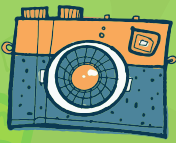




BURNLEY – A VISION FOR



OUR OUTDOOR TOWN



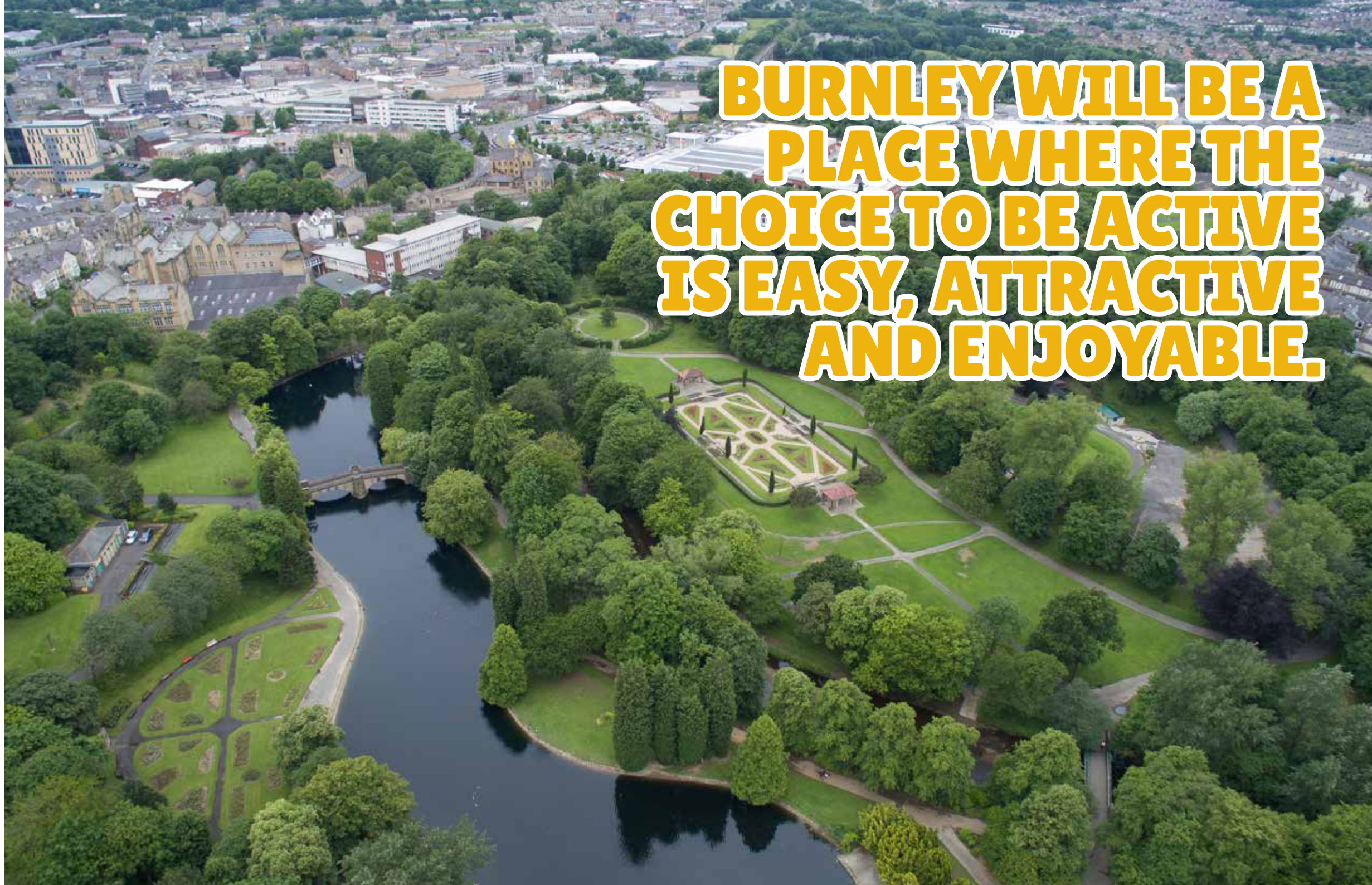
The outdoors in Burnley is one of our greatest assets. Our green and blue spaces offer the opportunity to spend time in Green Flag parks, on canal towpaths and in the water, wild moorland, woodlands, neighbourhood open land and reservoirs. These diverse spaces are literally on our doorsteps and with over 550 hectares to access, alongside a higher average of 36.72sqm of green space per person, compared with the national average at 30sqm, Burnley is in a prime position to use these spaces to support the wellbeing of local people.

Our vision is to use our Outdoor Town to connect people to place in sports, arts, culture, learning, health and wellbeing. We will work at neighbourhood levels to develop ownership and pride in our greenspaces; encouraging people to see the value in accessing nature and the benefits of nurturing this, for themselves and the environment. Our outdoor spaces are our strength. Going outdoors is free to everyone and helps people to enjoy happier and healthier lives. We all have Our Outdoor Town to use as an asset.

Following on from the Active Burnley Strategy in 2018; Burnley – A Vision for Our Outdoor Town looks at how members of the Active Burnley Forum, other partners and the wider community can work towards creating and valuing the opportunities that outdoor spaces can bring to the lives of those who live and work in the borough. Whether that is through using active travel routes to move around the town, taking part in sports, enjoying outdoor leisure time, connecting with nature or trying something new; the outdoors is an asset that each and every one of us can benefit from.

We will use our Outdoor Town to connect people with where they live – their place. We will work to bring people into the outdoors, providing a wide range of opportunities to become more active, volunteer or work outside, therefore improving health outcomes and the prosperity of the borough both in real terms and through social returns on investment.

As a town we have the power of the outdoors at our fingertips to reduce health inequalities and support people across our neighbourhoods. Our Outdoor Town provides the perfect starting place for us to achieve a range of positive health and wellbeing impacts upon the lives of individuals and the wider community.



WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

In 2018 the Active Burnley Strategy launched with the overall aim of encouraging partners to work together to improve the lives of people in the borough through the development and promotion of physical activity. Whilst this piece of work was underway the borough was selected to receive funding and support from Together an Active Future in 2019 further enabling the borough to work towards its ambition. This Sports England Place Partner was designed to create the conditions for this change at a local level, enabling sustainable change in approaches to physical activity.

Working in partnership, Together an Active Future and the Active Burnley Forum have seen a number of successes:

- In Autumn 2021 Beat the Street Burnley set out to increase physical activity levels across the population, encourage healthier lifestyles, increase engagement with canal towpaths and address health inequalities. The programme also aimed to improve collaborative working across the borough by strengthening relationships and building new connections. The programme was so successful that Beat the Street also ran in Spring 2023 and partial funding was secured to run further programmes in 2025 and 2027.
- The growth of the Active Burnley Forum; attracting more partners to attend and increased partnership working leading to a wide range of projects delivered at neighbourhood level.

- With the development of Social Prescribing roles we have seen the evolution of a system that connects with people, to raise awareness and communicate local existing opportunities; championing the role that being active can have on physical, mental and social wellbeing.
- Through the Active Burnley Forum we have supported current provision, developed new opportunities and worked collaboratively to raise the profile and importance of being active.
- Partners have worked together to develop the concept of Burnley as an Outdoor Town, with organisations showing that the outdoors can make being active part of everyday life.
- Collaboration has led us to prepare and improve outdoor spaces, beginning to create a culture where being active is the easy option and activity flows through the town.
- In 2023 Active Burnley Forum partners worked together to secure funding from the Climate Action Fund. This funding has given us the opportunity to employ an Green Activities Co-ordinator for 5 years.



CASE STUDY

PARK YOGA

In May 2023, Burnley became the first northern location for Park Yoga; a national charity bringing yoga classes outdoors. This partnership between Burnley Leisure and Culture, Burnley Borough Council and Burnley West Primary Care Network saw a free yoga class take place at Queen's Park on Sunday mornings from May until September. The park was chosen as an ideal place for its accessible nature, nearby car parking and active travel routes allowing those travelling on foot and bike to connect with nature on the journey as well as in the class. The sessions became an instant hit with local people seeing an average of 85 residents attend each week. Now entering a third year, Park Yoga uses the asset of our Outdoor Town to work towards a healthier and happier life for everyone in Burnley.



WHERE ARE WE GOING?

2025 is a very different place to that of 2018. Despite a global pandemic and many changes in government leaders leading to policy change and funding cuts, the Active Burnley Forum has gone from strength to strength, growing in the number of partners involved and the range and diversity of their strengths. Through a series of workshops with the Forum, facilitated by Together an Active Future, a final vision and 3 shared objectives have been developed. These are shared by all Forum members:

VISION:

BURNLEY WILL BE A PLACE WHERE THE CHOICE TO BE ACTIVE IS EASY, ATTRACTIVE AND ENJOYABLE.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Grow and nurture collaboration. Work with and inspire place based partnerships.
2. Increase national visibility of Our Outdoor Town movement; seeking to influence integrated place and wellbeing policy at a strategic level.
3. Create community led, neighbourhood based greenspace initiatives which bring inward investment and accessible opportunities to become healthier and happier.



HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

We have found that our priorities align with the headings of the local strategic plan – **People, Place and Prosperity**. Using our Outdoor Town as a tool we will be ambitious in the opportunities we create for **people**, leading the way in working together towards **place** based activities which encourage **people** into the outdoors. We will regularly check in to ensure our work is supporting local **people** to become more active and achieve improved health and wellbeing outcomes. Improved health and wellbeing outcomes will lead us to greater **prosperity** in our town as more **people** build resilience, move towards healthier lifestyles and achieve their ambitions.

Active Burnley Forum will oversee the delivery of the vision, ensure that we keep our focus and that the right people are involved. The Forum will regularly monitor the action plan that works towards achieving the vision and act as a critical friend; challenging work to ensure it meets our objectives. Every organisation interested in improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of local people will have a part to play and will benefit from being part of this ambitious way of working.

From April 2028 the Forum will work together to evaluate the delivery of objectives and measure the outcomes they have achieved, assess the current environment and look at the direction of travel for the next three years.

We will ask ourselves these guiding questions:

- Is it strategic?
- Will it lead to change?
- Are the right people involved?
- Will it make the boat go faster?
- How will our influence lead to impact?



CASE STUDY

BURNLEY RUGBY CLUB

Burnley Rugby Club offers opportunities to play and watch the sport in our Outdoor Town. With nearly a century of activity the club has opportunities for everyone. The club plays an important role in supporting people of the borough to become healthier and happier, whether that is taking part in training activities, becoming part of a playing team or watching a match. Providing both the chance to become active and the opportunity to socialise, the club supports the positive physical and mental health of everyone who gets involved.

Through their partnership with Burnley Borough Council and the Holiday Activities and Food project, the club offers free opportunities to engage with club activities during school holidays for children with eligibility for free school meals. They also work in partnership with local schools to deliver rugby sessions as part of their PE curriculum and after school offer.

Young people accessing the club report the benefits of being active in Our Outdoor Town as a way to make friends, be away from a screen and improve mental health alongside the physical activity in the outdoors that it provides.



ACTION PLAN

Over the next three years, under each objective, we will have impactful actions that support the move towards the vision: Burnley will be a place where the choice to be active is easy, attractive and enjoyable.

Our objectives will be to:

1. Grow and nurture collaboration. Work with and inspire place based partnerships.
2. Increase national visibility of Our Outdoor Town movement; seeking to influence integrated place and wellbeing policy at a strategic level.
3. Create community led, neighbourhood based greenspace initiatives which bring inward investment and accessible opportunities to become healthier and happier.

In order to achieve our objectives we will:

- Continue the development of the Active Burnley Forum ensuring members feel a connection to the vision and know how their work makes a positive difference to the lives of local people.
- Connect the Outdoor Town vision to Burnley's Year of Culture in 2027 so that local people, partners and the creative sector see the role of Outdoor Town in the delivery of cultural activities.
- Deliver the Climate Action Fund partnership work, linking physical activity in the outdoors to nature and work which protects and nurtures our environment.
- Host the Naturemind conference in 2025 at Towneley Hall, exploring the latest research and best practice in nature-based social prescribing.
- Work with Forum partners to deliver a guided walk programme across the borough.
- Provide opportunities for local people to plant and care for 10,000 trees.
- Deliver British Cycling's Limitless programme locally; providing inclusive cycling opportunities for people, regardless of age, impairment and ability.
- Deliver the Outdoor Town Explorers programme using Ernest Cook funding to provide outdoor family learning opportunities.
- Continue the development of the Outdoor Town website as a tool for local people to connect to opportunities to be active, enjoy nature and care for the environment.
- Continue to work with a range of statutory and voluntary sector partners will work together to organize high quality activities in the outdoors.
- Deliver the Beat the Street programme in 2025 and work together to secure funding for further delivery in 2027.

During the first three years we will continue to develop our action plan as a partnership and develop ways to evaluate our work in a meaningful and impactful way to direct the route ahead.



CASE STUDY

FRIENDS BY THE WATER

Our Outdoor Town plays a pivotal role in the social group; Friends by the Water. Working in partnership, Outdoors 4 All Together and the Canal and River Trust offer a dementia friendly, inclusive social group at the side of the canal.

The session is extremely relaxed and allows natural flow of conversations, interests and time with no pressure to do anything they don't want to do. Activities vary each week and can include gentle mobility, conversation, reminiscence, crafts, cooking and snacks, all based outdoors. Activities are user-led, based on the needs and interests of those attending.

Offering a safe space for everyone these sessions can reduce social isolation, provide support for people living with dementia and their carers and improve positive mental health.



WHY OUTDOOR TOWN?

Burnley – our Outdoor Town, is our greatest asset. From our town centre high street up into the hills beyond; it is our place. Our outdoor spaces, whether they are green or blue, offer each and everyone of us the opportunity to live a healthier and happier life. These spaces attract visitors from far and wide bringing prosperity to the borough. They are award winning spaces. The things that take place there are also award winning and make a positive difference to people's lives.

There is a growing body of evidence, at local, national and international level, around the benefits of spending time in the outdoors. With the wealth of outdoor spaces around Burnley we are perfectly positioned to use these assets to achieve our vision of a place where the choice to be active is easy, attractive and enjoyable.



With our ambitious approach to partnership working and the alignment of our plans with current good practice along with local and national policy we can work together to support the delivery of:

Burnley's Local Plan

burnley.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Strategic-Plan-2024-Final.pdf

Burnley's Green Infrastructure Strategy

burnley.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/GI-Strategy-Report.pdf

Burnley's Cultural Framework

blcgroup.co.uk/app/uploads/2024/02/Our-People-Our-Culture-Burnley-Framework-Final-Web-Version.pdf

Every Move - Sport England's Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan

sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/sustainability?section=every_move_-_our_strategy

Sport England's Uniting the Movement Vision

sportengland.org/about-us/uniting-movement

Nature North – Investing in Nature for The North

naturenorth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Nature-North-Investing-In-Nature-For-The-North.pdf

National Trust – People and Nature Thriving

nationaltrust.org.uk/who-we-are/our-strategy

NHS Long Term Plan

england.nhs.uk/publication/the-nhs-long-term-plan

Lancashire's Public Health Strategy 2024-2030

lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/public-health/public-health-strategy



OUTDOORTOWN.UK

