

**Community
Climate Action**

Inclusive Transport Vision for Bristol

July 2024



Summary



Transport is a significant challenge faced by Bristol. It is a top issue in public opinion surveys on climate action, and an area where progress in terms of reducing emissions has been challenging. Local transport governance is complex with responsibilities split across Bristol City Council, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and the national Department for Transport.

The community climate action project partners know that transport is a big issue for their communities. Again and again community organisations share stories of young people whose life chances are impacted by long, unreliable bus journeys across town to attend college courses, wages sacrificed on taxis to avoid losing jobs because the bus was repeatedly late or didn't turn up, and the independence of older people being limited because they couldn't get out and about due to unsafe pavements and inaccessible transport options.

This is a transport vision with a difference: ordinary people of Bristol are at the heart of it. It is a transport vision that includes the day-to-day experiences of parents, Disabled people, shift workers, tradespeople and carers.

Historically, transport planning has focused on the needs and experiences of 9-5 commuters. This is understandable as these rush hour journeys are the ones that generate pinch points in capacity of roads and public transport provision. However, in the post lockdown era it is even more important to consider the journeys taken by Bristolians at all times of day and night, and how a good public transport system, active travel networks, and consideration for accessibility can lead to increased wellbeing and mobility for all the residents of Bristol.

Jargon buster

Accessible: When something meets the needs of Disabled people.

Active travel: Getting around by walking, wheeling and cycling.

Car club: An organised system for people to share cars.

Citizen's Assembly: A way of influencing decisions by bringing ordinary people together – people who don't work in a job that involves making decisions. They are paid for their time. They are made up of all the different types of people who the decisions are being made for. They have access to experts and expertise more than most of us usually do.

Clean air zones: When people who drive cars, vans, lorries etc that make dirty air have to pay to drive through an area. This means that the air becomes cleaner.

Click and collect: When parcels are sent to a place such as a shop or business near a person's house they can then go and get. This means that there are fewer vans and cars driving things to people's homes.

Climate change: A long term change in how hot the world is and the weather conditions. It is caused by humans and our use of dirty fuels like oil and gas. The heat means that lots more dangerous weather is happening. For example, in Bristol it means there will be more floods, extreme heat and more unpredictable weather.

Community climate action plans: This is when a community plans what to do about climate change. The aim is to make the community better for the people in that community by action that also benefits the planet and nature.

Disadvantaged backgrounds: People who are treated unfairly because of who they are. For example Disabled people, Black people, or people on low incomes.

Dropped kerbs: When the pavement slopes down to the road. This means wheelchair users and people with prams can get off the pavement.

Impairment: Something that is different about someone, like missing a hand or being blind. When they are treated unfairly because of their impairment they are Disabled.

Junction: Where two roads meet.

Learning and mentoring programme: A project that teaches people and gives them advice so they can do something they could not do before, or do something better than before.

Public transport: Things like buses, trains and trams.

Pocket parks: When very small parks are made, for example in old car parking spaces.

Tradespeople: People doing jobs such as plumbers and electricians.

Vision: When you think about how things could be better in the future so that you can work out what changes need to be made.

Wheeling: Some people who use wheeled mobility aids, for example a wheelchair or mobility scooter user, may not identify with the term walking and may prefer to use the term wheeling. Wheeling is defined to only cover modes that use pavement space at a similar speed to walking. It does not include the use of e-scooters or cycles.

Introduction

This is a transport vision with a difference. It is based on the priorities identified in six community climate action plans, reflecting the desires and priorities of communities in Bristol spanning a diversity of locations, lived experiences and perspectives.

Bristol's mammoth goal of being carbon neutral and climate resilient, whilst improving the lives of its residents, especially those most disadvantaged, will require the collective skills, knowledge, energy and collaboration of the whole city. The community climate action plans put communities and community anchor organisations at the heart of this. Each of the plans included a number of priorities relating to transport, many of which are represented in this vision.

While the six community organisations who co-developed Bristol's first ever community climate action plans are not representative of all parts of Bristol, their views bring in important insights that are less frequently represented within city transport decision-making. You will see those community stories and perspectives throughout this document.

Climate action should also be about improving the quality of life for Bristol's residents, especially those who experience disadvantage or marginalisation. That means transport decision making should consider socio-economic issues as a key principle, and put a just transition at its heart. It is essential that any net zero transport policies do not systematically make things worse for people who are already marginalised in the transport system, but should aim to improve how they are able to move around the city.

A joined up transport vision for all

Transport is a contentious, politicised and emotive subject. It's easy to critique and blame, and harder to create. This vision is all about being constructive and amplifying the views of communities who want something better. It is about seeking common ground and acting on it in a joined up and collaborative way, in a context where people can be very passionate and polarised about particular solutions.

Achieving a net zero transport future for Bristol means designing for everyone's journeys. Not just the 9-5 commuter who produces rush hour traffic, but also:

- * **hospitality workers** who needs to get home safely late at night
- * **factory workers** who need to get to work early in the morning
- * **carers** who visit lots of homes across the city in one day
- * **parents** dropping off and collecting children, or needing to bring a buggy onto a bus or train
- * **young people** going to college or university, or on a night out
- * **wheelchair users** who want to travel together
- * **tradespeople** who have to carry tools in their van
- * **older people** who need clear and smooth pavements to feel able to walk to the shops
- * **children** cycling or scooting to the park to play with their friends
- * **people driving lorries** and cars delivering goods and parcels

What are the community climate action plans?

The Community Climate Action Project is an ambitious, citywide programme funded by the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund, and co-ordinated by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership. It demonstrates the important role communities can play in achieving the city's climate and nature ambitions, whilst also improving people's quality of life.

In 2022 ACH, Ambition Lawrence Weston, Bristol Disability Equality Forum, Eastside Community Trust, Heart of BS13 and Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust led an in-depth community engagement process to co-produce their own community climate action plans.

Transport was a key issue for all communities, but they felt that it should be addressed at citywide level not local level. As such, these community organisations took part in further discussions to produce this transport vision, based on the priorities in their plans.

In spring/summer 2024, five more communities (Bedminster, Southmead, Brislington, Hilfields and Knowle West) launched their plans as part of the project's learning and mentoring programme. These also have transport priorities, some of which echo the issues raised in this vision, although they have not been explicitly incorporated.


You can read the community climate action plans at bristolclimatenature.org.

Bristol, Greater Bristol and beyond

The community climate action plans that form the basis of this vision are from communities in Bristol. However, transport goes beyond political boundaries, and the residents of Bristol want to be able to get to any of their destinations beyond the Bristol City Council boundary. Similarly people who travel into Bristol from other areas need transport that works for them and for neighborhoods they travel though. This is why collaborating across city, regional and national boundaries is key.

What came before

Throughout this document we reference some of the previous sustainable transport plans for Bristol. Key documents include:

- *  [The 2016 Good Transport Plan](#), which was made with strong sustainable transport expertise but is missing some of the community perspectives of this vision
- *  The [Bristol Citizens' Assembly recommendations](#) from 2021, which were voted on by a representative group of 60 Bristol residents
- *  The Moving Bristol Forward (now WESTACT) [manifesto](#) of 2020 which had input from over 100 people from a diverse range of backgrounds

Top themes: public transport and active travel



The top transport priorities for all six community climate action plans were public transport and active travel. These were also the top priorities for the Good Transport Plan, the Citizens' Assembly, and Moving Bristol Forward.

The personal stories are fictionalised versions of real people's experiences. Some are combinations of multiple people's experiences.

Public transport

Vision from community climate action plans:

All people in Bristol have accessible and affordable public transport. It works with their needs and everyone is treated fairly. It is safe at all times of day and night. Public transport is joined up and covers the whole city. One ticket is used for the whole journey. The whole journey is accessible. There is step-free access and the access needs of all impairments are met. To make this happen the work is designed with Disabled people's organisations.



What others say:

"Create a flexible, reliable and affordable public transport system that is integrated, simple to use and gets you from A to B on time."

– Bristol Good Transport Plan 2016

"By 2030, make Bristol the best city internationally to travel around, by prioritising sustainable, safe, healthy, accessible alternatives to the car for all."

**– Climate Assembly 2021 (Recommendation 9)
– supported by 89% of participants**

"Ensure more remote and deprived areas are served by public and active transport networks; increase the number of interchanges to support connectivity around the city without having to go via the centre."

**– Climate Assembly 2021
– action toward Recommendation 9**

"Bristol City Council and WECA to establish a disability and mobility working group, with the aim of increasing provision to all areas of the city and ensuring that transport is truly accessible (e.g. enforcing Equality Act compliance)."

**– Climate Assembly 2021
– action toward Recommendation 9**

"Join up transport services to make journeys simple"

– Moving Bristol Forward manifesto 2020

Personal stories

The people telling these stories are fictional - but the quotes are based on real experiences reported by community partners.

Now:

"The railway goes right past my house, but the old station was closed and now the only option is the bus."

– Clara, Lockleaze

"I work in a restaurant on late shifts during weekends. I have to go back home by taxi because there isn't a bus after 9pm."

– Jason, Hartcliffe

"My partner and I are both wheelchair users, but as buses only have one wheelchair space we can't travel together."

– Calum, Horfield

"Because the nursery is on a stagecoach route and my work is on a first bus route, I spend over £150 per month on bus tickets. I am working part-time due to a childcare shortage, so I struggle every month."

– Sophie, Lawrence Weston



When our vision is implemented:

"The new train station on Constable Road has transformed my ability to get to work without a car."

– Clara, Lockleaze

"The buses now run all night, so I know I can get home safely after working late in the restaurant."

– Jason, Hartcliffe

"Buses now have two wheelchair spaces. It makes such a difference to be able to go for a night out with my partner by bus."

– Calum, Horfield



"The new tickets mean I can use a hopper fare that lets me get any bus on any provider within an hour and not pay for changes – this makes my nursery and work journeys affordable."

– Sophie, Lawrence Weston

Active travel

Definition: Getting around by walking, wheeling and cycling

Vision from community climate action plans:

All residents can access a joined up, accessible, safe active travel network, so everyone can get where they need to go easily and safely. Pavements are good quality and people don't block them with cars or recycling boxes. That means it's easier for people to travel by walking and wheeling.

People have access to kit, confidence and routes to cycle safely. This includes wide segregated cycle lanes, cycling training, bike maintenance workshops and bike storage sheds.



What others say:

"Establish a well-connected walking and cycling network."
– Bristol Good Transport Plan 2016

"Create a budget to invest in active travel, with annual incremental targets so that by 2030 it is equal to what is spent on roads, with a dedicated fundraising unit."
– Climate Assembly 2021
one of the actions for recommendation 9.

"Improve walking and cycling to make 'active travel' the top choice."
–Moving Bristol Forward manifesto 2020



Personal stories

Now:

"My life won't function without my car. I can't get to things without it."
–Keane, Lockleaze

"I end up pushing my toddler down the middle of the road as the cars are all on the pavement. Drivers shout at me and I feel unsafe."
–Daria, Easton

"I want to cycle with my kids but it's so scary on the roads, I feel safer driving them."
–Sarah, Hartcliffe

"I wish I didn't have to drive to the local shops, but too many of the dropped curbs are in a bad state, or blocked by cars. It's too risky for me to try to get all the way there in my wheelchair, even though it's not very far."
–Peter, Lawrence Hill



When our vision is implemented:

"I bought an e-bike after a free trial – no more sitting in traffic jams. I am fitter and I have lower maintenance costs."
–Keane, Lockleaze

"Now that pavement parking has been banned, and there are traffic wardens enforcing it, I can walk safely with my pram on the pavement."
–Daria, Easton

"Now that there are separated cycle paths, my kids have cycled to school for a whole term! Next term I might let them cycle independently."
– Sarah, Hartcliffe

"Now I can get to local shops by wheeling and not be afraid of getting stuck because dropped curbs are clear. There's also clear paths for me to get between pavements."
–Peter, Lawrence Hill



Other key themes from community climate action plans:



Public transport and active travel were important to all six communities and the other transport plans. In the community climate action plans some other ideas came up too. The ideas below are important to at least one of the communities who shared ideas for this vision.

Air quality

Cleaner air is important to local people. Good air quality makes walking and wheeling a more pleasant experience. Eastside Community Trust's plan has a priority of improving air quality across all wards, and the plan co-developed by Ashley Community Housing (working with Bristol's refugee and migrant community) has a priority of introducing clean air zones.



Personal stories of Bristol's transport

Now:

"There are so many cases of children with asthma in these tower blocks so we really need a clean air zone on Easton Way"
– Faduma, Lawrence Hill

"My windowsill is always covered in black soot. I clean it away, but I worry about what's getting into my lungs"
– Abdul, St Pauls

When our vision is implemented:

"There far fewer cars on my street since it was closed to people driving through. It's much quieter and it feels like the air is cleaner too."
– Abdul, St Pauls

"The clean air zone has led to much better air quality for my family and I'm happier about my kids playing out in the shared garden now"
– Faduma, Lawrence Hill



Make sure Disabled people have full mobility

Ensure that Disabled people who need to drive can do so, and are supported to do so in a way that is better for the planet. Enable Disabled people to drive less by ensuring mobility equipment is available for those who need to use it (e.g. shopmobility), and reopening public toilets. These are top priorities for Bristol's community of Disabled people (according to their community climate action plan) and affect Disabled people in all areas of the city.

Personal stories of Bristol's transport

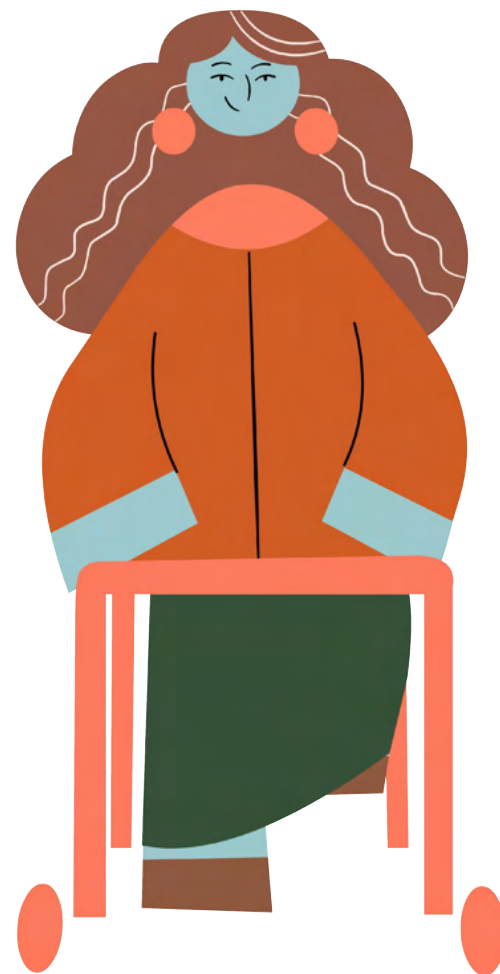
Now:

"Having clean air is important to me, so I do understand why the Clean Air Zone was made. However using public transport isn't possible for me because of my impairment. I wish they'd given Disabled people more support and time to get a car that is less bad for the air."

—Peter, Bishopston

"I feel anxious about walking into town though I would like to because it is really hard to find public toilets."

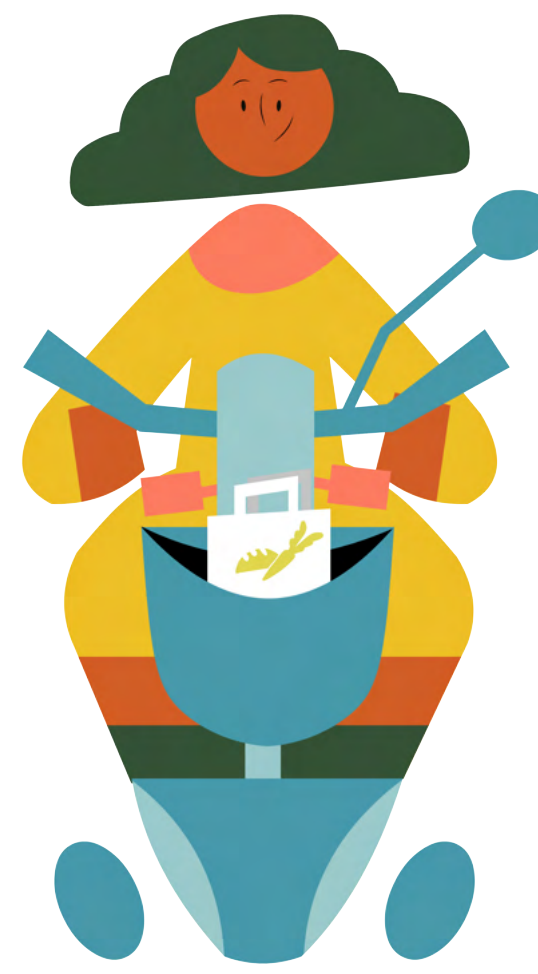
— Amina, Southville



When our vision is implemented:

"Shopmobility has made all the difference for me in town – it means I can get the bus, and rent a mobility scooter for a few hours, and go to the places I want to visit"

— Sarah, Kingsdown



"Letting Blue Badge holders into the Clean Air Zone for longer meant I could save up for a newer car."

—Mike, Bishopston

Local mobility hub and car club

Joined up public transport needs to be supported by other types of transport. For example, a community owned electric car club means people in a street can share a car. A mobility hub is a place where people can change buses or get onto e-scooters and e-bikes. These ideas are in both Ambition Lawrence Weston and Heart of BS13's plans. They are two of the communities that are a long way out from the city centre.

Personal stories of Bristol's transport

Now:

"Taking the bus is all very well, but there's no bus route to go to the other side of our neighbourhood where I need to do my shopping – and it's hard to cycle with heavy bags"

–Jen, Hartcliffe

"I need something to get me to the bus stop or train station as it's too far to walk."

–Kenny, Lawrence Weston



When our vision is implemented:

"I love being able to hire the electric car to do my weekly supermarket shop, and I know the money goes back into my local community"

–Jen, Hartcliffe

"Having bikes and scooters that I can hire right by the new bus route is so handy"

–Kenny, Lawrence Weston



Liveable neighbourhoods and less traffic outside schools

Making our neighbourhoods people-centred rather than car centred is a feature of many of the community climate action plans. The plan co-developed by Ashley Community Housing has a priority to create liveable neighbourhoods and address high traffic outside schools. Eastside Community Trust's plan (co-developed with residents in Easton and Lawrence Hill) includes a priority to reduce the need for occasional use and commuter car parking spaces. Ambition Lawrence Weston's plan includes a priority to create safer spaces on roads for active transport.

This chimes with the Citizens Assembly on Climate recommendation 10, which was supported by 91% of the assembly members "Fundamentally reimagine the places we live so that they are people centred (i.e. create liveable neighbourhoods)".

Personal stories of Bristol's transport

Now:

"Streets are just so full with parked cars and drivers taking shortcuts along residential streets – when I was a child we used to play out all day in quiet roads, but my grandkids have much less freedom."
–Leanne, Lawrence Weston

"I don't want to take my bike in case it gets stolen."
–Amir, Lawrence Hill

When our vision is implemented:

"Now that some of the parking spaces have been turned into 'pocket parks' with benches, I chat to my neighbours a lot more, and the street has felt much more friendly."
–Leanne, Lawrence Weston

"There are lots of safe spaces to store my bike, both outside school and outside my block of flats."
–Amir, Lawrence Hill

"The planters that stop through traffic mean that there's a lot less danger from cars to look out for, and my kids are safer playing out on the street. They seem so much happier since the liveable neighbourhood was put in."
–Clara, Lockleaze

"Now there is a school street at my kids' school, we feel we can walk to school without lots of cars jostling for space at drop off and pick up."
–Jack, Easton



Deliveries management to have fewer lorries and cars moving around the city

Deliveries are a hidden and important issue for traffic and road safety. Particularly now that online shopping is very popular. Eastside Community Trust's plan has a transport priority to reduce local car and lorry traffic from deliveries. This fits with one of the Good Transport Plan's priorities to "Improve coordination and consolidation of deliveries".

Personal stories of Bristol's transport

Now:

"The number of deliveries we need to make in a day to get reasonable pay is so high that it's not possible to park safely"

—Munira, Lawrence Hill

"Delivery drivers are terrible for unsafe parking on junctions and kerbs, which is a worry for letting my children cycle to school or to the park"

—Jesse, Easton



When our vision is implemented:

"I've switched to using click and collect in my local corner shop, which I walk to, for all of my internet shopping – it gets me out of the house, and reduces the number of deliveries. And I get to have a chat with the local shop owner while I'm at it."

—Jesse, Easton



"Now that I'm working for a company that does click and collect only, there are much fewer deliveries per day, with a larger number of items each time. It makes much more sense, and is less stressful work."

—Munira, Lawrence Hill








Citizens' Assembly

In 2021 Bristol City Council held a Citizens' Assembly on 3 topics: climate change and homes; transport; and health inequalities. It was made up of 60 people who were broadly reflective of the population of Bristol. There were five recommendations on transport. These included:

-  **Recommendation 9:** By 2030, make Bristol the best city internationally to travel around, by prioritising sustainable, safe, healthy, accessible alternatives to the car for all.
-  **Recommendation 10:** Fundamentally reimagine the places we live so that they are people centred (i.e. create liveable neighbourhoods).

Under Recommendation 9, the Citizens Assembly recommended the following actions:

1. Reduce the number of car journeys in Bristol, with year on year targets, so that at least 80% of journeys in 2030 are by active travel and public transport by:

-  Increasing provision of affordable buses;
-  Establishing a city-wide bike, e-bike and cargo e-bikes, e-scooters scheme and car share schemes;
-  Transferring 3-5% of road space to cycling, walking and green space every year;
-  Transferring 3-5% of street car parking spaces in the city over to cycle parking and shared green space every year;
-  Developing a school transport scheme (e.g. yellow school buses, e-scooters and more secure bike storage in schools).

2. Bring the buses back into public ownership. Reading buses to improve provision for everyone including a single flat fare (regardless of peak or off peak times) that covers all public and active transport (funding for bike storage) in West of England Combined Authority (WECA) by 2023.

3. Create a budget to invest in active travel, with annual incremental targets so that by 2030 it is equal to what is spent on roads, with a dedicated fundraising unit to support:

-  Funding for segregated cycle lanes,
-  Subsidised bikes (free to people on low incomes/benefits), secure bike storage (residential and in the centre),
-  Training people to ride bikes safely,
-  Maintenance and continued improvements of active travel infrastructure.

4. Ensure more remote and deprived areas are served by public and active transport networks; increase the number of interchanges to support connectivity around the city without having to go via the centre.

5. Bristol City Council and WECA to establish a disability and mobility working group, with the aim of increasing provision to all areas of the city and ensuring that transport is truly accessible (e.g. enforcing Equality Act compliance).

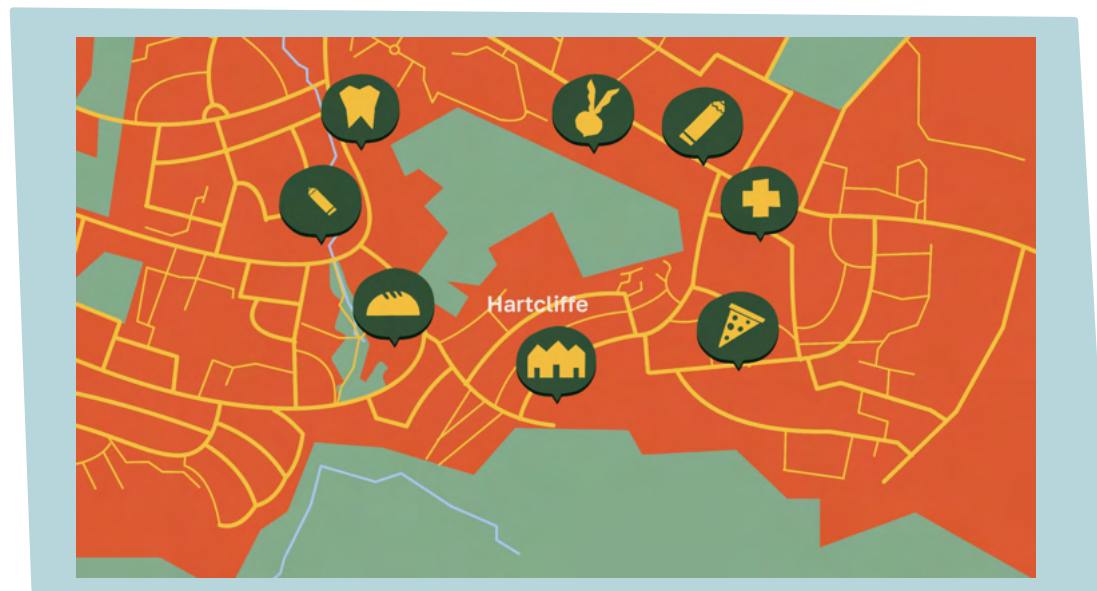
You can read the full Citizens Assembly report [here](#).

Beyond transport

Achieving the goal of 80% of journeys made without a private car requires good public transport and active travel networks, but it is also linked to issues of urban planning, housing and employment.

If people are going to be able to get to where they need to on foot, by bike/ scooter/ wheelchair or by public transport, having the right local infrastructure nearby is essential. That includes:

- **Doctor's surgeries and dentists** - the closure of GP practices, pharmacies and NHS dentists means that more people are having to travel further to access healthcare, while centralisation into fewer and larger hospitals means that people are either more reliant on cars or are unable to get to appointments.
- **Food shops with healthy fresh food** - many areas of Bristol are food deserts with limited access to healthy affordable food within walking distance.
- **Education** - there is a need for good quality primary and secondary schools in every area of Bristol, so that the nearest school is the obvious choice.
- **Places for leisure and connection** - people shouldn't have to travel across the city to access a pub or cafe, football pitch, cinema, community centre or leisure centre.



Better planning within some jobs could also reduce car use. For example if care workers' shifts and visits were organised locally it might be more feasible to cycle from one appointment to the next rather than owning a car. Alternative support for carers to access electric vehicles could be another solution.*

Issues such as increased inequality, lack of affordable housing and gentrification has also meant that people need to travel further to stay connected with family, and intergenerational care networks are more difficult to maintain.

Indeed, not all solutions to issues people have with getting around involve transport, some require a much more joined up approach.



*Clean Cars for Carers: Enabling rural care workers to switch to electric cars — Possible (wearepossible.org)

Conclusion

Bristol's residents want better transport. This vision comes from Bristol's communities and aims to be constructive and collaborative - giving a positive vision of how sustainable transport could improve people's lives.

- Public transport and active travel are the top priorities in Bristol's community climate action plans.
- Bristol's communities want a good public transport system that is reliable, accessible, safe and affordable. The lack of rapid reliable city transport is holding back our city.
- Transport planning must consider the needs of all transport users. It needs to be designed with user-experience at the heart, considering every part of a journey, different types of journeys, and different types of traveller. Testing ideas with community organisations and people with different views is a good way of ensuring quality.
- Mobility for Disabled people, air quality, local mobility hubs and car clubs, liveable neighbourhoods and less traffic outside schools and from delivery vans are also valued and desired by Bristol's communities.

The need for bold leadership is clear. It will take coordination at all levels of government and across political parties, understanding between lovers of buses, lovers of trains and lovers of bicycles, and decision makers actively listening to communities.

What you can do now

As a starting point, if you like this vision, share it - with your colleagues and family, with members of your community, with your councillors and MPs. Let's make sure people know what communities of Bristol want for our city's future!

This transport vision was created by and owned by the community climate action partners. The document was written and facilitated by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership and Praxis.

Thanks to all the local residents who took part in engagement sessions to shape the priorities which contributed to this vision.

This vision was developed as part of the Bristol Community Climate Action Project which is supported by the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund.

Useful links:

[Watch the animation of this vision](#)

[Read Bristol's community climate action plans](#)

[Find out more about community-led climate action in Bristol](#)



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