

**Active
Gloucestershire**

**Impact Report
Active Environments 2023**



**we
can
move**


Introduction to this Learning Impact Report

What do we mean by 'active environments'? Put simply, it describes everyone being active everywhere - not just in the places we might immediately think of, such as sports halls, swimming pools and pitches, or parks and open spaces, village halls, community centres and schools, but also the spaces we move through between our homes and the places we visit, or where we study and work.

Support for the concept of active environments is gathering pace: Sport England have prioritised it as one of the five pillars of their 10 year strategy 'Uniting the Movement', underpinning the creation and protection of the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

Active travel, an important component of active environments, has the dual benefit of getting people active while at the same time reducing carbon emissions - two key reasons for the growth in government support for the concept both nationally (through the recent creation of Active Travel England) and locally (Gloucestershire County Council's 'Think Travel' programme, for example).



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Gloucester, showing a dense residential area with many houses, interspersed with green spaces and parks. In the background, there are large industrial or commercial buildings with grey roofs. The city extends to the horizon under a blue sky with light clouds. On the right side of the image, there is a large, stylized pink graphic element that looks like a thick, curved line or a partial circle. A green line with orange semi-circular ends connects the text area to the pink graphic.

In this report we illustrate some of the diverse ways in which Active Gloucestershire is supporting the development of active environments both within our communities and across the wider physical activity system.

WE CAN MOVE JOURNEY

We can move is a social movement that inspires, connects and enables individuals, communities and organisations across Gloucestershire to help the least active, move more. The movement has changed a lot over recent years - here's our journey to explain what the movement does and what it has achieved so far.



BEFORE PRE-2017



Active Gloucestershire



FOCUS
Help the already active, get more active.

Primarily children, young people, schools and sports clubs.

FUNCTION
Programme delivery.

THE BEGINNING

FROM 2017
GLOUCESTERSHIRE MOVES



FOCUS
Shift to helping the least active, move more.

Received Social Impact Bond to research the best approach to do this. To get people moving more, we needed to:

- use a systems approach
- focus on behaviour change
- create a social movement.



FUNCTION
Gloucestershire Moves started to question whether only programme delivery was the right thing.

Instead, it focused on:



how to support others to get people moving more and change behaviours

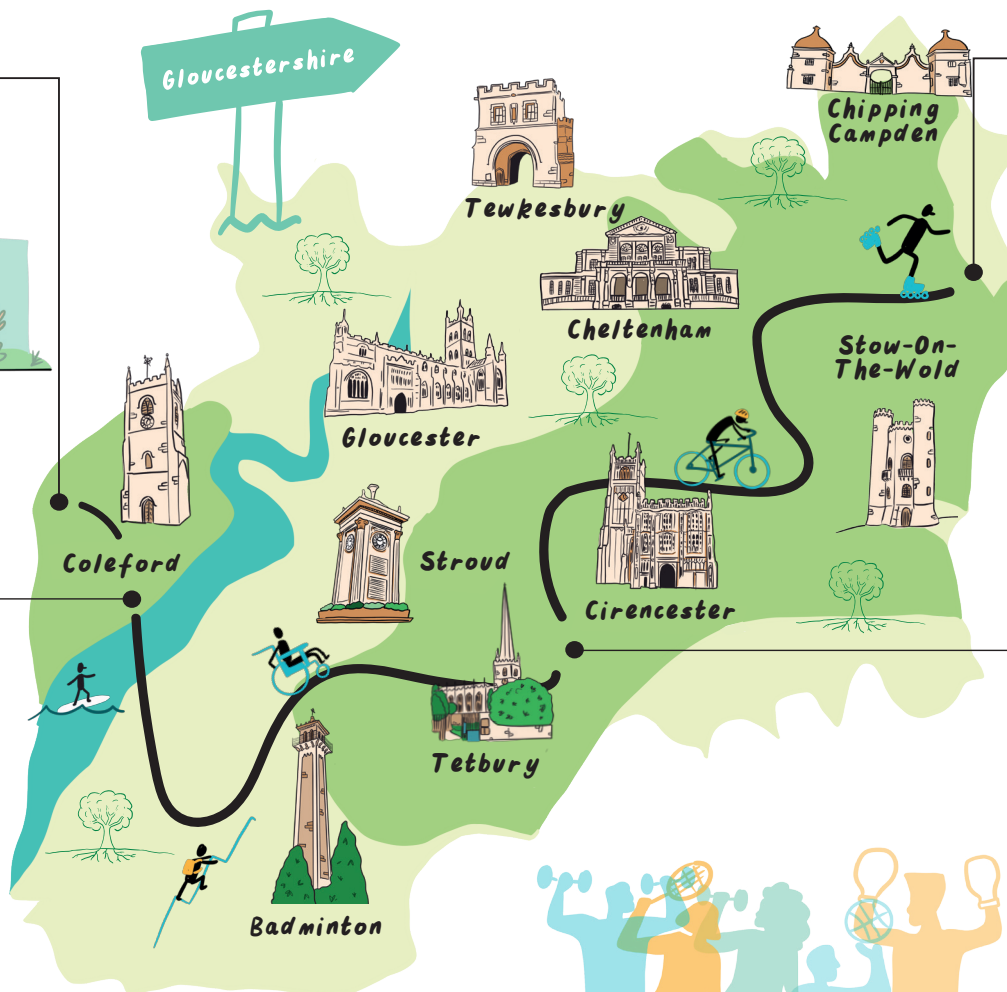


wider advocacy and partnerships



building a place based and community approach.

We tested what we learned from our research, developed a theory of change, and despite losing out on funding for a Local Delivery Pilot from Sport England, we continued our work due to the resilience and commitment from the community.



EXAMPLES

FALL PROOF

THE DAILY MILE

BARTON & TREDWORTH

IT'S YOUR MOVE

THE FUTURE 2022 & BEYOND



FOCUS
Ensuring the movement is self sustaining and learning is shared.

Better targeting of interventions, and building equality, diversity and inclusion into the governance of we can move to reduce inequalities.

Shift towards a more holistic approach to movement, to help create a happier and healthier Gloucestershire.

FUNCTION
Build infrastructure and develop mutually beneficial partnerships to support people to be more active, act as a catalyst for connections in the community to make this happen and build capacity to prioritise physical activity.

Build capacity across communities to build their confidence to inspire more people to get active, feel a part of **we can move**, and build an active future together, reducing the barriers to least active.

THE MOVEMENT NOV '17 to NOW



FOCUS
We can move became the movement to inspire, connect and enable individuals, communities and organisations across Gloucestershire to help the least active, move more.

FUNCTION
ARC West (University of Bristol) undertook rigorous evaluation to demonstrate the value and impact of the movement. 120 organisations and champions were involved in the evaluation.

Led the way in ripple effects mapping to show movement, growth and the wider impact.

OUTCOMES

INSIGHT DRIVEN PROGRAMMES EMBEDDED ACROSS THE SYSTEM

NEW PARTNERSHIPS, CO-PRODUCING SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES

LINKED TO 22 AGENDAS ACROSS THE COUNTY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTEGRATED INTO 6 NEW STRATEGIES

THE WE CAN MOVE APPROACH

Supported by Active Gloucestershire, we can move is a whole systems approach to increasing physical activity. We work in a complex environment so we'll need to work at an individual, community and system level - and also to learn from what we do - to create the conditions for more people to be active.

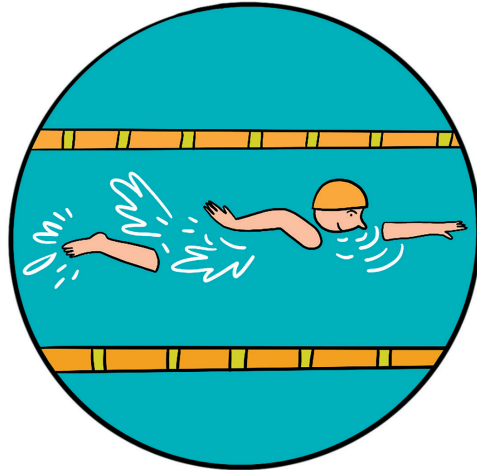
To do this we've developed our theory of change.

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



2. COLLECTIVE ACTION

'all people make a difference'

Strengths, people and place based approach through the we can move movement based on:

- Inspiring community activism to make positive changes
- Taking collective action
- Discovering and collaborating around shared values

3. BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

'everything we do makes a difference'

Supporting people to make changes to benefit from a more active life through:

- Using theories of behaviour change like the COM-B model
- Focusing on the individual whilst recognising wider system inequalities that impact their behaviour
- Working with people's strengths - 'focusing on what is strong, not what is wrong'



4. LEARNING & ADAPTING

'everything we discover makes a difference'

We embed learning throughout the work that we do by:

- Building evaluation in from the beginning
- Adapting to extraordinary circumstances
- Being prepared to get it wrong and understand why

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Inspire

Take time to read & understand this document; use in your own work & share with others

Connect

Hear how others have used this approach go to www.wecanmove.net or contact one of our staff team at www.activegloucestershire.org

Enable

Visit the we can move website to join one of our networks, access training and get funding for your project.

Blackbridge Sports & Community Hub

A leading ambition for our approach to active environments is supporting the provision of new spaces and places for physical activity, particularly in areas of most need.

While the neighbourhood of Podsmead in Gloucester is home to a vibrant community and a wealth of green spaces the area is nonetheless one of most deprived in the county. To help improve residents' health and wellbeing, plans for developing community sport and leisure facilities have evolved over several years, with Active Gloucestershire playing a leading role in bringing them to fruition.

Proposals for the development of Blackbridge Sports & Community Hub are now well advanced, having gained strategic and financial support from several key stakeholders, including Gloucester City Council and Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester City Homes, NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, Sport England, Gloucestershire Football Association, Podsmead Big Local and Gloucester Athletic Club.

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 changing rooms, a dance/exercise studio, health and fitness gym and social and meeting spaces. As well as numerous sport and physical activity opportunities for the community the Hub will also offer a new targeted and universal activity and advice offer for local young people.





The development of the project has for a long time been led by people drawn from local sports clubs and community development charities. In 2021 the group decided to form the Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (BCCBS), which was established for the benefit of the community rather than solely its members.

Active Gloucestershire has played a central role in enabling the development of the project by providing ongoing consultancy support to BCCBS. This work has seen us applying our skills and experience to assist with fundraising, business planning, community consultation, land negotiations, facility design and future management and operation.

Furthermore, we have been able to connect a huge range of individuals and organisations both to the project and each other, culminating in a large number of local sports clubs and community organisations lending their support to the scheme by committing to use of the facilities once they're built.

As of February 2023, the project is awaiting planning consent and the finalisation of the funding budget, before a start on site in late summer 2023 and opening in summer 2025.





Active Gloucestershire have played a vital role in helping us in our work to make the much needed Blackbridge Sports & Community Hub a reality. Over a number of years they have provided advice and guidance with all aspects of the project's development, as well as helping us to connect with user groups and funding partners. Together we're really looking forward to celebrating the opening of the Hub and getting on with the job of delivering sport, physical activity and wellbeing opportunities for the whole community.

Sue Cunningham
Chair of Blackbridge Community Benefit Society

Sports clubs / Physical activity groups

Rugby for heroes
Gloucester Athletics Club
Quedgeley Wanderers FC
Old Cryptians RFC
Tuffley Rovers FC
Abbeymead Rovers FC
Widden RFC
Rising Stars
Hardwick Rangers FC
SOH Fit
Severn Valley Youth League
7 UP Netball

Community groups

Your Next Move
Gloucester Community Building Collective
Ambitions Dance & Drama
Podsmead Big Local



Charities

Wheels for all
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Gloucestershire Age UK
Goals Beyond Grass

Public bodies

Crypt School
Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire

Advice Clinics

Part of the success of our work in supporting 'we can move' and promoting the benefits of physical activity has been to enable project ideas from across the network to become a reality.

Very often the groups and individuals behind these ideas need help to develop their plans, whether it's around fundraising, constituting as a group, reaching their target audience or making connections with other community partners.

Historically we have responded to this need mainly by offering workshops, delivered either by ourselves or in conjunction with trusted partners. While this format can be very effective, demand from the movement has shown that individual project ideas can't easily be discussed in larger groups and so may benefit from a more bespoke, tailored approach.

To address the absence of a bespoke offer within the Changemaker programme, the idea of hosting monthly project 'Advice Clinics' was proposed. Promoted through our communications channels and held on the first Thursday of every month. Groups and individuals are invited to book a 45 minute online appointment with our Lead for Active Environments to discuss any aspect of developing their idea.



Piloted in February and March 2022 and formally launched in September 2022, up to February 2023 the Advice Clinic has hosted 29 sessions, proving the success and popularity of the format and providing a valuable addition to the Changemaker programme.

By offering dedicated time to our network, we have been able to explore project ideas in detail, in turn enabling us to give bespoke advice and guidance. This usually takes the form of a follow up email with signposting to helpful online resources (either our own, or third party), and often introductions are made to colleagues with specialist expertise at Active Gloucestershire or key partner organisations.

To further improve the accessibility and impact of the Clinics we now offer themed sessions on a bi-monthly basis, whereby the Clinic is co-hosted by colleagues who lead on specialist areas such as older people, disability and inclusion, and so on.

Now firmly embedded in our Changemaker Programme and supported by colleagues across the Active Gloucestershire team we will build on the success of the Clinics by continuing to raise awareness of the offer and work with local and national system partners to help broaden the movement's access to specialist advice.



NEED ADVICE?

JOIN US FOR OUR FREE CLINIC



Active
Gloucestershire

Cleveland Lakes Feasibility Study

Gloucestershire is fortunate in having an abundance of natural spaces to get active, from parks, woodlands and forests to riverside paths, lakes and, of course, the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Many of these resources can be found within the Cotswold Water Park, an area which comprises 180 lakes within 42 square miles straddling the county boundaries of Wiltshire to the south and Gloucestershire to the north, and which offers a wide range of popular outdoor activities to members of the public.

Cotswold Lakes Trust is a charity dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of the Cotswold Water Park for the benefit of wildlife and people. Cleveland Lakes are two of the largest lakes within the Water Park and are surrounded by extensive wetland habitats. The Trust's vision for Cleveland Lakes is to sustainably develop non-motorised water sports activities alongside one of the area's most biodiverse nature reserves.

The dimensions, layout and accessibility of the larger of the two lakes suggest that it could host a variety of non-powered water activities, in particular rowing, canoeing, triathlon and paddleboarding, while the land adjacent and in between the lakes could be developed to include changing facilities, equipment storage, catering and refreshments, classrooms and toilets.



In summer 2022 the Trust commissioned Active Gloucestershire to produce a feasibility study into the viability of developing a sport and physical activity offer at Cleveland Lakes. Once again utilising our skills and experience in researching and developing sports business proposals we carried a range of tasks including a strategic review, stakeholder consultation, demand and supply analysis and funding options appraisal. In addition, we considered organisational structure and management options and concluded by producing a high-level business model.

Our report found the development of sport and leisure activities at Cleveland Lakes has strong strategic support and can be developed gradually and in a way in which the Trust is exposed to a minimal level of risk. As such, the project can help secure and make better use of the site's assets, thereby increasing participation and enjoyment of the Water Park, the key objective of the Trust.

Our work has already led to the formation of a Steering Group, as well as strengthening links to local clubs, watersports providers and key National Governing Bodies (including British Rowing and British Canoeing). We will continue to support the Trust as it looks to action the study's recommendations, with the longer term aim of helping all partners in the project secure physical activity outcomes for all, from walkers simply enjoying the site's biodiversity to elite level rowing and canoeing training and competition.



“The feasibility study produced by Active Gloucestershire gives us reassurance and confidence that the development of Cleveland Lakes can help Cotswold Lakes Trust realise the huge potential of the site. While the study gives us a ‘road map’ for delivering opportunities carefully and sustainably, which is obviously critical given the site’s environmental sensitivity, we’re extremely excited at the prospect of engaging with partners to offer water-based activities to people regardless of their experience, age or ability.”



Matthew Millett
Development Director at Cotswold Lakes Trust

Gloucester City Council Sport and Leisure Strategy

Gloucestershire's six local authorities are leading supporters of we can move and in turn Active Gloucestershire's work to support the wider network. Our Programme Group offers local councils an opportunity to share issues and discuss opportunities around physical activity, while at the same time being able to access our skills, experience and knowledge.

On the back of a Programme Group discussion around strategic planning we were invited by Gloucester City Council to submit a proposal to develop a new Sport & Physical Activity strategy for the authority.

In recognising both the disparities and opportunities facing residents, the City Council, through its Council Plan 2022-2024, aims to tackle inequality and improve the health and wellbeing of the city's communities. A central element of the plan is to ensure that Gloucester's residents can lead a healthy and active lifestyle by ensuring everyone has access to high-quality leisure facilities and thriving green spaces, developed and delivered with a range of leading local partners.

Having successfully secured the commission we set to work on the key tasks that underpin any successful strategy. To begin with we hosted a visioning workshop with senior officers and councillors, which helped define the parameters and objectives of the strategy. Following this we held several one-to-one conversations with senior stakeholders from the healthcare, education and community development sectors, before widening the consultation to the city's sports clubs, schools and community groups.



Next, we considered the demographic characteristics of the city, the wider context of sport and physical activity in relation to the Council's other leading strategic plans and priorities, and finally the City Council's role in helping to develop and deliver opportunities to get active. Armed with this research we then drafted the full strategy document, which concludes with a statement of the Council's four leading priorities for sport and physical activity and a list of Key Performance Indicators to help deliver and monitor progress against the strategy's objectives.

Developing Gloucester's sport and physical activity strategy offered a unique opportunity not only to support and strengthen the broader community wellbeing objectives of a key we can move stakeholder, but also enabled us to 'join the dots' between the Council and the wider activity system.

The City Council is keenly aware that supporting residents to be active can't be done in isolation, that it requires resources to be targeted towards where the energy is, and that residents must have a say in how their needs are met. Like us, the Council recognises that a whole-systems approach to wellbeing will more naturally lead to residents feeling comfortable and confident in making physical activity a daily part of their lives.





“Our new plan for sport and physical activity, covering the period 2023 to 2028, provides a clear direction for Gloucester City Council to work in partnership to support healthy lifestyles in the community by reducing levels of inactivity amongst residents, while at the same time helping local people who already participate in physical activity and sport be the best they can be. Active Gloucestershire’s role in leading we can move meant they were really well placed to help us develop what we expect to be a strategy that makes a real difference to community wellbeing.”

Phil Walker
Head of Culture
Gloucester City Council

Active Businesses Gloucestershire

Hosted by Active Gloucestershire and launched in January 2022, Active Businesses Gloucestershire is an employer-led network with a shared ambition to enable many more people to use sustainable transport and be more active as they travel around Gloucestershire.

Based on the model developed by North Bristol SusCom in South Gloucestershire the network is supported by Gloucestershire County Council's ThinkTravel team through the Capability Fund and is aligned with the development of the new walking and cycling infrastructure being installed along the B4063 corridor that links Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Active Businesses Gloucestershire works to raise awareness of the positive impact of making sustainable travel choices, to increase the number of sustainable travel options for employees and to help them undertake journeys by active travel or public transport. The group also aims to help the county reach Net Zero ambitions by decarbonising transport and reducing the number of car journeys in the county.



The network meets bi-monthly and provides the opportunity for some of the county's leading businesses to share best practice and collaborate around active travel, public transport usage and car sharing.

Activities and initiatives include:

- Mobilityways Gloucestershire (a package of support to measure, report and reduce commuter emissions),
- ThinkTravel employer grants (match funding up to £2,500 for facilities improvements, promotions and events that support active travel) and active travel roadshows featuring on-site travel advice stalls delivered by ThinkTravel advisers.

Businesses are also able to access

- Bikeability, which offers cycle confidence training run on-site for staff aimed at new cyclists or those looking to start cycling to work,
- Love to Ride Gloucestershire (a fun workplace challenge to get more staff cycling to work throughout the year with key events like Cycle September)
- Car Share Gloucestershire, an online platform to help staff find car share matches for their commute).


The Active Businesses Gloucestershire network demonstrates the increasing awareness of how active travel can not only enhance the health and wellbeing of the workforce, but also make a valuable contribution to the county's Net Zero targets. Furthermore, it illustrates the role Active Gloucestershire can play in connecting and enabling systems partners to realise the benefits of physical activity in new and impactful ways.





Both Gloucestershire County Council's Thinktravel service and Active Gloucestershire are focused on the benefits of active travel and healthy workforces. Since working together collaboratively we have been able to open new channels of engagement with Gloucestershire employers, particularly around encouraging and enabling behaviour change through Mobilityways, made possible thanks to successful bids to the Department for Transport's Capability Fund.

Our joint role is to help facilitate the Active Businesses Gloucestershire group, and we've seen some great engagement from some of the county's leading businesses. In turn, this has led to a growing understanding and interest in supporting employees to choose more healthy, sustainable and greener options as part of their routine commute.



Jo Atkins
Think Travel Co-ordinator
Gloucestershire County Council

Active environments and the whole systems approach

In this impact report we have shown that our active environments work is not only growing, but also that it is incredibly diverse.

The workstream provides us with the opportunity to help develop a really broad range of physical activity projects, from those that may need only minimal resources to get off the ground, all the way up to multi-million pound schemes that offer huge, long-term opportunities for entire communities.

It also gives us the chance to help shape policy and strategy at a district and county level. It allows us to work proactively in addressing two of the biggest challenges of our time, namely improving health and wellbeing and mitigating the effects of climate change.

In short, our active environments work clearly demonstrates the power of the whole-systems approach to developing physical activity opportunities. By collaborating with individuals and groups from diverse sectors, by engaging at all levels and by leading the way where we can, we stand the best chance of supporting the **we can move** to be as effective and impactful as it can be in getting Gloucestershire's residents active and healthy.

If you need help with your active environments project, get in touch at hello@wecanmove.net







Find out more at:

activegloucestershire.org.uk

**Come along to one
of our events**

www.wecanmove.net/events

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