

BRISTOL'S RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND CLEAN AIR CRISIS

Conference recognises that we face a global climate emergency.

To meet the international targets in the 2015 Paris Agreement, urgent action must be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst outcomes from climate breakdown, disruption of societies, nature and economies and, the worst of which are likely to be felt in developing countries that have contributed least to the crisis, with thousands of people dislocated from their communities and livelihoods. Similarly within the UK and cities like Bristol, the impact will be felt most by those people and communities with the least resources to prepare for and respond.

Conference reaffirms the target of net zero UK by 2045 at the latest endorsed by members at Autumn Conference by the overwhelming adoption of *Tackling the Climate Emergency* (policy paper 139), with the 75% reduction from 1990 levels by 2030 and 93% by 2040 – and more quickly if possible.

Conference recalls that during its year as European Green Capital 2015 Bristol demonstrated leadership among global cities by adopting a carbon neutral 2050 target at the Paris climate talks, and that it has continued to show leadership, through its vibrant environmental business and third sector organisations and cross-sector approaches to partnership-working.

Conference recognises that the city of Bristol must make a significant contribution to emissions reduction, and – given the above – must continue to show leadership within the UK by reducing emissions as quickly as possible, and much more quickly than the country as a whole.

Conference endorses the city's carbon neutral by 2030 ambition, as unanimously adopted by the elected members of Bristol City Council, including by Liberal Democrat councillors, by passing the first climate emergency in the UK in November 2018, since replicated by hundreds of councils.

Conference recognises that while city-wide action will be essential to achieve 2030, it is imperative that Bristol City Council should show leadership in the city by reaching carbon neutrality by 2025 at the latest (current corporate policy) and ensuring that strategies, plans, policies and funding enables the wider city to act as urgently and coherently as possible, and to work with city partners to articulate clear supporting asks for regional and central government.

Conference further endorses the proposals outlined in *Tackling the Climate Emergency*, and its key priorities:

1. Ensuring that the carbon neutrality is built into decision-making by local government, businesses, investors, communities and households, rewarding rapid progress and encouraging changes in patterns of living, working, travelling and eating.

2. Reducing energy costs by reducing the demand for energy through measures such as home insulation and greater energy efficiency.
3. Ending the UK's use of fossil fuels, including fracking and preventing new coal mines and pits, and replacing these with clean renewable energy.
4. Removing emissions from the atmosphere, including a massive programme of tree planting and the deployment of other technological solutions.

Conference, recalling the policy's detailed proposals, endorses the following:

1. Unleash democracy by:
 - a. Bristol City Council acting as if there was a statutory duty to create a Climate Strategy, including local and community power generation, home energy retrofit, local transport and land use plans, with accompanying decentralisation of powers and resources to people and communities within the city, in part by offering the city an opportunity to end the directly elected mayoralty.
 - b. Ensuring the climate emergency is a clear priority for Bristol City Council, including appointing a new cabinet member to focus the response and encouraging all public bodies actively report on how climate risk affects their ability to fulfil their responsibilities, and to work in partnership to deliver the significant co-benefits of climate action in other areas, such as air quality, health and well-being, and employment.
 - c. Ensuring that recent developments in 'whole of city' governance of Bristol are reviewed, with a view maximising the advantages of such approaches while minimising any deficiencies that such a review may identify.
 - d. Establishing a Bristol Citizen's Climate Assembly to engage directly and stimulate public debate on this urgent issue, with a representative group receiving evidence-based briefing about the climate emergency and the range of potential responses, deliberating about policy priorities for the city and their communities, and make recommendations to the elected members of Bristol City Council and/or to the executive.
2. Decarbonise finance and investment in Bristol by:
 - a. Investing in zero-carbon infrastructure for power, heat, transport, industrial carbon capture and storage (CCS) and afforestation.
 - b. Supporting City Leap's plans to deliver a zero-carbon, smart energy city by 2030.
 - c. Encouraging Avon Investment Fund to divest and decarbonise
 - d. Ensuring all Bristol City Council grants and social investment loans in the city are conditional on reducing emissions, and encouraging other funders to do similarly.
3. Decarbonise buildings by:
 - a. Promoting a zero-carbon standard for all new buildings by 2021, rising to Passivhaus standard by 2025, advocating to central government to ensure

- national planning guidance permits this or devolving powers to go beyond that guidance to the West of England Combined Authority;
- b. Adopting a zero-carbon heat strategy within the next three years.
4. Decarbonise power by:
- a. Promoting decentralised and community energy, including setting a target of more than half of households and businesses sharing in the renewable energy revolution by 2030, including requiring all new homes to be fitted with solar panels.
 - b. Conduct a comprehensive review of Bristol Energy Company's viability and value for money, assess alternative uses for funds pledged by the current administration, including the establishment of a 'Bristol Green Investment Bank'.
5. Decarbonise Bristol transport by:
- a. Calling for the conversion of local rail networks to ultra-low-emissions technology (electric or hydrogen) by 2030
 - b. Reducing demand for private car travel by significantly investing in public transport, lobbying WECA to introduce a franchising system for buses in Bristol, and lobbying central and regional government for supporting policies.
 - c. Supporting efforts, in line with *Tackling the Climate Emergency* Policy Paper 139 and approved by Liberal Democrat Federal Conference in Autumn 2019, to stop expansion of Bristol Airport until the aviation industry achieves net-zero emissions and any new and altered commercial development at Bristol Airport must be carbon neutral along with all forms of travel to and from the facility.
 - d. Demand more options for the Cumberland Basin development be put out for public consultation, with reduced-car or car-free options.
6. Decarbonise industry by:
- a. Working with industry to improve resource productivity and promote circular economy approaches in the city.
 - b. Banning non-recyclable single-use plastics within three years and initiating negotiations on an international agreement to reduce the production and consumption of plastics.
 - c. Providing infrastructure funding to accelerate the introduction of industrial carbon capture and storage.

Conferences wishes to ensure Bristol continues to build on its unique history of environmental leadership and partnership-working to reconfigure our city with popular consent. It further notes that the UK's hosting of the 2020 UN climate talks (COP26) culminating in a major international conference Glasgow provides significant opportunities to share our city's experience and learn from cities across the world.

Conference notes with concern:

- A. The dangerous rise in the emissions of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulates, and ozone (O₃).
- B. The impact of these emissions cause 40,000 early deaths each year.
- C. That emissions have serious impacts of children's health particularly impairing lung development.
- D. That Bristol has broken the legal limits, set by the EU, for NO₂ every year since 2010.
- E. That road transport is responsible for 80% of roadside NO₂ emissions.
- F. That the EU is currently responsible for ensuring the government complies with air quality legislation, and that this oversight looks likely to be lost after any UK withdrawal from the EU.

Conference believes that:

- i. People have the right to live in an area with unpolluted air.
- ii. All laws currently governing air quality currently afforded under EU regulations must be upheld in UK law.
- iii. The government must be fully accountable for missing any air quality targets and government policy must support cleaning up the air we breathe.

Conference reaffirms pledges in the Liberal Democrat 2017 manifesto to:

- 1. Extend ultra-low-emission zones to Bristol.
- 2. Require all private hire vehicles licensed to operate in urban areas should be electric, hybrid, or capable of running on other ultra-low emission technology, within five years.

To tackle the clean air crisis, Conference calls on Bristol City Council to:

- a. Replace their own current vehicle fleet with electric, hybrid or other ultra-low emission vehicles by 2022.
- b. Undertake air pollution testing more widely and frequently, with warning signs displayed in pollution hotspots and in sensitive areas such as near schools.

- c. Extend the existing ban on unnecessary idling of petrol/diesel vehicles on public roads to anywhere on public or private land, and encourage Bristol City Council to enforce such a ban, especially near sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals parks and care homes.
- d. Introduce new planning legislation requiring all new large developments and regeneration schemes to have low emissions transport plans, which include electric vehicle charging facilities.
- e. Invest significantly in schemes to speed up the strategic roll-out of rapid charging points and to expand them to popular in-town locations such as public car parks and supermarkets.
- f. Invest in residential on-street charging, using the existing lamp post infrastructure wherever possible so as not to clutter the pavement.
- g. Provide greater and more ambitious support for all forms of public transport and for active travel initiatives involving walking and cycling.

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