

**UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
LEISURE FACILITIES EVIDENCE BASE**

INDOOR & BUILT FACILITIES – NEEDS ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT

MAY 2024

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) has been appointed by Uttlesford District Council (UDC) to produce an indoor and built needs assessment for the period 2022-2041. Its stated objectives are to deliver:

- ◀ A detailed sports facilities assessment of indoor and built sports facilities.
- ◀ A comprehensive sport facilities and recreational strategy to inform future planning policies, priorities, infrastructure delivery and investment.

The overarching aim of the project is to provide:

- ◀ An evidence-based assessment of existing sport and recreation facilities.
- ◀ An assessment of the sport and recreational needs of the future residents of Uttlesford up to 2041.

This report is, thus, a detailed assessment of current provision of indoor and built sports facilities located within Uttlesford, identifying needs (demand) and gaps (deficiencies in provision).

Separate playing pitch and open space needs assessments have also been commissioned. All needs assessment reports will be followed by individual strategies which will contribute to the overall stated project outcomes to:

- ◀ Create sustainable communities by directing sports provision to areas of planned growth and areas of deficiency.
- ◀ Secure S106 contributions.
- ◀ Protect and enhance existing facilities ensuring better facilities through re-development.
- ◀ Incorporate a robust up to date needs assessment which supports the Council and meets the requirements of the amended National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- ◀ Reflect and address the needs and demands of the local population that will grow in line with the changes defined by the Local Plan.

Thereby:

- ◀ Encouraging greater participation in sport and recreation.
- ◀ Promoting healthier communities.
- ◀ Justifying on-site provision and financial support for facilities.
- ◀ Involving the community in decisions affecting provision.
- ◀ Reinforce partnerships in delivering health outcomes.

1.2: Scope of the project

This report provides a facility breakdown of 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 health and economic deprivation.

The facilities/ sports covered include, sports halls (and associated indoor sports), swimming pools, health and fitness, gymnastics, squash, indoor bowls and village halls / community centres.

In delivering this report KKP has:

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- ◀ Individually audited identified sports halls (conventional i.e., 3+ badminton court halls) swimming pools (minimum size 160m²), 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.

The audit was conducted between September and October 2023.

Specific deficiencies and surpluses are identified to inform the provision required. The specific objectives of the audit and assessment are to:

- ◀ Review relevant UDC strategies, plans, reports and corporate objectives.
- ◀ Review the local, regional and national strategic context.
- ◀ Present the scale of known local housing growth.
- ◀ Analyse the demographics of the local population at present and in the future (up to 2041).
- ◀ 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.

This process applied reflects Sport England's Guide; Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG) methodology for indoor and outdoor sports facilities and accords with the most up-to-date version of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

1.3: Background

Uttlesford is one of 12 local authorities located in the County of Essex. It comprises of three settlements; Saffron Waldron, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet along with several local rural centres including, Takeley, Thaxted, and Newport.

It is surrounded by the following districts; Braintree, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and South Cambridgeshire. Key transport routes include the M11, which connects the M25 with Cambridge, travelling north to south through the authority and the A120 which runs east to west, through the south connecting Stansted Airport to Braintree,

The key area of employment within the Authority is Stansted Airport. This is the fourth largest airport in the UK, behind the two London airports and Manchester. It is a base for several European low-cost carriers and currently employs c.3,200 people.

The authority's rural nature provides challenges for those people without private transportation, especially those living in outlying villages.

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Figure 1.1: Main towns and transport links – Uttlesford District Council



1.4: Report structure

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) in a report entitled 'Strategic Planning: Effective Co-operation for Planning Across Boundaries (2015)' makes 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.

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In the preparation of this report, KKP has paid due regard to these strategic principles, it is, therefore, structured as follows:

- ◀ Section 2 - background policy, population profile and demographic characteristics.
- ◀ Section 3 - description of methodology employed to assess indoor provision.
- ◀ Section 4 - assessment of sports hall provision.
- ◀ Section 5 - assessment of swimming pool provision.
- ◀ Section 6 - assessment of health and fitness provision.
- ◀ Section 7 - assessment of gymnastics.
- ◀ Section 8 - assessment of squash.
- ◀ Section 9- assessment of indoor bowls,
- ◀ Section 10 - assessment of village / community halls.
- ◀ Section 11 – strategic recommendations

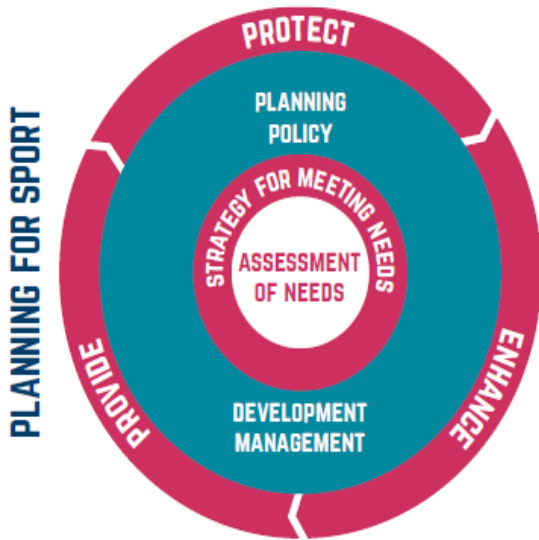
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SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

2.1: National context

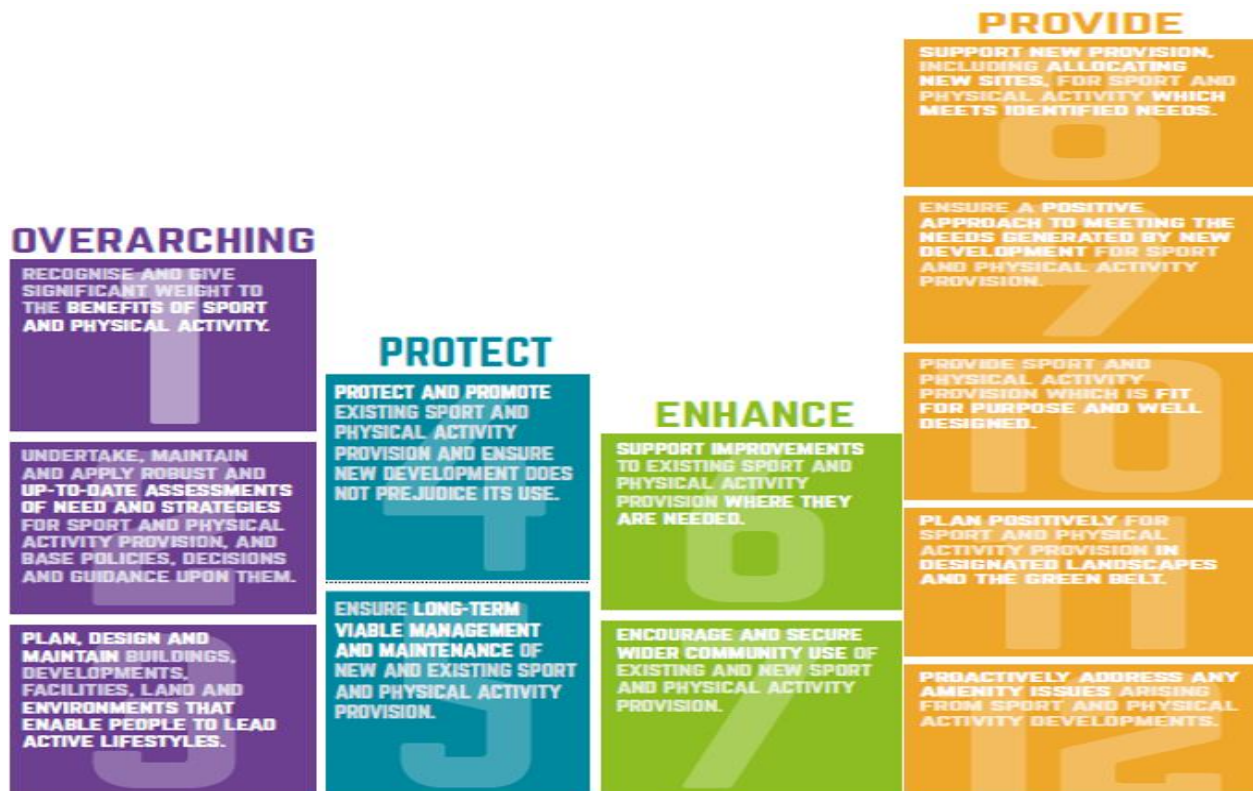
Sport England aims to ensure positive planning for sport, enabling the right facilities to be provided in the right places, based on up-to-date assessment of needs for all levels of sport and all sectors of the community. This assessment report has been produced for UDC applying the principles and tools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

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 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 2021

Sport and physical activity have a big 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's most recent strategy, Uniting the Movement is its 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

It sets out its aims to tackle the inequalities that it states are long seen in sport and physical activity making the point 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:



As well as being an advocate for sport and physical activity, through 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. Each is designated as a building block that, on its own, would make a difference, but together, could change things profoundly.

They 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:** Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people 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 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, 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 overall progress being made by all those supporting sport and physical activity.

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Sport England: The Future of Public Sector Leisure

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 the facts that:

- ◀ 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 2018/19¹, 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, which included both the statutory learn to swim programme and the water safety curriculum across primary schools. Swimming club usage is also predominantly based at public leisure facilities.

The leisure sector is emerging from the pandemic in a particularly fragile state. Emergency funding ² 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 have now been 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.

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 leaned 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 (see Figure 2.3 overleaf) focusing on added value and supporting the delivery of key local priorities, alongside wider government policy around Levelling Up, net zero and health inequalities.

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

² 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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Figure 2.3: Vision and commitments: Public Sector Leisure Report



✓ High-quality data and insight

A commitment to build the evidence base and intelligence around what works, why and the difference it makes to communities.

✓ Coordination and partnerships

A commitment to coordinate stakeholders and share information across organisations and geographical boundaries.

✓ Leadership and workforce development

A commitment to develop and deliver programmes to support the workforce at all levels both within local authorities and providers.

✓ Champion equality, diversity and inclusion

A commitment to training and change to embed diversity and inclusion across the full range of activities, services and communications – for both communities and the workforce.

✓ Digital transformation

A commitment to support the digital transformation of the sector through the development of a white paper, partnering options and maturity assessment.

✓ Strengthen the connection to health

A commitment to building partnerships at all levels including ICS and providing materials to support engagement (e.g. social prescribing handbook).

✓ Environmental sustainability

A commitment to improving awareness, owning good practice and supporting the transition to zero carbon facilities.

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Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England 2020

Sport England has brought together evidence on the contribution of community sport and physical activity to the five outcomes identified in the Government's strategy Sporting Future. These are physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and economic development.

Its aim was to assess the evidence base with a view to demonstrating the contribution of community sport and physical activity to the outcomes. Building on this foundation and other previous work, Sport England quantified the social and economic impact of community sport and physical activity. There are two complementary parts to the research. Part one measures the social impact (including physical and mental health) of sport and physical activity while part two measures the economic importance.

The findings reveal that community sport and physical activity brings an annual contribution of £85.5 billion to the country (in 2018 prices) through social and economic benefits.

Its social value – including physical and mental health, wellbeing, individual and community development – is more than £72 billion, provided via routes such as a healthier population, consumer expenditure, greater work productivity, improved education attainment, reduced crime and stronger communities. It also generates more than £13bn in economic value. The economic value includes more than 285,000 jobs within the community sport and physical activity sector.

Together, both parts enable Sport England to demonstrate the contribution of sport and physical activity to the five government outcomes. The research revealed that the combined social and economic value of taking part (participating and volunteering) in community sport and physical activity in England in 2017/18 was £85.5bn. When measured against the £21.85 billion costs of engagement and providing sport and physical activity opportunities, for every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity, a return on investment (ROI) of £3.91 was created for individuals and society in 2017/18.

Chief Medical Officer Physical Activity Guidelines 2019

This report updated the 2011 physical activity guidelines issued by the four Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK CMOs 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, the evidence to support 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.

The key factors for each age group are as follows:

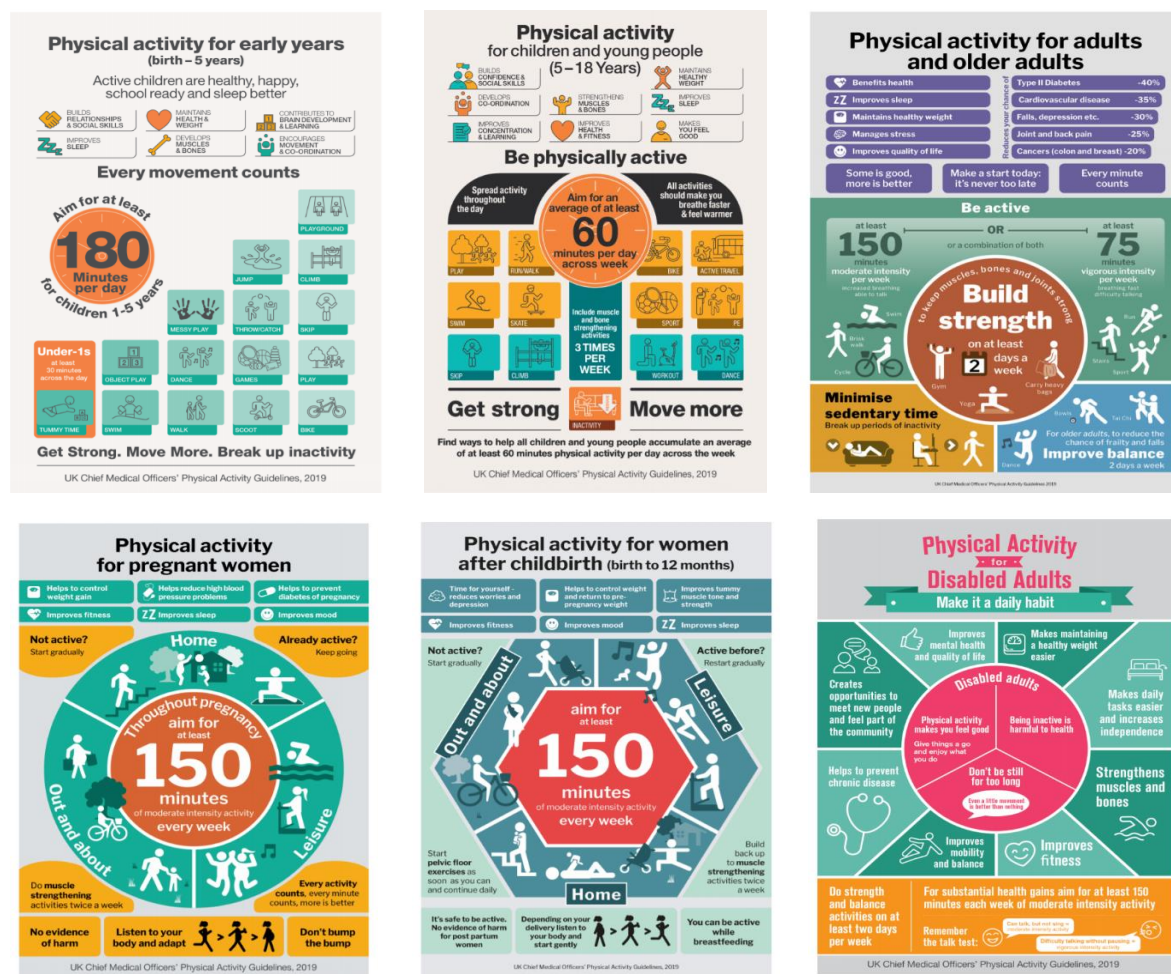
- ◆ **Under-5s:** This is broken down into infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. Pre-schoolers and toddlers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of different exercises, whereas infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activities.

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- Children and young people (5-18 years):** Children and young people 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+):** Older adults 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.

It notes the 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). This interval exercise has clinically meaningful effects on fitness, body weight and insulin resistance and is incorporated in recommendations for adults.

Figure 2.4: Physical activity guidelines



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.

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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 Chief Medical Officers guidelines which recommend an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week). It has three overarching ambitions which are that:

- ◀ All children and young people take part in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- ◀ Children and young people have the opportunity to realise developmental, character-building experiences through sport, competition and active pursuits.
- ◀ All sport/physical activity provision for children and 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, so they have the flexibility to use it in the way that they think 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.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework 2023

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 that 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 that participation in sport can bring.

The **promoting healthy and safe 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.

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Cost pressures affecting the leisure industry

Insight produced by the [Local Government Association](#) (the LGA) suggests that councils continue to face substantial inflationary, COVID-19 related, and demand-led pressures. These are affecting their ability to efficiently operate leisure provision. This sits alongside the steep increase of living costs to households.

Whilst the leisure sector recovery following Covid -19 restrictions gained momentum during 2022, rising utility costs and the recent cost of living pressures on households are likely to adversely impact consumer confidence, throughput, and participation rates. Councils and leisure operators are therefore being required to address and review existing management arrangements and options to ensure the viability of the sector.

Leisure providers (both in-house and externally commissioned) are being adversely and disproportionately affected because leisure centres have high energy demands, especially those with swimming pools. Typically, energy costs are a leisure operator's second highest cost after staffing. This is further exacerbated because the leisure estate is ageing and is relatively energy inefficient. Research shows that two-thirds of public swimming pools and sports halls are in need of replacement or refurbishment, and ageing assets are contributing up to 40% of some councils' direct carbon emissions.

The LGA suggests that, in tackling the challenges presented by the current energy crisis, councils should pursue a partnership focused approach and consider solutions which may contribute to wider public health, decarbonisation, and levelling up and economic outcomes. This could include the following measures:

- ◀ Regular monthly meetings with leisure operator to review and monitor utility costs.
- ◀ Encourage leisure operators to be open and transparent about the true cost of utilities.
- ◀ Explore potential for flexibility in contractual arrangements and operating parameters: i.e., pool temperature / building temperature / reviewing pricing.
- ◀ Review non-viable/low priority contractual requirements.
- ◀ Consider using any management fee to stabilise utilities and stabilise providers to ensure service continuity.
- ◀ Consider renegotiating the repayment terms of loans to enable providers to defer COVID repayments to later years when they are more stable.
- ◀ Work with the operator to include leisure projects as part of decarbonisation projects and/or council investment in energy saving projects.
- ◀ Application for any additional external body funding available to support the continuation and/or efficiency of service provision such as Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund.

Environmental sustainability

The UK Government net zero strategy 'Build Back Greener', published in October 2021, sets out how it intends to meet 2050 decarbonisation targets focusing on interventions such as:

- ◀ A fully decarbonised power system by 2035 with all electricity coming from 'low carbon sources'.
- ◀ Improved home and buildings heating efficiency, 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.

UDC net zero carbon commitment is set out in its Climate Crisis Strategy. It aims to become net-zero by 2030.

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[Sport England](#) reports that climate 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 in respect of this very real threat.

It proposes that a wide range of issues should be considered when considering project development and the resultant environmental impact of, say, a new swimming pool. This includes determining whether to refurbish an existing building with its carbon already embodied or to build anew³. Sport England suggests some key principles as part of a 'pathway to sustainability' and net zero carbon in respect of building design and operation – including:

- ◀ **Reduce energy consumption** - as the first measure to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.
- ◀ **Change 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 building fabric and glazing performance.
- ◀ Minimise initial energy demand - to reduce demand on plant and technologies incorporated.
- ◀ **Efficient systems** - invest in appropriate energy-efficient products including heating, ventilation, fittings, controls, sensors, heat pumps and recovery systems
- ◀ **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.

Summary of national context

Multiple challenges are currently impacting on the national policy context for physical activity and sport in the UK. Activity habits are continuing to be affected by rates of recovery from the Pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, meanwhile rising utilities costs are imposing serious financial constraints on the operation of leisure facilities.

Local authorities need to consider how sport and physical activity can be better positioned as a key driver in influencing wider corporate outcomes such as the reduction of health inequalities. This can be achieved through working more effectively with 'whole system' partners such as those in the NHS at neighbourhood level, whilst employing the skills within the physical activity sector to better connect people with opportunities to participate.

Ensuring an adequate supply of sustainable facilities to support this is also key and may require a radical re-shaping of facility stock in some areas given the age and low energy efficiency of certain facilities, particularly swimming pools. The evidence base provided within this report is intended to help UDC to make such decisions on an informed basis.

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2.2: Local context

Corporate Plan 2023-2027

Uttlesford's Corporate Plan sets out the key priorities for the next 5 years. Its vision within this time period is 'to make Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play', through the following themes:

Theme	Description
Active place-maker for our towns and villages	To create a renewed focus on strategic master-planning in partnership with towns and villages to create better resident-centred places to live. This will result in new policies and plans to give our towns and villages a strong sense of purpose and place.
Progressive custodian of our rural and historic environment	Residents will see the Council is a strong protector of the physical and historic environment and that the Council is taking affirmative action on combating the effects of climate change at a local level.
Champion for the District	Residents will feel that the Council is proactively working on their behalf for the good of the District with other authorities and organisations. This will improve Uttlesford's connectivity and create a better local health service for residents.

To ensure that Uttlesford's towns and villages become a strong sense of purpose and place, the authority will promote healthy lifestyles in diverse and inclusive communities. This will be achieved through:

- ◀ Working with partners, including the voluntary sector, to improve the general quality of life for residents, including for residents that experience social isolation, poor mental health, obesity, addiction and dementia.
- ◀ It will continue to be an active partner of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, to promote healthy lifestyles.

Uttlesford Local Plan

The new Uttlesford Local Plan will be part of the statutory planning framework for the district guiding decisions on all aspects of development. It will set out how and where new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered and the type of places and environment that will be created.

Submission of the draft Local Plan is expected in summer 2024. This will be followed by a period of examination during 2025 with the adopted Local Plan envisaged in early 2026.

This needs assessment report will therefore act as an important evidence base to help inform future priorities and requirements.

Uttlesford's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028

The health of people in Uttlesford is generally better than the England average. However, there are key issues associated with the rurality of the area and the potential to overlook local inequalities, which are masked by Uttlesford's generally affluent socio-economic profile.

To reduce these inequalities, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy vision is to ensure that all children, young people and adults across the whole of Uttlesford can live healthy, fulfilling and long lives.

To achieve this, the Strategy lists five key priorities which are to:

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1. Improve and support mental wellbeing.
2. Enable people to live healthy, active lifestyles throughout their lives.
3. Build healthy, resilient, active communities.
4. Alleviate pressures associated with increased costs of living.
5. Improve access to services and facilities.

To improve access to facilities, including leisure centres, the Authority will review and enhance sustainable public transport network to all key facilities. It will also ensure that facilities are of the highest of standards to ensure they are accessible. Providing accessible attractive facilities increasing the health of the Uttlesford community and creates opportunities for social interaction.

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

Launched in July 2021, the Fit for the Future 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.

As of June 2021, over 1.6 million people were living in Greater Essex of whom 901,000 are active adults who participate in over 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Active Essex wishes 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 achieve this, the Local Partnership sets out 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 our sport and physical activity sector, in order to collectively increase opportunities for all.

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2022 – 2026

Every local area must have a JHWS setting out the priorities identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that local government, the NHS and other partners will deliver together through the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB).

Essex JHWS 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, the JHWS identifies five key priorities, all of which have specific development outcomes which need to be achieved through partnership work, as outlined in Table 2.1.

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Table 2.1: Essex JHWS priorities and outcomes

Priority	Outcome
Improving mental health and wellbeing	Supporting 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	Enabling 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.

Leisure operator

The Council has a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with 1Life Management Solutions Limited to run its leisure centres. This contract, which expires in August 2035, incorporates:

- ◀ Refurbishment, maintenance, financing and operation of the Lord Butler Leisure Centre.
- ◀ The design, construction and ongoing maintenance and operation of two new facilities; the Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre.

Although situated at the same site as the Lord Butler Leisure Centre, Turpin's Indoor Bowls Club sits outside of the PFI contract and is therefore managed independently of the contract.

In February 2023, Parkwood Group acquired 1Life.

Summary of local policy

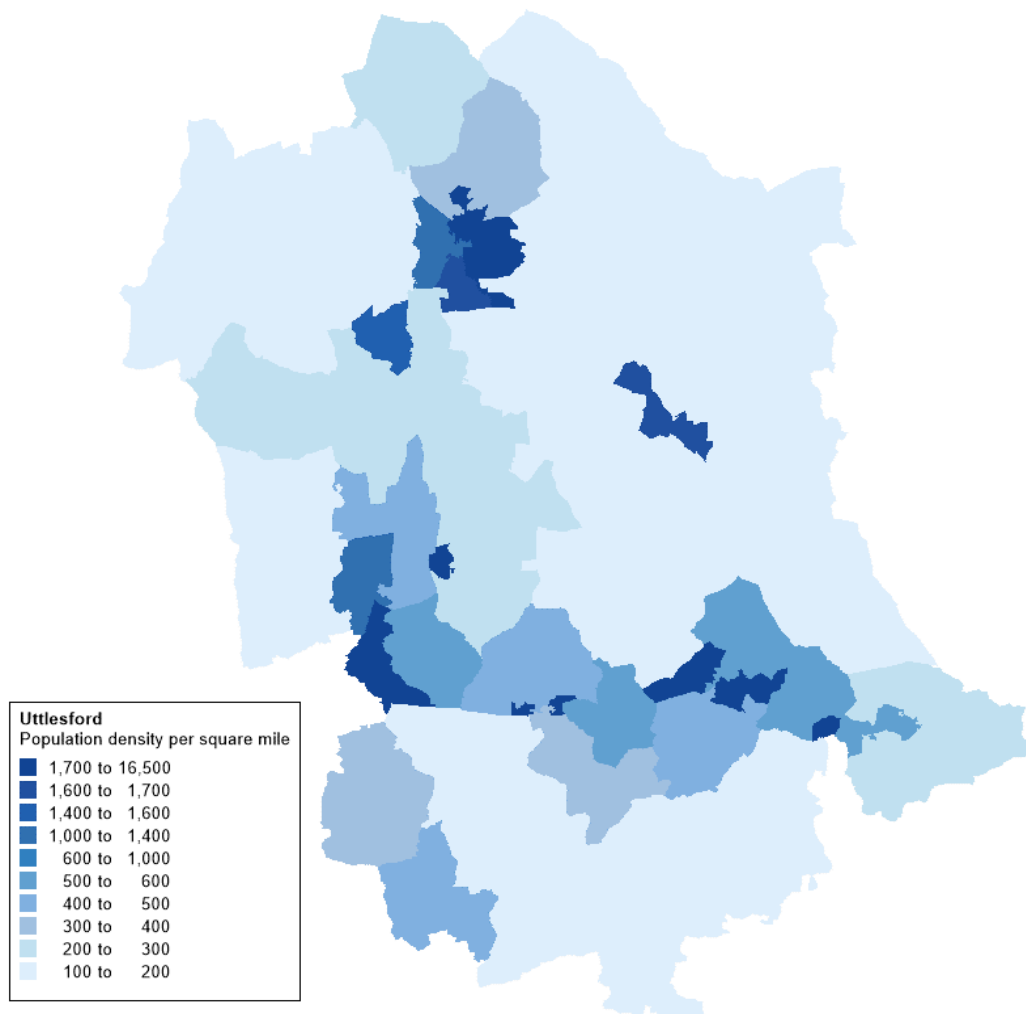
UDC is committed to ensuring that current and future residents have access to good physical activity opportunities, reside in strong communities and are supported by a successful and sustainable economy. It recognises that population growth and housing development is likely to require some form of intervention in relation to sports facility capacity by 2041.

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2.3: Demographic profile

Population and distribution (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS)

Figure 2.5: UDC population density: 2021 MYE, ONS



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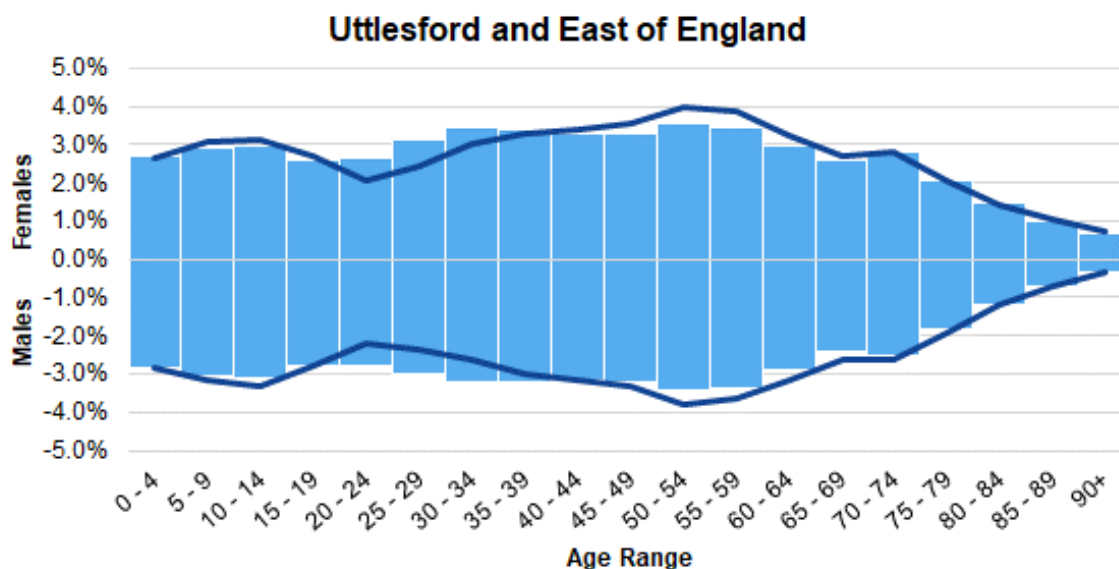
Higher population densities are focused in and around the three key settlements of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet, along with concentrations in and around Stansted Airport (which includes the local service centre of Takeley). Newport and Thaxted are also Local Service Centres with higher population densities. The rest of the authority is predominantly rural.

The total population for Uttlesford is 91,348 (44,652 male and 46,696 female).

The chart overleaf illustrates population age and gender composition. Overlaying the blue line for Uttlesford on the blue bars for the region it is easy to see where one dataset is higher or lower than the other.

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Figure 2.6: Comparative age/sex pyramid and Uttlesford and East of England



The proportion of 20-34 year olds is lower in Uttlesford (14.7%) than that in the East: (18.2%). There are, however, more people in the age groups from 45-64 (28.5% compared to 26.1%). The proportion of the population in remaining age groups in Uttlesford is similar to the regional averages.

Ethnicity: (Data source: 2021 census of population, ONS): Uttlesford's ethnic composition does not reflect that of England as a whole. According to the 2021 Census, the largest proportion (94.5%) of the local population classified its ethnicity as White; this is higher than the comparative England rate of 81.0%. The next largest population group (by self-classification) is Mixed, at 2.2% this is lower than the national equivalent (3.0%).

Deprivation (Data source: 2021 indices of deprivation, DCLG): None of the District's population falls within areas covered by the country's four most deprived cohorts compared to a national average of c.40%. Conversely, 68.2% live in the three least deprived groupings in the country, this compares to a 'norm' of c.30%.

Table 2.2: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) cohorts - multiple deprivation in Uttlesford.

10% bands	Population in band	%	Cumulative %
Most deprived - 10.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
20.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
30.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
40.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
50.0	1,537	1.8%	1.8%
60.0	9,369	11.0%	12.8%
70.0	16,211	19.0%	31.8%
80.0	19,939	23.4%	55.2%
90.0	23,663	27.8%	83.0%
Least deprived - 100.0	14,486	17.0%	100.0%

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Figure 2.7: IMD cohorts - multiple deprivation and health deprivation in Uttlesford

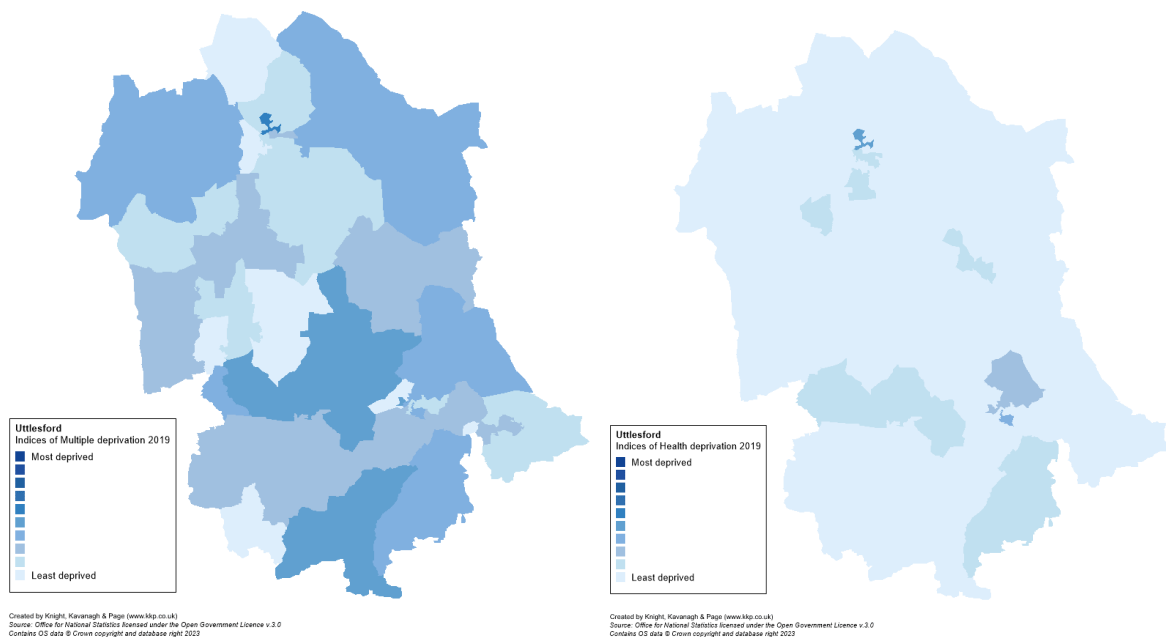


Table 2.3: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) cohorts – health deprivation in Uttlesford.

10% bands	Population in band	%	Cumulative %
Most deprived - 10.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
20.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
30.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
40.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
50.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
60.0	1,537	1.8%	1.8%
70.0	1,846	2.2%	4.0%
80.0	2,668	3.1%	7.1%
90.0	19,809	23.2%	30.4%
Least deprived - 100.0	59,345	69.6%	100.0%

Income and benefits dependency (Data source: Nomis 2022) The median figure for full-time earnings (2022) in Uttlesford is £38,489. The comparative rate for the East is £34,715 (-9.8%) and for Great Britain; £33,394 -13.2%. 985 people in Uttlesford claimed out of work benefits⁴ in July 2023. This is an increase of 51.5% when compared to March 2020 (650).

Health data (Data sources: ONS births and deaths, NCMP⁵ and NOO⁶): In keeping with patterns seen alongside lower levels of health deprivation, life expectancy in Uttlesford is higher than the national figure; the male rate is currently 82.6 compared to 79.4 for England, and the female equivalent is 85.4 compared to 83.1 nationally.

Weight and obesity: 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.

⁴ 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.

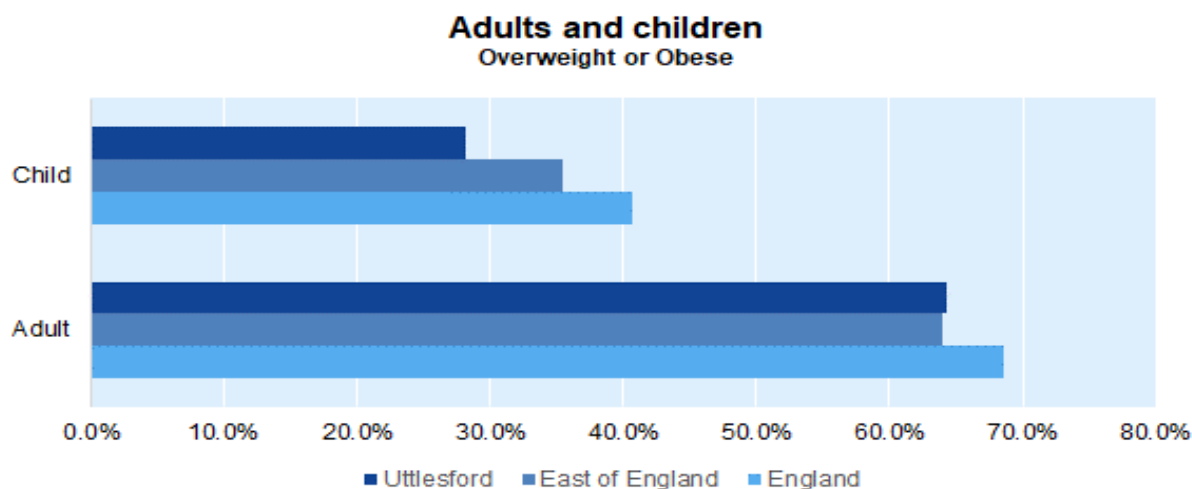
⁵ National Child Measurement Program

⁶ National Obesity Observatory

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These factors combine to make prevention of obesity a major public health challenge. Adult rates of obesity or overweight in Uttlesford are below national but slightly above regional rates. However, child rates are below both national and regional rates.

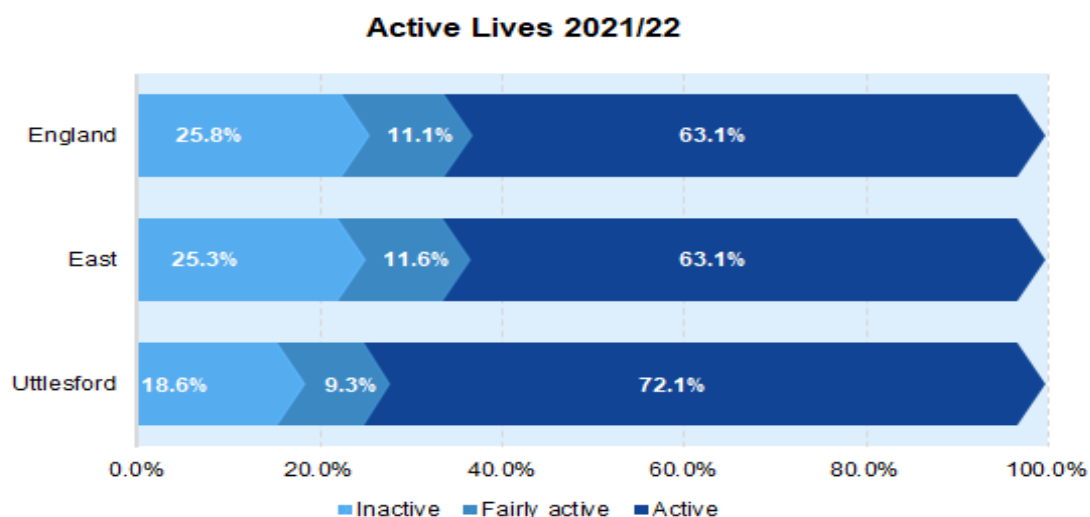
Figure 2.8: Child weight – reception and year 6



Sport England: Active Lives Survey (ALS) 2021/22

This is based on 16+ year olds taking part in walking, cycling, fitness, dance and other sporting activity (excluding gardening). When compared to national rates, Uttlesford has a lower percentage of inactive compared to England and the East and a higher percentage is considered to be active.

Figure 2.9: levels of activity and most popular sports and physical activities



The most popular sports and physical activities:

ALS also makes it possible to identify the top five participation sports within Uttlesford. As with many other areas, fitness and athletics are among the most popular activities and are known to cut across age groups and gender; in Uttlesford over one third of adults take part in fitness activities, on average, at least twice a month. The next most popular activity is athletics in which 20.0% of adults participate on a relatively regular basis.

Table 2.4: Most popular sports in Uttlesford

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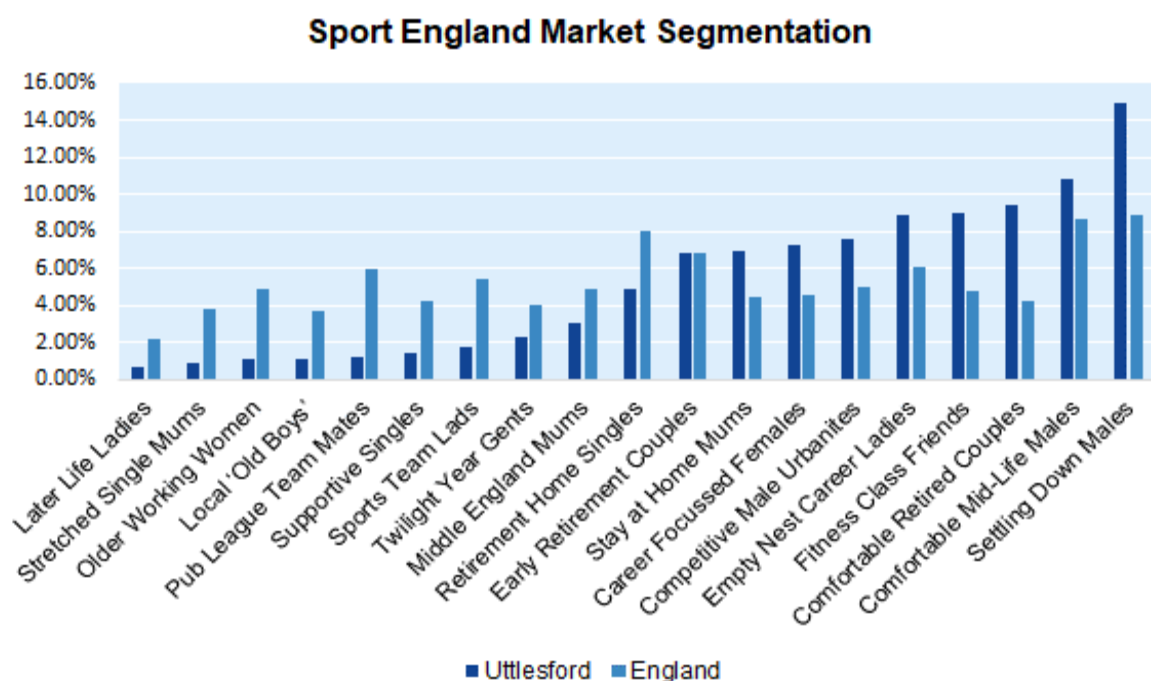
Sport	Uttlesford #.	Uttlesford %	East #	East %	England #	England %
Fitness	25,700	34.6%	1,264,600	25.0%	11,374,600	24.9%
Athletics	14,900	20.0%	694,100	13.7%	6,252,000	13.7%
Cycling	14,100	19.0%	916,500	18.1%	7,472,900	16.4%
Swimming	4,200	5.6%	231,200	4.6%	2,001,600	4.4%
Cricket	2,000	2.7%	25,900	0.5%	229,100	0.5%

Sporting segmentation (Data source: Market segmentation, Sport England)

Sport England classifies the adult population in 19 market segments to provide insight into the sporting behaviours. The segmentation profile for Uttlesford indicates that 'Settling Down Males' is the largest segment of the adult population at 14.97% (8,467) compared to a national average of 8.83%. This is followed by 'Comfortable Mid-Life Males' (10.86%) and 'Comfortable Retired Couples' (9.42%).

At the other end of the spectrum, there are fewest 'Later Life Ladies' with only 0.7%, 'Stretched Single Mums' (0.9%) and 'Older Working Women' (1.13%).

Figure 2.10: SE segmentation –Uttlesford- compared to England



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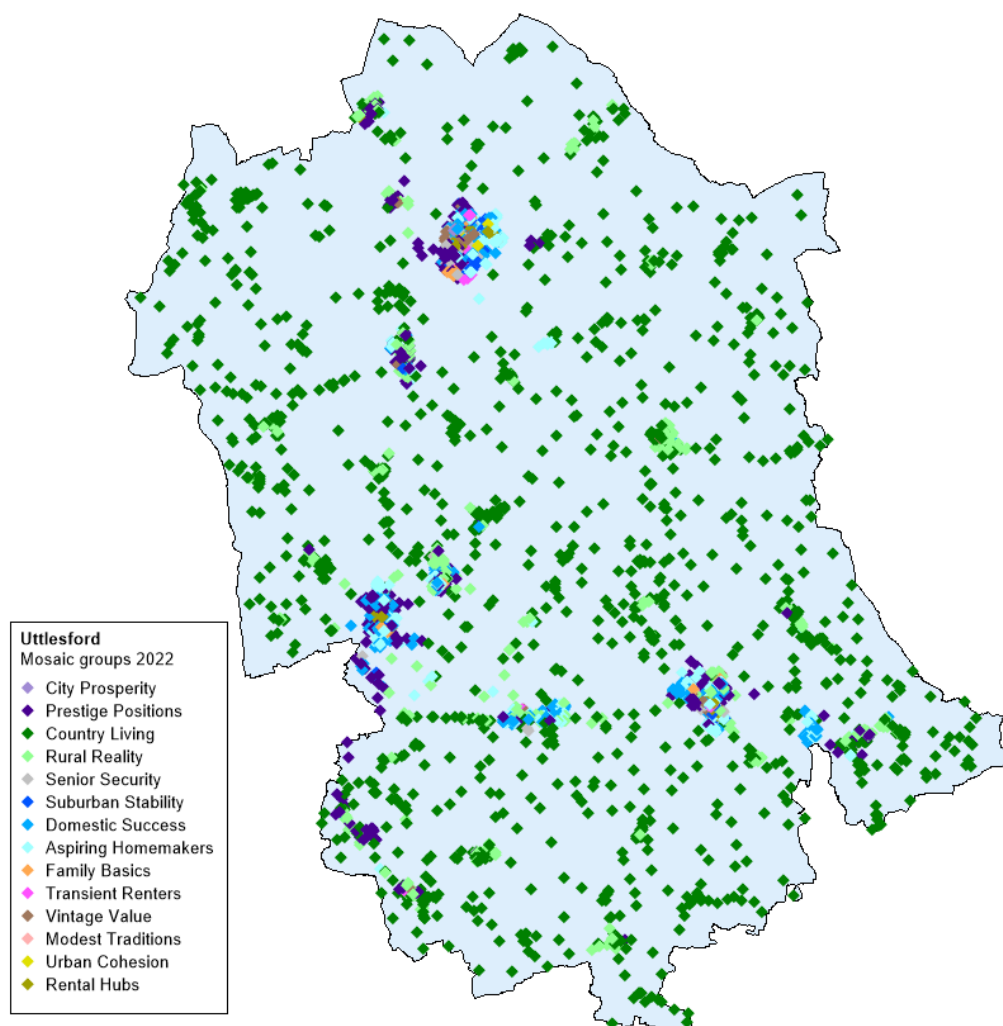
Mosaic (Data source: 2020 Mosaic analysis, Experian)

This is a similar consumer segmentation product. The following table shows the top five classifications in Uttlesford when compared to the country as a whole. The dominance of these five can be seen inasmuch as they represent almost three quarters (73.4%) of the population compared to a national equivalent rate of two in five (40.6%).

Table 2.5: Mosaic – main population segments in Uttlesford

Mosaic group description	Uttlesford #	Uttlesford %	National %
1 - Country Living	29,730	31.6%	7.1%
2 - Domestic Success	13,771	14.6%	8.8%
3 - Rural Reality	13,446	14.3%	7.2%
4 - Aspiring Homemakers	12,163	12.9%	10.5%
5 - Prestige Positions	10,335	11.0%	7.0%

Figure 2.11: Distribution of Mosaic segments in Uttlesford



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Table 2.4: Dominant Mosaic profiles in Uttlesford

Country Living	Well-off homeowners who live in the countryside often beyond easy commuting reach of major towns and cities. Some people are landowners or farmers, others run small businesses from home, some are retired, and others commute distances to professional jobs.
Domestic Success	High-earning families who live affluent lifestyles in upmarket homes situated in sought after residential neighbourhoods. Their busy lives revolve around their children and successful careers in higher managerial and professional roles.
Rural Reality	People who live in rural communities and generally own their relatively low-cost homes. Their moderate incomes come mostly from employment with local firms or from running their own small business.

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

It is important to analyse population projections within the future local plan (up to 2041). ONS projections indicate a rise of 20.6% in Uttlesford's population (+18,328) over the 23 years from 2018 to 2041. Several key points are outlined below.

- ✦ The number of 0-15 year olds, grows by +1,213 (+6.8%) over the first half of the projection (to 2031).
- ✦ The number of 16-24 year olds increases by +5.0% in the first period (+389) followed by a decline of -2.4% (-202) in the second period to 2041.
- ✦ There is a continuous increase in the numbers of persons aged 65+.

Table 2.6: Uttlesford – ONS projected population (2018 to 2041)

Age (years)	2018 #	2031 #	2041 #	2018 %	2031 %	2041 %	2031 Change	2041 Change
0-15	17,717	18,930	19,271	19.9%	18.6%	17.9%	106.8%	108.8%
16-24	7,846	8,235	8,034	8.8%	8.1%	7.5%	105.0%	102.4%
25-34	9,019	9,121	10,158	10.1%	9.0%	9.4%	101.1%	112.6%
35-44	11,266	13,169	12,325	12.6%	13.0%	11.5%	116.9%	109.4%
45-54	14,086	14,194	15,051	15.8%	14.0%	14.0%	100.8%	106.8%
55-64	11,863	13,935	14,379	13.3%	13.7%	13.4%	117.5%	121.2%
65+	17,382	24,057	28,291	19.5%	23.7%	26.3%	138.4%	162.8%
Total	89,179	101,642	107,507	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	114.0%	120.6%

Housing growth

Future need for open space will arise from the population increases from potential housing growth developments. The standard methodology identifies a housing requirement of 675 dwellings per annum for Uttlesford⁷. The housing requirement for Uttlesford District is therefore 13,500 homes to be delivered in the plan period between 2021 and 2041. The indicative population figure (16,416) assumes that population growth will average 2.4⁸ persons per dwelling. The draft Plan provides for at least 14,741 dwellings by 2041 in the interest of providing flexibility and contingency.

⁷ 5 year Land Supply Statement and Housing Trajectory (December 2022)

⁸ Source: ONS Household and resident characteristics (Census 2021)

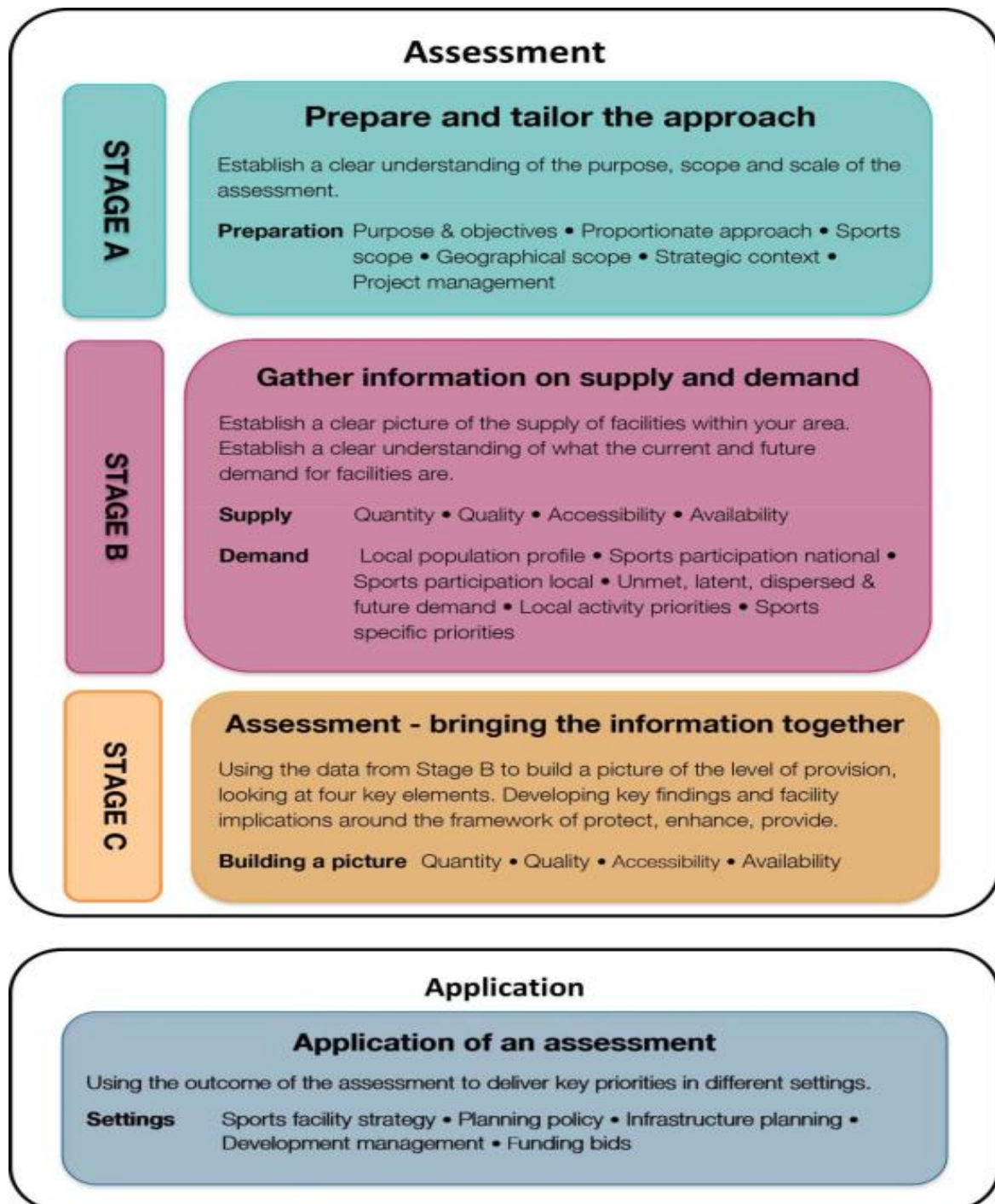
UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL INDOOR & BUILT FACILITIES - NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

SECTION 3: INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

3.1: Methodology

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



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This is the recommended approach to undertaking a robust assessment of need for indoor and outdoor sports facilities. It 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 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 103).

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 District 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 have been undertaken in consultation with facility staff. All community available facilities have been audited in consultation with facility owners/operators. The only exception to this is Helena Romanes School from which no response was received. (For clarification, the school facilities not the leisure centre.)

Consultation with key indoor facilities, those operated by other partners and the voluntary sector were undertaken. Audits were undertaken with the facility/site manager 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, where available, facility 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.

The assessment forms utilised capture quantity and quality data on a site-by-site basis and feeds directly into the main database allowing information to be stored and analysed. Quality assessments undertaken are rated in the following categories. These ratings are applied throughout the report, regardless of facility type.

Table 3.1: Quality ratings of indoor sports facilities using ANOG

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Quality rating	Description
Good	Facility is assessed as being new 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.

Ratings are based on non-technical visual assessments. These consider facility age and condition. 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 as is compliant with the Equality Act, although this is not studied in detail for the purposes of this report. When all data is collated, key facility elements receive an overall quality rating.

3.3 Catchment areas

Applying catchments areas for different provision types 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
Indoor bowls	30-minutes' drive
Dedicated gymnastics centre	30 minutes' drive
Village / community halls	800m / 10 minutes' walk

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SECTION 4: SPORTS HALLS

Indoor multi-purpose sports halls are key sports facilities for community sport and allow a range of sports and recreational activities to be played. The standard methodology for measuring them is the number of badminton courts contained within the floor area. They are generally considered to be of greatest value if they are of at least three badminton court size with sufficient height to allow games such as badminton to be played.

It should be noted, however, that a 4+ court sports hall provides greater flexibility as it can accommodate major indoor team sports such as football (5-a-side and training), basketball and netball. It also has sufficient length to accommodate indoor cricket nets and indoor athletics; as such they tend to offer greater sports development flexibility than their 3-court counterpart.

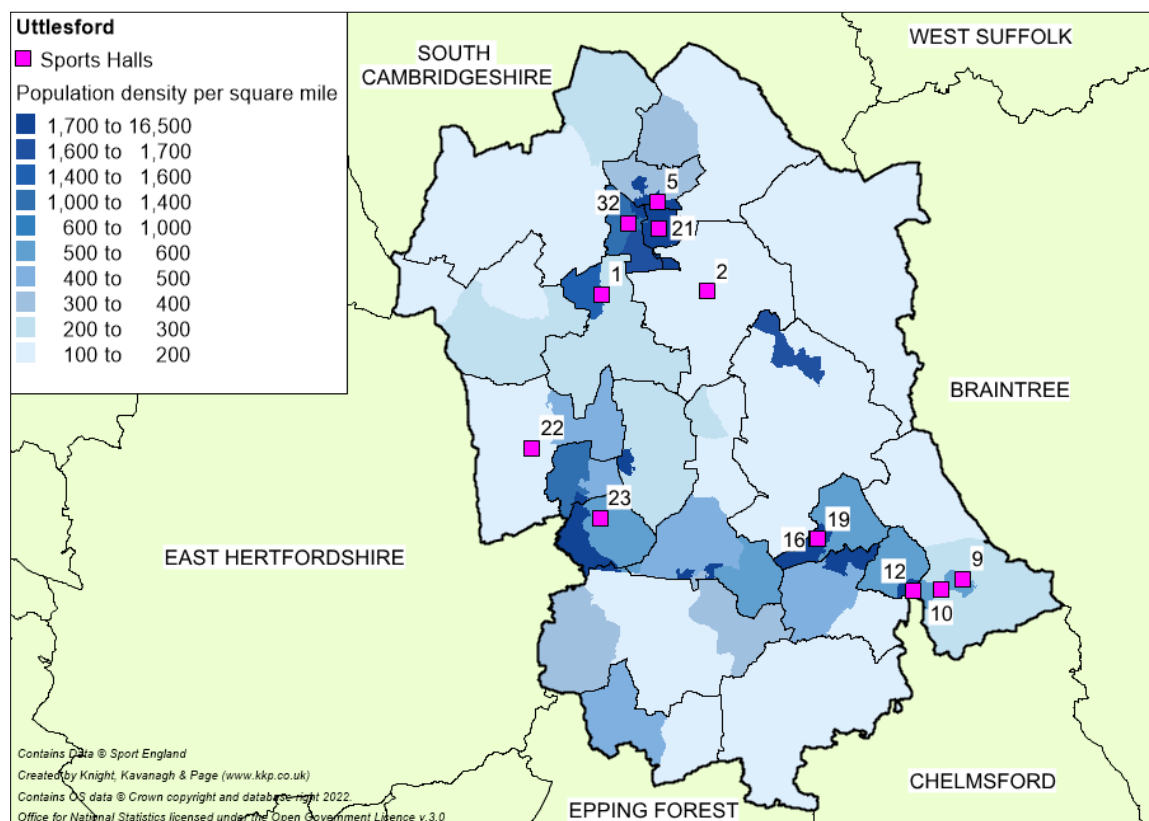
Larger halls, (e.g., those with 6-8 courts, can accommodate higher level training and/or competition as well as meeting day to day need. They also provide an option for more than one pitch/court increasing flexibility for training and competition and hosting of indoor central venue leagues for sports such as netball. This assessment considers all 3+ court facilities in Uttlesford. Halls that function as specialist venues (e.g., dance studios) are excluded.

4.1: Supply

Quantity

In Uttlesford, there are 14 sports halls at 12 sites accommodating 42 badminton courts.

Figure 4.1: All sports halls on population density



*Sites 16 & 19 are located in close proximity and appear as one square due to the location.

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Table 4.1: All sports halls/activity halls in Uttlesford

Map ID	Site name	Courts
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	1
2	Carver Barracks	3
5	Dame Bradbury School	3
9	Felsted Primary School	1
10	Felsted School	3
10	Felsted School	4
12	Flitch Green Community Centre	2
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4
19	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	4
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	4
22	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	1
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	4
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	4
-	Total	42

Four of the sports halls listed in Table 4.1 have two or fewer badminton courts. While often appropriate for mat sports, exercise to music and similar provision their size limits the range and scale of activity that can be accommodated. Table 4.2, lists the four halls excluded from the assessment due to size. (i.e., they have fewer than three marked badminton courts). The remainder (listed in Table 4.3) have 3+ marked badminton courts.

Table 4.2: Sports halls with fewer than three badminton courts

Map ID	Site name	Courts
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	1
9	Felsted Primary School	1
12	Flitch Green Community Centre	2
22	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	1

Table 4.3: Sports halls with 3+ badminton courts

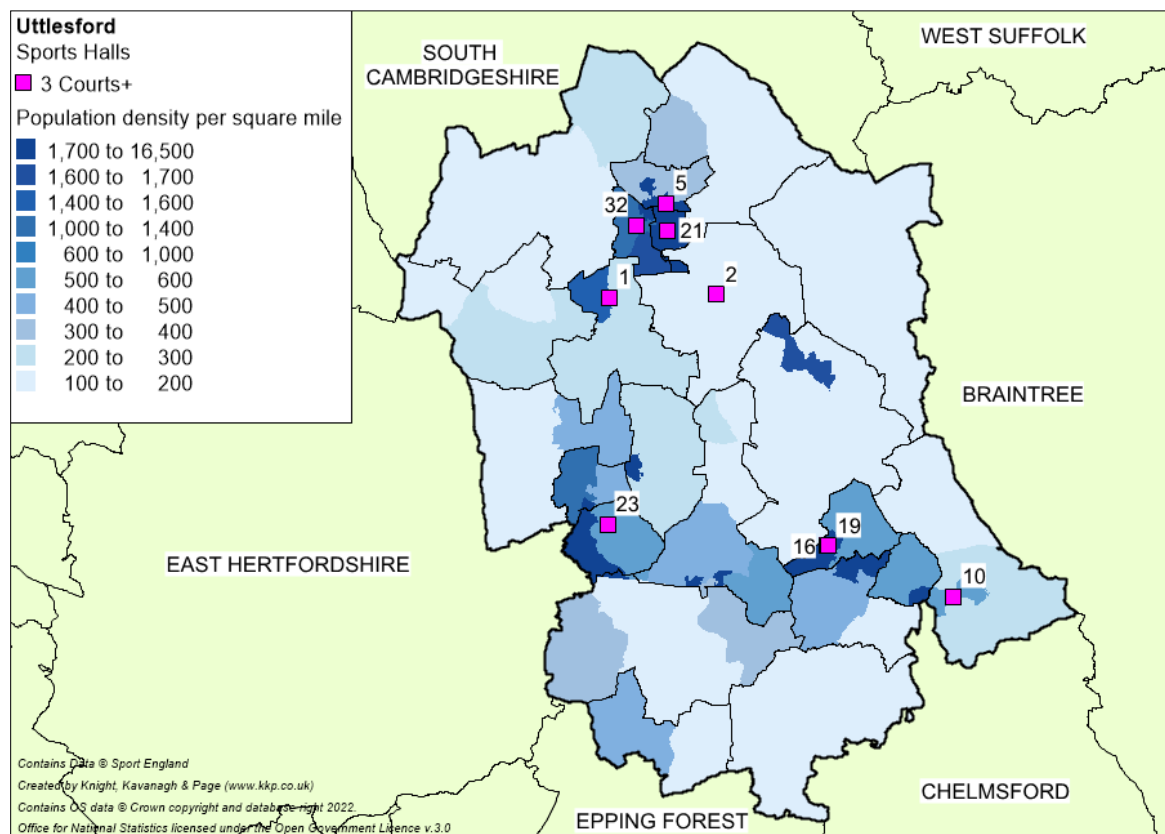
Map ID	Site name	Courts
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4
2	Carver Barracks	3
5	Dame Bradbury School	3
10	Felsted School	3
10	Felsted School	4
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4
19	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	4
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	4
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	4
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	4

There are three 3-court sports halls and seven with 4-courts. There is no large sports hall (6 courts plus) so sports that require a more generous playing area (such as futsal and handball) cannot be comfortably accommodated.

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Sports halls are well distributed across the district in the more densely populated areas. Spatially, there is a gap in provision in the (albeit sparsely populated) Carver Barracks /Thaxted area. Carver Barracks it is a military base and has its own provision (Map Id 2).

Figure 4.2: Sports halls 3+ courts on population density



Facility quality

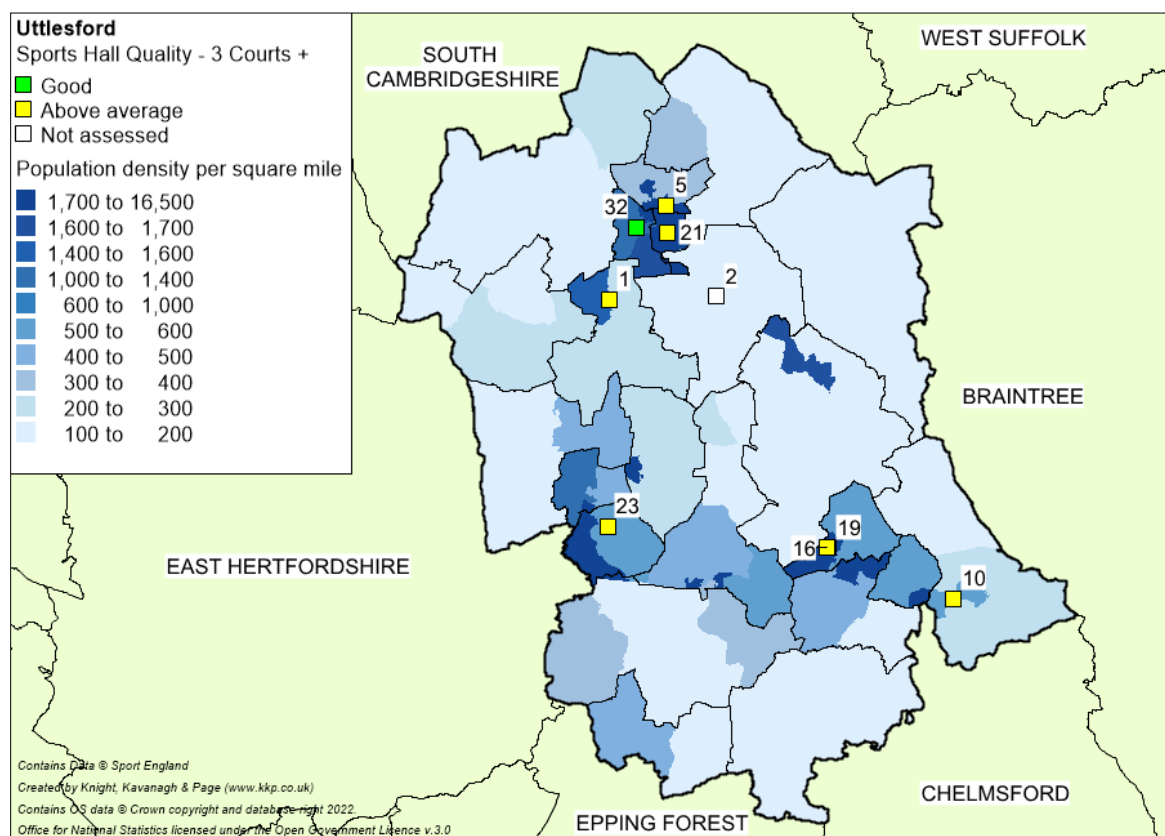
All 3+ court sports halls were subject to a virtual non-technical assessment to ascertain quality. These took place with consultation with the facility staff in September 2023, so any investment made after this date is not accounted for. Known or planned investment is mentioned below in the site notes.

Table 4.4: Quality of sports halls

ID	Site name	Courts	Court condition
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4	Above average
2	Carver Barracks	3	Not assessed
5	Dame Bradbury School	3	Above average
10	Felsted School	3	Above average
10	Felsted School	4	Above average
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4	Above average
19	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	4	Not assessed
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	4	Above average
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	4	Above average
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	4	Good

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Figure 4.3: Quality of 3+ court sports halls



One sports hall is rated good quality, seven above average and two were unassessed.

Table 4.5: Site audit notes

Site name	Site audit notes
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	The lighting was upgraded to LED in 2023. The roof leaks.
Carver Barracks	The condition and any recent investment in the sports hall is unknown.
Dame Bradbury School	No issues were reported at the time of consultation.
Felsted School (3-court hall)	New lights installed in 2022.
Felsted School (4-court hall)	Roof leaks. New floor installed in 2023
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	PFI facility, it has regular investment as per the agreement. No issues identified. Re-lining and sand and re-seal required in the short term.
Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	The condition and any recent investment in the sports hall is unknown.
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	PFI facility, it has regular investment as per the agreement. No issues identified.
Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	PFI facility, it has regular investment as per the agreement. No issues identified.
Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Has been flooded three times in recent years and required new floor. Most recently replaced in 2021. Reports of roof leaks. Requires new roof.

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Table 4.6: Year of construction and refurbishment of sports halls*

Site	Year built/ opened	Year refurbished*	Age since opened / refurbishment
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	2001	2023	0
Carver Barracks	1975	-	48
Dame Bradbury School	2003	-	20
Felsted School (3-court hall)	2008	2022	1
Felsted School (4-court hall)	1978	2023	0
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	2003	2023	0
Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form**	-	-	-
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	1984	2019	4
Mountfichet Romeera Leisure Centre	2003	2023	0
Saffron Walden County High Sports	2000	2021	3

*Years are as specified in Active Places Database 20/12/2022 or via the audit.

**Unknown due to the facility not being listed in Active Places Database and no response received.

Most sports halls have benefitted from some form of investment/refurbishment in the last five years. This is reflected in audit findings. One of the 3-court sports halls at Dame Bradbury is reported to have received no investment in the last 20 years. No information is available for Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form.

Maintenance at Lord Butler, Mountfichet Romeera and Great Dunmow leisure centres is overseen by the leisure operator 1Life. This is subject to the conditions of the PFI contract up until 2035. As such, these sites are well maintained, a situation reflected in the findings of the non-technical assessment. In addition, they have recently had a survey undertaken to identify decarbonisation opportunities. There are aspirations for solar panels.

The PFI contract has 13 years left on the contract.

Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre has only one EV charger, it will be upgraded in the short term. Discussions are taking place as to whether it could become a Car Club site. The concern is however that it may mean a reduction in parking spaces which could be a detriment to the sports centre users.

Accessibility

Sports hall accessibility is influenced by how far people are willing and 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 (one-mile radial catchment) for an urban area and a 20-minute drive time for a rural area:

In the Uttlesford area, 27,552 residents live within one mile of a sports hall (32.3% of the total population). As noted above, there are no people living in defined areas of higher deprivation.

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

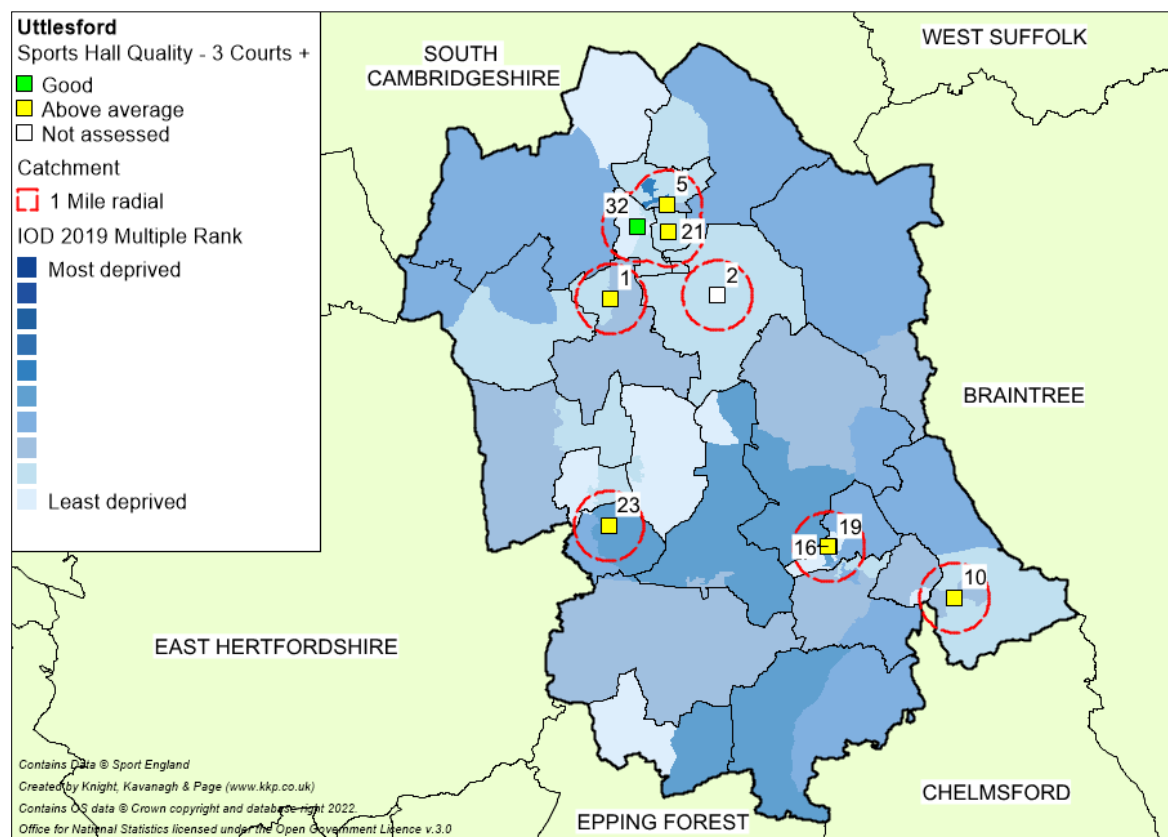


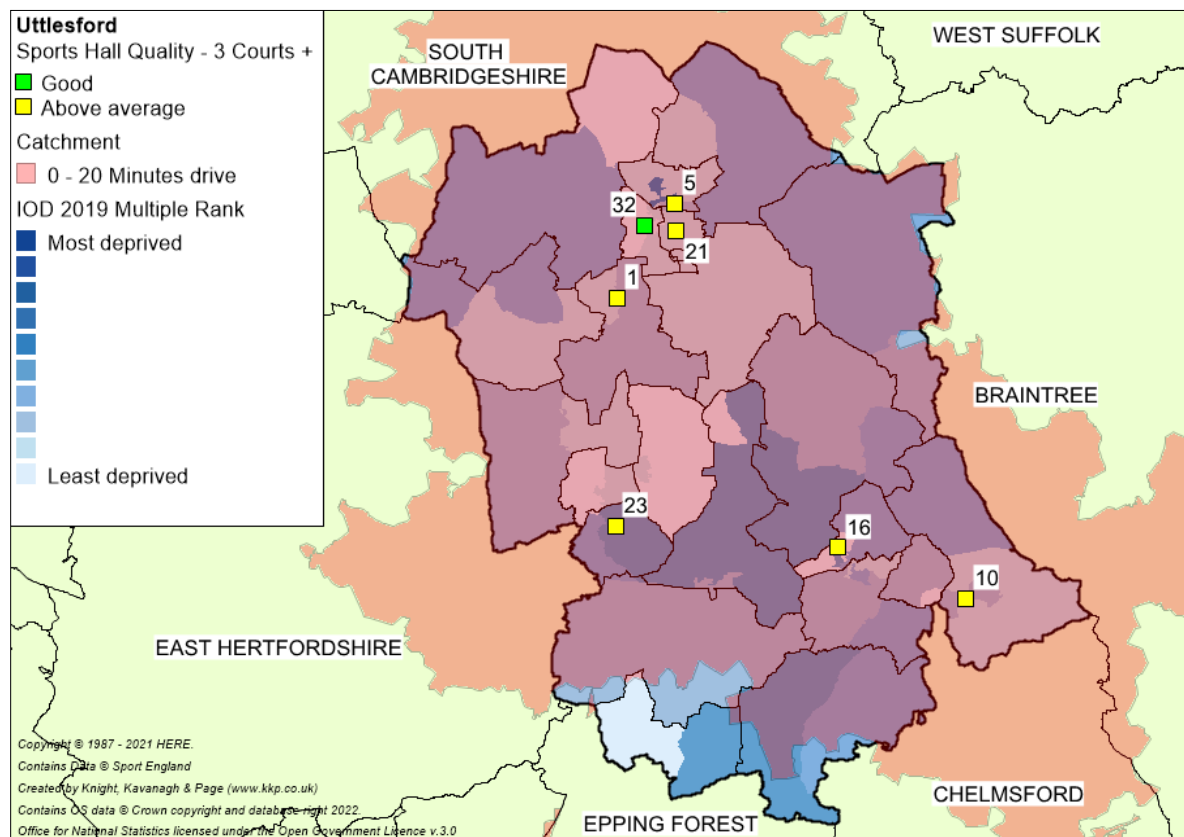
Table 4.7: Accessibility to sports halls with 3+ courts

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	1,537	1.8%	0	0.0%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	2,349	2.8%	7,020	8.2%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	2,456	2.9%	13,755	16.1%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	3,176	3.7%	16,763	19.7%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	12,214	14.3%	11,449	13.4%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	5,820	6.8%	8,666	10.2%
Total	85,205	100.0%	27,552	32.3%	57,653	67.7%

It is reported that car ownership levels are high, only 8.7% of the population do not have access to a car (2021 Census) meaning that 3,232 people in Uttlesford's population are reliant on public transport or walking to get to a sports hall. This can add to the cost of participation.

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Figure 4.5. Sports halls on IMD background based on 20 minutes' drive-time



Drive time catchment modelling suggests that approximately 95% of Uttlesford's population (87,153 people) live within a 20-minute drive of a publicly accessible sports hall with 3+ badminton courts, or a sports hall of equivalent dimensions.

Facilities in neighbouring local authority areas

Of the nine 3+ court sports halls in neighbouring authorities within two miles of the UDC boundary, one is to the north, two in the east and the remainder in East Hertfordshire to the southwest. The two public venues are Braintree Sport & Health Club and Leventhorpe Leisure Centre. They are considered likely to attract residents from the east and west of the authority. For some UDC residents the closest facility may be in a neighbouring authority.

Table 4.8: Uttlesford's neighbouring sports halls – minimum 3 court with community use

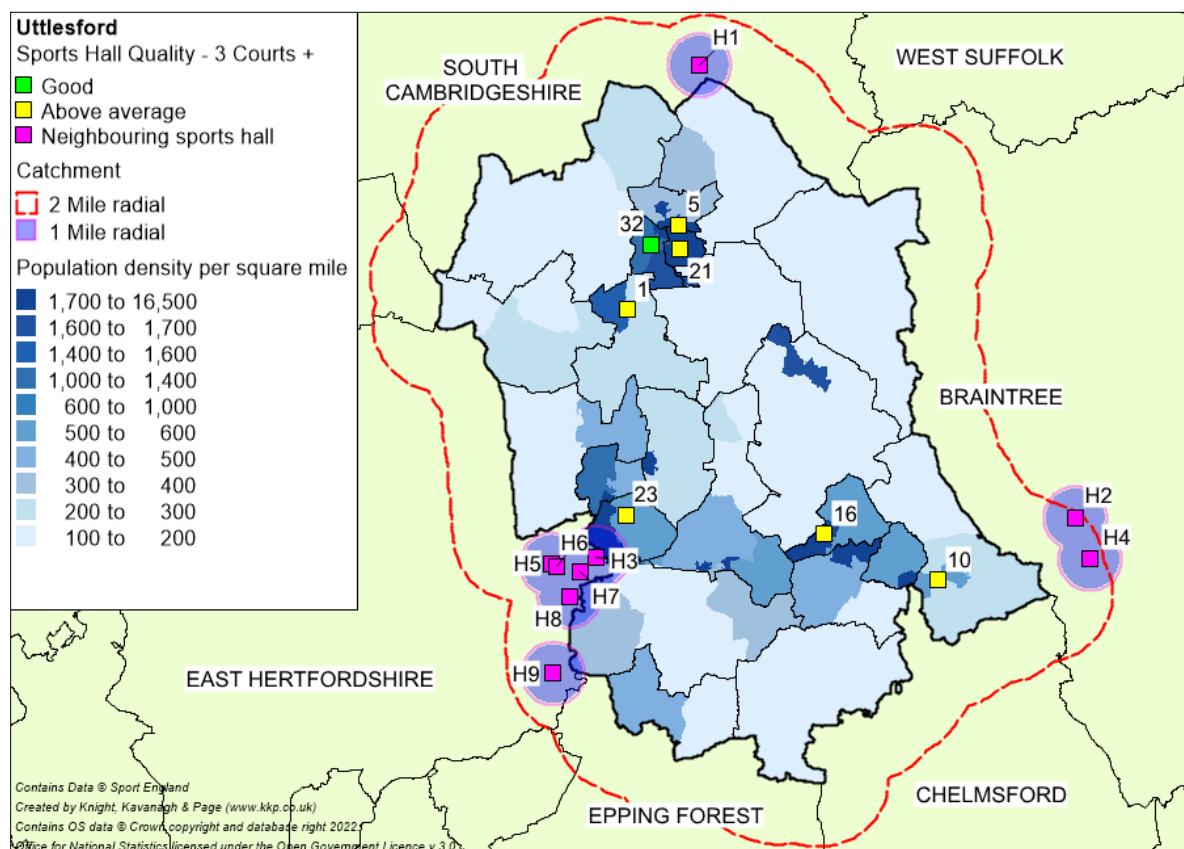
ID	Site name	Courts	Access type	Local authority
H1	Anglian Leisure Linton	3	Sports club / CA	South Cambs.
H2	Braintree Sport & Health Club	5	Pay and play	Braintree
H3	Birchwood High School	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H4	Notley Sports Centre	3 + 5	Sports club / CA	Braintree
H5	Bishop's Stortford College	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H6	Saint Mary's Catholic School	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H7	Hertfordshire & Essex High School	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H8	The Bishop's Stortford High School	5	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H9	Leventhorpe Leisure Centre	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire

Source: Active Places Power 03/10/2023

Sports club / CA = sports club / community association

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Figure 4.6: Neighbouring sports halls with community use (2 mile boundary)



Availability and facility management

In Uttlesford, all the sports halls are owned and managed in house by the respective education facility or by the Council's operator, 1Life (Parkwood). UDC has limited influence in terms of sports hall programming, pricing and management as it manages three out of nine sites.

Table 4.9: Ownership and management of sports hall facilities

Site	Ownership	Management
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	Academy	In house
Carver Barracks	MOD	MOD
Dame Bradbury School	Independent school	In house
Felsted School	Independent school	In house
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	UDC	1Life (Parkwood)
Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	Academy	In house
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	UDC	1Life (Parkwood)
Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	UDC	1Life (Parkwood)
Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Academy	In house

Availability is very limited at boarding schools; this is particularly the case at Felsted School.

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Daytime availability

Daytime availability is limited due to the constraints on education sites.

It is broadly accepted that some older people prefer to use facilities during daylight hours. Given that the proportion of older people (aged 65+) in the Authority is rising (from 19.5% in 2018 to 26.3% in 2041) provision of daytime access may be an increasing challenge going forward.

As shown below, there is limited capacity within existing facilities. (Sport England's benchmark for a facility to be comfortably full is 80%). All sites are reported to be operating at / beyond this benchmark. In addition, there is limited opportunity to increase community use hours at the existing sites. The only exception is Helena Romanes where the appetite for this has not been established. Lastly, some football activity is reportedly taking place in sports halls, if this could be taken outdoors onto 3G pitches, it would release sports halls space to help indoor sports to grow. However, the audit identifies limited opportunity to do this.

Table 4.10: Community use hours and activities that take place in sports halls

Community use hours		KKP Ref	Site	Courts	Main sports played	Used capacity
0	0	2	Carver Barracks	3		
		19	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	4		
1-39	8.0	10	Felsted School	3 + 4	Cricket nets, netball, judo.	100%
	26.0	5	Dame Bradbury School	3	Badminton, netball, cricket, dodgeball, martial arts.	100%
40+	40	1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4+1	Badminton, pickle ball, netball, Futsal, cricket nets, football, indoor hockey, table tennis, basketball.	80%
	52.0	32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	4	Disability football, fencing, basketball, dance, martial arts.	70%
	100.0	16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4	Indoor cricket, indoor tennis, gymnastics, trampolines, disability multi sports.	90%
	105.3	23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	4	Netball, badminton, football, martial arts.	80%
	108.0	21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	4	Cricket nets, badminton, netball, basketball, gymnastics, trampolining, pickleball	90%

The audit identifies a good range of sports taking place, with a balance of traditional and non-traditional sports on offer.

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Figure 4.7: All 3+ court sports halls on IMD with one mile radial catchment (excluding private use)

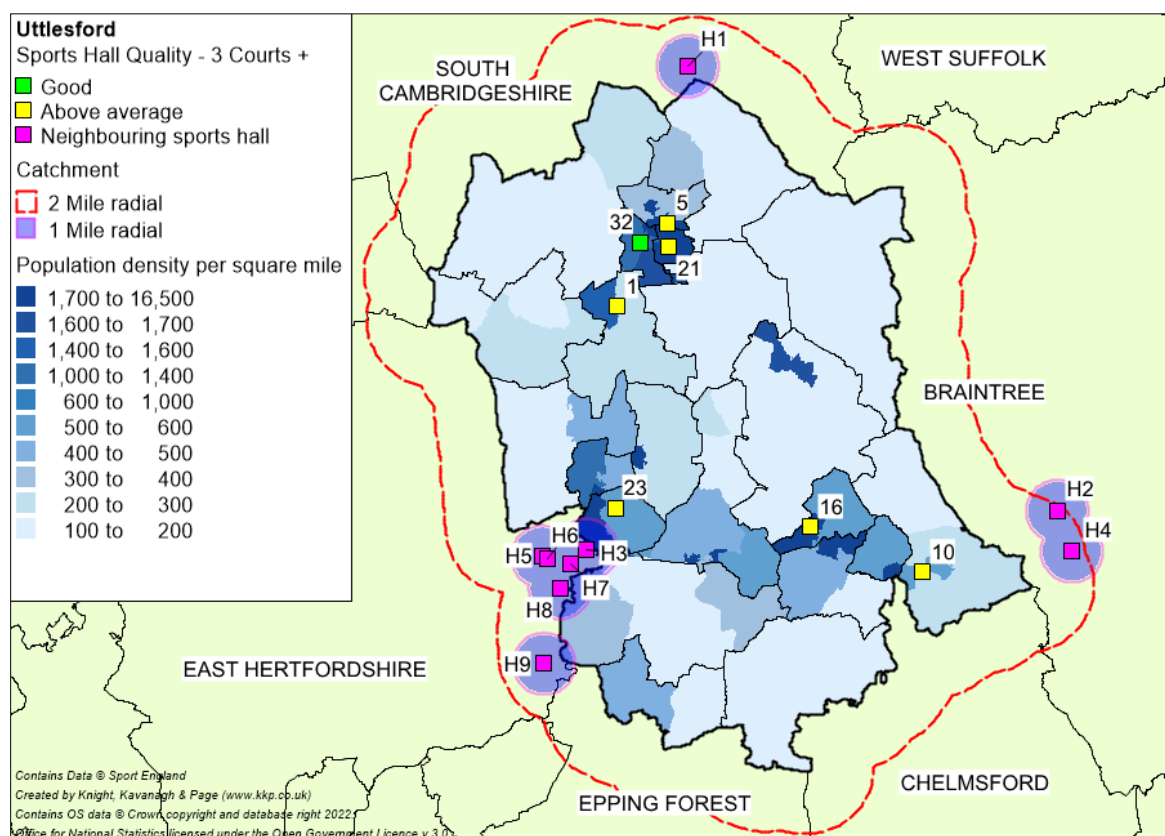


Table 4.11: Accessibility to sports halls with 3+ courts

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	1,537	1.8%	0	0.0%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	2,349	2.8%	7,020	8.2%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	2,194	2.6%	14,017	16.5%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	3,166	3.7%	16,773	19.7%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	11,381	13.4%	12,282	14.4%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	4,569	5.4%	9,917	11.6%
Total	85,205	100.0%	25,196	29.6%	60,009	70.4%

Future developments

There are plans to build a new replacement school (Helena Romanes School) in the south of Great Dunmow. Plans include an 8-court sports hall, two studios and a fitness gym. It is understood that there will be a community use agreement. Planning permission was granted in 2023. The existing 4-court sports hall (not available for CU) will be closed if the development proceeds.

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4.2 Demand

NGB consultation

NGBs and active clubs were consulted to ascertain current use, participation trends and the needs/challenges facing sports halls in the area.

Badminton England (BE)

BE's Discover Badminton 2017-2025 strategy presents its vision to be one of the nation's most popular and to win World, Olympic and Paralympic medals. Key objectives are to:

- ◀ 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.

BE does not identify Uttlesford as a priority area, it has no affiliated clubs and coaches. It noted that it would be keen to support some activator delivery of its programmes at a facility wishing to increase badminton participation and revenue.

KKP found unaffiliated activity at a number of sites as identified in Table 4.10. This is casual in nature.

Newport Badminton Club is a social club based at Lord Butler Leisure Centre (Wednesday) and Anglican Leisure Joyce Frankland (Tuesday). It has c.19 members which are predominantly male. It is not affiliated to Badminton England. It hires two of the four courts per week at each of the sites (Tuesday 19:00-22:00 and Wednesday 20.00-22.00).

It reports capacity for an additional 10 members before needing to introduce a waiting list. Consultation identified that membership has reduced in the last few years. Should its membership increase, it would seek to hire additional courts. It reports that there is no junior activity in the area, all activity is for adults.

As for the facilities it uses, it reports that the shower facilities at Joyce Frankland LC are poor quality however, the sports hall floor is good quality, and it has good lighting.

At Lord Butler, it reports good quality showers and changing provision and good quality flooring but poor lighting – it reports that it has not accounted for badminton, the lights are too bright and not aligned properly to the badminton courts – which affects play.

Netball

In November 2021 England Netball (EN) launched a 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 the development and growth of the game to every level, from grassroots to the elite;
- ◀ Elevate the visibility of the sport, and;
- ◀ Lead a movement to impact lives on and beyond the court.

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At the heart of its purpose, EN commits to remaining dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls to play the game as a priority and to work to address the gender participation gap in the sport which has widened since the Pandemic. Underpinned by years of engaging with and delivering netball for female communities, EN pledges to understand, support and nurture women and girls more deeply at every life stage, at every age.

It is committed to opening the sport to new audiences in every community, so netball better represents the rich diversity of the country it represents, and continues to evolve, adapt and thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive sport for all where everyone can belong, flourish and soar. A recent partnership announcement with England Men's and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA) 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 elite game is also a focus. EN's ambition is that the Vitality Roses will be the best female sports team in the world. It thus has to support the national team to win consistently on the world stage and to have an outstanding talent pathway in place to fuel sustainable successes on court and set new standards. Professionalisation of the game over the next decade is a priority – with a specific focus on growing world-leading international and domestic competitions and events and creating more careers in the sport.

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 homes that house the sport at a local and 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:

- ◀ 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.

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- ◀ Supports the 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 the sport to be growing fast nationally with a recently commissioned YouGov^[1] report noting that the 2019 World Cup inspired 160,000 adult women to take up the sport. In addition, 71% of clubs reported more people had shown an interest in playing netball than before the tournament started.

Netball is played both indoors and outdoors. For outdoor provision please refer to the Playing Pitch Strategy 2023.

Current indoor netball activity and provision in the Uttlesford area is as follows:

Saffron Walden and Newport (Swan) Netball Club has c.300 members. It caters for juniors (age 7+) and adults. The majority of its activities take place at its home venue Herts & Essex Sports Centre which is located in the neighbouring authority of East Hertfordshire District Council.

It reports moving there several years ago when it was unable to source the facilities (both indoor and outdoor) it required in Uttlesford - on the days and times to suit its juniors and adults. It reports some activity (walking netball and Back to Netball) taking place indoors at the Lord Butler Sports & Fitness Centre.

Infinity Netball Club has 130 members and trains at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and on occasion at Herts & Essex Sports Centre. Whilst almost all play is outdoors, the Club would like to do some training/matches indoors. It reports this not being possible in the Uttlesford area due to lack of availability. In addition, when it plays outdoors at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre, it must pay for the courts it is not using (it cannot hire two of the four courts, it must pay for all four).

Fencing

Saffron Walden Swords Club is a fencing club based at Saffron Walden County High School. It hires the sports hall on a Saturday 09.30 – 14.30 and caters for people aged 8 years and upwards (including adults). It has c.40 members and delivers coaching sessions and private 1:1 coaching session.

Consultation identified that the Club would like to be able to deliver evening sessions during the week but reports there not being sport hall availability. It also faces a challenge with the storage of equipment, as it requires three locked kit cages.

It reports having limited availability to cater for increased demand and considers its growth options to be limited until it can access additional sports hall time at the same site. (Using a different site for an additional session would require more equipment and the required storage space).

Other sports

Athletics

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

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Consultation indicates that both WaldenTri Club and Saffron Striders report demand for sports halls over the winter months, both however, indicate that there is no availability.

ECB – England and Wales Cricket Board

Consultation identified that currently the majority of cricket clubs use the Herts & Essex Sports Centre for indoor cricket activities. ECB would like the new replacement Helena Romanes School sports hall to include a minimum of 6 cricket lanes due to the strong demand in the area.

4.3: Future demand and Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC)

This helps quantify 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 (district) 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.

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 Uttlesford's population will lead to an increase in demand for sports halls to accommodate demand.

Table 4.12: Sport England: Sports Facilities Calculator

Description	Provision for 2018 population (mid-year estimate)	Provision for 2031 population (mid-year estimate)	Provision for 2041 population (mid-year estimate)
ONS population projections	89,179	101,642	107,507
Population increase	-	+12,463	+5,865
Facilities to meet additional demand	6.27 halls 25.08 courts	+0.88 halls +3.5 courts	+1.29 halls +5.15 courts
Estimated cost	£17,618,337	+2,462,209	+£1,158,698

Calculations assume that the current sports hall stock remains available for community use and the quality remains the same. The projected increase in population will increase demand for sports hall space. The SFC indicates a requirement for an additional 3.5 badminton courts up to 2031 and 5.15 badminton courts (1.29 sports halls up to 2041 (estimated cost: £1,158,698).

When factoring in the strategic housing impact, there is further increase in demand as follows:

Table 4.13: Strategic housing impact

Housing growth increases from proposed strategic allocation (Reg 19 working assumption)	Additional sports hall space required	Estimated cost (£)*
3,849	1.08 courts	£778,808

*based on 2Q2023 build costs

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Based on current assessment, availability and proposed new development, investment is required in improving the quality and capacity of the existing stock prior to considering the development of a new sports hall.

A Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for sports halls is recommended. The FPM report provides a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken which will account for cross-boundary movements.

4.4: Summary of key facts and issues – sports halls

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 14 sports halls (42 courts). Of these, 10 are 3+ court sports halls located at 8 sites (37 badminton courts).	Population growth (+18,328) estimates may create additional demand for an additional 5.15 courts (1.29 sports halls) by 2043. When adding in strategic housing impact there is further demand for 1.08 courts. The proposed new Helena Romanes School will result in the loss of a 4 court hall (no CU) and be replaced by 8 courts with a CUA.
Quality	In general, sports hall stock is good quality and well maintained. All sports halls have received some level of refurbishment within the last 20 years. Maintenance at the PFI (Parkwood) run facilities is subject to conditions of the PFI contract up until 2035.	There is a need to continue to maintain the quality of the sites as they age.
Accessibility	95% of UDC's population lives within 20 minutes' drive of a sports hall. Under one third (31.8%) live within 20 minutes' walk of a community available sports hall. There are nine 3+ court sports halls within two miles of UDC's border.	None required
Availability (Management and usage)	One site (Carver Barracks – an MoD site) is private use only. It cannot offer community use for security and military reasons. Felsted School has limited availability and is unable to expand primarily due to it being a boarding school. Netball reports having to travel out of area to access provision (indoor and outdoor). Herts & Essex Sports Centre is a key netball facility to which some Uttlesford residents travel.	There is limited capacity in existing facilities, they are operating at or beyond the Sport England benchmark of being comfortably full. Daytime use of sports halls will be of key importance given the projected increase in the number and proportion of older people in the authority. This applies particularly to Lord Butler Leisure Centre.

Strategic summary

- ◀ Each facility is important to the community served and all venues need to be protected in accordance with paragraph 103 of the NPPF.
- ◀ A good range of sports is available including gymnastics, badminton, netball, football, trampolining, pickleball, futsal, martial arts, indoor cricket, indoor hockey and indoor tennis. These sports need to be accommodated in the event of any new sports hall developments.
- ◀ Good relationships with schools are essential to retain/increase community use.

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- ◀ Ensure the new Helena Romanes School has community use and meets the needs of the key sports in the area particularly indoor cricket.
- ◀ Keyholder access/working with an operator could be a consideration to resolve this in the short and longer term.
- ◀ Increase daytime access to sports halls to keep pace with demand related to growth in the number and proportion of older people.
- ◀ A Sport England Facilities Planning Model report is recommended to be undertaken for sports halls to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken which will account for cross-boundary movements.

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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.

Many pool operators were placed in a serious financial situation during the Covid-19 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.

The UK Government’s £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund also enabled 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 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 160m² (e.g., 20m x 4 lanes) water space 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.

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Quantity

The audit identifies eight swimming pools at seven sites. Three are main/general pools, two are learner/teaching pools and three are lidos. The general consensus is that a venue that has both a learner/teaching pool and a main/general pool can deliver a much broader programme (and substantially improve income generation).

Pools are located in the Authority's more densely populated areas of the authority. The north of the district has only one swimming pool but is largely rural and sparsely populated.

Figure 5.1: Swimming pools in Uttlesford

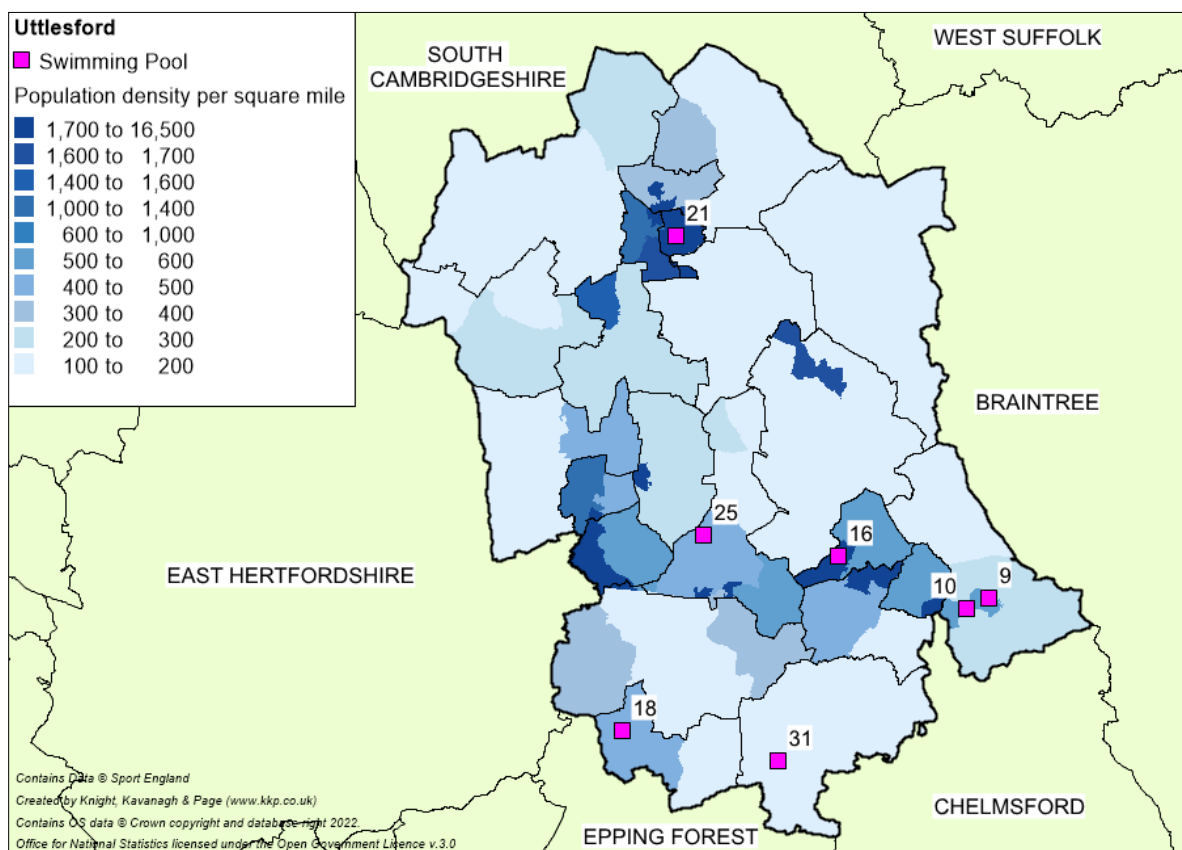


Table 5.1: Swimming pools in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Facility type	Lanes/length	Area (m ²)
9	Felsted Primary School	Lido	0 x 11m	55
10	Felsted School	Main/general	4 x 23m	184
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	Main/general	6 x 25m	325
18	Hatfield Heath Primary School	Lido	3 x 13m	85
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Main/general	5 x 25m	275
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Learner/teaching/training	0 x 12m	120
25	Pace Health Club (Stansted)	Learner/teaching/training	0 x 10m	40
31	Rodings Primary School	Lido	3 x 12m	66

The largest (6-lane x25m) pool is located at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre. The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre has the most water on site as it has a 5-lane x 25m pool and a 10m x 12m learner pool (0 lanes). Both are Council public leisure centres.

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Quality

Quality is assessed according to the process and definitions previously described in Section 3.2. The three main/ general pools in Uttlesford are all rated above average quality.

Figure 5.2: Quality of swimming pools

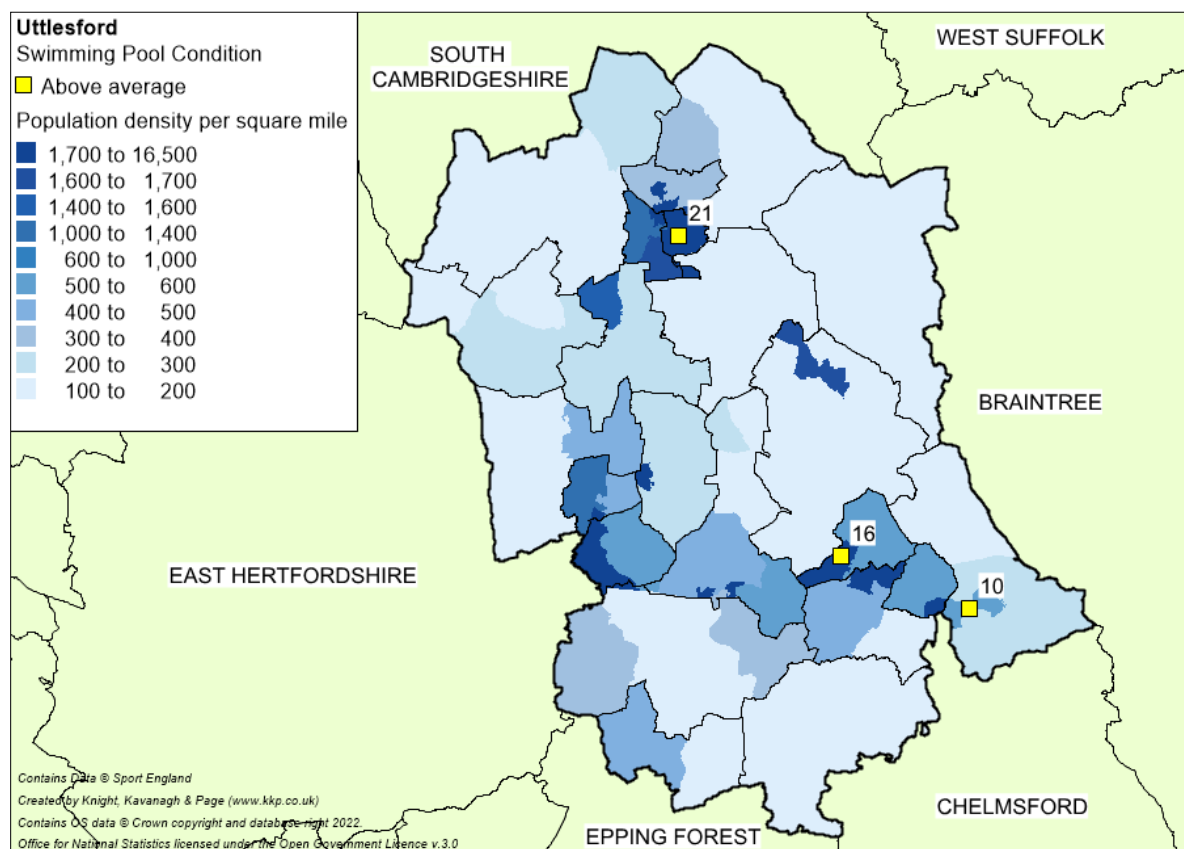


Table 5.2: Quality of 160m²+ swimming pools in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Facility type	Pool condition
10	Felsted School	Main/general	Above average
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	Main/general	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Main/general	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Learner/teaching/training	Above average

All pools are reported to be above average quality.

Table 5.3: Age of swimming pools

Site name	Year built/ opened	Refurbishment	Age (years) since refurbishment
Felsted School	1983	2021	2
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	2003		20*
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	1984	2004	19*

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*As mentioned previously, the two public pools (Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre) are maintained in accordance with the lifecycle maintenance programme as agreed in the PFI agreement.

Felsted School is the oldest pool in the authority. Consultation with the School indicated that it is well maintained and receives the necessary investment as and when required.

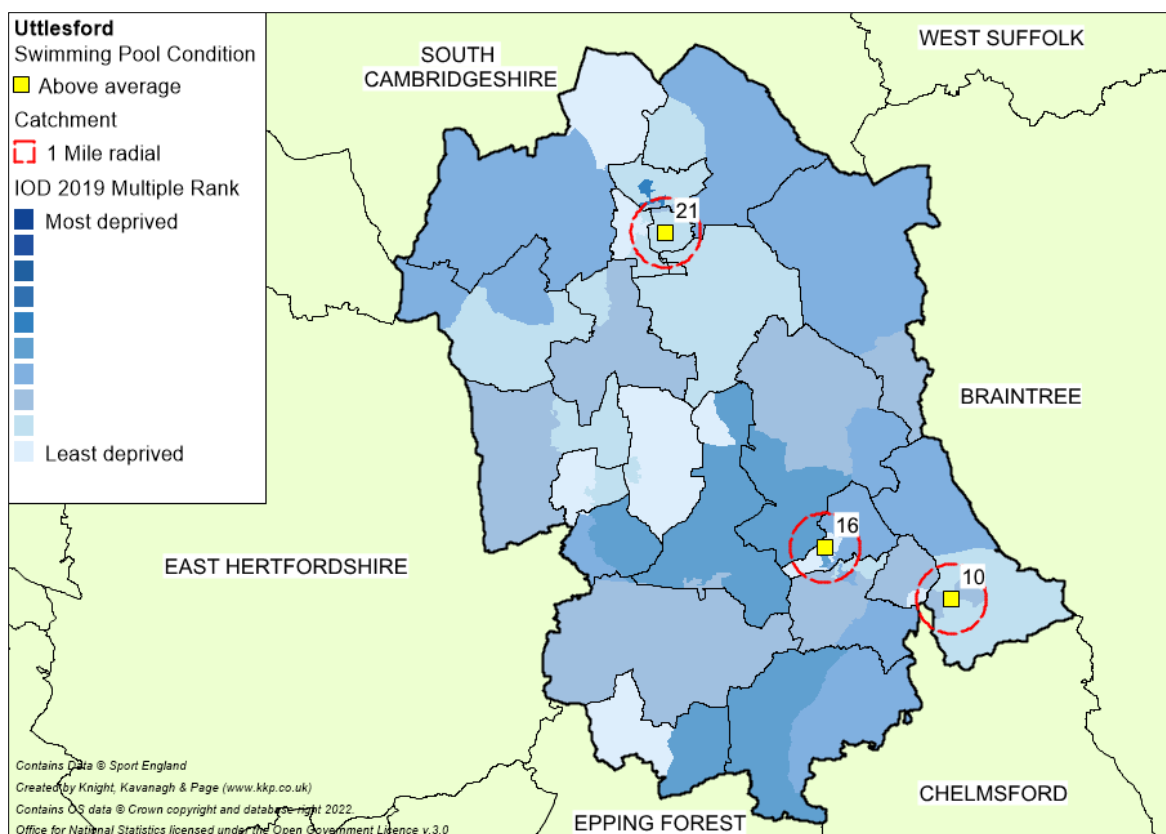
The challenge for the Council is the long-term future of Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre. It is important that UDC and its operator has a plan for the 'handback'.

Accessibility

Swimming pool accessibility is influenced by the physical (i.e., built) environment. Appropriate walk and drive-time catchments are applied to determine community accessibility. The normal acceptable standard is 20-minutes' walk time (1-mile radial catchment) for an urban area and a 20-minutes' drive time for a rural area. This enables analysis of the adequacy of coverage and helps identify areas currently not serviced by existing provision. Figure 5.3 and Table 5.4 illustrate the walk-time based accessibility of swimming pools in the authority.

Catchment analysis indicates that 17,909 (21.0%) of the population lives within one mile of a swimming pool that is 160m² or larger. Given the rural nature of Uttlesford, this is not unusual. The challenge is to enable people living in particularly rural areas, that do not have access to a car, to access facilities.

Figure 5.3: Accessibility of swimming pools in Uttlesford



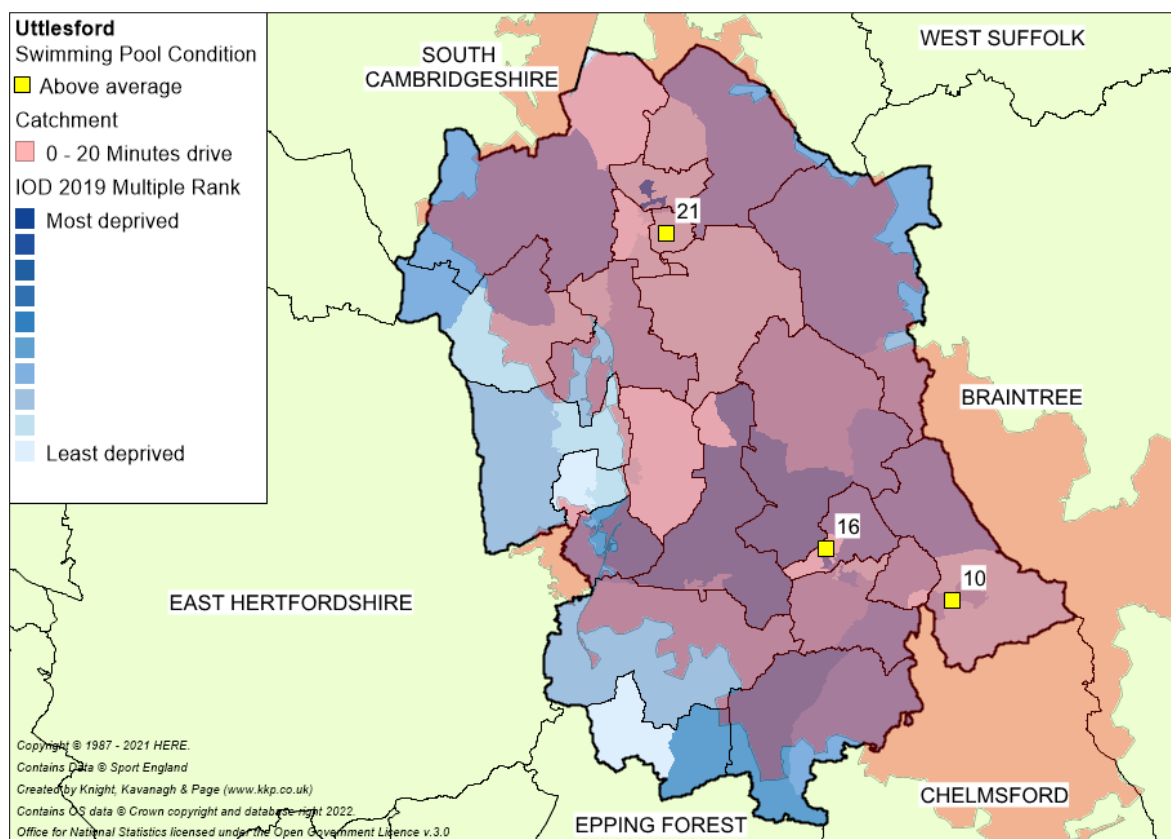
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Table 5.4: Accessibility of swimming pools in Uttlesford (IMD 2019)

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	437	0.5%	1,100	1.3%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	1,409	1.7%	7,960	9.3%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	1,090	1.3%	15,121	17.7%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	2,819	3.3%	17,120	20.1%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	9,430	11.1%	14,233	16.7%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	2,724	3.2%	11,762	13.8%
Total	85,205	100.0%	17,909	21.0%	67,296	79.0%

A substantial proportion (84.0%) of Uttlesford's population lives within a 20 minutes' drive time catchment of a swimming pool (160m²+).

Figure 5.4: Swimming pools with 20 minutes' drive time



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Availability

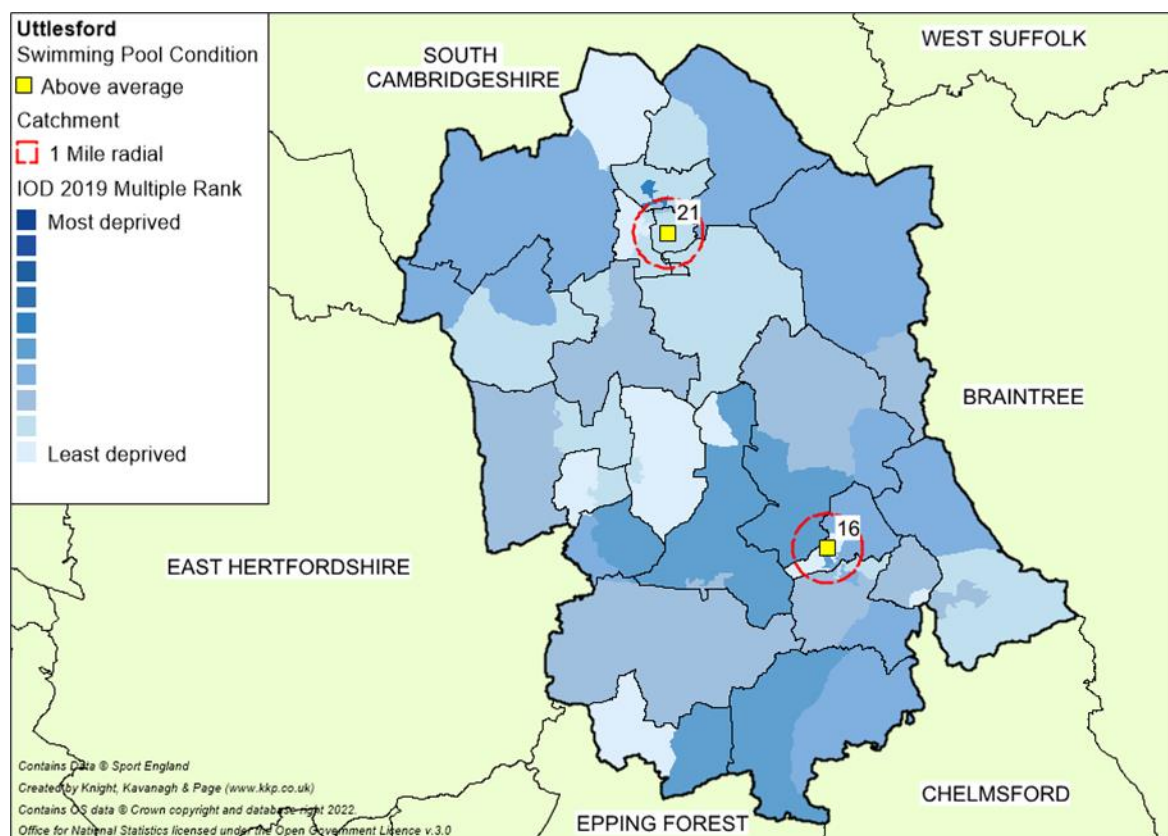
Felsted School pool is available for very limited community use, it has a swim school, and all other use is for its own students (boarders). It is not available to the public or to swimming clubs due to the lack of ancillary provision and the safeguarding measures required to accommodate users.

The School reports that it used to offer use of its pool to a swimming club however, since Covid, it has reviewed this and taken the decision to not re-open to clubs. This is primarily due to challenges with the small-scale changing facilities and its ability to accommodate parents and family members of the swimmers taking part in the sessions who also require access to toilets and request refreshments etc.

Only the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre are available to the community for casual use, fitness swimming and club use. Dunmow Leisure Centre only has a main pool and, thus faces a challenge with programming to accommodate all demands.

When considering the pay and play accessible pools in isolation, catchment analysis indicates that 15,862 (18.6%) of the Uttlesford population lives within one mile of a swimming pool 160m² or larger. This is a 2.4% less (2,047 people fewer) than the figure for all pools.

Figure 5.5: Swimming pools offering pay and play access (IMD 2019)



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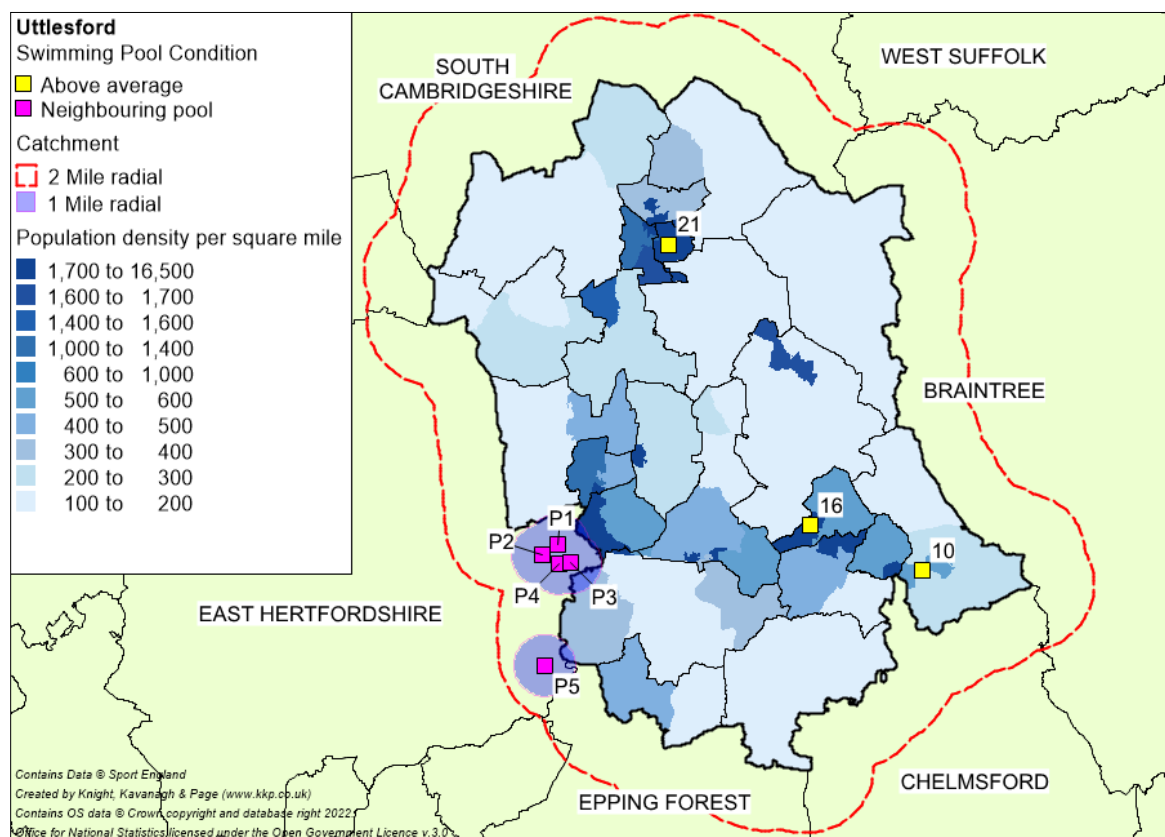
Table 5.5: Pay and play swimming pool accessibility in Uttlesford (IMD 2019)

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	437	0.5%	1,100	1.3%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	1,409	1.7%	7,960	9.3%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	1,090	1.3%	15,121	17.7%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	2,168	2.5%	17,771	20.9%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	9,076	10.7%	14,587	17.1%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	1,682	2.0%	12,804	15.0%
Total	85,205	100.0%	15,862	18.6%	69,343	81.4%

Facilities in neighbouring authorities

Accessibility is also influenced by facilities within easy reach of the local authority. All of these are located within East Hertfordshire. Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre offers pay and play access and is of significant size. The others require a membership to access or can be accessed via membership of a sports club/community association.

Figure 5.6: Swimming pools located within two miles of the Uttlesford boundary



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Table 5.6: Swimming pools located within two miles of Uttlesford's boundary

ID	Active Places site name	Lanes / length	Area m ²	Access type
P1	Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre	8 x 25m	500	Pay and play
P2	Bishop's Stortford College	6 x 25m	350	Sports club / CA
P3	Hertfordshire & Essex High School	4 x 25m	200	Sports club / CA
P4	Nuffield Health (Bishop's Stortford)	2 x 20m	160	Registered membership
P5	Leventhorpe Pool & Gym	5 x 25m	250	Pay and play

Source: Active Places Power 03/10/2022 NB: Sports Club / CA = Sports club / Community association

Future enhancements/new developments

As of the audit date, plans have been shared to re-furbish the swimming pool at Friends School as part of a housing development scheme. It has been disused for a number of years. Timescales and the proposed level of community use are unknown.

In addition, there is an ambition to add learner/teaching pools at the public leisure centres to increase viability and reduce programming pressure (enabling a balanced programme encompassing learn to swim, club use, swim for fitness and casual swimming).

Also, it is also reported that plans to build a new replacement school (Helena Romanes School) in the south of Great Dunmow. Plans include land reserved to add a swimming pool at a future date should funds be sourced.

5.2: Demand

Swim England's latest strategic plan (May 2020) aims to create a happier, healthier and more successful nation through swimming. It sets several strategic objectives - to:

- ◀ Provide strong leadership and be the recognised authority for swimming.
- ◀ Substantially increase the number of people able to swim.
- ◀ Significantly grow the number and diversity of people enjoying and benefitting from regular swimming.
- ◀ Create a world leading talent system for all disciplines.
- ◀ Deliver a high quality, diverse and motivated workforce within swimming.
- ◀ Strengthening organisational sustainability for future generations.

It reports that water provision in the district as a whole is slightly below the recommended 12m² per 1,000 population, with a deficit of 152m² (a 4-lane 20m pool is 160m²). This includes Felsted School pool and Pace Health Club - part of a hotel at Stansted Airport - the extent to which these should be regarded as offering community use is questionable. The Pace Health Club has a learner/training pool which would not typically be included unless there is a main pool on site, which there is not.

Swim England notes that the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre opened in 1984 and although it has been receiving refurbishment, is approaching 40 years old. Swim England's view is that Lord Butler's long-term future needs to be considered as it is the only publicly accessible water in the north of the district and accounts for almost 50% of the overall district supply. Its condition should be considered when determining need for future provision. In terms of future recommendations, it states the need to increase water provision and the following:

- ◀ Future water provision should look to have open community access, making the water space even more accessible to the local population.

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- ◀ The future facility mix needs to consider the versatility of its water space and the use of movable floor/boom system.
- ◀ A condition survey should be undertaken for the Lord Butler Fitness and Leisure Centre given its age and the period since refurbishment. This should determine the critical point of its lifespan and assess the need for future investment in refurbishment or replacement.
- ◀ Involve Swim England's business engagement team to help maximise operations.

Club consultation

Dunmow Atlantis Swimming Club is a competitive club, affiliated to Swim England which competes at national level. It has approximately 190 members, 135 of which are juniors. It is full to capacity, having retained almost all members during Covid restrictions and lockdowns. It currently has a waiting period of c. 6 months. Unfortunately, it lost access to Felsted School after Covid and this has placed increased pressure on demand as it is unable to source additional pool time at its home venue Great Dunmow Leisure Centre. It reports (ideally) needing an additional hour each evening.

It hosts club galas at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre but for swim meets and competitions it travels out of the area (to Braintree and Basildon) due to spectator seating requirements etc.

Saffron Walden Swimming Club (Saffron Seals) based at the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre has c.110 members (having had 190 going into the Pandemic). It has the capacity to cater for an increase in demand and has a plan to re-build the membership over the coming years. It reports having lost older swimmers when they could not train due to the lockdowns and facility closures.

Its training sessions run for 2 hours on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, 1.25 hours on a Saturday and 2.5 hours on a Friday. It competes in the Essex Mini League and Essex Swimming League.

One issue raised is that the Leisure Centre is open for fewer hours post Covid and there is more programming pressure on facilities than there was previously. In addition, it reports that Swim England has increased ratios related to the number of volunteers required and this has proved to be challenging.

WaldenTri uses the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre for the swimming aspects of its offer. It hires the pool for three hours a week, a two-hour coached session on a Wednesday and a one-hour uncoached lane swim session on a Sunday.

5.3: Sport England's Facilities Calculator (SFC)

As noted above the SFC 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 area facility needs but should not be applied for strategic gap analysis as it has no spatial dimension because it 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.

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Table 5.7: Sports facilities calculator

Description	Provision for 2018 population (mid-year estimate)	Provision for 2031 population (mid-year estimate)	Provision for 2041 population (mid-year estimate)
ONS population projections	89,179	101,642	107,507
Population increase	-	+12,463	+5,865
Facilities to meet additional demand	18.25 lanes 4.56 pools	+2.56 lanes +0.64 pools	+3.76 lanes + 0.94 pools
Estimated cost*	£19,575,926	+£2,735,787	+£4,023,829

*based on Q3 2022 build costs

Given the current undersupply of water space, population increases will necessitate new provision. Calculations assume that current pool stock remains available for community use and the quality remains the same.

Projected population increases will lead to a further increase in demand for swimming space. The SFC indicates a requirement for an additional 2.56 lanes (0.94 of a pool) up to 2031 and 3.76 lanes up to 2041; equivalent to 0.23 swimming pools up to 2041 (estimated cost: £4,023,829).

When factoring in the strategic housing impact, there is further increase in demand as follows:

Table 5.8: Strategic housing impact

Housing growth increases from proposed strategic allocation (Reg 19 working assumption)	Additional swimming pool provision required	Estimated cost (£)
3,849	0.79 lanes	£866,492

When the strategic housing impact (0.79 lanes) is added to the 3.76 lanes increase in demand from population growth there is a need for 4.55 lanes of a swimming pool (could be a 4 lane 25m and a learner teaching pool or extension to existing provision).

A Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for swimming pools is recommended. The FPM report provides a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken which will account for cross-boundary movements.

Swim England's estimate of a 152 m² deficiency is not based on a spatial assessment of Uttlesford and does not account for cross-boundary movements. Sport England reports that Sport England's key data from the 2023 FPM national run does not indicate that there is a deficiency of a scale that would justify new pool provision although a detailed assessment would be needed to confirm the position.

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5.4: Summary of key facts and issues – swimming pools

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	<p>There are eight pools at seven sites: three main pools, three lidos and two teaching/learner pools. Of these, three are 20m+ in length and are of community main pool size).</p> <p>Two main pools are located at public leisure centres, one is part of a boarding school.</p>	<p>There is insufficient water space in the area (a current deficit of -152m² which is almost equivalent to a 4-lane 20m pool). Existing stock will not be able to accommodate increased demand from projected population growth and housing development and additional provision may be required.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the viability of adding a learner/teaching pool to the Great Dunmow Leisure Centre address programming pressures, expand its learn to swim programme and accommodate aquatic classes.</p>
Quality	<p>Pool stock is generally in above average condition.</p> <p>The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre site is nearly 40 years old.</p>	<p>There is a need to maintain the current stock of swimming pools with ongoing investment. This is covered for public leisure sites until 2035.</p> <p>There is a need to plan for the long-term future of The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.</p>
Accessibility	<p>83% of the population lives within 20 minutes' drive of a swimming pool. 30% within 20-minutes' walk. Pay and play access is available to 18% of residents within one mile walk.</p>	<p>Availability of swimming pools is increasing pressure on the existing stock. It is considered likely that Uttlesford is exporting demand to pools out of the local authority.</p>
Availability (Management and usage)	<p>The two public leisure centre pools are available to the community on a pay and play basis.</p> <p>The Felsted School pool closed to the public during the Pandemic and consultation to date indicates it has not re-opened to the community since.</p>	<p>Ensure that the facilities can be accessed by the whole community particularly those from more deprived areas and/or with particular health needs.</p>
Other	<p>There is a need to invest in current facilities to reduce carbon emissions and the cost of operating efficiently to meet UDC's net zero emissions pledge.</p>	<p>Invest to save opportunities should be considered to reduce the energy consumption.</p>

Strategic summary

- ◀ Each facility is important to the community served and should be protected in accordance with Para 103 of the NPPF.
- ◀ Programming should be investigated to ensure the most popular activities are available at peak times.
- ◀ Develop a masterplan to determine the long-term plan for The Lord Butler Swimming & Fitness Centre.
- ◀ A Sport England Facilities Planning Model report is recommended to be undertaken for sports halls to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken which will account for cross-boundary movements.

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SECTION 6: HEALTH AND FITNESS SUITES

According to the most recent ALS data⁹, 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). The popularity of fitness activities reflects the fact that they are delivered in a range of venues and facilities including larger gyms (run on behalf of local authorities by in-house or private sector operators and trusts), independently by large multi-site and smaller more local commercial organisations) and also in other smaller activity spaces such as village and community halls.

Fitness studios also vary in their size and function, from relatively large rooms within leisure centres often containing a sprung floor, to smaller spaces (often within community and village halls) which may serve as dedicated spinning (indoor cycling) 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 are a core benefit of a health and fitness membership.

In terms of trends in the market, prior to the Covid-19 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 2022 found that membership levels dropped by around 5% since 2019 because of the Pandemic and that the number of facilities had also reduced. This correlates with ALS data which measured regular pre-Pandemic activity levels at around 14 million. Pure Gym and GLL remain the UK's leading operators (by number of gyms and members).

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

Larger health and fitness gyms containing a mix of flexible spaces (such as cardio, free weights and boxing equipment, (80 stations +¹⁰) remain central to the financial viability of public sector leisure centres. When combined with multiple studio facilities offering a good mix (and a sufficient number) of classes, these are often the most profitable spaces within a typical leisure centre.

The past decade or so has also seen a growth in the prevalence of operators offering 'functional fitness' type equipment and activities. This is a type of strength training that readies your 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

There are 14 health and fitness gyms in Uttlesford, they offer 675 stations. Generally, they are located in the main settlement areas and on the main arterial routes of the authority.

⁹ [Active Lives adult survey Nov 20-21 report](#)

¹⁰ 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 on population density.

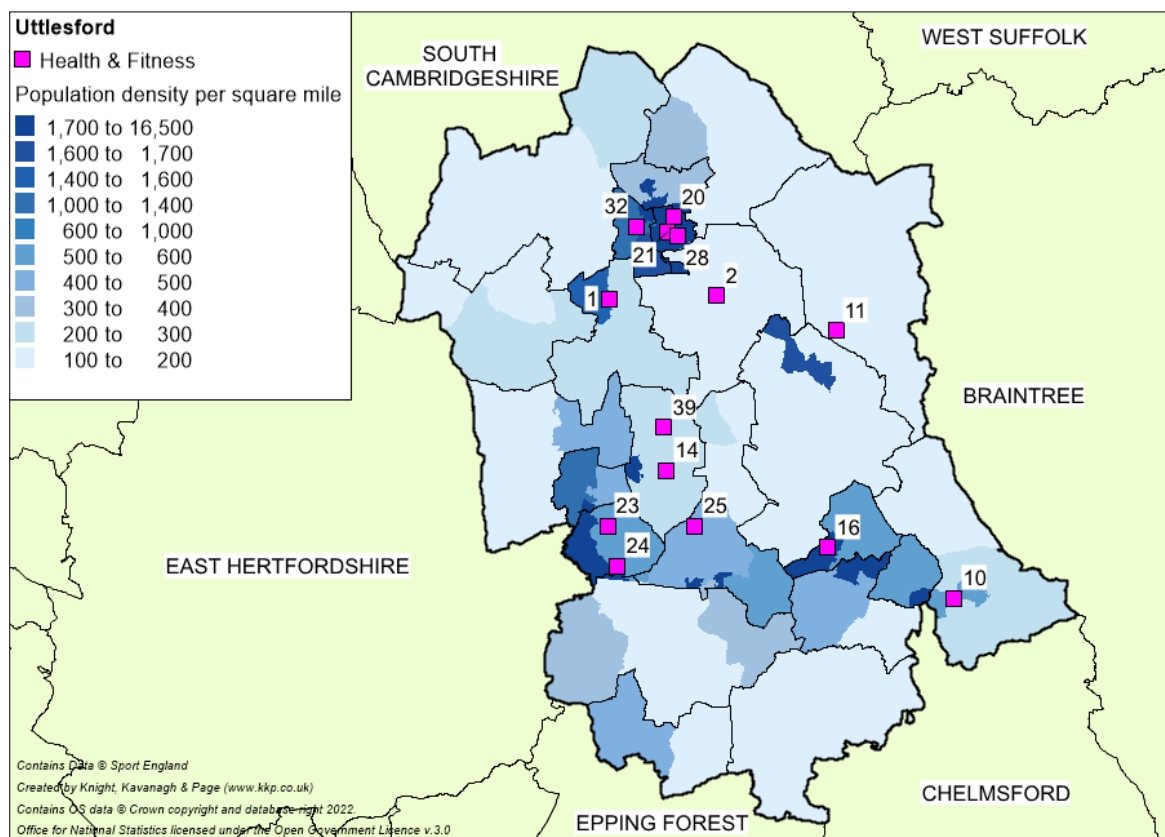


Table 6.1: All health and fitness gyms in Uttlesford

Map ID	Site name	Stations
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	20
2	Carver Barracks	20
10	Felsted School	33
11	Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	30
14	Golf World Stansted	11
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	55
20	Just Gym	60
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	72
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	37
24	Novotel (Stansted Airport)	19
25	Pace Health Club	32
28	Puregym	220
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	26
39	Vision Fitness	40

Fitness facilities with fewer than 20 stations are typically not assessed/considered although it is recognised that they can service smaller communities. When the venues (Golf World Stansted and Novotel) with fewer than 20 stations are removed from the supply list, there are 12 health and fitness gyms and 645 stations. It should be noted that Puregym (200 stations) is a substantial facility and accounts for almost one third of the overall local supply (32.5%).

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Quality

All community available health and fitness sites received a non-technical quality assessment. Generally, they are of good and above average quality. One is rated good quality (Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland), ten are above average, and one is below average.

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

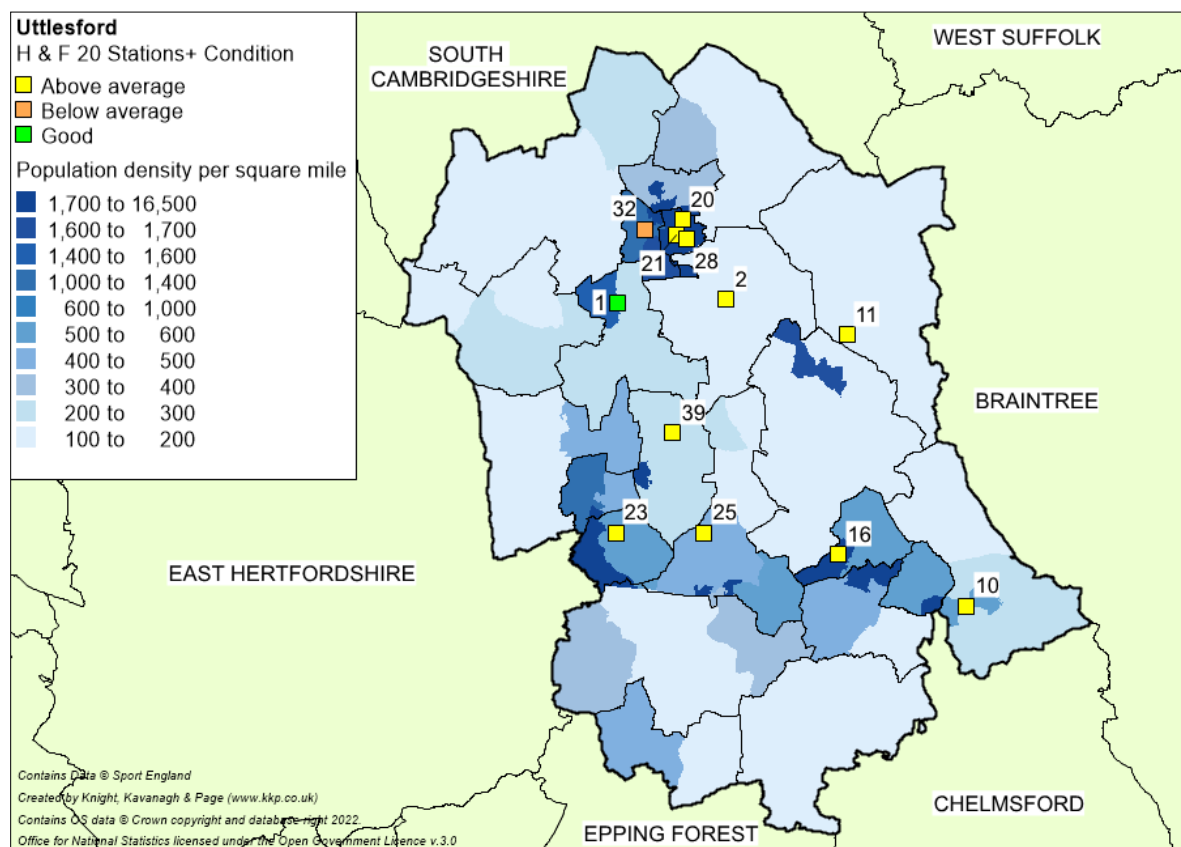


Table 6.2: Health and fitness gyms (20+ stations)

ID	Site name	Stations	Condition
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	20	Good
2	Carver Barracks	20	Above average
10	Felsted School	33	Above average
11	Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	30	Above average
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	55	Above average
20	Just Gym	60	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	72	Above average
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	37	Above average
25	Pace Health Club	32	Above average
28	Puregym	220	Above average
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	26	Below average
39	Vision Fitness	40	Above average

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Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland is good quality as it opened in 2023. It was funded as a result of the sale of land adjacent to the school. All the other gyms which rated above average in quality report benefitting from regular investment and maintenance regimes. Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is rated as below average and requires modernisation.

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

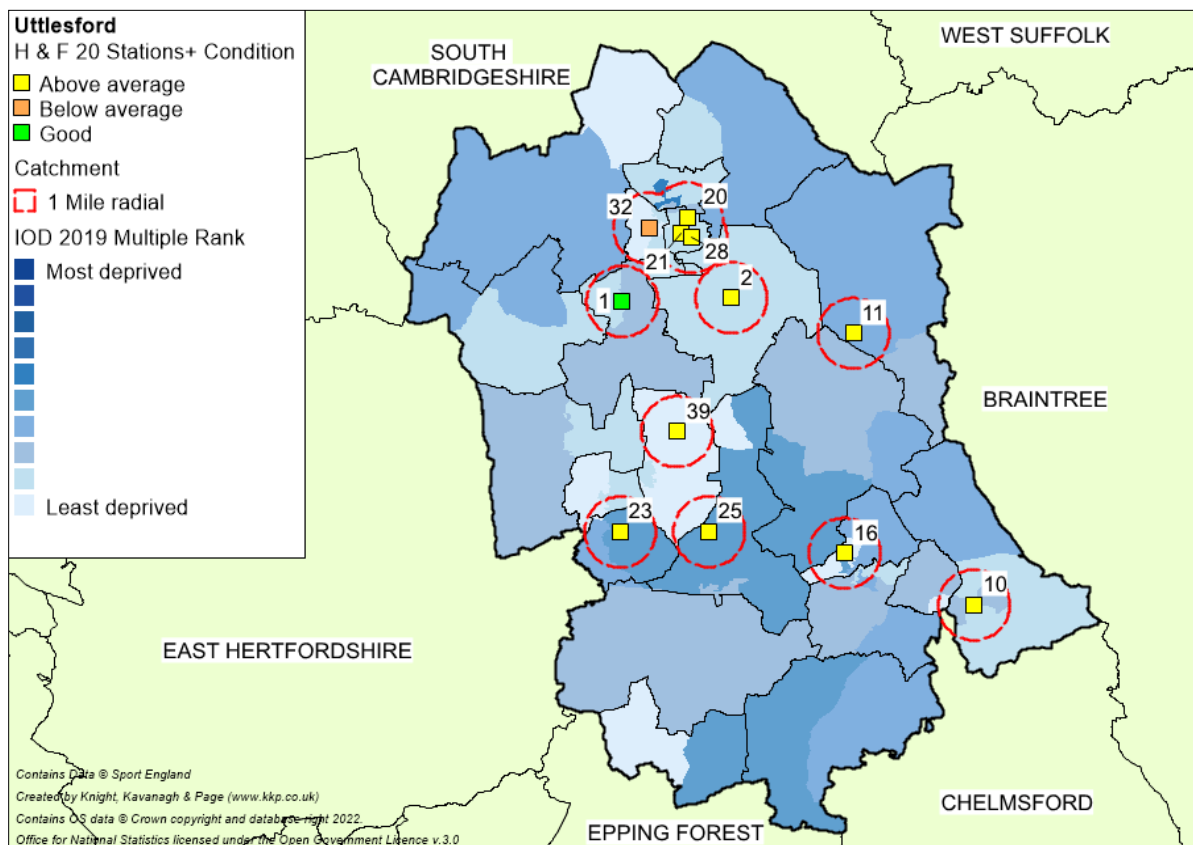


Table 6.3: Health and fitness gyms 20+ stations with 1-mile radial catchment

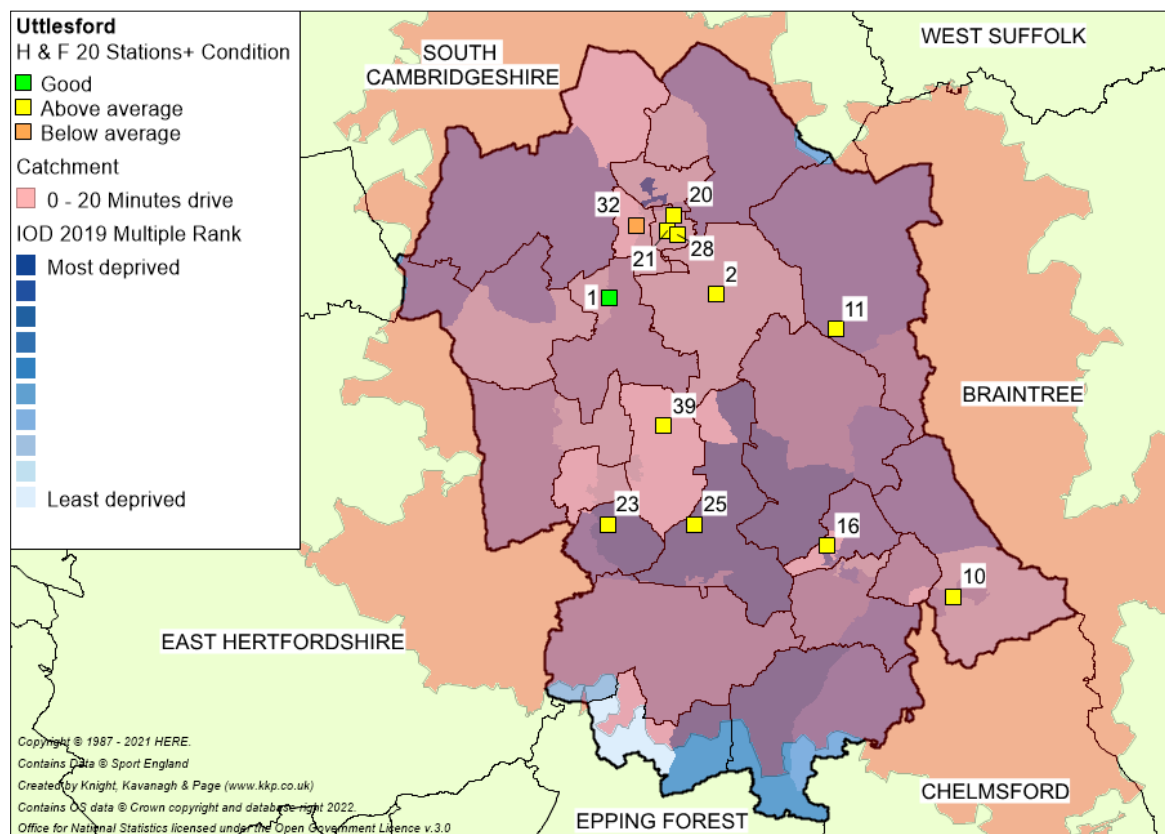
IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	842	1.0%	695	0.8%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	3,223	3.8%	6,146	7.2%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	2,498	2.9%	13,713	16.1%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	3,340	3.9%	16,599	19.5%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	12,332	14.5%	11,331	13.3%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	6,761	7.9%	7,725	9.1%
Total	85,205	100.0%	28,996	34.0%	56,209	66.0%

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Drive time catchment modelling suggests that approximately 97% of Uttlesford's population lives within a 20-minute drive of a (20+ station) health and fitness facility within the district. Just over one third (34.0%) reside within one mile walk of a facility.

Figure 6.4: Health and fitness gyms with 20 minutes drive time catchment on IMD



Neighbouring facilities

Health and fitness users do not just visit facilities within their own local authority, so those within two miles of the border are considered. There are nine sites located within two miles of the Uttlesford boundary. Two offers pay and play access. Four are of significant size with over 100 stations and two are national chains and will, thus, attract Uttlesford residents. Seven are in East Hertfordshire, one in Braintree and one is in South Cambridgeshire.

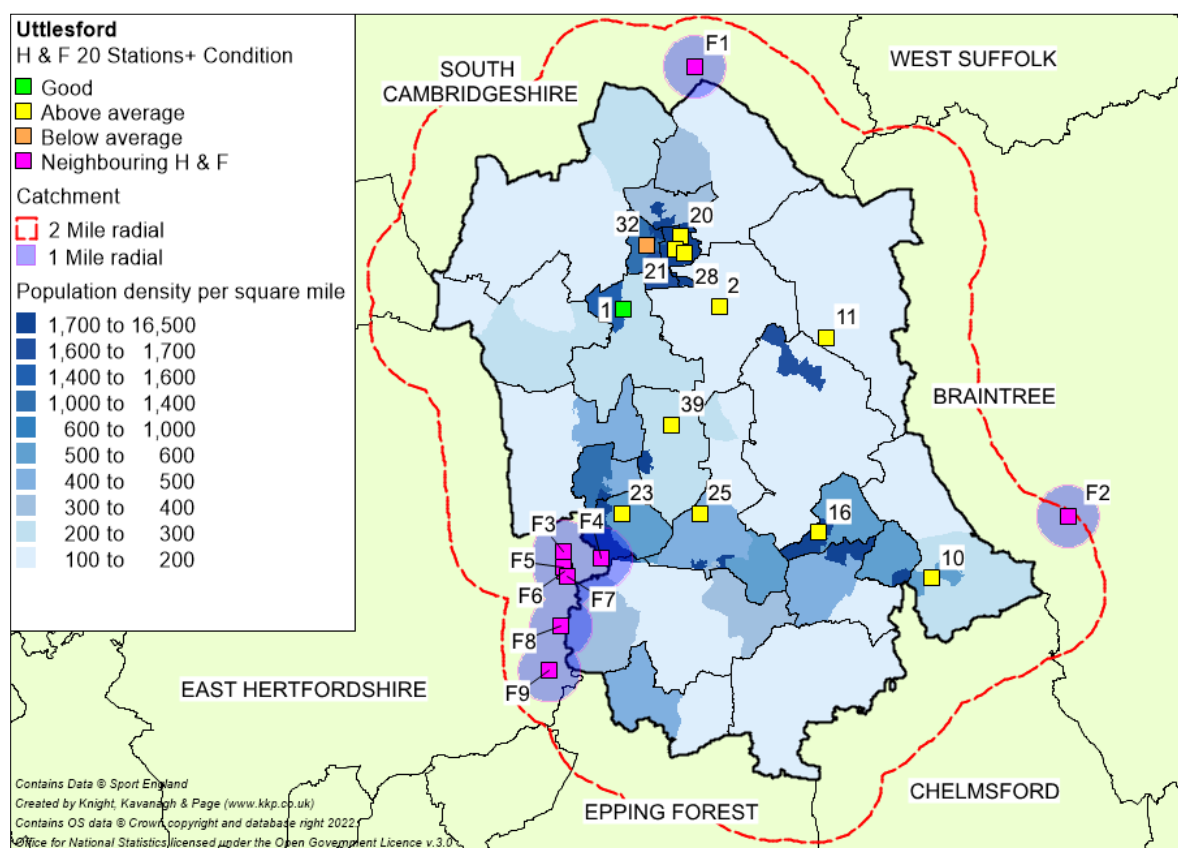
Table 6.4: Fitness gym with 20+ stations within 2 miles of local authority boundary

ID	Active Places site name	Stations	Access type
F1	Anglian Leisure Linton	50	Registered membership
F2	Braintree Sport & Health Club	60	Pay and play
F3	Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre	130	Registered membership
F4	Koru Gym	30	Registered membership
F5	Snap Fitness	200	Registered membership
F6	Nuffield Health	120	Registered membership
F7	Vision Fitness	40	Registered membership
F8	Challenge Active	106	Pay and play
F9	Leventhorpe Leisure Centre	40	Registered membership

Source: Active Places Power 03/10/2023

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Figure 6.5: Health and fitness gyms (20+ stations) within 2 miles of Uttlesford boundary



Availability and programming

Sport England's classification of access type defines registered membership use facilities as publicly available. This generally means a monthly fee, the cost of which can vary considerably. It is acknowledged that memberships which might be considered expensive offer access to different market segments and can ease pressure on more available facilities (i.e., those with cheaper membership options). The access policy of the 20+ station sites in Uttlesford is shown in Table 6.6 below.

Table 6.5: Access policy of health and fitness gyms in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Stations	Access type
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	20	Registered membership
2	Carver Barracks	20	Private use
10	Felsted School	33	Registered membership
11	Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	30	Pay and play
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	55	Pay and play
20	Just Gym	60	Pay and play
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	72	Pay and play
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	37	Pay and play
25	Pace Health Club	32	Registered membership
28	Puregym	220	Pay and play
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	26	Private use
39	Vision Fitness	40	Pay and play

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Most of health and fitness gyms offer pay and play access (seven out of 12 gyms). Three require membership for access and two (Saffron Walden County High School and Carver Barracks) are not available to the community.

Table 6.6: Pricing structure of health and fitness facilities in Uttlesford

Site name	Annual	12-month DD	Notes
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland		£20.00 (adult) £18.00 (senior) £15.00 (junior)	+£10.00 for all memberships to include classes.
Carver Barracks	Private use – MOD site		
Felsted School	£225.00	£25.00 £35.00 £20	Gym only Incl. swim, squash & classes Classes only
Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	£320.00	£32.00	
Great Dunmow LC Centre	£334.70	£30.00	Multi-site option; £40.99 pcm.
Just Gym		£35.00	
Lord Butler Fitness & LC	£334.70	£30.00	Multi-site option; £40.99 pcm.
Mountfitchet Romeera LC	£334.70	£30.00	Multi-site option at £40.99 pcm.
Pace Health Club		£59.00	£649.00
Puregym		£22.99	
Vision Fitness		£33.00	Classes at additional cost.

The cheapest monthly direct debit membership is Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland at £20 per month. The most expensive is Pace Health Club at Stansted Airport at £59.00.

Public leisure centres tend to offer multi activity membership options (e.g., swimming and fitness classes) and multiple site usage. Running good quality health and fitness facilities with studios can offset the costs and enhance the financial viability of other venue elements such as swimming pools. In many instances they cross subsidise such facilities. Commercial gyms (e.g., Puregym) also offer pay and play options, although in common with most pay and play sites it becomes less cost-effective when people attend weekly or more often.

Future developments

Both Lord Butler and Great Dunmow leisure centres report demand for fitness classes that cannot be met. Both have waiting lists for classes and aspirations to add studio space to meet the demands of users.

Two studios are planned as part of the new replacement Helena Romanes School and a small fitness gym. It is understood that should the development happen, all will be available for community use.

6.2: Demand

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 the adequacy of provision 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.

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Table 6.7: UK penetration rates; health/fitness in Uttlesford (ONS 2018 Data)

Description	Curent (2018)	Future (2031)	Future (2041)
Adult population (16+ years)	71,462	82,712	88,236
UK penetration rate	16.0%	16%	17%
Number of potential members	11,434	13,324	15,000
Number of visits per week (1.75/member)	20,009	23,159	26,250
% 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%)	333	386	438
No of stations (with comfort factor applied)	500	579	656

*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 a current need for 500 stations in Uttlesford. This will grow to 579 by 2031 and to 656 by 2041, taking account of a comfort factor (particularly at peak times). Comfort factor is a level of over provision to reduce users having to wait for equipment to be available when working out.

When comparing the number of community available stations currently available (599) and accounting for the comfort factor, there is a positive supply balance (99 stations at present, 20 by 2031 and then an under-supply of 57 by 2041). This means that, all things being equal, there is a sufficient supply of health and fitness provision at present and up to 2041.

When factoring in the strategic housing impact, there is further increase in demand as follows:

Table 6.8: Strategic housing impact

Housing growth increases from proposed strategic allocation (Reg 19 working assumption)	Additional fitness stations required (Including comfort factor)
3,849	27 stations

Based on current assessment, availability and proposed new development, investment is required in improving the quality and capacity of the existing stock prior to considering the development of a health and fitness provision.

One key issue is that budget operators are not necessarily available to people with barriers to participation and groups and people from areas of (relative) disadvantage (as cost is only one factor which may hinder usage). This applies particularly to those who need to pay for transport to access such facilities and where pay and play is not available. The challenge for Uttlesford is ensuring that people in rural areas can access provision and that the public leisure stock can meet demand whilst challenged by the lack of studio provision at its sites.

Consultation with Vision Fitness highlighted an aspiration to open an additional fitness gym in the area and a desire to expand current provision.

Supply and demand analysis

As noted, health and fitness facilities are an important facet of leisure provision. The income derived can offset the cost/underpin the viability of other aspects of provision and 'customer-targeted' physical activity programmes such as exercise on referral. The challenge is to continue to provide opportunity for people from rural areas and those with health inequalities.

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL INDOOR & BUILT FACILITIES - NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

6.3: Dance studios

Dance 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.

Activities offered vary from low impact classes (i.e., Pilates and yoga) to dance, step, Zumba and boxercise. Dance classes/clubs are key users of studio spaces throughout the country.

There are 11 studios in the district (nine fitness studios and two spinning studios). Nine were subject to a non-technical assessment – all were rated above average. The two unassessed are Golf World Stansted and Pure Body Health studios.

Five studios are available on a pay and play basis, four require a membership for access. One requires membership of a sports club/community association and one (Saffron Walden County High School) is private use only by the school. As noted above, Lord Butler and Great Dunmow leisure centres report demand for fitness classes that they cannot cater for. Options to increase the scale of studio provision at these sites should be considered.

Figure 6.6: Studios in Uttlesford

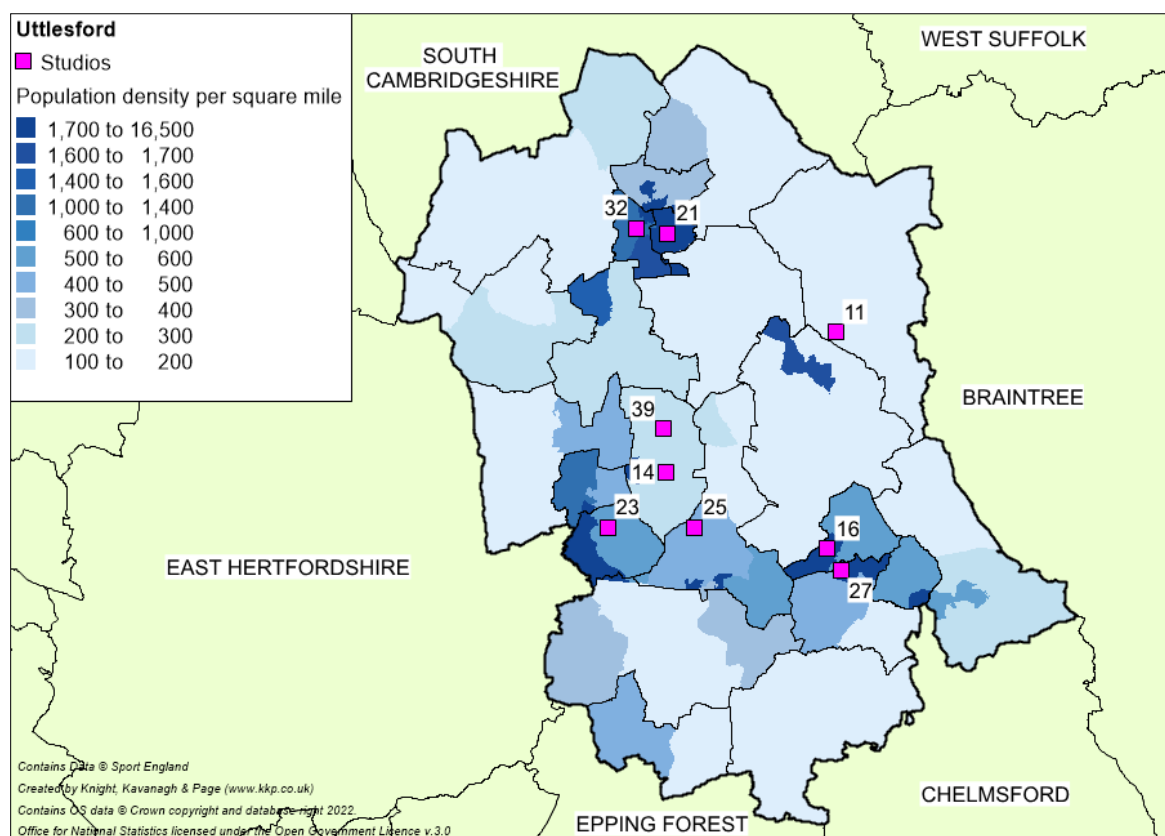


Table 6.9: List of studios in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Type	Access	Condition
11	Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	Fitness	Pay and play	Above average
14	Golf World Stansted	Fitness	R.Membership	Not assessed
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	Fitness	Pay and play	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Fitness	Pay and play	Above average

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ID	Site name	Type	Access	Condition
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Cycle	Pay and play	Above average
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	Fitness	Sports club/CA	Above average
25	Pace Health Club	Fitness	R.Membership	Above average
25	Pace Health Club	Cycle	R.Membership	Above average
27	Pure Body Health	Fitness	R.Membership	Not assessed
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Fitness	Private use	Above average
39	Vision Fitness	Fitness	Pay and play	Above average

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

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	Of the 14 gyms, twelve have 20+ stations. These 12 gyms provide 645 stations. There are 11 studios. The nine gyms in neighbouring authorities offer a combined total of 776 stations.	The current positive supply/demand balance of 99 stations will, going forward, reduce due to the increasing population and fitness trends. There is no need for increased provision between 2031-2041 period. There is a need to consider if additional studio space could be made available at The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre to meet current and future demand. This will enable the centres to increase its fitness class offering and fitness membership will enable it to compete more effectively with commercial operators at peak times. Two new studios are planned for the new replacement Helena Romanes School
Quality	All audited gyms are rated above average in quality.	There is a need to maintain current good quality.
Accessibility	97% of the population lives within 20 minutes' drive time of a fitness gym. 34% of the population lives within one mile of a gym.	Ensure that people with specific health needs or people in rural locations can access health and fitness facilities.
Availability (Management and usage)	There are seven pay and play gyms with 20+ stations (and 11 studios).	The key need is to cater fully for the full range of local market segments ensuring that residents from rural areas and those with specific health needs can afford them.

Strategic summary

There is a need to assist 1Life (Parkwood) as the Council's leisure provider to be able to increase studio provision at two of the three public leisure sites. This will enable it to meet current demand and compete effectively with commercial providers. This will ensure that it is both well-placed to maintain the viability of its sports facilities and best positioned to enable people who need it most to access health and fitness-based sport and physical activity.

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SECTION 7: GYMNASTICS

In 2023 British Gymnastics released its new 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.

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL INDOOR & BUILT FACILITIES - NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

7.1: Supply

There is one dedicated gymnastics venue and one non dedicated gymnastic venue in Uttlesford.

Figure 7.1: Gymnastics provision in Uttlesford – 30 minutes’ drive time catchment

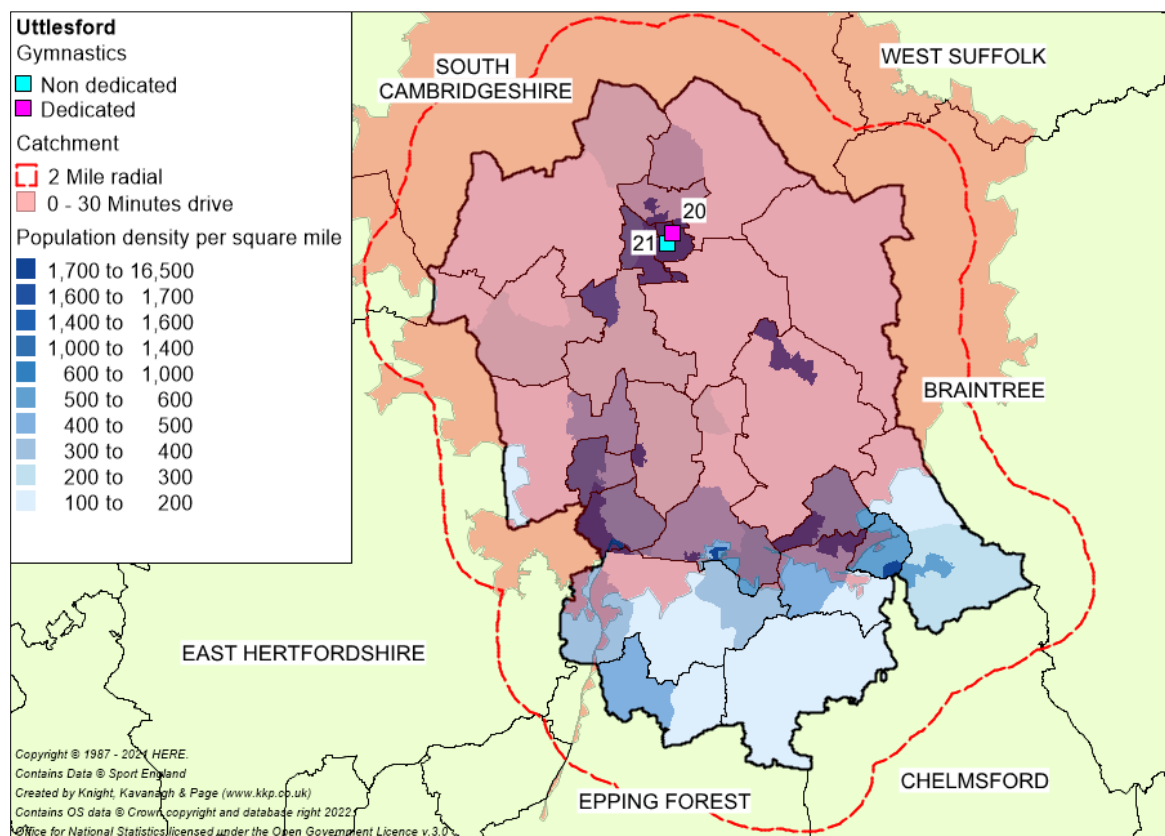


Table 7.1: Gymnastics provision in Uttlesford

Map ID	Site name	Type
20	Allstars Gymnastics (Just Play)	Dedicated
21	The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre (Forge Gymnastics)	Non-dedicated

Allstars Gymnastics operates from a children’s play centre. It offers recreational sessions for children aged 4 years to 11 years. Forge Gymnastics (formerly known as Dynamics (2001-2021) is based at the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre. It also operates from two other sites in neighbouring Cambridge. (Linton Village College and Parkside School).

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). As shown in Figure 7.1, 80% of the Uttlesford population lives within 30 minutes of a dedicated gymnastics facility. There are no known dedicated facilities in neighbouring areas within the 30 minutes catchment area.

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7.2: Demand

British Gymnastics reports that participation in gymnastics is increasing. It also suggests that there is substantial demand and that many clubs have waiting lists - restricting access to gymnastic activity due to lack of time within dedicated and generic facilities. In common with the majority of indoor based sports, gymnastic club membership levels were impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. It states that the sport is experiencing a strong recovery post Pandemic with current membership numbers tracking at just c.5% below 2019 levels.

A key part of the National Governing Body'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 classes. British Gymnastics 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.

Allstars Club is affiliated to British Gymnastics however, Forge Gymnastics Club is not.

Club consultation

Allstars Gymnastics did not respond to the invitation to be consulted. It operates from Just Play Saffron Walden and has 62 affiliated members.

Forge Gymnastics has recreational gymnastics. It hires the Lord Butler Leisure Centre for sessions but reports more demand than it can cater for. Its classes, dependent upon age, each cater for c.20-25 children. It requires more time but understands that this is currently not possible. Ideally, it would like an additional day to accommodate its current waiting list. It has no capacity to meet additional demand.

It reports that the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre can, at times, be too hot or too cold and has only limited storage. It aspires to have its own dedicated centre.

7.3: Summary of key facts and issues - gymnastics

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific needs
Quantity	Of the two gymnastics club in the area, one has a dedicated facility the other delivers from the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.	There is a need for increased gymnastics provision in Uttlesford. Forge Gymnastics aspires to acquire its own dedicated provision.
Quality	No quality issues have been reported. There are however challenges with storage of equipment and at times extremes in temperature of the sports hall at Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.	There are challenges with the storage of equipment at The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.
Accessibility	80% of Uttlesford's population lives within a 30-minute drive time of a club/venue within the authority. Some residents in the south of the authority are outside the 30 minutes' drive time catchment.	Consider how residents in the south of the authority can access gymnastics provision.
Availability (Management & usage)	Forge Gymnastics has waiting lists for all age groups. It reports demand for additional sessions but does not have the facility time to accommodate this.	There is a need for more time to meet current demand.

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Strategic summary

Support Forge Gymnastics club to move to a dedicated facility ideally in the Saffron Walden area.

Consider additional outreach provision in the future to meet demand in the South.

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SECTION 8: SQUASH

Squash is now on a new strategic path, implementing a rebrand and undergoing a major restructure. England Squash 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 needs to apportion resources in a significantly different manner.

Table 8.1: 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 England Squash vision, principles, and strategic pillars. 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, present and 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 its 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.

England Squash estimates that there is 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. For squash to thrive, the NGB believes that the ratio should be closer to one court per 10,000.

There are nine squash courts in the area which is theoretically sufficient. However, four are located at independent schools and the MoD site and are not available for community use. In addition, the three courts at the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre are currently not available. This means that currently two squash courts are available in the area.

Consideration should be given to any new provision (or facility extensions) planned to include squash facilities. For a good quality programme to be delivered on a single site, three squash courts are required. To meet the one per 10,000 benchmark, there is a current need for five courts. Taking future population growth (to 2041) into account there is a need for ten courts.

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8.1: Supply

Quantity and quality

Four sites in Uttlesford have squash courts. There are also nine (traditional and glass-backed) courts within 20 minutes' drive time of the authority.

Figure 8.1: Squash courts within a 20 minutes' drive time of Uttlesford

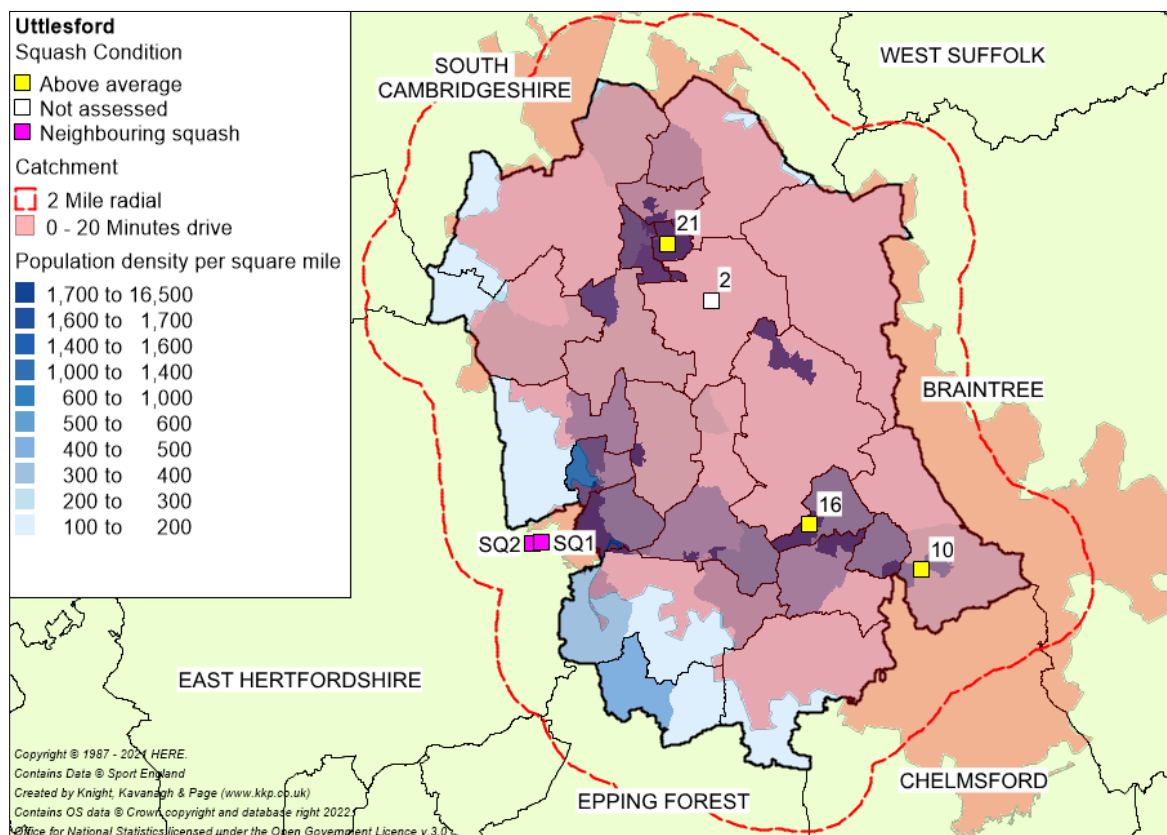


Table 8.1: Squash courts within 20 minutes' drive time of Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Normal	Glass backed	Total	Condition
2	Carver Barracks	0	2	2	Not assessed
10	Felsted School	2	0	2	Above average
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	0	2	2	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	3	0	3	Above average

The three courts at The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre have in 2023 been refurbished. During the refurbishment RAAC concrete was discovered in the ceiling resulting in the immediate closure of the courts. The remedial work is yet to take place and the timescale for the work is unknown (likely to be end of February 2024).

Accessibility

As illustrated above, approximately 90% of Uttlesford's population lives within a 30-minute drive of a facility with squash courts.

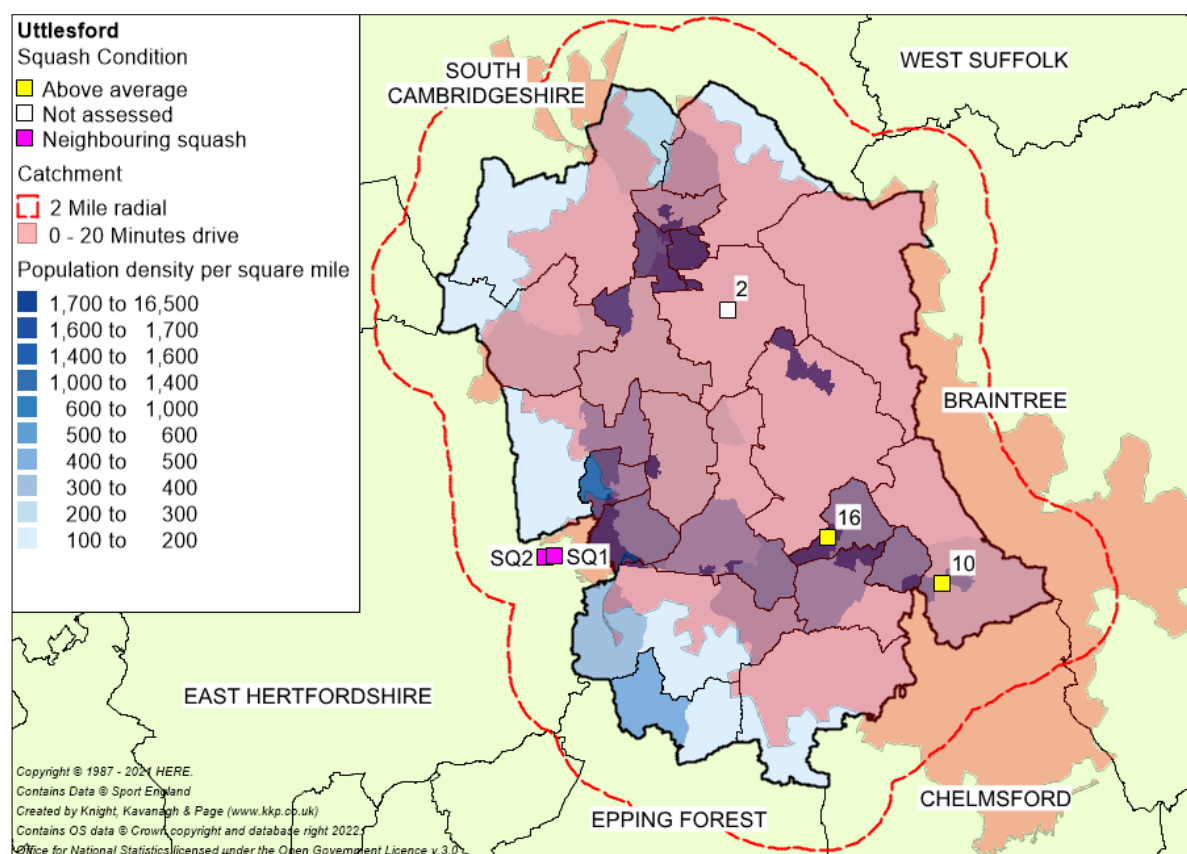
There are two sites (with 8 courts) within a 20-minute drive of Uttlesford. Both are in East Hertfordshire. Both require a membership to access the facilities.

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Table 8.2: Squash facilities within 30 minutes' drive time catchment

Map ID	Site name	Courts	
		Number	Facility type
SQ1	The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust	2	Normal
SQ2	Bishop Stortford Squash Club	4	Glass-backed
SQ2	Bishop Stortford Squash Club	2	Normal

Figure 8.2: Squash courts within 2 miles of authority boundary



Availability

Two sites offer pay and play access (Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre). The remainder (Carver Barracks and Felsted School) are private use only.

1Life (Parkwood) identified that the courts at Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre are closed due to the RAAC concrete issue. Drive time catchment modelling suggests that, when Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre is unavailable, approximately 87.7% of Uttlesford's population is within a 30-minute drive of a one of the other facilities with squash courts.

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Demand

Club consultation

Saffron Squash Club is based at the Lord Butler Fitness & leisure Centre. It has c.70 adult members and plays and organises games both recreationally and competitively. It affiliates to England Squash and competes in the Cambridgeshire Squash League.

It operates five nights per week and utilises all three courts for its programme, which includes training matches, box leagues, inter leagues and coaching on two of the three courts at the centre. It reports that it had managed to return its membership to pre Covid levels before having to stop due to the RAAC concrete issue.

The Club has reduced its programme temporarily until the work is completed as it reports that increased travel to the Great Dunmow Leisure Centre is not feasible for a number of members.

The Club aspires to expand its programme for juniors in the future.

8.2: Summary of key facts and issues – squash courts

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are nine squash court in Uttlesford at four sites. (Of these, four are glass-backed, and the others are traditional).	England Squash identifies a current need for nine courts rising to ten by 2041. Only five courts are available, currently reducing to two due to RAAC concrete. Consider installing squash courts as part of any new leisure development subject to demand and viability being identified and viability.
Quality	Courts are all rated above average quality.	There is an urgent need to complete the remedial work on courts at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre.
Accessibility	90% of Uttlesford's population lives within 20 minutes' drive time of a squash court located in a neighbouring authority.	None
Availability (Management and usage)	Pay and play opportunities are available at two sites in the authority (currently one). Other venues are private use only. Squash courts in neighbouring authorities require a membership to access.	None

Strategic summary

- ◀ There is a need to invest in squash court provision in the area to meet residents' needs.
- ◀ There is a need to consider installing squash courts as part of any new leisure development subject to the identification of demand.
- ◀ Update March 2024, the remedial RAAC concrete works on the squash courts at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre have been completed.

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SECTION 9: INDOOR BOWLS

The five forms of bowls 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 – compared to 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. It has no NGB.

An indoor bowling centre typically comprises a single flat green with several rinks and ancillary accommodation which generally varies according to the number of rinks(i.e., changing rooms, lounge/bar, viewing area, kitchen, office/ meeting rooms, stores and car parking. A successful indoor bowls centre requires a combination of the right location, design, and financial and general management. Sport England¹¹ 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, with the remainder by foot.
- ◀ As a guide, calculate demand based on 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:

- ◀ Develop and implement a robust Sports Development Plan.
- ◀ Actively review the Sport England Club Matters” website.
- ◀ Actively promote the Club and local community amongst those who are both able bodied and disabled. Wheelchair users and visually impaired are particularly keen on the sport of bowls.

EIBA Outline Plan 2017 - 2021

It was reported during consultation with EIBA that an updated development strategy is in process; due to be released imminently.

¹¹ Sport England Design Guidance Note Indoor Bowls 2005

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It will have additions and amendments related to further recovery from the Pandemic (Return to Play), increasing the number of 40-59 year old participants, increasing the number of volunteers, health and wellbeing and inclusivity. It will replace the current EIBA plan which is focused 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/were:

- ◀ Facilities: build, improve, retain
- ◀ Youth and the family
- ◀ Women – increase participation and retention.
- ◀ Disability
- ◀ Competitions
- ◀ Internationals
- ◀ Promotion
- ◀ Commercial partnerships

The “Recruit and Retain Strategy” is to concentrate on encouraging and supporting clubs to increase participation and improve the experience of all participants. Its objectives include:

- ◀ Growing participation across the adult population in local communities. Targeted work to increase female participation.
- ◀ Growing participation in the 12-18 age range as part of the EIBA Development Pathway.
- ◀ The provision of an excellent sporting experience for new and existing participants.
- ◀ A growth in indoor bowls participation by people who have disabilities.

Running alongside this is the Sport England funded development work provided jointly by the Indoor NGB (EIBA); Outdoor NGB, Bowls England (BE) and the “Bowls Development Alliance” (BDA). Each NGB has two directors on the Board of BDA. Sport England funding for the 2017-2021 period, focused on the delivery of the:

- ◀ **Club Development Programme:** supports clubs across the country where they have identified greatest need.
- ◀ **Play Bowls Package Scheme:** supports clubs with their recruitment.
- ◀ **Coach Bowls:** providing qualifications for coaches and developing the best tutor workforce to deliver these qualifications across the whole sport including BE, EIBA, British Crown Green BA and English Short Mat BA
- ◀ **Facilities:** providing funding support for BE and EIBA to research the facility requirements of their clubs.

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 NGBs (BE, EIBA, British Crown Green BA, English Short Mat BA and English Bowling Federation) to have policies and processes in place. Training is also available to support the network of Club Safeguarding officers.
- ◀ **Disability:** work 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 is 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.

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The BDA is also currently finalising its vision statement for 2022-2025. Its work with the bowling NGBs will include:

Vision - Together, we will place bowls at the heart of every community as an accessible sport for all.

Purpose - To sustain, grow and develop the sport in partnership with the bowls family.

Strategic Priorities:

- ◀ Build Partnerships and Communities
- ◀ Educate and Empower
- ◀ Diversify and Innovate
- ◀ Sustain and Grow

Their work with the Bowling NGB's includes:

- ◀ Club Hubs – encourage growth of Membership and retention of facilities.
- ◀ Communities
- ◀ Health
- ◀ Inclusion

9.1: Supply

The one dedicated indoor bowls facility in Uttlesford is Turpins Indoor Bowls. It has 6-rinks, opened in 1996 and was refurbished in 2004.

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

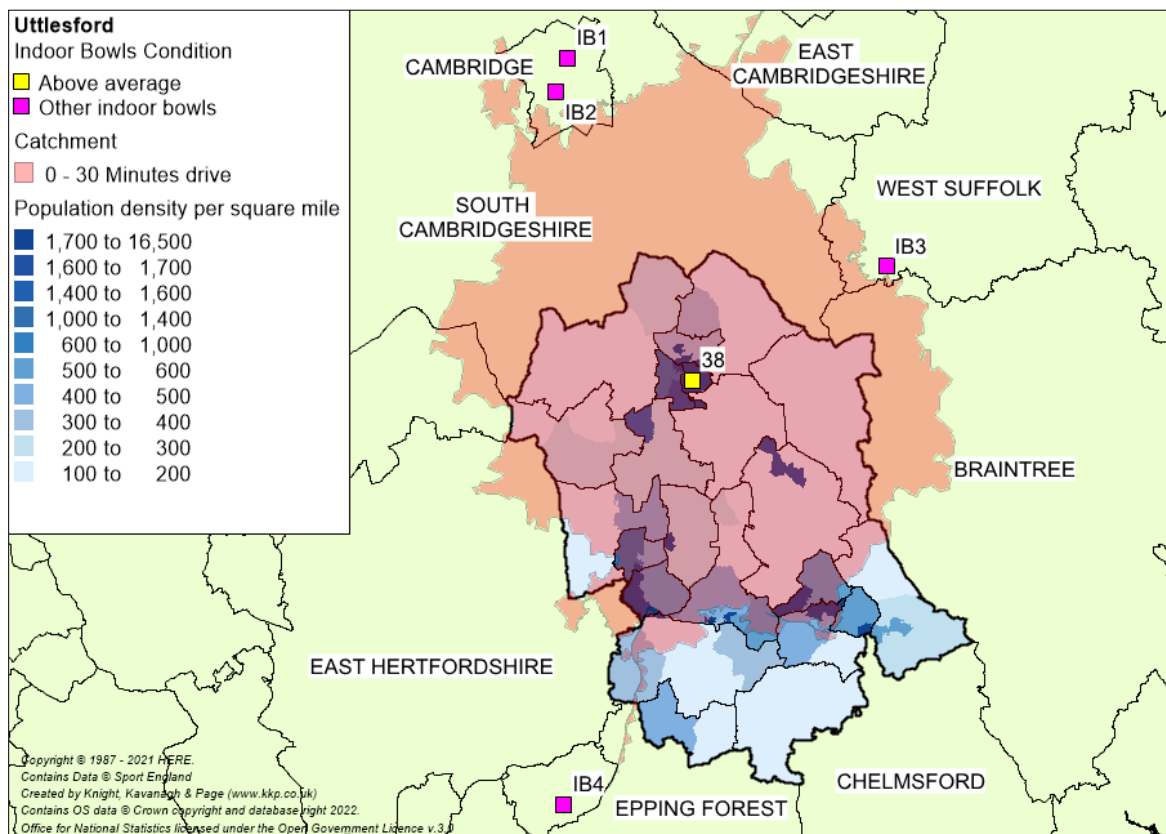


Table 9.1: Indoor bowls centres in Uttlesford

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ID	Site name	Rinks	Access type	Condition
38	Turpins Indoor Bowls Club	6	Registered membership	Above average

Quality

Turpins Indoor Bowls is rated as above average in quality. In the last 12 months it has upgraded its lights to LED following receipt of a grant from the EU Development Fund. It reports that its gas heating system is c.26 years old and in need of replacement. It would like to install solar panels roof but requires UDC permission as the Council owns the facility. The rink carpet is also approaching the end of its life and will require replacement at some point over the next 5 years, at an estimated cost of £50k.

Accessibility

Drivetime modelling suggests that the majority (76%) of Uttlesford's population lives within 30 minutes' drive of a facility. There are no other indoor bowls facilities within a 30-minute drive of Turpins Indoor Bowls Club. However, other indoor bowls facilities outside of the 30-minute catchment, are technically accessible to residents of the north and south of Uttlesford.

Table 9.2: Nearest indoor bowls centre to Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Rinks	Access type	Local authority
IB1	Cambridge Chesterton Indoor	8	Sports club / CA	Cambridge
IB2	Cambridge & County Bowls	2	Sports club / CA	Cambridge
IB3	Haverhill Indoor Bowls Centre	4	Sports club / CA	West Suffolk
IB4	Tye Green Indoor Bowls Club	9	Sports club / CA	Harlow

Source: Active Places Power 03/10/2023 NB: Sports Club / CA = Sports club / community association

Availability

Turpins Indoor Bowls Club requires a membership to access facilities. This is also the case for facilities in neighbouring authorities.

Turpins can cater for increased demand as it has capacity of 700 members and currently has 350.

9.2: Demand

The EIBA view is that the Turpins Indoor Bowls Club is a key facility in Uttlesford and that it can cater for future anticipated demand.

The Club's membership has remained static for the last six years (excluding the years affected by Covid). It reports being almost back to pre-Covid levels (it lost over 100 members during the Pandemic) and ran a large recruitment drive to replace them. It reports that the majority of its members are 70+ years old. It has fewer than 10 under the age of 25 and none aged 25-40 years. It has six members over the age of 90.

It is keen to improve signage to increase awareness of the facility. Since the Pandemic it has reviewed its operations, reduced staffing levels and closed the café area. It currently provides hot drinks and cakes only.

At present it operates on a key holder arrangement basis to keep staffing costs low. This applies both to periods of use by bowls club members and when other groups use the venue.

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These include darts teams and cards playing groups. It is also in discussions with the U3A (University of the Third Age) about the venue being used for some its activities. It has also identified demand for Boccia and is exploring the possibility of delivering this at its site.

9.2: Summary of key facts and issues – indoor bowls

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There is one indoor bowls facility (Turpins Indoor Bowls).	There is no requirement for additional provision.
Quality	It is above average in quality.	There is a need to invest in the gas boiler and the carpet will require replacement within the next 5 years.
Accessibility	(76% of the population lives within 30 minutes' drive time catchment of the facility. Facilities in neighbouring authorities may be more accessible to those living in the south of the authority.	There is no requirement for additional provision.
Availability (Management and usage)	Turpins Indoor Bowls Club requires a membership to access the facilities. It has capacity for cater for increased demand.	There is a need to increase participation and membership to ensure that the club remains viable in the long term.

Strategic summary

- ◀ Investment is required in the Turpins Club building heating system (which also meets the UDC decarbonization agenda).
- ◀ Turpins will also need a replacement carpet in the next 5 years.
- ◀ Given the increase in the number of older people projected, it is likely that demand for indoor bowls will increase.
- ◀ Where possible the Club should be supported to market and promote its activities to help grow/sustain participation and membership.

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SECTION 10: VILLAGE / COMMUNITY HALLS

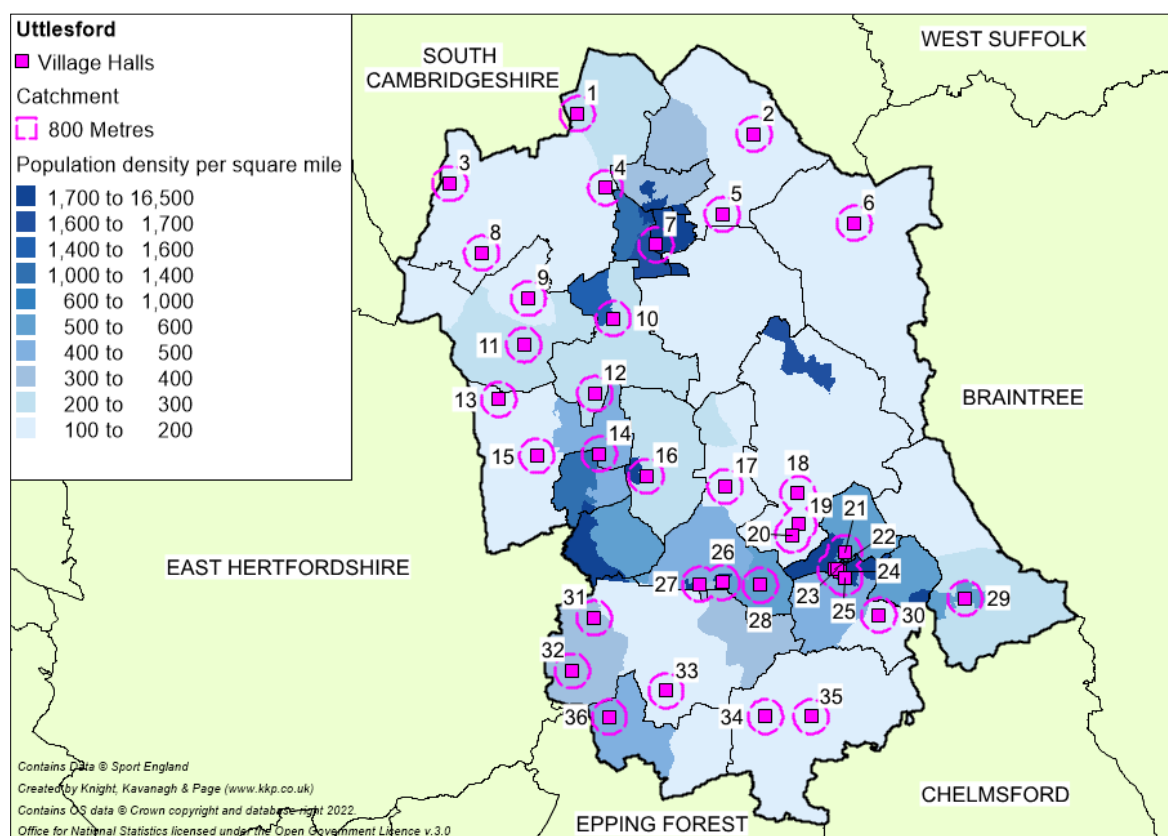
10.1: Village / community halls

Community centres 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 for meetings, socialising and for sports and 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.

10.2: Supply of village/community halls

The audit identified 36 village / community halls in the Authority located mainly in areas of denser population, predominantly in the central/western areas of the district..

Figure 10.1: Village/community halls in Uttlesford with 800m radial catchment



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Table 10.1: All village/community buildings in Uttlesford

Map ID	Site name
1	Chesterfords Community Centre
2	Ashdon Village Hall
3	Chrishall Village Hall
4	Littlebury Village Hall
5	Sewards End Village Hall
6	Hempstead Village Hall
7	Golden Acre Community Centre
8	Duddenhoe End Village Hall
9	The Village Hall Arkesden Essex
10	Newport Village Hall
11	Clavering Village Hall
12	Quendon & Rickling Village Hall
13	Berden Village Hall
14	Ugley Village Hall
15	Manuden Village Community Centre
16	Elsenham Village Hall
17	Broxted Village Hall
18	Great Easton Village Hall
19	Memorial Hall, Little Easton
20	The Barn Theatre & Turkey Barn
21	St. Mary's Room
22	Foakes Hall
23	Talberd Room
24	Rowena Davey Centre
25	The Arts Centre
26	Priors Green Community Hall
27	Silver Jubilee Hall
28	Little Canfield Village Hall
29	Felsted Memorial Hall
30	Barnston Village Hall
31	Great Hallingbury Village Hall
32	Little Hallingbury Village Hall
33	Hatfield Broad Oak Village Hall
34	Aythorpe Roding Village Hall
35	High Easter Village Hall
36	Hatfield Heath Village Hall and Institute

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Accessibility

Radial catchment modelling estimates that one fifth (20%) of the population lives within 800m walk of a village or community hall. These facilities have potential to offer different types of physical activity which are relevant to the local communities which they serve.

Availability

Typically, village halls rely on volunteers to operate, many offer facilities to the community at the times needed i.e., morning, afternoon and evening. Activities tend to reflect the needs of the local community; different types include:

Table 10.2: Types of activities found in Uttlesford's village halls/community centres

Dance	Fitness	Physical activity	Sport
Ballet	Zumba	Aerobics (legs bums & tums)	Table tennis
Ballroom tap	Pilates	Sculpt fit	Badminton
Modern (solo, salsa)	Boot camp	Seated exercise	Martial arts (various)
Contemporary	Circuit training	Tai chi	Boccia
Line	Boxercise	Kids wellbeing	Short mat bowls
Tea dance	Aerobics	Over 50s fitness	Carpet bowls
	Yoga	Flexible strength	Wrestling
	Jazzercise		
	Bounce		
	Metafit		
	Aerial fitness		

It is noticeable that in recent years (since the last audit) there has 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 are also being delivered at these sites (including, food banks, warm hubs, breakfast clubs and social supermarkets). It is presumed that this reflects the economic and financial constraints being experienced in the communities that many serve.

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 communities.

Management varies and management processes include village hall committees, local organisations and individuals. All management relies to a greater or lesser extent on volunteer goodwill.

10.2 Demand

Audit research suggests that demand for village hall/community centre space is high, highlighting the importance of these sites in ensuring a good range of local sport, physical activity, arts and cultural activities for local residents. Desk research indicates that the majority community centres have spare capacity.

These sites can (and could) play an important role in ensuring that older people or people living in more rural areas have access to facilities and can also contribute to getting the

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inactive active or retaining those already involved. Further analysis is required to understand whether, and the extent to which, activities in these facilities can meet the needs of the local population.

In KKP's experience, smaller community venues provide the 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 priorities set out in the Council's Health and Well-being Strategy.

10.3 Summary of key facts and issues

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 36 village / community centres in Uttlesford. They serve many of the more rural parts of the district.	No specific deficiencies or surpluses identified.
Quality	Quality was not assessed.	None identified
Accessibility	20% of the population lives within an 800-metre walk catchment of a site.	None identified
Availability (Management & usage)	Management varies between village hall committees, local organisations and individuals – virtually all reliant on volunteer goodwill. A wide variety of activity is on offer; it varies considerably between halls and is broadly reflective of interpreted local need.	None identified.

Strategic summary

- ◀ The opportunity to increase physical activity opportunity provided in such 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.
- ◀ In addition to sport and physical activity, other services are delivered (e.g., warm hubs, Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme). This reflects the economic and financial constraints experienced in the communities served.
- ◀ There may be opportunity to increase physical activity provision and work with service delivery partners (e.g., NHS) to ensure that all residents, particularly those in rural areas have improved access to sport/physical activity opportunity. This should be a key strategy feature moving forwards.

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SECTION 11: INITIAL STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal opportunity/challenge for Uttlesford is to ensure that there is continuous investment in indoor and built facilities and that they are, consequently, fit for the future. There is a need to balance the needs of the core market of sports consumers already participating in local clubs whilst ensuring the growth of existing or new activities which meet the needs of new participants and the authority's growing population of older residents.

The following key strategic recommendations will be developed further in the strategic document which follows this but are likely to encompass the need to:

- ◀ Undertake a Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for sports halls and swimming pools to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken.
- ◀ Work with Dame Bradbury School to improve the standard of its below average sports hall subject to its opening for community use (should sufficient demand be identified).
- ◀ Address the identified deficiency in water space in the area. Options include the installation of a learner/teaching pool at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre.
- ◀ Maintain the quality of facilities - across all sports - which are currently in above average and good condition.
- ◀ Ensure that if the new replacement Helena Romanes School is developed, it has a formal agreement in place via a community use agreements (CUAs).
- ◀ In the medium to longer term, increase the volume of health and fitness (including studio) provision in the area, ideally at public leisure centre sites. This will enable them to upscale a more viable fitness offer and further cross-subsidise other health and wellbeing activities.
- ◀ Support Forge Gymnastics Club to move to a larger dedicated facility should the opportunity arise.
- ◀ Undertake a review of sports hall programming, linked to the findings of the District's Playing Pitch Strategy. Ascertain whether there is a need for more 3G/netball court investment to enable outdoor sports to play outside creating additional capacity for indoor sports.
- ◀ Ensure that memberships and specific activities are available to people living in the Authority's more deprived communities via enabling increased use of community facilities (e.g., activity halls and community centres).
- ◀ Maintain a watching brief in respect of the scale of health and fitness provision within Uttlesford (and provision made outside the Authority). Plan for the expansion of existing facilities / new provision in the long-term future.
- ◀ Ensure that people who face specific barriers to participation can access health and wellbeing provision, especially those in rural areas.
- ◀ Support other developments (via planning, developer contributions and officer expertise) which may assist in increasing sport and physical activity within the wider community.
- ◀ Work with local sports clubs (with and via the leisure operator) to ensure that facilities and workforce development programmes enable facilities to best meet the needs of all clubs and residents.
- ◀ In line with UDC carbon reduction targets, ensure that existing facilities are made to be as energy efficient as possible, and that any new developments consider energy efficiency as a high priority.
- ◀ Develop a system to, as early as possible, identify and tackle ongoing investment, maintenance, and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities.
- ◀ Village halls are delivering more fitness and wellbeing activities in addition to key services (e.g., warm hubs, food banks). These play an important role in serving the local community needs, especially in rural areas and for those without private transportation.
- ◀ Plan for the long-term future of The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.