



CHEL TENHAM  
COLLEGE

# Sustainability Strategy

**Green**



**Growing**

## Context

The IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change, published March 2023 concluded that “climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health (very high confidence). There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all (very high confidence).”<sup>1</sup> It is therefore clear the imperative need for immediate and substantial action to confront the climate crisis.

The UK Government is actively implementing legislative and strategic measures aimed at reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, minimising waste, enhancing air quality, and improving biodiversity and resource efficiency. These initiatives align with the broader objectives outlined in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Net Zero Strategy. Within this framework, the education sector is required to play its role in positively responding to climate change. As a prestigious institution and prominent local landowner and employer, Cheltenham College is well-positioned to take a leading role in advancing sustainability efforts. We must address the increasing expectations of our stakeholders by mitigating the environmental impact of our operational activities. Achieving these goals will be challenging, and therefore a strategic and well-considered approach is essential to facilitate immediate actions and ensure robust long-term planning.

With a community of over 1,100 pupils and 600 staff across The Prep and College, Cheltenham College has a significant responsibility and unique opportunity to shape future generations into proactive agents of change. By embedding sustainability into our educational and extra-curricular activities, we can provide students with valuable learning experiences whilst equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to make a meaningful impact in their future endeavours. This approach aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), which emphasise the importance of quality education, climate action, and sustainable practices.

## Purpose

This strategy builds upon the previous iteration of the Cheltenham College Environmental Sustainability Strategy and offers a holistic overview of our strategic sustainability vision and objectives across key areas of work. It is designed to guide internal decision-making and to effectively communicate our commitments to our school community.

The strategy considers the interconnected environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability, and seeks to adopt an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. It recognises that sustainability is a multifaceted concept with implications for all aspects of our community and operational processes.

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC, 2023: Section 6 In: *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 42 - 66

## Scope

This strategy encompasses both Cheltenham College Senior School and Cheltenham College Preparatory School, collectively referred to in this document as 'Cheltenham College.' It has been informed by pupils and staff and is embraced by the entire College community, who share collective responsibility for determining and implementing our strategic sustainability 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 improving our 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 a reduction of GHG emissions and our 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 to understand the consequences of their direct actions on the environment, and encourage individuals 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 pupils and staff 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 to 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, 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
- Utilising the recommendations from our Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme (ESOS) Phase III Report
- 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, implementing measures to reduce use of mains water and reduce pollution entering watercourses
- Incorporating sustainability in decision making processes for estate 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 through separated waste streams

We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to commit to a 'zero waste to landfill' policy with our waste provider
- Improving our 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 menus
- Raising awareness of how personal diet choices affect health and the environment
- Collecting data and taking proactive measures to address food waste
- Implementing engaging initiatives to encourage pupils to minimise food waste
- Utilising pupil attendance platforms to inform production numbers for our Catering outlets

### *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 and on-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 staff, pupils and visitors to use 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