

CROYDON COUNCIL SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACILITIES STRATEGY 2018 - 2023



Delivering for Croydon

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FOREWORD

Our vision is to make Croydon a place where everyone lives a healthy lifestyle. The Sports and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy sets out our plans to enhance existing infrastructure and will guide future provision of facilities to best serve the Borough's communities.

Our ambition is to provide local and sustainable opportunities for people to get active, and support the growth in sport, recreation and fitness across Croydon.

We are a dynamic and diverse borough with changing needs. We face significant challenges in the future, including an ageing population, reduced public sector resources and an increased demand on our services; through working with a variety of partners, we will take forward and implement the recommendations within this strategy to facilitate the delivery of our ambitions.



Councillor Oliver Lewis
Cabinet Member for Culture,
Leisure and Sport

INTRODUCTION

This five-year strategy sets out Croydon's ambitions for its sports and physical activity facilities. These ambitions build on the findings and recommendations of two separate independent assessment reports that for the first time have provided a very clear understanding of the borough's facilities offer for both indoor and outdoor sports and physical activities.

This report should therefore be read with reference to these reports:

- London Borough of Croydon Indoor Facilities Assessment Report, Knight Kavanagh Page (2015)
- London Borough of Croydon Playing Pitch Strategy and Assessment (PPS), 4Global (2017)

The report is split by facility type, and divided into two sections, outdoor and indoor facilities, as follows:



For each of the above, the following information is provided:

- A current 'snapshot' of the facilities in the borough
- The supply of facilities in terms of quantity and quality
- The demand for the type of facilities
- What needs to be achieved over the next five years
- How we intend to achieve it

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Our leisure facilities are a vital way in which we deliver our liveability agenda. By this we mean creating a vibrant, welcoming place in which people want to live. A quality leisure offer means more people undertaking regular exercise, whilst gaining significant health and social benefits at the same time. Leisure facilities also create economic benefit, encouraging investment and creating jobs.



Through two recent studies, we have independently assessed both our indoor and outdoor facilities to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the sport and physical activity facilities offer, and where we need to make improvements. External consultants Knight Kavanagh Page have conducted an Indoor Facilities Assessment, completed in 2015, covering Swimming Pools, sports halls, fitness gyms, and specialist indoor facilities. External consultants 4Global have conducted a Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy, which has looked at facilities for Athletics, Bowls, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Rugby Union and Tennis.

Each assessment report has taken into consideration the following social trends in order to help determine how we develop our facilities:

- Croydon is a highly diverse borough and will continue to become more diverse. Our leisure facilities must be able to respond to this diversity;
- Croydon's population is set to increase by 5% over the next 15 years;
- The central part of Croydon will see the largest population growth, particularly the west of the borough.
- Demographically Croydon's age profile is also changing quickly
- will be between 30% and 70% more adults in every age category over 60 years old in 15 years' time, compared with 10% less children under 10;

Under both pieces of work, a core element has been to assess supply and demand within each facility type, taking into account the current demand and likely future demand based on the projected population changes highlighted above. The other core elements has been to assess to the quality of the facilities.

Both pieces of work have followed a methodology set by Sport England, and so represent robust analyses of the situation in Croydon.

SUMMARY

The following strategy takes the evidence and recommendations of both reports and develops this information into a core set of objectives that the Authority aims to achieve over the next 5 years. Fundamental to each set of objectives are the following core questions:

Is Croydon providing a high quality facilities offer for this sport or activity?

Is Croydon's current investment aligned to the interest and participation in the sport across the borough?

Are all borough residents able to access the facilities they want to use appropriately?

Is Croydon's current investment providing value for money?

Against these four questions, a number of headline findings have emerged from the two reports:

1. Croydon has a number of high-quality facilities across the borough, both council-owned and on other sites;
2. Croydon also has a number of facilities that have been independently rated as 'poor'. The ratio of good to poor facilities varies significantly, but for each facility type there a number of facilities in need of improvement;
3. There are significant mismatches in supply and demand, for example in the distribution of a single type of facility across the borough. This is most obviously the case in Football facilities;
4. There are significant variations in access to parts of the leisure offer across the borough, particularly access to pitch sports in the North of the borough.

The following sections provide a more detailed summary of the findings, along with a set of strategic objectives under each sport or physical activity type.



OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

ATHLETICS FACILITIES

Current snapshot of Croydon's Athletics facilities

Croydon's major Athletics offer is through Croydon Arena, with a secondary borough site at Woodcote School in the south of the borough (known as Track Coulsdon). These sites host the two major clubs, with Croydon Harriers using the Arena and South London Harriers using Track Coulsdon.

Athletics facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)

With two dedicated Athletics facilities, Croydon is well catered for, and Croydon Arena is providing a quality alternative to Crystal Palace Sports Centre's facilities (which have declined with uncertainty about its future preventing improvements). The two Athletics facilities are appropriately positioned within the borough, and the Playing Pitch Strategy research does not indicate a need for further facilities.

In terms of quality, Croydon Arena's facilities were rated as good and Track Coulsdon as standard.

What do we need to achieve?

Large Athletics facilities are difficult to manage sustainably. In partnership with the new operator Greenwich Leisure Ltd, we need to ensure that Croydon Arena's unique offer can be preserved over the long term. This may require changes to the breadth of the offer, and further development, however in the short-term we will need to look holistically at the offer and making small facilities changes in order to continue to sustain and grow Athletics.

How we intend to achieve it

- We will re-lay Croydon Arena's running track to ensure that the facility remains able to accommodate a high level of Athletics activity;
- We will work with GLL, and other site partners, to further develop plans for the facility in order to make it fully sustainable as an independent facility.



OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

BOWLS FACILITIES



Current snapshot of Croydon's Bowls facilities

The Playing Pitch Strategy identified 18 Bowls Greens facilities in Croydon, with these greens providing 79 outdoor rinks. As with the majority of outdoor sports, there are both private and publicly accessible facilities available on a pay and play basis. Eight Bowls Clubs are housed at Local Authority owned park sites, where the Local Authority commits to providing maintenance to support the club through its Grounds Maintenance contract.

Bowls facilities: Supply (quantity)

Most of Croydon's Bowls Greens are outdoors and have 6 to 8 rinks. Old Coulsdon Bowling Club and Croydon Bowling Club have 14 rinks each, as well as their indoor facilities. Clubs are relatively well spread out across the south, central and northern sub-regions of the borough, with a number of clubs at Croydon's defined 'destination parks' that have recently been included in a new, masterplanning approach¹.

A further 3 rinks are provided in an indoor facility at Old Coulsdon Bowls Club, and 6 indoor rinks are provided at Croydon Bowling Club in South Croydon, which is by far the largest club in the borough providing 20 rinks in total.

Bowls facilities: Demand

Due to Bowls England not having an agreed methodology for assessing demand locally, an assessment has been conducted on the basis of the ratio of bowls facilities to Croydon residents / statistical demand. Nationally the average number of bowlers per green is 89.9, however in Croydon the figure is 38.2. Croydon therefore has more than double the number of Bowls green facilities per head of population than the national average.

This evidence suggests an over-supply that is further reflected in club membership numbers, with a number of clubs reporting low and declining numbers. Despite the gradual change in age profile of the borough, seven clubs that responded to the survey conducted as part of the Playing Pitch Assessment indicated they have spare capacity. Three clubs have less than 30 members.



¹ For further information, visit www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/parksandopenspaces/ambitious-for-croydon's-parks/our-croydon-parks-vision

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

BOWLS FACILITIES



What do we need to achieve?

Croydon Council maintains Bowls Greens and pavilions for community Bowls clubs at a substantial cost. On the basis of the evidence provided, it can be suggested that this investment does not present the value that it should for Croydon.

We have begun to engage with club about the future and will work with them to develop a sustainable model for bowls in Croydon.

How we intend to achieve it

Our strategy will be to work with individual clubs on a case-by-case basis in order to look at options to achieve greater value for money from our park-based Bowls facilities. This will include:

- Supporting clubs to apply for external funding for equipment and training to enable them to become more autonomous;
- Working towards greater autonomy in managing and maintaining local authority facilities where possible;
- Considering the option of requiring greater variation in use of Local Authority-owned Bowls facilities (particularly during winter months when they are often closed);
- Considering Community Asset Transfers of facilities where appropriate;
- Considering decommissioning facilities where demand can be displaced to a nearby club or alternative facility.



¹ For further information, visit www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/parksandopenspaces/ambitious-for-croydon's-parks/our-croydon-parks-vision

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

CRICKET FACILITIES

Current snapshot of Croydon's Cricket facilities

Croydon has a strong history in Cricket, reflected in a large number of sites in the centre and south of the borough, and some high quality private sites.

In total, Croydon has 21 Cricket sites. Six sites are Local Authority managed, with the remainder either within an education setting or private. 13 of the sites identified are deemed to be accessible to the community on a pay-and-play basis, with 7 sites classified as private. Two Croydon park sites have artificial turf wickets – Wandle Park and Thornton Heath Recreation Ground, with 3 artificial turf wickets on other sites.



Cricket Facilities: Supply (quantity and quality – including ancillary facilities)

There are a number of noteworthy points regarding the quantity of Cricket facilities in Croydon:

- There is huge variation between sites in the number of wickets, from one wicket sites at South Norwood Lake and Grounds, Kenley Sports Club and Addington Cricket Club, to 42 wickets at Whitgift Sports Centre.
- There are just three artificial wickets that can support community and informal cricket
- Cricket facilities are very unevenly distributed, with just one grass wicket site in the entire northern sub-region of the borough (South Norwood Lake and Grounds).

In terms of quality, all Croydon Cricket sites were rated through the Playing Pitch Assessment as standard or good. All Local Authority managed facilities are rated as standard. This assessment is based on a combination of pitch and ancillary scores, and includes an assessment of the outfield, wicket, artificial wicket (if appropriate), and pavilion.

On ancillary facilities specifically, the lowest scoring facilities achieved 60%, rated as standard. However it must be noted that both South Norwood Lake and Grounds and Thornton Heath Recreation Ground do not offer any pavilion facilities and therefore score 0% (which in turn reduced the overall scores for those sites to the lower end of standard).

Through a survey conducted as part of the Playing Pitch Assessment, a number of clubs have suggested that the standard quality of the park-based facilities is not high enough for their level of Cricket.

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

CRICKET FACILITIES



What do we need to achieve?

Our priorities are to try to better match supply and demand of facilities, both in terms of quantity and quality. Evidence suggests there is strong demand in the North of the borough, particularly within south Asian communities in Norbury and Thornton Heath, however facilities and provision in these areas is much more limited.

How we intend to achieve it

- We will work with partners such as the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Surrey County Cricket to focus on developing Cricket in the North of the borough, providing more, and improved, facilities for Cricket to be played.
- In partnership with the ECB, we will conduct Institute of Groundsmanship reviews of important Croydon sites in order to provide a greater number of high quality facilities, particularly in the North of the borough.
- We will work with clubs to give them greater autonomy to manage these facilities to the level they require, supporting them to access training and funding for equipment.
- In partnership with the ECB and Surrey County Cricket, we will increase the number and availability of artificial turf wickets available for informal and community-level Cricket.



OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

FOOTBALL FACILITIES

Current snapshot of Croydon's Football facilities

The Playing Pitch Assessment report identified 173 Football pitches in Croydon. Of these 13 are Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) and 160 are grass pitches. The 173 pitches are spread across 62 individual sites, of which 24 are managed by Croydon Council. With the exception of Monks Hill Sports Centre and Croydon Arena, these are all on parks and recreation ground sites. Selhurst Sports Arena is a high quality 3G (3rd generation specialist Football surface) AGP on a council-owned site and this is currently operated by an independent community group.

The borough therefore has a very large supply of grass pitches in numerical terms, with the council, education establishments and private clubs managing an offer to local clubs and leagues. However, there are significant issues with the quality of the Football offer across these sites. In particular, the ancillary offer is more-often-than-not poor quality and ranges from no offer at all to very basic changing facilities. There are also issues with the borough supply of 3G AGPs, with those that exist heavily oversubscribed within peak times.



Football facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)

GRASS PITCHES - QUANTITY

The 161 grass pitches are composed of a mixture of sizes, ranging from 45 marked out for adult 11 vs 11 to 5 marked out for 5 vs 5 mini soccer pitches. A table below provides the full offer (at the time of assessment):

ADULT	YOUTH FOOTBALL		MINI SOCCER	
11 v 11	11 v 11	9 v 9	7 v 7	5 v 5
45	45	14	52	5
Taken from London Borough of Croydon Playing Pitch Strategy 2016-31, Page 25				

24 grass sites are managed by Croydon Council, 30 sites are the responsibility of education establishments, and 4 facilities are managed by clubs independently.

GRASS PITCHES - QUALITY

Of the 161 grass pitches identified through the assessment, 34 were assessed as 'good', 105 as 'standard', and 22 as 'poor'. 86% of pitches were therefore of a reasonable standard or higher. 4 pitches assessed as poor are Local Authority managed – these were all at Lloyd Park and are the result of overlay on this site.

ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCHES - QUANTITY

Of the 13 Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs), 6 are sand-dressed, 2 sand-filled, and 4 are 3G (specialist long-pile Football surface). The Archbishop Lanfranc School has a World Rugby compliant surface similar in nature to a 3G.

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

FOOTBALL FACILITIES

ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCHES - QUALITY

7 AGPS were rated as good quality, 4 as standard and 1 as poor (Canterbury Road Recreation Ground). Of the 3G facilities, 3 were rated as good and 1 as standard. It should be noted, however, that only one 3G in the borough meets the minimum size for FA-endorsed 11 vs 11 Football and is currently available for community use matchplay (Selhurst Sports Arena).

ANCILLARY FACILITIES – QUANTITY

Technically, the ancillary facility assessment is connected to each individual pitch (so each grass pitch received an ancillary facilities score). Of the 161 identified, 18 pitches were given a score of 0, meaning that effectively there is no ancillary offer at all. The remaining 143 pitches all had an ancillary offer of some kind, from a small car park or toilet to a high standard offer.

Croydon has 5 ‘main’ park-based Football sites that provide an ancillary offer. These are Purley Way Playing Fields (4 independent pavilions, 2 available for use), Duppas Hill Recreation Ground (1 pavilion), Lloyd Park (1 changing block, café and toilets), John Ruskin Playing Fields (1 pavilion), and South Norwood Recreation Ground (1 pavilion).

Elsewhere, a number of other pavilions buildings are either multiuse or have been put to alternative use. This includes Grange Park pavilion (used as a community venue), Norbury Park pavilion (housing a Boxing club) and Upper Norwood Recreation Ground pavilion (housing a recently-opened community centre).

ANCILLARY FACILITIES - QUALITY

In the main Croydon’s ancillary facilities offer is very poor. For the 161 grass pitches identified, more than half (87 in total) had an associated ancillary score rating of ‘poor’. 11 were not able to be assessed (N/A). Just 18 pitches received an ancillary score of good, across 5 sites. These were all private clubs and schools with the exception of Croydon Athletic FC’s Mayfield Road site. Whitgift Sports Centre received the highest possible rating of 100%.

All of the major council owned-and-managed sites highlighted above were rated as poor, along with a number of smaller sites (which often provide no changing or toilet facilities at all). Recent survey work with Football clubs backs up the 4Global Assessment, with half of teams consulted rating their Croydon facilities at 3 out of 10 or lower.

Football facilities: Demand

The PPS assessment identified 213 teams attached to Croydon. Further work to supplement this initial analysis has identified a further 30 teams that have roots in Croydon but are now playing in neighbouring boroughs. This ‘displaced demand’ is typical of a situation where a lack of good quality facilities means participants travel further afield to access the right facilities. We believe that through improving Croydon’s offer we can attract these teams back to the borough.

Based on an analysis using Sport England’s Playing Pitch methodology, it is estimated that the borough requires a combination of 5 new artificial turf (3G) pitches combined with a further 12 full size grass pitches in order to satisfy current and projected demand, including an assumption that 50% of Croydon teams playing outside the borough will return with improved facilities.



OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

FOOTBALL FACILITIES

One clear weakness in Croydon is the lack of female Football provision, with female Football accounting for just 3% of total affiliated Football played in the borough. The evidence we have gathered from clubs clearly suggests that the poor level of ancillary facilities in Croydon (with many sites having no ancillary facilities at all) is a significant factor in the low levels of female participation in the sport. Although it has not been tested, it is also commonly the case that participation by other under-represented groups would be impacted by poor facilities, notably older people and disabled people.

What do we need to achieve?

There needs to be a whole-sale change in the way Croydon's Football facilities offer is delivered. We need to address the trends in Football towards small-sided matches, the current increase in demand at junior level, the lack of female Football, and meet the needs of our diverse population as the population of the borough becomes older. We need to do all of this, but fundamentally we need to address the core aim of establishing a sustainable Football offer that can provide high quality facilities for everyone in the borough to enjoy playing the sport long into the future. Part of this means channelling investment so we are not spreading our offer too thinly.



OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

FOOTBALL FACILITIES

How we intend to achieve it

We will:

1. Support the sustainability of Football in Croydon by providing a greater number of 3G Football facilities by 2025.

As a borough we are heavily under-provided for in terms of specialist Football artificial turf pitches (3G), especially for official FA-affiliated match play purposes. We know the borough needs at least 5 full size 3G Artificial Turf Pitches in order to meet both current and future demand from population growth in Croydon.

2. Consolidate the Council's offer into a smaller number of sites, defined in a 'hub and spoke model'. We aim to establish at least 2 borough Football hub sites that will provide high quality ancillary facilities, a mix of 3G artificial turf and natural grass pitches, and potentially offer better facilities for spectators and other park users.

Currently the Football offer is spread too thinly and the ancillary offer to Football facility users is poor. Consolidating the Football offer into a smaller number of sites will help us improve quality and increase the sustainability of the offer.

3. Discontinue marking out pitches at a number of smaller one-pitch and two-pitch sites.

By increasing the number of artificial turf pitches and investing in hub facilities, the evidence is clear that a number of our smaller Football sites (particularly those offering one or two pitches and no ancillary facilities) can be decommissioned and opened up for informal use and alternative use.

For these sites, we will continue to work with local communities to establish whether there is a need for an informal / recreational Football offer or whether there is interest in an alternative option. Leases to external organisations may be possible, where there is a clear community case and where existing uses of that site can be adequately re-accommodated.

4. Externalise our pitch bookings service from 2019, with the responsibility for all pitch bookings and management falling to the borough's new leisure operator.

We aim to bring our indoor and outdoor sport and physical activity facilities together under our new leisure contract, starting in spring 2018. The booking of sports pitches will be the responsibility of Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) from summer 2018, creating greater efficiency across our facilities portfolio and providing greater opportunities for customers to book facilities online.

5. Adapt our pitch marking policy and offer, in order to respond to changing demand.

We know that with changing trends and population growth at lower age groups, into the future we will need fewer adult 11 vs 11 pitches and a greater number of small sided pitches, particularly youth 11 vs 11 and 9 vs 9 pitches.

Within our hub and spoke model of Football sites there will be greater diversity in the pitch sizes and goals provided. In addition, with new full-size 3G facilities there will be the ability to sub-divide these to accommodate small sided Football more easily.



OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

HOCKEY FACILITIES

Current snapshot of Croydon's Hockey facilities

Croydon's Hockey offer is delivered primarily through a small number of strong clubs on education sites and one Local Authority site. Community Hockey is now almost exclusively played on a sand-based, sand-dressed or rubber-crumb short-pile artificial turf surface, and so development is limited to where these facilities exist.

Croydon hosts five competitive Hockey clubs, who between them generate 28 teams.

Hockey Facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)²

There are 7 sand-based pitches in total. Trinity Sports Club provide two pitches, and the remaining sites have a single pitch. All pitches are floodlit extending the hours of play. Royal Russell, Trinity and the Whitgift are private schools, which together with Croydon High School (Croydon High Sports Club site) have an excellent reputations for developing school Hockey, as well as providing community access.

A supply-demand analysis shows that there is an over-supply of artificial turf pitches for Hockey. However, there is more limited supply of community Hockey for the North of the borough, with Oasis Academy Shirley Park the most Northern site accommodating community Hockey. This site is considered too expensive to hire, further adding to the lack of provision in the North.

In terms of quality, Croydon High Sports Club, Oasis Academy Shirley and Monks Hill Sports Centre were rated as standard, with the three private school facilities rated as good. Croydon High Sports Club, Oasis Academy Shirley and Monks Hill Sports Centre were rated as standard, with the three private school facilities rated as good.



² Hockey facilities assessment did not include assessing ancillary facilities.

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

HOCKEY FACILITIES

What do we need to achieve?

We need to continue to develop facilities to support community Hockey, and in particular ensure that Hockey maintains enough facilities across the borough (with a focus on schools converting to 3G long-pile pitches, which cannot accommodate Hockey). As most Hockey is played on education sites, it is vital that clubs have strong security of tenure, and we will support clubs to have strong community use agreements.

How we intend to achieve it

- We will provide a new short-pile artificial turf surface at Monks Hill Sports Centre, benefiting Goan Hockey Club and potentially Croydon Mid Whitgiftians Hockey Club if they wish to secure a new venue;
- We will support clubs to find a long-term and sustainable site for their community Hockey, including supporting the improvement of Community Use Agreements with schools (where appropriate);
- We will consider the development of Hockey in the North of the borough as part of an options appraisal for the future of Canterbury Road Recreation Ground. This Local Authority site does not currently facilitate any community Hockey and has not done so for some time.



² Hockey facilities assessment did not include assessing ancillary facilities.

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

RUGBY UNION FACILITIES



Current snapshot of Croydon's Rugby facilities

Croydon's Rugby offer is delivered primarily through a small number of strong clubs on education sites and private sites. There are 11 sites accommodating Rugby. 6 of these sites accommodate community Rugby, providing a total of 10 non-floodlit pitches, and hosting 4 Rugby Clubs that offer 36 community Rugby teams in Croydon.

Rugby Facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)³

Rugby facilities are relatively well distributed across the borough, with 3-4 sites in each sub-region. Given that the majority of sites are rated as poor (see below), there is no imperative to prioritise development sub-regionally.

The quality of the borough's Rugby facilities is variable, however the majority of sites (7) were rated as poor: Edenham High School, Purley John Fisher Rugby Club, St Joseph's College Playing Fields, Thomas More Catholic School, Streatham-Croydon RFC, and Trinity Mid-Whitgiftian Association. Whitgift Sports Centre, Whitgift Sport Club, and Trinity Sports Club's facilities were rated as good.



What do we need to achieve?

Facilities for community Rugby need to be improved. Through our work with clubs, we need to improve artificial turf provision, floodlighting provision, and the overall quality of facilities. We also need to ensure that clubs have security of tenure on the education sites they use.

A priority is the facilities at Streatham-Croydon RFC, where there is significant demand but pitches are unable to cope and become heavily worn.

How we intend to achieve it

- We will support Streatham-Croydon RFC to improve their facilities and enable them to provide an enhanced offer, either directly at their own site or through the use of Council-owned facilities;
- We will support other club-led facilities development where appropriate, focusing on those facilities where there is a potential for an enhanced community offer as a result of improvements such as drainage and floodlighting;
- We will investigate the potential for Rugby Union to be accommodated through facilities developments in other sports, most notably our Football facilities development work;
- We will support clubs to find a long-term and sustainable site for their community Rugby, including supporting the improvement of Community Use Agreements with schools (where appropriate).

“CROYDON'S RUGBY OFFER IS DELIVERED PRIMARILY THROUGH A SMALL NUMBER OF STRONG CLUBS ON EDUCATION SITES AND PRIVATE SITES.”

³ Rugby Union facilities assessment did not include assessing ancillary facilities.

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

TENNIS FACILITIES

Current snapshot of Croydon's Tennis facilities

The Playing Pitch Strategy identified 124 individual courts available to play Tennis across the borough. These are located across 30 sites, of which 17 are defined as community (open-access courts located within Croydon's parks) and 13 within private clubs.

A charging structure for Tennis facilities has existed previously, however currently no revenue from booking Tennis facilities is being taken and despite some signage advising otherwise, courts are open access and free to use.

Tennis facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)

TENNIS COURTS – QUANTITY

Private sites make up 71% of the overall number of courts in the borough, with community sites making up 29%.

Across community sites there are a total of 43 courts in use, ranging from 5 courts at Trumble Gardens in Thornton Heath to 1 court at South Norwood Recreation Ground and Wandle Park. Most sites have either 2 or 3 courts. One historical Tennis site (Milne Park in New Addington) has been put to alternative use.

Across the 13 private sites, Purley Lawn Tennis Club is the biggest Tennis facility in the borough, with 18 courts, 6 of which are floodlit. Shirley Park and Norbury Park Tennis Clubs have 11 and 7 courts respectively, and most other clubs have 3 to 4 courts.

TENNIS COURTS - QUALITY

The PPS identified 75 courts as good, 33 as average and 16 as poor. The majority of courts defined as poor were at council-managed park sites – Ashburton Park, Higher Drive Rec, Shirley Church Rec, South Norwood Lake and Grounds, Grangewood Park, and Upper Norwood Rec.

The only community Tennis facility with floodlighting is at South Norwood Rec, and this is not currently operational. There are no covered or indoor community court facilities in the borough (accessible on a free or pay-and-play basis). Both of these are seen as a high priority for the Lawn Tennis Association, in that they enable Tennis to take place for longer periods.

Across private sites, just 3 courts were rated as poor – all at Norbury Park Tennis Club, who have 4 further courts rated 'good'. There are 35 floodlit courts, with 31% of floodlit courts located at just 2 clubs, Shirley Park and Norbury Park. There are no covered courts in Croydon.

ANCILLARY FACILITIES – QUANTITY AND QUALITY

Ancillary facilities at Tennis sites were not assessed, as these no longer form part of the borough's Tennis offer.



OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

TENNIS FACILITIES

Tennis facilities: Demand

2,066 people are members of Tennis clubs in Croydon. The average level of 'capacity utilisation' (the number of members as a percentage compared to maximum capacity) in Croydon's Tennis clubs is 58%, demonstrating a capacity for a further 1,494 people to become members of clubs in Croydon. Purley Lawn Tennis Club has the largest number of members, at 421 at the time of assessment. St Paul's has the lowest membership, at 31.

For community sites, the Playing Pitch Assessment methodology has established estimates of 'actual demand' (people using the courts) and 'latent demand', which is the number of people that are potentially interested in playing Tennis who can't (due to poor courts, courts not being available at the right time, absence of ability to book, etc.).



The perceived actual and latent demand for community Tennis is highlighted in the table below:

SITE NAME	NUMBER OF COURTS	CAPACITY	DEMAND WITHIN 1KM RADIUS		
			ACTUAL	LATENT	TOTAL
ADDISCOMBE REC GROUND	4	160	324	337	661
ASHBURTON PARK	2	80	385	436	821
BIGGIN WOOD PARK	3	160	287	322	609
COULSDON MEMORIAL GROUND	3	120	152	151	303
GRANGEWOOD PARK	2	80	417	528	945
HIGHER DRIVE REC GROUND	1	40	218	223	441
LLOYD PARK	4	80	237	233	470
PARK HILL PARK	3	120	471	502	973
PURLEY BEECHES WOOD	2	80	208	201	409
RICKMAN HILL PARK	2	80	124	123	247
SHIRLEY CHURCH REC	2	80	197	190	387
SOUTH NORWOOD LAKE AND GROUNDS	2	80	392	477	869
SOUTH NORWOOD REC	1	60	381	502	883
TRUMBLE GARDENS	5	200	369	506	875
UPPER NORWOOD REC	2	80	370	453	823
WANDLE PARK	1	40	210	263	473
TOTAL	39	1540	4742	5447	10189

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

TENNIS FACILITIES

Tennis facilities: Demand

The table shows that approximately 5,447 people would be interested in playing Tennis in Croydon who currently do not. On the basis of the perceived actual demand, with the right offer there is the potential to more than double the number of users across community courts.

What do we need to achieve?

There are a number of core priorities that Croydon needs to address in order to help maximise the potential for increasing participation in Tennis, as well as allowing people currently playing Tennis to continue to do so. These are:

- Upgrading poor quality community sites, where demand is perceived to be highest;
- The reintroduction of an affordable pay-and-play system that will allow users to pre-book online;
- The establishment of larger community 'hub' sites that are floodlit, under cover, and are a focus for Tennis development;
- The development of sites to be multiuse, with the ability to facilitate outdoor sports such as Netball and Basketball.

How we intend to achieve it

We will:

1. Deliver a pay-and-play pilot at three sites in the borough. The sites identified are Ashburton Park, Addiscombe Rec, and Biggin Wood, sites that can be brought up to a good standard with investment and have significant perceived latent demand.
2. Provide an online Tennis facilities bookings system, delivered in partnership with the borough's new leisure operator Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA).
3. Develop a plan for, and apply for external funding to support, improvements to Grangewood Park and Trumble Gardens courts, with the latter potentially becoming a multisports 'system'.
4. Work with the borough's new Leisure operator to make further improvements to court sites that have been subject to a Parks Masterplanning Exercise in 2017, following the recommendations provided. These sites are Ashburton Park, South Norwood Lake and Grounds, and Park Hill Recreation Ground.
5. Work with the LTA to develop plans for at least one, but potentially two, community hub facilities that would include feasibility work on either a canopy or dome cover.
6. Work with the LTA and GLL to increase the number of courts that are floodlit.
7. Through any upgrading of Tennis courts, consider the option of enabling the facility to be used by, and booked for, other outdoor sports such as Netball and Basketball.

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

OTHER OUTDOOR FACILITIES

Current snapshot of 'other' outdoor facilities

The outdoor Playing Pitch Assessment covered Athletics, Bowls, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Rugby Union, and Tennis. However, there are a number of other outdoor sport and physical activities that residents participate in, and which the council supports through the provision of facilities and development support more broadly.

Other facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)

With a large and diverse population, and 128 public parks and open spaces (aswell as private open space), there is a great diversity of sports and physical activities on offer across the borough. In terms of the offer through our parks and open spaces⁴, we can highlight the following:

- 6 outdoor gym facilities;
- 15 multi-use games courts;
- 2 Skate parks and one 'half pipe';
- A pitch and putt golf course at South Norwood Country Park;
- A pitch accommodating Rugby League at Lloyd Park;
- 3 trim trails (fitness trails);
- A lake at South Norwood Lake and Grounds that supports junior and senior sailing, and fishing;
- A recently-opened BMX track at Norbury Park;
- Markings for Pickleball at Wandle Park and Purley Beeches Tennis Courts;
- A Petanque court at Ashburton Park.

No formal assessment has been made of these facilities in quality and quantity, therefore it is difficult to develop clear conclusions on supply and demand. However, we know that with the increasingly diverse population and greater range of interests, we have to continue to adapt our open spaces to meet demand. The BMX track at Norbury Park is an example of where Croydon has taken a needs-led approach to supporting the development of an emerging sport in the borough, with help from expert partners.

⁴ Note that this does not include Allotments or Play facilities.

What do we need to achieve?

With Croydon's increasingly diverse population we need to ensure there are opportunities for everyone, and that we are also providing an 'alternative' offer for those that are less interested in the borough's 'traditional' sports. We also have to ensure that whatever we do, it is sustainable, and this means that in line with our approach to Tennis, organised activity will need to be paid for in order for us to reinvest in our facilities.

How we intend to achieve it

- We will continue to work with smaller sports and emerging sports to provide facilities for their development in Croydon, making modifications and adapting facilities where needed;
- In partnership with GLL, we will upgrade a number of larger multi-use courts to allow for team sports (such as outdoor Netball and Basketball) and events, under a pay-and-play model;
- We will deliver six new outdoor gym sites in the borough, allowing more people to access these free opportunities to be active;
- We will continue to design spaces appropriate to the needs of the local area, addressing interest in alternative provision if appropriate;
- We will mark out pitches for minority sports where it is appropriate to do so, and where there is clear demand for that sport to be played on a pay-and-play basis.

“THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER OUTDOOR SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT RESIDENTS PARTICIPATE IN, AND WHICH THE COUNCIL SUPPORTS THROUGH THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT MORE BROADLY.”

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

SPORTS HALL FACILITIES

Current snapshot of Croydon's sports hall facilities

The Indoor Facilities Assessment Report (2015), conducted by Knight Kavanagh Page (KKP), identified 21 sports hall sites of 3 Badminton courts or larger, providing 25 sports halls that are marked for sport. This equates to a nominal 100 Badminton courts. Since the study was conducted Monks Hill Sports Centre has re-opened, taking the total to 22 sites with 26 sports halls and 104 badminton courts.

A further 21 sites provide 1 or 2 badminton court spaces, making up around 20% of overall sports hall space for use for Dance and exercise classes, and for sports such as martial arts.

Sports hall facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)

The majority of the 21 sports hall sites (3 or more courts) are education facilities, with community access during evenings and weekends. The Council provides 3 public 4-courts sports halls, at Monks Hill Sports Centre, Thornton Heath Leisure Centre, and Waddon Leisure Centre. 17% of sports hall are not available for general public use.

The borough has 4 sports halls larger than 4 courts. These are all located at private sites, with the largest a 7 court hall at Whitgift Sport Centre.

The quality of facilities is mixed, however the report notes improvements as a result of facilities investment, particularly in education facilities. The facilities at Waddon and Thornton Heath Leisure Centres were rated as good, and it can be assumed that Monks Hill Sports Centre (following a recent refurbishment) would also be rated as good.

Community accessible sports hall facilities are well distributed across the borough, as are those facilities that are publicly accessible and rated as good. The report notes an exception for the south-eastern corner of the borough, particularly New Addington.

Sports hall facilities: Demand

Using Sport England's Facilities Planning Model, the indoor facilities report identified a demand for the equivalent of 113 Badminton Courts available during peak time. Although complicated by usage patterns and access restrictions, it is suggested that there is a current shortfall against supply of the equivalent of 13 courts based on the analysis. The addition of 4 new courts at Monks Hill Sports Centre reduced this to 9 courts.



INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

SPORTS HALL FACILITIES



What do we need to achieve?

Croydon's sports hall provision has improved significantly over the last decade, however based on the report's finding the borough's numerical provision falls only just short of current demand. The model also does not take into account some of the intricacies of management arrangements and access across sites.

The major issue identified was with the lack of sport hall available for the New Addington area, and therefore addressing this provision is vital. Beyond this, based on future population projections Croydon will need to ensure that the quality and pay-and-play availability of sports halls on school sites (existing and proposed) is a priority in order to meet the increased demand.

A number of other specific issues need to be addressed:

- A small number of schools that have converted to Academies have either reduced or ceased community access;
- The lack of publicly accessible halls larger than 4 courts is hindering the competition requirements for higher level Basketball and Netball;
- Volleyball is being hindered by the basic specification on sports hall sites where there is no provision for appropriate fixings;
- Gymnastics is being hindered by the lack of spaces where equipment can be left out on a semi-permanent basis. Just one club of the 12 identified is able to set up permanently, and in addition Croydon does not have a facility of the quality needed for regional competition.

“CROYDON'S SPORTS HALL PROVISION HAS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE LAST DECADE, HOWEVER BASED ON THE REPORT'S FINDING THE BOROUGH'S NUMERICAL PROVISION FALLS ONLY JUST SHORT OF CURRENT DEMAND.”

How we intend to achieve it

- The council is addressing the major deficit in provision in the South East of the borough by building New Addington Leisure Centre, due to be opened by early 2019. The centre will include a four-court sports hall;
- We will work with any new school developments to ensure that facilities will be fully accessible to the community, and have the appropriate specification to allow the full range of sports the borough accommodates at the appropriate level;
- We will work with schools to further develop the community access of their facilities, and support schools to make improvements to their facilities where they have been rated as poor;
- We will continue to try to find appropriate facilities for the borough's Gymnastics Clubs, working with clubs and British Gymnastics to identify development options where they arise.



INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

SWIMMING POOL FACILITIES

Current snapshot of Croydon's Swimming pool facilities

Croydon's Swimming pools are located across a number of public leisure centre facilities, education sites, and private sites. Compared to many London boroughs, Croydon has strong Swimming pool provision that is well spread across the borough. The borough also benefits from the proximity to the National Sports Centre in Crystal Palace Park, Bromley, which provides access to a 50-metre competition pool.

Swimming pool facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)

The assessment report identifies 19 swimming pools across Croydon, located on 14 sites. There are also several smaller fitness pools based within health clubs. There are 13 pools that provide community access, and these are relatively well spread across the borough.

Four of the 13 public pool sites are considered to be open for the entirety of defined peak time⁵: Croydon Fitness and Wellbeing Centre, Norbury Fitness and Wellbeing Centre, South Norwood Leisure Centre and Waddon Leisure Centre. There are a further two main public Swimming Pools that have a slightly more restricted timetable during peak periods (Purley and Thornton Heath Leisure Centres).

In addition, there are 6 sites, mainly located at sports clubs / educational institutions, where the main pools are open to the public between 30 to 40 hours each during peak time.

The report highlights a core provision through 8 community accessible pools that are rated as above average or good. These are at five sites: South Norwood Leisure Centre; St Joseph's College; Thomas More Catholic School; Thornton Heath Leisure Centre; and Waddon Leisure Centre. A further 4 pools (at 2 sites) are assessed as below average – New Addington Leisure Centre and Purley Leisure Centre. The pools at Royal Russell School and Old Palace of John Whitgift School (senior site) were not assessed for quality.

These pools are relatively well distributed, however the South Eastern corner of the borough is highlighted as having poor supply given the poor quality of New Addington's pools. 49% of Croydon's residents are within the one-mile radial catchment of a public swimming pool that offers pay and play, with those falling outside mostly on the borough boundaries.



⁵ Peak time is defined as Mon – Fri 12:00 – 13.30; 16:00 – 22.00; Saturday 09:00 – 16:00; Sunday 09:00 – 16:30.

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

SWIMMING POOL FACILITIES

Swimming pool facilities: Demand

The report sums up demand for Swimming as follows:

“The Sport England Facilities Planning Model identifies that based on the current population there is estimated demand for 25,200 visits per week at peak times. This equates to minimum of 4,150 sq.m of pool provision taking into account the comfort factor. This compares to a current available supply of 3,315 sq.m of pool space, giving a nominal supply and demand balance of -840 sq.m. However the model suggests that circa 96% percentage of Croydon residents who want to swim can have their need met and that Croydon is well supplied with publically accessible water space. The small shortfall is the equivalent to 3 lanes of a 25m pool and if one takes into account that the learner pool at Waddon LC was not included in the demand calculations, the deficit is negligible.”⁶

What do we need to achieve?

Swimming pool provision in the borough is strong, with Croydon having the seventh highest amount of total water space of all London boroughs. Although public access is a mixed picture, the distribution of facilities and redevelopment of Croydon’s leisure facilities has been appropriate and has ensured that most people can access a swimming pool within their neighbourhood at an appropriate time.

There are, however, challenges. New Addington’s pools were rated as below average at the time of the report, and we are tackling this issue through a redevelopment of New Addington Leisure Centre. Purley Leisure Centre’s pools are poor quality and the centre needs a clear strategy for the future, with an assessment of the impact and relationship to Waddon Leisure Centre.

How we intend to achieve it

- We will open New Addington Leisure Centre by early 2019, providing a new 25 metre competition pool and teaching pool to replace the facilities rated as below average in the facilities report;
- In partnership with new leisure provider GLL, we will conduct a formal review and options appraisal of Purley Leisure Centre and its future, with a view to future investment in order to bring its facilities up to the standards required;
- We will continue to support clubs and pay-and-play access to borough pools.

“SWIMMING POOL PROVISION IN THE BOROUGH IS STRONG, WITH CROYDON HAVING THE SEVENTH HIGHEST AMOUNT OF TOTAL WATER SPACE OF ALL LONDON BOROUGHS.”

⁶ See Indoor Facilities Assessment Report (KKP), page 55

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

GYM AND FITNESS FACILITIES



Current snapshot of Croydon's gym and fitness facilities

Croydon's fitness offer is delivered predominantly by commercial operators and through council-owned leisure facilities. Facilities are well spread, although there is a predominance of commercial facilities within central Croydon.

Gym and fitness facilities: Supply (quantity and quality)

The Indoor Facilities Assessment report identified 25 fitness facilities providing a total of 1,510 static fitness stations. These sites are largely membership-based health and fitness clubs, dual use school sites, and council leisure centres. Four sites are small facilities with less than 20 stations.

The pay-and-play offer is restricted to council facilities, and Lewis Sports Centre in Upper Norwood. In total this amounts to 6 facilities, with 307 static fitness stations. The location of the pay-and-play facilities is closely aligned to high density populations, with these facilities all located in or near regional town centres.

Of these accessible facilities, Thornton Heath and Waddon Leisure Centres were rated as Good, South Norwood Leisure Centre was rated as Above Average, Lewis Sports and Leisure Centre was rated as Below Average and Purley Leisure Centre was rated as Poor. The report suggests that "both Purley and New Addington's provision suffers from being shoehorned into spaces that are less than ideal in terms of size or location."⁷

⁷ See Indoor Facilities Assessment Report (KKP), page 61.

Gym and fitness facilities: Demand

The analysis undertaken in the Assessment Report suggests the following:

- At the time of the report, statistically demand was perceived to met. However, it is clear that with population growth there will need to be increased capacity both within the commercial and publicly-owned facilities markets.
- In particular, with a significant increase in population with Croydon's Growth Zone⁸, there is potential to look at opportunities to enhance existing supply with Croydon town centre, particularly for accessible pay-and-play provision.
- The mapping of leisure centres members suggests that the areas of Shirley and Woodside show a limited number of members for relatively urbanised areas. Upper Norwood is similar, however the proximity to Crystal Palace National Sports Centre (in Bromley) has not been factored into the analysis.



⁸ See <http://news.croydon.gov.uk/croydon-to-deliver-growth-zone/>

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

GYM AND FITNESS FACILITIES



What do we need to achieve?

Although at the time of the assessment report supply was perceived to be meeting demand, issues were highlighted about the quality of council-owned centres at New Addington and Purley. Working on the offer at these centres is therefore a priority.

Beyond this, we need to work with new leisure operators Greenwich Leisure Ltd to continue to develop the public fitness offer across our existing sites, potentially expanding the offer and moving with fitness trends as they change and develop.

Lastly, we need to maximise any development opportunities that may allow additional fitness space in areas where demand is either likely to be higher currently (for example in the few borough 'blackspots' such as Shirley) and where there is going to be significant population growth, most notably in Croydon's Growth Zone.

How we intend to achieve it

- We will open New Addington Leisure Centre by 2019, providing a new fitness offer to replace the facilities rated as poor in the facilities report. The new centres will provide 136 m2 of fitness space, with around 100 new stations;
- In partnership with new leisure provider GLL, we will conduct a formal review of Purley Leisure Centre and its future, with a view to future investment in order to bring its facilities up to the standards required;
- GLL will evaluate the fitness offer at all council-owned centres, and we will make changes to ensure we are fully meeting demand and accommodating trends in the fitness market;
- We will also work with GLL to look at possible options for a temporary or medium-term fitness offer in Croydon town centre;
- We will work with developers in the borough to consider a fitness offer option where there is a strong need to do so.



SUMMARY

Croydon's Sports and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy (2018-2023) sets out the Council's ambitions to improve the quality and accessibility of the borough's facilities to support indoor and outdoor activity.

This strategy will be used to shape a Facilities Action Plan that will outline steps on a sport-by-sport basis and be used to identify associated funding opportunities. The document will support future planning and contract procurement over the next 5 years and underpin internal and external investment.

