

Active Partnerships
National Organisation Strategy
2023-2027

CREATING MOMENTUM

Active Partnerships
Engaging Communities, Transforming Lives



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WELCOME



I am delighted to introduce the new Active Partnership National Organisation Strategy to our members, partners, stakeholders and colleagues.

As a trusted lead system partner of Sport England, their 10-year strategy “**Uniting the Movement**” necessitated and inspired a review to explore the very reason why the Active Partnership National Organisation exists. This was a courageous exercise as it required us to ask some difficult questions of ourselves and those who work with us.

Since becoming Chair in January 2023 the outcome has been truly fantastic to witness.

Never before has the National Organisation had such clarity of purpose, ambition and determination to ensure we play a valued role in helping to connect, strengthen and enable the ability of the Active Partnership network and other system partners, to deliver against the “**Uniting the Movement**” strategy.

The work we do matters and we will not stop until physical activity and sport plays a much bigger and more prominent role in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all.

The launch of this new strategic approach signifies two important things. Firstly, it demonstrates the confidence the Board has in the strength of the National Team and our ability to positively make a difference. Secondly it is a statement of commitment to take ownership of this ambitious strategy at Board level.

Dave Capper

Chair of the National Board



When joining in 2022, it was clear that the best approach to developing a strong Active Partnerships National Organisation was to embed what we do in the strength of the collective Active Partnership network.

The development of this strategy reflects our belief that our collective is our greatest asset. We have spent time engaging with our network by talking, listening, observing, participating and challenging to understand best how we, as a National Team, are going to play our role in both supporting the Active Partnership network and the wider sector to tackle inequalities.

It has therefore been vital in our thinking, conversations and actions that our network is front and centre of all we do - with every decision we take and representation we make being on behalf of our members.

I am extremely grateful to have the honour of leading a fantastic organisation and team and be supported by an engaged, expert and committed Board of Trustees. We look forward to continuing to grow, amplify and celebrate the great work being done by the many to improve the lives of people through physical activity and sport.

Andy Taylor

CEO

WHO WE ARE

The ambitions of the **ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS** (formerly known as CSPs) have sat at the heart of England's need to create the conditions for an active nation for over twenty years.

A network of **43 Active Partnerships** who are locally-led, non-profit, strategic organisations, have become a significant part of the sport and physical activity landscape across all parts of England.

Putting **tackling inequalities** at the heart of their work, they are helping ensure that everyone can unlock the advantages of an active life.

As valued system partners and a central feature of Sport England's '**Uniting the Movement**' strategy, they play a pivotal role in driving change in their **local place**.

The **ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS NATIONAL ORGANISATION** is the national charity of the Active Partnerships network.

As a membership organisation we exist to **connect, strengthen and enable our network**, and beyond. We do this by influencing and shaping national and local place-based approaches to physical activity and sport as a driver for social change.

The opportunity to drive change is significant. We're a small team with **bold ambitions**, because we know the challenge is big.

We see ourselves as part of a greater whole and strive to progress our mission by building strong, trusted relationships with partners across all sectors of society who share a **common purpose** to improve people's lives.

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

2003

Funded by Sport England, County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) introduced across all parts of England as sports delivery agencies.

2011

CSPN incorporated as a national charity to represent the network of CSPs. A small core team is created.

2018

'Primary role' of CSPN shifts away from programme delivery to supporting a whole system, place-based approach.

2019

CSPN rebrands to Active Partnerships to reflect the collaborative nature of our work and approach.

2021

Sport England launches 'Uniting the Movement' strategy.

2022

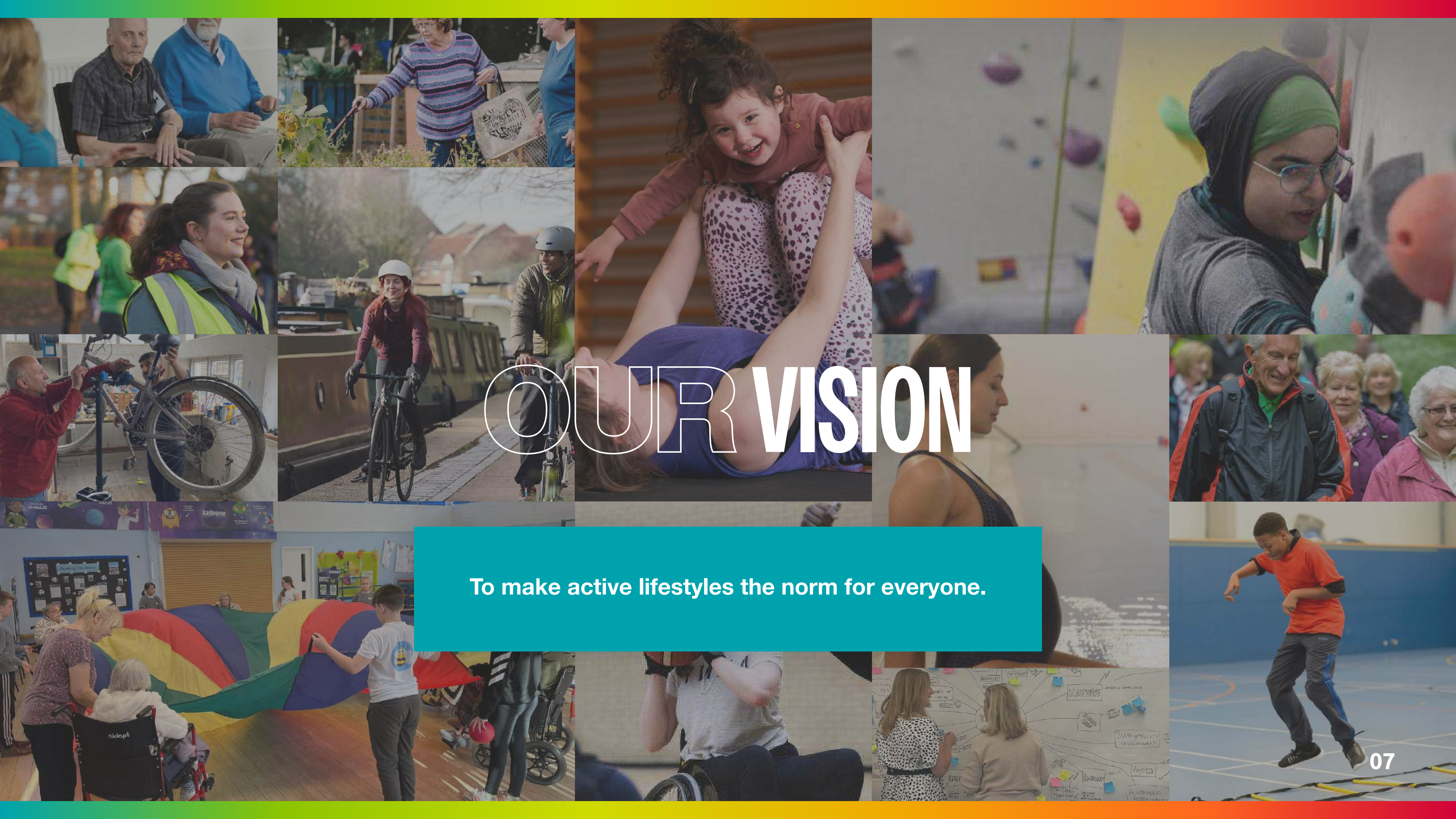
Review of the Active Partnerships National Organisation and achievement of Sport England System Partner Award.

2023

Development of 'Creating Momentum' strategy.

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK





OUR VISION

To make active lifestyles the norm for everyone.



OUR MISSION

To make it easier for everyone to enjoy an active life. We will help create the right conditions in local places to remove inequalities, and build relationships to connect networks and advance change.



OUR AMBITIONS

BY 2027 WE WILL

Be an **OUTSTANDING** performing organisation.

Have a **HIGHLY CONNECTED NETWORK** of strong performing Active Partnerships.

Be **VALUED AS LEADERS** creating momentum across places for 'Uniting the Movement' to flourish.

Evidence change through a **ROBUST, MEANINGFUL & EMBEDDED** measurement, evaluation and learning framework.

OUR ROLE

We've spent time exploring with our network and partners the role we can and could play to support achievement of our vision.

As a result we're clearer on where and how we add value. And how that can be further strengthened.

We're also clearer on what it isn't. Our role is not to manage individual local Active Partnerships. Nor to act as a top-down centralised service office for the network. We aren't a delivery agent for our partners, and don't lobby for a specific sport, product or even section of society. That's what makes us unique.

What we bring is the commitment and expertise to bring places, people, organisations, sectors, policies, ideas and tools together to create momentum.

Our uniqueness makes a difference. We've learnt it can help make things happen. And happen quicker and better. We often act on behalf of others, so we don't have to take the lead. Or any applause. But we do it all through the lens of our values and principles.





CONNECT

We connect places, people, organisations, sectors, policies, ideas and tools to make change happen. How we do this may not always look the same, so we don't label it. We might be:



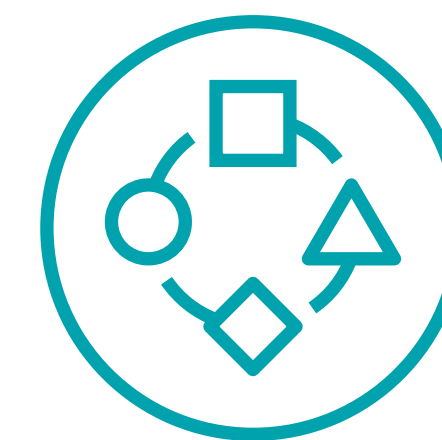
Using our neutrality to act as a bridge across organisations. By joining up agencies, national government departments and local partners we help unite the work.



Driving initiatives so local Active Partnerships can help shape the right opportunities for their communities and unite their local place.



Using our understanding of places and reach to 'tag' partners into conversations and platforms so everyone has the opportunity to get involved and help shape progress.

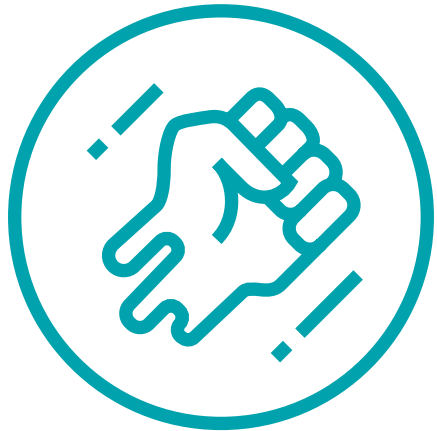


Convening learning clusters or communities of practice around a depth and breadth of topics.



STRENGTHEN

We strengthen people, organisations, sectors, ideas, outcomes and impact. We know this is a bold statement. But we see our added value as helping others to become stronger.



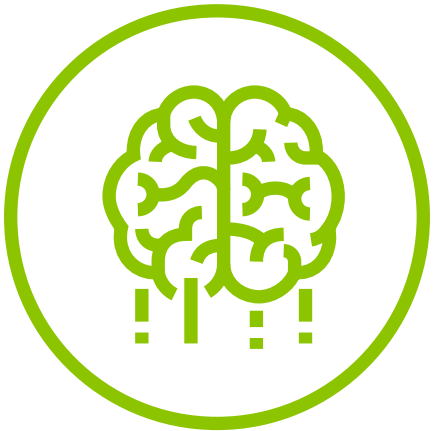
We help strengthen the leadership, skills and resilience of individuals, teams and boards whether via one-to-one guidance or more formal mentoring and coaching opportunities.



We share resources and tools which help develop efficiencies and strengthen governance, processes and systems.



We strengthen understanding and effectiveness through building knowledge, expertise, insight and ways of working.



We strengthen opportunities for people to share and learn - from supporting organisational learning to facilitating large-scale sector events.

ENABLE

We enable. Whether it's enabling others, enabling change or enabling the realisation of our vision. It's a challenge to articulate what this looks like but we describe enabling as:



Empowering others to innovate and find their own way forward with solutions that help them to do it for themselves.



Amplifying voices and agendas to ensure they are carried further and wider than any single organisation could.



Using our depth of data, insight and intelligence across the whole of England to drive greater impact.



Opening up doors, conversations and opportunities that a partner has not yet unlocked.

We see this as the result of the connecting and strengthening roles we play. It's the cumulative effect of the relationships we help build, ideas we help develop, solutions we help shape and change we help drive.

OUR PRINCIPLES



People and culture-first

We are passionate about our talent - as a core team and collective network. We believe in creating conditions in which all our people have a **SENSE OF PURPOSE** in their work, enabling everyone to feel belonging, develop, be motivated, and have their contributions recognised and celebrated.



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

is at our core. It's central to our purpose to **TACKLE INEQUALITIES** so it has to be authentic and transparent in everything we do. From the values we hold, the behaviours we demonstrate, debates we participate in and statements we curate, to the policies and processes we put in place and investments we make. It's our why, what and our how.



Being a collective

is our best asset. We have built an **UNSHAKEABLE CONFIDENCE** in the power of collaboration. Our connections with partners, each other as individuals and network members provides our energy, assurance, ideas and opportunities.



Innovation-driven

That could mean being pioneering with our thinking and practice. Or re-imagining or evolving through small iterative steps. It must ensure we **ENABLE EXPERIMENTATION**, test ideas, **CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS** and embrace when things don't work out as planned. This we see as progress.



Learning by design

is integral to how we work. It means we prioritise learning at the start, middle and end of our work to help us pay attention to what is important and **BUILD A MEANINGFUL PICTURE OF THE DIFFERENCE BEING MADE** by our work.



Being a sustainable and ethical workplace

The climate we create as a **FAIR, SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY-FOCUSED** organisation is important to us. We are still learning about how we best embed our commitment into our everyday work lives but we are resolute that being an ethical employer and improving our sustainability must be part of our organisational consciousness.



OUR VALUES

Our values reflect our fundamental beliefs as a collective team.

They help us make our decisions, build relationships with each other and guide our behaviour.

In essence they are our non-negotiables. So we're working hard to embed them in everything we do.

From who we recruit, to how we interact, what our development approaches are and why and when we reward ourselves.



Passion for our purpose

For us our vision is our passion. Because we all firmly believe in the power of physical activity and sport to help change lives and tackle inequalities. It's what binds us to our work and network and gives us our heart as a team. Sharing a passion creates our enthusiasm and energy and means, as we connect with others who share it, we get new insights into how it matters to others and why we care about what we do.



A collaborative spirit

We know that when we welcome, listen, understand and respect each other's knowledge and perspectives we're more creative, flexible and open to ideas. It's not just a way of working but an attitude and confidence. It enables us to be inclusive, to challenge assumptions, have courage to lead when needed and be forward thinking with our approach. It means we do better work together.



Trust brings connectivity

We work through building relationships. So honesty, having integrity and being our true selves matter. It's therefore important to us that we not only do what we say we will, but can rely on each other to do the right thing for us all. We call it the glue that holds us together.

A group of people are gathered around a whiteboard in a meeting. One person is writing on the whiteboard with a marker. The scene is brightly lit, and the people are engaged in discussion. The background is a light green wall.

OUR MEASUREMENT APPROACH

Our 'success' is built on understanding the impact we have, on the impact our partners collectively have, to create social change.

The work we do and how we do it means our influence can have indirect effects, our part played may not even be visible and the outcomes we seek dependent on factors beyond the scope of our work.

It can seem complex.



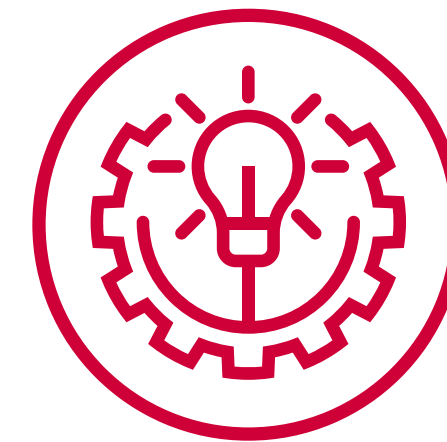
Nevertheless, developing a pragmatic approach to understanding our impact is important to us because:



We can hold ourselves to account for our organisational decision making.



It builds evidence and strengthens our value as a Sport England system partner.



It compels us to continually improve and innovate.



We are developing a blended review and reporting framework - made up of interdependent but distinct monitoring, evaluation and learning elements - to gain the best picture we can of our progress.

Using a mix of tools to carry this out we will deepen our understanding, learning and evidence base to evaluate how effectively we embody and deliver this strategy.



Monitor progress using data and insight which empowers

This includes firm level indicators which define tangible and quantitative metrics we can measure and interrogate with rigour.



Clear project evaluation tools

Assessing how well a project or activity has met its aims enables us to better understand our effectiveness. This means putting in place for every project robust risk, financial and capacity controls which track delivery against plans.



Deliberate learning

It's a principle that helps build our culture but also informs what we do and how we do it. Designing meaningful learning goals, capturing stories and sharing what our learning is telling us means we pay attention and act on what is important and worthwhile.

US ON A PAGE

2023-2027

VISION

To make active lifestyles the norm for everyone.

MISSION

To make it easier for everyone to enjoy an active life.

We will help create the right conditions in local places to remove inequalities, and build relationships to connect networks and advance change.

AMBITIONS

- Be an **OUTSTANDING** performing organisation.
- Have a **HIGHLY CONNECTED NETWORK** of strong performing Active Partnerships.
- **EVIDENCING CHANGE** through a robust, meaningful and embedded measurement, evaluation and learning framework.
- Be **VALUED AS LEADERS, CREATING MOMENTUM** across places for 'Uniting the Movement' to flourish.

ROLE

- To Connect
- To Strengthen
- To Enable

PRINCIPLES





- People and culture-first
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at our core
- Being a collective
- Innovation-driven
- Learning by design
- Being a sustainable and ethical workplace

VALUES

- Passion for our purpose
- A collaborative spirit
- Trust brings connectivity



**Active Partnerships
SportsPark
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3QF**

-  @Activepartners_
-  Active Partnerships
-  info@activepartnerships.org
-  activepartnerships.org

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