Bristol City Council

Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy

Symposium Feedback Report

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1   Introduction

1.1   Event Details

The Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Symposium comprised three elements; the Strategy Overview, a Panel Discussion and a Group Workshop.

The Strategy Overview outlined the overarching vision towards 2040; '*to enable all the people of Bristol to create a sustainable, inclusive and growing economy from which all will benefit*'. Following this, the Panel Discussion began with presentations from the following guest speakers:

- Sado Jirde, Black South west network CEO
- Eve Szczelkun, Bristol City Youth Mayor
- Ian Townsend, CEO of Bristol Green Capital Partnership
- Sally Melvin, Chief Executive, Ablaze Bristol
- Tom Bridges, Arup

These offered a wide range of differing viewpoints on Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. The audience then posed questions to which the panellists would respond. The Group Workshop element gathered views and ideas on the strategy objectives highlighted and the preferred implementation. Time was allocated to discuss the following 6 topics:

1. Placing people at the heart of investment
2. Developing high quality places
3. Delivering Homes
4. Providing an environment 'Open for Business'
5. Creativity and Innovation
6. Transport and Digital Connectivity

Broader outcomes included: Work in Partnership, Sustainability, Health and wellbeing resilience, Education, Social Mobility and Opportunity for Everyone. Key recommendations, projects and initiatives related to the strategy were noted by table facilitators and are distilled below.

1.2   Organisations Attended

Representatives of the following councils attended the event:

- Bristol City Council
- North Somerset Council
- South Gloucestershire Council

There were also attendees from the following organisations:

- Ablaze
- Ashley Community Housing
- Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner

- Big Lottery Fund
- Black South West Network
- Boomsatsuma
- Brigstowe
- Bristol City Youth Council
- Bristol Credit Union
- Bristol Energy Network
- Bristol Green Capital Partnership CIC
- Bristol is Open
- Business West
- BWB
- Cabot Learning Federation
- Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Community Innovation Fund
- Copper Consultancy
- Creative Youth Network
- Engine Shed
- Environment Agency
- The Future Economy Group
- Get Started Programme
- Hartcliffe and Withywood Ventures
- Invest Bristol and Bath
- KPMG
- Locality
- Mutually Inclusive Partnerships
- Operation Black Vote
- Police and Crime Commission
- Power to Change
- Prince's Trust
- South West Trades Union Congress
- Spike Island
- UK Parliament (MP Kerry McCarthy)
- Unison
- University of Bristol
- Voscur
- West of England Combined Authority

2 Workshop Feedback

2.1 Table 1 – Facilitator: Duncan Laird

2.1.1 Six Priorities

1. **The purpose of the strategy should be to create a fairer, more prosperous and inclusive Bristol that champions the city**. The high level of ambition required may be inspired by local and international case studies and projects.
2. **Local assets should be used**; **local knowledge, community leaders and networks**. Support should be provided via both direct investment in community groups and supporting groups to access funding.
3. **Local financial retention and recycling should be encouraged**. Opportunities to source, recycle and retain benefits in the local area should be investigated. The Strategy should assess and consider use of less traditional means of financing such as crowd funding, peer to peer, micro loaning, and upfront capital to deliver long-terms benefits
4. **Success shouldn't be measured by simple, coarse outputs such as number of jobs or GVA**. There is a need for greater intelligence and outcomes focused on shaping and driving positive behaviours to deliver the right jobs and prosperity/productivity in the right sectors and levels.
5. **Cultures and values of influential companies and organisations in Bristol should be addressed.** The Strategy should consider pledges/accreditations to underpin this approach (for both the public and private sector).
6. **Creativity and innovation need to be accurately defined.** Digitalisation and Aerospace do not need to be the focus. Innovation can be 'how you approach things in a way that benefits the community' for example through local cultural activities. The Strategy should celebrate and capture benefits of improved culture.

2.1.2 General Comments

Education
- Educational attainment should be measured with a broader lens; the current output-driven focus does not lend itself to supporting those not destined to achieve A-C grades. This must be adapted to encourage behaviours from educators to aid those of a less academic inclination.
- Retention of UWE/Bristol graduates must be increased.

Strategy
- Actions should be split into; short-term/quick wins, medium-term and long-term.
- Bespoke yet comprehensive approach should be employed; sector-by-sector analysis would offer value but the strategy must be holistic 'to include a broader and bigger approach'.
- Key challenges require institutional, system and cultural change at all levels.

- Sustainability should be included in the vision statement.
- Inspiration should be drawn from the London Plan
- Robust governance to progress inclusive agenda in the city needed.
- The policy should focus on basic process issues. 'It doesn't all have to be red ribbon-cutting and digital'.
- The Maslow hierarchy of needs should be considered; a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental needs first and the need for the fulfilment of potential at the top. In order, the needs are: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization.

Economic policy
- Trickle-down economics has failed
- LEP is focused on GVA rather than the type and health of the growth that is being created
- Grant dependency needs to be broken, financial sustainability is required.

Housing
- Affordable housing of high quality needed

Bristol-specific
- Local people and groups are doing a lot of good work and should be recognised and celebrated
- Celebrate the diverse mix in Bristol - a massive plus point of the city.

2.2 Table 2 – Facilitator: Linda Taylor

2.2.1 Six Priorities

1. **Young people need to be empowered.** Linking businesses (especially community-led businesses) to young people can enable young people to develop skills and behaviours that will match businesses needs in Bristol. Participants noted both the need for Third sector involvement and also more focus on pre-16 career aspirations and confidence to achieve this.
2. *'Open for Business' requires more nuance; third sector involvement, community-led businesses and addressing in-work poverty are key to ensuring a more inclusive business environment.* Participants felt that there was excessive labelling of communities as 'disadvantaged' or 'hard-to reach' and that barriers to improving wellbeing needed to be addressed.
3. **Better use should be made of existing structures and philanthropic investment such as the Bristol Pound; Invest in Bristol or Bath and access to Big Lottery Fund.** This could contribute to improved social infrastructure to create businesses and job opportunities to generate income.
4. **Compulsory Purchase Orders from developers, scaling-up of community-led housing and more community-engaged housing is necessary to address insufficient allocation of social housing and housing developments that are slow to materialise.**
5. **There may be a need to provide more dedicated student student accommodation to alleviate pressure on private sector housing.**
6. **There should be greater focus on developing innovative young people and facilitating career opportunities in more traditional sectors (such**

as retail, catering and social care) as alternatives to university. Under-16s feel disengaged and changes need to be made to support young people in developing the skills required for businesses.

2.2.2   General Comments

Strategy

- B Corps were seen as 'expensive' and 'elite' and thus uninclusive. Is there a way of involving disadvantaged residents?
- How can Engine Shed be used to build bridges with others?
- More use of Knowle West Media Centre should be made to address people living in isolation.

2.3   Table 3 – Facilitator: Joanna Rowelle

2.3.1   Six Priorities

1. **Commissioning**. Open for Business is a good idea especially for local supply chains and procurement. Procurement isn't necessarily set up to work in partnerships
2. **Social and environmental value**. Check all policies and agendas against the 3D agenda – social, environmental and economic. Challenge business – where is the social value. City Council should look at contracts, policy and recruitment for the 3Ds
3. **The Growth Hub.** Look at the combined authority and LEP initiative for local purchase and a green industrial strategy. Bristol needs to embed itself in the city's culture and look at its influencers. What are we doing to support entrepreneurship?
4. **Co-creation**
5. **Jobs good for all people.** Education – we should focus on rounded individuals service the community – we are too caught up in attainment. We need to invest in aspiration and make sure "every child" can achieve their goals.
6. **Spatial and aesthetics.** Sustainable walkable environments. Maintain what we have and help SMEs scale up and we have quality key worker housing – look after staff in the services we need.

2.3.2   General Comments

- We need to see action and not more theory as there have been a lot of strategy setting sessions

- Need some focus on the environment and green credentials as it is not coming through enough in the objectives

- Skills and education, who are the main clients and stakeholders?

- People led is a good focus

2.4   Table 4 – Facilitator: Peter Gist

2.4.1   Six Priorities

1. **Initiatives should be 'People-led' instead of 'people-centred'.** This includes a focus on engaging the wider community and using people 'on the ground' (local residents) to inform decisions and ensure community engagement in creating solutions.

2. **'Open for Business' was not sufficiently comprehensive.** Attracting companies is not enough to ensure economic inclusion. Participants suggested that target firms and partnerships be used as a 'call to action' to businesses, in place of top-down 'delegation' by the council. Other suggestions included provision of employee leisure and catering facilities at the workplace, the need to go beyond 'corporate social responsibility' to ensure long-term sustainable behaviours across sectors, and a levy applied to large employers to ensure that local suppliers are used.

3. **Training and Education should adapt to the needs of employers and the modern economy**. The current national curriculum was seen as 'narrow', and a more creative business-focused approach was suggested. This included:
   a. Dealing with new challenges (e.g. Chinese lessons for business purposes),
   b. Returning to careers guidance in schools.
   c. Linking training with education providers (possibly through partnerships).
   d. Continuing 'The Works' programme- a Bristol City Council initiative focused on developing job experience.
   e. More apprenticeships and 'on the job' training, especially in emerging R & D industries.

4. **Employment opportunities need improvement.** Improving employment opportunities for people of more diverse backgrounds- including disabled people- is important. Transport and economic inclusion go hand-in-hand, and so there is a clear need for both more spaces for disabled people and better wheelchair access on public transport.

5. **The public sector needs more creativity and innovation.** 'Intrapreneurship and opportunity creation' within council offices and avoiding strict hierarchical structures are important for capitalising on the city's creative potential.

6. **Housing policies should aim for more than 'affordability'**. Improved access to transport, jobs and training from new homes should be a key focus. Participants noted the need for the council to both question the nature of the new homes (in terms of whom they would serve) and play a greater role in ensuring housing development occurs in an inclusive way.

2.4.2   General Comments

Strategy
- A clear method of delivery is required.

Economic Policy

- A 'Bristol Development Pound' was suggested. Use of this local currency would only be rewarded to employers with inclusive agendas and proof of maintaining environmental standards.
- What funding will replace the current European Social Funding?

2.5   Table 5 – Facilitator: Alison Murray

2.5.1   Six Priorities

1. **Communities need to be empowered to make positive changes to deal with disengagement and lack of aspiration.** Previous successful examples of this include the Place Based Social Action (Big Lottery Fund) programme, which has effectively engaged with planning and housing growth. This includes both youth engagement and providing revenue sources to support wider community activities (e.g. housing, business support).

2. **The Strategy needs to be achievable, results-focused and build on existing initiatives.** Replication and scaling-up of existing schemes and organizations at a local level will produce meaningful results, but will require effective governance and a bold public sector. A 'one size fits all approach' will not work, since Bristol is 'really a collection of smaller villages'

3. **Better use of the apprenticeship levy must be made.** Many companies in Bristol are paying the levy yet do not see how it is spent. The levy being paid by Bristol companies should be spent on key sectors and training- is there potential for a 'Bristol programme' to use the levy in a specific manner?

4. **To increase employment, the council should cater for SMEs, especially scale-ups.** Cheaper office accommodation outside the city centre will encourage SMEs. Densification of some neighbourhoods to generate population to support local economies was also suggested.

5. **Improved transport infrastructure should be focused on supporting key areas for both learning and work.** An improved approach to buses is needed to link areas within Bristol to each other, and the London model of bus franchising was suggested to achieve this. Participants also noted that It was unclear how the different strategies sit together (Joint Spatial Plan, Joint Transport Plan, UK industrial strategy, Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Strategy).

6. **There needs to be greater provision of homes that are genuinely affordable.** Participants noted that Registered Providers of Housing were not always providing 'Living Rents' homes (that are linked to wage levels). Suggestions included: making better use of publicly owned land, ensuring strong links between employment and new housing, and Compulsory Purchase Orders from Homes England and Bristol City Council to hold land owners and developers.

2.5.2   General Comments

Education & Training

- Continuation of city leadership programme
- Lifelong learning focus e.g. local projects in work zones to improve skills
- Pastoral care interventions to address physical and mental health among students
- Address resourcing and funding issues: loss of European funding, and inflexibility of funding pots
- 'Short-termism' of many projects needs to be addressed
- The Strategy should complement existing programmes such as Big Lottery Funded projects already in place, to seek to help those furthest from the jobs market. Improvement is required particularly in building up basic skills, including through voluntary work and 'On site Bristol programme' (an apprentice 'sharing' programme).

Strategy

- 'Don't reinvent the wheel'. The strategy should not lose sight of existing developments. There is potential for growing/scaling-up of existing initiatives.

Economic Policy

- Employment space: Potential to build on existing models e.g. Southmead Trust where space is provided by a charity / social enterprise
  - Need for cheaper office space and more choice, perception that city centre only offering top end and expensive space which is holding places back – need more flexible approaches
  - Examples of local provision of employment space, and links to charities, communities to generate revenue for other activities (community, housing, business support)

Community engagement

- Important to engage through community groups and institutions
- Necessary to accept that some initiatives will fail. Not all projects/investments are successful. Continuing to deliver an unsuccessful project within restrictive funding environments may sap energy and resources.

Digital & Transport

- Digital connectivity should be a key priority

2.6 Table 5 – Facilitator: Tom Bridges

2.6.1 Six Priorities

1. **Health and well-being should feature more strongly within the overall vision and narrative.**

2. **The strategy should address real pressures on small fast-growing businesses.** Business space availability is a key requirement, and may be alleviated by stimulating provision of lower-cost space in South and East Bristol with links to the city centre. The new Enterprise Zone should also contribute towards this aim.

3. **'Open for Business' is seen as being insufficiently selective.** Participants noted that being open to the right businesses with *the right values and behaviours* was more important, and ensuring that these businesses used the skills base of local people rather than importing talent.

4. **Improved access to finance is required.** Participants suggested peer-to-peer lending, crowd funding, credit unions and a more entrepreneurial role for the city council in investing in infrastructure and business growth. The Council should also attempt to connect start-ups and scale-ups with angel investors and investment funds.

5. **Civic enterprise could play a greater role in delivering social value.** This implies greater self-sufficiency within council services by creating income-generating ideas and encouraging a more entrepreneurial culture within the council.

6. **There needs to be a clearer framework for how the Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Strategy and the One City Plan work together.** This is difficult because the ISGS will be finished before the One City Plan.

2.6.2 General Comments

Strategy

- The vision should be more distinctive and specific, with a strong set of values.

- The Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Strategy will need specific projects and a few Key Performance Indicators.

3   Questions to Panellists

The following questions were prior to the event and were not answered on the day. Please find responses below where they have been provided.

Matt Griffith – Business West
Q1. Deprivation and connectivity Nearly half of the most deprived areas in Bristol are in South Bristol (source: Deprivation in Bristol, 2015 – Bristol City Council). Yet, in the most recent draft spatial plans for the city region, South Bristol has no identified new employment land allocations and few articulated transport interventions – with no weighting given to improving transport connectivity to deprived areas when these plans were drawn up. As a result, private sector investment remains low and access to employment opportunities, particularly in economic growth sectors, is likely to remain limited. What steps do you think the city region needs to take to rebalance its investment plans to give deprivation and connectivity greater attention?
ANSWER: Ian Townsend: The Joint Spatial Plan and local plan processes are really important for ensuring transport investment is in the best places. We have submitted evidence for the final stage of the JSP and will be encouraging our members to engage with the local plan as well, with the public consultation due to launch on 19 Feb. Metrobus was intended at least in part to address such connectivity issues, so it will be interesting to see how this develops once active and what learnings could be taken for future public transport investment in our city.
Q2. Deprivation and educational performance Bristol's education and skills deprivation performance is significantly worse for children and young people's educational performance (broadly pre 16 education), than it is for its skill performance (broadly post 16 training) – with twice as many areas of Bristol falling into the 'worst 10% in the country' category for the children and young people's education performance compared to in skills (70 LSOA areas compared to 36 areas – BCC 2015 data). Despite this, post 16 skills interventions often receive much greater visibility than efforts to improve under 16 educational performances. Given the importance of pre 16 education in determining future life chances, what measures do you think the city can take to improve educational under performance and set a greater level of ambition for the city here?
ANSWER: Ian Townsend: Careers in environmental sustainability and low carbon are exciting and will be growth areas for decades to come. We are encouraging children in schools some of our more deprived areas to consider working in sustainability in Bristol through our partnership with Bristol Works, part of Bristol Learning City. This is something we hope to build on in future. Let's see if we can do more with Business West on this in future.

Paul Hassan – Locality UK
Q1. "How can community anchor organizations (like Barton Hill Settlement, Southmead Development trust, Windmill hill city farm and Knowle West Media) working in the most economic marginalized communities, yet resilient communities play their part in delivering inclusive growth?
ANSWER: Ian Townsend: Community anchor organisations – in spatial, interest and other communities – are certainly important in achieving inclusive and sustainable prosperity for our city and its people. The financial situation is not ideal, but Locality is one of several organisations bringing in important expertise for example of community asset transfer. We are here to help where we can.

Matt Griffin – Hartcliffe & Withywood Ventures
Q1. When you talk about "PLACE FOCUSED - Develop high quality places, communities and neighbourhoods to retain and attract a diverse mix of residents, workers and visitors", do we have a planning policy that treats areas equally? For example, will new housing be for this diverse mix or just reflect the existing communities (ie affordable housing in affordable areas, more quality housing in affluent areas)?
ANSWER: Ian Townsend: We also need to include sustainable housing in the consideration, both at design and build stage, but also throughout their lifetime of being lived in. The Joint Spatial Plan and Bristol local plan policies are important processes to ensure our city and region have appropriate policies for affordable and sustainable housing. There are a range of groups active in this area, for example Knowle West's citizen housing project.
Q2. How will we support SME, especially the very small businesses, to be able to afford to pay a living wage?
A2.
Q3. There are skills gaps. There may not be enough young people or unemployed to fill those gaps, and even with training, they may not be capable of filling those gaps. How can tap in to the potential of people currently employed, who can be retrained? - training with job guarantees / benefit guarantees whilst training? And how can we convince employers that the long-term needs of the city outweigh their short-term needs?
ANSWER: Ian Townsend: The job opportunities in environmental sustainability and decarbonisation of the city's activity to meet the 2050 carbon neutral target go way beyond high-tech: they are across skill levels, notably in domestic retrofit. We need to encourage businesses to engage and investment in

training to ensure all can benefit. We're keen to work with the local and combined authorities and business on this. Most of our member organisations are from the private sector, suggesting they are taking that longer-term view, and we would welcome new members who do the same.

Q4. Looking at the Leeds model, is a focus on growing facilities in the City centre something we want to adopt? Wouldn't improving community facilities help lift those communities and encourage movement between communities, diversity and a whole-Bristol outlook?

ANSWER: Ian Townsend: The Partnership generally has a city-wide focus, but we are increasingly working with community organisations, notably Up Our Street in Easton and Lawrence Hill and Knowle West Media Centre. We'd be keen to explore building up other links too, so please do get in touch!

Colin Nolden – University of Bristol. Question for Briony & Ian

Q1. Distributed ledger technologies such as blockchain enable the creation of 'multidimensional' currencies. Rather than just representing and economic value, associated currencies can also entail an environmental and social 'footprint' of information on databases. 'Mining' could even be based on measured, reported and verified carbon emission reductions vis a vis a baseline using the EMAS tool mentioned in the draft paper. This allows a tradable commodity equivalent to money to be 'sourced' ethically with associated benefits for inclusivity and sustainability. Given Bristol's experience with the Bristol Pound, is there capacity among Bristol City Council and relevant (mission-led) stakeholders to trial the co-creation of such a multi-dimensional currency?

ANSWER: Ian Townsend: It was good to speak to Colin at the event and since. Recent attention has been on crypto-currencies and their volatility, but the blockchain (protected distributed ledger) approach at the heart of these could certainly be used for carbon emissions. It is not something the Partnership has specifically explored to date, but we would be interested in engaging technical experts on this issue to see how it might work, and what the pros, cons and potential impact might be.

Marina Traversari – Oracle Startup Cloud Accelerator.

Q1. For Briony - What specific strategies or initiatives do you know about that businesses in the region are employing to create their own inclusive and sustainable growth?

A1.

Q2. Open for the panel - How do we ensure that our workforce and Boards are reflective of our local communities?

ANSWER: Ian Townsend: It is a challenge many organisations face. Our Board does reasonably well on gender balance (though it is not 50:50), but perhaps less well on other equality measures. We have an annual election for directors to represent our members on our Board, and will encourage candidates from under-represented groups in this year's election.

Q3. For Tom - What are the key lessons learnt from Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy that could be adopted by Bristol?

A3. *(not for publishing, but interested in why the environment does not features strongly in Leeds' strategy)*

Q4. Open for the panel - Inclusive Growth is extremely important to me, and to Oracle and to the majority of employers across the City Region - however, considering it's top of everyone's agenda, why are we not seeing this inclusivity reflected across all sectors?

ANSWER: Ian Townsend: Environmentally sustainable growth is also important to our members, with over 50% coming from the private sector. At the event Briony highlighted accreditations like B-corps, and we have had Go Green in Bristol. I think these can play an important role, and trailblazers can share their learnings with others through Partnerships like ours.

Ed Rowberry – Bristol & Bath Regional Capital

Q1. What is the best way to measure whether we are achieving inclusive growth? Is it qualitative/quantitative or both?

ANSWER: Ian Townsend: It will almost certainly be a bit of both, and for sustainable growth as well. There are so many possible measures for both, and we need to agree on suitable ones for Bristol. The One City Plan process can help, and we should also consider relevant indicators for cities from the Sustainable Development Goals as part of that.

David Jepson – Ashley Community Housing

Q1. The likelihood is that demographic change through the arrival of refugees and migrants will be a major feature of Bristol over the years ahead. How will our inclusive growth strategy build in a culture of openness and access for

opportunity which will benefit the communities concerned and also benefit Bristol as diversity brings the innovation, skills and networks which we need?

ANSWER: Ian Townsend:. The Green & Black project, led by Partnership members Ujima Radio, found that BAME communities are interested in environmental sustainability, but perhaps do not express this in the same ways as others in the city. We have been keen to promote inclusive sustainability, and the Green & Black Ambassadors project with Ujima and the Cabot Institute builds on this, to link up the BAME and sustainability communities with paid Ambassadors. We are hoping to expand on this with a major funding bid soon. Please do get in touch if you are interested!

4   Next Steps

Both a clear vision for 2040 and a set of broader outcomes were presented in the symposium and subject to feedback and questions from stakeholders, whose priorities and comments are distilled above.

We should now consider whether further public engagement is required at this stage- for example from local think-tanks, universities and research centres that may contribute to a more nuanced understanding. A systematic compilation of data (on poverty, demography and the labour market) may provide a clearer picture of issues that need to be addressed, while the potential incorporation of Inclusive and Sustainable Growth 'champion' organisations may encourage progress.

If none of the above is required, then objectives and expected outcomes should be defined for the short and medium-term that are linked to the long-term vision to 2040. Policy options should be assessed, and relevant sectors should be identified for later consultation in alignment with the long-term vision.

Options appraisal would then identify the best targeted interventions. Trade-offs should also be considered, and resolved with reference to key success factors before being validated by stakeholders. In terms of implementation, key factors for success include a clear timeline (with effective sequencing), and realistic resource estimates.

Throughout these steps, it is worth considering requirements for effective implementation and assessing each intervention or investment by its individual merits. While the strategy should be thought of holistically, analysing the effect of individual components might allow prioritisation of policies.

Policies should then be designed that reflect best options and can be achieved within financial constraints. There should be a focus on both synergies between policies (e.g. employment and housing) and urgency (to avoid lock-in of irreversible effects).

Finally, an effective Monitoring and evaluation process is required to create a feedback loop into the design of policies. Impact evaluation and participatory approaches that capture the social impact of policy implementation (including monitoring target areas) should be used to collect relevant data and produce reports that monitor progress appropriately and accurately.