

Active
Gloucestershire

2024

Impact Report

Place and Communities

With thanks to:

Sport England

NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board

Prepared by:

Sarah Haden

Michael Thurlow

Hannah Meek

Matt Williams

Chris Davis

Ben Langworthy

Tom Beasley

Tom Handley

Richard Fishlock

Geetha Dean



Welcome to our 2024 impact report and thank you

Creating Active Communities, Places and Spaces Together: A Vision for Gloucestershire - our 2024 Impact Stories

"The places and spaces where we live, work, play and connect are essential to building and maintaining active lifestyles, enabling good health and nurturing social connections. At the heart of our efforts at Active Gloucestershire, is our approach to place-based working guided by data and local insights. Through strong partnerships and community knowledge, we shape the vision that drives our initiatives, informs our decisions and determines where to focus our resources.

On behalf of Active Gloucestershire and our county, we extend our thanks to Sport England for their ongoing support and investment, which enables us to undertake this vital work.

This collaboration enables us to embark on an ambitious journey, dedicated to enhancing the wellbeing and activity levels of our communities.

Together, we envision a Gloucestershire where inactivity is a relic of the past. By uniting our efforts across the system and concentrating on areas with specific needs, we can turn this vision into a reality.

Let's stand shoulder to shoulder to create vibrant, active communities for everyone."



Sarah Haden

Director of People and Partnerships
Active Gloucestershire

Contents

	Page
Director of People and Partnerships welcome.....	2
Place Vision and Introduction.....	4
1 - Gloucester.....	6
1.a. Cross-sector Partnerships.....	8
1.b. Community Grants.....	10
1.c. Blackbridge Community Sports Hub.....	13
1.d. Capacity Building across Trusted Organisations.....	17
1.e. Street Tag.....	20
Enablers for Change.....	23
Summary and Next Steps.....	25
2 - Cinderford.....	27
2.a. Systems Approaches.....	30
2.b. Capacity Building.....	37
2.c. Relationship Building.....	38
2.d. Beat the Street.....	41
Enablers for Change.....	45
Summary and Next Steps.....	47
3 - Test and learn.....	49
3.a. Systems Leadership.....	50
3.b. Collective Action.....	52
Enablers for Change.....	55
Summary and Next Steps.....	57
Key Learning.....	58
Strategic Recommendations.....	61
Closing Summary.....	63
Contact Us.....	64

Place Vision

The environments where we live, work and play should be places that encourage us to be active and healthy. Unfortunately, deep-rooted and complex inequalities have long stood in the way of this vision, creating unfair barriers in certain areas and communities within our county.

Our goal is clear: we want to cut inactivity in half, beginning with the communities that need our support the most. Together, we can create opportunities for everyone to lead more active lives and build healthier, happier communities.

Our scope for 2024

1

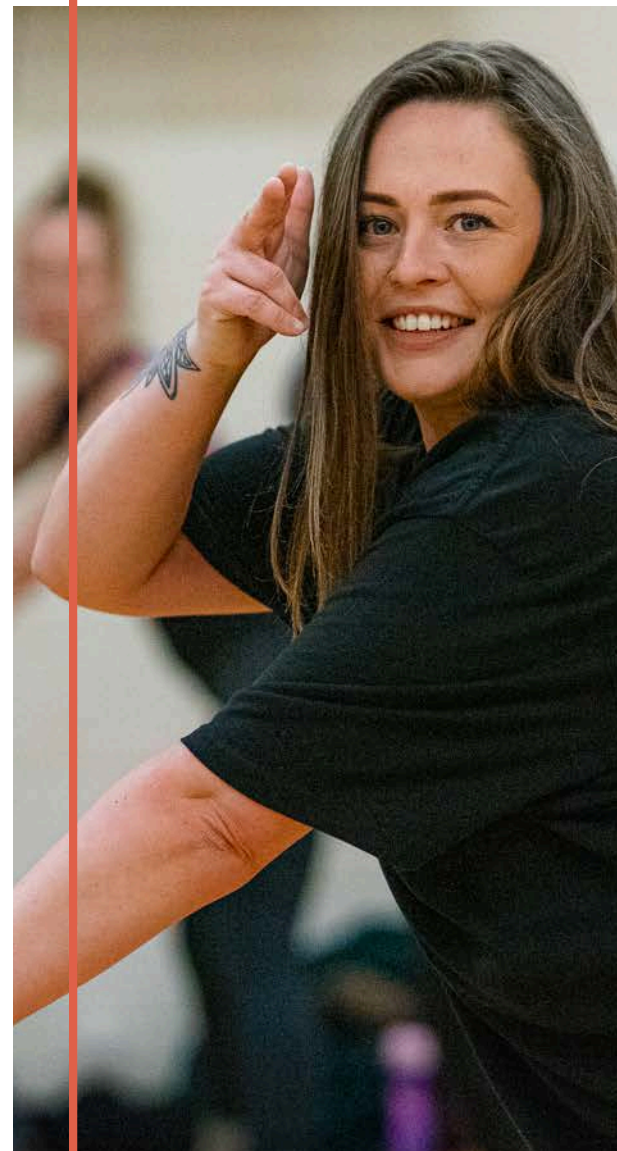
To continue to expand our place-based working within Gloucester, into other areas of the city and using new approaches to generate further place-based approaches learning.

2

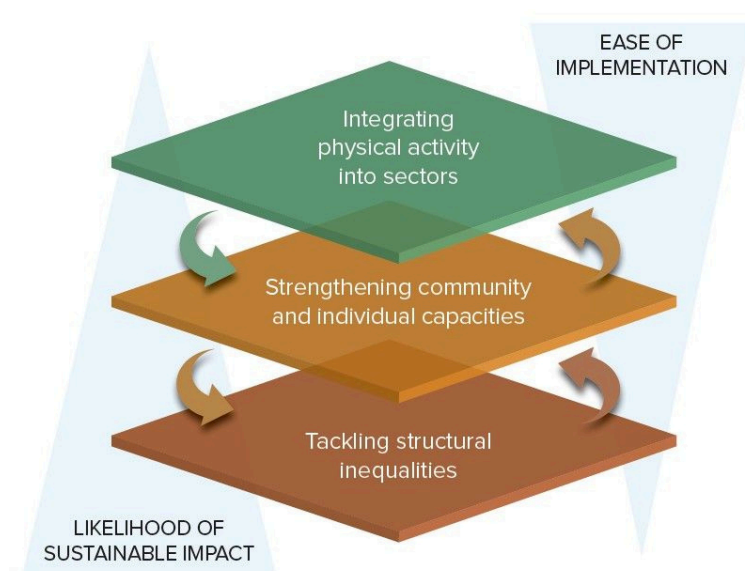
To work in a new rural community – Cinderford in the Forest of Dean and test relationship building, dynamic systems approaches and intervention delivery in this area.

3

To test and learn new approaches outside specific targeted areas, including working with ILP's and system partners, systems mapping, modelling and leadership.



Conceptual framework and conditions for place-based working



Throughout this report there will be reference to elements of the conceptual framework and cross-cutting conditions that describe and show ways of working to create enabling conditions for physical activity to take place across sectors

© National Learning and Evaluation Partnership / NELP. (2023).

Integration of physical activity into sectors	Strengthening community & individual capacities	Tackling structural inequalities
<p>Understanding the barriers and enablers of physical activity</p> <p>Distributed and collective leadership</p> <p>Collaboration across <u>organisations</u></p> <p>Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities</p> <p>Facilitative processes and proportionate, representative governance</p> <p>Co-production, local people-led initiatives (community power)</p> <p>Focus on inequality and intersectionality</p> <p>Cultures and social norms for wellbeing and physical activity</p> <p>Physical environments that enable wellbeing and physical activity</p> <p>Cycles of learning and action</p>		

1 - Gloucester

Expanding our work on place-based approaches and learning into new wards across Gloucester.



Gloucester - Our Approach

Gloucester: A City of Culture with a Heart for Change

Gloucester is a vibrant city full of culture, but like many places, it faces significant inequalities across various sectors and areas. Over the past six years, we have embraced a new way of working that focuses on strengths-based approaches. This means we're tapping into the unique strengths of our community, with both statutory and voluntary sectors coming together in partnership, all committed to making a positive impact.

Our place-based efforts to date had primarily centred on two areas of the city - Barton and Tredworth, where we've paid special attention to Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and strengths-based working. Partnering with community-building organisations has opened up many opportunities for local residents.

During the last year, we've expanded our focus to explore new approaches to working in different parts of the city. We're excited about the opportunities this has created and look forward to seeing how we can further support our communities in Gloucester!

What have we tested over the last year?

- Cross-sector partnerships
- Community activation funding
- Development of a multi-sport and community development hub
- Roles within community organisations trusted in specific areas
- Street Tag



1.a. Cross-Sector Partnerships

Together Gloucester

Together Gloucester is an evolving cross-sector partnership whose work follows a place based lens. Led by Gloucester Culture Trust, it is funded by a combination of Arts Council England investment as well as contributions from local authority and other project partners listed below.



What are the aims of the partnership?

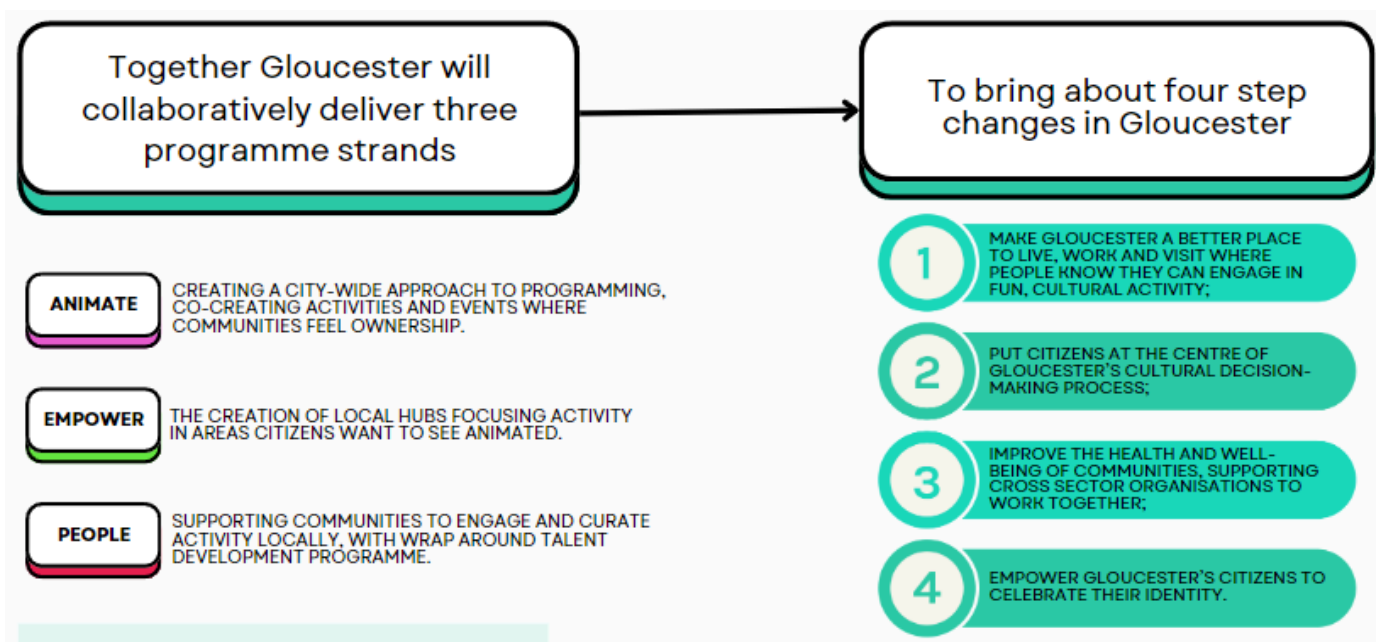
At its heart, Together Gloucester is an exciting and ambitious three-year programme designed to put the residents of Gloucester at the centre of cultural decision-making. This initiative is crucial for Active Gloucestershire to be a part of, not only because it reflects our commitment to place-based working but because we recognise that tackling physical inactivity is a challenge that cannot be solved by one sector alone. It requires a collaborative approach.

Every resident of Gloucester engages with life through different perspectives. For many, getting involved in arts, heritage and cultural activities can be the key to becoming more active. This partnership has opened up new pathways for reaching, engaging and encouraging our least active residents to adopt healthy habits that resonate with them. Together Gloucester will inspire a vibrant culture of movement and wellbeing in our community.

Cross-Sector Partnerships

Together Gloucester

Together Gloucester will provide strategic and community partners working across the city of Gloucester the opportunity to align work areas, share resources, ideas and connections to make their work stretch further.



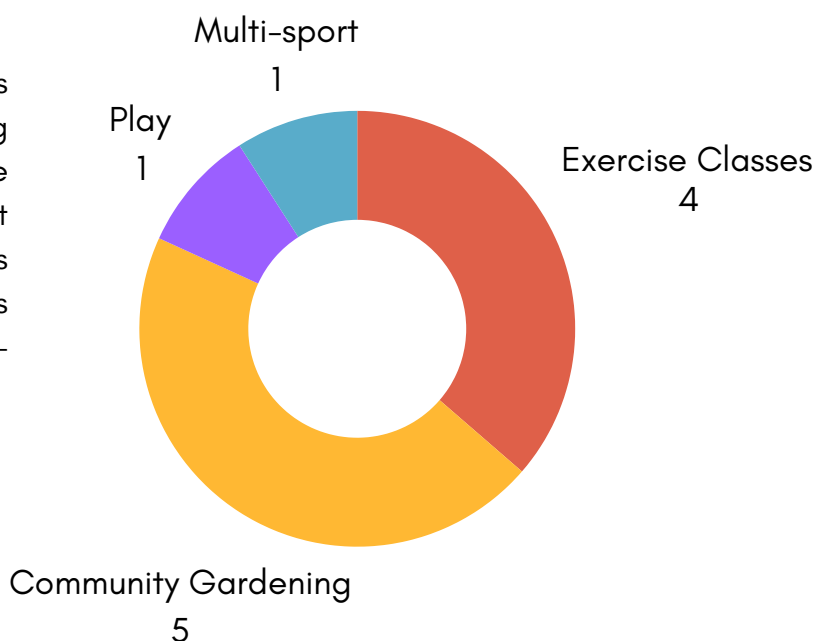
All partners involved want Gloucester to be a city that residents, workers and visitors are proud to be a part of, a city that engages easily in cultural, arts and physical activity and that in doing so, health and wellbeing will improve.

It is the first time a city-wide, cross-sector partnership has formed and having such a committed and diverse range of partners in the group will set the foundations for this way of strategic partnership working to take place long into the future.

1.b. Community Grants

The **Neighbourhood Fund** was a small pot of £5000 (spilt into grants with values of upto £500) which was provided to a community building team with the purpose of supporting local communities to activate activity for themselves, building community capacity and power. By working with a trusted organisation - Gloucester Community Building Collective, they had the time to work with community partners and support them to access funding to get their ideas off the ground. The success of this approach lay in the fact that trusted partners held relationships with communities and were therefore able to help them build confidence and skills needed to create change and ensure community action prevailed.

So far this year there have been 11 projects supported by the Neighbourhood fund, including community gardens bringing isolated people together in an active way, exercise classes set up in ethnically diverse communities, led walks in partnership with social prescribers as well as local community-led play sessions and multi-sport in local parks.



Neighbourhood Fund in Action

Ebony Carers

Ebony Carers, an organisation founded in October 2004, has been dedicated to supporting ethnically diverse carers by offering them essential services and opportunities for respite. Among many other programs, they offer chair yoga, a key wellness activity designed to support the physical and mental health of these carers.

Derrick, a Community Builder, who works closely with the All Nations Community Centre where the Ebony Carers are based, became aware of the situation and recommended that they apply for the Neighbourhood Fund. The fund has allowed the organisation to maintain a space where individuals could come together, engage in physical activity, and benefit from the mental health boost that the sessions provide whilst allowing time for the group to look for other types of funding.

Since the beginning of the chair yoga sessions, substantial growth in attendance has been seen, from an initial 12 participants to 50–60 people now attending each week. This increase reflects not only the program's effectiveness, but also the strong community need for such activities and the positive impact this has had on the community. The sessions have become a hub for social interaction, helping to reduce feelings of isolation among residents. Many attendees, who previously felt disconnected from their community, found a supportive environment where they could build connections and improve their mental wellbeing. The sessions have become more inclusive, now serving not just carers but also other members of the Black community, thus creating a sense of connection and reducing isolation as those that attend often do not leave their house during their week. The Neighbourhood Fund has allowed the group time to find further sustainable funding to continue to grow and become an important asset in the community.

The continuation of the yoga sessions enabled Ebony Carers to use the community space for other activities, such as hosting the Black Luncheon Club. This club, previously located at Saint Catherine's Port, had lost its venue post-COVID. By utilising the community space at All Nations, Ebony Carers provided a link between exercise and social interaction for the community. The Ebony Carers also collaborated with healthcare providers, who now offer health checks and information sessions at Ebony Carers' events, which has further enhanced the support available to attendees and begun to reduce the health inequalities as these people would not attend regular health assessments or awareness days.



Neighbourhood Fund in Action

Resident led community garden

Since the pandemic, something that has not recovered is how many people find themselves isolated, craving a sense of community and shared purpose. Steve and a group of local residents in Linden, all passionate about gardening, came together to turn a derelict strip of land next to their local church into a community garden that could be shared and used by all. This was not just about gardening, it was about creating a space where people could come together, reconnect, and replenish their mental and physical wellbeing.

With community builder Agnes' guidance, the group secured a £250 grant from the Neighbourhood Fund and obtained access to the church-owned land. Their goal was to transform this derelict area into a community garden, building community spirit and enhancing mental and physical wellbeing. The project however, was more challenging than they had anticipated. While initial enthusiasm was high, many volunteers' interests began to fade. One of the biggest hurdles was the garden's locked gate, a security measure in place due to the access of the church's side entrance. This restriction limited access and hindered the creation of a truly open community space.

Despite these challenges, Steve, along with his wife and children, remained committed. They spent weekends clearing the overgrown area, building planters, and slowly transforming the space. They tackled accessibility issues head-on with the help of a wheelchair user who initially expressed concerns about the garden's accessibility, worried that her mobility would make it difficult for her to participate fully. Instead of sidelining these challenges, the group embraced her input and appointed her as their accessibility consultant. Her insights, such as placing planters by the entrance to prevent cars from parking in spaces that were needed for her wheelchair, were invaluable in ensuring that the garden could be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of physical ability. This not only ensured the garden would be an inclusive space that caters to all, but also on that enhanced both mental and physical wellbeing through inclusive participation.

Although the garden is still a work in progress, its impact is already evident. Steve and his family, alongside other members of the church, are regularly gardening, getting outside and being physically active. In addition, the church has repurposed the space as an emergency exit route, highlighting its immediate utility. Recently, the team received a donation of pallets, which they are using to create additional planters, moving closer to their vision of a usable community garden. This project has demonstrated the crucial role of community involvement and the importance of creating accessible, open spaces for everyone.

Steve and his team have learned valuable lessons from this experience. They discovered that successful community projects require more than just initial enthusiasm; they need sustained commitment and involvement from all members. The mental and physical benefits of gardening have been a highlight, offering therapeutic relief and fostering a sense of community. Looking forward, Steve and his family are eager to apply these insights to future projects. They are excited to create more spaces that promote well-being and community spirit, hoping to involve even more residents and ensuring a shared investment in the project's success.

Steve's community garden project, though still in development, stands as proof of the power of resilience, teamwork, and the transformative impact of green spaces.

1.c. Blackbridge Community Sports Hub

Podsmead is a neighbourhood of around 3,300 residents, largely built during the second half of the 20th century and located approximately three miles from historic Gloucester city centre. Residents have access to some fantastic green spaces, welcoming community cafes and meeting spaces, and the area is poised to see significant investment into new and existing homes.

Despite this, Podsmead is also an area facing some significant challenges: crime levels are relatively high, housing quality and availability needs to be improved and education, training and skills opportunities are difficult to access, as are health, disability and youth services. Over the past decade, Podsmead has been identified as the most deprived area in Gloucestershire, with residents facing significant health inequalities. It also ranks amongst the 0.3% most educationally deprived areas in England.

Sport and physical activity facilities can play an important role in the health and wellbeing of Podsmead residents. While there are positives such as the Blackbridge Jubilee Athletics Track, grass pitches at Blackbridge Sports Field and Tuffley Park, and Robinswood Hill Country Park, there are also major deficiencies. The pitches at Blackbridge Sports Field need significant upgrades, and there is a shortfall of artificial pitches in the south of Gloucester. Indoor facilities are similarly limited, with only one small gym, two community halls, and no fitness studios within a 20-minute walk of the centre of Podsmead.

Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub is being built to help address these challenges. The hub will feature a full-sized, floodlit artificial grass pitch and natural grass pitches for football, rugby and cricket, as well as a pavilion building which will feature fully accessible changing rooms, a dance/exercise studio, health and fitness gym and social and meeting spaces. The following timeline illustrates the history of the project.



BLACKBRIDGE

14

Context:

Blackbridge Playing Fields in Gloucester have served for decades as a key site for local sports like football, athletics, and rugby, as well as community events, particularly supporting the Podsmead area

2015

- Gloucester City Council's Playing Pitch Strategy recommended a sports hub for the city's south.
- The proposal included options for 3G pitch facilities and additional grass pitches.
- Based on detailed demand and supply analysis, the hub aimed to meet local sports needs.

EARLY 2010'S

- Initial discussions began to create a community-led sports hub to meet local needs in Podsmead, one of Gloucestershire's most deprived areas.
- Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire County Council, and community and sports organisations provided early support.
- The project aimed to enhance recreational opportunities and address social needs in the community.

2019-2023

- Community consultation, planning, and fundraising led by Podsmead Big Local, Gateway Trust, Active Gloucestershire, and others.
- Input from local stakeholders ensured the hub would meet community health and activity needs.
- Focus on addressing physical activity, health, and social needs.

DEC 2021

- Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (Blackbridge CCBS) was established to develop the Blackbridge Community & Sports Hub and support Podsmead's wellbeing.
- The creation aligns with the Podsmead Big Local initiative, a long-term empowerment project funded by the National Lottery since 2014.
- Operating as a community benefit society, Blackbridge CCBS promotes resident ownership and investment in the hub beyond Big Local's funding, which ends in 2026.

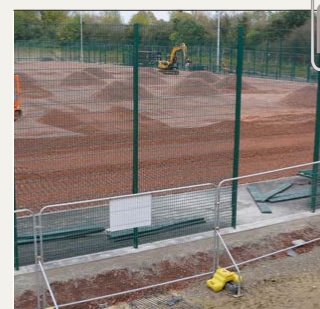
January 2023:

Development of Blackbridge Sports & Community Hub becomes a strategic priority for Gloucester City Council, with the site included in the new Gloucester City Plan.



OCT 2024

- Freedom Leisure are appointed by Blackbridge CCBS as the operators of the hub, aligning the project with Freedom's management of GLI Leisure Centre and Oxstalls Sports Park elsewhere in the city.

**APRIL 2024**

- Construction progresses with key structural elements installed, including the steel frame and parking infrastructure.
- The build incorporates eco-friendly practices like tree planting and sustainable energy generation.
- The project aims for a biodiversity net gain of 22%, exceeding the minimum requirement of 10%.

FEB 2024

- A groundbreaking ceremony marks the official start of construction, led by E.G. Carter & Co Ltd.
- The event represents a significant community milestone.
- Local leaders, funders, and residents come together to celebrate.

SUMMER 2023

- The project receives full planning consent and work begins to secure funding for delivery.
- A £6 million funding package is secured with contributions from the Youth Investment Fund, Gloucester City Council, Football Foundation, Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, and Sport England.
- Land negotiations conclude successfully, granting Blackbridge CCBS a 125-year lease for the development.



Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society

The development of the Blackbridge Community & Sports Hub, driven by the Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (Blackbridge CCBS), is a significant step forward for Podsmead, addressing both immediate needs and long-term community aspirations.

Formally established in 2021 to lead this pivotal project, Blackbridge CCBS is dedicated to enhancing community wellbeing through physical activity, social inclusion and shared spaces. Its creation aligns with the Podsmead Big Local initiative, a community empowerment project funded by the National Lottery in 2014, aimed at fostering sustainable, resident-led development. As Podsmead Big Local's funding is set to conclude in 2026, the emergence of Blackbridge CCBS as a legacy organisation ensures that the progress and gains made by the initiative will not only be preserved but expanded upon.

Formed by local people with strategic support from Sport England, Active Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, Gloucester City Homes and Gloucester City Council, Blackbridge CCBS is designed to continue these efforts by establishing a vibrant community sports hub and promoting ownership and engagement among residents. This model reflects the values of sustainability and continuity, positioning the society to carry forward the mission of community empowerment well into the future.

A key strength of Blackbridge CCBS is its structure as a Community Benefit Society. This model encourages local residents to become shareholders, embedding a sense of shared responsibility and investment in the hub. Such a structure ensures that community interests remain at the forefront, with profits reinvested into further local initiatives, services and facilities. This ownership model promotes deeper engagement, fostering a collective sense of pride and stewardship that is critical for the hub's success and longevity.

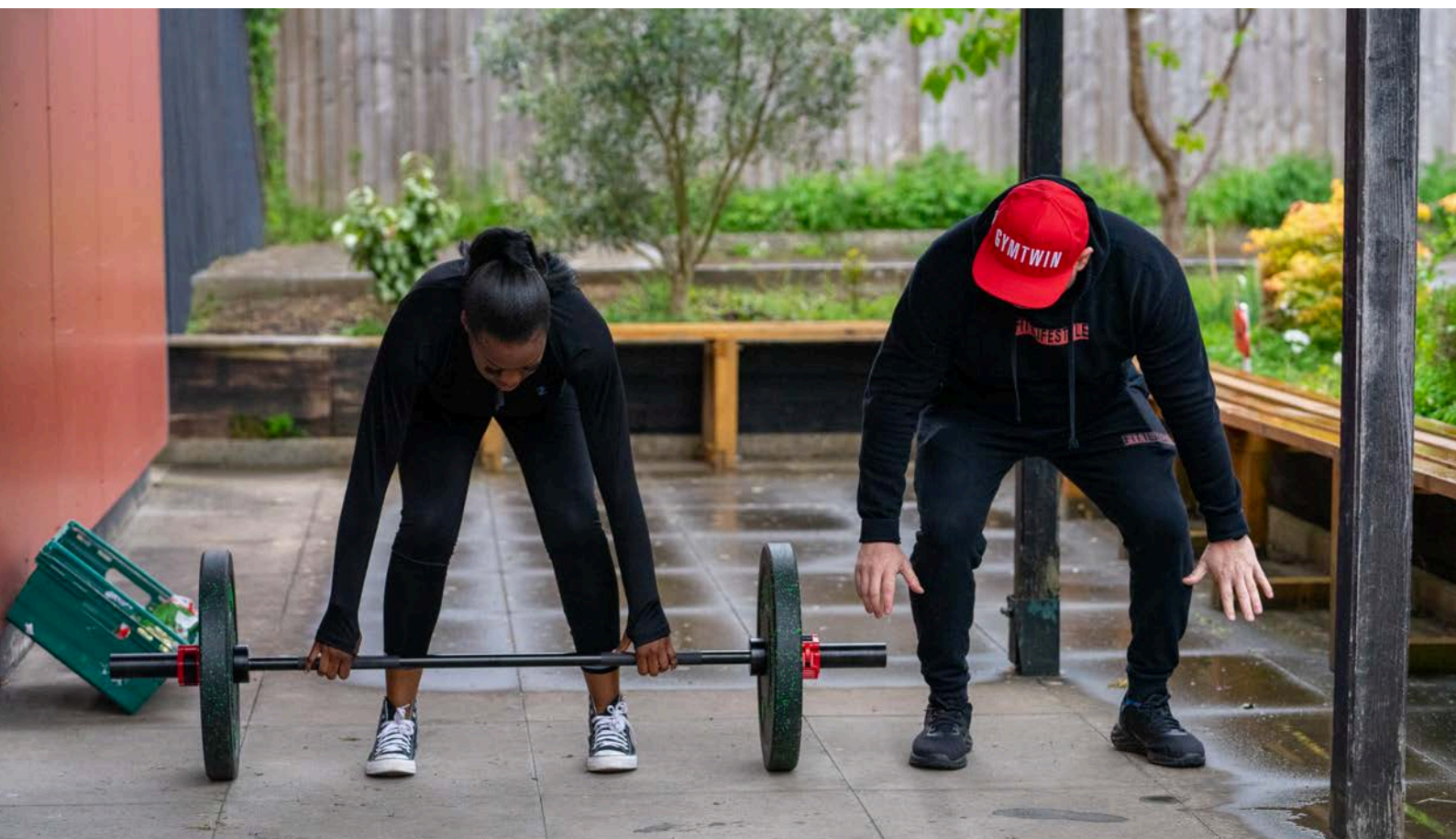
Sport England and Active Gloucestershire's support for facilities that are developed and owned by and for the community aligns seamlessly with the mission of Blackbridge CCBS. The society's focus on community-led development ensures that the Blackbridge Community & Sports Hub will be a space that reflects local needs and aspirations. By incorporating resident input and fostering democratic participation, the hub can achieve higher levels of usage and satisfaction, creating a positive impact on health and social cohesion.

1.d. Community groups capacity building

GL Communities

This report details the first six months of a health and wellbeing coach role, created in partnership between GL Communities (a trusted local organisation) and Active Gloucestershire and made possible through Sport England place-based investment. Based with GL Communities, the primary purpose of this wellbeing coach role, was to grow the momentum of GL Communities and further strengthen community engagement and individual coaching

The aim was to build relationships with community members, facing some of the greatest health inequalities – inequalities that were subsequently affecting their levels of physical activity. We wanted the wellbeing coaching role to have a positive impact on them as individuals, as well as across the wider community. So far, 34 individuals have been supported within the first six months. During this time, we have seen encouraging growth and heightened participant engagement and have introduced new initiatives targeting a broad array of health and wellbeing challenges



Community groups capacity building

Key achievements

1. 1-2-1 Coaching Success

The individual coaching sessions exemplify "**Strengthening community and individual capacities**" by enhancing personal health and wellbeing through tailored coaching. See examples below.

- Stroke recovery client: working with a stroke survivor who initially struggled with basic motor skills demonstrates the tangible benefits of capacity-building. Over five weeks, this client showed marked improvements in physical mobility and mental wellbeing, underlining the importance of addressing both physical and mental barriers.
- 68 year old client: coaching another participant with severe mobility issues allowed her to regain independence and confidence. This case highlights the strength of adopting a localised approach within wider "place-based" frameworks, where coaching can be adapted to the specific needs and capacities of individuals.

Both examples embody **co-production and community power** by fostering a supportive environment where participants have a say in shaping their goals, reinforcing the value of local knowledge in effective coaching.

2. Walk and Talk Group

The Walk and Talk initiative aligns with a focus on **Strengthening community capacities** and **distributed and collective leadership**. Weekly sessions have evolved beyond exercise to form a social support network, attended by 3-7 people weekly. More than half of the participants initially joined through the coaching programme. This group-based approach fosters community solidarity, and notably, two participants have transitioned into volunteer roles, showcasing distributed leadership and a model where the community sustains and grows the programme's impact.

3. Wellbeing Cup

Held in August, the Wellbeing Cup event illustrates the principle of **integrating physical activity across sectors**, as this event brought together diverse age groups (16 to 83 years old) and achieved social inclusion through sport. By creating a space for community activity, this event increased accessibility to physical activity. Plans are in place to make this event a regular part of our community engagement strategy, creating a culture of ongoing participation and collective activity.



4. Pain Management Group

This programme supports individuals with chronic pain, offering movement based activity and also therapeutic outlets such as arts and crafts. This shows how targeting **cultures and practices** are vital for wellbeing, as it promotes physical and emotional wellbeing in a supportive group setting.

5. Street Dance Group for Ages 8-18

This programme was introduced to engage young people in physical activity, fostering improved health and social skills. By targeting a younger demographic, this initiative considered **addressing physical inactivity at multiple life stages**, cultivating lifelong healthy behaviours.

6. Grow-Cook-Eat Project:

Launching soon, this project teaches participants how to grow food and make healthier eating choices. This looks at wellbeing beyond movement. It explores how we can develop trusted **physical environments that enable wellbeing** by empowering individuals to improve their diets through sustainable, community-driven practices.

7. Swimming Group for Parents of Children with Additional Needs:

This new programme aims to create a nurturing environment for self-care among parents. Addressing **inequality and intersectionality** by recognising the unique challenges faced by parents of children with additional needs.

Challenges and Opportunities

The programme continues to experience both successes and challenges as it seeks to maintain and grow community engagement.

Mental Health Focus

Many participants present with complex mental health needs, requiring a whole systems approach to be effective. This involves patient, holistic engagement that recognises mental health as a key factor in promoting sustained physical activity. It has been fundamental to understand and address both **barriers and enablers of physical activity**.

Sustaining Engagement

Keeping participants engaged long-term requires a variety of approaches, from ongoing follow-ups to volunteer-led activities and **cycles of learning and action**, as we continuously evaluate and adapt methods to meet participant needs. Moreover, sustaining engagement demonstrates a real community level of **distributed and collective leadership**, encouraging community members to take ownership of their wellbeing journeys.

These examples highlight how you can effectively take a whole systems approach, working with communities through this lens, addressing **structural inequalities**, developing several new initiatives which aim to respond to community-specific needs and promote long-term wellbeing.

1.e. Street Tag comes to Gloucester



In October, we partnered with Street Tag to encourage the people of Gloucester to embrace a more active lifestyle and increase daily physical activity. With Street Tag, individuals or teams can walk, run, cycle, or roll through the city to collect virtual tags and earn points. This app transformed Gloucester into a virtual playground, fostering community competition and rewarding activity with prizes.

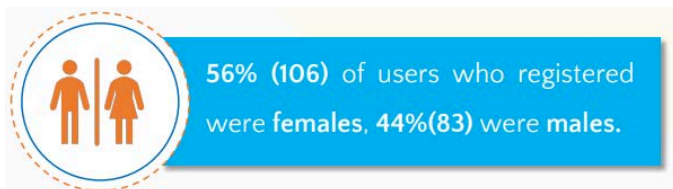
Street Tag is a unique app-based program designed to inspire families and individuals to stay active while exploring and connecting with their local communities. By earning points for activities such as walking, cycling, scooting, or rolling, participants engage in fun, accessible physical activity.

This project aims to target less active communities, encouraging outdoor activities to boost fitness and health, community engagement, and mental wellbeing. It also addresses common barriers to activity, including transport, safety, cost, and confidence. By engaging community groups, families, schools, and individuals, Street Tag aimed to make Gloucester more active and connected.

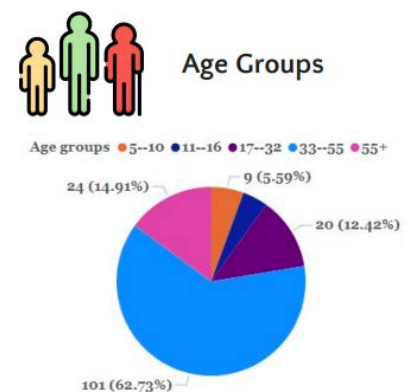
During 2024-25, we are running two eight-week seasons. The first took place from October 1st to November 30th 2024, with the second scheduled for February to April 2025.

Player Demographics

Take a look at the demographic breakdown of players that engaged in season 1 of Street Tag between 1st October and 30th October'



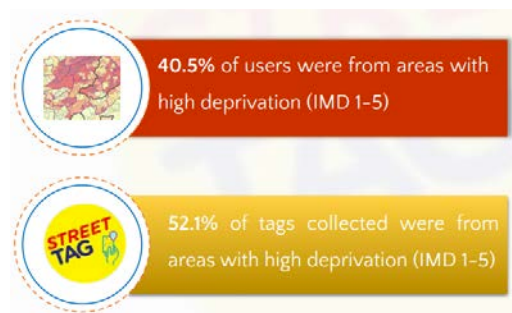
99% of participants that disclosed their ethnicity said they were 'white or white british'



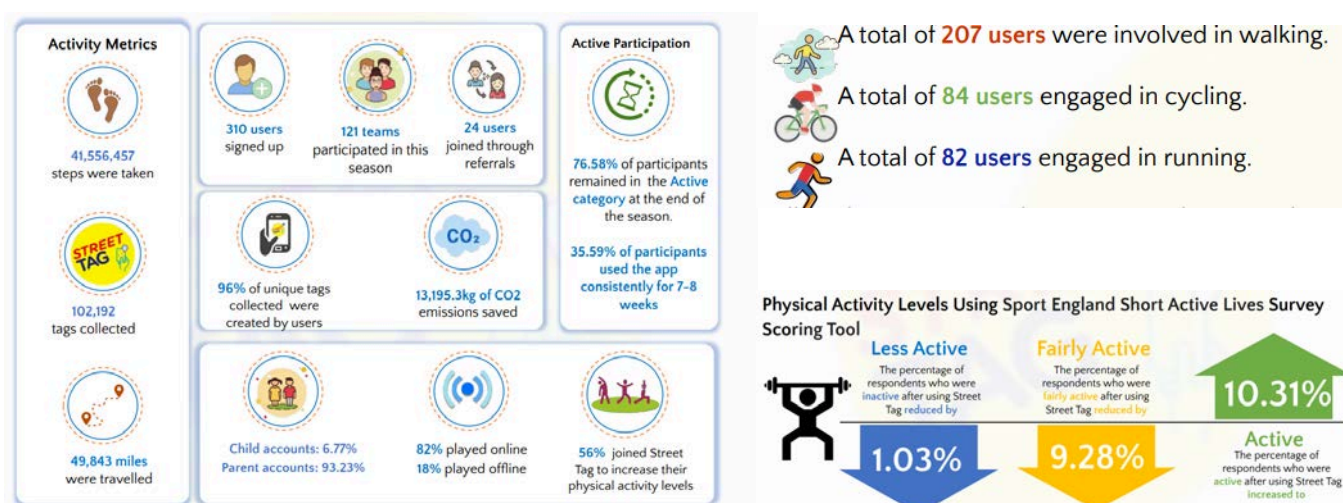
161 users shared their ages, of which majority were adults aged between 33 and 55 years. This is followed by adults above 55 years with a participation rate of 14.91% (24).

Deprivation

- **36.7%** of users live in employment deprived areas with 53.7% of tags located in these areas.
- **54.4%** of users live in areas that experience barriers to housing and services, with 75.3% of tags located in these areas
- **39.9%** of users live in income deprived areas with 53.1% of tags located in these areas.
- **40.5%** of users live within the 50% most deprived areas nationally, with 52.1% of tags located in these areas



Outcomes



A total of 277 respondents participated in the pre-health survey, with 97 successfully completing the post-health survey.

To measure users' behavioral change, the Sport England scoring tool was applied to the responses in both the initial and follow-up surveys.

In the initial survey, 11 respondents were classified as less active; this group decreased by 1.03% in the follow-up.

Similarly, 23 respondents were categorised as fairly active in the initial survey, but this group saw a 9.28% reduction as many transitioned to the actively engaged category.

Meanwhile, 63 respondents were initially classified as active in the pre-health survey. This number increased by 10.31% in the follow-up survey, with 73 respondents maintaining or improving their active status, marked by an increase in physical activity and breathing rates.

Stories

"The kids (10 and 8) have really enjoyed playing Street Tag. They especially liked being able to place their own on the Eastern Avenue bridge. It got us out the house more and we've definitely increased how much walking we did."

"I hope there will be an opportunity to feed back to Active Gloucestershire just how much I have gained from playing Street Tag. The timing of the game has been a real bonus for me. Having a child who refused school at the start of a school year it was a very stressful time for me. However, I have walked different routes home from the school in the morning to collect tags and this has given me a chance to calm down after a spike in my stress levels."



Next Steps

We are excited for the launch of Season 2 of Street Tag in February 2025, running until April 2025.

Building on the insight and groundwork established in season 1, we aim to deepen our engagement with Gloucester's most inactive residents, diverse ethnic communities, and those living in the priority wards of Barton, Matson, Tredworth, Robinswood, and Podsmead.

Gloucester's enablers for change

Whole Systems and Place-based Approaches

- Integration of physical activity across sectors: Success is driven by embedding physical activity into diverse sectors beyond traditional sports such as healthcare, arts, culture, social services, and community organisations. This approach helps reach people who may not typically engage with fitness or wellbeing programmes.
- Strengthening community and individual capacities: Fostering skills and confidence within individuals and creating strong community networks enables people to participate more actively and sustainably in physical activities. This community empowerment is a critical factor for lasting success.
- Addressing structural inequalities: Focusing on the socio-economic, cultural, and environmental barriers to physical activity is essential for sustainable change. By targeting the root causes of health inequalities, ways of working and programmes can create an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of background, feels able to engage in physical activity.

Cross-cutting Conditions for Sustainable Engagement

- Identifying local barriers and enablers: A clear understanding of the specific barriers to and facilitators of physical activity within the unique local context helps tailor interventions more effectively. This insight ensures that activities are relevant to the local community, increasing the likelihood of sustained engagement.
- Distributed and collective leadership: Empowering participants and community members to take leadership roles, as seen with the GL Communities work and Neighbourhood Fund, encourages a shared sense of responsibility and ownership. This distributed leadership contributes to a supportive, self-sustaining community structure.
- Collaboration within and across organisations: Building productive partnerships with local organisations, mental health services, arts, culture and volunteer networks enables programmes to pool resources, share expertise, and address more complex participant needs more holistically.

Engaging and Inclusive Programmes

- Co-production and local leadership: Involving participants in the design and ongoing development of programmes, such as in the GL Communities, Blackbridge and Together Gloucester work, fosters a sense of ownership and relevance. When people feel their needs and preferences are considered, they are more likely to stay engaged and connected.
- Addressing intersectionality and inclusion: By recognising and responding to the unique needs of various participant groups (e.g., parents of children with additional needs, young people, and young persons voice in Gloucester Park), the initiative will build an inclusive space where everyone feels welcome and supported.

Adaptable and Innovative Programming

- Flexible and responsive programme design: The ability to adapt activities based on participant feedback and emerging community needs (e.g., the launch of the street dance group for youth at GL Communities and the Bar Park build in Gloucester Park) helps a programme remain relevant and engaging.
- Cycles of learning and action: Continuous evaluation and adaptation, learning from both successes and challenges, allows for adjustments that enhance programme effectiveness. This feedback loop is crucial to keeping the initiative aligned with participant needs and the evolving community landscape.

Gloucester's enablers for change

Focus on Wider Health and Wellbeing

- Recognising the intertwined nature of physical and mental health, interventions can offer a holistic approach that values both aspects equally. Supporting participants with complex physical health or mental health needs through patient, one-on-one engagement addresses key barriers that might otherwise prevent individuals from remaining active.
- Creating a culture of wellbeing: Building a culture that values and promotes mental and physical wellbeing, as seen in events like the Wellbeing Cup, fosters social cohesion and motivates participants to make long-term changes.
- Communities value social connections, this is a wider societal influence on physical activity. Focus on the important things and activity and movement can occur indirectly.



Gloucester Summary and Next Steps

The report on Gloucester's place-based approach provides a comprehensive overview of efforts to improve community health, physical activity, and social cohesion throughout the city. Led by Active Gloucestershire, in collaboration with Sport England and numerous community partners, this initiative aims to tackle structural inequalities and promote sustainable community engagement in physical activities.

Overview

The Gloucester approach is centred on addressing systemic health and activity inequalities across the city. Initially, efforts focused on specific wards, such as Barton and Tredworth, with a strong emphasis on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). Over time, the initiative has expanded to include other areas, fostering partnerships and implementing projects like multi-sport hubs, community gardens, and local funding to support neighbourhood activities. A key example of this cross-sectoral collaboration is the "Together Gloucester" project, which integrates arts, heritage, and cultural activities into health and well-being programmes, recognising that addressing physical inactivity requires a multi-faceted approach rather than the efforts of a single sector.

Another significant element of Gloucester's place-based approach is the Blackbridge Community & Sports Hub. Based in Podsmead, one of the city's most deprived areas, this hub is a long-term project aiming to provide local residents with enhanced recreational and social opportunities. Originally envisioned as part of Gloucester City Council's Playing Pitch Strategy, which prioritised 3G pitch facilities and other amenities to address local sporting needs, the Blackbridge project has evolved with strong community involvement. Supported by various local organisations, including the Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS), it aligns with the broader goals of promoting health and activity across the city, with an added emphasis on community ownership and engagement.

Barriers and Enablers

• Enablers

- **Community partnerships**, collaborative efforts among various local organisations, such as Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester Culture Trust, and the Blackbridge CCBS, enable shared resources, distributed leadership, and cultural inclusivity.
 - **Neighbourhood funding**, small funding pots, provided to community groups for activities like chair yoga and play sessions, support local empowerment and enhance active engagement across the city. These funds allow communities to self-direct activities that address local needs.
 - **Inclusive programming**, programmes such as Walk and Talk and the Wellbeing Cup are inclusive, catering to people of all ages and backgrounds, helping to build community solidarity and engagement.
-

Gloucester Summary and Next Steps

- **Barriers**

- **Complex partnerships**, as projects scale, maintaining alignment among partners on shared goals and objectives can be challenging. For example, some community groups have prioritised independence in managing intellectual property, which can lead to fragmented efforts.
- **Inclusivity challenges**, gender inclusivity is a notable concern, particularly within certain activities where assumptions around participation surfaced underlying biases that require attention.
- **Sustained engagement**, keeping participants involved long-term necessitates various strategies, including continuous feedback and programme adaptation to suit changing community needs.

Strategic Priorities and System Change

1. **Unified goals and governance**, establishing common goals and governance structures from the outset is crucial to preventing misalignment among partners. Future projects could benefit from formal agreements, such as a memorandum of understanding (MoU), to outline commitments and responsibilities.
2. **Flexible programme design**, ensuring programmes are adaptable based on community feedback and evolving needs. For instance, the introduction of a street dance group for youth highlights the value of responsiveness to community interests.
3. **Inclusivity and cultural relevance**, ensuring programmes cater to all community members, particularly underrepresented groups, is vital. For example, the Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub has sought to balance facilities for men, women, and young people, creating a space that serves the entire community's needs.
4. **Sustainable community capacity**, building capacity within community organisations to support long-term engagement, enhancing local skills, and fostering shared leadership. This approach has been effective within initiatives like the Neighbourhood Fund and Blackbridge, where local leadership and community investment have driven progress.

Next Steps

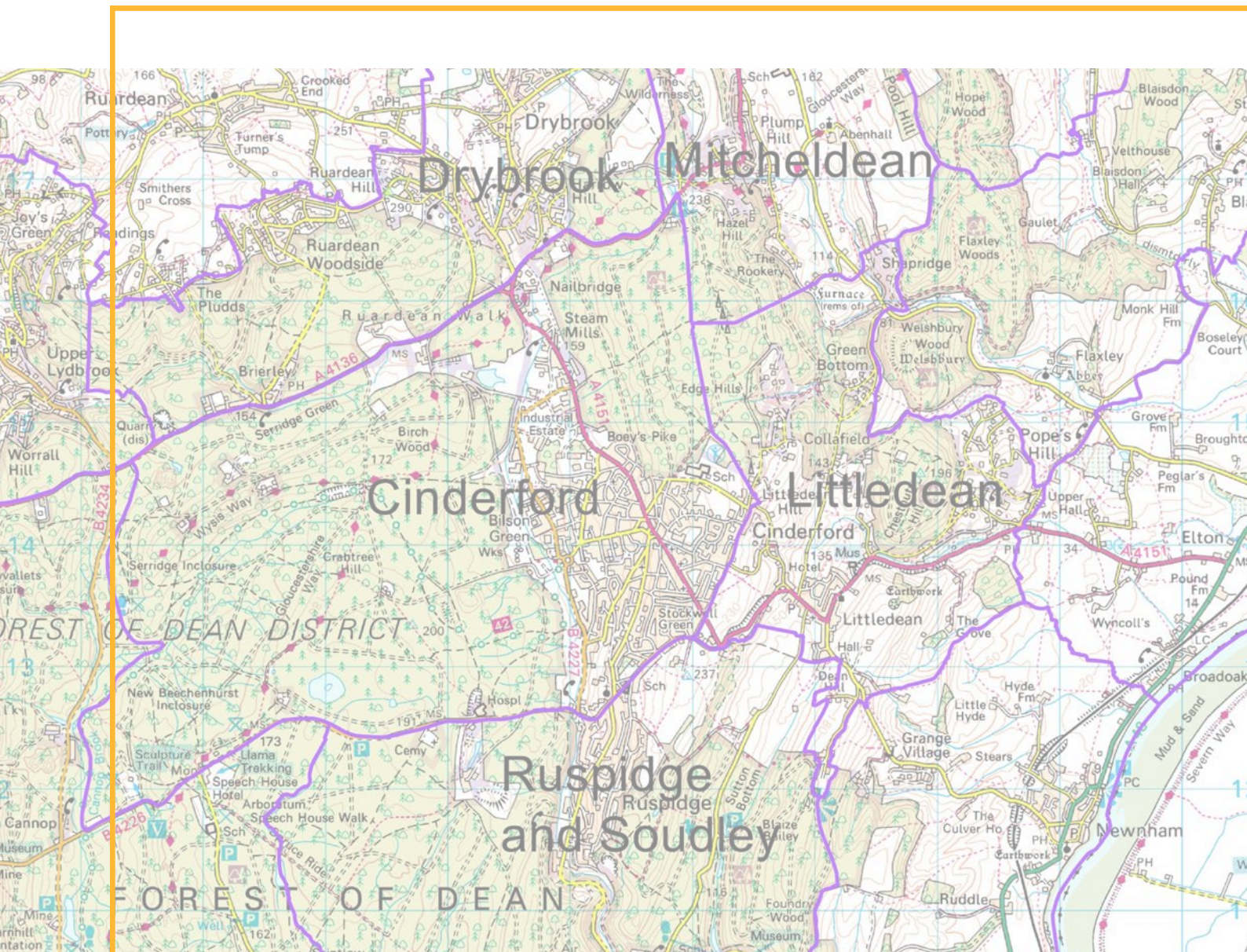
- **Expanding place-based approaches**, plans are underway to replicate the successful place-based methods in additional Gloucester wards, continuing to ensure robust community involvement.
- **Strengthening cross-sector collaboration**, emphasis will remain on partnerships that integrate cultural, social, and health sectors to foster holistic solutions to physical inactivity.
- **Securing long-term funding**, a priority for Gloucester is securing stable funding sources to sustain programmes like the Neighbourhood Fund, empowering local initiatives with dependable resources.
- **Evaluating and adapting strategies**, regular evaluation and adaptation will be central to future projects, allowing for responsiveness to community needs, particularly in inclusivity and culturally relevant programming.

In summary, this report highlights Gloucester's commitment to transforming communities through an approach that values inclusivity, local empowerment, and sustained improvements to health and wellbeing. The inclusion of Blackbridge exemplifies the importance of dedicated community spaces that serve local needs, providing an inspiring model of collective impact and community resilience.

2 - Cinderford

Aim

To work in a new area, a rural community, Cinderford in the Forest of Dean. To test relationship building, dynamic systems approaches and intervention delivery to test these in a new area



Cinderford

Our Approach

In Cinderford we wanted to test three ways of working:

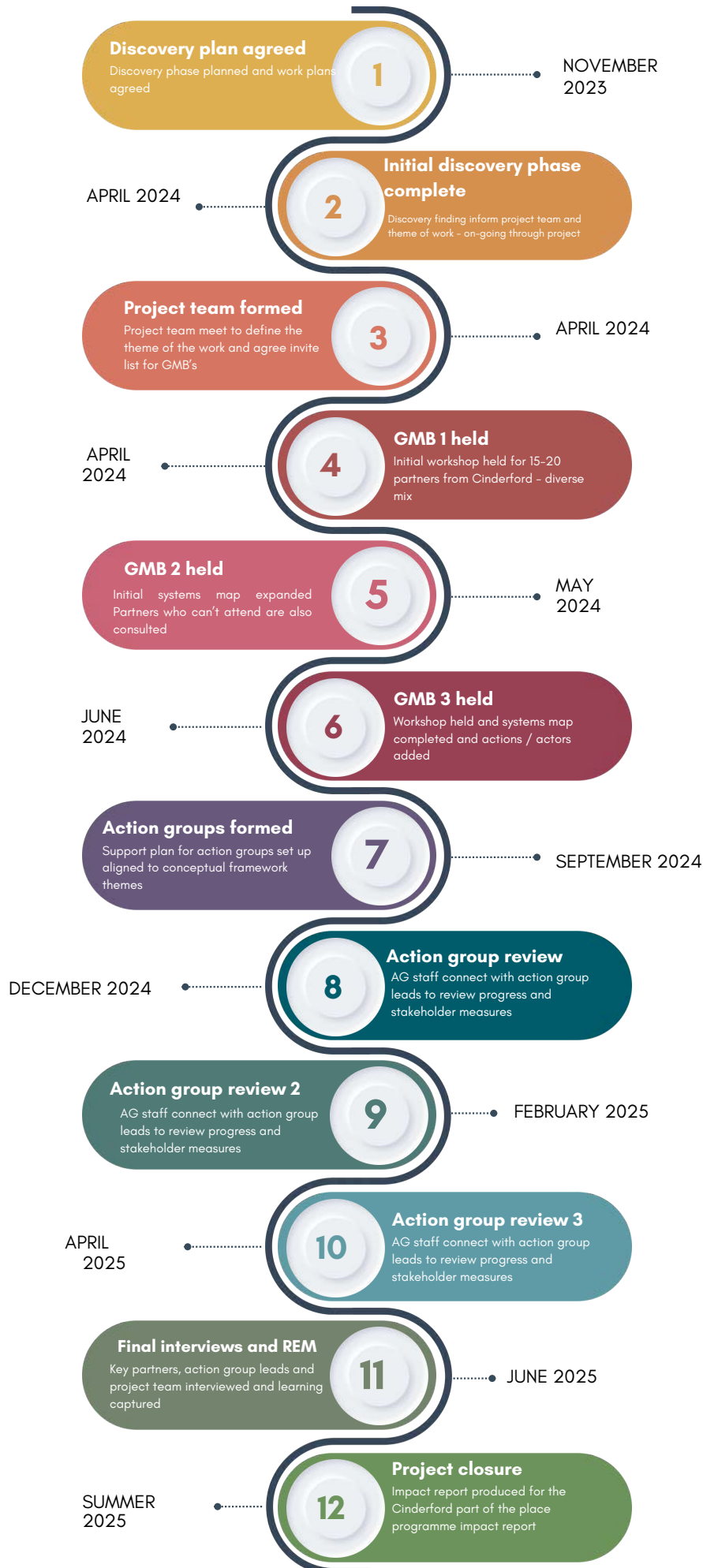
1. Relationship building
2. Systems modelling to understand barriers and opportunities
3. Physical activity interventions

we wanted to understand the impact of each of these elements and how they worked together to improve the chances of creating systemic change within Cinderford

Our timeline of this work is on the next page, and in the subsequent pages we explore how we applied those three ways of working in place, examples, stories of impact and key learning and outputs. Below is a video that explains our approach to this work.



CINDERFORD



2.a. Systems Approaches

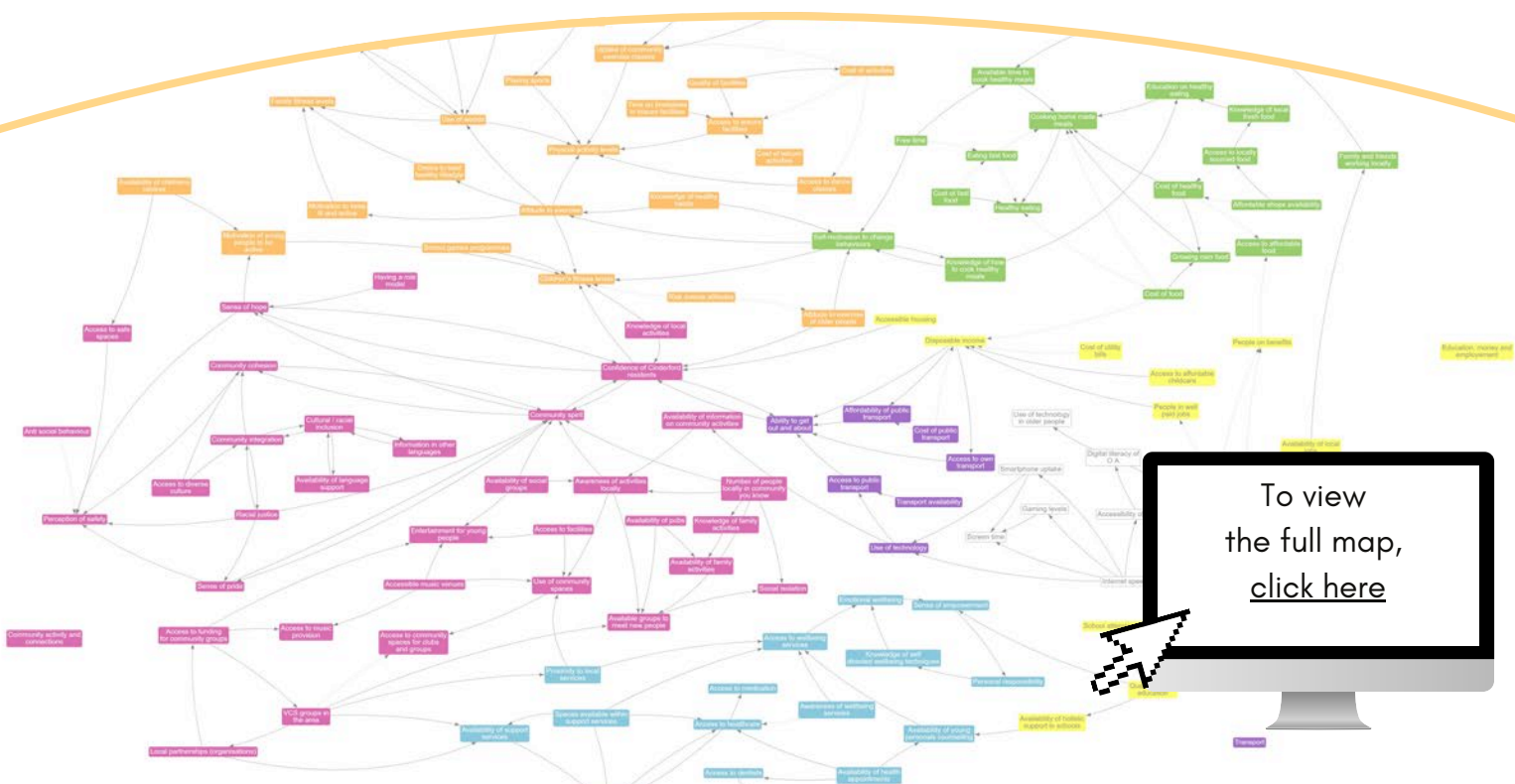
Dynamic Systems Mapping and Modelling

Using a community and cross-system participatory approach called group model building, we convened partners through a series of workshops to begin telling stories of change over time. Our goal was to work with local partners to identify and map systemic interconnected factors and gain a deeper understanding of the complex, real-world challenges that impact physical activity in Cinderford.

By involving local stakeholders, this innovative process ensured that the insight and solutions offered were community-driven, relevant, had cross-system influence and were grounded in local experiences.

This collaborative approach helped to identify key leverage points for change, fostered shared ownership of initiatives, and built a stronger network of support for sustainable, long-term improvements in health and wellbeing.

Additionally, it encouraged systems thinking, recognising that improving physical activity requires addressing multiple interconnected factors rather than isolated issues.



Systems Approaches


Group Model Building Workshops April - June 24

Group Model Building (GMB) is a collaborative approach used in system dynamics to engage stakeholders in the process of creating and analysing models that represent complex systems. This method involves diverse participants working together to develop a shared understanding of a problem (in this case a clear example of **how to understand barriers and enablers across the system of physical activity**), its causes, and potential solutions.

GMB is a powerful collaborative method that engages stakeholders to understand and address complex systems effectively. It generates a series of action ideas, and as a result action groups form to make these a reality (see next page). It also hands decision making power to the collective, who agree actions – which clearly shows an example of **distributed and collective leadership**.

Key aspects:

- Collaboration
- System Dynamics
- Model Building
- Shared Understanding
- Scenario Analysis



This is the approach
we took during the
Cinderford
workshops!



Outputs generated and shared with partners from the Group Model Building workshop held in July



COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION CHANNELS

These initiatives aim to foster a more connected and vibrant community in Cinderford. The focus is on enhancing visibility and participation in local events, facilitating better communication between organisations, and ensuring that community members have improved access to resources and opportunities.

High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility
High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility

ACTION IDEAS:

- STUDENT HARTFURY / GLOS COLLEGE FREEDOM APPRENTICE (H/NF)**
 - Engage students in creating a unified online presence for community activities.
 - Annual student project to create a website/social media presence.
 - Creative information about Cinderford's offerings.
 - Develop an email list and supportive network for local activities.
- COMMUNICATION GROUP - 'CINDERFORD ACTIVITIES' (H/NF)**
 - Improve communication among activity providers in Cinderford.
 - An inclusive, exciting central hub that is the 'go to point' for all activities.
 - Share information, refer people to suitable activities.
 - Exchange funding ideas and resources.
 - Create pictorial representations of group activities.
 - Create a user-friendly communication method for sports club enquiries.
 - Promote Wykehead Activities Events Page (What's On FOD) to increase awareness of community events. Encourage event/activity postings. Promote the website as an information source.

OVERVIEW

FACILITIES

The Facilities Action Group is dedicated to improving local activity facilities to ensure they are inclusive, high-quality and usable throughout the year. Facilities and assets in a local community are crucial as they provide essential spaces for recreation, sports, and social interaction.

Well-maintained and accessible facilities not only enhance the quality of life but also foster community cohesion, promote physical health, and offer opportunities for all residents to engage in activities that contribute to their well-being.

High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility
High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility

ACTION IDEAS:

- IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL GRASS FOOTBALL PITCHES**
 - Improve playing surfaces for year-round use.
 - Collective drainage to handle local weather and increase the number of all-weather pitches (e.g., Soudley, Stream Mills grass pitches, Cinderford 30).
 - Maintain and improve the quality of facilities.
- IMPROVED FENCING AROUND GRASS PITCHES**
 - Prevent beer damage to maintain pitch quality.
 - Ensure the longevity and usability of football pitches.
- IMPROVE FACILITIES FOR ALL-INCLUSIVE ACTIVITIES**
 - Continue promoting sports clubs.
 - Enhance facility standards to accommodate all participants.
 - Encourage self-motivation to join sports groups.
 - Include SEND players in local football activities; establish a partnership with local football teams.

NEXT STEPS:

- DELIVER BY DATE
- GROUP MEETS
- PRIORITY ACTION IDEAS
- GROUP DECIDE ON ROLES

OVERVIEW

SERVICES (HEALTH, WELLBEING AND COMMUNITY)

This Action Group strives to enhance community well-being through targeted initiatives. Accessible health, community, and wellbeing services are crucial in fostering a thriving, resilient population. In areas like the Forest of Dean, limited access to these services can lead to increased isolation, poor mental health, and widening inequalities.

By ensuring that health and wellbeing services are readily available and easily accessible, communities can build stronger support networks, improve mental and physical health outcomes, and promote social cohesion.

High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility
High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility

ACTION IDEAS:

- NEURODIVERSITY AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**
 - Provide specialised support for neurodiverse individuals, including peer support, mental health services, and reducing waiting times for both children and adults. Utilise the new Forest hospital in Cinderford.
 - Expand groups for neurodiverse children, especially during school holidays, to ensure broader access beyond those on free school meals, addressing individual needs in a low-income community.
 - Offer more clinical and mental health support specifically for ADHD, including specialised coaching and therapy, leveraging successful models from other regions.
- COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND SUPPORT**
 - Establish a central hub for community wellbeing that collaborates with voluntary services and voluntary community sector (VCS) organisations to offer comprehensive support.
 - Extend the hours and scope of children's centres to provide additional support groups, therapy sessions, and activities for children, young people, and families, thereby alleviating pressure on schools.

OVERVIEW



COMMUNITY ACTIVITY (INCLUDING EVENTS, CULTURE, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, FOOD AND WOODLANDS)

Fostering community well-being is essential for creating thriving, resilient societies. Social activities that improve access to services, support networks, and educational opportunities play a crucial role in this by enhancing quality of life and reducing disparities.

By strengthening social bonds, these programs build a more equitable and supportive environment, empower residents, and foster economic growth. This holistic approach ensures a thriving community where individuals feel connected, supported, and equipped to face challenges, contributing to a better quality of life for all.

High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility
High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility

ACTION IDEAS:

- ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND GREEN SKILLS**
 - Green Skills Development: Develop school programs focusing on green skills such as gardening, renewable energy, and sustainable construction, fostering future job opportunities.
 - Woodland Management and Wildlife Knowledge: Increase community knowledge on woodland management and local wildlife through guided walks, talks, and educational trails.
 - Confidence in Woodland Exploration: Facilitate guided walks and waymarked trails to build residents' confidence in exploring local woodlands.
- INCLUSIVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**
 - Exercise and Healthy Living Awareness: Organize local events to educate the public on the importance of exercise and healthy living, involving local studios and hospitals.
 - Physical Access to Local Activities: Train volunteers to help older adults and those with mobility issues access local events and activities, reducing social isolation.

OVERVIEW

TRANSPORT

To enhance transportation in the Forest of Dean, several initiatives are proposed. Reliable transportation in rural communities is vital for connecting residents to essential services, employment, education, and social opportunities.

It combats isolation, especially for those who cannot drive, such as the elderly or those with mobility challenges, and ensures equitable access to healthcare, mental health support, and community activities. Improved transportation also fosters economic growth by linking local businesses and enabling better access to markets.

High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility
High impact - low feasibility	High impact - high feasibility

ACTION IDEAS:

- IMPROVED LOCAL BUS SERVICES**
 - Liberty to improve services.
 - Implement a 'stop on fire off' bus service with regular stops throughout the Forest of Dean (FOD). Liberty for better overall bus services to enhance accessibility to all local services.
 - Work towards improving transport across the entire Forest of Dean to combat isolation and improve access to health services, mental health support, and community engagement.
 - If public transport improvements are not feasible, explore community-funded and shared transport solutions.
- ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY SUPPORT**
 - Support the Forest of Dean District Council's (FODDC) Active Travel Strategy by connecting teams for walking, wheeling, and rolling, and integrating active travel considerations into planning and new developments. Promote awareness to prevent staid efforts.

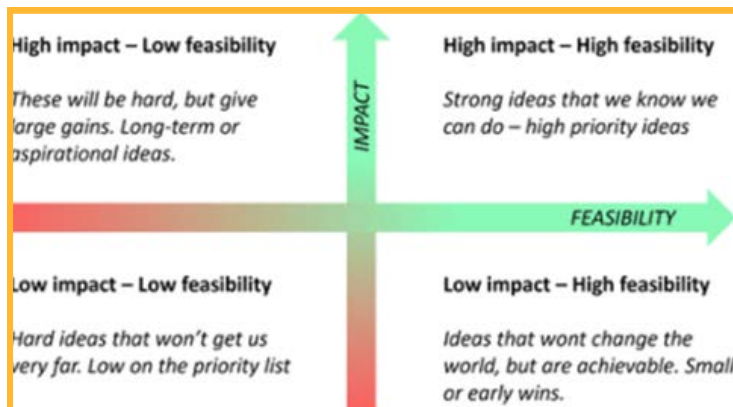
OVERVIEW

Cinderford Action Groups

In September and October, the five action groups – ‘Community Activity’, ‘Services’, ‘Communication & Information’, ‘Transport’, and ‘Facilities’ – convened to further discuss the action ideas developed during the GMB workshops.

These five action groups had 73 sign ups in total, to join the more in depth discussions on their specific theme. These individuals came from different sectors and levels of the system, all committed to driving forward the work and to create a healthier and happier Cinderford.

At each of the five meetings, members discussed the action ideas that were generated in the summer, and from this, they decided what actions they felt needed to be prioritised.



To help shape this, they continued to utilise the Impact / Feasibility Model, helping to ensure they had a balance of actions that were both short-term quick wins that would help to build momentum, but also those that will have long-term sustainable systemic change, although this may take a little longer to achieve.

By the end of each of the five action groups, this resulted in the creation of a number of priority actions that linked to the themes that individual(s) committed to delivering on behalf of the action group.

It was truly inspiring to see a diverse range of people representing different organisations come forward to commit to actions and working with others to achieve these.

We also discussed how we would like this to be structured, and the long-term sustainability of each action group.



The Journey Continued

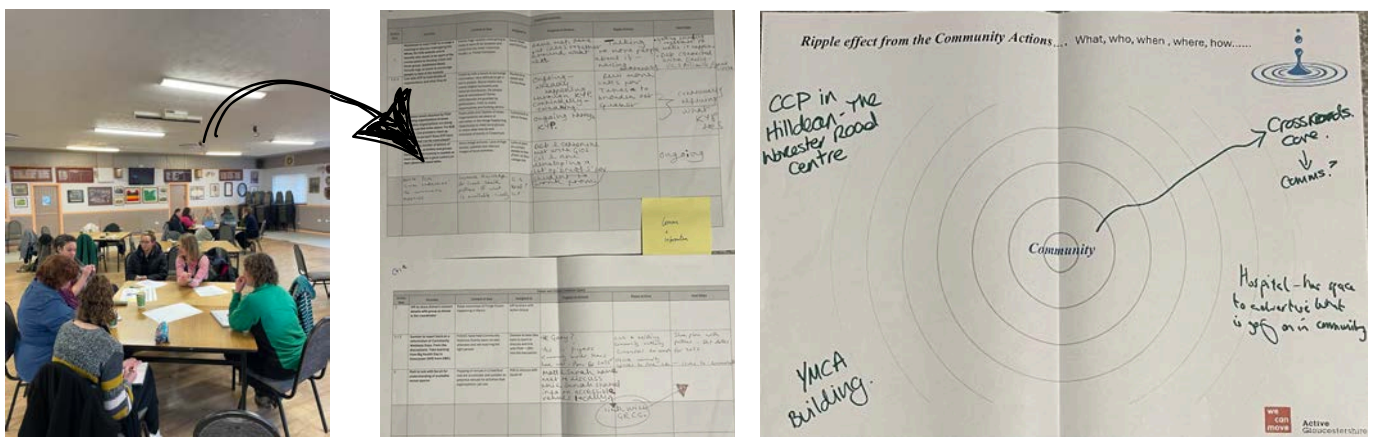
In December, over 30 individuals across all five action groups came together to review the exciting progress following the initial meetings in September and October.

Due to the amount of cross over and links between groups, members agreed that it would make sense to bring everyone together at the same time, rather than continue to meet separately.

To support discussions and to start the process of ensuring long-term sustainability, we appointed two facilitators for each action group. These facilitators played a key role in leading their respective group discussions during the December meeting.

The discussions focused on the following:

- reviewing and updating the progress of priority actions identified in the September and October meetings
- planning the next steps, including identifying outstanding actions, determining what still needed to be done, exploring any new actions or opportunities and considering whether anyone important was missing from the discussion
- reflecting on any 'ripple actions or outcomes' that emerged from discussions or collaborations during the September and October action group meetings.



While it is still early in the action group process, we wanted to share a few outcomes and the progress made so far.

Collaboration across the system

Building on the efforts of the action groups, local groups and organisations have begun collaborating to achieve shared objectives independently of the action groups themselves. While some of these activities may have occurred naturally, the GMB process has, in several cases, provided momentum by fostering connections among people. This dynamic has been observed across all five action groups. To clarify, we are not claiming credit for these outcomes—these achievements are a testament to the hard work and dedication of local individuals. However, our work has undoubtedly served as a catalyst for driving change.

Influencing system change

What we are really proud of is how this work has united individuals from various sectors to drive broader systemic change. Although it's still in the early stages, we've begun to observe individuals and groups from specific sectors become more proactive in collaborating with others to better understand and shape their future work. For example, during the Services Action Group Meeting, NHS representatives had a discussion with VCSE organisations on the current challenges with engaging neurodiverse children and adults in Cinderford and Forest of Dean. They are now having proactive conversations on how they can work more closely to engage individuals of greatest need with local services, programmes and initiatives.



Re-shaping of 'what's on in Cinderford' via website and booklet (Communication & Information).

Forest Voluntary Action Forum, Wyldwood Arts, and others, are coming together to re-think promoting 'what's on in Cinderford' via website and booklet. They're working together to try and secure funds to make it happen.

Collaboration between VCSE and NHS (Services)

There have been productive and ongoing conversations and restorative work between the VCSE, NHS directors and members of the NHS inclusion teams. They've been looking at how they can work more closely to engage those in greatest need.

Local facility development (Facilities)

Cinderford Town Council (CTC) has given some funds to Steam Mills Recreation Ground Trust (SMRGT) as they launch the exciting venture to upgrade their facilities.

Plans for walking leaders training programme (Community)

Forestry England and other partners are having discussions and in the process of securing funds to establish a walking leaders training programme in the town.

Developing plans for transport and active travel map for FOD (Transport)

The group have contributed towards and added momentum towards progress on a 'public transport and active travel map' for the Forest of Dean. Partners have worked together to feed into the map and secure funding, which aims to launch early 2025.

What's next?

This provides a glimpse of the progress being made, with some outcomes already tangible and operational on the ground, while others are focused on influencing the system to drive long-term, systemic change.

The next Cinderford Action Groups meeting is confirmed for February 2025, bringing together all five action groups to review progress and plan the next steps.

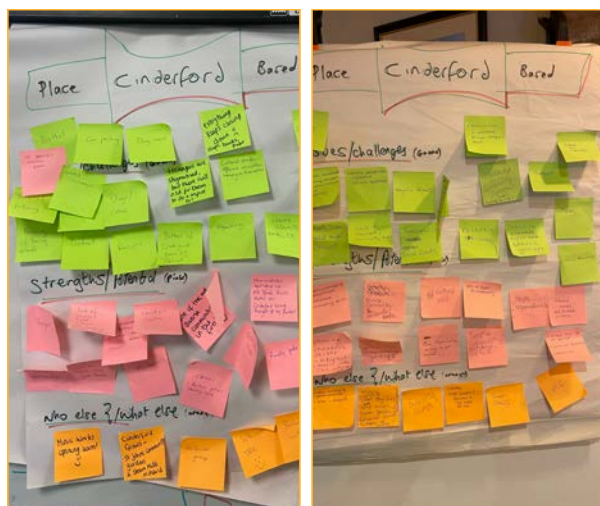
With new participants joining this work, an encouraging development we are delivering the next installment of the place-based workshop for these individuals and other key system stakeholders.

Our efforts are gaining recognition and momentum. We have been invited to present updates on local progress and findings at the upcoming Integrated Locality Partnerships (ILP) NHS meeting, the Cinderford Town Council meeting in March, and the Know Your Patch meeting.



2.b. Strength-based workshops

In February and April 2024, we actively engaged with a diverse array of partners through workshops aimed at enhancing **capacity and capability across the workforce**. These were focused on strength-based working and asset-based community development.



"Tell us about Cinderford!"

These workshops served as pivotal platforms for collaborative learning and skill-building, fostering a deeper understanding of leveraging community strengths and assets. By empowering our partners with these frameworks, we sought to catalyse sustainable community-driven solutions and cultivate a more resilient and empowered society.

Through interactive sessions and shared experiences, participants gained invaluable insights and tools to effectively harness local resources and foster positive change within their communities, especially in **co-production and locally led solutions**.



"Draw your 'dream' community / village or place"

2.c. Relationship Building

A key factor in the success of our work in Cinderford has been the strong relationships we've cultivated with partners across the system. Throughout the process, we have consistently prioritised honesty, transparency, and authenticity in every interaction.

Throughout the project, we maintained consistent communication with key partners, ensuring regular updates, shared reflections, and ongoing learning. This open dialogue not only kept everyone aligned but also fostered a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. By regularly sharing insights and lessons learned, we strengthened our partnerships and adapted our approach to better meet evolving needs and opportunities.



Supporting figures!

Attendees at workshops

15 >>> GMB1
12 >>> GMB2
44 >>> GMB3

Sign ups to Action Group Meetings

Transport: 9
Community Activity: 17
Communication & Information: 12
Services: 12
Facilities: 9

Measuring Change: Ripple Effect Mapping

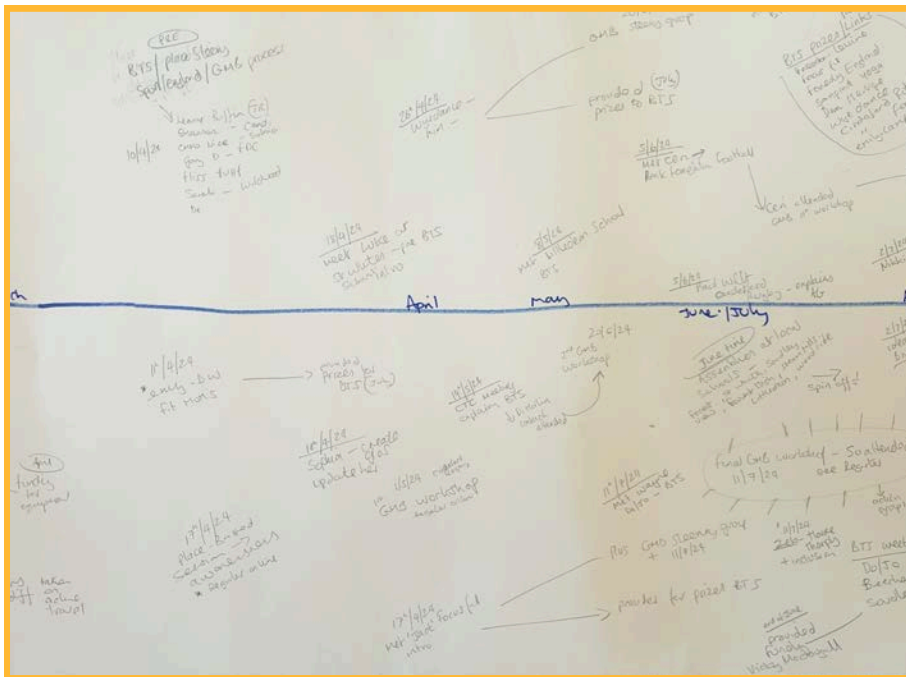
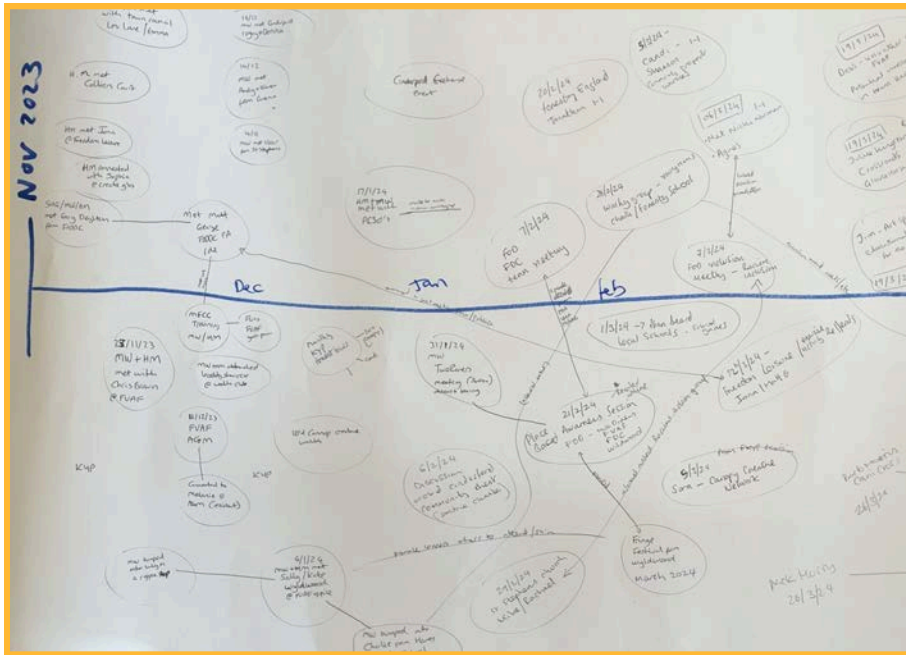
We utilised a ripple effect map to track the development of relationships and the wider impact of our work. This visual tool helped us document how initial actions and collaborations with key partners led to broader outcomes over time.

Starting from the core of our activities, the ripple effect map highlighted how specific interactions – such as meetings, joint initiatives, or shared learning – triggered additional partnerships, new opportunities, and community-driven outcomes.

By mapping these "ripples," we were able to clearly see the influence of our work spreading through the network, track the growth of relationships, and assess the long-term impact of our efforts on both individual partners and the broader system.

This process allowed us to capture not just direct outcomes but also indirect benefits, offering a comprehensive view of how our actions contributed to systemic change.

Ripple Effect Mapping



2.d. Beat the Street: A community in motion

[Click here to read the full report](#)

Beat the Street is a behaviour change programme aimed at creating a social norm around physical activity by connecting people to each other and their environment, while addressing health inequalities through small daily changes.



As part of our 'relationship building', strengths based workshops and discovery phase in the area, people told us that provision was disconnected, they didn't know what was on, how to be active and that they didn't venture out in their local area. We decided to use this insight and bring Beat the Street to Cinderford to mobilise community action, and work with local partners. The programme targeted 8 primary schools, 1 secondary school, and various community groups, aiming for 10% of the population to participate. With strong collaboration from local partners, the game exceeded expectations, engaging **1,337** people - **15%** of the population and **134%** of the target.



Launched on June 26th with local stakeholders, the game engaged schools, community groups, and families. Throughout the four-week period, events like village fetes, arts mornings, and fitness sessions were held, incentivised with double points to encourage participation and connect residents with local organisations. For Cinderford it was a huge success. People explored their local area and met and tried activities and clubs they had no idea even existed!



Player Demographics

3%

from a Black,
Asian or culturally
diverse
community

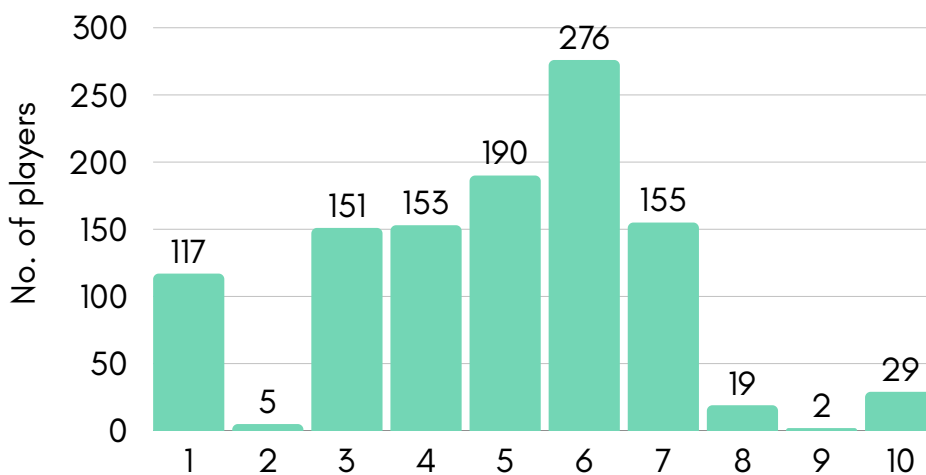
4%

of players
had a
disability

19%

of people had a
long-term
medical
condition

Level of deprivation



11% of players were living in the 20% most deprived areas, overrepresenting the proportion of the population that live in IMD 1-2 postcodes.

My three children and I really enjoyed walking/cycling whilst doing Beat the Street. We spent many evenings after school and weekends out in the fresh air and earning lots of points which the children were very excited about! What a great idea to encourage children to be active.



Outcomes

78% of children said they walked more for travel and 21% said they cycled more



10,680

miles were
travelled



1337

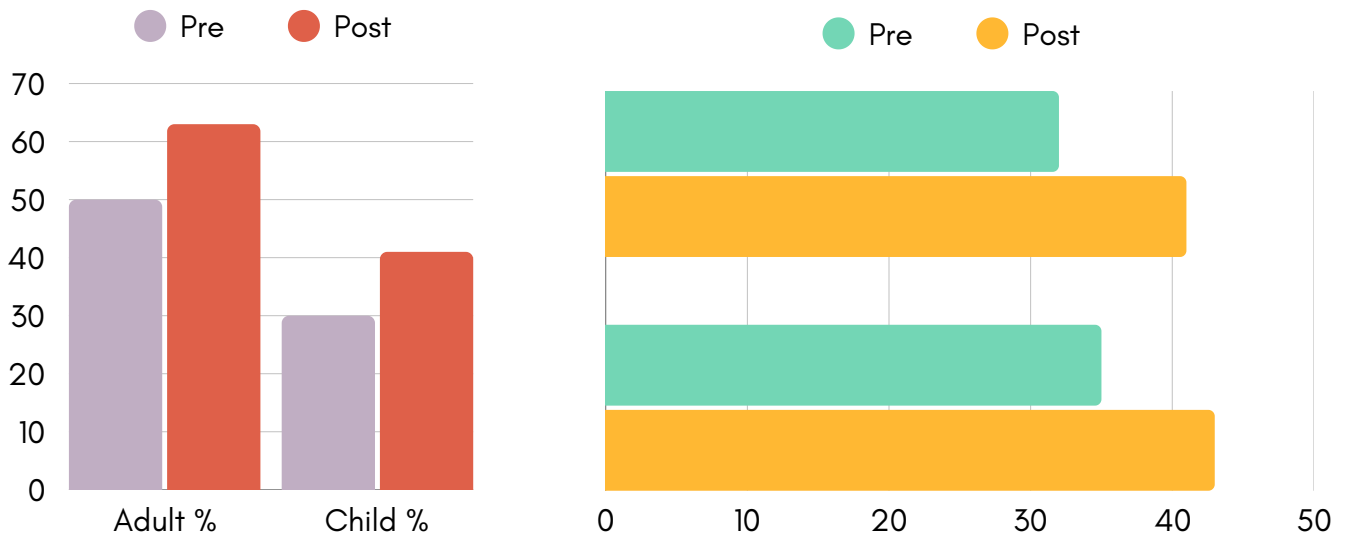
total
players



1,117

played as part
of a team

Change in people getting the recommended amount of physical activity



Community Sentiments

I feel a part of a network of residents, groups and organisations that collaborate in my local area.

I have stories I can tell or that I have heard that encapsulate the cultures and heritage of my community.

Stories

BTS got my family exercising more and made it more enjoyable as the children never complained and enjoyed earning points.



My kids and I LOVED Beat the Street! On days we didn't have any plans, it gave us an excuse to get out and be active. We were so sad to see it come to an end and **want it back in Cinderford!!**



My daughter doesn't like to go out of the house and Beat The Street has got her out and made her really enthusiastic about it too



Cinderford enablers for change

Enhanced Resource Sharing and Collaboration

- Key dynamic: this enabler addresses the need for resource optimisation within the Cinderford community, pooling assets and reducing redundancies.
- Contextual influence: resource availability varies across community organisations. Therefore, creating a culture of shared resources allows diverse groups to maximise their impact. Community trust and willingness to collaborate are essential here and key to influencing the project's success.
- Outcomes: increased access to activities and services, enhanced by mutual support across organisations, builds greater community participation.

Increased Awareness and Communication

- Key dynamic: effective, community-wide communication allows residents to better understand available resources, increasing engagement.
- Contextual influence: Cinderford's diverse communication networks require a tailored approach to outreach. Siloed working structures present a challenge, highlighting the need for improved channels to reach all community members.
- Outcomes: by improving communication channels, this enabler reduces barriers to information, enabling residents to make informed decisions and participate more readily in physical activities.

Networking and Knowledge Exchange Opportunities

- Key dynamic: networking fosters a support system across organisations, enhancing capacity for collaborative problem-solving.
- Contextual influence: the effectiveness of networking initiatives depends on existing relationships and the willingness of organisations to engage in collective knowledge-sharing.
- Outcomes: increased coordination across sectors enables a more cohesive response to community needs, reducing isolation among stakeholders and promoting a collaborative approach

Audit and Utilisation of Community Spaces

- Key dynamic: mapping and optimising local spaces ensures that available assets are fully leveraged to increase accessibility to physical activities.
- Contextual influence: this dynamic requires thorough knowledge of the community's landscape and willingness among stakeholders to open spaces for shared use. Cinderford's variety of underused buildings presents a clear opportunity to create accessible activity spaces.
- Outcomes: effective space audits lead to expanded opportunities for physical activity by making more venues available, especially to groups that may otherwise lack access.

Cinderford enablers for change

Enhanced Resource Sharing and Collaboration

- Key dynamic: providing culturally relevant activities supports inclusivity and fosters a sense of belonging, directly addressing community diversity.
- Contextual influence: success depends on cultural understanding and sensitivity, requiring stakeholders to collaborate in developing activities that resonate with various community groups.
- Outcomes: increased participation from diverse groups, fostering inclusivity and social cohesion, leads to a stronger sense of community identity and motivation to engage in shared activities

Shared Leadership across Levels of the System

- Key dynamic: effective, collaborative and co-owned leadership of actions and changes that communities and stakeholders want to see.
- Contextual influence: Cinderford's diverse sector of passionate people who are well-connected, but not connected well, to work together than share the responsibility of the change they wish to see. They agree shared values which sets them up for successful shared leadership long into the future.
- Outcomes: by improving how partners see systems and systemic working, they will see their role in creating change and that leadership is less of a title, and more of a set of behaviours which we can all exhibit to make positive change.

Influential Contextual Factors

Community trust, existing communication structures, and historical social dynamics play influential roles in how enablers operate. For example, without effective communication infrastructure, raising awareness about activity opportunities becomes challenging. Similarly, achieving social integration through dialogue depends heavily on overcoming pre-existing cultural divides within the community.

Patterns and Variability in Outcomes

Outcomes may vary across groups and settings in Cinderford. For instance, culturally relevant activities resonate strongly with specific community groups but may not draw in others, unless adjusted to address their unique interests. Likewise, network-building efforts flourish where pre-existing relationships and trust exist but face challenges in areas where trust needs building.

Unanticipated Changes and Learning

As initiatives progress, certain enablers – such as social integration efforts, may reveal additional community needs, such as expanded mental health support or youth-specific programming. Continuous engagement and feedback loops allow the project to adapt, identifying and responding to emerging needs within Cinderford.

Cinderford summary and next steps

1. Project Overview and Rationale

The Cinderford place-based approach, driven by Active Gloucestershire with support from Sport England, addresses the local need for increased physical activity and community wellbeing. Identified as a priority area due to trends in health, activity levels, and socio-economic indicators, Cinderford presents both challenges and opportunities. The initiative has been driven via a system-based model, recognising that sustainable change comes from addressing structural and systemic factors and fostering local partnerships.

2. Enablers and Barriers to Physical Activity

The project team conducted in-depth conversations with the Cinderford community, including organisations, councils, sports clubs, and cultural groups. This engagement process highlighted:

Potential Enablers

- In clear alignment with the conceptual model's focus on co-design, this engagement process identified enablers including:
 - Shared resources and knowledge networks: enhancing resource sharing across organisations and increasing awareness of community offerings reflect principles of mutual support and co-created solutions.
 - Community audits and asset mapping: auditing community spaces for activity use aligns with mapping local resources, helping the project tap into underutilized assets while promoting inclusive physical activity.
 - Cultural relevance and inclusivity: activities tailored to the cultural identities within Cinderford enhance inclusivity, addressing social factors and promoting community integration.

Key Barriers

Persistent barriers were mapped to the conceptual model's principles of removing systemic constraints and empowering communities:

- Safety and transport limitations: concerns around safe access to outdoor spaces and transportation highlight the need for cross-sector collaboration to improve infrastructure and accessibility.
- Low awareness and siloed communication: limited communication between local organisations and low awareness of available opportunities point to a need for integrated, accessible communication channels.
- Integration challenges: potential racial tensions and limited social cohesion indicate a deeper need for cultural competency within programming to bridge divides and foster unity.

Cinderford summary and next steps

3. Strategic Priorities and Systemic Change

Reflecting the model's emphasis on systemic change, the Cinderford initiative prioritises efforts to dismantle barriers by addressing underlying community and structural factors. Key strategic actions are listed below:

- Co-creation through strengths-based workshops
- To deepen understanding of local challenges and explore solutions, the team will host strengths-based workshops. This participatory approach engages local stakeholders in designing tailored interventions, ensuring community members feel ownership over initiatives and that solutions are culturally relevant.
- Bridging siloes through connection and collaboration.
- Emphasising collaborative partnerships aligns with the model's systems thinking approach. By linking partners in complementary fields, the project aims to overcome siloed working and build a support network that collectively addresses community challenges.
- Long-term sustainability through community-led Initiatives.
- Recognising the importance of sustainable, community-driven initiatives, the Cinderford project seeks to establish a foundation for ongoing local-led efforts. This includes identifying long-term champions within the community who can help carry forward initiatives, fostering resilience, and promoting physical activity long-term.

4. Next Steps: Mapping and Collaboration

Moving forward, the team plans to convene a collaborative session with community stakeholders. This event will map out actions to tackle existing barriers, potentially through new, community-driven initiatives. The approach follows the model's goal of relationship-building and co-design, helping to integrate community insights into actionable and sustainable plans for change.

By embedding the conceptual model's principles into its framework, the Cinderford project is well into delivering its mission of increasing physical activity through a holistic, place-based approach that respects and uplifts local needs and strengths. This approach encourages a connected, inclusive community, empowered to sustain its health and wellbeing initiatives long into the future.



3 - Test and Learn

Aim.

To test and learn new approaches outside of specific targeted areas, such as working with ILP's, system partners and systems mapping, modelling and leadership.



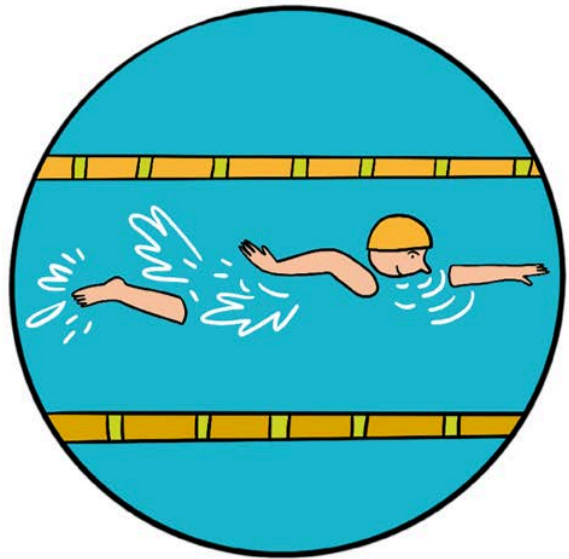
3.a. Systems Leadership

1. SYSTEM WORKING

'all parts make a difference'

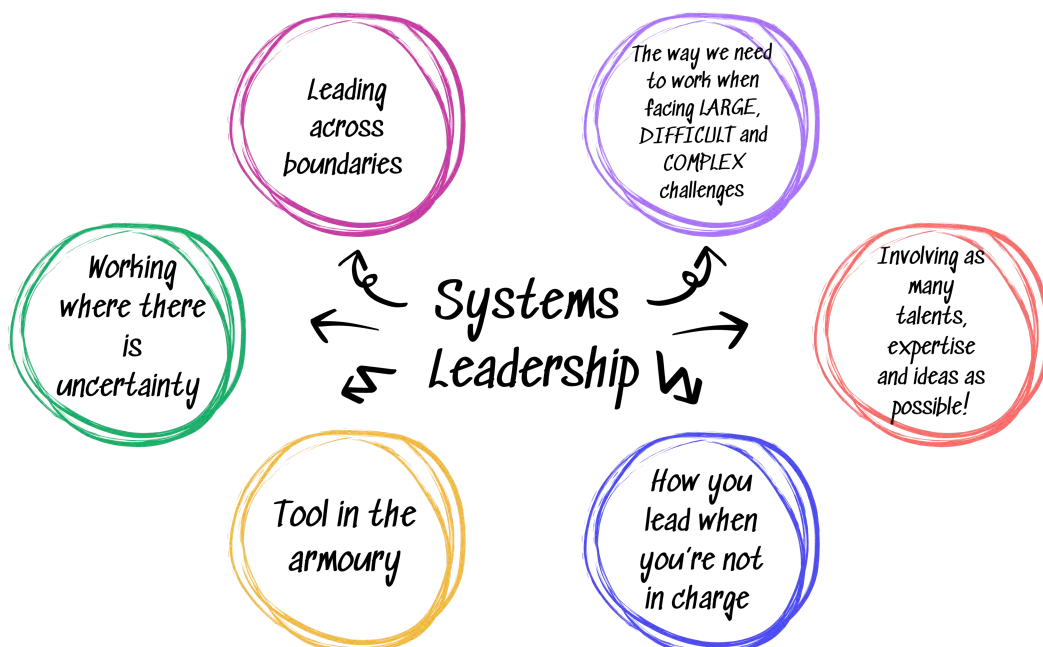
Driving change through:

- Understanding how the organisations and people work at local and national levels
- Building relationships based on trust to support positive decision making
- Leadership and advocacy across organisations and sectors to develop shared goals



Purpose and Context

Systems leadership is a fundamental part of the work we do across Active Gloucestershire. The following example shows where we provided informal mentoring to other VCSE partner organisations. With the sector facing high demands and uncertain funding, the mentorship aimed to build leadership resilience, strengthen governance, and promote long-term organisational stability. During this mentorship, the organisations we supported also established new governance structures such as new chairs and trustees, positioning them for further future success.



Systems Leadership

Key elements for change

- Structured mentorship: consistent mentoring enhanced resilience and decision-making capacity. A more formalised approach could reinforce this support further.
- Strengthened governance: guidance on governance improved organisational health, aligning with **distributed and collective leadership**
- Reflective learning cycles: the mentoring relationships encouraged shared reflection, supporting adaptability—a key aspect of effective support systems

Outcomes and Insights

The mentorships led to several positive outcomes:

- Enhanced trust and collaboration: improved inter-organisational trust enabled collaborative efforts in funding and programming.
- Governance gains: the organisations gained new governance structures that bring about stability.
- Mutual learning: both mentor and mentee benefited from reflective cycles, highlighting the value of reciprocal feedback loops

Lessons and Recommendations

- Formalise leadership support: structured mentorship can provide clearer guidance and measurable impact.
- Embed leadership as core work: leadership support should be a core organisational function, strengthening both individual leaders and partnerships.
- Encourage mutual learning: reciprocal learning deepens support impact, building a resilient leadership pipeline across organisations.

3.b. Collective community action through systems approaches:

Live Longer Better

We recognise that the art of convening can be a powerful intervention in its own right. We have witnessed the impact of collective community action surrounding an important change agenda for our county. How we can age well, stay active and live longer better.


Launched in October 2024, Live Longer Better is a campaign, designed to support older adults in Gloucestershire to maintain a healthy and independent lifestyle

Great things happen when people are given the chance to come together and understand their role in tackling stubborn issues. Gloucestershire is a rapidly ageing county with around 50,000 inactive over 65's spending more time living in poor health.

We all wear many hats! As family members, carers, children, parents or even older adults ourselves, a vision for collective action is one of inspiration and bravery to respond to a challenging and complex issue:

"The health and activity of older adults in Gloucestershire."

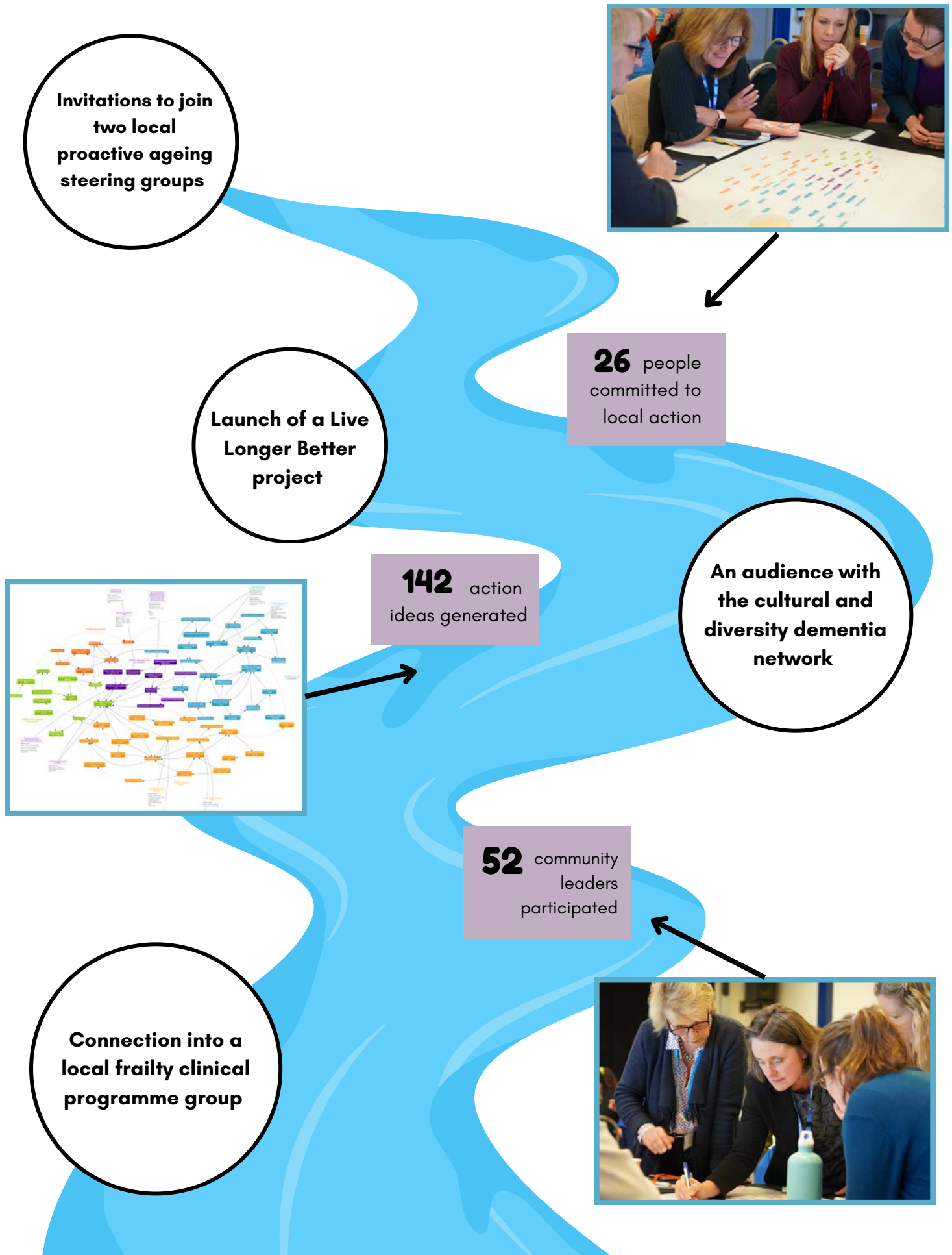
The collective network collaboratively told us the factors that influence activity levels for older adults in our county.



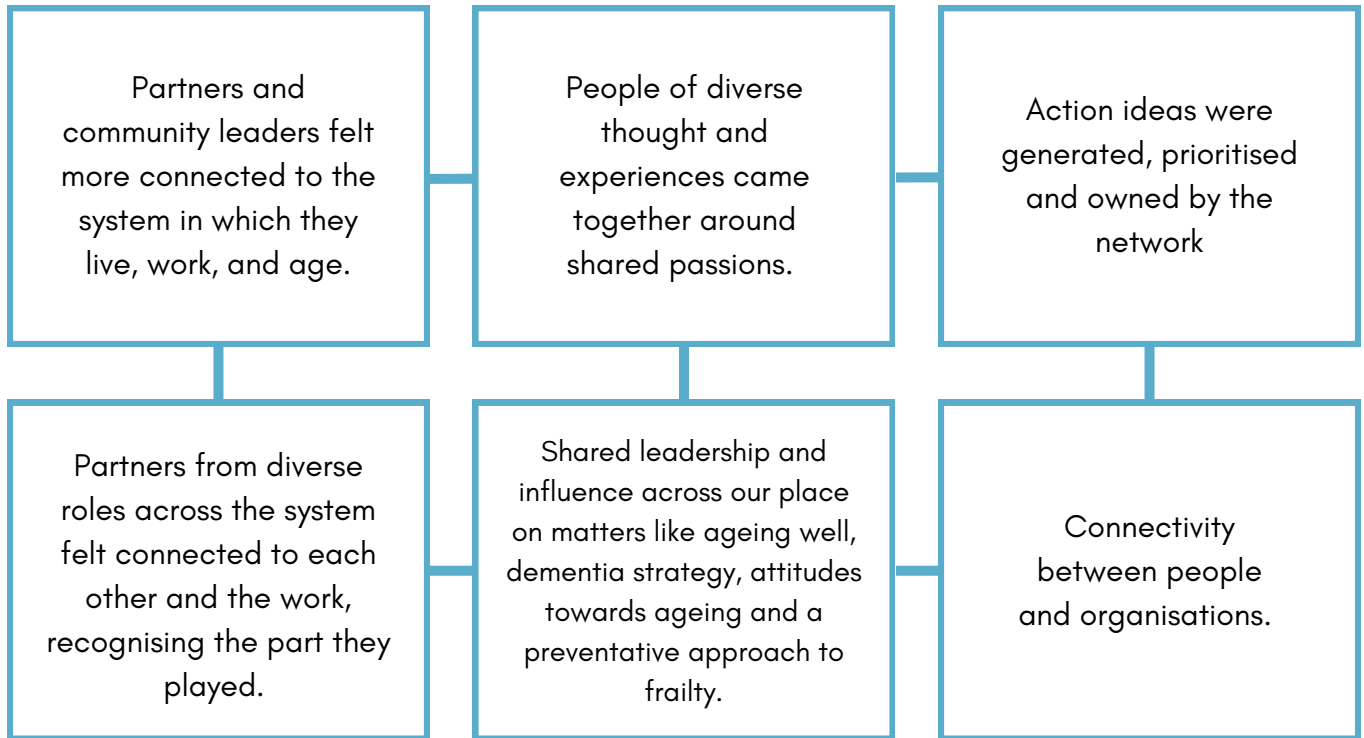
Using a systems approach (group model building) we invited a network of 52 community leaders to convene around identifying ideas for local actions that its members would own. Recognising the challenges of convening a community led approach with such diversity of place, people and geography, we identified four helpful themes around which collective action took place: **Physical activity, service development, promotion and communication, investment and strategy.**



Ripples of Change

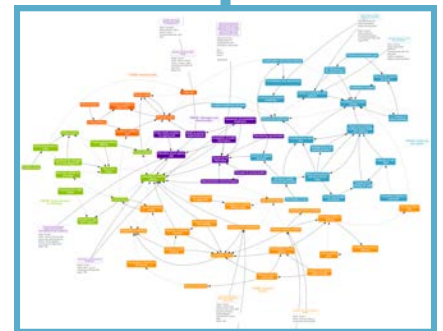


What happened as a result?



There were some key ingredients or 'enablers' for us to work in this way. The recipe might look different from one space to the next, but this is what worked in this context:

- The art of **convening the space**
- **Trusted** relationships
- Hooking into a local **strategic priority**
- **Buy-in** from across local community leadership
- Using a tested and **evidence based process** (systems dynamics/group model building)
- **Facilitation** skills
- **Strengths** of a network



What did we learn?

We wanted to test applying systems mapping within a place through a narrow focus e.g. older people at large place scale vs other test areas within smaller micro localities.

We found that this approach may have covered too large a geographical area to unpick real, local and stubborn inequalities, but it has presented an opportunity to localise the co-produced actions to district level and respond to specific priorities in each place.

Test and Learn enablers for change

Trust and Relationships

Establishing trusted relationships among stakeholders has improved collaborative efforts. The mentoring process not only built governance structures but also enhanced mutual learning and reflective practices, resulting in a stronger network of support.

Community Engagement

Involving local communities in the development and implementation of strategies has led to more relevant and impactful actions. The Live Longer Better project in Gloucestershire, for example, engaged 52 community leaders to co-produce action ideas that would resonate with older adults, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment.

Evidence-based Processes

Utilising systems dynamics and GMB techniques has facilitated deeper insights into community needs and dynamics. The approach of convening a diverse group of community leaders around shared passions has led to innovative ideas for tackling inactivity among older adults.

Test and learn enablers for change

Key dynamics and conditions

Identifying barriers and enablers: engaging with local communities has revealed specific barriers to physical activity, such as socio-economic factors and lack of access to resources. For example, in Gloucestershire, a systems leadership initiative provided informal mentoring to voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, helping them understand local barriers to participation and build resilience.

- **Distributed and collective leadership:** empowering individuals across multiple layers of society has facilitated a broader approach to decision-making and resource allocation. The mentorship in Gloucestershire enhanced trust and collaboration between organisations, enabling collective efforts to secure funding and develop programmes that respond to community needs.
- **Collaboration across organisations:** productive partnerships have emerged from shared objectives and a common purpose. In one initiative, community leaders convened to identify local actions addressing physical activity for older adults, resulting in collective commitment and prioritisation of actions that reflect community needs.
- **Capacity building:** developing the skills and attributes necessary for effective, responsive, and collaborative working is crucial. For instance, strategies to recruit, reward, and build capabilities among volunteers and community members have been implemented to support a more active workforce.



Test and learn summary and next steps

Lessons learned

Understanding local context: every community is different, and it's important to recognise those differences when designing our initiatives. Feedback from community leaders has shown that we need to adjust our approaches to suit the specific needs and circumstances of each area.

Importance of reflection: taking time to reflect on our experiences has made us more flexible and better equipped to tackle new challenges. For example, our mentorship programmes highlighted how valuable it is to learn from each other, which has helped us improve our plans.

Need for ongoing support: ongoing mentoring and support for community leaders and organisations are crucial for keeping the momentum going and building strength. Making leadership support a regular part of organisational structures has been helpful for long-term success.

Next steps

To keep moving forward in tackling inequalities in physical activity, we suggest the following actions:

Better data collection: we need to set up reliable ways to gather data on what our communities need and the outcomes of our efforts. Regular check-ins will help us make sure our initiatives stay relevant and effective.


Widen Our networks: we should look to expand our partnerships to bring in a wider variety of stakeholders. This will help us combine resources and expertise to address inequalities more effectively.

Prioritise sustainability: we need to create long-term plans that make physical activity a key part of what local organisations do. This means keeping community priorities at the forefront of our initiatives.

Share knowledge: we should set up opportunities for different communities to share what's working for them. This could include creating spaces for community leaders to swap stories and strategies, helping everyone learn from one another.

5 - Key learning


Integrating physical activity into various sectors



Successful programmes show that bringing physical activity into different areas like healthcare, education, culture, and social services helps more people get involved. In Gloucester, there are physical activity programmes that work with local healthcare providers. Doctors can 'prescribe' exercise to their patients, connecting them with walking groups and fitness classes.

Also, by teaming up with cultural organisations like the Gloucester Culture Trust, there are active opportunities available through arts and heritage events. This makes it easy for people to be active during social and cultural gatherings. These efforts make physical activity part of everyday life, reaching a wider range of community members who might not usually take part in traditional sports.


Strengthening community and individual capacities



Programmes like Gloucester's "Walk and Talk" sessions and personalised coaching show how important it is to build skills for both individuals and communities to stay active. For example, the Ebony Carers initiative offers wellness activities like chair yoga specifically designed for carers from minority communities. These activities help individuals feel more confident about being active and strengthen social connections, which empowers the entire community.

Over time, this approach helps the community become more resilient, allowing people to support one another in adopting and maintaining healthier habits. The positive impact of these initiatives is reflected in increased community involvement and local leadership in health and wellbeing.

Tackling structural inequalities




Tackling the systemic barriers that prevent people from being active is key to achieving long-term success. In Cinderford, local projects aim to improve access to important resources, like safe spaces for exercise and reliable transport, which are often hard to find in lower-income areas.

In Gloucester, the Blackbridge Community & Sports Hub focuses on the Podsmead area, which faces economic challenges, by creating a dedicated space for sports and recreational activities. These efforts aim to overcome social and economic disadvantages, making physical activity available to everyone in the community, no matter their background. By developing inclusive projects, these initiatives work to break down systemic inequalities and offer equal chances for everyone to be active.

5 - Key learning


Distributed and collective leadership



Encouraging shared leadership helps local people take charge of initiatives, making sure that projects meet community needs. The Group Model Building workshops in Cinderford are a great example of this. They bring together different local leaders to work together on solutions to boost physical activity.

Similarly, the Gloucester Community Building Collective shares decision-making among community groups, giving residents the power to lead projects like local gardening and walking clubs. This approach builds a sense of shared responsibility, strengthens connections among residents, and keeps community-led activities going.


Collaboration across organisations



Partnerships across different sectors help create well-rounded solutions for local health and inactivity challenges. In Gloucester, cultural organisations working with local councils and healthcare providers to involve people in activities that improve both physical and mental wellbeing. The Together Gloucester project is a great example of this; it brings together arts and physical activity groups to create inclusive programmes that promote movement through cultural activities.

In Cinderford, partnerships with community groups and families have introduced physical activity programmes for young people, encouraging children to stay active from an early age. These collaborations use a mix of skills and resources to reach more people and address a range of needs.


Capacity and capability building



Building capacity within communities, through volunteer training and leadership development, ensures programmes are sustainable and community-driven. Gloucester's Health and Wellbeing Coaches work closely with local groups to train volunteers, creating a network of community leaders who can carry forward initiatives independently. Another example is the Neighbourhood Fund, which allocates small grants to community groups, enabling them to develop their own physical activity programmes. By investing in local leadership and providing training in areas like project management and community engagement, these efforts empower communities to take charge of their health and wellness initiatives.

5 - Key learning


Facilitative processes for agile working



Flexible administrative processes help support community-led programmes that can quickly adapt to changing needs. For example, Gloucester's Neighbourhood Fund offers small grants with very little red tape, allowing local groups to act quickly on new opportunities.

The Blackbridge Community & Sports Hub also uses an adaptable approach, changing its plans based on feedback from the community to better meet local needs. By lowering administrative hurdles, these processes help ensure that programmes stay relevant and keep the community involved and engaged.


Addressing inequality and intersectionality



Inclusive programmes recognise and tackle the unique challenges faced by different groups of people. For instance, Ebony Carers offers tailored wellness activities to support Black and minority ethnic carers who often deal with extra social and health difficulties.

Similarly, the Gloucester Park initiative focuses on gender inclusivity by providing female-only sessions to encourage women and girls to take part in physical activities in a safe environment. By addressing these overlapping social factors, these initiatives create fairer opportunities for diverse groups, ensuring that everyone in the community feels welcome and supported.

Cycles of learning and action



Using methods like ripple effect mapping and regular evaluation helps programmes adapt based on community feedback and learning. In Cinderford, Group Model Building workshops and Ripple Effect Mapping provide ongoing feedback that tracks the wider impact of projects over time.

Gloucester's Wellbeing Cup event also uses feedback each year to improve its approach, making sure it meets participants' needs and enhances their experience. These learning cycles allow projects to evolve, keeping them relevant and effective while responding to the changing needs of the community.

Strategic recommendations

Strengthen cross-sector partnerships

Build and maintain partnerships across healthcare, education, cultural, and social sectors to create diverse entry points for physical activity. Encourage non-sport sectors to embed active opportunities within their programmes to reach more individuals, particularly those less likely to engage with traditional sports.

Empower local leaders and distributed decision-making

Develop training programmes and leadership pathways within the community to support local leaders and volunteers. By fostering distributed leadership, communities can take greater ownership of initiatives, ensuring they are responsive to local needs and sustained over time.

Focus on capacity building and community-led initiatives

Prioritise programmes that build skills, confidence, and capacity within communities. Provide resources, such as small grants or training in project management, to enable community groups to design and deliver their own physical activity initiatives, tailored to local needs.

Address structural barriers to physical activity

Identify and address the socio-economic and environmental barriers that limit access to physical activity. Invest in safe, accessible spaces for exercise, particularly in deprived or marginalised areas, and improve infrastructure such as transport and facilities to ensure that all community members can participate.

Ensure inclusivity and address intersectional needs

Design programmes with a focus on inclusivity, recognising the unique challenges faced by different demographic groups. Offer tailored activities and safe spaces to encourage participation from underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities.

Strategic recommendations

Implement flexible administrative processes for agile responses

Simplify grant processes and reduce bureaucratic barriers to enable quick, responsive support for community initiatives. Facilitate agile governance that can adapt to feedback and evolving community needs to keep programmes relevant and effective.

Embed continuous learning and feedback loops

Establish regular cycles of learning through evaluation and community feedback to adapt programmes over time. Use tools like Ripple Effect Mapping and community surveys to track impact, refine strategies, and ensure initiatives evolve to meet changing needs.

Leverage the power of collective action and shared resources

Promote resource sharing among community organisations and encourage collaborative problem-solving. Coordinated efforts, including shared spaces and joint funding applications, can increase the reach and sustainability of physical activity programmes.

Create a culture of wellbeing and physical activity

Foster a community culture that values physical and mental wellbeing, making physical activity a visible and integral part of daily life. Encourage initiatives that promote inclusivity, mental health support, and social connections, as these underpin sustained engagement in active lifestyles.

These recommendations aim to create a supportive ecosystem for physical activity by integrating it across sectors, empowering communities, and addressing some of the stubborn structural and social barriers that drive inequalities.

Closing summary

To create equitable, sustainable opportunities for physical activity, place-based initiatives should prioritise cross-sector partnerships, empowering local leaders, and address structural barriers that limit access. By building capacity within communities, supporting inclusive programmes and projects, and developing a culture of wellbeing, these approaches will ensure that physical activity becomes accessible to all. Flexible processes and continuous learning will enable initiatives to adapt to community needs, while collective action and shared resources strengthen wider impact. Together, these approaches will create a supportive Gloucestershire ecosystem that makes active lifestyles achievable for everyone, regardless of background or circumstance.



What's Next?

"We're set to ignite a new wave of change in Gloucestershire, supporting communities to transform physical activity into a vibrant, inclusive part of daily life. By expanding bold and ambitious cross-sector partnerships, influencing facilities and infrastructure, streamlining support for community and organisational leaders, and championing flexible, responsive funding, we'll commit to creating a dynamic environment where everyone, no matter their background, can thrive.

With a commitment to ongoing and adaptive learning and innovation, our vision is to build resilient, connected communities where active, healthy lifestyles are both accessible and celebrated. Together, we're shaping an exciting future where everyone in Gloucestershire has the opportunity to live actively and well – a future that builds on our collective strengths and is shaped and driven by the communities we value so much."

Sarah Haden

Director of People and Partnerships

Contact Us

Active Gloucestershire Place Team

**Michael Thurlow**

Strategic Lead for Place Programmes
michaelthurlow@activegloucestershire.org
01452 224477

**Matt Williams**

Senior Project Officer – Place
mattwilliams@activegloucestershire.org
01452 393600

**Sarah Haden**

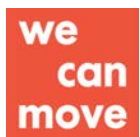
Director of People and Partnerships
sarahhaden@activegloucestershire.org
01452 3935605

Useful websites

www.activegloucestershire.org

www.wecanmove.net





Active
Gloucestershire