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CIRENCESTER GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2025 to SEPTEMBER 2041



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD

Cirencester
HERITAGE

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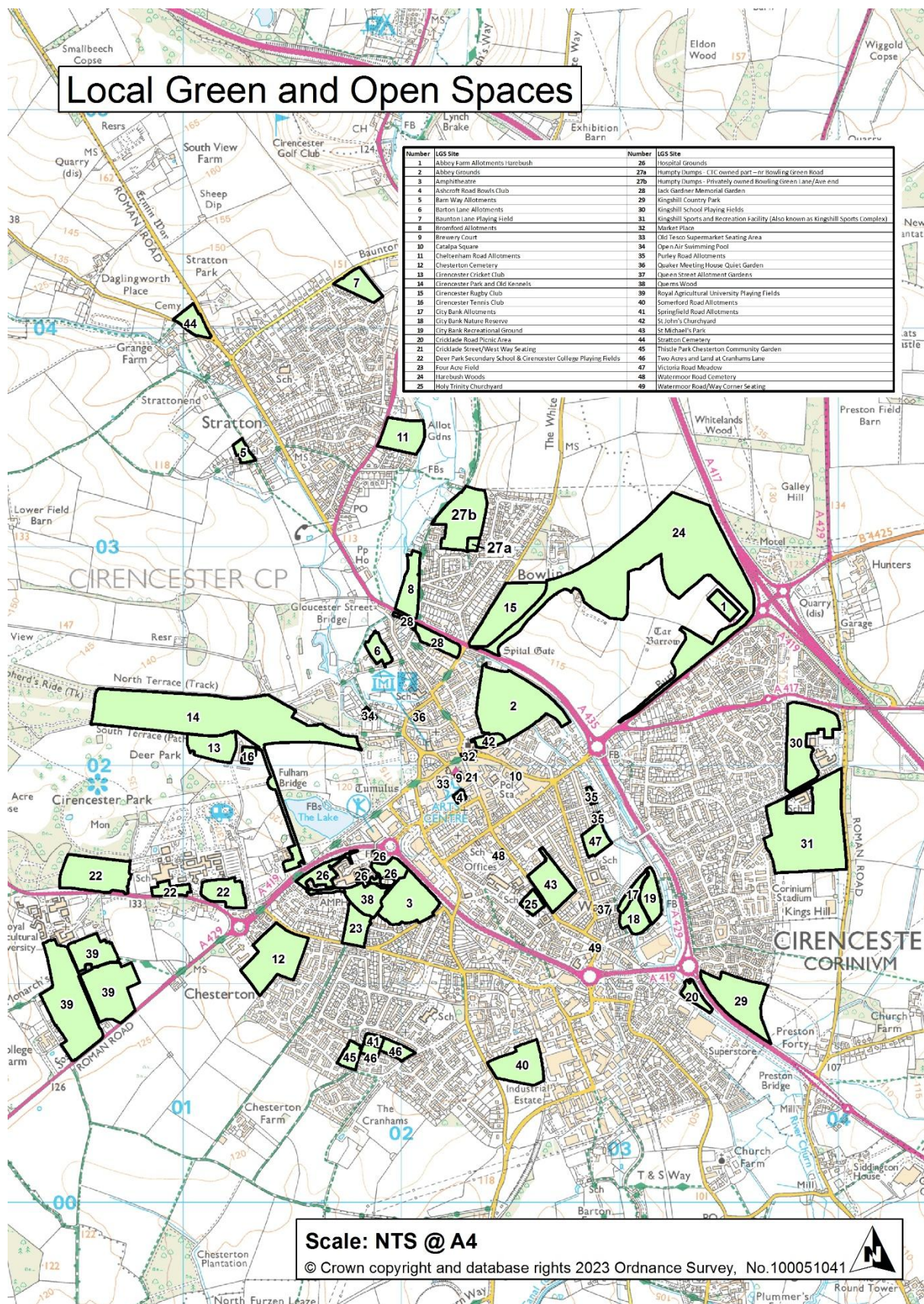


Figure 1: Local Green and Open Spaces

1.0 Green Spaces Strategy - Vision Statement

By 2041, Cirencester's Green Spaces will be vibrant, wildlife-rich environments that are seamlessly connected, accessible and inclusive to all.

They will actively support health, wellbeing, and quality of life by providing safe, inspiring outdoor settings where everyone can benefit.

These spaces will offer a beautiful haven for the community, maintained to the highest standards and resilient to the challenges of climate change.

Through sustainable management, they will be financially secure, ensuring long-term enjoyment and benefit for current and future generations of visitors and residents.

2.0 Strategy Objective

2.1 Defining Green and Blue Space

- 2.1.1** In this strategy, green and blue spaces are understood as the places in Cirencester where nature and water play the leading role.
- Green spaces are the vegetated areas around us, such as parks, gardens, allotments, woodlands, meadows, street trees and even features like green roofs.
 - Blue spaces are areas shaped by water, including rivers, lakes, canals, ponds, wetlands, and coastal areas, as well as man-made features like fountains.
- 2.1.2** Throughout this strategy we use the term green spaces to include both green and blue spaces. This means we are considering all vegetated areas as well as water features - public or private, natural or managed, formal or informal - that together form a connected network supporting wildlife, community well-being, and climate resilience.

2.2 Principles of the Strategy

- 2.2.1** Built on a foundation of accessibility and inclusivity for all, the strategy will be project based, and simple to put into action, ensuring that everyone can engage with, and benefit from it.
- 2.2.2** A key objective is to be clear about how local public green spaces such as parks, nature reserves and allotments, and related facilities (footpaths, sports facilities, playgrounds, street furniture) that the Town Council is responsible for will be managed going forward and have climate resilience as an essential focus of the management of all green spaces.
- 2.2.3** This document should be viewed as a catalyst for change and a benchmark for the future; read as a community strategy for anyone who loves Cirencester's green spaces, waterways and environment and who is committed to their future provision.
- 2.2.4** In setting this benchmark we want to:
- improve opportunities to enjoy contact with the natural world for all ages;

- contribute to the creation of healthy places;
- strengthen local identity and social cohesion;
- encourage local food production opportunities;
- support improved play and recreational activities for children and young people;
- enhance the physical character of our green spaces;
- provide outdoor space for educational learning and enjoyment;
- improve physical and social inclusion, ensuring greater accessibility for all;
- support efforts to mitigate flooding and adapt to climate change;
- enhance the economic potential of tourism, leisure, and cultural activities.

2.2.5 To achieve this benchmark, we will set out a detailed action plan that has been developed through consultation and an understanding of local need.

2.2.6 Our measure of success being that by 2041, we will have created a nature first destination, providing naturally cooler spaces and an oasis for everyone to enjoy.

2.3 Strategic Pillars

2.3.1 The action plan will be based on four strategic pillars and their goals:



Figure 2: Strategic Pillars and Goals

3.0 Strategic Context

3.1 Introduction to Strategic Context

3.1.1 The Green Spaces Strategy for Cirencester has been developed with careful consideration of influences at the **local, district, national, and global levels**.

This layered approach ensures that the strategy not only responds to the specific needs of the town and its communities but also aligns with national policy priorities and contributes to global ambitions for sustainable development.

- At the **global level**, the strategy supports the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, particularly those focused on health, sustainable cities, climate action, and biodiversity.
- At the **national level**, it is informed by the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, *Fields in Trust Standards*, and the *Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework*, which

provide principles, standards, and tools for high-quality green infrastructure planning and delivery.

- At the **district level**, the strategy complements the *Cotswold District Council Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Play Space Strategy (2017)* and supports the “Green to the Core” Local Plan.
- At the **local level**, it aligns with the *Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan* and draws on extensive consultation with residents, businesses, and community groups.

Together, these influences provide a robust policy and practice foundation for shaping the future of Cirencester’s green spaces.

3.1.2 This chapter sets the Green Spaces Strategy within its wider context, including international, national, district, and local policy, an overview of key assets, and current management and maintenance arrangements.

3.1.3 The *2011–2021 Green Spaces Strategy* emerged from the *Our Future Cirencester Community Plan* and is now superseded by this strategic document.

3.2 Global Context

3.2.1 At a global level, the strategy supports the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, particularly:



Figure 3: UN Sustainable Development Goals – Crossovers with Strategy

3.2.2 By aligning with these global goals, the strategy contributes to international efforts to build sustainable, equitable, and climate-resilient communities.

3.3 National Context

3.3.1 At a national level, the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* defines green infrastructure as:

“A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.”

This provides the overarching policy basis for protecting and enhancing green infrastructure across England.



Figure 4: National Planning Policy Framework Crossovers with Strategy

3.3.2 Building on this, Natural England developed a *Green Infrastructure Framework*, shaped with input from policy makers, local authorities, academics, industry experts, and businesses, to provide clear guidance supporting the greening of England’s towns, cities, and developments.

3.3.3 The framework aims to promote *better planning for good quality green infrastructure* and to target the creation or improvement of GI where it is needed most, ensuring delivery of environmental, economic, health, and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities.

3.3.4 The *Green Infrastructure Framework* provides access to five key resources:

- *Principles* – underpinning the approach and making the case for high-quality green infrastructure.
- *Standards* – defining what good green infrastructure looks like for various users.

- *Mapping* – providing free mapping layers to help target investment.
- *Planning and Design Guide* – practical guidance aligned with national design codes.
- *Supporting Tools* – including the Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool (EBNT) to demonstrate wider benefits.

3.3.5 The framework complements *Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)* by providing practical support to design accessible, multifunctional green spaces where communities and nature can thrive.

3.3.6 Its *Urban Greening Factor* sets measurable targets for urban areas that work alongside BNG requirements. The EBNT helps assess the wider benefits of project design, while the *Urban Nature Recovery Standard* provides guidance for creating and restoring wildlife-rich habitats.

3.3.7 The *Green Infrastructure Mapping Database* identifies priority areas for nature recovery and wildlife corridors, directly informing *Local Nature Recovery Strategies*.

3.3.8 At a national and regional level, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) provides spatial mapping of priority habitats, wildlife corridors, and opportunities for ecological enhancement. This mapping (fig 5) identifies where nature recovery will deliver the greatest benefits for biodiversity, climate resilience, and people.

3.3.9 For Cirencester, the LNRS will help guide where investment in green infrastructure should be prioritised, ensuring that the Town Council’s strategy is aligned with wider ecological networks across Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds.



Figure 5: Local Nature Recovery Map

3.3.10 The *Fields in Trust Standards* provide nationally recognised benchmarks for the quantity, quality, and accessibility of parks and green spaces. As good practice guidance, they support local authorities, planners, and developers in creating multifunctional green spaces that enhance health, wellbeing, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

3.3.11 For Cirencester, considering these standards ensures alignment with a respected national framework, helping to protect existing open spaces while guiding the development of new, sustainable facilities for the benefit of residents, visitors, and the natural environment.



Figure 6: Fields in Trust Standards

3.3.12 Collectively, these resources and toolkits provide invaluable insight into how to inspire and create *healthier, nature-rich, climate-resilient, and thriving green places to live, learn, work, and play.*

3.4 District Context

3.4.1 At the district level, Cotswold District Council's *2017 Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Play Space Strategy* has been updated and now serves as an evidence base supporting the *Local Plan* and its update, which is explicitly "Green to the Core."

3.4.2 This district-wide document provides guidance for:

- Developers and their agents
- Statutory decision makers and consultees
- Town and parish councils
- Landowners and managers
- Community groups and the general public

3.5 Local Context

3.5.1 At the community level, Cirencester Town Council has prepared its *Regulation 16 Neighbourhood Plan*, which is awaiting consultation, independent examination, and referendum.

3.5.2 The Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges that health and wellbeing, particularly mental health, was never more challenged than during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the first lockdown, residents highlighted the value of access to nature and green spaces, alongside the sense of social cohesion, community spirit, and growing appreciation of the local environment.

3.5.3 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect, enhance, and better connect the environment and waterways, while responding to the climate emergency, through the following aims and objectives, supported by planning policy:

Objective	Linked Policies / Guidance
Ensure that land made available for new development supports a vibrant, connected, economically active, and sustainable town centre, without adding to congestion or flood risk.	TC1, AM1, QPR2, TMN1, LE1, LE2, Chapter 10: Natural Environment
Improve connections between outlying suburbs and the historic centre by addressing barriers in walking and cycling routes, including overcoming those created by the A419 and A429 dual carriageways.	AM1, QPR4, NE3, LE4

Objective	Linked Policies / Guidance
Introduce a 20 Minute Neighbourhood model across Cirencester, supporting safe, sustainable, mixed communities with active transport links to jobs and essential services.	TMN1
Minimise flood risk by protecting and, where possible, extending the functional floodplain; requiring developments to integrate multifunctional mitigation measures such as SuDS; and improving river flow management along the upper Churn.	Chapters 2, 10, 12; UK Health Security Agency guidance
Protect, maintain, and enhance the natural environment, including local green spaces, parks, trees and green buffers, habitats, the River Churn, Gumstool Brook, and wildlife corridors, while promoting biodiversity and native planting.	NE1-NE5
Safeguard and deliver accessible community infrastructure, including healthcare, education, skills development, sport, leisure, culture, and recreation facilities, to meet both current and future needs.	Chapters 2, 12; QPR3, TMN1, LE3

Figure 7: Relevant Neighbourhood Plan Policies

3.5.4 Cirencester Town Council owns and manages more than 49 hectares of green space. These range from historic scheduled monuments such as the Abbey Grounds and the Amphitheatre Complex, to award-winning sites like St Michael's Park — a Green Flag accredited park — as well as recreational provision at Kingshill.

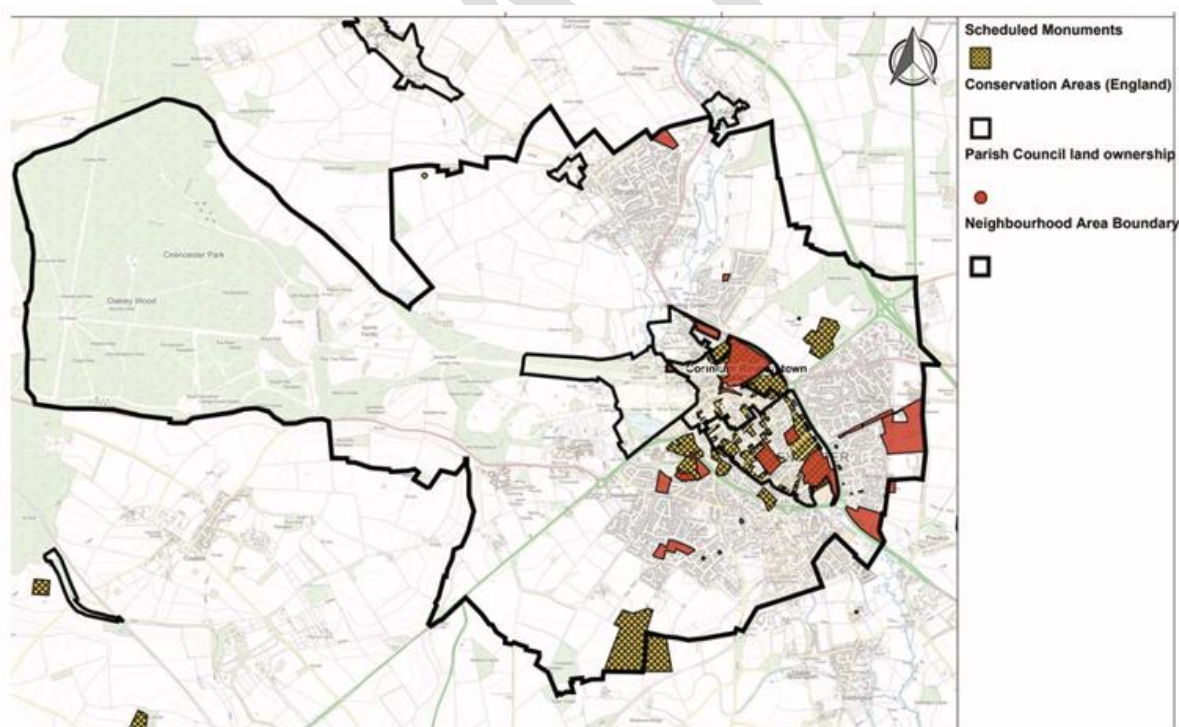


Figure 8: Map of Scheduled Monuments (Parish Online, 2025)

3.5.5 The Council's responsibilities also extend across a wide range of land, property, and infrastructure, including:

- Allotments
- Amenity Land (including residential areas)
- Changing Places Facility

- Grounds Maintenance Depot
- Local Nature Reserve
- Norman Arch and Cottage
- Obelisk Community Rooms (formerly the Scout Hut)
- Play Areas
- Public Toilets
- Sluice Gates
- Sport and Recreation Facilities
- Woodland

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Strategy Review

- 4.1.1** In 20XX, the Council launched a comprehensive review of the 2011–2021 Green Spaces Strategy. The review assessed long-term threats, opportunities, and priorities, and established a framework for the sustainable development and management of green spaces. It also incorporated a viability assessment and delivery plan for future projects.
- 4.2.2** The review also drew on Cirencester’s demographic profile (see Appendix 2). With just over 20,000 residents and an older age structure than the national average (23.5% aged 65+), the town faces growing demands for health, care, and accessible facilities. At the same time, high levels of physical activity (68% of adults active vs. 64% nationally) and strong neighbourhood satisfaction (89%) highlight a community that values and uses its green spaces. Embedding these insights ensures the strategy responds to local needs, particularly healthy ageing, wellbeing, and inclusivity.
- 4.1.3** In the absence of a clear and up-to-date strategy, it had previously been difficult for the Council to prioritise projects, allocate resources effectively, or demonstrate the full value of Cirencester’s open spaces.
- 4.1.4** The new Green Spaces Strategy therefore provides an essential management tool – enabling decisions to be evidence-based, guiding investment, supporting funding bids, and shaping promotional activity.

4.2 How the Review was Managed

- 4.2.1** Given the wide scope of the review - covering climate and environment, land and property, and finance and audit - the Council convened an Advisory Group to oversee progress. Membership included the lead councillors for each service area.
- 4.2.2** The Advisory Group’s remit included:

Task	Purpose
Review the 2011–2021 Green Spaces Strategy	In the context of the 2015 OFC Community Plan Review
Produce a management framework and strategic guidance	For Council-owned green spaces
Review and update the 2015–2025 Amphitheatre Masterplan	Supported by feasibility studies and an action plan

Task	Purpose
Develop a Masterplan for the Abbey Grounds	With feasibility studies and a prioritised action plan
Assess the condition of green spaces across Cirencester	Addressing biodiversity, climate resilience, and community engagement
Explore opportunities for income generation	Through Council-managed green spaces
Strengthen environmental resilience	Of both natural and built environments to climate change
Develop a communications strategy	To engage the public and build stakeholder partnerships

4.2.3 To support this work, the Advisory Group created two specialist sub-groups:

- **Baseline Data Collection Sub-Group** – reviewed Council-owned parks and green spaces using a modified Green Flag Award framework.
- **Norman Arch and Cottage Sub-Group** – contributed to the long-term vision for the Norman Arch and Cottage.

4.2.4 Councillors Andrea Pellegram and Christine Gore were appointed to the Core Project Team, working alongside senior officers to lead preparation of the new strategy.

4.3 Timetable and Approach

4.3.1 The strategy was developed between September 2023 and September 2025 using a project-based approach. Its aim was to deliver benefits for residents, visitors, wildlife, and the environment, while strengthening the role of green spaces in tackling climate change.

4.3.2 The scope covered:

- Land owned and maintained by the Town Council (Figure 9)
- Land not owned but maintained by the Town Council (Figure 10)
- Land leased under maintenance agreements (e.g. the Amphitheatre)
- Unregistered land such as grass verges

Map of CTC owned land

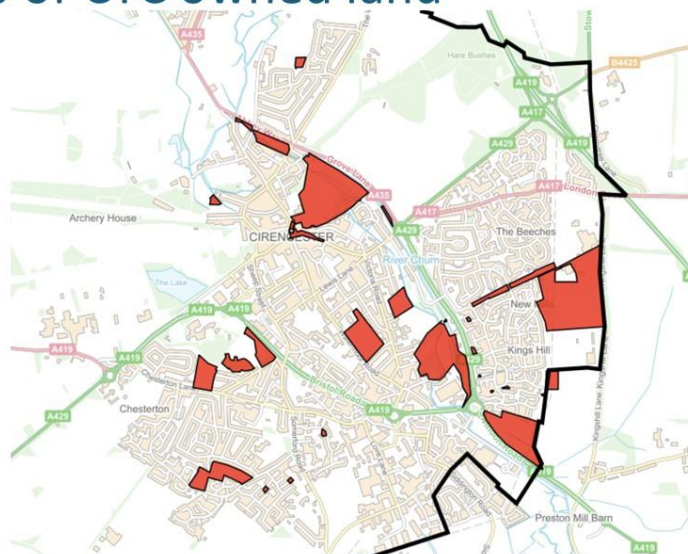


Figure 9: Land owned and maintained by the Town Council

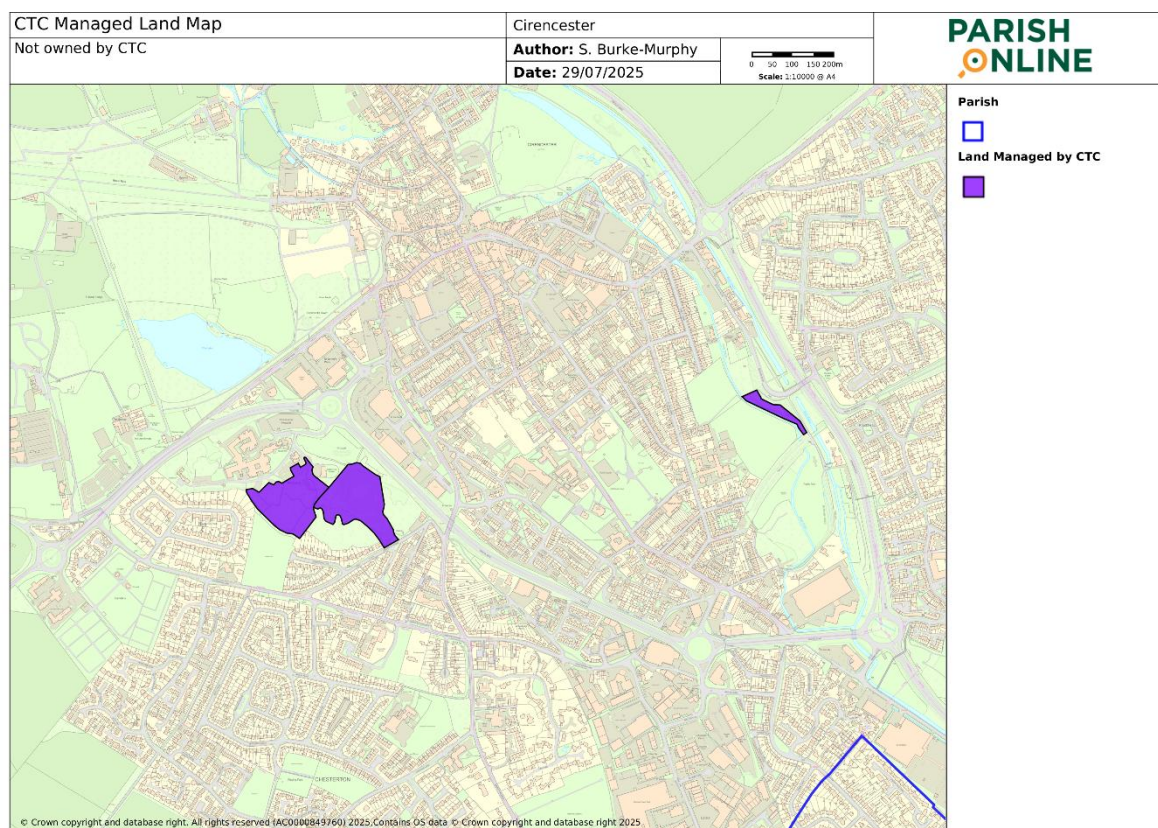


Figure 10: Land not owned but maintained by the Town Council (Parish Online, 2025)

4.4 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.4.1** Public consultation was central to shaping the strategy. A series of online and in-person sessions were held with community groups, local businesses, and activity providers, who provided valuable feedback on draft objectives and vision.

- 4.4.2** Additional engagement included dedicated town-wide and youth surveys (November 2023 and August 2025), along with stakeholder events and presentations in November 2024 and August 2025.

4.5 Benchmarking Against National Standards

- 4.5.1** The Green Flag Award standard - administered nationally by Keep Britain Tidy on behalf of the Government - served as the starting point and benchmarking framework for assessing Cirencester's parks and open spaces. St Michael's Park, which has achieved Green Flag Award status, demonstrates how this benchmark can be successfully met within the town.
- 4.5.2** These standards have since been embedded as the Council's preferred method for auditing the quality and performance of its green spaces and will guide the master planning of other key sites. Both the Green Flag Award framework - exemplified by St Michael's Park - and the Fields in Trust Standards underpin the Council's approach to ensuring high-quality, accessible, and sustainable green spaces.
- 4.5.3** The Council has also formally adopted the Fields in Trust Standards, a nationally recognised framework that supports local authorities, planners, designers, and developers in creating multifunctional green spaces.
- 4.5.4** Adoption of these approaches is fundamental to the success of the strategy, particularly in developing masterplans for the Abbey Grounds, Kingshill, and the Amphitheatre. In each case, the Green Flag Award framework and the Fields in Trust Standards will provide benchmarks for design quality, management, accessibility, and long-term sustainability. Alongside this, detailed management plans will be prepared for the day-to-day maintenance and enhancement of all Council-managed green spaces.

4.6 Strategic Alignment

- 4.6.1** This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan, the Council's Climate Action Plan, and its Net Zero Strategy, ensuring alignment across policy areas.

4.7 Priority Areas for Action

- 4.7.1** The review process identified **four Strategic Pillars** as the foundations of the new strategy. Together, they provide a framework for protecting Cirencester's green spaces while maximising their value for people, nature, and the town's future resilience:
1. **Nature and Climate Resilience** – protecting and enhancing biodiversity, strengthening habitats, and designing green spaces that help the town adapt to climate change.
 2. **Health, Wellbeing, and Access** – ensuring parks and open spaces are safe, inclusive, and accessible to all, supporting physical activity, mental health, and social interaction.
 3. **Community Engagement and Education** – encouraging active stewardship of green spaces through volunteering, events, interpretation, and lifelong learning opportunities.
 4. **Sustainable Management, Communication, and Investment** – embedding high standards of design, maintenance, and governance, underpinned by clear communication, partnership working, and long-term financial sustainability.

4.8 Next Steps and Implementation

- 4.8.1** Figure 11 illustrates how these pillars were developed into goals, objectives, and projects, with funding and partnership considerations built into delivery and long-term monitoring.

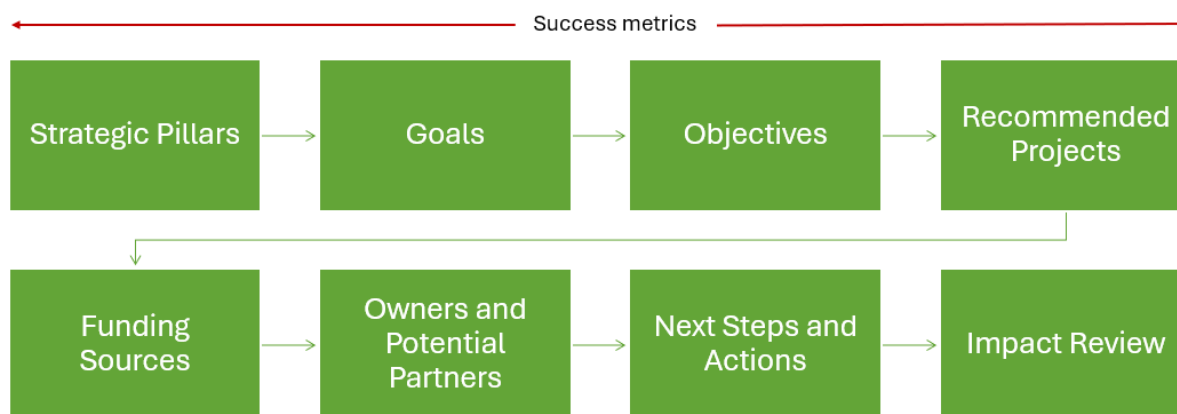


Figure 11: Strategy Process

4.8.2 The following chapters introduce each of the Strategic Pillars, together with their associated goals, objectives, and recommended projects.

5.0 Strategic Pillar 1 – Enhancing Nature, Climate Resilience and Connectivity

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1** Cirencester’s green spaces are at the heart of the town’s identity and resilience. By protecting, restoring, and connecting these landscapes, we can create thriving habitats for wildlife, strengthen the town’s natural defences against climate change, and enrich community wellbeing.
- 5.1.2** This section sets out our approach to enhancing biodiversity, building climate resilience, and improving connectivity between spaces - ensuring that waterways, woodlands, meadows, and public green areas are not only protected, but actively managed to flourish for generations to come.

Goal: Protect, enhance, and connect Cirencester's green spaces to benefit biodiversity, community wellbeing, and climate adaptation.

Objectives:

- Enhance and sustainably manage waterways to create resilient, nature-rich corridors that support biodiversity, improve water quality, reduce flood risk, increase natural water storage, and promote community wellbeing.
- Develop and implement site-specific management plans for priority spaces, focusing on biodiversity, ecosystem connectivity, and landscape character.
- Use green infrastructure to mitigate and reverse climate change impacts and biodiversity loss through habitat creation, effective tree management, sustainable water management schemes, and nature-based solutions.
- Embed biodiversity net gain and climate resilience principles across planning, management, and development.

Figure 12: SP1 Enhancing Nature, Climate Resilience and Connectivity - Goal and Objectives

5.2 Enhance and Manage Waterways

*Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have been found to reduce surface water flooding by up to **30%** and lower levels of pollutants in run-off by over **50%** (CIRIA, 2019).*

- 5.2.1** Cirencester's waterways – particularly the River Churn, which rises at Seven Springs near Cheltenham, flows south through North Cerney and Cirencester, and joins the River Thames at Cricklade – are vital for wildlife, flood protection, water supply, and community wellbeing.
- 5.2.2** While water quality is generally good, challenges such as low summer flows, over-shaded banks, and fragmented habitats limit their ecological potential and resilience to climate change.
- 5.2.3** Over the years, Cirencester has experienced notable flooding events in December 2000, July 2007, and December 2020. The 2007 floods, caused not by overflow of the River Churn but by failure of surface water drainage systems, underscored the importance of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) alongside effective river management.
- 5.2.4** A combined approach to enhancement and sustainable management will create resilient, nature-rich corridors that support biodiversity, improve water quality, reduce flood risk, and increase natural water storage. Targeted measures will include selective tree clearance to encourage aquatic plant growth, creating and restoring habitats for water voles and otters, and tackling invasive species such as signal crayfish.
- 5.2.5** Restoring floodplains, retrofitting SuDS in parks and road verges, removing culverts where feasible, and installing rain gardens will help to slow runoff, recharge groundwater, and improve flood resilience. Natural solutions such as wetland creation, riparian buffer planting, and meadow establishment will filter pollutants, store water, and enhance habitat quality.

*The Environment Agency (2021) has shown that nature-based solutions, such as restoring floodplains and wetlands, can reduce flood risk at up to **50% lower cost** than traditional hard-engineering methods, while also delivering multiple biodiversity and recreational benefits.*

- 5.2.6** Water quality improvements will be achieved by fixing drainage misconnections, promoting water butt use, and restoring riverbanks with native vegetation. A comprehensive management plan for the Abbey Grounds Lake, including proposals for restocking with fish, will form an integral part of the Abbey Grounds masterplan.
- 5.2.7** These actions will be delivered in partnership with organisations such as the Environment Agency, FWAG, Thames Water, and the newly launched Cirencester and Churn Waterways and Environment Partnership (CCWEP), which will bring together local groups, landowners, and agencies to coordinate action.
- 5.2.8** Public engagement will be central to this work, empowering communities through citizen science, volunteer clean-ups, awareness campaigns, and improved signage and nature trails that help residents and visitors connect with the waterways and take an active role in their care.

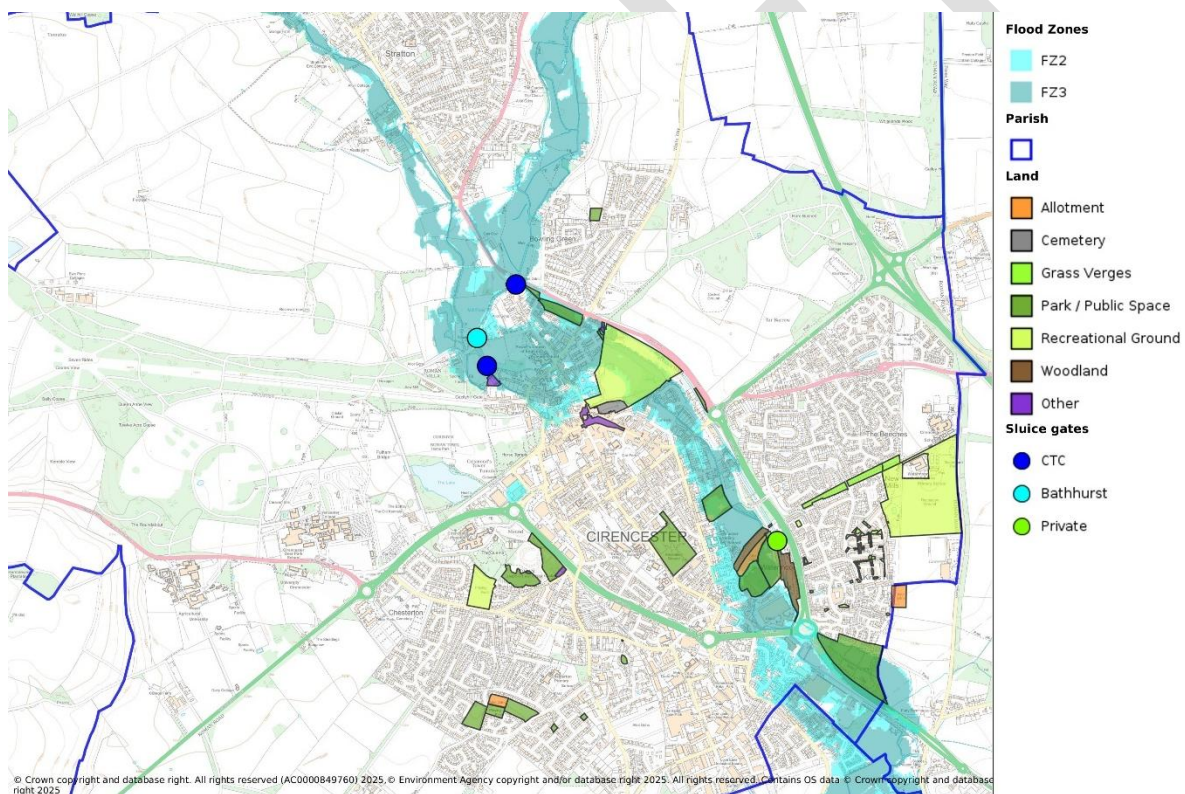


Figure 13: Flood map of Cirencester (Parish Online, 2025)

Recommended Projects:

- Pilot nature-based flood management schemes at priority sites such as Stratton Meadows.
- Restore floodplains at Watermoor and create wetlands for water storage and filtration.
- Retrofit SuDS and rain gardens in public spaces to reduce surface water runoff.
- Remove or daylight culverts to improve natural river flow.
- Undertake riparian buffer planting and riverbank restoration with native species.
- Manage habitats through selective tree clearance on shaded stretches of the Churn, water vole and otter habitat creation, and a signal crayfish control programme.
- Implement an Abbey Lake management plan, including fish population management.
- Distribute water butts to reduce roof runoff and correct drainage misconnections.
- Establish a local flood warden network, with training to support preparedness and resilience.
- Promote community involvement through citizen science monitoring and volunteer clean-up events.

Figure 14: Enhance and Manage Waterways - Recommended Projects

5.3 Develop and Implement Site Specific Management Plans

- 5.3.1** Each of Cirencester's key green spaces deserves a tailored plan to protect wildlife, enhance habitats, and improve access. Actions might include coppicing to improve woodland health, planting wildflower grasslands for pollinators, adding wetland features, and tackling invasive species.

*Since the 1930s, England has lost **97% of its wildflower meadows**, making the creation of new meadows and pollinator habitats in Cirencester's parks and verges a vital part of reversing biodiversity decline (Plantlife, 2023)*

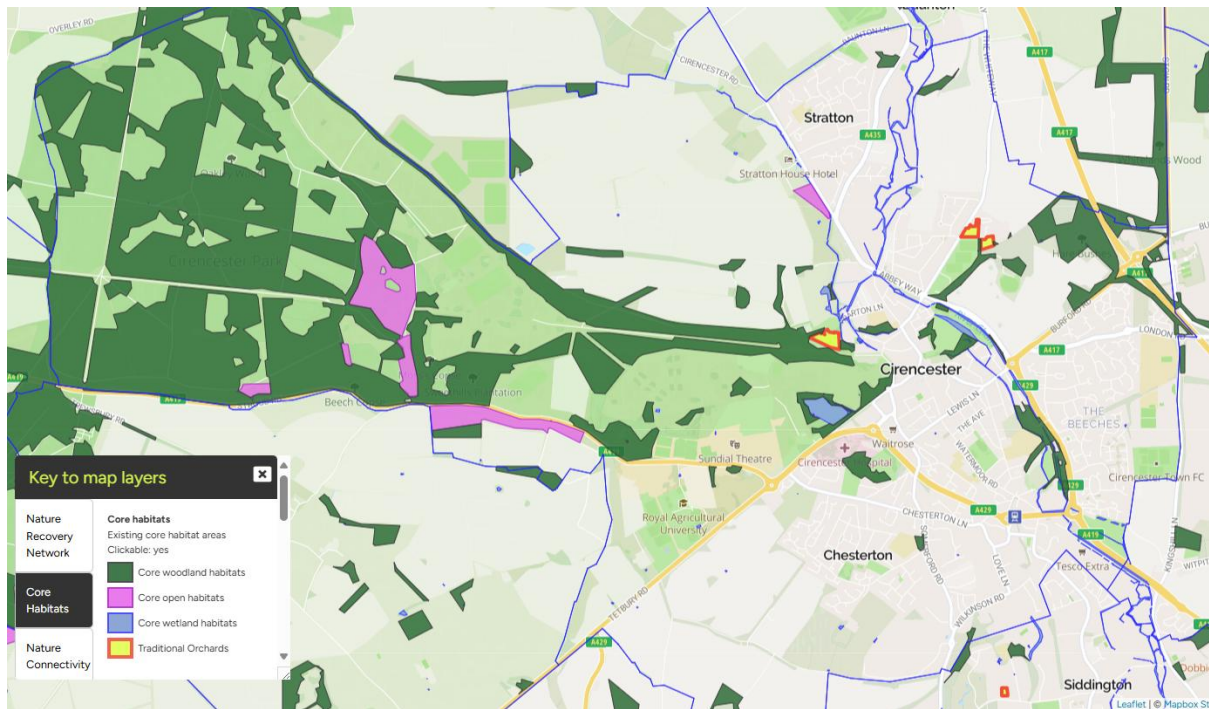


Figure 15: Habitat Data - Gloucestershire's Natural Capital

5.3.2 These management plans will be developed with strong input from the Land and Property Manager and the Grounds Team to ensure they are practical, achievable, and informed by operational knowledge. This collaborative approach will help align aspirations with available resources and maintenance capacity, ensuring successful long-term delivery.

5.3.3 Nature Recovery Network mapping will guide connectivity between habitats, while features like bat boxes, sensory gardens, and pocket parks will benefit both people and wildlife.

*Nationally, the Nature Recovery Network is aiming to restore **500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat by 2042**, a target that local projects in Cirencester will directly support (DEFRA, 2020).*

Recommended Projects:

- Expand City Bank Nature Reserve meadow and create new wetland habitats.
- Restore woodlands through coppicing and deadwood habitat creation.
- Revive the hospital orchard with pollinator-friendly planting.
- Develop pocket parks along key walking routes.
- Install bat and bird boxes to support local wildlife.
- Control invasive species to protect native habitats.

Figure 16: Develop and Implement Site-Specific Management Plans – Recommended Projects

5.4 Use Green Infrastructure to Address Climate Change

- 5.4.1** Parks, rivers, and verges can help tackle climate change while boosting biodiversity. New habitats, healthy tree cover, and restored wetlands can store carbon, provide shade, and reduce flood risk.

Research by Forest Research (2020) demonstrates that tree canopy cover in urban areas can reduce local summer temperatures by as much as 5°C, helping to protect vulnerable residents during heatwaves.

- 5.4.2** Nature-based solutions, such as wildflower meadows, green roofs and walls, and rain gardens, will make Cirencester more resilient to extreme weather while creating attractive public spaces.

Recommended Projects:

- Pilot green roofs, green walls, and rain gardens in partnership with property owners.
- Deliver the Urban Tree Strategy, targeting urban heat islands with new planting and long-term maintenance.
- Create new meadows, wetlands, orchards, and pollinator corridors to link green spaces.
- Restore woodlands and wetlands to enhance biodiversity and capture carbon.
- Phase out single-use plastics in council-managed spaces.

Figure 17: Use Green Infrastructure to Address Climate Change - Recommended Projects

5.5 Embed Biodiversity Net Gain and Climate Resilience in Planning

- 5.5.1** The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain ¹ offers Cirencester a chance to secure environmental improvements through development. Habitat banks on council land could provide both biodiversity benefits and income.
- 5.5.2** Nature Recovery Network mapping and climate risk assessments will guide where to integrate habitats, tree planting, and SuDS. Training for planners and land managers will ensure consistent high standards.

Recommended Projects:

- Establish council-owned habitat banks for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to generate income and enhance biodiversity.
- Undertake baseline biodiversity surveys on council land, followed by ongoing monitoring and public reporting.
- Provide clear guidance for developers on native planting, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), and climate-resilient landscaping.
- Implement climate-resilient planting schemes in new developments and council-managed spaces.

Figure 18: Embed Biodiversity Net Gain and Climate Resilience in Planning - Recommended Projects

¹ Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a planning approach introduced in the UK through the Environment Act 2021, requiring most new developments to deliver a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity value, ensuring habitats are left in a measurably better state than before.

6.0 Strategic Pillar 2 – Promote Outdoor Activity for Health and Wellbeing

6.1 Introduction

*Public Health England (2020) found that people with easy access to green space are **24% more likely** to meet recommended levels of physical activity, reducing risks of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.*

- 6.1.1** Access to nature is fundamental to a healthy, connected, and inclusive community. By ensuring that Cirencester's green spaces are safe, welcoming, and accessible to all, we can support physical health, mental wellbeing, and social connection across all ages and backgrounds.
- 6.1.2** This section sets out how we will promote outdoor activity, improve inclusivity, create vibrant spaces for culture and sport, and link these places through sustainable travel networks - ensuring everyone can enjoy and benefit from the town's natural assets.

Goal: Ensure everyone can benefit from safe, inclusive, and inspiring outdoor environments that support health and quality of life.

Objectives:

- Promote green spaces as essential for sustaining and improving physical and mental health, encouraging contact with the natural world for all ages.
- Improve access for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds by addressing barriers to participation, safety, and inclusion.
- Provide spaces and facilities for cultural, social, recreational, and sporting activities, enhancing social cohesion and family life.
- Support sustainable transport and active travel through green corridors, cycling routes, and walkable connections between key open spaces.

Figure 19: SP2 - Promote Outdoor Activity for Health and Wellbeing - Goal and Objectives

6.2 Promote Outdoor Activity for Health and Wellbeing

*Fields in Trust (2022) valued the UK's urban parks and green spaces at **£34 billion annually** in health and wellbeing benefits, including **£6.6 billion in mental health cost savings alone**.*

*Natural England (2023) has estimated that increasing physical activity through better access to green spaces could save the NHS **£2.1 billion every year**.*

- 6.2.1 Cirencester's parks, waterways, and natural areas are essential for physical health, mental wellbeing, and fostering a connection to nature. Research consistently shows that spending time outdoors reduces stress, boosts mood, and supports healthier lifestyles.
- 6.2.2 Community events, nature-based activities, and targeted health initiatives can help more people experience these benefits.
- 6.2.3 Partnerships with health providers, schools, and community organisations can embed outdoor activity into daily life - from "green gym" volunteer sessions to guided wellbeing walks.
- 6.2.4 Investment in high-quality sports and recreation facilities further supports active lifestyles.
- 6.2.5 In 2016, outdoor gym equipment was installed at Kingshill, Four Acre Field, Thistle Park in Chesterton, and City Bank, funded by the *Active Together Grant*. The grant also provided table tennis tables for the Abbey Grounds and St Michael's Park, a cricket net and climbing wall for St Michael's Park, a new trim trail at Kingshill, and a refurbished trim trail at Thistle Field.
- 6.2.6 In 2025, the tennis courts at St Michael's Park were upgraded, new pickleball courts added, and tennis coaching introduced, providing opportunities for players of all ages and abilities.
- 6.2.7 Schools can also play a role by developing "green school" programmes with outdoor classrooms, food-growing areas, and nature learning built into the curriculum. These initiatives can directly support the Natural History GCSE, giving pupils hands-on experience in local ecosystems, conservation work, and biodiversity monitoring.
- 6.2.8 Collaboration with the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) can further expand opportunities for research, internships, and student-led projects in local green spaces.

Recommended Projects:

- Green social prescribing programmes with the NHS, GPs, and Link Workers, including guided nature walks, mindfulness activities, and outdoor gym sessions.
- Curriculum-linked outdoor learning spaces and educational resources for schools and colleges, supporting opportunities such as the Natural History GCSE.
- A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme piloted with local farmers and cooperatives.
- Pocket parks created by transforming underused urban spaces with community input.
- Family-friendly nature trails and play areas to encourage outdoor activity
- Partnerships with hospitality providers to promote healthy, sustainable, and community-focused use of green spaces.
- An up-to-date stakeholder map to guide collaboration and engagement.

Figure 20: Promote Outdoor Activity for Health and Wellbeing - Recommended Projects

6.3 Improve Access for All Ages, Abilities and Backgrounds

*The Office for National Statistics (2020) highlighted that **one in eight households in England has no garden**, with households in poorer areas twice as likely to lack access to private outdoor space.*

- 6.3.1** Green space must be inclusive and safe for everyone. Removing physical, social, and cultural barriers will ensure that people of all ages, mobility levels, incomes, and backgrounds can enjoy them.
- 6.3.2** Access is not equal everywhere: in Great Britain, 12% of households have no access to a private or shared garden (ONS, 2020).
- 6.3.3** In Cirencester, the proportions vary significantly - 23% of properties in Cirencester Central lack a garden, nearly double the national average, compared with 7% in Cirencester South and just 3% in Cirencester East & Stratton.
- 6.3.4** This highlights the importance of ensuring that public green spaces are designed and managed to meet the needs of those with little or no private outdoor space.
- 6.3.5** On-site accessibility improvements may include upgrading paths and entrances, provide accessible seating, and ensure wayfinding and interpretation in multiple formats.
- 6.3.6** Safety is also a priority, with good lighting, natural surveillance, and visible community presence to deter anti-social behaviour.

Recommended Projects:

- Conduct an accessibility review of parks and green spaces with disability advocacy groups, ensuring the needs of people with both visible and invisible disabilities are reflected in site masterplans.
- Install step-free paths, accessible gates, and all-weather surfacing on key routes.
- Expand inclusive play areas with equipment suitable for children of all abilities, incorporating sensory play features that support neurodiverse users.
- Improve safety and navigation through better lighting, sightlines, signage, and interpretation boards, including heritage features and nectar café planters.
- Explore park ranger or volunteer presence schemes to support accessibility, safety, and community engagement.

Figure 21: Improve Access for All Ages, Abilities and Backgrounds - Recommended Projects

6.4 Provide Spaces for Culture, Social Life and Sport

- 6.4.1** Green spaces are also social hubs - places to gather, celebrate, and play.
- 6.4.2** Well-designed facilities for cultural events, markets, performances, and sport can strengthen community ties, support local culture, and encourage active lifestyles.
- 6.4.3** The success of Josser in St Michael's Park in 2025 (fig. 7), combining healthy, locally sourced food with a programme of yoga sessions and family-friendly events, demonstrates how parks can encourage outdoor activity, support health and wellbeing, and act as vibrant, community-focused spaces.
- 6.4.4** Flexible, adaptable spaces allow for both small gatherings and large-scale events.
- 6.4.5** Investment in infrastructure such as power points, seating, and shelter will support year-round activity and help deter underuse.

Josser at St Michael's Park - Case Study

Between April and September 2025, Josser's residency at St Michael's Park brought new vibrancy and positive change to Cirencester's park life.

- **J Kiosk:** Fresh takeaway food from local produce and barista coffee.
- **Wellbeing:** Adults' and children's yoga sessions, three times a week.
- **Food & Culture:** Weekend brunches, gourmet burgers, Thursday live music, guest chef supper clubs.
- **Community Engagement:** Dig & Delve workshops, cookery classes, creative activities.
- **Income Opportunities:** Rental income from kiosk and event tent, plus revenue from events.
- **Social Impact:** Increased community satisfaction and a reduction in antisocial behaviour in the park.



Figure 22: Josser at St Michael's Park - Case Study

Recommended Projects:

- Develop multi-use sports pitches and courts in partnership with local clubs and community groups.
- Create outdoor performance spaces for music, theatre, and cultural events linked to health and wellbeing.
- Establish community gardens and food-growing spaces to support social connection and healthy living.
- Provide picnic and barbecue areas to encourage family-friendly use of green spaces.
- Host seasonal events and festivals in parks to celebrate culture and bring communities together.

Figure 23: Provide Spaces for Culture, Social Life and Sport - Recommended Projects

6.5 Support Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

- 6.5.1** Linking green spaces through safe, attractive walking and cycling routes is essential to encouraging active travel, reducing reliance on cars, and improving everyday access to nature.
- 6.5.2** Well-designed green corridors and linear parks can connect neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, and the town centre, while also functioning as vital wildlife corridors that strengthen biodiversity.
- 6.5.3** Investment in wayfinding, secure cycle parking, and high-quality, well-maintained paths will make active travel a convenient and appealing choice for all users.
- 6.5.4** Collaboration with schools will play a key role in embedding healthy habits from an early age, supporting safe walking and cycling routes that enable children and young people to travel independently and sustainably.

- 6.5.5** Building on the 2025 Neighbourhood Plan, Cirencester's **wheel-and-spoke active travel network** (fig. X) offers a clear framework for connecting outlying suburbs with the historic town centre.
- 6.6.6** By enhancing the spokes with green corridors and safe, accessible walking and cycling routes, this strategy will deliver a cohesive, legible network that links homes, schools, workplaces, and community facilities.
- 6.6.7** This model not only reduces car dependency but also fosters healthier lifestyles, promotes inclusive mobility, and strengthens the role of green spaces as natural connectors across the town.

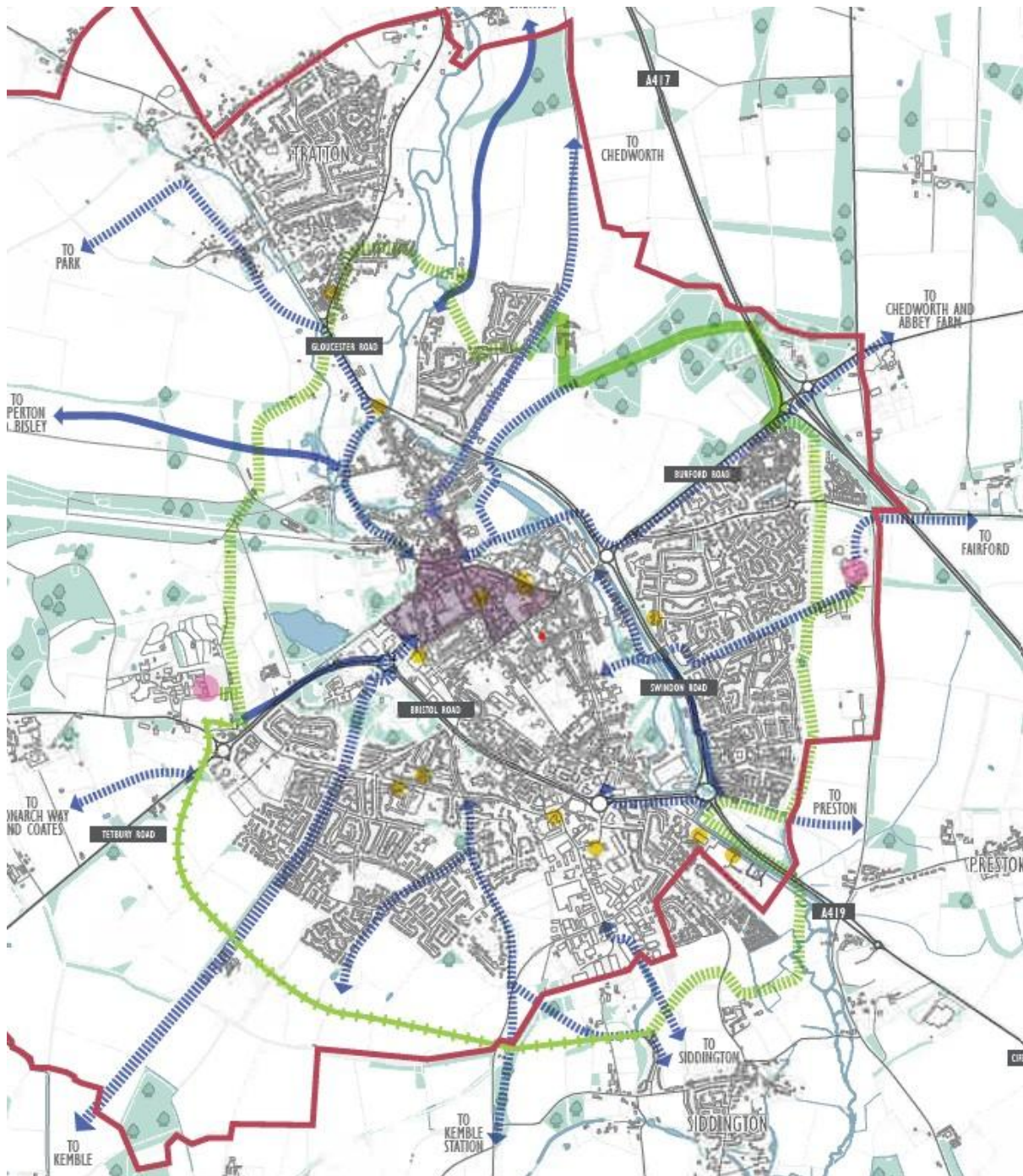


Figure 24: Cirencester Wheel and Spoke Network (Neighbourhood Plan, 2025)

Recommended Projects:

- Develop a Greenway cycle route linking key parks and neighbourhoods.
- Create a riverside walking path with rest spots and interpretation.
- Install secure cycle parking at major green space entrances.
- Introduce traffic-calming measures and safe crossings to improve access between parks.
- Establish tree-lined walking routes connecting schools, neighbourhoods, and community hubs.
- Publish an updated walking and cycling map, including the wheel-and-spokes network, for public consultation.

Figure 25: Support Sustainable Transport and Active Travel - Recommended Projects

7.0 Strategic Pillar 3 – Community Engagement and Education

7.1 Introduction

*Arts Council England (2019) found that areas with active heritage and culture programmes enjoy **higher rates of volunteering** and stronger measures of community cohesion.*

- 7.1.1** Public spaces thrive when the community is actively involved in their care. By inspiring local pride, fostering partnerships, and creating opportunities for learning and volunteering, we can strengthen the bond between people and nature.
- 7.1.2** This section sets out how we will engage residents, schools, and organisations in hands-on stewardship, celebrate the town's rich natural and cultural heritage, and provide opportunities - from citizen science to community food growing - that make everyone a part of shaping and sustaining our shared spaces.

Goal: Inspire stewardship, environmental awareness, and active participation through partnerships, volunteering, and learning.

Objectives:

- Encourage community and partnership involvement in managing and developing green spaces, especially through Friends groups, schools, and local organisations.
- Raise awareness and promote environmental education through interpretation, community events, citizen science, and school engagement programmes.
- Celebrate the historic, cultural, and natural heritage within Cirencester's open spaces to strengthen local identity and civic pride.
- Provide opportunities for local food production, such as community gardens and allotments.

Figure 26: SP3 - Community Engagement and Education - Goal and Objectives

7.2 Encourage Community and Partnership Involvement

- 7.2.1** Active community involvement is the lifeblood of vibrant, well-used, and well-cared-for green spaces.
- 7.2.2** Working closely with Friends groups, local organisations, and schools ensures that spaces reflect community needs while fostering a shared sense of responsibility. Partnerships with environmental charities, health services, landowners, and local businesses can bring valuable resources, skills, and volunteers.
- 7.2.3** Figure X highlights City Bank, designated in 2018 as Cirencester's first Local Nature Reserve. The case study illustrates how partnership working between the Friends of City Bank and Cirencester Town Council has created a space that supports both community access and wildlife conservation.

City Bank Nature Reserve - Case Study

City Bank became Cirencester's first designated Local Nature Reserve in September 2018, marked by a community launch event hosted by the Friends of City Bank.

Local Nature Reserves are protected areas that conserve the natural environment for both people and wildlife.

Over the past five years, the Friends group and Cirencester Town Council have worked in partnership to create a shared vision:

- A welcoming green space for everyone to enjoy
- A safe sanctuary for wildlife to thrive

City Bank is home to wild orchids, a rich diversity of birds, and many other species, making it one of Cirencester's most special natural habitats.



Figure 27: City Bank Nature Reserve - Case Study

- 7.2.4** Volunteer activities - from habitat creation and path maintenance to running events and fundraising - help residents of all ages connect with their environment. "Green school" initiatives can give pupils hands-on experience in managing and enhancing nearby sites, creating early connections to environmental stewardship.
- 7.2.5** Cirencester's extensive network of active community groups (see [Appendix 4](#)) offers a strong foundation for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and joint delivery.

Recommended Projects:

- Form or expand Friends groups to support the care of key parks.
- Organise volunteer habitat restoration days to involve the community directly in green space management.
- Partner with schools to adopt and help care for local green spaces.
- Deliver joint projects with local businesses and charities to build wider community support.
- Strengthen collaboration with the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) through research partnerships, internships, and student conservation placements.
- Expand citizen science projects with schools and wildlife groups, using simple tools to encourage community-led biodiversity monitoring.

Figure 28: Encourage Community and Partnership Involvement - Recommended Projects

7.3 Raise Awareness and Promote Environmental Education

*Research by Natural England (2021) showed that schools with more green space have pupils with **better attention, memory, and behaviour**, particularly in lower-income areas.*

- 7.3.1** Green spaces can serve as open-air classrooms, bringing nature, climate, and sustainability to life.
- 7.3.2** Interpretation boards, guided walks, and hands-on workshops can showcase local wildlife, habitats, and heritage. Citizen science projects — such as wildlife counts and river monitoring — invite active participation and build environmental knowledge.
- 7.3.3** School engagement programmes will be aligned with the new Natural History GCSE, giving pupils practical experience in biodiversity monitoring, habitat management, and climate resilience.
- 7.3.4** Linking classroom learning with real-world activities in parks, rivers, and woodlands will create lasting skills and understanding.
- 7.3.5** Green spaces can also be used in social prescribing, offering tailored nature-based activities that improve health and wellbeing for people referred by healthcare providers.

Recommended Projects:

- Install themed interpretation boards and trails at key sites to showcase biodiversity, heritage, and sustainability.
- Deliver curriculum-linked fieldwork opportunities for schools, supporting the Natural History GCSE.
- Organise wildlife surveys and community bioblitz events.
- Launch citizen science projects such as water quality testing to involve residents in local monitoring.
- Host storytelling walks that bring together nature, culture, and local heritage.
- Expand green social prescribing sessions in parks to support health and wellbeing.

Figure 29: Raise Awareness and Promote Environmental Education - Recommended Projects

7.4 Celebrate Historic, Cultural and Natural Heritage

*Historic England (2021) found that **83% of UK adults** feel local heritage makes their area a better place to live, highlighting the role of cultural identity in community pride.*

- 7.4.1** Cirencester's parks and green corridors hold layers of history — from Roman archaeology to Victorian park design.
- 7.4.2** Integrating heritage interpretation into green space projects builds civic pride and deepens visitors' sense of place.
- 7.4.3** Partnerships with museums, heritage groups, and cultural organisations can bring performances, exhibitions, and events into open spaces, blending art, history, and nature.

Recommended Projects:

- Create heritage-themed walking trails linking biodiversity features with local history.
- Deliver outdoor exhibitions exploring the connections between local heritage, landscapes, and biodiversity.
- Host annual heritage and nature festivals to celebrate local culture and biodiversity.
- Run archaeology open days in parks to engage residents and visitors with the town's past.
- Develop themed gardens, such as a Roman Garden or designs reflecting different historic periods.
- Collaborate with the RAU's Cultural Heritage and Archaeology students on joint projects.

Figure 30: Celebrate Historic, Cultural and Natural Heritage - Recommended Projects

7.5 Provide Opportunities for Local Food Production

*A 2025 review of 162 studies (spanning 1978–2022) found that community gardens like allotments consistently foster a strong **sense of community and wellbeing**, acting as inclusive social environments for people of all backgrounds.*

- 7.5.1** Community gardens, allotments, and edible planting schemes can improve food security, support healthy diets, and strengthen community bonds. These spaces also enhance biodiversity and encourage sustainable gardening.
- 7.5.2** Partnerships with schools, community groups, and local growers can make food-growing projects inclusive and accessible.
- 7.5.3** "School allotments" can link to the Natural History GCSE², connecting horticulture with lessons on ecosystems, pollinators, and soil health.

² Add some text about new GCSE.

Recommended Projects:

- Create new allotment sites in underserved areas based on local demand.
- Establish community orchards and edible hedgerows to increase local food production and biodiversity.
- Launch school food-growing programmes to teach children about sustainability and healthy eating.
- Run training workshops on sustainable gardening, including zero-dig methods in collaboration with the RAU.
- Establish shared tool libraries to support local growers.
- Develop Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects with local farmers and cooperatives, linked to the wheel-and-spokes cycle network for easy access.

Figure 31: Provide Opportunities for Local Food Production - Recommended Projects

8.0 Strategic Pillar 4 – Sustainable Management, Communication and Investment

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1** Sustaining Cirencester's green spaces for the future requires careful management, smart investment, and clear communication. By protecting heritage assets, securing diverse funding, monitoring impact, and sharing the value of these places with the public, we can ensure they remain high-quality, accessible, and well-loved for generations to come.
- 8.1.2** This section outlines how we will combine long-term planning, evidence-based decision-making, and strong community engagement to safeguard and enhance the town's natural and cultural assets.

Goal: Ensure long-term quality, visibility, and financial sustainability of open spaces.

Objectives:

- Protect, maintain, develop, and invest in high-quality, accessible open spaces and associated heritage assets that enhance the physical character of the area and influence future development.
- Develop a long-term funding strategy that includes external grants, strategic partnerships, and income-generating activities, maximising the economic potential of tourism, leisure, and cultural activities.
- Monitor and evaluate environmental, social, and economic value using evidence-based indicators to guide future investment and improvement.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy to promote the value, benefits, and activities of Cirencester's green spaces, engaging a wide range of audiences and building community support.

Figure 32: SP4 - Sustainable Management, Communication and Investment - Goal and Objectives

8.2 Protect, Maintain and Enhance Open Spaces and Heritage Assets

- 8.2.1** Cirencester's open spaces and heritage features are central to its unique character.
- 8.2.2** Protecting them requires ongoing investment in design, restoration, and maintenance - from tree care to path repairs and heritage conservation.
- 8.2.3** Management should be guided by professional and community consultation and site-specific plans to meet current needs while preserving historic and ecological value.

Recommended Projects:

- Restore historic features, such as the Norman Arch, as part of ongoing site management.
- Expand tree canopy cover and introduce climate-resilient planting schemes.
- Improve accessibility with step-free routes and inclusive play equipment.
- Combine infrastructure upgrades with new habitat creation and SuDS retrofitting to enhance biodiversity and water management.
- Carry out annual heritage condition and archaeological audits to monitor quality and maintenance needs.
- Develop and maintain conservation management plans for heritage assets to guide their long-term care.

Figure 33: Protect, Maintain and Enhance Open Spaces and Heritage Assets - Recommended Projects

8.3 Develop a Long-Term Funding Strategy

*Since 1996, the National Lottery Heritage Fund has invested over **£950 million in UK public parks**, often leveraging additional local and partner funding (Heritage Fund, 2022).*

- 8.3.1** Sustaining high-quality green spaces requires a diverse mix of funding - grants, partnerships, and income-generating activities.
- 8.3.2** Opportunities lie in tourism, cultural programming, and environmental funding streams.
- 8.3.3** Partnerships can unlock sponsorship, expertise, and in-kind support.
- 8.3.4** Income-generating activities can support both local enterprise and reinvestment in site maintenance.

Recommended Projects:

- Develop a comprehensive Funding Directory to map potential grant funding sources and match them to projects.
- Lease the Norman Arch as a residential property to generate sustainable income for heritage conservation.
- Develop tourism packages with local operators, in partnership with the Town Council's Local Information Centre (LIC).
- Generate income by letting spaces for events, markets, and filming.
- Secure sponsorship for projects from local businesses.
- Explore opportunities for carbon offset credits through partnerships with environmental NGOs and participation in carbon market schemes.
- Establish BNG habitat banks on identified sites to generate income from biodiversity net gain units.

Figure 34: Develop a Long-Term Funding Strategy - Recommended Projects

8.4 Monitor and Evaluate Impact

- 8.4.1** Evidence-based monitoring will track environmental, social, and economic benefits, informing investment and guiding improvements.
- 8.4.2** Citizen science and partnerships with schools, universities, and wildlife groups can strengthen data collection and community engagement.

Recommended Projects:

- Establish annual biodiversity surveys on council-owned land with support from local experts.
- Expand citizen science programmes to monitor biodiversity, water quality, and habitat condition.
- Track visitor satisfaction, usage levels, and wellbeing impacts from initiatives such as social prescribing.
- Assess carbon sequestration benefits from tree planting and other habitat projects.
- Develop a public-facing dashboard to share progress on environmental, social, and economic indicators.

Figure 35: Monitor and Evaluate Impact - Recommended Projects

8.5 Develop and Implement and Communications Strategy

*Keep Britain Tidy (2020) noted that councils which publish annual performance reports on their green spaces see **higher levels of public satisfaction** and more active volunteer involvement.*

- 8.5.1** The purpose of developing a communications strategy is to inform and engage the public in the management and stewardship of Cirencester's green spaces, establishing partners and key stakeholders.

- 8.5.2** A strong communications strategy will raise awareness, attract visitors, and encourage participation.
- 8.5.3** Using social media, local press, events, and on-site interpretation will reach diverse audiences.
- 8.5.4** Storytelling and good news stories will be central - sharing heritage, success stories, and volunteer achievements - and linking to national campaigns will amplify impact.

Recommended Projects:

- Carry out audience analysis to shape tailored communication plans for different stakeholder groups.
- Publish regular “green space spotlight” features in local media to share success stories and updates.
- Run social media campaigns showcasing seasonal changes, events, and community involvement.
- Partner with tourism organisations for joint promotion of green spaces.
- Install site-specific interpretation boards with QR codes linking to interactive maps and digital content
- Produce short volunteer and heritage video stories to highlight personal experiences and cultural connections.

Figure 36: Develop and Implement and Communications Strategy - Recommended Projects

Appendix 1 – Technical Annex

Progress Tracker	Annex Title/Type [not in chronological order]	Complete By	Outline of Contents and Relevant Information
	Cirencester Parish Boundary Map	At Publication	The electoral boundary of Cirencester Town Council.
	Cirencester Town Council Owned Land Map	At Publication	Sites which are owned by the Town Council.
	Cirencester Town Council Managed Land Map	At Publication	Sites which are managed but not directly owned by the Town Council (CTC).
	Cirencester Scheduled Ancient Monument Sites	At Publication	Sites within Cirencester which are scheduled.
	Non-CTC Publicly Accessible Open Space	Within 12 months of Publication	Land which is not owned or managed by CTC but which is publicly accessible.
	Flood Maps (including hydrology information)	At Publication	Including sluice gate information.
	Habitat Data	Within 12 months of Publication	Site specific data.
	Local Nature Recovery Maps	At Publication	Overview of proposed and existing projects.

	Nature Based Solutions Mapping	Within 12 months of Publication	Overview of proposed and existing projects.
	Equipped and Natural Play Spaces	Within 6 months of Publication	Including those which are on CTC owned land, managed land and those which are not owned by CTC but publicly accessible.
	Local Green Spaces Designation Map	At Publication	Formal designation.
	Community Asset Green Spaces	Within 6 months of Publication	Defined as accessible to the public throughout the day including cemeteries and public open space with permissive rights; excludes private land with permissive rights of way, open spaces which are chargeable to access, allotments and residential amenity land.

Progress Tracker	Annex Title/Type [not in chronological order]	Complete By	Outline of Contents and Relevant Information
	Asset Mapping	Within 6 months of Publication	Trees, benches, lighting etc.
	Communication Strategy	Within 3 months of Publication	Create a communications strategy to inform and engage the public in the management and stewardship of CTC's open spaces; establishing partners and key stakeholders. This extends beyond the consultation and engagement being undertaken in the context of preparing the strategy. Consideration to be given to using the online platform Commonplace, internal/external comms, establishing topic focused groups and having dedicated web pages online.
	Masterplans	Within 3 years of Publication	Full copy of masterplans.
	Management Plans	Within 12 months of Publication	Full copy of management plans.
	List of partners and stakeholders	At Publication	List of partners and stakeholders including community groups; role and remit.
	List of National, Regional and Local frameworks	At Publication	List of policy documents and local partnership groups.

	Topographic Maps	Within 6 months of Publication	Masterplan Sites Only
	Environmental Data Sets	Within 3 years of Publication	Including geology, soil, biodiversity, biosecurity, wildlife, pests, diseases, mitigation and adaptation to climate for Masterplan Sites Only.
	Social and Community Data Sets	Within 12 months of Publication	To be incorporated within the masterplan and management plan documents, including community events, organized and informal activities, sports and leisure, and demographics, as well as cultural and heritage significance.
	5-Year Action Plan	Within 3 months of Publication	Includes outline of key tasks and priorities for the first five years of delivering the plan.

Appendix 2 – Cirencester Demographics and Community Profile

Key statistics on population, health, housing, education, and wellbeing, taken from Gloucestershire County Council's Local Insight Profile for Cirencester CP Area3, created March 2023, in comparison to the national average.

Population & Age Profile

Population: 20,182 residents – *A small market town community size, influencing the scale of local services.*

23.5% aged 65+ (England: 18.4%) – *Significantly older population, increasing demand for health and care services.*

Dependency ratio: 0.64 (England: 0.59) – *Higher proportion of non-working-age residents per working-age person.*

Health & Wellbeing

PIP claimants (working-age): 5.1% (England: 7.5%) – *Lower than national average, indicating slightly less disability benefit dependency.*

Limiting long-term illness: 17% (England: 17%) – *Matches the national average for chronic illness.*

Depression diagnoses: 11.3% – *Over 1 in 10 residents recorded by GPs with depression.*

Physical Activity

³ [Community Insight profile report.](#)

68% of adults are physically active vs. 64% England - *Above-average active population -good health baseline.*

21% are physically inactive, compared to 23% nationally - *Fewer adults in low activity bracket than average.*

83% active at least twice a month, vs. 79% nationally - *High regular engagement in physical activity.*

Neighbourhood Satisfaction

88.8% satisfied with neighbourhood (England: 79.3%) – *Residents report high satisfaction, reflecting strong community cohesion.*

Housing & Affordability

Owner-occupied: 62.3% (England: 62%) – *Home ownership rates are similar to the national average.*

Affordability gap: £82,940 (England: £42,272) – *Local house prices are significantly less affordable than average.*

Houses without Gardens

In Great Britain, **12%** of households have no access to a private or shared garden (ONS, 2020).

In Cirencester, the proportions vary significantly:

Cirencester Central: 23% of properties lack a garden - nearly double the national average.

Cirencester South: 7% - well below the national average.

Cirencester East & Stratton: 3% - among the lowest locally.

Green Space Access

6.1% of the area is designated as public green space (England: 2.2%) – *Well above average, offering good access to recreational and natural areas.*

Economic Profile

Working-age out-of-work benefits: 4.5% (England: 7.8%) – *Lower proportion of residents reliant on workless benefits.*

Relative low-income children (0–19): 8% (England: 19%) – *Substantially fewer children living in low-income households.*

Unemployment benefit claimants (Jan 2023): 1.9% (England: 3.8%) – *Unemployment is around half the national rate.*

Full-time employment (age 16–74): 33% (England: 34%) – *Close to the national rate for full-time work.*

Education & Skills

No qualifications: 15% (England: 18%) – *Lower proportion without qualifications than nationally.*

Pensioners & Older Adults

Pensioner households without a car: 29.5% (England: 40.8%) – *Better transport access among older households.*

State pension claimants: 93.4% (England: 92.5%) – *Slightly higher uptake of state pensions.*

Pension Credit claimants: 10.2% (England: 11.3%) – *Slightly fewer older residents on income-related pension benefits.*

Care & Support Roles

Unpaid carers (all): 9.6% (England: 10.2%) – *Slightly fewer residents provide unpaid care compared to average.*

Unpaid carers (50+ hours/week): 1.7% (England: 2.4%) – *Lower proportion of intensive unpaid carers.*

Household Resilience

Households with no deprivation: 52% (England: 48.4%) – *A higher proportion of households face no deprivation factors.*

Households with 2 or more deprivation dimensions: 14.1% (England: 17.9%) – *Fewer households experience multiple forms of deprivation.*

Summary

Overall, Cirencester presents itself as a relatively prosperous and resilient community, with high levels of neighbourhood satisfaction, strong engagement in physical activity, and lower-than-average deprivation and unemployment.

However, challenges remain in housing affordability and the demands of an ageing population, which will continue to shape local priorities for health, care, and sustainable development.

Appendix 3 - Recommended Projects by Strategic Pillar and Objective

Strategic Pillar 1 – Enhancing Nature, Climate Resilience and Connectivity

Objective	Recommended Projects
Enhance and Manage Waterways	• Pilot nature-based flood management schemes. • Restore floodplains at Watermoor and create wetlands for water storage and filtration. • Retrofit SuDS and rain gardens in public spaces to reduce surface water runoff. • Remove or daylight culverts to improve natural river flow. • Undertake riparian buffer planting and riverbank restoration with native species. • Manage habitats through selective tree clearance on shaded stretches of the Churn, water vole and otter habitat creation, and a signal crayfish control programme. • Implement an Abbey Lake management plan, including fish population management. • Distribute water butts to reduce roof runoff and correct drainage

	misconnections. • Establish a local flood warden network, with training to support preparedness and resilience. • Promote community involvement through citizen science monitoring and volunteer clean-up events.
Develop and Implement Site-Specific Management Plans	• Prepare tailored management plans for Abbey Grounds, St Michael's Park, Four Acre Field, Kingshill Meadow, and other key spaces. • Undertake woodland coppicing and planting of wildflower grasslands. • Create wetlands and ponds to increase habitat diversity. • Remove invasive species such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed. • Install bat boxes, bird boxes, and insect hotels. • Develop sensory gardens and pocket parks for community use. • Ensure plans are co-designed with the Land & Property Manager and Grounds Team.
Use Green Infrastructure to Address Climate Change	• Expand wildflower meadow planting across verges and open spaces. • Introduce green roofs and walls on suitable council and community buildings. • Create rain gardens in residential streets and public squares. • Establish tree planting programme to increase canopy cover and urban shading. • Develop wetland areas to enhance water storage and carbon sequestration.
Embed Biodiversity Net Gain and Climate Resilience in Planning	• Establish a biodiversity "habitat bank" on council-owned land. • Integrate Nature Recovery Network mapping into development planning. • Apply climate risk assessments to identify priority areas for intervention. • Deliver training for planners, land managers, and developers. • Secure developer contributions to SuDS, tree planting, and habitat creation.

Strategic Pillar 2 – Promote Outdoor Activity for Health and Wellbeing

Objective	Recommended Projects
Promote Outdoor Activity for Health and Wellbeing	• Deliver community events, guided wellbeing walks, and nature-based activities. • Develop ‘green gym’ volunteer sessions across local parks. • Expand outdoor gym equipment and recreation facilities at Kingshill, Four Acre Field, Thistle Park, and City Bank. • Upgrade and maintain tennis and pickleball courts, climbing walls, and cricket nets. • Develop ‘green school’ programmes with outdoor classrooms, food-growing areas, and curriculum-linked activities. • Collaborate with the Royal Agricultural University to deliver research and student-led projects.
Improve Access for All Ages, Abilities and Backgrounds	• Upgrade paths, entrances, and accessible seating in parks. • Introduce multi-format wayfinding and interpretation boards. • Enhance safety with lighting, natural surveillance, and community presence.
Provide Spaces for Culture, Social Life and Sport	• Design flexible spaces for cultural events, performances, and markets. • Invest in infrastructure such as seating, shelters, and power points. • Expand models like Josser at St Michael’s Park to other spaces.
Support Sustainable Transport and Active Travel	• Deliver the wheel-and-spoke active travel network linking suburbs with the town centre. • Create green corridors and linear parks connecting neighbourhoods, schools, and workplaces. • Invest in wayfinding, secure cycle parking, and well-maintained paths. • Collaborate with schools to promote safe, sustainable walking and cycling routes.

Strategic Pillar 3 – Community Engagement and Education

Objective	Recommended Projects
Encourage Community and Partnership Involvement	• Strengthen Friends groups and partnerships with local schools and organisations. • Deliver volunteer activities such as habitat creation, path maintenance, and events. • Develop ‘green school’ initiatives linking pupils with environmental stewardship.
Raise Awareness and Promote Environmental Education	• Install interpretation boards and deliver guided walks and workshops. • Run citizen science projects such as wildlife counts and river monitoring. • Align school engagement with the Natural History GCSE. • Develop social prescribing initiatives through nature-based activities.
Celebrate Historic, Cultural and Natural Heritage	• Integrate heritage interpretation into green space projects. • Collaborate with museums, heritage groups, and cultural organisations for events and exhibitions.
Provide Opportunities for Local Food Production	• Expand community gardens, allotments, and edible planting schemes. • Partner with schools and local growers to promote food growing. • Develop ‘school allotments’ linked to biodiversity and pollinator education.

Strategic Pillar 4 – Sustainable Management, Communication and Investment

Objective	Recommended Projects
Protect, Maintain and Enhance Open Spaces and Heritage Assets	• Deliver ongoing investment in design, restoration, and maintenance of heritage features and open spaces. • Undertake regular tree care, path repairs, and conservation of historic features.

	• Ensure site-specific plans reflect both current needs and heritage value.
Develop a Long-Term Funding Strategy	• Secure diverse income streams through grants, partnerships, and environmental funding. • Develop tourism, cultural programming, and income-generating activities. • Foster sponsorship, expertise-sharing, and in-kind contributions from partners.
Monitor and Evaluate Impact	• Implement monitoring systems to track biodiversity, usage, and wellbeing outcomes. • Regularly report on environmental and social impact to stakeholders.
Develop and Implement a Communications Strategy	• Create a communications plan to raise awareness of green spaces. • Use social media, local press, and events to promote activities and successes. • Highlight volunteer achievements and link campaigns with national initiatives.

Appendix 4 – Partners, Stakeholders, Community Groups and Schools in Cirencester

Partners and Stakeholders	Community Groups in Cirencester	Junior Schools in Cirencester	Secondary Schools in Cirencester	Further education
Abbey Lake Angling Club	Ashcroft Coffee & Chat	Chesterton Primary School	Cirencester Deer Park School	Cirencester College
Allotment holders*	Barton Senior Citizens Club	Chesterton Primary School	Cirencester Kingshill School	Royal Agricultural University
AQIVA*	Chesterton Community Project	Powell's CoE Primary School		
Bathurst Estate	Chesterton Senior Citizens	Stratton CoE Primary School		
Cirencester 1st Scouts*	Ciren Samba	Watermoor CoE Primary School		
Cirencester Civic Society*	Cirencester & District Beekeepers			
Cirencester College	Cirencester & District Carers			
Cirencester Wildlife Group*	Cirencester & District Model Aircraft Club			
Cotswold District Council*	Cirencester & District Soroptimist Club			
Cotswold Rivers Trust	Cirencester & Stroud Good Afternoon Choir			
Cotswolds National Landscape	Cirencester Action on Buses			
English Heritage*	Cirencester Air Cadets: 1245 (Cirencester) Squadron			
Environment Agency	Cirencester and Churn Waterways and Environment Partnership			
Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (FWaG)*	Cirencester Archaeological & Historical Society			
Flood Wardens*	Cirencester Art Society			
Friends of Abbey Grounds	Cirencester Badminton Club			
Friends of Gumstool Brook*	Cirencester Bowls Club			
Friends of the Hare Festival Way*	Cirencester Brass Band			
GCC Highways	Cirencester Camera Club			
Gloucestershire Constabulary*	Cirencester Chess Club			
Gloucestershire Council Council*	Cirencester Choral Society			
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT)*	Cirencester Community Development Trust			
Historic England *	Cirencester Eclectic Strings			
Local businesses	Cirencester Foodbank			
National Health Service (NHS)*	Cirencester Gardening Club			
Nursing homes	Cirencester Ladies Probus Club			
Parish Councils	Cirencester Male Voice Choir			
Preschools	Cirencester Men's Shed			
Primary Schools	Cirencester Phoenix WI			
Residents / local people	Cirencester Radio			
Royal Agricultural University	Cirencester Railway Society			
Senior Schools - Deer Park and Kingshill	Cirencester Ramblers			
Thames Water	Cirencester Science & Technology Society			
The CHURN Project*	Cirencester Singers			
The Steadings	Cirencester Stroke Club			
Tree Wardens	Cirencester Theatre Company			
Watermoor Community Group*	Cirencester u3a			
Youth Clubs	Cirencester u3a Mahjong Group			
	Cirencester u3a Music Group			
	Club Italiano			
	Corinium Community Choir			
	Corinium Squares Modern American Square Dance Club			
	Dementia Support Café			
	Friday Badminton Club			
	Friends of St. John Baptist Churchyard			
	Friends of the Earth			
	Friendship Café			
	Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society			
	Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust			
	Memory Café			
	Men Walking & Talking Cirencester			
	Park Community Group			
	Phoenix Gardeners			
	Probus Club of Cirencester			
	Stratton Probus Club			
	Stratton WI			
	The Arts Society Corinium			
	The Fruit Exchange Cirencester			
	The Inner Wheel of Cirencester			
	The Rotary Club			
	The Royal British Legion Women's Section			
	The Stratton Association			
	The Tuesday Group			
	Watermoor & St. Michael's Community Group			
	Writers in the Library			

Appendix 5 – BAP Species Analysis

To be added.

Appendix 6 – August 2025 Consultation Sessions and Workshops Outcomes

Pillar	Project	Green Dots (Priority)	Red Dots (Concerns)	Comments
Pillar 1 – Nature, Climate & Connectivity	Pilot nature-based flood management schemes	●●●		Strong support for natural flood solutions
Pillar 1 – Nature, Climate & Connectivity	Abbey Lake management plan	●●●		Support for habitat and fish management
Pillar 1 – Nature, Climate & Connectivity	Create wetlands and ponds	●●●		Increase habitat diversity
Pillar 1 – Nature, Climate & Connectivity	Rain gardens in residential/public squares	●●●		Positive support
Pillar 1 – Nature, Climate & Connectivity	Secure developer contributions (SuDS, tree planting, habitat)	●●●●		Seen as essential for funding & delivery
Pillar 1 – Nature, Climate & Connectivity	Remove/daylight culverts		●	Concerns raised around practicality
Pillar 1 – Nature, Climate & Connectivity	Wildflower meadow planting	●		'Only mow as necessary' noted
Pillar 1 – Nature, Climate & Connectivity	Flood warden network	●●		Already exists in GGC – comment seconded
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	Green school programmes (outdoor classrooms, food growing)	●●●		Strong support for school engagement
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	Upgrade paths, entrances, accessible seating	●●●		Cyclist/pedestrian separation noted
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	Enhance safety with lighting/community presence	●●	●	Concerns about lighting impact
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	Expand Jossier model at St Michael's Park	●●●		Interest in replicating model
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	Wheel-and-spoke active travel network	●●●		Support incl. pedestrians
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	Create green corridors and linear parks	●●●●		Very strong support
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	Collaborate with schools on safe walking/cycling routes	●●●		Strong support
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	Wayfinding/interpretation boards	●		Maintenance/signage patchiness issues
Pillar 2 – Outdoor Activity & Wellbeing	RAU student-led projects			Questionable value unless 'outside the box'
Pillar 3 – Community & Education	Strengthen Friends groups/school partnerships	●●●		Concerns about sustainability of Friends groups
Pillar 3 – Community & Education	Green school initiatives (stewardship)	●●●●		High enthusiasm for school links
Pillar 3 – Community & Education	Heritage interpretation in green space projects	●●●●●		Top-rated project
Pillar 3 – Community & Education	Collaborate with museums/heritage groups	●●●		Support for partnerships
Pillar 3 – Community & Education	School allotments (biodiversity & pollinators)	●●●●		High support for practical school projects
Pillar 3 – Community & Education	Volunteer activities			Reliance on volunteers problematic; easier to manage than Friends groups
Pillar 3 – Community & Education	Community Supported Agriculture	●		Supported in principle, not to be managed by CTC
Pillar 4 – Management, Communication & Investment	Regular tree care, path repairs, conserve historic features	●●●●●		Highest support overall
Pillar 4 – Management, Communication & Investment	Secure diverse income streams (grants, partnerships, funding)	●●		'So more can be done' – funding critical
Pillar 4 – Management, Communication & Investment	Communications plan to raise awareness	●●●		Seen as essential
Pillar 4 – Management, Communication & Investment	Highlight/'utilise' volunteer achievements	●●●		Need to go beyond highlighting
Pillar 4 – Management, Communication & Investment	Tourism/cultural programming, income-generation	●		Should link to economy; suggestion for Forum area green space