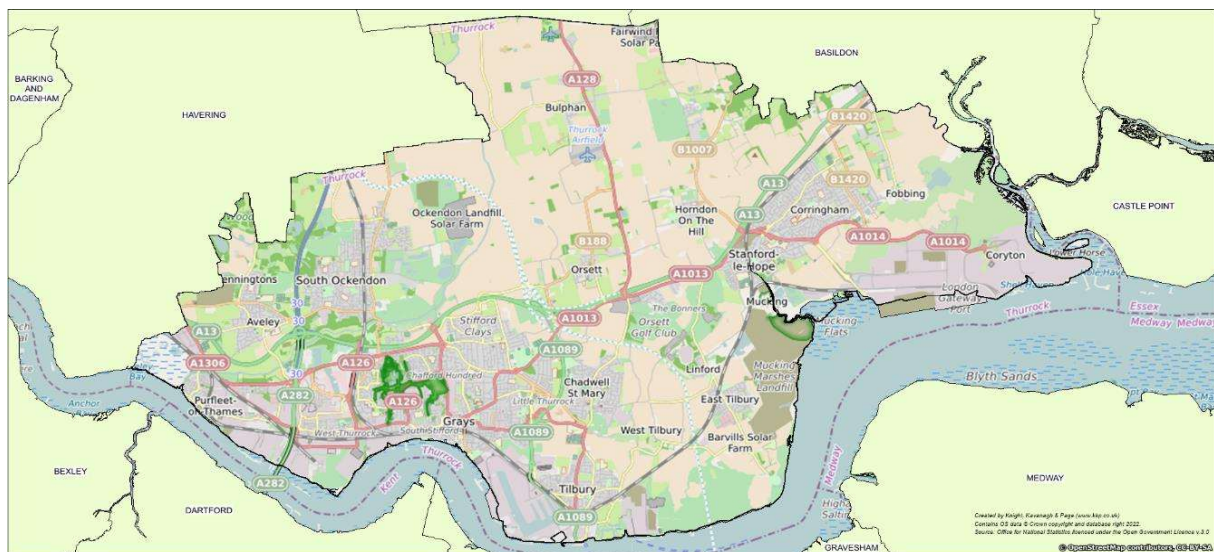
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This process follows the ANOG methodology for assessing indoor sports need, developed by Sport England. It also accords with relevant paragraphs of the most up-to-date version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

1.3: Background

Thurrock is located on the north bank of the River Thames immediately to the east of London. Its main settlements are Corringham, East Tilbury, Grays, Chadwell St Mary, Purfleet, Aveley, Tilbury, South Ockendon and Stanford Le Hope. Access west to east is via the A13, a main arterial route into central London. The M25 motorway provides strategic north south linkages across the River Thames whilst the A13 provides key east west connections. Both are considered to have national and regional importance.

Figure 1.1: Thurrock with main roads



Proximity to the M25, the River Thames and London make Thurrock a nationally important centre for road and rail freight distribution hubs. It is also home to Lakeside Shopping Centre, a premier destination shopping venue for the south and east regions. Beyond the key settlements, industrial and shopping hubs much of Thurrock is undeveloped and rural in character.

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1.4: Report structure

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) in a report entitled 'Strategic Planning: Effective Co-operation for Planning Across Boundaries (2015)' puts the case for strategic planning based on six general principles:

- ◀ Have focus.
- ◀ Be genuinely strategic.
- ◀ Be spatial.
- ◀ Be collaborative.
- ◀ Have strong leadership and
- ◀ Be accountable to local electorates.

KKP has paid due regard to these strategic principles and this needs assessment report is, thus, structured as follows:

- ◀ Section 2 - review of background policy documentation (national/regional/local) and a profile of the population and socio-demographic characteristics of the Authority.
- ◀ Section 3 - description of methodology employed to assess provision.
- ◀ Section 4 - assessment of sport halls provision.
- ◀ Section 5 - assessment of swimming pool provision.
- ◀ Section 6 - assessment of health and fitness provision.
- ◀ Section 7 - assessment of squash.
- ◀ Section 8 – assessment of gymnastics and trampolining.
- ◀ Section 9 - assessment of indoor bowls.
- ◀ Section 10 – assessment of indoor tennis.
- ◀ Section 11- assessment of village/community halls.
- ◀ Section 12- assessment of cycling.
- ◀ Section 13- membership analysis.
- ◀ Section 14– initial strategic recommendations.

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SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

It is important to note that a change of UK Government took place in July 2024. The majority of strategies and policies to which reference is made below were set in place prior to June 2024 and it is, thus, likely that over the period of time to which this strategy applies, some changes will be made.

2.1: National context

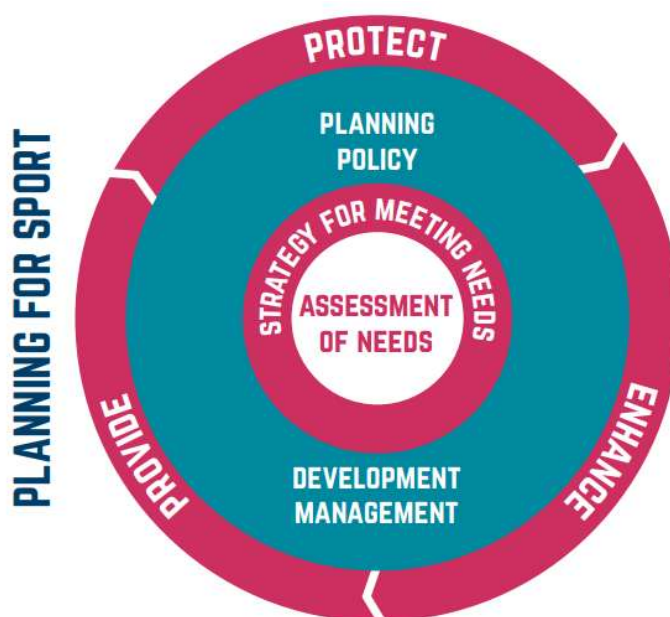
The Government's [Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity](#) has a focus on increasing physical activity, making sport more welcoming and inclusive, and ensuring the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of the sector. In addition, the recently launched cross-departmental National Physical Activity Taskforce has a focus on environmental sustainability in the sector, clear targets for increasing physical activity rates and a new vision for leisure facilities from 2023.

Get Active sets out how the government will work with the sector to achieve these aims by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to get active. Central to this is a focus on ensuring that children establish a lifetime of engagement with sport and physical activity. This is accompanied by the introduction of national targets for participation to help hold Government and the sector to account for delivering the change that is needed.

Sport England

Sport England aims to ensure positive planning for sport, enabling the right facilities to be provided in the right places, based on up-to-date assessment of needs for all levels of sport and all sectors of the community. This assessment report has been produced for Thurrock Council applying the principles and tools identified in ANOG.

Figure 2.1: The Sport England Planning for Sport Model



Assessment of need is core to planning for sporting provision. It is underpinned by 12 planning-for-sport principles which help the planning system to contribute to sustainable development by fulfilling the key role of the NPPF in creating strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Applying them ensures that the planning system plans positively to enable and support healthy lifestyles, delivers community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs, and

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provides opportunity for all to experience the benefits that taking part in sport and physical activity brings. They apply to all areas of the planning system and to planning at local authority and neighbourhood levels. As such they are of relevance to all involved in, or looking to engage with, the planning system.

Figure 2.2: Sport England's 12 planning principles



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Sport England: Uniting the movement 2023

Sport and physical activity have a major role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities, and rebuilding a stronger society for all following the global pandemic. Reflecting this, Sport England has recently released its new strategy, Uniting the Movement, its 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

It seeks to tackle the inequalities that it states are long seen in sport and physical activity noting that 'providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important'. The three key Strategy objectives are:

1. Advocating for movement, sport and physical activity.
2. Joining forces on five big issues.
3. Creating the catalysts for change.

As well as advocating sport and physical activity via the building of evidence and partnership development, the Strategy identifies five big issues upon which people and communities need to address by working together. They are described as the major challenges to England being an active nation over the next decade as well as being the greatest opportunities to make a lasting difference. They are designated as building blocks that individually would make a difference but tackled collectively could change things profoundly. The issues are:

- ◀ Recover and reinvent: Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant, and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.
- ◀ Connecting communities: Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- ◀ Positive experiences for children and young people: an unrelenting focus on positive experiences for them - as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- ◀ Connecting with health and wellbeing: Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health, and wellbeing, so that more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- ◀ Active environments: Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

To address these five big issues, the right conditions for change need to be created: across people, organisations, and partnerships to help convert plans and ideas. This will include a range of actions, including development of effective investment models and applying innovation and digital technology to ensure sport and physical activity are more accessible.

The specific impact of the Strategy will be captured via funded programmes, interventions made, and partnerships forged. For each specific area of action, key performance indicators will be developed to help evidence the overall progress being made by all those involved in supporting sport and physical activity.

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Total annual social value of sport and physical activity in England 2024¹

Sport and physical activity are widely recognised for making people happier, healthier, and fostering stronger communities. That's why creating more opportunities for those who need them most is central to Sport England's Uniting the Movement strategy.

The Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England 2020² created an evidence base to better understand the value of taking part in sport and physical activity. Sport England, in partnership with social value experts State of Life, sports economists from the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University, and the Institute of Sport at Manchester Metropolitan University, developed an updated national model to quantify the social value of community sport and physical activity.

The October 2024 report breaks down the social and economic impact of community sport and physical activity into two parts. Part one focuses on the primary benefits, such as physical and mental health improvements, while part two explores the broader value to society.

Community sport and physical activity contributed £107.2 billion annually to the UK in 2023/2024, through both social and economic benefits. Of this, £96.7 billion is attributed to primary value, with individual wellbeing improvements driven by adult volunteering, youth participation, and adult participation. This underscores the profound impact of sport and physical activity on quality of life, as improved health and wellbeing positively influence relationships, social connections, and productivity.

Sport England: The Future of Public Sector Leisure (2023)

Engagement by Sport England with the public leisure sector has highlighted that the pandemic has accelerated the appetite for local authorities to look at leisure services and re-examine the purpose of their provision, delivery against local community outcomes and consider their alignment with broader strategic outcomes, particularly health.

Key insight from the report ([Sport England: The Future of Public Sector Leisure](#)) includes:

- ◀ 68% of sports halls and swimming pools were built 20+ years ago. Although more than £150m was invested in the opening of new public leisure and swimming facilities in 2018/19³, with another £200m worth of assets in construction or planning there remains significant levels of ageing public leisure stock.
- ◀ 72% of all school swimming lessons take place in a public leisure facility. This includes both statutory learn to swim programmes and the water safety curriculum across primary schools. Swimming club use is also predominantly based at public leisure facilities.

The leisure sector is emerging from the pandemic in a particularly fragile state. Emergency funding⁴ helped to avert financial catastrophe and enabled the additional costs of maintaining public assets and reopening services to be met.

These funding sources are, however, finite and are now virtually exhausted. At best, financial pressures risk limiting the ability of stakeholders to deliver against their commitments; at worst they may result in the permanent closure of some services or facilities.

¹ [Link to Sport and physical activity generates over £100 billion in social value | Sport England](#)

² [Link to Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England 2020](#)

³ 2 Mintel Report on Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools (September 2019)

⁴ Local authorities invested £160 million The National Leisure Recovery Fund £100m, Leisure operators drew on £171 million of reserves alongside further relief measures such as the Government's furlough scheme.

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In respect of the recovery of the sector to pre-Pandemic participation levels, data generated via the [Moving Communities](#) platform suggests that in October 2021, throughput levels (13.2 million) were still lower than the monthly average in 2019 (17.8 million). Recovery of participation levels across different activities has been imbalanced and has leant towards those activities which deliver a faster return to pre-pandemic revenue levels.

Sites refurbished in the last 10 years are seeing a throughput recovery of 68% compared with a recovery of 62% for those last refurbished 20+ years ago, suggesting that investment in newer facilities creates spaces that have greater appeal, increase user confidence levels and provide a more relevant offer to meet current customer demands.

To address these significant challenges, a repositioning of the traditional offer of public leisure into one akin to an **active wellbeing service** is advocated focusing on added value and supporting the delivery of key local priorities, alongside wider government policy around Levelling Up, net zero and health inequalities.

Chief Medical Officer Physical Activity Guidelines 2019

This updated the 2011 physical activity guidelines issued by the four chief medical officers (CMOs) of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They drew upon global evidence to present guidelines for different age groups, covering the volume, duration, frequency and type of physical activity required across the life course to achieve health benefits.

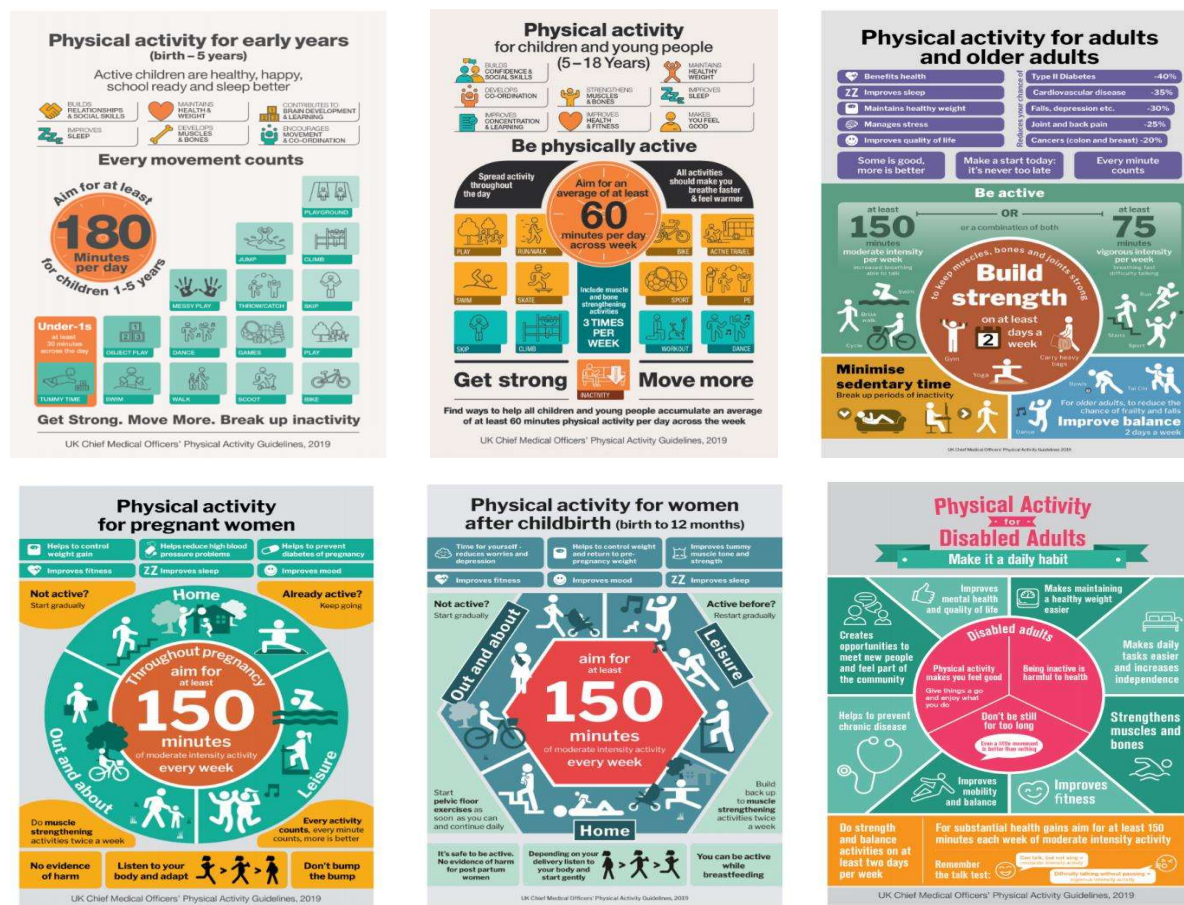
Since 2011, evidence of the health benefits of regular physical activity for all groups has become more compelling. In children and young people, regular physical activity is associated with improved learning and attainment, better mental health and cardiovascular fitness, also contributing to healthy weight status. In adults, there is strong evidence to demonstrate the protective effect on physical activity on a range of many chronic conditions including coronary heart disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes, mental health problems and social isolation.

Regular physical activity can deliver cost savings for the health and care system and has wider social benefits for individuals and communities. Key factors for each age group are as follows:

- ◆ Under-5s: This is broken down into infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. They should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of different exercises, whereas infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activities.
- ◆ Children and young people (5-18 years): they should engage in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week.
- ◆ Adults (19-64 years): For good physical and mental health, adults should aim to be physically active every day. This could be 150 minutes of moderate exercise, 75 minutes of vigorous exercise or even shorter durations of very vigorous intensity activity, or a combination of moderate, vigorous and very vigorous intensity activity.
- ◆ Older adults (65+): should participate in daily physical activity to gain health benefits, including maintenance of good physical and mental health, wellbeing, and social functioning. Each week older adults should aim to accumulate 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate intensity aerobic activity.

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Figure 2.3: Physical activity guidelines



The report also recognises an emerging evidence base for the health benefits of performing very vigorous intensity activity performed in short bouts interspersed with periods of rest or recovery (high intensity interval exercise, HIIT). Available evidence demonstrates that high intensity interval exercise has clinically meaningful effects on fitness, body weight and insulin resistance. This option has therefore been incorporated into the recommendation for adults.

It, thus, emphasises the importance of regular activity for people of all ages. It presents additional guidance on being active during pregnancy, after giving birth, and for disabled adults. The new guidelines are consistent with previous ones, introducing some new elements and allowing flexibility in achieving recommended physical activity levels for each age group.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation UK Poverty 2025 report

This report notes that poverty in the UK has now increased to close to pre-pandemic levels. Available data provides evidence that more than one in five people now live in poverty (including 4.3 million children. Of these, 40% are described as being in 'deep poverty', with an income considerably below the standard poverty line. Certain groups of people face particularly high levels of poverty. They include (figures relate to 2021/22 unless otherwise stated):

- ✦ Larger families – where 45% of children in families with 3 or more children were in poverty.
- ✦ Families whose childcare responsibilities limit their ability to work – 44% of children in lone-parent families were in poverty.
- ✦ Many minority ethnic groups – many households have higher rates of child, very deep and persistent poverty.

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- 30% of disabled people are in poverty. This rate is higher (at 38%) for people with a long-term, limiting mental health condition.
- 28% of informal carers (those with caring responsibilities). They have limited ability to work and unpaid social-care givers experience an average pay penalty of nearly £5,000/annum.
- Families not in work – more than half of working-age adults (56%) in workless households are in poverty - compared with 15% in working households. Around two-thirds of working-age adults in poverty actually live in a household where someone is in work.
- Part-time workers and the self-employed - the poverty rate for part-time workers was nearly triple that of full-time workers (22% compared with 8%).
- 43% of people living in rented accommodation and 35% of private renters are in poverty after housing costs.
- Poverty rates of people claiming different income-related benefits are much higher than the national average poverty rate.

Environmental sustainability

The UK Government produced its net zero strategy 'Build Back Greener' in October 2021. This sets out how it intends the UK to meet its target for decarbonisation by 2050. It focuses on interventions such as:

- A fully decarbonised power system by 2035 with all electricity coming from 'low carbon sources'.
- Improved efficiency of heating for homes and buildings, aiming for all new heating appliances to be based on low carbon technologies, such as electric heat pumps or hydrogen boilers.
- Low carbon fuel supply – by scaling up the production of low carbon alternatives including hydrogen and biofuels.

[Sport England](#) reports that ⁵climate change and the increased occurrence of extreme weather that it brings are already affecting sports facilities, meaning that the sector needs to build greater resilience to counter this very real threat.

It proposes that a wide range of issues should be considered when approaching project development to, and the resultant environmental impact of, say, new swimming pool development. This applies to determining whether to refurbish an existing building with its carbon already embedded or to build anew⁶. In establishing a sustainability strategy early on Sport England suggests some key principles as part of a 'pathway to sustainability' and net zero carbon in respect of building design and operation.

These include:

- Reducing energy consumption as the first measure to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.
- Changing behaviour, eliminate energy waste and operate energy control systems more effectively at no extra cost.
- Passive design - Building orientation and placement on site is critical to achieving net zero targets Harness a site's natural resources to benefit cross ventilation, natural lighting, solar gain, shelter or shading.
- Fabric efficiency Maximise the building fabric and glazing performance.
- Minimising initial energy demand to reduce demand on plant and technologies incorporated.
- Installing efficient systems and Investing in appropriate energy-efficient products such as heating, ventilation, fittings, controls, sensors, heat pumps and recovery systems.

⁵[Sport England Environmental Sustainability policy](#)

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- ✦ On-site renewables Incorporate low and zero carbon (LZC) technologies to produce energy on site.
- ✦ Off-site renewables - only use energy providers who use renewable energy.

Investment in school sport

The School Sport and Activity Action Plan (July 2019) sets out the Government's commitment to ensuring that children and young people have access to at least 60 minutes of sport and physical activity per day, with a recommendation of 30 minutes of this delivered during the school day (in line with the CMO guidelines which recommend an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week). The action plan has three overarching ambitions - that:

- ✦ All children/young people take part in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- ✦ Children/young people have the opportunity to realise developmental, character-building experiences through sport, competition and active pursuits.
- ✦ All sport and physical activity provision for children/young people is designed around the principles of physical literacy, focuses on fun and enjoyment and aims to reach the least active.

The PE and sport premium can help primary schools to achieve this aim, providing primary schools with £320m of government funding to make additional and sustainable improvements to the quality of the PE, physical activity and sport offered through their core budgets. It is allocated directly to schools which have the flexibility to use it in the way that they consider works best for their pupils.

In 2021 the Department for Education announced a £10.1 million funding package to help more schools open their facilities to the public once the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is over. The funding, which will be administered by Sport England and distributed via the Active Partnership Network will help schools deliver extra-curricular activities and open their facilities outside of the school day during evenings, weekends and school holidays.

The Physical Literacy Consensus Statement for England – Sport England (2023)

This has been developed to facilitate a shared understanding of physical literacy for those working in the sport, education, physical activity, recreation, play, health and youth sectors. It offers a broad overview of physical literacy, why it matters and how it can be developed and supported.

Developing a consensus on the term physical literacy has been a priority, as understanding what impacts people's relationship with movement and physical activity throughout life will enable those working in the sector to ensure their offer is as appealing as possible.

In essence, physical literacy represents the extent to which individuals have a positive relationship with movement and physical activity. The Youth Sport Trust has published findings evidencing that a total of 4,000 hours of physical education (PE) have been lost from the curriculum of state-funded secondary schools. PE hours have fallen victim to more time spent online, poor school attendance and declining health and wellbeing levels in young people. Since 2012, the amount of PE in England has fallen by more than 12%.

Evidence also shows that children with high levels of physical literacy are twice as likely to engage in sport and physical activity. In later life, adults who feel they have the opportunity, ability and enjoy being physically active are more likely to be so. To increase physical activity in both children and adults, it is important to consider the cultural and environmental factors which affect physical activity levels alongside the influence of previous experiences.

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Ensuring good quality and regular PE in schools is considered to be essential to improving the mental and physical wellbeing of young people and will enable young people to develop new skills, achieve greater academic success and live longer, happier, healthier lives.

Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund

In 2023, a funding pot of £63 million was announced to ease the pressure on leisure centres with managing the cost of operating, maintaining and heating swimming pools. The funding will be managed by Sport England and is available to all pools run by councils and charities and those run on behalf of local authorities are eligible. The following two Thurrock venues benefitted from the fund; they are as follows:

- ◆ Impulse Leisure- Blackshots Leisure centre (£157,448) Phase 1 – Phase 2 (£427,836) made up of pool covers £13,836 (Completed) and air handling unit of £414,000 (could not deliver in timescales so returned) includes pool covers.
- ◆ Impulse Leisure- Corringham Leisure centre (£83,106) Phase 1. Incorrect Phase 2 bid was not successful.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The NPPF sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities. It states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies the need to focus on three themes of economic, social, environmentally sustainable development:

A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making, the NPPF states that local plans should meet objectively assessed needs. It is clear about sport's role delivering sustainable communities through promoting health and well-being. Sport England, working within the provisions of the NPPF, wishes to see local planning policy protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need, as well as helping to realise the wider benefits participation in sport can bring.

The **promoting healthy communities** theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust, up-to-date assessment of need for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs, quantitative/qualitative deficiencies and surpluses should be identified and used to inform provision requirements in an area.

Summary of national context

In the context both of emergence from the global pandemic and the highly challenging economic environment, there is a need to reconnect communities, reduce inequality and create stronger societies. The aim is to create a catalyst for change, with sport and physical activity a key driver and people in all age groups either getting or remaining active. Ensuring an adequate supply of suitable facilities to support this aim is a key requirement of the planning system in line with national policy recommendations.

2.2: Local context

Thurrock Local Plan

Thurrock Council is currently developing a new local plan, which will shape the future of development in Thurrock up to 2044. The aim is that this will be adopted by 2028. The Local Plan

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will contain a spatial strategy which identifies specific locations for delivering development needs such as housing, employment, retail, education facilities, open and green space, transport infrastructure improvements, healthcare provision and provision for leisure facilities. Strategic policies, site allocation policies, and development management policies will be used in the determination of planning applications which will help to realise the overall strategy.

The Plan has an important role to play in encouraging active lifestyles through the provision of sufficient quality open spaces, sports and leisure facilities and active travel opportunity.

Thurrock Local Development Scheme (September 2024)⁷

This was approved by the Council in September 2024. It sets out the timetable for the Councils DPD work for the next three years. It explains when the Council intends to reach key stages in the Preparation of its Local Plan and other planning documents. The timetable is as follows:

Table 2.1: Timetable of the Council's Local Plan

Name of Stage	Date
Scoping	Completed
Issues and Options (Stage 1)	Completed
Issues and Options (Stage 2)	Completed
Local Plan: Initial Proposals Consultation (Regulation 18)	Completed
Local Plan: Publication Draft Consultation (Regulation 19)	Spring 2026 (circa Jan-March 2026)
Submission to Secretary of State for examination in public (Regulation 22)	Summer 2026 (circa Jul-Sept 2026)
Commencement of Examination hearings	Spring 2027 (circa Jan-March 2027)
Inspector's Report expected	Autumn 2027 (circa Sept-Nov 2027)
Adoption of the Local Plan by Council	Spring 2028 (circa Jan-March 2028)

Thurrock Corporate Plan⁸

This was published in July 2024. Over the Plan period 2024-2029, the main purpose is to achieve two policy outcomes, for People and Place. The People policy aims to ensure that communities, families and residents are supported and have an opportunity to achieve their full potential. The Place policy aims to enable Thurrock to achieve a strong and well-connected place that enables diverse communities, businesses, to thrive and grow. The corporate policy outcome will ensure that Thurrock build strong and impactful partnerships to maximise the benefits for residents in the borough.

Thurrock Core Strategy & the Replacement Local Plan⁹

The Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (the Core Strategy) dated 2015 is currently the main local plan document. It sets out the spatial vision, strategy and planning policies for Thurrock. It was originally adopted in December 2011 and was updated in 2015 following examination of the Core Strategy Focused Review document.

⁷https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/local_development_scheme_-_september_2024.pdf

⁸<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/corporate-plan/our-2024-2029-plan-and-priorities>

⁹https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/core_strategy_adopted_2011_amended_2015.pdf

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The Core Strategy sought to deliver 13,550 dwellings over the period 2009-2021 and a further 4,750 dwellings over the five year period 2021-2026. The Strategy also sought to provide 445 hectares of the industrial and Commercial and Mixed Use Land over 2009-2026.

The Core Strategy contains the existing local policy for sports and leisure provision and related policy for open space. These policies include:

- ✦ Policy CSSP3 – Sustainable Infrastructure.
- ✦ Policy CSTP9 – Well-being: Leisure and Sports.
- ✦ Policy CSTP18 – Green Infrastructure.
- ✦ Policy CSTP20 – Open Space.
- ✦ Policy PMD5 – Open Spaces, Outdoor Sports and Recreational Facilities.

Thurrock has one of the fastest growing economies in the country, supported by major developments and investment. The Council are now in the process of undertaking a new replacement Local Plan for the period 2024-2044 which is anticipated to include significant areas of commercial and industrial land plans to build between 20&30,000 new homes and associated infrastructure. For further information regarding the new Local Plan see the Thurrock Local Development Scheme (September 2024).

Lower Thames Crossing (LTC)

The LTC is a proposed new road crossing of the River Thames east of London that will connect Kent, Thurrock and Essex. Following consultation on a series of route options, the Secretary of State for Transport announced (in April 2017) that the preferred route would connect the A2 in Kent, east of Gravesend, to the M25 in Essex, south of Junction 29 crossing under the River Thames by means of two bored tunnels.

The scheme as proposed in October 2018 sets out that the LTC will comprise c. 23km of new roads connecting the tunnel to the existing road network, with two 4km tunnels to enable traffic to cross beneath the river. It is proposed that the new road scheme will have three lanes in both directions, with widening of the M2/A2 and the M25 at each end of the route. An application was submitted to National Highways on 20th March 2024 for the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) Development Consent Order (DCO). The Secretary of State for Transport approved the LTC DCO on 25th March 2025. Now the LTC DCO has been approved it is expected that work could begin by 2026 and be completed by 2032.

Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026¹⁰

This sets out priorities for reducing inequalities and improving the health and well-being of the people of Thurrock. Its vision is 'Levelling the Playing Field' with aims to tackle the many causes of poor health that are uneven across Thurrock. These include high-quality education, access to employment and other opportunities, warm and safe homes, access to green spaces and leisure, strong and resilient communities and effective public protection. This Strategy aims to level up some of the inequities that exist in Authority and sets goals and action across six broad domains that will influence the determinants of health listed above:

- ✦ Staying Healthier for Longer.
- ✦ Building Strong and Cohesive Communities.
- ✦ Person-Led Health and Care.
- ✦ Opportunity for All.
- ✦ Housing and the Environment.
- ✦ Community Safety.

¹⁰<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/hwb-strategy-2022-v01.pdf>

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Thurrock- The Health in All Policies (HIAP)- 2023

The HIAP approach is central to achieving this collaborative place-based approach which builds on the strengths of Public Health and emphasises the reach and influence of local government's many other functions. The 'Framework for creating change' is synthesised from review of multiple policy and guidance documents from across the planning and health sectors which identified similar themes presented in a variety of ways. The framework encapsulates the key themes related to place shaping: Neighbourhood Design, Housing, Food Systems, Natural Environments and Transportation Networks.

Find Your Active Thurrock: Sport England's Place Partnerships Programme

Thurrock has been identified as one of the six priority areas in Essex. Since January 2024, key stakeholders in Thurrock have been working together on a strategic programme of work to increase participation in physical activity and sport across the Borough. This programme aims to do this through gaining a clear understanding of the system in place and looks to address barriers to residents' participation. As part of the work, there has been a broad engagement of wider stakeholders in Thurrock, and through a development phase learning has been undertaken. A full award proposal has been developed and submitted to Sport England, outlining that the local programme will focus on 4 key priorities (Active environments (including active travel), Children and Young People, Communities, and Health and Social Care) and, if successful, proposes to fund 5 strategic themes (Leadership and workforce development, activating neighbourhoods and spaces, active travel, communities, and creation of an active wellbeing service). As a part of this work an evaluation has been undertaken which shows that one of the strategic issues and insights from the work highlighted access and facilities, specifically having limited facilities, transport issues (to access facilities) and affordability.

Active Wellbeing Service

As part of the work of Find Your Active Thurrock, a responsive Active Wellbeing Service in Thurrock is being pursued. This looks to the public sector leisure offer operated by Impulse Leisure as a part of the integrated care system in the Borough, in recognition of the contribution that physical activity has on preventable ill-health. This work aims to evolve existing models around exercise on referral and move more to embedding physical activity and public sector leisure as part of care pathways for health and wellbeing. The Active Wellbeing Service currently looks at some core strands relevant to the Thurrock population: long-term health condition management, falls prevention and a supported employment programme.

Thurrock Community Strategy

The Thurrock Community Strategy vision is: *Thurrock a place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish.*

It has five priorities:

- ❖ Create a great place for learning and opportunity.
- ❖ Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity.
- ❖ Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities.
- ❖ Improve health and well-being.
- ❖ Protect and promote our clean and green environments.

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Thurrock Climate Change Strategy Update¹¹

In October 2019 the Council passed a motion to declare a climate emergency and to take urgent action to reduce its carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030. This includes a number of actions to reduce emissions which were to:

- ◀ Reduce emissions per resident by 15%, per job by 22%, and per daily road movement by 15% by 2022.
- ◀ Help local industry find alternatives to natural gas: Thurrock's industry is responsible for 23% of the area's emissions, with half of those coming from natural gas. Thurrock is working to help local industry switch to alternative fuels and low-carbon heat sources.
- ◀ Build capacity in the supply chain and labour force: Thurrock is promoting green training and skill development to create green jobs.
- ◀ Grow the market for key technologies: Thurrock is working to grow the market for technologies like heat pumps.
- ◀ Encourage the use of industrial rooftop space: Thurrock is working with major industrial partners to encourage the use of industrial rooftop space for solar thermal, water harvesting, and biodiversity.
- ◀ Insulate homes: Thurrock is working to ensure that homes are insulated.
- ◀ Provide grants for climate-friendly heating: Thurrock is working to provide grants for more climate-friendly heating.

Fit for the Future: Active Essex Implementation Plan 2021-31

Launched in July 2021, this strategy provides a rallying call to action for the thousands of organisations and people across Essex who recognise the enormous contribution physical activity and sport makes to the health and wellbeing of everyone. More than 1.6 million people live in Greater Essex and 901,000 are active adults who participate in over 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Active Essex is keen to increase this number, unite in one direction and over the next 10 years, create an active Essex to improve everyone's health and wellbeing. To active this, it has set the following key objectives.

- ◀ **Strengthening communities** - all communities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock use the power of physical activity and sport to build resilience, connection and wellbeing.
- ◀ **Active environments** - to work collectively to develop and provide well connected, accessible places and spaces that encourage people to be active.
- ◀ **Children and young people** - to ensure every child has the best start in life, whereby they are active, healthy and happy.
- ◀ **Levelling up health and wellbeing** - to change behaviours, which will enable and empower people to do things for themselves and their local communities. Physical activity is the highest priority for good health.
- ◀ **Sport and physical activity** - to support the recovery, development and growth of the sport and physical activity sector to collectively increase opportunities for all.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

This looks at the health needs of local people, supporting commissioning processes used by health, council and community organisations in Thurrock. Helping areas to commission health, well-being and social care services in the borough alongside improving the physical and mental health and well-being of individuals and communities. The JSNA works through the Health and Well-being board to ensure the JSNA informs the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

¹¹<https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s37351/Climate%20Change%20Strategy%20Presentation.pdf>

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Leisure operator (Impulse Leisure)

In 2000, the Council created Thurrock Community Leisure Ltd (operating as Impulse Leisure) as a Charitable Trust (not for profit) company to manage its community leisure centres. Five years remain of the first term on what is a 30-year Tenancy Lease with a right to remain. It manages:

- ◀ Impulse Leisure (Blackshots) Leisure Centre.
- ◀ Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park) Leisure Centre, Golf Course and grass pitches)
- ◀ Impulse Leisure (Corringham) Leisure Centre.
- ◀ The Civic Hall.

Owned by Thurrock Council they were constructed in the 1960's and 70's. They have received developmental investment in 2000 and subsequent periodic landlord responsibility investment over the preceding years. The most recent significant taking place;

- ◀ Impulse Leisure (Blackshots) Leisure Centre: Teaching pool air handling, roof covering replacement, external décor, heating system.
- ◀ Impulse Leisure (Corringham) Leisure Centre: Pool plant replacement, pool hall roof replacement, pool air handling
- ◀ Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park) Leisure Centre, Golf Course and grass pitches): Pool plant replacement, pool air handling, electrical distribution board upgrades, new roof covering.

However, the buildings are around 50 years old and are beyond their anticipated life. Key challenges include elements of the plant rooms and asset management elements.

Impulse Leisure has invested c.£8m over the 25 years in redevelopment, modernisation, legislatively compliance/upgrades and equipment improvements. As might be expected, areas where specific investment has occurred (notably health and fitness, changing rooms, studios, reception/front of house, Food & Beverage, energy efficiency and circulation areas look modern and have improved the user safety and quality of experience whilst maintaining value for money.

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Adjoining Area Related Plans & Strategies

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026

This aims to improve the health and wellbeing of all residents in Essex by creating a culture and environment that reduces inequalities and enables residents of all ages to live healthier lives. To achieve this, it identifies five key priorities, all of which have specific development outcomes - to be achieved through partnership work, as outlined below.

Table 2.2: Essex JHWS priorities and outcomes

Priority	Outcome
Improving mental health and wellbeing	Supported the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and families with a focus on the vulnerable. Reduced loneliness and social isolation. Reduced suicide through a focus on system support
Physical activity and healthy weight	Enabled children, young people and their families to be more physically active. Improved levels of physical activity amongst adults by helping them find ways to integrate physical activity into their daily lives. Improved nutritional awareness, healthy eating, and help low-income households access affordable healthy food options.
Supporting long term independence	Improved access to advice and guidance including financial support so that residents with long-term conditions and their carers can better manage their conditions. Reduced digital exclusion to improve access to advice and support online. Help all residents have better access to opportunities in education, work, skills, housing, and their social lives.
Alcohol and substance misuse	Improve access to advice, support and treatment for residents experiencing alcohol or substance use issues. Work across the system to help address the challenges of county lines and drugs related criminality. Educate children, young people, adults, and families on the risks associated with alcohol and substance misuse.
Health inequalities & the wider determinants of Health	Ensure that all children have access to quality parenting, early years provision and education that provide the foundations for later in life. Address food poverty and ensure that all children can access healthy food. Improve access to employment, education and training for adults and young people in our most deprived communities. Embed the use of health impact assessments in planning practice to ensure new planning proposals do not negatively impact on health, health services or widen health inequalities.

Local housing growth

The draft Local Plan (2024 to 2044) proposes a total housing requirement of 28,880 dwellings across the Plan period (1,440 dwellings per annum).

Summary of local policy

Thurrock Council is currently developing its new Local Plan which will shape the future of development in Thurrock up to 2044. The aim is to adopt this by summer 2028. It will contain a spatial strategy which identifies specific locations for delivering development needs such as

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housing, employment, retail, education facilities, open and green space, transport infrastructure improvements, healthcare provision and provision for leisure facilities.

The importance of physical activity in addressing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing is recognised in Essex's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy (both 2022-2026). Both of these strategies map out specific interventions around health referral and the role of built facilities.

Potential partners for Thurrock Council include Active Essex and Impulse Leisure who have worked closely together to provide a policy platform to demonstrate how physical activity can impact on wider health outcomes, through the Thurrock Health & Wellbeing Strategy. There is opportunity for the built facilities evidence base to provide further evidence and insight in support of these plans to help create a healthier more active Thurrock.

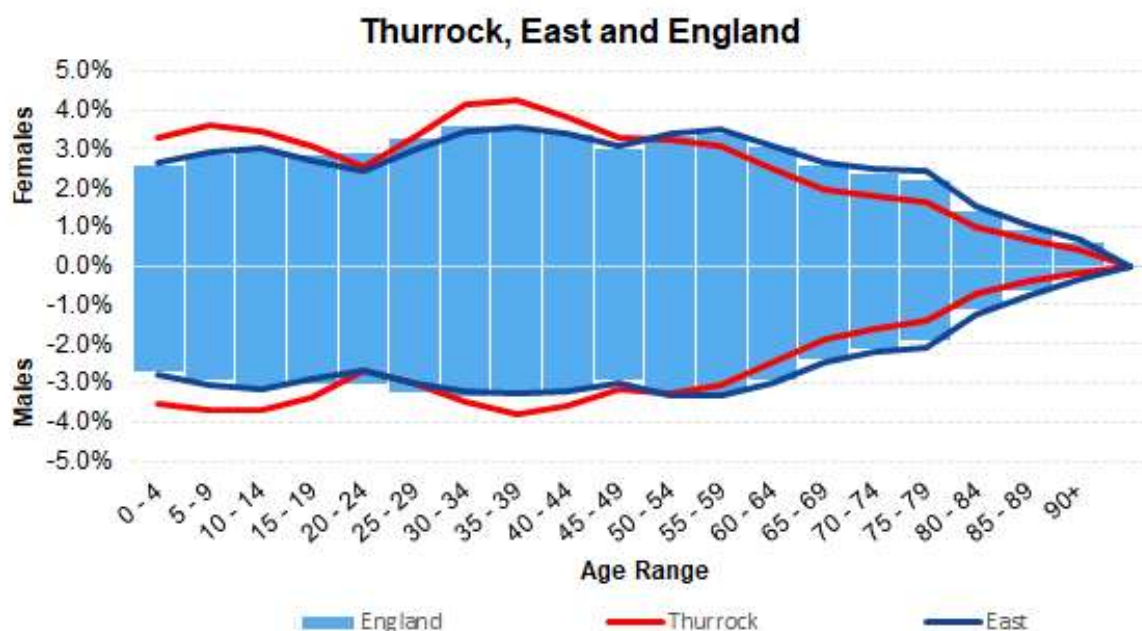
2.3: Demographic profile

Population and distribution (Data source: 2023 Mid-Year Estimate (MYE), (ONS))

The total population is 178,201. This comprises 87,262 males and 90,936 females.

The following chart illustrates the population's age and gender composition. By overlaying the dark blue line for Thurrock on top of the blue bars for the region it is easy to see where one dataset is higher or lower than the other.

Figure 2.4: Comparative age/sex pyramid for Thurrock, East and England



Thurrock has a lower proportion of 60-84 year olds (Thurrock: 17.0%, East: 23.2%, England: 22.2%). There are, however, more in the age groups from 30-49 (Thurrock: 29.5%, East: 26.2%, England: 26.3%).

In addition, the latest census data (2021) shows that the average (median) age remained 36 years old in Thurrock between the last two censuses. Thurrock had a lower average (median)

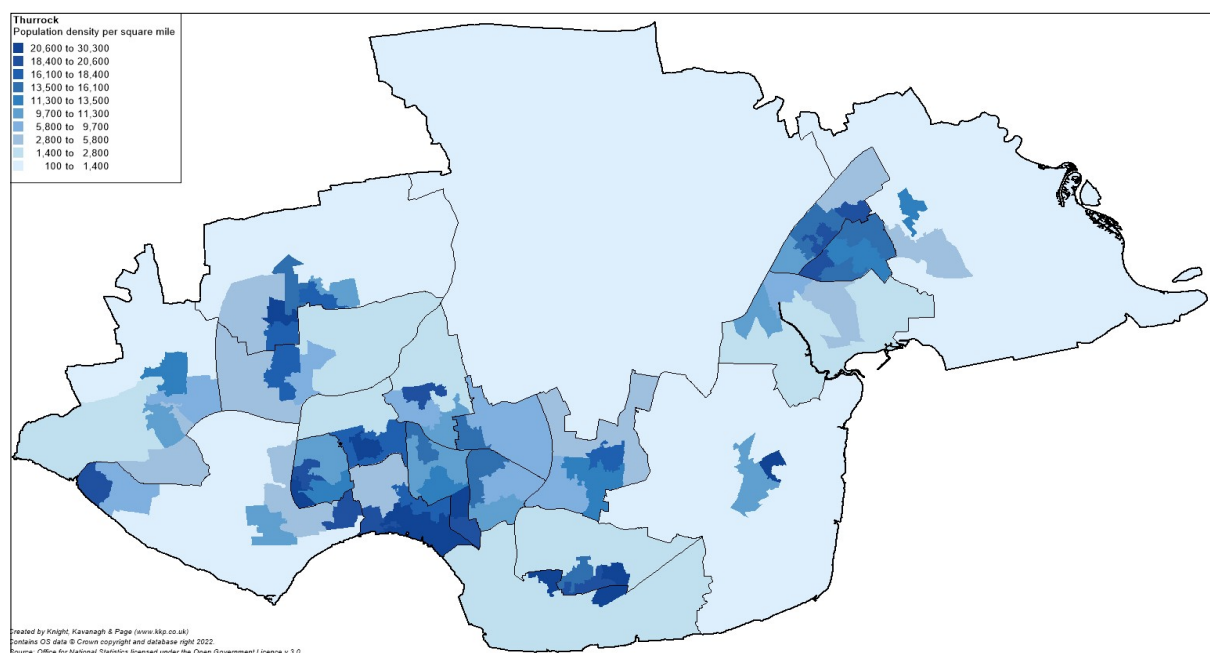
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age than the East of England as a whole in 2021 (41 years old) and a lower average (median) age than England (40 years old).

As a combination of factors, it suggests careful consideration should be given to the pitching of sports and physical activity offers within the area – Sport England’s segmentation model may be interpreted in relation to this age structure (see later).

Figure 2.5 presents the population density of the borough. The Lower Super Output Area (LSOA's) are shaded from light to dark, with the darkest areas representing the most densely populated urban areas of the borough.

Figure 2.5: Population density 2021 Census: Thurrock (LSOAs)



Ethnicity (Data source: 2021 census of population, ONS):

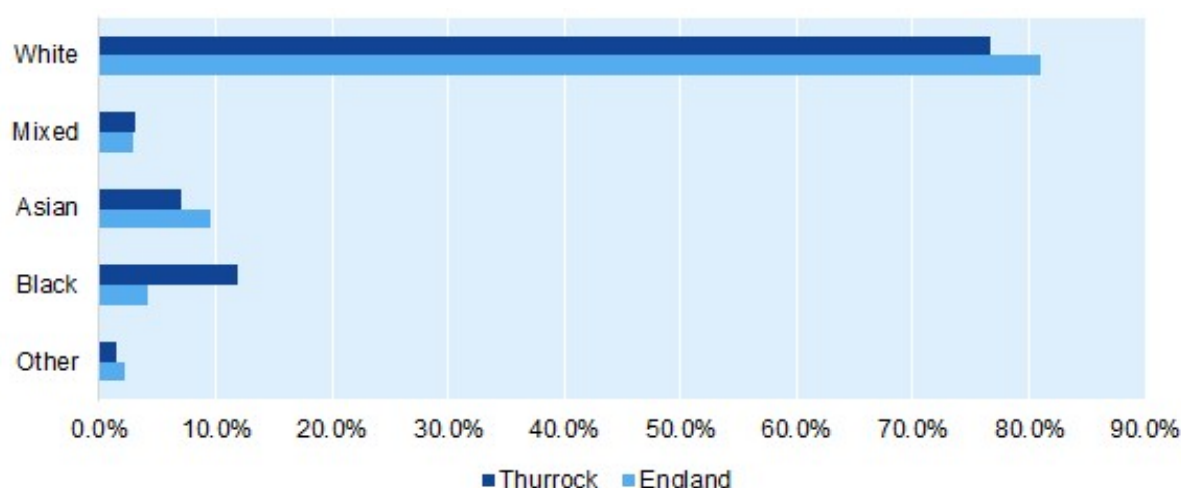
In broad terms, Thurrock’s ethnic composition does not reflect that of England as a whole. According to the 2021 Census, the largest proportion (76.7%) of the local population classified its ethnicity as White; this is lower than the comparative England rate of 81.0%. The next largest population group (by self-classification) is Black, at 11.9% this is higher than the national equivalent (4.2%).

Table 2.4: Ethnic composition – Thurrock and England

Ethnicity	Thurrock #	Thurrock %	England #	England %
White	134,984	76.7%	45,783,401	81.0%
Mixed	5,252	3.0%	1,669,378	3.0%
Asian	12,205	6.9%	5,426,392	9.6%
Black	20,877	11.9%	2,381,724	4.2%
Other	2,675	1.5%	1,229,153	2.2%
TOTAL	175,993	100.0%	56,490,048	100.0%

Figure 2.6: Ethnicity in Thurrock and England

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Country of Birth (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS)

According to the 2021 Census, the largest proportion (78.1%) of the local population classified its country of birth as England; this is lower than the comparative England rate of 80.3%. The next largest population group (by self-classification) is other Europe, at 10.1% this is higher than the national equivalent (6.6%).

National Identity (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS)

In the 2021 Census, the largest proportion (53.3%) of the local population identified as British; this is lower than the comparative England rate of 56.8%. The next largest population group is English, at 19.1% this is higher than the national equivalent (15.3%).

Proficiency in English (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS)

The largest proportion (85.1%) of the local population's main language is English in the 2021 census; this is lower than the comparative England rate of 87.9%. The next largest group is people who's main language is not English but can speak English very well or well, at 9.1% this is higher than the national equivalent (7.1%).

Income and benefits dependency (Data source: Nomis 2023)

The median figure for full-time earnings (2023) in Thurrock is £37,019; the comparative rate for the East is £36,697 (-0.9%) and for Great Britain is £ 35,496 (-4.2%). 5,315 people in Thurrock claimed out of work benefits¹² in August 2024. This is an increase of 20% when compared to August 2023 (4,430).

Crime (Data source: Crime in England and Wales year ending June 2023, ONS)

Crime data is only available for police force areas. Thurrock is in the Essex Police Force Area, which comprises 14 local authorities (Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Tendring, Thurrock, and Uttlesford). Thurrock's population accounts for 9.4% of this area.

During the 12 months to June 2023 the number of recorded crimes per '000 persons in the Essex area was 86.2 (2022 MYE). This is markedly lower than the equivalent rate for England and Wales

¹² This includes both Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit. Universal credit also includes other benefits including employment and support allowance (ESA) and child tax credits.

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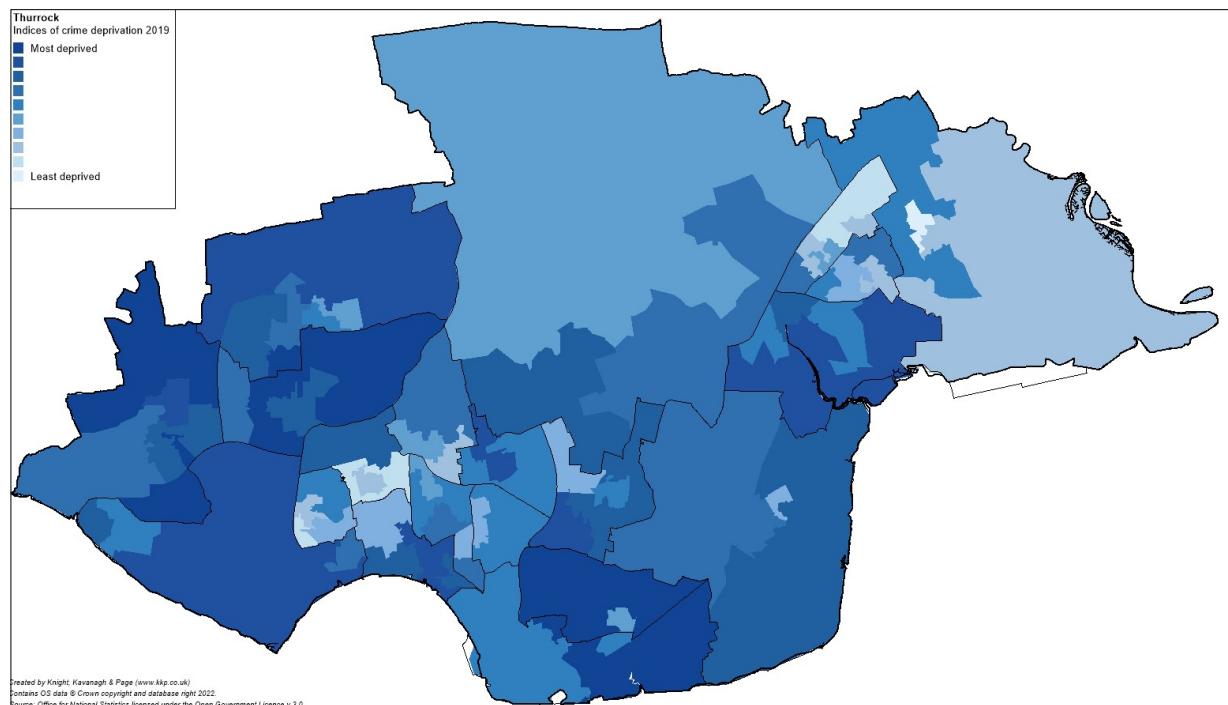
which was 92.5. The number of recorded crimes in the Essex area has fallen (by 4.8%) since June 2020 (2021 Census). The number for England and Wales has risen by 1.1% over the same period.

Table 2.3: Comparative crime rates: Thurrock and England & Wales

Authority/area	Recorded crime (Jul '22 – Jun '23)	Population 2022 MYE	Recorded crime per 1,000 population
Essex	161,800	1,877,301	86.2
England & Wales	5,572,143	60,238,038	92.5

As an alternative to the crime figures for police force areas the Index of Deprivation measures the risk of personal and material crime at a more local level. In Thurrock, 40.1% of the population are in the top three cohorts most at risk compared to 30.0% nationally.

Figure 2.7: Map of crime deprivation

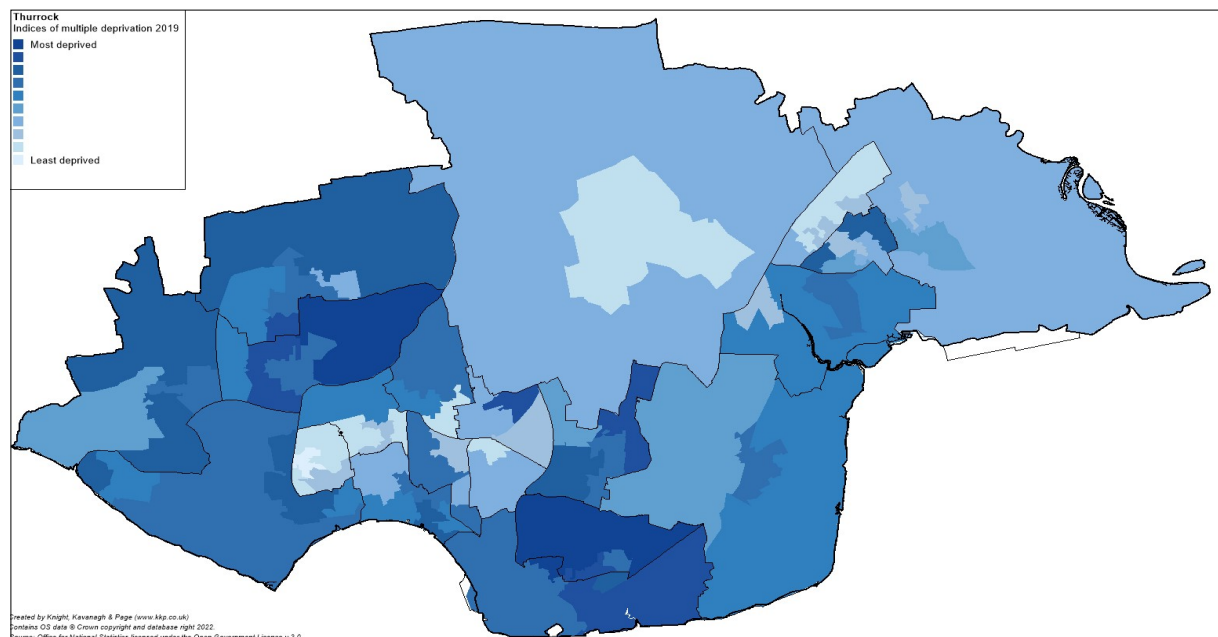


Deprivation (Data source: 2019 indices of deprivation, MHCLG)

One quarter of Thurrock's population (25.5%) falls within areas covered by the country's three most deprived cohorts (national average c.30%). 20% live in the three least deprived groupings in the country compared to a 'norm' of c.30%.

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Figure 2.8: Map of multiple deprivation



IMD illustrates relative deprivation for lower super output areas (LSOAs) based on 37 separate indicators grouped into seven domains, each of which reflects a different aspect of deprivation. This includes, for example, income, employment, education, health, crime, housing and the living environment.

Table 2.4: IMD cohorts – multiple deprivation in Thurrock

10% bands	Population in band	%	Cumulative %
Most deprived - 10.0	6,586	4.0%	4.0%
20.0	11,537	6.9%	10.9%
30.0	24,264	14.6%	25.5%
40.0	36,178	21.8%	47.3%
50.0	23,689	14.3%	61.6%
60.0	7,614	4.6%	66.2%
70.0	23,039	13.9%	80.0%
80.0	13,269	8.0%	88.0%
90.0	18,162	10.9%	99.0%
Least deprived - 100.0	1,702	1.0%	100.0%

The picture in respect of health is better. 5.6% of the population lives in the three most deprived cohorts while 32.1% live in the three least deprived groupings.

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Figure 2.9: Map of health deprivation

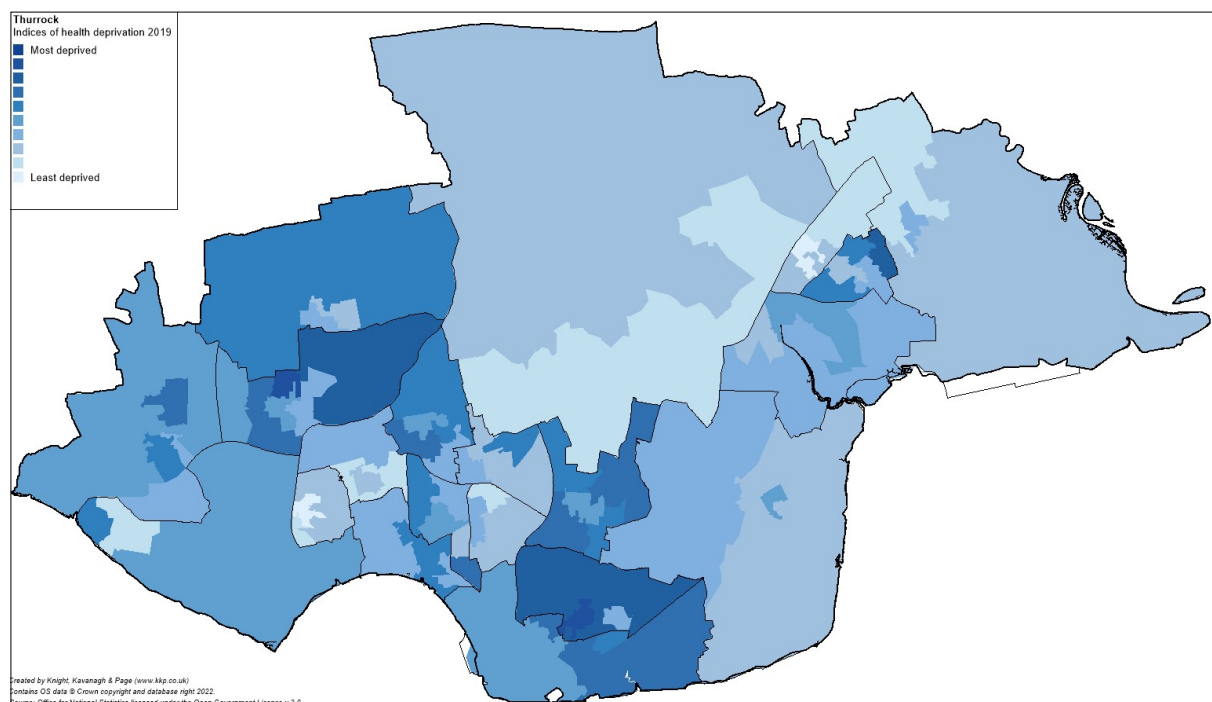
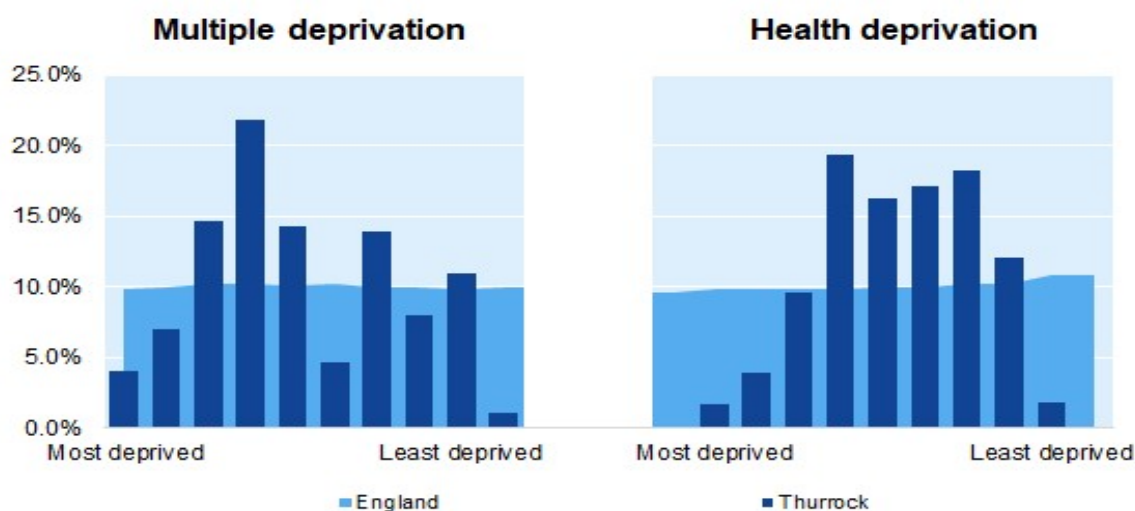


Table 2.5: IMD cohorts – health deprivation in Thurrock

10% bands	Population in band	%	Cumulative %
Most deprived - 10.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
20.0	2,834	1.7%	1.7%
30.0	6,407	3.9%	5.6%
40.0	15,980	9.6%	15.2%
50.0	32,081	19.3%	34.5%
60.0	27,020	16.3%	50.8%
70.0	28,424	17.1%	67.9%
80.0	30,157	18.2%	86.1%
90.0	20,059	12.1%	98.1%
Least deprived - 100.0	3,078	1.9%	100.0%

Figure 2.10: Index of multiple and health deprivation



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Health data (Data sources: ONS)

In contrast with standard patterns of health deprivation, life expectancy in Thurrock is lower than the national figure; the male rate is currently 78.3 compared to 79.4 for England, and the female equivalent is 82.6 compared to 83.1 nationally¹³. However, the life expectancy varies across the district with male life expectancy ranging from 74.9 to 83.3 and female ranging from 77.9 to 86.6.

Figure 2.11: Map of male life expectancy

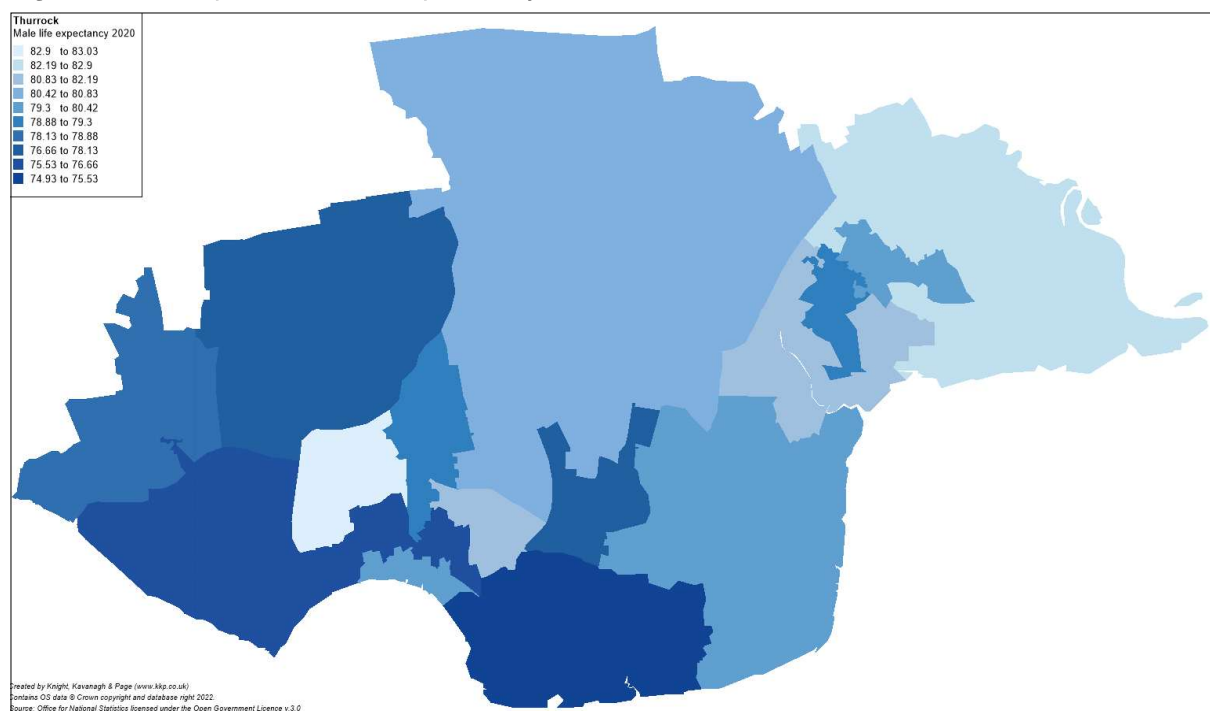
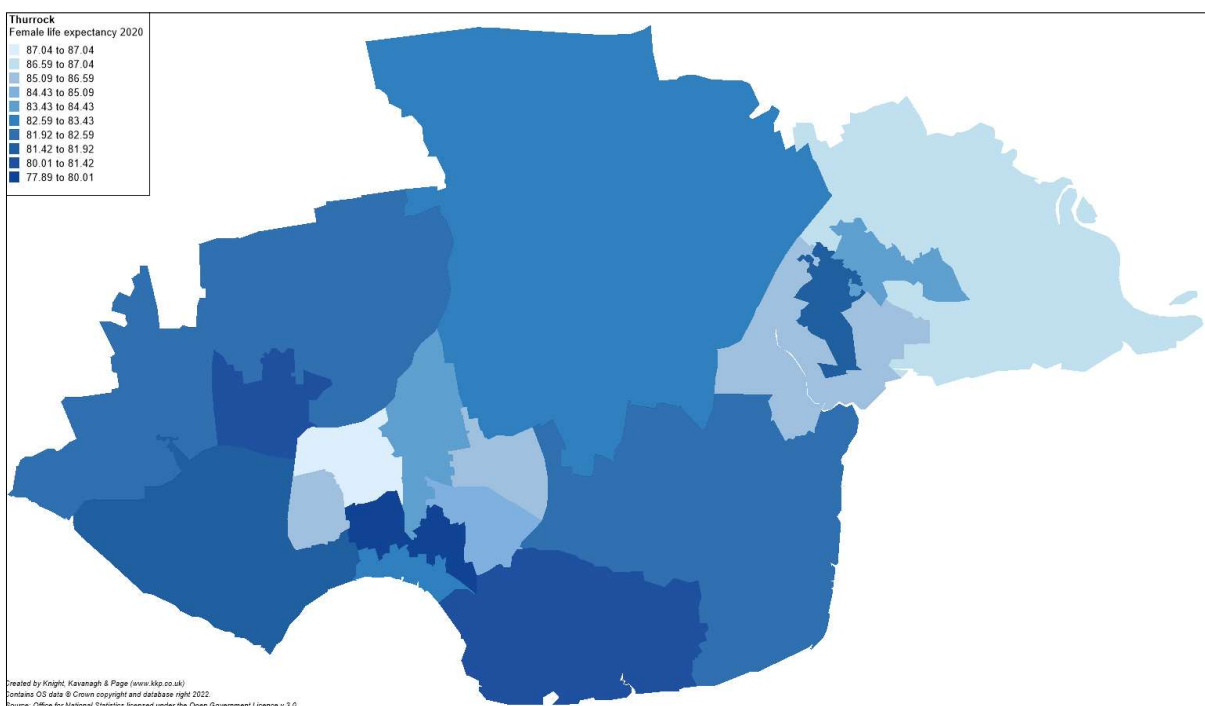


Figure 2.12: Map of female life expectancy



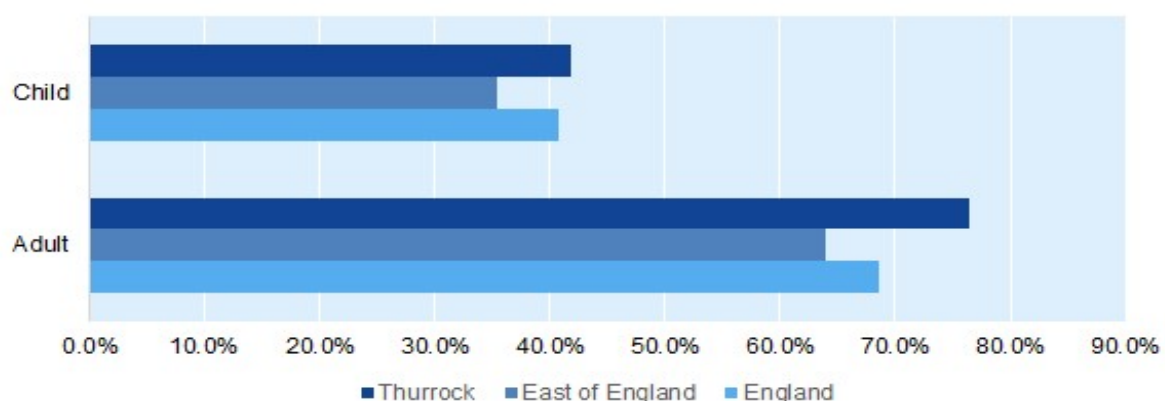
¹³ Office of National Statistics: Life Expectancy at Birth by local areas in the United Kingdom, 2020.

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Weight and obesity (Data sources: NCMP¹⁴ and NOO¹⁵)

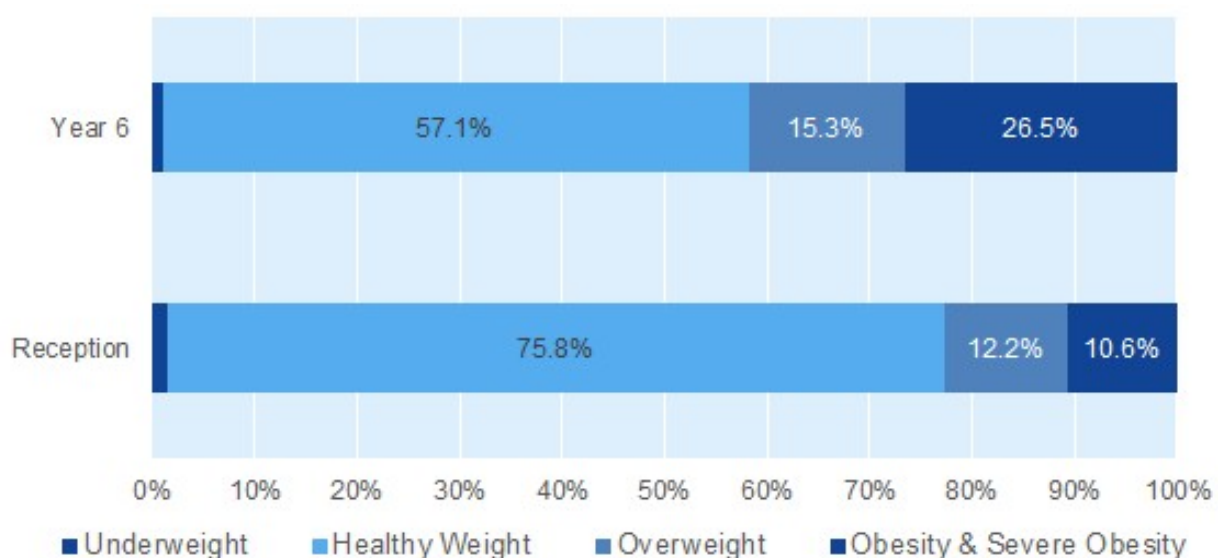
Obesity is widely recognised to be associated with health problems such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. At a national level, the resulting NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year. These factors combine to make the prevention of obesity a major public health challenge. In reference to Figure 2.11, adult and child rates of obesity or overweight in Thurrock are above both the national and regional rates.

Figure 2.13: Adult and child obesity rates - Thurrock



With reference to Figure 2.12 below and in common with many other areas, obesity rates increase significantly between the ages of 4-11. One in ten children (10.6%) in Thurrock is obese in their reception year at school and 12.2% are overweight. By Year 6 these figures rise to over one quarter (26.5%) obese and 15.3% being overweight. In total by Year 6, two in five children (41.8%) are either overweight or obese.

Figure 2.14: Child weight – reception and year 6 (2021/22)



¹⁴ National Child Measurement Program

¹⁵ National Obesity Observatory

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Active Lives Survey (Data Source: Sport England November 2021/22)

This is based on 16+ year olds taking part in walking, cycling, fitness, dance and other sporting activity. Levels of activity are defined by Sport England as follows:

- ◆ Inactive - <30 minutes per week.
- ◆ Fairly Active – 30 - 149 minutes per week.
- ◆ Active – 150+ minutes per week.

As identified in Table 2.6 below, a lower percentage of the Thurrock population is inactive than is the case in England and the East and a higher percentage is considered to be active.

Figure 2.15: Levels of activity (Active Lives 2021/22)

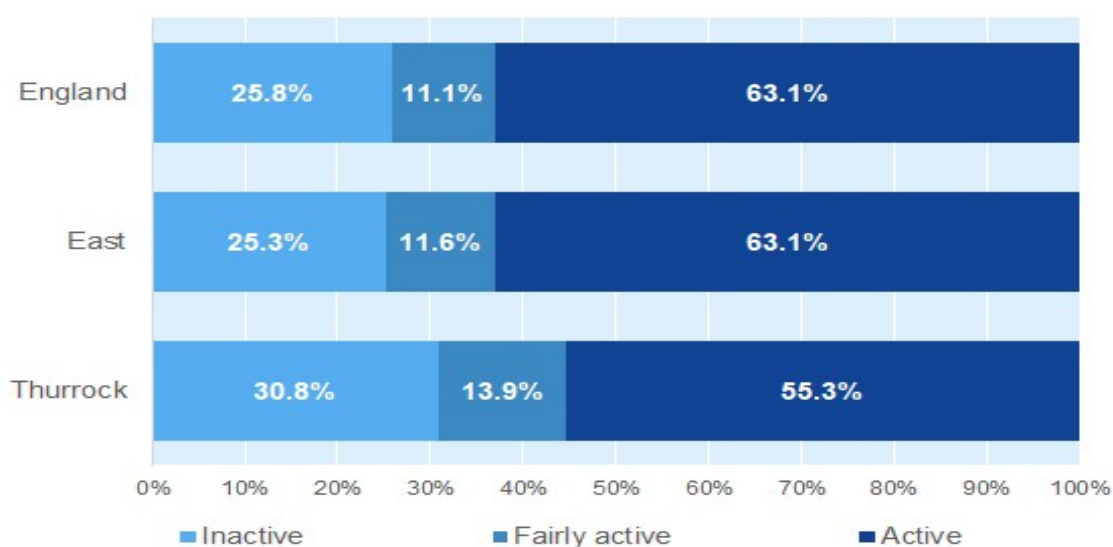


Table 2.6: Active Lives Survey results: November 2021/22.

	Inactive #	Inactive %	Fairly active #	Fairly active %	Active #	Active %
England	11,874,800	25.8%	5,131,700	11.1%	29,062,000	63.1%
East	1,305,500	25.3%	599,400	11.6%	3,257,000	63.1%
Thurrock	42,000	30.8%	18,900	13.9%	75,400	55.3%

Rate/population totals for sport and physical activity levels (excluding gardening) of adults (16+) in English local authority areas.

This data is also collected for Children & Young People aged 5-16 during the academic year.

Table 2.7: Children and Young People: Active Lives Survey results: Academic Year 23-24

	Less active #	Less active %	Fairly active #	Fairly active %	Active #	Active %
England	2,194,900	29.5%	1,684,500	22.7%	3,548,500	47.8%
East	234,600	27.6%	191,700	22.1%	422,600	49.8%
Thurrock	11,100	42.0%	6,300	19.3%	9,200	34.5%

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Sport England Place Needs Classification Data

Thurrock has been identified as one of the 53 place expansion partnerships by Sport England due to a range of factors that have set out in Sport England's Place Needs Classification Tool. This will help to address the regional inequalities in activity levels across England.

Some areas of the Authority have higher needs around physical activity than others. For example, South Ockenden, Chadwell St Mary and Tilbury are areas of higher deprivation as well as West Thurrock and Purfleet.

The Place Needs Classification Data is based on data extracted from Sport England's Active Places Power (APP), IMD and a couple of other data sets such as health data and life expectancy.

Popular sports (Data source: Sport England Active Lives Survey November 2020/21)

Around one fifth (20.5%) of adults take part in fitness activities, on average, at least twice a month. The next most popular activity is cycling in which 12.5% of adults participate in on a relatively regular basis.

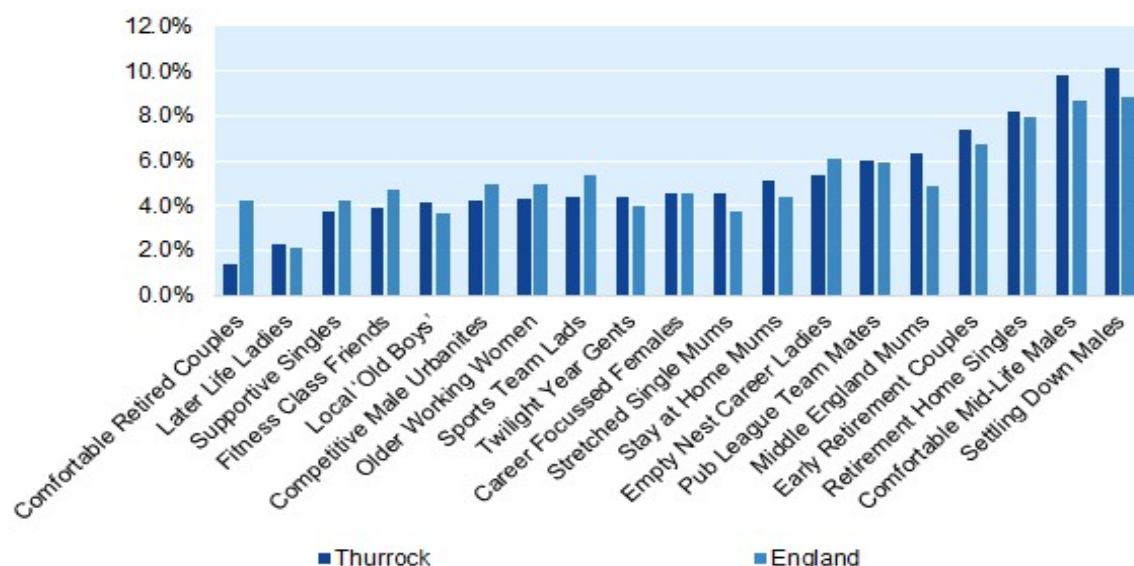
Table 2.8: Most popular leisure activities in Thurrock

Sport	Thurrock #	Thurrock %	East #	East %	England #	England %
Fitness	27,600	20.5%	1,264,600	25.0%	11,374,600	24.9%
Cycling	16,800	12.5%	916,500	18.1%	7,472,900	16.4%
Athletics	12,800	9.5%	694,100	13.7%	6,252,000	13.7%
Swimming	4,000	3.0%	231,200	4.6%	2,001,600	4.4%
Football	2,700	2.0%	135,700	2.7%	1,451,700	3.2%

Sporting segmentation (Data source: Sport England Sports Market Segmentation web tool)

Sport England classifies the adult population via a series of market segments which provide an insight into the sporting behaviours of individuals throughout the country. Knowing which segments are predominant in the local population can help direct provision and programming.

Figure 2.16: Sport England market segmentation- Thurrock compared to England



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Population projections: (Data source: 2018- based population projections, ONS)

Strategic planning: Change over 25 years (2018 to 2043)¹⁶

The recorded population of Thurrock in 2021 was around 176,000 the most recent ONS projections indicate a rise of 19.1% in Thurrock's population (+32,945) over the 25 years from 2018 to 2043 to a grand total of 205,470. Over this extended timeframe fluctuations are seen in rise and fall at different points across the majority of age groups. Key points for Thurrock include:

- ◆ The number of 0-15 year olds, rises by 1,765 (+4.4% %) over the first half of the projection (to 2030).
- ◆ The proportion of economically active population (16-64 year olds) is only projected to fall from 64% to 63% bucking the national trend.
- ◆ In contrast, there is predicted to be an increase in the number of 16-24 year olds, +22.1% in the first period (+3,723) followed by a decline of -2.6% (-540) in the second period. Consequently, Sport England's target of 'increasing the number of 14-25 year olds playing sport once a week' may prove difficult.
- ◆ There is a continuous increase in the numbers of persons aged 65+ and a need to consider varying sports offers for this age group. This represents an increase of +21.1% (+5,030) in the first period continuing to rise to +49.2% (+11,701) between 2018 and 2043. While the age group represented 13.8% of Thurrock's population in 2018 it is projected to be 17.3% of the total by 2043 - this is over a sixth of the population.

Figure 2.17: Projected population change (2018 – 2043) ONS 2018 projections

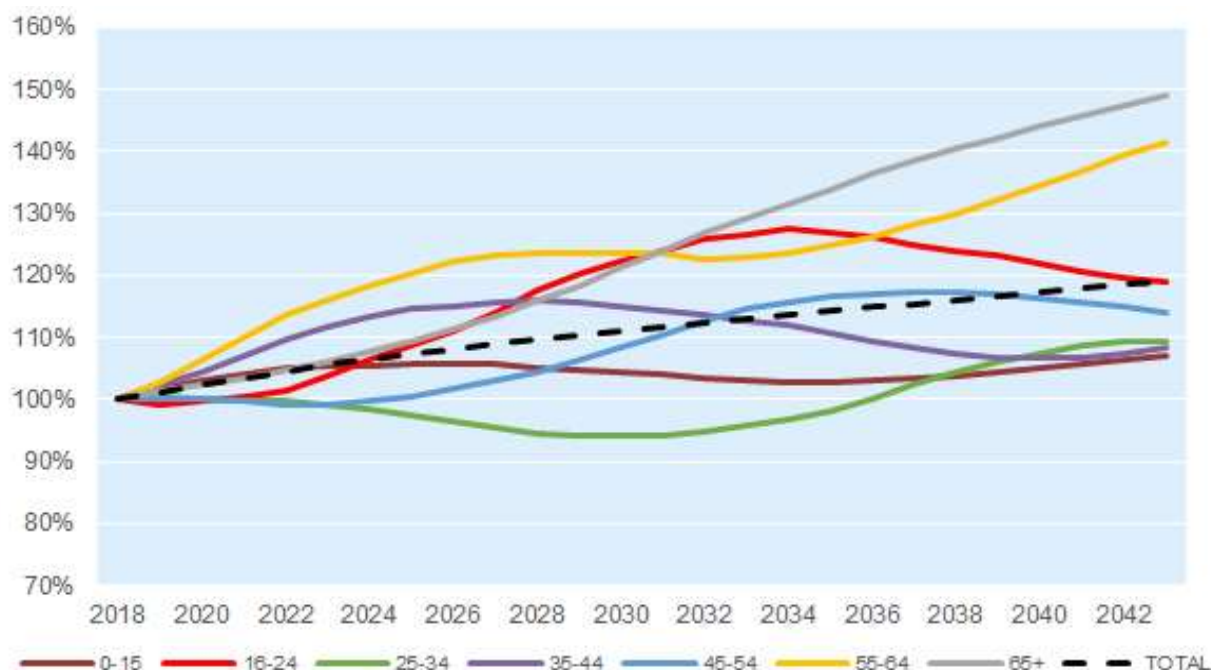


Table 2.9: Thurrock – ONS projected population (2018 to 2043)

Age (years)	2018 #	2030 #	2043 #	2018 %	2030 %	2043 %	2030 Change	2043 Change
0-15	39,859	41,624	42,693	23.1%	21.7%	20.8%	104.4%	107.1%
16-24	16,827	20,550	20,009	9.8%	10.7%	9.7%	122.1%	118.9%
25-34	24,646	23,207	26,976	14.3%	12.1%	13.1%	94.2%	109.5%

¹⁶ Office for National Statistics 2018-based population projections (data released March 2020)

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35-44	25,331	29,151	27,437	14.7%	15.2%	13.4%	115.1%	108.3%
45-54	24,318	26,346	27,732	14.1%	13.7%	13.5%	108.3%	114.0%
55-64	17,756	21,967	25,134	10.3%	11.5%	12.2%	123.7%	141.6%
65+	23,788	28,818	35,489	13.8%	15.0%	17.3%	121.1%	149.2%
Total	172,525	191,662	205,470	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	111.1%	119.1%

Summary of the demographic profile and population projections

Thurrock's population is expected to rise by 19.1% by 2043. A significant factor in this is the continuous rise in the number of older people. By this date 17.3% of the population will be over 65.

A key issue to consider is whether the current stock of facilities will be able to accommodate this increase or whether there is sufficient demand in specific areas to justify development of new leisure facilities. There will also be a need to consider how the ageing population will choose to use its leisure time; this may well lead to changes in levels of demand for different activities.

The importance of ensuring that the proportion of the population which is currently active remains so and that more of the presently inactive become active (sustaining and improving the general health of the local population) will become increasingly relevant.

There will be greater need for daytime available facilities to accommodate the number of older people.

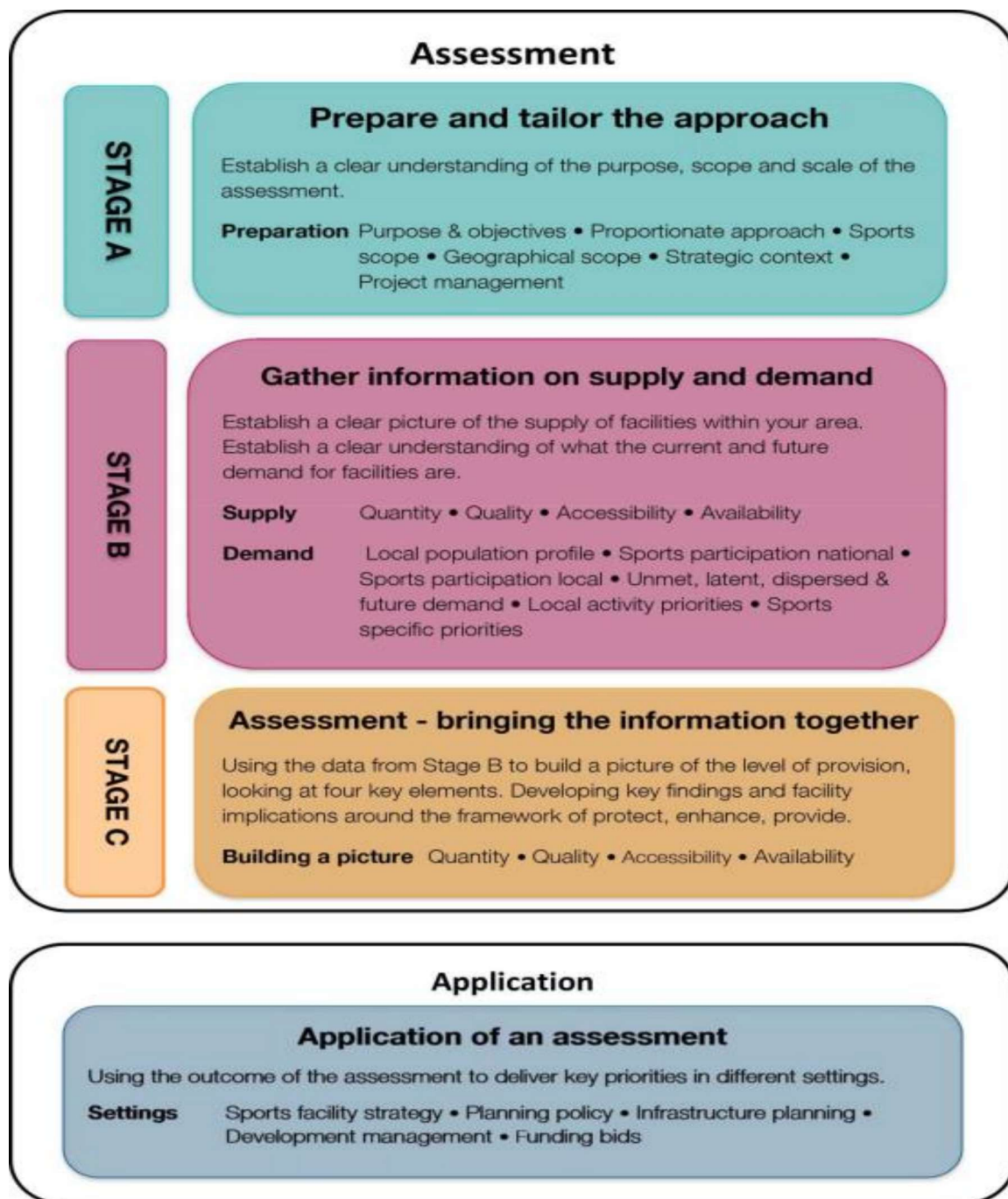
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SECTION 3: SPORTS FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

3.1: Methodology

As noted above, the assessment of provision is based on the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

Figure 3.1: Recommended approach



This is the recommended approach to undertaking a robust assessment of need for indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

ANOG has been produced to help (local authorities) meet the requirements of the Government's NPPF, which states that: 'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and

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recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.’ (NPPF, Paragraph 104).

Provision assessment involves analysis of quality, quantity, accessibility and availability for the identified facility types (e.g., sports halls and swimming pools). Each venue is considered on a ‘like for like’ basis within its own facility type, to enable it to be assessed for adequacy.

Demand background, data and consultation is variable, depending upon levels of consultation garnered. In some instances, national data is available whilst in others, it is possible to drill down and get some very detailed local information. This is evident within the demand section.

The report considers the distribution of and interrelationship between facility types in the Authority and provides a clear indication of areas of high demand. It will identify where there is potential to provide improved and/or additional facilities to meet this demand and to, where appropriate, protect or rationalise the current stock.

3.2: Site visits

Active Places Power (APP) is used to provide baseline data to identify facilities in the study area. Where possible, assessments are undertaken in the presence of facility staff. This tends to add value as it enables access to be gained to more areas within venues and more detailed in-situ discussion of issues such as customer perspectives, quality, maintenance etc. Where possible it adds value to the audit (which is a ‘snapshot’ visit) enhancing the accuracy of insight gathered about the general user experience.

Site visits to key indoor facilities, those operated by other partners and the voluntary sector were undertaken. Via the audit and via informal interviews with facility managers this report identifies ‘relevance’ and ‘condition’ and describes (e.g.):

- ◀ Facility and scale.
- ◀ Usage/local market.
- ◀ Ownership, management and access arrangements (plus, as applicable, owner aspirations).
- ◀ Management, programming, catchments, user groups, gaps.
- ◀ Location (urban/rural), access and accessibility.
- ◀ Condition, maintenance, existing improvement plans, facility ‘investment status’ (lifespan in the short, medium and long term).
- ◀ Existing/ planned adjacent facilities.

Assessment captures quantity and quality data on a site-by-site basis. This is fed directly into the main database allowing information to be stored and analysed. Quality assessments are rated based upon the categories shown in Table 3.1 overleaf. These ratings, based on non-technical visual assessments) are applied throughout the report, regardless of facility type.

Facility age and condition is assessed. Surfaces, tiles and walls, line markings and safety equipment are considered and problem areas such as mould, damage, leaks etc. are noted. The condition of fixtures, fittings and equipment is recorded. Maintenance and facility ‘wear and tear’ is considered in terms of compliance with the Equality Act, although this is not studied in detail for the purposes of this report. Overall facility quality ratings are based upon all data collated.

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Table 3.1: Quality ratings of indoor sports facilities using ANOG

Quality rating	Description
Good	Facility is new (less than 10 years old) or recently invested in, up to date, clean, well maintained and presented. Fixtures, fittings, equipment and sports surfaces are new or relatively new with little if any wear and tear. They are well-lit with a modern feel. Ancillary facilities are new or well maintained, fit for purpose, modern and attractive.
Above average	Facility is in reasonable condition and is well maintained and presented. May be older but it is fit for purpose and safe. Fixtures, fittings, equipment and sports surfaces are in an acceptable condition but may show some signs of wear and tear. Ancillary facilities are good quality, but potentially showing signs of age and some wear and tear.
Below average	Facility is older and showing signs of age/poor quality. Fixtures, fittings, equipment and sports surfaces show signs of wear and tear. It is usable, but quality could be improved. The facility is not as attractive to customers and does not meet current expectations. Ancillary facilities are deteriorating, reasonable quality, but usable.
Poor	The facility is old and outdated. Fixtures, fittings, equipment and sports surfaces are aged, worn and/or damaged. The facility is barely usable and at times may have to be taken out of commission. The facility is unattractive to customers and does not meet basic expectations. Ancillary facilities are low quality and unattractive to use.

3.3: Catchment areas

Applying catchments areas for facility types listed enables identification of areas currently not served. These vary from person to person, day to day, hour to hour. This problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchment'; the distance travelled by around 75-80% of users (used in the Sport England Facilities Planning Model - FPM). Sport England data indicates that most people will travel up to 20 minutes to access sports facilities. This, coupled with KKP's experience of working in/with leisure facilities and use of local data enables identification of catchment areas for sports facilities as follows.

Table 3.2: Facility catchment areas

Facility type	Identified catchment area by urban/rural
Sport halls	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Health and fitness	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Swimming pools	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Squash courts	20 minutes' drive
Gymnastics and trampolining	30 minutes' drive
Indoor bowls facilities	30 minutes' drive
Indoor tennis facilities	30 minutes' drive
Village/community halls	800m/10 minutes' walk

3.4: Facilities Planning Model Standard Run Assessment

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) helps to assess the strategic provision of community sports facilities. It has been developed as a means of:

- Assessing requirements for different types of community sports facilities on a local, regional or national scale.
- Helping local authorities determine an adequate level of sports facility provision to meet local need.

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- ◀ Testing 'what if' scenarios with regard to provision and changes in demand, this includes testing the impact of opening, relocating and closing facilities and the impact population changes may have on need for sports facilities.

In its simplest form the FPM seeks to assess whether the capacity of existing facilities for a particular sport is capable of meeting local demand considering how far people are prepared to travel to a facility (using the integrated transport network). To estimate the level of sports facility provision in an area, the model compares the number of facilities (supply) with the demand for that facility (demand) that the local population will generate.

For the purpose of this study, Thurrock Council has commissioned an FPM standard run assessment for both swimming pool and sports hall provision. Analysis looks at the following aspects :

- ◀ A baseline assessment of existing sports hall provision using 2018 population (ONS) in order to assess how the supply of facilities is meeting demand in Thurrock.
- ◀ A baseline assessment of existing swimming pool provision using 2018 population (ONS) in order to assess how the supply of facilities is meeting demand in Thurrock.

Within this report, FPM national run data (2025) and future population forecast (2043) data for both swimming pool and sports hall provision. This is used alongside KKP mapping and audit information to provide a balanced summary of supply and demand across these facility types.

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SECTION 4: SPORTS HALLS

Indoor multi-purpose sports halls are prime venues for community sport enabling a range of sport and recreational activities to be played. The standard methodology for measuring sports halls is the number of badminton courts contained within the floor area.

Sports halls are generally considered to be of greatest value if they are of at least 3 or more badminton court size with sufficient height to allow games such as badminton to be played. However, 4-court sports halls provide greater flexibility as they can accommodate major indoor team sports such as football (5-a-side and training), basketball and netball. They also have sufficient length to accommodate indoor cricket nets and indoor athletics and, as such offer greater sports development flexibility than their 3-court counterpart. There is often variance in the dimensions of 4-court halls, and only those which meet current Sport England Design Guidance of 34.5m x 20m can accommodate the full range of indoor sports, especially competition/league activities.

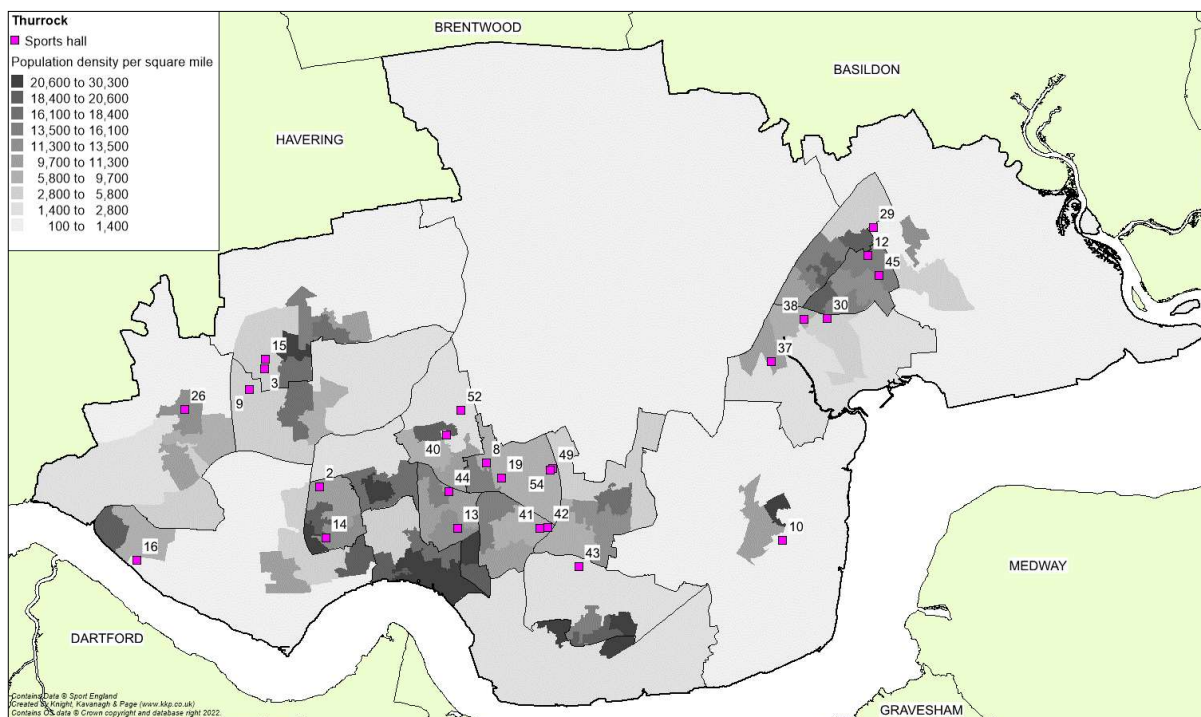
Larger halls, for example those with six or eight courts, can accommodate higher level training and/or competition and meet day-to-day need. They also provide an option for more than one pitch/court increasing flexibility for training and competition and hosting of indoor central venue leagues for sports such as netball. This assessment considers all 3+ court facilities in Thurrock. Halls that function as specialist venues (e.g., dance studios) are excluded.

4.1: Supply

Quantity

There are 37 sports halls of all sizes in Thurrock accommodating 96 badminton courts.

Figure 4.1: All sports / activity halls in Thurrock— regardless of size



Some venues have more than one activity/sports hall on site.

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Table 4.1: All sports / activity halls in Thurrock

Map ID	Site name	Number of courts
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	6
3	Beacon Hill Academy	1
8	Deneholm Primary School	2
9	Dilkes Academy	0
10	East Tilbury Primary School	2
12	Giffards Primary School	1
13	Grays Convent High School	1
14	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	0
14	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	0
14	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	4
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	4
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	6
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	2
16	Harris Academy Riverside	4
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	0
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	0
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	0
26	Ormiston Park Academy	4
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	4
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	1
30	Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	1
30	Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	4
30	Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	2
37	St Clere's School	4
38	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	0
40	Stifford Clays Primary School	1
41	Storm Fit (Grays)	4
42	Thames Park Secondary School	4
43	The Gateway Academy	4
43	The Gateway Academy	2
44	The Hathaway Academy	4
44	The Hathaway Academy	1
45	The Springhouse	1
49	Treetops School	3
52	William Edwards School	1
52	William Edwards School	8
54	Orsett Heath Academy	4
-	Total courts	90

(0-court halls identified in Active Places but not large enough to accommodate 1 badminton court)

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The location of sports halls reflects population density. The main population areas, such as Grays and Ockenden, Stanford- Le-Hope/ Corringham and East Tilbury all have several venues.

Thurrock has 21 sports/activity halls with two or fewer marked badminton courts. While often appropriate for mat sports, exercise to music and similar provision, the size of smaller (0-2 court) halls limits the range and scale of recreational/sporting activity accommodated.

Several sites have more than one activity/sports hall. One example is Harris Academy Ockenden, which has four. Only sites with sports halls containing three or more marked badminton courts were subject to assessment for the purpose of the needs assessment as these can accommodate a range of sports and potentially be used by the community depending on the access policy.

There are 16 sports halls (43% of total hall provision) with 3 or more marked badminton courts in Thurrock, totalling 77 badminton courts (85% of courts).

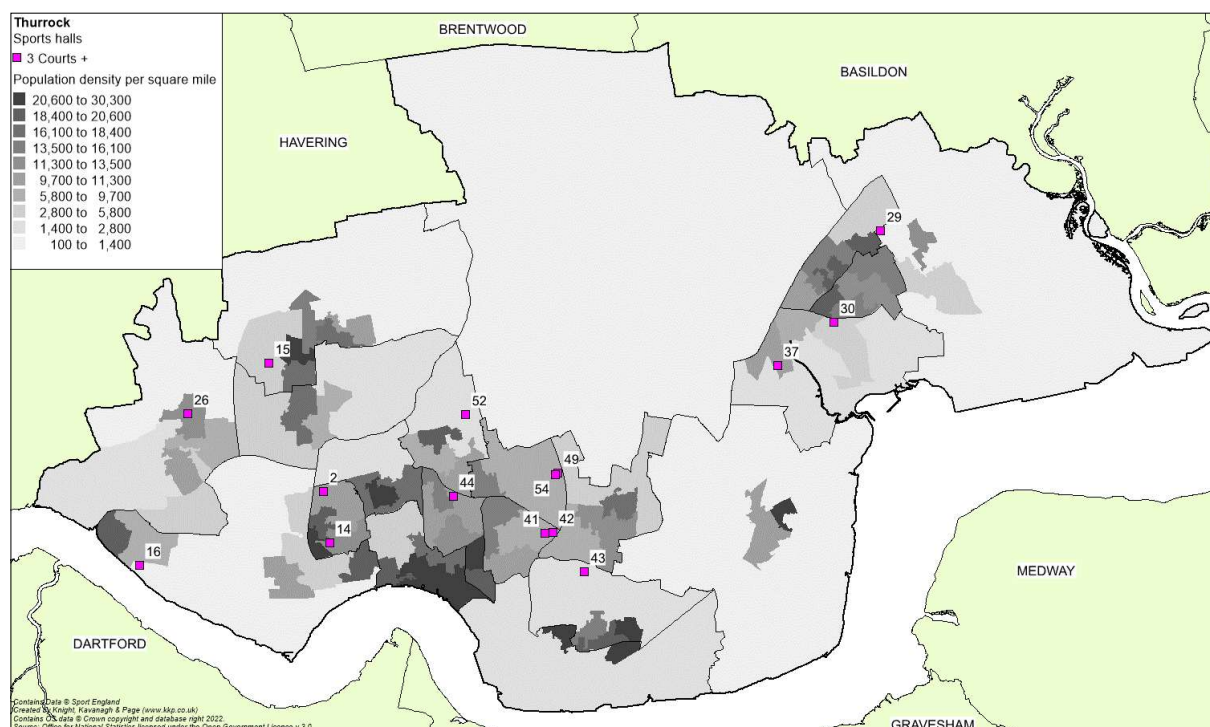
Table 4.2: Sports halls with 3 or more badminton courts

Map ID	Site name	Courts
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	6
14	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	4
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	4
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	6
16	Harris Academy Riverside	4
26	Ormiston Park Academy	4
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	4
30	Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	4
37	St Clere's School	4
41	Storm Fit (Grays)	4
42	Thames Park Secondary School	4
43	The Gateway Academy	4
44	The Hathaway Academy	4
49	Treetops School	3
52	William Edwards School	8
54	Orsett Heath Academy	4
-	Total	77

In common with most local authorities the 4-court sports hall is the most common size. A larger sports hall (one of 4+ courts in size) can cater for sports that require more floor space such as futsal and handball or can offer multiple courts for events and competitions. The largest sports hall is located at William Edwards School which has eight marked courts.

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Figure 4.2: Sports halls with 3 or more courts on population density



Facility quality

Sports halls with 3 or more courts are generally concentrated in the centre and to the west of the Authority servicing its more densely populated areas. There is less provision in the east (i.e., Stanford-Le-Hope and Corringham). The north of Thurrock is not serviced by any provision and neither is there any provision in the Tilbury & East Tilbury area.

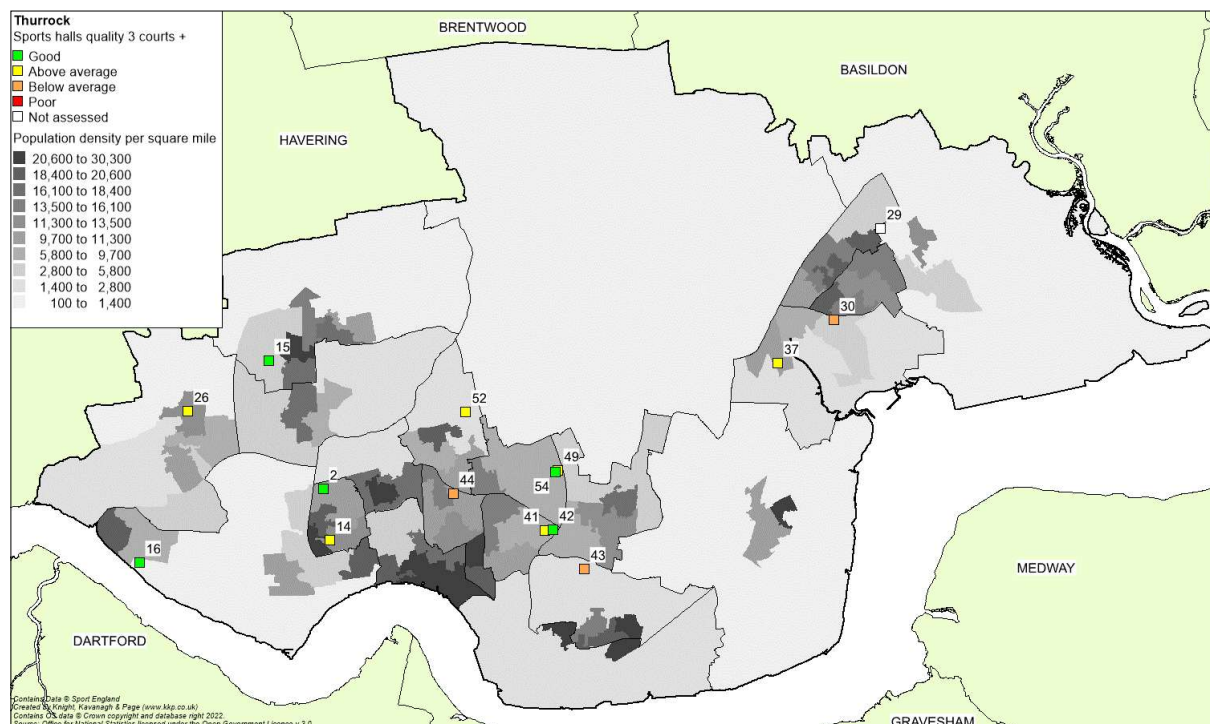
All 3 or more court sports halls were subject to non-technical assessment to ascertain quality. These took place between October-December 2024. Investment made after this date is not accounted for. Known or planned investment is captured. Access was not obtained to Ortu Gable Hall School, despite several attempts to contact the facility no response was received.

Table 4.3: Quality of 3 or more court sports halls

ID	Site name	Courts	Court condition
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	6	Good
14	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	4	Above average
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	4	Below average
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	6	Good
16	Harris Academy Riverside	4	Good
26	Ormiston Park Academy	4	Above average
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	4	Not assessed
30	Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	4	Below average
37	St Clere's School	4	Above average
41	Storm Fit (Grays)	4	Above average
42	Thames Park Secondary School	4	Good
43	The Gateway Academy	4	Below average
44	The Hathaway Academy	4	Below average
49	Treetops School	3	Above average
52	William Edwards School	8	Above average
54	Orsett Heath Academy	4	Good

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Figure 4.3: Quality of 3+ sports halls on population density



There are five good quality sports halls (24 courts), six above average (27 courts) and four below average (16 courts). As noted above, one sports hall (four courts) was not assessed.

None of the public leisure centres feature a sports hall with three or more badminton courts. Consultation highlighted that Impulse Leisure is keen to make Belhus Park & Country Club into a hub site (it is located in an area of higher deprivation) and re-configure it, in order to add a 3-court sports hall to increase the level of daytime availability in the Authority.

A prominent factor in the below quality rating of sports halls on school sites is the lack of recent investment. One example is Hathaway Academy (below average quality) where the sports hall has received no major refurbishment since it was built. As a result of this, it is in poor condition and requires replacement.

Table 4.4: Reported quality issues at below average sports halls

Site name	Rating	Audit findings
Hathaway Academy	Below average	This has received limited investment in the last decade and looks tired as a result. The floor is dated and showing signs of wear and tear and is in need of a replacement. There is a lack of available storage space.
The Gateway Academy	Below average	Flooring is dated and in need of a refurbishment. The hall has an issue with a leaking roof and the School is in the process of sourcing funding to fix.
Harris Academy Ockenden (4 court sports hall).	Below average	A dated sports hall in need of modernisation. The floor is tired and is showing signs of wear and tear. Lighting is also poor. Run off space surrounding the courts is limited.
Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	Below average	This older style sports hall is in need of modernisation. It is suffering with a leaking roof and this causes some water pooling at times.

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Four of the five good quality sports halls are located at educational sites, with the other located at Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred). Orsett Heath Academy is the newest sports hall in Thurrock - it opened in 2023. It features a sprung wooden floor, LED lighting and modern décor. The 6-court sports hall at Harris Academy Ockenden was built in 2019 to accommodate the high demand for sports hall usage from sports clubs whilst its 4- court sports hall was opened in 1989 and last refurbished in 2006. The sports hall at Bannatyne Health Club recently underwent a major refurbishment and it now features modern décor, a good quality floor and new line markings.

Storm Fit (Grays) has an above average four-court sports hall. It has good line markings, which were re-marked in 2019 as well as a good supply of storage space for equipment.

William Edwards School also has above average provision. Its sports hall opened in 2012 as a Badminton England Performance Centre. Although, the floor markings have not been re-lined since, it is well maintained on a regular basis by the School. Furthermore, the wall colour is suitable for badminton and the lighting has been converted to LED.

Four other schools also have above average sports hall provision. Ormiston Park Academy did not report any issues with the overall quality of the building despite its age and flooring and line markings are renewed on a regular basis.

The 3-court sports hall at Treetops School opened in 2019 and has a sprung wooden floor and modern décor. Harris Academy Chafford Hundred has not been refurbished since it opened in 2001 but the floor has been well maintained and it has installed LED lighting.

Table 4.5: Date of opening and refurbishment of sports halls

Site	Year built / opened	Last refurbished	Age since opened/ refurbished
Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	1998	2019	6
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	2001	-	24
Harris Academy Ockendon (4-court)	1989	2006	19
Harris Academy Ockendon (6-court)	2019	-	6
Harris Academy Riverside	2019	-	6
Ormiston Park Academy	2013	-	12
Ortu Gable Hall School	1986	-	38
Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	1950	2004	21
St Clere's School	1978	2020	5
Storm Fit (Grays)	1996	2013	12
Thames Park Secondary School	2022	-	3
The Gateway Academy	2008	-	17
The Hathaway Academy	1996	2006	19
Treetops School	2019	-	5
William Edwards School	2012	-	13
Orsett Heath Academy	2023	-	2

Most sports halls have had some form of investment/refurbishment in the last 20 years. Ortu Gable Hall School may also have been refurbished more recently than indicated.

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Accessibility

Sports hall accessibility is influenced by how far people are willing/able to travel to and from them. Walk and drive-time catchments are applied to determine facility accessibility to different communities. The normal (industry) standard is a 20-minute walk time for urban areas and a 20-minute drive for rural areas. 17.3% of the population do not have access to a car (2021 Census). This means that 11,474 people in Thurrock are reliant on public transport or walking/cycling to get to a sports hall. This can add to the cost of participation.

Figure 4.4: All sports halls with 3+ courts on IMD with one-mile radial catchments

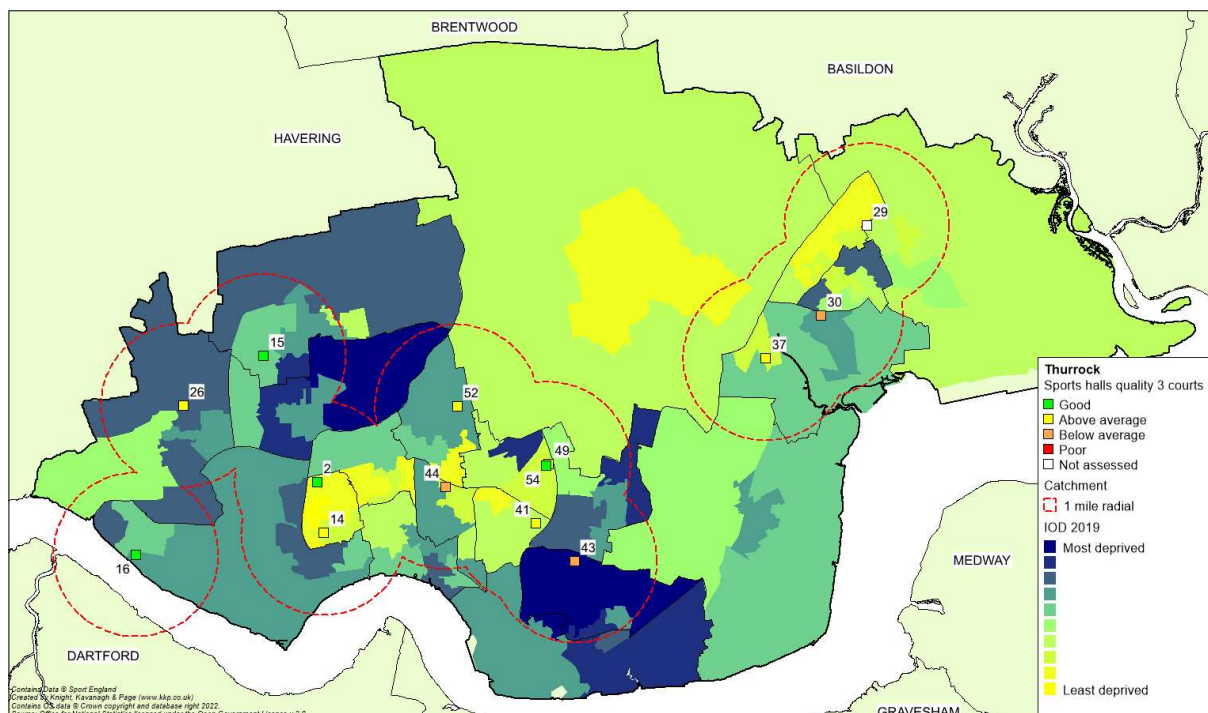


Table 4.6: Population adjacence to sports halls with 3+ courts

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	6,586	4.0%	5,628	3.4%	958	0.6%
10.1 - 20	11,537	6.9%	8,591	5.2%	2,946	1.8%
20.1 - 30	24,264	14.6%	19,104	11.5%	5,160	3.1%
30.1 - 40	36,178	21.8%	29,323	17.7%	6,855	4.1%
40.1 - 50	23,689	14.3%	18,579	11.2%	5,110	3.1%
50.1 - 60	7,614	4.6%	4,978	3.0%	2,636	1.6%
60.1 - 70	23,039	13.9%	17,433	10.5%	5,606	3.4%
70.1 - 80	13,269	8.0%	13,269	8.0%	0	0.0%
80.1 - 90	18,162	10.9%	16,720	10.1%	1,442	0.9%
90.1 - 100	1,702	1.0%	1,702	1.0%	0	0.0%
Total	166,040	100.0%	135,327	81.5%	30,713	18.5%

In Thurrock, 81.5% of residents live within a one mile walk of a sports hall, this represents a high level of accessibility. This figure is the same when applying the calculation to sports halls with community access. Community use is defined as facilities in public, voluntary, private or

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commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by clubs. Of the 42,387 people in Thurrock living in defined areas of higher deprivation (0-30% IMD bands); 33,323 of them (79%) have access to an accessible sports hall.

Figure 4.5: Community use sports halls (3+ courts on IMD with one-mile radial catchment)

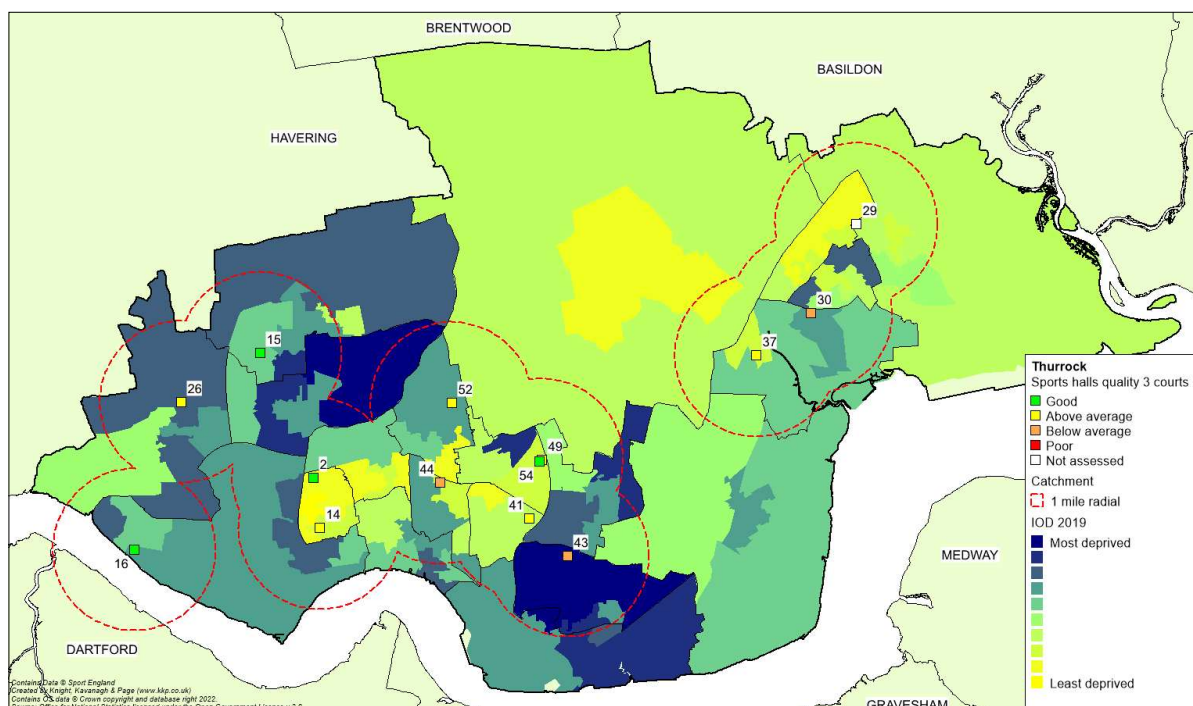


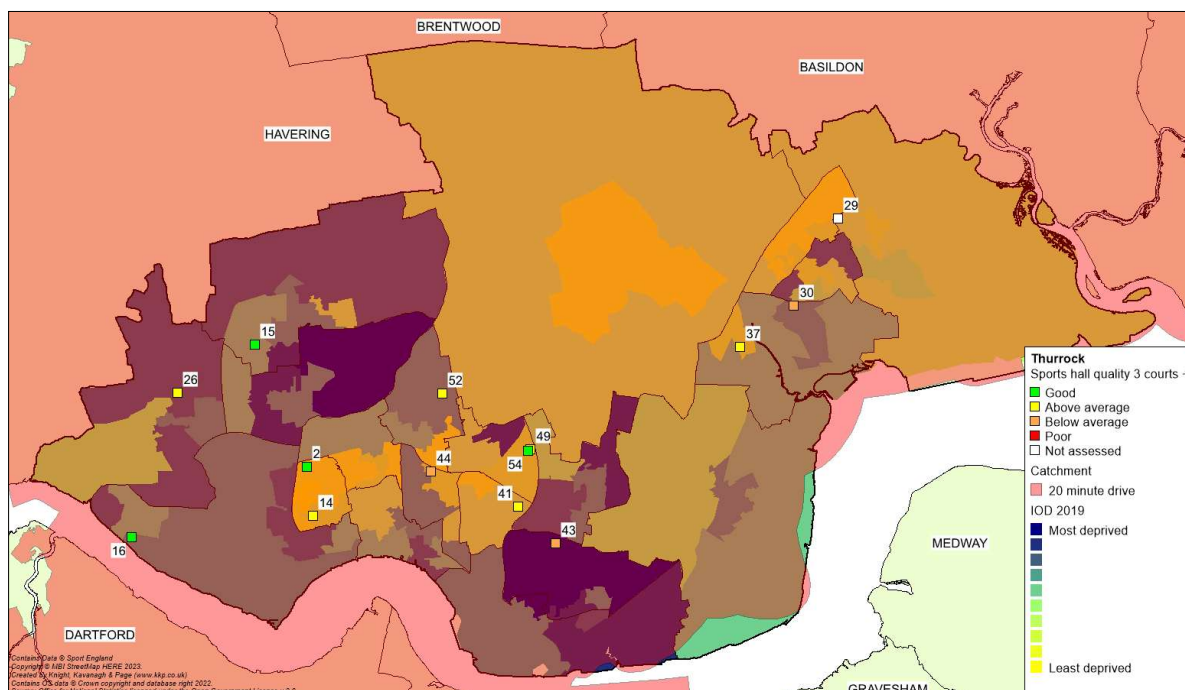
Table 4.7: Accessibility to community use sports halls with 3+ courts

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	6,586	4.0%	5,628	3.4%	958	0.6%
10.1 - 20	11,537	6.9%	8,591	5.2%	2,946	1.8%
20.1 - 30	24,264	14.6%	19,104	11.5%	5,160	3.1%
30.1 - 40	36,178	21.8%	29,323	17.7%	6,855	4.1%
40.1 - 50	23,689	14.3%	18,579	11.2%	5,110	3.1%
50.1 - 60	7,614	4.6%	4,978	3.0%	2,636	1.6%
60.1 - 70	23,039	13.9%	17,433	10.5%	5,606	3.4%
70.1 - 80	13,269	8.0%	13,269	8.0%	0	0.0%
80.1 - 90	18,162	10.9%	16,720	10.1%	1,442	0.9%
90.1 - 100	1,702	1.0%	1,702	1.0%	0	0.0%
Total	166,040	100.0%	135,327	81.5%	30,713	18.5%

Almost 99.8% of Thurrock's population is within a 20-minute drive of a publicly accessible sports hall with 3 or more badminton courts, or sports hall of equivalent dimensions as shown in Figure 4.6 overleaf.

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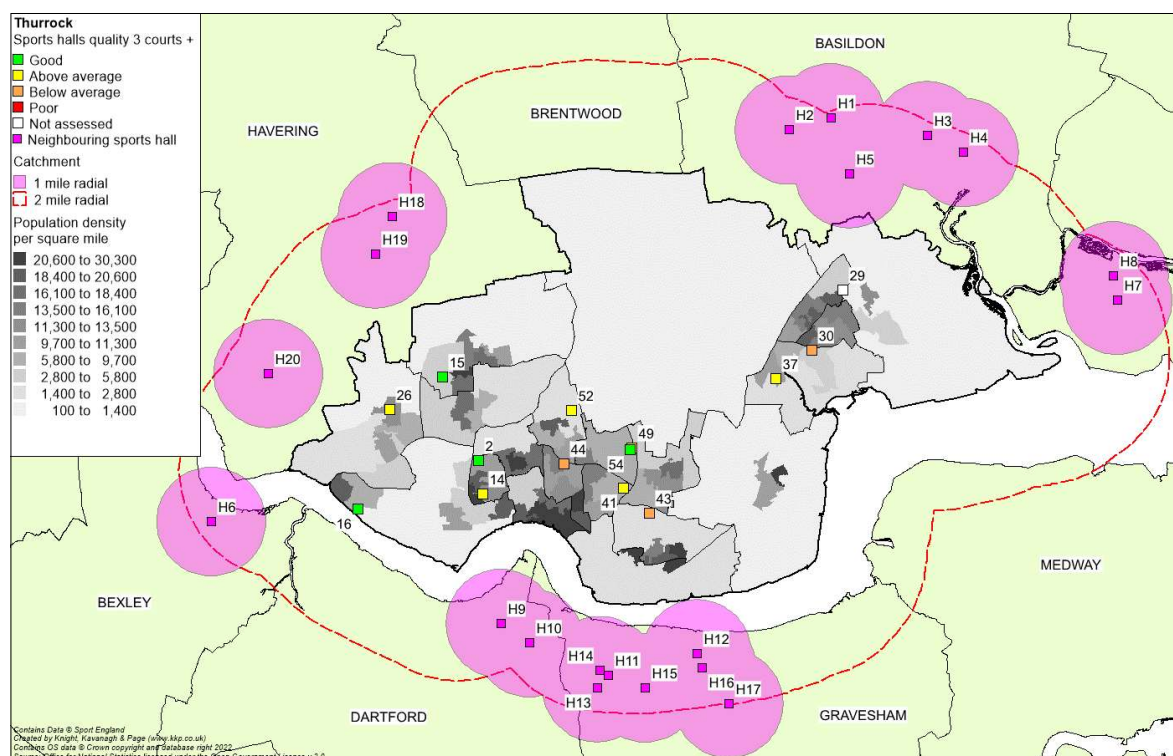
Figure 4.6: Sports halls on IMD background based on 20 minutes' drive-time



Facilities in neighbouring authorities

Accessibility is influenced by facilities located outside the authority. There are 20 sports halls with 3+ courts located within two miles (indicative of how far people may travel) of the Thurrock boundary. They offer 85 courts, 28 of which are in Gravesham, 24 in Basildon, 12 in Havering, 10 in Castle Point, seven in Dartford and four in Bexley.

Figure 4.7: Sports halls with community use within 2-mile boundary of Thurrock



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Table 4.8: Neighbouring sports halls – 3+ courts with community use

ID	Site	Courts	Access	Authority
H4	The Basildon Upper Academy	4	Sports club / CA	Basildon
H2	James Hornsby School	4	Sports club / CA	Basildon
H3	The Basildon Lower Academy	4	Sports club / CA	Basildon
H5	Woodlands School (Basildon)	4	Sports club / CA	Basildon
H1	Basildon Sporting Village	8	Reg. membership	Basildon
H6	Erith Leisure Centre	4	Pay and play	Bexley
H7	The Cornelius Vermuyden School	4	Sports club / CA	Castle Point
H8	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	6	Pay and play	Castle Point
H9	Swanscombe Leisure Centre	3	Pay and play	Dartford
H10	The Ebbsfleet Academy	4	Sports club / CA	Dartford
H11	Cygnat Leisure Centre	4	Pay and play	Gravesham
H13	Northfleet School For Girls	4	Sports club / CA	Gravesham
H15	Saint Georges Church Of England School	4	Sports club / CA	Gravesham
H14	Northfleet Technology College	4	Sports club / CA	Gravesham
H17	Thamesview School	4	Sports club / CA	Gravesham
H16	St Johns Catholic Comprehensive School	4	Sports club / CA	Gravesham
H12	Gravesend Grammar School	4	Sports club / CA	Gravesham
H20	Harris Academy Rainham	4	Pay and play	Havering
H18	Coopers Company & Coborn School	4	Sports club / CA	Havering
H19	Gaynes School Language College	4	Sports club / CA	Havering

Availability and facility management

Management and ownership vary. There is no public leisure centre based 3+court sports hall in Thurrock; the majority are located on education sites with the one other owned and managed by Bannatyne Health Club. Only four education sites are owned and managed in house; the remaining sites use third-party lettings agent to manage bookings and staffing.

Due to its lack of response, desk research was undertaken to better understand whether community use is available at Ortu Gable Hall School. This and consultation with local clubs suggests that it does offer this in some capacity, but the extent is unknown.

Consultation with Thames Park Secondary School confirmed that, at the time of the audit being undertaken in November 2024, there is no community use at the site. However, it has plans to open its facilities up for community use from September 2025.

For further information on Impulse Leisure and the facilities they manage, please see Section 2.2: Local context.

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Table 4.9: Ownership/management of 3+ sports hall facilities with community access

Site name	Ownership	Management
Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	Commercial	In house
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	Academy	School Hire
Harris Academy Ockendon	Academy	School Space
Harris Academy Riverside	Academy	Vivfy
Ormiston Park Academy	Academy	In house
Ortu Gable Hall School	Academy	School Hire
Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	Academy	School Hire
St Clere's School	Academy	School Hire
Storm Fit (Grays)	Further Education	In house
The Gateway Academy	Academy	School Hire
The Hathaway Academy	Academy	Council
Treetops School	Community Special School	In house
William Edwards School	Academy	School Hire
Orsett Heath Academy	Academy	In house

Daytime availability

Only Bannatyne Health Club offers daytime (off peak) availability although this is limited as it can only be accessed on the basis of registered membership; none of the sites offer pay and play access. Availability during the day and relevant programming can be attractive for residents who wish to use facilities at such times (such as older people and shift workers). Given that the proportion of older people (aged 65+) in the Authority is projected to rise from 13.8% in 2018 to 17.3% by 2043 daytime access is likely to be an increasing priority going forward.

Given the nature of school sites, availability is limited to evenings and weekends. The following nine schools provide community use outside school hours seven days per week:

- ◀ Harris Academy Ockendon.
- ◀ Harris Academy Riverside.
- ◀ Ormiston Park Academy.
- ◀ St Clere's School.
- ◀ Storm Fit (Grays).
- ◀ The Gateway Academy.
- ◀ Treetops School.
- ◀ William Edwards School.
- ◀ Orsett Heath Academy.

Harris Academy Chafford Hundred provides community access six days per week (closed Sundays). The most significant reason given for this is the lack of available staff.

Peak period hours are calculated using Sport England guidance in line with the Facilities Planning Model (FPM). Peak hours are deemed to be between 09:00-10:00 and 17:00-22:00 on weekdays and 08:00-16:00 at weekends. The maximum number of peak period hours a facility can be open per week is 46 hours.

Table 4.10 details used capacity at each site. The percentages were determined based on booking information provided by the venue and information generated via consultation. It is not possible to gauge used capacity exactly due to the changing nature of bookings on a week-by-week basis, the seasonality of sports and use of sports halls for school exams.

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Table 4.10: Opening hours and activities in sports halls 3+courts in Thurrock

Total community use hours	Peak CU hours	Site	Courts	Main sports played
None	-	Thames Park Secondary School	4	None
16	14	The Gateway Academy	4	Badminton, basketball and netball
25	20	Treetops School	3	Badminton, basketball, gymnastics
26.5	24	Harris Academy Ockenden	4	Badminton, basketball, netball, indoor football.
26.5	24	Harris Academy Ockenden	6	Badminton, basketball, cricket, futsal, netball.
27	27	Orsett Heath Academy	4	Badminton, basketball, indoor cricket, netball
31	30	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	4	Badminton, basketball, futsal, indoor cricket.
36	36	William Edwards School	8	Badminton, basketball, netball, futsal, pickleball
37	37	Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	4	Badminton, netball, walking netball, indoor cricket, basketball, volleyball.
39	39	The Hathaway Academy	4	-
39.5	42.5	Harris Academy Riverside	4	Badminton, basketball, indoor football, cricket.
51	39	St Clere's School	4	Badminton, netball, futsal, basketball.
51.5	43.5	Ormiston Park Academy	4	Badminton, basketball, netball, gymnastics.
80	43.5	Storm Fit (Grays)	4	Badminton, netball, basketball, futsal.
93.5	38	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	6	Badminton.
34**	38	Ortu Gable Hall School	4	Badminton.

**Usage provided by Sport England Active Places Power database

Desk research suggests that Ortu Gable Hall School which did not respond to consultation requests does offer community use. Despite the limited information available, consultation with local clubs suggests there is community use in some capacity at the School; however, the extent is unknown.

Community use hours are generally high across the sports hall stock. The majority of facilities located at education sites offer community access seven days per week.

There is opportunity to increase the hours available at The Gateway Academy, Treetops School. Harris Academy Ockenden, Orsett Heath Academy and Harris Academy Chafford Hundred should there be an increase in demand (subject to viability).

Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM)

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Sport England provided a standard run FPM assessment report for sports halls in Thurrock in August 2025.

Headline position

- ◆ The quantitative findings identify that almost all of the demand for sports halls in the Authority are met by the accessible supply.
- ◆ The total sports hall space in Thurrock is the equivalent of 88.7 badminton courts. The space available for community use in the weekly peak period is the equivalent of 61.6 courts. Therefore, unavailable court space equates to 31% of the total supply.
- ◆ The overall estimated used capacity of the sports halls in Thurrock during the weekly peak period is 69%. This is higher than the regional average of 64% and the national average of 66%.
- ◆ There is a high commitment to community use at most of the educational sites. If there is no Community Use Agreement (CUA) in place, this should be negotiated and agreed. Sport England can advise on a CUA, and it will be important to ensure delivery is monitored by Thurrock Council.

Supply summary

- ◆ In terms of the general supply and demand balance in Thurrock, the resident population generates demand for 48.1 badminton courts including an applied comfort factor. This is 13.5 courts less than Thurrock's available supply in the peak period.
- ◆ Thurrock has an ageing stock; the average age of sports halls in the Authority is 25 years old.
- ◆ The educational provider is the major provider with 12 of the 13 sites and accounts for 92% of the available capacity in the peak period. Thurrock is dependent on the educational sector to provide for community use and this supply needs to be protected. Bannatyne Health Club is the only other sports hall in the Borough.
- ◆ Of the total courts modelled, 31% (equivalent to 27.1 badminton courts) are unavailable for community use in the peak period. There is scope to increase capacity by increasing the hours available for community use.

Demand summary

- ◆ FPM demand findings (see Table 4.11 below) suggest that satisfied demand in Thurrock are very high.
- ◆ The population in Thurrock generates a demand for 14,147 sports hall visits per week in the FPM peak period. Of this total demand, the vast majority (96%) is able to be met.
- ◆ 90% of this satisfied demand is met at sports halls located within the Authority. Exported demand equates to 10% / 1,372 visits in the peak period per week.
- ◆ The 4% of unmet demand is equal to 515 visits in the peak period, 99% cannot access a facility due to travel distance.
- ◆ There is no location in the Council area where sufficient unmet demand could be met to consider the provision of a new sports hall to improve accessibility for residents.
- ◆ The overall estimated peak period used capacity of sports halls in Thurrock is 69%. This is higher than the regional average of 64% and the national average of 66%. This suggests that some sites have capacity to accommodate additional users.

Table 4.11: Demand findings from the FPM (2025)

Element	FPM 2025
Total demand	48.1 courts
Satisfied demand (%)	96%
Satisfied demand retained within Thurrock	90%

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Satisfied demand exported	10%
Levels of unmet demand	4%
% of unmet demand (residents living outside hall catchment; as opposed to no capacity)	99%
Used capacity of facilities	69%

Whilst the FPM does not state current need for new provision in the Authority, it does not factor in the high levels of club demand and housing growth projections.

Used capacity

Non-technical site audits identify the used capacity of each sports hall. Used capacity is assessed as a percentage of available community use hours used. Sport England identifies 80% as a 'comfortably full' benchmark, so, for example, the 24 hours available at Harris Academy Ockenden are used 95% of the time, whilst The Hathaway Academy is available for 39 hours per week during the peak period and is operating at 20% used capacity.

Table 4.12 provides a comparison of used capacity at each sports hall site (i.e. percentage of available community use hours used¹⁷). As noted, 'KKP audited used capacity' is our assessment based on booking information provided by each site and information gained via consultation with schools and sports clubs. It accepts that numbers of bookings can vary on a week-by-week basis, according to the seasonality of sports and due to the use of sports halls for school exams.

'FPM used capacity' figures for sports halls are an estimation based on a number of set parameters including each facilities relative attractiveness. It assumes for example that local authority operated sports halls will have a more balanced programme and are therefore more attractive than sports halls on education sites, which are more likely to have a programme limited to block bookings by sports clubs and therefore are less attractive to the pay and play user. It also considers a figure of 80% used capacity as a 'comfortably full' benchmark.

Table 4.12: Used capacity of sports halls

Site	KKP Audited Used capacity	FPM Used capacity
Ortu Gable Hall School**	Unknown	64%
Thames Park Secondary School	0%	-
The Hathaway Academy	20%	96%
Harris Academy Ockenden (four court)	40%	68%
Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	40%	48%
Treetops School	60%	-
Storm Fit (Grays)	60%	64%
The Gateway Academy	75%	100%
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	80%	62%
Ormiston Park Academy	80%	57%
St Clere's School	80%	83%
Orsett Heath Academy	85%	69%
William Edwards School	90%	76%
Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	95%	60%

¹⁷ NB the FPMs estimation of used capacity considers **all** sports hall space on a particular site i.e. main and activity halls where appropriate, whereas KKP's audited figure is based on 3 + court halls only.

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Site	KKP Audited Used capacity	FPM Used capacity
Harris Academy Ockenden (six court)	95%	68%
Harris Academy Riverside	95%	69%

(80% -Sport England's guidance threshold for a "comfortably full" sports hall).

**Usage provided by Sport England Active Places Power database

Consultation with Thames Park Secondary School confirmed that, at the time of the audit, there was no community use at the site. However, it has plans to open its facilities up for community use from September 2025.

Seven sports halls in Thurrock are operating above Sport England's 80% threshold (they are deemed to be comfortably full demonstrating the high demand. Harris Academy Ockenden and Harris Academy Riverside are also operating close to the benchmark. Other sports halls in Thurrock have capacity to accommodate further demand.

Hathaway Academy has the lowest levels of community use. It also uses the sports hall for exam tables for up to 12 weeks each year. It does not actively advertise to increase this. It did not note any intent to significantly increase community use despite the low usage.

3-court sports halls are not well-suited to accommodate sports such as netball, basketball or handball and clubs in these sports are, thus, likely to opt to use other available venues in Thurrock or neighbouring authorities.

Harris Academy Ockenden (4-court) and Ortu Hassenbrook Academy reportedly operate at around c.40% used capacity. Consultation with both indicated that sports hall quality is a significant factor in this low level of usage.

The Gateway Academy provides 14 hours of community use per week in the peak period, of which approximately 70% is currently taken up by community groups. It reports having very little spare capacity on Mondays and Tuesdays but that more bookings could be accommodated on Thursday and Friday evenings.

Harris Academy Chafford Hundred provides 30 hours of community use and is currently open between 17:00-21:00 on weekdays and 09.00-16.00 on Saturdays. Its midweek evening slots are fully booked. It is currently not open on Sundays reportedly due to a lack of available staff. It could potentially open pm an additional hour each midweek evening and on Sundays to increase its availability to service further demand.

Several schools report being at capacity during peak periods on Mondays, Tuesday and Wednesday, but able to accommodate bookings at less popular peak period times such as Friday evenings and weekend afternoons.

As seen above, FPM modelling is in broad agreement with KKP audit findings in estimating high levels of used capacity currently, which are projected to increase further in line with housing growth.

Future developments

The audit did not identify any current or future developments in which sports hall provision would likely increase or decrease.

4.2: Demand

NGB consultation

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National governing bodies of sport (NGBs) and active clubs have been consulted to ascertain and understand current use, participation trends and the needs/challenges facing sports hall facilities in the area.

Badminton

Badminton England (BE) is the NGB for badminton. Its latest strategy, Discover Badminton 2017-2025 presents a vision for the sport to become one of the nation's most popular and to consistently win medals at world, Olympic and Paralympic levels. To achieve this, it has identified three key objectives:

- ◆ Grow grassroots participation.
- ◆ Create a system that identifies and develops player potential to deliver consistent world class performers.
- ◆ Build financial resilience to become a well governed organisation and demonstrate compliance with the UK governance code.

It applies a specific strategy model to assess court quality and sufficiency by local authority. below presents the statistics for Thurrock.

Table 4.13: Overall statistics for Thurrock

Description	Number
Number of sites	19
Number of courts	62
Private use courts	9
Supply and demand balance (2019)	+1.9 courts
Supply and demand balance (2030)	+0.8 courts

BE facilities modelling indicates that there is a current and future surplus in terms of the supply and demand for badminton courts. It should be noted however, that KKP's needs assessment differs from the findings of the BE model. While BE assumes that there are 62 available courts, KKP's assessment only identifies 57. A further factor is that KKP's assessment identifies only 3+ court sports hall facilities, whereas BE's assessment identifies all facilities with halls (including halls with one and two courts).

Consultation with BE outlined the need for increased quality and availability of badminton courts in Thurrock. BE confirmed that there are currently two affiliated and one non- affiliated clubs in the area. There are also 79 BE affiliated members and 32 school clubs, of which eight are at secondary schools and 24 at primary schools.

In terms of workforce, it reports one 'Essentials' endorsed leader, five 'No Strings co-ordinators', five 'Smashup! activators' and two 'The Racket Pack Endorsed'. There are three registered Level 2 coaches in the area.

Club consultation:

Both affiliated clubs were approached for consultation; however, neither responded. This summary is, thus, based on information provided by BE plus desk research carried out for the audit.

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East Thurrock Badminton Club is one of the largest badminton clubs in the County. It holds club sessions at William Edwards School in the 8-court sports hall. These take place on Monday evenings for seniors and Monday evenings and Saturday mornings for juniors. It also runs adult coaching sessions which take place on Saturday mornings and social Pay2Play sessions on Thursday evenings.

Stanford Badminton Academy holds club nights at Ortu Gable Hall School on Saturday mornings.

Netball

In November 2021 England Netball (EN) launched its ten-year 'Adventure Strategy' for the game along with a new organization brand identity. Its new strategy shares a purpose-led ambition for the game, to build on the momentum the sport has seen in recent years and to take it to new heights for the decade ahead. The strategy outlines the intention to:

- ✦ Accelerate development and growth of the game to every level, from grassroots to elite.
- ✦ Elevate the visibility of the sport, and;
- ✦ Lead a movement to impact lives on and beyond the court.

EN is committed to increasing opportunities for women and girls to play the game, to opening the sport to new audiences in every community and to continuing to evolve, adapt and thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive sport for all. A recent partnership announcement with England Men's and Mixed Netball Association to help develop and grow male participation in the game, supports this commitment as EN pledges to promote difference and embrace the opportunity to make the sport available to all.

Transforming netball for children and young people is a strategic priority to help protect the future of the sport. EN is working with schools and policy makers to extend physical literacy within, and after the school day with a focus on netball specific provision. It is committed to accelerating the expansion of its Bee Netball programme for young children, whilst supporting teens and young women to stay in the game.

The Adventure Strategy was developed on the back of feedback from the Netball Family, with over 3,000 members and stakeholders consulted as part of the strategic process to understand what they wanted netball to 'look like' in 2031, the plan is aspirational and ambitious and sees EN pledge to continue as a trailblazer for women's sport.

Facility development

Facility development aspirations stated within EN's Strategy are to:

- ✦ Take a fresh look at the spaces required to support the sport, creating accessible places in every community to allow netball to be incorporated into how and where women and girls live their lives.
- ✦ Protect, enhance, and extend the network of venues for the sport at local/regional level.
- ✦ Develop an elite domestic professional competition that supports full-time athletes underpinned by a world-class infrastructure and environments.

For EN to achieve its ambitions to make the game accessible to wider audiences and in every community, it encourages local authorities to adopt policies within outdoor and indoor sports facilities strategies that:

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- Facilitate informal netball activity within neighbourhood multi-use games areas for example by installing combined outdoor basketball and netball goals and art courts in neighbourhood equipped areas for play (NEAPs).
- Incorporates the cultural and health needs of women and girls within any designs for improved or new facilities.
- Protects and enhances netball facilities within all primary and secondary school environments so they offer a positive first experience of the sport for students and the wider community during out-of-school hours.
- Support installation of floodlights on outdoor courts to increase all-year-round use.
- Facilitates the development of netball growth programmes, club training and competition within public leisure centres.
- Where appropriate, supports development of netball homes and performance environments to enable local women and girls to pursue a career in netball as an elite athlete, official, coach or administrator.

EN reports that the sport is growing and references the YouGov^[1] report noting that the 2019 World Cup inspired 160,000 adult women to play (71% of clubs reported that more people had shown an interest in playing netball than before the tournament started).

Netball is played indoors and outdoors. For outdoor provision please refer to the Thurrock PPS (2024). Current indoor provision in Thurrock is as follows:

- Back 2 Netball sessions are coach-run and designed to re-introduce players to the sport. There is currently no Back 2 Netball being delivered in Thurrock.
- Walking Netball (netball played at a walking pace) is designed to enable anyone to play regardless of age or fitness level. No walking netball sessions are currently taking place in Thurrock; although desk research indicates that sessions used to take place at Ortu Hassenbrook Academy on Thursday evenings.

Netball clubs in Thurrock compete in the South Essex & Thurrock Netball Association and Chelmsford Senior and Junior leagues (exported demand). These clubs include Bears Netball Club, Fusion Netball Club and Stars Netball Club. The audit identified three EN affiliated clubs in Thurrock.

Table 4.14: Netball clubs in Thurrock

Club name	Affiliated	Club response
Bears Netball Club	Yes	Yes
Fusion Netball Club	Yes	Yes
Stars Netball Club	Yes	Yes

Clubs were approached by both KKP and England Netball to take part in the audit and they all responded to consultation requests. The following summary is based upon club feedback and information provided by England Netball:

Bears Netball Club has c.150 members and trains on the outdoor courts at Ortu Hassenbrook Academy. It competes in the South East & Thurrock Netball League. Whilst almost all play is outdoors, it would like to train indoors, particularly during winter months.

Fusion Netball Club has c.260 members and participates in the Thurrock Senior League and South East & Thurrock Netball League and the Metropolitan League in Redbridge. It utilises the facilities at Ortu Hassenbrook Academy on Thursday evenings for training sessions on the outdoor courts.

^[1] <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2019/10/02/netball-world-cup>

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Star Netball Club has c.75 members. It caters for juniors (age 5+) and adults. Its team compete in the South East & Thurrock Netball League and Basildon & District Netball League. The majority of its activity takes place on the indoor courts at William Edwards School and occasionally at St Clere's School.

The South East & Thurrock Netball Association (SETNA) was contacted for consultation and also responded. It is a large county netball league and runs both senior and junior competitions. Its leagues are heavily participated in within Thurrock (both winter and summer leagues run). All activity is delivered via central venue formats (rather than clubs and teams organising home venues and playing on a home and away basis).

Its Senior League runs from September to April and currently caters for 67 teams across nine divisions and over 1000 registered members. Whilst not all this demand is generated from within Thurrock, a significant proportion is as the central venue at Ortu Hassenbrook Academy is utilised for matches. Matches take place on four nights a week from Monday to Thursday.

The Junior League is also one of the largest in the Country. It comprises 15 divisions with a total of 86 teams playing competitive matches. Its matches are also played at a central venue - at Ortu Hassenbrook Academy.

Table Tennis

In October 2022, Table Tennis England launched its Strategic Plan 'Table Tennis United'. This shares its vision for the game which is 'a table tennis nation': Its strategic objectives (pledges) are:

- ✦ Table tennis will be a thriving community – a sport for everyone with no barriers to taking part.
- ✦ Culture change across the pathway that inspires World Class Performances and medal success.
- ✦ Connection across the table tennis community.
- ✦ A high performing organisation that is not just fit for today but is fit for the future.

The audit identified one affiliated table tennis club in Thurrock. Stanford Le Hope TTC. It was invited to take part in the consultation and responded to consultation requests. Table Tennis England was also invited to take part in the consultation but did not respond. A summary of the club consultation is as follows:

Stanford Le Hope TTC has c.60 senior members and runs four adult teams which play in the Basildon & District Table Tennis League. It is based at St John's Church Hall and has access on Monday and Tuesday evenings. It state they would ideally like more space and/or a new facility as its membership is constantly increasing.

Desk research indicates that Grays Table Tennis Club previously accessed Hathaway Academy on Thursday evenings, however it is not affiliated to Table Tennis England and no contact details were found online for the club suggesting that it is either a recreational / social group or may not still be operational.

Basketball

BBE is the NGB for the sport in England. Its latest strategy, Transforming Basketball in Britain Together (2016 - 2028) aims to improve basketball from grassroots to GB teams, by adopting a whole sport approach and working closely with the basketball community. To achieve this, a series of key objectives have been identified:

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- ◀ Develop successful GB teams.
- ◀ Build high-quality men's and women's leagues and teams.
- ◀ Support talented players, officials and coaches and coach development pathways.
- ◀ Drive increased awareness and profile of the sport.
- ◀ Increase opportunities to play the game at every level.
- ◀ Transform the leadership and culture of the sport.

To increase opportunity to play the game at every level, BBE has produced a facilities strategy which aims to create community hubs including, where appropriate, arenas that sit at the heart of communities and are homes for the leading British Basketball League (BBL), Women's British Basketball League (WBBL) and community clubs.

The stated intent is that as part of its facilities strategy implementation, BBE will regularly monitor provision in schools, colleges, universities, clubs and at local authority sites and identify any gaps, looking to improve connections between these organisations to increase the availability and affordability of facilities of the right quality.

BBE reports having one affiliated club in the Authority (AQ Astros Thurrock Basketball Club). It was responsive to consultation. This summary is provided based on information provided by the Club and Basketball England.

AQ Astros Basketball Club reports having one junior boys' team and c.43 junior members. Its team competes in the Essex Junior Basketball League. It has access to two facilities within Thurrock; Harris Academy Chafford Hundred and Gateway Academy and utilises the sports hall on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings for two hour training sessions.

Indoor cricket

Working closely with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), Essex Cricket is responsible for the management and development of all forms of recreational cricket for men, women and children in the County. Indoor cricket is most often played between two teams of six or eight players. It can take place in any suitably sized multi-purpose sports hall offering amateur and professional cricketers an option to play during winter months.

Essex Cricket was invited to take part in the consultation. It did so and identified that currently no indoor cricket leagues take place in Thurrock.

There is no dedicated indoor cricket facility in Thurrock, however, Orsett Heath Academy recently (September 2024) had a 4-lane training facility installed in its sports hall. It is already used by Orsett & Thurrock Cricket Club (CC) and is expected to cater for use from Stanford Le Hope CC, Horndon on the Hill CC and Belhus CC over winter 2024/25.

Furthermore, an indoor cricket academy operates out of Harris Academy Ockenden. This received significant capital funding from the ECB and has six cricket net lanes facilitating substantive practice sessions, group training exercises or one-to-one programmes, as well as offering space for indoor game situation training.

In addition, school sports halls accommodate indoor training, which generally comprises indoor nets for senior players and soft-ball cricket drills and games for juniors. Where 4-court sports halls are used for winter nets, there tends to be insufficient space for pace bowlers to complete a full length run up. In addition, floor type and quality at education sites is often problematic. As a result, clubs often travel further afield to access good quality facilities.

Consultation with Essex Cricket highlighted the demand for a male senior indoor cricket league with Orsett Heath Academy a potential option for hosting matches.

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Thurrock's PPS highlighted that five clubs in Thurrock utilise indoor facilities for cricket training throughout the winter months in preparation for the start of the season. They report accessing indoor provision at the following sites:

- ✦ Aveley CC (Harris Academy Ockenden).
- ✦ Belhus Park CC (Harris Academy Ockenden and Harris Academy Chafford Hundred).
- ✦ Horndon on the Hill CC (Ormiston Park Academy).
- ✦ Orsett & Thurrock CC (Orsett Heath Academy).
- ✦ Stanford Le Hope CC (Harris Academy Ockenden).

Futsal

Two facilities have been identified for futsal activity; Ortu Gable Hall School and Ortu Hassenbrook Academy which are used by Thurrock United Futsal Club to deliver Thurrock-based sessions. The condition of the hall at Ortu Hassenbrook Academy is in need of modernisation. It is suffering with a leaking roof and this causes some water pooling at times.

Volleyball

No clubs were identified in the Thurrock area, and England Volleyball did not respond to consultation requests.

4.3: Future demand and Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC)

Please note, the Sports Facilities Calculator is purely a quantities exercise based on population growth and does not take into account existing provision and how that provision may be used currently (whether it is under or over capacity).

The SFC helps to identify additional demand for community sports facilities generated by new growth populations, development, and regeneration areas. It is used to estimate facility needs for whole area populations but should not be applied for strategic gap analysis as it has no spatial dimension and does not take account of:

- ✦ Facility location compared to demand.
- ✦ Capacity and availability of facilities – opening hours.
- ✦ Cross boundary movement of demand.
- ✦ Travel networks and topography.
- ✦ Attractiveness of facilities.

Table 4.15: Sport England: Sports Facilities Calculator

	Population 2018 (ONS)	Population estimate 2030 (ONS)	Population estimate 2043 (ONS)
ONS population projections	172,525	191,662	205,470
Population increases from 2023	-	+19,137	+32,945
Facilities to meet additional demand from 2023	-	+1.29 halls / +5.17 courts	+2.23 halls / +8.91 courts
Estimated cost*	-	+£3,878,175	+£6,676,412

(Build costs as of Q3 2024)

Calculations assume that the current sports hall stock remains available for community use and the quality remains the same. It appears that the projected increase in population will lead to an

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increase in demand for sports hall space. The SFC indicates a requirement for an additional 8.91 (badminton) courts, up to 2043.

Investment is required to improve the quality and capacity of existing stock. Given the low used capacity at sites such as Hathaway Academy, effort should be made to increase the number of hours available to meet future demand prior to considering developing new sports hall provision.

The FPM and SFC do not account for any future developments of sports halls. Should further capacity be required to meet demand, the audit and FPM identified a number of sites in which community hours could be extended to maximise sports hall usage.

SFC calculations do not account for housing led population growth as the population estimate is only based on ONS projections which will not account for this. The level of population growth is therefore expected to be greater in practice than the ONS based estimates in Table 4.15.

4.4: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Sports halls	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	Thurrock has 37 sports halls containing 90 badminton courts. There are 16 sports halls with 3+ courts (77 badminton courts).	Sports halls are generally well located in line with the areas of higher population density. Grays and Ockenden, Stanford- Le-Hope/ Corringham and East Tilbury all have several venues. Although there are a lack of facilities in Tilbury Town, for example. The spare capacity at some educational sites is sufficient to accommodate increased demand and to raise the number of hours available to the community.
Quality	Five are rated good quality (26 courts), six are above average (40 courts) and four are below average (27 courts). One could not be assessed.	Work with school sites rated poor or below average quality, to identify funding to upgrade the respective facilities.
Accessibility	Physical accessibility is good – 81.5% of Thurrock's population lives within one mile of a community accessible sports hall. All residents live within a 20-minute drive of a sports hall with community use.	Maintain good relationships with schools to ensure that community access is maintained. This could potentially be achieved through dual use (CUAs) agreements during evenings, at affordable prices. Ensure there are good public transport links to key leisure facilities for those who do not have access to their own vehicle, to ensure they remain as accessible as possible.
Availability (Management and usage)	15 sports halls provide some form of community availability. Eight are operating at the Sport England threshold of 'comfortably full'. Five halls are operating below 70% and have capacity to accommodate increased demand.	FPM lists average used capacity of hall as 69%; KKPs audit suggests that suggests that average used capacity is c.66%. Some discrepancies in used capacity at sites were identified between the FPM and KKPs audit, however, this is not uncommon as the

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Facility type	Sports halls	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
	There is a limited supply of sports halls that offer daytime access as the majority are on school sites. This may affect the ability for the supply to meet the needs of some groups such as the elderly and shift workers.	FPM is a theoretical model, whereas this audit is based on live information. Ensure schools continue to offer peak time availability to local sports clubs. Ensure that school sports hall facilities are open/available for the maximum number of weekday evening hours all year round. Consider options to extend school community use hours where used capacity is above 80% e.g. Harris Academy Ockenden and William Edwards School. Several clubs report losing access to facilities during school exam periods. Work with schools to both increase the number of weekly community hours available and to reduce the number of weeks when sports halls are unavailable.
Strategic summary - Each facility is important to the community served and all venues need to be protected in accordance with paragraph 104 of the NPPF. - The quality of below average sports halls needs to be improved. - A good range of sports is available including gymnastics, badminton, netball, football, trampolining, futsal and indoor cricket. - Educational sites are a significant proportion of the available sports hall space during peak times. It is crucial that relationships with these institutions are maintained to ensure that accessibility remains high with binding community use agreements (CUAs) completed. - Additional provision at public leisure site to support new sports halls should be considered to help to cross-subsidise such facilities, to provide a multi-facility offer for users and to offer daytime provision to the general public. - Accommodate increased demand during peak hours via extending levels of community access at existing venues. Developer contributions could/should thus, be directed at improving sports hall quality at sites which will enable an increase in, in particular midweek evening community hours – and the number of weeks – available throughout the year. - The FPM has identified that almost all of the demand for sports halls in the Authority are met by the accessible supply. - Despite FPM finding that sports halls are operated at 69% used capacity, KKP' audit suggests demand is considerably lower. The Hathaway Academy and Harris Academy Ockenden (four court), for example, have a used capacity of 20% and 40% respectively. Whilst the FPM notes used capacity of 68% and 90% respectively. - Specific sports that sports halls need to accommodate to meet demand such as netball, badminton, trampolining and indoor cricket. This will help with the design of new sports halls that are planned or existing facilities that are refurbished.		

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SECTION 5: SWIMMING POOLS

A swimming pool is defined as an “enclosed area of water, specifically maintained for all forms of water-based sport and recreation”. It includes indoor and outdoor pools, freeform leisure pools and specific diving tanks used for general swimming, teaching, training and diving. Many small pools are used solely for recreational swimming and will not necessarily need to strictly follow the NGB recommendations. It is, however, generally recommended that standard dimensions are used to allow appropriate levels of competition and training and to help meet safety standards. Relatively few pools need to be designed to full competition standards or include spectator facilities.

Training for competition, low-level synchronised swimming, and water polo can all take place in a 25m pool. With modest spectator seating, pools can also accommodate competitive events in these activities. Diving from boards, advanced synchronised swimming and more advanced sub-aqua training require deeper water. These can all be accommodated in one pool tank, which ideally should be in addition to the main pool.

The NGB responsible for administering diving, swimming, synchronised swimming and water polo in England is Swim England.

Swim England’s report ‘A Decade of Decline: The Future of Swimming Pools in England’ provides a national analysis of the current swimming pool stock across England. It notes that the average age of a pool built from 1960 onwards is 43 years. On this basis it suggests that many of these pools are now coming to the end of their lifespan.

Swim England published its latest Strategy ‘One Swim England’ in December 2024. Its mission is to lead and serve an aquatics community to enable safe, enjoyable and successful experiences.

Many pool operators were placed in a serious financial situation during the pandemic, when many local authorities provided emergency financial support through direct grants, deferred payments or loans to subsidise pool operators who had suffered loss of income due to pool closures.

UK Government’s £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund also provided assistance to enable pools to re-open once restrictions had been lifted. Despite this, Swim England reports that 206 pools (including 68 public pools) closed, either permanently or temporarily over the period of the Pandemic.

In preparing for the future, Swim England recommend that local authorities conduct analysis of their pool stock to understand if they have the right pools in the right places to meet the needs of the local community. In the light of leisure facilities accounting for over 40% cent of some councils’ direct carbon emissions it advocates capital investment into renewal of pool stock in order to support efforts to reach net zero targets, alongside combating the predicted overall future deficit of water space nationally.

5.1: Supply

This assessment is mostly concerned with larger pools available for community use (no restrictions to accessing the pool as a result of membership criteria). As such, those less than 20m in length and/or located at private member clubs are deemed to offer limited value in relation to community use and delivery of outcomes related to health and deprivation. It is recognised that smaller pools can accommodate learning/ teaching sessions, but they are, for modelling/needs assessment purposes, deemed unable to offer a full swim programme and, thus, eliminated from the supply evaluation, when considering accessibility and availability later in this section.

Quantity

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The audit (including all pools irrespective of size and access) identifies nine at five sites including five main pools, one leisure pool and three learner/teaching pools. There are mainly located in the main population areas of Grays and Ockenden, with one in the Corringham area. There is no pool in the South of the Authority - in the Tilbury area.

Figure 5.1: All Swimming pools in Thurrock

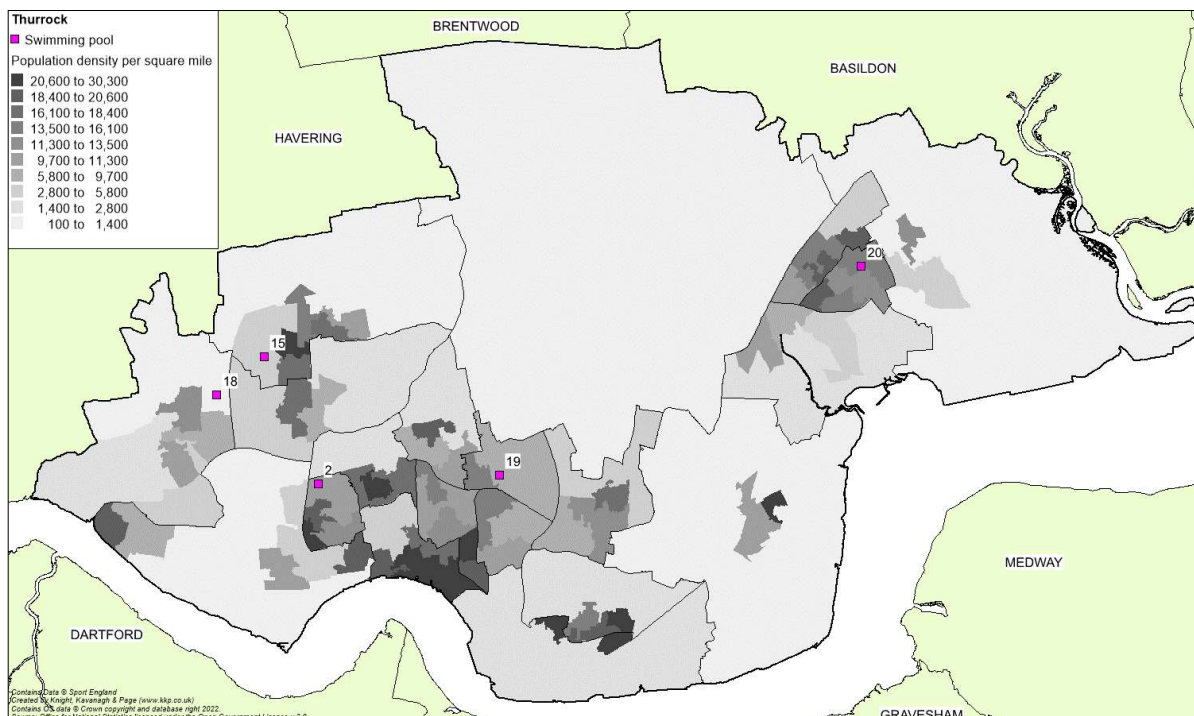


Table 5.1: All swimming pools in Thurrock

ID	Site	Sub-type	Lanes	Length	Area
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	Main/general	2	20m	160
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	Main/general	3	22m	286
18	Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	Main/general	5	25m	200
18	Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	Learner/teaching	0	9m	54
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	Main/general	6	33m	429
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	Leisure pool	0	15m	105
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	Learner/teaching	0	16m	128
20	Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	Main/general	4	25m	200
20	Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	Learner/teaching	0	8m	40

The largest venue is the main/general pool at Impulse Leisure (Blackshots). This also has a learner/teaching pool and a leisure pool - totalling 429m² of water space. This strategic facility provides more than one quarter (26.7%) of the total supply in the area.

Stand-alone smaller/learner teaching pools smaller than 20m in length are not included from this point in the assessment. They are, however, important particularly where they assist with programming (and income generation) at the public leisure centre sites.

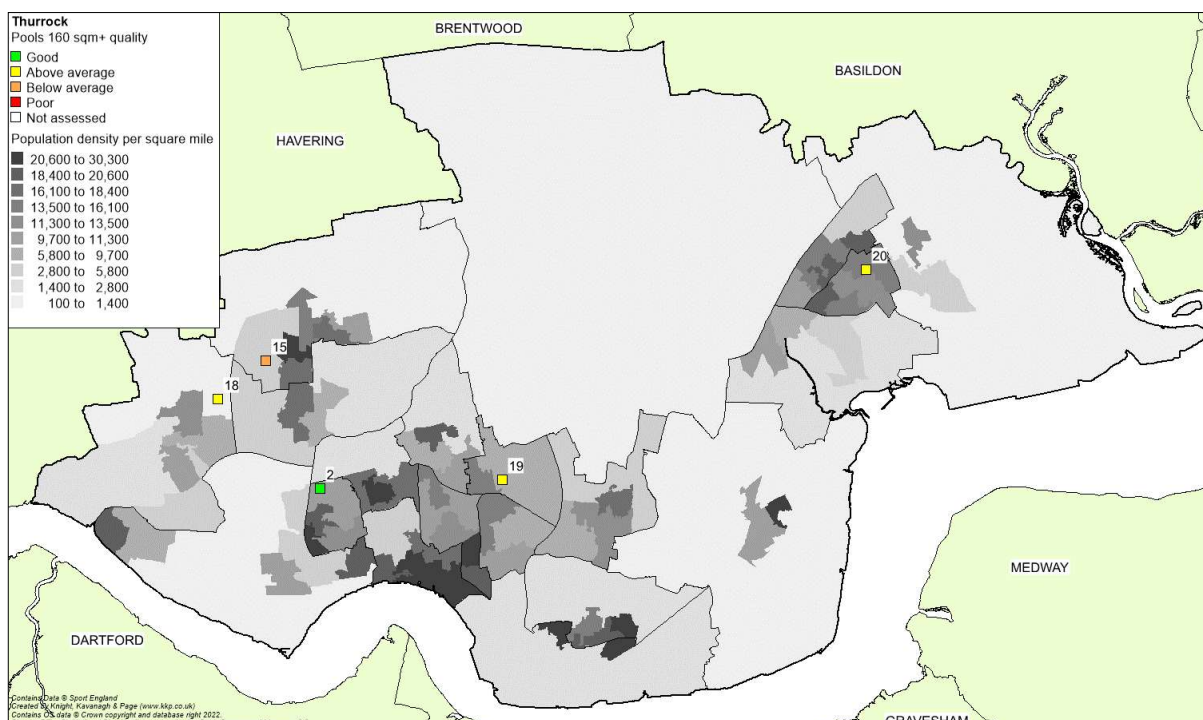
Once smaller pools are removed from the analysis (i.e. less than 20m in length), five pools across five sites remain.

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Quality

Of these five pools (across five sites), one is good in quality, four are above average and one is below average. KKP's non-technical visual assessments encompass review of changing provision as this also plays a significant role in influencing and attracting users. In general, changing facilities are of a comparable standard to pool quality.

Figure 5.2: Swimming pools larger than 160m² with quality ratings



Residents in the main population areas live in close proximity to either a good or an above average quality pool. Some changing rooms could not be assessed due to them being in use at the time of audit.

Table 5.2: Quality of 160m²+ swimming pools in Thurrock

ID	Site name	Pool condition	Changing condition
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	Good	Good
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	Below average	Below average
18	Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	Above average	Above average
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	Above average	Above average
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots) (leisure pool)	Above average	Above average
20	Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	Above average	Above average

The three public leisure centres in the Authority are all rated as above average quality, following continued investment from Impulse Leisure. The accompanying changing facilities are also rated as above average quality.

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The swimming pool (including the poolside tiles, toilets, changing rooms) at Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club) have been refurbished with the roof and pumps replaced in 2018.

The pool at Impulse Leisure (Corringham) is of above average quality. It has also been refurbished since 2012 when the roof and air handling was replaced and the pool plant and filters replaced in 2023. However, in the medium/long term the facility will require refurbishment as it is operating beyond its life expectancy.

The remaining Impulse Leisure managed public pool at (Blackshots) is also above average in quality. It has suffered with cracked pool tiles and dated décor over the years but has benefitted from recent investment in the pool area to address these issues. Whilst there are no current issues in respect of pool day to day operation, with exception of the air handling unit in the main pool as this is end of life. Parts of the plant room are over 30 years old and relatively inefficient. In addition, it has moveable boom, separate learner tank and splash pad pool enabling it to provide a very attractive, flexible pool programme.

Each main pool within the Community Leisure Centres are supported with Poseidon drowning detection cameras providing increased swimmer safety.

All three of the public leisure centres in Thurrock, it is recognised that investment is required to improve energy efficiency. Given that the facilities were originally built in 1960's/70's and are well used, a programme of refurbishment will need to be established. This will be further explored in the Strategy document, which follows this report.

Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred) is identified in Sport England's Active Places database as having last been refurbished in 2018. Given the commercial nature of the venue (and member expectations in respect of quality) it is assumed that more recent work may have been done.

Harris Academy Ockenden provides community accessibility in the form of club and commercial swimming lesson use. It is of below average quality primarily due to its age and décor. Tiles surrounding the pool need re-grouting to improve pool aesthetics. The changing facilities are of a similar age and quality standard to the swimming pool, due to both community use access and school access.

Residents in South Ockenden have only access to a below average swimming pool whereas all other residents in the authority have access to either good quality or above average provision.

Table 5.3: Age of swimming pools (20m+) and refurbishment dates (where applicable)

Site name	Year built/ opened	Year last refurbished	Age (years) since built/refurbished
Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	1998	2018	7
Harris Academy Ockendon	1989	2004	21
Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	1976	2018	7
Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	1963	2023	2
Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	1977	2023	2

Accessibility

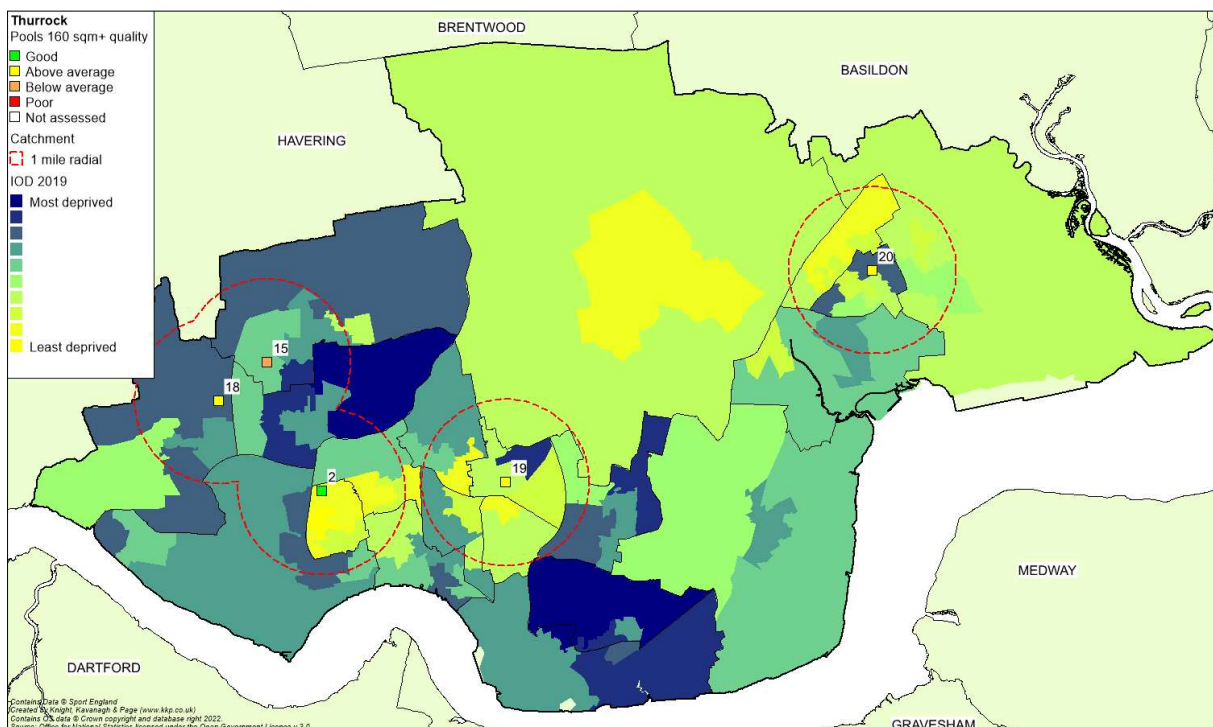
Swimming pool accessibility is influenced by physical traits such as the built environment. Appropriate walk and drive-time catchments are applied to determine accessibility to communities. The normal acceptable standard is 20-minutes' walk time (1-mile radial catchment)

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for an urban area and a 20-minutes' drive time for a rural area. This enables analysis of coverage adequacy and helps identify areas unserved by existing provision.

Over half (51.5%) of the population lives within one mile of a swimming pool 20m + in length which offers some level of community use. The whole Thurrock population lives within a 20-minute drive of a swimming pool facility. Of the 42,387 people in its areas of high deprivation, 17,364 live within one mile of a pool.

Figure 5.3: Accessibility of swimming pools in Thurrock



The three public leisure centres; Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club, Impulse Leisure (Blackshots) and Impulse Leisure (Corringham) are all located within Thurrock's most deprived areas. One other significant area of deprivation falls narrowly outside the one-mile radius of Harris Academy Ockenden.

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Figure 5.4: Swimming pools on IMD background based on 20 minutes' drive-time

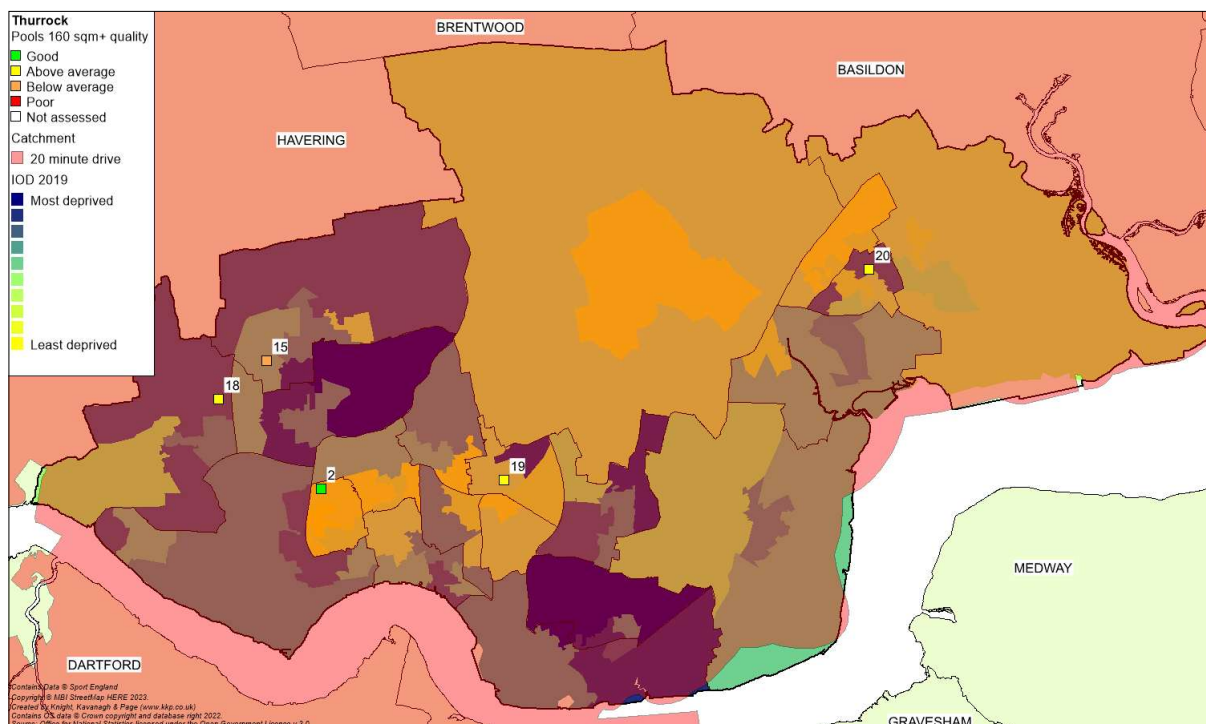


Table 5.4: Accessibility of swimming pools in Thurrock

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	6,586	4.0%	489	0.3%	6,097	3.7%
10.1 - 20	11,537	6.9%	6,147	3.7%	5,390	3.2%
20.1 - 30	24,264	14.6%	10,728	6.5%	13,536	8.2%
30.1 - 40	36,178	21.8%	15,781	9.5%	20,397	12.3%
40.1 - 50	23,689	14.3%	7,496	4.5%	16,193	9.8%
50.1 - 60	7,614	4.6%	3,724	2.2%	3,890	2.3%
60.1 - 70	23,039	13.9%	12,753	7.7%	10,286	6.2%
70.1 - 80	13,269	8.0%	11,720	7.1%	1,549	0.9%
80.1 - 90	18,162	10.9%	14,965	9.0%	3,197	1.9%
90.1 - 100	1,702	1.0%	1,702	1.0%	0	0.0%
Total	166,040	100.0%	85,505	51.5%	80,535	48.5%

Availability of swimming pools

Swimming pool availability differs dependent upon ownership and/or management. All facilities audited all offer some form of public access. The access policy for each site is detailed below.

Three pools can be accessed on a pay and play basis – all are publicly accessible leisure centres operated by Impulse Leisure. These also offer membership options which, for regular users, can be more cost-effective than the pay and play offer. As evidenced in Figure 5.5 (below), 34.6% of the population live within one mile of a pay and play accessible swimming pool.

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For further information on Impulse Leisure and the facilities they manage, please see Section 2.2: Local context.

Commercial health and fitness operators which provide pools offer access via registered membership only. This is the case for Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred). While acknowledging that commercially managed facilities can cater for specific market segments, they are not always available to all sections of the community and may not necessarily be affordable to all households.

The pool at Harris Academy Ockenden offers community use in the form of swim schools or swimming club use but does not offer individual pay and play access.

Table 5.5: Access policy of swimming pools

Site name	Access policy
Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	Sports club / CA
Harris Academy Ockenden	Sports club / CA
Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	Pay and play
Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	Pay and play
Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	Pay and play

(NB: Sports club/CA = Sports club/community association use)

Figure 5.5: Accessibility of pay and play provision

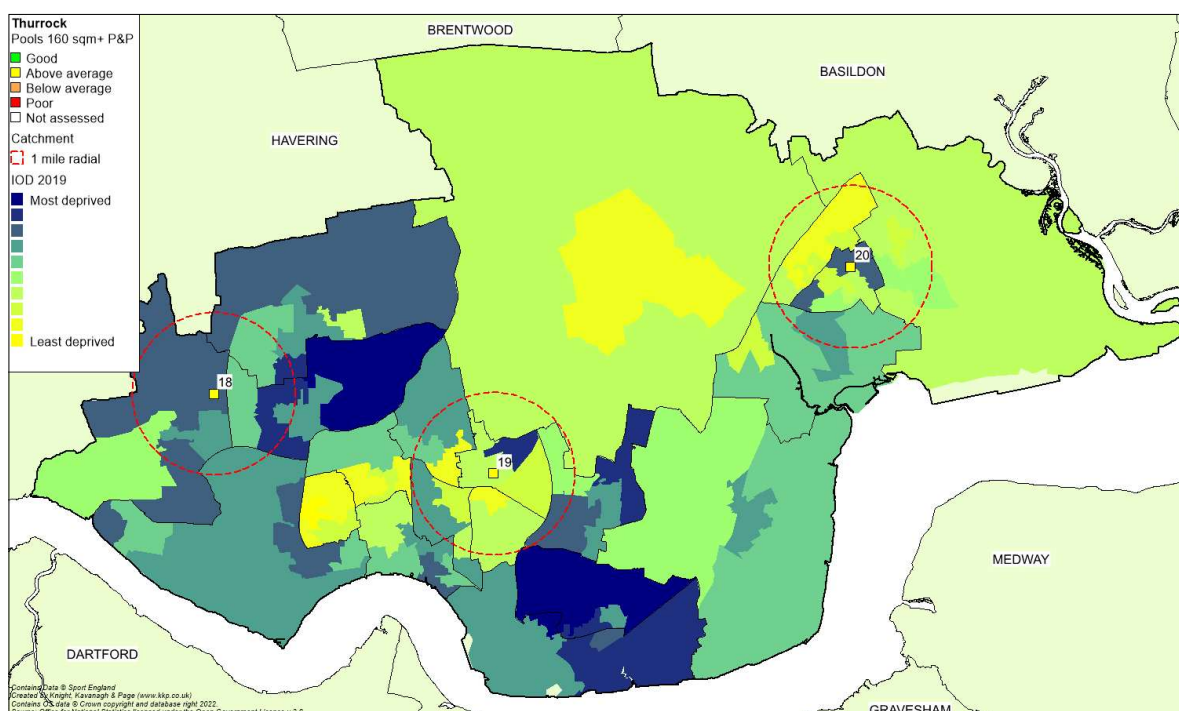


Table 5.6: Swimming pools with pay and play access

Site name	Access policy
Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	Pay & play
Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	Pay & play
Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	Pay & play

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Table 5.7: Accessibility of pay and play pools swimming provision

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	6,586	4.0%	1	0.0%	6,585	4.0%
10.1 - 20	11,537	6.9%	4,056	2.4%	7,481	4.5%
20.1 - 30	24,264	14.6%	9,130	5.5%	15,134	9.1%
30.1 - 40	36,178	21.8%	8,635	5.2%	27,543	16.6%
40.1 - 50	23,689	14.3%	4,564	2.7%	19,125	11.5%
50.1 - 60	7,614	4.6%	3,724	2.2%	3,890	2.3%
60.1 - 70	23,039	13.9%	11,777	7.1%	11,262	6.8%
70.1 - 80	13,269	8.0%	8,635	5.2%	4,634	2.8%
80.1 - 90	18,162	10.9%	6,945	4.2%	11,217	6.8%
90.1 - 100	1,702	1.0%	0	0.0%	1,702	1.0%
Total	166,040	100.0%	57,467	34.6%	108,573	65.4%

Some parts of Thurrock are of a rural nature as well as the high levels of deprivation meaning accessibility is an issue. Only a limited proportion of users can access public leisure centres on foot making access to a car or public transport essential. This means that public transport access and car parking needs to be appropriate.

Facilities in neighbouring authorities

Eleven (20+m) pools at five sites are located within two miles of Thurrock; four in Basildon, two each in Gravesham and Havering and one each in Bexley, Brentwood and Castle Point.

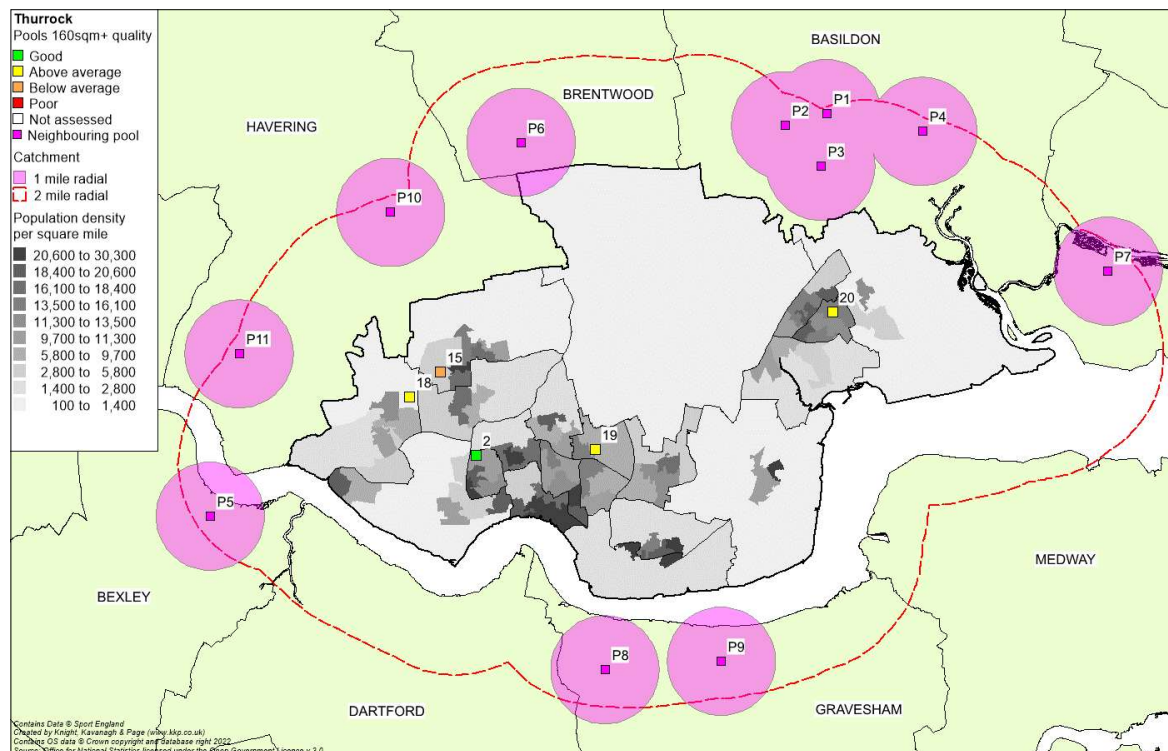
Five offer pay and play access, four can be accessed via sports club or community association, one requires registered membership and one is private use only. Basildon Sporting Village has an 8-lane x 50m pool. Due its size, it is considered likely to be attracting residents and clubs from within Thurrock.

Table 5.8: Neighbouring community available pools within 2-miles of Thurrock

ID	Site name	Lanes/length	Access type	Authority
P1	Basildon Sporting Village	8 x 50m	Pay and play	Basildon
P2	James Hornsby School	4 x 19m	Sports club / CA	Basildon
P3	Lee Chapel Primary School	4 x 25m	Sports club / CA	Basildon
P4	The Basildon Lower Academy	4 x 20m	Sports club / CA	Basildon
P5	Erith Leisure Centre	6 x 25m	Pay and play	Bexley
P6	Virgin Active Clearview Health & Racquet Club	6 x 25m	Reg. membership	Brentwood
P7	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	6 x 25m	Pay and play	Castle Point
P8	Cygnat Leisure Centre	6 x 25m	Pay and play	Gravesham
P9	N. Kent College (Gravesend Campus)	4 x 25m	Private use	Gravesham
P10	Coopers Company & Coborn School	4 x 25m	Sports club / CA	Havering
P11	Rainham Leisure Centre	6 x 25m	Pay and play	Havering

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Figure 5.6: Swimming pools located within 2 miles of the Thurrock's boundary



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Future enhancements/new developments

As of the audit date, no known new swimming pool developments are planned in the area.

Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM)

Sport England provided an FPM assessment report for swimming pools in Thurrock in July 2025.

Headline position

- ✦ The quantitative and spatial findings interact to identify that Thurrock's demand requires more water space to be comfortably met within the Authority, but a very high proportion of its demand is satisfied, and unmet demand is low. However, the swimming pool stock is very old and, while there have been recent refurbishments, this is of some concern.
- ✦ The estimated utilisation of the swimming pools in Thurrock at peak times ranges from 64% to 92%. The public leisure centres are estimated to be uncomfortably full at peak times (over 70% of capacity used), with 92% at Impulse Leisure Blackshots, 88% at Impulse Leisure Corringham, and 83% at Impulse Leisure Belhus Park.
- ✦ All three public leisure centres are uncomfortably full at peak times. All the pools are available for the maximum 52.5 hours in the weekly peak period. There is no scope to increase availability and capacity at these pools so as to reduce peak time utilisation.

Supply

- ✦ The total water space in Thurrock is 1,602 sqm of water. When scaled against the amount available during the weekly peak period, this reduces to 1,507 sqm. The water space unavailable for community use is 6%.
- ✦ The swimming pool stock is very old with an average age for all the sites of 45 years and 54 years for the public sites. The oldest site is Impulse Leisure Blackshots, which opened in 1964. All five sites have been modernised, with four sites being refurbished in 2018 and one in 2004.
- ✦ The only scope to increase capacity is to negotiate increased access for community use at Harris Academy Ockendon, where its pool is currently available for only 35 hours in the weekly peak period. This option should be investigated.
- ✦ The high level of utilisation of the ageing public leisure centres is most likely impacting on their condition. All three sites were modernised in 2018, but the need for further refurbishment or replacement should be considered in the future.

Demand

Table 5.9 below illustrates that:

- ✦ 94% of the demand for swimming pools from Thurrock residents is met, however only 77% are satisfied by swimming pools located within the Authority.
- ✦ Six of the neighbouring local authorities have a larger proportion of satisfied demand than Thurrock, with Brentwood having the highest at 99%. Thurrock, along with Bexley and Gravesham, have the lowest the proportion of satisfied demand in the study area.
- ✦ Total unmet demand is equal to 117m2 of water (6% of total demand). Residents who are too far from a swimming pool account for 99% of unmet demand. The highest proportion of unmet demand is in Tilbury at 13sqm. However, this is insufficient unmet demand to justify the provision of a new swimming pool to improve accessibility for residents.
- ✦ The estimated utilisation of the swimming pools in Thurrock at peak times ranges from 64% to 92%. The public leisure centres are estimated to be uncomfortably full at peak times (over 70% of capacity used), with 92% at Impulse Leisure Blackshots, 88% at Impulse Leisure Corringham, and 83% at Impulse Leisure Belhus Park.

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Table 5.9: FPM demand findings (2025)

Element	FPM 2025
Total demand (visits per week in the peak period)	2,115m ²
Satisfied demand	94%
Satisfied demand retained within Thurrock	77%
Satisfied demand exported	23%
Unmet demand	6%
% of unmet demand due to residents outside swimming pool catchment (as opposed to no capacity)	99%
Overall average used swimming pool capacity	92%

Used capacity

'FPM used capacity' figures for swimming pools (see Table 5.10 below) are an estimation based on a number of set parameters including each facilities relative attractiveness. The FPM assumes for example that older swimming pools will be less attractive to users and therefore adjusts assumed used capacity figures accordingly. It also assumes that commercially operated pools will be less attractive in areas containing higher concentrations of deprivation as measured by the IMD. It also considers a figure of 70% used capacity as a 'comfortably full' benchmark.

Table 5.10: Used capacity

Site	FPM Used capacity 2025
Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	64%
Harris Academy Ockendon	74%
Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	83%
Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	92%
Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	88%

5.2: Demand

Swim England calculates that there is currently a water provision deficit of 1066 m² in Thurrock (for comparison, a 6-lane 25m pool equates to 312.5m²). It does recommend that any future strategic review should consider ensuring it has open community access, making the water space even more accessible to the local population. It also states facility mixes in the future needs to consider the versatility of its water space and the use of a movable floor/boom system.

Club consultation

The audit identified one swimming club, one diving club and two swim schools currently utilising swimming pools with community access in Thurrock. All clubs and organisations were invited to take part in consultation. KKP received responses from four as detailed below.

Thurrock Swimming Club currently has 520 members, of which all are juniors. It is operating at approximately 90% capacity and only has room for an additional c.10 members. It hires two facilities in the Authority, with sessions taking place at Impulse Leisure (Blackshots) for 25 hours a week and Corringham Leisure Centre on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings for a total of four hours a week.

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The Club reports having a good working relationship with Impulse Leisure and there is a signed usage agreement in place. Club membership has risen in recent years – helping it to meet increased pool hire charges. It highlighted the fact that it does have the capacity to expand but is limited by the level of facility access available to it – which is, in effect, in its view as a barrier to growth. As noted above, the quality of the pool facilities at Impulse Leisure (Blackshots) is an ongoing issue, although it notes that it recognises that Impulse Leisure works hard to maintain the facility to a high standard.

Thurrock Aqualung Club uses the wet facilities at Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club). It hires the venue on Friday evenings.

Marlins Swim School currently uses the swimming pool at Harris Academy Ockenden on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays to run a learn to swim programme. No response to consultation was received so this information was obtained via desk research.

D&S Swim School accesses the pool facilities at Harris Academy Ockenden on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for its learn to swim programme. No response to consultation was received so this information was obtained via desk research.

Swimming lessons

Children's swimming lessons are delivered at the three publicly accessible pools in Thurrock. Current lesson volumes are as follows:

- ◆ Belhus Park Leisure Centre- c.385 (87% full).
- ◆ Blackshots Leisure Centre- c.1807 (95% full).
- ◆ Corringham Leisure Centre- c.490 (85% full).

On average swim programmes at the public leisure centres are operating at 90% capacity. The above sites have capacity to accommodate more participants; 56 at Belhus Park, 103 at Blackshots and 87 at Corringham.

In addition to children's swimming lessons, Impulse Leisure run adult swimming sessions to encourage older residents to stay active and engaged. This aligns with local authority objectives. Current lesson volumes are as follows:

- ◆ Belhus Park Leisure Centre- c.32 (71% full).
- ◆ Blackshots Leisure Centre- c.88 (95% full).
- ◆ Corringham Leisure Centre- c.18 (46% full).

5.3: Sport England's Facilities Calculator (SFC)

Please note, the Sports Facilities Calculator is purely a quantities exercise based on population growth and does not take into account existing provision and how that provision may be used currently (whether it is under or over capacity).

As noted in the sports hall section of this report, this assists local planning authorities to quantify additional demand for community sports facilities generated by new growth populations, development and regeneration areas. It can be used to estimate facility needs for whole area populations but should not be applied for strategic gap analysis as it has no spatial dimension as it does not take account of:

- ◆ Facility location compared to demand.
- ◆ Capacity and availability of facilities – opening hours.
- ◆ Cross boundary movement of demand.

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- Travel networks and topography.
- Attractiveness of facilities.

Table 5.11: Sports facilities calculator

Factor	Population 2018: (ONS)	Population estimate: 2030 (ONS)	Population estimate: 2043 (ONS)
ONS population projections	172,525	191,662	205,470
Population increase	-	+19,137	+32,945
Facilities to meet change in demand	-	+4.04 lanes / 1.01 pools	+6.95 lanes / +1.74 pools
Estimated Cost	-	+£4,619,511	+£7,952,645

(Build costs as of Q3 2024)

Calculations assume that the current swimming pool stock remains available for community use and the quality remains the same. The projected increase in population will lead to an increase in demand for swimming space. The SFC indicates a requirement for an additional seven lanes (equivalent to 1.74 swimming pools, up to 2043 (estimated cost: £7,952,645).

In the shorter term, programming at all the public leisure sites should be continually reviewed to ensure that the most popular activities are available at peak times. This should include options for pay and play swimming, learn to swim and club use.

SFC calculations do not account for housing led population growth as the population estimate is only based on ONS projections which will not account for this. The level of population growth is therefore expected to be greater in practice than the ONS based estimates in Table 5.11.

5.4: Summary of key facts and issues – swimming pools

In summary, the above consultation and analysis indicates that Thurrock is in the following position with regards to its swimming pool provision:

Facility type	Swimming pools	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are nine pools at six sites. Five pools are larger than 20m+ in length. Public leisure sites are well placed relative to the main population areas.	KKP audit and FPM modelled findings find that demand for swimming from Thurrock residents currently outstrips available supply. The audit also identified high demand particularly from the significantly sized club and that the FPM does not take into account future housing projections. Public leisure sites have limited capacity to take on additional learn to swim members. Clubs and fitness members also report lack of provision.
Quality	One pool is rated good quality, three are above average and one as below average.	Residents in most main population areas have access to above average pool provision. The exception is Tilbury. Investment is needed to improve and maintain the quality of the swimming pool located at Harris Academy Ockenden as it provides community use to clubs and

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Facility type	Swimming pools	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
		swimming lesson providers during peak hours.
Accessibility	Just over half the Thurrock population lives within one mile of a swimming pool that is 20m+ in length that offers some level of community use. This increases to 100% when calculating the number of residents in Thurrock who live within a 20-minute drive of a swimming pool.	Swimming pool accessibility is reasonably good, Relative access to pay and play sites is lower; 34.6% of the population live within a 1-mile walk of a pool.
Availability (Management and usage)	All three public leisure sites provide pay and play options for residents. Commercial operators provide a registered membership option, and the one school pool allows club use.	The public leisure centres are operating near to capacity. This correlates with FPM findings estimating that the three public pools are uncomfortably busy in Thurrock between 68% and 92% used capacity. Maintain good relationship with Harris Academy Ockenden to ensure community use remains accessible. There is a need for regular reviews of programming at leisure centre pools to ensure a balanced programme which means the whole community (including casual swims) is suitably provided for.
Strategic summary - According to the FPM, the area of Thurrock with the largest amount of current unmet demand, is Tilbury, in the East of the Authority. The level of unmet demand here (equivalent to 13 sqm of water in 2025) is insufficient to justify the provision of a new swimming pool to improve accessibility for residents. - Each facility is important to the community served and should be protected in accordance with Paragraph 104 of the NPPF. - There is a need to maintain and improve the quality of swimming pools in the area via good maintenance programmes. - Regular review of public pool programming is required to ensure that learn to swim, casual and club swimming is catered for at times which meet local community need. - In order to accommodate future population growth, and reduce reliance on neighbouring LA pool provision, Thurrock should investigate the feasibility of developing new swimming pool provision. Various locations could be tested via a bespoke FPM study to better understand where future provision should go to best meet the needs of Thurrock residents. - Population increases and housing growth will create additional demand that more provision may be needed to accommodate.		

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SECTION 6: HEALTH AND FITNESS SUITES

According to the most recent ALS data¹⁸, around 11.4 million adults regularly engage in some form of fitness type activity (i.e., using gym equipment, a weights session, fitness class, or interval session). It is offered at/across wide range of facilities including larger gyms (run on behalf of the local authority by companies and/or trusts, managed in-house or private sector operators), and also other smaller activity spaces such as village and community halls.

Fitness studios vary in size and function, from relatively large rooms in leisure centres to smaller spaces (often in community/village halls) which serve as dedicated spinning studios or accommodate virtual fitness classes. Studio based timetabled classes such as Pilates, yoga, dance, step, boxercise and Zumba usually generate a significant amount of activity within publicly operated provision and comprise a core benefit of a health and fitness membership.

Prior to the Pandemic, the UK health and fitness industry was enjoying a strong period of growth. It had more gyms, more members and a greater market value than ever before. The State of the Fitness Industry Report UK for 2024 found that the number of facilities has increased from 6,998 in 2023 to 7,009 in 2024, although it remains below the high of 7,239 in 2019. Whilst membership levels have increased since 2023 with 10.7 million in 2024 compared to 10.3 million in 2023. By the number of gyms, PureGym is the largest UK private sector operator and GLL is the largest public operator (by number of gyms and members).

Health and fitness facilities are a core element of the transition of public leisure facilities to delivering on wider health improvement outcomes. A leisure operator's role in providing for people with long term health conditions, including via active wellbeing service can be critical. Fitness studios may 'double up' as spaces where NHS services such as physiotherapy, health screening, and weight management can take place alongside exercise classes.

Larger gyms with a mix of flexible spaces (e.g., cardio, free weights and boxing - 80 stations +¹⁹) remain central to the financial viability of public sector leisure centres. When combined with multiple studio facilities offering a good mix (and sufficient number) of classes, these usually offer the most profitable spaces within a typical leisure centre.

The past decade has seen growth in the prevalence of operators offering 'functional fitness' type equipment and activities. This is a type of strength training that readies one body for daily activities and includes lifting, loading, pushing, pulling, squatting and hauling. This is manifested both in terms of small private facilities, and the incorporation of functional fitness spaces within publicly operated health and fitness facilities.

6.1: Supply

Quantity

The 22 health and fitness gyms in Thurrock contain a total of 1,483 stations and tend to be located in its more densely populated areas including Grays, Tilbury and Stanford.

¹⁸ [Active Lives adult survey Nov 20-21 report](#)

¹⁹ A health and fitness 'station' is defined as a piece of static fitness equipment – KKP normally audits facilities of 20 stations or more.

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Figure 6.1: All health and fitness gyms on population density

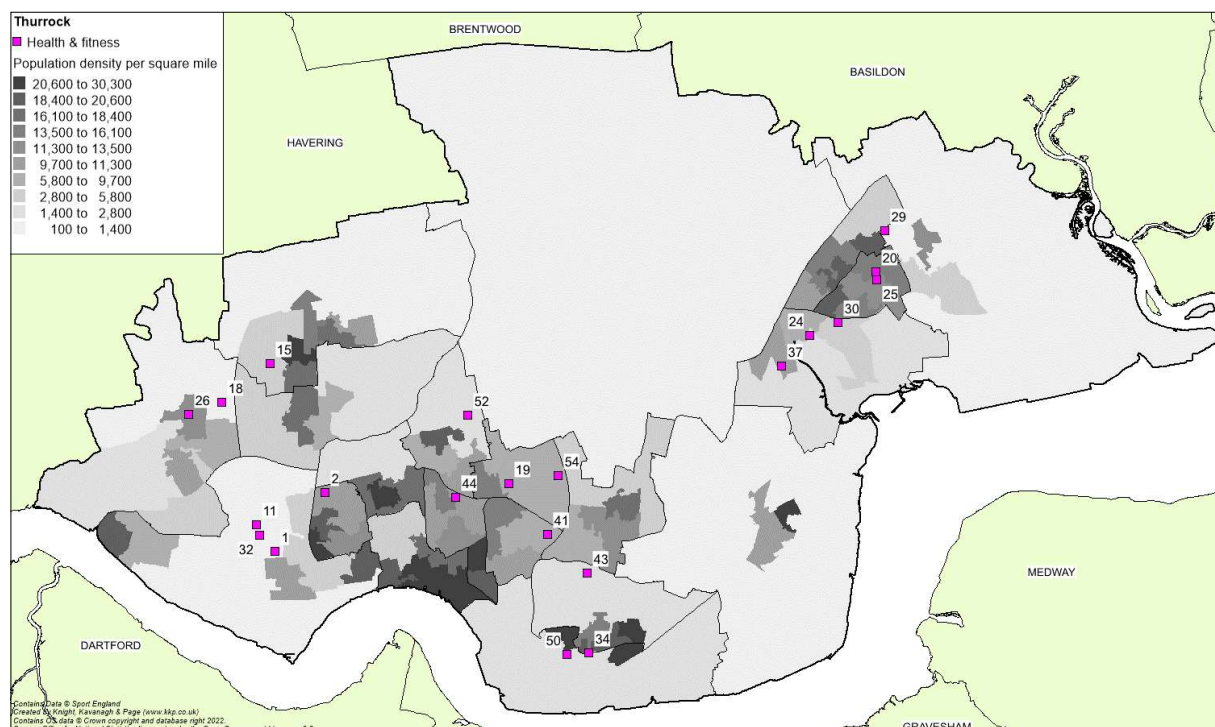


Table 6.1: All health and fitness gyms in Thurrock

ID	Site	Stations
1	Ab Salute Gym Ltd (Lakeside)	180
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	200
11	Everlast Gyms (Thurrock)	200
15	Harris Academy Ockendon	17
18	Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	80
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	120
20	Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	110
24	Oasis Health & Fitness Club	36
25	Oasis Women	18
26	Ormiston Park Academy	18
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	32
30	Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	18
32	Puregym (West Thurrock)	220
34	S6 Gym	70
37	St Clere's School	10
41	Storm Fit (Grays)	27
43	The Gateway Academy	19
44	The Hathaway Academy	10
50	Uk Fitness Club	60
52	William Edwards School	20
54	Orsett Heath Academy	18
-	Total	1,483

Fitness facilities with fewer than 20 stations are typically not assessed/considered to be sufficiently large to be a community gym although they can service small sections of the community. When

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smaller facilities are removed from the supply calculation, 13 facilities with 20+ stations, which offer 1,355 stations in total) remain. Seven gyms are of significant size (100+ stations). There is substantial competition in the area for good quality provision from a number of national chain providers.

Table 6.2: Health and fitness suites (20+ stations)

ID	Site	Stations
1	Ab Salute Gym Ltd (Lakeside)	180
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	200
11	Everlast Gyms (Thurrock)	200
18	Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	80
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	120
20	Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	110
24	Oasis Health & Fitness Club	36
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	32
32	Puregym (West Thurrock)	220
34	S6 Gym	70
41	Storm Fit (Grays)	27
50	Uk Fitness Club	60
52	William Edwards School	20
-	Total	1,355

Quality

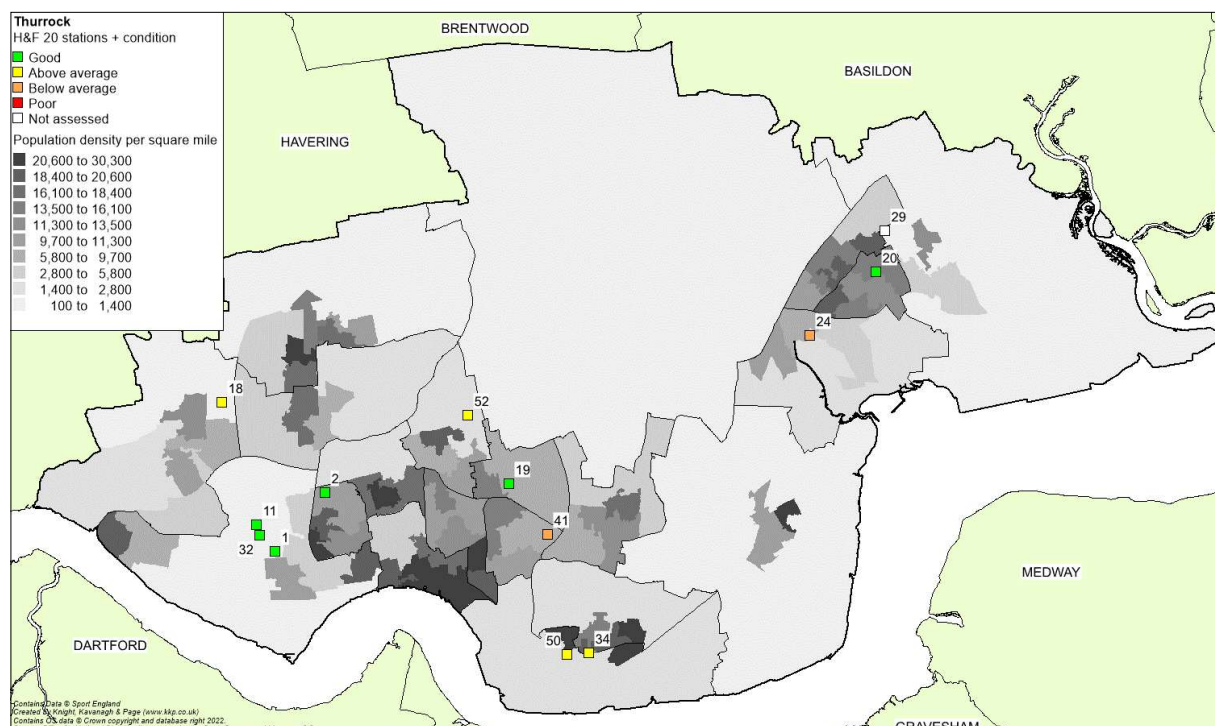
All health and fitness sites received a non-technical quality assessment. Six are rated as good quality, four above average and two below average. One site (Ortu Gable Hall School) was not assessed despite attempts to arrange a site visit.

Table 6.3: Health and fitness gyms (20+ stations) by condition

ID	Site	Stations	Condition
1	Ab Salute Gym Ltd (Lakeside)	180	Good
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	200	Good
11	Everlast Gyms (Thurrock)	200	Good
18	Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	80	Above average
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	120	Good
20	Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	110	Good
24	Oasis Health & Fitness Club	36	Below average
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	32	Not assessed
32	Puregym (West Thurrock)	220	Good
34	S6 Gym	70	Above average
41	Storm Fit (Grays)	27	Below average
50	Uk Fitness Club	60	Above average
52	William Edwards School	20	Above average

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Figure 6.2: Health and fitness gym quality (20+ stations)



Impulse Leisure (Blackshots) is the largest and newest public health and fitness facility in the area. Its suite was refurbished in March 2024 and had new equipment installed. During consultation, it was indicated that there is strong demand and that the site was extended and refurbished to reflect this. Impulse Leisure reports that membership has increased.

The health & fitness suite at Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club) was refurbished in 2019 and again in 2023 to improve its quality. Equipment was replaced, and new free weights and resistance equipment were added. The squash courts were repurposed in the 1990's to create additional gym floor space. Impulse Leisure noted that it would ideally like to increase the number of stations at this site but is limited due to the low roof.

Given the high levels of competition in the area, there is a need for a high-quality offer and high-quality changing provision is considered to be important to allow the public leisure centres in Thurrock to compete commercially and attract new users to the sites, as a result.

Accessibility

The Sport England classification of access type defines registered membership use facilities as being publicly available. For health and fitness suites, this generally means payment of a monthly membership fee which can vary considerably. Private operators do not have a contractual obligation to, for example, offer an active wellbeing service nor do they necessarily actively target people / communities who face barriers to participation. It is also acknowledged that some memberships are expensive while others are cheaper than those offered by public sector venues. There is little doubt that the various private operators can take pressure off the more available public facilities.

As with pools and sports halls, appropriate walk and drive-time accessibility standards are applied to health and fitness suites to determine provision deficiencies or surpluses. The normal acceptable standard for an urban area is a 20-minutes' walk time and 20-minute drive time for a rural area.

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Two thirds (67%) of Thurrock's population lives within 20 minutes' walk of a health and fitness facility with 20+ stations and community access. 17.3% of the population is likely to need to use a car or public transport to access facilities. All residents in Thurrock live within a 20-minute drive of a community accessible facility with 20+ stations.

Figure 6.3: Health and fitness gyms 20+ stations+ with 1-mile radial catchment

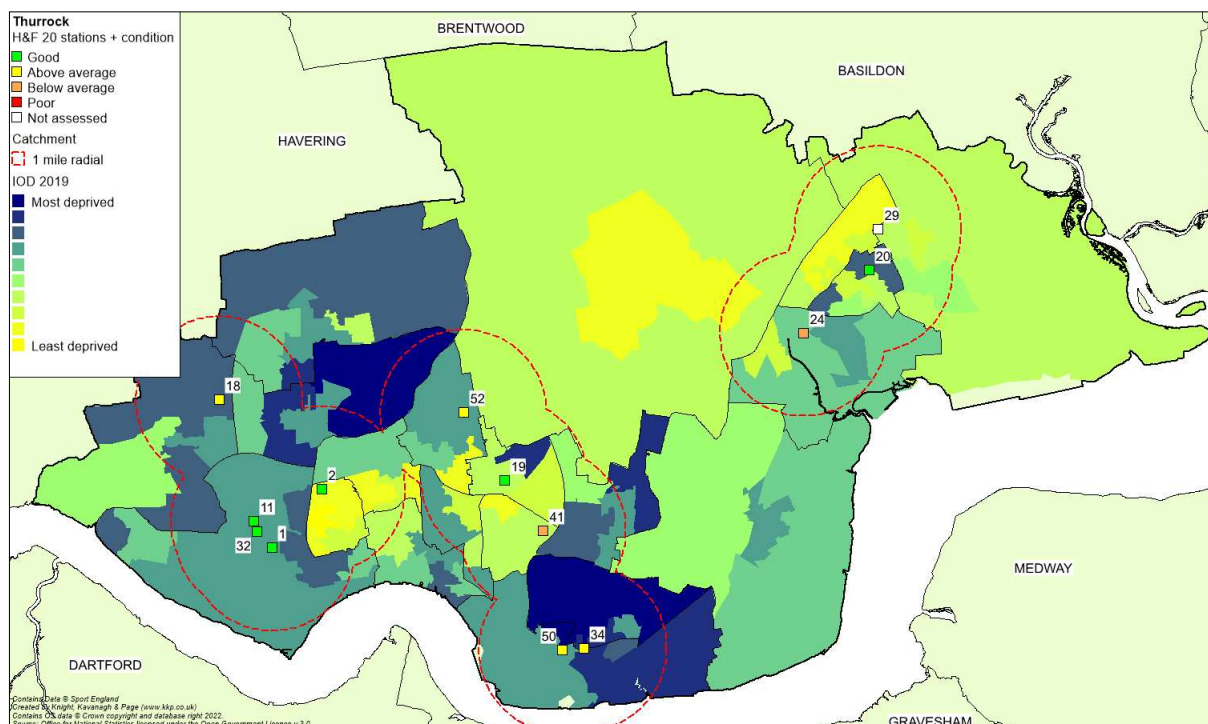


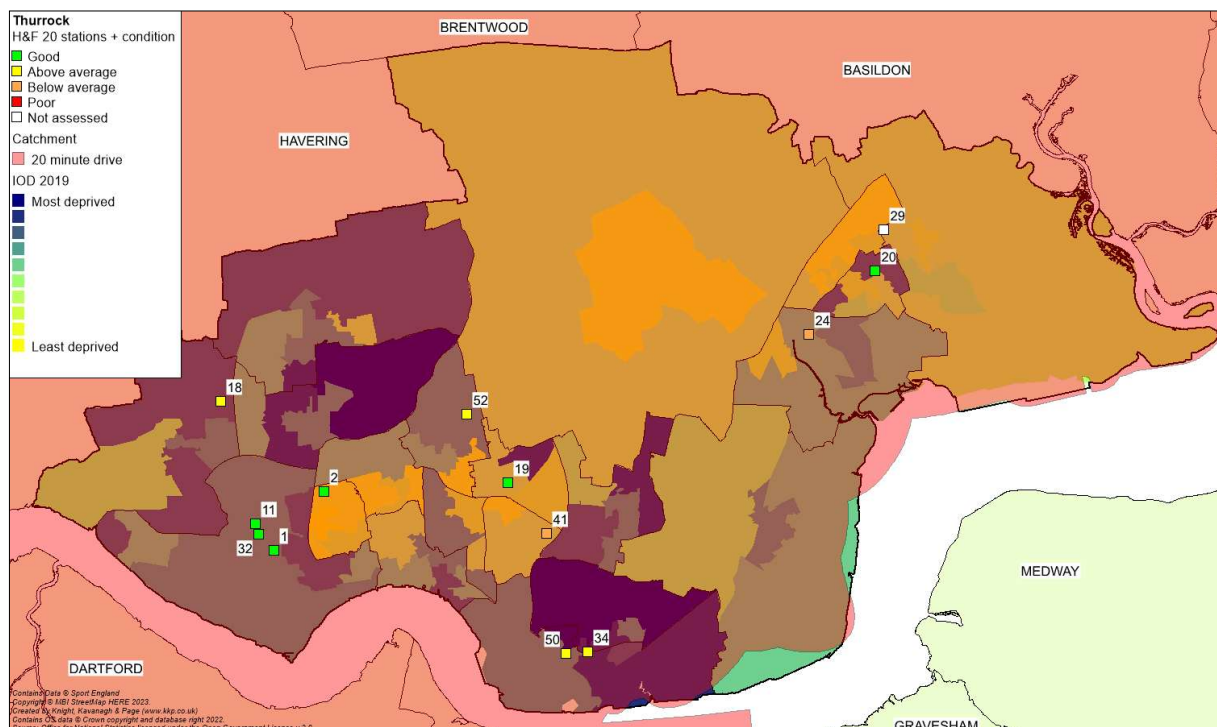
Table 6.4: Health and fitness 20+ stations with 1-mile radial catchment

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	6,586	4.0%	5,337	3.2%	1,249	0.8%
10.1 - 20	11,537	6.9%	7,229	4.4%	4,308	2.6%
20.1 - 30	24,264	14.6%	16,055	9.7%	8,209	4.9%
30.1 - 40	36,178	21.8%	22,505	13.6%	13,673	8.2%
40.1 - 50	23,689	14.3%	10,515	6.3%	13,174	7.9%
50.1 - 60	7,614	4.6%	4,071	2.5%	3,543	2.1%
60.1 - 70	23,039	13.9%	15,465	9.3%	7,574	4.6%
70.1 - 80	13,269	8.0%	13,153	7.9%	116	0.1%
80.1 - 90	18,162	10.9%	15,764	9.5%	2,398	1.4%
90.1 - 100	1,702	1.0%	1,702	1.0%	0	0.0%
Total	166,040	100.0%	111,796	67.3%	54,244	32.7%

Thurrock has 42,387 residents living in areas of higher deprivation (0-30 IMD bands). Of these, 8.3% live outside a 1-mile radius of a health and fitness facility.

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Figure 6.4: Health and fitness gyms 20+ stations with 20-minute drive time



Neighbouring facilities

Health & fitness facility users do not just visit facilities in their own local authority. As a consequence, facilities located within two miles of the Thurrock border are considered. There are 24 health and fitness facilities in this catchment. Two offers pay and play access whilst 21 require some form of membership and one (Harris Academy Rainham) is private use only. Seven are located in Basildon, five in Dartford, four in Gravesham, three in Castle Point, two each in Bexley and Havering and one in Brentwood.

Table 6.5: Community available health/fitness (20+ stations) within 2 miles of Thurrock

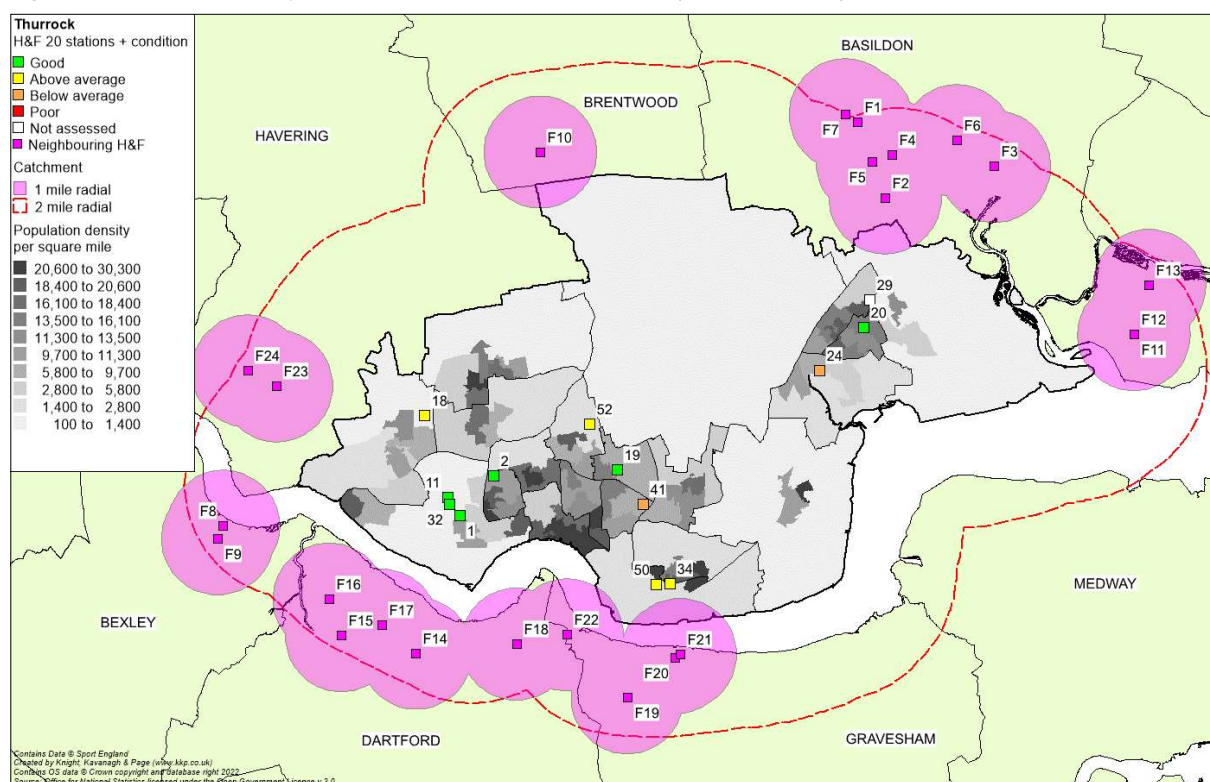
ID	Site	Stations	Access	District
F1	Basildon Sporting Village	100	Reg. membership	Basildon
F2	Club Kingswood	300	Reg. membership	Basildon
F3	Pitsea Leisure Centre (The Place)	25	Reg. membership	Basildon
F4	Puregym (Basildon)	220	Reg. membership	Basildon
F5	Snap Fitness (Basildon)	200	Reg. membership	Basildon
F6	The Basildon Lower Academy	27	Reg. membership	Basildon
F7	The Gym Group (Basildon)	220	Reg. membership	Basildon
F8	Energie Fitness (Erith)	50	Reg. membership	Bexley
F9	Erith Leisure Centre	90	Pay and play	Bexley
F10	Virgin Active Clearview Health & Racquet Club	110	Reg. membership	Brentwood
F12	Island Gym	150	Reg. membership	Castle Point
F11	Island Gym	60	Reg. membership	Castle Point
F13	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	80	Reg. membership	Castle Point
F14	Beefs & Babes Gym	43	Reg. membership	Dartford

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ID	Site	Stations	Access	District
F15	Europa Weightlifting (Dartford Gym)	32	Reg. membership	Dartford
F16	Leigh Utc Academy	20	Reg. membership	Dartford
F17	Livingwell Health Club (Dartford)	26	Reg. membership	Dartford
F18	Swanscombe Leisure Centre	47	Reg. membership	Dartford
F19	Cygnat Leisure Centre	81	Pay and play	Gravesham
F20	Nrg Gym (Gravesend)	70	Reg. membership	Gravesham
F21	Puregym (Gravesend)	200	Reg. membership	Gravesham
F22	Snap Fitness (Ebbsfleet)	200	Reg. membership	Gravesham
F23	Harris Academy Rainham	20	Private use	Havering
F24	Rainham Leisure Centre	75	Reg. membership	Havering

Source: Active Places Power 13/01/2025

Figure 6.5: Community available health and fitness (20+ stations) within 2 miles



Availability and programming

Sport England's classification of access type defines registered membership use facilities as publicly available. However, monthly membership fees can vary considerably. It is acknowledged that those which may be considered expensive offer access to different market segments and can ease pressure on facilities which offer cheaper options.

Of the 12 health and fitness suites with 20+ stations, four offer some element of pay and play via the pre-purchase of a one-day pass or pay on arrival. All four gyms offering pay and play also offer a monthly membership scheme, which may work out as a more cost-effective option based on usage. Six gyms in Thurrock offer access via registered membership. Ortu Gable Hall School is the only 20+ station site with no community use.

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Table 6.6: Access policy of fitness gyms (20+ stations)

ID	Site	Stations	Access type
1	Ab Salute Gym Ltd (Lakeside)	180	Reg. membership
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	200	Reg. membership
11	Everlast Gyms (Thurrock)	200	Reg. membership
18	Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	80	Pay and play
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	120	Pay and play
20	Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	110	Pay and play
24	Oasis Health & Fitness Club	36	Reg. membership
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	32	Private use
32	Puregym (West Thurrock)	220	Reg. membership
34	S6 Gym	70	Reg. membership
41	Storm Fit (Grays)	27	Sports club/CA
50	Uk Fitness Club	60	Pay and play
52	William Edwards School	20	Sports club/CA

The cost of health and fitness facility use varies considerably. The three sites managed by Impulse Leisure offer a comprehensive membership, offering gym, swim and class use with a varying price dependent upon on age, participation frequency and economic means. The public leisure centre sites also offer pay and play use; however, access requires online or onsite registration, and places can be guaranteed when booked through the website, app or at site. On the day access is possible when spaces are available.

Ab Salute Gym provides the cheapest pay and play option in Thurrock at £7.50 per session. At the opposite end of the sale, Pure Gym is the most expensive, at £8.99 per session.

Membership at the public leisure centres offer multi activity options (e.g., swimming and fitness classes) and multiple site usage. It is recognised that well run health and fitness facilities with studios can offset the costs/enhance the financial viability of other venue elements such as swimming pools and in many instances cross subsidise such facilities.

Impulse Leisure, on behalf of the Council, delivers a GP referral programme at three of its sites; Blackshots Leisure Centre, Belhus Park (Golf and Country Club) and Corringham Leisure Centre. This aims to provide opportunities for people with underlying medical conditions, or those at risk of developing conditions to become more active in a safe and welcoming environment and raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity, helping to create long-term behaviour change. The programme runs for 12 weeks and is designed to help individuals self-manage conditions more effectively and with more confidence.

Table 6.7: Pricing structure - health and fitness with community use and 20+ stations

Site name	Pay & play	Annual	12-month DD	Notes
AB Salute Gym LTD (Lakeside)	£7.50	£440.00	£39.50	£50.00 per month option for cash payment
Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	-	£662	£64.99	Price includes access to 57 clubs, gym access, swim & exercise classes.
Everlast Gyms (Thurrock)	N/A	N/A	£35.00	Includes a £5 joining fee.
Impulse (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	-	-	£45.95	Includes unlimited access to all three leisure centres
Impulse: (Blackshots Leisure Centre)	-	-	£45.95	Includes unlimited access to all three leisure centres.

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Site name	Pay & play	Annual	12-month DD	Notes
Impulse: (Corringham)	-	-	£45.95	Includes unlimited access to all three leisure centres.
Oasis Health & Fitness Club	-	Unknown	Unknown	The pricing structure could not be identified during audit.
Puregym (West Thurrock)	£8.99	-	£18.99	24-hour use.
S6 Gym	-	Unknown	Unknown	The pricing structure could not be identified during audit.
Storm Fit (Grays)	-	£240.00	£35.99	
UK Fitness Club	£5.99	£235.99	£35.99	Price includes gym access.
William Edwards School	£5.00	-	-	Open 18:00-22:00 weekdays and 08:00-16:00 weekends.

*Pricing as advertised in January 2025

6.2: Demand

Impulse Leisure confirmed that since the health & fitness suites in its three Thurrock leisure centres were refurbished/expanded, demand for memberships has risen. Table 6.9 sets out the membership and programme of studio-based classes at the centres.

Health and fitness via exercising in a gym or class environment is a highly popular form of exercise, appealing to men and women across a range of age groups. To identify provision adequacy a demand calculation based upon the assumption that 'UK penetration rates' will increase slightly in the future is applied. Population increases are also factored in to enable a calculation of whether current supply will meet future demand.

Table 6.8: UK penetration rates; health/fitness in Thurrock (ONS data)

	Current (2018)	Future (2030)	Future (2043)
Adult population (16+ years)	132,666	150,039	162,777
UK penetration rate	16.0%	17.0%	17.0%
Number of potential members	21,227	25,507	27,672
Number of visits per week (1.75/member)	37,146	44,637	48,426
% of visits in peak time	65	65	65
No. of visits in peak time (equated to no. of stations required i.e., no. of visits/39 weeks*65%)	619	744	807
Number of stations (comfort factor applied)	929	1050	1211

*Applies 1.75 visits/week by members and 65% usage for 39 weeks of the year. (Figures rounded up/down).

Based upon UK penetration rates there is current need for 929 stations in Thurrock. This will grow to 1,050 stations by 2030, taking account of a comfort factor (particularly at peak times). When comparing the current number of community available stations (1,355 and accounting for the comfort factor, there is a positive supply balance of c.426 stations. This indicates capacity to accommodate future demand from projected population growth. However, the audit identified high participation rates in the authority. Furthermore, it is presumed that there will be some import and export of demand whereby Thurrock residents will access facilities in neighbouring local authorities, especially larger sites and vice versa.

It is not uncommon for the private sector to identify niche markets and fill them with stations which make the market appear congested. The key issue is that while some of these may be budget operators this does not necessarily make them available to people/communities who face barriers to

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participation and people from areas of (relative) disadvantage (as cost is only one factor which may hinder usage). It could be argued that this applies particularly to those who require transport to access such facilities.

All leisure centres in the Authority operate on the basis of a cashless system. The price point and the requirement to register, book and pay online in order to access 'pay and play' sport and leisure provision means that the option could be restrictive. It is important that people are able to access provision without barriers. Whilst centres are generally well used, there is a need to create opportunity for those potentially digitally excluded.

Supply and demand analysis

As discussed above, fitness facilities are an important facet of leisure provision and have been a successful addition to sports centres over the past three decades. Income derived can help offset the cost/underpin the viability of other areas of provision such as swimming pools or targeted physical activity programmes (i.e., GP referral). In Thurrock, the challenge is to provide opportunity for people from areas of higher deprivation who are less likely to be able to afford or choose to access provision and do not have the transport to access it.

6.3: Fitness studios

Fitness studios are an important element of the wider health, fitness and conditioning market. They vary in size, shape, quality of environment, access to sprung wooden floors and quality of ancillary facilities. There has been an increase in the number of people accessing fitness classes as identified in increased UK penetration rates. Activity types offered also vary from low impact classes such as Pilates and yoga to dance, step, boxercise and Zumba. It is worth noting that dance classes/clubs are key users of studio spaces throughout the country.

There are 18 studios in Thurrock across 15 sites; of these 17 were subject to a non-technical assessment.

Consultation with Impulse Leisure at the public leisure sites confirms that demand is generally high for available classes, with the highest number (of classes) taking place at Blackshots Leisure Centre. Corringham Leisure Centre also has potential to accommodate further growth following investment in the new health and fitness suite which is attracting new members to the site. Demand for these sites is set out in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: Thurrock in-house fitness membership & studio demand

Site	Number of health and fitness stations	Number of direct debit fitness members	Fitness classes/week
Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	80	1180	25
Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	120	2982	45
Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	110	2124	30

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Figure 6.6: Studios in Thurrock

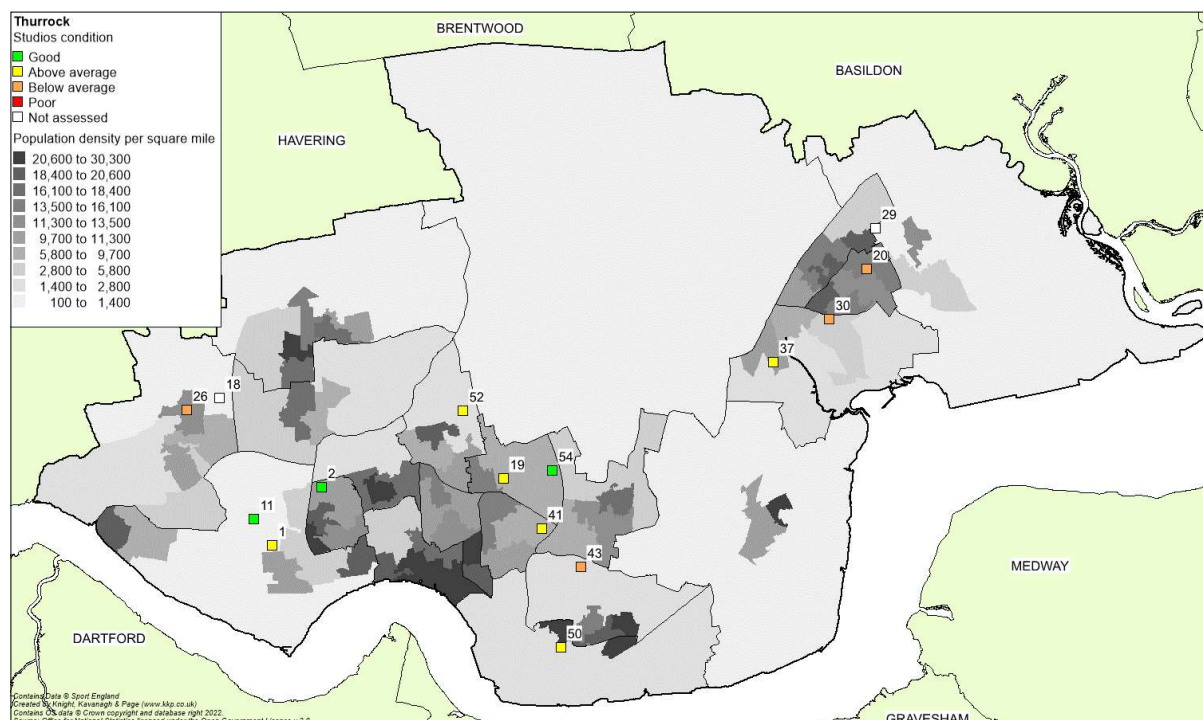


Table 6.10: Table of studios in Thurrock

ID	Site name	No.	Access	Condition
1	Ab Salute Gym Ltd (Lakeside)	2	Reg. membership	Above average
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	2	Reg. membership	Good
11	Everlast Gyms (Thurrock)	1	Reg. membership	Good
18	Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club)	1	Pay and play	Above average
19	Impulse Leisure (Blackshots)	1	Pay and play	Above average
20	Impulse Leisure (Corringham)	1	Pay and play	Below average
26	Ormiston Park Academy	1	Private use	Below average
29	Ortu Gable Hall School	2	Sports club/CA	Not assessed
30	Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	1	Sports club/CA	Below average
37	St Clere's School	1	Sports club/CA	Above average
41	Storm Fit (Grays)	1	Sports club/CA	Above average
43	The Gateway Academy	1	Sports club/CA	Below average
50	Uk Fitness Club	1	Sports club/CA	Above average
52	William Edwards School	1	Sports club/CA	Above average
54	Orsett Heath Academy	1	Sports club/CA	Good

(NB: Sports Club/CA= Sports Club / Community Association use)

All the above are fitness studios with the exception of Everlast Gym which is a dedicated cycle studio.

In terms of access policy, nine can be used on the basis of a sports club/community association, five are accessed via a registered membership and three via pay and play access. One studio, located at Ormiston Park Academy, is private use only and is not available to the community.

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6.4: Summary of key facts and issues – health & fitness

Facility type	Health & fitness	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 22 health and fitness suites containing 1,483 stations. 21 of the 22 have 20+ stations, totalling 1,355. The 20 sites (1,355 stations) are available to the community. There is a current positive supply demand balance in the area. There are 18 studios, 17 offer some form of community access. The audit identified high local demand and participation rates. There is likely to be imported demand from neighbouring authorities.	While supply is currently sufficient, should the upward participation trend continue, there will be a need to increase provision in the area in line with population growth and housing development.
Quality	The majority (14 of 18) health and fitness suites are good or above average in quality. (Four are below average quality).	There is a need to provide high quality provision and maintain quality across the stock.
Accessibility	Over 67% of Thurrock residents live within a one-mile radius of a health and fitness suite. 100% live within 20-minutes' drive of a community accessible facility. There is considerable supply (24) of gyms in neighbouring authorities within 2 miles of the Thurrock boundary.	Accessibility in Thurrock is good. Each main settlement has access to a good quality health and fitness facility.
Availability (Management and usage)	There are three technically pay and play accessible public health and fitness facilities with 20+ stations in Thurrock. Seven require a membership to access.	Ensure that health and fitness facilities continue to cater to a range of market segments. Ensure that the concessionary priced and pay and play offer is sufficient to enable people facing financial and other barriers to participation to engage.
Strategic summary - Current and future demand is well catered for, with Impulse Leisure (Blackshots) handling most demand within publicly operated sites. - The ageing demographic profile should be strategically planned for with consideration to a health and wellbeing hub in the Authority. - Thurrock Council should consider introducing clearer/more proactive ways to make 'pay and play' access available to people who do not wish/cannot afford to commit to registered memberships. - The importance of the financial contribution that health and fitness make to the viability of other facilities such as swimming pools is an important facet.		

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SECTION 7: SQUASH

Squash is now on a new strategic path, implementing a rebrand and undergoing a major restructure. England Squash (ES) has achieved core strategic goals agreed with Sport England and is committed to supporting the traditional infrastructure of county associations, clubs, coaches and officials to grow the game via key programmes (e.g., Squash101) and campaigns (e.g., Squash Girls Can) but will be apportioning resources in a significantly different manner.

Table 7.1: England Squash strategic aims:

Element	Aim
Governance	Adhere to the highest standards of organisational governance.
Membership	Provide a membership model that caters to and provides benefits for anyone interested in playing and coaching squash irrespective of their ability.
Programmes	Enabling and supporting partners to be at the forefront of adult and player recruitment and retention.
Talent & high performance	Provide a support and development programme that identifies, develops and delivers world leading individuals and teams.
Commercial	Create a diversified and effective revenue model that minimises risk and reduces dependency on funding.

Squash In a Changing World (2021-2025) outlines the vision, principles and strategic pillars for ES. Its vision for the future of squash in England is a thriving, diverse and growing community. Its Purpose is to serve as custodians of the game's past, its present and its future. It is to serve as a catalyst for positive change across the sporting community at home and abroad. The 2021-2025 strategy sets six key objectives:

- ◆ Drive increased participation in the game, with a radical advance in equality, diversity and inclusion.
- ◆ Inspire and train a community of world class coaches, referees and volunteers at every level, who drive participation and increase engagement in the game.
- ◆ Sustain world-leading talent pathways and programmes for high performing players who achieve success on the global stage and inspire others to realise their potential.
- ◆ Empower creativity and innovation in the game and in our organisation's culture, using ideas and technology to support the squash community and to engage with new audiences.
- ◆ Spearhead new and creative ways to enhance the visibility and appeal of squash at local, national and international levels, including the pursuit of Olympic inclusion.
- ◆ Provide leadership for the game nationally and internationally, including addressing the Climate and Ecological Crisis.

ES has set a benchmark of one court per 10,000 people in an authority in order for squash to thrive. It estimates that there is currently one court per 12,617 people in England. This reflects the significant number of court closures and/or non-replacements when new facilities are developed to replace older venues - seen over the past decade.

Thurrock has a population of 178,201 (MYE 2023) and has five courts. There was previously one squash court at Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club), however it was repurposed to create additional gym space. Applying the ES model would indicate a theoretical demand for an additional 13 courts to meet the ES standard. When taking future population growth (to 2043) into account there is a need to increase this number to 16 additional courts.

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7.1: Supply

Quantity

There are six squash courts in Thurrock located at three sites.

Table 7.2: Squash courts in Thurrock

ID	Site	Courts	Type	Condition
2	Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred)	2	Glass-backed	Good
47	Thurrock Rugby Football Club	2	Normal	Above average
48	Tilbury Community Association	1	Glass-backed	Below average
48	Tilbury Community Association	1	Normal	Below average

Figure 7.1: Location of squash courts in Thurrock and within a 20-minute drivetime

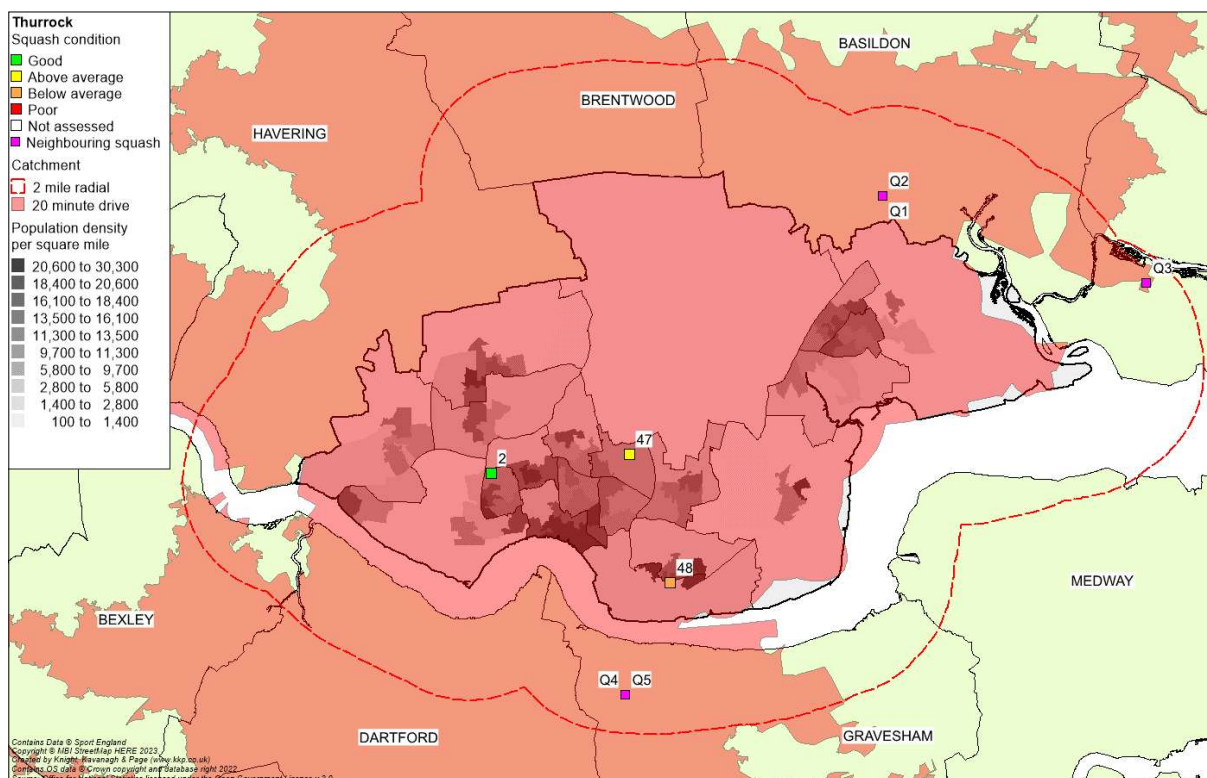


Table 7.3: Squash courts in neighbouring authorities within 20 minutes' drive time of Thurrock

ID	Site	Type	Courts	Access	District
Q1	Club Kingswood	Glass-backed	5	Reg. membership	Basildon
Q2	Club Kingswood	Normal	2	Reg. membership	Basildon
Q3	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Normal	3	Pay and play	Castle Point
Q4	Cygnat Leisure Centre	Glass-backed	1	Pay and play	Gravesham
Q5	Cygnat Leisure Centre	Normal	2	Pay and play	Gravesham

Source: Active Places Power 13/01/2025

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Quality

Squash court quality in Thurrock varies. The two at Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred) are rated as good quality having been part of a major refurbishment in 2019 which led to the courts getting new walls and floors. Its changing facilities were also refurbished. These courts are regularly maintained via a yearly sand and floor re-seal.

Thurrock Rugby Football Club has two above average courts located in its main clubhouse. The walls were re-marked five years ago, and LED lights were installed. Court floors are quite old but they are sanded and re-sealed on a regular basis.

Tilbury Community Association has two below average courts. They lack squash wall markings and the floors look tired and dated. They have dated décor and poor quality halogen lighting.

Accessibility and availability

Drive time catchment modelling suggests that 99.7% of Thurrock's population (176,364 MYE 2022) is within a 20-minute drive of a facility with squash courts. A further 13 courts (located across three sites) can be accessed within 20-minutes of the Thurrock boundary.

The courts at Thurrock Rugby Football Club and Tilbury Community Association can only be accessed via sports club/community association use while the Bannatyne Health Club courts are accessed via registered membership (which, on a full access basis, costs £64.00 per month and covers all facilities including the gym, pool, squash courts and sauna. An off peak membership is also available at £54.99 per month for access to the facilities weekdays between 09.00-16.30.

Of the facilities located in neighbouring authorities, Waterside Farm Leisure Centre and Cygnet Leisure Centre offer pay and play provision within a 2-mile drive time catchment. Club Kingswood requires access via registered membership.

7.2: Demand

England Squash was invited to take part in consultation with regard to squash provision in Thurrock. Despite multiple attempts to contact, no response was received.

Limited demand for squash provision was identified at Tilbury Community Association.

Club consultation

The audit identified one affiliated squash club within Thurrock (Thurrock Squash Club). It was invited to take part in consultation; however, no response was received. The following information has been obtained via desk research.

Thurrock Squash Club has c.20 squash members. It plays and organises games both recreationally and competitively. It affiliates to England Squash and competes in the Essex Squash & Racketball League. It operates seven days a week and utilises the two courts for its programme, which includes training matches, box leagues, inter leagues and coaching.

In addition, Tilbury Community Association has a squash section attached to the Community Association which has c.35 members. It no longer competes in the Essex Squash & Racketball League reportedly due to having insufficient members to field a team. Its members tend to play on a recreational basis.

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7.3: Summary of key facts and issues – squash courts

Facility type	Squash	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are six traditional squash courts in Thurrock at three sites. (Of these, three are glass-backed and the others are traditional). A further 13 courts can be accessed within a 20-minute drivetime. One court was recently lost when they were repurposed for fitness at Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf & Country Club).	Despite being below the ES threshold of one court per 10,000 people, the audit did not identify demand for additional courts in Thurrock. This theoretical position does not necessarily currently transfer to activity on site as the courts are reportedly underutilised and booking levels are relatively low.
Quality	Two courts are of good quality, two are above average and two below average.	Improve the quality of the courts at Tilbury Community Association.
Accessibility	Effectively the whole Thurrock population lives within a 20-minute drive of a squash facility.	-
Availability (Management and usage)	None of the sites offer pay and play access. Two sites are accessed via sports club/community association use and one requires membership access.	Consider the implementation of squash provision at existing leisure centres or during future developments subject to sufficient demand and viability being identified.
Strategic summary ◀ Squash provision in Thurrock does not meet the ES threshold of one court per 10,000 people, however, the audit did not identify demand for additional courts. ◀ Work closely with ESR and deliver targeted initiatives such as Squash 101 to grow engagement. ◀ The sites offering squash provision all report having spare court capacity during weekday daytimes. In addition, the sites could be encouraged to consider making a more accessible 'pay and play' offer and pricing option. ◀ Improve quality of the courts at Tilbury Community Association to increase the attraction of facilities.		

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SECTION 8: GYMNASTICS AND TRAMPOLINING

The 2023 British Gymnastics strategy – Leap Without Limits: A New Vision for a New Era. The strategy is developed as a shared vision for gymnastics across all four home nations. To help achieve the vision It focuses on five 'leaps':

- ✦ **The Why Leap** - Nurturing and celebrating the positive impact of gymnastics on individuals, communities and wider society.
- ✦ **The Empowerment Leap** – Supporting everyone involved in gymnastics to play their part in making a positive difference.
- ✦ **The Experience Leap** – Making positive experiences and memories central to everything we do, at every stage, in every role.
- ✦ **The Creative Leap** – Encouraging and welcoming new ideas to support meaningful change.
- ✦ **The Together Leap** – Uniting the community, existing and new partners to maximise impact, learning and growth.

To bring the vision to life, British Gymnastics are working on the following actions:

- ✦ **Membership** – Develop a new more relevant membership offer that provides value for all its members, and an improved membership system.
- ✦ **Education** - Implement a reformed and reimagined approach to supporting the learning and development of the gymnastics workforce, ensuring it feels valued and supported by British Gymnastics and the clubs and delivery environments you operate within.
- ✦ **Community** – Celebrate and recognise the contribution and stories of those in the gymnastics community on British Gymnastics channels and more widely, including further developing the British Gymnastics Awards as an annual platform for this.
- ✦ **Reform** - Deliver all of the 40 actions British Gymnastics has committed to in Reform '25 over the next two years to create safe, positive and fair experiences for all in gymnastics, including a major Safe Sport campaign.
- ✦ **Events** - Work with its Technical Committees to agree a clearly defined and sustainable long-term national event programme for each discipline and develop new competitions and events at a recreational level.
- ✦ **Disability** - Work to build international support for our ambition for gymnastics to become a Paralympic sport, with the aim of agreeing a plan and pathway for this to become a reality.

The new strategy outlines six key impacts:

- ✦ More people enjoying the sport and its benefits, across all abilities, ages, and backgrounds, and as a gymnast, coach, club owner, official or fan.
- ✦ Everyone is safe, supported and is able and confident to speak up, whatever their role or involvement in gymnastics.
- ✦ More inspirational moments that are seen, shared and enjoyed by more people.
- ✦ The NGB membership experience is a positive one, which meets your needs, is easy from start to finish. and being a member of British Gymnastics is something that provides you with both pride and value.
- ✦ Members/participants feel connected to British Gymnastics and trust it to be positive custodians of this incredible sport.
- ✦ A united sport, where everyone is working together to ensure that collectively we deliver an uplifting gymnastics experience for all.

8.1: Supply

Two sites provide gymnastics in Thurrock; at Ormiston Park Academy and Treetops School, neither site is a dedicated facility.

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Figure 8.1: Gymnastics provision in Thurrock

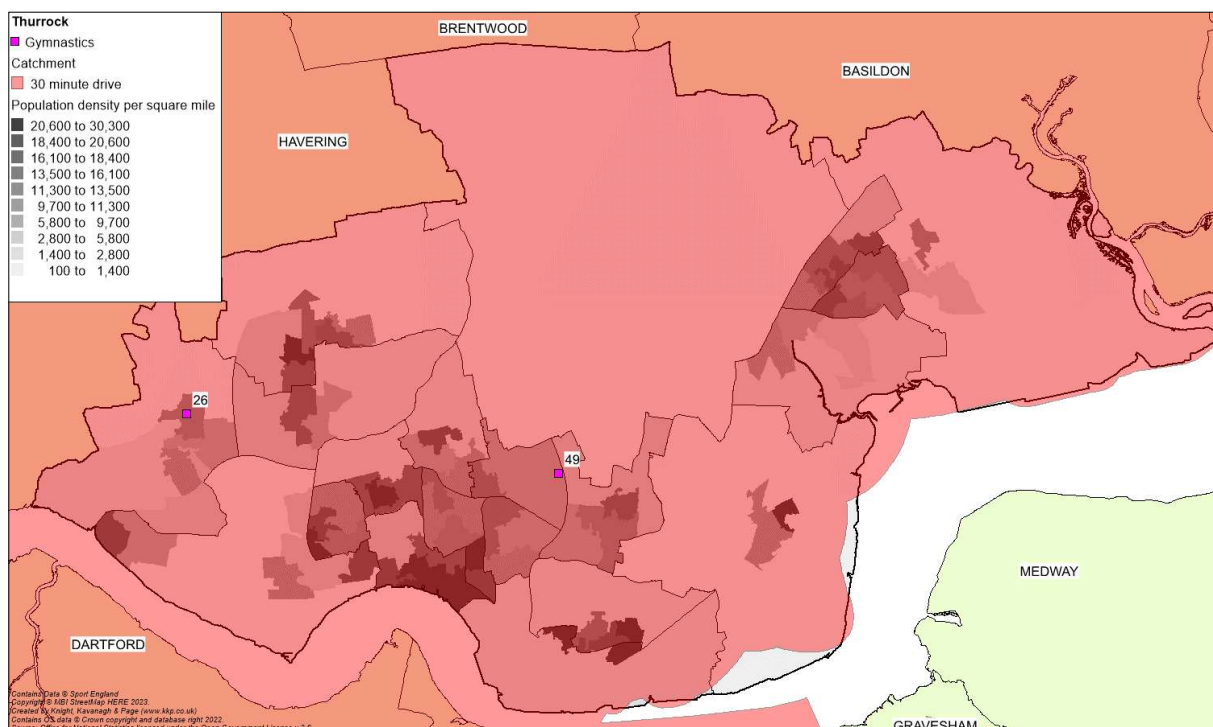


Table 8.1: Gymnastics provision in Thurrock

ID	Site	Club	Dedicated
26	Ormiston Park Academy	Thurrock Gymnastics Club	No
49	Treetops School	Jays Gymnastics Club	No

Both Jays Gymnastics Club and Thurrock Gymnastics Club operate at non-dedicated sites. Jays accesses the sports hall at Treetops School, whilst Thurrock utilises the sports hall at Ormiston Park Academy. Both venues are multi-sport facilities which were covered as part of the sports hall audit. Details with regard to both can be found in Section Four.

Accessibility and availability

Gymnastics facilities appeal beyond a local authority boundary. Consequently, this report considers provision within a 30-minutes' drive time catchment to demonstrate accessibility (Sport England suggests that drive time to specialist sports facilities can be modelled at 30 minutes as opposed to the 20 minutes modelled for sports halls and swimming pools). Virtually the whole Thurrock population lives within a 30-minute drive of gymnastics provision.

8.2: Demand

British Gymnastics reports that participation in gymnastics is increasing rapidly. It also reports substantial demand and that many clubs have waiting lists - restricting access to gymnastic activity due to lack of time within dedicated and generic facilities. As with most indoor based sports, membership levels were impacted by the Pandemic although British Gymnastics reports that the sport is experiencing a strong recovery with current membership numbers tracking at c.5% below 2019 levels.

A key part of the NGB's strategy to increase participation is to support clubs, leisure providers and other partners to move to their own dedicated facilities, offering more time and space for

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classes. It provides a range of products and programmes and expert assistance to support local delivery; gymnastic activities which are successfully driving membership growth and retention across the country.

British Gymnastics confirmed that supporting clubs to increase participation and expand provision is a priority in Thurrock. It is keen to see a dedicated facility developed in the Authority. It has worked with Thurrock Gymnastics Club for several years during which time a range of projects both at its existing school site and at council owned sites have been investigated – without coming to fruition. The Club has continued to develop over the years to enable it to be in a good position to take on a dedicated facility. However, it has not been able to increase capacity since 2017 due to access to space and the relationship with the School being less positive than it once was creating further capacity issues and limiting development.

Both clubs were invited to be part of the consultation; however, only Thurrock Gymnastics Club responded to. Desk research and consultation with British Gymnastics for Jays Gymnastics was to be carried out to evaluate its demand.

Thurrock Gymnastics Club reports having c.672 members and a waiting list of 200 young people. It currently hires the sports hall and adjoining gymnasium at Ormiston Park Academy. This is, however, insufficient to meet demand and the Club also has to close during certain period of the year – when the school sports hall is unavailable during exam periods. It requires access to its own dedicated facility to accommodate all members and offer year-round access. The number of coaches and volunteers it has is also a limiting factor on growth.

Jays Gymnastics has c.162 members and operates out of the sports hall at Treetops School. It offers a variety of sessions for toddlers, beginners, and advanced gymnasts and runs sessions on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings.

8.3: Summary of key facts and issues – gymnastics and trampolining

Facility type	Gymnastics and trampolining	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific needs
Quantity	There is no dedicated gymnastics facility in Thurrock. Gymnastics participation is being delivered at two non-dedicated sites; with these being at Ormiston Park Academy and Treetops School.	Thurrock GC reports a requirement for its own dedicated facility to accommodate demand.
Quality	No reported quality issues.	-
Accessibility	All Thurrock residents reside within a 30-minute drive time of a club in the Authority.	-
Availability (Management & usage)	Thurrock Gymnastics Club requires access to a dedicated facility to increase its capacity. It has been unable to grow since 2017 and has a lengthy waiting list.	Support Thurrock Gymnastics Club to develop a dedicated facility to reduce waiting lists/increase participation.
Strategic summary		
Work with British Gymnastics to help to ensure that dedicated provision is developed in the Authority. A solution is required to tackle the waiting list at Thurrock Gymnastics Club.		

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SECTION 9: INDOOR BOWLS

The five forms of bowls that are played indoors (flat/level green, crown green, long mat, short mat and carpet mat) each require a different venue and each format of the game has a different technical specification for their indoor facility.

Indoor flat/level green bowls is played on a purpose-built indoor green which complies with the laws of the sport of bowls. The NGB is English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA). It requires a standard bowling green; a flat area 31-40 metres long divided into playing areas called rinks. The number of these varies, depending on the width of the green.

Crown green bowls requires a standard crown green, artificial grass (carpeted) area of approximately 38m square which is crowned i.e. higher in the centre than round the perimeter. Indoor crown greens are relatively rare – substantially less common than those provided for flat green bowls. The NGB is the British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA).

Carpet bowls is played on a rectangular carpet (45 x 6 feet) that is rolled out. It can be accommodated in any indoor space large enough to accommodate the mats which come in different lengths. It tends to be played at a recreational level. The NGB is the English Carpet Bowls Association (ECBA).

Short mat bowls is typically played in sports halls, parish council rooms, outdoor bowls club pavilions and on indoor flat green bowls club greens. The NGB is the English Short Mat Bowling Association (SMBA). Long mat bowls is played on a rolled carpet typically laid on a sports hall floor. There are no ditches in this game. It is typically found in areas of low flat-green supply and/or where crown green bowls is played outdoors. There is no NGB for this version of the game.

An indoor bowling centre typically comprises a single flat green with a number of rinks and ancillary accommodation such as changing rooms, lounge/bar, viewing area, kitchen, office/meeting rooms and stores plus designated car parking. Ancillary accommodation scale varies according to the number of rinks available. A successful indoor bowls centre requires a combination of the right location, design, and financial and general management. Sport England²⁰ guidelines on catchment for indoor bowls centres are set out to be interpreted in the light of local circumstances:

- ◀ Assume the majority of users live locally and not travel more than 30 minutes.
- ◀ Assume that 90% of users will travel by car or public transport, with the remainder by foot.
- ◀ As a guide, calculate demand on the basis of one rink per 14,000-17,000 total population.
- ◀ The number of rinks required can be related to the estimated number of members, assume 80-100 members per rink.

EIBA stated priorities are:

- ◀ Recruitment of participants.
- ◀ Retention of participants.
- ◀ Clubs are recommended to:
 - ◀ Develop and implement a robust sports development plan
 - ◀ Actively review the Sport England 'Buddle' website.
 - ◀ Actively promote the club in the local community amongst those who are able bodied and disabled. Wheelchair users and visually impaired people are particularly keen on the sport of bowls.
- ◀ Retention and improvement of facilities.
- ◀ New indoor facilities in areas of low-supply and high-demand.

²⁰ Sport England Design Guidance Note Indoor Bowls 2005

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EIBA Vision 2025-2027

This plan focuses on: recruit and retain 45+ and recruit and retain 70+. Both markets require growth. The idea is that people aged 45+ need new versions/formats of the game to play and the 70+ will wish to continue with current formats. Its focus areas are:

- ◀ Recruit and Retain.
- ◀ Facilities – Build, Improve, Retain
- ◀ Inclusion
- ◀ Communications
- ◀ Commercial Activities
- ◀ Competitions
- ◀ Performance
- ◀ Governance

The EIBA “Recruit and Retain Strategy” is to concentrate on the family aspect of our Sport. This means that we are keen for all of our Clubs to avail themselves of opportunities for “increasing participation” and “improving the experience” of all able-bodied or disabled participants in Bowls across all ages and gender.

Running alongside this is the Sport England funded development work provided jointly by the Indoor NGB (EIBA); Outdoor NGB (Bowls England) and the “Bowls Development Alliance” (BDA). Each NGB has two directors on the Board of BDA.

The Sport England funding for the 2022-2025 period, focuses on the delivery of:

- ◀ **Club hubs:** ensure that all clubs remain sustainably positioned at the heart of the communities, and there are good pathways to increase membership.
- ◀ **Communities:** develop healthy bowling communities, with good quality competitions, options to increase coaches and volunteers and healthy relationships between clubs.
- ◀ **Health and wellbeing:** support clubs promote health and wellbeing of members with a range of programmes and activities.
- ◀ **Inclusion:** ensure clubs are as inclusive as possible, promoting the sport to all including females and people from diverse communities.

Alongside these core objectives the BDA works with key partners on:

- ◀ **Safeguarding:** ensuring the sport is safe for everyone to play by working across all five National Governing Bodies (NGBs) [BE, EIBA, British Crown Green BA, English Short Mat BA and English Bowling Federation] to have policies and processes in place. Training is available to support the network of club safeguarding officers.
- ◀ **Disability:** the BDA works in partnership with Disability Bowls England, Activity Alliance, BE and the EIBA to ensure everyone regardless of disability can access the sport of bowls.
- ◀ **Women Can:** the BDA are driving a campaign alongside BE and the EIBA to encourage more women to play bowls, coach bowls and volunteer in bowls.
- ◀ **Equality & Diversity:** the BDA, BE and the EIBA are all striving to ensure the sport of bowls is as diverse as it can be.

BDA Vision and Strategy 2022-2027

This Strategy focuses on the new era of collaboration across the bowls network.

Its vision is to place bowls at the heart of every community as an accessible sport for all. It has also outlined strategic priorities, which as follows:

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- ✦ **Build Partnerships and Communities:** To ensure our role in the bowls family preserves the important connection with our partners and key stakeholders through the continuation of shared goals and objectives, aligning to our organisation's vision of transforming bowls into an accessible sport for all.
- ✦ **Educate and Empower:** To Increase the impact we have on tackling inequalities through a more connected and educated volunteer workforce who fully support our efforts at a local level and who represent a younger, more diverse group of people, ensuring the sport has sustainability into the future.
- ✦ **Diversify and innovate:** To continue to take the lead on driving inclusion with the view to improving the culture of our sport through more inclusive and innovative practices on the ground, linking into the whole sport inclusion strategy.
- ✦ **Sustain and Grow:** To ensure we have tried and tested sustainability plans in place to recruit and retain volunteers and grow participation at our clubs, working closely with our wider network to broaden our reach and influence.

9.1: Supply

Quantity and quality

There is one indoor bowls facility in Thurrock; Tilbury Community Association. It has six rinks. There is one indoor bowls facilities within 30 minutes' drive time of Thurrock.

Figure 9.1: Indoor bowls facilities in Thurrock and within 30 minutes' drive time

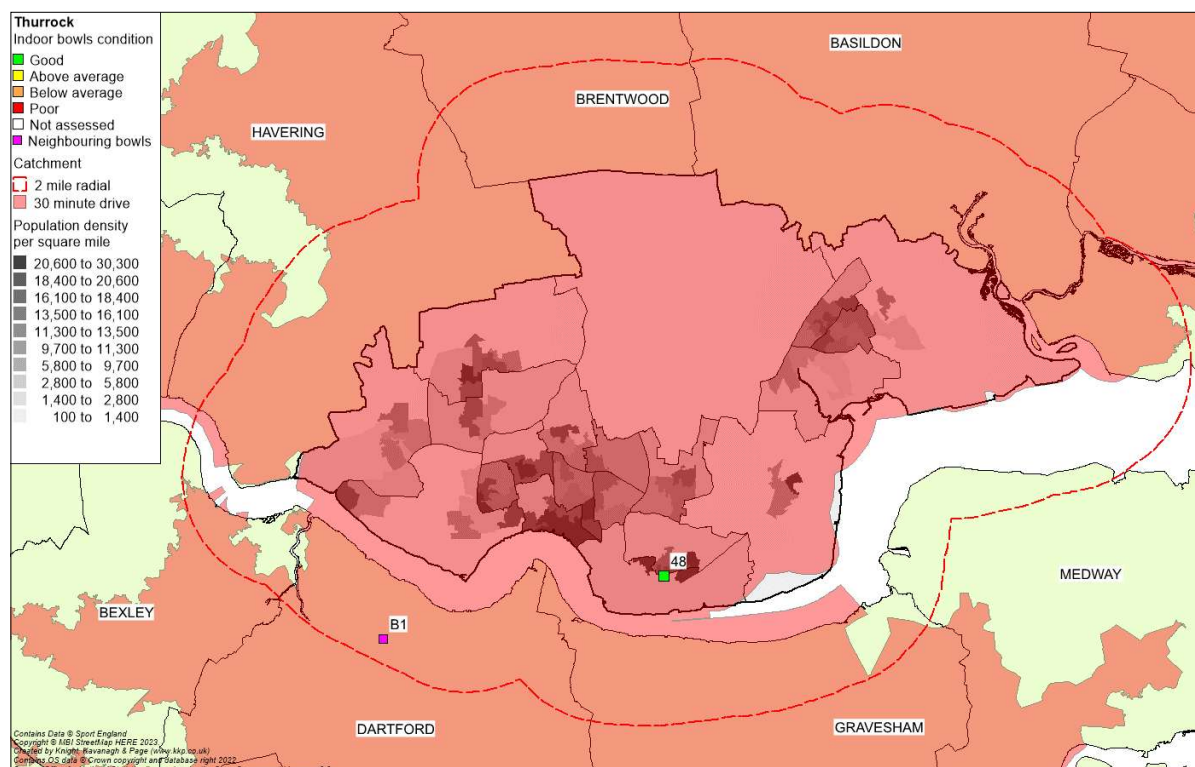


Table 9.1: Indoor bowls facilities in Thurrock

ID	Site name	Rinks	Access type	Condition
48	Tilbury Community Association	6	Sports club / CA	Good

Table 9.2: Indoor bowls facilities within a 30-minutes' drive

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ID	Site	Rinks	Access	District
B1	Dartford Stone Lodge Indoor Bowls & Social Club Ltd	6	Reg. membership	Dartford

Source: Active Places Power 13/01/2025

The Tilbury Community Association facility is rated as good quality. Its carpet was last resurfaced in 2020 and it is well maintained by the club. LED lights have been installed above the playing surface and in the rest of the building to reduce energy consumption. Changing facilities are in above average condition and are regularly maintained by the club.

Accessibility

Drive time catchment modelling suggests that over 98% of Thurrock's population lives within a 30-minute drive of an indoor bowls facility within the Authority.

Availability

Tilbury Community Association requires a membership to access facilities. It is available during the day and in the evening, seven days per week. Dartford Stone Lodge Indoor Bowls & Social Club Ltd requires registered membership to access.

9.2: Demand

Consultation with EIBA and Tilbury Community Association suggests that there is currently sufficient provision in Thurrock and adjoining local authority areas. The Club offers two membership types to accommodate indoor bowling - for competitive and social members. Current membership stands at c. 950 (750 playing members). Although, this should be noted this includes members who also play squash. Consultation suggests that it could accommodate a further 50 playing members before reaching capacity.

Overall, membership has been decreasing since the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Club reports gaining a couple of new members each month generally via word-of-mouth promotion. In addition, it is working with local schools to offer children free sessions at the venue. (Demand for indoor provision identified via outdoor bowls clubs will be captured in the PPS).

9.3: Summary of key facts and issues – indoor bowls

Facility type	Indoor bowls	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There is one indoor bowls facility in Thurrock, containing 6 rinks.	Retain and support the existing facility.
Quality	The 6-rink facility is good quality.	Create a sinking fund to ensure the carpet can be replaced at an appropriate time.
Accessibility	Over 98% of Thurrock's residents live within a 30-minute drive of an indoor bowls facility.	-
Availability (Management and usage)	Tilbury Community Association provides access via a reasonably priced membership.	This key facility offers daytime activity. Seek opportunities to diversify the offer to the wider community to increase participation to remain viable.

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Strategic summary

There is no requirement for increased indoor bowling facilities in the Authority. Tilbury Community Association has spare capacity to accommodate new members.

The Club could be encouraged to consider making a more accessible 'pay and play' offer and pricing option.

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SECTION 10: INDOOR TENNIS

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the NGB for all tennis provision within the UK. It administers the sport at national and regional level. One of its key objectives is to get more people playing tennis more often. To achieve this, through its most recent Investment Framework (Vision 2019 – 2023), prioritises will be given to the following sites:

- ◆ New and existing indoor tennis centres
- ◆ Park tennis
- ◆ Tennis clubs
- ◆ Schools and other educational establishments

This will be supported through the following key funding objectives:

- ◆ Funding through interest free loans.
- ◆ Investing in venues that have a proven record of increasing participation.
- ◆ Investing where there is thorough community engagement.
- ◆ Support venues that encourage participation growth.
- ◆ Target investment that is demand led.
- ◆ Invest in venues that are financially sustainable.
- ◆ Support venues that have successfully sourced partnership funding.

Central to any investment will be the provision of a sustainable business case.

This section considers indoor tennis facilities provision in Thurrock. It uses two terms to describe indoor building types:

Traditional - A permanent structure made of traditional materials using traditional construction techniques. This commonly takes the form of steel or timber portal frame spanning the full length of the court (including run backs) clad in a material to suit local conditions e.g. metal cladding, brickwork or timber boarding.

Non-traditional - A permanent or non-permanent structure made of non-traditional materials using non-traditional construction techniques. Three types of structure fall into this category:

- ◆ Air supported structures (air halls).
- ◆ Framed fabric structures.
- ◆ Tensile structures.

The LTA identifies 72 target locations for new community indoor tennis venues in England. Thurrock has not been identified as a priority area.

10.1: Supply

Indoor tennis is based on specialist facilities which appeal beyond local authority boundaries. This report considers provision within a 30-minutes' drive time catchment to demonstrate accessibility. There is one indoor tennis facility in the authority at Bannatyne Health Club; it has two acrylic courts.

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Quality

The two acrylic courts at Bannatyne Heath Club are good quality. The blue surface has good line markings and an attractive décor. The lighting is good, and the roof is a suitable height. The courts were refurbished in 2023 and have been maintained to a good standard. There are funds in place to continue to upkeep the courts as required.

Figure 10.1: Indoor tennis courts within 30 minutes' drive time of Thurrock

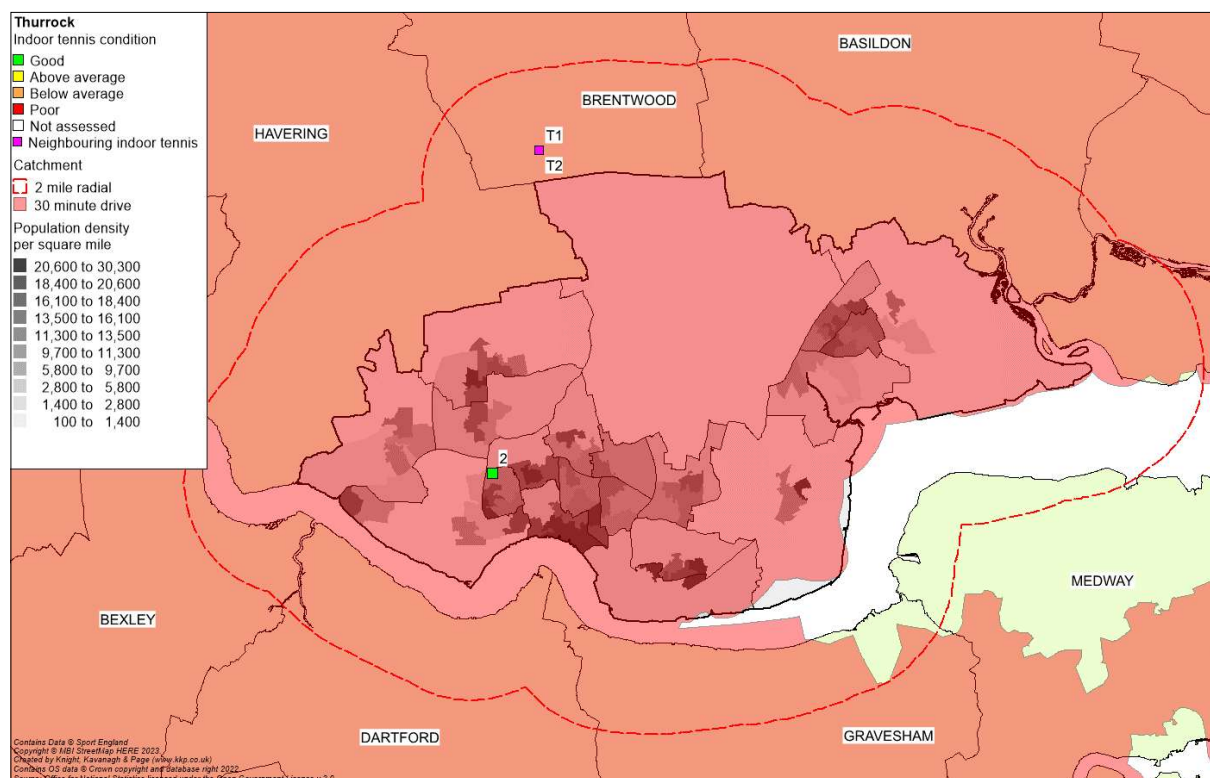


Table 10.1: Indoor tennis courts within 30 minutes' drive time of Thurrock

ID	Site name	Courts	Access type	Condition
2	Bannatyne Heath Club	2	Reg. membership	Good

ID	Site	Type	Courts	Surface	Access	District
T1	Virgin Active Clearview Health & Racquet Club	Traditional	6	Acrylic	Reg. membership	Brentwood
T2	Virgin Active Clearview Health & Racquet Club	Airhall (seasonal)	1	Acrylic	Reg. membership	Brentwood

Source: Active Places Power 13/01/2025

Accessibility and availability

Drive time catchment modelling suggests that 99.8% of Thurrock's population (176,549 MYE 2022) is within a 30-minute drive of a facility with indoor tennis courts. There is one facility within a 30-minute drive of Thurrock; Virgin Active Clearview Health & Racquet Club in Brentwood. It is accessible via a registered membership.

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10.2: Demand

The LTA has recently restructured its strategic approach to target key national focus areas, ultimately to grow participation. Future investment in facilities will be based on detailed analysis of potential demand throughout the UK. It has identified 72 priority target areas for development of new indoor courts in the UK of which Thurrock is not one.

The indoor courts at Bannatyne Health Club (Chafford Hundred) are heavily used during winter months. Evening capacity is limited but daytime usage is low and increased capacity could be accommodated.

There is a need to monitor demand for indoor tennis courts at outdoor court venues. This will be captured within Thurrock's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2025.

10.3: Summary of key facts and issues – indoor tennis

Facility type	Indoor tennis	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	Bannatyne Health Club is the sole facility offering indoor tennis in Thurrock, with two acrylic courts.	No additional demand for indoor tennis has been identified.
Quality	Court quality is good and funds are in place to replace the playing surface when needed to retain its quality.	-
Accessibility	All residents live within a 30 minutes' drive time of an indoor tennis facility.	-
Availability (Management and usage)	The courts at Bannatyne Health Club are only available for registered members. Therefore, it may not be accessible to many Thurrock residents due to membership costs. There is no pay and play facility in Thurrock or within a 30 minute drive time of the Authority.	Seek opportunities to enable a pay play offer in the Authority.
Strategic summary		
The Authority should monitor demand for indoor tennis facilities at outdoor court venues (see Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy 2025).		

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SECTION 11: VILLAGE/COMMUNITY HALLS

Village and community halls are important recreational facilities, especially in rural areas that, in some instances, may lack access to purpose-built sports facilities. They are usually multi-functional, providing places to meet, socialise and for sport/recreational clubs and activities. In more isolated areas, a church hall or a sports pavilion can also serve a range of functions depending on its size.

11.1: Supply

The audit identified 27 village/community halls spread evenly across the Authority, with understandably greater concentrations in its more densely populated areas.

Figure 11.1: Village/community halls in Thurrock with 800m radial catchment

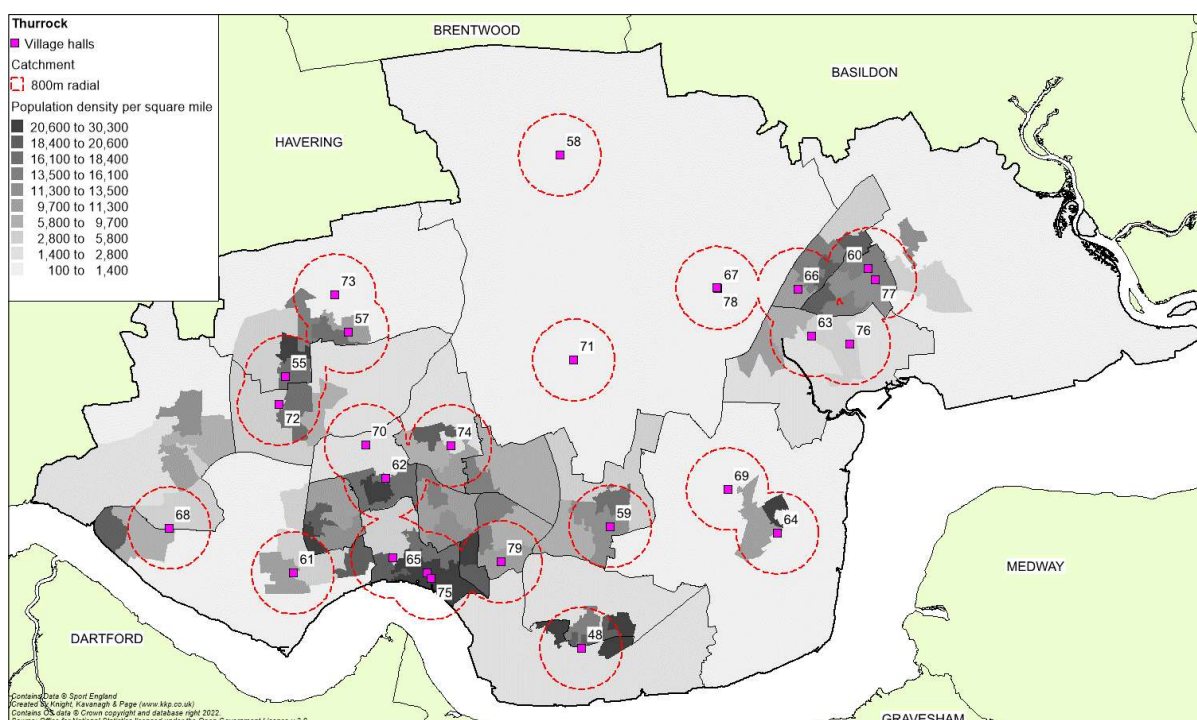


Table 11.1: All village/community buildings in Thurrock

ID	Name
48	Tilbury Community Association
55	Belhus Village Hall
56	Belmont Village Hall
57	Brandon Groves Community Centre
58	Bulphan Village Hall
59	Chadwell Village Hall
60	Corringham Hall
61	Cowdray Hall Community Centre
62	Drake Community Centre
63	East Thurrock Community Association
64	East Tilbury Village Hall
65	Grays Parish Hall

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ID	Name
66	Homesteads Village Hall
67	Horndon Village Hall
68	Hugh Delargy Village Hall
69	Linford Village Hall
70	North Stifford Village Hall
71	Orsett Village Hall
72	Royal British Legion Hall
73	South Ockendon Village Hall
74	Stifford Parish Hall
75	The Beehive
76	The Crooked Billet
77	The Springhouse
78	The Woolmarket
79	Tyrells Hall Club
80	West Tilbury Village Hall

Accessibility

Over 56% of the population lives within an 800m walk of a village or community hall. They offer different types of physical activity relevant to the local communities which they serve.

Availability

Typically, they rely upon volunteers to operate. Many offer facilities at key times needed i.e., morning, afternoon and evening. Activities tend to reflect local community needs/ requirements.

Table 11.2: Types of activities taking place in Thurrock's village halls/community centres

Dance	Fitness	Physical activity	Sport
Ballet Ballroom tap Modern (solo, salsa) Contemporary Line	Zumba Pilates Boot camp Circuit training Boxercise Aerobics Yoga	Aerobics (legs bums & tums) Karate Tai Chi	Table tennis Badminton Bowls Football Cricket Martial arts (various)

There has, in recent years, been a marked increase in the number of fitness and physical activity sessions taking place in the centres (and less dance). Audit research suggests that in addition to sport and physical activity, key services delivered at these venues include food banks, warm hubs, breakfast clubs and social supermarkets. It is presumed that this reflects the economic and financial issues in the communities that many serve. Consultation indicates some spare daytime and weekend capacity but much less on weekday evenings. Given issues of sports hall capacity and the requirements of some of the area's clubs, village and community halls may be an ideal environment to provide small halls to cater for very localised badminton demand and combat sports.

Availability

Village/community halls tend to be open on a needs (booked) basis. Most are available during the day and at evenings/weekends, offering a range of activities serving their respective

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communities. Management formats vary; processes include village hall committees, local organisations and individuals. Virtually all rely to some degree on volunteer input/goodwill.

11.2: Demand

Audit research suggests that demand for village hall/community centre space is high, highlighting their importance ensuring a good range of local sport, physical activity, arts and cultural activities for local residents. Desk research indicates that the majority of centres have some spare capacity. They have key role ensuring that older people or people from more rural areas have access to facilities and can contribute to getting the inactive active or retaining those already involved. Further analysis is required to gauge the extent to which, activities in these facilities can meet the needs of the local population.

These venues often provide an ideal environment to deliver health referral type activity such as gentle and chair-based exercise. Any future development of community hall provision should investigate the potential for integration with NHS neighbourhood services linked to physical activity and the Council's Health and Well-being Strategy priorities.

11.3: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Village/community halls	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 27 village / community centres in Thurrock. They also serve many more rural parts of the Authority.	No specific deficiency identified.
Quality	Quality was not assessed.	None identified
Accessibility	There is a good level of accessibility: Over 56% of the population lives within 800m catchment of a venue.	None identified
Availability (Management and usage)	They are often available on weekday daytimes and at weekends – the operation of most venues reliant to a degree on volunteer goodwill. Activity on offer varies considerably and is broadly reflective of interpreted local need.	None identified.
Strategic summary The opportunity to increase physical activity opportunity provided in village halls and community venues should be a key strategy feature moving forward. Activities tend to reflect the needs of the local community and halls open at time to suit demand. There may be options to increase physical activity provision and work with service delivery partners (e.g., the NHS) to ensure that all residents, particularly those in rural areas have improved access to sport/physical activity opportunity. Ensure that harder to reach groups and people with specific health needs can access health and wellbeing provision.		

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SECTION 12: CYCLING

British Cycling (BC) is the NGB for all forms of cycling. It oversees six sporting disciplines, with each having a dedicated facility type:

- ◀ Track cycling – velodromes.
- ◀ Road cycling – closed road circuits.
- ◀ Mountain biking – trails.
- ◀ BMX racing – race/pump tracks.
- ◀ Cycle speedway – cycle speedway tracks.
- ◀ Cyclocross – non-dedicated, non-permanent venues.

BC aids in the development of all six formats, helping to safeguard those that wish to participate in a competitive and compelling environment. The popularity of cycling has increased since recent, elite sporting success in the Olympics and Paralympics as well as in other major championships.

This section focuses on dedicated cycling facilities and considers the provision of local cycling (active travel) infrastructure. Consultation was undertaken with road cycling clubs.

Local cycling & walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs)

In 2017 the Government published its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy²¹, which sets out the Government's ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys. It is intended to support the transformation of local areas to tackle congestion, improve physical and mental health, and strengthen local economies.

This was followed in 2022 by the publication of Gear Change²², and the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy in 2022, which reaffirms the Government's commitment to making walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choices for millions more journeys.

LCWIPs provide a new strategic approach to identify cycling and walking improvements at a local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks over the next ten years. They will also form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.

The three key outputs of LCWIPs are:

- ◀ Network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for future development.
- ◀ Prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment.
- ◀ Technical report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.

²¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908535/cycling-walking-infrastructure-technical-guidance-document.pdf

²²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

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Through desk research it was highlighted that nine LCWIPs are currently in development for the main urban settlements in Thurrock. A summary of where the plans²³ are up to is as follows:

- ◆ **Aveley:** It is proposed to improve two bridges across the M25, two bridges across the A13, to install a new bridge across the A13, safer crossings across the village and a review of footways and traffic in the village centre.
- ◆ **Chadwell St Mary:** It is proposed to improve junctions and crossing on existing links across the area, install a protected cycle facility for Herringham Primary Academy, accessibility improvements in/around Cross Keys and a new link to East Tilbury.
- ◆ **East Tilbury and Linford:** It is proposed that a new link towards Chadwell St Mary along Muckingford Road is installed plus a new link to the A1013 Stanford Road along Buckingham Hill Road, a new link to Stanford-le-Hope along the rail line and accessibility improvements on the surroundings of the shops of Stanford House.
- ◆ **Grays:** It is proposed to improve the link along Lodge Lane to allow further east-west movements across the borough, improve crossings along the east-west link on Lodge Lane, improve connections between Lodge Lane and Grays town centre, improve connections to Chadwell St Mary, improve safety around the school cluster with traffic management on Bradleigh Avenue, create a new link with Tilbury (between New Road and Thurrock Parkway) and accessibility improvements in Grays town centre, Socketts Heath and Southend Road.
- ◆ **Lakeside, West Thurrock and Chafford Hundred:** It is proposed to improve crossing on existing links (including Pilgrims roundabout), improvements on the north-south link between A126 London Road and the A1306 Arterial Road, a school street on Mill Lane and create a new link between Lakeside and Chafford Hundred.
- ◆ **North Grays:** It is proposed to improve the link along Lodge Lane to allow further east-west movements across the borough, improve crossings along the east-west link on Lodge Lane (including on Treacle Mine roundabout and Stifford Interchange). Also included is development of a calmer and safer environment for active travel to school with measures on Blackshots Lane and Connaught Avenue and accessibility improvements around Crammavill Street.
- ◆ **Purfleet-on-Thames:** It is proposed to improve to the two bridges across the A13, install a new bridge across the A13, remove accessibility barriers on cycle paths and create a safer environment on London Road.
- ◆ **South Ockendon:** It is proposed to improve the three north-south links (Foyle Drive, Daiglen Drive and the path along the B186), improve crossing on the B1335 Stifford Road, improve connections towards Aveley across the M25, improve connections towards North Stifford and Lakeside and deliver accessibility improvements around Derwent Parade.
- ◆ **Stanford-le-Hope and Corringham:** It is proposed to link the train station with the wider network towards Stanford Road to the east, link the train station with the wider network towards the Manorway shared path to the north, improve safety on the main west-east link (Southend Road), install a new link with the A1014 Manorway cycle path. Also included are accessibility improvements in Stanford-le-Hope and Corringham town centres and accessibility improvements in Lampits Hill shops.
- ◆ **Tilbury:** It is proposed to create a new link between Tilbury and Grays from Thurrock Parkway to New Road and remove accessibility barriers on existing links.

²³<https://consult.thurrock.gov.uk/lcwip-24>

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12.1: Supply

There is no dedicated cycling venue in Thurrock, with clubs and groups using the local road network for cycling sessions.

12.2: Demand

Consultation was undertaken with BC, cycling clubs, and community groups. Where no response was received to a consultation request, desk research has informed cycling demand. Of the three clubs invited to consultation, two responded (Chafford Hundred Cycling Club and Gateway Cycling). A summary of the consultation and other known cycling activity is as follows:

Chafford Hundred Cycling Club

Chafford Hundred Cycling Club has c.50 members and provides regular group rides on a weekly basis to fulfil the needs of club members. Main club rides take place on Saturday and Sunday mornings at 08.00, using Lakeside Business Village as a starting point. The Club also runs beginners' rides on Wednesday evenings at 19.00 from spring to autumn taking in a 10–12-mile route. It reports not having or needing any facilities, as it publishes the meeting point (often car parks) and route on its website.

Gateway Cycling

Gateway Cycling caters for people living in Thurrock, Basildon, the Thames Gateway and the surrounding areas of South Essex. It has c.150 members. Its rides take place on Sunday mornings starting from Bulphan Primary School, meeting at 09.00 in the summer and at 09:30 in winter months.

It usually has two or three rides (dependent on numbers and ability), a recreational ride, an intermediate ride and sometimes a fast ride. It is not actively trying to increase participation as this would result in meeting points, which are usually cafes, becoming overcrowded. It does not have a clubhouse or function room so the stops along the routes provide an opportunity for members to socialise.

Viking Avoidance Cycling Club

Viking Avoidance Cycling Club is a friendly social group of cyclists that ride most weekends from 25-50 miles per ride. It uses roads and off-road routes throughout Thurrock and South Essex.

UK Go-Ride

UK Go-Ride is a BC development programme for young people. It offers what is described as a fun and safe way to introduce young people to the sport and provides a platform to improve cycling skills. It hosts holiday coaching programmes and has local accredited club activity which allows young people to sample the various disciplines of the sport. Progression is obtainable with Go-Ride Racing, offering competition for riders to transition from school or club coaching to inter club and open regional competitions.

None of Thurrock's clubs are accredited Go-ride cycling clubs.

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UK Breeze

UK Breeze is a BC development programme for women. It offers three categories, easy going, steady and challenging to allow women of all abilities to get involved. This provides exercise opportunities whilst also creating a comfortable environment to meet new people.

In Thurrock, there are currently no UK Breeze sessions taking place. The nearest identified is at Hornchurch County Park Visitor Centre in the London Borough of Havering.

12.3: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Cycling	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There is dedicated cycling venue in Thurrock. There is demand for cycling as evidenced by the numerous cycling clubs in the area. Desk research highlighted that nine LWIPs are currently in development for the main urban settlements in the Authority. A number of clubs operate without the need for facilities utilising existing infrastructure e.g., café stops etc.	BC highlights a need for a dedicated off-road closed road circuit facility which could accommodate cyclocross and cycle speedway and accommodate events. It has no funding to support this.
Quality	No reported quality issues.	-
Accessibility	-	-
Availability (Management & usage)	All dedicated cycling facilities are free to access.	Seek opportunities to enable a pay play offer in the Authority.
Summary	Several clubs offer opportunities for recreational and competitive cycling across the Authority, with membership relatively high. LCWIPS are reviewing and where possible improving the infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling in the area.	

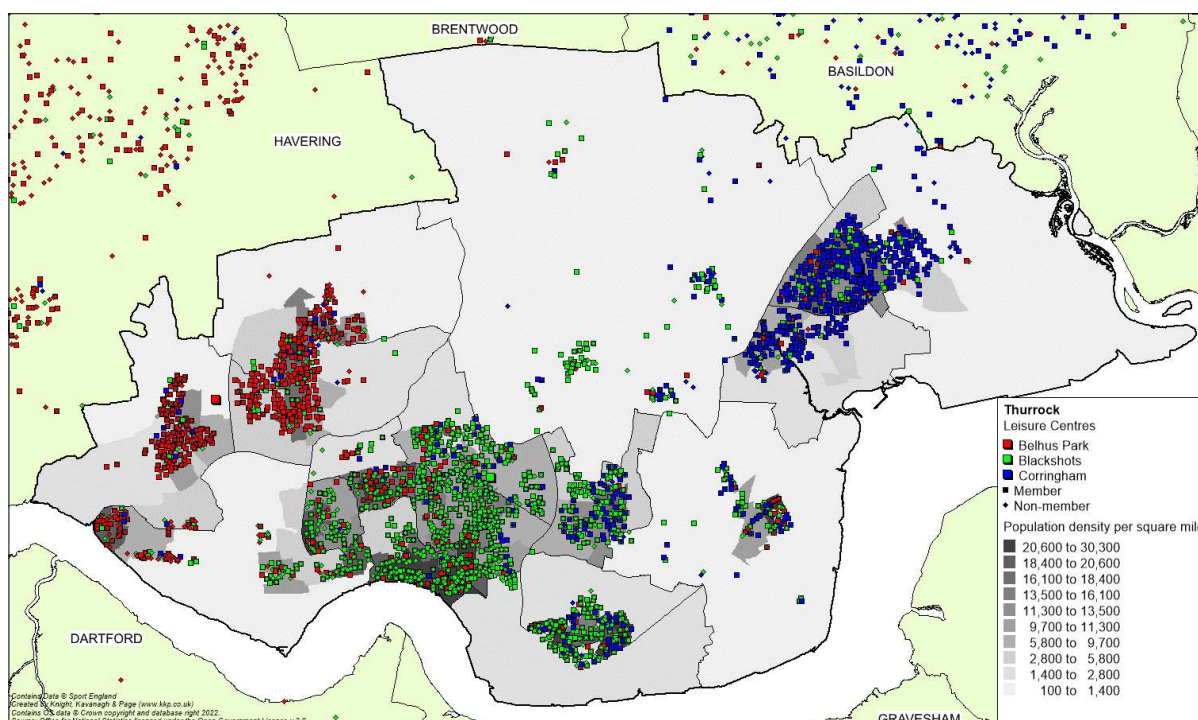
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SECTION 13: MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS

KKP requested current membership data from Impulse Leisure in order to analyse where current members reside in relation to the centre they attend. A total of 7,157 postcode records were provided on 30th January 2025. These identify members active over the last three months. The data provided the following:

- 7,085 (99%) had correct and valid postcodes for mapping.
- 5,821 (82.2%) of the mapped postcodes are within the Thurrock local authority area.
- 1,264 (17.8%) of mapped postcodes are out of the Thurrock local authority area

Figure 13.1: Thurrock: membership distribution by centre on Census population density



The data is allocated to the following centres:

- Impulse Leisure (Blackshots Leisure Centre)- 3,174.
- Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park Golf and Country Club)- 2,180.
- Impulse Leisure (Corringham) and the Civic Hall- 1,731.

Figure 13.1 indicates where members live in relation to the leisure centre they subscribe to. The majority of members use the facility closest to their home, although there does appear to be some cross-over, potentially reflective of work patterns. It is clear that both Belhus Park and Corringham, presumably because of their locations to the west of the Authority for the former and to the east for the latter pull in members from outside of the Thurrock boundary.

Members rely heavily on transport to access the centre they attend. The data indicates that majority (82.2%) reside within Thurrock, with the remaining residing from outside of Thurrock (17.8%) from authorities such as Basildon, Bexley, Brentwood, Castle Point, Dartford, Havering, Newham, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Tower Hamlets.

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Figure 13.2: Thurrock membership distribution by centre IMD 2019

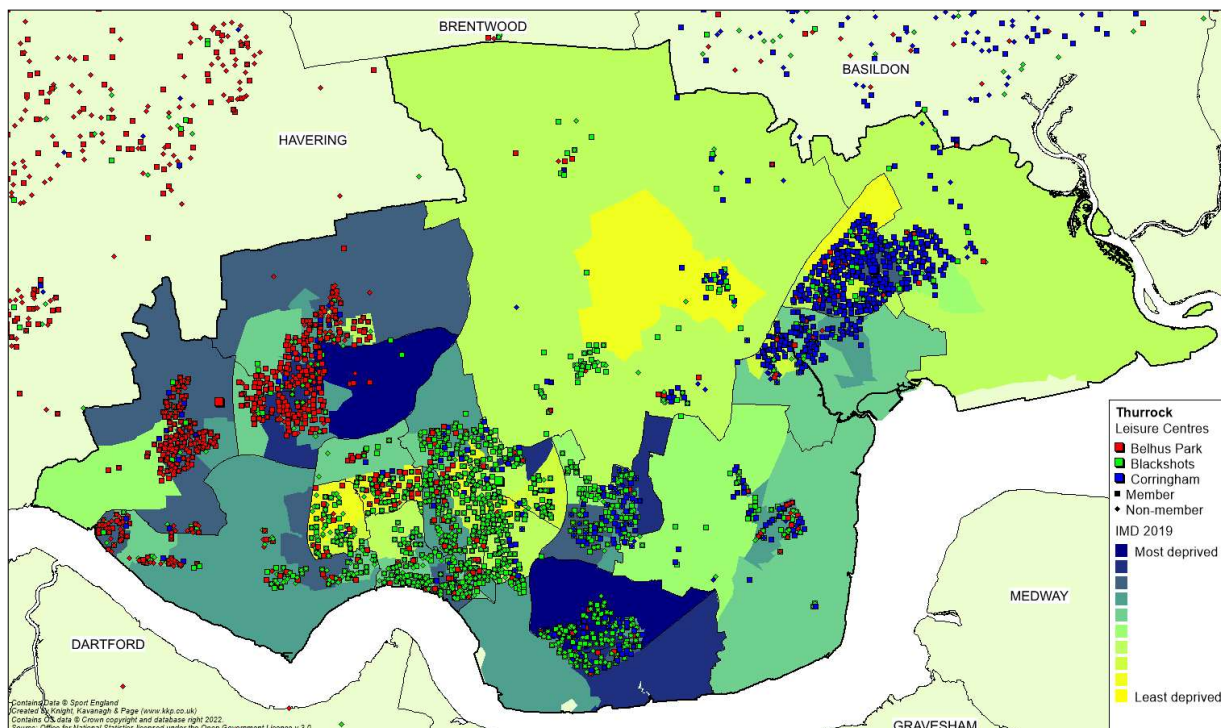


Table 13.1: All centre users- Thurrock postcodes IMD 2019

IMD 2019 10% bands	Thurrock Persons #	Thurrock Persons (%)	All centres Persons #	All centres Persons (%)
0 - 10	6,586	4.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	11,537	6.9%	89	4.6%
20.1 - 30	24,264	14.6%	324	16.6%
30.1 - 40	36,178	21.8%	344	17.7%
40.1 - 50	23,689	14.3%	146	7.5%
50.1 - 60	7,614	4.6%	137	7.0%
60.1 - 70	23,039	13.9%	404	20.8%
70.1 - 80	13,269	8.0%	274	14.1%
80.1 - 90	18,162	10.9%	228	11.7%
90.1 - 100	1,702	1.0%	0	0.0%
Total	128,280	100.0%	4,380	100.0%

Figure 13.2 and Table 13.1 indicate that across the centres, the number of people that live in the IMD most deprived bandings (1-30%) is high. On a centre by centre basis, Belhus Park (Table 13.2) is attracting more people from these bands than the other two centres. 25.5% of the Authority population reside in areas of higher deprivation.

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Table 13.2: Centre usage by IMD (multiple deprivation)

IOD 2019 10% bands	Thurrock Population (mid-2015)	%	All centres #	All centres %	Belhus Park #	Belhus Park %	Blackshots #	Blackshots %	Corringham #	Corringham %
00 - 10%	6,586	4.00%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10 - 20%	11,537	6.90%	89	4.6%	64	13.9%	25	3.4%	0	0.0%
20 - 30%	24,264	14.60%	324	16.6%	169	36.8%	5	0.0%	150	19.9%
30 - 40%	36,178	21.80%	344	17.7%	99	21.6%	203	27.7%	42	5.6%
40 - 50%	23,689	14.30%	146	7.5%	103	22.4%	36	4.9%	7	0.9%
50 - 60%	7,614	4.60%	137	7.0%	24	5.2%	21	2.9%	92	12.2%
60 - 70%	23,039	13.90%	404	20.8%	0	0.0%	230	31.3%	174	23.1%
70 - 80%	13,269	8.00%	274	14.1%	0	0.0%	110	15.0%	164	21.8%
80 - 90%	18,162	10.90%	228	11.7%	0	0.0%	104	14.2%	124	16.5%
90 - 100%	1,702	1.00%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	166,040	100.00%	1,946	100.0%	459	100.0%	734	100.0%	753	100.0%

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Of the current membership, Table 13.2 indicates that 50.7% of Belhus Park's members reside within areas of higher deprivation (as identified above), Corringham has 19.9% and Blackshots has 3.4%.

Summary

Thurrock leisure centre members are well distributed across the Authority with a significant number travelling more than one mile to access facilities. The Authority's facilities also attracts some members from neighbouring authorities.

Thurrock's leisure centres attract 21.2% of the Thurrock population which reside in areas of higher deprivation. In addition, some residents access sites casually on a *pay as you go* basis. However, access requires online or onsite registration, and places can be guaranteed when booked through the website, app or at site. The leisure centres require registration before the first visit to track the data used for Sport England's Moving Communities Platform and site security. Free spaces to any activity are available on the day from walk in's, but this is not guaranteed.

It is important that people are able to access provision without barriers. Whilst centres are generally well used, there is a need to create opportunity for those potentially digitally excluded. 50.7% of Belhus Park's members reside within areas of higher deprivation, Corringham has 19.9% and Blackshots Leisure Centre has 3.4%.

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SECTION 14: INITIAL STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategy which follows will take account of the findings of this needs assessment, the Authority's demographic make-up and the Council's vision. There is a general requirement to continue to invest in sports facilities in Thurrock to ensure that they are fit for purpose for the 21st Century (e.g., welcoming, clean, attractive, flexible spaces, wide programme offer, ability to learn to swim, cost-effective to manage and operate etc). This should lead to increased participation and a more active Authority.

Strategy recommendations are likely to be predicated upon some or all of the following:

- ◀ In line with the Council's carbon reduction targets (in the Thurrock Climate Change Strategy Update), ensure that existing facilities are made as energy efficient as possible and that refurbishments and any new development consider energy efficiency as a high priority.
- ◀ Develop a system to, as early as possible, identify/tackle ongoing investment, maintenance, and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities.
- ◀ Develop a medium/long term approach of refurbishing/replacing the public leisure centres, given the age of provision. Thurrock's centres are operating beyond their reasonable life expectancies, inefficient (albeit that they are well used and in high demand) and require investment to improve quality and remain operational.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to develop increased swimming pool provision, given that the public leisure centres are operating near to capacity. Appraisal of potential site locations may be aided by a bespoke FPM assessment. Locations in close proximity to Tilbury should be considered as a priority, where deprivation is highest, to improve access to swimming facilities.
- ◀ Collaborate with schools sites to ensure sports hall quality remains at/rises to an appropriate standard and that their venues continue to be made available for community use.
- ◀ FPM findings in relation to sports halls identify that almost all of the demand for sports halls in the Authority are met by the accessible supply. The following recommendations are:
 - Increase access for community use at key sites and provide a more balanced distribution of met demand.
 - Modernisation of the sports halls is of increasing importance in order to maintain their attractiveness, ensure equity of provision across the Council area, and continue to retain the very high level of demand from Thurrock being met within the Council area.
 - The importance of community access to educational sports halls is evident. If not in place, a community use agreement should be put in place for the current supply. Looking ahead, it will be important to negotiate and secure a community use agreement at any new or replacement educational sports hall site.
- ◀ FPM findings in relation to swimming pools identify that Thurrock's demand requires more water space to be comfortably met within the Authority, but a very high proportion of its demand is satisfied, and unmet demand is low. However, the swimming pool stock is very old and, while there have been recent refurbishments, this is of some concern.
 - Achieve a better balance between the distribution of supply and demand by increasing availability and capacity at the key sites.
 - Increase the hours for community use at Harris Academy Ockenden.
 - Consider refurbishment or replacement of public leisure centres to ensure long-term sustainability and attractiveness.

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- ◀ Consider a bespoke FPM assessment for modelling the impact of future population growth and the spatial distribution of development planned in the emerging Local Plan. This is in addition to undertaking a bespoke FPM assessment for potential site locations for increasing swimming provision.
- ◀ The Council (and partners including the Active Partnership) should collaborate with educational sites to ensure where possible, they remain open for the maximum possible period of time for community use throughout the year. In addition to seeking to apply innovative solutions to help tackle this issue, clubs need to be supported during the periods during which exams occupy sports hall space.
- ◀ Where new developments generate an increase in demand secure capital sums to contribute to providing additional facilities and secure community use agreements at any new or replacement educational sports hall site.
- ◀ Given the projected population increase among residents aged over 65, support providers to increase the number and range of activities and opportunities made available for people in this age group.
- ◀ Due to the high level of demand for pay and play fitness facilities in the Authority, look to develop sports hall provision at Impulse Leisure (Belhus Park & Country Club) to increase daytime availability as a priority.
- ◀ Several clubs in different sports in the Authority are at membership capacity due either to current facility size or reliable availability. Look to support clubs seeking to access different facilities to enable them to continue to grow participation. Sports to which this applies include badminton, gymnastics, netball and swimming.
- ◀ Given the absence of dedicated provision in the Authority, explore options to support Thurrock Gymnastics Club to find a dedicated gymnastics facility to allow it to accommodate current and future demand.
- ◀ Consider options to support Stanford-Le-Hope TTC to find additional space and/or a new facility to accommodate current and future demand.
- ◀ Improve the quality of squash courts at Tilbury Community Association and work closely with ESR and deliver targeted initiatives such as Squash 101 to grow engagement.
- ◀ Ensure that public leisure centre memberships and specific activities are available to people living in the Authority's more deprived communities at an appropriate price point and that the mechanisms used to promote this are more prominent.
- ◀ Promote more sporting activities in the Authorities village and community halls to ensure rural communities have greater access to sport provision.
- ◀ Ensure that people living in the Authority's rural communities can gain access to activities delivered at and by village halls and community centres.
- ◀ Ensure that harder to reach groups and people with specific health needs can access health and wellbeing provision. This includes making memberships and specific activities available to people living in the Authority's more deprived communities via enabling increased use of community facilities (e.g., village halls and community centres).
- ◀ Support other developments (via planning, developer contributions and officer expertise) to increase levels of sport and physical activity in the wider community.