



CHEL TENHAM
COLLEGE

Sustainability Strategy



Context

The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, published February 2022, concluded that 'The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human wellbeing and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.'¹ It is therefore clear that urgent and meaningful action is required to tackle the climate crisis.

The UK Government is increasingly introducing legislative requirements and strategic policy to reduce greenhouse gases and waste and to improve air quality, biodiversity and resource efficiency, in line with their 25 Year Environment Plan and Net Zero Strategy. The education sector is required to play its role in positively responding to climate change and it is right that a prestigious school such as Cheltenham College, being a significant local landowner and employer, should take a leadership position in improving our sustainability performance. We must respond to the increasing expectations of our stakeholders to take action to minimise the adverse environmental impact of our operational activities. Achieving this will be challenging, particularly at a time when we are expanding, and therefore a well-considered strategy is required to drive successful immediate action and future planning.

With over 1100 pupils across The Prep and College, we recognise that we have both the responsibility and the opportunity to influence and inspire future generations to be agents of change. Embedding sustainable learning and engagement opportunities in our educational and co-curricular activities will enable our pupils to enjoy positive benefits during their school careers, whilst developing the skills, knowledge and motivation to contribute to wider impacts in their future roles.

Purpose

This strategy has been developed from a previous iteration of the Cheltenham College Environmental Sustainability Strategy. It provides a holistic overview of our strategic vision and objectives across key areas of work, to guide decision-making internally and to effectively communicate our commitments to our community.

The strategy considers the interconnected environmental, social, and economic pillars of sustainability and seeks to take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, recognising that sustainability is a broad and complex concept that impacts all areas of our community.

¹ IPCC, 2022: *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

Scope

This strategy applies across both Cheltenham College Senior School and Cheltenham College Preparatory School, referred to in this document as 'Cheltenham College'. It has been informed by pupils and staff and is owned across the whole College community, with collective responsibility for determining and implementing our strategic vision.

The strategy was first approved by Council in June 2022 and is subject to annual review. Administrative responsibility for the strategy lies with the Cheltenham College Sustainability Lead.

STRATEGIC VISION

Cheltenham College is committed to making a positive contribution to our environment and society by continually making improvements to our own sustainability performance and by educating, supporting and inspiring our community to achieve collective impactful change.

Objectives

To embed sustainability at the heart of our organisational approach, values and vision:

- Ensuring that sustainability is embedded in our decision-making and business processes
- Integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across the curriculum and within our educational policy
- Acknowledging sustainability as a force for transformative change with the potential for a range of positive impacts
- Developing an understanding of the importance of our sustainability strategy amongst all stakeholder groups

To operate more sustainably, ensuring that we are able to meet our present and future operational needs:

- Reducing our direct impact on the environment, including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and carbon footprint
- Making physical improvements to our buildings and estate and changes to our policies and processes
- Committing to the efficient use, and reduction of, resources
- Ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and legislation
- Reducing operating costs and mitigating risk where possible

To educate and engage pupils and staff on the concept of sustainability:

- Educating our pupils and staff so that they understand the consequences of their actions on the environment, and are encouraged to take personal and collective responsibility for those actions
- Embedding awareness and interest through dedicated projects and communication initiatives
- Utilising ESD throughout curricular and co-curricular activities to develop technical knowledge and key skills
- Providing opportunities for all members to have a voice, participate in initiatives, and take on sustainability leadership roles so that they are empowered through responsibility
- Leading by example to influence behaviour change

To work together as a community and to collaborate with external partners:

- Cultivating a considerate, inquisitive, and motivated community
- Giving people a greater sense of control over decisions that influence the quality of everyday community life
- Working with other educational and community partners on shared projects to stimulate change in the local area
- Enabling our pupils and staff to have a positive impact beyond the school in the wider community by sharing our knowledge, experience, and resources

Action areas of work

Buildings, Energy and Water

We seek to:

- Lower our relative unit consumption of energy and water over time, in line with targets defined in the Cheltenham College Energy Policy
- Reduce our carbon footprint towards net zero
- Provide buildings that make the most efficient use of resources whilst providing a functional and inspiring setting for our core educational purpose

We will achieve this by:

- Actively and holistically managing our energy consumption and strategy through a dedicated Energy Management Committee
- Monitoring and collating energy data to fully understand our consumption, identify areas for improvement and report on progress, in conjunction with ESOS compliance from 2023
- Seeking to procure energy from green tariffs and renewable sources, including on-site generation where possible
- Making use of energy-saving technical solutions to achieve operating efficiencies
- Using water efficiently in buildings and business use, implementing measures to reduce use of mains water and reduce pollution entering watercourses
- Incorporating sustainability in decision making processes for Estates works, new construction projects and long-term infrastructure planning
- Encouraging pupils and staff to take responsibility for reducing consumption through sustained behaviour change

Waste, Recycling and Litter

We seek to:

- Reduce our total volume of waste
- Increase the percentage of total waste that is recycled

We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to commit to a 'zero waste to landfill' policy with our waste provider
- Improving our waste and recycling infrastructure, providing a sufficient quantity and distribution of receptacles that are fit for purpose with clear and consistent signage
- Introducing education initiatives to encourage behaviour change, with a particular focus on encouraging personal responsibility for recycling amongst pupils
- Enabling transparency of waste collection and treatment processes
- Evaluating business use of disposable goods, with a particular focus on single-use plastics
- Developing digital systems to reduce demand for printing and hard-copy materials

Procurement

We seek to:

- Minimise the environmental impact of our purchases
- Meet our needs for goods, services and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis

We will achieve this by:

- Considering the environmental and social costs of the goods and services we procure when making purchasing decisions
- Working with local and ethical producers where possible
- Facilitating the use of recycled and reclaimed goods and educating our community about the impact of their consumer choices
- Seeking opportunities to rationalise orders and deliveries

Food and Catering

We seek to:

- Reduce the environmental impact of our food services related to land and water use, carbon emissions and waste

We will achieve this by:

- Working with our catering provider to offer nutritionally balanced and sustainable menu options
- Raising awareness of how personal diet choices affect health and the environment
- Gathering data and taking action on food waste

Natural Environment – Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Green Spaces

We seek to:

- Limit our negative impacts on natural ecosystems and environments within our grounds
- Implement measures to enhance biodiversity and support wildlife across the site
- Increase appreciation of the natural environment amongst our community

We will achieve this by:

- Using environmentally friendly practices to manage the school grounds
- Making use of the school site and grounds as a learning environment, giving pupils the opportunity to experience and care for nature and wildlife where possible
- Providing opportunities for the community to engage with our green spaces and develop a greater connection with nature
- Investigating off-site sustainable land management opportunities

Transport and Travel

We seek to:

- Reduce the negative environmental impacts of travel related to our operations and activity, including GHG emissions, air pollution and traffic congestion

We will achieve this by:

- Monitoring vehicle movements on-site and understanding the needs and motivations of drivers
- Encouraging and supporting staff, pupils and visitors to use active and low carbon modes of transport through practical and educational initiatives
- Improving the provision of dedicated facilities for cyclists, pedestrians and EVs
- Working with partners to support sustainable travel initiatives in the local area
- Decarbonising our own vehicle fleet and influencing our transportation partners
- Minimising or off-setting GHG emissions related to overseas trips

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