



**CHELTENHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Our draft vision and outcomes for physical activity and sport

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# Foreword

Cheltenham is in an incredibly exciting place. The council's new corporate plan sets out our ambitions to be the cyber capital of the UK, to lead the way in our collective efforts to help make Cheltenham net zero by 2030, increase the number of affordable homes and ensure our residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity.

At the heart of these ambitions is our work to make sure people living in Cheltenham can live healthy, fulfilling and productive lives.

But having looked at the data and spoken with a wide range of partners as part of the development of this document, we know that not all our residents have the same opportunities to lead healthy lives.

We also know that the communities with the lowest levels of physical activity often have the highest levels of people with disabilities and poor health. But we also know that the most successful agents of change will be people themselves – so building confidence and giving people the confidence, tools and encouragement will make the greatest difference to people's lives.

Part 1 of our physical activity & sports strategy therefore sets out our collective vision that

**Cheltenham is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from sport and physical activity.**

We have also agreed three outcomes that will guide our work

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

I'd like to thank all the people and organisations that have played a part in the development of this document and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we develop and implement our strategy.

I'd also like to thank Mari Davis and Theo Miller from the Leadership Centre for all their invaluable guidance and support.

**Cllr Max Wilkinson**

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## PART 1

# SETTING THE SCENE AND OUR VISION

## Introduction

Cheltenham is fortunate to be seen as an active town; 67.1% of our population is already classed as active enjoying 150 mins of activity every week – compared to 66% for the county and 63% nationally.

We are blessed with many much loved parks, gardens and informal green spaces, which provide a significant resource for wide range of formal and informal sports and activities.

We have a range of leisure provision in both public, education and private sectors, including 6 swimming pools.

There is an appetite to be more active – from our recent household survey, 68% of residents choose to walk, cycle or use public transport more instead of using a car with a further 18% willing to make this change in the next few years

We have a wide range of community-based organisations that are leading the way in keeping people physically active including our sporting clubs, schools, friends of groups, community projects and many of these have contributed to the development of this document via a series of stakeholder workshops.





## The benefits of physical activity

Nationally, physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone).

Unfortunately, the UK population is around 20% less active than in the 1960s. If current trends continue, it will be 35% less active by 2030.

Being physically active has significant benefits for health, both physical and mental, and can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression.

In addition, physical activity, when undertaken outdoors, and with others, can help people:

- Improve their mood and feelings of self esteem
- increase ability to concentrate and be productive in both school and at work
- be sociable and make friends
- lower stress and anxiety
- improve their sleep

## Why we need a strategy?

As you will read, we have a number of compelling reasons to come forward with our strategy:

We need to determine the longer-term future of CBC physical activity facilities, particularly Leisure-at Cheltenham and Prince of Wales Stadium. Due to their age, both facilities require significant investment. A new strategy is needed to provide the framework by which we can generate and test future options for the site.

Our communities are ambitious and are coming forward with plans to deliver improved activity and sports facilities; both Cheltenham Saracens FC and Belmont School have developed multi-million pound schemes. A new strategy can help create the framework by which these communities can access external investment.

When looking at health data, it is clear that some of our geographic communities face long-term health inequalities; local partners have assess data relating to a range of health conditions including obesity, depression and COPD. The data paints a picture that low income communities have worse health outcomes than more affluent communities. A new strategy will set out how we can encourage communities to be more active.

We are also aware that some of our low income communities do not have the same access to physical activity opportunities than more affluent communities. For instance, we are aware that there are no youth football teams serving West Cheltenham in the whole Cheltenham Youth League. A new strategy will set out how we address these inequalities in opportunities.

Creating opportunities to be more physically active and to enjoy sports is going to be central to creating sustainable and healthy communities in our growth areas – Elms Park and Golden Valley. A new strategy will set out how we use physical activity and sports to support the longer-term growth ambitions of Cheltenham.





## Scope of our strategy

We have entitled this document our vision and outcomes for physical activity and sport to reflect our focus on being as inclusive as possible and that getting people more physical active is the right starting point.

So within scope of this strategy are all the things we things we can do as a community to encourage, promote more people to be physically active.

But we recognise the absolute importance of sports and Cheltenham's rich sporting heritage and are determined that this strategy puts in place the means to encourage more people to enjoy and benefit from sports be that as a beginner or at elite levels.

Cheltenham Borough Council is not the transport authority, but we recognise the importance of active travel. This is reflected in our Connecting Cheltenham report and our ongoing engagement with Gloucestershire County Council on transport policy. To ensure focus on deliverable outcomes, this strategy will not duplicate existing work on active travel.



## Timescales and process

We have split the work to develop a physical activity and sports strategy into two phases. The first phase will develop a collective vision and high-level shared outcomes. This will be scrutinised by cabinet in summer 2023. This work started with initial stakeholder workshops in Oct 2022 to gain agreement to emerging themes and cross-cutting issues.

A series of stakeholder workshops were then held in Jan/Feb 2023 to begin the work of agreeing a vision, outcomes and objectives. These were then further refined at a stakeholder workshop in April.

The second phase will see the council commission consultancy support to update the Cheltenham playing pitch & built leisure and sports facilities assessments. The consultants will deliver a full strategy in spring 2024, following technical work and appropriate consultation.

## PART 2

# THE CONTEXT FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS IN CHELTENHAM

### Summary of data

We know that 21% of our population is considered inactive and although this compares with 23% inactive for the county and 26% nationally, there are areas of Cheltenham and groups of people where inactivity levels are far higher.

**Low income** - People living in our lower income neighbourhoods are at risk of lower activity levels. Twice as many people are classed as inactive in our most deprived communities (38%) when compared to our least deprived communities (19%). We also know that obesity in women affects 39.5% of those living in most deprived areas compared with 22.4% from least deprived areas.

**Disabled people** - we know that 36% of people who class themselves as disabled are inactive compared to only 17% who class themselves as non-disabled – a participation gap of c.20% .

**Ethnicity** - Nationally, 37% of people from the Asian ethnic group are classed as inactive, compared to 24.5% of people from white British origin. In the Asian and white British ethnic groups, women are more likely to be inactive than men.

**Younger women** - Whilst similar rates of adult women are classed as active when compared to men, school data from the Gloucestershire online pupil survey shows 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 find it embarrassing compared with only 21% of boys.



## What our stakeholders have told us

From several workshops held to develop the strategy, our stakeholders have painted a rich picture of the challenges that some of our communities face when accessing physical activity:

### Accessibility challenges

- Cost is a barrier for many people - only going to get worse with cost of living
- Childcare can be a barrier
- Perceptions of feeling safe when exercising
- Unequal geographic distribution of facilities and opportunities - exacerbated by lack of bus services

### Infrastructure challenges

- Not enough pitches and courts to meet demand
- Lack of funding or awareness of eligible funding for investment
- Some facilities could be better used - e.g. schools sports facilities
- Lack of facilities for diverse needs of younger people e.g. skate parks

### Organisations & working together challenges

- Lack of volunteers to provide services and confidence of volunteers
- How do we future proof organisations
- Lack of joint working on sports

### Engagement and communication challenges

- We are not hearing from a broad enough range of voices
- Lack of a joined-up approach across partners - how we make physical activity a priority
- How is physical activity marketed?
- Celebrate the normality of being active
- Overcoming increasingly sedentary lifestyles



## PART 3

# OUR SHARED VISION AND MISSION

### **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.

### **Mission**

Together we will work as a whole system to make sure that everyone can benefit from and have access to affordable and sustainable physical activity opportunities, providing the necessary support and making it easier for people to join in.



## PART 4

# OUTCOMES AND SHARED COMMITMENTS

Working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, we have developed a set of three outcomes and associated objectives that set out what are we committing to do via our strategy.

### 1) Cheltenham is a place where all our communities enjoy and benefit from physical activity:

- We will explore how best to support communities increase their engagement in physical activity where we know inactivity inequalities are the greatest:
  - Those on low incomes (including children living in poverty)
  - Disabled people and people with long-term health conditions
  - Women and girls
  - People from ethnically diverse communities
  - Others (older people, carers, refugees)
- We will engage with relevant communities to identify and address barriers and opportunities, plus explore funding to support specific programmes and work with social prescribers to connect with activity
- We will also work with partners to address safety concerns – not feeling safe when exercising is seen as a significant barrier to participation



## 2) Our physical and community infrastructure is accessible and affordable but also high-quality and sustainable:

- We will commission a playing pitch strategy & built leisure and sports facilities assessment that will provide a set of recommendations for future provision including funding and investment opportunities
- Following these assessments, we will then develop options for Leisure At / Prince of Wales
- We will work with sport national governing bodies to better understand their investment plans
- We will work with community-based organisations to identify their ambitions and support their fund-raising and investment plans
- We will work with schools and organisations like Move More to explore opportunities for great engagement in physical activities and to ensure communities can benefit from their resources
- We will work with the county-based volunteering infrastructure to ensure greater supply of volunteers to support community-based physical activity and sports projects
- We will 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



## 3) We collaborate to create active and inclusive communities:

- We will set up a physical activity and sports network to share best practice and support each other. For example, via mutual training opportunities
- We will explore opportunities to share resources across the network eg schools
- We will explore partnerships with other organisations where they can support our vision and outcomes
- We will encourage organisations, groups and employers to work collaboratively to develop a campaign – a movement for change where people in Cheltenham feel enabled and empowered to be more active
- We will be clear about the social value of our work to promote physical activity
- We will look to develop a communications plans to ensure people are aware of the physical activity and sporting opportunities in their community, and that we are linking with national and local campaigns - the message needs to be that being active is not just fulfilling and fun but can also be an easy choice.

# PART 5

## NEXT STEPS

### What are we going to do next?

Our immediate commitments to support the vision, mission and outcomes of this document are as follows:

#### July 2023

**In July**, we will commission consultancy support to undertake the playing pitch assessments and the built leisure and sports assessments. Together, these studies will provide a rich picture of our current infrastructure and how well it will meet the future needs in our communities, along with an investment plan for how we secure funding to improve provision.

#### September 2023

**In September**, we will have the first meeting of a physical activity and sports network that will share best practice and support each other eg via mutual training opportunities.

#### October 2023

**In October**, using expertise from the network, we will begin to engage the communities where we believe there are inactivity inequalities; those on low incomes, disabled people, women and girls and people from ethnically diverse communities so that we use insight to form future plans for increasing activity levels.

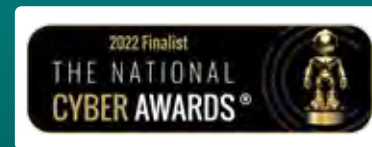
#### March 2024

**In March** next year, a final strategy will be prepared that will include the strategic elements from the playing pitch and built facilities assessments alongside the detailed engagement and insights from communities where there are inactivity inequalities.



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**Photo credits**

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- **Page 05** - Goals Beyond Grass
- **Page 06** - (skateboarder) Visit Cheltenham and (cyclists) Belmont School
- **Page 07** - The Cheltenham Trust and Cheltenham Rugby Club
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- **Page 12** - Cheltenham Town Ladies FC
- **Page 13** - Alex Rotas c/o Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation and (Girl dancing) Lives of Colour
- **Page 15** - (family cyclists) Visit Cheltenham