



Active
Gloucestershire

Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2031

April 2026

Chair's foreword

Active Gloucestershire and **we can move** are committed to **creating sustainable communities in sustainable places** – places where people can be active every day in environments that support their health, wellbeing and long-term resilience.

Climate change is already affecting physical activity in Gloucestershire through flooding, extreme heat, declining air quality and reduced access to green spaces. These impacts reflect national trends and are felt most strongly by people and communities who already face barriers to being active.

Like many sectors, sport and physical activity has an environmental impact through travel, energy use and procurement, but it also has a strong opportunity to influence positive change.

This Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan sets out how Active Gloucestershire will respond to these challenges through a dual-purpose approach: reducing the organisation's own environmental impact while enabling and influencing wider action across the **we can move** movement.

Our strategy aligns with global frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, national commitments to net zero and local government strategies in Gloucestershire. It also directly reflects the principles and ambitions of [Sport England's Every Move Strategy](#), the [British Association for Sustainable Sport \(BASIS\)](#) and the [Active Partnerships National Organisation](#).



Through this alignment, we will play a leading role in shaping a more climate-resilient, inclusive and environmentally responsible sport and physical activity system for the county.

The strategy is built around **seven strategic themes**, from net zero commitments and sustainable facilities to active travel, circularity and tackling inequalities. These themes guide a practical action plan that will drive change across our operations, partnerships and community work.



Strong governance underpins this plan. Sustainability leadership within the team, a Board-level champion, an internal working group and structured partner engagement will ensure accountability, shared learning and continuous improvement.

Through this strategy, Active Gloucestershire commits to leading by example, empowering partners and communities and contributing to a healthier and more sustainable future for everyone in Gloucestershire.

Emma Owen
Active Gloucestershire Chair



How to use this document

We have structured this strategy and action plan in a way which will hopefully engage those in the sport and physical activity sector who are taking the first steps on their environmental sustainability journey, and those who feel they have good basic understanding are keen to take action.

The strategy begins in [section 1](#) with an introduction to Active Gloucestershire and **we can move**, while [sections 2 and 3](#) describe the impact of climate change on physical activity in Gloucestershire and the wider strategic context for the strategy.

In [section 4](#) we outline our environmental sustainability vision, mission and principles, and in [section 5](#) we take stock of our own impact and outline the net zero actions we plan to take as a business. [Section 6](#) describes the seven core strategic themes which underpin this strategy and action plan, and the ways in which Active Gloucestershire will deliver against them is explained in [section 7](#).

For those who want to jump straight into taking action, [section 8](#) features both Active Gloucestershire's internal action plan, followed by the external action plan designed to support **we can move** system partners. Linked to this, several links to useful resources and additional support can be found in the Appendices.

Finally, [section 9](#) explains our commitment to monitoring, evaluating and learning from the strategy's implementation, while [section 10](#) includes the all-important 'call to action' for Active Gloucestershire and, more critically, to our partners and colleagues across the county's physical activity, sport and health sectors.



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01 Introduction

About we can move and Active Gloucestershire

Active Gloucestershire is an independent charity driven by a vision for everyone in Gloucestershire to be active every day.

We play a central role in increasing physical activity across the county and act as a catalyst for change by bringing together individuals, a diverse range of organisations and national policymakers to tackle one of society's biggest challenges: physical inactivity.

Our goal is to inspire, connect and enable people to get active in ways that suit their lives. We also support those who help others become more active, such as activity providers, sports clubs and key partners throughout the county.

This work is powered by **we can move** – a social movement in Gloucestershire that unites people from the sport, physical activity, public, voluntary and community sectors and which is coordinated and supported by Active Gloucestershire.

At the heart of our movement is a desire to enable the creation of sustainable communities; these are places where people's needs are met in a way that supports both the environment and the community's social and economic wellbeing, ensuring these benefits are available not just for current generations but future ones too.

In short, by supporting the development of sustainable communities, collectively we can enable healthier lifestyles, greater equity and stronger local networks.



Why environmental sustainability matters in physical activity and sport

Active Gloucestershire recognises that climate change is one of the most significant challenges shaping how people live, move and stay active now and in the future. We understand its impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities, and the places and spaces where people are active.

Environmental sustainability is essential in physical activity and sport because these activities rely on healthy natural environments. Green spaces, clean air and safe outdoor areas are vital for walking, cycling and outdoor sport.

At the same time, sport can have a significant environmental impact through energy use, waste and travel. Promoting sustainable practices - like using eco-friendly facilities and encouraging active travel – helps reduce our carbon footprint.

Climate change also threatens participation in physical activity and sport through extreme weather and poor air quality, the effects of which disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities. By embedding sustainability, our sector can adapt to these challenges and help protect future opportunities for everyone to be active.

Sport and physical activity also have a powerful influence on behaviour and can inspire wider environmental action. Supporting environmental sustainability aligns with national and global goals, helping build healthier, happier and more resilient communities.

Our role in Gloucestershire's environmental sustainability leadership

Like many public-facing organisations within the county we have long known about the threats of climate change: we have seen first-hand the impact of flooding and extreme heat on our communities, and in the past, we have taken steps to understand and mitigate our own carbon footprint.

We now see that we need to do much more. In recent months we have taken action to broaden our collective understanding of the issues surrounding climate change by working with expert mentors and undertaking research, training and study.

At the same time, we reached out to national and local individuals and organisations who are leading the way in advocating for climate action, tapping into their expertise and knowledge so that we can position ourselves as leading advocates for environmental sustainability in Gloucestershire.

This strategy is the culmination of that work, and it is the blueprint for how we as a sector will raise our game in addressing the environmental impact of the sport and physical activity sector in the county.

Key to the strategy's long term success is understanding that climate and environmental conversations can sometimes feel inaccessible, overly technical or culturally distant from the everyday experiences of many people and communities. Active Gloucestershire recognises its responsibility to help bridge this gap by amplifying under-represented voices, creating spaces for dialogue between communities and decision-makers, and ensuring that environmental action reflects lived realities rather than imposing one-size-fits-all solutions.

Our dual-purpose approach to making a difference

As a business we know that we can work harder to minimise our impact on the environment. At the same, because of our unique position as the lead organisation for **we can move**, we know we can potentially make even more of a positive difference by supporting the county's physical activity and sport sector on its journey to net zero.

That's why this strategy takes a dual-purpose approach to environmental sustainability in our sector: it aims both to embed environmental sustainability into Active Gloucestershire's operations, and at the same time inspire, connect and enable the people and organisations that are part of the **we can move** social movement to do the same.



02 The impact of climate change on physical activity in Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire, like much of the UK, faces environmental challenges that directly impact people's ability to be physically active, reflecting patterns seen nationally by Sport England.

Climate change is disrupting participation: Sport England's [Activity Check-in](#) reveals that three in five adults and children (60%) report being negatively affected by extreme weather – such as heatwaves and flooding – when trying to be active. A negative loop emerges when cancellations increase and there are fewer opportunities to participate, especially among vulnerable groups like children and older adults.

Flooding, which is often severe in Gloucestershire, renders around a third of community pitches unplayable for two months annually, contributing to an estimated 120,000 grassroots football matches being lost each year.

Air pollution (particularly in urban areas such as Gloucester and Cheltenham), heat-related risks during extreme weather and deteriorating green spaces further hamper activity, mirroring environmental pressures and barriers reported by [Sport England](#). These conditions discourage walking, cycling and outdoor play, limit access to safe and clean environments and disproportionately affect those already least active.

The loss of green spaces through urban development and restricted active travel infrastructure, especially in rural and less connected areas, reduces opportunities for exercise and exacerbates health inequalities. Meanwhile, high energy use in facilities contributes to environmental degradation, undermining the long-term viability of community assets that support physical activity.



Climate change and inequality

Climate change is not experienced evenly, either across Gloucestershire or within communities. Its impacts are shaped by where people live, the quality of local environments, access to transport and green space, the affordability of facilities and the degree of flexibility people have in their working and family lives.

Those living in areas with limited green and blue space, poor air quality or car-dependent transport systems are often exposed to greater environmental risks; at the same time they have fewer alternatives when conditions deteriorate. Flooding, heatwaves and poor air quality can therefore act as reinforcing barriers to physical activity rather than isolated disruptions.

The quality and management of land and water plays a critical role. Healthy soils, trees, wetlands and permeable surfaces

reduce flood risk and overheating, protect sports pitches and paths, and help sustain river- and canal-based activity. Conversely, poorly managed land, loss of biodiversity and development pressure can reduce the resilience of places where people are active and increase the likelihood of disruption.

Climate change also affects the reliability of participation. When pitches become regularly unplayable, waterways are unsafe, or heat restricts daytime activity, informal and organised physical activity becomes less predictable. This uncertainty disproportionately impacts children, older adults and people on low incomes, for whom missed opportunities are harder to replace.

These challenges underline the importance of adaptation as well as carbon reduction. Protecting and enhancing the places where people are active – through nature-based solutions, resilient infrastructure and inclusive design – is essential to sustaining participation now and into the future.



03 Strategic Alignment

Climate change recognises no boundaries, and its effects are felt globally, nationally and locally. The actions we take as individuals, as businesses and as a sector, impact the world far beyond our doorsteps. As such, it is critical that we align our strategy with the leading sustainability goals that best resonate with sport and physical activity.

At the very highest level the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a globally recognised framework for achieving a better and more sustainable future. By aligning with these goals we can help ensure that local action within Gloucestershire is aligned with broader global priorities around climate, health, equity and sustainable development. The following graphic describes the 17 SDGs:

 [Click on the diagram to see how some of the key SDGs directly relate to our strategy](#)

Nearer to home, the UK Government has committed to reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, a legally binding target set under the Climate Change Act (2008, amended 2019). This national ambition requires coordinated action across all sectors, including transport, housing, waste and energy. It places increased expectations on public bodies, charities and community organisations to reduce their carbon footprint, adopt sustainable practices and support behaviour change across the population.

The Department for Transport's 'Decarbonising Transport' Plan also plays a crucial role. It sets out how the UK will deliver a net zero transport system, with a strong focus on enabling more people to travel actively – walking, wheeling and cycling. This shift toward active travel is not only essential for emissions reduction but also supports healthier, more connected communities - aligning closely with Active Gloucestershire's mission and work through **we can move**.

At the local level, Gloucestershire County Council's Climate Change Strategy (2019–2025) sets a target for the council to become carbon neutral by 2030, and outlines actions

to help the wider county transition to net zero. Priorities include improving energy efficiency in buildings, expanding active travel infrastructure, supporting community climate action and embedding sustainability in decision-making processes. This provides a clear framework and opportunity for local organisations, including Active Gloucestershire, to align their work with county-wide ambitions.

In addition, all six district councils within Gloucestershire have declared climate emergencies and set their own net zero targets – some as early as 2030 or 2040. Their local climate action plans include measures like enhancing public transport, creating circular economy initiatives and investing in green spaces. These policies further reinforce the importance of sustainability at the grassroots level and open the door for collaboration with community-based organisations and social movements like **we can move**.



Alignment with Sport England, the British Association for Sustainable Sport and the Active Partnerships Network

Within the sport and physical activity sector Sport England has emerged as a key driver of environmental action. Through *'Every Move'*, its Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Sport England encourages organisations to embed sustainability into their operations, investments and delivery models. The strategy highlights the importance of reducing emissions, protecting natural environments where people are active and supporting climate resilience. Importantly, Sport England has begun to link sustainability performance to future funding, underlining the need for action across the sector.

Now a key system partner for Sport England, the British Association for Sustainable Sport (BASIS) is the UK's leading organisation dedicated to driving environmental sustainability in the sport and physical activity sector. It supports clubs, venues, governing bodies and organisations to reduce their environmental impact through carbon measurement tools, education and sustainable operations guidance. BASIS also promotes leadership, best practice and innovation in its work to help the sector transition toward net zero and circular economy principles.

The Active Partnerships Network's Environmental Sustainability Commitment is a collective pledge by all 42 local Active Partnerships in England and the Active Partnerships National Organisation to embed environmental sustainability across their work to support active lifestyles. It recognises the links between climate change, environmental quality and inequality, noting that disadvantaged communities are often most affected by environmental harm. The commitment focuses on five key areas: integrating sustainability into all activities, contributing to the wider response to climate change, promoting active and sustainable environments, improving access to quality green and blue spaces and addressing inequality through environmental action. Each partnership is expected to develop locally relevant plans that deliver practical and measurable impact.

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan has been designed to actively deliver on the principles and ambitions of Sport England, BASIS and the Active Partnerships Network. By integrating sustainability into our operations, governance and systems leadership our plan contributes to a coordinated, locally led and climate-resilient sport and physical activity sector for Gloucestershire.

04 Environmental Sustainability: Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Principles

The **vision** for our Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan is:

'Sustainable communities in sustainable places'

Our **mission** is:

**'Inspiring and enabling environments that are healthier for activity,
and activity that is healthier for the environment'**

The development and delivery of this strategy by Active Gloucestershire is guided by the following **5 principles**:

- 1. As a charity** environmental sustainability is essential to ensure our mission to improve lives through physical activity does not come at the cost of future generations or the health of our planet.
- 2. As an employer** we have a responsibility to model environmentally responsible behaviours, create a climate-aware workplace and support our staff to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 3. As a business** sustainable practices reduce long-term costs, enhance our resilience, and increase our credibility with funders, partners and local communities.
- 4. As part of the Active Partnership Network** we contribute to a collective commitment to lead the sector toward net zero and help create a more sustainable future for sport and physical activity across England.
- 5. As sport and physical activity system leaders in Gloucestershire** we have the influence and opportunity to connect health, equity and climate action in a way that supports both community wellbeing and environmental resilience.

05 Active Gloucestershire's journey towards Environmental Sustainability

Active Gloucestershire is determined to play its part in the county's transition to net zero. To do that, we need to understand our current impact in terms of carbon emissions, the risks to our business and, most importantly, the steps we can take to make a positive difference.

In summer 2025 we commissioned environmental consultants [Future Leap](#) to carry out a carbon audit for Active Gloucestershire.

Our baseline carbon footprint for the 2024–25 reporting year was assessed at 37.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e, the unit used to express greenhouse gas emissions), reflecting a typical profile for a small, service-based charity.

Carbon emissions are typically categorised in the following three ways:

Scope 1: direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by an organisation.

Scope 2: emissions associated with purchased electricity consumed by the organisation.

Scope 3: indirect emissions (other than those covered in Scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the organisation.

As expected, most of Active Gloucestershire's emissions fell within Scope 3 (90%), with the remainder split across Scope 1 (7.3%) and Scope 2 (2.6%). This confirms that most of our environmental impact arises not from our office building but from the wider activities, services and travel patterns associated with our work.

The largest share of emissions came from travel, totalling 24.25 tCO₂e (64.4%). Of this, commuting alone contributed 19.31 tCO₂e, reflecting the car-dependent nature of much of Gloucestershire. Business travel added a further 4.94 tCO₂e. Supply chain emissions contributed 9.03 tCO₂e (24%), mainly from purchased goods and services such as professional support, training, software and IT equipment.

Buildings accounted for 4.35 tCO₂e (11.6%), primarily from gas heating, electricity use and refrigerant leakage from air-conditioning systems, while waste and water made up a very small portion of the footprint but relied heavily on estimates due to limited data. Although our offices benefit from shared solar generation, precise tracking is not yet available and was therefore excluded from the calculation.

The audit also identified several environmental risks for Active Gloucestershire:

- Our reliance on car travel exposes us to rising fuel costs and makes emission reductions challenging without significant behavioural and structural change.
- Building emissions are influenced by both heating and the use of refrigerants with high global warming potential, while limited access to real-time energy and solar data reduces our ability to manage performance effectively.
- Supply chain emissions present another complexity, as we rely on external providers whose practices we do not directly control. In addition, data gaps for waste, water and deliveries restrict the

The greatest potential impact lies in transforming travel behaviours through active travel, public transport incentives, hybrid working and, where feasible, transitions to electric vehicles.

Strengthening our procurement processes offers another significant opportunity to reduce Scope 3 emissions, while improvements to building energy efficiency and renewable energy use, combined with better monitoring, could also generate meaningful reductions.

Take a look at the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan in [Section 8](#) to find out how we'll be working to mitigate the risks and realise the benefits of the opportunities open to us as an organisation.

06 Our Seven Strategic Themes

To help establish the core strategic themes of our organisational and systems approach to environmental sustainability we worked with Plans With Purpose consultancy to build our knowledge from the ground up.

We started by getting a better understanding of the basics – why climate change is happening, its harmful effects on physical activity and the steps we might take to challenge and reduce its impact.

Through a series of workshops with the whole staff team, senior leaders and Board trustees we broadened our individual and joint knowledge of the leading issues around the impact of climate change. We started to think about how we might address them both in our specific work areas and collectively as an organisation. Taking a ‘whole team’ approach to understanding environmental sustainability has enabled us to move forward with confidence.

At the same time, we took time to learn how other organisations within Gloucestershire and across the wider sport and physical activity network were approaching climate change. Despite the enormity of the challenge, we have been inspired by the creativity, energy and resilience shown within the sector.

This groundwork has culminated in us prioritising seven core strategic themes, which underpin this strategy and action plan. They are as follows:



1. **Net zero commitment:** as a business, align with Sport England by committing to net zero emissions by 2040 and halving emissions by 2030, across Scopes 1, 2 and 3



2. **Sharing climate insights:** connecting our network to resources, upskilling partners and kick-starting climate conversations



3. **Active travel:** championing active travel and supporting the implementation of active travel policies



4. **Sustainable facilities:** support sport and physical activity facilities across Gloucestershire to become more sustainable



5. **Access to green and blue spaces:** improve access to and safety of green and blue spaces in Gloucestershire



6. **Waste and circularity:** share waste and circularity insight with our network, sparking local conversations and action



7. **Tackling inequalities:** ensure sustainability actions contribute to improving inclusion, access and opportunity across all communities

07 Governance and Delivery

Effective governance is essential for ensuring that environmental sustainability becomes embedded throughout Active Gloucestershire's work. To achieve this, we will establish a clear leadership structure supported by coordinated internal processes, transparent reporting and strong external partnerships.

Responsibility for driving the strategy will sit with a designated Sustainability Lead within the staff team. This role will act as the organisational lead for environmental sustainability, ensuring that commitments are translated into practical action, coordinating work across departments, and serving as the link between staff, the Active Gloucestershire Board and delivery partners.

The Board will maintain overall accountability for progress and will receive regular updates throughout the year. To support the strategy and the staff team, the Board will nominate its own Sustainability Champion.

An annual sustainability report will be presented to the Board and shared with funders, outlining achievements, challenges, emissions data and future priorities. This approach aligns with governance

expectations across the physical activity sector and reflects best practice within publicly funded sport organisations.

Delivery of the strategy will be supported by an internal Environmental Sustainability Working Group, bringing together staff from across the organisation. Meeting quarterly, this group will monitor data such as carbon footprint, travel patterns and procurement emissions, identify opportunities for improvement, coordinate action plans and help build internal understanding and enthusiasm. Alongside this, progress against the strategy's action plan will be reviewed by the senior management team quarterly.

Training opportunities - including carbon literacy, sustainable procurement guidance and environmentally responsible event planning – will further ensure that sustainability considerations are embedded within everyday decision-making.

Environmental considerations will be fully integrated into core policies and operational processes, including procurement, travel, facilities and events. All major decisions will take account of environmental impact alongside operational and financial factors.

Risks relating to climate change, rising energy and travel costs and supply-chain emissions will be monitored through established organisational risk-management processes. We will achieve this by ensuring the strategy dovetails with and supports the objectives of other key Active Gloucestershire policies, including our annual Business Plan, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and People Plan.

Beyond Active Gloucestershire we will work closely with **we can move** partners to support system-wide progress around sustainability. A Partner Sustainability

Forum will be created to bring together delivery partners, funded organisations, community groups and local stakeholders to share learning, align environmental goals and coordinate collaborative action. Environmental sustainability requirements will be built into funding agreements and partnership processes, ensuring that organisations supported through **we can move** also contribute to shared climate ambitions.



Internal Sustainability Action Plan

08 Environmental Sustainability Action Plan

Our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan is comprised of two parts: an **Internal Sustainability Action Plan**, which focuses on the measures Active Gloucestershire will take to meet its net zero goals, and an **External Sustainability Action Plan**, which aims to inspire, connect and enable we can move system partners to set and meet their own sustainability objectives. Turn to page 25 if you would like to move straight to that part of the Action Plan.

Internal Sustainability Action Plan

The internal sustainability action plan prioritises actions by impact across five key operational areas:

- **People:** embedding environmental sustainability leadership across the Active Gloucestershire team.
- **Buildings:** working in partnership with our landlord where possible, optimising renewable energy use, improving

efficiency and ensuring future locations are net zero ready.

- **Travel:** reduce car use through policies that support hybrid working, active travel and public and electric transport.
- **Waste:** improve data collection and move toward circular waste systems.
- **Supply Chain:** engage key suppliers, integrate sustainability into procurement, and prioritise low-carbon providers.

By focusing on managing travel emissions, careful procurement decisions and efficient operations, Active Gloucestershire can lead by example and demonstrate how small, service-based organisations can deliver meaningful climate action.

Internal Sustainability Action Plan

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People

<i>Short term (< 1 year)</i>	<i>Medium term (1-3 years)</i>	<i>Long term (3-10+ years)</i>
Nominate an Environmental Sustainability Lead, Senior Leadership Team Sponsor and AG Board Champion.	Produce a short annual report to highlight internal and external progress with ES initiatives.	Explore external funding opportunities to enhance AG's staffing resource to support the delivery of the ES Action Plan (internal and external).
Agree the Terms of Reference for an Active Gloucestershire Environmental Sustainability Working Group and schedule quarterly meetings.	Ensure our ES objectives are embedded into refreshed versions of our annual Business Plan, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and People Plan.	
ES Lead to attend Ops Team meetings on a regular basis.	Ensure ES awareness training opportunities are included within our staff development training plans.	
	Create a we can move Partner Sustainability Forum to share learning, align environmental goals and coordinate collaborative action.	

**Internal
Sustainability Action Plan**

Buildings

<i>Short term (< 1 year)</i>	<i>Medium term (1-3 years)</i>	<i>Long term (3-10+ years)</i>
Engage landlord to install smart energy management systems to automate efficiency gains and monitor real-time consumption.	Engage landlord to review EPC performance and potential fabric upgrades.	
Encourage behavioural savings: training, staff power-down policies, equipment timers and “energy champions.”		
Track monthly energy and solar generation data to measure avoided emissions and energy use more accurately (in partnership with landlord).		Occupy only net zero-ready premises (EPC A / BREEAM-certified) if changing premises.
Optimise ASHP and AC system efficiency through smart scheduling, regular servicing and detailed record keeping (in partnership with landlord).	2. Upgrade to high-efficiency lighting and appliances (LEDs, A+++ rated) (partnership with landlord).	Maintain 100% renewable electricity supply and ensure to eliminate fossil fuel dependence.
Change to 100% renewable electricity supply (REGO-certified) to reduce market-based scope 2 emissions and contribute to grid decarbonisation (in partnership with landlord).	Explore direct electric water heating if not already installed or provided by ASHP (in partnership with landlord).	Upgrade AC units to use lower GWP refrigerant than R410a. R32 is currently the lowest GWP product but technology is changing rapidly. Seek up to date advice at the time of replacement (in partnership with landlord).
	Explore increasing solar self-consumption through battery storage (in partnership with landlord).	

Internal Sustainability Action Plan

Travel

<i>Short term (< 1 year)</i>	<i>Medium term (1-3 years)</i>	<i>Long term (3-10+ years)</i>
Develop a commuting strategy: conduct a detailed staff travel survey to confirm commuting distances, modes and barriers.	Promote and formalise hybrid working to reduce commute frequency, encourage remote meetings even locally.	Embed low-carbon travel expectations into organisational budgeting and policies.
Encourage active and public transport commuting through AG's Cycle-to-Work scheme and explore low-emission travel subsidies.	Provide a pooled Electric Vehicle (EV) or access to local EV Car Clubs for short business journeys where active travel is not possible.	Offset unavoidable travel emissions through verified carbon removal projects each year after 2040.
Adopt a sustainable business travel policy prioritising virtual meetings and train travel over car travel where possible.	Car share platform: set up internal or local carpooling for staff living in similar areas.	
Regularly record and review travel and commuting data to more accurately track emissions trends and identify opportunities for further reduction.		
Support EV use through an EV leasing policy and an onsite EV charger (in partnership with landlord)		

Waste

<i>Short term (< 1 year)</i>	<i>Medium term (1-3 years)</i>	<i>Long term (3-10+ years)</i>
Improve recycling systems and monitoring across the office; ensure clear segregation and signage.	Introduce a zero-waste-to-landfill target, ensuring all waste streams are recyclable, reusable, or compostable.	Achieve a fully circular office system, ensuring all materials are reused, recycled or composted.
	Source circular office supplies (recycled paper, refillable pens, remanufactured printer cartridges).	
	Develop supplier take-back schemes for IT equipment and office furniture.	

**Internal
Sustainability Action Plan**

Supply Chain

<i>Short term (< 1 year)</i>	<i>Medium term (1-3 years)</i>	<i>Long term (3-10+ years)</i>
Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy prioritising environmental performance in supplier selection.	Include carbon and sustainability metrics in supplier assessments to encourage transparent and accountable procurement.	Collaborate with major suppliers to codevelop reduction targets and request annual carbon reporting.
Engage high-impact suppliers (brand development, software, training) to provide environmental statements or carbon data.	Aim to procure low-emission consumables especially for events e.g. vegan and vegetarian catering.	Offset remaining supply chain emissions through certified carbon removal projects each year after 2040.



External Sustainability Action Plan

By engaging and supporting we can move partners, organisations and community groups, the External Sustainability Action Plan seeks to facilitate meaningful carbon reduction, knowledge sharing and long-term behavioural change across Gloucestershire.

The External Sustainability Action Plan has two elements: **Part 1** features the actions Active Gloucestershire will undertake to support **we can move** system partners, while **Part 2** highlights the actions system partners themselves can take to reduce their impact on the environment.

Part 1: Active Gloucestershire’s support for we can move system partners






Our support for system partners is themed in the following way:

- **Inspire:** actions that motivate and raise awareness of sustainability and climate action among communities, clubs and partners.
- **Connect:** actions that bring people and organisations together to share knowledge, collaborate and build collective impact.
- **Enable:** actions that provide practical support, tools, and resources to help others implement sustainable change.

Active Gloucestershire Role: **Inspire**








<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Sustainability Theme(s)</i>
Case Studies and Stories	Highlight local organisations who have made changes (e.g. solar panels, kit swaps, cycling schemes).	
Sustainability Awards / Leaderboards	Organise an annual award programme for public recognition of clubs and community groups making progress (annual award, website/social media shout-outs).	
Tiered “Sustainability Badge / Certification”	Introduce bronze, silver, gold badges to recognise clubs and community groups on a pathway to improvement.	

Active Gloucestershire Role: Connect

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Sustainability Theme(s)</i>
Campaigns / Challenges	For example, devise and promote a 'Low-Carbon Travel Month' encouraging walking, cycling and car shares.	
Ambassador Programme	Nominate local athletes, coaches, or sports personalities as sustainability role models.	
Green Champion Network	Spotlight individuals from different clubs, groups and areas as ambassadors. Specifically highlight work to tackle inequalities.	
Climate Engagement Toolkit	Collate existing resources into a localised climate engagement toolkit that can be used to upskill partners and kick-start climate conversations.	
Youth Engagement	Empower young athletes to champion sustainability within their clubs (as part of AG's 'children and young people' work stream?)	



Active Gloucestershire Role: Enable

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Sustainability Theme(s)</i>
Workshops and Webinars	Organise workshops and webinars to educate on practical topics like energy savings, recycling, sustainable kit, travel reduction.	
Carbon Literacy Training	Organise training sessions to upskill sports clubs and organisations with how to calculate a carbon footprint.	
Collaborative Pledges	Encourage organisations to sign a voluntary "Green Sports Charter" with Active Gloucestershire/WCM branding.	
Develop a Sustainability Toolkit	Provide simple checklists, templates, supplier recommendations for clubs.	
Include Sustainability in Grant Applications	Encourage organisations to include sustainability aims/actions when applying for grants or other funding.	
Sustainability Funding Signposting	Develop a directory of green funding available locally, regionally and nationally.	
Climate Action Meetings	Host regular meetings to encourage community climate action where local sports clubs and stakeholders are invited to share their challenges associated with climate change and actions they are taking to mitigate the impact.	

Part 2: Suggested decarbonisation actions for we can move system partners

This element of the External Sustainability Action Plan features suggested decarbonisation actions for local clubs and community groups, alongside case studies that highlight local ‘real world’ examples of organisations already taking steps towards sustainability. The actions and case studies highlight initiatives and opportunities for impact across five key areas:

- 1.** Facilities and energy
- 2.** Travel
- 3.** Land management
- 4.** Procurement and purchasing
- 5.** Education and behaviour change

Note: throughout this section we refer to tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) and kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent (kgCO₂e). These are the units used to express a quantity of greenhouse gas emissions.

1. Facilities and energy

Lighting	Building fabric and heat efficiency	Smart monitoring and controls	Renewable energy integration
Replace outdoor halogen/metal halide floodlights with LEDs.	Improve insulation in roofs, walls, and glazing before upgrading any heating systems.	Install a building management system (BMS) to track and optimise energy use.	Explore feasibility for onsite electricity generation (e.g., solar panels).
Ensure all indoor lighting is LED.	Draught proof where required to minimise heat loss.	Set clear schedules for lighting, heating and equipment.	Ensure subscription to 100% renewable energy tariff.
Install motion sensors and daylight dimming controls.	Ensure hot water pipes are lagged.	Benchmark energy use against industry standards (e.g., kWh per square metre of floor area).	



Oxstalls Sports & Tennis Centre minimised their carbon impact through solar panel installation

Oxstalls Sports & Tennis Centre is a Gloucester City Council owned sports facility. It is managed via partnership with Freedom Leisure, a not-for-profit charitable leisure and cultural trust.

With the aim of becoming a completely sustainable sports club, a solar photovoltaic system, converting sunlight directly into electricity, was installed in conjunction with battery storage by utilising the Government Sustainability Grant.

Through their action, Oxstalls Sports & Tennis Centre generate over 212,000 kWh of clean, low-cost electricity annually. This has reduced their purchased electricity demand by 40% and minimised carbon impact by 50 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent annually.



Deer Park Archers, on target for a sustainable future

Deer Park Archers in Shurdington have regenerated a former inert landfill site into a thriving, biodiverse and environmentally responsible sports facility. The club has planted more than 2,000 trees and 300 metres of hedgerow, restored native species and built key structures from repurposed materials, including a clubhouse created from a recycled ex-NHS modular operating theatre. Their commitment to reducing environmental impact includes the installation of 66 solar edge-controlled panels, LED lighting and water-saving measures, with plans to expand solar capacity and introduce a grey-water recycling system.

This environmental work sits alongside a strong commitment to inclusion and community wellbeing. Reinforced all-weather surfaces ensure year-round access for people of all ages and abilities, while tailored sessions support those with physical and neurodiverse needs. Low-cost and pay-as-you-go options help remove financial barriers, and a volunteer-driven culture strengthens engagement across the community. In recognition of this holistic, sustainability-led approach, the club was awarded the Sport and Recreation Alliance's **Green Club of the Year**.



Dursley Rugby Club explores renewable energy options

Dursley RFC faced escalating energy bills and a heavy reliance on fossil fuels, prompting the club to explore renewable energy options. With ownership of its buildings, the club identified solar panels and battery storage as the most effective way to reduce dependence on grid electricity – yet installation costs of more than £40,000 placed the project far beyond its means. Volunteers secured £14,000 from local grants and charitable trusts, but the remaining gap led to the club's first crowdfunder, run through the Aviva Community Fund with match funding from Sport England.

The campaign raised over £20,000 in two months, enabling installation of the solar array, which now saves around £6,000 annually and significantly cuts emissions.

Building on this success, the club has launched a new crowdfunder to reduce its reliance on gas by installing an air source heat pump, upgraded radiators and expanded hot water storage. These improvements, once again driven by volunteers, support Dursley RFC's long-term commitment to a sustainable, resilient sports facility for future generations.

2. Travel

<i>Spectator travel</i>	<i>Staff and members commuting</i>	<i>Team travel</i>	<i>Purchasing-related deliveries</i>
Partner with local transport providers to improve public transport access on match days.	Ensure bike storage and shower facilities for staff and members.	Prioritise coach or minibus travel over multiple cars. Where possible, partner with EV transport providers.	Consolidate deliveries to minimise trips.
Offer priority parking for carpooling attendees to reduce single-occupancy car use.	Incentivise low-carbon travel by offering discounts on rail cards or giveaways.	Schedule more local fixtures to minimise need for traveling long distances.	Work with suppliers using low-emission or electric vehicles.
Provide secure bike storage and EV charging facilities; and promote active travel routes.	Promote active travel by participating in initiatives like 'National Bike Week'.		Review local sourcing to reduce travel distances.
Incentivise sustainable travel (e.g., discounted tickets for fans arriving by bike or public transport).	Offer salary-sacrifice schemes for bikes (Cycle to Work) and EV leases for staff.		
Engage with local councils to improve walking, cycling, and EV infrastructure around the facility.	Support hybrid working where possible to reduce trips.		

East Glos Club incentivised active travel amongst their club members

East Glos Club is a multi-sports club offering racket sports facilities located in Cheltenham.

In 2023, the club participated in National Bike Week for the first time, to encourage active travel among club members. This initiative was promoted within the club and boosted by perks, such as free drinks or a prize draw offering free sports massage at a local physiotherapist.

62 members cycled to the club, saving travel-emissions equivalent to covering 120 miles of distance.



3. Land management

<i>Pitch and surface maintenance</i>	<i>Landscaping and biodiversity</i>
Reduce use of chemical fertilisers by switching to organic alternatives.	Engage with wildlife charities, ecologists and amateur gardeners to plant native trees, plants and shrubs for enhancing biodiversity.
Avoid harming soil worm populations by eliminating use of chemical pesticides, insecticides and herbicides containing glyphosate. Worms help water absorption in soil, thus minimising flooding on sports pitches and grounds.	Identify green corridors and bee highways around the facility to channel biodiversity conservation and restoration efforts.
Optimise irrigation with rainwater harvesting or smart irrigation systems and explore feasibility of utilising greywater from the facility for irrigation.	Utilise underused areas in and around the sports facility to create wildflower meadows.
Transition to electric or battery-powered mowing equipment for eliminating machinery-related fuel combustion.	Partner with local community and groups on habitat restoration, biodiversity planting and awareness campaigns.
Conduct soil carbon assessments to understand storage potential.	Review impact of external lighting on nocturnal wildlife.
Explore opportunities to help pitches adapt to climate change, for example sowing more resilient pitch grasses.	Introduce drought tolerant plants and trees and shrubs that provide shading.



Forest Green Rovers earned the title of world's greenest football club



Forest Green Rovers is a professional association football club based in Nailsworth in Gloucestershire.

The club plays on the world's first organic football pitch at its The New Lawn Stadium, which uses no artificial fertilizers. The pitch is maintained by employing manual weeding, using sea algae for organic soil nourishment, and deploying a solar powered robotic lawn mower. Rainwater is collected from the

strands and pitch and reused for irrigation, and local farmers use grass cuttings to improve their soil.

By embedding sustainable practices in land management and other operational areas, Forest Green Rovers have earned the title of world's greenest football club. It is the only club to hold the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) accreditation, recognised by the UNFCCC.

4. Procurement and purchasing

<i>Sports apparel and equipment</i>	<i>Catering and hospitality</i>	<i>General purchasing</i>
Provide club-owned shared kit and equipment instead of requiring each team or player to buy individually.	Increase plant-based and vegetarian menu options, as meat (especially beef) has very high carbon footprint.	Include carbon reduction commitments for suppliers in tendering processes.
Establish an in-house kit and equipment donation or exchange centre to promote reuse and minimise waste.	Use seasonal produce to avoid air-freighted fruit and vegetables.	Prioritise suppliers with highest spend for carbon reduction-related engagement.
Use Velcro patches or modular branding alternatives for sponsor branded kit, allowing use of sports apparel for multiple seasons.	Eliminate single-use plastics by shifting to reusable/compostable packaging.	Provide carbon literacy training and share resources to encourage decarbonisation actions.
Work with sponsors to commit for multiple seasons, reducing kit obsolescence.	Track food waste and adjust portion sizes accordingly.	Build partnerships with suppliers who actively measure and reduce their emissions.
Select higher-quality, longer-lasting apparel and equipment to reduce replacement frequency.		Ensure office and any electrical equipment purchased meets energy efficiency standards.
Prioritise equipment made from biobased or recycled materials.		Consider joint renewable energy supply procurement with neighbours.



Gloucestershire County Cricket Club's circularity initiative has helped find new homes for items of sports kit and equipment

Gloucestershire County Cricket Club is one of 18 first-class county clubs within the domestic cricket structure of England and Wales.

The club launched a Kit Drop & Swap initiative in 2021 aimed at encouraging donation and exchange of unwanted sports equipment among local and international charities. The recycling initiative has become an annual event since, with the event growing each year.

The Kit Drop & Swap initiative has helped promote sustainability in sports and break down financial barriers to sports participation for young people. At the most recent Gloucestershire Cricket's Kit Drop & Swap event in 2024, over 500 items of sports kit and equipment found new homes.

5. Education and behaviour change

Energy use	Travel	Food and drink	Waste	Stakeholder engagement
<p>Educate staff and members to switch off unused lights, HVAC and equipment.</p> <p>Implement traffic light signage on equipment and lighting to communicate if it is meant to be turned off after use (green), or left on sleep mode (amber), or left on all the time (red).</p> <p>Communicate energy savings opportunities using posters, emails and workshops to spread the message and encourage action.</p> <p>Encourage community engagement by promoting energy-saving actions taken by the organisation, with a call to action.</p>	<p>Promote car-sharing, cycling, and public transport for staff and spectators.</p> <p>Offer incentives for sustainable travel (e.g., discounted tickets, priority parking for shared/low-carbon travel).</p> <p>Communicate carbon impact of different modes of travel to educate staff and spectators.</p>	<p>Run campaigns in catering areas highlighting impact of meat vs. plant-based meals.</p> <p>Carbon footprint menu items offered at clubhouses to encourage staff and members prioritise low-carbon meals.</p> <p>Provide clear portion options to reduce plate waste.</p> <p>Introduce on-site food waste composting.</p>	<p>Ensure clear, visible bin signage for waste segregation e.g., recycling and composting.</p> <p>Introduce separate kit and equipment collection boxes for recycling.</p> <p>Promote campaigns like “bring your own bottle” to minimise single-use plastics waste.</p> <p>Organise workshops for members and players enabling them to undertake repair and maintenance of their sports kits, thus reducing abandonment/waste.</p> <p>Communicate waste-related facts for sports kit and equipment to encourage sustainable behaviour among members.</p> <p>Encourage players to use older sports kits as training gear before purchasing new.</p>	<p>Include communication of sustainable practices at the sports facility into player/coach inductions and volunteer training.</p> <p>Designate ‘green champions’ among staff, teams, fans and club members; and reward those who show leadership in sustainability.</p> <p>Organise sustainability competitions with other clubs and sports facilities to encourage emissions reduction.</p> <p>Host community climate action week to encourage volunteering and participation from local community in events like plantation drive, sports kit and equipment donation, building maintenance and repair, etc.</p> <p>Share relatable and inspiring success stories to highlight how small changes can contribute to a larger global effort to combat climate change.</p>



East Glos Club's sustainability working group is diverting used tennis balls away from landfill



Based in Cheltenham, East Glos Club offers tennis, squash, padel and racketball, as well as professional coaching for adults and children.

The club set up a new Sustainability Working Group 2023 by seeing member volunteers with sustainability interests and connections. As part of several sustainability initiatives launched by the committee from LED lighting to water conservation, an innovative tennis ball recycling scheme was introduced. The club partnered with DYUCE – a tennis and padel ball recycling service that collects use balls from sports venues in the UK and Ireland,

processes them to recycle the rubber for new products like footwear soles.

To encourage tennis ball recycling and promote awareness, East Glos Club installed an attractive tennis ball collection bin with the following written on it: "The average tennis ball spends 6 hours on court and up to 300 years in landfill."

Installed in August 2024, the club managed to collect over 3,500 balls for recycling in the first three months!

09 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning are integral to the successful delivery of this Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan. Our approach recognises that environmental action is evolving and that organisations and communities are starting from different places on their sustainability journey.

We will take a proportionate and developmental approach, focusing not only on measuring progress but on understanding what works, for whom, where and why. This will allow us to learn, adapt and strengthen our response over time.

What we will monitor

We will monitor progress across three broad areas:

1. Organisational performance

This includes tracking Active Gloucestershire's own environmental impact, such as carbon emissions, travel patterns, energy use, procurement and waste. Our annual carbon footprint will provide a consistent baseline to assess change over time and inform future internal actions.

2. System influence and capability

We will gather qualitative and quantitative insight on how organisations across the we can move system are engaging with environmental sustainability. This will include participation in training, forums and initiatives, uptake of tools and funding and examples of practical change within clubs, facilities and community groups.

3. Place, people and resilience outcomes

Where possible, we will explore how environmental action is contributing to:

- improved access to green and blue spaces
- greater resilience of facilities and activity routes to flooding, heat and extreme weather
- reduced barriers to participation for least-active and disadvantaged communities

This recognises that success is not only about emissions reduction, but about protecting and sustaining opportunities to be active.

Learning and continuous improvement

Learning from delivery will be embedded throughout the life of the strategy. Evidence and insight will be used to:

- refresh the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan annually
- shape future funding priorities and partner support
- refine guidance, tools and training offers
- share learning across the county and the wider Active Partnerships Network

We will place equal value on learning from challenges and unintended consequences as we do on celebrating success.

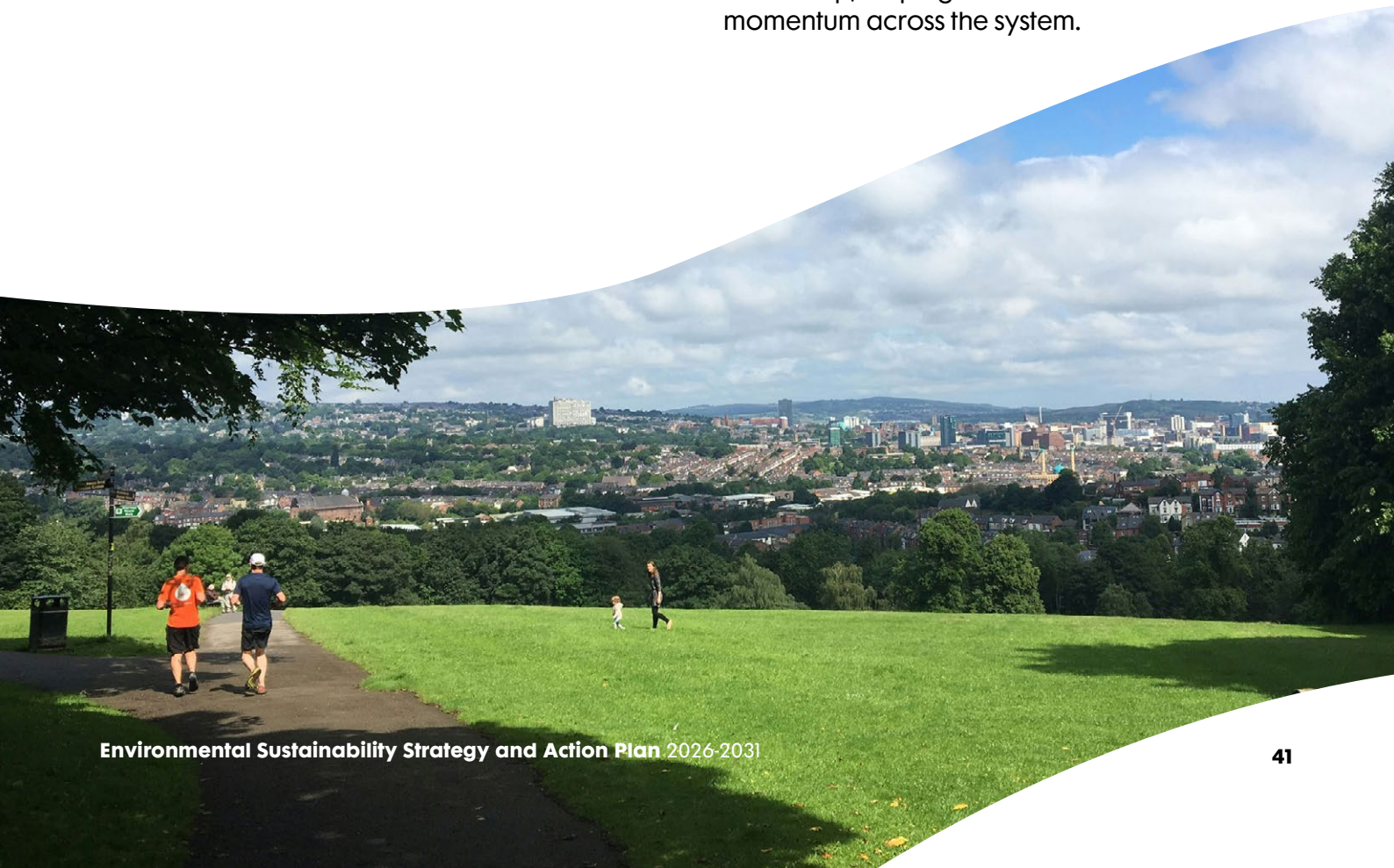
Governance, transparency and accountability

Progress against the strategy will be reviewed quarterly by the senior management team and monitored through the Environmental Sustainability Working Group. An annual Environmental Sustainability Report will be presented to the Board, shared with funders and made publicly available.

This report will include:

- a summary of progress against key actions
- headline environmental performance data
- learning from delivery and partnership working
- priorities for the year ahead

Through **we can move**, we will celebrate and share stories of progress, innovation and leadership, helping to build confidence and momentum across the system.



10 Call to Action

Gloucestershire is full of energy, creativity and people who care deeply about their communities. That's what makes our county such a powerful place to champion environmental sustainability through sport and physical activity. This strategy shows how, together, we can build a future where active lives and a thriving natural environment go hand in hand.

Active Gloucestershire is committed to leading this journey – reducing our carbon footprint, improving the way we work and supporting others to grow their environmental ambition.

But the real potential lies in the collective strength of the **we can move** movement. Every club, school, community group, organisation and individual has something valuable to contribute.

We invite you to join us in taking positive, practical steps towards a greener future.

Try a new idea. Start a conversation. Explore how your organisation can reduce its impact or enhance local green spaces. Celebrate the changes you make and inspire others by sharing your successes. Above all, keep in mind that no one needs to be an expert to take action.

Wherever you are on your sustainability journey help is at hand. Do get in touch with us at Active Gloucestershire – we'll try and help with any questions you might have, and if we don't know the answer, we probably know someone who does! Alternatively, check out the links to further information and support in the Appendices that follow.

Together, we can create places that are healthier, more connected and full of opportunity – places where the environment supports active living, and active living helps sustain the environment.



11 Appendices

Links to further information and support

The following websites offer environmental sustainability information, advice and guidance specifically targeted towards the sport and physical activity sector:

wecanmove.net/our-work/active-environments

www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/sustainability

buddle.co/learning-and-support-resources/environmental-sustainability

basis.org.uk

Glossary of terms

Active Travel

Walking, wheeling, cycling or using other non-motorised modes of transport as part of everyday journeys, including travel to sport, work and community activities.

Adaptation (Climate Adaptation)

Actions taken to adjust systems, places and behaviours to reduce the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, heatwaves or extreme weather.

Biodiversity

The variety of plant and animal life in a particular habitat or ecosystem, which supports environmental resilience and healthy places for physical activity.

Blue Spaces

Natural or man-made water environments such as rivers, canals, lakes and wetlands that support wellbeing, biodiversity and opportunities for physical activity.

Carbon Audit / Carbon Footprint

A measurement of the total greenhouse gas emissions produced by an organisation, activity or event, expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e)

A standard unit used to compare the climate impact of different greenhouse gases by expressing them in terms of the amount of carbon dioxide that would have the same warming effect.

Carbon Literacy

An understanding of climate change, its causes and impacts, and the practical actions individuals and organisations can take to reduce emissions.

Circular Economy / Circularity

An approach that minimises waste by keeping materials and products in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, sharing and recycling.

Climate Change

Long-term changes in global and local climate patterns, largely driven by human activity, particularly the burning of fossil fuels.

Climate Resilience

The ability of people, communities, facilities and systems to anticipate, adapt to and recover from climate-related shocks and stresses.

Environmental Sustainability

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by protecting natural resources and reducing environmental harm.

Green Spaces

Parks, playing fields, natural landscapes and other open spaces that support physical activity, wellbeing and environmental health.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs)

Gases such as carbon dioxide and methane that trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to climate change.

Inequalities (Environmental and Health)

Unfair and avoidable differences in environmental conditions, health outcomes and access to opportunities for physical activity between different communities or population groups.

Net Zero

Achieving a balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and emissions removed from the atmosphere, resulting in no overall contribution to climate change.

Nature-Based Solutions

Actions that work with nature to address climate challenges, such as tree planting, wetland restoration or sustainable land management.

Procurement

The process of sourcing and purchasing goods and services, including consideration of environmental and social impacts.

Renewable Energy

Energy generated from natural sources that are continually replenished, such as solar, wind or hydro power.

Scope 1, 2 and 3 Emissions

Categories used to classify carbon emissions:

- *Scope 1*: Direct emissions from owned or controlled sources
- *Scope 2*: Emissions from purchased electricity
- *Scope 3*: Indirect emissions from the wider value chain, including travel and procurement

Sustainable Facilities

Buildings and venues designed or managed to reduce environmental impact through energy efficiency, renewable energy, low-carbon materials and resilient design.

Sustainable Procurement

Purchasing practices that prioritise suppliers and products with lower environmental impact and stronger social responsibility.

System Leadership

Using influence and partnerships to enable coordinated action across organisations and sectors, rather than acting alone.

we can move (WCM)

A county-wide social movement coordinated by Active Gloucestershire, bringing together partners from sport, physical activity, health and communities to enable active lives.

Acknowledgements and contact details

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Andy Coley-Maud – Sport England

Active Partnerships National Organisation

Mint + Mabel

If you'd like to discuss any aspect of this Strategy and Action Plan, or if you need support with your sustainability plans, we'd be delighted to hear from you – just drop us a line at info@activegloucestershire.org.

