

Swimming Pool Facilities in Fylde – An indicative report of swimming facilities quality, quantity and accessibility across Fylde

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Executive Summary

The aim of this report is to provide Fylde Borough Council with an understanding of accessible swimming facilities within the borough and local demand for those services, in light of the recent announcement by YMCA to permanently close Kirkham Rural Splash swimming pool. The report takes into account the demographic, geographical, economic and health picture of Fylde, with this report identifying the importance of swimming facilities. This report highlights the potential challenges faced by local communities to access the remaining sites given their access models and geographical locations in relation to rural and coastal Fylde. This report is not designed to provide conclusive evidence for the need for replacement facilities but instead provide an understanding of the local environment and should be used alongside additional evidence and research.

This report identifies that there is the potential within the borough to meet the needs of local residents to access water space. Fylde Borough Council should consider the following recommendations:

- Explore, plan and undertake consultation with key local stakeholders including but not limited to: schools, local businesses, health and wellbeing services and providers, existing members, and community groups.
- Engage with existing local facilities to make swimming more accessible to local communities through partnership and collaboration both within and beyond Fylde.
- Undertake a more in-depth, holistic facility review across Fylde to consider if facilities are meeting the local population needs. This could present opportunities to identify how Kirkham Rural Splash could be replaced with a wet or mixed-use site to ensure those within rural Fylde are able to continue to access swimming. Sport England support may be required here to identify a suitable consultant.

These recommendations are designed with the intention to provide the council further opportunities to understand their sport and physical activity provision within Fylde and to ensure a long-term viability to swimming within the borough. At each stage, a strong, cross party/ stakeholder collaboration approach should be taken which Active Lancashire is well positioned to support if required.

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Report Purpose

This report was commissioned in late August 2023 following the announcement by YMCA Fylde Coast to close the Kirkham Rural Splash (Locally known as Kirkham Swimming Pool). The facility was popular with the local population and local schools, offering swimming opportunities to young people and families. Whilst initially closed in December 2021 following significant structural damage caused by Storm Arwen, it has since been confirmed by YMCA for the pool to be permanently closed due to significant costs associated with repairing an aging facility. According to YMCA themselves, it is estimated the total investment required to repair the structural damage and to replace aging facilities is between £961,559 and £1,066,220 (1). This is in addition to the rising costs of operating swimming facilities. This report seeks to develop an understanding of the current swimming pool facilities on offer within the Fylde district, their current conditions, current swimming uptake within the district, wider Lancashire region and nationally, and how accessible the remaining facilities are to the local population.

Fylde Demographics and Geography

Fylde is one of 14 local authorities within the Active Lancashire ‘footprint’ and is one of the 12 local authorities that fall within the Lancashire County Council administration region. Situated in the west of the region with Preston to its East, Wyre to its North, Blackpool to its West, the River Ribble to its South and its flow into the Irish Sea along its South West Coast (Figure 1). It is a borough that is both heavily rural with the majority of its population either living to the south of the borough, along or near its coasts, or within Kirkham and Wesham in the rural centre of the borough. The borough is the 3rd least deprived within the Lancashire-14 region (including Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen) and 80% of the working age population are engaged in some type of employment (2, 3).

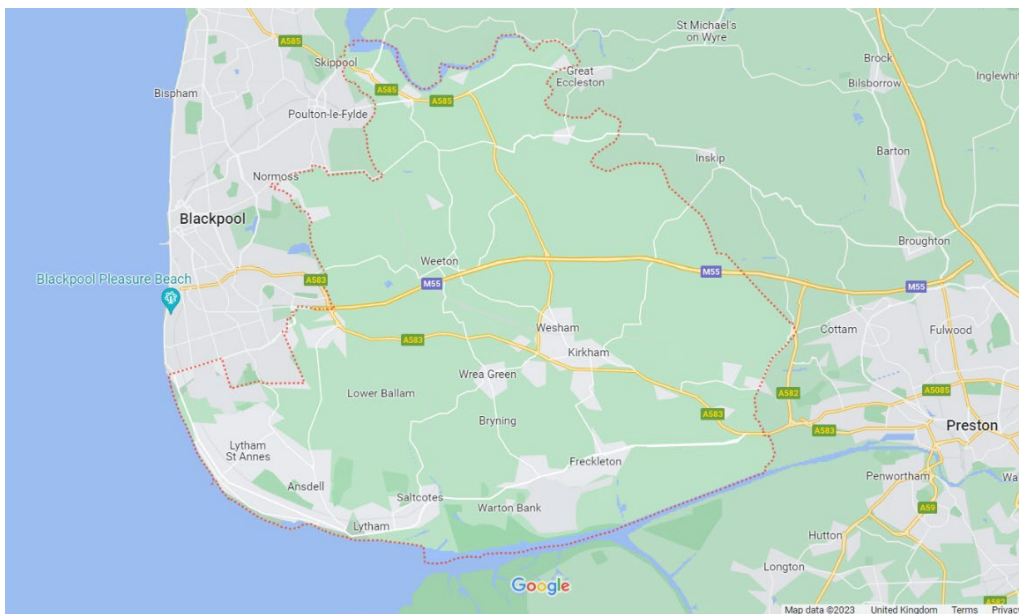


Figure 1 – Map of Fylde

The 2021 census revealed there are 81,375 people who usually live within the borough. This is an increase of 5,618 or 7.4% since 2011 (4). This population is expected to continue to rise with ongoing new housing developments across Fylde to meet the growing demand. There are slightly more females (41,517) compared to males in the borough (39,858) with a larger than average older population (4). Figure 2 below further explores the proportion of the populations by broad age groups comparing Fylde to the North West and England. In addition to a larger than average over 65s population, the borough also has a smaller than average working age population of 58% compared to 64% and a smaller than average under 15 population at 14% compared to 18% (4).

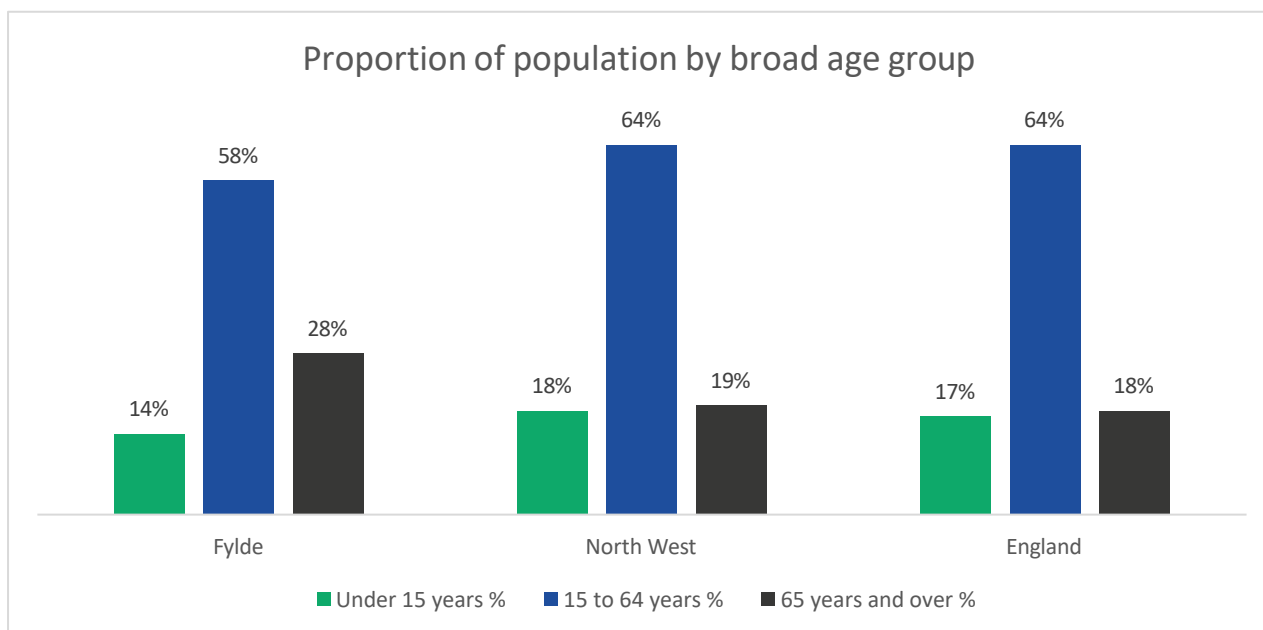


Figure 2 – Fylde, North West and England population groups by broad age profiles

From a health perspective, Fylde has similar life expectancy to England with male life expectancy at 79.9 years vs 79.4 years for England and female life expectancy at 82.9 years vs 83.1 years for England (5). Looking at under 75 mortality rates tells a similar story. Under 75-mortality rate per 100,000 from cardiovascular diseases is 61.1 with England experiencing 76 deaths per 100,000 (5). In addition, under 75-mortality rate per 100,000 from cancer is 109.4 with England experiencing 121.5 per 100,000 (5). Fylde has similar levels of adults classified as overweight or obese (63%) compared to England (66%) (6). Finally, looking at suicide rates reveals a very similar picture comparing Fylde to England with 10.7 deaths per 100,000 compared to 10.4 deaths per 100,000 (5).

In summary, Fylde has a slightly older population which is not experiencing high levels of health inequalities or significant economic pressures.

Physical Activity and Swimming Levels

Physical activity levels across England vary from region to region with a broad range of influencing factors including costs, access to facilities, lack of time, confidence levels and appropriate opportunities (7). Sport England announced in December 2022 that children and young people activity levels had recovered to pre-Coronavirus (Covid-19) levels with an additional announcement in April 2023 confirming the same for adults (8, 9). Figure 3 below shows the current adult activity levels regardless of sport or activity between November 2021 and November 2022 (10). It highlights how Fylde is slightly above average for the proportion of their population who are engaging in at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week at a Lancashire, regional and national level.

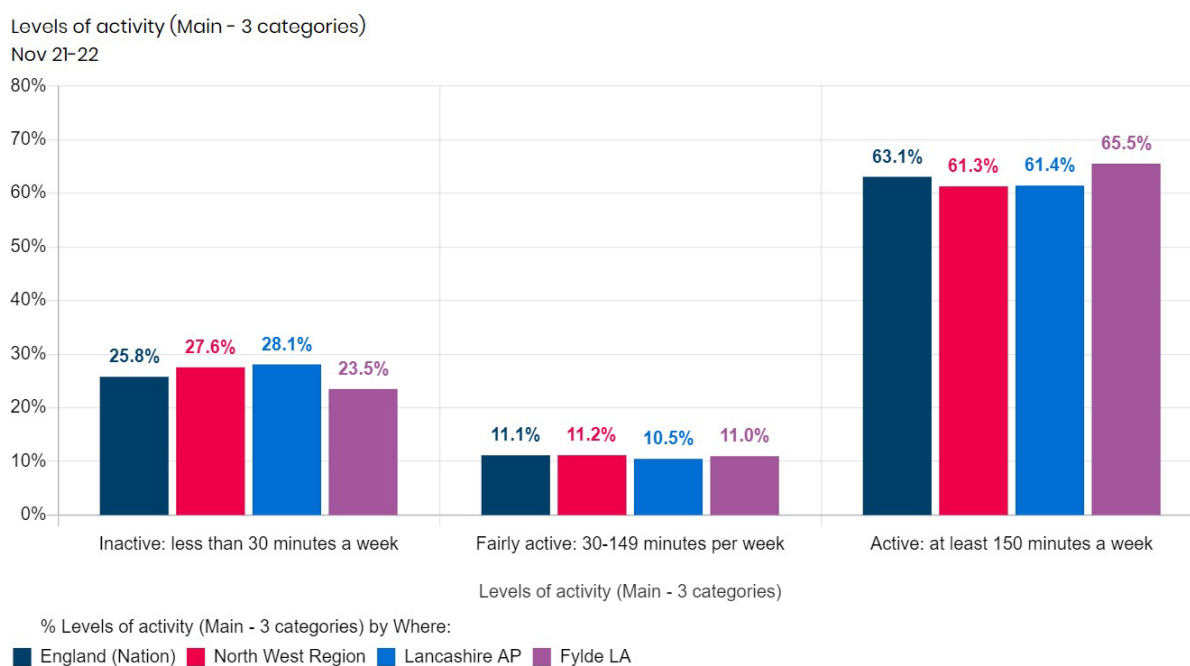


Figure 3 – Adult Physical Activity Levels November 2021-2022 (9)

Given the UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines state adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate activity each week or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week, this is positive news (11). Concerning children and young people, the UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines state children should "aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity a day across the week" (12). In addition, children and young people should "take part in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to development movement skills, muscles and bones" (12). Within Fylde, activity levels across children and young people reveals a mixed picture with the 2017-2018 academic year highlighting a higher than average 'less active: less than an average of 30 minutes a day' at 40.6% compared to 32.9% nationally (10). However, the final full year prior to the Covid-19 pandemic highlights recovery has taken place with Fylde 'less active: less than an average of 30 minutes a day' being very similar to national levels at 28.6% (Fylde) vs 29% (National). Across this academic year, it appears more children and young people had improved their activity levels to either 'fairly active: an average of 30-59 minutes a day' or 'active: an average of 60+ minutes a day' as shown in figure 4 below (10).

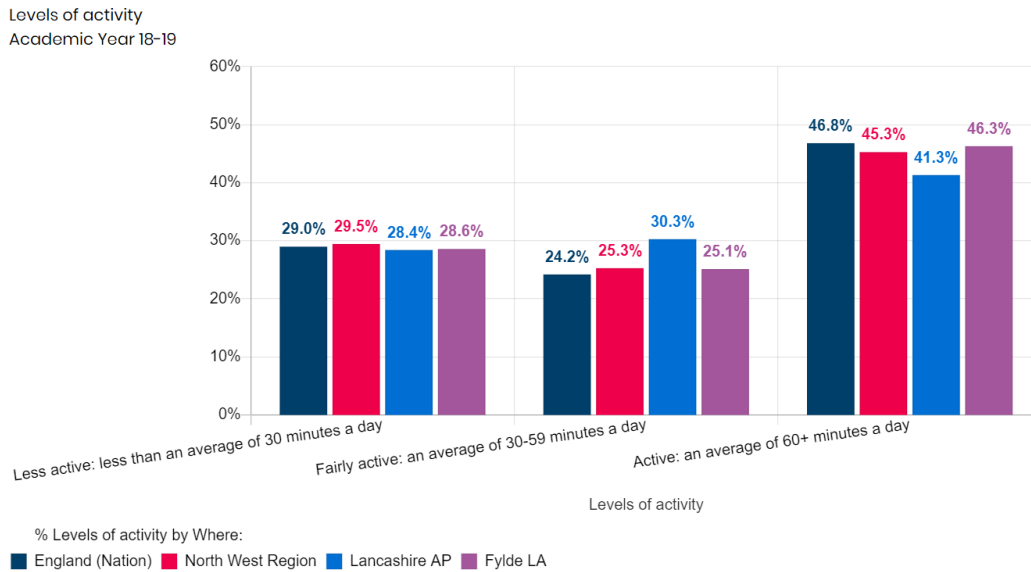


Figure 4 – Children and Young People Physical Activity Levels 2018-2019

Unfortunately, it is not possible to clearly state Fylde children and young people activity levels post pandemic due to a lack of data. However, we can make some assumptions based on wider geographical trends. If Fylde continues to follow wider geographical trends, we can potentially expect around 45% of Fylde children and young people to be ‘active’ and around 30% of to be ‘less active’ (Figure 5) (10). This is very similar findings shown in figure 4 above.

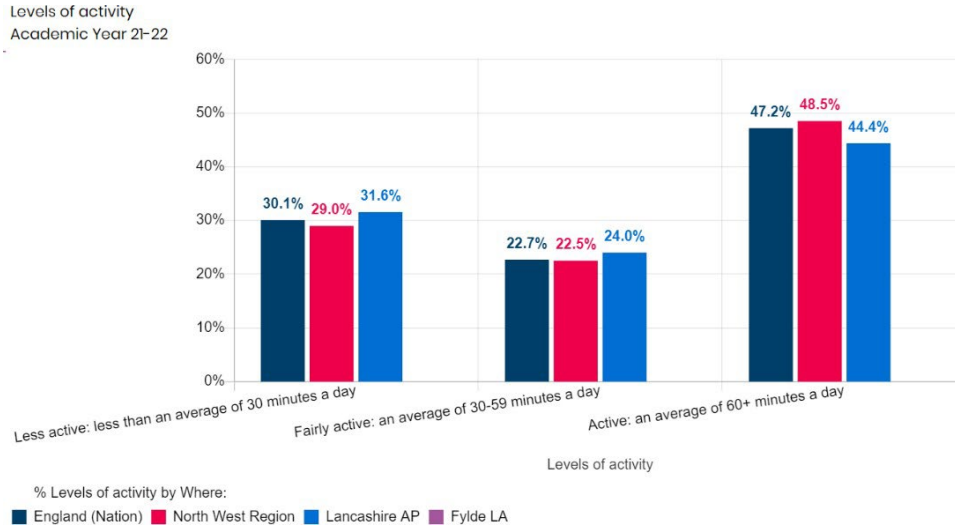


Figure 5 – Children and Young People Physical Activity Levels 2021-2022

Considering Fylde geography being a coastal community, it is expected swimming levels to be potentially higher than other landlocked boroughs. With an adult participation rate of 23.8% compared to Lancashire 19.4% this does appear to be the case. When comparing the figures to national levels we find it is similar at 23.1%. However this is lower than pre-pandemic as shown in figure 6 below when swimming participation was at 32% in November 2015-2016 (10).

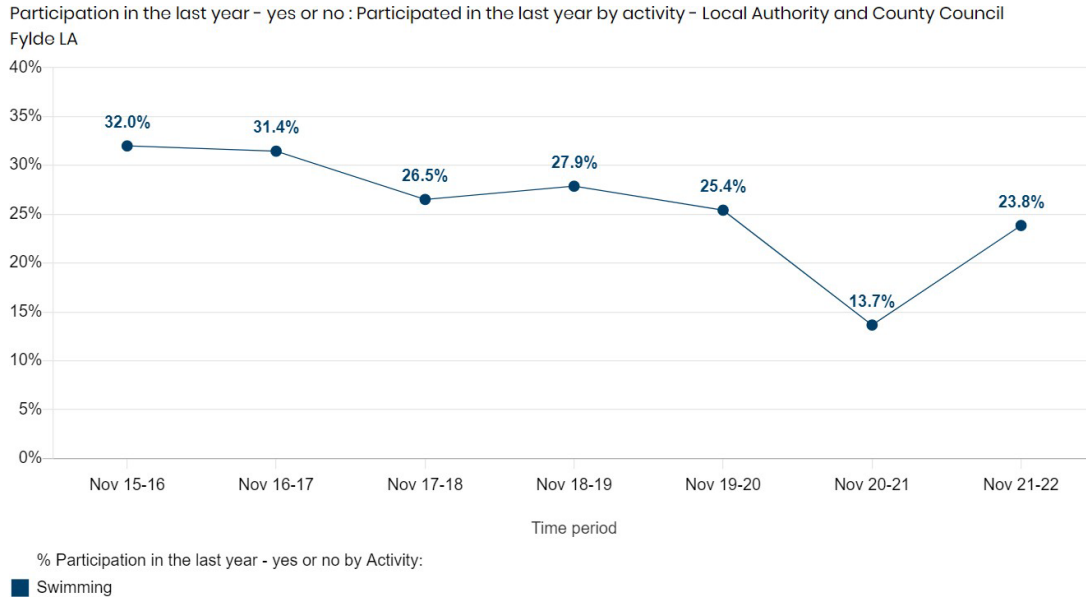


Figure 6 – Fylde Adult Swimming Participation Levels

This is not an isolated case exclusive to Fylde with the negative trend being experienced across the nation as shown in figure 7 below.

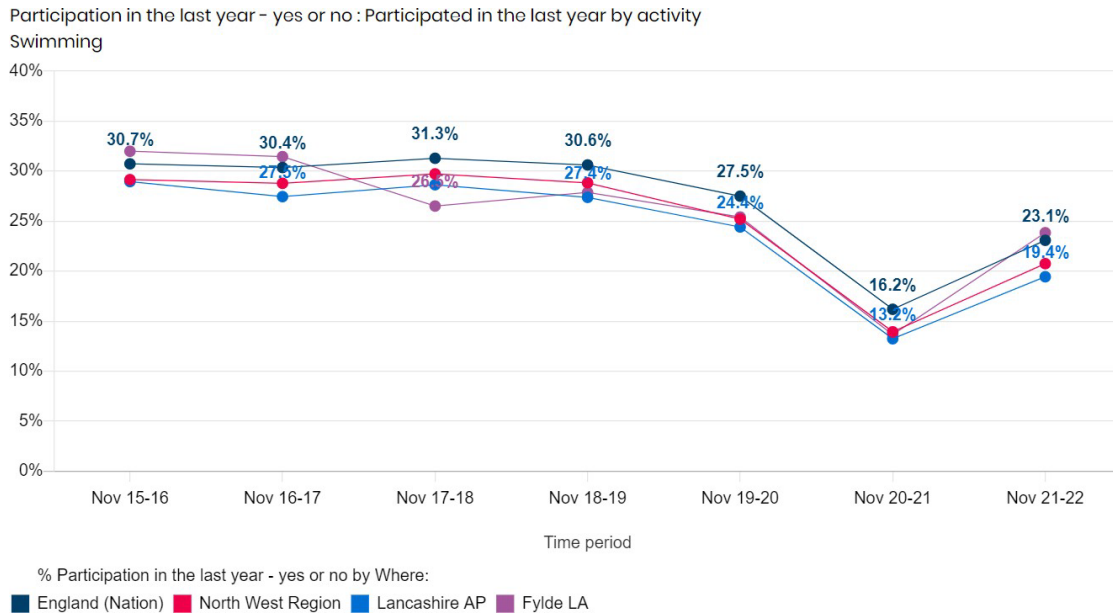


Figure 7 – Adult Swimming Participation Levels Comparing Regions

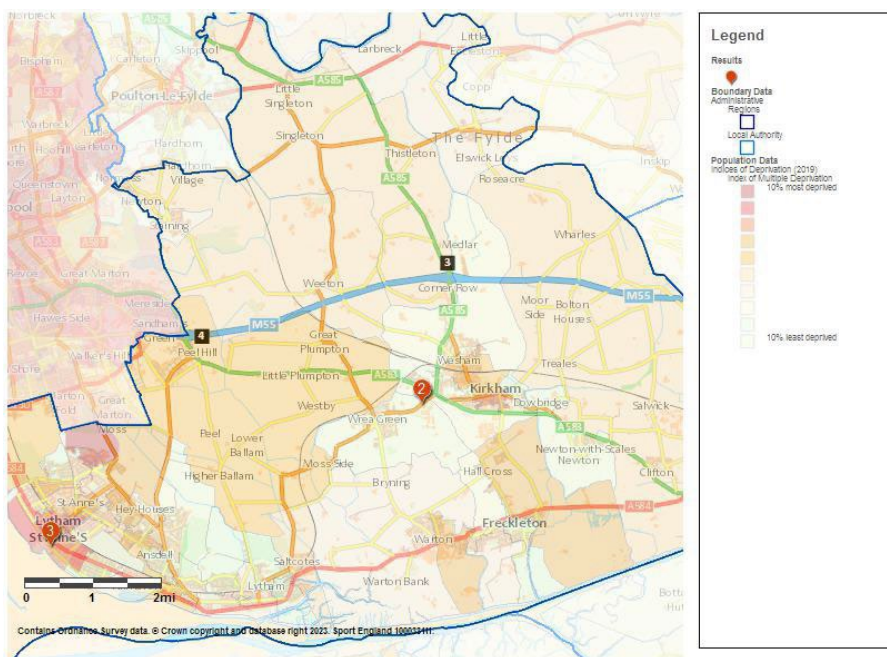
Children and young people are also experiencing the negative swimming trend being experienced within the adult population. Unfortunately, there is limited data from the previous two academic years covering Fylde however swimming levels across Lancashire for the 2021 – 2022 academic year is at 23.4% which is very similar to national levels at 23.6% (10). It should be noted the rate of decline does appear to be slower compared to the adult population. This may be because swimming is a key part of the Physical Education curriculum for Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 to provide opportunities to swim at least 25 metres (13).

The cause of this negative trend is complex with a range of factors influencing swimming participation levels. Research specifically looking at barriers to swimming is scarce however a broad range of reasons are possible including increased costs, location of existing facilities and aging facilities being closed without replacements being offered (7, 14). Swim England published a report in 2021 titled 'A Decade of Decline: The Future of Swimming Pools in England' which outlines how 2,000 pools could be closed by the end of the decade with a decrease of 40% (15). The primary reasons include increased costs, reduced local authority budgets and aging facilities. This translates to 3.86 million people being excluded from the sport that offers a broad range of health and social benefits (15).

Despite this negative trend of participation levels and the projected decline in facilities to engage in swimming, the sport is still very popular with 4.7 million people across England swimming twice or more a month (16). The next section will outline in more detail the current facility levels across the borough and comparing against other regions in Lancashire to develop a clearer understanding of facility levels.

Swimming Pool Facilities across Fylde

There are currently 5 open sites across the Fylde borough area providing 5 swimming facilities (e.g. full sized pool, teaching pool, lido). These facilities are located: 2 near Kirkham and 4 within Lytham St Anne’s (Figure 8) (17). This is down from 6 sites and 9 swimming facilities based on historic data. The below table provides further detail about these facilities that are currently open (17). It should be noted that all facilities in figure 9 offer at least some pay and play/ membership access. This is dependent on pool availability if the site is situated within a hotel or Holiday Park and current levels of residences onsite. Further work is needed to understand facility awareness and perception within the local community and barriers to engagement. It should be noted not all sites are identified in Figure 8 below due to 1 facility missing from the Active Places Power system. The missing facility is within the ‘3’ cluster pointer in figure 8.



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Figure 8 – Map of current swimming facilities across Fylde



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Site Name	Post Code	Facility Sub Type	Lanes	Length (meters)	Maximum depth (meters)	Minimum depth (meters)	Changing Rooms	Disability Details	Access Type	Ownership Group	Year Built	Year Refurbished
DALMENY HOTEL AND LEISURE	FY8 1LX	Main/General	0	20	2.4	1.2	Yes	Parking	Registered Membership use & Pay and Play on request subject to availability	Commercial	1995	2005
SPORT AND LEISURE (RIBBY HALL VILLAGE)	PR4 2PR	Main/General	3	25	1.3	0	Yes	Parking, Finding and reaching the entrance, Reception area, Doorways, Changing facilities, Activity areas, Toilets, Social areas, Emergency exits	Registered Membership use & Pay and Play on request subject to availability	Commercial	2003	n/a
ST ANNES YMCA POOL & GYM	FY8 1SW	Main/General	6	25	2.1	0.9	Yes	Parking, Finding and reaching the entrance, Reception area, Doorways, Changing facilities, Activity areas, Toilets, Social areas, Spectator areas, Emergency exits	Pay and Play	Local Authority/ managed by Community Organisation	1987	2010
ST IVES HOTEL	FY8 1LS	Main/ General	0	11.7	1.2	0.9	Yes	Parking	Registered Membership use & Pay and Play on request subject to availability	Commercial	1970	n/a
THE GRAND HOTEL	FY8 1NB	Main/ General	0	17	1.5	1.2	Yes	Parking	Registered Membership use – facility advised pre-book only via membership pass	Commercial	2002	n/a

Figure 9 – Breakdown of current open swimming facilities across Fylde

Figure 9 on the previous page, shows 5 sites where swimming pools exist. 3 of these are situated within hotels, 1 site is situated within a holiday village and 1 site is a designated leisure site managed by YMCA. The oldest facilities within Fylde is the St Ives Hotel with an estimated opening date of 1970 followed by St Annes YMCA Pool and Gym. Despite being refurbished in 2010, the site itself is 36 years old and Active Lancashire have been advised certain aspects of the site is reaching the end of its lifespan. Therefore, it is expected a replacement site or additional refurbishment may be required in the near future to maintain 'public' swimming opportunities beyond the commercial operators.

Figure 10 below outlines facilities that exist within the Fylde borough but are only accessible by residences of the site such as hotel guests or tourists staying onsite. These facilities have been segregated from facilities identified in figure 9 to highlight swimming facility capacity that is not accessible via membership or day passes. These facilities have not been included in any further calculations within this report due to their limited access.

Site Name	Post Code	Facility Sub Type	Lanes	Length (meters)	Maximum depth (meters)	Minimum depth (meters)	Changing Rooms	Disability Details	Access Type	Ownership Group	Year Built	Year Refurbished
BLACKPOOL NEWTON HALL INDOOR BOWLS CLUB	FY3 0AX	Main/General	0	17	1	1	Yes	Parking, Finding and reaching the entrance, Reception area, Doorways, Changing facilities, Activity areas, Toilets, Social areas, Spectator areas, Emergency exits	Residential only	Commercial	1900	2010
NIVENS HEALTH CLUB	FY8 1LU	Learner/Teaching/Training	0	11	2	1.1	Yes	Parking, Finding and reaching the entrance, Reception area, Doorways, Emergency exits	Residential only	Commercial	1994	n/a
SPORT AND LEISURE (RIBBY HALL VILLAGE)	PR4 2PR	Main/General	5	25	1.5	1.2	Yes	Parking, Finding and reaching the entrance, Reception area, Doorways, Changing facilities, Activity areas, Toilets, Social areas, Emergency exits	Residential only	Commercial	1994	2017

Figure 10 – Swimming facilities only accessibly by residences of the site

The table below (figure 11) shows the facilities and sites that have closed. 3 of the facilities closed were managed by the local authority and had a pay and play access model. The most recent closure is the Kirkham Rural Splash YMCA site where the learner pool was closed in 2009 and the full site considered too costly to repair and manage. Therefore, due the closures outlined below, Fylde only has one learner pool based at Nivens Health Club in Lytham St Annes, which is only accessible to residences of the hotel only. This potentially presents challenges for young families to engage in swimming who do not wish to use larger/ more general pools.

Site Name	Post Code	Facility Sub Type	Lanes	Length (meters)	Maximum depth (meters)	Minimum depth (meters)	Access Type	Ownership Group	Year Built	Year Refurbished	Closed Date	Closure Reason
GLENDOWER HOTEL	FY8 2NQ	Main/General	0	15	1.6	0.6	Registered Membership use	Commercial	1991	2003	01-Sep-09	Refurbishment led to loss of facility
RURAL SPLASH YMCA KIRKHAM (CLOSED)	PR4 2HA	Main/General	4	22.8	1.75	1	Pay and Play	Local Authority	1914	n/a	13-Jul-22	Strategic Review – Financially unviable following structural damage
RURAL SPLASH YMCA KIRKHAM (CLOSED)	PR4 2HA	Learner/Teaching/Training	0	12	0.7	0.7	Pay and Play	Local Authority	1984	n/a	01-Jul-09	Unknown reason
ST ANNES YMCA POOL & GYM	FY8 1SW	Learner/Teaching/Training	0	14	0.75	0.75	Pay and Play	Local Authority	1987	2007	07-Jan-15	Strategic Review - facility not being replaced

Figure 11 – Swimming facilities closed in Fylde

Current state of existing facilities that are open and accessible via day passes or membership (non-residential)

Below are publically sourced images of the existing facilities to provide an indication of current conditions. Further research/ consultation is required to understand facility conditions and expected lifespan.

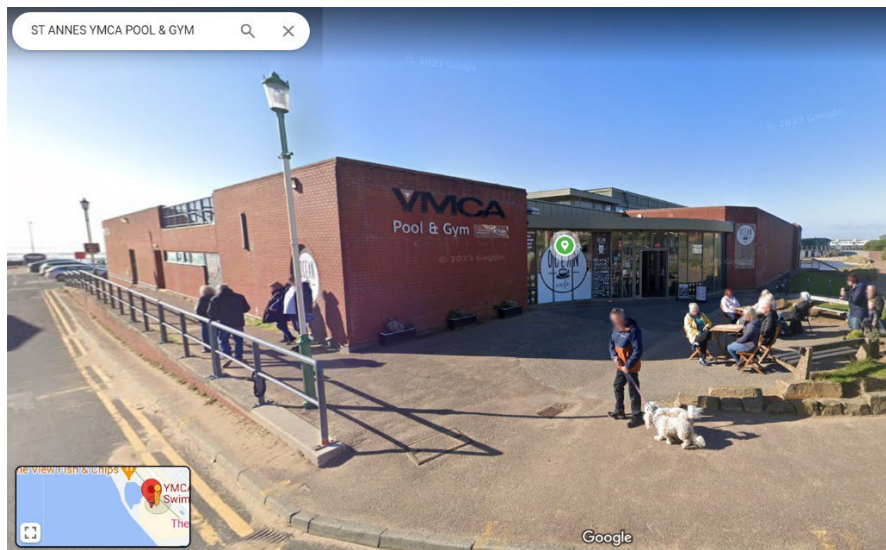
Dalmeny Hotel and Leisure – The picture shows a pool that is in good condition that is again practical for a range of uses (18).



Sport and Leisure (Ribby Hall Village) – The site has 1 swimming pool that is accessible to the public via day passes. The image below the family pool offering slides and informal swimming opportunities (19). The pool appears to be in good condition.



St Annes YMCA Pool and Gym – The facility was built in 1987 with refurbishments in 2010. The current facility appears to be in good condition based on public photos. However Active Lancashire has been made aware of the aging infrastructure and increasing risk of at least temporary closure should certain aspects of the facility fail. This risk should not be ignored over the long term given the potential to unfold in a similar manner to Kirkham Rural Splash. This is the non-commercial managed facility covering Fylde allowing members of the community to access the site without membership requirements. Its standard pool size provides flexible opportunities (20, 21).



St Ives Hotel – The hotel has advised they estimate the facility to have opened in 1970. The current facility appears to be in good condition with access to a sauna to the side of the pool (22).

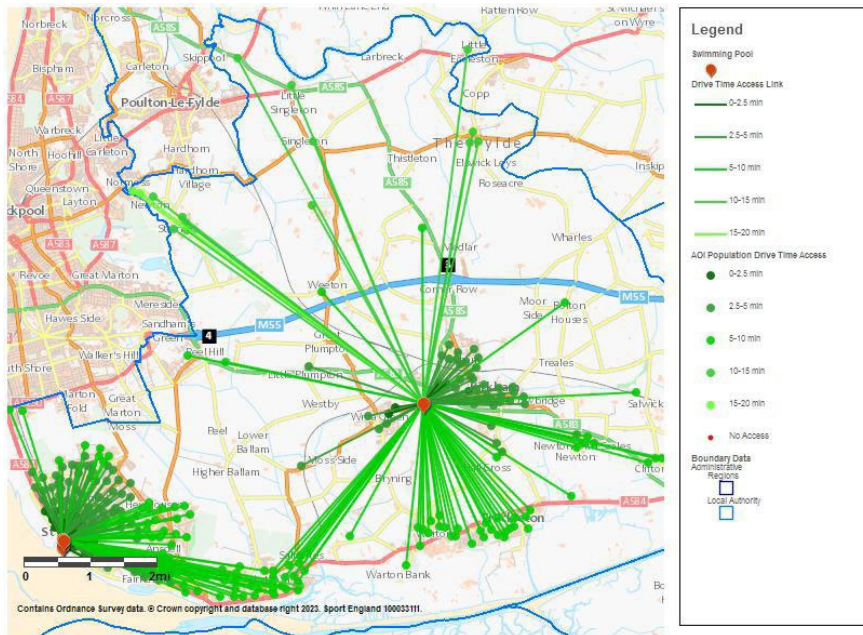


The Grand Hotel – The facility opened in 2002 and forms part of a wider ‘luxury’ leisure opportunity for hotel residences and members including day pass members. The pool has the option of lanes however; these are not permanent and therefore have not been included in any lane calculations or facility analysis. The facility appears to be in good condition based on publically accessible images (23).



Travelling to facilities and accessibility

Using Active Places Power, we are able to visually illustrate where the current population will potentially go to access swimming facilities that are currently open (17). The model takes into account average traffic and journey times within the region. The results show how accessible facilities are in their current geographical locations. Figure 12 illustrates where individuals may travel to base on a 20-minute maximum car journey. It shows how important a facility at Kirkham is, given its central geographical location. Those based in the Lytham and surrounding area are likely to use those facilities.

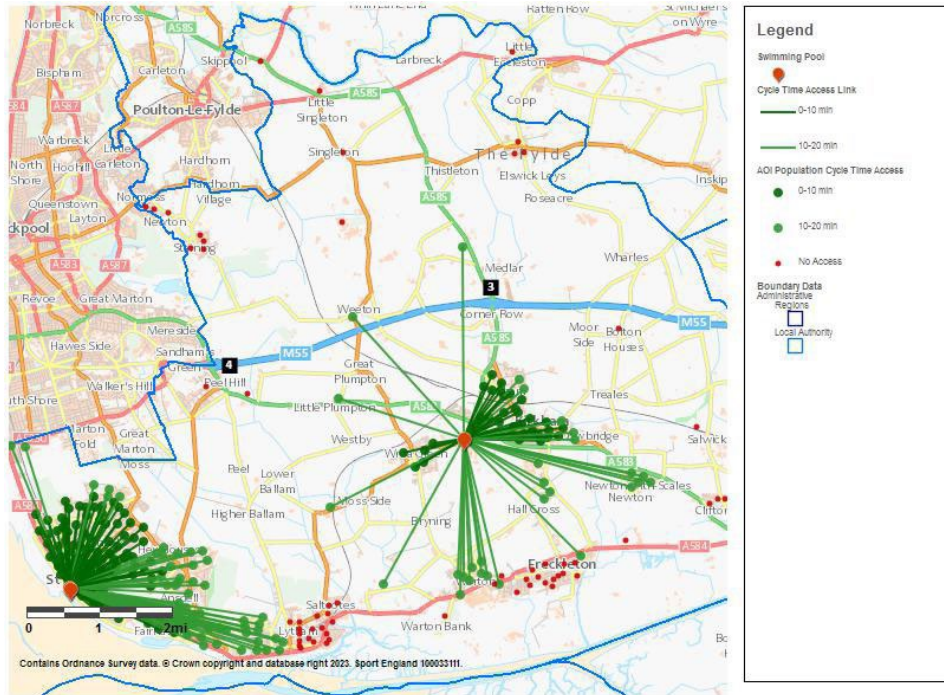


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Figure 12 – Fylde swimming pool accessibility by 20-minute car journey



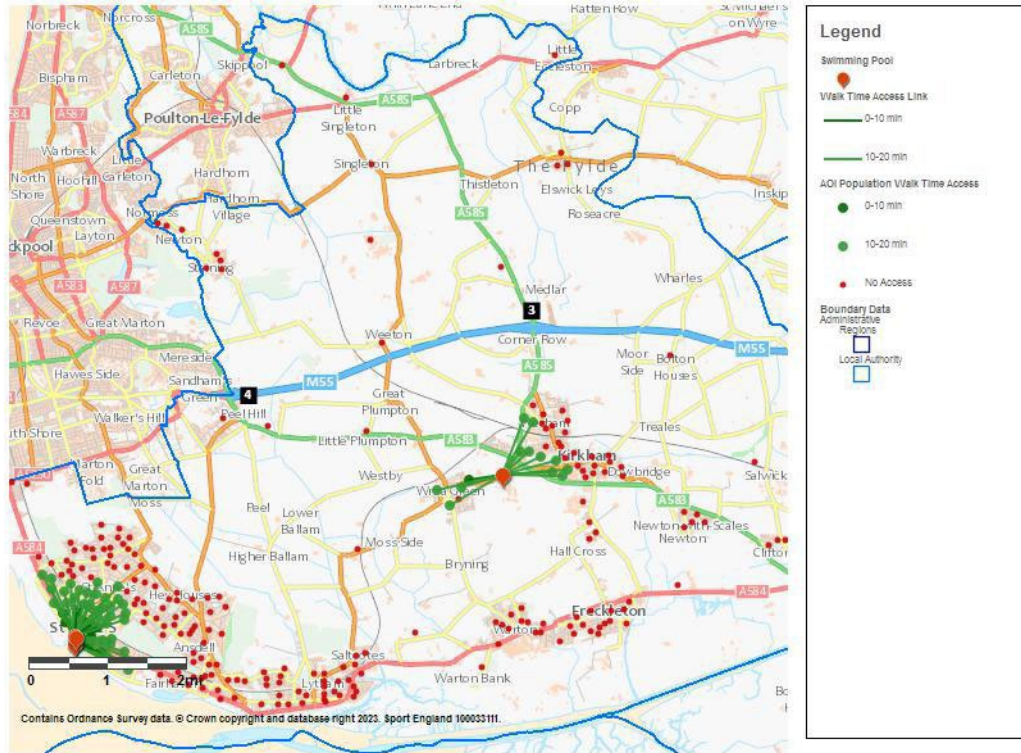
Figure 13 below shows the same model with members of the public using a bike instead of a car. Whilst the majority of the region can still access a swimming pool facility regardless of access type, those based in the Freckleton and Lytham area may not be able to access a swimming pool within a 20-minute bike journey. This is indicated by the red dots across the map. Those based in the northeast may find it easier to access facilities outside of the borough.



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Figure 13 - Fylde swimming pool accessibility by 20-minute bike journey

Figure 14 below shows the same model with members of the public walking to the swimming pools rather than by bus or car. Unsurprisingly it shows that those near the facilities are able to access by walking. However, it does highlight the need for facilities to be located in locations that enable maximum accessibility by all modes of transport.



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Figure 14 - Fylde swimming pool accessibility by 20-minute walk



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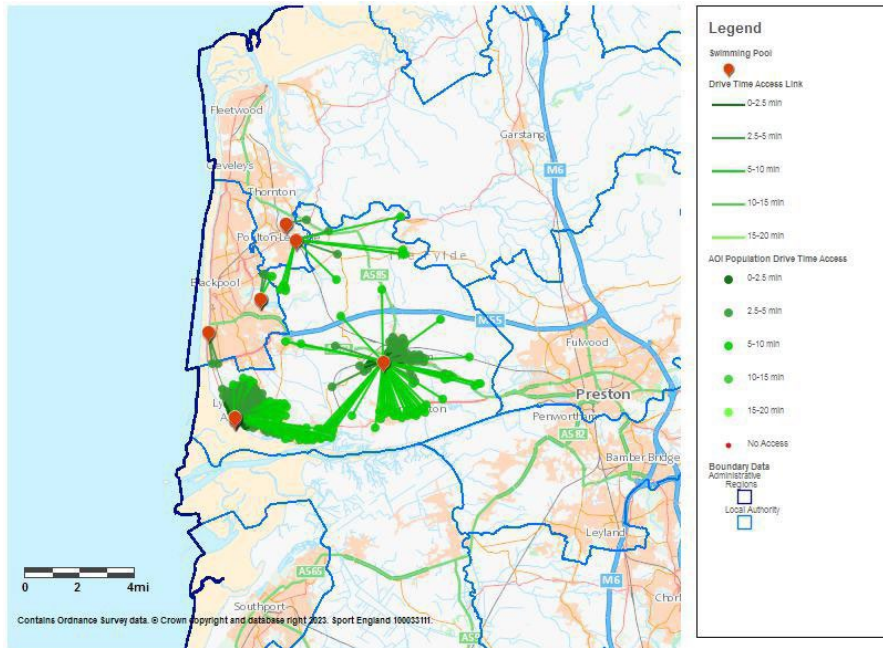


Based on these 3 models, it is very clear that there is a need for facilities in that allow the local population to engage with swimming opportunities across Lancashire. It is also important to recognise that there will be a crossover of users from surrounding boroughs and the Fylde population crossing over to neighbouring boroughs. Figure 15 below shows this when looking at how far those who live in Fylde could travel within 20 minutes regardless of site location (i.e. site could be based in Blackpool). It shows a small proportion of Fylde population visiting 2 sites in Blackpool and 2 in Wyre. Active Lancashire recognises there are potential sites within 20 minutes in Preston and Blackpool that the model has

not recognised such as Total Fitness in Preston and Palatine Leisure in Blackpool. Active Lancashire understands that the model works based on the nearest or quickest site to reach (based on distance, road speed limits and average traffic) in relation to the Fylde population. Facilities outside of Fylde identified to be within a 20-minute car journey have not been included within the analysis of this report due to:

- The report focuses on facilities within Fylde
- Including additional facilities outside of Fylde would have a detrimental impact on comparing Fylde to other geographical regions
- Facilities outside of Fylde may not be expected to compensate for any lack of facilities within Fylde

Despite this, there is a clear need to recognise the importance of working with neighbouring authorities to maximise swimming accessibility and provide multiple opportunities to local residences when existing facilities close down.



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Figure 15 - Fylde swimming pool accessibility by 20-minute car journey

Facilities against population comparison

Whilst it is not currently possible to determine the amount of sites and facilities to ensure there is enough swimming facilities for the Fylde population, it is possible to determine the current number of people per site and people per facility. This is based on current data including the latest 2021 census (24). Using this approach, it is possible to understand how Fylde compares to other boroughs within Lancashire and the wider geographical North West and England. Figure 16 below sets out those findings in more detail.

Figure 16 – Number of people per site and facilities comparison*

Area	Number of Sites	Population (2021 Census)	Number of people per site	Number of facilities	Number of people per facility
Lancaster	11	142,931	12,993	12	11,910
Ribble Valley	4	61,561	15,390	5	12,312
Blackpool	9	141,036	15,671	12	11,753
Fylde	5	81,375	16,275	5	16,275
West Lancashire	7	117,429	16,776	9	13,047
Hyndburn	3	82,234	20,559	3	27,411
South Ribble	5	111,946	22,389	7	15,992
Burnley	4	94,646	23,662	5	18,929
Pendle	4	95,757	23,939	6	15,959
Wyre	4	111,946	27,986	5	22,389
Chorley	4	117,732	29,433	7	16,818
Preston	5	147,835	29,567	9	16,426
Blackburn with Darwen	4	154,739	38,684	7	22,105
Rosendale	1	70,871	70,871	2	35,435
Lancashire-14	69	1,531,127	22,190	94	16,288
North West	326	7,417,397	22,752	455	16,301
England	2397	56,490,048	23,566	3438	16,431
Fylde*	6	81,375	13,562	7	11,625

**Analysis takes into account facilities that are free to the public, pay and play, registered membership use or not known. It does not include private or residential only facilities.*

**This takes into account that should the Kirkham Rural Splash facility was to re-open or a new site developed with 2 facilities. Active Lancashire has been made aware of a vision to utilise Fairhaven Lake for open swimming. This has not been taken into account as the report focuses on permanent all season indoor wet facilities. Active Lancashire is unable to comment on the potential impact this additional open water swimming facility may have on provision.*

Figure 16 shows that Fylde is currently 4th in terms of number of people per site with 16,275. If the Kirkham Rural Splash facility was to re-open or development of a new site, that would boost Fylde to be 2nd in terms of number of people per site with 13,562. Lancaster, Ribble Valley, and Blackpool offering more swimming sites based on population levels. Blackpool, Wyre and Preston all border Fylde borough boundaries either in the west, north or east. Only Blackpool provides a stronger offering with 15,671 per site across 9 sites. Wyre has 4 sites containing 5 facilities and Preston has 5 sites containing 9 facilities. Both areas have a greater number of people per site and per facility compared to Fylde.

Looking exclusively at population size, Hyndburn is similar with 82,234 individuals living in the borough. With just 3 sites across the borough, it potentially adds greater pressure to existing sites with 20,559 per site. This shows the increased pressure existing sites and facilities face should further sites close. Across those 3 sites, there are 3 facilities to accommodate the local population resulting in the area being 6th from the perspective of number of people per site but 13th from the perspective of number of people per facility. By looking at wider geographical areas, it is possible to build an understanding of the boroughs offering compared to Lancashire, North West and England. Currently Fylde provide a stronger offering based on number of people per site and a similar offering based on the number of people per facility when compared to the Lancashire-14, the North West and England. Should Fylde increase their sites back to 7, the area will continue to be able to provide a stronger offer compared to England and the vast majority of Lancashire-14. This is important considering the coastal communities that exist within the borough along the south and south-west.

Comparing facilities on offer

In addition to understanding the number of sites and facilities on offer, it is also important to understand the types of facilities on offer, site access and management types. In addition to Fylde, its neighbouring boroughs Blackpool, Wyre and Preston were included to develop an understanding of the entire coastal and central Lancashire region. The data reveals that facilities, site access and management type vary across the region. There are many possible reasons for this including political, commercial interests and policies in place. Figures 17, 18 and 19 below present these findings in more detail. Please note findings may not match numbers presented earlier within this report. This is due to sites having multiple facilities on each site.

Facility Type	Fylde	Blackpool	Preston	Wyre
Main/General	5	7	4	6
Learner/Teaching/Training	0	4	4	0
Leisure Pool	0	1	1	0
Lido	0	1	0	0

Figure 17 – Facility type across Fylde and neighbouring geographical areas

Access Type	Fylde	Blackpool	Preston	Wyre
Sports Club / Community Association	0	0	0	1
Registered Membership use	4	7	3	2
Pay and Play	5	3	2	2

Figure 18 – Access type across Fylde and neighbouring geographical areas - Please note findings may not match numbers presented earlier within this report. This is due to some sites having multiple access routes.

Management Type	Fylde	Blackpool	Preston	Wyre
Commercial Management	4	8	3	1
Community Organisation	1	0	0	1
Local Authority (in house)	0	2	0	0
Trust	0	0	2	2
School/College/University (in house)	0	0	0	1

Figure 19 – Management type across Fylde and neighbouring geographical areas – Please note findings are calculated by number of sites not by wet facilities on offer.

Average swimming pool size and lanes

Active Lancashire understands that previous reports and discussions included an understanding of swimming lanes provision. There is no statutory guidance that Active Lancashire is aware of regarding the minimum number of swimming lanes that should be provided to the local population. The only guidance that has been identified relates to wider site development and requirements for 25 and 50-meter pools. These are accessible on the Swim England Facilities page: <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/the-swim-england-facilities-team/>. Therefore, the findings within this sub-section should only be considered alongside other information set out in this report and not in isolation. The following table on the next page (Figure 20) sets out the findings based on current data available from Active Places Power (17).

Area	Average Number of Lanes	Average Area Meters ²
Fylde	3*	193*
Lancashire-14	2.5	199
North West	2.4	192
England	2.4	206

Figure 20 – Average number of swimming lanes and average pool area

*Not including The Grand Hotel as data is unavailable and excluding Ribby Hall Village Adult Swimming Pool

Based on the data above, Fylde has above average number of lanes available to the public and above average pool area (meters²) for the North West but lower than average pool area (meters²) for Lancashire-14 and England. It should be noted not all wet facilities provide lanes depending on the type of facility (e.g. lidos, learner/ teaching pools, or pools that are not big enough). Looking at the data more closely across England, it is typically pools of at least 15 meters or more in length that can offer swimming lanes. Once a pool is 25 meters or more in length, lane-swimming opportunities increase significantly as per the facility guidance set out by Swim England.

Summary

The aim of this report is to provide Fylde Borough Council with an understanding of swimming facilities within the borough in light of recent announcement by YMCA to permanently close Kirkham Rural Splash swimming pool. This closure was a result of structural damage caused by Storm Arwen in December 2021 and ongoing aging facility. Taking into account the demographic, geographical, economic and health picture of Fylde, this report establishes the importance of swimming facilities. In addition, it is becoming increasingly vital to maintain existing and invest in new facilities following the report by Swim England (published in 2021) predicting a decline in swimming facilities across England by 40% by the end of the decade. This report highlights the current facilities on offer with 5 sites offering at least some form of pay and play offer depending on membership and/ or residential usage of the facilities. In addition, only 1 site is non-commercial with the remaining 4 being commercially operated across hotels and tourism sites. This may present barriers to engaging with swimming if costs or perceived access is restrictive. 2 additional sites and 1 facility within a 3rd site were identified and have been excluded from analysis due to their restrictive access to residences of the wider site only (e.g. tourists staying in hotels or holiday parks).

The closure of Kirkham Rural Splash will have a negative impact for those living across the rural areas of Fylde away from the coastal towns and villages. Whilst there are potentially enough existing facilities, their accessibility to local communities is of potential concern and further work is required to understand this in more detail. In addition, further facility assessments and facility review is required to fully understand the quality and suitability to meeting local needs. This review should not be Kirkham or indeed swimming restrictive, instead it should consider Fylde and a broad spectrum of sport facilities to create a holistic understanding.

Therefore, this report provides the following recommendations for Fylde Borough Council to consider:

- Explore, plan and undertake consultation with key local stakeholders including but not limited to: schools, local businesses, health and wellbeing services and providers, existing members, and community groups.
- Engage with existing local facilities to make swimming more accessible to local communities through partnership and collaboration both within and beyond Fylde.
- Undertake a more in-depth, holistic facility review across Fylde to consider if facilities are meeting the local population needs. This could present opportunities to identify how Kirkham Rural Splash could be replaced with a wet or mixed-use site to ensure those within rural Fylde are able to continue to access swimming. Sport England support may be required here to identify a suitable consultant.

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