

**CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL
BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGY
NEEDS ASSESSMENT – FINAL REPORT
NOVEMBER 2025**

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) has been appointed to produce a Built Facilities Study (BFS) for Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC). This work will provide a key piece of evidence to support the update of the Castle Point Plan. The stated objectives for this are to:

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

KKP delivered CPBC's previous BFS in 2018. Its scope included assessment of 3+ court sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness suites, indoor tennis, squash, sailing, community/village halls and specialist sports provision for boxing, table tennis and martial arts.

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Since that time there have been numerous changes to provision along with increasing demand. This report is, therefore, a detailed assessment of current provision of indoor and built sports facilities in Castle Point, identifying need (demand) and gaps (deficiencies in provision).

Evidence about provision and overall need will incorporate:

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

The audit was conducted in February 2025 largely via in-situ facilities assessment. In instances where site access was not available KKP carried out non-technical quality assessments via desk research. Where possible this was supplemented utilising virtual ‘walk arounds’ of the relevant facilities or videos and photos present on operators’ websites or in discussion with operators.

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

1.2: Scope of the project

This report provides detail as to what exists within Castle Point, 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, dance/aerobic studios, squash, gymnastics and, indoor tennis, indoor bowls, and climbing and bouldering. In delivering this report KKP has:

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

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

The specific objectives are to:

- ◀ Review relevant Council strategies, plans, reports, corporate objectives.
- ◀ Review the local, regional, and national strategic context.
- ◀ Demographic analysis of the local population at present and in the future (up to 2043, in line with the current Castle Point Plan timeframes).
- ◀ Audit indoor facilities provided by public, private, voluntary and education sectors.

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- ◆ 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 follows Sport England's ANOG methodology and accords with relevant paragraphs in the most up-to-date version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

1.3: Background

Castle Point is a borough located in the County of Essex.

Figure 1.1: Castle Point with main roads



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Strategic roads within the Authority include the A13 east-west road linking Southend-on-Sea to the east and the M25 motorway to the west. The A130 is the main route connecting Canvey Island to Chelmsford. The railway station located in Benfleet, provides regular services to London, Tilbury and Southend. Southend Airport is located a few miles from the border of Castle Point and currently provides regional and international flights.

The Authority comprises four main towns: Hadleigh, South Benfleet, Thundersley and Canvey Island, with the latter a popular seaside resort. It borders Thurrock, Basildon, Rochford and Southend-on-Sea and forms part of the Thames Gateway, making it the focus for regeneration projects. The Council has been working with other key local agencies through the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership to look at long-term improvements to the Borough.

1.4: Report structure

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

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

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

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

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SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

2.1: National context

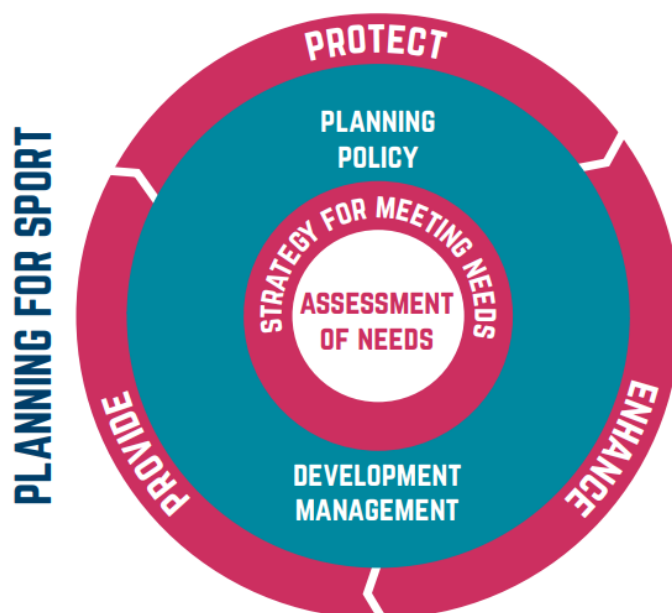
The Government's [Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity](#) has a focus on increasing physical activity, making sport more welcoming and inclusive, and ensuring the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of the sector. In addition, the recently launched cross-departmental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

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

Sport England

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

Figure 2.1: The Sport England Planning for Sport Model



Assessment of need is core to planning for sporting provision. It is underpinned by 12 planning-for-sport principles which help the planning system to contribute to sustainable development by fulfilling the key role of the NPPF in creating strong, vibrant and healthy communities.

Applying them ensures that the planning system plans positively to enable and support healthy lifestyles, delivers community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs, and 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

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and neighbourhood levels. As such they are of relevance to all involved in, or looking to engage with, the planning system.

Figure 2.2: Sport England’s 12 planning principles



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Sport England: Uniting the Movement 2023

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

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

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

As well as advocating sport and physical activity via the building of evidence and partnership development, it identifies five big issues which people and communities need to address by working together. They are described as the major challenges to England being an active nation over the next decade as well as being the greatest opportunities to make a lasting difference. They are designated as building blocks that individually would make a difference but tackled collectively could change things profoundly. 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: an unrelenting focus on positive experiences for them - as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- ◀ Connecting with health and wellbeing: Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health, and wellbeing, so that more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- ◀ Active environments: Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The report also noted that the leisure sector emerged from the pandemic in a particularly fragile state. Emergency funding ⁴ helped to avert financial catastrophe and enabled the additional costs of maintaining public assets and reopening services to be met. Funding sources are, however, finite and are now virtually exhausted. At best, financial pressures risk limiting the ability of stakeholders to deliver against their commitments; at worst they may result in the permanent closure of some services or facilities.

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

² Link to Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England 2020

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

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

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

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

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

Chief Medical Officer Physical Activity Guidelines 2019

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

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

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

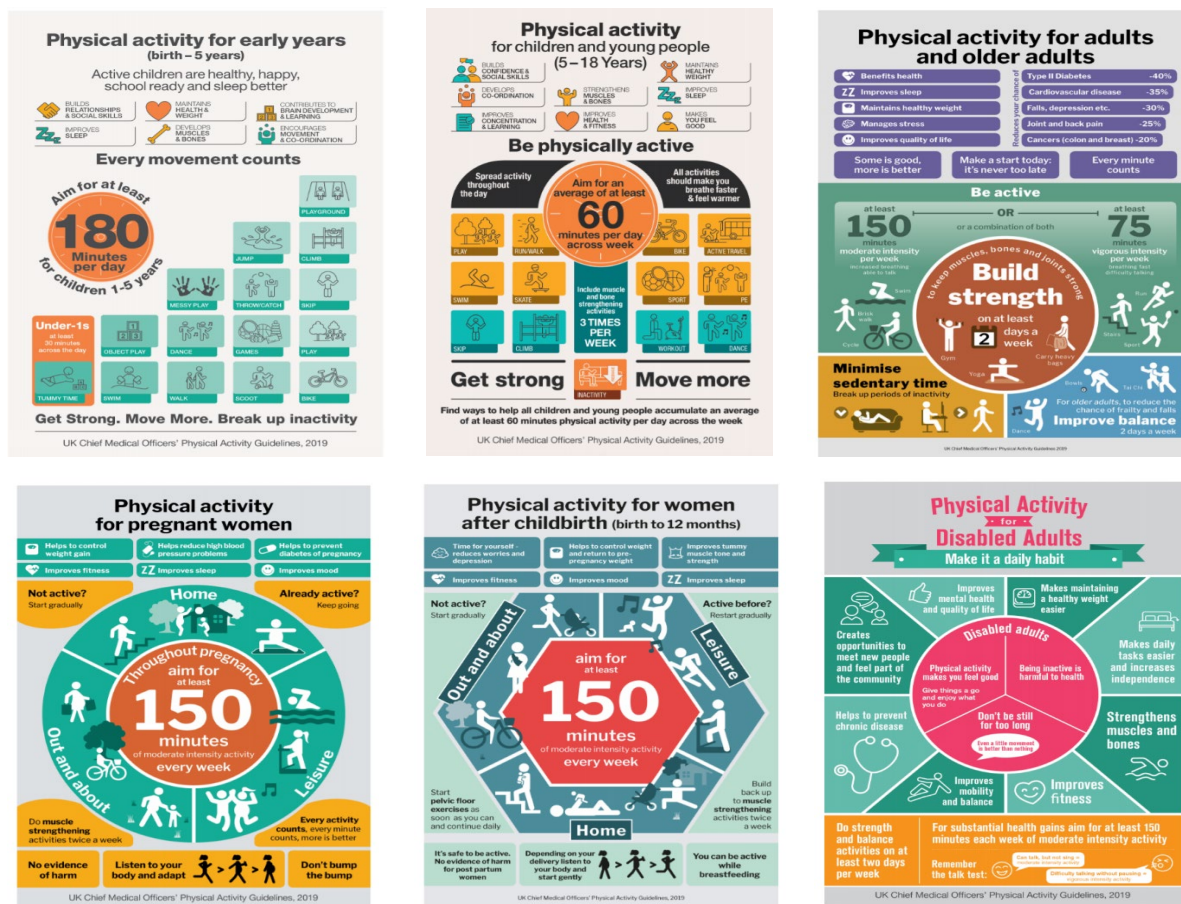
- ◆ Under-5s: This is broken down into infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. They should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of different exercises, whereas infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activities.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

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

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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.

Figure 2.3: Physical activity guidelines (hyperlink image)



Joseph Rowntree Foundation UK Poverty 2025 report

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

- ✦ Larger families – where 45% of children in families with 3 or more children were in poverty.
- ✦ Families whose childcare responsibilities limit their ability to work – 44% of children in lone-parent families were in poverty.
- ✦ Many minority ethnic groups – many households have higher rates of child, very deep and persistent poverty.
- ✦ 30% of disabled people are in poverty. This rate is higher (at 38%) for people with a long-term, limiting mental health condition.
- ✦ 28% of informal carers (those with caring responsibilities). They have limited ability to work and unpaid social-care givers experience an average pay penalty of nearly £5,000/annum.

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- ◆ Families not in work – more than half of working-age adults (56%) in workless households are in poverty - compared with 15% in working households. Around two-thirds of working-age adults in poverty actually live in a household where someone is in work.
- ◆ Part-time workers and the self-employed - the poverty rate for part-time workers was nearly triple that of full-time workers (22% compared with 8%).
- ◆ 43% of people living in rented accommodation and 35% of private renters are in poverty after housing costs.
- ◆ Poverty rates of people claiming different income-related benefits are much higher than the national average poverty rate.

Environmental sustainability

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

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

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

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

- ◆ Reducing energy consumption as the first measure to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.
- ◆ Changing behaviour - eliminate energy waste and operate energy control systems more effectively at no extra cost.
- ◆ Passive design - building orientation and placement on site is critical to achieving net zero targets i.e., harnessing sites' natural resources to benefit cross ventilation, natural lighting, solar gain, shelter or shading.
- ◆ Fabric efficiency - maximise building fabric and glazing performance.
- ◆ Minimising initial energy demand to reduce demand on plant/technologies incorporated.
- ◆ Installing efficient systems and investing in appropriate energy-efficient products such as heating, ventilation, fittings, controls, sensors, heat pumps and recovery systems.
- ◆ On-site renewables incorporating low/zero carbon technologies to produce energy on site.
- ◆ Off-site renewables - only use energy providers which use renewable energy.

⁵[Sport England Environmental Sustainability policy](#)

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Investment in school sport

Following the allocation of the 2021 Department for Education £10.1 million fund to help more schools open their facilities to the public post pandemic, in March 2023, the Government announced that a subsequent funding package to boost equal opportunities in school sport to both boys' and girls' sport. Schools that successfully deliver equal opportunities for girls and boys were rewarded through the School Games Mark – a mechanism to assess parity of provision in PE and extracurricular sport.

Schools were asked to offer a minimum of two hours curriculum PE time and the then Government committed to supporting schools with this via the refresh of the School Sport Action Plan. This was backed by a package of cross-government funding to help boost sport and activities both inside and outside school hours including the confirmation of over £600 million in funding for the following two academic years for the PE and Sport Premium and £22 million for the School Games Organisers (SGO) network.

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

This has been developed to facilitate a shared understanding of physical literacy for those working in the sport, education, physical activity, recreation, play, health and youth sectors. It offers a broad overview of physical literacy, why it matters and how it can be developed and supported. Developing a consensus on physical literacy has been a priority, as understanding what impacts people's relationship with movement and physical activity throughout life will enable those working in the sector to ensure their offer is as appealing as possible.

In essence, physical literacy represents the extent to which individuals have a positive relationship with movement and physical activity. The Youth Sport Trust has published findings evidencing that a total of 4,000 hours of physical education (PE) have been lost from the curriculum of state-funded secondary schools. PE hours have fallen victim to more time spent online, poor school attendance and declining health and wellbeing levels in young people. Between 2012 and 2023, the amount of PE in England reportedly fell by more than 12%.

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

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

Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund

In 2023, a funding pot of £63 million was announced to ease the pressure on leisure centres with managing the cost of operating, maintaining and heating swimming pools. The funding, managed by Sport England, is available to all pools run by councils and charities. Those run on behalf of local authorities are eligible. Waterside Farm Leisure Centre is benefitting from a £98,800 grant from this Fund.

This reinforces the commitment to environmental sustainability via installation of solar panels, expected to generate 33,244 kWh of clean energy annually and reduce CO2 emissions by 64,186 kg (over 30% of its total electricity usage). This £144,628 project marks a significant investment by CPBC.

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National Planning Policy Framework 2024

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

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

The **promoting healthy 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.

Summary of national context

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

2.2: Local context

Castle Point Plan

The Council is currently developing the Castle Point Plan which will shape the future of development in the borough up to 2043. It will contain a spatial strategy which identifies specific locations for delivering development needs such as housing, employment, retail, open and green space, transport infrastructure improvements and provision for leisure facilities. Strategic policies, site allocation policies, and development management policies will be used in the determination of planning applications which will help to realise the overall strategy.

It has an important role to play encouraging active lifestyles via provision of sufficient quality open spaces, sports and leisure facilities and active travel opportunity.

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Castle Point Corporate Plan 2025-2028

Castle Point Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2028 sets out the vision for a thriving, safe, and sustainable borough. The Plan focuses on five ambitions:

- ◆ Supporting a prosperous local economy,
- ◆ Investing in places and spaces,
- ◆ Promoting healthier and safer communities,
- ◆ Protecting the environment,
- ◆ Restoring the Council to good health.

Key priorities include improving town centres, increasing recycling, enhancing community safety, and ensuring sound financial management. The Council is committed to transparency, partnership working, and engaging residents in decision-making to deliver the best outcomes for all who live and work in Castle Point.

Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2028

This is the three-year plan to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Castle Point and the Rochford District. Its vision is to make Castle Point and Rochford an inclusive place where everyone is empowered, informed and supported to live healthy lives. It centres on early intervention and prevention focusing on what can be done at a local, grass roots level to make sure everyone has equal opportunities to:

- ◆ Lead healthy lives and stay in good health for as long as possible.
- ◆ Prevent health issues from occurring that can cause people to become unwell.
- ◆ Address problems at an earlier stage to stop them getting worse.
- ◆ Receive the right help and support when they need it.

The strategy has four priorities:

- ◆ Mental health wellbeing.
- ◆ Physical health and wellbeing.
- ◆ Ageing well.
- ◆ Community resilience.

Place partnership expansion⁷

Sport England has launched a major expansion of its investment into local communities across England, to ensure that those in greatest need are able to play sport and be physically active. Its Place Partnerships Programme will see £190 million of National Lottery and Exchequer funding invested in up to 80-100 new places across England over the next 5 years.

The intention is that targeted local investment, and resources will help to increase activity levels, decrease inactivity and breakdown the barriers and inequalities that prevent people from playing sport or being active.

Since 2018, Sport England has tested place partnerships through a place-based approach working with 'local delivery pilots' in 12 of the country's most disadvantaged and least active communities. This included Essex, where the particular focus was Basildon, Colchester and Tendring. Sport England has selected the locations for three new place partnerships for Essex, they will be in Castle Point, Harlow and Thurrock.

⁷ <https://www.activeessex.org/place-partnership-expansion/>

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Castle Point Climate Action Plan

Under the corporate plan theme 'A greener and cleaner environment,' the Council is committed to reducing its carbon footprint, increasing recycling rates, enhancing its street scene, and protecting natural habitats. It is anticipated that the Climate Action Plan will be presented to the CPBC Climate Policy and Scrutiny Committee in Summer 2025. As noted above in the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund, the abovementioned investment in the Waterside Farm Leisure Centre is one facet of this commitment.

Essex Climate Action Commission

This was established in May 2020 to advise Essex County Council on how best to tackle climate change. Initially set up for two years, its term has been extended to run until 2025. It comprises over 30 members, including local councillors, academics, business leaders, and representatives from the Young Essex Assembly.

Its foundational work culminated in the publication of the Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral report in July 2021, which laid out a roadmap for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and enhancing the county's resilience to climate impacts such as flooding, water shortages, and overheating. These recommendations were fully adopted by Essex County Council and now underpin the county's climate action plan. The Commission's ongoing role involves monitoring and driving the implementation of these recommendations, advising on strategic priorities, evaluating progress, promoting climate-positive policies across local authorities, and fostering collective action.

It also plays a key role in engaging the public - including residents, businesses, schools, and community organisations - via advice packs and outreach initiatives available on its website.

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026

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

Table 2.1: Essex JHWS priorities and outcomes

Priority	Outcome
Improving mental health and wellbeing	Supported the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and families with a focus on the vulnerable. Reduced loneliness and social isolation. Reduced suicide through a focus on system support
Physical activity and healthy weight	Children, young people and their families are 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/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.

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Alcohol and substance misuse	<p>Improve access to advice, support and treatment for residents experiencing alcohol or substance use issues.</p> <p>Work across the system to help address the challenges of county lines and drugs related criminality.</p> <p>Educate children, young people, adults, and families on the risks associated with alcohol and substance misuse.</p>
Health inequalities & the wider determinants of Health	<p>Ensure that all children have access to quality parenting, early years provision and education that provide the foundations for later in life.</p> <p>Address food poverty and ensure that all children can access healthy food.</p> <p>Improve access to employment, education and training for adults and young people in our most deprived communities.</p> <p>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.</p>

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

This strategy is a rallying call to action for people and organisations across Essex who recognise the contribution physical activity and sport makes to health and wellbeing. Of the more than 1.6 million people living in Greater Essex, 901,000 adults are active (they participate in 150+ minutes of physical activity per week). Active Essex is keen to increase this number, unite in one direction and over the next 10 years improve everyone's health and wellbeing. To achieve this, it has set the following key objectives.

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

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

This assesses the health needs of local people and supports the commissioning processes used by health, council, social care and community organisations in Castle Point. Its key objective is to improve the physical and mental health and well-being of individuals and communities. The JSNA informs the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Sport for Confidence⁸

Essex County Council has appointed Sport for Confidence CIC to deliver a physical activity model to support adults living with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and long-term health conditions. Its new programme, Reconnect, uses a place-based model of early help and prevention to embed integrated physical activity pathways across Essex.

⁸<https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/news/reconnect-waterside-farm-leisure-centre-canvey-island-3248/>

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The independently verified evidence from the two-year pilot study confirmed that in addition to the benefits derived by the people who received the support, embedding physical activity into a whole system approach to adult health and social care could deliver £58.72 of social value per £1 invested. Based upon the positive outcomes and learning from the pilot, it is guaranteed funding for three years, with the option to extend for two more.

Physical activity interventions that can build and maintain physical, mental and emotional wellbeing will be offered in community settings across Essex. Occupational therapists and coaching workforce, dual-trained in mental health and physical disability, will work with a multitude of community partners including leisure centre operators, care homes, community nursing teams and charities.

The intervention marks a significant move by the County Council to support community-driven health interventions that tackle health inequalities and create person-centred physical activity opportunities for those who traditionally find it difficult to access services and fall behind the rest of the population in terms of activity levels.

The provision of community-based services that prevent, delay and reduce the need for clinical services will alleviate pressure on the NHS and aligns with the government's NHS Reform Plan, moving care from hospitals to communities, with a focus on prevention. With physical activity at the heart of the solution, this is a model which could be replicated in other counties.

Leisure operator

Castle Point Leisure is the Council's in-house operator. It runs two venues, Runnymede Leisure Centre and Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, plus four community halls: Runnymede Hall, The Paddocks Community Centre, Woodside Hall, and King George V Hall.

Castle Point Leisure has been recognised as having achieved the highest net promoter score for the year at the TRP Member Experience Awards for two of the last three years (2022 and 2024) and received an award for offering the best member experience among local authority operators in 2021.

Summary of local policy

The Council is currently developing the Castle Point Plan which will shape the future of development in the borough up to 2043. It will contain a spatial strategy which identifies specific locations for addressing development needs in respect of housing, employment, retail, open and green space, transport infrastructure improvements, and leisure facilities.

The importance of physical activity in addressing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing is recognised in Essex's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022-2026) and the Castle Point and the Rochford District Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2025-2028) both of which map out specific interventions around health referral and the role of built facilities.

Partners in Essex, including Active Essex and CPBC have worked closely together to provide a policy platform to demonstrate how physical activity can impact on wider health outcomes. There is opportunity for this strategy to provide further evidence and insight in support of these plans to help create a healthier more active Castle Point.

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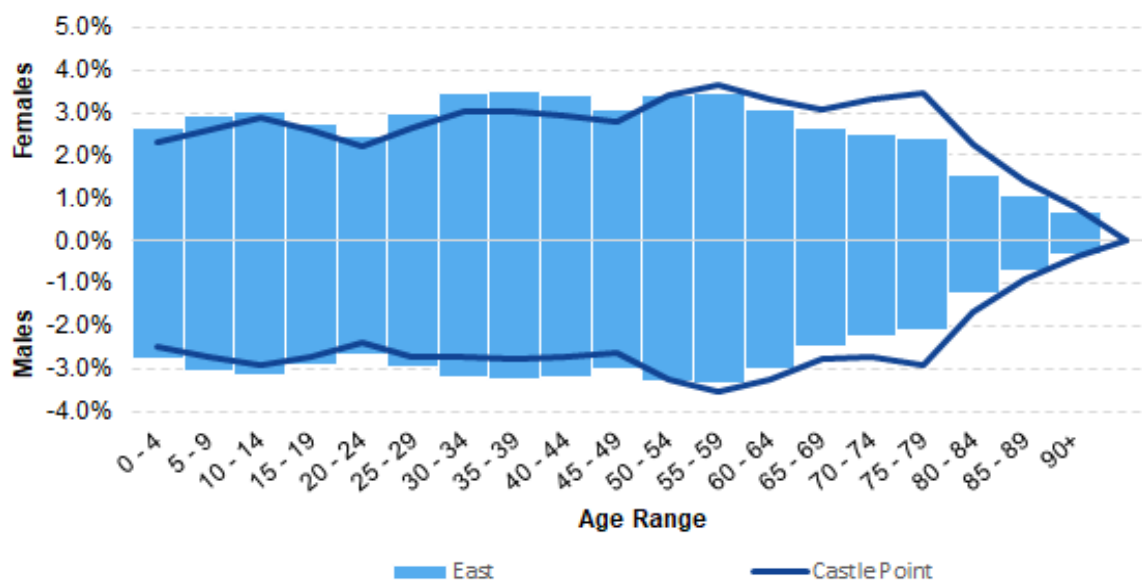
2.3: Demographic profile

Population (Data source: 2018 ONS)

The total population, in Castle Point was 90,970 (males = 43,666 and females = 47,304).

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

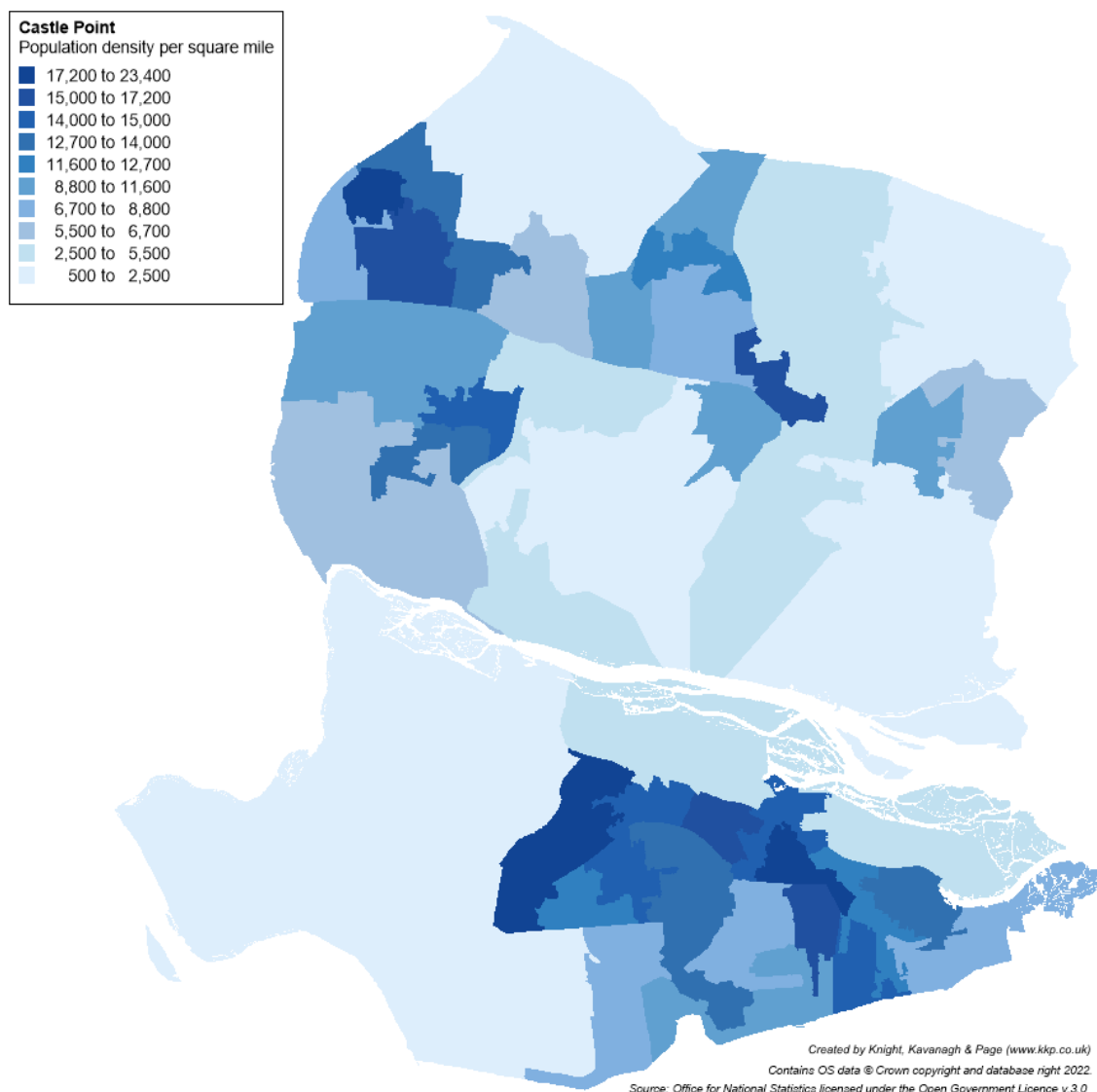
Figure 2.4: Comparative age/sex pyramid for Castle Point and the East Region



The borough has a lower proportion of 25-49 year olds (Castle Point: 28.0%, East: 32.1%) but more in the age groups from 65-84 (Castle Point: 22.2%, East: 17.1%).

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Figure 2.5: Population density 2021 Census: Castle Point (LSOAs)



Ethnicity (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS)

Castle Point's ethnic composition does not reflect that of England as a whole. The largest proportion (94.9%) of the local population is White; this is significantly higher than the comparative England rate of 81.0%. The next largest population group (by self-classification) is Asian, at 1.7% this is much lower than the national equivalent (9.6%).

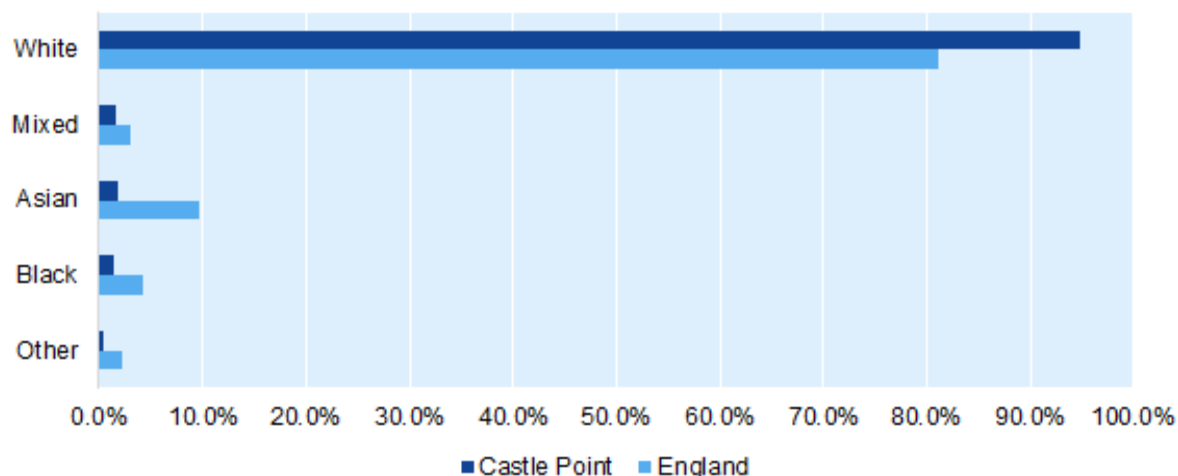
Table 2.2: Ethnic composition – Castle Point and England.

Ethnicity	Castle Point #	Castle Point %	England #	England %
White	84,981	94.9%	45,783,401	81.0%
Mixed	1,446	1.6%	1,669,378	3.0%
Asian	1,550	1.7%	5,426,392	9.6%
Black	1,179	1.3%	2,381,724	4.2%
Other	426	0.5%	1,229,153	2.2%
Total	89,582	100.0%	56,490,048	100.0%

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Figure 2.6: Ethnicity in Castle Point and England (2021)



Car and van ownership (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS)

In total, 31,796 households (85.0%) in Castle Point have at least one car or van in the household. This is higher than the equivalent rate of 83.2% in East and 76.7% in England and Wales. While there is a spread over the four categories, the highest proportion of households in Castle Point (39.1%) have one car or van.

Table 2.3: Comparative car and van ownership: Castle Point, East and England & Wales.

Car/van ownership	Castle Point #	Castle Point %	East #	East %	England #	England %
No cars or vans	5,593	15.0%	442,121	16.8%	5,777,962	23.3%
1 car or van	14,637	39.1%	1,092,400	41.6%	10,236,901	41.3%
2 cars or vans	11,731	31.4%	789,796	30.0%	6,485,729	26.2%
3+ cars or vans	5,428	14.5%	304,466	11.6%	2,282,601	9.2%
Total	37,389	100.0%	2,628,783	100.0%	24,783,193	100.0%

Income and benefits dependency (Data source: Nomis 2024)

The median figure for full-time earnings (2024) in Castle Point is £39,968; the comparative rate for the East is £ 39,702 (-0.7%) and for Great Britain is £ 37,950 (-5.1%)

1,375 people in Castle Point claimed out of work benefits⁹ in February 2025. This is an increase of 13.6% when compared to February 2024 (1,210).

Crime (Data source: Crime in England and Wales year ending September 2024, ONS)

Crime data is only available for police force areas. Castle Point is in the Essex Police Force Area, which comprises 14 local authorities (Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Tendring, Thurrock, and Uttlesford). The population of Castle Point accounts for 4.7% of the Essex Police Force Area.

⁹ This includes both Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit. Universal credit also includes other benefits including employment and support allowance (ESA) and child tax credits.

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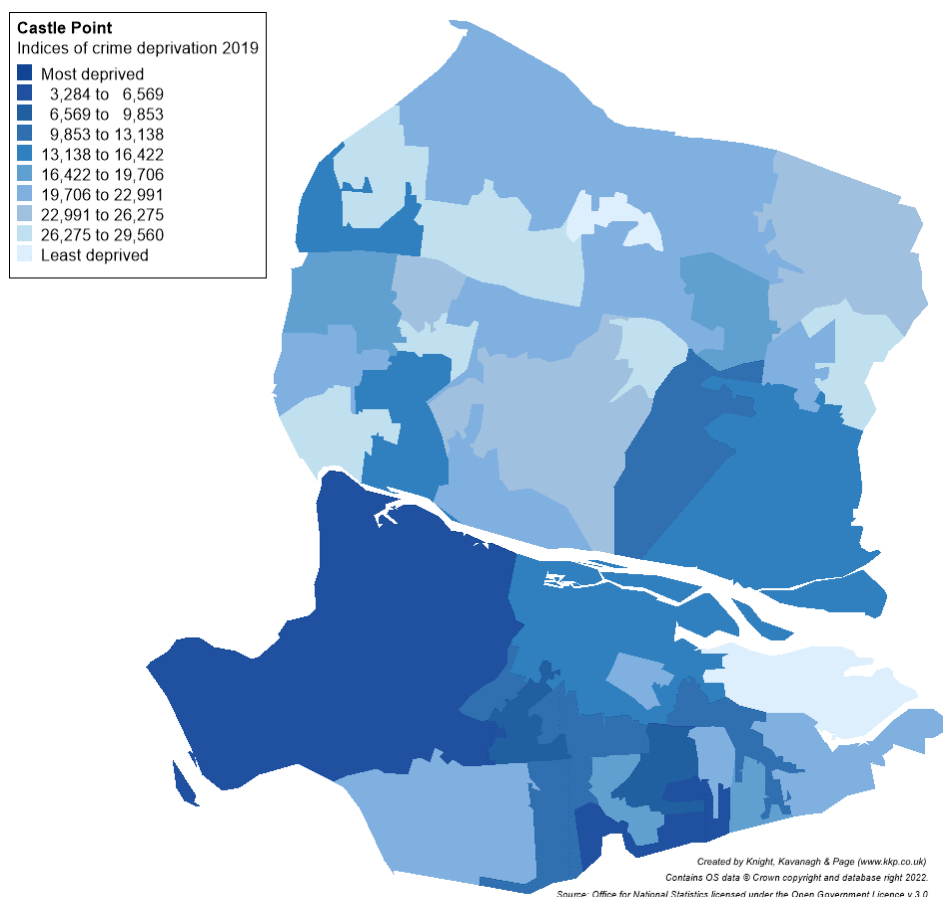
During the 12 months to September 2024 the number of recorded crimes per 1,000 persons in the Essex Police Force area was 79 (2023 MYE). This is markedly lower than the equivalent rate for England and Wales as a whole which was 88.1. The number of recorded crimes in the Essex area has fallen significantly (by 7.1%) since September 2023 (2022 MYE). The number for England and Wales has fallen by 5.0% over the same period.

Table 2.4: Comparative crime rates: Essex and England & Wales.

Authority/area	Recorded crime (Oct '23 - Sep '24)	Population 2023 MYE	Recorded crime per 1,000
Essex	149,862	1,896,590	79
England & Wales	5,364,061	60,854,727	88.1

As an alternative to the crime figures for police force areas the Index of Deprivation measures the risk of personal and material crime at a more local level. In Castle Point, 10.0% of the population are in the top three cohorts most at risk compared to 30.0% nationally.

Figure 2.7: Map of crime deprivation



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

Relative to other parts of the country Castle Point experiences low levels of deprivation; fewer than one in 15 of the borough population (13.4%) falls within areas covered by the country's three most deprived cohorts compared to a national average of c.30%. Conversely, 40.7% live in the three least deprived groupings in the country, compared to the 'norm' of c.30%.

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The pattern is broadly replicated for health but to a greater extent. Around one in 20 of Castle Point's population (5.7%) falls within the areas covered by the three most deprived cohorts (a national average c.30%). Conversely, 40.8% live in the three least deprived groupings compared to the national 'norm' of c.30%.

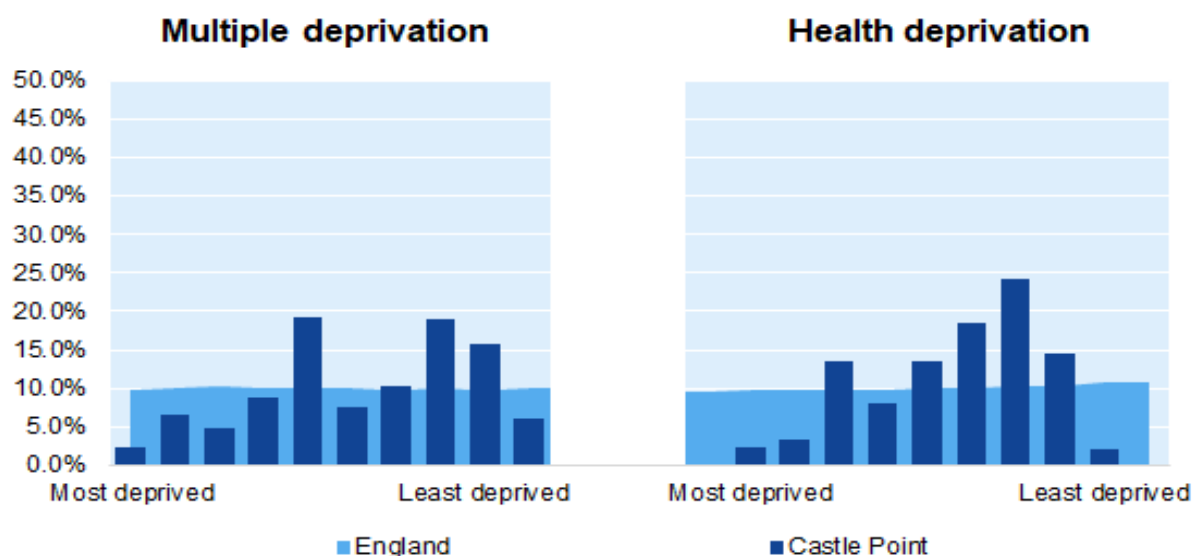
Table 2.5: IMD cohorts – multiple deprivation in Castle Point.

10% bands	Population in band	%	Cumulative %
Most deprived - 10.0	2,026	2.3%	2.3%
20.0	5,749	6.4%	8.7%
30.0	4,196	4.7%	13.4%
40.0	7,933	8.9%	22.3%
50.0	17,186	19.3%	41.6%
60.0	6,630	7.4%	49.0%
70.0	9,126	10.2%	59.3%
80.0	16,904	19.0%	78.2%
90.0	14,058	15.8%	94.0%
Least deprived - 100.0	5,376	6.0%	100.0%

Table 2.6: IMD cohorts – health deprivation in Castle Point.

10% bands	Population in band	%	Cumulative %
Most deprived - 10.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
20.0	2,026	2.3%	2.3%
30.0	3,013	3.4%	5.7%
40.0	12,043	13.5%	19.2%
50.0	7,248	8.1%	27.3%
60.0	11,990	13.4%	40.7%
70.0	16,466	18.5%	59.2%
80.0	21,593	24.2%	83.4%
90.0	12,909	14.5%	97.9%
Least deprived - 100.0	1,896	2.1%	100.0%

Figure 2.8: Index of multiple and health deprivation



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Figure 2.9: Map of multiple deprivation

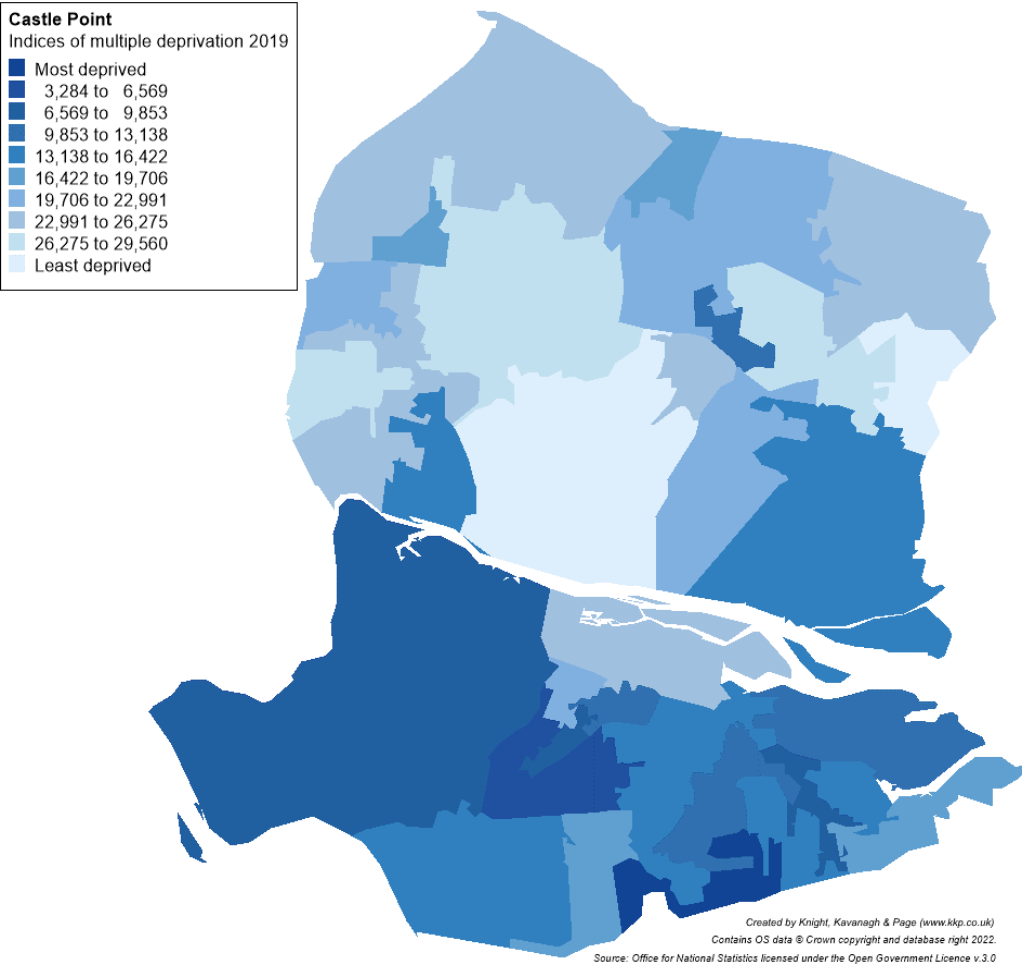
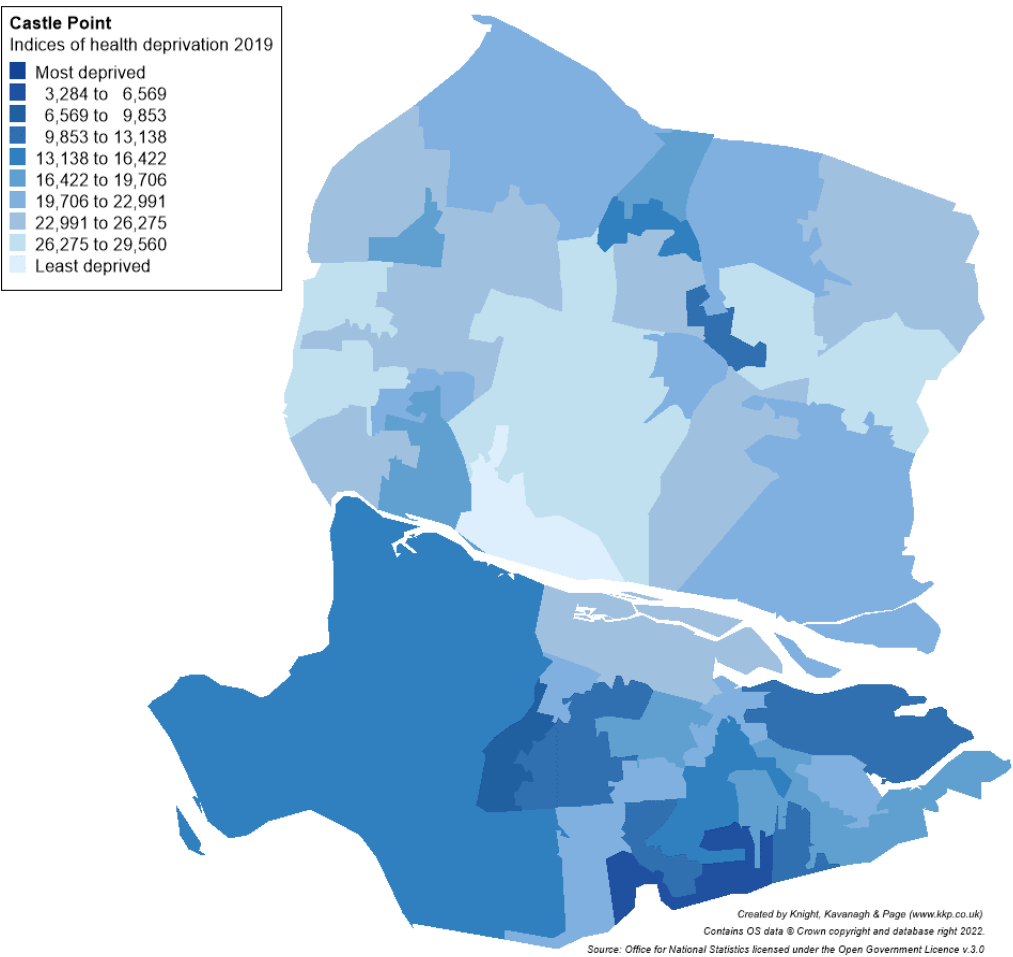


Figure 2.10: Map of health deprivation



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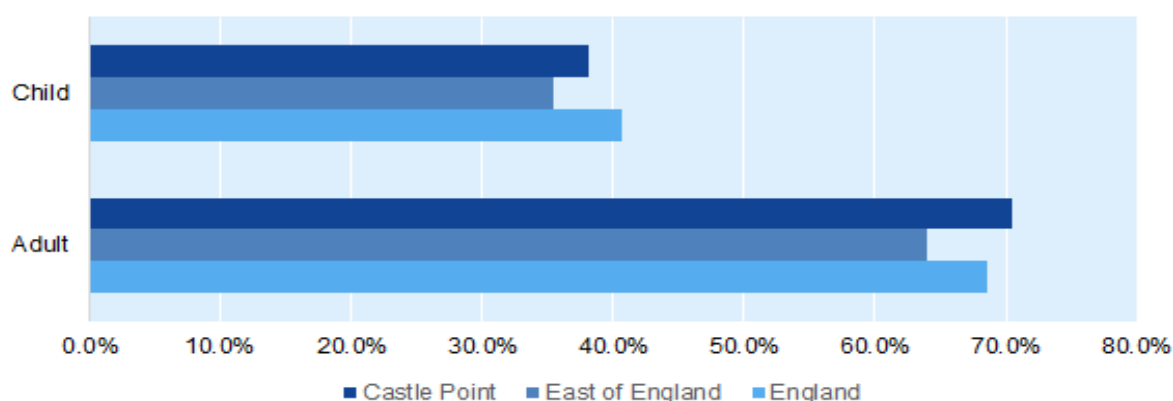
Health data (Data source: ONS)

Life expectancy for both males and females in Castle Point is the same as the national figures (England); the male rate is currently 79.4, and the female equivalent is 83.1¹⁰.

Weight and obesity (Data Sources: NCMP¹¹ and NOO¹²)

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

Figure 9.0: Adult and child obesity rates



Active Lives Survey - ALS (Data Source: Sport England November 2023/24)

The ALS is based on 16+ year olds taking part in walking, cycling, fitness, dance and sporting activity. Compared to England and the East, a higher percentage of the Castle Point population is inactive, and a lower percentage is active. Active and inactive are defined by Sport England as follows:

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

Table 2.7: Active Lives Survey results: November 2023/24.

	Inactive #	Inactive %	Fairly active #	Fairly active %	Active #	Active %
England	11,826,300	25.1%	5,252,800	11.2%	29,962,800	63.7%
East	1,246,200	23.7%	650,900	12.4%	3,355,100	63.9%
Castle Point	19,500	26.2%	9,000	12.1%	45,900	61.7%

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

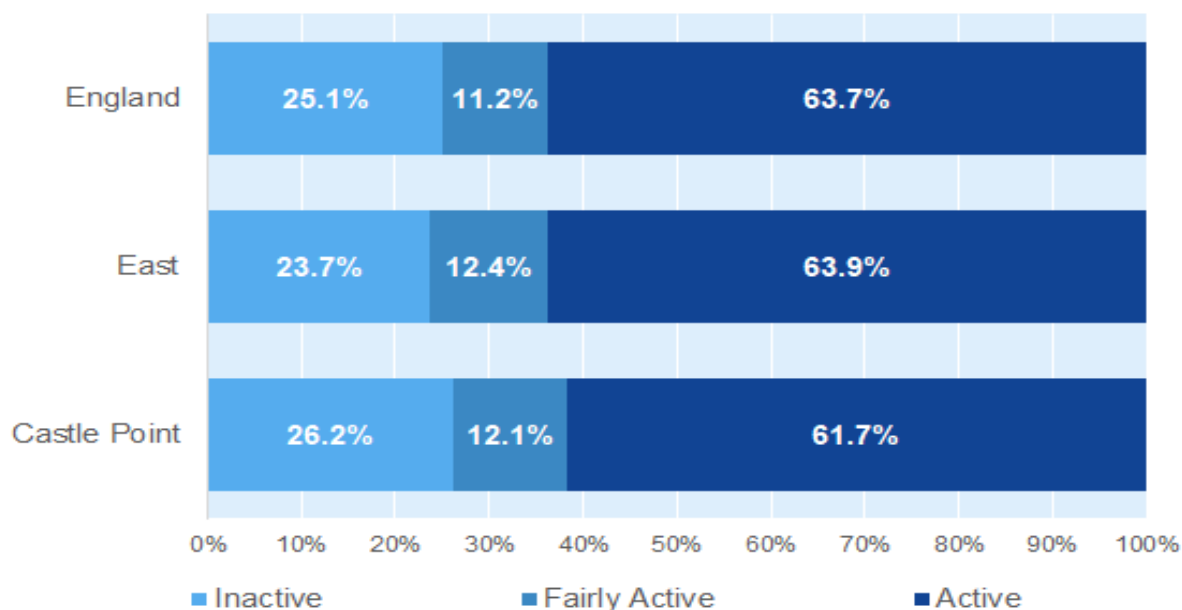
¹⁰ Office of National Statistics: Life Expectancy at Birth by local areas in the United Kingdom, 2020.

¹¹ National Child Measurement Program

¹² National Obesity Observatory

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Figure 2.11: Levels of activity (ALS 2023/24)



Popular sports/activities (Data Source: ALS November 2020/21)

This enables identification of the top five sports within Castle Point. As with many other areas, fitness and cycling are among the most popular activities and are known to cut across age groups and gender; in Castle Point around one quarter (25.1%) of adults take part in fitness activities, on average, at least twice a month. The next most popular activity is cycling which 13.8% of adults participate in on a relatively regular basis.

Table 2.8: Most popular sports in Castle Point.

Sport	Castle Point #	Castle Point %	East #	East %	England #	England %
Fitness	18,900	25.1%	1,264,600	25.0%	11,374,600	24.9%
Cycling	10,400	13.8%	916,500	18.1%	7,472,900	16.4%
Athletics	8,800	11.7%	694,100	13.7%	6,252,000	13.7%
Swimming	3,200	4.3%	231,200	4.6%	2,001,600	4.4%
Football	1,500	1.9%	135,700	2.7%	1,451,700	3.2%

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

Sport England classifies the adult population via a series of 19 market segments which provide an insight into the sporting behaviours of individuals throughout the country. The profiles cover a wide range of characteristics, from gender and age to the sports that people take part in, other interests, the newspapers that they read etc.

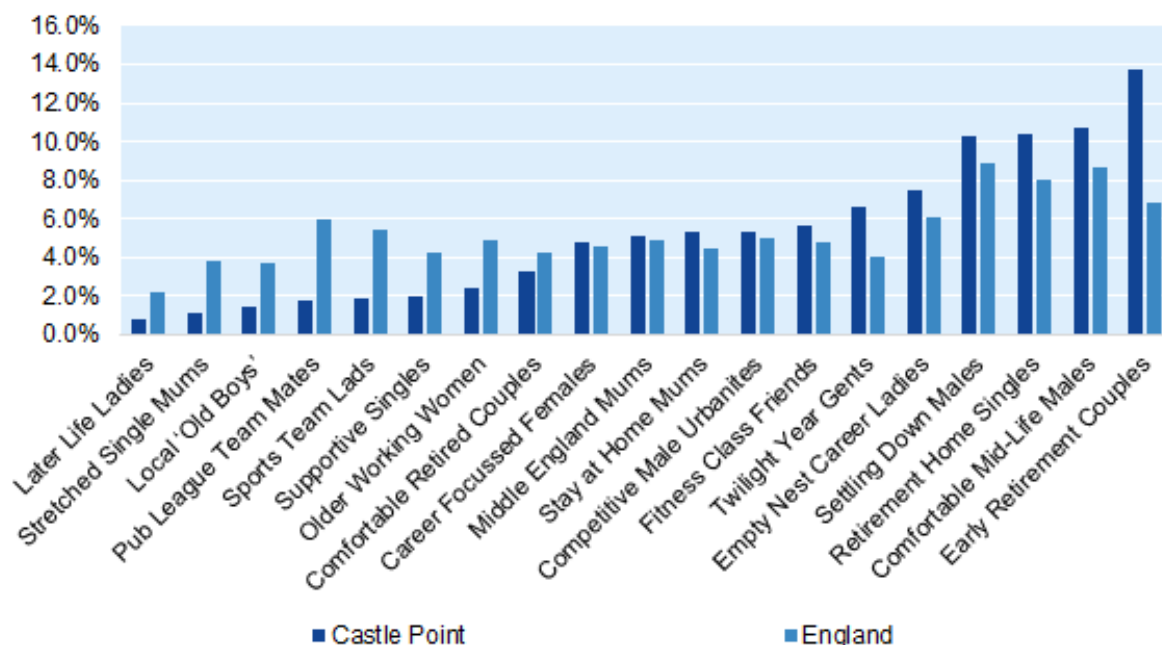
Knowing which segments are most dominant in the local population is important as it can help direct provision and programming. Segmentation also enables partners to make tailored interventions, communicate effectively with target market(s) and better understand participation in the context of life stage and lifecycles.

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Castle Point's segmentation profile indicates that 'Early Retirement Couples' is the largest segment of the adult population at 13.7% (9,651) - a national average 6.8%. This is followed by 'Comfortable Mid-Life Males' (10.7%) and 'Retirement Home Singles' (10.4%).

At the other end of the spectrum, there are fewest 'Later Life Ladies' with only 0.7%, 'Stretched Single Mums' (1.1%) and 'Local 'Old Boys' (1.4%).

Figure 2.12: Sport England segmentation – Castle Point compared to England



Mosaic (Data source: 2023 Mosaic analysis, Experian)

Mosaic 2023 is a similar consumer segmentation product. It classifies all 28.6 million households into 15 groups, 66 household types and 238 segments. This data is then used to paint a picture of UK consumers in terms of their social-demographics, lifestyles, culture and behaviour and tends to be used to draw out population characteristics for the backdrop to library usage and other non-sporting activities. The following table shows the top five Mosaic classifications in Castle Point compared to the country as a whole. The dominance of these five can be seen inasmuch as they represent over four fifths (83.0%) of the population compared to a national equivalent rate of 4 in 10 (40.0%).

Table 2.9: Mosaic – main population segments in Castle Point

Mosaic group description	Castle Point #	Castle Point %	National %
1 - Suburban Stability	24,125	26.8%	5.2%
2 - Senior Security	24,037	26.7%	7.4%
3 - Aspiring Homemakers	9,745	10.8%	11.0%
4 - Domestic Success	8,808	9.8%	9.1%
5 - Prestige Positions	8,075	9.0%	7.2%

The largest segment profiled for Castle Point is the Suburban Stability group, making up 26.8% of the adult population in the area, this is five times the England rate (5.2%). This group

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is defined as typically mature couples or families, some enjoying recent empty-nest status and others with older children still at home. They live in mid-range family homes in traditional suburbs where they have been settled for many years.

Figure 2.13: Segmentation – Mosaic groups 2023: Castle Point compared to nationally

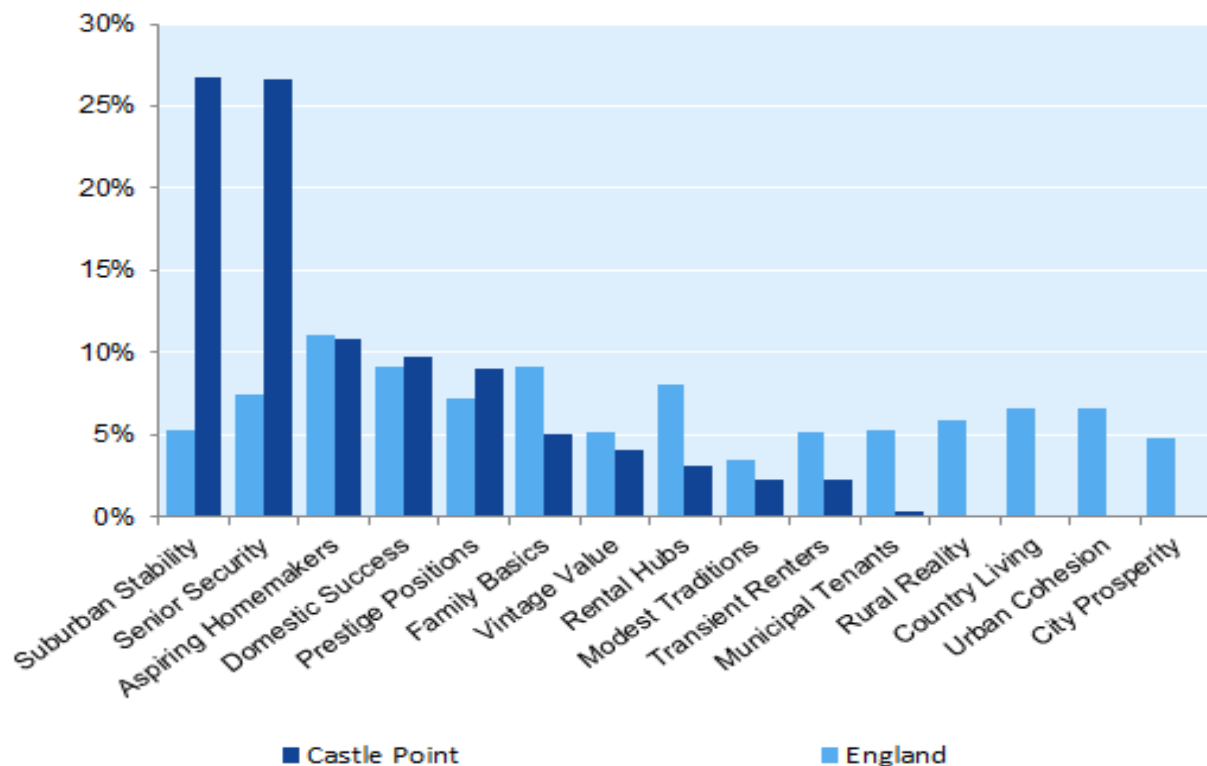
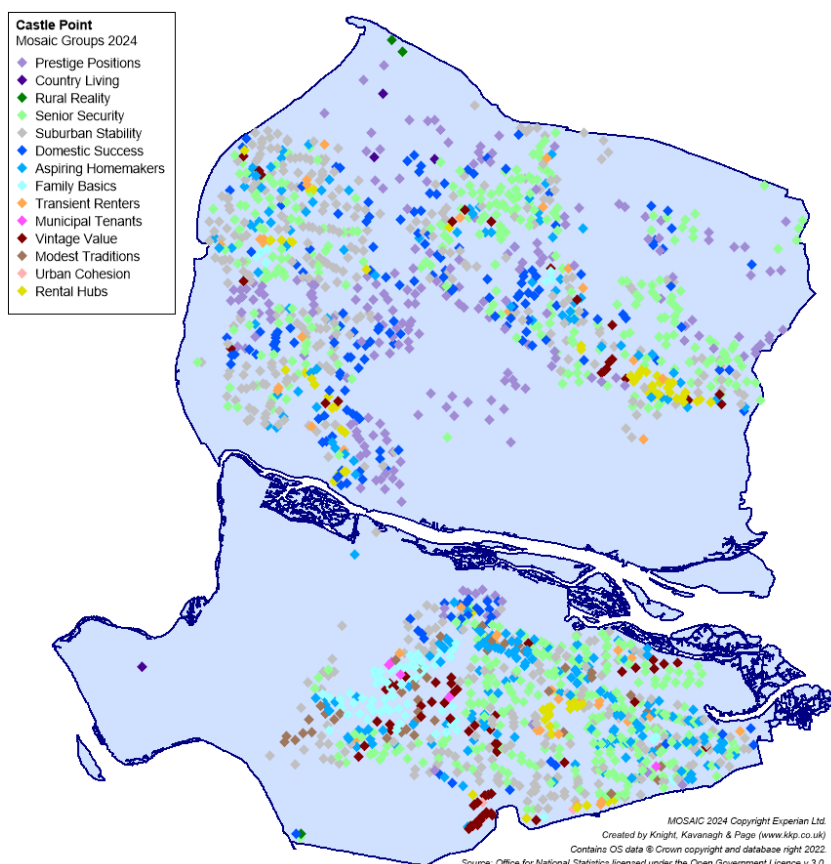


Table 2.10: Dominant Mosaic profiles in Castle Point

Suburban Stability	Typically, mature couples or families, some enjoying recent empty-nest status and others with older children still at home. They live in mid-range family homes in traditional suburbs where they have been settled for many years.
Senior Security	Elderly singles and couples who are still living independently in comfortable homes that they own. Property equity gives them a reassuring level of financial security. This group includes people who have remained in family homes after their children have left, and those who have chosen to downsize to live among others of similar ages and lifestyles.
Aspiring Homemakers	Younger households who have, often, only recently set up home. They usually own their homes in private suburbs, which they have chosen to fit their budget.

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Figure 2.14: Distribution of Mosaic segments in Castle Point



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

There is a predicted rise of 6.6% in Castle Point's population (+5,929) over the 25 years from 2018 to 2043. Over this timeframe there are fluctuations at different points across the majority of age groups. Some of the key points for Castle Point are outlined below:

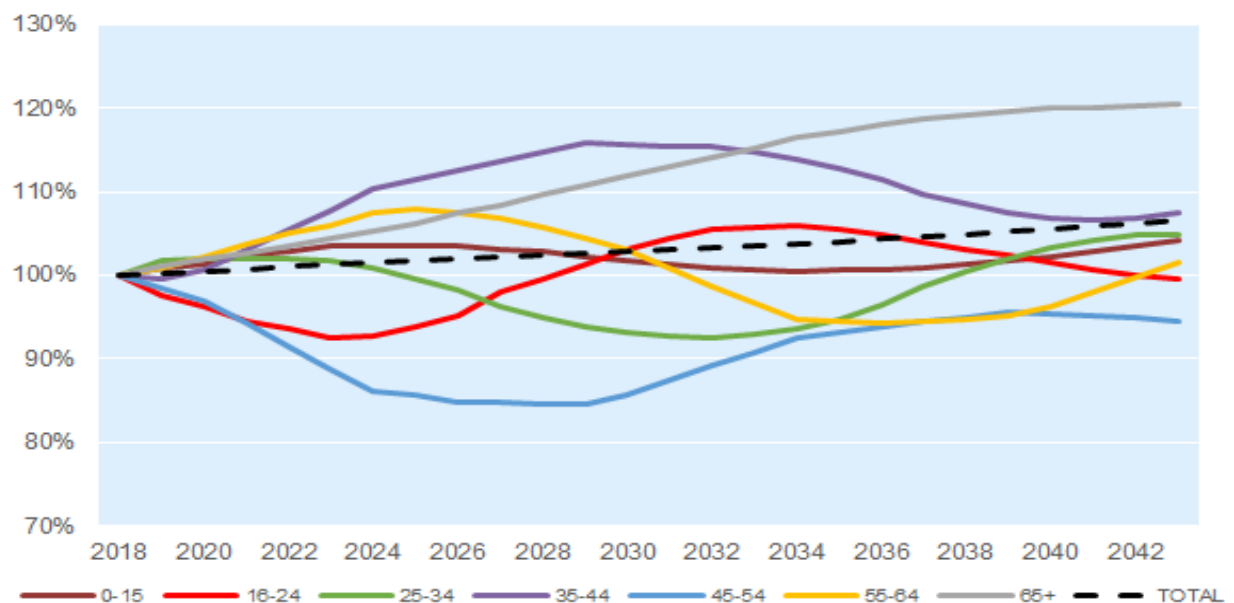
- ▶ The number of 0-15 year olds, rises by +275 (+1.8%) over the first period (to 2030).
- ▶ There is a predicted increase in the number of 16-24 year olds, +3.1% in the first period (+261) followed by a decline of -3.5% (-300) in the second period.
- ▶ There is a continuous increase in the number of people aged 65+, by +11.9% (+2,695) in the first period and +20.6% (+4,681) by 2043. This age group represented 25.2% of Castle Point's population in 2018 and it is projected to be 28.6% of the total by 2043.

Table 2.11: Castle Point – ONS projected population (2018 to 2043)

Age (years)	2018 #	2030 #	2043 #	2018 %	2030 %	2043 %	2030 Change	2043 Change
0-15	15,250	15,525	15,881	16.9%	16.7%	16.5%	101.8%	104.1%
16-24	8,441	8,702	8,402	9.4%	9.4%	8.8%	103.1%	99.5%
25-34	9,662	8,996	10,124	10.7%	9.7%	10.5%	93.1%	104.8%
35-44	9,558	11,060	10,265	10.6%	11.9%	10.7%	115.7%	107.4%
45-54	12,566	10,763	11,861	14.0%	11.6%	12.4%	85.7%	94.4%
55-64	11,859	12,218	12,051	13.2%	13.2%	12.6%	103.0%	101.6%
65+	22,734	25,429	27,415	25.2%	27.4%	28.6%	111.9%	120.6%
Total	90,070	92,693	95,999	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	102.9%	106.6%

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Figure 2.15: Caste Point - projected population change (2018 – 2043). Source ONS 2018



Housing development

As is noted above, CPBC is currently developing the Castle Point Plan, which includes housing development of a minimum 6,196 homes. The Castle Point Plan was published for public consultation (Regulation 19) in August-September 2025. The Council's timetable is to submit the Castle Point Plan to the Planning Inspectorate in November 2025 for examination.

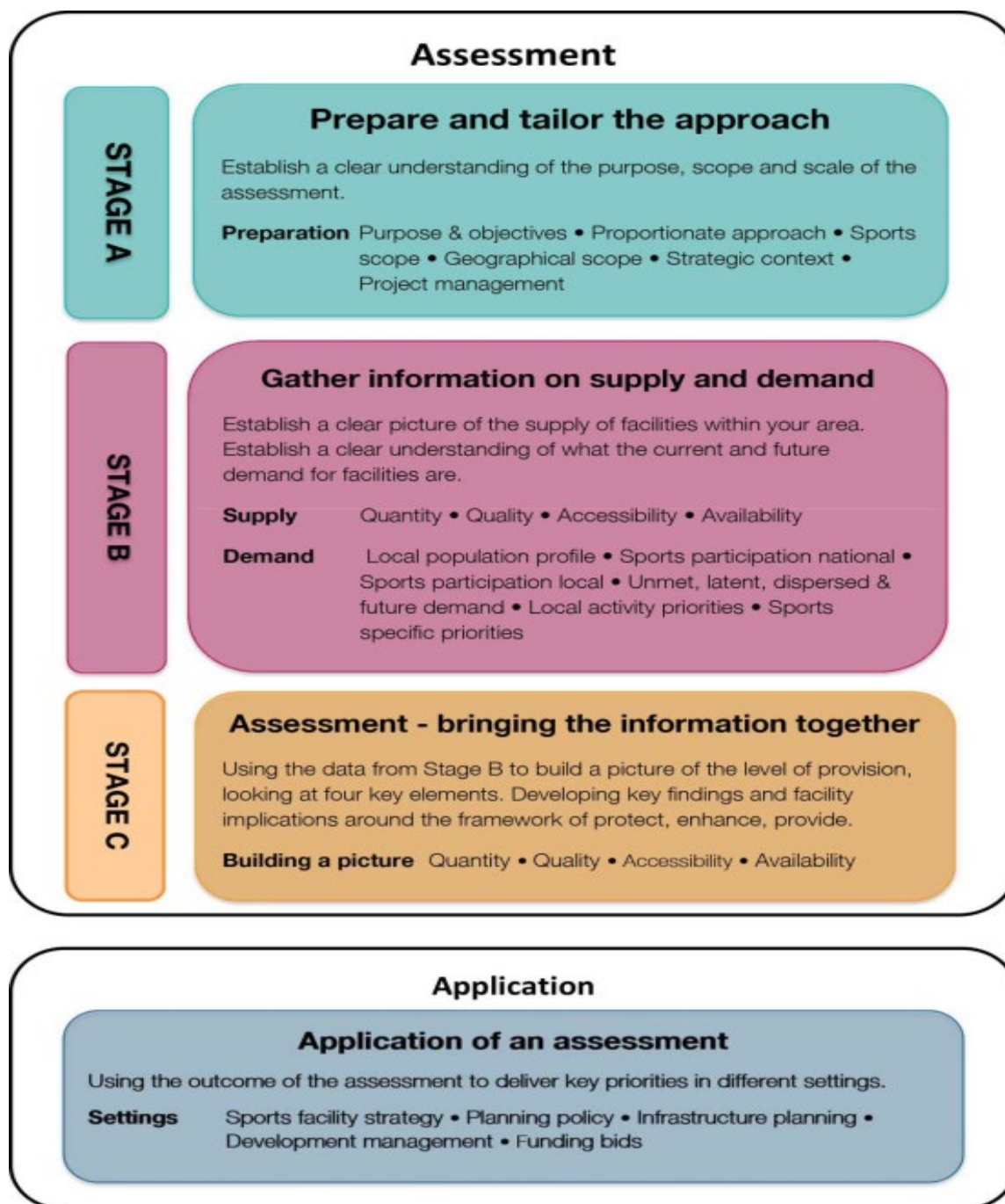
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SECTION 3: SPORTS FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

3.1: Methodology

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

Figure 3.1: Recommended approach



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

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ANOG has been produced to help (local authorities) meet the requirements of the Government's NPPF, which states that: 'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.'

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

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

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

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

3.2: Site visits

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

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

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

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

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

Table 3.1: Quality ratings of indoor sports facilities using ANOG

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

3.3: Catchment areas

Applying catchments areas for facility types listed enables identification of areas currently not served. These vary from person to person, day to day, hour to hour. This problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchment'; the distance travelled by around 75-80% of users (used in the Sport England Facilities Planning Model - FPM).

Sport England data indicates that most people will travel up to 20 minutes to access sports facilities. This, coupled with KKP's experience of working in/with leisure facilities and use of local data enables identification of catchment areas for sports facilities as follows.

Table 3.2: Facility catchment areas

Facility type	Identified catchment area by urban/rural
Sport halls	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Health and fitness	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Swimming pools	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Squash courts	20 minutes' drive
Gymnastics	20 minutes' drive
Indoor bowls / tennis facilities	30 minutes' drive
Climbing wall	30 minutes' drive

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SECTION 4: SPORTS HALLS

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

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

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

4.1: Supply

Quantity

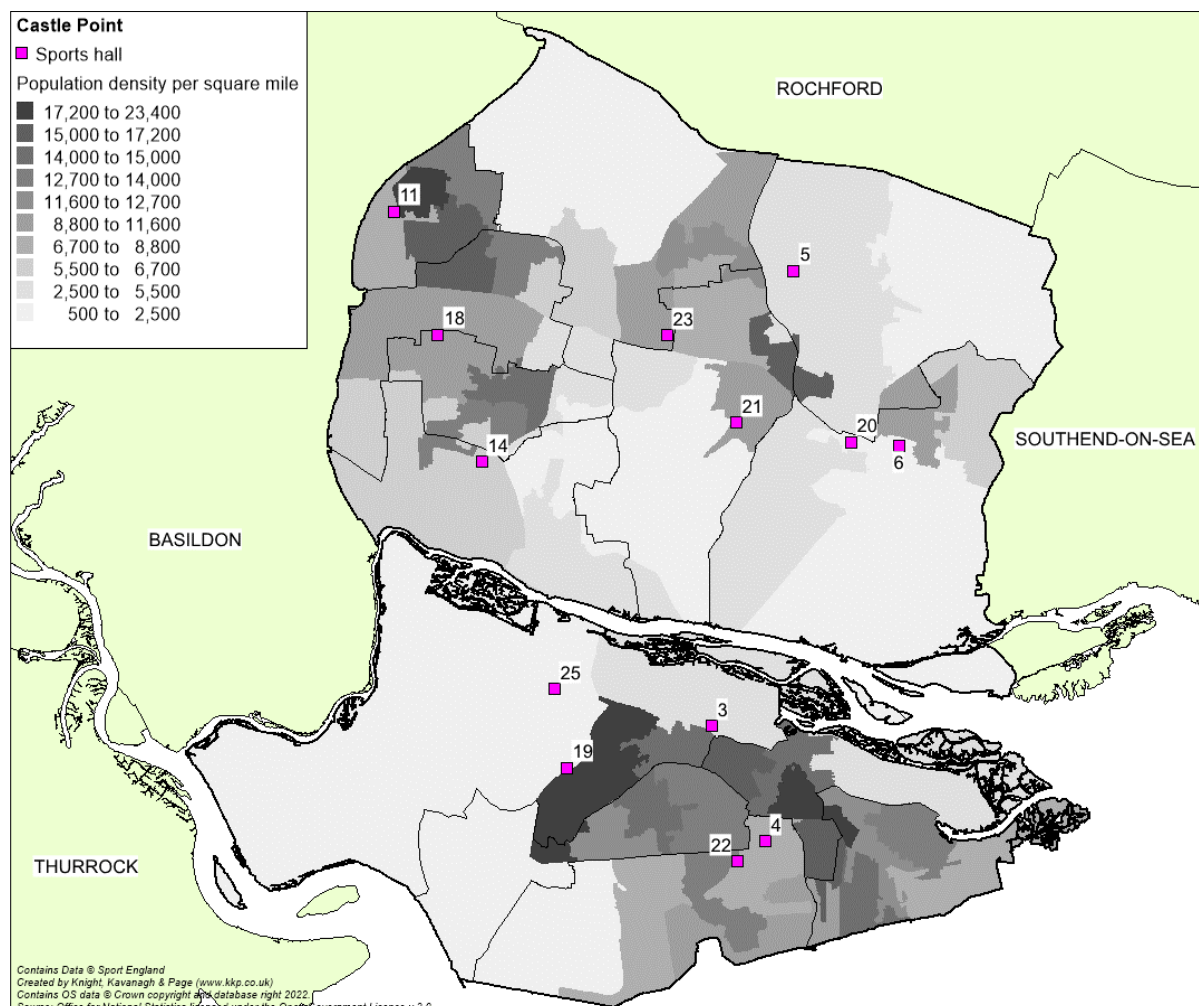
There are 16 sports halls (14 sites) of all sizes in Castle Point accommodating 35 courts. The distribution of halls is shown in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: All sports halls in Castle Point

Map ID	Site name	Number of Courts
3	Canvey Skills Campus	0
4	Castle View School	4
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	4
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	1
6	Hadleigh Junior School	1
11	Montgomerie Primary School	1
14	Richmond Hall	0
18	The Appleton School	4
18	The Appleton School	1
19	The Cornelius Vermuyden School	4
20	The Hadleigh Suite	0
21	The King John School	4
21	The King John School	1
22	The Paddocks Community Centre	0
23	USP College (Seevic Campus)	4
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	6
-	Total courts	35

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Figure 4.1: All sports halls in Castle Point on population density (MYE 2022)



The location of sports halls reflects population density. The main population areas, such as Benfleet and Canvey Island all have several venues.

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

Several sites have more than one activity/sports hall. These include, Deanes Sport Centre, The Appleton School, and The King John School which all have two. Only sites with sports halls containing three or more marked badminton courts were subject to assessment for the purpose of the needs assessment as these can accommodate a range of sports and potentially be used by the community depending on the access policy.

There are seven sports halls (44% of total hall provision) with three or more marked badminton courts in Castle Point, totalling 30 badminton courts (86% of courts).

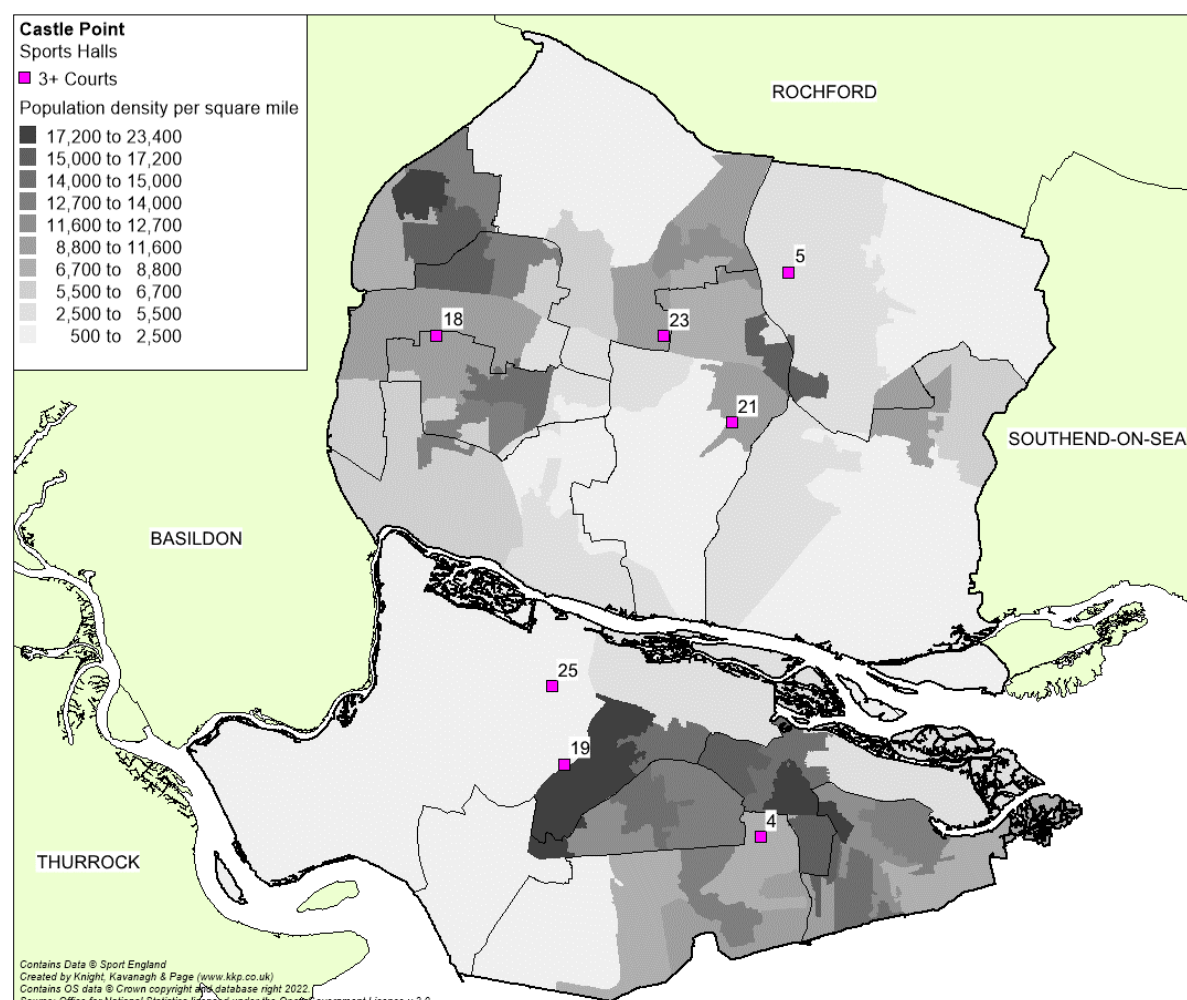
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Table 4.2: Sports halls with 3+ badminton courts

KKP ref	Site	Courts
4	Castle View School	4
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	4
18	The Appleton School	4
19	The Cornelius Vermuyden School	4
21	The King John School	4
23	USP College (Seevic Campus)	4
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	6
-	Total	30

Figure 4.2: Sports halls with 3+ badminton courts on population density (MYE 2022)



In common with most local authorities the 4-court sports hall is the most common size. A larger hall (one of 4+ courts in size) can cater for sports that require more floor space such as futsal and handball or can offer multiple courts for events and competitions. The largest sports hall in Castle Point is at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, it has six marked courts.

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Quality

Sports halls with 3+ courts are concentrated in Canvey Island, Benfleet, Hadleigh and Thundersley. The east and southwest of Castle Point is not serviced by any provision. All 3+ court sports halls were subject to non-technical assessment to ascertain quality. Assessments were conducted in February 2025. Investment made after this date is not accounted for, however known or planned investment is captured. Changing provision at The Cornelius Vermuyden School was in use at the time of audit so was not assessed due to safeguarding reasons.

Figure 4.3: Quality of 3+ sports halls on population

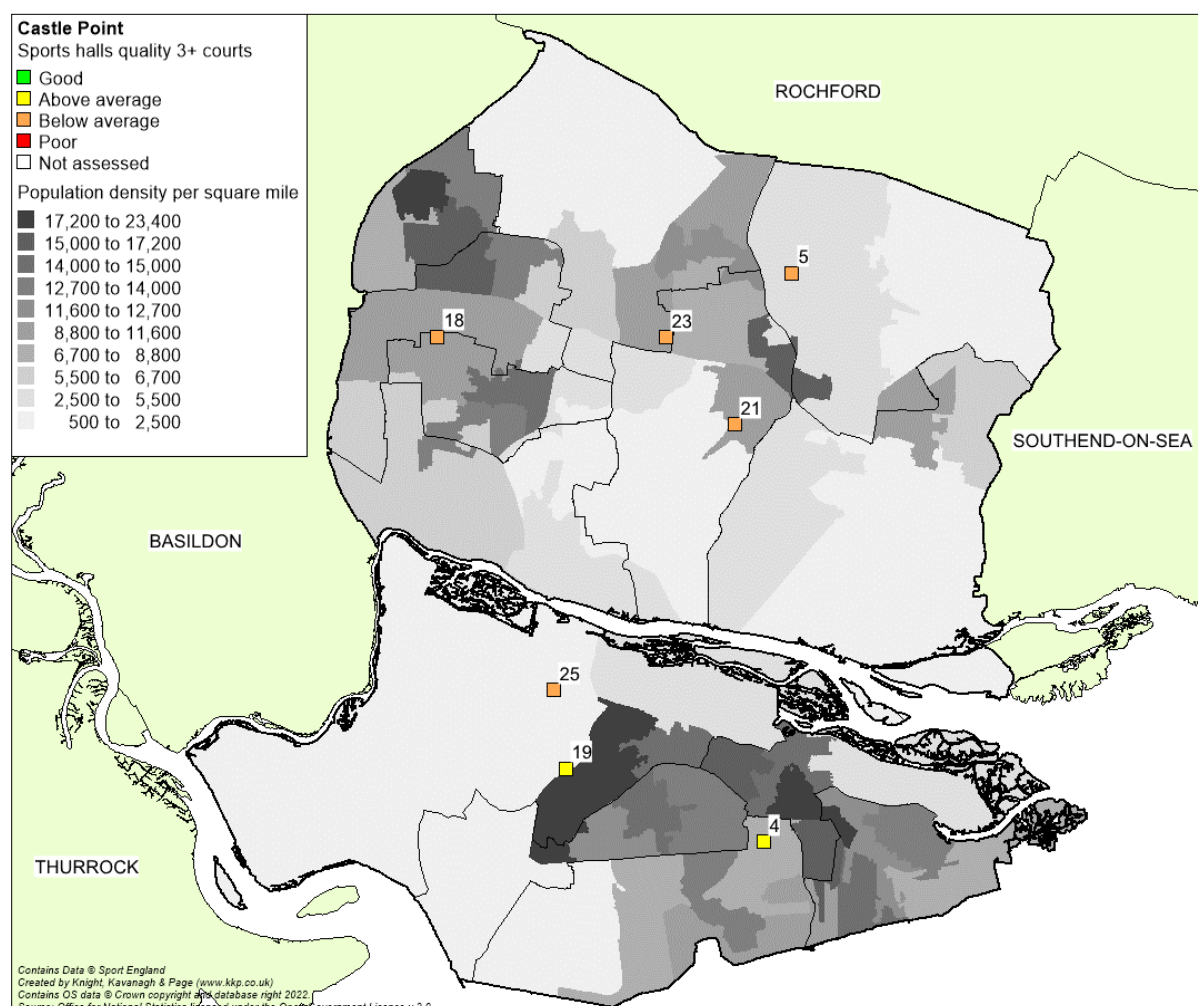


Table 4.3: Quality of 3 or more court sports halls

Ref	Site	Courts	Court condition	Changing condition
4	Castle View School	4	Above average	Above average
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	4	Below average	Poor
18	The Appleton School	4	Below average	Poor
19	The Cornelius Vermuyden School	4	Above average	Not assessed
21	The King John School	4	Below average	Above average
23	USP College (Seevic Campus)	4	Below average	Below average
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	6	Below Average	Above average

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There are two above average sports halls (eight courts) and five below average (22 courts). Two venues have poor quality changing provision. Residents in the southern part of the authority have access to higher-quality sports hall provision, with the only two above-average facilities located in Canvey Island. By contrast, the northern area offers only below-average sports halls.

Only one of the public leisure centres feature a sports hall with 3+ courts. Runnymede Leisure Centre does not have a sports hall whereas Waterside Farm Leisure has a 6-court sports hall.

Table 4.4: Reported quality issues at below average sports halls

Site name	Rating	Audit findings
Deanes School Sports Centre	Below average	The floor is dated and showing signs of wear and tear. It needs to be replaced. Court run off space is limited so it is unable to accommodate competitive basketball. The school is looking to resurface the flooring, improve the structure of the roof and repaint the walls within the next 18 months.
The Appleton School	Below average	Flooring is around 14 years old and becoming dated and showing signs of wear and tear. It is in need of a refurbishment.
The King John School	Below average	A dated sports hall in need of modernisation. The flooring shows clear signs of wear and tear, and the roof has ongoing leaks that occasionally result in water pooling on the floor.
USP College (Seevic Campus)	Below average	This older style sports hall is in need of modernisation. It has a leaking roof, which causes some damage to the equipment and is making the walls damp.
Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Below average	The floor is showing noticeable signs of wear, with multiple areas of patchwork covering previous damage. Line markings are faded and in need of renewal.

A prominent factor in the below quality rating of sports halls on school sites is the lack of recent investment. A key example is both Deanes School Sport Centre and USP College (Seevic Campus) (below average quality) where the sports halls have received no major refurbishment in over 20 years. As a result of this, both are in poor condition and requires replacement.

Table 4.5: Date of opening and refurbishment of sports halls

Site	Year built / opened	Last refurbished	Age since opened/ refurbished
Castle View School	2012	-	13
Deanes School Sports Centre	1997	2003	22
The Appleton School	1960	2011	14
The Cornelius Vermuyden School	1995	2012	13
The King John School	1950	2012	13
USP College (Seevic Campus)	1970	2004	21
Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	1976	2008	17

Most sports halls have had some form of investment/refurbishment in the last 20 years.

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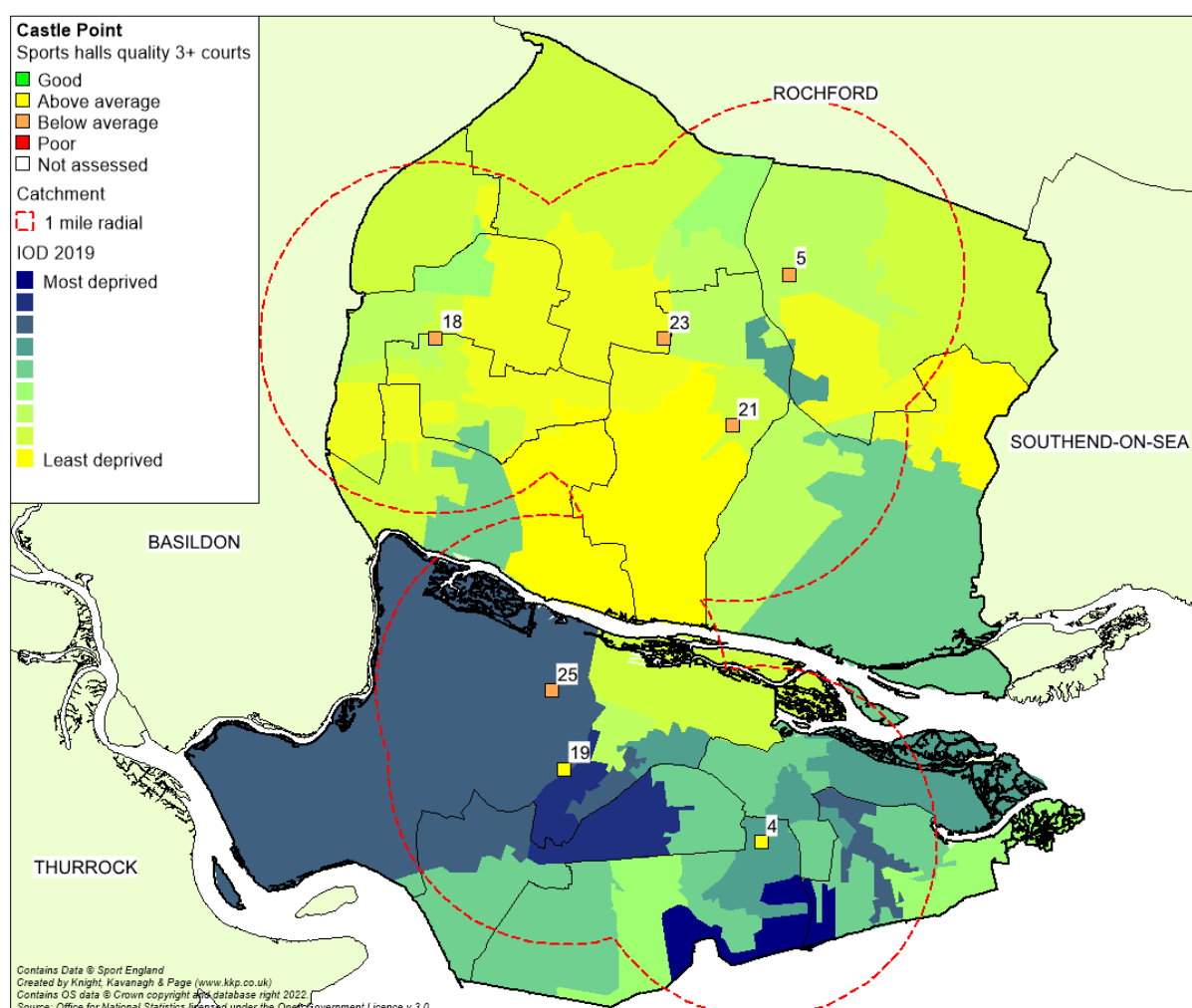
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Accessibility

Sports hall accessibility is influenced by how far people are willing/able to travel to and from them. Walk and drive-time catchments are applied to determine facility accessibility to different communities. The normal (industry) standard is a 20-minute walk time for urban areas and a 20-minute drive for rural areas. 15% of the borough population do not have access to a car (2021 Census). This means that 5,593 people are reliant on public transport or walking/cycling to get to a sports hall. This can add to the cost of participation.

In Castle Point, 86.7% of residents live within a one mile walk of a sports hall, this is a high level of accessibility. This figure is the same when applying the calculation to sports halls with community access. Community use is defined as facilities in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by clubs.

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



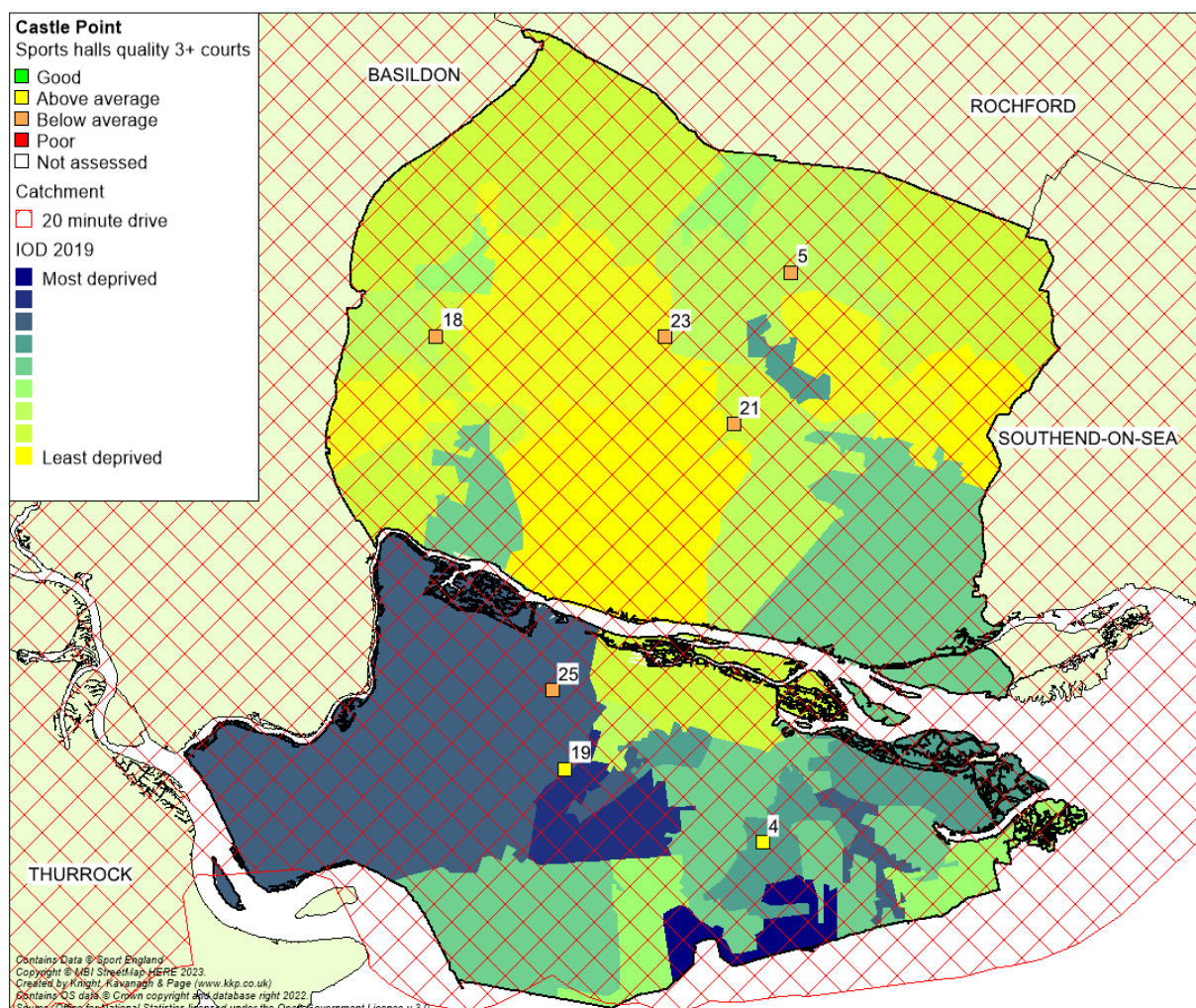
Of the 11,971 people in Castle Point living in defined areas of high deprivation (0-30% IMD bands); 11,442 (96%) live within one mile walk of a community accessible sports hall.

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

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	2,026	2.3%	2,026	2.3%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	5,749	6.4%	5,749	6.4%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	4,196	4.7%	3,667	4.1%	529	0.6%
30.1 - 40	7,933	8.9%	6,782	7.6%	1,151	1.3%
40.1 - 50	17,186	19.3%	14,252	16.0%	2,934	3.3%
50.1 - 60	6,630	7.4%	4,813	5.4%	1,817	2.0%
60.1 - 70	9,126	10.2%	9,019	10.1%	107	0.1%
70.1 - 80	16,904	19.0%	14,205	15.9%	2,699	3.0%
80.1 - 90	14,058	15.8%	13,221	14.8%	837	0.9%
90.1 - 100	5,376	6.0%	3,573	4.0%	1,803	2.0%
Total	89,184	100.0%	77,307	86.7%	11,877	13.3%

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



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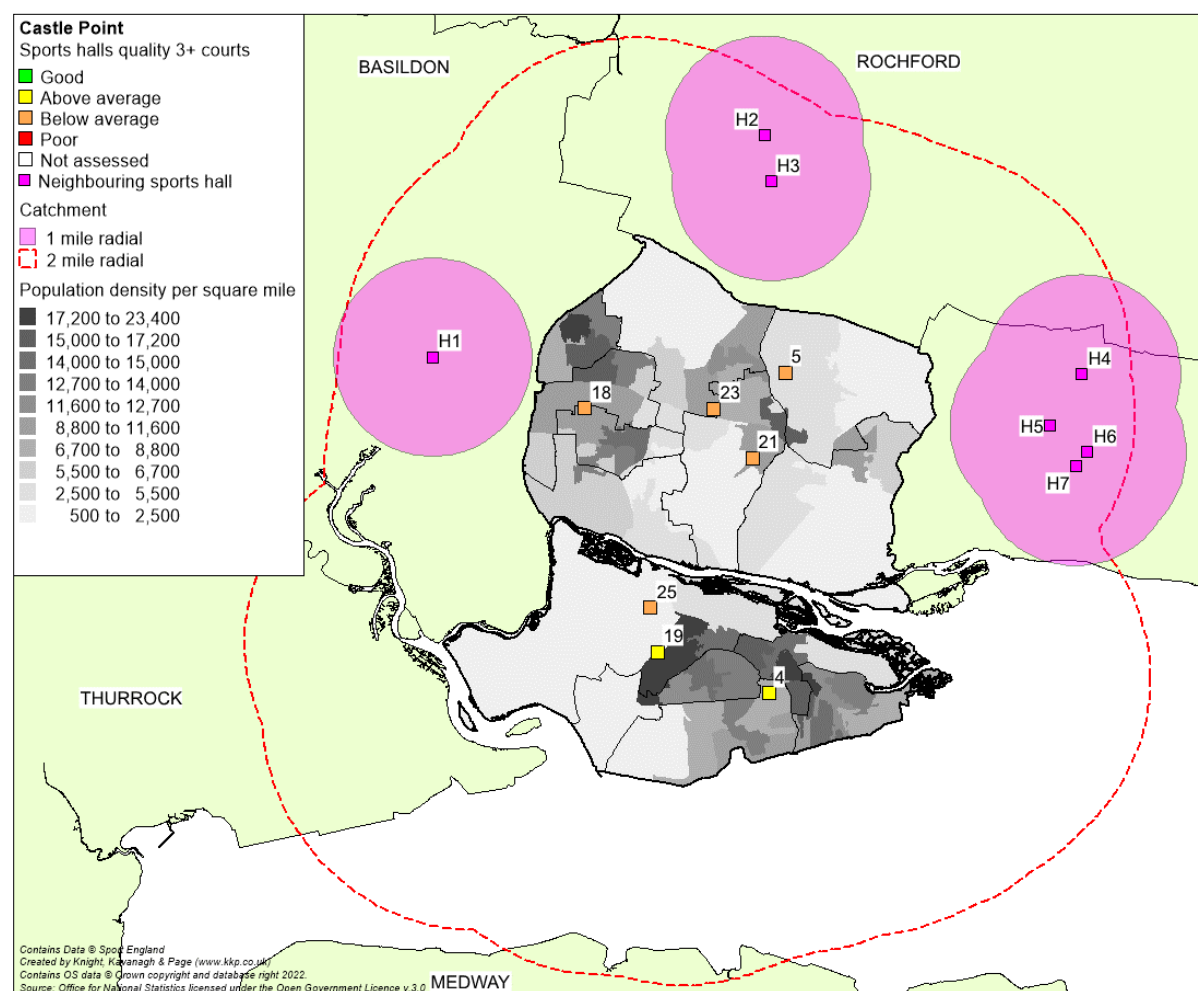
Facilities in neighbouring authorities

Accessibility is influenced by facilities located outside the authority. There are seven sports halls with 3+ courts located within two miles (indicative of how far people may travel) of the Castle Point boundary. They offer 27 courts, 15 of these courts are in Southend-on-Sea, eight in Rochford and four in Basildon.

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

Map ID	Site	Courts	Access	Authority
H1	Eversley Leisure Centre	4	Pay and play	Basildon
H2	Rayleigh Leisure Centre	4	Sports club / CA	Rochford
H3	Sweyne Park School	4	Sports club / CA	Rochford
H4	David Lloyd (Southend)	4	Registered membership	Southend-on-Sea
H5	The St Christopher's School	3	Sports club / CA	Southend-on-Sea
H6	St Thomas More High School	4	Sports club / CA	Southend-on-Sea
H7	Westcliff High School for Girls	4	Sports club / CA	Southend-on-Sea

Figure 4.6: Sports halls with community use within 2-mile boundary of Castle Point



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Availability and facility management

Waterside Farm Leisure Centre is the only public leisure centre with 3+court sports hall in Castle Point, the majority are located on education sites. All of which are owned and managed in house. None use third-party lettings agents to manage bookings and staffing. No community use agreements were found at educational sites during the audit. Further information on CPBC and the facilities it manages, please see Section 2.2: Local context.

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

Site name	Ownership	Management
Castle View School	Academy	In house
Deanes School Sports Centre	Foundation school	In house
The Appleton School	Foundation school	In house
The Cornelius Vermuyden School	Foundation school	In house
The King John School	Foundation school	In house
USP College (Seevic Campus)	Further Education	In house
Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Local Authority	Council

Daytime availability

Only Waterside Farm Leisure Centre offers daytime sports hall availability, providing access for both registered members and pay and play users. Availability during the day and relevant programming can be attractive for residents who wish to use facilities at such times (such as older people and shift workers). Given that the proportion of older people (aged 65+) in the Authority is projected to have risen by 9% between 2018-2043 daytime access is likely to be an increasing priority going forward.

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

- ◀ Castle View School.
- ◀ Deanes School Sports Centre.
- ◀ The Appleton School.
- ◀ Cornelius Vermuyden School.
- ◀ The King John School
- ◀ USP College (Seevic Campus).

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

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

It is important to consider the significant impact that exam periods have on the availability, appeal, and accessibility of sports halls for community use. While many of these facilities may appear underutilised, this is often due to them being withdrawn from community bookings for approximately 12 weeks each year to accommodate school exams. For example, The Appleton School, Cornelius Vermuyden School, Castle View School, and The

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King John School, all listed in Table 4.10, report having its sports halls removed from public access during exam periods, contributing to their lower usage capacity.

In contrast, Deanes School Sport Centre, which hosts exams in a separate facility and keeps its sports hall available year-round, demonstrates a significantly higher usage rate. This year-round accessibility allows sports clubs to secure consistent bookings, thereby making the venue more appealing and practical for sustained community use.

Consequently, while sports halls at educational sites may appear to offer capacity to accommodate further demand, the temporary loss of availability during exams critically reduces their usability and long-term appeal to community users.

Community use hours vary across the sports hall stock. The majority of facilities located at education sites offer community access seven days per week. However, The Appleton School is unable to open its indoor facilities for community use on Sunday due to a planning restriction. The King John School does not open on Sundays, due to reported lack of demand and staff availability.

Table 4.10: Weekly opening hours and activities in sports halls 3+courts in Castle Point

Total CU hours	Peak hours	Site	Courts	Main sports played
21	21	The King John School	4	Netball, indoor football, badminton.
32	27	The Appleton School	4	Badminton, basketball, indoor football, cricket.
33	29	Castle View School	4	Indoor football.
36	29	The Cornelius Vermuyden School	4	Indoor football.
35	35	USP College (Seevic Campus)	4	Indoor football, basketball, badminton.
55	41	Deanes School Sports Centre	4	Badminton, basketball, netball, indoor football.
99	44	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	6	Badminton, pickleball, basketball, table tennis, indoor football.

Used capacity

Non-technical site audits identify the used capacity of each sports hall. Used capacity is assessed as a percentage of available community use hours. Sport England identifies 80% as a 'comfortably full' benchmark, so, for example, the 44 hours available at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre are used 90% of the time, while The Cornelius Vermuyden School is available for 29 hours per week during the peak period and is operating at 10% used capacity.

Table 4.11 compares used capacity at sports hall sites per week (i.e., percentage of available community use hours used per week). As noted, KKP audited used capacity is an assessment based on booking information provided by each site plus consultation with schools, the College and sports clubs.

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Table 4.11: Used capacity of sports halls per week

Used capacity	Peak community use hours	Site
10%	29	The Cornelius Vermuyden School
20%	29	Castle View School
40%	35	USP College (Seevic Campus)
50%	21	The King John School
80%	27	The Appleton School
85%	41	Deanes School Sports Centre
90%	44	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre

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

Three sports halls in Castle Point are operating at/above Sport England's 80% threshold (they are deemed to be comfortably full reflecting the high demand benchmark. The other four sports halls in Castle Point have capacity to accommodate further demand.

Cornelius Vermuyden School currently experiences the lowest levels of community usage among local schools. One contributory factor is the loss of community use of its sports hall when used for school examinations - for up to 12 weeks each year. It is important to note that, as a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) school, Cornelius Vermuyden has to meet higher operational costs for out-of-hours use. This is primarily due to the requirement to hire external security personnel during community access times. Despite these challenges, the school is actively seeking to increase community engagement and facility usage. Discussion is ongoing with personnel from Deanes School Sports Centre, who have expressed a willingness to collaborate and support Cornelius Vermuyden School to boost the level of community bookings.

Castle View School has the second lowest level of community use, with only a limited number of bookings taking place each week. As another PFI school, it is required to hire an external security team to be on-site during all community bookings. The school faces challenges with weekend bookings, where security staff have occasionally arrived late, resulting in users, such as local clubs, being unable to access the sports hall. These have caused frustration for both facility users and the school, particularly as the external security team currently has no direct point of contact on-site. In addition to the increased costs associated with hiring security, this sports hall is also unavailable for over 12 weeks each year due to exam use.

USP College (Seevic Campus) reportedly operates at around 40% used capacity, accommodating only a few midweek evening bookings and minimal usage at weekends. The main activity accommodated is indoor football.

The sports hall at King John School reportedly operates at around 50% used capacity. Consultation suggests that lack of demand is a significant factor in the low level of usage. The school has indicated that it has capacity to accommodate additional bookings during peak midweek periods, as it currently averages only one booking per evening. There is also availability on Fridays and Saturdays, with only occasional use reported on these days. The school does not open the sports hall for community use on Sundays due to lack of enquires and available staff.

The Appleton School is currently unable to open its indoor sports facilities for community use on Sundays due to planning restrictions. During consultation, the school expressed a strong

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interest in revisiting this limitation, as there is clear demand for Sunday usage. At present, it operates at approximately 80% used capacity.

A key challenge highlighted by the school is the difficulty balancing exams usage with community access. A significant portion of time is allocated to exams, during which the main sports hall is unavailable for lettings. While the school does have a one-court sports hall that allows for some level of community use during exam periods, it is not sufficient to meet the needs of larger clubs. As a result, it reports losing potential long-term bookings, as many clubs seek venues that offer consistent, year-round access.

Both The Deanes School Sport Centre and Waterside Farm Leisure Centre reportedly operate at the highest used capacity. Both report being at capacity during peak periods mid-week but are able to accommodate bookings at less popular peak period times such as Friday evenings and on weekend afternoons.

Future developments

The audit did not identify any current or future developments which would mean that sports hall provision would either increase or decrease.

4.2: Demand

NGB consultation

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

Badminton

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

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

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

Table 4.12: Overall statistics for Castle Point

Description	Number
Number of sites	9
Number of courts	32
Private use courts	5
Supply and demand balance (2019)	-0.5 courts
Supply and demand balance (2030)	-0.7 courts

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BE facilities modelling indicates that there is a current and future shortfall in terms of the supply and demand for badminton courts. It should be noted however, that KKP's needs assessment differs from the findings of the BE model. While BE assumes that there are 32 available courts, KKP's assessment only identifies 30. The likely reason for this is that KKP's assessment only assesses 3+ court sports hall facilities, whereas BE's figures include facilities with one and two courts.

Consultation with BE outlined the need for increased quality and availability of badminton courts in Castle Point. It confirmed that there are currently two affiliated and one non-affiliated clubs in the area. There are also 39 BE affiliated members and six school clubs, of which four are at secondary schools and two at primary schools.

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

Club consultation

Both affiliated clubs were approached for consultation; however, only Deanes Badminton Club responded. Therefore, the Blenheim Badminton Club summary is based on information provided by BE and desk research.

Deanes Badminton Club was established approximately two years ago and currently has around 30 senior members. It has the capacity to grow and capacity, to accommodate up to 36 members.

Its primary venue is Deanes School Sports Centre, where it runs a regular Thursday evening booking. For the first hour, it has access to three courts, followed by access to all four during the second hour. The Club has an annual contract with Deanes School Sports Centre.

In addition, it has an annual agreement with Waterside Farm Leisure Centre. However, the Club has temporarily suspended this block booking due to concerns about the floor condition. During consultation, the Club reported that the flooring at Waterside Farm is too slippery, posing a safety risk for players. The Club plan to reassess its intent to use the venue once appropriate improvements have been made.

While not using Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, it is temporarily accessing courts at Clements Hall Leisure Centre in Rochford to ensure play continuity for members. Although the Club would like to expand court time at Deanes School Sports Centre to support future growth, it is aware that there is currently no peak-time availability to accommodate this request. It has, as a consequence, been searching for court time at other venues within the area.

Blenheim Badminton Club accesses Deanes School Sport Centre. However no further information is available due to the Club being unresponsive to consultation requests and the absence of any club website or social media pages.

Netball

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

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The strategy outlines the intention to:

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

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

Transforming netball for children and young people is a strategic priority to help protect the future of the sport. EN is working with schools and policy makers to extend physical literacy within, and after the school day with a focus on netball specific provision.

It is committed to accelerating the expansion of its Bee Netball programme for young children, whilst supporting teens and young women to stay in the game.

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

Facility development

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

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

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

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

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

Netball is played indoors and outdoors. For outdoor provision please refer to the Castle Point PPS (2025). Current indoor provision in Castle Point is as follows:

- ◀ Back 2 Netball sessions are coach-run and designed to re-introduce players to the sport. There is currently no Back 2 Netball being delivered in Castle Point.
- ◀ Walking Netball (netball played at a walking pace) is designed to enable anyone to play regardless of age or fitness level. No walking netball sessions are currently taking place in Castle Point.

Eastwood Netball Club and Manor Essex Netball Club are the only two netball clubs using sports hall provision within Castle Point as a home venue. Neither is affiliated to EN. Both were invited to consult but only Eastwood Netball Club responded. Desk research suggests that Manor Essex Netball Club hires the sports hall and the outdoor courts at Deanes School Sport Centre.

Eastwood Netball Club has 80 members, and competes in several leagues including, Senior Regional League, Regional Youth League, Basildon Junior League, and Chelmsford Junior League.

Its primary training sessions takes place on Friday evenings at Deanes School Sports Centre, utilising both the indoor sports hall and outdoor netball courts. The outdoor courts, which were resurfaced in 2017 with significant support from the Club, are used for both training and competitive play.

However, it considers the indoor sports hall at Deanes is to be unsuitable for competitive matches, primarily due to the insufficient run-off space, which does not meet league standards. Additionally, the Club has raised concerns about the overall quality of the indoor facility, citing issues such as poor lighting, outdated flooring, and general wear and tear, which negatively affect the training environment.

For competitive matches in the regional leagues, which must be held indoors to meet league requirements, it uses the sports hall at USP College on a home-and-away basis. This meets its requirements and has appropriate flooring and EN compliant run-off space.

Eastwood Netball Club is well-positioned for future growth, with sufficient access to facilities and qualified coaching staff. While it does not currently face capacity constraints, it does note a common trend of player drop-off around the age of 14 years. Despite this, the Club continues to support young athletes through to age 16 years and beyond, fostering a pathway for continued participation and progression.

The Deanes School Sport Centre outdoor courts are the home of Southend and District Netball League. They also accommodate teams from the Basildon Junior League. This is further discussed in the Castle Point PPS 2025.

Consultation with England Netball raised the issue of the lack of local leagues in Castle Point. The only league in the Authority uses outdoor netball provision. Those looking to play

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

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competitive netball in the area tend to travel further afield to play in commercial leagues in the neighbouring authorities of Southend, Thurrock, Basildon and Chelmsford.

Basketball

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

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

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

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

There is no affiliated club in the authority and BBE did not respond to consultation requests.

However, USP College (Seevic Campus) has a Basketball England approved academy called Storms Basketball Academy. The College provides the opportunity to receive basketball training and academic teaching. The Storm first team competes in the Academy Basketball League and its second team competes in the Association of College (AoC) Sport League.

Indoor cricket

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

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

There is no dedicated indoor cricket facility in Castle Point, however, school sports halls do accommodate indoor training, which generally comprises indoor nets for senior players and soft-ball cricket drills and games for juniors. Where 4-court sports halls are used for winter nets, there tends to be insufficient space for pace bowlers to complete a full length run up. In addition, floor type and quality at education sites is often problematic. As a result, clubs often travel further afield to access good quality facilities.

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Essex Cricket reports that Benfleet Cricket Club hires indoor nets at Appleton School for cricket training throughout the winter months in preparation for the start of the season. Essex Cricket also noted that Benfleet CC, Hadleigh and Thundersley CC and Canvey Island CC access indoor nets in neighbouring authorities.

Volleyball

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

Futsal

The UK Futsal Leagues CIC is a futsal league, launched in September 2024, and operates throughout Essex, hosting regular competitive matches across the county.

In Castle Point, two teams currently compete, TFP South Essex and Hadleigh Youth Football Club. TFP South Essex accesses indoor facilities in Castle Point, including Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, Deanes School Sports Centre, and St Clere's School in Thurrock. Hadleigh Youth Football Club is a recent addition, joining for the 2025/26 season, though its current facility usage is unknown.

4.3: Future demand and Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC)

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

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

It is important to note that the SFC is purely a quantities exercise based on population growth and does not take account of existing provision and how that provision may be used currently (whether it is under or over capacity).

Table 4.13: Sport England: Sports Facilities Calculator

	Population 2018: (ONS)	Population estimate: 2030 (ONS)	Population estimate: 2043 (ONS)
ONS population projections	90,070	92,693	95,999
Population increases from 2018	-	+2,623	+5,929
Facilities to meet additional demand from 2018	-	0.65 courts 0.16 halls	1.47 courts 0.37 halls
Estimated cost*	-	£486,622	£1,099,954

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 lead to an increase in demand for sports hall space. The SFC indicates a requirement for an additional 0.37 of a sports hall (1.47 badminton courts) up to 2043.

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Table 4.14: Strategic housing impact

Housing growth to 2043	Average number of people per owner occupying household (England)	Population increase due to proposed housing	Additional sports hall space required	Estimated cost (£)
6,200	2.4	14,880	+3.68 courts 0.92 halls	£2,760,552

(Build costs as of Q3 2024)

Table 4.15: Strategic housing impact – upper level figure

Housing growth to 2043	Average number of people per owner occupying household (England)	Population increase due to proposed housing	Additional sports hall space required	Estimated cost (£)
11,500	2.4	27,600	+6.83 courts 1.71 halls	£5,120,379

(Build costs as of Q3 2024)

The first housing growth scenario, the SFC indicates need for an additional 3.68 courts (0.92 of a sports hall) to accommodate future demand based on housing growth figure. When taking into account both population and housing growth, there is need for 5.15 courts (1.29 of a sports hall).

The second housing growth scenario, the SFC indicates need for an additional 6.83 courts (1.71 of a sports hall) to accommodate future demand based on the upper level housing growth. When considering both population and housing growth, there is a need for 8.3 courts (2.08 of a sports hall).

In addition, investment is required to maintain the quality and capacity of existing stock.

However, currently underutilised sports halls, such as the one at Castle View School, could help meet this future demand. This could be achieved by increasing support for schools to make their facilities more accessible for community use. Additionally, improving the quality of facilities, for example, Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, particularly to better accommodate daytime usage would ensure that it remains well-utilised and fit for purpose.

Using sports halls for exams is having a significant impact on community sport due to the large periods of time that they are unavailable during the playing season. There is a need to seek ways (and funding) solutions that could enable exams to take place and community sport to continue.

To secure better understanding of demand for sports halls, particularly in the north of the Authority, it would be advisable to undertake an FPM analysis to calculate future sports hall demand in relation to current provision, current hall capacity and population growth. This will enhance understanding of the number of courts required to accommodate said growth.

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4.4: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Sports halls	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	Castle Point has 16 sports halls containing 35 badminton courts. There are seven sports halls with 3+ courts (30 badminton courts)	Sports halls are generally well located in line with areas of higher population density. Canvey Island, Benfleet, Hadleigh and Thundersley all have accessible venues.
Quality	Three (of the 3+court sports halls) are rated above average (14 courts) and four are rated below average (16 courts).	Work with school sites rated below average quality and Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, to identify funding to upgrade the respective facilities.
Accessibility	Physical accessibility is good – 86.7% of Castle Point population lives within one mile of a community accessible sports hall. All residents live within a 20-minute drive of a sports hall with community use.	Maintain good relationships with schools to ensure that community access is maintained. Ensure good public transport links to key leisure facilities for those who do not have access to their own vehicle, to ensure they remain as accessible as possible.
Availability (Management and usage)	All seven 3+court sports halls provide some form of community availability. Three are operating at the Sport England threshold of 'comfortably full'. Four are operating below 70% and have capacity to accommodate increased demand.	The spare capacity at some sites is sufficient to accommodate increased demand and to raise the number of hours available to the community. Ensure schools continue to offer peak time availability to local sports clubs. Ensure that school sports hall facilities are open/available for the maximum number of weekday evening hours all year round. Consider options to extend school community use hours where used capacity is above 80% e.g., at The Appleton School and The Deanes School Sport Centre. Several clubs report losing access to facilities during school exam periods. Work with schools to both increase the number of weekly community hours available and to reduce the number of weeks when sports halls are unavailable.

Strategic summary

- Each facility is important to the community served and all venues need to be protected in accordance with paragraph 104 of the NPPF.
- A good range of sports is available including basketball, badminton, netball, football, pickleball, and indoor cricket.
- New sport hall provision must ensure is suitable for sports active in the area, as mentioned in the previous bullet point.
- The quality of below average sports halls needs to be improved.
- Educational sites are a significant proportion of the available sports hall space during peak times. It is crucial that relationships with these institutions are maintained to ensure

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that accessibility remains high and is reinforced by binding community use agreements (CUAs).

- ◆ Accommodate increased demand during peak hours via extending levels of community access at existing venues. Developer contributions could/should thus, be directed at improving sports hall quality at sites which will enable an increase in, in particular midweek evening community hours – and the number of weeks – available throughout the year.
- ◆ Review whether a solution can be found to reduce the significant impact that exam periods have on the availability, appeal, and accessibility of sports halls for community use (e.g., foldaway lightweight examination desks and chairs – and schemes whereby clubs help clear sports halls before and reformat them after use).
- ◆ A Sport England Facilities Planning Model assessment should be undertaken should be undertaken to provide an additional layer of insight to the above assessment by measuring the potential impact of new population growth at a spatial level.

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 Strategy, One Swim England (2024), focuses on creating an inclusive, welcoming environment where people of all ages and backgrounds can learn to swim and enjoy aquatic activities safely and successfully. Its vision is 'Great experiences in water, for all, for life.' Developed collaboratively with the aquatic's community, the strategy promotes shared culture and values, aiming to deliver enjoyable experiences and broaden participation.

Swim England's report 'A Decade of Decline: The Future of Swimming Pools in England' (2021) 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 pandemic, when many local authorities provided emergency financial support through direct grants, deferred payments or loans to subsidise pool operators who had suffered loss of income due to pool closures.

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

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

5.1: Supply

This assessment is mostly concerned with larger pools available for community use (no restrictions to accessing the pool as a result of membership criteria). As such, those less than 20m in length and/or located at private member clubs are deemed to offer limited value in relation to community use and delivery of outcomes related to health and deprivation. It is

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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 (including all pools irrespective of size and access) identifies nine pools at six sites including four main pools, two lido and three learner/teaching pools. These are located in the main population areas of Canvey Island, Thundersley and Benfleet.

Figure 5.1: All swimming pools in Castle Point

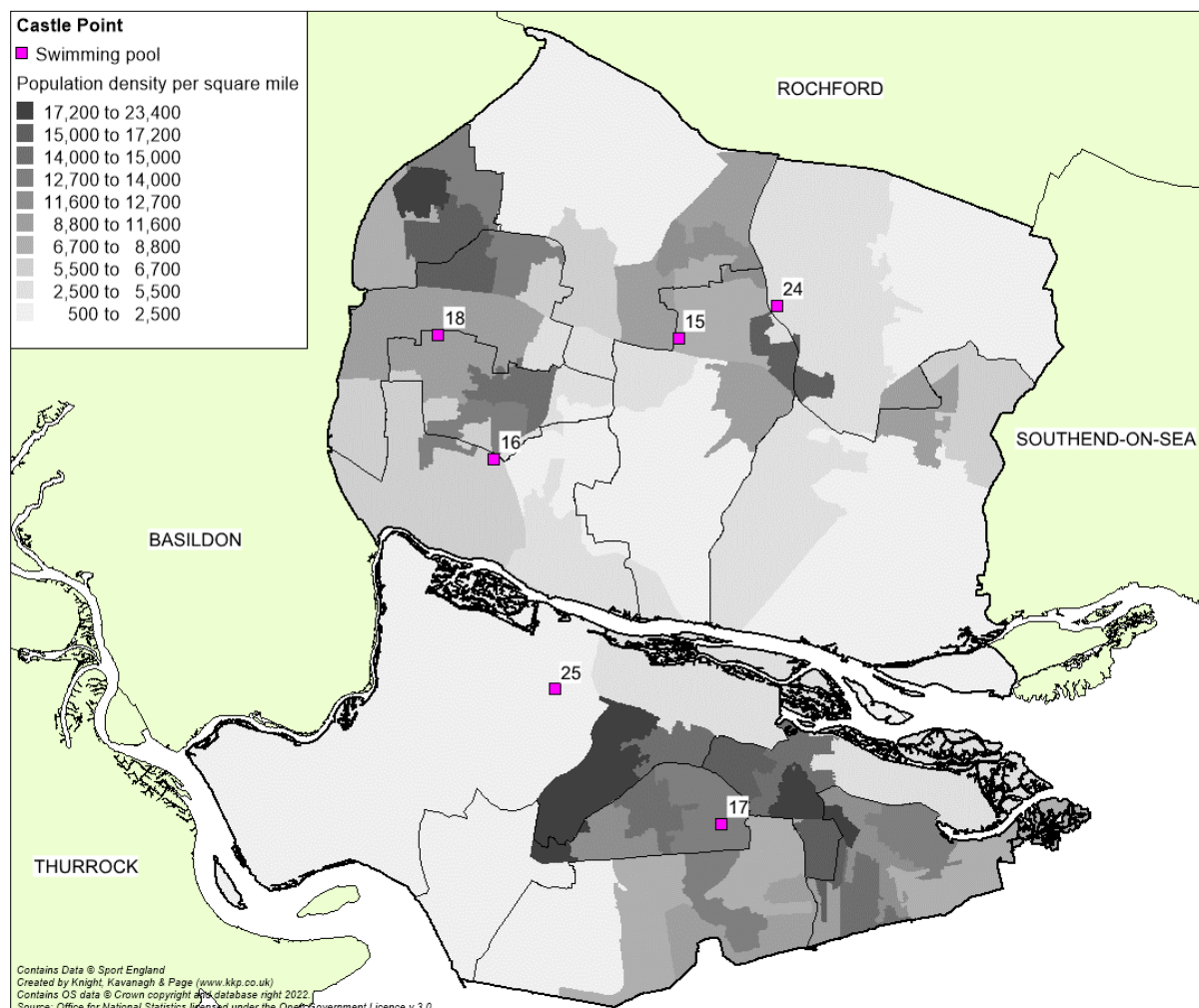


Table 5.1: All swimming pools in Castle Point

ID	Site	Lanes	Length	Type
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	6	25	Main/General
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	0	12	Learner/Teaching/Training
16	South Benfleet Primary School	0	8.5	Lido
17	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	0	25	Lido
18	The Appleton School	4	18.4	Main/General
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	5	25	Main/General
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	0	12	Learner/Teaching/Training
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	6	25	Main/General
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	0	13	Learner/Teaching/Training

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The two largest venues are the main/general pools at Runnymede Leisure Centre and Waterside Farm Leisure Centre. Both also have a learner/teaching pool. These public leisure facilities are key strategic sites and serve Castle Point's residents with access to swimming provision.

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

It's important to note that The Appleton School, has a 4-lane 18.4m pool. The facility is accessible to the community and is regularly used by Runnymede Swimming Club's Swim School programme, with sessions taking place on four evenings each week. Following a temporary closure during the pandemic, the pool has reopened. It has been significantly upgraded– improvements include full retiling, a plant room, and a new roof. Whilst not included in this audit it is contributing to the overall supply in the area for swimming lesson provision.

However, community access remains limited due to restrictions linked to a planning agreement, which prohibits its use on Sundays. This restriction, along with ongoing noise complaints from neighbouring residents, poses challenges to expanding community usage.

Once smaller pools are removed from the analysis (i.e. those less than 20m in length), four pools remain in the audit.

Quality

Of these four pools (across four sites), one is of good quality, two are above average and one was unassessed. Three out of the four main pools are accompanied by a learner/teaching pool of the same quality. KKP's non-technical visual assessments encompass review of changing provision as this also plays a significant role in influencing and attracting users. Some changing rooms could not be assessed due to them being in use at the time of audit, however, in general, changing facilities are of a comparable standard to pool quality.

Table 5.2: Quality of 20m+ in length swimming pools in Castle Point

ID	Site	Lanes	Length	Condition
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	6	25	Above average
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	0	12	Above average
17	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	0	25	Not assessed
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	5	25	Good
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	0	12	Good
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	6	25	Above average
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	0	13	Above average

Residents in the main population areas live in close proximity to either a good or an above average quality pool.

The two public leisure centres in the Authority are rated as above average quality. The changing facilities at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre are also rated above average having been refurbished in the last five years. However, the changing facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre are of below average quality. CPBC has aspirations to improve this provision.

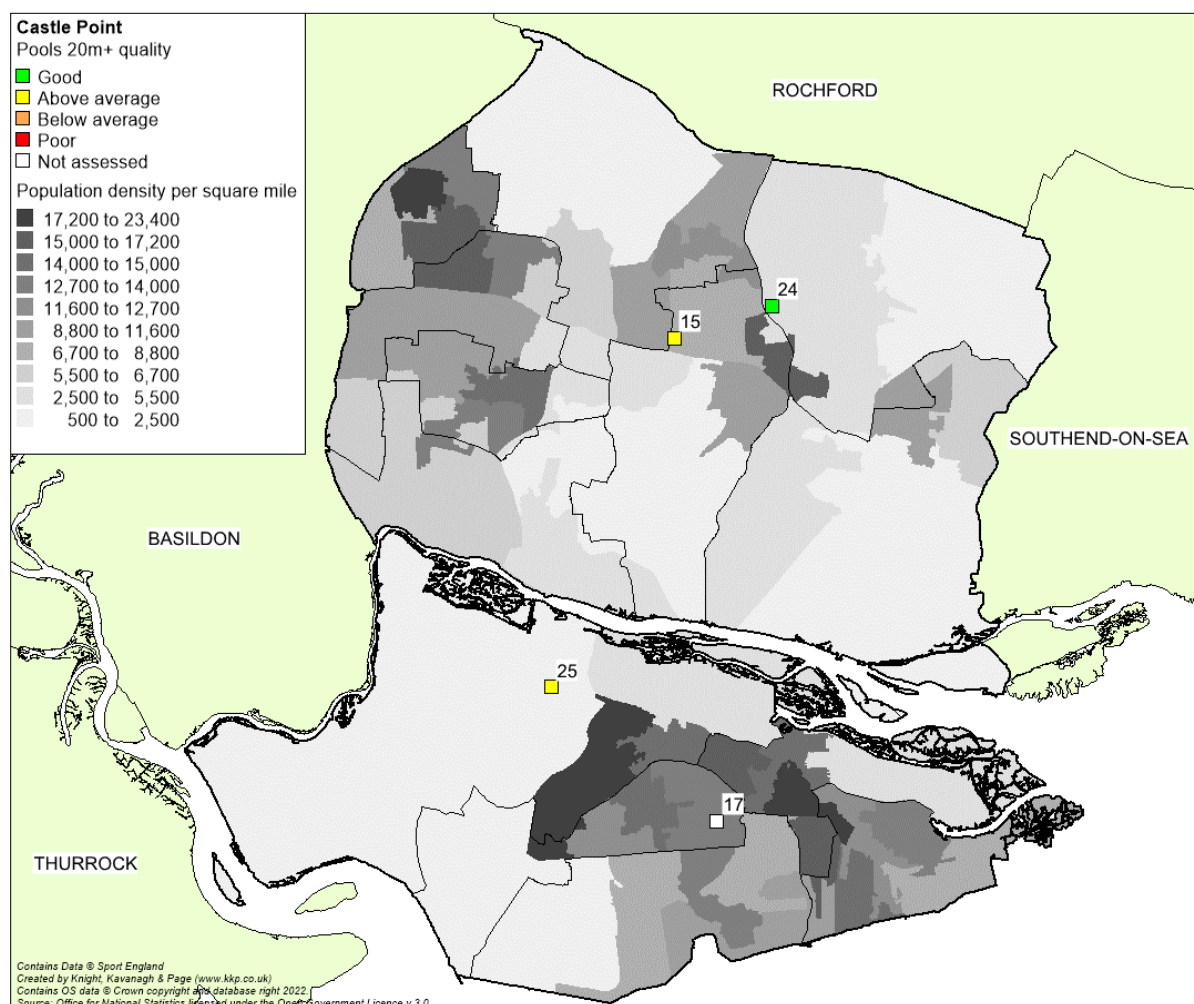
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The swimming pool at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre was last fully refurbished in 2012, but refurbishments of pool tiling, lights and plant room was undertaken in 2023. In April 2025, the site installed solar panels to improve energy efficiency.

The pool at Runnymede Leisure Centre underwent refurbishment in 2017. This included installation of a new roof. More recently, a new pool pod has been added to enhance accessibility for people with mobility issues and disabilities. However, the cover for the learner pool is currently broken and unable to function, a replacement is required.

Figure 5.2: Swimming pools longer than 20m+ with quality rating



Virgin Active (Thundersley) is identified in Sport England's Active Places database as having no refurbishments since its installation in 2004. Given the commercial nature of the venue (and member expectations in respect of quality) it is assumed that more recent work may have been done, to ensure the pool is of a good quality.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a lido-style pool with no cover; however, access to the site for assessment was not successful. According to Sport England's Active Places database, the pool was installed in 2019.

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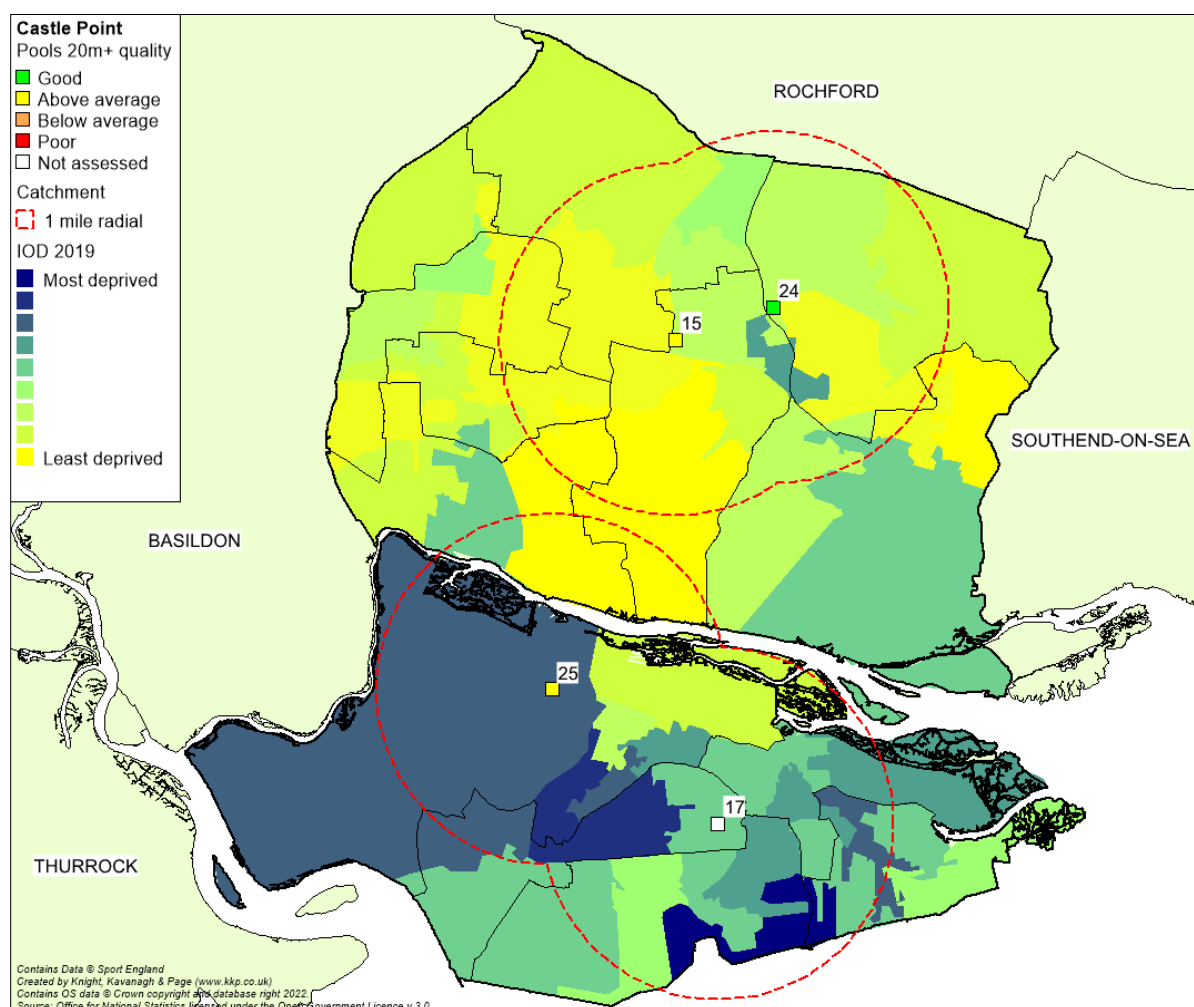
Table 5.3: Age of swimming pools (20m+) and refurbishment dates (where applicable)

Site name	Year built/ opened	Year last refurbished	Age (years) since built/refurbished
Runnymede Leisure Centre	1973	2017	8
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	2019	-	6
Virgin Active (Thundersley)	2004	-	21
Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	1976	2023	2

Accessibility

Swimming pool accessibility is influenced by physical traits such as the built environment. Appropriate walk and drive-time catchments are applied to determine accessibility to communities. The normal acceptable standard is 20-minutes' walk time (1-mile radial catchment) for an urban area and a 20-minutes' drive time for a rural area. This enables analysis of coverage adequacy and helps identify areas unserved by existing provision.

Figure 5.3: Accessibility of swimming pools in Castle Point

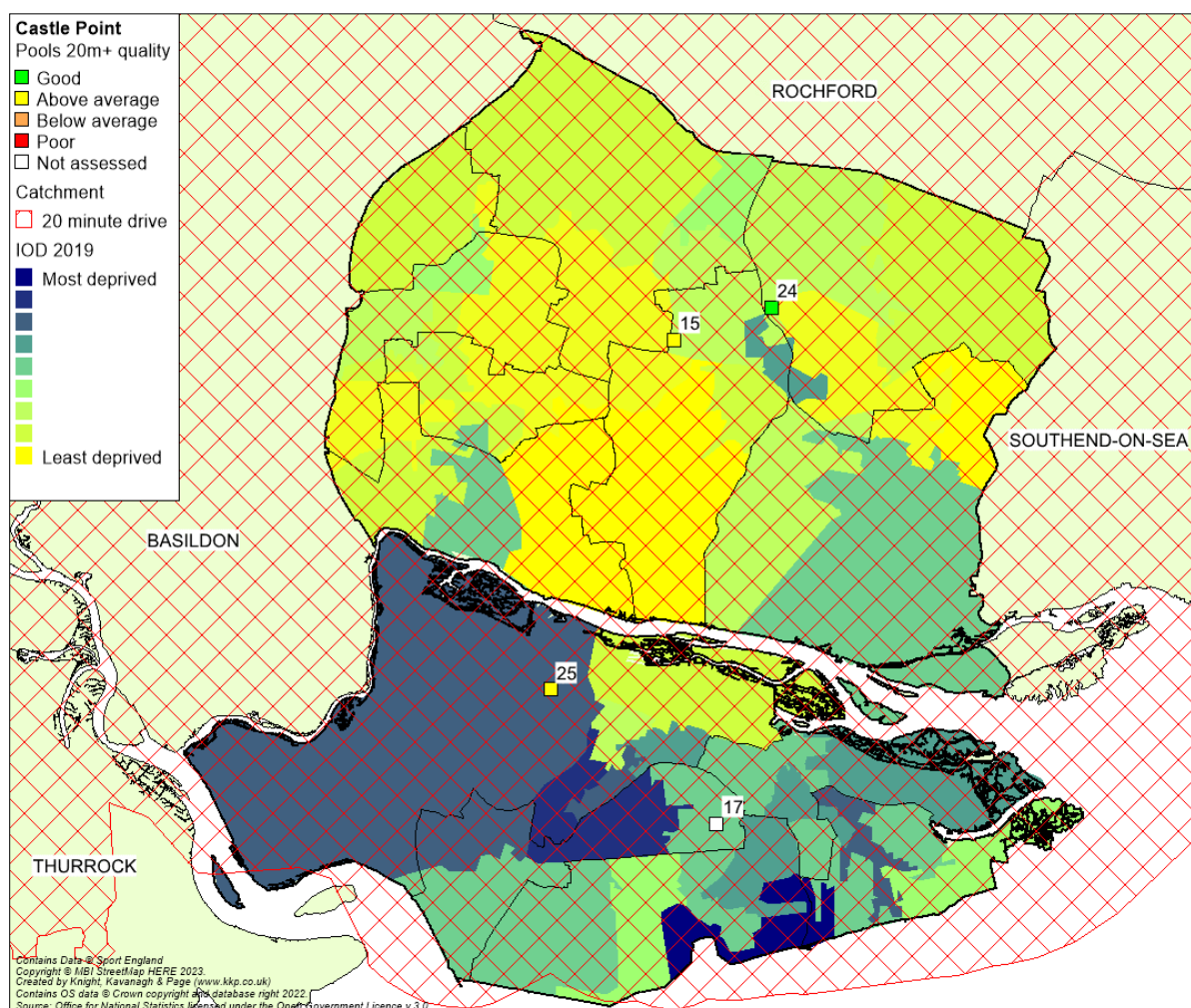


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Table 5.4: Accessibility of swimming pools in Castle Point

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	2,026	2.3%	2,026	2.3%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	5,749	6.4%	5,749	6.4%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	4,196	4.7%	3,195	3.6%	1,001	1.1%
30.1 - 40	7,933	8.9%	6,431	7.2%	1,502	1.7%
40.1 - 50	17,186	19.3%	11,213	12.6%	5,973	6.7%
50.1 - 60	6,630	7.4%	3,211	3.6%	3,419	3.8%
60.1 - 70	9,126	10.2%	6,223	7.0%	2,903	3.3%
70.1 - 80	16,904	19.0%	4,156	4.7%	12,748	14.3%
80.1 - 90	14,058	15.8%	9,076	10.2%	4,982	5.6%
90.1 - 100	5,376	6.0%	3,174	3.6%	2,202	2.5%
Total	89,184	100.0%	54,454	61.1%	34,730	38.9%

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



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The whole population lives within a 20-minute drive of a swimming pool 20m+ in length which offers some level of community use.

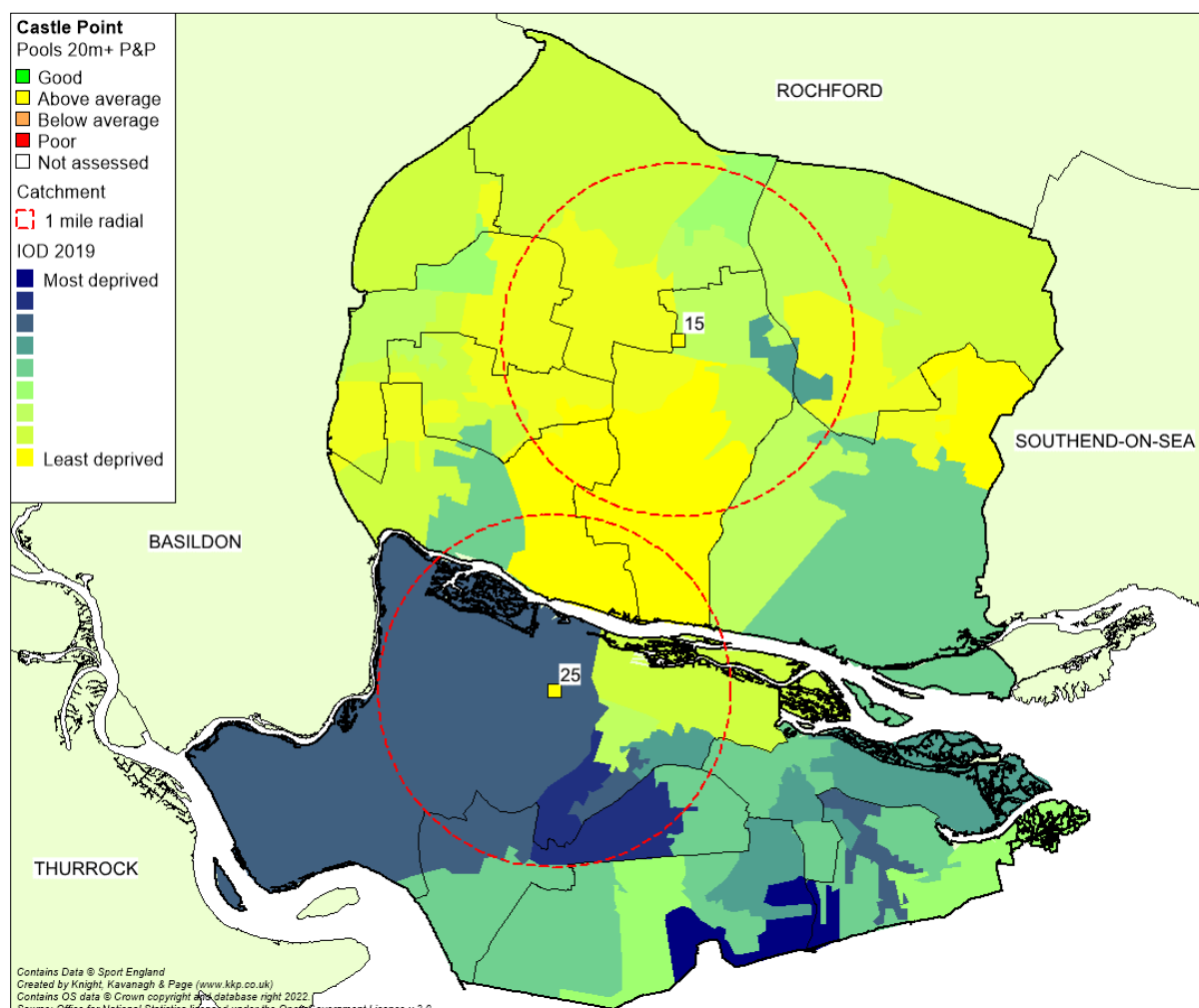
Of the 11,971 people in areas of high deprivation (0-30%), 10,970 live within one mile walk of a pool.

Waterside Farm Leisure Centre is located within Castle Point most deprived areas whereas Runnymede Leisure Centre is located in its least deprived area.

Availability of swimming pools

Swimming pool availability differs dependent upon ownership and/or management. All facilities audited all offer some form of public access. Two pools can be accessed on a pay and play basis - the publicly accessible leisure centres operated by Castle Point Leisure. These also offer membership options which, for regular users, can be more cost-effective than the pay and play offer. As evidenced in Figure 5.5 (below), 35.6% of the population live within one mile of a pay and play accessible swimming pool.

Figure 5.5: Accessibility of pay and play



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Table 5.6: Swimming pools with pay and play access

Site name	Access policy
Runnymede Leisure Centre	Pay & play
Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Pay & play

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

The pool at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School offers community use by the swimming club for swimming lessons use but does not offer individual pay and play access. However, no usage via swimming clubs was identified within the audit.

Table 5.5: Access policy of swimming pools

Map ID	Site name	Access policy
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	Pay and play
17	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Sports club / CA
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	Reg. membership
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Pay and play

Table 5.7: Accessibility of pools with pay and play access

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	2,026	2.3%	0	0.0%	2,026	2.3%
10.1 - 20	5,749	6.4%	5,206	5.8%	543	0.6%
20.1 - 30	4,196	4.7%	2,101	2.4%	2,095	2.3%
30.1 - 40	7,933	8.9%	2,879	3.2%	5,054	5.7%
40.1 - 50	17,186	19.3%	1,409	1.6%	15,777	17.7%
50.1 - 60	6,630	7.4%	1,031	1.2%	5,599	6.3%
60.1 - 70	9,126	10.2%	5,223	5.9%	3,903	4.4%
70.1 - 80	16,904	19.0%	2,978	3.3%	13,926	15.6%
80.1 - 90	14,058	15.8%	7,861	8.8%	6,197	6.9%
90.1 - 100	5,376	6.0%	3,062	3.4%	2,314	2.6%
Total	89,184	100.0%	31,750	35.6%	57,434	64.4%

Facilities in neighbouring authorities

Seven pools at six sites are located within two miles of Castle Point; one in Basildon, one in Rochford and five in Southend-on-Sea. One offer pay and play access, two can be accessed via sports club or community association, and two requires registered membership. It is important to note four of the seven pools are less than 20m pools, which can be seen in the table below.

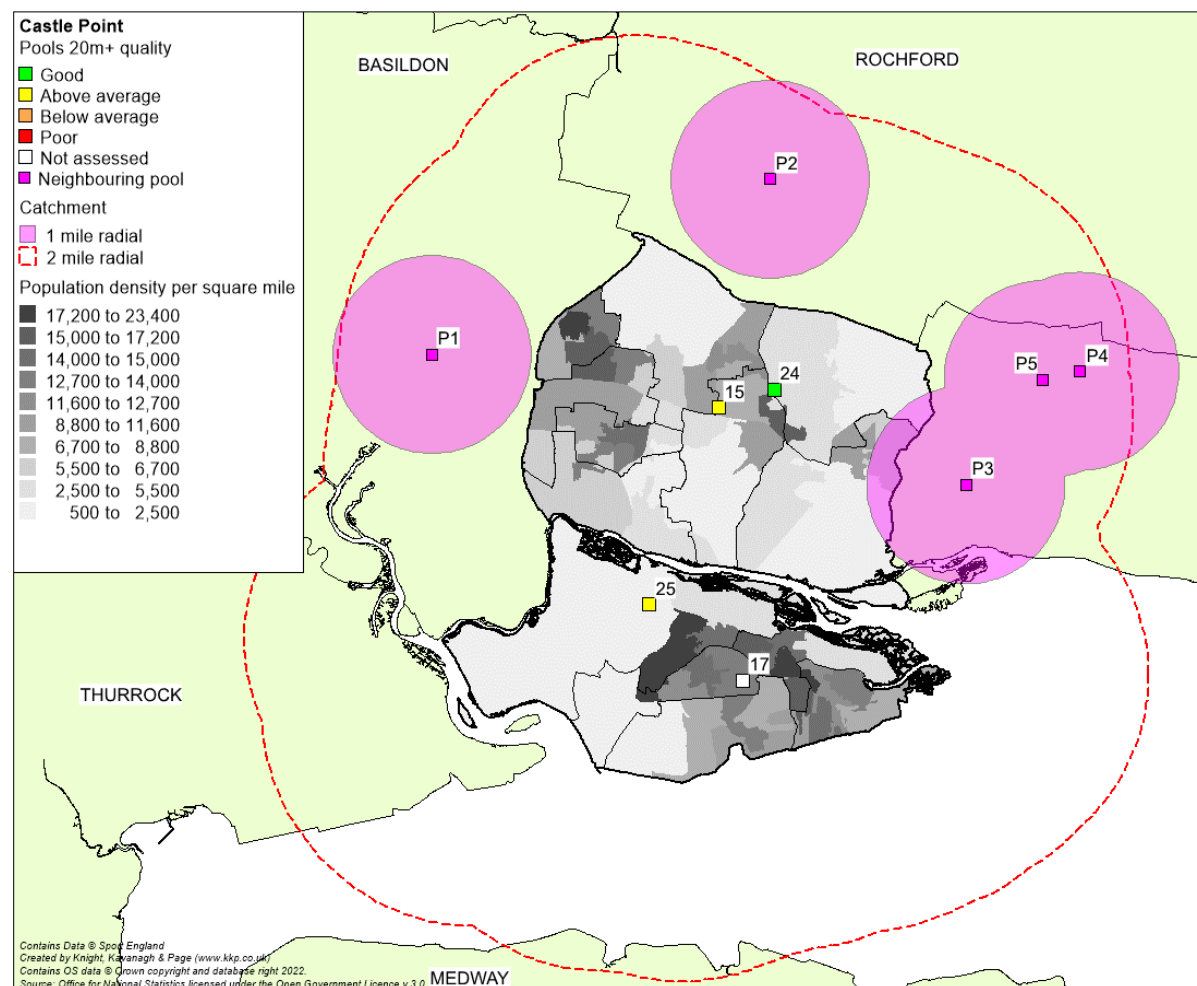
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Table 5.8: Neighbouring community available pools within 2-miles of Castle Point

ID	Site name	Lanes/length	Access type	Authority
P1	Eversley Leisure Centre	4 lanes 25m	Pay and play	Basildon
P2	Sweyne Park School	4 lanes 19m	Sports club / CA	Rochford
P3	Belfairs Swim Centre	4 lanes 25m	Pay and play	Southend-on-Sea
P3	Belfairs Swim Centre	0 lanes 10m	Pay and play	Southend-on-Sea
P4	David Lloyd (Southend)	4 lanes 25m	Reg. membership use	Southend-on-Sea
P4	David Lloyd (Southend)	3 lanes 13m	Reg. membership use	Southend-on-Sea
P5	The Eastwood Academy	4 lanes 18m	Sports club / CA	Southend-on-Sea

Source: Active Places Power 24/03/2025 NB: CA =community association

Figure 5.6: Swimming pools in neighbouring authorities within two mile of Castle Point



Future enhancements/new developments

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

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5.2: Demand

Swim England calculates that there is currently a water provision deficit of 250 m² in Castle Point (for comparison, a 6-lane 25m pool equates to 312.5m²). It does recommend that any future strategic review should consider ensuring it has open community access, making the water space even more accessible to the local population. It also states that facility mixes in the future needs to consider the versatility of its water space and the use of a movable floor/boom system.

Club consultation

The audit identified two swimming clubs, and one swim school currently utilising swimming pools with community access in Castle Point. All clubs and organisations were invited to take part in consultation. KKP received responses from all three as detailed below.

Runnymede Swimming Club currently has approximately 100 members, ranging from junior to senior swimmers, and is operating at full capacity with a waiting list now forming. It hires facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre seven days a week and also benefits from having access to a dedicated club room on-site. In addition to its core swimming programmes, the Club runs Swimability, an initiative designed to make swimming accessible for individuals with disabilities.

It reports having a strong working relationship with Runnymede Leisure Centre, supported by a formal usage agreement. Membership has grown steadily in recent years, and while there is capacity within the organisation to accommodate more swimmers, expansion is currently limited by pool time and lane availability. The Club notes that increasing pool access would enable it to reduce the waiting list and grow its membership; however, the rising cost of pool hire presents a significant financial barrier. Fees have increased substantially in recent years, making it challenging for the Club to take on additional pool time without further financial support.

Runnymede Swim School is closely partnered with Runnymede Swimming Club and there is a strong relationship between the two organisations. The swim school serves as a key pathway into the Club and currently has approximately 350 members enrolled on its learn-to-swim programme. It reports having no capacity issue and that it is able to accommodate further growth.

The Swim School accesses facilities at The Appleton School from Monday to Thursday and at Runnymede Leisure Centre from Friday to Sunday. It maintains positive working relationships with both venues, underpinned by formal usage agreements. However, it has raised concerns with regard to the standard of the changing facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre, highlighting this as an area for improvement.

Canvey Island Swimming Club currently has approximately 250 members, including around 200 participants in its learn to swim programme and 50 swimmers in its competitive squad. It has capacity to accommodate additional demand; however, doing so may require an increase in available pool time to ensure programme quality and sustainability.

The Club accesses facilities at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre six days a week, utilising approximately 13 hours of pool time. While the overall relationship with the centre is positive supported by a formal annual agreement and no reported issues with facility quality, the Club has expressed ongoing concerns about the limited access on Mondays, where only two lanes are available during the first hour of the session.

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In addition, it lost approximately one hour of pool time per week following the pandemic and believes that regaining this lost time would significantly enhance its ability to meet growing demand.

Canvey Island Jewish Trust was consulted to discuss the communities current need for sport provision. It highlighted the need for indoor sports facilities, particularly for women, due to modesty rules. The Jewish community has ongoing discussions with Waterside Farm Leisure Centre to provide it with swimming access and in respect of the importance of having female-only lifeguards and appropriate privacy measures. It recently secured two swimming sessions and will implement them over the coming months. While it is grateful to have secured these sessions, it pointed out that session timing is not ideal for children.

Swimming lessons

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

- ✦ Runnymede Leisure Centre- c.868 (86% full).
- ✦ Waterside Farm Leisure Centre- c.852 (88% full).

On average swim programmes at the public leisure centres are operating at 87% capacity. However, consultation with Castle Point Leisure indicated that despite the fact that there is a waiting list for lessons, the issue is not a shortage of swimming instructors but rather limited pool space, which restricts the ability to meet demand. It has a requirement to deliver a balanced programme that meets multiple demands.

5.3: Sport England's Facilities Calculator (SFC)

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

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

Table 5.9: Sport England: Sports Facilities Calculator

	Population 2018: (ONS)	Population estimate: 2030 (ONS)	Population estimate: 2043 (ONS)
ONS population projections	90,070	92,693	95,999
Population increases from 2018		+2,623	+5,929
Facilities to meet additional demand from 2018		0.51 lanes 0.13 pools	1.16 lanes 0.29 pools
Estimated cost*		£585,473	£1,323,3970

(Note that the SFC is purely based on population growth and does not account for existing provision and how that provision is currently used (whether it is under or over capacity).

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Calculations assume that the current swimming pool stock remains available for community use and the quality remains the same. The projected increase in population will lead to an increase in demand for swimming space. The SFC indicates a requirement for an additional one lane (equivalent to 0.29 swimming pools, up to 2043 (estimated cost: £1,323,3970).

Table 5.10: Strategic housing impact

Housing growth increases from strategic sites (500+ houses to 2043)	Average number of people per owner occupying household (England)	Population increase due to proposed housing	Additional sports hall space required	Estimated cost (£)
6,200	2.4	14,880	+2.9 lanes 0.73 pools	£3,321,327

(Build costs as of Q3 2024)

Table 5.11: Strategic housing impact – upper level figure

Housing growth increases from strategic sites (500+ houses to 2043)	Average number of people per owner occupying household (England)	Population increase due to proposed housing	Additional sports hall space required	Estimated cost (£)
11,500	2.4	27,600	+5.38 lanes 1.35 pools	£6,160,526

(Build costs as of Q3 2024)

The first housing growth scenario, the SFC indicates need for an additional 2.9 lanes (0.73 of a swimming pool) to accommodate future demand based on the housing growth figure. When taking into account both population and housing growth, there is need for 4.06 lanes (1.02 of a swimming pool).

The second housing growth scenario, the SFC indicates need for an additional 5.38 lanes (1.35 of a swimming pool) to accommodate future demand based on housing growth. When considering both population and housing growth, there is a need for 5.67 lanes (1.64 of a swimming pool).

The Borough's swimming provision includes two public leisure pools, a commercial facility operated by Virgin Active, and The Appleton School, which contributes to swimming lessons. These sites currently accommodate demand but given their age (albeit that they have both been refurbished) and the additional demand likely to be generated by the increased local population which will be the result of planned housing growth and the current reported supply deficit, it is important to start to plan for new provision at some point over the next decade. In the meantime, it will be important to continue to maintain the quality of current pool provision.

Based on the current requirements as calculated by Swim England, in the short term, there will be sufficient water space if both Waterside Farm Leisure Centre and Runnymede Leisure Centre pools remain open. However, by 2043, there will be a slight shortfall of provision based on current supply. There is a need to undertake an FPM bespoke run to calculate future requirements in relation to housing growth.

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

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5.4: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Swimming pools	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are nine pools at six sites, four are 20+m in length. Public leisure sites are well placed relative to the main population areas.	Public leisure sites have limited capacity to take on additional learn to swim members. Local swimming clubs also report lack of provision.
Quality	One pool is rated good quality, two are above average and one was unassessed.	Residents in most main population areas have access to above average pool provision. Potential investment is needed to improve the quality of changing facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre.
Accessibility	The whole of Castle Point population lives within one mile of a swimming pool that is 20m+ in length that offers some level of community use.	Swimming pool accessibility is good, 50% of local pool provision can be accessed on a pay and play basis-
Availability (Management and usage)	Both public leisure sites provide pay and play options for residents. Commercial operators provide a registered membership option, and the one school pool allows club use.	The public leisure centres are operating near to capacity. Maintain good relationship with the Appleton School to ensure community use remains accessible. Explore whether planning restrictions could be reviewed to enable it to operate on Sundays. Regularly review programming at leisure centre pools.

Strategic summary

- Each facility is important to the community served and should be protected in accordance with Paragraph 104 of the NPPF.
- There is a need to maintain the quality of swimming pools in the area via good maintenance programmes.
- Investment in changing facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre is required.
- Regular review of public pool programming is required to ensure that learn to swim, casual, club swimming and cultural needs are catered for at times which meet local community need.
- Population increases and housing growth will create additional demand that more provision may be needed to accommodate.
- There is a need to consider when to start planning new pool provision given the demand for facilities, the current ageing stock and the housing growth planned to 2043.
- A Sport England Facilities Planning Model assessment should be undertaken for swimming pools to provide an additional layer of insight to the above assessment by measuring the potential impact of new population growth at a spatial level.

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SECTION 6: HEALTH AND FITNESS

According to the most recent ALS data¹³, around 11.4 million adults regularly engage in some form of fitness type activity (i.e., using gym equipment, a weights session, fitness class, or interval session). It is offered at/across wide range of facilities including larger gyms (run on behalf of the local authority by companies and/or trusts, managed in-house or private sector operators), and also other smaller activity spaces such as village and community halls.

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

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

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

Larger gyms with a mix of flexible spaces (e.g., cardio, free weights and boxing - 80 stations +¹⁴) remain central to the financial viability of public sector leisure centres. When combined with multiple studio facilities offering a good mix (and sufficient number) of classes, these usually offer the most profitable spaces within a typical leisure centre.

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

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant shift in how people access fitness content. With gym closures and social distancing measures, many individuals turned to online fitness platforms, including free YouTube workouts and paid services like Peloton. This trend has continued post-pandemic, with virtual workouts now firmly established as a regular part of many people's fitness routines.

¹³ [Active Lives adult survey Nov 20-21 report](#)

¹⁴ 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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6.1: Supply

Quantity

The 12 health and fitness gyms in Castle Point contain a total of 1,137 stations. Most are located in its densely populated areas: Thundersley, Canvey Island and South Benfleet.

Figure 6.1: Castle Point all health and fitness on pop density (MYE 2022)

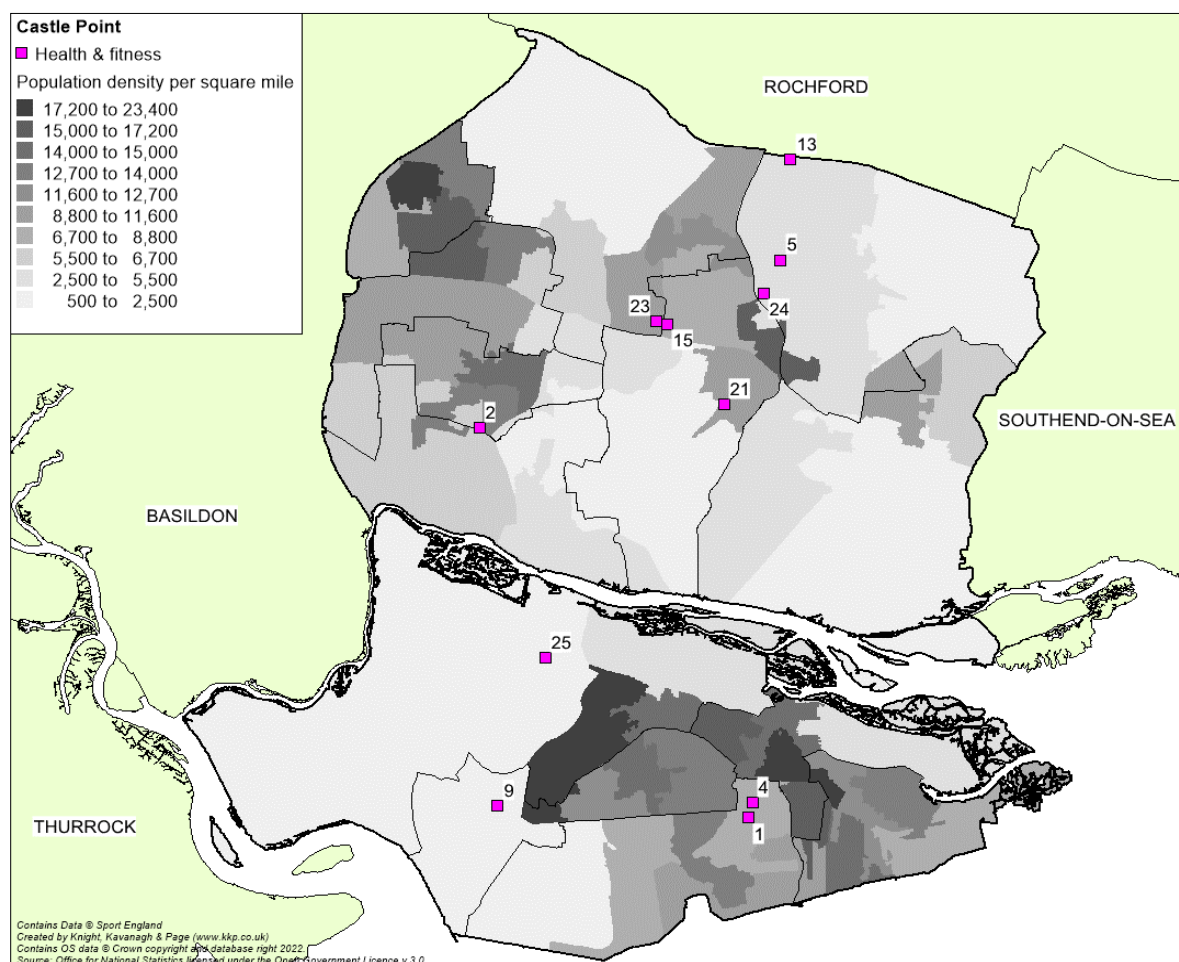


Table 6.1: All health and fitness gyms in Castle Point

ID	Site	Stations
1	Anytime Fitness (Canvey Island)	125
2	Bodycare Personal Fitness Club	16
4	Castle View School	25
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	25
9	Island Gym	150
9	Island Gym	60
13	Puregym (Rayleigh)	220
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	50
21	The King John School	22
23	USP College (Seevic Campus)	24
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	320
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	100
-	Total	1,137

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Fitness facilities with fewer than 20 stations are typically not assessed/considered to be sufficiently large to be a community gym although they can service small sections of the community. When the one facility with fewer than 20 stations is removed from the supply calculation, 11 facilities with 20+ stations (1,121 stations in total) remain.

Quality

All health and fitness sites received a non-technical quality assessment.

Figure 6.2: Health and fitness gyms with 20+ stations by condition

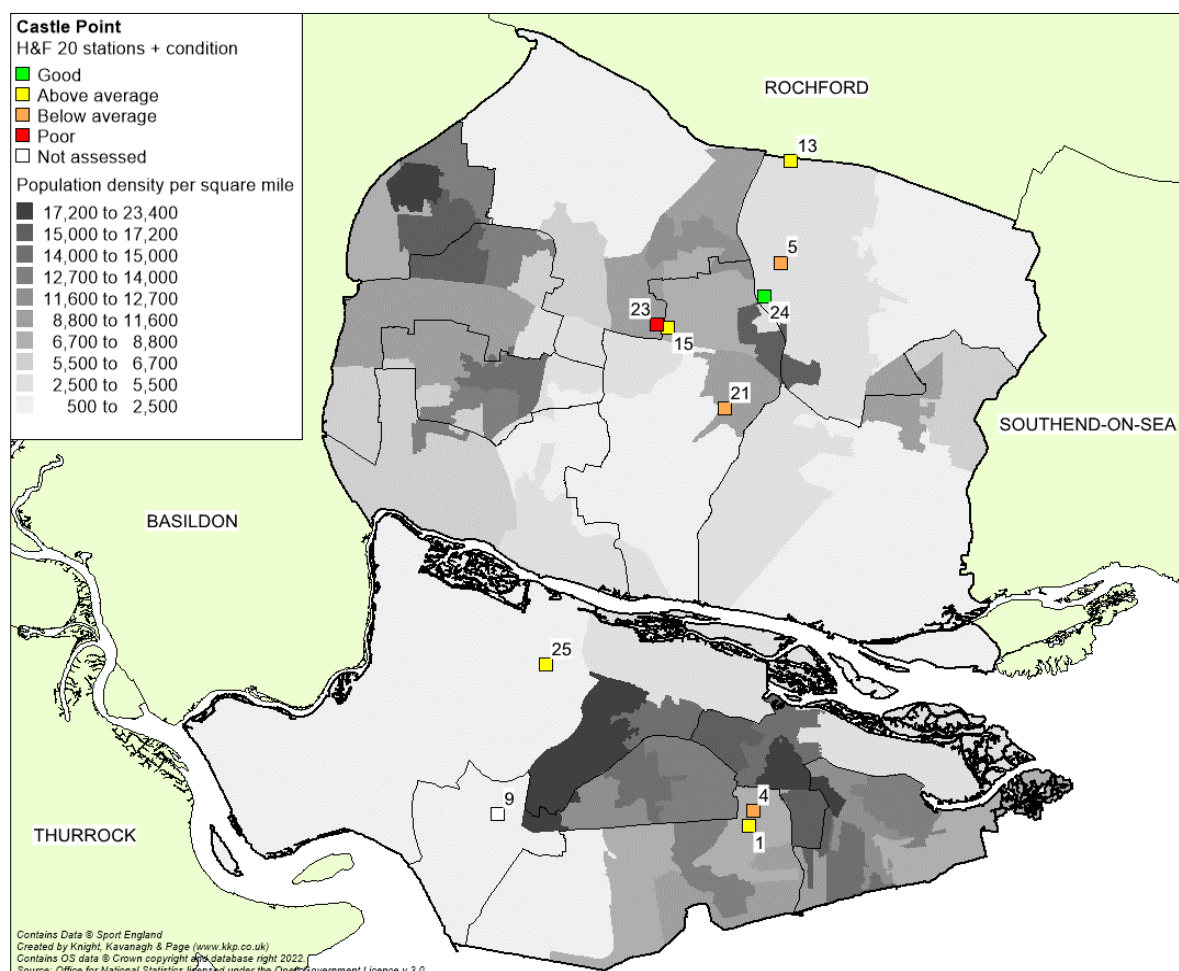


Table 6.2: Health and fitness gyms (20+ stations) by condition

ID	Site	Stations	Condition
1	Anytime Fitness (Canvey Island)	125	Below average
4	Castle View School	25	Below average
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	25	Below average
9	Island Gym	150	Above average
9	Island Gym	60	Above average
13	Puregym (Rayleigh)	220	Above average
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	50	Above average
21	The King John School	22	Below average
23	USP College (Seevic Campus)	24	Poor
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	320	Good

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ID	Site	Stations	Condition
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	100	Above average

As is set out above, one venue is rated as good quality, five are above average, four are below average and one of poor quality.

Waterside Farm Leisure Centre is the largest public health and fitness facility in the area. It was refurbished in 2022 when the squash courts were repurposed to create additional gym floor space and new equipment was installed. During the consultation it was indicated that there is strong demand and that the site was extended and refurbished to reflect this with reports that membership has subsequently increased.

The health & fitness suite at Runnymede Leisure Centre has recently seen the addition of new equipment, including a modern sled track, to support a broader range of training options. While much of the existing gym equipment is approximately seven years old, the Centre has aspirations to comprehensively update all fitness equipment in the coming years.

Castle View School, Deanes School Sport Centre, The King John School and USP College health and fitness suites are all located on educational sites and primarily service curriculum use. Some of these suites are also available for community use.

Given the high levels of competition in the area, there is a need for a high-quality offer and high-quality changing provision is considered to be important to ensure that the public leisure centres in Castle Point can compete commercially, retain their current members and attract new users.

Waterside Farm Leisure Centre's changing facilities are of above-average quality, having been refurbished within the past five years. In contrast, the dry side changing facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre are dated and tired and rate below average. Centre management confirmed the ambition to upgrade these facilities subject to funding.

Four gyms are of significant size (100+ stations). There is substantial competition in the area for good quality provision from a number of national chain providers.

Accessibility

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

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

Majority of Castle Point's population lives within 20 minutes' walk of a health and fitness facility with 20+ stations and community access. Drive time catchment modelling suggests that nearly all of Castle Point's population (89,731 MYE 2022) is within a 20-minute drive of a 20+ station health and fitness facility within Castle Point.

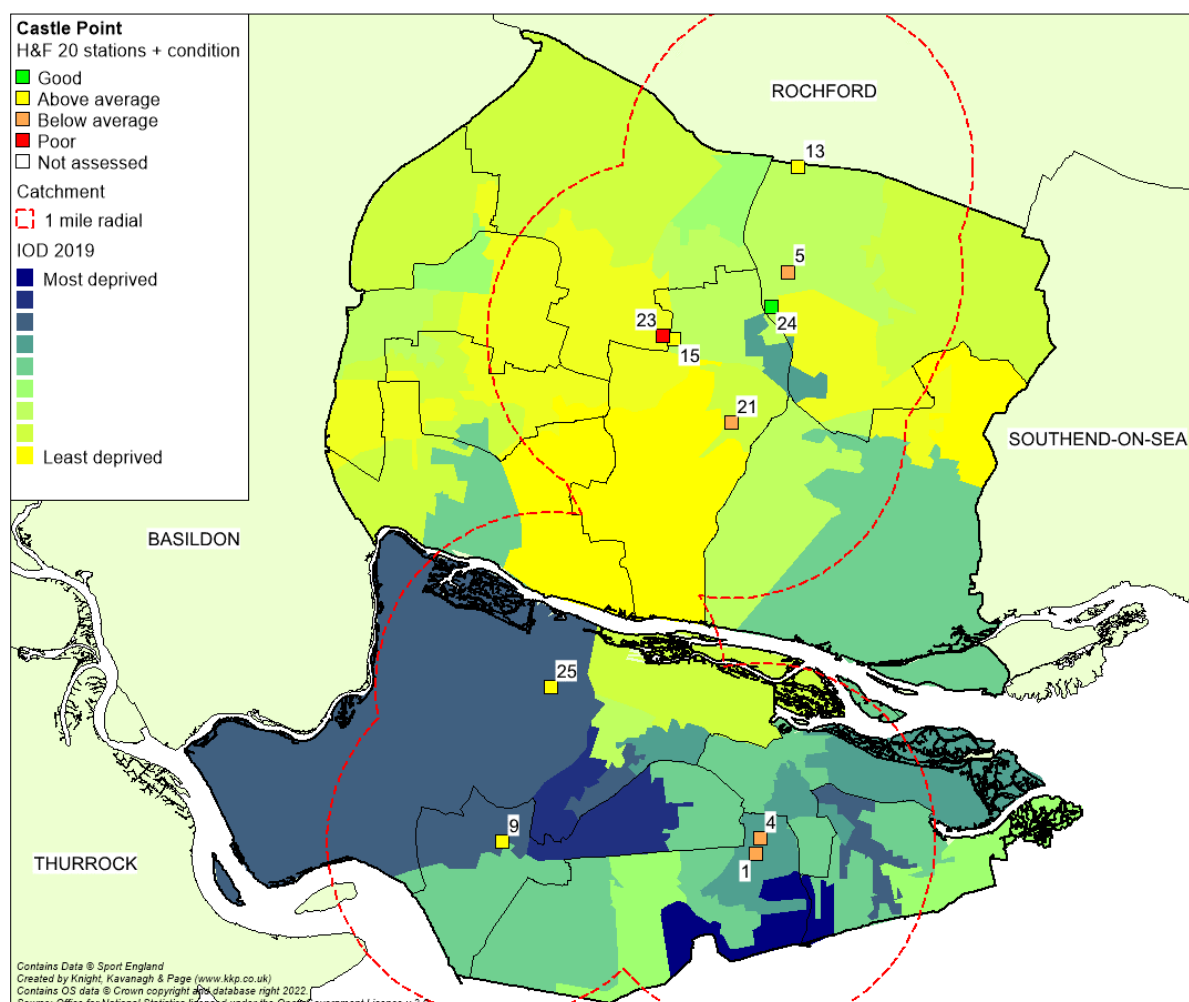
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Table 6.3: Health and fitness 20+ stations with 1-mile radial catchment

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	2,026	2.3%	2,026	2.3%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	5,749	6.4%	5,749	6.4%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	4,196	4.7%	3,802	4.3%	394	0.4%
30.1 - 40	7,933	8.9%	6,782	7.6%	1,151	1.3%
40.1 - 50	17,186	19.3%	14,166	15.9%	3,020	3.4%
50.1 - 60	6,630	7.4%	3,639	4.1%	2,991	3.4%
60.1 - 70	9,126	10.2%	7,071	7.9%	2,055	2.3%
70.1 - 80	16,904	19.0%	4,660	5.2%	12,244	13.7%
80.1 - 90	14,058	15.8%	9,913	11.1%	4,145	4.6%
90.1 - 100	5,376	6.0%	3,506	3.9%	1,870	2.1%
Total	89,184	100.0%	61,314	68.8%	27,870	31.3%

Castle Point has 11,971 residents living in areas of higher deprivation (0-30 IMD bands). Of these, 0.4% (394) live outside a 1-mile radius of a health and fitness facility.

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



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Facilities in neighbouring authorities

Health & fitness facility users do not just visit facilities in their own local authority. As a consequence, facilities located within two miles of the Castle Point border are considered. There are ten in this catchment. Two offer pay and play access whilst eight require some form of membership and are available via sport club and community association membership only. Four are in Basildon, four in Southend-on-Sea, and two in Rochford.

Figure 6.4: Community available health and fitness (20+ stations) within 2 miles

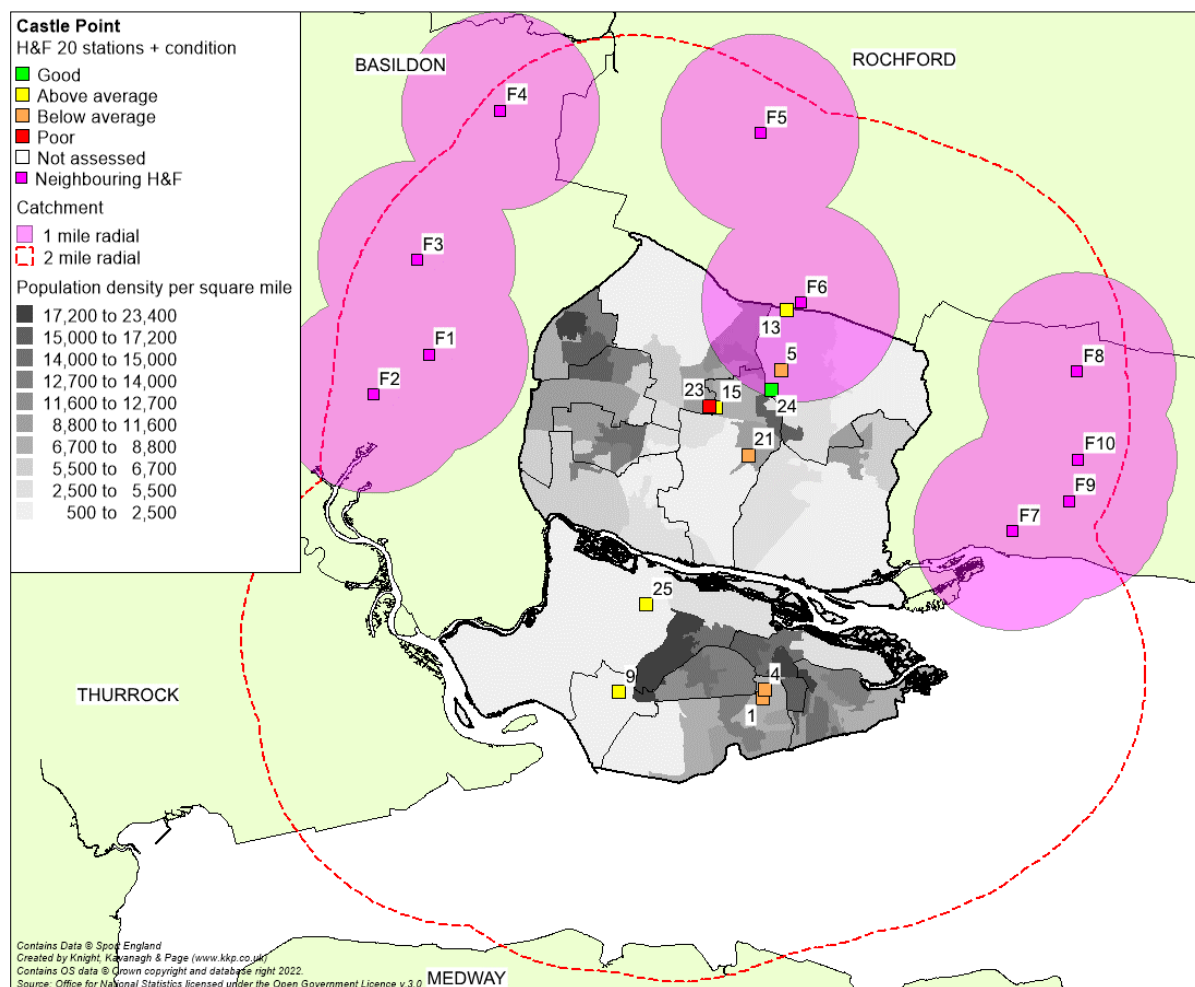


Table 6.4: Community available health/fitness (20+ stations) within 2 miles of Castle Point

ID	Site	Stations	Access	Authority
F1	Eversley Leisure Centre	65	Pay and play	Basildon
F2	Pitsea Leisure Centre (The Place)	25	Registered membership	Basildon
F3	Ripped Gym (Basildon)	111	Registered membership	Basildon
F4	The Gym Hub	95	Registered membership	Basildon
F5	Rayleigh Leisure Centre	42	Pay and play	Rochford
F6	Stack House Gym	50	Registered membership	Rochford
F7	Anytime Fitness (Leigh-On-Sea)	200	Registered membership	Southend-on-Sea
F8	David Lloyd (Southend)	77	Registered membership	Southend-on-Sea
F9	Leigh Fitness Centre	21	Pay and play	Southend-on-Sea
F10	Westcliff High School for Boys	28	Sports club / CA	Southend-on-Sea

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Availability and programming

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

Of the 11 health and fitness suites with 20+ stations, four offer some element of pay and play via the pre-purchase of a one-day pass or pay on arrival. All four gyms offering pay and play also offer a monthly membership scheme, which may work out as a more cost-effective option based on usage. Four gyms in Castle Point offer access via registered membership: The King John School is available for sport clubs and community association only. Castle View School and USP College (Seevic Campus) are the only 20+ station sites with no community use.

Table 6.5: Access policy of health and fitness

ID	Site	Access
1	Anytime Fitness (Canvey Island)	Registered membership use
2	Bodycare Personal Fitness Club	Registered membership use
4	Castle View School	Private use
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	Registered membership use
9	Island Gym	Pay and play
13	Puregym (Rayleigh)	Pay and play
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	Pay and play
21	The King John School	Sports club / Community Association
23	USP College (Seevic Campus)	Private use
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	Registered membership use
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Pay and play

The cost of health and fitness facility use varies considerably. The two sites managed by Castle Point Leisure offer a comprehensive membership, offering gym, swim and class use with a varying price dependent upon on age. The public leisure centre sites also offer pay and play use and do not require an online registration.

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

Castle Point Leisure, on behalf of the Council, delivers a GP referral programme at Runnymede Leisure Centre. This provides opportunities for people with underlying medical conditions, or those at risk of developing conditions to become more active in a safe and welcoming environment and raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity, helping to create long-term behaviour change. The programme runs for 12 weeks and is designed to help individuals self-manage conditions more effectively and with more confidence. The centre also runs a My Weight Matters programme.

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Table 6.6: Pricing structure - health and fitness with community use and 20+ stations

Site name	Pay & play	Annual	12-month DD	Notes
Anytime Fitness (Canvey Island)	N/A	£319.50	£32.95	Includes free introduction and free PT consultation.
Bodycare Personal Fitness Club	-	Unknown	Unknown	The pricing structure could not be identified during audit.
Castle View School	-	-	-	Not available for community use.
Deanes School Sports Centre	-	£200.00	£20.00	£10.00 joining fee. Open 16:00-22:00 weekdays and 08:00-18:00 weekends.
Island Gym	£7.50	£340.00	£39.95	Provides other pricing options, including joint couples and over 60s.
Puregym (Rayleigh)	£9.99	£29.99	N/A	24-hour use with a cheaper off-peak membership option.
Runnymede Leisure Centre	£8.30	£506	£46.00	Includes access to fitness suite, swimming pool and exercise classes. Cheaper off-peak membership option available.
The King John School	-	-	-	Only available for sport clubs and community association on block bookings
USP College (Seevic Campus)	-	-	-	Not available for community use.
Virgin Active (Thundersley)	N/A	N/A	£56.00	Is a £25.00 joining fee. Price includes access to gym on same tier system.
Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	£8.30	£506.00	£46.00	Includes access to fitness suite, swimming pool and exercise classes. Cheaper off-peak membership option available.

Island Gym provides the cheapest pay and play option at £7.50 per session. At the opposite end of the sale, Pure Gym is the most expensive, at £9.99 per session.

In terms of monthly rates, Deanes School Sports Centre is the cheapest at £20.00 per month and Virgin Active is the most expensive at £56.00 per month.

6.2: Demand

Castle Point Leisure confirmed that since the health & fitness suites at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre was refurbished in 2022, membership demand has risen.

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

Based upon UK penetration rates there is current need for 556 stations in Castle Point. This will grow to 631 stations by 2043, taking account of a comfort factor (particularly at peak times). When comparing the current number of community available stations (1,137 and accounting for the comfort factor, there is a positive supply balance of c.581 stations. This indicates capacity to accommodate future demand from projected population growth. However, the audit identified high participation rates in the authority. Furthermore, it is presumed that there will be some import and export of demand whereby Castle Point residents will access facilities in neighbouring local authorities, especially larger sites and vice versa.

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Table 6.7: UK penetration rates; health/fitness in Castle Point (ONS data)

	Current (2018)	Future (2043)
Adult population (16+ years)	74,820	80,118
UK penetration rate	17%	18%
Number of potential members	12,719	14,421
Number of visits per week (1.75/member)	22,259	25,237
% of visits in peak time	65	65
No. of visits in peak time (equated to no. of stations required i.e., no. of visits/39 weeks*65%)	371	421
Number of stations (comfort factor applied)	556	631

It is not uncommon for the private sector to identify niche markets and fill them with stations which make the market appear congested. The key issue is that while some of these may be budget operators this does not necessarily make them available to people/communities who face barriers to participation and people from areas of (relative) disadvantage (as cost is only one factor which may hinder usage). It could be argued that this applies particularly to those who require transport to access such facilities.

Supply and demand analysis

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

6.3: Fitness studios

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

There are 17 studios in Castle Point across nine sites; of these 12 were subject to a non-technical assessment.

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Figure 6.5: Studios in Castle Point

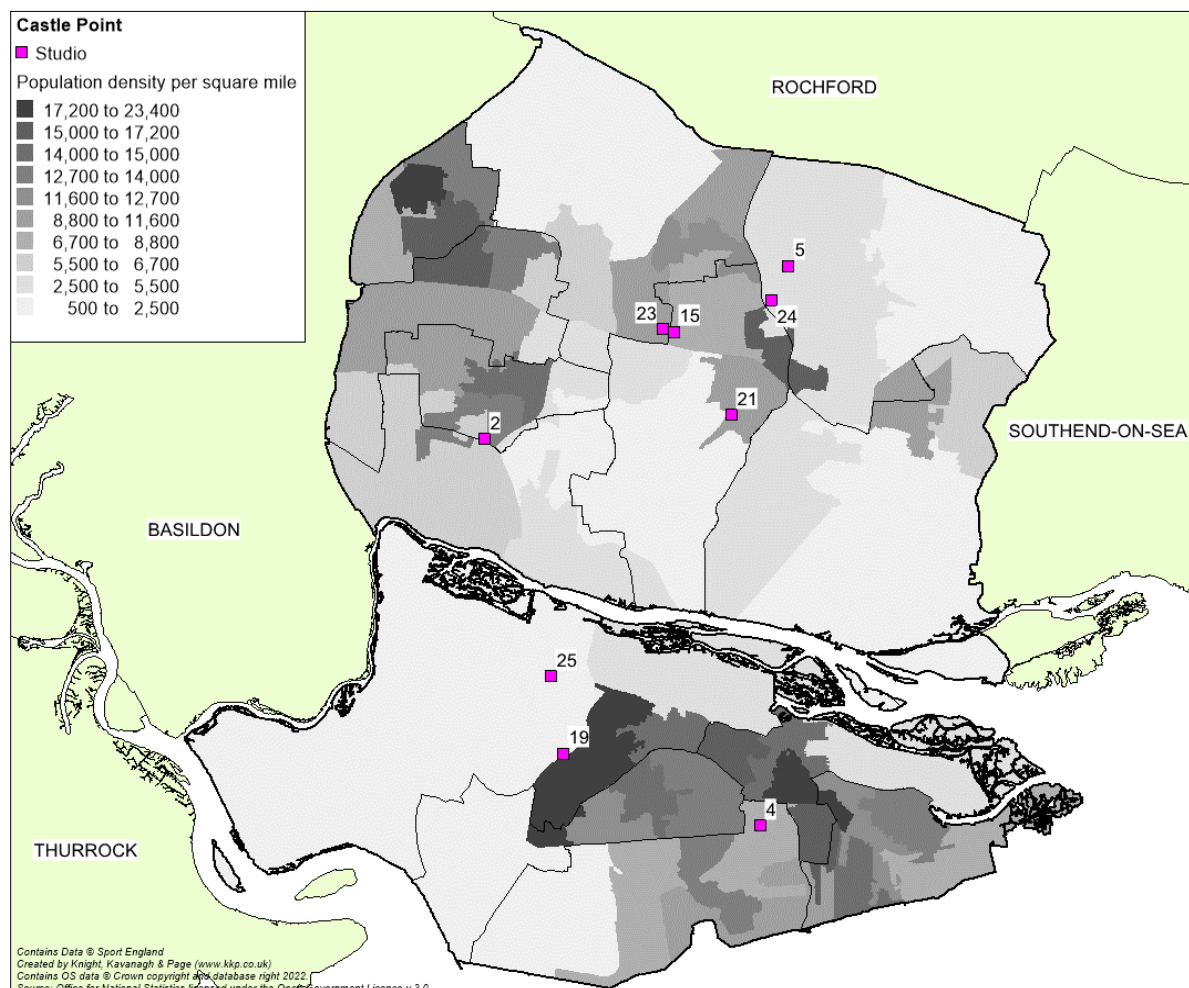


Table 6.8: Table of studios in Castle Point

ID	Site	Access	Condition
2	Bodycare Personal Fitness Club	Registered membership	Poor
2	Bodycare Personal Fitness Club	Registered membership	Poor
4	Castle View School	Private use	Above average
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	Sports club / CA	Below average
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	Sports club / CA	Below average
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	Sports club / CA	Below average
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	Pay and play	Above average
15	Runnymede Leisure Centre	Pay and play	Below average
21	The King John School	Sports club / CA	Below average
23	USP College (Seevic Campus)	Sports club / CA	Below average
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	Registered membership	Good
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	Registered membership	Good
24	Virgin Active (Thundersley)	Registered membership	Good
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Pay and play	Below average
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Pay and play	Above average
25	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Pay and play	Above average
19	The Cornelius Vermuyden School	Sports club / CA	Poor

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

With the exception of the dedicated spin studios at each of Runnymede Leisure Centre and Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, all the above are fitness studios.

Consultation with Castle Point Leisure confirms that demand is generally high for available classes at the public leisure sites. The highest number (of classes) is delivered at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre. Demand for these sites is set out in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: Castle Point in-house fitness membership & studio demand

Site	Number of health and fitness stations	Number of fitness members	Fitness classes/week
Runnymede Leisure Centre	50	1,778	70
Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	100	3,778	110

6.4: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Health and fitness	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 12 health and fitness suites containing 1,137 stations. (11 of the 22 have 20+ stations. There is a current positive supply demand balance in the area. Of the 17 studios, 16 offer some form of community access.	Supply is sufficient to accommodate current and future demand. There is no need identified within the authority for additional facilities.
Quality	One is rated good, five above average, three below average and one of poor quality.	There is a maintain quality across the stock.
Accessibility	Nine of the 11 health and fitness suites with 20+ stations (1,072 stations) are available to the community. All residents live within one-mile of a health and fitness suite. Nearly all live within 20-minutes' drive of a community accessible facility. There are 10 gyms in neighbouring authorities within 2 miles of the boundary. Two offer pay and play access whilst eight require some form of membership and are available via sport club and community association membership only	Accessibility in Castle Point is good. Each main area has access to a good quality health and fitness facility. There is likely to be exported demand to and imported demand from neighbouring authorities.
Availability (Management and usage)	The audit identified high local demand and participation rates. There are four pay and play accessible public health and fitness facilities with 20+ stations in Castle Point. Five require a membership to access.	Ensure that health and fitness facilities continue to cater to a range of market segments. Ensure that concessionary priced and pay and play offers are sufficient to enable people facing financial and other

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Facility type	Health and fitness	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
		barriers to participation to engage.

Strategic summary

- Current and future demand is well catered for, with Waterside Farm Leisure Centre handling most demand within publicly operated sites.
- Castle Point Borough Council/Castle Point Leisure should consider introducing clearer/more proactive ways to make 'pay and play' access available to people who do not wish/cannot afford to commit to registered memberships.
- The importance of the financial contribution that health and fitness make to the viability of other facilities such as swimming pools is an important facet.

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SECTION 7: SQUASH COURTS

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

Table 7.1: England Squash strategic aims:

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

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

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

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

Castle Point has a population of 90,970 (ONS 2018) and there is no squash provision within the authority. Applying the ES model would indicate a theoretical demand for nine courts to meet the ES standard. When taking future population growth (to 2043) into account there is a need to increase this number to ten courts.

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7.1: Supply

Quantity

There are currently no squash courts in Castle Point. Waterside Farm Leisure Centre previously provided two courts, but these were removed in 2022 to accommodate an expansion of the gym facilities.

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

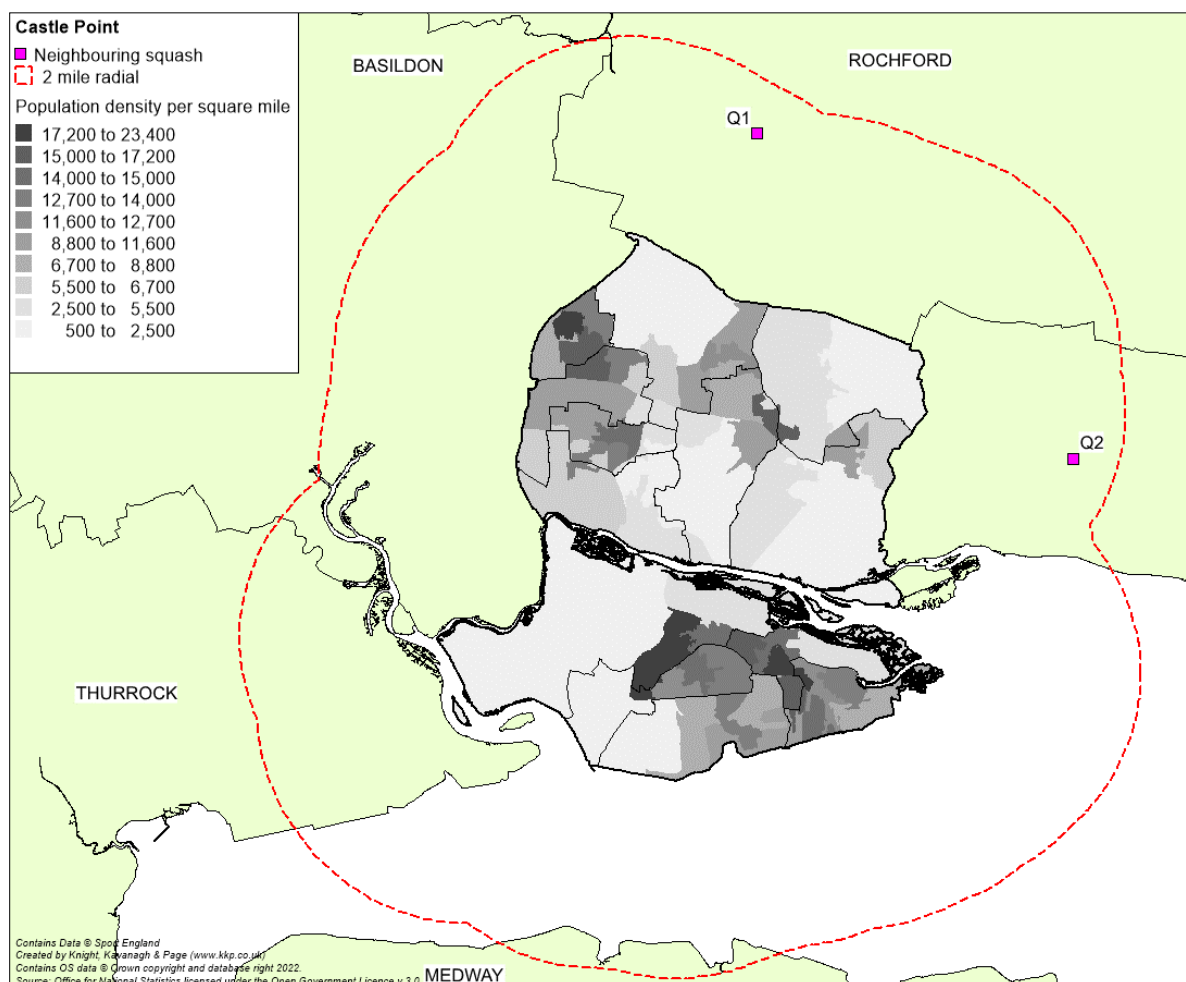


Table 7.2: Squash courts in neighbouring authorities within 2 miles of Castle Point

ID	Site	Courts	Access	Authority
Q1	Rayleigh Leisure Centre	2	Pay and Play	Rochford
Q2	Westcliff High School for Boys	2	Sports Club / CA	Southend-on-Sea

Accessibility and availability

Rayleigh Leisure Centre and Westcliff High School for Boys in Rochford and Southend-on-Sea respectively provides the population of Castle Point access to squash provision. The Rayleigh Leisure Centre courts can be accessed on a pay and play basis whereas Westcliff High School for Boys facilities are part of a school and are let out to/via sport clubs and community associations.

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7.2: Demand

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

7.4: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Squash courts	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are no squash courts within the authority. The two courts originally at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre were repurposed in 2022 to accommodate gym expansion.	The audit did not identify demand for courts in Castle Point.
Quality	-	-
Accessibility	-	-
Availability (Management and usage)	-	-

Strategic summary

- ◀ Squash provision in Castle Point does not meet the ES threshold of one court per 10,000 people, however, the audit did not identify demand for squash courts.
- ◀ Demand is to a degree a function of supply. Given that there is no longer any squash provision in the area, there is no way to track membership or participation. There may, thus, be a need to evaluate indicators for latent interest and potential demand.
- ◀ Monitor demand to identify if any need for squash provision within the authority to counter for the loss of the two courts at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre.

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SECTION 8: INDOOR TENNIS

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

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

This will be supported through the following key funding objectives:

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

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

There are two terms to describe indoor building types:

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

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

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

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

8.1: Supply

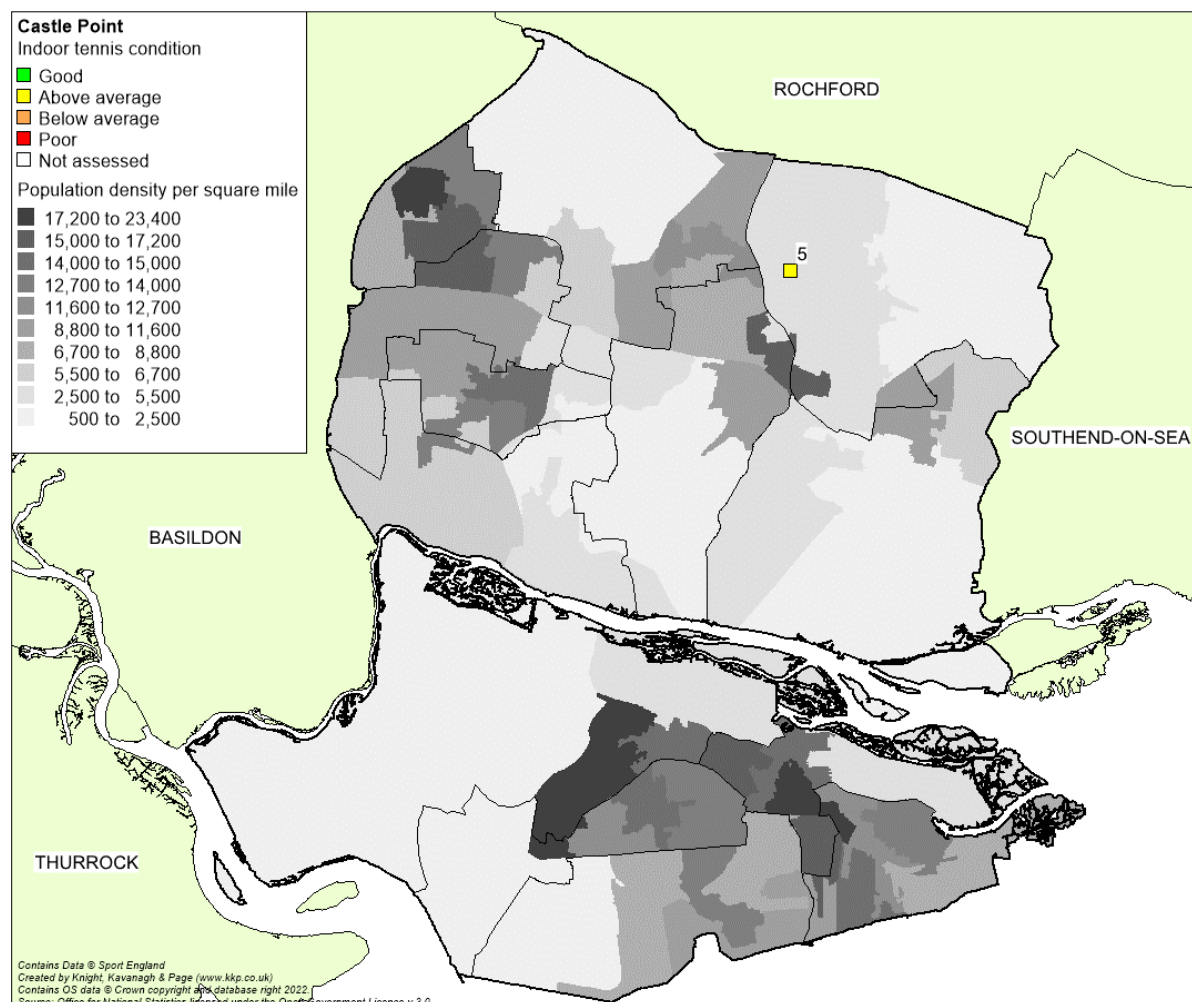
Indoor tennis is based on specialist facilities which appeal beyond local authority boundaries. This report considers provision within Castle Point and within a 30-minutes' drive time catchment. The one indoor tennis facility in Castle Point, Deanes School Sport Centre, has three courts.

Table 8.1: Indoor tennis sites in Castle Point and in neighbouring authorities

ID	Site	Access	Type	Courts	Condition
5	Deanes School Sports Centre	Sports club / CA	Acrylic	3	Above average

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Figure 8.1: Castle Point indoor tennis courts



Quality

The three acrylic courts at Deanes School Sports Centre are of above average quality. All are marked for doubles and covered by a permanent structure. They were installed in 2020 but receive regular maintenance as a result of high usage. There is wear and tear to the flooring and nets, however grip underfoot is still good. Consultation confirmed that the courts are due to be resurfaced this year.

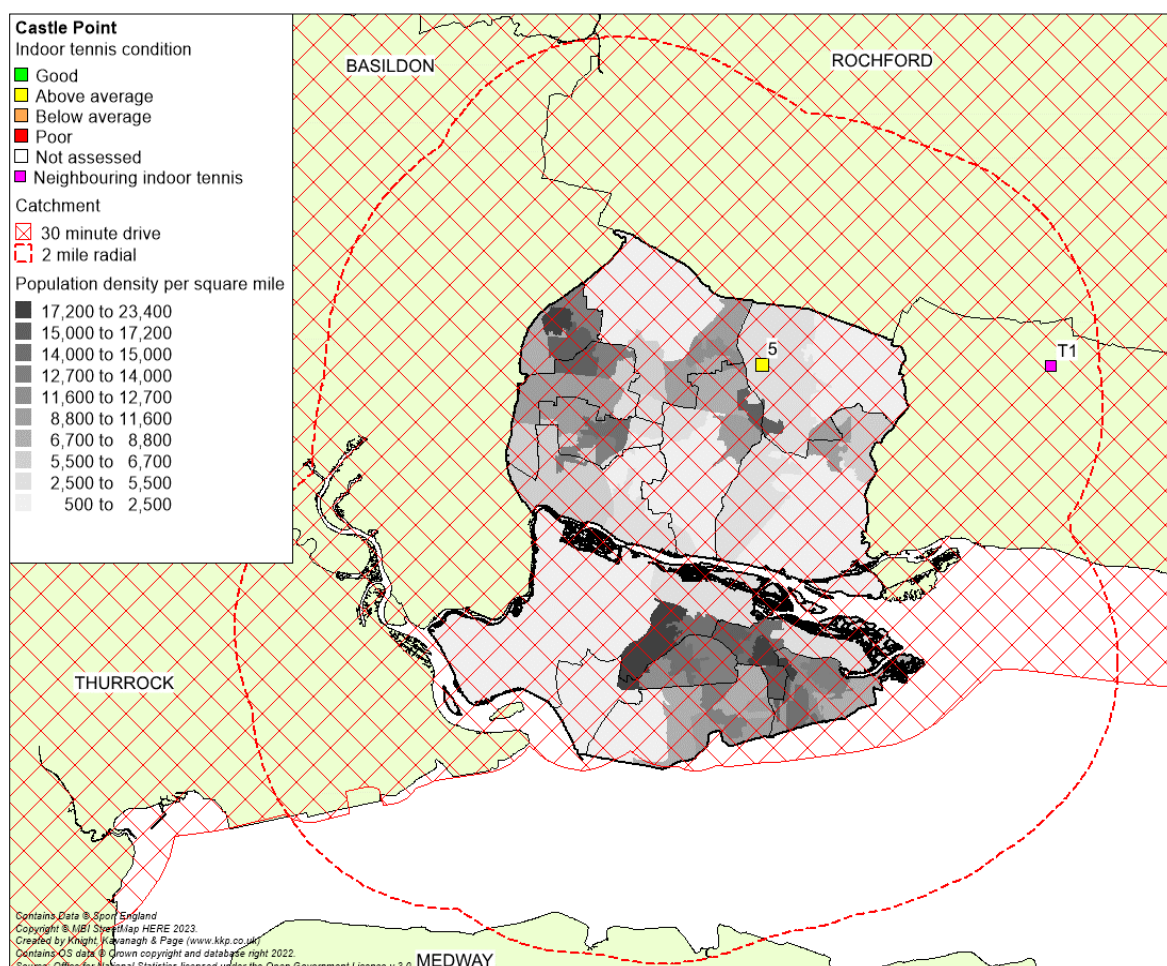
There is one indoor tennis facility located within 30 minutes drivetime of Castle Point. This is the David Lloyd Centre in Southend-on-Sea.

Table 8.2: Indoor tennis provision in neighbouring authorities

ID	Site	Access	Type	Courts	Authority
T1	David Lloyd (Southend)	Registered membership	Acrylic	5	Southend-on-Sea

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Figure 8.2: Indoor tennis courts within 30 minutes' drive time of Castle Point



Accessibility and availability

Drive time catchment modelling suggests that nearly all of Castle Point's population (89,731 MYE 2022) is within a 30-minute drive of a facility with indoor tennis courts. The one facility within a 30-minute drive of Castle Point, David Lloyd (Southend-on-Sea), is accessible via a registered membership.

8.2: Demand

The LTA has recently restructured its strategic approach to target key national focus areas, ultimately to grow participation. Future investment in facilities will be based on detailed analysis of potential demand throughout the UK.

The tennis courts at Deanes School Sports Centre are in high demand, particularly during evenings and weekends. Access is available through the Centre's membership programme or on a pay-and-play basis. The site has a full programme of junior and senior coaching.

Currently, the Centre has approximately 60 senior and 100 junior members. Coaching sessions are offered for both groups, and it regularly hosts tournaments and supports member participation in local leagues.

While there is capacity for further growth in membership and coaching provision, increased usage may reduce court availability for pay-and-play users.

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The facility is located within the grounds of Deanes School and therefore is only available from 16:00 on weekdays. Castle Point residents looking to access an indoor tennis facility during weekday afternoons must travel to neighbouring authorities. There is a need to monitor demand for indoor tennis courts at outdoor court venues. This will be captured within the Castle Point PPS 2025.

8.3: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Indoor tennis	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	Deanes School Sport Centre is the sole indoor tennis facility in Castle Point. It has three acrylic courts.	No additional demand for indoor tennis has been identified.
Quality	It is rated as above average quality with suitable ancillary provision. The refurbishment scheduled for July 2025, will include court resurfacing and the installation of new nets and curtains.	Monitor refurbishment plans and provide support if needed.
Accessibility	All residents live within a 30 minutes' drive time of an indoor tennis facility.	-
Availability (Management and usage)	Deanes School Sport Centre offers a pay and play option for Castle Point residents. Acquiring a club membership reduces the rate at which this can be accessed.	-

Strategic summary

- ◆ Monitor refurbishment at Deanes School Sport Centre and provide support if needed.
- ◆ Undertake regular maintenance to the indoor playing surface to ensure the current quality is maintained/improved.
- ◆ Protect provision at Deanes School Sport Centre as only indoor tennis venue within the authority.

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SECTION 9: INDOOR BOWLS

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

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

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

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

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

An indoor bowling centre typically comprises a single flat green with a number of rinks and ancillary accommodation such as changing rooms, lounge/bar, viewing area, kitchen, office/meeting rooms and stores plus designated car parking. Ancillary accommodation scale varies according to the number of rinks available. A successful indoor bowls centre requires a combination of the right location, design, and financial and general management. Sport England¹⁵ guidelines on catchment for indoor bowls centres are set out to be interpreted in the light of local circumstances:

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

EIBA stated priorities are:

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

¹⁵ Sport England Design Guidance Note Indoor Bowls 2005

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- ◀ New indoor facilities in areas of low-supply and high-demand.

EIBA Vision 2025-2027

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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BDA Vision and Strategy 2022-2027

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

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

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

9.1: Supply

Quantity and quality

There is no indoor bowls facility in Castle Point. There is one indoor bowls facility within two miles of Castle Point boundary.

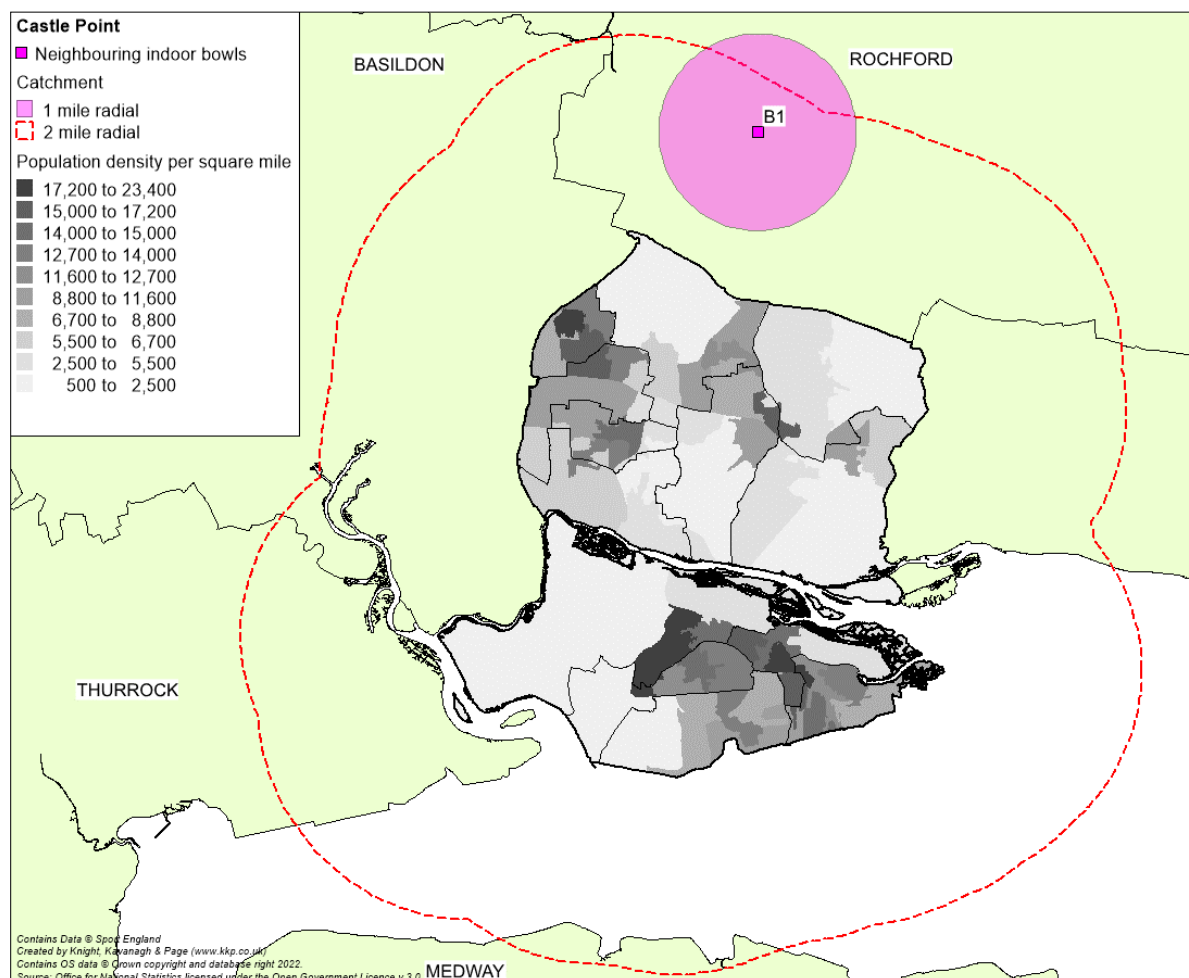
Table 9.1: Indoor bowls facilities within two miles of boundary

ID	Site	Rinks	Access	Authority
B1	Rayleigh Leisure Centre	4	Pay and play	Rochford

Source: Active Places Power 24/08/2025

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Figure 9.1: Indoor bowls facilities within 2 miles of Castle Point boundary



Accessibility

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

Availability

Rayleigh Leisure Centre in neighbouring Rochford, provides the population of Castle Point with access to 4 indoor rinks, on a pay and play basis and requires a membership to play in league games. It is available during the day and in the evening, seven days per week.

9.2: Demand

Consultation with EIBA suggests although there is no provision within the authority, there is currently sufficient provision in adjoining local authorities' areas to cater for current and future demand.

Consultation with Waterside Farm Leisure Centre revealed that the sports hall hosts a programme called Active Bowls, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. These typically attract around 15 participants, and once a month, a professional bowler provides coaching to support skill development and enhance the experience.

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9.3: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Indoor bowls	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are no indoor bowls facilities in Castle Point. Waterside Farm Leisure Centre hosts Active Bowls twice a week in the sites sports hall.	The audit did not identify demand for a dedicated facility in Castle Point.
Quality	-	-
Accessibility	98% of Castle Point population live within a 30-minute drive of a facility with indoor bowls provision.	
Availability (Management and usage)	-	Monitor Active Bowls at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, potential increase in demand may lead to need for an indoor bowls facility within the authority.

Strategic summary

- There is no requirement for an indoor bowls facility in the Authority.
- Monitor both Active Bowls at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre and bowls participation, potential increase in demand may lead to need for an indoor bowls facility within the authority.

SECTION 10: GYMNASTICS

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

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

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

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

The new strategy outlines six key impacts:

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

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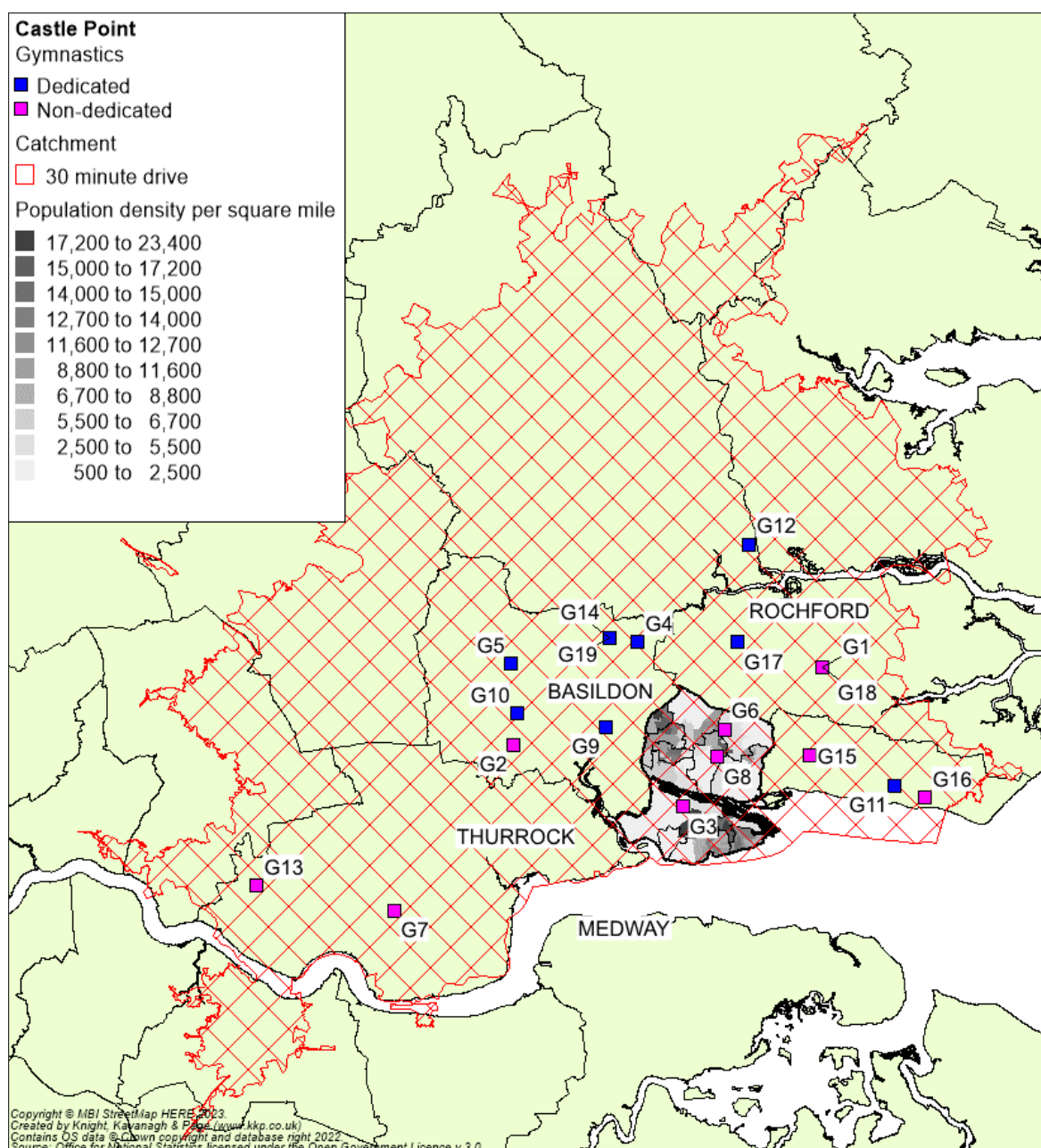
10.1: Supply

Three sites provide gymnastics in Castle Point: Waterside Farm Leisure Centre (G3), The Deanes School Sport Centre (G6) and The King John School (G8). None are dedicated facilities.

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. On this basis, virtually the whole Castle Point population lives within a 30-minute drive of gymnastics provision.

Figure 10.1: Gymnastic provision within a 30-minutes' drive



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Table 10.1: Gymnastic Provision within a 30-minutes' drive

ID	Gymnastics Club	Dedicated	Site name	Authority
G1	Arabesque Gymnastics Club	Non-dedicated	Clements Hall Leisure Centre	Rochford
G2	Basildon Gymnastics	Non-dedicated	Lee Chapel Primary School & Nursery	Basildon
G3	Canvey Gymnastics Club	Non-dedicated	Waterside Farm Leisure Centre	Castle Point
G4	Carousel School of Gymnastics	Dedicated	Carousel Gymnastics Club	Basildon
G5	Celebrate Gymnastics	Dedicated	Celebrate Gymnastics	Basildon
G6	Dove Gymnastics Club	Non-dedicated	The Deanes School Sport Centre	Castle Point
G7	Jays Gymnastics Club	Non-dedicated	Treetops School	Thurrock
G8	Platinum Gymnastics	Non-dedicated	The King John School	Castle Point
G9	South Essex Gymnastics Club	Dedicated	Basildon Sporting Village	Basildon
G10	South Essex Gymnastics Club	Dedicated	Eversley Leisure Centre	Basildon
G11	Southend Gymnastics	Dedicated	Southend Gymnastics	Southend-on-Sea
G12	Swallows Gymnastics Club	Dedicated	Swallows Gymnastics Club	Chelmsford
G13	Thurrock Gymnastics Club	Non-dedicated	Ormiston Park Academy	Thurrock
G14	Ultima Trampoline Club	Dedicated	The Wickford Trampoline Centre	Basildon
G15	Unique Gymnastics	Non-dedicated	Greenway School	Southend-on-Sea
G16	Unique Gymnastics	Non-dedicated	Blenheim Primary School	Southend-on-Sea
G17	Virtuosity gymnastics club	Dedicated	Virtuosity gymnastics club	Rochford
G18	Westcliff Trampoline Club	Non-dedicated	Clements Hall Leisure Centre	Rochford
G19	Wickford Trampoline Centre	Dedicated	The Wickford Trampoline Centre	Basildon

Within Castle Point, all three clubs operate at non-dedicated sites. Canvey Gymnastics Club accesses a studio at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre. Dove Gymnastics Club utilises the one court hall at The Deanes School and, Platinum Gymnastics access The King John School one court hall. All venues are multi-sport facilities which were covered in the sports hall and studio audit. Details with regard to the sites can be found in Section Four and Six.

10.2: Demand

British Gymnastics reports that participation in gymnastics is increasing. It also reports substantial demand and that many clubs have waiting lists - restricting access to gymnastic activity due to lack of time within dedicated and generic facilities.

A key part of the NGB's strategy to increase participation is to support clubs, leisure providers and other partners to move to their own dedicated facilities, offering more time and space for classes. It provides a range of products and programmes and expert assistance to support local delivery; gymnastic activities which are successfully driving membership growth and retention across the country.

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British Gymnastics were consulted with and states there is limited access to time and space in both dedicated and shared facilities across the UK, leading to waiting lists and restricted club growth. Improving access and creating high-quality spaces is a key priority. Feedback highlights limitations of existing facilities and challenges in securing long-term premises. Local conversations focus on aspirations for dedicated space, access to Club Capital, or lease security concerns.

All three clubs within Castle Point were invited to participate in the consultation; however, only two responded. Canvey Gymnastics Club and Dove Gymnastics.

Canvey Gymnastics Club currently has 40 active members and a waiting list of 100 young people. It operates out of the Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, hiring studio space on Monday evenings and Thursday afternoons through an annual agreement.

The Club has expressed a desire to expand its operations to accommodate growing interest. Plans include acquiring additional equipment and securing access to more time slots at the leisure centre. However, it faces ongoing challenges, including being unable to leave equipment set up between sessions, which reduces valuable session time. It also reports that there is inadequate storage at the venue.

Dove Gymnastics currently has 318 members and operates six days a week from The Deanes School, utilising the one-court sports hall under an annual agreement. It supplies its own equipment, supplemented by some provided by the school.

In January 2025, Club management was taken over by another established gymnastics organisation based in Kent. Since the transition, it has seen significant growth, with an increase of 100 members. This expansion has been driven by the introduction of additional coaching staff and a restructured timetable to improve access and session delivery.

The Club's long-term aspiration is to secure a dedicated facility to better meet community demand. However, financial support would be required to achieve this. Alternatively, it would like to have sole use of the existing one-court sports hall at The Deanes School, with daytime access to enable the introduction of toddler and pre-school classes.

Platinum Gymnastics Academy did not response to consultation, however British Gymnastics confirms, the Club does not access any dedicated facilities and currently has 18 members.

10.3: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Gymnastics	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There is no dedicated gymnastics facility in Castle Point. Gymnastics is delivered at three non-dedicated sites.	Canvey Gymnastics Club report challenges with access and storage of equipment. There is a need to work with them to ensure equipment can be sufficiently stored.
Quality	No reported quality issues.	Explore improving storage space for Canvey Gymnastics Club.
Accessibility	All Castle Point residents reside within a 30-minute drive time of a club in the Authority.	-

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Facility type	Gymnastics	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Availability (Management and usage)	Canvey Gymnastic Club require access to additional studio time to accommodate demand. Dove Gymnastics Club require a dedicated facility to provide preschool and toddler sessions.	Support Canvey Gymnastics Club to expand to accommodate current demand, via potentially offering additional slots or provide sole use at a studio in Waterside Farm Leisure Centre. Support Dove Gymnastics Club to find a dedicated facility or secure sole use of the one court hall at Deanes School Sport Centre.

Strategic summary

- Work with British Gymnastics, Waterside Farm Leisure Centre and Deanes School Sport Centre to support both clubs to help to ensure that they can meet current and future demand.
- Seek opportunities to work with the clubs and British Gymnastics to enable the clubs to move to dedicated provision to accommodate demand and increase capacity.

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SECTION 11: CLIMBING / BOULDERING

This section focuses on facilities which provide opportunities for indoor climbing.

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) is the national representative body that champions the interests of climbers, hill walkers, mountaineers and ski mountaineers in England and Wales. It is recognised by Sport England as the NGB for competition climbing. BMC's is currently in the process of creating its strategy for 2025-2030, however the latest Strategic Plan (2020-2024) outlines the vision of 'to create a better future for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers'. It sets out five key strategic themes:

- ◆ Access, conservation & environmental sustainability.
- ◆ Membership engagement, services & support.
- ◆ Education, inspiration & skills.
- ◆ Organisational development & sector leadership.
- ◆ GB Climbing - competitions, talented athletes & the GB Teams.

Sport climbing (speed, bouldering and lead) officially debuted at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. All three disciplines can be hosted at indoor venues and are popular formats of climbing. Bouldering is identified as a high growth area, especially for children entering the sport.

BMC would be open to exploring the feasibility of working with other sports such as Skateboarding to develop a national performance centre with indoor climbing facilities. Early discussions with the BMC and other NGBs have taken place.

The International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) has several requirements for climbing walls used in Olympic standard competitions, they include:

Boulder: maximum height of 4m and safety mats below, climbers solve (complete) problems on four/ five boulders in the lowest number of attempts over a set period of time.

Lead: climbers secured by a rope, one at a time, on an overhanging route climb to the highest point in an individual attempt on a 15m high wall as possible in six minutes. (Climbers can preview the route for six minutes prior and are kept in isolation before performing their attempt).

Speed: Secured from above, climbers run up standardised parallel routes on a 15m wall. The fastest climber wins.

11.1: Supply

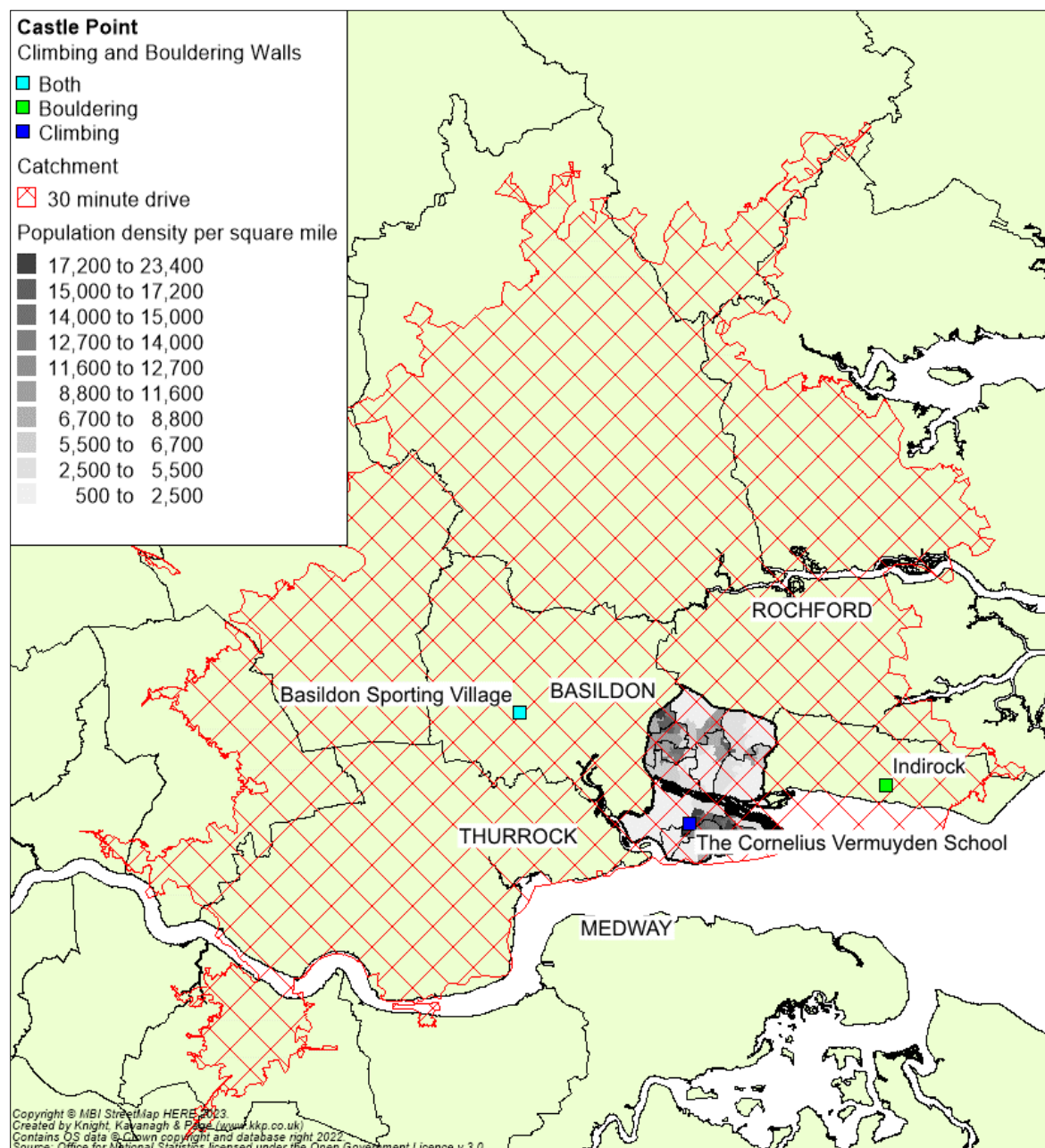
In Castle Point, there is one indoor climbing wall located at The Cornelius Vermuyden School within the sports hall. There are, also two facilities within 30 minutes drivetime catchment of the Borough.

Table 11.1: Supply of climbing walls

Site	Authority	Type
The Cornelius Vermuyden School	Castle Point	Top roped wall
Basildon Sporting Village	Basildon	Top roped wall Bouldering wall
Indirock	Southend on Sea	Bouldering

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Figure 11.1: Climbing walls in Castle Point



Accessibility and availability

Drive time catchment modelling suggests that 100% of the population of Castle Point lives within a 30-minute drive of a climbing wall.

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11.2: Demand

The climbing wall at Cornelius Vermuyden School has the capacity to accommodate up to eight climbers at a time and there are no reported issues with its quality. While it is technically available for community use, current utilisation is minimal and limited solely to school activities. The school has expressed a desire to expand external bookings and increase community engagement but there is, as yet, no clear evidence of demand from the wider community.

No other demand was identified at the time of audit.

11.3: Summary of key facts and issues

Facility type	Climbing / bouldering	-
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There is one indoor climbing wall in Castle Point located at The Cornelius Vermuyden School - in the sports hall. It has capacity for up to eight climbers at a time	There is no requirement for additional indoor climbing provision.
Quality	Wall quality is reportedly fine.	-
Accessibility	All residents live within a 30 minutes' drive time of an indoor climbing facility. There are two other facilities within neighbouring authorities.	-
Availability (Management and usage)	While the facility is available for community use, current utilisation is minimal and limited solely to school activity. The school is interested in expanding community engagement and use.	Monitor demand and the potential expansion of bookings at the facility and support the school where needed.

Strategic summary

Although the audit did not identify a specific demand for a climbing facility, The Cornelius Vermuyden School is seeking to expand community use of its climbing wall. It is recommended that demand be regularly monitored, and that support be provided to the school as appropriate.

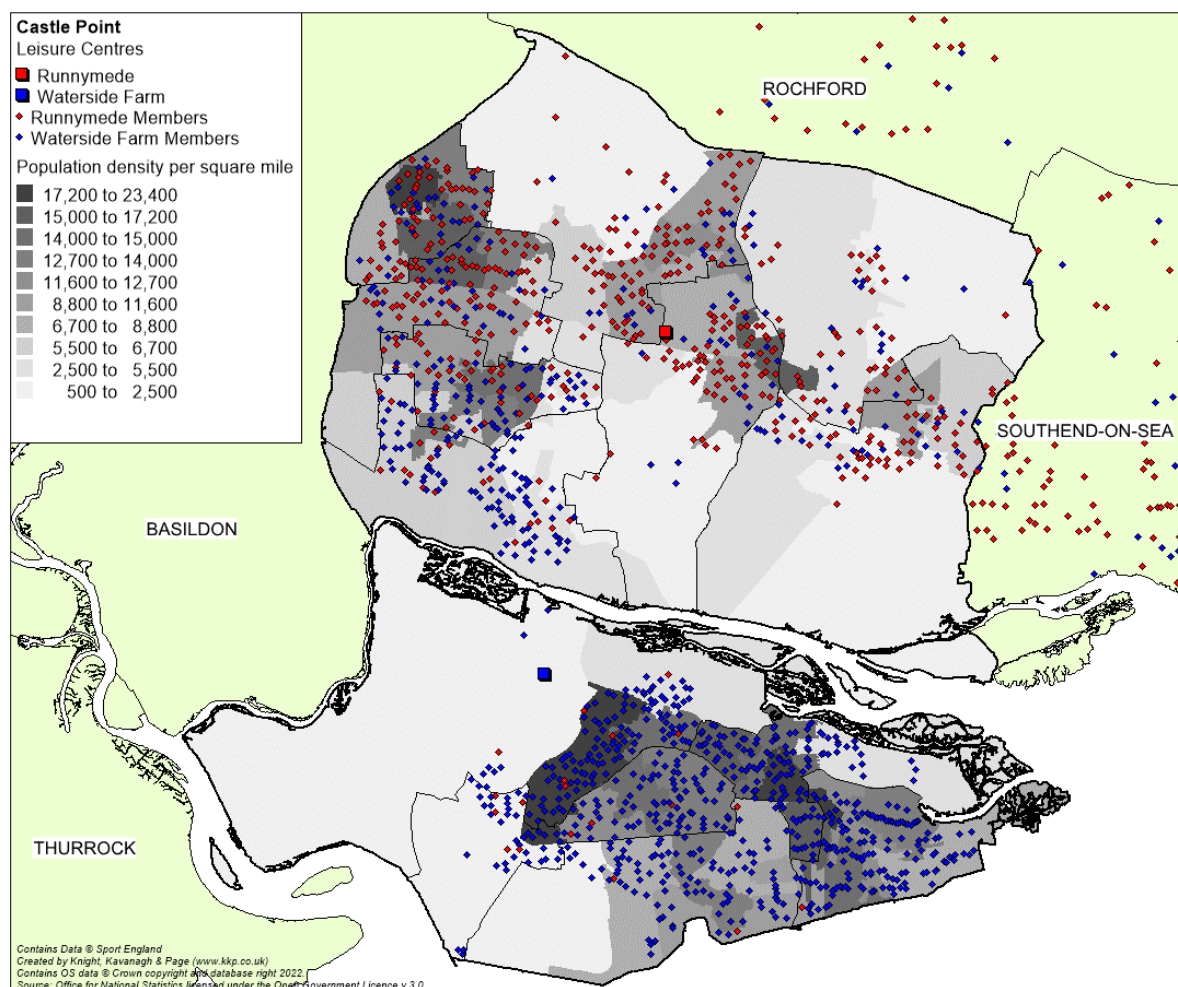
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SECTION 12: MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS

KKP requested current membership data from Castle Point Borough Council/Castle Point Leisure in order to analyse where current members reside in relation to the centre they attend. A total of 5,252 postcode records were provided on 28th May 2025. These identify members active over the last three months. The data provided the following:

- 5,075 (96.6%) had correct and valid postcodes for mapping.
- 4,645 (91.5%) of the mapped postcodes are within the Castle Point local authority area.
- 430 (8.5%) of mapped postcodes are out of the Castle Point local authority area

Figure 12.1: Castle Point: membership distribution by centre on Census population



density

The data is allocated to the following centres:

- Runnymede Leisure Centre- 1,827.
- Waterside Farm Leisure Centre- 3,248.

Figure 13.1 indicates where members live in relation to the leisure centre they subscribe to. Memberships enable members to access both sites. While members may use both, each member has been assigned to a designated home site. The majority use the facility closest to their home, although there does appear to be some cross-over, potentially reflective of

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work patterns. It is clear that both public leisure centres, attract members from outside of the Castle Point boundary.

Figure 12.2: Castle Point membership distribution by centre IMD 2019

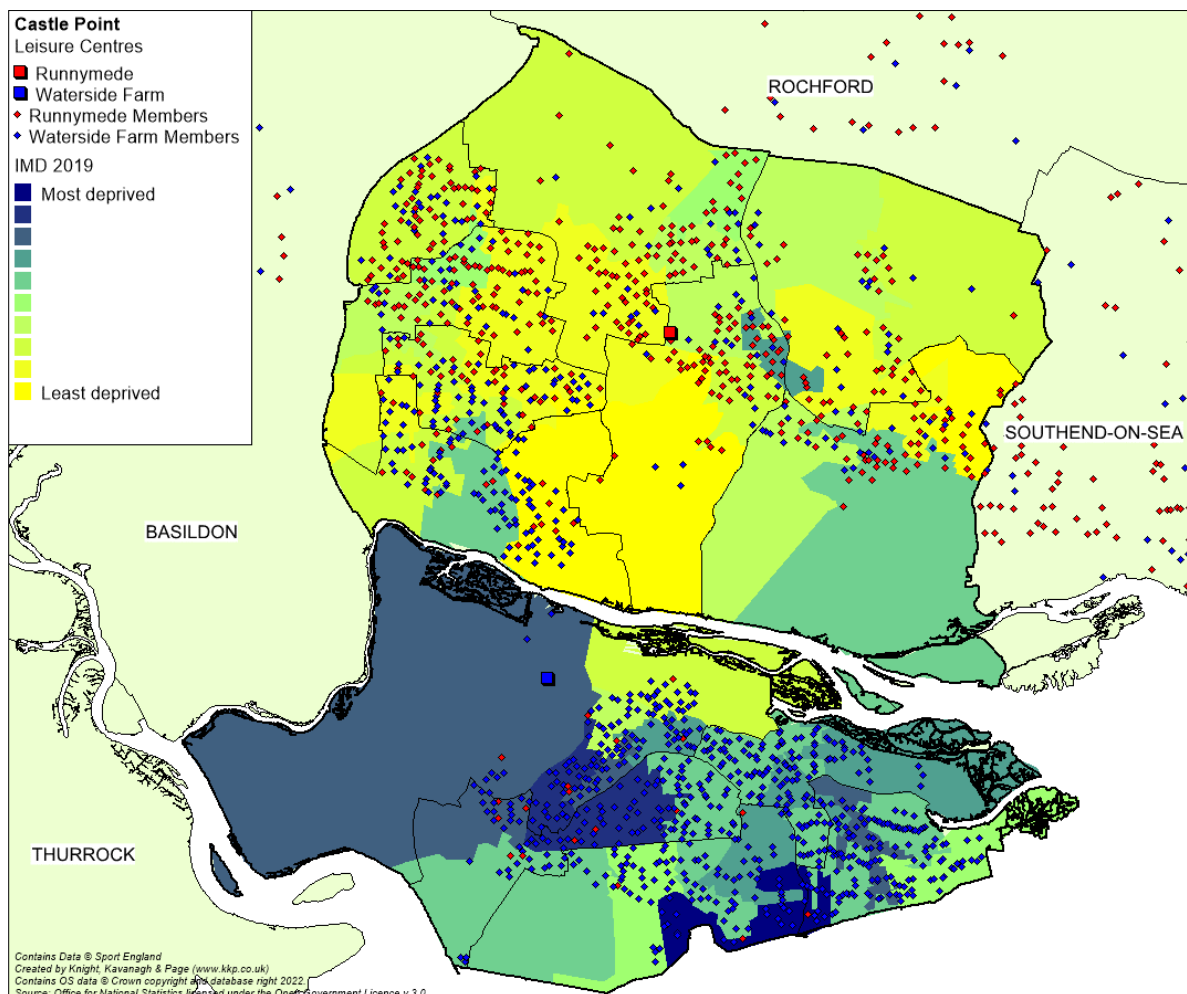


Table 12.1: Centre users - Castle Point postcodes IMD 2019

IOD 2019 10% bands	Castle Point population (mid-2015)	%	All centres #	All centres %	Runnymede #	Runnymede %	Waterside Farm #	Waterside Farm %
00 - 10%	2,026	2.3%	111	2.4%	6	0.4%	105	3.4%
10 - 20%	5,749	6.4%	333	7.2%	12	0.8%	321	10.4%
20 - 30%	4,196	4.7%	319	6.9%	12	0.8%	307	10.0%
30 - 40%	7,933	8.9%	402	8.7%	63	4.0%	339	11.0%
40 - 50%	17,186	19.3%	920	19.8%	117	7.5%	803	26.1%
50 - 60%	6,630	7.4%	306	6.6%	81	5.2%	225	7.3%
60 - 70%	9,126	10.2%	508	10.9%	259	16.5%	249	8.1%
70 - 80%	16,904	19.0%	751	16.2%	381	24.3%	370	12.0%
80 - 90%	14,058	15.8%	690	14.9%	501	32.0%	189	6.1%
90 - 100%	5,376	6.0%	305	6.6%	134	8.6%	171	5.6%
Total	89,184	100.0%	4,645	100.0%	1,566	100.0%	3,079	100.0%

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Figure 12.2 and Table 12.1 indicate that across the centres, the number of people that live in the IMD most deprived bandings (1-30%) is relatively high. On a centre-by-centre basis, Waterside is attracting more people from these bands than Runnymede. 13% of the Authority population reside in areas of higher deprivation.

Of the current membership, Table 12.1 indicates that 23.8% of Waterside Farm Leisure Centre members reside within areas of higher deprivation (as identified above), Runnymede Leisure Centre has 2%.

Summary

Castle Point leisure centre members are well distributed across the Authority. A significant number travel more than one mile to access facilities. Castle Point facilities also attract some members from neighbouring authorities.

Castle Point leisure centres attract 6% of the Castle Point's population which reside in areas of higher deprivation. Membership levels are notably low in the most deprived areas of the authority.

In addition, some residents access sites casually on a *pay as you go* basis, which can be accessed without online registration reducing restrictions to access to sport provision and removing the barrier online registration creates. 23.8% of Waterside Farm Leisure Centre members reside within areas of higher deprivation and Runnymede Leisure Centre has 2%.

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SECTION 13: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- ◀ In line with the Council's carbon reduction targets (in the Castle Point Climate Action Plan), ensure that existing facilities are made as energy efficient as possible and that refurbishments and any new development consider energy efficiency as a high priority.
- ◀ Develop a system to, as early as possible, identify/tackle ongoing investment, maintenance, and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities.
- ◀ The need to refurbish the changing facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to increase the quantity of swimming pool provision, given that the public leisure centres are operating near to capacity.
- ◀ A Sport England Facilities Planning Model assessment should be undertaken for sports halls and swimming pools to provide an additional layer of insight to the above assessment by measuring the potential impact of new population growth at a spatial level.
- ◀ Collaborate with schools to ensure sports hall quality remains at/rises to an appropriate standard and that their venues continue to be made available for community use.
- ◀ The Council (and partners including the Active Partnership) should collaborate with educational sites to ensure where possible, they remain open for the maximum possible period of time for community use throughout the year (including during exam periods). In addition to seeking to apply innovative solutions to help tackle this issue, clubs need to be supported during the periods during which exams occupy sports hall space.
- ◀ Where new developments generate an increase in demand secure capital sums to contribute to providing additional facilities and secure community use agreements at any new or replacement educational sports hall site.
- ◀ Given the projected population increase among residents aged over 65, support providers to increase the number and range of activities and opportunities made available for people in this age group.
- ◀ Due to the high level of demand for casual sports hall activity in the Authority, look to develop and improve sports hall quality at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre.
- ◀ Several clubs in different sports in the Authority are at membership capacity due either to current facility size or reliable availability. Look to support clubs seeking to access different facilities to enable them to continue to grow participation. Sports to which this applies include badminton, gymnastics, netball and swimming.
- ◀ Given the lack of dedicated gymnastics provision in the Authority, explore options to support Dove Gymnastics Club to find a dedicated facility or have sole use of the 1-court sport hall at Deanes School Sport Centre to accommodate current and future demand.
- ◀ With no indoor bowls and squash courts within the authority, it is recommended that demand is monitored and consider provision if a clear need is identified.
- ◀ Ensure that public leisure centre memberships and specific activities are available to people living in the Authority's more deprived communities at an appropriate price point and that the mechanisms used to promote this are more prominent. Continue to provide opportunities that enable digitally deprived people to access Council facilities.
- ◀ Ensure that under-represented groups and people with specific health needs can access health and wellbeing provision. This includes making memberships and specific activities

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available to people living in the Authority's more deprived communities via enabling increased use of community facilities (e.g., village halls and community centres).

- ◀ Support other developments (via planning, developer contributions and officer expertise) to increase levels of sport and physical activity in the wider community.