

BRISTOL - A GROWING SUCCESS

Helen Holland is Leader of Bristol City Council

Bristol is a fantastic place to live, work and play. We are recognised by government as one of the most successful and fastest growing cities in the country and investment and confidence have rarely been higher.

This brings both opportunities and challenges. Amongst these are high house prices, traffic congestion and the fact that despite our wealth, some of our neighbourhoods remain amongst the most deprived in England.

We need to use growth creatively to increase the prosperity of all residents, and especially to revive our disadvantaged communities. We must ensure that developments are well-designed to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. And we must ensure that growth does not undermine the distinctive characteristics and communities which make Bristol such a special place.

Creating balanced and sustainable communities

Whilst there has already been extensive renewal in the city centre, the task now is to regenerate the suburbs, starting in South Bristol.

Our approach needs to be long-term, appropriate to local opportunities and needs, and underpinned by major investment. Our vision is to create balanced and sustainable communities, where people want to live – and stay. They should contain a mix of housing tenure, with a range of size, type and affordability, meeting the needs of people at every stage of their life so that no one is forced to leave their community for accommodation, or to house a growing family, or to downsize as they grow older.

Homes should be within walking distance of a community hub offering shopping, local services, community facilities and places of work. Where these are not available locally, they should be accessible through affordable, regular and reliable public transport.



Harnessing the benefits of growth

The projected high levels of growth in Bristol provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to reshape our communities. We need to:

- Demonstrate vision, responsiveness and strong partnership working, ensuring that local people are actively involved and listened to in decision-making.

- Work with neighbouring councils and public and private investors to improve infrastructure and shift the focus of growth from the north to the south of the city.

- Avoid urban sprawl by redeveloping brownfield and under-used sites. Ensure good design throughout to maintain and improve our high quality of life.

This will be managed through transparent planning policies, currently under review through the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF). I am very pleased that the Civic Society is one of the many organisations actively involved in the process.

Conclusion

This is an exciting time for Bristol. Over the next 20 years we will be responsible for managing an increase of 10% in the population, over 60,000 new jobs and around 28,000 new homes. This will have a huge impact on current and future citizens, and it is essential that we get it right.

The council's leadership and work in partnership has influenced and delivered major regeneration and city centre projects over the last 15 years. It is time to step up that work. I and my colleagues in the Cabinet will give positive and visible leadership to deliver balanced and sustainable communities now, and to secure them for the future, to make Bristol a city of opportunity for all.

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NEW MEMBERS TO WELCOME

Mrs L C BAXTER
Mr & Mrs J LUCAS
Mr S G PEARCE