

# Gloucester City Council Sport & Physical Activity Strategy 2023-2028





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## Foreword

We know that participation in sport and physical activity offers an enormous range of benefits to individuals, families and communities. Being physically active lowers the risk of lifestyle related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and can assist in preventing or surviving other illnesses. Participating in active recreation helps to refresh the mind, contributing to improved mental health and enhancing overall health and wellbeing. It can help build individual self-esteem and self-confidence, encourage social interaction, bring communities together and contribute to strong family relationships.



Physical activity is also an opportunity for people to get together: kicking a ball, riding a bike or watching the kids play sport are all opportunities for a families and friends to come together in an enjoyable and supportive way. Sport and physical activity also reduce healthcare costs,

generate economic activity, provide opportunities for volunteering and skills development and play a role in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

Gloucester City Council and its partners recognise that the City has good capacity to deliver physical activity opportunities through its sport and leisure facilities, open spaces, schools and the wider environment. However, a sustainable approach to maintaining and developing these physical community assets is required as the local area faces a challenging economic climate in the coming years.

This strategic plan for sport and physical activity, covering the period 2023 to 2028, provides a clear direction for the Council to work in partnership to support healthy lifestyles in the community by reducing levels of inactivity amongst its residents, while at the same time helping local people who already participate in physical activity and sport be the best they can be.

Supported by four leading priorities and a set of Key Performance Indicators, the strategy will guide the development of activities, programmes and partnerships that can help realise the full potential of physical activity and



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sport within the community. At the same time, it will help to ensure that the Council and its delivery partners are working collaboratively towards the same goals, ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently and that new opportunities for participation are maximised.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Cook".

# About Gloucester

Located in the heart of Gloucestershire, the district, county town and cathedral City of Gloucester boasts a wealth of cultural, architectural and industrial heritage alongside a thriving, well connected local economy. Its population of just over 132,000 people enjoys access to numerous open spaces and waterways and a diverse range of sport, physical activity and cultural facilities.



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Despite this backdrop the health and wellbeing of Gloucester residents is often compromised by low activity levels and, in some areas of the City, poor socio-economic conditions. Gloucester also has several diverse ethnic communities who experience inequalities and barriers to being physically active.

To further establish the context for this strategy it is useful to highlight some of the key demographic and health characteristics of the district:

- The population of Gloucester has increased by 8.9%, from around 121,700 in 2011 to 132,500 in 2021, higher than the overall increase for England over the same period (6.6%). As of 2021, Gloucester is the third most densely populated of the South West's 30 local authority areas. There has been an increase of 22.3% in people aged 65 years and over; an increase of 6.8% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 6.1% in children aged under 15 years (2011 to 2021), all higher than the England averages.

- Public Health England's 2019 'Local Authority Health Profile for Gloucester' provides the most recent snapshot of the prevailing health conditions within our district, which are found to be varied compared with the England average. Life expectancy for men is lower than the England average, while life expectancy is 13.5 years lower for men and 9.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Gloucester than in the least deprived areas. The under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases is worse than the England average, and in terms of children's health in Year 6, 23.6% (377) of children are classified as obese – this is worse than the average for England, as are the district's levels of teenage pregnancy.
- Regarding physical activity levels 60.8% of our local adult population are active for more than 150 minutes a week, slightly lower than the average across England (61.4%). However slightly more (12.4%) of local residents over the age of 16 are fairly active (30-149 minutes of activity per week), compared to the average of 11.5% across England. Between November 2018 and November 2021 levels of adult inactivity rose from 24.6% to 27.2%, no doubt due in part to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and associated lockdowns.



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- Local children and young people (aged 5 to 16) are slightly less active than the national average, with 43.9% being active for 60 minute or more each day (compared to 44.9% nationally), 19.6% being fairly active (30 to 59 minutes per day) compared to 23.8% nationally, and 36.5% being less active (under 30 minutes per day) compared to 31.3% across England. Significantly fewer children and young people in Gloucester have reported doing the recommended amount of exercise than in the other Gloucestershire districts.
- Gloucester is the most deprived district in Gloucestershire and ranks as the 138th most deprived of the 317 districts in England. 10 out of 13 of Gloucestershire's top 10% most deprived Local Super Output Areas nationally are located in Gloucester district and Gloucester has the highest proportion of all districts living in the most deprived areas (23% of the district). About 16.1% (4,195) children live in low income families.
- In terms of active travel and working from home the 2021 Census shows that 24.2% of Gloucester residents work from home, compared to an England & Wales average of 31.2%. Conversely, the number of residents who either

walk to work (9.0%) or cycle to work (3.3%) is higher than the averages for England & Wales (7.6%/2.0% respectively).

- Ordnance Survey publish the locations and extent of green spaces that are likely to be accessible to the public. The data include the following types of green spaces: allotments or community growing spaces, bowling greens, cemeteries, religious grounds, golf courses, other sports facilities, play spaces, playing fields, public parks or gardens and tennis courts. 2017 data shows that 11.9% of Gloucester district (excluding the parish of Quedgeley) is comprised of green space (412.5 hectares), compared with an England average of 2.2%, while public parks and gardens cover 136.1 hectares (3.9% of the district) compared with an England average of 0.8%.

# Making the case for Sport and Physical Activity

Sport England, the arms-length body of government responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and getting more people active across England, makes a compelling, evidenced-based case for sport and physical activity across five key areas:

## 1. Physical Wellbeing

- Sport and physical activity can help prevent ill health as well as provide therapeutic and management effects for those suffering - particularly for people affected by cancer.
- It can also lead to improvements in strength, balance, movement and motor skills, and help in maintaining a healthy body weight.
- It can reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 30-40% and can reduce the risk of a range of medical conditions, including cancer, dementia, strokes, heart disease and depression.
- Other physical wellbeing outcomes backed by evidence include improved quality of sleep, increased energy levels, healthy early years development, reduced unhealthy behaviours like smoking, reduced mortality, effective pain management and improved quality of life in ageing.



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## 2. Mental Wellbeing

- Physical activity can contribute to enjoyment and happiness, and more broadly to life satisfaction through increased social interaction.
- Volunteers and sports fans also have an increased sense of purpose and pride, while self-esteem and confidence are known to increase through participation or volunteering.
- Sport and physical activity also have the potential to reduce anxiety and depression symptoms.

## 3. Social & Community Development

- As well as developing individuals, sport and physical activity can help build stronger communities by bringing people together.
- Sport is widely seen as a way for people of different backgrounds to interact and integrate by taking part, volunteering and spectating.
- It can provide opportunities for migrants to adapt to living in England and can bridge divides between men and women, homeless people and those who are not homeless, and people with different employment backgrounds.

## 4. Individual Development

- Physical activity can have a positive impact on a person's employment opportunities and provide support to those who are not in employment, education or training.
- There's also clear evidence being active improves educational behaviour and attainment, through greater self-esteem, confidence and direct cognitive benefits.
- It can also help reduce anti-social behaviour in disaffected young people and increase willingness to volunteer and the development of soft skills, such as integrity, responsibility and leadership.

## 5. Economic Development

- The sport and physical activity sector boosts the economy in two ways: directly, through job creation, and indirectly by reducing healthcare costs due to a healthier population and reducing crime.

In the context of this background of evidence, Gloucester's demographic, health and activity data illustrates not only the barriers residents face to getting active, but also provides a framework for creating opportunities and solutions.

The district's considerable population growth over the ten years between 2011 and 2021, and that of neighbouring areas such as Tewkesbury, is significant. Firstly, it is likely to be putting pressure on local sport and physical activity facility infrastructure in terms of demand, meaning that investment in upgraded and new facilities must be a priority. Secondly, the data shows a simultaneous increase in the number of children and older people over 65. Inactivity within these groups is particularly detrimental to overall community wellbeing, meaning children must be supported to develop a life-long 'habit' of being physically active, while 'active ageing' should be encouraged to help reduce age-related illnesses.

The City's health profile shows a significant gap between the life expectancy of men and women living in the most and least deprived areas of the City, as well as a relatively high under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases. This, combined with slightly lower than average rates of physical activity, suggest that taking measures to increase participation in sport and physical activity can play a critical role in reducing health inequalities among our communities. Similarly, supporting children and young people to be more active both inside and outside of school hours can directly impact on participation levels and help address levels of obesity.

The data for active travel is encouraging, with higher than average numbers of Gloucester residents walking or cycling to work. Travelling actively has a huge number of benefits and is a direct way in which people can address the impact of climate change. We are committed to working with county and local partners to improve travel infrastructure and make it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to get around the City.

Also encouraging are the statistics on the provision of green and open spaces. There is strong evidence to suggest that green spaces have a beneficial impact on physical and mental wellbeing and cognitive function through both physical access and usage. Despite its relatively high population density Gloucester is fortunate to have much



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higher levels of green and open spaces than the national average, yet many of the organisations we consulted as part of the research for this strategy questioned how well known and accessible these spaces are. As such, there is great potential to increase the number of people accessing the natural environment, but factors such as access to transport will need to be considered.

The evidence suggests that there are numerous barriers to physical activity – including safety, location, affordability, weather, cultural and social – and that delivering change at scale is difficult. For these reasons we believe that a systematic approach is needed to harness the benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

'Whole system' thinking acknowledges that multiple factors contribute to an individual's decision to adopt or sustain an inactive lifestyle. These factors are diverse, context dependent and constantly changing. To get to grips with the challenge, we need to consider not individuals and their conditions, but the holistic system and the dynamic relationships, diverse perspectives and invisible boundaries that exist within it. Changing one factor may have a cascading effect – positive or negative – on one or many more of the others.

The systems approach to solving problems begins by looking for points of convergence and evidence of shared ambitions and goals. The following section attempts to do this by taking a high-level look at the strategic landscape within which this strategy sits.



# Strategic context

This strategy is primarily guided by Gloucester City Council's overarching strategic plan, the **Council Plan 2022-2024**. The Plan has three leading priorities, one of which is 'building greener, healthier, and more inclusive communities'. This priority aims to ensure that Gloucester's residents can lead a healthy and active lifestyle by ensuring everyone has access to high-quality leisure facilities and thriving green spaces, developed and delivered with a range of leading local partners.



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The strategy's development has also been influenced by several other national, county and district level strategies and plans, which further contextualise and shape the strategic approach for physical activity, sport and wellbeing:

- **Uniting the Movement – Sport England, 2021:**

this ten year plan is based on five key pillars, all of which resonate with objectives of the Gloucester City Council Plan:

- **Recover and Reinvent** – recovering from the pandemic to create a network delivering sport and physical activity opportunities
- **Connecting Communities** – sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together
- **Positive Experiences for Children & Young People** – as the foundations for a long and healthy life

- **Connecting with Health & Wellbeing** – strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life
- **Active Environments** – creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active

- **Building Back Better in Gloucestershire 2022-2026:**

Gloucestershire County Council's four year strategy outlines how the council aims to support and engage with communities to help them realise their ambitions across areas including skills, education, employment and their health and wellbeing. Gloucester City is highlighted as an exemplar of 'asset-based community development', an approach that begins with what is strong about communities, not what is wrong with them. The strategy also addresses the need to tackle climate change and highlights the role physical activity can play by creating a network of local cycling routes to make active travel the default choice for short journeys.

- **Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2030:**

developed by Gloucestershire County Council and the NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group this strategy focuses on areas where a collective, system wide approach can help to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Gloucestershire. 'Physical activity' and 'healthy lifestyles' are recognised as key interventions with the strategy lending support to 'We Can Move', a social movement supported by Active Gloucestershire (the Active Partnership for the county) which aims to get 30,000 inactive people in Gloucestershire active and to make being physically active the social norm.





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● **Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust Strategy 2021-2026:**

the county's Foundation Trust provides provide integrated services for people with physical health, mental health and learning disability needs and a leading aim of its strategy is to work in partnership with communities to improve the health outcomes of those who are most disadvantaged. Key to this is being an active partner at both a locality and system level to tackle the root causes of health inequality, and this way of working offers significant opportunities to harness the benefits of physical activity to achieve better health outcomes for individuals and the communities they live in.

● **We Can Move Strategy 2021-2030:**

We Can Move was formed in 2017 with the aim of helping more people to get active and enjoy the benefits of a healthier life. The movement provides support, resources and systems leadership for individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of sport and physical activity within Gloucestershire, and Gloucester City Council is fully committed to supporting its work under the Council Plan's 'Leading a healthy lifestyle' priority.

● **Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2025:**

this plan provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities, thereby helping the council prioritise and target resources. The vision of the strategy is 'to provide an accessible, high quality and sustainable network of outdoor sports facilities, which provide opportunities for all residents to access good sport, physical activity and recreation facilities'. The key priorities identified by the strategy were to develop full sized 3G Artificial Turf Pitch provision, of which there were no pitches at the time, as well to reduce grass pitch shortfalls through use of 3G pitches for match play and improvement of grass pitch quality. Since the publication of the strategy a number of these recommendations have been successfully delivered, including new 3G ATPs at the University of Gloucestershire/Oxstalls Sports Park and Council investment into grass pitch improvement at key local authority managed sites.



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- **Gloucester Indoor & Built Facilities Strategy 2019:**

this report enables the council and its partners to plan and develop the more modern, efficient and sustainable range of indoor community-based leisure, physical activity and sport facilities that Gloucester requires, thereby ensuring residents have the opportunity to develop their physical, sporting, health and wellbeing ambitions within their local community. The strategy notes the Council's commitment to a presumption (in Planning Policy) against any net loss of active sport and leisure facilities in the City, and that the principal opportunity/challenge for Gloucester City is to ensure that its stock of facilities is fit for the future.



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- **Gloucester Open Space Strategy 2021-2026:**

setting out how Gloucester City Council plans to protect, manage and enhance its open spaces, this strategy recognises the importance of formal and informal green spaces and has as a leading priority the promotion of Gloucester's open spaces as attractive places to sustain and improve physical and mental health and wellbeing. In terms of overall open space provision, the strategy identifies that the distribution of open space across the City is adequate, but rather uneven. Due to the densely built-up nature of many of the City's residential areas, creating additional new open spaces where there are shortfalls will not be possible. Instead, the strategy seeks to improve the quality of facilities and accessibility to existing green spaces, as well as providing residents with plenty of information about parks and recreational opportunities in adjacent areas.

- **Gloucester Local Football Facility Plan 2018:**

developed in partnership with the Football Foundation and Gloucestershire FA, this plan builds on the findings of the Council Playing Pitch Strategy and highlights the assets and opportunities associated with the district's football facilities. The plan's Priority Project List outlines the main improvements and additions required, including the provision of additional 3G Artificial Turf Pitches and enhanced supply of grass pitches.

- **Gloucester's Cultural Vision & Strategy 2021-2026:**

a key aim of the strategy is to ensure cultural policy runs through the heart of the City's wider strategies, recognising the role of arts, heritage and creativity as fundamental drivers of Gloucester's economic, social and community development, as well as health and wellbeing. Given the obvious 'crossover' between art and physical activity with activities such as dance, musical theatre, illusion, mime, circus arts and performance art, it is important that the strategy's aims and objectives are reflected in this plan.



# Consultation findings

Another important aspect to understanding how physical activity, sport and wellbeing can contribute to wider local strategic goals is gathering insight. To ensure we met this objective a consultation process was undertaken to inform the development of the strategy, allowing our leading partners and the wider sport and physical activity delivery network the opportunity to contribute and help direct us.

An initial visioning workshop was held with elected members, directors and key staff from the Council, the main outcome of which was the production of a shortlist of key themes that set the agenda for further consultation and ultimately the strategy content itself.

As well as setting the Council's vision and ambition for sport and physical activity in the context of the Council Plan, the workshop confirmed the desire to illustrate the golden thread that links it to complementary Council services and key community partners. Also highlighted was the need to evidence and articulate the leading issues facing communities, describe the positive change that is needed and ensuring that resources are assigned efficiently and effectively, and that outputs and outcomes are measurable.

The following outcomes were also prioritised by the group:

- Investing in existing and new facilities and repurposing them where viable.
- Maximising funding and sponsorship opportunities from national, regional and county level sources.
- Supporting greater community use of facilities at education sites.
- Developing new and existing partnerships, particularly with the health sector, with a focus on Asset Based Community Development.
- Increase the profile of, and investment and participation in, sport and physical activity by attracting more elite-level events to the City.
- Highlight links to the City's broader cultural offer.
- Help develop social enterprises around facility maintenance and service delivery.

In order to get a more detailed understanding of Gloucester's needs and opportunities a number of face to face interviews with leading representatives of the healthcare, community development, leisure and disability sectors were carried out. These discussions were invaluable in placing emphasis on many of the points raised during the visioning workshop, as well as highlighting further issues for consideration, including the following:



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- Tackling inactive, sedentary lifestyles amongst residents is key, particularly where individuals are in poor health. Joining the dots between primary health care providers and community sport and physical activity organisations would make a significant impact.
- Linked to this, we need to build on the success of the 'whole system approach' to tackling inactivity through both closer working within Council departments and with external partners and stakeholders.
- Being active needs to resonate with people of all ages in the way that it affects their daily lives – how can they walk or cycle to school more safely, how can being active more easily become part of people's social lives, and how can the maintain physical activity into older age, especially around core strength and balance?



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- Recognise the importance and influence of behavioural science and look at activity-related issues such as walkability, navigability, self-confidence and social norms.
- Improve accessibility to city-centre leisure facilities, particularly car parking, cycle storage and enhanced walking routes.
- Diversify the range of activities available at venues, for example GLI Leisure Centre's hosting of cultural events and installations has encouraged new users.
- Highlight more effectively where and how people can be active, particularly where there is no cost involved. Some green and open spaces are hidden away – how can they be made more accessible (particularly for disabled people) and more well-known?
- Make the link between climate change and being more physically active clearer by using language and examples that people more easily understand. Active travel can play a key role here.
- Develop an asset improvement strategy to highlight where sport and physical activity facilities require upgrade, repurposing or replacement.
- Gloucester City Council's Playing Pitch Strategy Working Group is a Sport England exemplar of good practice - could it be used to enhance participation further?
- A lot of facilities are in the centre of the City, with much less provision in smaller outlying neighbourhoods. How can it be made easier for people to access those spaces that are local to them?
- Barriers are harder to break down if we don't involve people in facility and programme design and provision, so we require a 'strength-based' approach to understanding what is available and where and how well that is matched to what local people want.

Finally, an online survey was carried out to gauge the views and opinions of various community-based sport and physical activity providers delivering within the district. The survey was sent out to over 220 organisations whose details were held by Active Gloucestershire and included schools, clubs and community groups.

The survey's main findings were as follows:

- 74% of responding organisations cater for people with disabilities or long-term health conditions, a good base from which to enhance the inclusivity of sport and physical activity organisations.
- While 55% of organisations reported that the Covid 19 pandemic had caused a decrease in their user numbers, 67% believed that there would be an increase in their user numbers over the next 5 years.
- Cost, time pressures and lack of motivation are seen as the main barriers to participation in sport and physical activity.
- 59% of organisations rated the quality of the City's sports facilities as being either 'good' or 'very good', while 13% thought they were poor. Similar figures were reported for the affordability of the facilities, while 23% described their availability as being poor or very poor.
- The leading method of travel to facilities was by car (87%). Encouragingly, travelling actively to venues (i.e. walking, cycling, running) was recorded by 57% of organisations.
- When asked to consider 'what, if anything, would encourage your users to switch to more active forms of travel to the chosen facility?', 33% of respondents highlighted 'a better connected and signposted walking and cycling network'.
- In the survey's final 'open' question organisations highlighted the difficulty in hiring grass pitches, the need for clubs to become more 'multi-sport' in their focus, greater partnership working between venues to raise awareness of the City's sport and physical activity offer and more and safer cycleways.





# Vision

Having considered the findings discussed above the Council and its partners have agreed a clear vision for sport and physical activity in Gloucester:

***‘Delivering a healthier, stronger, more active Gloucester’***

This vision complements key national and local strategic plan and encompasses all aspects of a systems-based physical activity including sport, health and wellbeing and active travel.

## Gloucester’s current leisure provision

Gloucester is well served across the district by both indoor and outdoor leisure facilities. In common with most local authority areas, Gloucester’s provision of sport and physical activity facilities is predominantly a combination of council-owned venues (some of which are operated by a third party) and spaces and places operated by sports clubs, schools and voluntary/community sector organisations. Taken as a whole, these operators host a wide range of universal leisure facilities and activities available to everyone.

The Council owns two leisure centres, GLI Leisure Centre and Oxstalls Sports Park that are managed by Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust, created in 2008 from the Council’s previous in-house team. The contract is primarily based on a lease with the Council holding landlord responsibilities which is scheduled to end in September 2024.

Aspire offers a range of services and interventions which are focused on providing social value to Gloucester residents including the City’s largest swimming and swimming lesson programme. In 2019, Aspire launched a Health and Wellbeing Hub in GLI working with health partners including Gloucester Community Wellbeing Team, the 2gether Trust (physiotherapists specialising in mental health services), and Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust (Macmillan Cancer Rehabilitation Specialists). Many councils are aspiring to develop similar hubs, but few have actually achieved this.

In 2022 the Council commissioned a Leisure and Cultural Services Assessment and Management Options Appraisal to better understand the Council’s options for future delivery of the services. The report concluded that while procurement of a multi-site trust operator is the most advantageous management option for the Council, there is work to be done to make the service ‘procurement ready’.

This included addressing some of the physical barriers to



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access (such as car parking at GLI), undertaking asset condition surveys to help understand the whole life costs of key venues, developing a strategic approach to leisure and a services specification focused on contributing towards narrowing health inequalities in the City.

A key purpose of this new Sport & Physical Activity Strategy is to address the relevant recommendations not only of the Management Options Appraisal but also the three Council strategies which underpin our understanding of facility provision within the district, namely our Playing Pitch, Open Space and Indoor & Built Facilities Strategies. Each has their own action plan, and we will continue to review and act upon the recommendations made in each.

The high level findings and recommendations of these strategies indicates that Gloucester’s sport and physical activity facilities largely (with the exception of a shortfall in 3G Artificial Turf Pitch and natural grass pitch provision) fulfil





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the suggested quota for the population and will meet the needs of future generations, providing these facilities are well maintained and remain fit for purpose.

Gloucester has a strong sporting heritage and as such there is an equally strong presence throughout the area of teams, clubs, leagues, associations and organisations offering a wide variety of sports and leisure activities. While Gloucester Rugby Football Club proudly brings elite level rugby to the City there are a significant range of amateur clubs offering participation and progression routes, with football and rugby clubs being the most prevalent closely followed by bowling, cricket, running and athletics.

Sport clubs/organisations and their members have a wealth of knowledge and experience about their particular

sport and have an important part to play in promoting, developing and delivering activity in the future. We want to do more to encourage clubs to become accredited within their own sports discipline, e.g. Charter Standard Clubs. Accredited clubs tend to be run more ethically and have to provide welfare officers, qualified coaches and be proactive in tackling issues around equality and child protection.



# The role of Gloucester City Council in providing sport and physical activity opportunities

Our role in sport and physical activity goes beyond commissioning the management of our leisure centres.

The City Council also has an important leadership role in facilitating and enabling an infrastructure conducive to physical activity through our planning policies, and the Council can, for example, require developers to make contributions towards the provision and maintenance of community leisure facilities.

With the increasing profile of climate change and active travel there is strong evidence to support the introduction of cycle friendly facilities and routes around the City and for excellent pedestrian access to be maintained for all areas including workplaces and public amenities. We will continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council's ThinkTravel and highways teams to explore ways in which we can invest in and improve our active travel infrastructure and encourage more people to walk or cycle to their destination.

Through our presence on the Gloucestershire Health & Wellbeing Board and our partnerships with strategic health bodies such as NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust, Gloucester Integrated Locality Partnership and



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Gloucestershire County Council's Prevention, Wellbeing and Communities Team we are well placed to promote and share healthy lifestyle messages, ensuring that people have access to information about healthy lifestyle choices and opportunities to be more active. This extends beyond the provision of sports and leisure facilities and parks to include access to informal places and opportunities for people to walk, cycle and enjoy the natural environment.

In the past, we have been able to more easily access funding to support the provision of leisure facilities and services. However, funding for leisure is now the lowest it has ever been and the City Council is under increasing pressure to deliver more with less, meaning we will need to target limited resources far more effectively. We will build on our



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recent success in securing 'levelling up' funding by seeking investment from a wide range of sources, while at the same time we will strive to build resilience into the community networks in Gloucester by supporting local clubs, groups and partner organisations to become more sustainable in the future.

We will continue to support initiatives that help open school facilities for wider community use. Many of Gloucester's schools have fantastic facilities located in the heart of their communities, and there are a range of benefits to opening them up for community use in the evenings and at weekends, such as increasing the activity levels of pupils and the local community, making connections with

local and national organisations that are looking for safe spaces for young people to be active and providing a vital new income stream.

Lastly, we will continue to lead the sport and physical activity sector's recovery from the Covid 19 pandemic. Since March 2020, the City's residents and its leisure facilities and sporting activities have been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the impact being felt hardest by people disadvantaged because of their health condition, social isolation, economic circumstances or their ethnicity. This has naturally made it more difficult for these groups to be active.





# Our priorities for sport and physical activity



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## PRIORITY 1

### Achieving health and wellbeing outcomes

To ensure that Gloucester's residents can lead a healthy and active lifestyle we will focus our resources on areas that will increase the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Consequently, areas of activity that are most popular and have greatest impact on health will be prioritised.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring everyone has access to high-quality leisure facilities and thriving green spaces by working closely with organisations within our communities, our leisure provider; and through our role on the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board.
  - Enabling and encouraging those who are currently inactive to participate in physical activity, building up their levels of participation.
  - Ensuring sport and physical activity is embedded in the wider prevention agenda.
  - Continuing to support 'We Can Move' and encourage a collaborative 'whole system' approach to service development and delivery across Gloucester's leading sport, physical activity and health providers.
- Shaping Gloucester's sport and physical activity offer to meet the needs of the current and future population. The criteria for decisions on future provision will be based on the impact these services have on physical and mental health and wellbeing.
  - Addressing barriers to participation and improving access to all facilities and services, advice and information.
  - Ensuring facilities and services remain diverse and delivered by a range of providers across the public, private and voluntary sector.
  - Promoting the diverse range of sport and physical activity opportunities across Gloucester:



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## PRIORITY 2

### Reducing inactivity, increasing participation

We will ensure that the facilities and services delivered on our behalf and the City's wider sport, physical activity and wellbeing offer encourages people to participate, particularly those who are inactive.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring that council-owned leisure facilities and other key venues deliver increased activity in key groups, such as adults and children who are inactive, overweight and those with poor mental health.
- Supporting physical activity initiatives as a pathway to employment and to improve mental health and resilience.
- Joining with strategic partners to work with schools to maximise their physical activity offer to children, young people and the wider community.
- Promoting sport and leisure as a diversionary activity for young people at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Promoting active travel choices that reduce carbon emissions and contribute to physical and mental wellbeing.
- Promoting active workplaces and addressing the often sedentary nature of working from home.
- Developing and promoting more family focussed opportunities for physical activity.
- Harnessing the growing 'active environments' agenda and our wealth of parks and green spaces to develop and deliver more sport and physical activity opportunities.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress by running an annual resident survey based on the relevant Key Performance Indicators included within this strategy.





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### PRIORITY 3

## Delivering a positive customer experience at our facilities

To secure the best health and physical activity outcomes from our facilities we recognise the need to strengthen existing and future leisure services contracts.

We will do this by:

- Addressing the recommendations of the Leisure and Cultural Services Assessment and Management Options Appraisal.
- Reviewing the provision and impact of sport and leisure facilities and programmes currently delivered at GLI and Oxstalls.
- Assessing property conditions to ensure the facilities remain fit for purpose now and into the future, with a particular focus on energy resilience and sustainability.
- Developing a range of Key Performance Indicators upon which to base future leisure services contracts.

- Looking for opportunities to diversify services at GLI and Oxstalls (for example the co-location of health services) and encourage greater collaborative working with other sport and physical activity providers.



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#### PRIORITY 4

### Working with Local Clubs, Groups and the Third Sector

We recognise the very significant contribution our local clubs and community groups make to Gloucester's sport and physical activity offer. Local clubs and groups can often engage with our residents in ways that public services cannot. We will work with these organisations to help them develop traditional and non-traditional activities within a diverse range of settings, thereby giving residents the best chance of getting active on their own terms.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring Gloucester's network of high quality, sustainable and accessible sport clubs and community groups continues to grow and thrive.

- Working with local groups, clubs and volunteers to see if more facilities and services can be provided by the voluntary sector.
- Linking clubs and groups to opportunities to enhance the health and wellbeing of their users alongside their tradition programme/activity offer.
- Promoting our sport clubs and groups through our leisure facilities and partner NHS Primary Care settings.
- Encouraging the uptake of accreditations amongst Gloucester's sport clubs and groups and celebrating their achievements and those of their users and volunteers.





# Key Performance Indicators

To ensure we can monitor progress against the four priorities identified above we have developed the following suite of 18 Key Performance Indicators.

Reporting against the KPIs will provide a baseline of data for sport and physical activity projects, programmes and interventions delivered in Gloucester and, where possible, they will be used to underpin the Council's leisure contracts.

Those KPIs marked with an asterisk are drawn from insight collected as part of Sport England's 'Active Lives Survey', which gives us the opportunity to compare progress with the regional and national picture. Others are recorded by either the council or its leisure contractor:

| Priority Outcome   | Key Performance Indicators  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>PRIORITY 1</b></p> <p><b>Achieving health and wellbeing outcomes</b></p> | <p><b>KPI 1*</b></p> <p>a. Percentage of adults in Gloucester taking part in sport for 30 minutes once per week</p> <p>b. Percentage of the population taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last 28 days</p> <p>c. Percentage of people physically inactive</p> <p><b>KPI 2</b> Number of Gloucester residents aged 16-64 participating in physical activity on average 30 minutes, 5 times per week (or 2.5 hours per week) in leisure centres and outreach programmes as a percentage of the total district population</p> <p><b>KPI 3</b> Number of residents participating in physical activity on average 30 minutes, twice per week in leisure centres and outreach programmes as a percentage of the total district population</p> |

| Priority Outcome   | Key Performance Indicators  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>PRIORITY 2</b></p> <p><b>Reducing inactivity, increasing participation</b></p> | <p><b>KPI 4*</b> Residents in specified Indices of Multiple Deprivation area(s) participating at least once per week in physical activity as a percentage of the total in the area(s).</p> <p><b>KPI 5*</b> Residents with disabilities taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last 28 days</p> <p><b>KPI 6*</b> Residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last 28 days</p> <p><b>KPI 7*</b> Residents aged 5-16 years active (for 60 minute or more each day), fairly active (30 to 59 minutes per day) and less active (under 30 minutes per day)</p> <p><b>KPI 8*</b> a. Percentage of children achieving physical literacy<br/>b. Percentage of young people (11-18) with a positive attitude towards sport and being active.</p> <p><b>KPI 9</b> Residents taking out the concessionary pricing schemes as a percentage of those eligible in the district.</p> <p><b>KPI 10*</b> Residents over 65 years of age who have taken part in an activity at least twice in the last 28 days in council owned facilities as a percentage of the total in the district.</p> <p><b>KPI 11*</b> Percentage of adult residents participating in active travel at least twice in the past 28 days.</p> |





| Priority Outcome   | Key Performance Indicators  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>PRIORITY 3</b></p> <p><b>Delivering a positive customer experience at our facilities</b></p> | <p><b>KPI 12</b> Customer and partner satisfaction indicators captured through an on-going monthly rolling programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the overall service</li> <li>● staff/coaches</li> <li>● access and parking</li> <li>● facilities</li> <li>● catering</li> <li>● cleanliness</li> <li>● changing rooms</li> <li>● value for money</li> </ul> <p><b>KPI 13</b> Satisfaction with the leisure operator/s as a partner.</p> <p><b>KPI 14</b> Quest™ Plus scores for Leisure Facilities and Sports Development.</p> <p><b>KPI 15</b> Customer retention; fitness, swimming, courses/activities.</p> <p><b>KPI 16</b> Relative importance of Leisure Facilities as expressed by residents responding to the Gloucester City Council Annual Budget survey.</p> |

| Priority Outcome   | Key Performance Indicators   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>PRIORITY 4</b></p> <p><b>Working with Local Clubs, Groups and the Third Sector</b></p> | <p><b>KPI 17*</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase in the number of people volunteering in sport in the last 12 months.</li> <li>b. Club membership in the last 12 months.</li> </ol> <p><b>KPI 18</b> Uptake of accreditations amongst Gloucester's sport clubs and groups.</p> |



PHOTO: GLOUCESTER RUGBY CLUB







## Acknowledgements

This strategy was researched and developed in partnership with **Active Gloucestershire**, the coordinators of **'we can move'**, a social movement designed to get more people active in the county.

The consultation survey for the sports strategy was sent to **197 schools, clubs and other physical activity delivery organisations** drawn from the Active Gloucestershire CRM database. A further **20 or so clubs** were sent the link via the contact forms on their websites.

From this a total of **40 responses** were collected comprising the following:

**Constituted sports clubs, Charities, Schools and Colleges, Social enterprises and Community Interest Companies, Sport Governing Bodies and other businesses**

The respondent organisations covered the following sports:

**Athletics, Running, Badminton, Basketball, Bowls, Boxing, Canoeing, Cricket, Cycling, Dance, Fencing, Fitness activities, Football, Futsal, Gymnastics, Hockey, Martial Arts, Netball, Roller Hockey, Rowing, Rugby, Squash, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Trampolining, Volleyball and Walking**

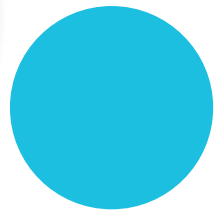
Thank you to all these respondents to the consultation survey and particularly to the following organisations whose valuable insights helped shape the strategy's vision and priorities:

- Active Gloucestershire
- Aspire Leisure and Cultural Trust
- Gloucester City Council
- Gloucester City Integrated Locality Partnership
- Gloucester Community Building Collective
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association
- Inclusion Gloucestershire
- One Gloucestershire
- University of Gloucestershire
- Venture:White City

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