



Facilities Planning Model Assessment of
Sports Hall Provision for
Braintree District Council

Bespoke Report

22 June 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

- 0.1 Braintree District Council (also referred to as Braintree or the District) is reviewing its current provision of sports halls and assessing the future demand and level of provision required to 2041.
- 0.2 This report has been prepared based on an assessment using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) spatial modelling tool. The FPM study is a quantitative, accessibility and spatial assessment of the supply, demand and access to sports halls.
- 0.3 The FPM modelling runs are to provide:
- Run 1 – a baseline assessment of provision in 2025
 - Run 2 – a forward assessment of demand for sports halls and its distribution, based on the projected changes in population between 2025 and 2041
- 0.4 The main report sets out the full set of findings under each of the seven assessment headings.
- 0.5 The next section of the report provides the headline strategic overview, and the key findings and interventions arising from the FPM study on supply, demand and accessibility.

Headline Strategic Overview

- 0.6 The headline strategic overview is that Braintree's demand for sports halls can be met by the available supply in 2025 and 2041. A large proportion of Braintree's satisfied demand is met within the District. Unmet demand is low.
- 0.7 However, the distribution of demand and attractiveness of Halsted Leisure Centre means that is estimated to be completely full at peak times in 2025 and 2041.
- 0.8 The educational sector provides most of the sports hall sites in the District. There is a high commitment to community use and this needs to be protected.

Key Findings

- 0.9 The key findings that underpin the headline strategic overview are as follows:
1. The hall space available for community use in Braintree in the weekly peak period is 40.3 courts in 2025 and 2041. The unavailable hall space is the equivalent of 12.5 courts in both years.
 2. The educational sector is the major provider with 86% of the available capacity in both years. Notley High School provides 22% of the available capacity.
 3. Braintree's population is projected to increase by 4% between 2025 and 2041, resulting in a 1% increase in demand for sports halls.

4. Braintree's demand is the equivalent of 75% of its available supply in 2025, increasing to 76% in 2041.
5. In 2025, 97% of Braintree's demand is met. The proportion decreases to 96% in 2041, however, the number of visits met in the weekly peak period increases from 10,771 in 2025 to 10,870 in 2041 because of the increase in demand.
6. Of Braintree's satisfied demand, 84% is met within the District in 2025, decreasing to 83% in 2041. The number of visits retained decreases from 9,083 in the weekly peak period in 2025 to 9,056 visits in 2041.
7. Unmet demand is very low, at 1.2 courts in 2025 and 1.3 courts in 2041. Residents who are too far from a facility account for 96% of unmet demand in both years. Unmet demand from lack of capacity is negligible.
8. The overall used capacity of Braintree's sports halls in the weekly peak period is 68% in 2025, and 69% in 2041. However, three sports hall sites are estimated to be 100% utilised in 2025 and two sites in 2041. Two sites are uncomfortably full in 2041 (more than 80% of capacity used).

Interventions and Next Steps

- 0.10 The quantitative and spatial assessment has identified that there is a sufficient supply of sports halls to meet Braintree's demand up to 2041. Based on the FPM assessment, there is no need to increase sports hall provision.
- 0.11 However, there are two strategic issues that emerge:
- The high proportion of used capacity at Halstead Leisure Centre, Braintree Sports and Health Club, and Lift Maltings in the weekly peak period
 - Protecting the educational supply for community use
- 0.12 The three sites with the highest proportion of used capacity are located in the three areas with the highest demand in Braintree.
- 0.13 Halstead Leisure Centre is estimated to be 100% utilised at peak times in 2025 and 2041. It is available for the maximum peak period, therefore, there is no scope to expand availability and capacity to reduce the proportion of used capacity to a comfortable level (less than 80% utilised). A management intervention is to ensure the programming of the sports hall to provide for the most popular activities at peak times and accommodate the most demand. The nearest sports hall is at Gosfield School, which has spare capacity to meet demand but is currently only available for 10.0 hours in the weekly peak period.
- 0.14 Braintree Sports and Health Club is estimated to be 100% utilised in 2025 and 95% utilised in 2041. It is available for the maximum peak period, therefore, there is no scope to expand availability and capacity to reduce the proportion of used capacity to a comfortable level. The nearest sports halls are at Alex Hunter Academy and Notley High School. Both sites have spare capacity to meet demand but are less attractive to residents because they are school sites managed in-house and they are older sports halls.

- 0.15 Lift Maltings is estimated to be 100% utilised in both years. It is available for 27.0 hours in the weekly peak period, therefore, there is scope to expand availability and capacity by up to 14.0 hours as it is an educational site.
- 0.16 The educational sports hall supply in Braintree needs to be protected. Any decrease in availability and capacity will reduce the amount of demand met.
- 0.17 A Community Use Agreement (CUA) provides the framework to protect the current supply and any new or replacement educational sports halls. If not already in place, a CUA should be negotiated and agreed.
- 0.18 Sport England will advise on the requirements as part of the planning process for any new or replacement sports hall. Once a CUA has been put in place, it is essential that the Braintree District Council monitors its actual delivery.
- 0.19 These interventions and suggested next steps are based on the FPM findings and should be considered as a key part of the all-round evidence base. Combining the FPM assessment with the wider review of provision will lead to well considered options on the best ways to meet the projected demand for sports halls up to 2041 and beyond.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Braintree District Council (also referred to as Braintree or the District) is reviewing its current provision of sports halls and assessing the future provision required to 2041.
- 1.2 This report has been prepared based on an assessment using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) spatial modelling tool. The FPM study is a quantitative, accessibility and spatial assessment of the supply, demand and access to sports halls.
- 1.3 The strategic drivers for Braintree District Council are to understand the impact of the following:
- How well the existing supply of sports halls meets demand in 2025 and 2041
 - The impacts that population change and residential development have in meeting the demand for sports halls and its distribution up to 2041
- 1.4 The outputs from the FPM assessment will:
- Inform Braintree District Council's strategic planning review of sports hall provision and future strategy
 - Inform an evidence base that contributes to development of planning policy for the provision of indoor sports facilities
- 1.5 The sequence of work is based on assessments known as runs, and these are set out in the Executive Summary.

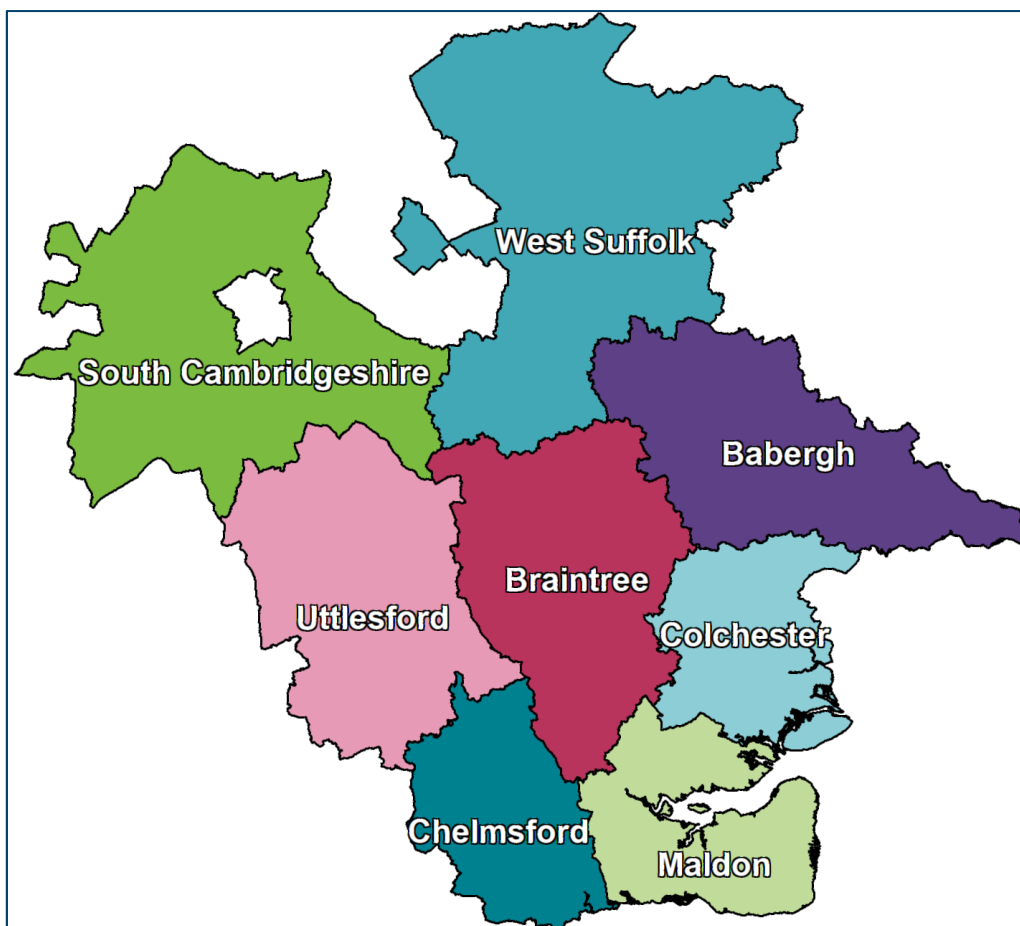
The Study Area

- 1.6 The assessments include the sports halls and population in Braintree and the neighbouring local authority areas, which comprise the study area (see Map 1.1).
- 1.7 A customer's choice of sports hall does not respect local authority boundaries. There may be management and possibly pricing incentives for customers to use sports facilities in their local authority area. Other factors that influence choice of sports hall include:
- How close the venue is to where residents live or work
 - Other facilities at the same site, such as a gym or studio
 - Programming of the hall with activities that appeal to residents and are available at times that fit with the lifestyle of residents
 - Age and condition of the facility and inherently its attractiveness
- 1.8 Increasingly, the quality of sports halls and their offer are of more importance to residents in their choice of venues. New facilities will have a significant draw because of the enhanced quality of the venues.
- 1.9 In determining the position across Braintree, it is important to take full account of the sports halls and population in neighbouring local authority areas. The most attractive facility for some Braintree residents may be outside the District (known as exported demand). For

residents of neighbouring authorities, their most attractive sports hall may be inside Braintree (known as imported demand).

- 1.10 To take account of these factors, a study area is established that places Braintree at its centre and includes the neighbouring local authority areas.

Map 1.1: Study Area for Braintree Sports Halls Assessment



Report Structure, Content and Sequence

- 1.11 The findings for the Braintree assessment are set out in a series of tables for both runs. This allows a 'read across' to see the specific impact of changes between Runs 1 and 2 and builds up the picture of change.
- 1.12 The headings for each table are:
- Supply
 - Demand
 - Accessibility
 - Satisfied Demand
 - Unmet Demand
 - Used Capacity
 - Local Share
- 1.13 The terms listed above are defined beneath the tables.

- 1.14 To support the findings, this report also includes maps that show sports hall locations, demand, deprivation, driving and walking coverage, public transport access, exported satisfied demand, unmet demand, imported used capacity and local share.
- 1.15 Where valid, the findings for neighbouring local authorities are set out. A commentary is provided on these comparable findings. For example, some local authorities like to know how their findings on proportion of met demand compare with those of neighbouring local authorities.
- 1.16 The key findings in each of the sections are numbered and highlighted in bold typeface.
- 1.17 The facilities excluded from the study, with explanations, are listed in Appendix **1**. Details of the sports halls in the neighbouring local authority areas included in the assessment are set out in Appendix **2**. The FPM and its parameters are described in Appendix **3**.
- 1.18 All maps for the study are provided in a separate document as layered PDFs.

2 SPORTS HALL SUPPLY

Braintree has an extensive supply of sports halls. There are six four-court halls, of which three have dimensions suitable for club development.

The educational sector is the major provider. There is a high commitment to community use, with six educational sites that are managed in-house that are available for between 27.0 hours and 41.0 hours in the weekly peak period.

The stock is ageing. Seven sites opened before 2000 and only two have been refurbished.

Table 2.1: Supply of Sports Halls in Braintree by Run

Supply	Run 1	Run 2
Braintree	2025	2041
Number of sports halls	15	15
Number of sports hall sites	10	10
Supply in badminton court equivalents	52.8	52.8
Supply in courts scaled with hours available in peak period	40.3	40.3
Unavailable supply in the weekly peak period	24%	24%
Supply in visits per week in peak period	14,826	14,826
Average age of all sites	39	55
Average age of public leisure centres	21	37

Definition of supply – This is the supply or capacity of the sports halls available for community and club use in the weekly peak period. Supply is expressed in the number of visits that a sports hall can accommodate in the weekly peak period and in the number of badminton courts.

Weekly peak period – This is when most visits take place and when users have most flexibility to visit. The peak period for sports halls is one hour on weekday mornings, five hours on weekday evenings and eight hours on weekend days. This gives a total of 46 hours per week. The modelling and recommendations are based on the ability of the public to access facilities during this weekly peak period.

- 2.1 In both 2025 and 2041 there are 15 sports halls across ten sites in Braintree that are available for community use in the weekly peak period.
- 2.2 Braintree District Council requested that the two-court hall at Earls Colne Recreation Club be included. The FPM assumes that each sports hall site can meet a wide range in demand, including basketball and volleyball.
- 2.3 The Council requested that the older smaller four-court hall at Lift New Rickstones, which is recorded as closed for redevelopment in 2011, is now available and is included, along with the newer larger four-court hall at the site.

Table 2.2: Details of Sports Halls in Braintree Included in the Runs

Site	Provider	Facility Type	Dimensions (m)	Area (sqm)	Peak Hours	Total Hours	Capacity (visits)	Year Built	Year Refurb
Halstead Leisure Centre	Public	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	46	100.5	1,472	2004	2014
Braintree Sports and Health Club	Educational (3rd party)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	46	96	1,840	1992	
Alec Hunter Academy	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	34	38	1,938	1960	
		Activity	24 x 10	240	34	38		1960	
Gosfield School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	10	10	320	1998	
Hedingham School	Educational (in-house)	3-court	27 x 18	486	39	41	936	1965	2016
Honywood Community Science School	Educational (in-house)	3-court	27 x 18	486	27	33	1,154	1960	
		Activity	18 x 10	180	27	33		1960	
Lift Maltings	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	27	27	864	2011	
Lift New Rickstones	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	41	45	2,400	2012	2023
		4-court	33 x 18	594	34	38		1985	2023
Notley High School	Educational (in-house)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	40	59.5	3,310	1974	2008
		3-court	27 x 18	486	40	59.5		2010	
		Activity	18 x 10	180	40	59.5		1974	
Earls Colne Recreation Club	Other (pay & play)	2-court	18 x 17	306	37	84	592	1985	

Providers

- 2.4 Public leisure centres are available for use to all residents, and provide recreational pay-and-play, and organised team and individual sports activities. Halsted Leisure Centre is operated by Freedom Leisure on behalf of the Council.
- 2.5 Braintree Sports and Health Club is located at Tabor Academy and is managed by Freedom Leisure on behalf of the Council.
- 2.6 There are eight educational sports hall sites, which are managed in-house and, therefore, are responsible for promoting community use. Promotion may be passive, whereby the school responds to booking requests, or dynamic, with the school working alongside sports clubs to encourage community use.
- 2.7 Protecting the educational supply of sports halls for community use is very important. If not already in place, a Community Use Agreement (CUA) should be established to protect this current supply.
- 2.8 Given that nearly all the sports hall stock is provided by the educational sector, this may restrict residents who require access during weekday daytimes; for example, stay-at-home parents, home workers, and the unemployed or retired. This places greater reliance on the more limited public leisure centre stock for these residents.
- 2.9 There is one other provider, Earls Colne Recreation Club, which is a charity. The centre provides for local residents on a pay and play or membership basis.
- 2.10 The facilities excluded from the study are listed in Appendix 1.

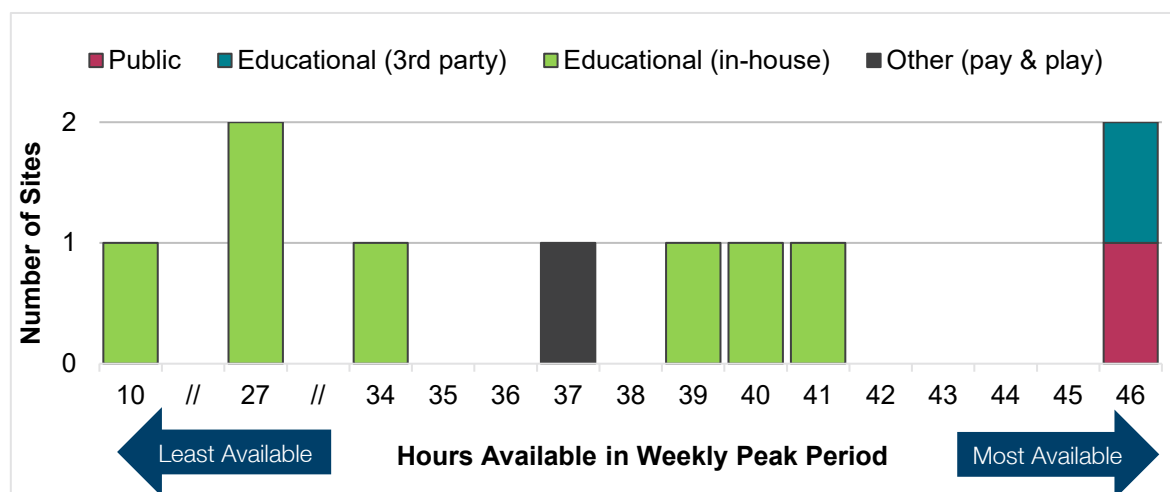
Scale

- 2.11 The largest sports halls are at Braintree Sports and Health Club and Notley High School. Both have a five-court hall, with dimensions of 40.16m x 21.35m, which can accommodate all hall sports and provide for more than one activity at a time.
- 2.12 There are six four-courts halls, of which:
- Three have dimensions of 34.5m x 20m. This is the size that Sport England and the National Governing Bodies for hall sports recommend for a four-court hall. These dimensions can cater for all hall sports at the community level of participation and also meet the requirements for hall sports club development.
 - Three have dimensions of 33m x 18m. This size of sports hall, while meeting the requirements for most indoor hall sports at the community level of participation, has less space between and behind individual courts. This may prohibit use of these sports halls if they do not meet the requirements for competition play.
- 2.13 There are three three-court halls, with dimensions of 27m x 18m, which provide for most hall sports at a recreational level of play.

- 2.14 Earls Colne Recreation Club is a two-court hall, with dimensions of 18m x 17m, which provides for badminton, indoor football and table tennis.
- 2.15 There are three sites that also have an activity hall. An activity hall is a flexible space for multiple sports that is smaller than the equivalent of three badminton courts and may or may not have line markings. Two of the activity halls have dimensions of 18m x 10m and one has dimensions of 24m x 10m.
- 2.16 Where a sports hall site has a main hall and an activity hall, the activities for the two halls are programmed together. The main hall can accommodate big/high space activities such as basketball and badminton, which have low participant numbers at-one-time. The activity hall can accommodate smaller space activities such as martial arts, which have higher participant numbers.
- 2.17 The at-one-time capacity of a main hall with marked courts is eight people per badminton court (the equivalent area of a badminton court is 144 sqm). For an activity hall, this increases to 15 people per court. Therefore, an activity hall has almost double the capacity of a main hall with the same dimensions.

Availability

Chart 2.1: Availability of Braintree Principal Sports Halls by Provider

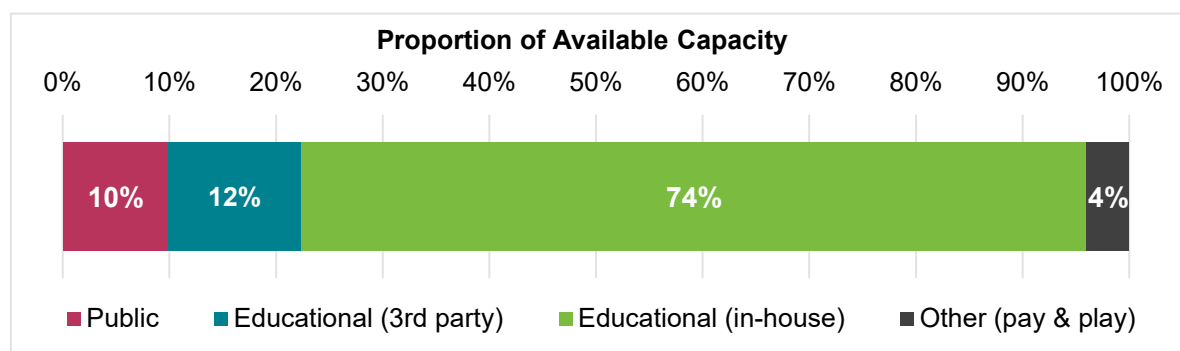


- 2.18 Halstead Leisure Centre and Braintree Sports and Health Club are available for the maximum 46.0 hours in the weekly peak period. There is no scope to increase availability and capacity to accommodate more demand.
- 2.19 It is very unusual for educational sports halls managed in-house to be available for more than 41.0 hours in the weekly peak period because they are not available for community use during weekday daytimes.
- 2.20 There is a high commitment to community use at the educational sites. The highest availability is at the larger sports hall at Lift New Rickstones, at 41.0 hours in the weekly peak period. Five other sites are available for between 27.0 hours and 40.0 hours. Gosfield School has the least availability, at 10.0 hours in the weekly peak period.

- 2.21 Overall, there is some limited scope to increase availability and capacity at the educational sites.
- 2.22 Sport England has produced a resource to support schools in opening their facilities for community use in non-school hours. The resource covers how to get started, who can help, operating models, legal and governance, finance, marketing, operating safely and safeguarding and can be found here: <https://www.sportengland.org/funding-and-campaigns/use-our-school>
- 2.23 The resource can be used to support discussions with schools to open their sites for community use either for the first time or to extend the hours available to the local community.
- 2.24 Earls Colne Recreation Club is available for 37.0 hours in the weekly peak period.

Capacity

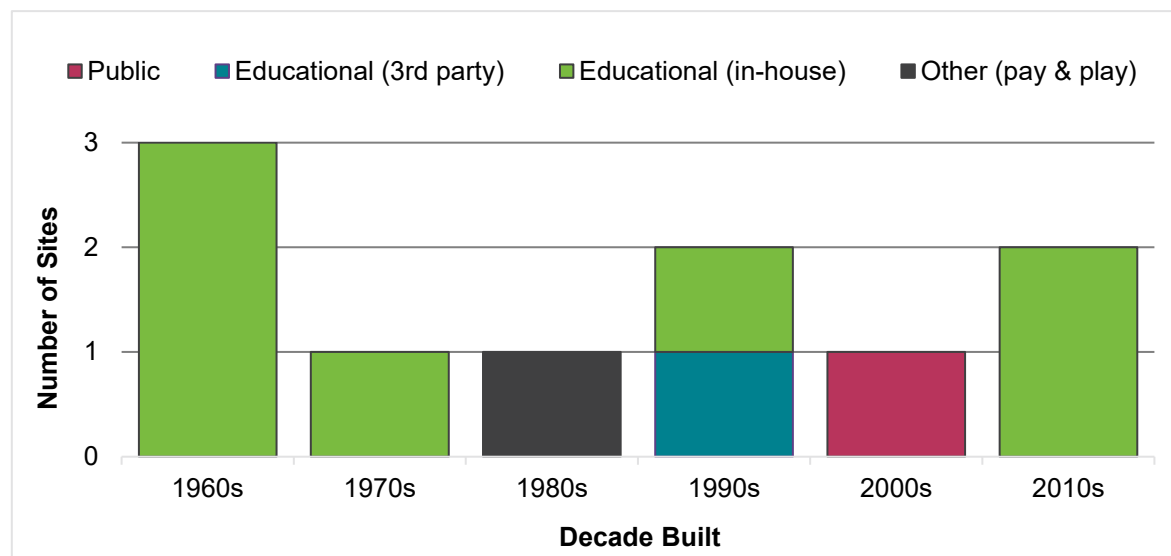
Chart 2.2: Proportion of Available Hall Space in Braintree by Provider



- 2.25 **Key finding 1** is that the hall space available for community use in Braintree in the weekly peak period is 40.3 courts in 2025 and 2041. The unavailable hall space is the equivalent of 12.5 courts in both years.
- 2.26 **Key finding 2** is that the educational sector is the major provider, with 86% of the available capacity in both years. Notley High School provides 22% of the available capacity.
- 2.27 Notley High School has a capacity of 3,310 visits in the weekly peak period. The school has three halls and the second highest availability of the educational in-house sites.
- 2.28 Lift New Rickstones has the second largest capacity in Braintree, at 2,400 visits in the weekly peak period, and accounts for 16% of the available capacity in both years.
- 2.29 Gosfield School has the smallest capacity, at 320 visits in the weekly peak period and accounts for 2% of the available capacity.
- 2.30 Earls Colne Recreation Club has the second smallest capacity, at 592 visits in the weekly peak period and accounts for 4% of the available capacity.

Age

Chart 2.3: Decade Built of Sports Halls in Braintree by Provider

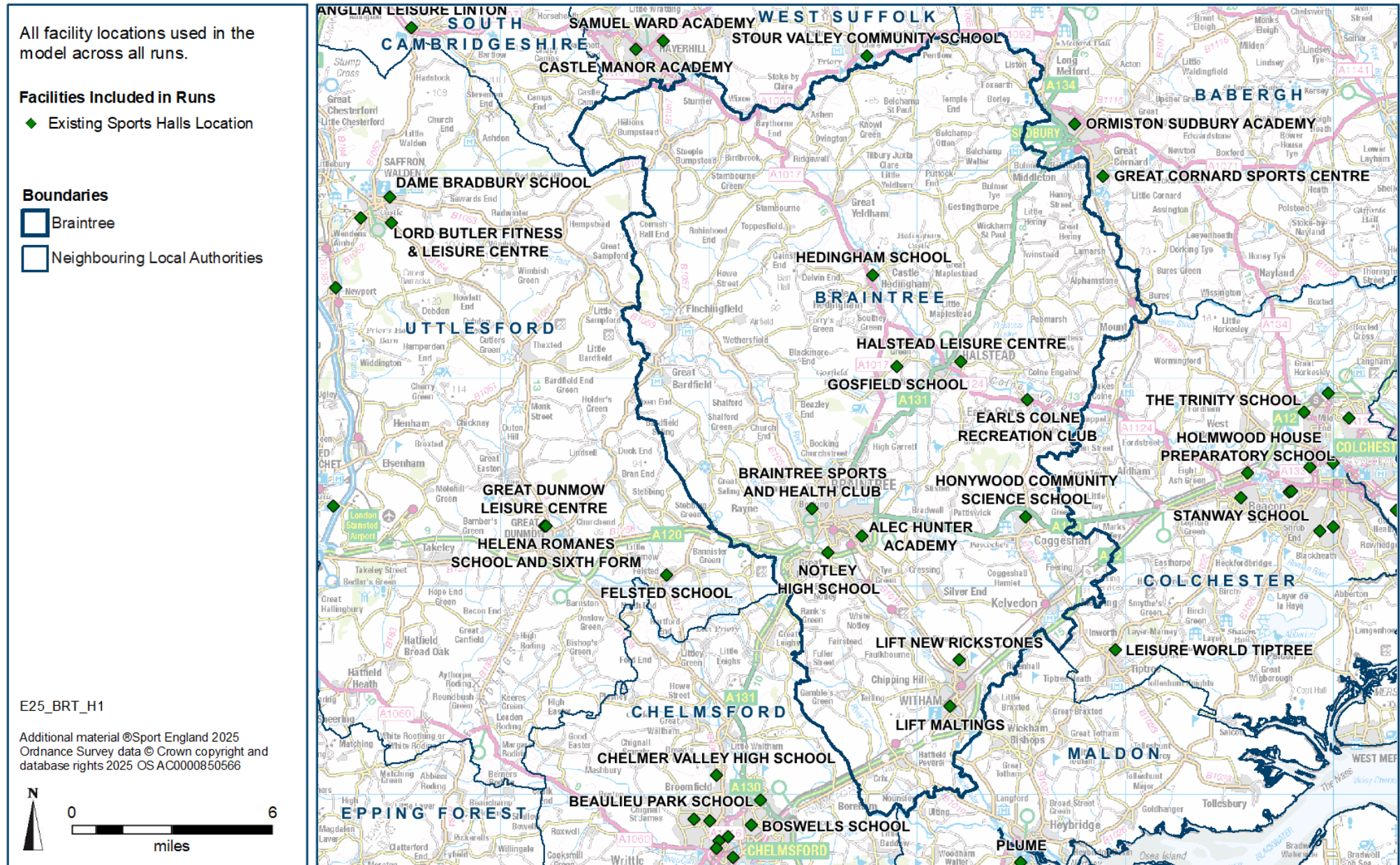


- 2.31 Braintree's sports halls are ageing. The average age of all the sports hall sites increases from 39 years in 2025 to 55 years in 2041.
- 2.32 The oldest sites are Alec Hunter Academy and Honywood Community Science School, which both opened in 1960. Neither are recorded as having been refurbished.
- 2.33 Lift New Rickstones has the newest sports hall, which was built in 2012 and modernised in 2023.
- 2.34 There is a poor track record of modernisation at the sites that opened before 2000, with only two of the seven sites having been refurbished.
- 2.35 Modernisation is defined as one or more of the following:
- Upgrade of the sports hall floor to a sprung timber floor
 - Upgrade of the lighting in the sports hall
 - Modernisation of the changing accommodation

Sports Hall Locations

- 2.36 Seven of the sports hall sites are located in the southern half of the District. There are three sites in the northern half of the District, with two sites in Halstead and one in Sible Hedingham (see Map 2.1).
- 2.37 Two sports hall sites in Babergh, and three in West Suffolk, are located close to the northern border of Braintree.

Map 2.1: Location of Sports Halls in 2025 and 2041 (Runs 1 and 2)



3 DEMAND FOR SPORTS HALLS

Demand for sports halls increases by 1% from 2025 to 2041, which is the equivalent of 0.5 courts.

Demand is greatest in Braintree town, Witham and Halstead.

Demand increases in all the local authorities in the study area to 2041. The largest increase is in South Cambridgeshire, at 3.9 courts. The smallest increase is in Braintree.

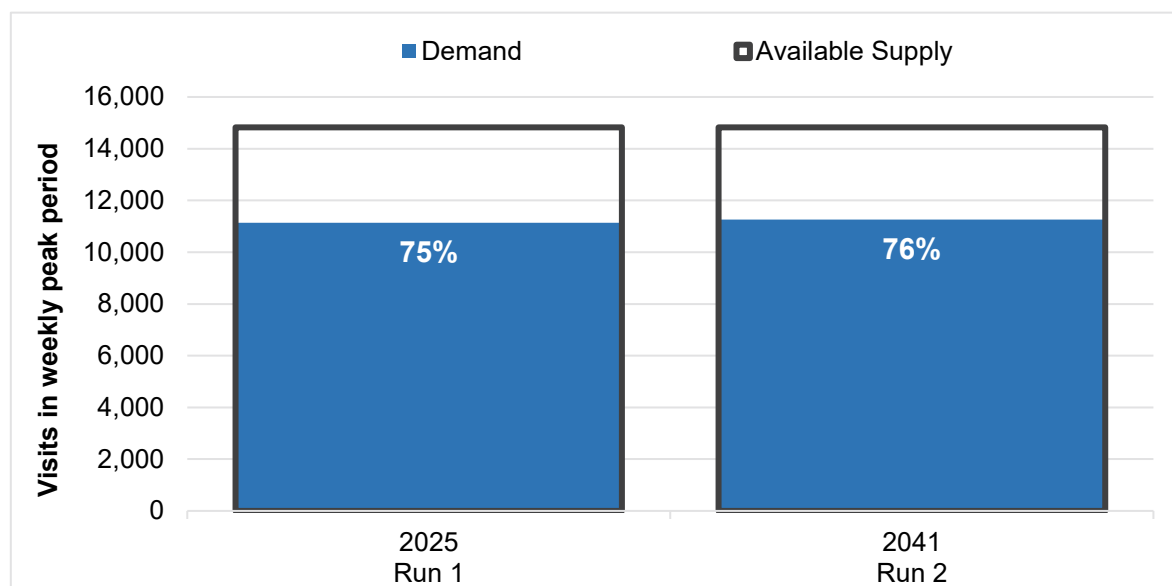
Table 3.1: Demand for Sports Halls in Braintree by Run

Demand	Run 1	Run 2
Braintree	2025	2041
Population	154,464	161,079
Visits demanded in weekly peak period	11,138	11,267
Demand in courts with comfort factor included	37.8	38.3
% of demand in the 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally	0%	0%

Definition of total demand – This represents the total demand for sports halls by gender and for six age bands from 0 to 79 and is calculated as the percentage of each age band/gender that participates. This is added to the frequency of participation in each age band/gender to arrive at a total demand figure, which is expressed in visits in the weekly peak period and number of badminton courts. The FPM parameters for the percentage of participation and frequency of participation, for gender and for different age bands, are calculated from Sport England's Active Lives survey up to November 2023 and are set out in Appendix 3.

- 3.1 Demand is calculated from the resident population. Braintree District Council provided its population forecast for 2025 and 2041, as well as details of housing growth sites which are shown on Map 3.1.
- 3.2 **Key finding 3** is that Braintree's population is projected to increase by 4% between 2025 and 2041, resulting in a 1% increase in demand for sports halls.
- 3.3 The smaller increase in demand compared with population growth is because of the ageing of the population in Braintree between 2025 and 2041. There will be fewer residents in the age bands with the highest sports hall participation (0-15 year olds and 16-24 year olds) in 2041 than in 2025. The rate and frequency of sports hall participation is assumed to be unchanged between the two years (for participation rates and frequency, see Appendix 3: Sports Halls Parameters).

Chart 3.1: Demand as a Proportion of Available Supply in Braintree by Run



- 3.4 **Key finding 4** is that Braintree's demand is the equivalent of 75% of its available supply in 2025, increasing to 76% in 2041.

Demand in the Study Area

Table 3.2: Demand for Sports Halls by Area and Run

Demand in Court Equivalents Considering a 'Comfort' Factor	Run 1	Run 2	Difference 2025 to 2041	
Area	2025	2041	Courts	% Change
Braintree	37.8	38.3	0.5	1%
South Cambridgeshire	42.5	46.4	3.9	9%
Chelmsford	46.8	49.7	2.9	6%
Colchester	52.3	55.6	3.3	6%
Maldon	16.4	17.8	1.4	8%
Uttlesford	23.5	26.3	2.8	12%
Babergh	22.5	24.0	1.5	6%
West Suffolk	45.6	48.0	2.4	5%

- 3.5 Braintree has the smallest increase in demand in the study area from 2025 to 2041. It is the equivalent of 0.5 courts with a comfort factor included.
- 3.6 Demand is projected to increase in every neighbouring local authority in the study area, which is based on the Office of National Statistics population projection. South

Cambridgeshire has the largest increase in demand in courts, at 3.9 courts, and Maldon has the second lowest, at 1.4 courts.

Geographical Distribution of Demand

3.7 In 2025 and 2041 demand is much lower in the northern half of the District.

2025

3.8 In 2025 the greatest densities of demand per square kilometre are in Braintree town at 1.4 courts (yellow square in Map **3.2**) and Witham at 1.2 courts (light green square).

3.9 Demand is highest across nine square kilometres in the following areas:

- Braintree town – 7.3 courts (Braintree Sports and Health Club and Alec Hunter Academy are within this area)
- Witham – 4.7 courts (Lift Maltings is within this area)
- Halstead – 2.7 courts (Halstead Leisure Centre is within this area)
- Great Notley – 2.4 courts

3.10 In most of the northern part of the District demand is sparse and equates to less than 0.5 courts per square kilometre (dark blue and purple squares).

2041

3.11 In 2041 demand remains highest in the same areas as 2025 (see Map **3.3**):

- Braintree town – decreases by 1.3 courts to 6.0 courts
- Witham – decreases 0.6 courts to 4.1 courts
- Halstead – increases by 0.5 courts to 3.2 courts
- Great Notley – decreases by 0.3 courts to 2.1 courts

3.12 Outside of these areas, the places with the largest increase in demand per square kilometre are:

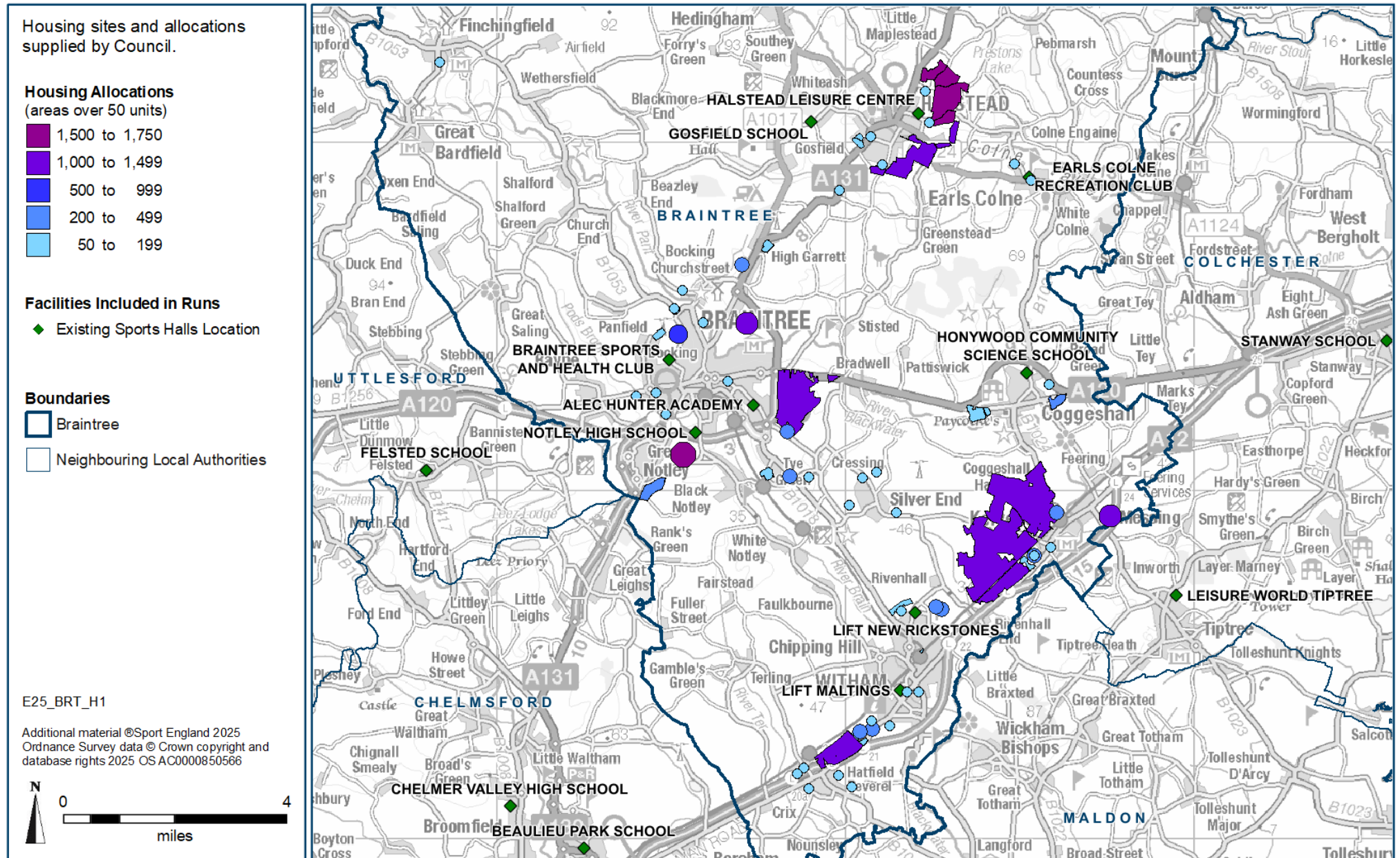
- South of Braintree town – increases by 0.6 courts to 0.8 courts (light green square)
- Northeast Kelvedon – increases by 0.6 courts to 0.6 courts (medium blue square)
- Hatfield Peverel – increases by 0.3 courts to 0.4 courts (dark blue square)
- East of Braintree town – increases by 0.3 courts to 0.3 courts (dark blue squares)
- Northwest Kelvedon – increases by 0.3 courts to 0.3 courts (dark blue square)

3.13 Other areas of the District only have minor changes in demand.

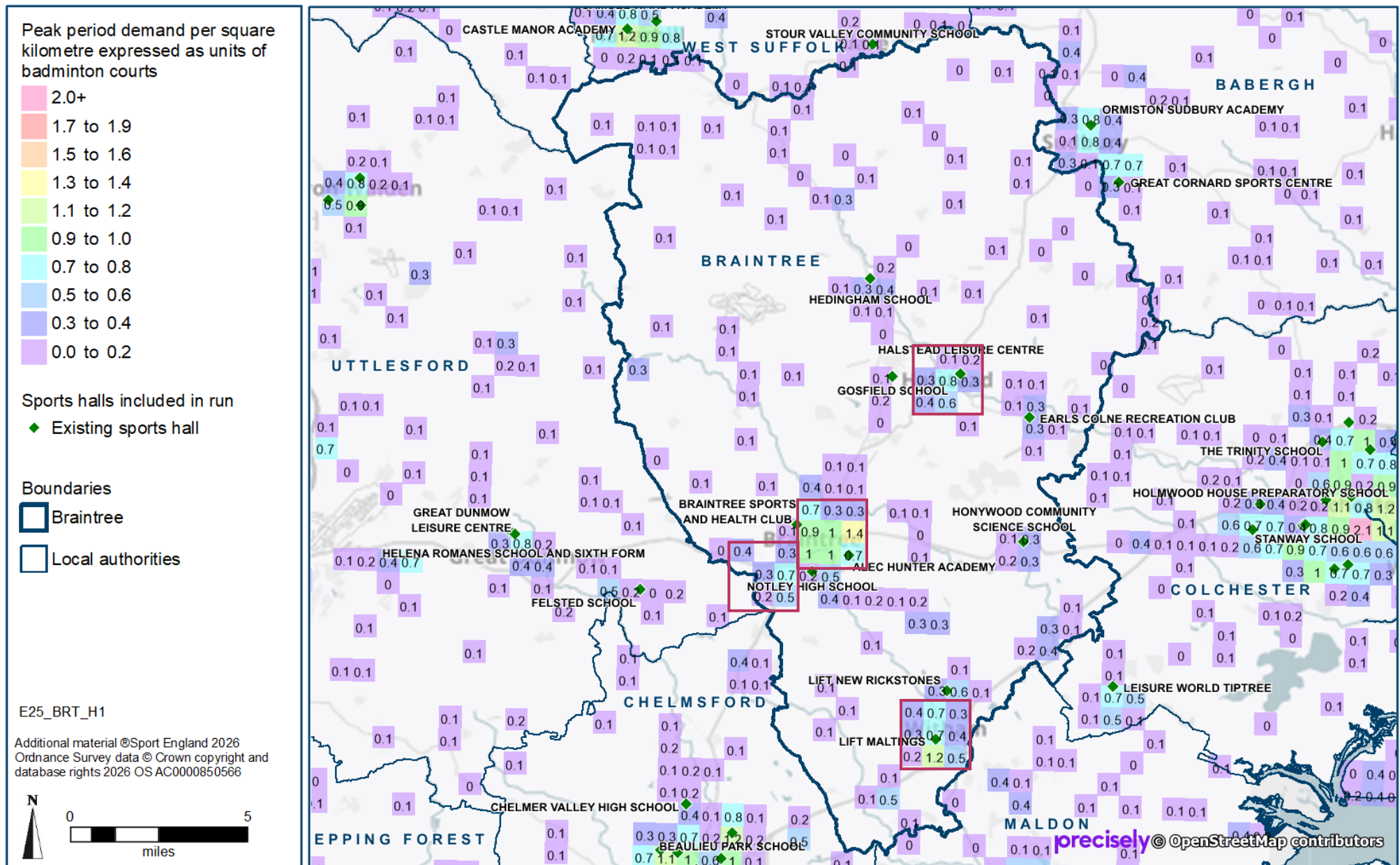
Deprivation

- 3.14 None of Braintree's demand is in the 10% most-deprived lower super output areas (LSOAs) nationally.
- 3.15 The areas of greatest deprivation in Braintree are in the 20% most-deprived LSOAs and are located in southwest Halstead and north of Braintree town (dark red areas in Map **3.4**).
- 3.16 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score is used in the FPM to limit whether people will use commercial facilities (see Appendix **3** for definition of IMD). A weighting factor is incorporated to reflect the cost element often associated with commercial facilities. The assumption is that the higher the IMD score (less affluence), the less likely the population of the LSOA would choose to go to a commercial facility.

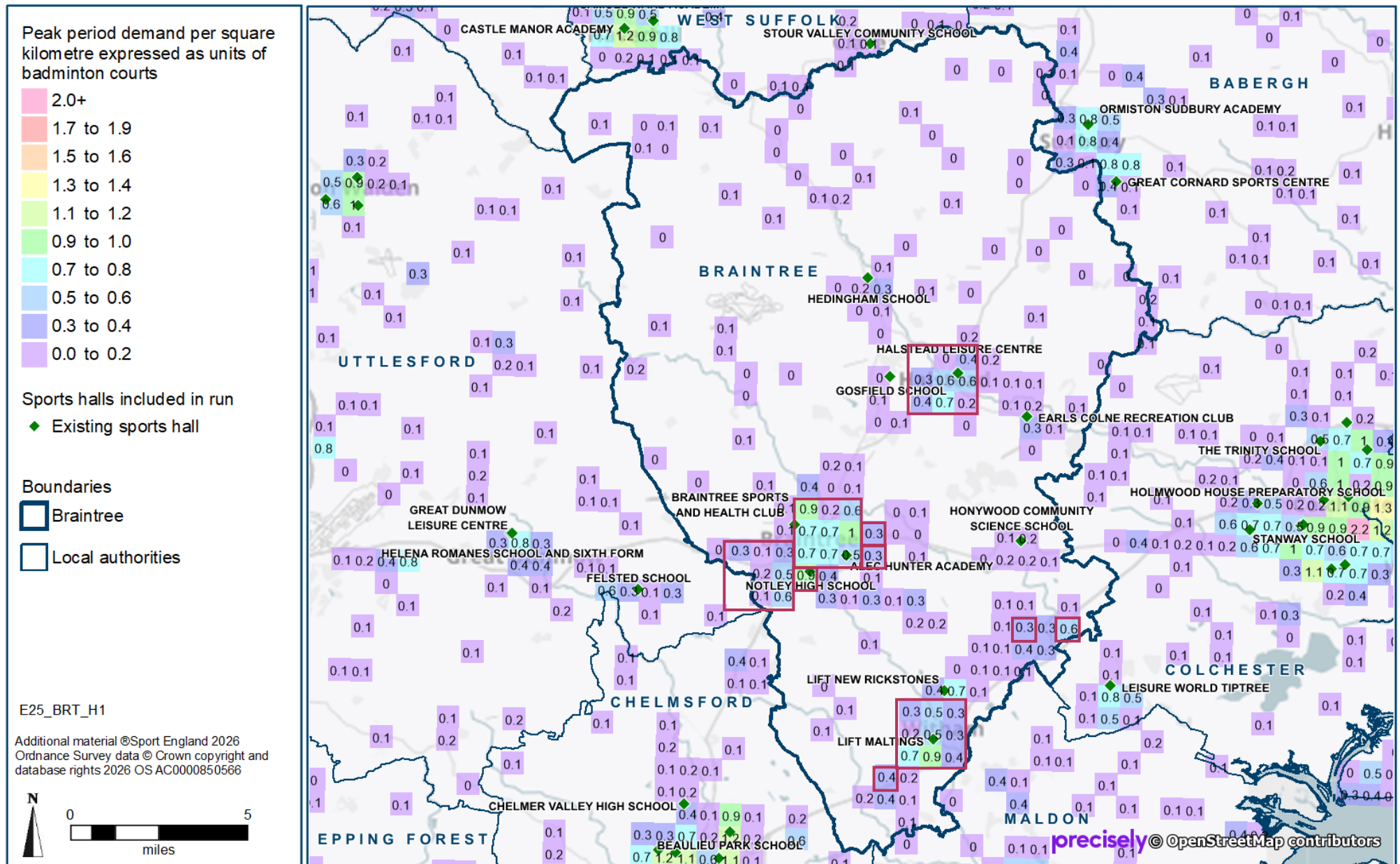
Map 3.1: Housing Growth Areas in Braintree to 2041 (Run 2)



Map 3.2: Demand for Sports Halls in 2025 (Run 1)



Map 3.3: Demand for Sports Halls in 2041 (Run 2)



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4 ACCESSIBILITY

In 2025, 51% of Braintree's residents are within a 20-minute walk of a sports hall. The proportion is slightly lower in 2041 at 45%.

All the sports hall sites are within a five-minute walk of an existing bus stop.

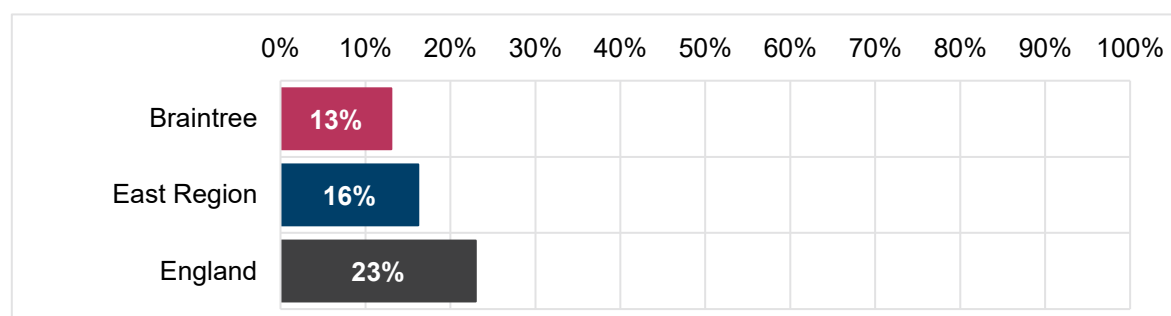
In both years, most of Braintree is within a 20-minute drive of more than five sports hall sites. Access is higher in the southern half of the District where residents in some areas can drive to more than 20 sports hall sites within 20 minutes.

Table 4.1: Travel Mode of Braintree Demand to Sports Halls by Run

Accessibility	Run 1	Run 2
Braintree	2025	2041
% of total residents within a 20-minute walk of a sports hall	51%	45%
% of demand satisfied when travelled:		
on foot	11%	9%
by public transport or bicycle	5%	6%
by car	84%	85%

Definition of accessibility – The FPM uses a distance decay function where the further a user is from a facility, the less likely they will travel. A description of the distance decay function is set out in Appendix 3. On average, a 20-minute travel time accounts for approximately 90% of visits to a sports hall.

Chart 4.1: Proportion of Residents Without Access to a Car



- 4.1 In Braintree, 13% of residents do not have access to a car. This is lower than both the regional average of 16% and the national average of 23%.

Walking Access

- 4.2 Of Braintree's residents, 51% are within a 20-minute walk of a sports hall in 2025, decreasing to 45% in 2041 when the supply is unchanged and the new housing developments are included.

- 4.3 In both years access is higher in very small areas of Braintree town and Witham where residents can walk to two sports hall sites within 20 minutes (medium orange areas in Map 4.1).
- 4.4 However, not all residents in these areas will walk to a sports hall and some will travel further. It is estimated that the proportion of journeys made on foot to sports halls by Braintree residents is 11% in 2025, and 9% in 2041.

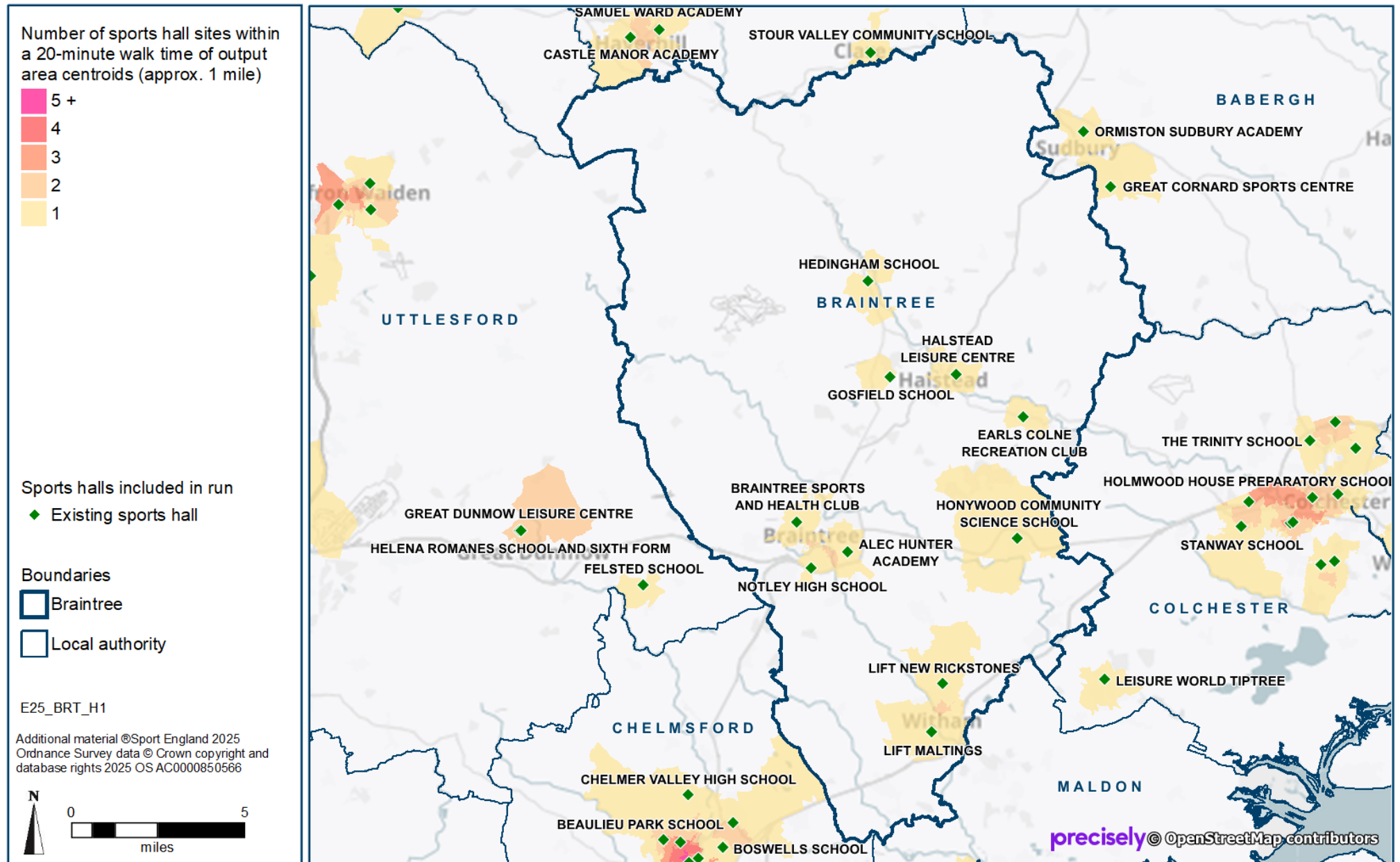
Public Transport Access

- 4.5 All the sports halls in Braintree are within a five-minute walk of an existing bus stop (pink areas in Map 4.2).
- 4.6 Alec Hunter is within a 15-minute walk of a railway station (purple areas).
- 4.7 It should be noted that, while most Braintree residents can access an existing public transport stop, it may not mean they can get to a sports hall within 20 minutes from home via a combination of walking and public transport. Also, in rural areas the service may be irregular.
- 4.8 It is estimated that the proportion of journeys to sports halls by Braintree residents are made by public transport or bicycle is 5% in 2025 and 6% in 2041.

Driving Access

- 4.9 In 2025 and 2041, access to sports halls with a 20-minute drive is lowest in the northern half of the District. Residents can drive to between one and ten sites within a 20-minute drive of where they live (light green and dark green areas in Map 4.3).
- 4.10 In the southern half of Braintree, residents can drive to between 11 and 20 sites within 20-minutes (blue areas).
- 4.11 Access to sports halls is best along the A12, in Terling, Great Notley and southwest Braintree town, where residents can reach more than 20 sites within a 20-minute drive (purple areas).
- 4.12 It is estimated that 84% of all journeys to sports halls by Braintree residents are by car in 2025, and 85% in 2041.

Map 4.1: Walking Access to Sports Halls in 2025 and 2041 (Runs 1 and 2)



Map 4.2: Walking Access to Public Transport in 2025 (Runs 1 and 2)

Areas within walking time shown thematically (colours) from bus, coach and tram stops, and railway, metro and underground stations.

Public Transport

- Railway/Metro/Underground Station

Walk Time from Station

- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 15 minutes

Walk Time from Bus Stop

- 5 minutes

Facilities Included in Runs

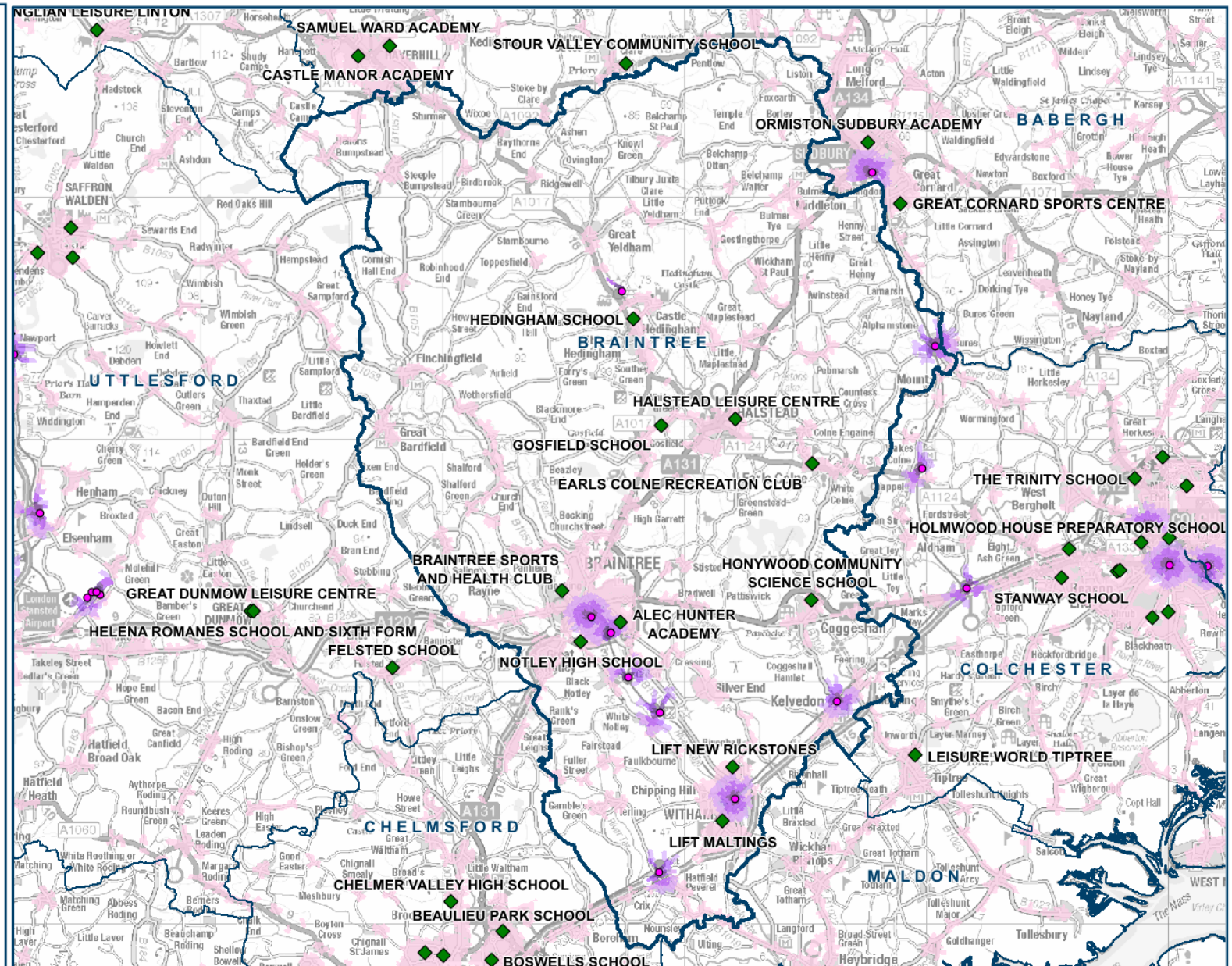
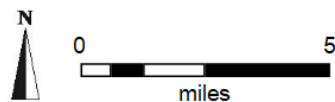
- Existing Sports Halls Location

Boundaries

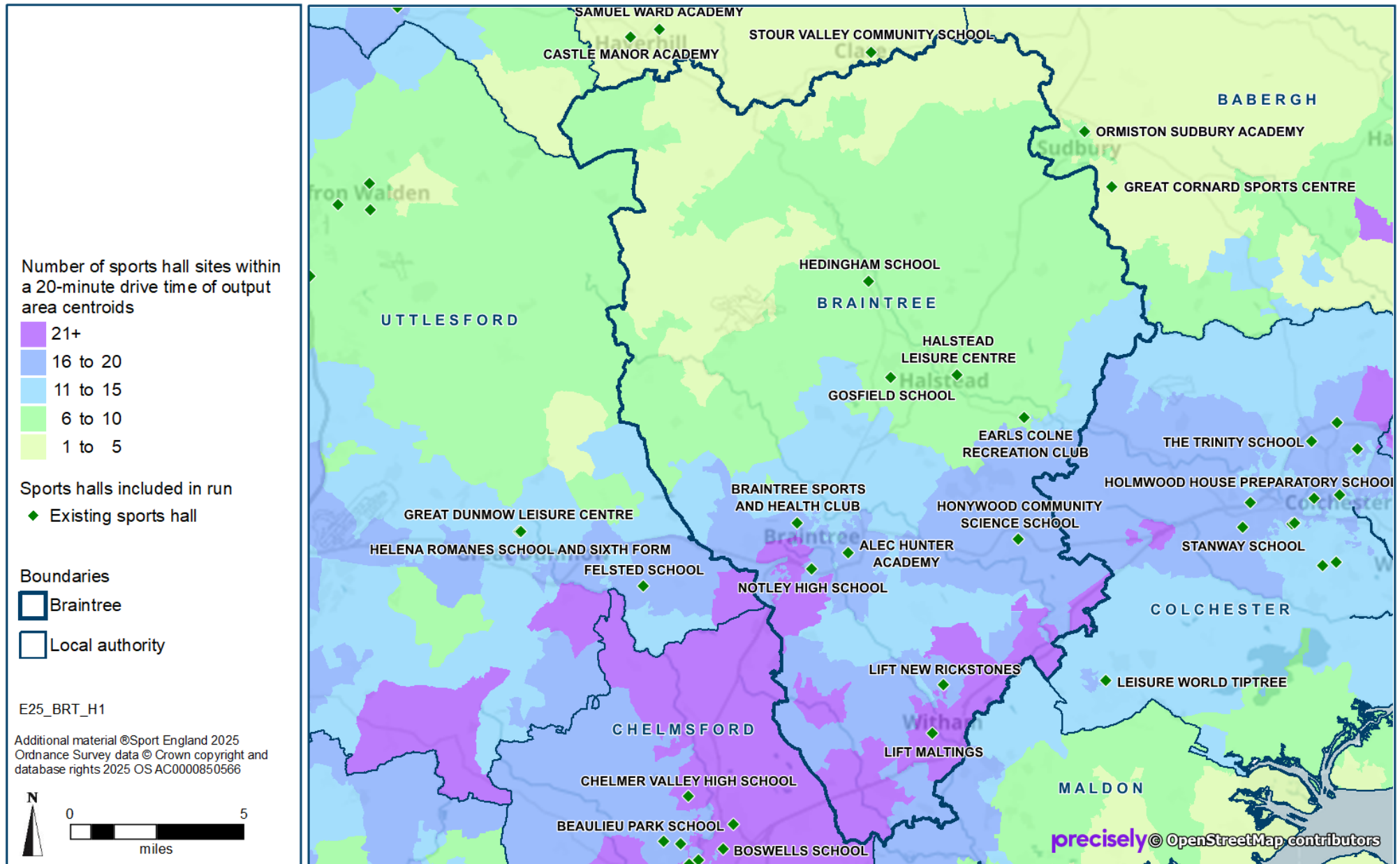
- Braintree
- Neighbouring Local Authorities

E25_BRT_H1

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Map 4.3: Driving Access to Sports Halls in 2025 and 2041 (Runs 1 and 2)



5 SATISFIED DEMAND FOR SPORTS HALLS

Nearly all of Braintree's demand is satisfied in 2025 and 2041. Most of the satisfied demand is met within the District.

In 2025, 16% of Braintree's satisfied demand is exported and met in other local authorities. This increases slightly to 17% in 2041.

In both years, the largest amount of exported demand goes to Chelmsford, which increases between 2025 and 2041.

Table 5.1: Satisfied Demand for Sports Halls in Braintree by Run

Satisfied Demand	Run 1	Run 2
Braintree	2025	2041
Number of visits which are met per week in peak period	10,771	10,870
% of total demand satisfied	97%	96%
Number of visits retained per week in peak period	9,083	9,056
Demand retained as a % of satisfied demand	84%	83%
Number of visits exported per week in peak period	1,688	1,815
Demand exported as a % of satisfied demand	16%	17%

Definition of satisfied demand – This represents the proportion of total demand that is met by the capacity at the sports halls from Braintree residents who live within the travel time of a sports hall. This includes sports halls located both within and outside Braintree.

- 5.1 **Key finding 5** is that 97% of Braintree's demand is met in 2025. The proportion decreases to 96% in 2041, however, the number of visits met in the weekly peak period increases from 10,771 in 2025 to 10,870 in 2041 because of the increase in demand.
- 5.2 A very large proportion of the neighbouring local authorities' demand is met and is within a narrow range of between 93% and 98%. It is highest in Chelmsford and lowest in West Suffolk in both years.
- 5.3 Details of the sports halls in the neighbouring local authority areas are listed in Appendix 2.

Table 5.2: Proportion of Demand Met by Area and Run

Proportion of Demand Met	Run 1	Run 2
Area	2025	2041
Braintree	97%	96%
South Cambridgeshire	96%	96%
Chelmsford	98%	98%
Colchester	95%	95%
Maldon	95%	95%
Uttlesford	97%	97%
Babergh	95%	94%
West Suffolk	94%	93%
East Region	96%	96%
England	95%	94%

Retained Demand

Definition of retained demand – A subset of the satisfied demand findings shows how much of Braintree residents' demand for sports halls is met at sports halls located within the District. This assessment is based on the travel time from Braintree's sports halls and residents in the District participating at these halls.

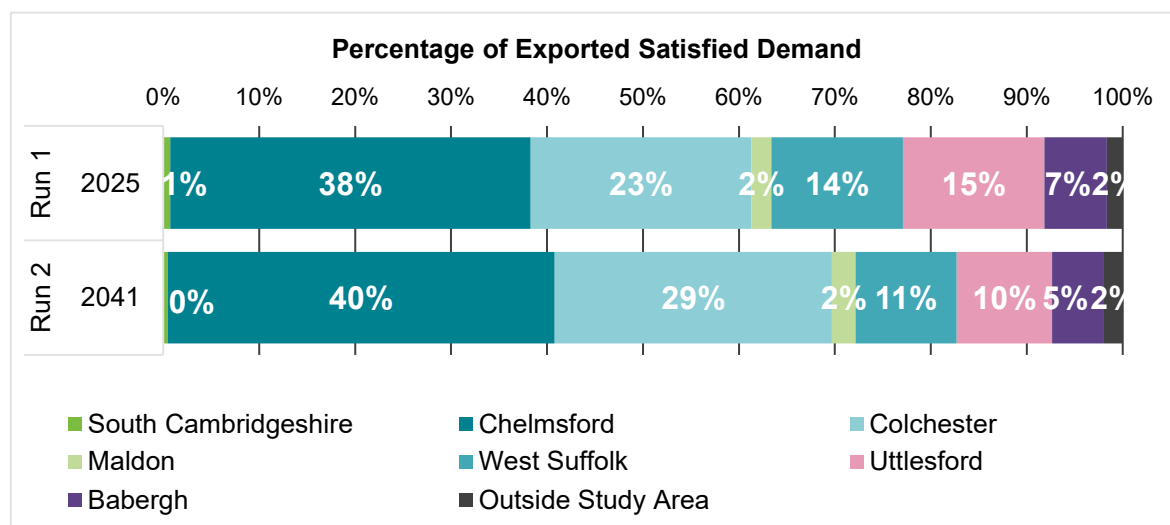
- 5.4 **Key finding 6** is that 84% of Braintree's satisfied demand is met within the District in 2025, decreasing to 83% in 2041. The number of visits retained decreases from 9,083 in the weekly peak period in 2025 to 9,056 visits in 2041.

Exported Demand

Definition of exported demand – The residue of satisfied demand, after retained demand, is exported demand. This is based on Braintree residents who live within the travel time of a sports hall located outside Braintree and use that hall.

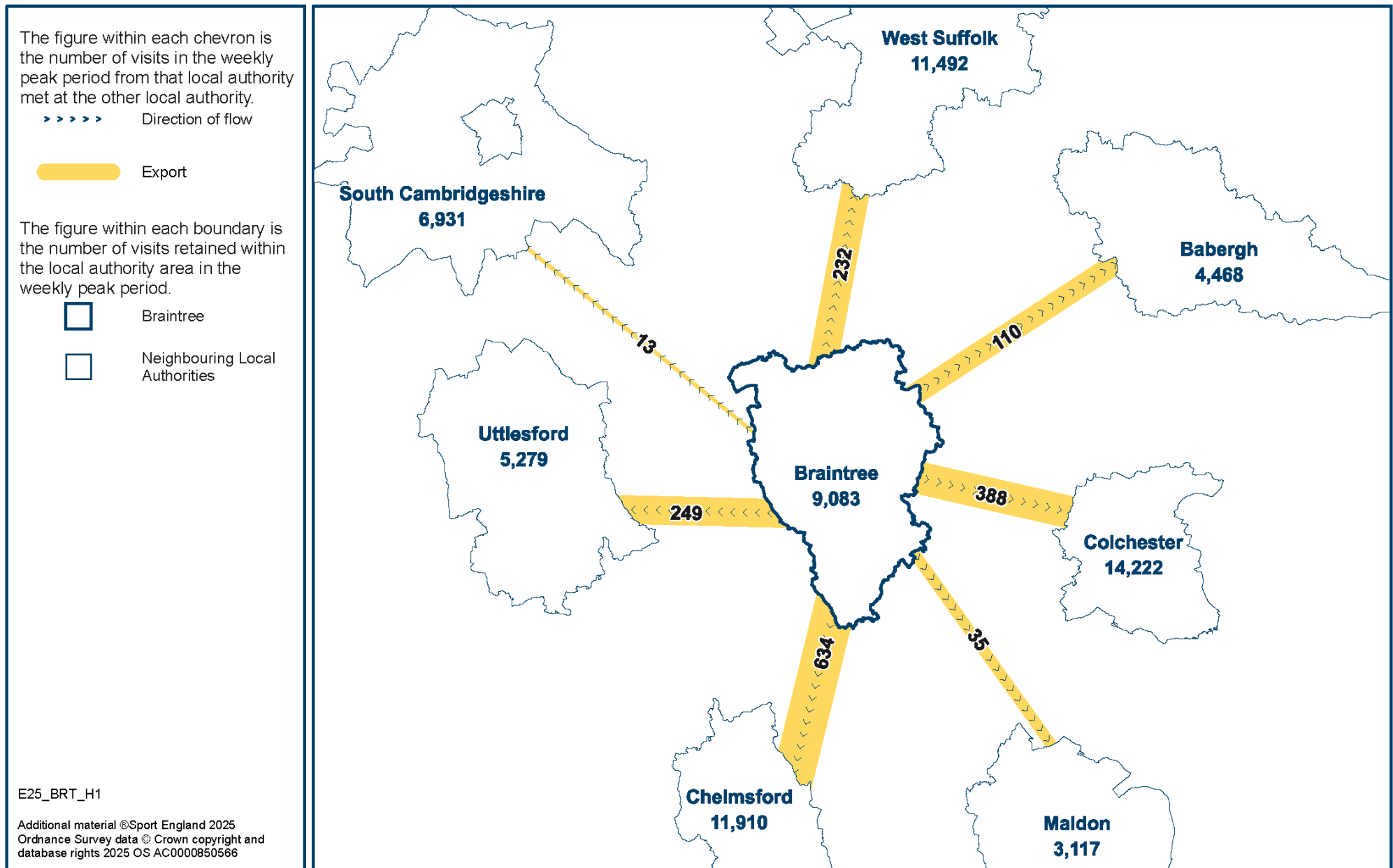
- 5.5 Of Braintree's satisfied demand, 1,688 visits in the weekly peak period are met at sports halls in other local authorities in 2025, increasing to 1,815 visits in 2041.

Chart 5.1: Percentage of Exported Satisfied Demand by Destination and Run

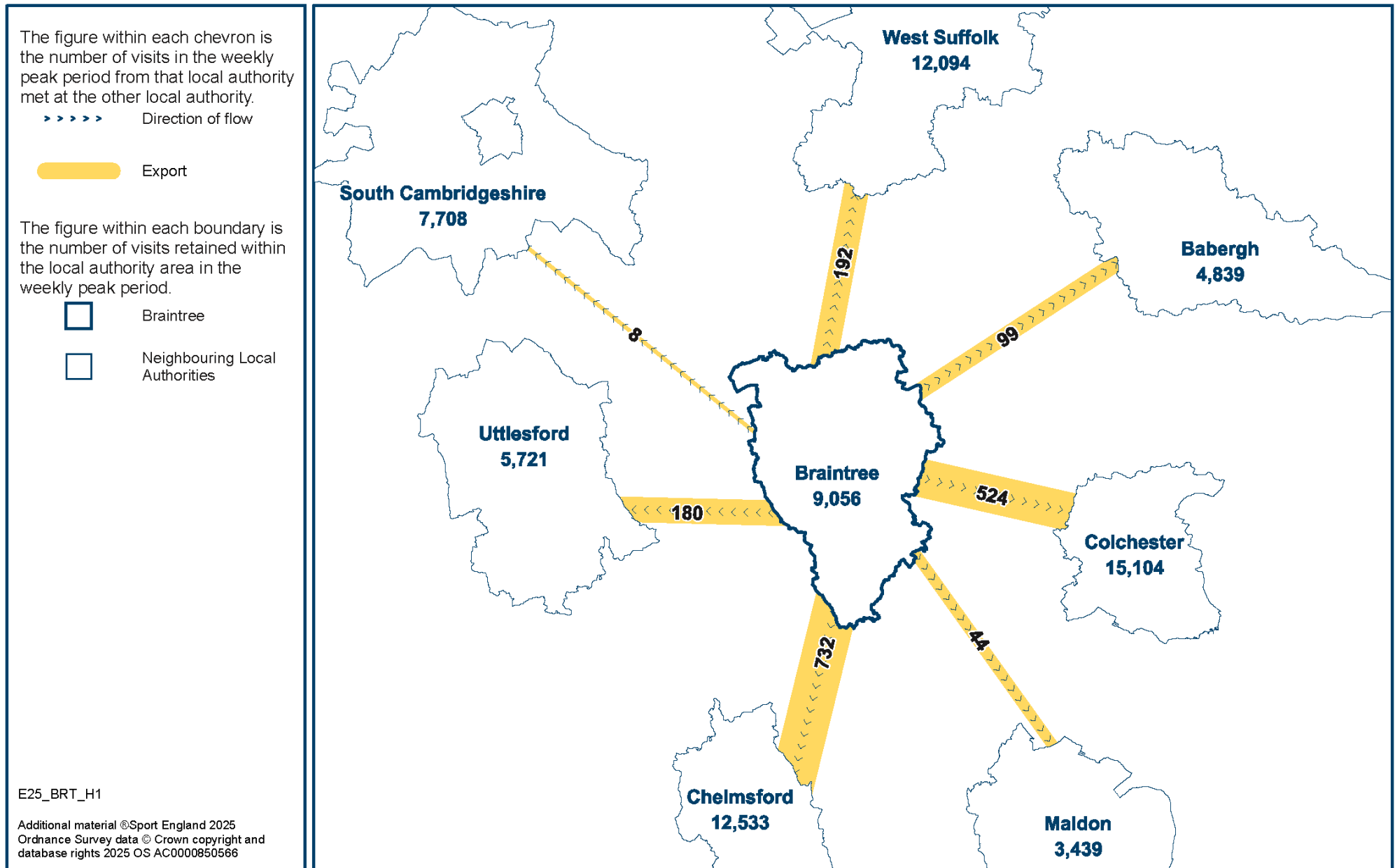


- 5.6 The largest amount of Braintree's exported demand goes to Chelmsford, accounting for 38% of exported demand and equating to 634 visits in the weekly peak period in 2025 (see Map 5.1), and accounting for 40% and equating to 732 visits in 2041 (see Map 5.2). Demand in Braintree is highest in Braintree town and the A131 provides access to a cluster of 14 sports hall sites in Chelmsford.
- 5.7 The second largest amount of exported demand goes to Colchester, accounting for 23% of exported demand and equating to 388 visits in the weekly peak period in 2025. It increases to 29% and 524 visits in 2041. There are only two small sports halls in Braintree close to the Colchester border and there are large housing growth sites in this area, which increase the demand in 2041.

Map 5.1: Export of Braintree Satisfied Demand for Sports Halls in 2025 (Run 1)



Map 5.2: Export of Braintree Satisfied Demand for Sports Halls in 2041 (Run 2)



6 UNMET DEMAND FOR SPORTS HALLS

Unmet demand is very low, at just over one court in 2025 and 2041.

Nearly all of the unmet demand is too far from a facility.

Unmet demand is distributed in very low values of less than 0.1 courts per square kilometre across Braintree.

Table 6.1: Unmet Demand for Sports Halls in Braintree by Run

Unmet Demand	Run 1	Run 2
Braintree	2025	2041
Number of visits unmet per week in peak period	366	397
Unmet demand as a % of total demand	3%	4%
Equivalent in courts with comfort factor	1.2	1.3
% of unmet demand due to:		
Facility too far away:	96%	96%
Without access to a car	86%	88%
With access to a car	9%	8%
Lack of facility capacity:	4%	4%
Without access to a car	4%	4%
With access to a car	0%	0%

Definition of unmet demand – This has two parts; demand for sports halls that cannot be met because either:

1. There is too much demand for any particular sports hall within its travel time area and there is a lack of capacity.
2. The demand is located too far from any sports hall that it can use (taking into account deprivation) or reach (taking into account car access) and is then classified as unmet demand.

- 6.1 **Key finding 7** is that unmet demand is very low at 1.2 courts in 2025 and 1.3 courts in 2041. Residents who are too far from a facility account for 96% of unmet demand in both years. Unmet demand from lack of capacity is negligible.
- 6.2 Unmet demand that is too far from a sports hall will always exist because it is not possible to achieve complete spatial coverage whereby all areas of a local authority are within walking distance of a sports hall that is not commercial and not everyone will want, or is able, to drive the full distance.
- 6.3 The key point here is the scale of the unmet demand. Also, if it is clustered in one location, further provision should be considered to improve accessibility.

Location of Unmet Demand

- 6.4 In 2025 (see Map 6.1) and 2041 (see Map 6.2), unmet demand is less than 0.1 courts per square kilometre (purple squares). In both years, the largest cluster of unmet demand is in Braintree town, Witham and Kelvedon. The area increases in Kelvedon in 2041 because of the extensive housing growth sites.

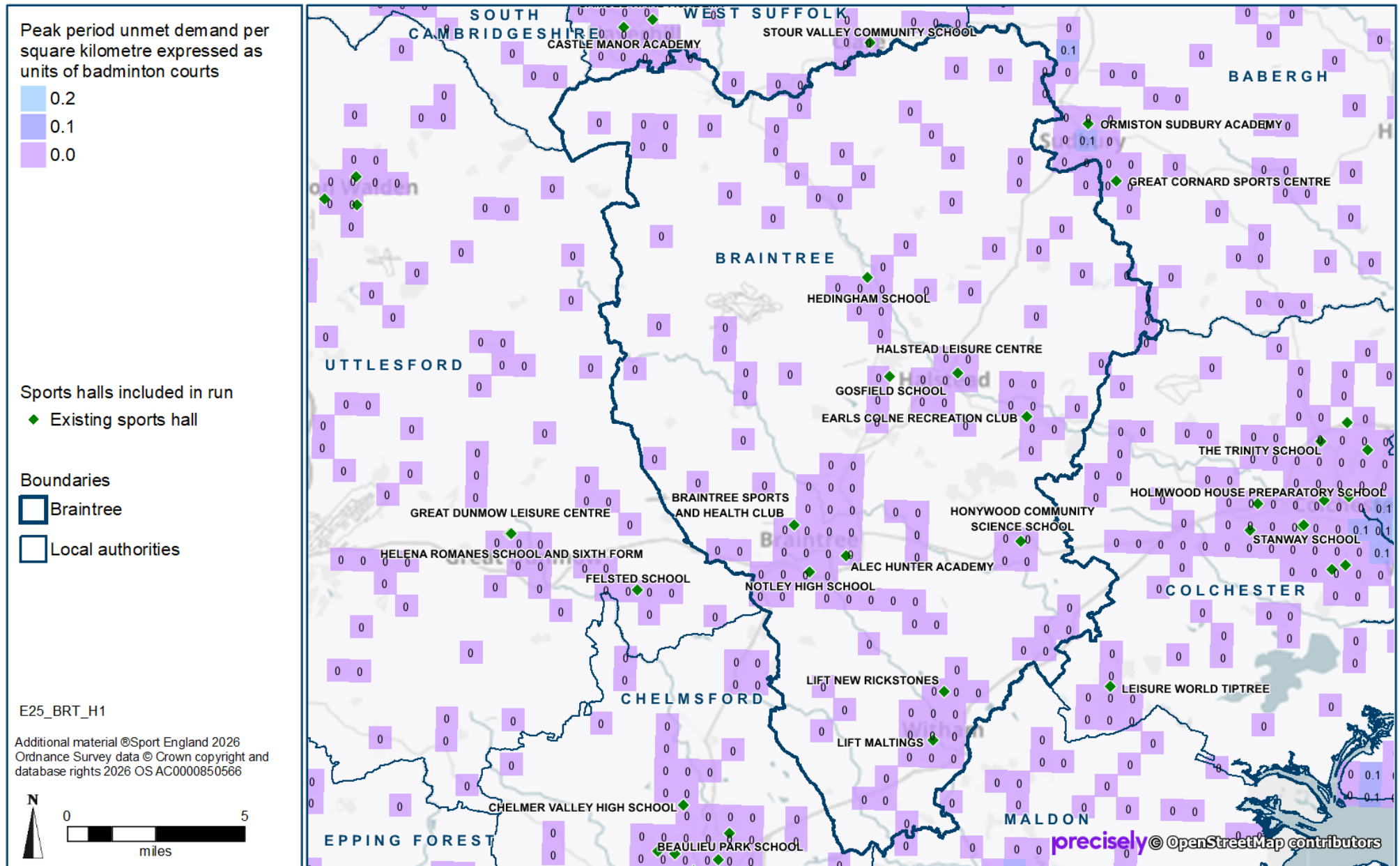
Meeting Unmet Demand

Definition of reachable unmet demand – Analysis of the spread of unmet demand shows the level of unmet demand that would be met by a potential new facility in any given location. This ‘reachable unmet demand’ is calculated for each one-kilometre grid square and figures are shown in the map.

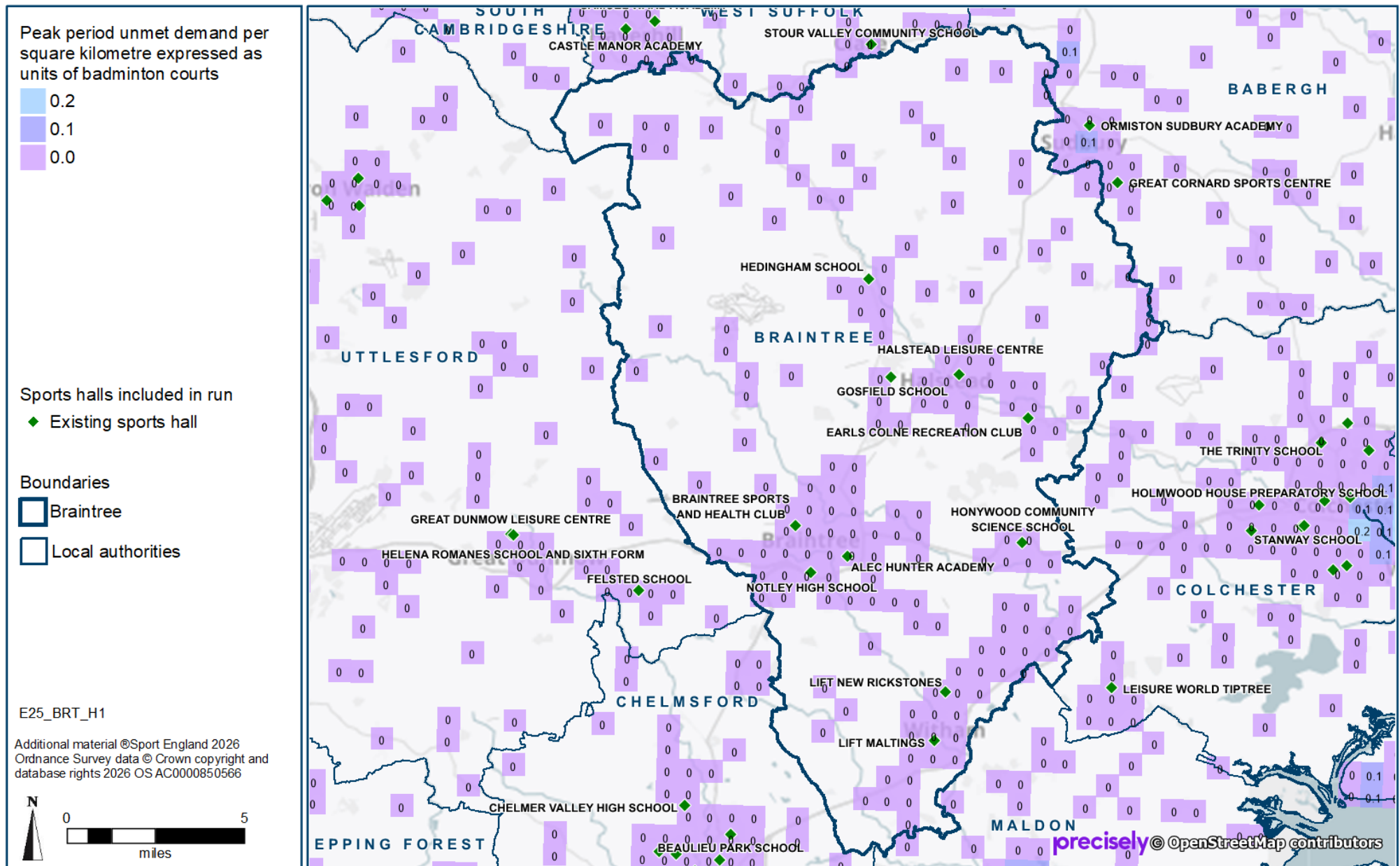
- 6.5 In 2041, the areas where the most unmet demand can be met are along the A12 and east of Braintree town, at 0.4 courts (light blue squares in Map 6.3). This is an insufficient amount to consider providing a new sports hall to meet unmet demand.

For context, the minimum number of reachable courts required to justify a new sports hall would be three.

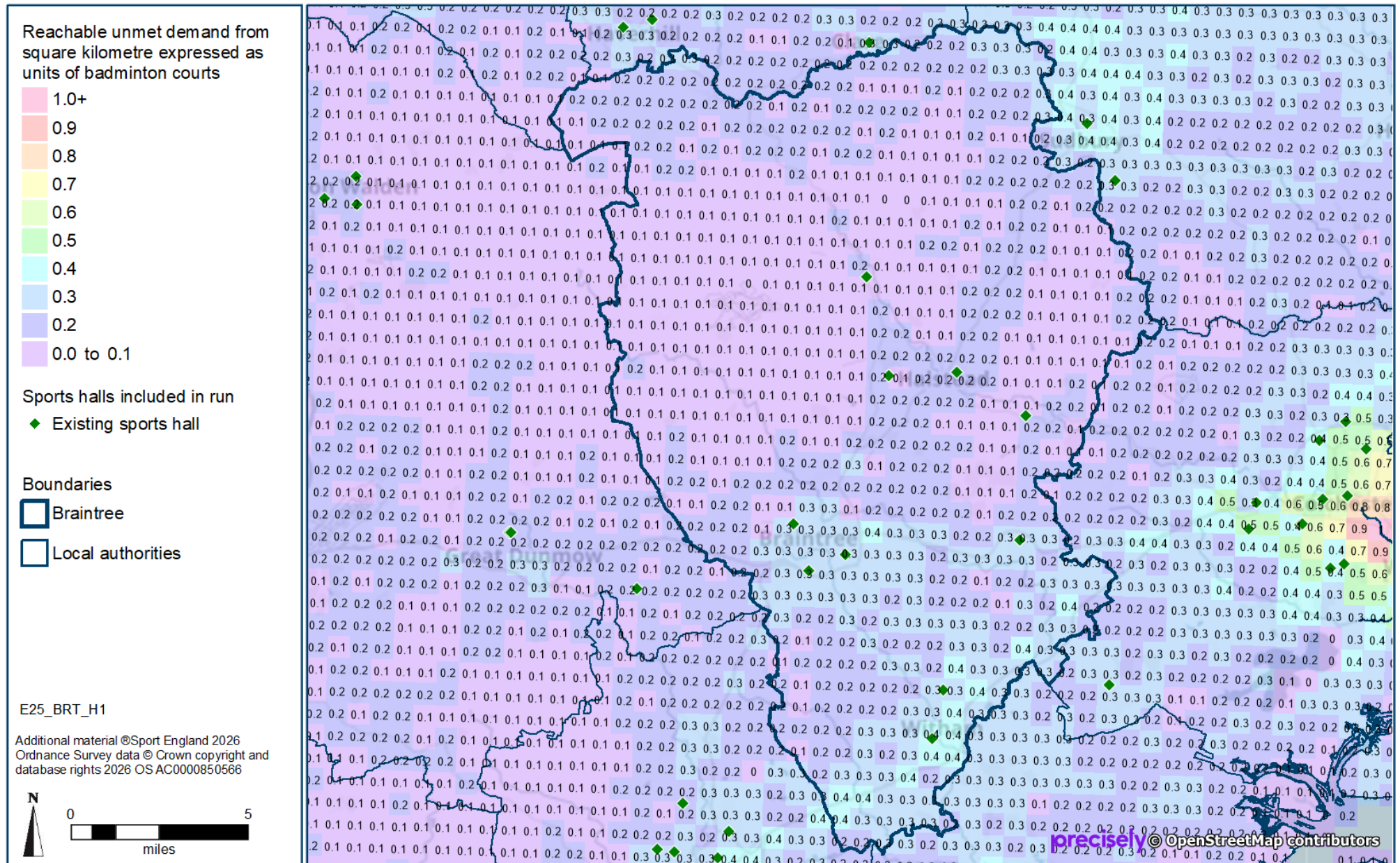
Map 6.1: Unmet Demand for Sports Halls in 2025 (Run 1)



Map 6.2: Unmet Demand for Sports Halls in 2041 (Run 2)



Map 6.3: Reachable Unmet Demand for Sports Halls in 2041 (Run 2)



7 USED CAPACITY OF FACILITIES

The overall utilisation of sports halls in Braintree is 68% at peak times in 2025 and 69% in 2041.

Halstead Leisure Centre and Lift Maltings are estimated to be completely full at peak times in both years.

Braintree Sports and Health Club is estimated to be completely full in 2025 and uncomfortably full in 2041. Lift New Rickstones is uncomfortably full in 2041.

Imported demand accounts for 11% of the used capacity of Braintree's sports halls in 2025 and 12% in 2041.

Most of the imported demand is from Maldon but it is also high from Colchester and Chelmsford.

Braintree exports more visits than it imports in both years.

Table 7.1: Used Capacity of Sports Halls in Braintree by Run

Used Capacity	Run 1	Run 2
Braintree	2025	2041
Number of visits used of capacity in weekly peak period	10,150	10,266
% of overall capacity of halls used	68%	69%

Definition of used capacity – This is a measure of usage at sports halls and estimates how well used or how full facilities are. The FPM is designed to include a 'comfort factor', beyond which the venues are too full. When the venues are too full, the time taken to change the sports hall programme and equipment starts to impinge on the activity time itself and the changing and circulation areas become congested. In the model, Sport England assumes that usage above 80% of capacity is busy and that the sports hall is operating at an uncomfortable level.

- 7.1 The number of visits met at Braintree's sports halls in the weekly peak period increases slightly from 10,150 visits in 2025 to 10,266 visits in 2041 because of the increase in demand.
- 7.2 **Key finding 8** is that the overall used capacity of Braintree's sports halls in the weekly peak period is 68% in 2025, and 69% in 2041. However, three sports hall sites are estimated to be 100% utilised in 2025 and two sites in 2041. Two sites are uncomfortably full in 2041 (more than 80% of capacity used).

Table 7.2: Weekly Peak Period Used Capacity of Braintree Sports Halls by Run

Used Capacity	2025 (Run 1)		2041 (Run 2)		Provider	Peak Hours	Year Built	Year Refurb
Individual Sites	Proportion	Visits	Proportion	Visits				
Halstead Leisure Centre	100%	1,472	100%	1,472	Public	46	2004	2014
Braintree Sports and Health Club	100%	1,840	95%	1,752	Educational (3rd party)	46	1992	
Alec Hunter Academy	52%	1,016	58%	1,118	Educational (in-house)	34	1960	
Gosfield School	35%	113	39%	126	Educational (in-house)	10	1998	
Hedingham School	74%	690	52%	490	Educational (in-house)	39	1965	2016
Honywood Community Science School	30%	350	37%	429	Educational (in-house)	27	1960	
Lift Maltings	100%	864	100%	864	Educational (in-house)	27	2011	
Lift New Rickstones	79%	1,908	88%	2,112	Educational (in-house)	41/34	2012	2023
Notley High School	46%	1,525	47%	1,550	Educational (in-house)	40	1974	2008
Earls Colne Recreation Club	63%	374	60%	356	Other (pay & play)	37	1985	

Site Utilisation Factors

- 7.3 The estimated used capacity should be reviewed with the facility operator. There are several reasons for the variation in estimated used capacity by site. Often it is difficult to identify which of these reasons apply because several could be interacting simultaneously, but variation is generally caused by any of the following factors.

Type of site operator (public/educational)

- Public leisure centres have a 'draw effect' for the following reasons:
 - They have the greatest accessibility for both sports club and public use because they are available for daytime use, which is not possible at educational venues during term time
 - Public operators actively promote hall sports and physical activity participation, with a programme of use that reflects the activities customers wish to participate in and when they wish to participate
- Access to educational sports halls for community use will be determined by the policy of each educational provider and affects the hours available for community use:
 - Some schools and colleges actively promote community use, while others let their sports halls to sports clubs or community groups on a termly basis, or for shorter periods
 - At some venues there is little differentiation between educational and wider community use, with community access based on a membership system (classed as commercial)

Age of the hall and its 'attractiveness'

- To assess their comparative attractiveness to customers, all sports halls in the model are weighted to reflect their age, whether they have been modernised, and how actively managed they are (educational sites managed in-house have a lower weighting).
- The effect of refurbishment at a site decreases as the site gets older, and it becomes less attractive than a site built in the same year as the refurbishment.
- The quality and range of the offer are considered by customers. These features are of increasing importance to customers and affect participation levels. Desirable features include a modern sports hall with a sprung timber floor, good-quality lighting, modern changing rooms, and other facilities on site such as a studio and/or a gym. Residents may travel further to use a sports hall with this all-round offer rather than participate at the sports hall closest to where they live.

Location of demand and competition from other sites

- Where sports halls are located close together, the demand for these sites is shared between the venues, and this contributes to the level of used capacity at each.
- Conversely, where a sports hall is remotely located, it benefits from having no competition for the local demand.

Capacity

- When reviewing the estimated used capacity, it is important to consider the capacity of the site and not just the proportion in isolation. Centres with the same or similar proportions of used capacity can accommodate very different levels of demand.
- The hours when a site is available for community use affects its capacity at peak times.

Imported demand

- If residents in neighbouring local authority areas participate at a site in Braintree, their usage becomes part of the used capacity of the District's sports halls.

Highly Utilised Sites

7.4 The sites that are estimated to be more completely full in 2025 and 2041 are:

- Halstead Leisure Centre
 - Only public leisure centre and highly attractive
 - Located in an area of high demand
 - Larger capacity than other sports halls nearby
 - No scope to increase availability and capacity to reduce proportion of used capacity to a comfortable level
- Braintree Sports and Health Club
 - Highly attractive as attractively managed
 - Located in the area of highest demand in the District
 - No scope to increase availability and capacity to reduce proportion of used capacity to a comfortable level
- Lift Maltings
 - Third smallest capacity in the District
 - Located in the area of second highest demand in the District
 - Scope to expand availability and capacity by up to 14.0 hours as it is an educational site
- Lift New Rickstones
 - Meets the most visits in the District
 - Located north of the area of second highest demand in the District
 - Located close to a large housing development in 2041
 - Most recently built and refurbished site, therefore, the most attractive educational site managed in-house
 - No scope to increase availability and capacity to reduce proportion of used capacity to a comfortable level

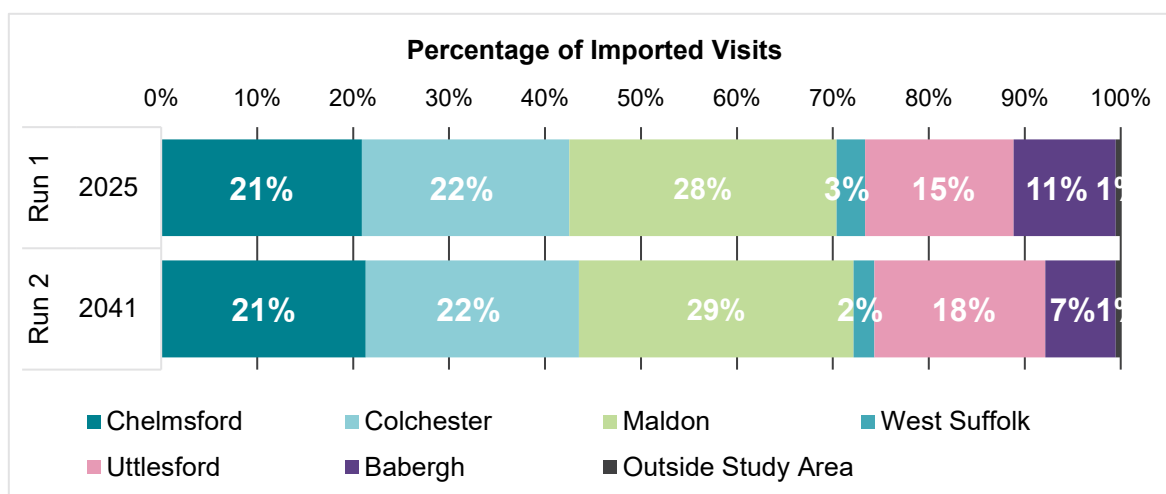
Imported Demand

Table 7.3: Imported Demand for Sports Halls in Braintree by Run

Imported Demand	Run 1	Run 2
Braintree	2025	2041
Number of visits imported in weekly peak period	1,067	1,210
Visits imported as a % of used capacity	11%	12%
Difference between visits imported and exported	-621	-604

- 7.5 Imported demand to Braintree's sports halls increases from 1,067 visits in the weekly peak period in 2025, to 1,210 visits in 2041. This equates to 11% of the used capacity of Braintree's sports halls at peak times in 2025, and 12% in 2041.
- 7.6 Braintree is a net exporter of visits, exporting 621 more visits in the weekly peak period than it imports in 2025, and 604 more visits in 2041.

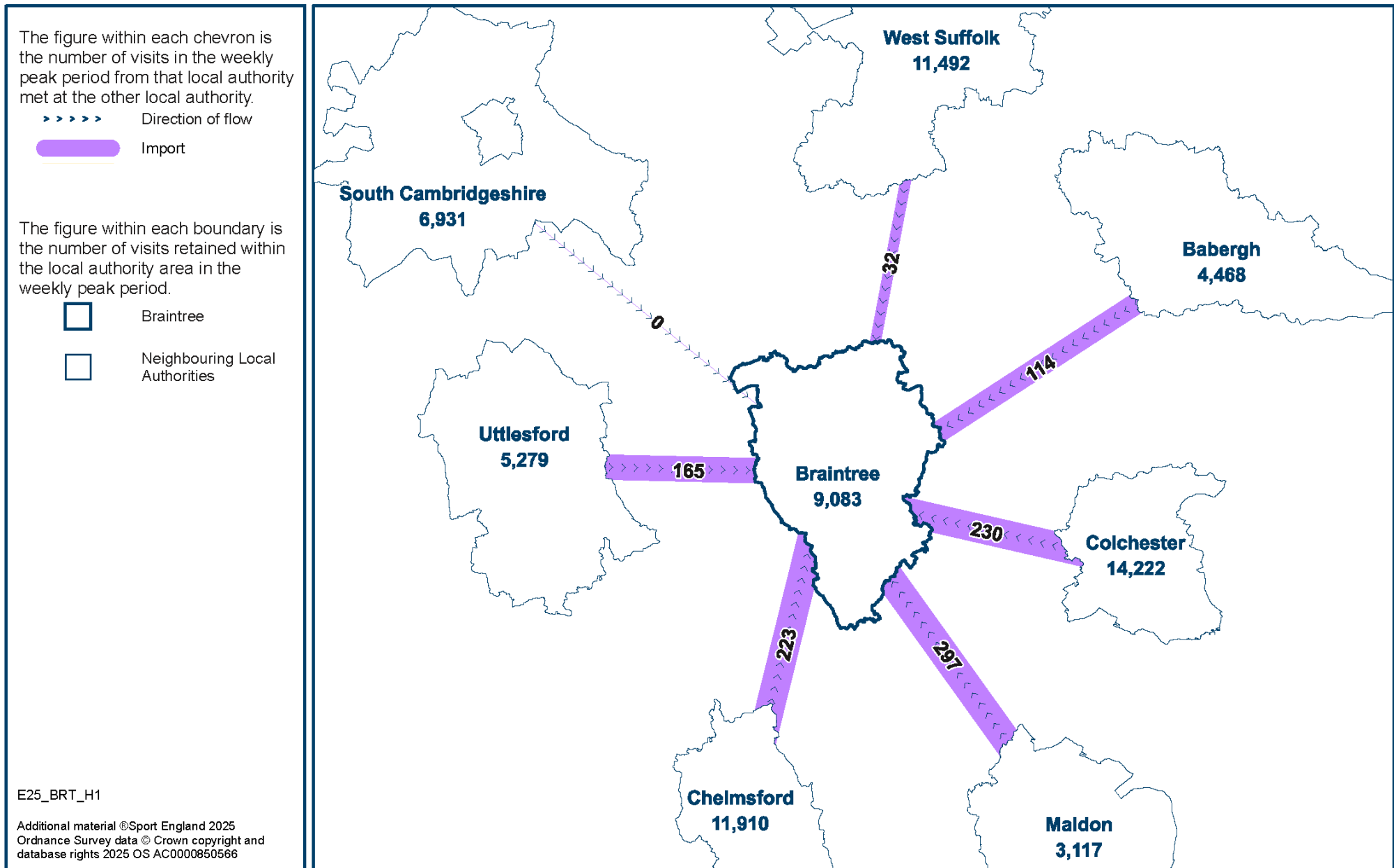
Chart 7.1: Proportion of Imported Visits by Origin and Run



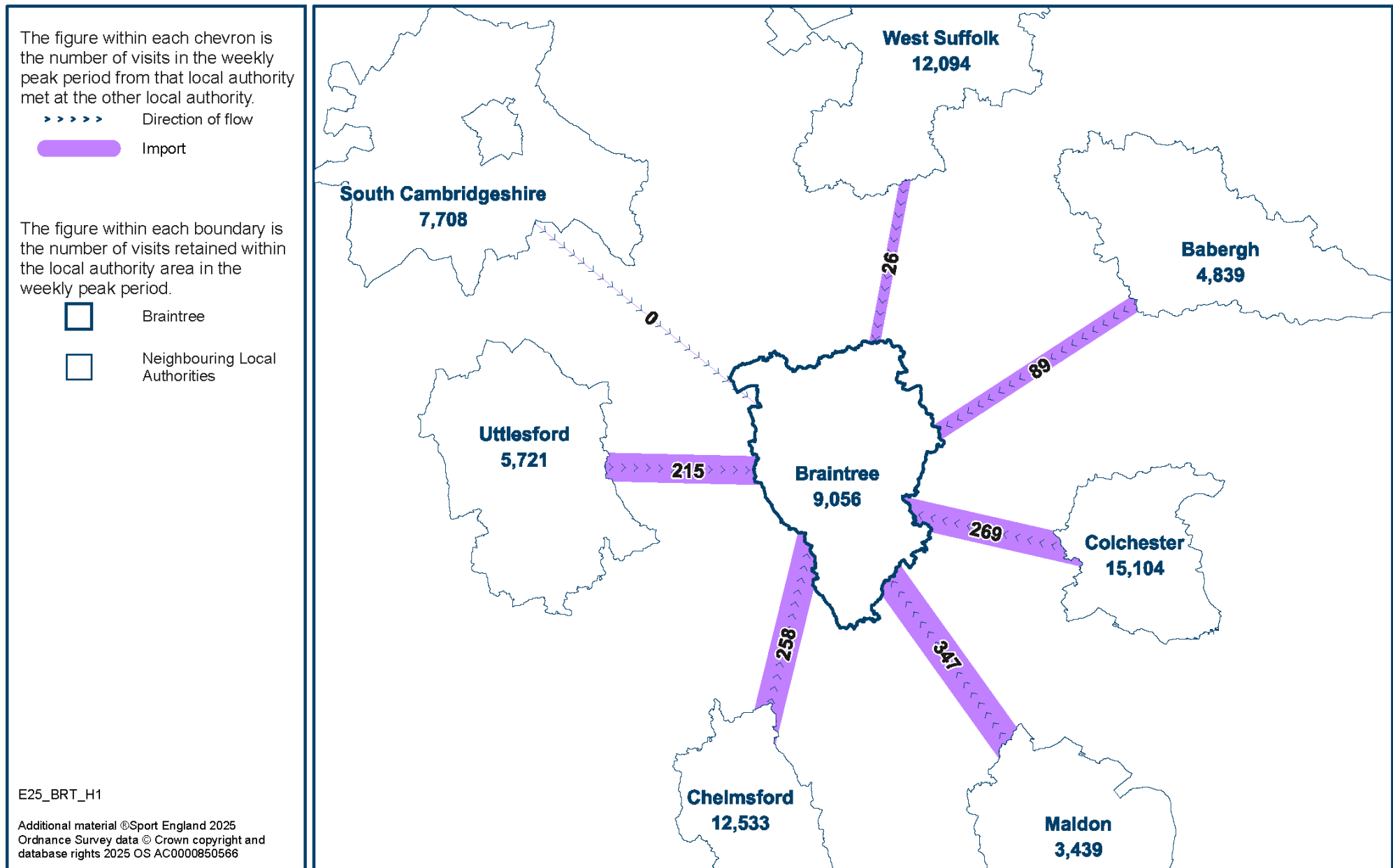
- 7.7 In 2025 the largest amount of imported demand comes from Maldon, equating to 28% of Braintree's imported demand and accounting for 297 visits in the weekly peak period (see Map 7.1). Two of Braintree's sites are close to the border with Maldon and are more attractive than the site in Maldon.
- 7.8 The second largest amount of imported demand is from Colchester, equating to 22% of Braintree's imported demand and accounting for 230 visits in the weekly peak period. Demand in Colchester is the highest in the study area and there are no sports hall sites in the northwest of Colchester.
- 7.9 Demand imported from Chelmsford accounts for 21% of Braintree's imported demand and equates to 223 visits in the weekly peak period.

- 7.10 In 2041, imported demand increases the most from Uttlesford and accounts for 215 visits in the weekly peak period (see Map **7.2**), which equates to 18% of Braintree's imported demand. Uttlesford has the largest percentage increase in demand across the study area.
- 7.11 Demand imported from Maldon increases to 347 visits in the weekly peak period and accounts for a larger proportion of Braintree's imported demand at 29%.

Map 7.1: Imported Demand for Sports Halls to Braintree in 2025 (Run 1)



Map 7.2: Imported Demand for Sports Halls to Braintree in 2041 (Run 2)



8 LOCAL SHARE OF FACILITIES

Braintree has the joint lowest provision of total water space per population in the study area with Maldon in 2025 and the third lowest in 2041. Braintree's provision is lower than the regional and national averages in both years.

Chelmsford has the best provision in the study area in both years.

Table 8.1: Local Share of Sports Halls in Braintree by Run

Local Share	Run 1	Run 2
Braintree	2025	2041
Local share of sports halls relative to demand in local area: <1 = poorer, >1 = better	0.62	0.44

Definition of local share – This helps show which areas have a better or worse share of facility provision. It considers the size, availability and quality of facilities, and travel modes. Local share is useful for looking at 'equity' of provision. Local share is the available capacity that people want to visit in an area (considering deprivation), divided by the demand for that capacity in the area. Local share decreases as facilities age.

- 8.1 Local share shows how access and share of sports halls differs across the local authority area, as follows:
- A value of 1 means that there is sufficient suitable supply reachable by the demand
 - A value of less than 1 indicates a shortage of suitable supply that can be reached by the demand
 - A value greater than 1 indicates a surplus of suitable supply that can be reached by the demand
- 8.2 Overall, local share identifies the areas of the local authority where the share of sports halls is better and worse. The intervention is to try and increase access for residents in the areas with the poorest access to sports halls.
- 8.3 Local share is poor in 2025, at 0.62, and decreases to 0.44 in 2041 because of the increase in demand, and the ageing and decreased attractiveness of the sports halls. In both years, there is insufficient suitable provision that Braintree's demand can access.

Geographical Distribution of Local Share

2025

- 8.4 In 2025 local share is best in Halstead and Earls Colne, at 0.9. (light green squares in Map 8.1). Demand is quite high in Halstead but lower in Earls Colne. There are three sports halls in the area, including Halstead Leisure Centre, which is the most attractive site in the District, and Gosford School and Earls Colne Recreation Club, which are underutilised.

- 8.5 Local share is poorest in Foxearth at 0.4 (orange squares). Two of the nearest sports hall sites to Foxearth are in Babergh. Both are old sites with low availability in the weekly peak period. Local share is poor in the northwest of the District at 0.5 (orange squares). Local share is poorer to the north of this area in West Suffolk.
- 8.6 Local share is poor in Witham at 0.5 (orange squares). Demand is high in Witham and the two educational sites are highly utilised.

2041

- 8.7 In 2041 local share is best in Gosfield and East Colne at 0.6 (yellow squares in Map 8.2). Demand is low in these areas, but both locations have a sports hall, which is underutilised.
- 8.8 Local share remains poorest in Foxearth and in the northwest of the District but is lower at 0.3 (red squares) due to the aging of facilities and increase in demand in the neighbouring local authorities.
- 8.9 Local share is poor in the south of the District at 0.4 (orange squares). Demand increases with the large housing growth sites and supply is unchanged.

Comparative Measure of Provision

- 8.10 A comparative measure of sports hall provision is the total number of badminton court equivalents per 10,000 population.

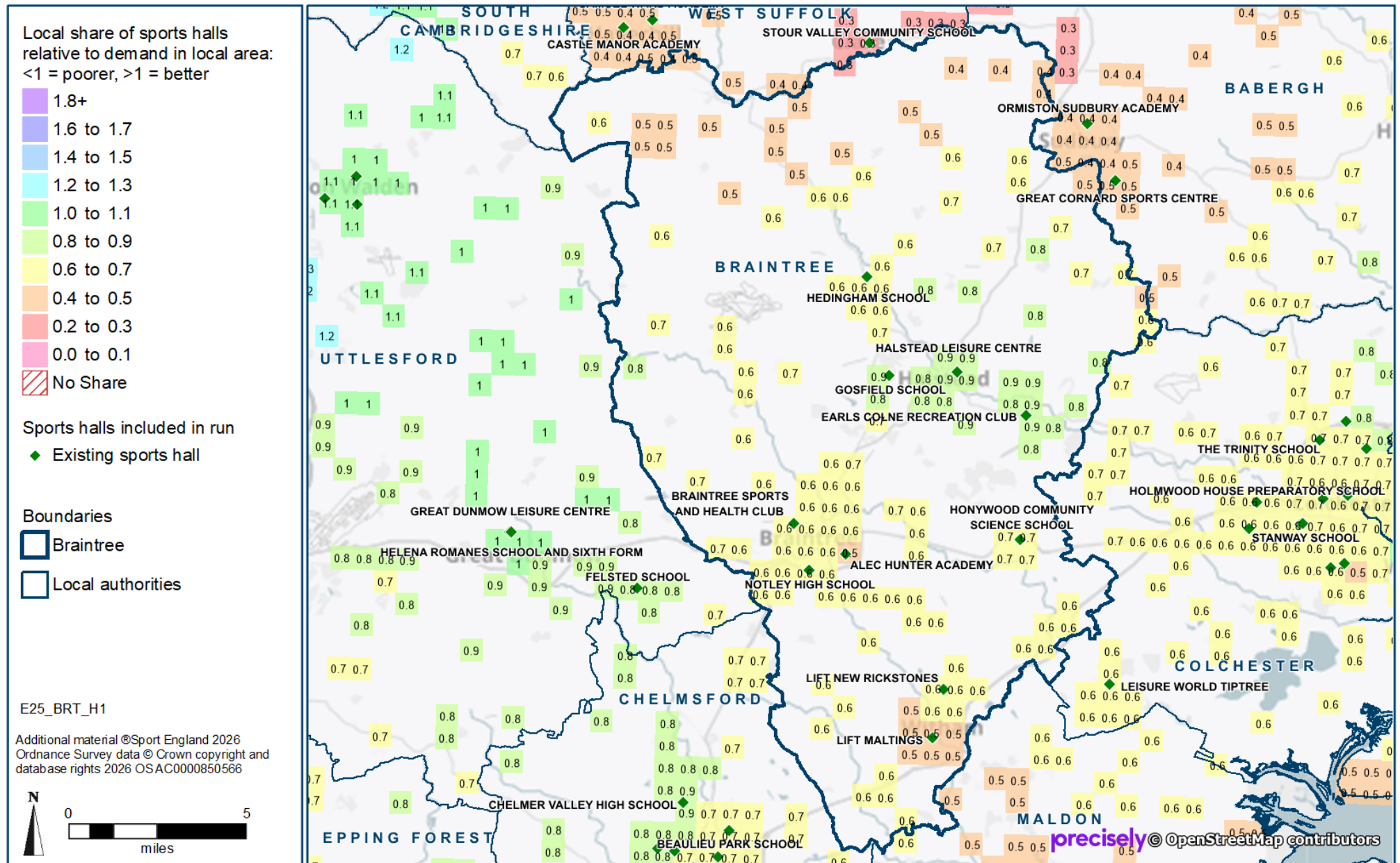
Table 8.2: Badminton Court Equivalents per 10,000 Population by Area and Run

Courts per 10,000 Population	Run 1	Run 2
Area	2025	2041
Braintree	3.4	3.3
South Cambridgeshire	3.8	3.4
Chelmsford	5.0	4.6
Colchester	4.4	4.0
Maldon	3.4	3.0
Uttlesford	3.6	3.1
Babergh	4.4	3.9
West Suffolk	3.9	3.6
East Region	3.9	3.6
England	3.9	3.7

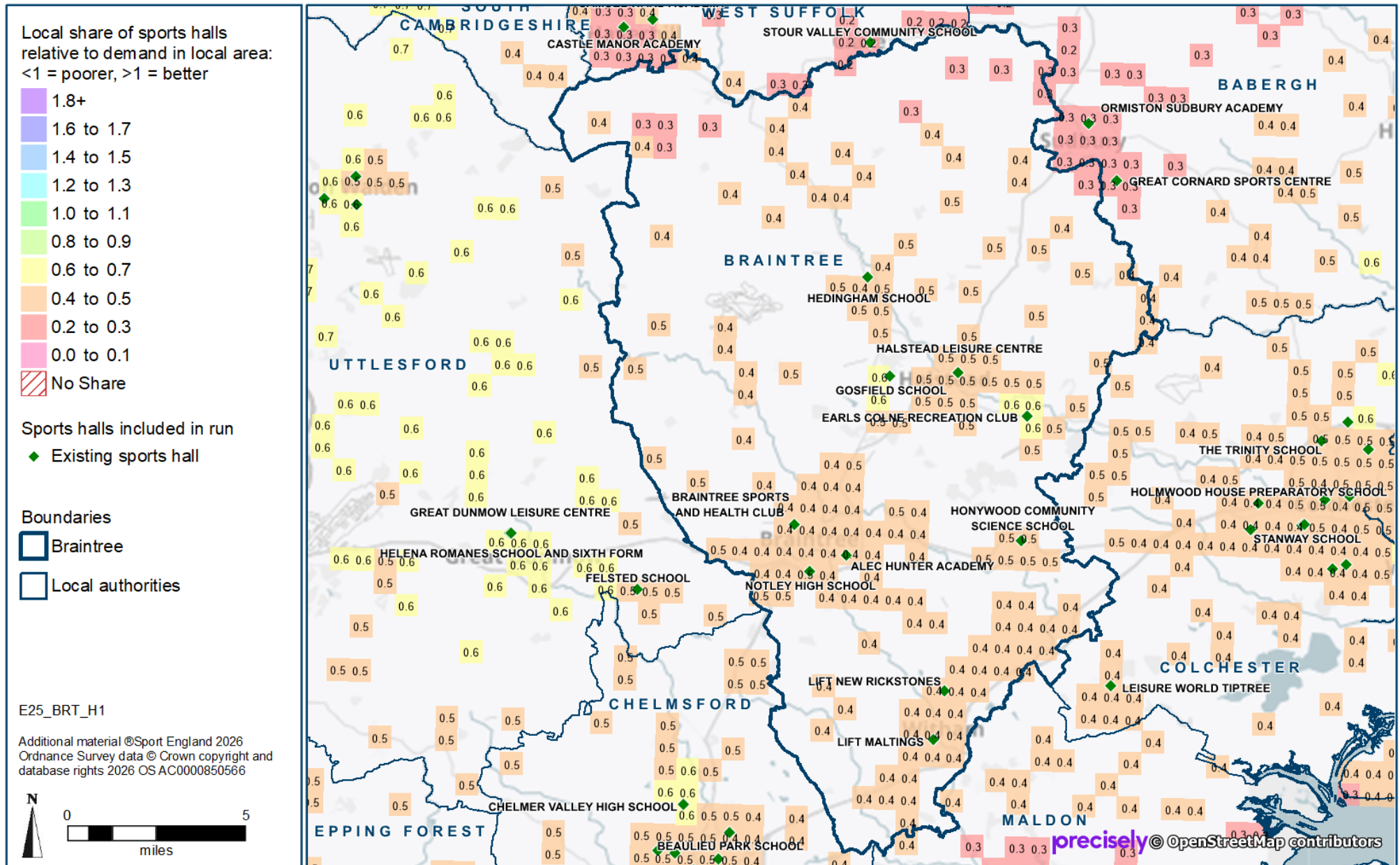
- 8.11 Braintree has the joint poorest provision with Maldon in the study area at 3.4 courts per 10,000 population in 2025. This is lower than the regional and national averages, which are both 3.9 courts.
- 8.12 The number of courts per 10,000 population decreases across the study area and nationally from 2025 to 2041 because of the increase in population and no change in supply.

- 8.13 Braintree's provision is 3.3 courts per 10,000 population in 2041, which is the third lowest in the study area. It remains lower than the regional and national averages of 3.6 courts and 3.7 courts, respectively.
- 8.14 Chelmsford has the best provision in the study area, at 5.0 courts per 10,000 population in 2025, and 4.6 courts in 2041.
- 8.15 **The findings on badminton courts per 10,000 population are set out because some local authorities like to compare their quantitative provision with that elsewhere; however, this does not set a standard of provision, and should not be used as such.**
- 8.16 The supply and demand assessment for sports halls in Braintree is based on the findings from the previous six headings analysed in this report.

Map 8.1: Local Share of Sports Halls in 2025 (Run 1)



Map 8.2: Local Share of Sports Halls in 2041 (Run 2)



APPENDIX 1: FACILITIES EXCLUDED

The audit excludes facilities that are deemed to be either for private use, too small, closed or there is a lack of information, particularly relating to hours of use. The following facilities were deemed to fall under one or more of these categories and therefore excluded from the modelling:

Site	Facility Type	Reason for Exclusion
Black Notley Community Association	Activity	Principal hall too small
Bocking United Services Club	Activity	Principal hall too small
Bramston Sports Centre (Closed)	Main	Closed
	Activity	Closed
Colchester Institute (Braintree Campus)	Main	Closed
Feering Community Centre	Activity	Principal hall too small
Glebe Community Hall	Activity	Principal hall too small
Great Bardfield Primary School	Activity	Principal hall too small
Hatfield Peveral Village Hall	Activity	Principal hall too small
Hedingham School	Activity	Closed
Holy Trinity Primary School	Activity	Principal hall too small
Honywood Community Science School	Activity	Closed
Howbridge Church of England Junior School	Activity	Private use
Rayne Village Hall	Activity	Principal hall too small
Silver End Academy	Activity	Private use
The Salings Millennium Hall and Playing Field	Activity	Principal hall too small
Towerlands Park (Closed)	Main	Closed

APPENDIX 2: FACILITIES IN NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS INCLUDED IN THE ASSESSMENT

Site	Provider	Facility Type	Dimensions (m)	Area (sqm)	Year Built	Year Refurb
South Cambridgeshire						
Anglian Leisure Linton	Educational (in-house)	3-court	27 x 18	486	1992	2014
		Activity	18 x 18	324		
Anglian Leisure Sawston	Educational (in-house)	3-court	27 x 18	486	1970	2004
		Activity	19 x 17	323		
Bassingbourn Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	2008	
Cambourne Fitness and Sports Centre	Public	4-court	33 x 18	594	2011	
Cambourne Village College	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18.2	600.6	2016	
		Activity	17 x 9	153		
Cambridge Regional College Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34 x 18	612	2009	
		4-court	32 x 18	576		
Comberton Village College	Educational (in-house)	4-court	32.4 x 18	583	1980	2005
		Activity	18 x 17	306		
Cottenham Village College	Educational (in-house)	3-court	27 x 18	486	1980	
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
Impington Village College and Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34 x 20	680	1995	
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
Northstowe Secondary College	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	2019	
Swavesey Village College Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	2015	
		2-court	27 x 18	486		
Chelmsford						
Anglia Ruskin University The Old Factory Gym and Mildmay Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	2005	
Beaulieu Park School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	2019	
Boswells School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	2002	2009
		Activity	18 x 17	306		
Chelmer Valley High School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	1955	2012
		Activity	25 x 17	425		
Chelmsford County High School for Girls	Educational (in-house)	4-court	36 x 18	648	2021	
Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre	Public	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	2002	2015
Dovedale Sports Centre	Educational (3rd party)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	1974	2002
Great Baddow High School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	1972	2012
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
Hylands School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1985	
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
King Edward VI Grammar School	Educational (in-house)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	2018	
Moulsham High School	Educational (in-house)	3-court	27 x 18	486	1985	
Riverside Leisure Centre (Chelmsford)	Public	6-court	34.5 x 27	932	1986	2019

South Woodham Ferrers Leisure Centre	Public	4-court	33 x 18	594	1982
		Activity	18 x 17	306	
St John Payne Catholic School	Educational (in-house)	6-court	34.5 x 27	932	2011
		Activity	17 x 18	306	
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
The Sandon School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1972 1998
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
Colchester					
Colchester County High School For Girls	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	2018
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
Colchester Leisure World	Public	6-court	34.5 x 27	932	1991
		5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	
Colchester Sports Park At Northern Gateway	Public	5-court	40 x 20	800	2020
Corporal Budd VC Gymnasium	Other (sport club)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	2008
		3-court	27 x 18	486	
Holmwood House Preparatory School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	2010
Leisure World Highwoods	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	1985
Leisure World Tiptree	Educational (3rd party)	4-court	33 x 18	594	1977 2004
		Activity	19 x 17	323	
St Benedicts Catholic College	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	1997
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
St Helena School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1938 2005
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
Stanway School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	1987 2018
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
The Thomas Lord Audley School	Educational (in-house)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	1975 2008
The Trinity School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	2023
University Of Essex Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	8-court	60 x 34.5	2070	2018
		6-court	35 x 25	875	
Maldon					
Dengie Hundred Sports Centre	Public	5-court	45 x 18	810	1983 2015
		Activity	17 x 9	153	
Ormiston Rivers Academy	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1990
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
Plume, Maldon's Community Academy	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1975
		Activity	18 x 17	306	
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
Uttlesford					
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	2001 2023
		Activity	18 x 10	180	
Dame Bradbury School	Educational (in-house)	3-court	30 x 18	540	2003

Felsted School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	32 x 19	608	1978	2023
		2-court	27 x 18	486		
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	Other (pay & play)	4-court	29.7 x 20	594	2003	2023
Helena Romanes School And Sixth Form	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 20	660	2018	
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Public	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1984	2019
Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	Other (pay & play)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	2003	
Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33 x 18	594	2000	
Babergh						
East Bergholt High School & Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	4-court	33.6 x 18.4	618	1958	2014
		Activity	20 x 12	240		
Great Cornard Sports Centre	Educational (in-house)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	1973	
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
Hadleigh High School	Educational (3rd party)	4-court	33.6 x 18.4	618	1965	
		Activity	24 x 10	240		
Ipswich High School	Educational (in-house)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	2002	
Ormiston Sudbury Academy	Other (sport club)	5-court	40.5 x 20	810	1970	2010
Royal Hospital School Holbrook	Educational (in-house)	5-court	40.6 x 21.35	867	1933	2006
Suffolk One	Educational (in-house)	6-court	33 x 27	891	2010	
West Suffolk						
Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre	Public	4-court	34.5 x 18	621	1975	2006
Castle Manor Academy	Educational (in-house)	3-court	27 x 18	486	1975	
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
County Upper School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1960	2004
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
Culford Sports And Tennis Centre	Educational (in-house)	5-court	39 x 22	858	1992	
David Lloyd (Bury St Edmunds)	Commercial	3-court	27 x 18	486	2024	
Dome Leisure Centre	Educational (3rd party)	4-court	35 x 20	700	1984	
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
King Edward VI School	Educational (in-house)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1972	2005
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
Mildenhall Hub	Public	4-court	33 x 18	594	2021	
Newmarket Leisure Centre	Educational (3rd party)	4-court	32 x 18	576	2009	
		Activity	17 x 9	153		
RAF Honington	Other (sport club)	4-court	34.5 x 20	690	1995	2009
Samuel Ward Academy	Educational (in-house)	8-court	45 x 35	1575	2012	
		3-court	27 x 18	486		
		Activity	18 x 10	180		
Skyliner Sports Centre	Educational (3rd party)	4-court	33 x 18	594	2017	
Stour Valley Community School	Educational (in-house)	3-court	27 x 18	486	1956	2011

APPENDIX 3: MODEL DESCRIPTION, INCLUSION CRITERIA AND MODEL PARAMETERS

Included within this Appendix are the following:

- Model Description
- Facility Inclusion Criteria
- Model Parameters

Model Description

1 Background

- 1.1 The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) is a computer-based supply/demand model, which has been developed by Edinburgh University in conjunction with **sportscotland** and Sport England since the 1980s.
- 1.2 The model is a tool for helping to assess the strategic provision of community sports facilities in an area. It is currently applicable for use in assessing the provision of the following facilities that Sport England holds substantial demand data for:
- sports halls
 - swimming pools
 - indoor bowls centres
 - artificial grass pitches (AGPs)

2 Use of FPM

- 2.1 The FPM is one of Sport England's principal tools and has been developed as a means for:
- Assessing the requirements for different types of community sports facilities on a local, regional and national scale.
 - Helping local authorities to determine an adequate level of sports facility provision to meet their local needs.
 - Helping to identify strategic gaps in the provision of sports facilities.
 - Comparing alternative options for planned provision, taking account of changes in demand and supply. This includes testing the impact of opening, relocating and closing facilities, and the likely impact of population changes on the need for sports facilities.
- 2.2 The FPM has been used in the assessment of Lottery funding bids for community facilities and as a principal planning tool to assist local authorities in planning for the provision of community sports facilities.

3 How the Model Works

- 3.1 In its simplest form, the model seeks to assess whether the capacity of existing facilities for a particular sport is capable of meeting local demand for that sport, considering how far people are prepared to travel to such a facility.
- 3.2 In order to do this, the model compares the capacity of facilities (supply) within an area against the demand for that facility from the local population, similar to other social gravity models.
- 3.3 To do this, the FPM converts both demand (in terms of people) and supply (facilities) into a single comparable unit. This unit is 'visits in the weekly peak period'. Once converted, demand and supply can be compared.
- 3.4 The FPM uses a set of parameters to define how facilities are used and by whom. These parameters are primarily derived from a combination of data, including actual user surveys from a range of sites across the country in areas of good supply, together with participation survey data. These surveys provide core information on the profile of users such as their age and gender, how often they visit, the distance travelled, duration of stay, as well as information on the facilities themselves such as programming, peak times of use and capacity of facilities.
- 3.5 This survey information is combined with other data sources to provide a set of model parameters for each facility type. The original core user data for halls and pools comes from the National Halls and Pools survey undertaken in 1996. This data previously formed the basis for the National Benchmarking Service. For AGPs, the core data used comes from the user survey of AGPs carried out in 2005/06 jointly with **sportscotland**.
- 3.6 User survey data from the National Benchmarking Service and other appropriate sources are used to update the model's parameters on a regular basis. The parameters are set out at the end of the document, and the main data sources analysed are:
 - Active Lives:
 - For the adult survey, this data is collected by an online survey or paper questionnaire on behalf of Sport England. Each annual sample includes approximately 175,000 people and covers the full age/gender range. Detailed questions are asked about over 200 separate sport categories in terms of participation and frequency.
 - For the children and young people survey, this data is collected through schools, with up to three mixed ability classes in up to three randomly chosen year groups completing an online survey.
 - National Benchmarking Service (now ceased):
 - This was a centre-based survey whose primary purpose was to enable centres to benchmark themselves against other centres. Sample interviews were conducted on site. The number of people surveyed varied by year depending on how many centres took part. Approximately 10,000 swimmers and 3,500 sports hall users were surveyed per year. This data was used for journey

times, establishing proportions of particular activities in different hall types, the duration of activities and the time of activity (peak period).

- Moving Communities Customer Experience Survey:
 - Annual online survey distributed by participating local authorities and operators via email. Email invites are sent to any member or customer on their database who has attended their leisure centre in the last 3 months. The results inform the travel mode that residents use to access facilities.
- Scottish Health:
 - Annual survey of approximately 6,600 people (just under 5,000 adults). This data is primarily used to assess participation, frequency and activity duration.

3.7 Other data is used where available. For example, the following data sources are among those that have been used to cross-check results:

- Children's Participation in Culture and Sport, Scottish Government, 2008
- Young People's Participation in Sport, Sports Council for Wales, 2009
- Health and Social Care Information Centre, Lifestyle Statistics, 2012
- Young People and Sport, Sport England, 2002
- Data from Angus Council, 2013/14
- National Pools and Halls Survey, 1996
 - This survey was used to obtain capacities per sports hall for differing sport types for programming data.

4 Calculating Demand

- 4.1 Demand is calculated by applying the user information from the parameters, as referred to above, to the population¹. This produces the number of visits for that facility that will be demanded by the population.
- 4.2 Depending on the age and gender composition of the population, this will affect the number of visits an area will generate. In order to reflect the different population profiles of the country, the FPM calculates demand based on the smallest census groupings. These are output areas (OAs)².
- 4.3 The use of OAs in the calculation of demand ensures that the FPM is able to reflect and portray differences in demand in areas at the most sensitive level based on available census

¹ For example, it is estimated that 7.72% of 16-24 year old males will demand to use an AGP 1.67 times a week. This calculation is done separately for the 12 age/gender groupings.

² Census OAs are the smallest grouping of census population data and provide the population information on which the FPM's demand parameters are applied. A demand figure can then be calculated for each OA based on the population profile. There are over 178,600 OAs in England. An OA has a target value of 125 households per OA.

information. Each OA used is given a demand value in visits in the weekly peak period by the FPM.

5 Calculating Supply Capacity

5.1 A facility's capacity varies depending on the following factors:

- Its size (area of pool or hall, number of pitches or rinks)
- How many hours the facility is available for use by the community in the weekly peak period
- How many visits can be accommodated by the facility at any one time (pools = 1 user/6 sqm, main halls/barns = 8 users/court, activity halls/studios = 15 users/court, AGPs = 28 users/pitch, indoor bowls = 6 users/rink)

5.2 The FPM calculates the maximum number of visits that a facility can accommodate, which gives it a theoretical capacity in visits in the weekly peak period.

5.3 Based on travel time information (see Travel Time section) taken from the user surveys, the FPM then calculates how much demand would be met by the facility, having regard to its capacity and how much demand can travel to the facility. The FPM includes an important feature of spatial interaction. This feature takes account of the location and capacity of all the facilities, having regard to their access and the size of demand, and assesses whether the facilities are in the right place to meet the demand.

5.4 It is important to note that the FPM does not simply add up the total demand within an area and compare that to the total supply within the same area. This approach would not take account of the spatial aspect of supply against demand in a particular area. For example, if an area has a total demand for five facilities and there are currently six facilities within the area, it would be too simplistic to conclude that there is an over-supply of one facility as this approach would not take account of whether the five facilities are in the correct location for local people to use them within that area. It may be that all the facilities are in one part of the local authority area, leaving other areas under-provided. An assessment of this kind would not reflect the true picture of provision. The FPM is able to assess supply and demand within an area based on the needs of the population within that area.

5.5 In making calculations as to supply and demand, visits made to sports facilities are not artificially restricted or calculated by reference to administrative boundaries, such as local authority areas. Users are generally expected to use their closest facility. The FPM reflects this through analysing the location of demand against the location of facilities, allowing for cross-boundary movement of visits. For example, if a facility is on the boundary of a local authority, users will generally be expected to come from the population living close to the facility, but who may be in a neighbouring authority.

6 Calculating the Capacity of Sports Halls – Badminton Court Equivalents

6.1 The capacity of sports halls is calculated in the same way as described above, with each sports hall site having a capacity in visits in the weekly peak period. In order for this capacity to be meaningful, these visits are converted into the equivalent of main hall badminton

courts. This 'court' figure is often mistakenly read as being the same as the number of 'marked courts' at the sports halls in the Active Places data, but it is not the same. There will usually be a difference between this figure and the number of 'marked courts' in Active Places.

6.2 The reason for this is that the badminton court equivalents are of all the main and activity halls' capacities; this is calculated based on hall size (area) and whether it is a main hall or an activity hall. This gives a more accurate reflection of the overall capacity of the halls than simply using the 'marked courts' figure, for two reasons:

- In calculating the capacity of halls, the model uses a different at-one-time parameter for main halls and for activity halls. Activity halls have a greater at-one-time capacity than main halls. Marked courts can sometimes not properly reflect the size of the actual main hall. For example, a hall may be marked out with four courts, when it has space for three courts. As the model uses the 'courts' as a unit of size, it is important that the hall's capacity is included as a 'three-court unit' rather than a 'four-court unit'.
- It is often difficult to visualise how much hall space there is when expressed as visits in the weekly peak period. To make things more meaningful, this capacity is converted back into badminton court equivalents and is noted in the output tables as hall space in courts.

7 Facility Attractiveness – for Halls and Pools Only

7.1 Not all facilities are the same, and users will find certain facilities more attractive to use than others. The model attempts to reflect this by introducing an attractiveness weighting factor, which affects the way visits are distributed between facilities. Attractiveness, however, is very subjective. Currently weightings are only used for sports hall and swimming pool modelling.

7.2 Attractiveness weightings are based on the following:

- Age and refurbishment weighting (pools and halls): The older a facility is, the less attractive it will be to users. It is recognised that this is a general assumption and that there may be examples where older facilities are more attractive than newly built ones due to excellent local management, programming and sports development. Additionally, the date of any significant refurbishment is also included within the weighting factor; however, here attractiveness is set lower than a new build of the same year. It is assumed that a refurbishment that is older than 20 years will have a minimal impact on the facility's attractiveness. The information on year built/refurbished is taken from Active Places. A graduated curve is used to allocate the attractiveness weighting by year. This curve levels off at 70 years old with a 20% weighting. The refurbishment weighting is slightly lower than the new built year equivalent.
- Management and ownership weighting (halls only): Due to the large number of halls being provided by the education sector, an assumption is made that these halls will generally not provide as balanced a programme as halls run by local authorities, trusts, etc, with school halls more likely to be used by teams and groups through block booking. A less balanced programme is assumed to be less attractive to a general

pay-and-play user than a standard local authority leisure centre sports hall with a wider range of activities on offer.

7.3 To reflect this, two weighting curves are used:

- High weighted curve – includes non-education management (third party) and a more balanced programme, therefore more attractive
- Lower weighted curve – includes educational halls managed in-house, therefore less attractive

7.4 Commercial facilities (halls and pools): While there are relatively few sports halls provided by the commercial sector, an additional weighting factor is incorporated within the model to reflect the cost element often associated with commercial facilities. For each population OA, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score is used to limit whether people will use commercial facilities. The assumption is that the higher the IMD score (less affluence), the less likely the population of the OA would choose to go to a commercial facility.

7.5 The English Indices of Deprivation 2019, produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, measure relative levels of deprivation in 32,844 lower super output areas in England. IMD is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their relative weights.

8 Used Capacity

8.1 Used capacity refers to how much of a facility's theoretical capacity is being used. At first this can appear to be unrealistically low, with local authority figures being in the 50-60% region. Without any further explanation, it would appear that facilities are half empty. The key point is not to see a facility's theoretical maximum capacity (100%) as being an optimum position. In practice this would mean that a facility would need to be completely full every hour it was open during the peak period. This would be both unrealistic from an operational perspective and undesirable from a user's perspective, as the facility would be completely full.

8.2 For example, a 25m four-lane pool has a theoretical capacity of 2,260 visits per week during a 52.5-hour peak period. Usage of a pool will vary throughout the evening, with some sessions being busier than others through programming, such as an aqua aerobics session between 19:00 and 20:00 and lane swimming between 20:00 and 21:00 (see table below). Other sessions will be quieter, such as between 21:00 and 22:00. This pattern of use would mean a total of 143 swims taking place. However, the pool's maximum theoretical capacity is 264 visits throughout the evening. In this instance the pool's used capacity for the evening would be 54%.

Visits per hour	16:00-17:00	17:00-18:00	18:00-19:00	19:00-20:00	20:00-21:00	21:00-22:00	Total visits for the evening
Theoretical maximum capacity	44	44	44	44	44	44	264
Actual usage	8	30	35	50	15	5	143
% of capacity used	18%	68%	80%	114%	34%	11%	54%

9 Comfort Factor – Halls and Pools

- 9.1 If the facilities were full to their theoretical capacity, there would simply not be the space to undertake the activity comfortably. In addition, there is a need to take account of a range of activities taking place which have different numbers of users; for example, aqua aerobics will have significantly more participants than lane swimming sessions. Additionally, there may be times and sessions that, while being within the peak period, are less busy and so will have fewer users.
- 9.2 To account for these factors the notion of a 'comfort factor' is applied within the model. For swimming pools, 70%, and for sports halls, 80%, of their theoretical capacity is considered as indicating where a facility starts to become uncomfortably busy. This should be seen only as a guide to help flag when facilities are becoming busier, rather than as a 'hard threshold'.
- 9.3 The comfort factor is also used to increase the capacity needed to comfortably meet unmet demand. If this comfort factor is not applied, then any facilities provided will be operating at their maximum theoretical capacity, which is not desirable as previously noted.
- 9.4 The comfort factor is not applied to AGPs due to the fact they are predominantly used by teams that have a set number of players, therefore, the notion of having a 'less busy' pitch is not applicable.

10 Travel Times

- 10.1 The model includes three different modes of travel:
- driving
 - walking and wheeling
 - public transport and cycling
- 10.2 Car access is also considered. In areas where there is less access to a car, the model reduces the number of visits made by car and increases those made on foot for shorter journeys and public transport for longer journeys.
- 10.3 Overall, surveys have shown that most visits to swimming pools, sports halls and AGPs are made by driving, with a significant minority of visits to facilities being made on foot.

Facility	Driving	Walking	Public Transport	Cycling
Swimming Pool	74%	18%	4%	4%
Sports Hall	76%	19%	2%	3%
AGP Combined	79%	18%	3%	unknown
AGP Football	74%	22%	4%	
AGP Hockey	97%	2%	1%	

- 10.4 The model includes a distance decay function where the further a user is from a facility, the less likely they will travel. Set out below is the survey data with the percentage of visits made

within each of the travel times. This shows that almost 90% of all visits, both by car and on foot, are made within 20 minutes. Hence, 20 minutes is often used as a rule of thumb for the coverage for sports halls and swimming pools.

Minutes	Swimming Pools		Sport Halls	
	Drive	Walk	Drive	Walk
0-10	56%	53%	54%	55%
11-20	35%	34%	36%	32%
21-30	7%	10%	7%	10%
31-45	2%	2%	2%	3%

- 10.5 For AGPs, there is a similar pattern to halls and pools, with hockey users observed as travelling slightly further (89% travel up to 30 minutes). Therefore, a 20-minute travel time can also be used for combined and football, and 30 minutes for hockey.

Minutes	AGP Combined		AGP Football		AGP Hockey	
	Drive	Walk	Drive	Walk	Drive	Walk
0-10	28%	38%	30%	32%	21%	60%
10-20	57%	48%	61%	50%	42%	40%
20-40	14%	12%	9%	15%	31%	0%

NOTE: These are approximate figures and should only be used as a guide

- 10.6 Ordnance Survey's Multi-Modal Network with average speed data is used to calculate the off-peak drive times between facilities and the population, observing any one-way and turn restrictions that apply. These travel times have been validated against national survey work, and therefore are based on the actual travel patterns of users.
- 10.7 The network is also used to calculate walk times along paths and roads, excluding motorways and trunk roads. A standard walking speed of 3 mph is used for all journeys.
- 10.8 Due to the complexity of public transport timetables, public transport travel times in the model are assumed to be twice as long as driving times.
- 10.9 A cycling speed of 12 mph is used for roads and shared use cycleways, which is approximately half the average speed of driving in urban areas. A speed of 7.5 mph is used for tracks and off-road travel.

Facility Inclusion Criteria

Sports Halls

The following inclusion criteria were used for this analysis.

- Include all operational sports halls available for community use, ie, pay-and-play, membership, sports club/community association.
- Exclude all halls not available for community use, ie, private use.
- Exclude all halls where the main hall is less than 3 courts in size.
- Include all 'planned', 'under construction', and 'temporarily closed' facilities only where all data is available for inclusion.
- Where opening times are missing, availability is included based on similar facility types.
- Where the year built is missing, assume date 1975³.

Facilities over the border in Wales and Scotland included, as supplied by **sportscotland** and Sport Wales.

³ Choosing a date in the mid-1970s ensures that the facility is included, while not overestimating its impact within the run.

Model Parameters

Sports Halls Parameters

At-one-time Capacity	32 users per 4-court hall 15 users per 144 square meters of activity hall																											
Coverage Maps	Car: 20 minutes Walking: 1.6 km Public transport: 20 minutes at about half the speed of a car NOTE: Travel times are indicative, within the context of a distance decay function of the model																											
Duration	60 minutes																											
Percentage Participation	<table><tr><td>Age</td><td>0-15</td><td>16-24</td><td>25-34</td><td>35-44</td><td>45-59</td><td>60-79</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>21.7%</td><td>16.3%</td><td>12.9%</td><td>10.8%</td><td>9.2%</td><td>6.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>24.7%</td><td>16.8%</td><td>15.1%</td><td>13.6%</td><td>13.5%</td><td>10.7%</td></tr></table>							Age	0-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60-79	Male	21.7%	16.3%	12.9%	10.8%	9.2%	6.4%	Female	24.7%	16.8%	15.1%	13.6%	13.5%	10.7%
Age	0-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60-79																						
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Frequency per Week	<table><tr><td>Age</td><td>0-15</td><td>16-24</td><td>25-34</td><td>35-44</td><td>45-59</td><td>60-79</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>0.60</td><td>0.96</td><td>0.88</td><td>0.80</td><td>0.94</td><td>1.02</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>0.65</td><td>1.20</td><td>1.14</td><td>1.01</td><td>1.11</td><td>0.96</td></tr></table>							Age	0-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60-79	Male	0.60	0.96	0.88	0.80	0.94	1.02	Female	0.65	1.20	1.14	1.01	1.11	0.96
Age	0-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60-79																						
Male	0.60	0.96	0.88	0.80	0.94	1.02																						
Female	0.65	1.20	1.14	1.01	1.11	0.96																						
Peak Period	Weekday: 9:00 to 10:00, 17:00 to 22:00 Weekend: 08:00 to 16:00 Total: 46.0 hours																											
Proportion in Peak Period	62%																											

Executive Summary of Sport England Facilities Planning Model: Sports Halls Provisions 2026-2041

Key findings

The evidence suggests the Council's should **not** be building additional sports halls. With 97% of demand already being met and very low unmet demand, the network has sufficient overall capacity to meet demand through to 2041 providing it maintains the current offer.

87% of the Sports Halls Provisions come from educational settings and priorities should focus on protecting Community Use Agreements as well as modernising and maximising existing provision.

Portfolio Age Profile:

Measure	2025	2041
Average age of all sports hall sites	39 years	55 years
Average age of public leisure centres	21 years	37 years

The sports hall estate is ageing significantly, with the average age increasing by 16 years between 2025 and 2041 because no major replacement facilities are assumed within the model.

Site-by-Site Asset Age:

Facility	Built	Refurbished	Age in 2025	Age in 2041
Halstead Leisure Centre	2004	2014	21	37
Braintree Sports & Health Club (Tabor)	1992	-	33	49
Alec Hunter Academy	1960	-	65	81
Gosfield School	1998	-	27	43
Hedingham School	1965	2016	60	76
Honywood Community Science School	1960	-	65	81
Lift Maltings	2011	-	14	30
Lift New Rickstones (new hall)	2012	2023	13	29

Lift New Rickstones (older hall)	1985	2023	40	56
Notley High School (main hall)	1974	2008	51	67
Earls Colne Recreation Club	1985	-	40	56

Recommendations for protecting modernising and maximising existing provision

1: Protect Community Access to School Sports Halls

- 86% of sports hall capacity comes from the education sector.
- Notley High School alone provides 22% of all available capacity.
- Most of the district's provision relies on schools continuing to make facilities available to the community.

Key actions

- Secure Community Use Agreements (CUAs).
- Monitor actual community access.
- Strengthen relationships with schools and academy trusts.
- Protect community use through planning policy.

Why this matters: Losing access to even one major school site would have a greater impact than any increase in population growth.

2: Invest in Halstead Leisure Centre

Halstead Leisure Centre is the district's clearest pressure point:

- Operating at 100% capacity in both 2025 and 2041 forecasts.
- Located within one of the district's highest demand areas.
- Already available for the full peak period, so capacity cannot be increased through longer opening hours.

Investment priorities

- Refurbishment and lifecycle replacement.
- Improving customer experience.
- Energy efficiency upgrades.
- Maintaining attractiveness versus competing facilities.

Why this matters: Protect the long-term viability of the only major public leisure centre serving the northern part of the district.

3: Invest in Braintree Sports and Health Club

This is the most significant opportunity identified in the report

- Operating at 100% capacity in both 2025 and 2041 forecasts.
- Located in the highest demand area in the district (Braintree town)
- Any reduction in availability would create immediate pressure elsewhere.
- Available for the full peak period, giving maximum access for clubs and community users.

Investment priorities

July 2027

- Refurbishment and lifecycle replacement.
- Improving customer experience.
- Energy efficiency upgrades.
- Maintaining attractiveness versus competing facilities.

Why this matters: Protect the long-term viability of the major public leisure centre serving the most populated area of the district

4: Support Growth in Witham

Witham emerges throughout the study as an area requiring attention although the new Community Centre has not been included in the study.

- Second-highest concentration of demand (after Witham)
- High utilisation at Lift Maltings.
- Poor local share of provision.
- Significant housing growth planned.

Investment priorities

- Protect access at Lift New Rickstones.
- Understand the opportunities for Witham Community Centre

Why this matters: Ensure facility provision keeps pace with population growth.

Conclusion

The FPM evidence points towards a "*protect, modernise and optimise*" strategy rather than a "*build more facilities*" strategy. The Council should focus on:

1. Protecting access to school facilities.
2. Investing in Halstead Leisure Centre.
3. Investing in Braintree Sport and Health Club.
4. Supporting growth in Witham through realising new opportunities with Witham community Centre and Community Use Agreements

With an investment focus on:

- Flooring replacement.
- LED lighting.
- Changing facilities.
- Accessibility improvements.
- Decarbonisation measures.

This will address the main risks identified in the study whilst maximising the value of the existing sports hall network.