

# Bristol City Council's Alignment to the city's Just Transition Declaration

## 1. Introduction

Bristol's One City Climate Strategy sets out a vision: *"In 2030, Bristol is carbon neutral and climate resilient. We have collectively achieved a fair and inclusive transition; capturing the opportunities of new jobs and investment, improved health, wellbeing and education, and a better environment for local people. We have helped lead the way to a safer global climate."*

It sets out a key principle of the Strategy as Fairness: *"Achieving a just transition is central to our strategy and critical to it achieving successful outcomes. This means maintaining a democratic mandate, ensuring there are opportunities for all to participate in the benefits of change with its costs shared fairly."*

This paper sets out how the council will approach the implementation of a just transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient city in line with Bristol's Just Transition Declaration.

## Bristol's Just Transition Declaration

A [Just Transition Declaration](#) has been written for Bristol by four citizens in consultation with stakeholders around the city. It is not an action plan but a set of 10 principles that everyone working on climate change and nature loss in the city can make use of and endorse.

It has been written to accompany Bristol's Climate and Ecological Emergency Declarations and strategies.

The 10 principles, not in order of importance, are:

1. Centring the expertise of disadvantaged communities at every step of the journey
2. Good future-proof jobs for everyone
3. Empowering disadvantaged communities to take climate and ecological action
4. Supporting individual change through system change
5. Fair distribution of costs and benefits
6. Prioritising accessible communication
7. Standing in solidarity with those experiencing the worst climate and ecological impacts across the globe
8. Building inclusive resilience
9. Infrastructure for all
10. Embedding the process internally and at the beginning.

Stakeholders across Bristol have been invited to sign-up to the declaration to support, endorse and action its principles. The declaration is a living document that will be reviewed as the city's understanding of how to transition in a just way grows.

## Endorsement of Bristol's Just Transition Declaration

On the 5 September 2023, Bristol's Cabinet formally endorsed Bristol's Just Transition Declaration.

On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Full Council formally endorsed the declaration.

This report follows on from this formal endorsement to outline Bristol City Council's alignment to the city's Just Transition Declaration. This will cover:

- Alignment with the council's Governance process
- Alignment with the council's and the city's Environmental strategies
- Internal Communications of Just Transition
- External partnership work

## 2. Alignment with Bristol City Council's Governance process:

The council's governance process includes guiding strategies and plans as an organisation as well as the steps needed to progress the council's Decision pathway report. This section gives an overview of these different processes and guiding documents, and how they relate to Bristol's Just Transition declaration.

### BCC Corporate Strategy:

The Council's [Corporate Strategy](#) outlines a vision of driving an inclusive, sustainable and healthy city of hope and aspiration where everyone can share the city's success. It also describes the activities we must do by law.

It's based on a wide-ranging review of evidence and needs-assessments and was co-created through a series of engagement events with elected political leaders, citizens, partners, and staff from across the council.

This Strategy outlines the overall approach and priorities to take place across the council over a five-year period (2022-27) and speaks to the principles of *supporting individual change through system change* and *fair distribution of costs and benefits*.

One of the five building blocks (which affect all our priorities and influence everything we do) is Environmental Sustainability. Which we define as:

*"Tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergencies while inclusively growing the economy, maximising our positive environmental impacts, and avoiding or mitigating negative ones wherever possible. Build our climate and ecological resilience."*

This ensures that there is always consideration of Environmental Sustainability in all our key decisions, which is demonstrated by the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure outlined above.

Alongside this, one of the seven themes of the Corporate Strategy is Environment and Sustainability, which we define as:

*"Decarbonise the city, support the recovery of nature and lead a just transition to a low carbon future."*

This ensures that the priority areas within Environment and Sustainability are also guided by a just transition to a low carbon future. These priority areas are:

- Carbon neutral
- Ecological Recovery
- Cleaner Bristol
- Climate Resilience
- Global Leadership

### **BCC Business Plan:**

Each year, Bristol City Council produces a Business Plan outlining our top priorities for the next financial year. This stems directly from the Corporate Strategy and aligns to its themes and building blocks outlined above. This shows a continuation of the principle of *fair distribution of costs and benefits*.

### **Social Value Policy:**

The Council's Social Value Policy is linked to Bristol specific Themes Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) which are evaluated in the tender stage and account for 20% of a decision. They include local employment and spend, apprenticeships and school engagement and investment and volunteering with community groups.

There is a specific TOM relating to supporting community projects with an environmental sustainability theme in terms of investment or volunteering hours.

The Healthy and Sustainable Procurement Policy endorsed in 2021 introduced Health and Sustainability requirements with an additional weighting, as defined by the Service Area and Procurement Officers and with an average of 10% for large construction projects.

There is a suite of requirements ranging from biodiversity, waste, clean air, Bristol Eating Better Award and carbon and all originate from either One City, Climate or Ecological Strategy actions or a Government Buying Standard. An internal assessment determines which are relevant.

Carbon reduction plans are requested for contracts above the UK Public Procurement Thresholds, which is currently a scored requirement. Carbon reporting is not required, but referred to in the tender documentation as something we will be asking for in the future.

We are seeking to ensure that reporting requirements support improved performance and are proportionate to the scale of the contract and likely capacity of the suppliers to meet those, so as not to place disproportionate requirements on smaller businesses.

### **Environmental Impact Assessments:**

BCC's Environmental Impact Assessment process is how we evaluate the potential environmental impacts of key decisions. Through this process we decide how best to enhance potential positive impacts and mitigate potential negative impacts, as they relate to the targets set out in the One City Climate Strategy, One City Ecological Emergency Strategy, and Corporate Strategy.

This means we try to understand and quantify the likely effects our decisions will have on the environment based on:

- emission of climate changing gases
- wildlife and habitats
- consumption of resources and generation of waste
- Bristol's resilience to the effects of climate change
- prevention of pollution to land, water, or air

All key decisions are required to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment, with support offered by members of the Climate Change team. The approach is intended to be proportionate to the impacts. Where these are greater, more information will be requested to try to quantify those impacts and understand how to enhance or mitigate them more accurately. The process is intended to be iterative and considerate of the project lifecycle stage of a given proposal, with greater focus on influencing design decisions at earlier stages. Where overall impacts are found to be significant, a summary of these is required to be included in the evidence base of the decision pathway document in order to highlight these to decision makers from the outset.

### Equality Impact Assessments:

Any key decisions taken within Bristol City Council must go through an Equality Impact Assessment.

An Equality Impact Assessment is a way to evaluate the potential impact of our internal and external policies, procedures, activities, and decisions on equality communities and make sure we meet our legal duties as defined by the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We do this by trying to understand the likely effects our decisions will have on people based on their [protected characteristics](#). Plus, we need to consider the likely effects of our decisions on people who live in deprivation and have other relevant characteristics, such as being a carer.

We must then:

- Remove, mitigate, or justify potential negative impacts
- Promote equality if we find some opportunities to, which means taking active steps to help or encourage certain groups of people with different needs or who are disadvantaged in some way

These assessments do not have the same focus on net zero and sustainability as the Just Transition Declaration but speaks to the same values of ensuring decision we make do not affect people unfairly based on a range of characteristics, speaks to the theme of building inclusive resilience and that there aren't harmful unintended outcomes to our key decisions, including those that that are taken to respond to the climate and ecological emergencies.

### 3. Alignment to Environmental Strategies and Plans:

Bristol City Council has a wide range of environmental strategies and action plans that are relevant to Bristol's Just Transition Declaration. This section gives an overview of each of these strategies and plans and their relevance.

## One City Climate Strategy (2020):

The [One City Climate Strategy](#) was commissioned by the One City Environment Board and is supported by a significant number of One City partners. It sets the vision for where we need to be in 2030 based on sound science, giving the city a focus and direction and provides the framework within which we can each take responsibility and work together to transform the city.

As well as 10 themes the Strategy sets out and 6 Enabling conditions for change, one of which is Engagement, culture and inclusion. The next steps identified in the strategy include much which supports a Just Transition such as development of delivery plans to ensure that the perspectives of a range of equalities groups are incorporated in line with protected characteristics described in the Equalities Act and developing approaches to engage with harder to reach communities and involving all within the city in city planning, decision making and delivery of climate action.

*'To deliver a fair transition, we need to make sure that unintended negative consequences are quickly identified and minimised or avoided entirely so that change is accessible and possible for all.'* – OCCS page 21, Enabling Condition 1.

## Bristol City Council Climate Action Plan 2022-2025:

The [Bristol City Council Action Plan](#) gives an overview of the council's contribution to the achievement of the goals of the One City Climate Strategy.

In the foreword Councillor Kye Dudd, Cabinet Member for Climate, Ecology, Waste and Energy states *'The investments coming will improve our lives. Approaching this work with fairness and the need for a 'just transition' at the front of our minds is essential. The transition will just not happen without that'*

Action 53 commits BCC to playing its part in the delivery of the Community Climate Action project, including supporting the new [Community Leadership Panel on Climate and Just Transition](#).

Action 54 commits BCC to Deliver a climate and ecological emergency community grants scheme focusing on community groups not included in mainstream environmental action which was completed in 2022/3 providing grants to a range of community groups supporting the Just Transition.

Action 55 commits BCC to take a lead for the city on engagement with citizens and to do this with a co-benefits approach including improved physical and mental health, reduced air pollution, community cohesion, warmer and healthier homes, lower energy and food bills.

Action 56 commits BCC to Display the Think Global Act Bristol interactive climate change exhibition at the M-Shed in 2022. This had a strong focus the just transition content and outreach community engagement activities.

## Bristol One City Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021):

The [One City Ecological Emergency Strategy](#), was commissioned by the One City Environment Board to confront the ecological decline we face and put forward solutions that match the urgency and

scale of the issue. Alongside the 4 Strategic Goals is one cross-cutting aim – to be Fair, Just and Inclusive:

*‘People are at the very heart of this strategy and will determine its success. That’s why a key focus must be to find new ways for people from every part of the city to get involved with this work and access the benefits it will bring – in other words it must be fair, just and inclusive.’*

*‘Too often, the benefits of a healthy natural environment are not shared equally and we need to ensure that the actions we take are fair, just and inclusive. Everyone has a part to play in restoring a healthy natural environment and everyone should enjoy the benefits.’*

## Bristol City Council Ecological Emergency Action Plan 2021 -2025

This [Action Plan](#) sets out how BCC will deliver it’s contribution to the One City Ecological Emergency Strategy.

Action H5 Communication & engagement *‘To support diverse access to our city’s natural heritage through museum engagement spaces and programme. This will encourage learning and awareness of local and global ecological importance and facilitate research.’* To achieve this BCC commits to *‘Develop focus on engagement with global ecological crisis through the prism of Bristol’s colonial past, to empower across city actions rooted in knowledge of history, diverse perspectives and environmental justice’*

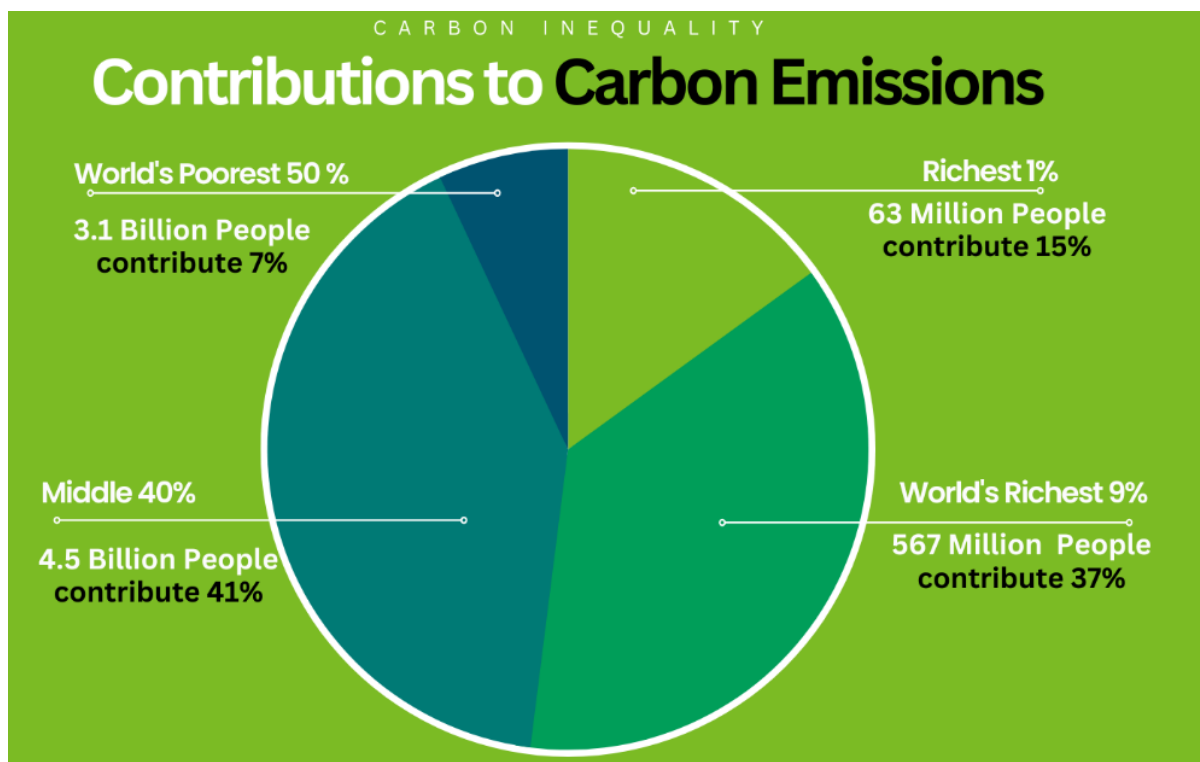
### Sustainable City and Climate Change team:

The Sustainable City and Climate Change team lead on the delivery of Bristol City Council’s response to the climate and ecological emergencies. The Just Transition is a key principle of the team’s work programme and is incorporated into all new and existing projects and programmes and into the team’s work to support services across the council.

## 4. Internal Communications of a Just Transition:

All Bristol City Council employees must complete mandatory climate change training.

One of the areas of focus of this training is ‘human contributions to climate change.’ This section puts a large emphasis on the inequality of the causes of climate change, while also highlighting that at a local level policy must take into consideration how they impact different segments of society. This demonstrates a similar understanding to aspects of what’s needed at a local level in Bristol’s Just Transition Declaration.



**Figure 1: Diagram used in mandatory climate change training to raise awareness of inequality of emissions when it comes to human contributions to climate change. [\[open repository\]](#) graphic by Alex Robertshaw).**

The mandatory training gives learning opportunities around climate change to employees who may not have the chance to engage with climate issues in their day-to-day work. This allows employees to be more involved in the process, be aware of why we take actions towards climate change and provides an opportunity to be actively engaged in our response to the climate emergency.

#### Informing employees on Bristol City Council's endorsement of Bristol Just Transition Declaration:

There will be an internal comms blog to coincide with the report going to Cabinet to inform employees about the council's endorsement of the Just Transition declaration and what this means for employees.

#### 5. External partnership work:

Our alignment to Bristol's Just Transition Declaration can also be seen within the partnerships we are part of. Below are some examples of these partnerships and how they relate to a Just Transition.

## **West of England Combined Authority:**

The West of England Combined Authority puts a Just Transition at the heart of its [Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan](#).

This includes means ensuring the transition to a green economy does not leave anyone in the region behind and also using their position to facilitate a Just Transition across the region.

## **City Office:**

The One City Office is playing an important role in raising awareness of Bristol's Just Transition Declaration through the One City Approach and ensuring partners across the city are sighted on it, and how they can apply the principles set out in the declaration to their own organisations.

The Just Transition Declaration will be an area of focus at the next City Gathering, and the One City Environment Board has reviewed the current iteration of the Just Transition Declaration.

## **Bristol Green Capital Partnership:**

The Bristol Green Capital Partnership has helped drive a lot of Just Transition related work across the city, including workshops delivered to officers, employees, and climate leaders at various city partner organisations, leading on related the sustainability section of a universities led Social Mobility Innovation programme.

Bristol City Council is a founding supporting member of the organisation and has been an active member and supporter of the partnership ever since.

## **Bristol City Leap:**

Bristol City Leap is a landmark world-first partnership between Bristol City Council and Ameresco and Vattenfall to accelerate the decarbonisation of the city.

As part of this public-private partnership, there is a strong emphasis on social value and in particular engagement with communities and the provision of local jobs and training in jobs which will accelerate Bristol's transition.

## **6. Conclusion and Next Steps:**



The City Council has embedded the concept of a Just Transition into its work for some years as evidenced in this report. To embed the specific principles of Bristol's Just Transition Declaration we will seek further opportunities beyond those mentioned in this report. This includes updating the mandatory staff training on climate change to include Bristol City Council's endorsement of the Just Transition Declaration.

The council seeks to address the climate and ecological emergencies when writing and reviewing new policy and strategy. This will be extended to ensure that Bristol's Just Transition declaration alongside climate more generally is included in our policy and strategy approach.

The council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategic Board is in place to ensure that the council achieves its climate and ecological goals via coordinating a whole organisational response to both emergencies. The Terms of Reference of this Board have been updated to include Bristol's Just Transition Declaration and this will be reflected in board's future operation.

The council will also ensure that the annual Business Plan and any new or refreshed Corporate Strategy will prioritise actions and priority areas that will actively contribute towards the principles of Bristol's Just Transition Declaration. The council will also be reviewing its own Climate and Ecological Emergency action plans, which will also consider Bristol's Just Transition declaration in the refreshed version.

The process and accountable body for signing up and monitoring declarations is still in development and the City Council will work with the authors as this emerges so that the council's commitment to the declaration can be officially registered.

The council will review the progress of our endorsement of Bristol's Just Transition declaration within two years.