

Cheltenham Borough Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 19 May 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm

Meeting venue: Council Chamber - Municipal Offices

Membership:

Councillor Tabi Joy (Chair), Councillor Jackie Chelin (Vice-Chair), Councillor Graham Beale, Councillor Julia Chandler, Councillor Chris Day, Councillor Juan Carlos Garcia Clamp, Councillor Sandra Holliday, Councillor Richard Pineger, Councillor Stan Smith and Councillor Hannah Healy

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Contact: democraticservices@cheltenham.gov.uk
Phone: 01242 264 246

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of interest

3 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 5 - 10)

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2025

4 Public and Member questions, calls for actions and petitions

5 Cabinet Briefing

18:05 10 mins

Briefing from Councillor Hay, Leader (if she has an update, or if O&S Members have questions for her)

Objective: An update from the Cabinet on key issues for Cabinet Members which may be of interest to Overview and Scrutiny and may inform the work plan
To include a regular update on the Household Recycling Centre from the Leader/Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and the public realm.

6 Matters referred to committee

7 Feedback from other scrutiny meetings attended

18:15 15 mins

Due to the County Council elections, there are no updates on this occasion. For information the dates of the next meetings of these joint committees are as follows :

[Gloucestershire Health O&S Committee](#) – 15 July

[Gloucestershire Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee](#) – 25 July

[Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel](#) – 11 July

8 Updates from scrutiny task groups

There are currently no active scrutiny task groups

9 Physical activity and sport strategy for Cheltenham - Draft Action Plan (Pages 11 - 48)

18:15 20 mins

Objective: to review the draft physical activity and sports strategy action plan before it goes to Cabinet for approval on 20 May.

To provide an opportunity for the committee to reflect on the proposed actions and how they support wider ambitions of the Council.

Richard Gibson, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships

10 Accessibility and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) briefing note
(Pages 49 - 66) **18:35 30 mins**
Objective: Present impact of new EDI policy. Identifying good practice and reviewing targets.

Director of Governance, Housing and Communities

11 Review of scrutiny workplan (Pages 67 - 68)
To consider and approve the draft scrutiny work plan 2025/26

12 Any other item that the Chair determines to be urgent

13 Date of next meeting
7th July 2025

Informal de-brief

What went well? Can we identify opportunities for improvement or training needs?

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Cheltenham Borough Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Meeting date: 31 March 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 7.00 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Jackie Chelin (Vice-Chair), Frank Allen, Julia Chandler, Chris Day, Juan Carlos Garcia Clamp and Richard Pineger

Also in attendance:

Victoria Bishop (Governance, Risk and Assurance Manager), Lisa Edgar (Cheltenham Trust), Philippa Turner (Cheltenham Trust) and Richard Gibson (Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships), Councillor Martin Horwood (Cabinet Member Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Holliday, Joy and Smith

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair chaired the meeting.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February were approved and signed as a correct record.

4 Public and Member questions, calls for actions and petitions

There were none.

5 Cabinet Briefing

In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader confirmed there was little to report to scrutiny on this occasion, albeit the Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Public Realm had asked to inform scrutiny that the Household Recycling Centre work was ongoing. He was awaiting an end of project report which will provide detailed data, including booking data from Wingmoor farm. The Cabinet Member had met with partners and they were considering potential waste collections at kerbside and disposal options. Scrutiny would have the opportunity to consider a report in due course.

6 Feedback from other scrutiny meetings attended

There were no questions, but the Chair advised that a new Teams channel had been set up with the nominated representatives to ensure questions raised by O&S could be responded to efficiently.

Members were reminded that they could raise issues with the representatives at any time.

7 Matters referred to committee

There were no matters referred to O&S.

8 Updates from scrutiny task groups

There are no active scrutiny task groups.

9 Interim Collections Development Policy 2025-2027

The Head of Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships introduced the item and explained that the collections policy had last been reviewed in 2019. Best practice was to review it every 5 years and the council was keen to approve this new policy to confirm the governance for collections going forward.

That said this would be an interim policy for two years due to the ongoing Big Museum project which was an opportunity for communities to engage with the Wilson and have their say on the future direction of the museum. The Collections Policy would then be reviewed and rewritten to reflect what the consultation had fed back.

The Cabinet Member would be taking this report to Cabinet on 8 April and any views from O&S would be fed back to Cabinet verbally due to the timings of publication of the Cabinet report.

The Head of Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships took the opportunity to thank the Curatorial Manager and the Head of Culture for all their work to date. It was vital

that the right levels of governance were in place to address any potential reputational hazards. They did an amazing job in the face of financial constraints and staff and storage capacity.

The Head of Culture at the Wilson, provided the context to the policy. The Big Museum Project which comprises community consultations, a test space and outreach provides the Wilson with the opportunity to rethink and renew all its programmes. The museum attracted 300 visitors a day and the number of participants in the learning and engagement programmes amounted to 52,000 last year. This included individuals, communities and schools across the region.

Feedback collected throughout the year within the Test Space and mobile stations will contribute to the design, curation, and interpretation of the new museum.

She highlighted that the collections development policy was critical for Arts Council accreditation. The draft interim policy has been updated to ensure it is compliant, but the Trust wishes to be more ambitious and informed by communities. The data from the big museum project will be considered and future proof the collection in terms of strengthening the museum's position in terms of fundraising and investment.

In response to questions from Members, the following responses were given :

- As a direct result of the consultation, the Wilson will be intending to create a more dynamic display policy going forward
- The decolonisation agenda is quite challenging across UK museums. The Wilson does not have any objects of immediate concern but the approach is a methodical one, object by object. A great deal of research and scrutiny has been undertaken in terms of the collection and the Wilson has been working in consultation with Oxford, Liverpool and the national museum of world culture collections. Repatriating items would present an opportunity to forge new international links.
- Through the Big Museum project local audiences will have their say on how they see such objects sitting within the museum; it was very much a consultative process.
- Inevitably, not every one of the 250 000 objects can be displayed in the museum, but it is important that a representative sample is on public display. All objects are made accessible for research purposes.
- Once storage is improved and better spaces are created, the collection will be prioritised and 'brought to life'.
- Much of the collection is being digitised to enable a better online experience for all.
- There is currently a moratorium on donations due to storage challenges. By making space through the rationalisation of the collection there can be a more ambitious acquisitions policy. This will enable the museum to present more of a sense of the past through heritage to local communities so things are collected which are relevant to people today.

- The structure of the collections policy has been developed by the Arts Council and adapted accordingly. It represents a living, working document. The collection impact form asks a series of questions, including cost and storage, to ensure due diligence is done when accepting items.

The Cabinet Member Economic Development, Wellbeing & Culture thanked the Cheltenham Trust for the detailed work being undertaken. He welcomed the strategic approach to collections, which also opens up the opportunity to look at what can be rationalised in terms of what is potentially of low cultural value and not being strongly connected to Cheltenham.

The Cabinet Member wished to highlight Tram 21, Cheltenham's last tram and the only one of its kind. Options were being considered to safeguard its future. Converting it back to a working tram was not realistic in the medium term and it was too big for the Wilson. The recommendation is to move towards deaccessioning it subject to a considered plan. Bringing it out of storage would enable its story to be told, even if it is converted to another use.

The Chair thanked representatives from the Wilson for their work and attending the meeting.

10 Review of scrutiny work plan 2025/26

Members considered the workplan and suggested that whilst the safeguarding of women and girls was important and the council was playing a role in addressing this, there was also a growing problem for young men in society, particularly around online influences. Deradicalisation in general is incredibly important, particularly for men in what can be a toxic environment online. It was recognised that the council provides support to third parties such as community, charity and religious organisations and there is work the council can do in terms of supporting education and education initiatives. A Member noted the work that the Police and Crime Commissioner was doing in terms of actively going into schools to talk about these issues. Recognising that education and crime were under different auspices, the committee would welcome a briefing note outlining support that does exist for this respect. **Action – Dem Services**

11 Any other item that the Chair determines to be urgent

None.

12 Date of next meeting

19 May 2025

13 Briefing note

Whilst the content of the briefing note was not for discussion, Members wished to put on record the following points :

- Environment Agency data on actual carbon emissions was not included in the briefing note as the EA is not required to report until next year. A member had obtained the statistics for 2021/22 which were as follows : 179.000 t Co2 produced and Javelin Park was 1 of 56 active incinerators with 18 more under construction.
- Reports from industry suggest that incinerators emit less carbon than landfill sites although landfill technology was already cutting down on emissions, for example, methane is captured and turned into energy, and most councils compost food waste. Both were current working solutions. Landfill also stored carbon better.
- Energy from waste required a 2-3 year development control order process which local councils had little control over; it was all about carbon capture and utilisation.
- Whilst the Environmental Partnerships Manager had offered to host an information session on the issues, Members acknowledged that the priority was to increase recycling rates further in order to avert waste going to the incinerator.

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Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 20 May 2025

Physical activity and sport strategy for Cheltenham - Action Plan

Accountable member:

Cllr Rowena Hay - Leader

Accountable officer:

Richard Gibson - Head of Communities, wellbeing & partnerships

Ward(s) affected:

n/a

Key Decision: No**Executive summary:**

In the Council's corporate plan 2023-2027, we set out our commitment to:

“Work with partner organisations to develop a sports strategy for Cheltenham, to improve and further develop sport provision and help ensure more opportunities for external funding in order to improve health and wellbeing opportunities for local people”

In 2023, the Council worked collaboratively with stakeholders including local clubs and national governing bodies to develop an overarching [vision for physical activity and sport](#) that was agreed by Cabinet in July 2023.

Cheltenham is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from physical activity and sports, creating active, healthy and happy communities.

The Council also updated its playing pitch and built leisure and sports facilities strategies which were endorsed by Cabinet in 2024. These strategies provide a picture of current infrastructure and how well it meets future needs, along with a set of recommendations to improve provision.

The action plan has been developed to respond to the recommendations from the playing pitch and built leisure and sports facilities strategies, plus information from demographic data, recent consultations and ongoing engagement with the national

governing bodies across the sports identified by the playing pitch and built leisure and sports facilities strategies.

Recommendations: That Cabinet:

- 1. endorses the physical activity and sports action plan, attached as Appendix 2.**
 - 2. delegates authority to the Director for Community and Economic Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture and Wellbeing, Councillor Izaac Tailford, to make any final amendments to the action plan as it is presented in its final designed format.**
 - 3. uses the action plan to establish a sports and physical activity steering group that will oversee the progress of the action plan identifying where partners can work collaboratively to support delivery.**
-

1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

Whilst there are no direct financial implications from the physical activity action plan, there are a number of projects that will have financial implications for the Council.

These costs, be they capital or revenue, will be fully understood and approval sought in line with the Council's usual financial and budget processes.

Signed off by: gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

There are direct legal implications arising from this report. The Council has discretionary powers under various legislative provisions to provide sport and leisure facilities and also provide financial assistance to others to do so.

One Legal will be able to provide legal advice and assistance surrounding potential grant funding opportunities to the Council or from the Council or third parties, and any procurement requirements for necessary goods, works or services arising as a result of this report. It should be noted that the Council is required to consider whether there are any Subsidy Control implications and One Legal will be able to assist with this.

Signed off by: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk, One Legal

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

The completed dashboard and summary report are attached as **Appendix 3**. The strategy is generally positive in its contribution to environmental and social outcomes.

Physical Activity & Sports Strategy Action Plan



It is proposed that specific sustainability guidance for sports and physical activity is developed that will provide practical advice to support community leads who manage and maintain built leisure & sports facilities and playing pitches to encourage sustainable transitions, to effectively target investment, and reduce negative environmental impacts.

The guidance will sign post to nationally recognised organisations such as Sports England and the Local Council documents to support with improving facility energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gases, and mitigating flood risk. Local case studies will also be included to showcase projects which are achieving effective energy efficiency and flood risk management.

The guidance will also ensure actions taken within the Physical activity and sports action plan align with the Council's net zero ambitions, mitigate negative environmental impacts and support with effectively targeting investment.

Signed off by; Maizy McCann, Climate Officer

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

The Physical Activity and Sports Strategy will contribute to Priority 4: Ensuring

residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

The completed community impact assessment is attached as **Appendix 4**. The action from the impact assessment is to deliver the three actions from the action plan that specifically progress equality and diversity commitments.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

The action plan sets out what actions will be taken under each of the outcomes. The actions are identified for those to be taken in the current year, in the medium-term and in the longer-term.

The plan also identifies which person or organisation is responsible for the action and suggested measures of success.

Progress against the action plan will be monitored via stakeholder group meetings at which those that are accountable for actions will be asked to supply updates.

Consideration will also be given to placing the action plan on the forward plan for the Council's overview and scrutiny committee to test the monitoring and performance in future years

2 Background

2.1 In the Council's corporate plan 2023-2027, we set out our commitment to:

“Work with partner organisations to develop a sports strategy for Cheltenham, to improve and further develop sport provision and help ensure more opportunities for external funding in order to improve health and wellbeing opportunities for local people”

2.2 In 2023, the Council worked collaboratively with stakeholders to develop an overarching vision for physical activity and sport that was agreed by [Cabinet in July 2023](#).

Cheltenham is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from physical activity and sports, creating active, healthy and happy communities.

2.3 This vision was supported by three outcomes:

- Our physical and community infrastructure is accessible and affordable but also high-quality and sustainable;

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- Cheltenham is a place where all our communities enjoy and benefit from physical activity and
- We will collaborate to create active and inclusive communities.

2.4 The Council also committed to updating its playing pitch and built leisure and sports facilities strategies. These strategies provide a picture of current infrastructure and how well it meets future needs, along with a set of recommendations to improve provision.

2.5 Work on the supporting strategies commenced in July 2023 with work on the Built Leisure and Sports Facilities strategy being reported to [Cabinet in April 2024](#). The Playing Pitch strategy was prepared on a longer timeframe to enable the full assessment of both winter and summer sports provision. This was presented to [Cabinet in July 2024](#).

2.6 Alongside the playing pitch and built leisure and sports facilities strategies, the Council has also sourced demographic data from Sport England and undertaken engagement activities direct with sport's governing bodies and where relevant local sports clubs, set out in more detail in section 4. In addition regard has been given to recent engagement undertaken with young people by the St. Giles Trust that was reported to [Cabinet in February 2025](#).

3 Reasons for recommendations

3.1 The development of the action is one of the commitments set out in the 2023-2027 corporate plan and was actioned by.

- working with stakeholders to agree a vision and outcomes for physical activity and sports
- undertaking detailed assessments of the infrastructure that supports the delivery of physical activity and sports
- reviewing the latest data on physical activity and reviewed engagement findings.

3.2 The action plan provides an important part of the evidence base for the consideration of planning applications and an input into the preparation of the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan

3.3 The action plan has been developed to respond to the recommendations from the playing pitch and built leisure and sports facilities strategies, plus information from demographic data and recent consultations which Cabinet is now being asked to endorse.

3.4 Cabinet will note that some of the actions are reliant on a number of stakeholders

for their delivery alongside securing funding. Developing a steering group will be a key action to work collaboratively on the action plan and will be an important group in monitoring progress and identify any challenges/blockages.

4 Consultation and feedback

4.1 The Council carried out a physical activity survey between January and March 2024 and which had 163 responses. This was reported to [Cabinet in April 2024](#)

- 87% of respondents felt either reasonably or very active;
- 90% of respondents are either reasonably or very interested in being more active;
- Over 60% of respondents enjoy being active either around their neighbourhood, in local parks or in the countryside.

4.2 Top five ways of keeping active:

Option	Total	Percent
1. Walking	104	63.80%
2. Cycling	45	27.61%
3. Running	44	26.99%
4. Pilates / yoga	44	26.99%
5. Indoor swimming	38	23.31%

4.3 Top five barriers:

Option	Total	Percent
1. Costs of taking part	68	41.72%
2. Lack of time	53	32.52%
3. Having to book in advance, or be a member	38	23.31%
4. Feeling nervous to start a new activity or go to a new place	34	20.86%
5. Getting to places to be active	29	17.79%

4.4 In the summer of 2024, the Council worked with the St. Giles Trust to engage with local young people. Via a survey, which had 578 responses and which was reported to Cabinet in February 2025, young people told us that their most popular free time activities were

- hanging out with friends (62%);
- online activities (59%);
- and sport/physical activity (45%).

4.5 Given the interest of young people in sport and physical activity, there are three recommendations from the [St. Giles Trust report](#). These are:

- Enhance sports infrastructure: Investment in youth-specific sports facilities such as more gyms, football pitches, and recreational areas to meet demand;
- Offer affordable physical activity programmes: Collaborating with local sports organisations to offer free or low-cost programmes to help remove financial barriers and increase participation;
- Promote inclusive sports opportunities: Developing programmes that cater to a wide range of interests and abilities will ensure all young people, regardless of skill level, feel welcome to participate.

5 Key risks

5.1 The key risks are that without a robust and up to date strategy, the Council will be unable to:

- Develop a long-term vision and investment plan for Leisure at Cheltenham and the Prince of Wales Stadium.
- Not have an appropriate evidence base to inform the preparation of the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan, feed into Community Infrastructure Levy funding opportunities and updates to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and not being able to negotiate effectively on development sites across the borough and maximise investment in sports provision to meet the needs of local communities.

Report author:

Richard Gibson
Head of communities, wellbeing and partnerships
Richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Cheltenham action plan for promoting physical activity and sports
- iii. Climate Change Impact Assessment
- iv. Equality Impact Assessment

Background information:

[Report to Cabinet 25 July 2023](#) - Physical activity and sport strategy for Cheltenham – Part 1 - [our draft vision and outcomes for physical activity and sport in Cheltenham](#)

[Report to Overview and Scrutiny 25 March 2024](#) - Physical activity and sport strategy for Cheltenham – Phase 2 – built facilities and playing pitch assessments

[Report to Cabinet 2 April 2024](#) - Physical activity and sport strategy for Cheltenham – [Part 2 Built Facilities strategy](#)

[Report to Cabinet 23 July 2024](#) - Physical activity and sport strategy for Cheltenham – [Phase 2 –Playing Pitch Strategy](#)

[Report to Cabinet 18 February 2025](#) - Youth Voice – a process for hearing the voice of young people in Cheltenham

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
385	Leisure & Culture Venues - If the Council does not have a long term vision & investment plan in place for its leisure & culture venues then significant unplanned maintenance, repairs & investment may be required to keep the venues running & it may undermine the ability of the Trust (or any future provider) to run leisure & culture services in a profitable way.	Claire Hughes	5	4	20	Reduce	- Detailed maintenance plan to be developed - Project to review and appraise venues and identify investment required. - procurement to commence to secure external consultancy support on future options for the leisure-at and PoW site	Richard Gibson	Brief finalised by 31 March 2025
	If the Council is not able to set out a robust assessment of current sporting and physical activity provision and a strategy for how to meet demand, there is a risk that provision will not be met appropriately via the current Cheltenham Plan and the emerging Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan.	Tracey Birkinshaw	2	1	2	Reduce	Ensure the Council is using up to date playing pitch and built facilities findings as the basis of negotiations with developers across all relevant planning applications.	Richard Gibson	Strategies completed Risk will be closed upon agreement of the action plan by Cabinet and the set up of a steering group.

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Cheltenham action plan for promoting physical activity and sports – 2025-2028

Introduction

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture and Wellbeing for Cheltenham Borough Council, I am proud to introduce Cheltenham's Physical Activity and Sports Action Plan. This plan is a vital step towards creating a healthier, more active, and inclusive community for all our residents, regardless of age, background, or ability.

We know that regular physical activity is essential for maintaining both physical and mental health. But today's world is constantly throwing challenges at us - illness, inequality and anxiety can all undermine our health and so many distractions on screens and TVs draw us into less healthy, sedentary lifestyles.

This action plan is designed to address those barriers and create an environment where everyone in Cheltenham can enjoy the benefits of sport and physical activity. Developed in partnership with local sports clubs, national governing bodies, Sport England, and community stakeholders, this plan lays out a roadmap for improving our facilities, supporting local initiatives, and fostering a culture of active living throughout the borough.

Through collaboration, investment, and a clear focus on inclusion, we aim to ensure that Cheltenham is a place where physical activity is accessible, enjoyable, and part of daily life for all. Together, we can create a vibrant and active community that thrives on well-being, connection, and the joy of movement.

Let's get active!

Summary of progress to date

In the Council's corporate plan 2023-2027, we set out our commitment to develop a sports strategy.

In 2023, the Council worked collaboratively with stakeholders, including our local sports clubs and the national governing bodies of sport across Cheltenham to develop an overarching [vision for physical activity and sport](#). [This vision](#) was agreed by Cabinet in July 2023.

Cheltenham is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from physical activity and sports, creating active, healthy and happy communities.

We want this vision to be supported by three outcomes:

- Our physical and community infrastructure is accessible and affordable but also high-quality and sustainable;
- Cheltenham is a place where all our communities enjoy and benefit from physical activity and
- We will collaborate to create active and inclusive communities.

The Council also committed to updating its playing pitch and built leisure and sports facilities strategies. These strategies provide a picture of current infrastructure and how well it meets future needs, along with a set of recommendations to improve provision. It provides a snapshot in time and will need to be reviewed in the future

Work on the supporting strategies commenced in July 2023 with work on the [Built Leisure and Sports Facilities strategy](#) being endorsed by Cabinet in April 2024. [The Playing Pitch strategy](#) was prepared on a longer timeframe to enable the full assessment of both winter and summer sports provision. This was endorsed by Cabinet in July 2024.

Cabinet, in April 2024 also agreed to commission consultants to undertake an options appraisal of the future provision of Leisure at Cheltenham and the Prince of Wales stadium as these are important civic facilities which both face maintenance and development challenges ahead given the age of these facilities.

Cabinet also endorsed the move to the third phase which will see an overarching physical activity and sports action plan which is presented in this document.

The key findings from the built leisure and sports facilities and playing pitch strategies

Although key findings and recommendations from the built leisure and sports facilities and playing pitch strategies have already been approved by Cabinet, the summary below identifies those recommendations that are being taken forward in the action plan. The full list is provided in appendix 1.

The key findings and recommendations from the **Built Facilities Strategy** include:

- Sports Halls (Leisure At Cheltenham). Given its importance as the only year-round public sports facility in the borough, plus its extensive off-peak availability and proximity to communities that might have greater health inequalities, it is recommended that the Council considers options for the future of the site
- Sports Halls (schools-based). Recommendation to work in partnership with schools to increase community access to their sports halls via community use agreements, and to encourage investment and/or modernisation where community access is given;
- Swimming Pools (Leisure At Cheltenham). Recommendation to consider options to replace and/or reconfigure the 52 year old Leisure at Cheltenham to ensure future water space meets the demand of the local population and major clubs like the Cheltenham Swimming & Water Polo Club and maximises programme flexibility;
- Prince of Wales Stadium (Athletics) – Given that England Athletics (EA) see the venue as being strategically important in the South West with three affiliated athletics clubs based there, the recommendation is to work with EA to lever capital investment into the resurfacing the track to protect its long-term future. Disability access should also be included in any track or facility upgrade. Given the stadium's regional importance, the Council should look beyond its own boundaries in considering the scope of Community Infrastructure Levy which could be drawn on to support this facility;

- Community use agreements – Recommendation to protect community access to school-based sports facilities wherever possible with formal community use agreements;
- Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic & Local Plan – Protect built leisure and sports facilities required to meet the need and demand of Cheltenham's population in the SLP and develop a detailed approach to the use of developer contributions e.g. through a Supplementary Planning Document.

The key findings and recommendations from the **Playing Pitch Strategy** include:

- Football – 44 sites currently provide 95 pitches, 54 available for community use, 39 in good condition and 19 in poor condition. Protect all existing sites, seek to secure community use of sites not currently secured for community use, and work with Gloucestershire Football Association and the Football Foundation to update the Local Football Facilities Plan for Cheltenham;
- 3G pitches - There is only one full-sized 3G pitch in Cheltenham at All Saints Academy meaning a shortfall of 4 full size artificial grass pitches. Via the local football facility plan, the recommendation is to develop a prioritised plan to secure investment to provide additional 3G pitches and encourage feasibility work at sites identified as having 3G potential, e.g. Prince of Wales Stadium, Pittville School and Bournside School and ensure longer term maintenance plans are in place at existing sites;
- Cricket - 12 sites in the Borough that provide 22 grass cricket pitches, 20 in good condition but there are current and future shortfalls at peak periods. - the recommendation is to protect existing cricket pitches, explore opportunities to bring unmarked pitches back into use, improve pitch quality at Swindon Village Park, support local clubs to improve ancillary provision including parking, explore how new housing developments can help to meet demand;

Other sports

As the format for the built leisure and sports facilities and playing pitch strategies follows national guidelines, it sometimes means that smaller sports

are not considered. In Cheltenham's case these smaller sports include two – archery and croquet – where Cheltenham boasts clubs of national significance as well as novel sports and new physical activities with potential to reach less engaged demographics such as bouldering and padel.

The Council recognises the value of these sports and holds an open door to conversations and wider engagement with organisations such as Archery GB, Croquet England, Parkrun and the wide range of local clubs and stakeholders to identify needs and opportunities for these activities as well.

Demographic data

From the latest Sport England data (Nov 22-23) from Sport England, 71% of Cheltenham's population are considered to be active (exercising for at least 150 minutes a week) and 18.9% are considered to be inactive (exercising for fewer than 30 minutes a week).

Although this compares favourably with national and county rates, there are areas of Cheltenham and groups of people where inactivity levels will be higher. Reasons for this include:

Low income - People living in our lower income neighbourhoods are at risk of lower activity levels. Nationally, 1.5 times people are classed as inactive in our most deprived communities when compared to the least deprived communities.

Disabled people – Nationally, we know that 40.8% of people who class themselves as disabled are inactive compared to only 20.7% who class themselves as non-disabled – a participation gap of c.20%.

Ethnicity - Nationally, 33% of people from the Asian ethnic group are classed as inactive, compared to 24.3% of people from white British origin.

Younger women - Whilst similar rates of adult women are classed as active when compared to men, school data from the Gloucestershire online pupil survey showed that whilst 60% of boys do the recommended level of activity, only 48% of girls achieve this.

Children and young people – from Sport England's active lives data for children and young people (2023-24), whilst 48.3% of children are active in Cheltenham (doing the recommended average of 60 minutes or more a day), 30.9% are classed as less active (less than an average of 30 minutes of activity a day).

Deprivation and the link to health inequalities

In an update report titled "[Tackling Multiple Deprivation](#)" that was presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2024, it was noted that whilst Cheltenham has a close to county average life expectancy for males and females, there is significant inequality in life expectancy between most and least deprived residents. Whilst Cheltenham has a close to county average life expectancy there are significant inequality in life expectancy between the most and least deprived residents.

The report also mentioned that data from One Gloucestershire showed that health inequalities are most acutely seen in West Cheltenham, in the wards of Hesters Way, St Marks and St Peters. These areas have a higher prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, obesity, smoking and depression.

Consultation and Engagement

The Council carried out a physical activity survey between January and March 2024 and which had 163 responses. A summary of these responses is provided below.

- 87% of respondents felt either reasonably or very active;
- 90% of respondents are either reasonably or very interested in being more active;
- Over 60% of respondents enjoy being active either around their neighbourhood, in local parks or in the countryside.

People were asked what activities they took part in to keep active, the top 5 ways included:

Option	Total	Percent
1. Walking	104	63.80%
2. Cycling	45	27.61%
3. Running	44	26.99%
4. Pilates / yoga	44	26.99%
5. Indoor swimming	38	23.31%

People were also asked what they considered the barriers to keeping active were, the top 5 responses received were:

Option	Total	Percent
1. Costs of taking part	68	41.72%
2. Lack of time	53	32.52%
3. Having to book in advance, or be a member	38	23.31%
4. Feeling nervous to start a new activity or go to a new place	34	20.86%
5. Getting to places to be active	29	17.79%

In the summer of 2024, the Council worked with the St. Giles Trust to engage with local young people. This engagement included a survey, which had 578 responses and which was reported to [Cabinet in February 2025](#). Young people told us that their most popular free time activities were:

1. hanging out with friends (62%);
2. online activities (59%);
3. and sport/physical activity (45%).

Given the interest of young people in sport and physical activity, there are three recommendations from the St. Giles Trust relevant to this action plan. These are:

1. Enhance sports infrastructure: Investment in youth-specific sports facilities such as more gyms, football pitches, and recreational areas to meet demand;
2. Offer affordable physical activity programmes: Collaborating with local sports organisations to offer free or low-cost programmes to help remove financial barriers and increase participation;
3. Promote inclusive sports opportunities: Developing programmes that cater to a wide range of interests and abilities will ensure all young people, regardless of skill level, feel welcome to participate.

In the Council's experience, it is potentially easier to build voluntary capacity for project management, fundraising and development projects in more affluent communities than in less affluent communities, yet as the data presented here shows very clearly, it is in those latter communities that the health inequalities are greater and there is greatest need for more active lifestyles. While resource is a challenge, the Council will seek ways e.g. through seeking external funding to add capacity to voluntary clubs in the communities that are facing the greatest challenges.

Future stakeholder engagement

For this action plan to make meaningful change, it will require the whole system to work together - not just the Council. Working with stakeholders creates more capacity across different sectors, and longer-lasting impacts.

Examples of organisations that could be involved include:

- Sporting clubs and their national governing bodies
- Local physical activity providers
- Community-based partners
- Health and wellbeing partners
- Business partners that share values around social responsibility

The action plan proposes that a sports and physical activity steering group is established to bring these partners together - but with a clear focus on outcomes and monitoring the progress of this action plan. Active Gloucestershire, the county's active partnership, have committed to supporting the Council with future engagement.

PART 2: Cheltenham's action plan for promoting physical activity and sports (2025 - 2028)

PRIORITY: Our physical and community infrastructure is accessible and affordable but also high-quality and sustainable				
Summary of key issues from the evidence base and demographic data	Proposed activity	Who	Timescale Short / Medium / Long	Targets / Measures
3G pitches The Playing Pitch Strategy indicates that there is a shortfall of four full-sized 11v11 3G pitches.	<p>The Council will work with key stakeholders including Football Foundation, Gloucestershire Football Association, clubs and sites to support the creation of new 3G pitches in the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bournside School Pittville School <p>The following sites need more work in terms of feasibility, funding and community engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prince of Wales stadium King George V playing fields <p>For potential 3G pitches, providers should include consultation on use and potential external funding with local clubs and bodies representing other sports including rugby and lacrosse who will benefit from 3G pitches</p>	CBC – communities team	Delivery – medium and longer-term	Target of 2 new 3G pitches to be available by 2028
Grass Football Pitches The forecast demand is for 34 new teams across the borough. 19 existing pitches were assessed as poor quality, all 12 of those available for community use being Council-owned. The PPS recognises that these pitches need investment to sustain the level of activity on them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brizen - youth 11v11 	<p>Continue to work with the Gloucestershire Football Association and the Football Foundation to update and publish the Local Football Facilities Plan.</p> <p>With £12.5k allocated from the UK Shared Prosperity Funding, the Council will commission detailed pitch assessments for the 5 sites and then work with key stakeholders including Football Foundation, Football Association, clubs and sites to secure investment via the Football Foundation pitch improvement funds, via the Council's own</p>	CBC – communities team & green space team	Seek external funding for pitch improvements– short to medium term Delivery – medium and longer-term	Target to complete pitch assessments of the 5 sites by end of March 2026.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KGV - three poor quality adult pitches • Priors Park - two poor quality adult pitches & one poor quality youth 9v9 pitch • Springfield Park - one poor quality adult pitch • Swindon Village - one poor quality adult pitch, 2 poor quality youth 11v11 pitches 	<p>grounds maintenance budgets, and where appropriate, via s106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions</p> <p>Explore opportunities to bring unmarked pitches back into use for football.</p> <p>As per the health inequalities section above, the Council will prioritise its own resources on supporting improvements in areas facing the highest health inequalities.</p>			<p>If funding permits, seek to secure improvements to 4 pitches by 2028.</p>
<p>Ancillary Football Facilities</p> <p>The Playing Pitch Strategy indicates that there are a number of Council-owned and managed sites across the Borough that have poor quality ancillary facilities and need investment to maximise their contribution to sports and physical activity.</p>	<p>From the Local Football Facility Plan, the priority projects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petersfield Park • Swindon village; • Priors; • King George V playing fields. <p>Subject to external funding being available, the Council will work with key stakeholders including Football Foundation, Football Association, clubs and sites to secure investment via the Football Foundation pitch improvement funds and via the Council's own grounds maintenance budgets, plus the potential for off-site contributions via Planning Section 106 agreements and where appropriate submit schemes CIL contributions for potential funding via Community Infrastructure Levy.</p> <p><i>As per the health inequalities section above, the Council will prioritise its own resources on supporting improvements in areas facing the highest health inequalities.</i></p>	<p>CBC – communities team & green space team</p>	<p>Seek to secure external funding – medium term</p> <p>Delivery – medium and longer-term</p>	<p>If funding permits seek to secure improvements to at least 2 sites' ancilla facilities by 2028</p>

Cricket pitches and ancillary facilities The Playing Pitch Strategy recommends that the Council should protect existing cricket pitches, explore opportunities to bring unmarked pitches back into use	Subject to external funding being available, the Council will explore how best to improve pitch capacity on Council-owned sites	CBC – communities team & green space team	Seek external funding – short to medium term Delivery – medium to longer-term	Measure – number of cricket pitches improved
Leisure At Cheltenham The Built Facilities Strategy recognises the importance of Leisure At Cheltenham for Cheltenham given that it is the only public facility in the borough, its extensive off-peak availability and its proximity to some of more deprived areas. The Built Facilities Strategy also recognises that Leisure At Cheltenham requires a long-term programme of investment.	The Council is undertaking an analysis of the existing Leisure At Cheltenham facilities. The review will consider a needs analysis, site assessment, facility mix options, financial appraisal and will make recommendations for the Council to take forward.	CBC - Leadership Team	Options study is short term Implementation will be longer term	Target - delivery of options appraisal by Q3 25/26 Council agreement to longer-term strategy for the site by 26/27
Prince of Wales – athletics track The Built Facilities Strategy recognises that the venue is strategically important in the South West with three affiliated athletics clubs based there, but that the track needs replacing and does not meet England Athletics standards for competitions.	The Council is undertaking an analysis of the existing Prince of Wales facilities. The review will consider a needs analysis, site assessment, facility mix options, financial appraisal and will make recommendations for the Council to take forward.	CBC - Leadership Team	Options study is short term Implementation will be longer term	Target - delivery of options appraisal by Q3 25/26 Council agreement to longer-term strategy for the site by Q1 26/27
Cheltenham Zero	It is proposed that specific sustainability guidance for sports and physical activity is developed that will provide practical advice to	CBC – climate team	Short term, with implementation	Measure – number of

<p>In the 2023 vision document, it stated that the Council should explore how best to invest in energy reduction and climate mitigation projects for our sporting infrastructure to support their resilience as part of our commitment to Cheltenham Zero</p>	<p>support community leads who manage and maintain built leisure & sports facilities and playing pitches to encourage sustainable transitions, to effectively target investment, and reduce negative environmental impacts.</p> <p>The guidance will sign post to nationally recognised organisations such as Sports England and the Local Council documents to support with improving facility energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gases, and mitigating flood risk. Local case studies will also be included to showcase projects which are achieving effective energy efficiency and flood risk management.</p> <p>The guidance will also ensure actions taken within the Physical activity and sports action plan align with the Council's net zero ambitions, mitigate negative environmental impacts and support with effectively targeting investment.</p>		<p>being medium to longer term</p>	<p>energy reduction and climate mitigation projects delivered by 2028 to benefit our sporting infrastructure</p>
<p>Strategic housing developments The Playing Pitch Strategy sets out strategic housing developments planned that will result in an increase in the population and demand for outdoor sports facilities.</p>	<p>The Council will use the information set out in the playing pitch strategy and built facilities strategy as the basis of negotiating with developers of housing sites for on-site provision and off-site contributions as part of the relevant planning applications and as an important evidence base to inform the preparation of the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan.</p>	<p>CBC – communities, planning policy and development management teams</p>	<p>Short term, with implementation being longer term</p>	<p>Measure – amount of investment secured for offsite contributions into sporting infrastructure</p>

PRIORITY: Cheltenham is a place where all our communities enjoy and benefit from physical activity

Summary of key issues from the evidence base and demographic data	Proposed activity	Who	Timescale Short / Medium / Long	Targets / Measures
Feel Good Pass Data suggests that 1.5 times people are classed as inactive in the most deprived communities (33.7%) when compared to the least deprived communities (20.5%).	The Council will work with partners to launch the Cheltenham Feel Good Pass that will incentivise users to take up memberships at Leisure- at Cheltenham and other physical activity providers. This will be funded from the Council's allocation of NHS funding.	CBC – communities team	Short term to medium term	Target to have 200 active users of the Pass by Q4 25/26
NCLB Youth Activity Pass Sports England data suggests that only 48% of young people are doing the minimum recommended level of physical activity. The St. Giles Trust survey suggests that young people want more programmes to remove financial barriers and increase their participation in sports and physical activity.	With an allocation of £20k from the UK Shared Prosperity Funding, the Council will scope out a Youth Activity Pass that will give young people growing up in low-income families or neighbourhoods the chance to improve their physical and mental health through an exciting range of physical, social, creative and cultural activities that they would not be able to access otherwise.	CBC – communities team	Delivery – medium and longer-term	Target – to develop a youth activity pass ready to go live by Q4 25/26 Target to have 200 active users of the pass by Q4 26/27
Building capacity In the 2023 vision document, it stated a concern that some of our low-income communities do not have the same access to physical activity opportunities than more affluent communities. For instance, (at the time) there were no youth football teams	To help build capacity within our sporting clubs and activity providers, the Council will work with Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and Go Volunteer Glos to help advertise volunteering opportunities. The Council will also support clubs to identify national governing bodies funding that can help build the skills and capacity of local sporting clubs.	CBC – communities team	Delivery – medium and longer-term	Measure number of organisations benefiting from additional capacity.

serving West Cheltenham in the whole Cheltenham Youth League.	In terms of increasing the capacity of specific sporting clubs and activity providers that serve our more deprived communities, approaches will also be made to some of the areas larger construction projects, businesses and public sector partners via their social value strategies to encourage volunteering and investment to support local grassroots sporting clubs.			
Overcoming barriers to activity Data suggests that disabled people, women and girls and people from ethnically diverse backgrounds can be at higher risk of not being physically active.	Recognising the barriers that some members of our community face; the Council will work with local partners and national governing bodies to secure additional investment for programmes that both listen and engage with communities and create more active opportunities where everyone feels welcome.	CBC – communities team	Seek external funding – short to medium term Delivery – medium to longer-term	Measure: the amount of additional funding secured to overcome barriers to activity
Working with Friends of Groups Feedback from a local friends of group to the playing pitch strategy has shown some concern that the Council is taking a narrow definition of physical activity and solely focused on investing in playing pitches within our parks and green spaces.	The Council will continue to work with local Friends of groups to ensure that, where funding is available, there is a range of non-sport activity in parks and gardens. Recent examples of this include the work with Friends of Sandford Park to install the outdoor fitness equipment and with Friends of Naunton Park to install a circular pathway. The Council will also prioritise the safety of park users and where appropriate, work with Friends of Groups to bid for community safety funding to install safety schemes such as lighting schemes.	CBC – communities team and green spaces team	Seek external funding – short to medium term Delivery – medium to longer-term	Measure: the amount of additional funding secured for park improvements

PRIORITY: We will collaborate to create active and inclusive communities				
Summary of key issues from the evidence base and demographic data	Proposed activity	Who	Timescale Short / Medium / Long	Targets / Measures
Sports and physical activity steering group For the action plan to make meaningful change, it will require the whole system to work together - not just the Council. Working with stakeholders could create more capacity across different sectors, and longer-lasting impacts. Examples of organisations that could be involved include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting clubs and their national governing bodies • Local physical activity providers • Community-based partners • Health and wellbeing partners • Business partners that share values around social responsibility 	<p>The Council will establish a sports and physical activity steering group to bring partners together - but with a clear focus on action.</p> <p>The group will help oversee the progress of the action plan identifying where partners can work collaboratively to support delivery and that there are also building links to wider priorities within the town.</p> <p>Active Gloucestershire, the county's active partnership, have committed to supporting the Council with future engagement.</p> <p>The Council will continue to work closely with Sport England, national governing bodies and local clubs to secure investment into both sporting facilities and into the programmes that encourage participation in physical activity.</p>	CBC – communities team working with Active Gloucestershire	Establish the steering group in the short term	Measure – number of partners engaged with the steering group
Working with schools Local schools provide much of Cheltenham's sporting infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 schools provide swimming pools which the community can use • 11 schools provide community access to their sports pitches • 9 schools provide community access to their sports halls. 	<p>The Council will encourage investment and/or modernisation into school sporting infrastructure including sports halls where community access is given;</p> <p>The Council will also continue to liaise with local secondary schools on at least an annual basis to help secure investment into new sporting facilities whilst also protecting existing facilities via community use agreements, particularly for those pools and sports halls that do not have secured community access</p>	CBC – communities team	Short to long term	Measure – number of review meetings held with local schools Number of community agreements secured.

Working with Parishes Parish Councils are key providers of sporting infrastructure as they have access to their own funding via their precepts and access to community infrastructure levy from any development occurring within their boundary.	The Council will work with parishes via the C5 group (representing the 5 Cheltenham parish councils) to encourage investment of their parish community infrastructure levy allocations into meeting the vision and outcome of this strategy.	CBC – communities team via C5 group	Medium term	Measure – amount of additional investment into the town’s sport and physical infrastructure from parish councils
Engagement with young people The St. Giles Trust survey suggests that young people want more programmes to remove financial barriers and increase their participation in sports and physical activity.	<p>The Council will continue to work alongside No Child Left Behind as part of the Year of Youth Action to engage with local young people to explore how best we take forward the three recommendations from the St. Giles Trust report; enhancing sports infrastructure, offering affordable physical activity programmes and promoting inclusive sports opportunities.</p> <p>This may include identifying contemporary sports and leisure activities that are popular with young people, e.g. bouldering, wheeled-sports, and others, and opportunities to develop and promote them.</p>	CBC – communities team	Short term - 2025	Measure: the number of young people engaged via No Child Left Behind
Engagement with the planning system	<p>The council will ensure that vision and outcome of the physical activity and sports strategy is reflected in policies and requirements in the emerging Cheltenham, Gloucester & Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building in requirements as part of any allocations for development. • Protection of existing football pitches, cricket pitches, bowling greens, outdoor tennis courts and also the number of unmarked pitches where there is potential for these to be brought back into use. • Take findings of the playing pitch strategy and built leisure and sports facilities strategy and ensure appropriate policy framework within Strategic and Local Plan. 	CBC – communities team	Short to medium term	Target – creation of an effective planning framework for sports and physical activity set out in the Strategic and Local Plan.

Resources and capacity As a place leader, the council needs to take a leadership role in delivering the vision for sports and physical activity and the commitments set out in this action plan	<p>The Council will review its financial and staffing resources that support sports and physical activity to ensure that wherever possible, they align with the aspirations of this action plan.</p> <p>The Council will also seek external funding for it to employ a sports development officer to support implementation of this action plan and also to add capacity to local clubs and potential new clubs to assist with start-up, project management and fundraising and grants applications with a focus on initiatives that will tackle inactivity inequalities in communities with the least capacity</p>	Leadership Team	<p>Seek external funding – short to medium term</p> <p>Delivery – medium to longer-term</p>	Measure: the amount of additional funding secured to support delivery of this action plan
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Monitoring and reporting

The action plan sets out what actions will be taken under each of the outcomes. The actions are identified for those to be taken in the current year, in the medium-term and in the longer-term.

The plan also identifies which person or organisation is responsible for the action and suggested measures of success.

Progress against the action plan will be monitored via stakeholder group meetings at which those that are accountable for actions will be asked to supply updates.

The action plan will be placed on the forward plan for the Council's overview and scrutiny committee within 18 months of its cabinet approval to test the monitoring and performance in future years.

Appendix 1

The key findings and recommendations from the **Built Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy** are as follows:

- Sports Halls (Leisure At Cheltenham). Given its importance as the only year-round public sports facility in the borough, plus its extensive off-peak availability and proximity to communities that might have greater health inequalities, it is recommended that CBC consider options for the future of the site – **see action plan**
- Sports Halls (schools-based). Recommendation to work in partnership with schools to increase community access to their sports halls via community use agreements, and to encourage investment and/or modernisation where community access is given; **see action plan**
- Sports halls (community-based) Community halls are important local assets particularly in areas of greatest unmet demand and for sports that don't require high ceilings such as yoga, Pilates and martial arts, and in turn freeing up capacity elsewhere for sports that do need high ceilings;
- Swimming Pools (Leisure At Cheltenham). Recommendation to consider options to replace and/or reconfigure the 52 year old Leisure at Cheltenham to ensure future water space meets the demand of the local population and major clubs like the Cheltenham Swimming & Water Polo Club and maximises programme flexibility; **see action plan**
- Swimming Pools (community-based). Despite Cheltenham having large supply of pool space, the recommendation is to retain and invest in the pool sites and encourage access to school sites through good communication, partnership and community use agreements;
- Gym and fitness – Change in fitness facilities will need to be considered to reach the potential growth in fitness numbers and provision of additional facilities should be tested for financial viability. Studios should be considered within new builds or refurbishments to ensure sports halls are not occupied by fitness classes;
- Prince of Wales Stadium (Athletics) – Given that England Athletics (EA) see the venue as being strategically important in the South West with three affiliated athletics clubs based there, the recommendation is to work with EA to lever capital investment into the resurfacing the track to protect its long-term future. Disability access should also be included in any track or facility upgrade. Given the stadium's regional importance, the Council should look beyond its own boundaries in considering the scope of Community Infrastructure Levy spending; **see action plan**
- Tennis - Recommendation to protect park tennis and explore opportunities for an indoor tennis centre and protect outdoor clubs at Prestbury and Leckhampton, for instance through the Local Plan;
- Village Halls – Recommendation to explore opportunities for village halls to take more sports that do not require a high sports hall ceiling;
- Bowls – protect existing bowls greens through the local plan and support improvements to meet disability access requirements;
- Indoor Cricket – consider working with Gloucestershire County Cricket to find and provide suitable accommodation for cricket clubs to access indoor cricket facilities. Consider cricket nets in any redevelopment of Leisure at Cheltenham and ensure indoor cricket is considered in any new sports hall development;
- Wheeled Sports – consider building a new skatepark as part of the strategic housing development at North-West Cheltenham;
- Gymnastics – support the Gym Centre Gymnastics Club and British Gymnastics to explore club-led development of new facilities;
- Indoor football – protect important facility at Leisure at Cheltenham in any redevelopment there;
- Cycling - protect existing indoor cycling spin studios, consider cycle infrastructure at planning stage if Leisure at Cheltenham is rebuilt and support community cycling hubs including pump tracks and learn to ride areas in future developments;
- Netball – all netball courts across Cheltenham should be protected and netball courts should

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be marked on all new MUGAs and look to negotiate community use agreements for netball through the planning process on education sites;

- Table Tennis - Start a dialogue with Table Tennis England about future provision of outdoor tables in schools, public places and new housing developments;
- Community use agreements – Recommendation to protect community access to school-based sports facilities wherever possible with formal community use agreements; **see action plan** and
- Strategic & Local Plan – Protect built leisure and sports facilities required to meet the need and demand of Cheltenham's population in the SLP and develop a detailed approach to the use of developer contributions e.g. through a Supplementary Planning Document. **see action plan**

The key findings and recommendations from the **Playing Pitch Strategy** are as follows:

- Football – 44 sites currently provide 95 pitches, 54 available for community use, 39 in good condition and 19 in poor condition. Protect all existing sites, seek to secure community use of sites not currently secured for community use, and work with Gloucestershire FA and the Football Foundation to update the Local Football Facilities Plan for Cheltenham; **see action plan**
- 3G pitches - There is only one full-sized 3G pitch in Cheltenham at All Saints Academy meaning a shortfall of 4 full size artificial grass pitches. Via the local football facility plan, the recommendation is to develop a prioritised plan to secure investment to provide additional 3G pitches and encourage feasibility work at sites identified as having 3G potential, eg Prince of Wales Stadium, Pittville School and Bournside School and ensure longer term maintenance plans are in place at existing sites; **see action plan**
- Rugby - 43 rugby union pitches within the Borough across 15 sites, 28 pitches are on education sites. The recommendation is to protect and improve pitches and work with clubs and the RFU to improve pitches and ancillary facilities and improve clubs' security of tenure. Identify opportunities for Cheltenham Phoenix rugby league club within Cheltenham;
- Hockey – 5 clubs with 25 teams, 11 full-size AGPs, 8 available for community use – the recommendation is to encourage all AGP owners to ensure maintenance is planned to maintain AGPs at hockey standard and work with clubs, sites and England Hockey to explore how to create sufficient future capacity to address the lack of access to artificial pitches;
- Cricket - 12 sites in the Borough that provide 22 grass cricket pitches, 20 in good condition but there are current and future shortfalls at peak periods. - the recommendation is to protect existing cricket pitches, explore opportunities to bring unmarked pitches back into use, improve pitch quality at Swindon Village Park, support local clubs to improve ancillary provision including parking, explore how new housing developments can help to meet demand; **see action plan**
- Lacrosse – Protect existing pitch at the Civil Service Sports Ground and consider how future 3G provision could help meet training demand

Physical Activity & Sports Strategy Action Plan



Key

	Significant and/or long-term positive impact identified. No changes needed.
	Slight or short-term positive impact identified. No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
	Not applicable or no cause for concern.
	Slight or short-term negative impact identified. Review to identify possible improvements.
	Significant and/or long-term negative impact identified. Changes needed before proceeding.

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Introduction

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a method for assessing the effects or impacts of a council policy or function on removing barriers to equality.

The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty which requires public authorities to try and eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and promote equality and good relations across a range of protected characteristics.

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment
Marriage and civil partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	Sex	Sexual orientation

An EqIA should be completed with the full range of protected characteristics considered during the initial stages of developing new strategies, policies, functions or services, prior to starting a procurement exercise and before decisions are made.

Examples of when an EqIA should be completed are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any proposals to introduce or add to a service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any proposals to adopt policy priorities, strategies and plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any proposals to remove, reduce or alter a service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Changes to staffing structure where groups of employees are likely to be negatively affected
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any new policies or changes to policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any proposals in relation to procured or commissioned services

Stage 1 - Equality Screening

Whenever a policy/service or function is reviewed, changed, developed or removed an initial equality impact assessment stage 1 will need to be undertaken. This is a screening template and will help establish whether a full assessment is needed. This should be done at an early stage of the process so that it is part of policy development.

Stage 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

This is the full EqIA and seeks to identify the equality considerations that have been taken into account including any mitigating actions proposed and ensures decisions are based on evidence. The EqIA will need to be agreed with the appropriate Head of Service or Director and should be included on the decision making report, along with commentary on the assessment in the main body of the report.

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this EqlA

Officer responsible: Richard Gibson

Service Area: Communities

Title: Head of communities, wellbeing & partnerships

Date of assessment: 10 March 2025

Signature: R J Gibson

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Policy

If other, please specify:

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Physical activity and sports strategy action plan

Is this new or existing?

New or proposed

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Commitment in 2023-2027 corporate plan to develop a sports strategy

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

Vision: Cheltenham is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from physical activity and sports, creating active, healthy and happy communities.

Objectives:

Outcomes:

Three outcomes:

- Our physical and community infrastructure is accessible and affordable but also high-quality and sustainable;
- Cheltenham is a place where all our communities enjoy and benefit from physical activity and
- We will collaborate to create active and inclusive communities.

Benefits:

To address inactivity inequalities within our communities

e. What are the expected impacts?

Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.

Yes

Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?

Positive

Please provide an explanation for your answer:

The action plan sets out a number of commitments that will help deliver the vision that Cheltenham is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from physical activity and sports, creating active, healthy and happy communities.

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

f. Identify next steps as appropriate

Stage Two required

Yes

Owner of Stage Two assessment

Richard Gibson

Completion date for Stage Two assessment

Please forward this completed form to and move on to Stage 2 if required.

2. Engagement and consultation

The best approach to find out if a policy etc, is likely to impact positively or negatively on equality groups is to look at existing research, previous consultation recommendations, studies or consult with representatives of those equality groups.

a. Research and evidence

List below any data, consultations (previous, relevant, or future planned), or any relevant research, studies or analysis that you have considered to assess the policy, function, strategy, service change or project for its relevance to equality.

From the latest Sport England data (Nov 22-23) from Sport England, 71% of Cheltenham's population are considered to be active (exercising for at least 150 minutes a week) and 18.9% are considered to be inactive (exercising for fewer than 30 minutes a week). Although this compares favourably with 21.5% inactive for the county and 25.7% inactive nationally, there are areas of Cheltenham and groups of people where inactivity levels will be higher.

Low income - People living in our lower income neighbourhoods are at risk of lower activity levels. Nationally, 1.5 times people are classed as inactive in the most deprived communities (33.7%) when compared to the least deprived communities (20.5%).

Disabled people – Nationally, we know that 40.8% of people who class themselves as disabled are inactive compared to only 20.7% who class themselves as non-disabled – a participation gap of c.20%.

Ethnicity - Nationally, 33% of people from the Asian ethnic group are classed as inactive, compared to 24.3% of people from white British origin.

Younger women - Whilst similar rates of adult women are classed as active when compared to men, school data from the Gloucestershire online pupil survey showed that whilst 60% of boys do the recommended level of activity, only 48% of girls achieve this. In addition, 46% of girls don't exercise because they found it embarrassing compared with only 21% of boys.

Children and young people – from Sport England's active lives data for children and young people (2023-24), whilst 48.3% of children are active in Cheltenham (doing the recommended average of 60 minutes or more a day), 30.9% are classed as less active (less than an average of 30 minutes of activity a day).

b. Consultation

Has any consultation be conducted?

Yes

Describe the consultation or engagement you have conducted or are intending to conduct. Describe who was consulted, what the outcome of the activity was and how these results have influenced the development of the strategy, policy, project, service change or budget option.

If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.

The council carried out a physical activity survey between Jan and March 2024 and which had 163 responses.

- 87% of respondents felt either reasonably or very active;
- 90% of respondents are either reasonably or very interested in being more active;
- Over 60% of respondents enjoy being active either around their neighbourhood, in local parks or in the countryside.

Top 5 ways of keeping active:

Option	Total	Percent
1. Walking	104	63.80%
2. Cycling	45	27.61%
3. Running	44	26.99%
4. Pilates / yoga	44	26.99%
5. Indoor swimming	38	23.31%

Top 5 barriers:

Option	Total	Percent
1. Costs of taking part	68	41.72%
2. Lack of time	53	32.52%
3. Having to book in advance, or be a member	38	23.31%
4. Feeling nervous to start a new activity or go to a new place	34	20.86%
5. Getting to places to be active	29	17.79%

3. Assessment

a. Assessment of impacts

For each characteristic, please indicate the type of impact (positive – contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group, neutral – no impact, negative – could disadvantage them).

Please use the description of impact box to explain how you justify the impact and include any data and evidence that you have collected from surveys, performance data or complaints to support your proposed changes

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristic	Impact	Description of impact	Mitigating Action
AGE	Older people (60+)	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
	Younger People (16-25)	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
	Children (0-16)	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
DISABILITY A definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is available here . <i>See also carer responsibilities under other considerations.</i>	Physical disability	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
	Sensory Impairment (sight, hearing)	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Mental health	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
	Learning Disability	Neutral	None identified	None identified
GENDER REASSIGNMENT		Neutral	None identified	None identified
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	Women	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Men	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Lesbians	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Gay Men	Neutral	None identified	None identified
PREGNANCY & MATERNITY	Women	Neutral	None identified	None identified
RACE*	White	Neutral	None identified	None identified

Further information on the breakdown below each of these headings, is available here . For example Asian, includes Chinese, Pakistani and Indian etc	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
	Asian	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
	African	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
	Caribbean or Black	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
		Choose an item.		
RELIGION & BELIEF** A list of religions used in the census is available here	See note	Neutral	None identified	None identified
SEX (GENDER)	Men	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Women	Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified
	Trans Men	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Trans Women	Neutral	None identified	None identified
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Heterosexual	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Lesbian	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Gay	Neutral	None identified	None identified
	Bisexual/Pansexual	Neutral	None identified	None identified
Other considerations				
Socio-economic factors		Positive	The action plan identifies a specific action to address inactivity inequalities within this group	None identified

(income, education, employment, community safety & social support)				
Rurality i.e. access to services; transport; education; employment; broadband		Neutral	None identified	None identified
Other (e.g. caring responsibilities)		Neutral	None identified	None identified

* To keep the form concise, race has not been included as an exhaustive list, please augment the list above where appropriate to reflect the complexity of other racial identities.

** There are too many faith groups to provide a list, therefore, please input the faith group e.g. Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Hindus, etc. Consider the different faith groups individually when considering positive or negative impacts. A list of religions in the census is available [here](#)

4. Outcomes, Action and Public ReportingPage 47

a. Please list the actions identified through the evidence and the mitigating action to be taken.

Action	Target completion date	Lead Officer
Recognising the barriers that some members of our community face; the Council will work with local partners and NGBs to secure additional investment for programmes that both listen and engage with communities and create more active opportunities where everyone feels welcome.	2026	Richard Gibson
The council will work with partners to expand the existing Feed Cheltenham activity pass. The current pass incentivises food bank users to take up memberships at Leisure-at Cheltenham, but there is scope to expand both the groups being able to access the card, and the range of physical activity providers. This will be funded from the council's allocation of NHS funding.	Implementation from April 2025	Richard Gibson
Subject to funding being available, the Council wishes to engage with young people to explore whether a Youth Activity Passport might be beneficial. The passport could give young people growing up in low-income families or neighbourhoods the chance to improve their physical and mental health through an exciting range of physical, social, creative and cultural activities that they would not be able to access otherwise.	2026	Richard Gibson

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Briefing Note

Committee name: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 May 2025

Responsible officer: Claire Hughes, Director of Governance, Housing and Communities

This note provides information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Cabinet or a committee but where no decisions from Members are needed.

If Members have questions relating to matters shown, they are asked to contact the officer indicated.

This briefing note is designed to provide Committee Members with an update on our ongoing work around accessibility, equalities, diversity and inclusion.

Accessibility

A significant amount of work is happening around accessibility across multiple service areas. This briefing note sets out some of the work that has been carried out to date and identifies areas of further development.

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Customer Services

The Customer Services Team manage the main reception at the Municipal Offices, operate the main switchboard, and manage the main enquiries mailbox. They also serve as the first point of contact for pest control issues. They are available to the public and can be contacted via telephone, in writing by email and post and in person at the reception in the Municipal Offices.

Customer interaction with departments is managed via telephone or by in person appointments only. Customers are generally directed to the telephone booths to talk to departments directly or to use the public access computers in the reception area, which can be used to contact the service areas of the council via their webpages.

Disabled Access

The main reception at the Municipal Offices can be accessed by wheelchair users and those with limited mobility via the level access at the rear of the offices and the internal platform lift. The main reception desk is split level, enabling access to wheelchair users and all heights.

In addition, we have a private meeting room, with a desk height telephone, that can be used by wheelchair users or those that need more space.

However, following a meeting with the accessibility forum where the outside directional signage and internal platform lift were discussed. It was found that large electric wheelchairs do not fit into the platform lift and the directional signage could be improved.

Working with the National Star College, we are reviewing access and the associated signage. In addition, it is proposed that we create a video showing the accessible route into the office for use on our website. If this is successful, we will look to expand this to making more videos of our other locations in the future.

Deafness

A Hearing loop is set up in reception to enable those with hearing loss to hear the receptionists more clearly.

Sight Impairment

The council does not have a designated supplier for large format and braille printing, however this can be organised on an as and when required basis. Documents can be printed in larger formats using the council printers.

Other Languages

The council has access to language line, this a telephone interpreting and translating service. It can be used for communicating with individuals who cannot, or prefer not, to speak English.

We acknowledge that our current approach may require those with disabilities to request or seek out some of our provision as opposed to it being more obviously available. We are committed to reviewing this and to having clear signage and messaging setting out the facilities that we have for those with disabilities.

Democratic Services

As a local authority accessibility to our decision-making processes is essential. We therefore have the following mechanisms in place:

Access to reports

All reports are presented in accessible format as far as possible and are made available on the council's website. Hard copies are available on request.

Access to meetings

Disabled Access: Members of the public are welcome to observe or take part in council meetings. However, the current layout of the council chamber means that those with limited mobility and wheelchair users are unable to access the public gallery due to the stairs.

These means that in reality it would be difficult for a wheelchair user to attend a public meeting without prior notice, as they will need help to access the building out of normal office hours and assistance to use the lift into the Chamber. Furthermore, a visit from the Disability Forum has identified that the lift into the Chamber cannot accommodate a large electric wheelchair, meaning that access would not be possible. This is an issue both for members of the public wanting to take part in or observe a meeting, or for an elected councillor who is a wheelchair user.

In addition, proper evacuation of a wheelchair user from the Chamber in the event of an emergency could be challenging. The evac chair would be required for the stairs out of the Chamber and those at the front of the building to pavement level.

Whilst the live streaming of our meetings via You Tube does enable those who are unable to attend to watch meetings online, active participation is not possible.

The 'Get Involved' page on our website advises:

Accessibility

Please note, access to the Municipal Offices for wheelchair users or anyone using a mobility aid is via the Royal Well entrance at the rear of the building, with a lift to take you to the ground floor where the committee rooms are situated, and a further lift to help you into the Council Chamber, if required. Hearing enhancers are available in our main committee rooms for the hard of hearing. Please email [Democratic Services](#) or call 01242 264246 in advance if you are likely to require any additional assistance when attending a meeting.

Deafness: An assistive listening system is available for councillors, officers and members of the public participating in council meetings who have any hearing impairment. However, we are currently unable to provide meeting sub-titles or transcripts for anyone watching with hearing impairment

Sight: At present, save for the accessibility tools on our website we have very limited provision for those with a sight impairment. Documents can be produced in large print

relatively quickly, although requests for braille would take some time and would unlikely be made available in the time between the publication of agendas and the meeting.

Other languages: Our website functionality enables users to view content in a number of different languages and we have access to language line (see above under customer services) but at present we are unable to provide any further assistance to those whose first language is not English.

The sale of the municipal offices presents an opportunity to review and address some of these issues as the council seeks to identify alternative premises for its public meetings.

Communications Team

The communications and marketing team have been trained on how to produce accessible content. This covers:

- Visual assets – for example colour contrast in posters and images for social media, using alternative text descriptions when publishing images online and on social platforms, such as Facebook
- Writing in plain English
- Other accessibility considerations covered in our staff guidance on the intranet and OurSpace
- Digital accessibility is well understood by the team and is a consideration in all the content they produce

Websites

At present we are still operating two websites; www.cheltenham.gov.uk and www.cbh.org, however a project is now underway to create a single website which will be a key platform for sharing information in accessible formats.

In 2021 Our cheltenham.gov.uk site was the subject of a full audit by the Shaw Trust, a charity that works to challenge inequality and support people with complex needs into employment. The Shaw Trust also provided training on website accessibility and making accessible Word documents and PDFs. These training sessions were attended by colleagues across the organisation in early 2022.

Following the audit the web team worked through an extensive list of issues and our website currently has an accessibility rating of 84% (or 'great') in the Silktide¹ list of council websites accessibility. Our accessibility statement provides more information on the accessibility of our website and alternative provisions: [Accessibility statement | Cheltenham Borough Council](#) and our accessibility tools provide functionality such as an ability to change the language, text to speech, colour preferences and font spacing and size.

¹ Silktide are a leading provider of accessibility services. Their accessibility rankings have replaced the SOCITM (Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation for local public services) Better Connected rankings of council websites usability

Unfortunately, the Silktide report only gives cbh.org a rating of 47% (or 'poor') which reflects the limited amount of accessibility work which has been done to date. Whilst an accessibility toolbar provided by ReachDeck is installed on cbh.org which does provide users with some basic accessible features, such as a text to speech function, this doesn't address accessibility issues with the website's design. It is therefore essential that a full content review is completed as part of the creation of the new website.

To support our work, we have digital accessibility policy which has been approved by the Leadership Team and the cabinet member working group for ICT.

The communications and marketing team continues to offer support and training for colleagues on the creation of accessible web content and documents and OurSpace provides a range of guidance documents and examples for use by employees.

A key piece of work that is still in its infancy is moving away from reliance on PDFs as a means of publishing information. The GDS (Government Digital Service) advises against the use of PDFs where possible as they're not designed for screens, are harder to make accessible, harder to use and less likely to be kept up to date, among other reasons. The GDS have published a blog on why content should be published in HTML and not PDF. This will be taken into consideration as we review all our web content in preparation for going live with a new website.

Once the new website goes live it is essential that it remains accessible. We therefore need a clear method for regular auditing. We are currently in discussions with ICT about joining their Silktide account for running automated accessibility checks.

Staff intranet(s)

The creation of the OurSpace has provided an opportunity for new content to be fully accessible. However, little work has been done on the legacy sites of CBCi and CBHQ staff intranets in terms of accessibility. Given that these legacy sites will be "switched off" at some point it is not intended to review these, although content will be reviewed as it transitions onto OurSpace.

Communities Team

Accessibility Forum

The Communities Team provide support to the Cheltenham Accessibility Forum, which was initially set up to advise the Cheltenham Development Taskforce on accessibility and brings together representatives of groups and people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments. The Accessibility Forum provides collective responses to relevant planning and licensing applications, such as new applications for a-boards or outside seating areas. It was also instrumental in shaping the designs for the Montpellier Gardens toilet refurbishment and has been involved at all stages of consultation on the new taxi policy.

Forum members visited the Municipal Offices public areas and committee suite to provide feedback on accessibility for people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Some actions were taken (such as improvements to signage, lighting, repainting the white strips on the main steps into the building) but some (such as improving the lifts into the Council Chamber and to reception to enable access by larger wheelchairs) were not

feasible at the time. National Star College students also visited Leisure @ Cheltenham and the Prince of Wales Stadium to offer feedback to Property Services.

The forum has developed a list of town centre highways priorities relating to pavements, dropped kerbs and crossings which are with Highways and also previously arranged a simul specs walk for CBC officers and elected members to simulate walking round the town centre with sight loss.

Grants

The council has just agreed a health grant of £9.5k for Goals Beyond Grass to put on inclusive cycling sessions at Belmont School, alongside establishing a new weekly session at the Prince of Wales Stadium.

The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy fund, in 2023, funded a portable disability ramp for Cheltenham Cricket Club; a safe crossing in Warden Hill Road to improve safe access to Bettridge, Belmont and Bournside Schools; sensory beds at wheelchair height in Pittville Park; improvements to access at Fiddlers Green park and a new perimeter path to improve access for wheelchair users at King George V park.

The team also sit on the Glos Funders fortnightly panel meeting which brings together funders with a focus on disability and accessibility.

As part of our work with the National Star College the council received feedback that 2 wheelchair users are unable to sit next to each other when attending performances at the Everyman, therefore this year as part of the grant provided to the Everyman we have requested that the grant agreement states that we would like them to do some specific work around accessibility.

NCLB/HAF

NCLB large events (such as Party in the Park) include a quiet hour for families with young people with special educational needs.

As part of the HAF offer, there are some SEND specific sessions in Cheltenham such as Chelt and Glos Gymnastics and Bloodhound Engineering. The other providers do also undergo accessibility training with Active Impact, and work to ensure their activities are as accessible as possible for those with additional needs, however, how well suited they are to children with physical disabilities definitely varies between provider depending on the nature of the activity. There is also a county wide SEND specific provider who's role is to deliver sessions for those children with higher level needs.

Other EDI work:

The communities team also support the following:

- Inter Faith Week events with Cheltenham Interfaith
- Holocaust Memorial Day annual act of remembrance
- Community Pride grants made in 2024 to support Culture Fest; Pride in Cheltenham; a Celebration of the Hindu festival of Durga Puja and My Voice My Cheltenham at Cheltenham Literature Festival
- A one-off grant to Cheltenham Alliance for Race Equity for a co-ordinator
- A small annual grant to Sahara Saheli multi-cultural women's group

- Flag flying in support of key dates in the LGBT+ annual calendar and Black History Month
- Attend the county Hate Crime Partnership and deliver training and awareness raising in Hate Crime Awareness Week.
- Attend the county Armed Forces Covenant group and LGBT+ Partnership

Licensing Services

Taxi Licensing

We are committed to delivering a mixed fleet in line with the Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance. Our current licensing policy provides that any new hackney carriage vehicles must be wheelchair accessible, and that all current hackney carriage vehicles (aside from the proprietors that were affected by the 2021 policy) must be replaced with a wheelchair accessible vehicle. At present there are 61 wheelchair accessible vehicles licensed in Cheltenham, although it is acknowledged that wheelchair accessibility does not necessarily mean suitable for all types of wheelchair.

In addition, to ensure our drivers are actively able to assist those with disabilities our driver training courses include a section on driver responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Other Policies

This year we will be reviewing the street scene policy. This will include a pavement licensing policy which will enable us to promote Inclusive Mobility for accessibility to furniture and highway users.

We will then move onto the street trading policy later this year which will also be updated with Inclusive Mobility.

Cheltenham Disability Forum and Inclusion Gloucestershire are now consultees in all policy reviews to gain their feedback. They are also stakeholders at Gloucestershire Licensing Officers Group.

Planning Services

Applications and Decision Making

Accessibility is integral to planning both in terms of process and outcomes. It has long been the case that planning proposals (both existing and historic) can be viewed remotely on the council's website, whereas in the past this was only possible if physically visiting the council's offices; this has transformed the way in which stakeholders interact with the planning team and planning system more broadly. The website is largely accessible, but it is acknowledged that it could go much further, particularly in respect of using alternatives to PDF documents for example.

The monthly Planning Committee meeting is now webcast via YouTube and again, as with the introduction of the public access Planning website some years ago, this has transformed the way in which stakeholders interact with the Planning Committee process; this has been particularly beneficial to those with accessibility issues. It is acknowledged

that further accessibility improvements could be made to committee webcasts through the use of subtitling software, for example, as well as in other areas.

The government consulted (in October 2024) on proposals to allow remote attendance at Planning Committee meetings by both members of the committee and third parties (via video link). These proposals, if enacted, will further transform the operation of Planning Committee meetings in an accessibility and inclusivity sense. The government's response to the consultation is awaited.

Planning Fees

Householder planning application fees are waived for a disabled person wishing to create a means of access and/or provide for their improved safety, health or comfort; this exception from the fee is a national legislative requirement. The council also offers a 100% discount on pre-application advice to disabled persons where the works in question are for the benefit of a disabled residential occupier.

Planning Policy

Public participation in the formulation of planning policy is wide-ranging and mindful of the need to be inclusive and accessible. The council's Statement of Community Involvement (2023) sets out the council's policy for involving interested parties in matters relating to development within the borough. The Statement of Community Involvement sets out that, amongst other things, Planning consultations will:

- use plain English and will be provided in different formats or languages upon request;
- engage with communities, including hard to reach groups, at the earliest opportunity;
- engage with voluntary bodies; racial, ethnic or national groups; religious groups; disabled persons groups as well as business groups.
- modify traditional consultation methods, where appropriate, to engage with hard-to-reach groups.

The fine detail of accessibility arrangements is largely a matter for the Building Regulations rather than the Planning system but accessibility, in the broad sense, is a material consideration and within the scope of planning policy. The Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy sets out the overarching planning policies for the borough and our immediate neighbours. The Cheltenham Plan sets out Cheltenham-specific planning policy. The need for development to be located such that it ensures accessibility to local services for pedestrians and cyclists and those using public transport is a key design policy requirement (Policy SD4). Balancing conservation interests while improving accessibility (where relevant) is a key component of Policy SD8 (Historic Environment). A key strand running through the council's residential planning policies is that new housing be built to a high standard of accessibility and adaptability as well as to address specialist accommodation needs.

At present there is no requirement for a specific number of properties to be accessible in developments, however, in the Joint Core Strategy Policy SD11: Housing Mix and Standards, it references under 2(ii) that "Housing should be designed to be accessible and adaptable as far as is compatible with the local context and other policies...".

We don't have anything specified in the Cheltenham Plan in terms of numbers / percentage. Whereas Gloucester City Council have a policy (A6: Accessible and adaptable homes) that does require a certain percentage (25%) to meet Building Regs M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings, and that 4% of the affordable housing component has to meet Building Regs M4 (3) 'wheelchair user dwellings' and Tewkesbury BC have a similar policy (RES13 Housing Mix) although their policy references M4(2) and M4(3) being "provided in accordance with up to date evidence of local need".

If the council was in a position where it fully understood the need, then we could, subject to viability testing seek to introduce a policy across the Strategic Local Plan area.

Environmental Services

Service adjustments

The Council offers a range of services within environmental services mainly via its service provider, Ubico Ltd, including kerbside waste collection including recycling, bring banks, grounds maintenance (mowing, hedge trimming, weed control) and street cleansing (litter bin emptying, litter picking, mechanical sweeping on highways and pavements, jet washing, graffiti removal and fly tip clearance). Majority of the services provided need no adjustment however there are occasions where adjustments are needed such as:

- Assisted collections for kerbside services where residents benefit from support physically moving the bins and boxes for collection or remembering when to do this. This is easy for residents or their carers to request and is often provided informally by crews who notice residents are in need of help. New technology helps ensure there is consistency with all crews knowing the property is flagged for this additional support at no additional cost.
- Sorted recycling – our policy requires residents to sort recycling into different boxes or bags for presentation at kerbside. Residents who find it difficult to sort recycling for a variety of physical or mental health reasons are exempt from being required to sort their recycling and crews will do this for them. Again the new technology helps ensure there is consistency with all crews knowing the property is flagged for this additional support.
- Bulky waste service – residents who are unable to physically dispose of large items of household furniture at the GCC Household Recycling Centre are able to book a bulky waste collection. This is a paid for service and the Council continues to review where there should be discounts in place for residents on low incomes.
- Recycling receptacles/containers – residents are required to pay the delivery cost for receptacles however a discount is offered for those on benefits. Residents are not required to collect receptacles. Where necessary exemptions are made regarding the charging to ensure residents do have the required containers to continue recycling.

Access to sites

The HRC at Swindon Road is currently closed and no adjustments are needed currently. This will be reviewed if the position changes. The Swindon Road depot site is not open to the public and is operated by Ubico Ltd who are responsible for access arrangements for

staff and other site users. Access ramps are in place however health and safety considerations for an operational waste site have to be considered.

Communications

The environmental services team have been trained on how to produce accessible communications and publicity content. This covers:

- Visual assets (including colour contrast in posters, images for social media, online text descriptions and social platforms)
- Writing in plain English for the many communications with residents
- Digital accessibility is understood by the team and a consideration when producing content

Website content: The team have a significant amount of information for environmental services on the website and this is gradually being reviewed and updated in conjunction with the web team ensure it meets accessibility guidelines.

Customer contact: The team seek to reply to residents in the same format they have communicated with us however where residents have specific needs face to face or telephone contact is made where written communication is less appropriate.

Documents in other formats: Although we do not have a designated supplier for large format and braille printing, this is something that we would organise as required in conjunction with customer services. Documents can be printed in larger formats using the council printers.

Council Buildings and Assets

With over 250 commercial properties the Council owns a diverse portfolio of buildings and open spaces, ranging from our public toilets to sports pavilions as well as our leisure facilities and historic venues that make our town so special. Ensuring these special places are accessible to all are part of the council's core values. Awareness training for our customer facing teams, investment into our publicly accessible properties and forward planning are all pivotal to ensuring our town is a safe, welcoming, inclusive and inviting place for all to visit.

The Equality Act of 2010 sets out protective measures for those people who have a disability, it ensures they are treated fairly and equally to an able-bodied person and protects them from discrimination. The Act requires employers and bodies providing services to anticipate the need for reasonable adjustments, including physical adjustments to properties, so as not to discriminate.

This piece of legislation replaces the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 which drastically changed the way in which disabilities were perceived, broke down barriers and encouraged property owners and operators alike to fully consider the way in which a disabled user would have a positive experience when visiting a property. Furthermore, the provision of inclusion and full disability access in the built environment can deliver social and business benefits.

Disability Rights UK has a wealth of resource regarding making buildings accessible, they have joined forces with the RIBA to set out guidance notes in relation to the design and

refurbishment of buildings which has been a particularly useful tool when looking to improve our spaces to make them more inclusive.

During 2023 a group of students from the National Star college assisted CBC Property Surveyors in providing first hand advice on their experience of visiting some of the council's properties. The students, all with varying disabilities, visited the Recreation Centre, Pump Rooms, Town Hall and Municipal Offices. The students met with CBC Property Surveyors and the building operators to gain an understanding of accessibility, the facilities available and in return we were given an insight into some of the challenges the students faced, together with advice on both some short and longer term measures that could be implemented to make their experience of the venues a positive place to visit.

Below is a summary of the measures the council has in place, detailing the areas where 'reasonable adjustments' and investment has been made to enhance our special town to make it an inclusive place for all to visit.

Historic Properties, Leisure & Community Facilities and event venues.

At the Pittville Pump Rooms, arguably the town's most prestigious and iconic building, a good level of thought has been put into making the building accessible for all to visit and enjoy. The building is owned by Cheltenham Borough Council and operated by The Cheltenham Trust, its main function is an events venue, hosting weddings, concerns and community events. From the East Approach Drive there are 6 disabled car parking bays and level access to the building. Automatic double doors allow unhindered access into the foyer and box office area where there is a lowered reception hatch. There is good circulation space leading to the main hall and rear bar area together with accessible toilet and adequate signage. The main hall also has a hearing loop and a lift offers access to the upper floors on request, where there are several meeting rooms.

Similarly, the Town Hall has 3 parking bays in close proximity to the building, these are available on request at the time of booking as the area is predominantly used by staff. From the car park level access is available into the building. At the front of the building ramped access to the main entrance exists, there is good circulation space for wheelchair users to access all areas of the ground floor and contrasting décor assists those with visual impairment. Again, there is a hearing loop on the ground floor of the auditorium. There is no access to the balconies but as all the services are made available on the ground floor, including accessible toilet cubicles, 'reasonable adjustments' have been made.

There is a similar set up to the above two properties at the Art Gallery & Museum (Wilson) with both lift access to all floors, level access to the front and rear entrances and an accessible toilet. Assistant guide dogs are welcome at this property which allows visitors to explore 3 floors of art and historic collections. Signage is good with details of whom to contact if visitors require a personal assistant to accompany them and an induction loop exists on the ground floor, including the café area.

By contrast, St Mary's Mission, doesn't offer so much accessibility but equally the tenant advises they would accommodate specific requirements for visitors to the building as needed.

Recreation Centre & Prince of Wales Stadium

Whilst originally built in the 1970's the above facilities have been extended, refurbished and have evolved with 'business need' over a number of years. The Recreation Centre, a Leisure Centre as opposed to a sports centre, appeals to all members of the community. There are classes specifically tailored to those with additional needs, the elderly, as well as babies and toddlers. The site is fully accessible with a disabled passenger lift to the café and offices on the upper level as well as a lift to the spectator gallery in the main swimming pool and hoist facility for those less mobile to access the main swimming pool and teaching pool areas. More recently, a splashpad area and soft play have been added to the facility to create a safe space, meeting the needs of those with sensory requirements.

Within the change village there are accessible shower and toilet facilities as well as family change areas. Most recently the centre has been decorated to allow better movement around the space for those with visual impairment and the main reception area has an induction loop for those with hearing difficulties. Externally, there are disabled parking bays as well as parent and child bays in close proximity to the centre.

Whilst the Prince of Wales Stadium is less geared to meet the needs of those with a disability, it does have the benefit that such facilities are provided opposite at the Recreation Centre.

Oakley Community Centre

This is a purpose-built property providing office and community resource accommodation. The property is laid out over two floors and provides two designated parking spaces. The property has several entrances all of which provide a level access into the building. Accessible toilets are available both to the ground and first floors. A lift is present to gain access to the first floor. There are no onsite facilities provided for hearing-impaired visitors, but an abstract colour scheme and LED lighting provide some aid to the visually impaired.

Crematorium

The main crematorium is a purpose built single storey modern facility, approximately seven years old and was built to be fully accessible. There is suitable parking provision, level access approach, power assisted doors and internal facilities including accessible WCs as well as an induction loop and a good level of contrasting features to assist those with sight impairments. The location and setting have been well thought out to provide a peaceful and calming space for the bereaved as well as those who are neurodivergent with well landscaped and sensory areas.

Municipal offices

The main CBC Municipal Offices is a Georgian terraced building in the centre of Cheltenham. The building occupies 5 floors. Accessible parking spaces are available to the rear of the building along with a level access approach. A wheelchair platform lift is provided internally to access the ground floor. A further passenger lift is available to access the upper floors. Induction loop and other assistance items are available at the main reception. Procedures are in place to assist disabled persons to access services within the building.

Crematorium Office

The crematorium office is a small single storey building constructed in the 1920s. The building's reception is used by members of the public and reasonable provisions are afforded, staff provide any additional facilities that may be needed.

Car Parks

The council owns and manages a number of level car parks across the borough, including two multi-storey car parks. There is ample provision for disabled parking, parent and child parking as well as lift provision in the multi-storey car parks. Our car parks are well lit areas offering pedestrian walkways in contrasting colour schemes to keep the users safe from moving vehicles.

Greenspace, Parks & Gardens

The council maintains over fifty play areas and recreational areas, with Pittville Park being its flagship facility. The play area was designed to be inclusive in terms of equipment being suitable for children of all abilities, and incorporates tactile elements, sound, and access points to equipment that can be utilised by children and carers. The same principles apply to all project briefs developed as part of the council's annual play area improvement programme.

In consideration of recreational facilities enjoyed by older generations, the council has also constructed three boules/pétanque courts to meet local demand. Similarly, there are numerous green spaces that now incorporate outdoor fitness equipment.

In terms of general access to green space the council has been successful in securing funding in partnership with community groups to install circular paths to many of its larger playing fields that can now accommodate year-round all weather access to both recreational and semi natural green space. Furthermore, some allotment sites now have adapted plots with paved surfaces and raised beds for tenants with restricted mobility.

Green Space Officers recently attended a "Nature without Barriers" event organised by the Barnwood Trust in collaboration with the Gloucestershire Nature Partnership, which has prompted further thought about the type of information contained on the council's parks web pages. Pictorial and written lists of facilities can provide reassurance to people for whom anxiety is a restricting factor when considering a visit to a public space.

As part of our work with National Star College and Accessible Gloucestershire we will shortly be commencing a review of access to our parks and gardens.

Pavilions & Playing Fields

The council owns and manages a number of sports pavilions that are let to local sports and community groups. The pavilions are purpose-built properties providing changing rooms, showers and toilet facilities for sporting events. Some of these properties benefit from on-site parking and disabled spaces and where this cannot be provided street parking is generally available nearby. Where level access is not available, a ramp is provided making the pavilions accessible for all and at the time of booking the organiser is advised which facility may suit their user group the best. The majority of the pavilions are laid out across one floor and many benefit from an accessible toilet complete with panic alarm. There are no onsite facilities provided for hearing-impaired visitors, but an abstract colour scheme provides some aid to the visually impaired.

Public Toilets

Bath Terrace is a purpose-built public toilet providing male, female and accessible toilets. The toilet block is set within a carpark and has 3 designated parking bays. Level access is

available from the carpark and into the building via a ramp. There is a single accessible toilet provided within the block. There is a similar set up at Imperial Garden and Royal Well, level or ramped access is available into the facility and an accessible toilet is provided.

Montpellier toilets have recently undergone a full refurbishment programme, making them inclusive and accessible for all. The purpose-built public toilet block provides male, female, accessible and changing places facilities. Street parking is available directly outside of the block and level access is available from the street parking into the building via a ramp. The changing places facility provides additional facilities for assisted disabled visitors, such as an electric hoist, bed, WC and shower.

Similarly, Pittville Park Changing Places facility offers a similar set up catering for those with additional needs. The facility is located close to the play area and has level access throughout. There is an abstract colour scheme and LED lighting within the change pod which provides some aid to the visually impaired.

Our changing places are cleaned daily by Ubico who report defects to the property team. In addition, they are subject to monthly detailed property inspections.

At present there are no plans for further changing places facilities to be installed, however we are aware of the concerns that there are no facilities open after the shops shut which could discourage those with additional needs from using restaurants/ other nightlife facilities. We will therefore work with the BID to explore options.

Housing Improvement Programme

As part of the Consumer Standards – under Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, registered providers must ensure that landlord services are accessible, and that the accessibility is publicised to tenants. This includes supporting tenants and prospective tenants to use online landlord services if required.

As part of the Gap Analysis, CBC determined that the control within this standard as 'Met'.

CBC provide tenants with a range of means of accessing services, who can seek support via the phone to our Customer Services team, through a dedicated website and Customer Portal, which links to our Housing Management System and through regular face to face meetings with our Tenancy Management team.

Computers have been installed at sheltered schemes and training has been provided to enable tenants to use the Customer Portal. A range of training is available free of charge to all customers at our Skills Hub which includes developing numeracy and IT skills.

Available services and support are advertised through a dedicated website and Customer Portal, social media posts, and newsletter (available in both physical and digital formats). Tenants are provided with a Tenant Handbook on sign-up, to ensure they have information on the services provided and how to report problems. The Customer Services team aim to direct customers to the appropriate services and support at the first point of contact. Increasingly, CBC is using QR codes on posters and leaflets to direct customers to further information and support.

Registered providers must give tenants a wide range of opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. The Tenant Scrutiny Panel deliver an annual scrutiny programme. This is determined by the panel and scrutiny's are selected to address issues of most importance to tenants, identified via performance against tenant satisfaction measures (TSM) (customer feedback) and other feedback. In addition, the tenant panel engage in a full programme of consultation as part of the development of strategies and policies. We are working towards engagement with the wider tenant population and will develop this further. Completed tenant scrutiny reviews have been published on the website. CBC are committed to removing any barriers to engagement and will make any necessary adjustments to meet individual needs. Examples include considering the accessibility of venues, providing transport and making equipment available through the skills hub.

Registered providers must collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord services. An annual report to tenants is published on the website and signposted to tenants through the newsletter and social media. This report includes details of how income was spent and how tenant feedback has shaped services in the last year. It is presented in a clear accessible format, making use of infographics and statistics. Financial statements are also published on the website and Companies House annually. This includes a breakdown of spending and the financial position, including a value for money analysis using KPI information. CBC have addressed issues with accessibility of the financial statements on the website.

Our ongoing programme of tenancy audits is currently gathering information which will enable us to have a better understanding of our tenants needs and our stock condition surveys are identifying properties which have adaptations to enable the creation of an adaptations register which will assist in matching housing applicant to homes that most suits their needs.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Following on from our recent merger with CBH, we are developing one ED&I policy and action plan that sets out our commitment to addressing inequalities and promoting ED&I across all areas of our work and our communities. We are also reviewing our respective 2024/25 ED&I actions to assess and report on progress and working together with housing services and other key stakeholders to agree targets for 2025/26. Our aim is to have a draft policy and action plan completed by the end of May together with a revised ED&I group structure and terms of reference.

Actions

Whilst this briefing note highlights a lot of good work in this area it is clear that there is still much to do as identified in these actions:

Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Working with the National Star College review access to the Municipal Offices and the associated signage.	Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment	October 2025
Working with the National Star College create a video showing the accessible route into the office for use on our website	Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment	October 2025
Install clear signage and messaging in reception identifying the facilities that we have for those with disabilities	Head of Customer Services	September 2025
When identifying a location for the new council chamber consider accessibility issues	Democratic Services Team Leader	As part of municipal offices project
Ensure our new website is accessible, moving from the use of PDFs to HTML where possible and implementing a process for regular accessibility checks	Communications and Marketing Manger	December 2025
Ensure that grant agreement with the Everyman states that we would like them to do some work around accessibility to facilitate two wheelchair users being able to sit together and monitor compliance with this provision.	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships	May 2025 – April 2026
Review street scene policy and street trading policy.	Licensing & Public Protection Manager	December 2025
Work with National Star College and Accessible Gloucestershire to review of access to our parks and gardens.	Parks and Public Realm Manager	Commenced – conclude by April 2026

Work with the BID to explore options for further changing places.	Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment	December 2025
Complete tenancy audits so that we have a better understanding of our tenants needs	Director of Housing – Customer and Community Services	October 2025
Create an adaptations register to assist in matching housing applicants to homes that most suits their needs	Director of Housing – Customer and Community Services	April 2026
Revised ED&I policy and action plan	Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity Manager	October 2025
Liaise with the BID about access to shops in the town, with a view to creating a map identifying all the accessible shops	Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment	December 2025

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Work Plan 2025/2026

Title	Objective	Format	Officer/Interested Party/Partner
7th July 2025			
Minster Exchange	Update on first year of operation. Assessing the impact against original objectives	Report	Chief Executive
Housing Transition	An update on progress following the integration of housing services into CBC one year ago	Information/Discussion Paper	Chief Executive
Culture Board	Assessing outcomes of the activities and measuring success against original objectives	Information/Discussion Paper	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships
8th September 2025			
Preventative Maintenance on Council assets and Community Leased Buildings	To understand the general approach to the planned maintenance of public facilities and the asset management strategy	Information/Discussion Paper	
Waste, Recycling, Fly-tipping and Enforcement	To understand how the council is addressing any impacts of the prolonged closure of the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) To receive the annual performance report from Ubico	Information/Discussion Paper	Environmental Partnerships Manager/Enforcement/Ubico
Flood Risk Management and Prevention	To understand partnership working to improve flood mitigation in the borough	Information/Discussion Paper	Climate, Flooding and Decarbonisation Manager and Gloucestershire partners
24th November 2025			
Draft Procurement Strategy	To consider the emerging CBC procurement strategy	Information/Discussion Paper	Strategic Procurement Manager
Devolution	Assessing the opportunities and threats of devolution and how officers are prioritising/responding to these.	Information/Discussion Paper	Chief Executive

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Work Plan 2025/2026

Title	Objective	Format	Officer/Interested Party/Partner
2026			
Safeguarding – Safety for Women and Girls in the Borough	To update O&S on the work being carried out by the Cheltenham community safety partnership in response to the “Your experiences, your voice – Life in Cheltenham for young women” report and event	Information/Discussion Paper	Safeguarding and Partnerships Manager
Youth Engagement	To update O&S on progress being made by No Child Left Behind to deliver a year of youth action	Information/Discussion Paper	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships
Empty Homes	Evaluating data and measures to encourage putting back in use and respective barriers	Information/Discussion Paper	Private Sector Housing