



Bristol Climate &
Nature Partnership

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION PROSPECTUS

Community
Climate Action



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to the first ever Community Climate Action prospectus! This prospectus was created through Bristol’s Net Zero Investment Co-Innovation Lab, (‘the Lab’) funded by Horizon Europe and delivered in partnership by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership, BBRC and Abundance Ltd. Its goal is to create the financial mechanisms, governance and infrastructure needed to help citizens, communities and local business to invest in, and benefit from, a faster, fairer transition to net zero.

Inside you will find eight compelling case studies showcasing the potential for community-led climate action to improve quality of life in Bristol. Each one highlights how local action can drive climate progress while delivering meaningful social and environmental benefits. We hope these spark new conversations, partnerships and funding to help bring these and other similar projects to life.



INTRODUCTION



LIZZI TESTANI CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER |
BRISTOL CLIMATE & NATURE PARTNERSHIP

The need to transition to net zero is urgent – to limit climate change, protect communities, and restore ecosystems. For marginalised groups, the climate crisis brings added risks, to finances, social cohesion, and democratic participation. This makes it essential to ensure climate action reduces inequalities, rather than increases them

Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership’s (the Partnership) role is to support our 1,300+ member organisations to work towards the vision of a zero-carbon, socially just and nature-rich city and region. We do this by convening our members, coordinating projects and creating opportunities for action that helps deliver the One City Climate Strategy and a just transition.

One of the Partnership’s flagship initiatives is the Community Climate Action Project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and launched in 2020. Working with Bristol City Council and the Centre for Sustainable Energy, Community Climate Action has supported community organisations from across the city to act on the climate crisis, engaging over 11,000 people from across Bristol’s diverse neighbourhoods and communities.

This has included older people, refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, as well as communities of interest such as sports and the arts.

At the heart of the project are Community Climate Action plans, community-led frameworks developed by VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) organisations in partnership with local people. These plans have set out locally driven priorities on transport, energy, food, waste, nature, buildings, business/skills and adaptation and resilience, with communities having ownership over the action they wish to take.



DEFINITIONS

NET ZERO

Net-zero emissions are achieved when human-caused GHG emissions are reduced by at least 90% and any residual emissions are neutralised.

– Science Based Targets Initiative

JUST TRANSITION

A just transition aims to bring about fairer outcomes as the world transitions to net zero carbon emissions, maximising the benefits of climate action and minimising the negative impacts for workers and their communities.

– LSE Grantham Institute

NATURAL CAPITAL

Natural capital is the value of everything that comes from nature – soil, air, water and all living creatures. Natural capital gives people the essential means for life. It supports society and the economy.

– European Investment Bank

The Partnership's CCA project is just one part of Bristol's thriving ecosystem that nurtures and develops community and VCSE sector agency and leadership, alongside Voscur (Bristol's local support and development agency for voluntary, community & social enterprise organisations), Bristol Energy Network (a membership organisation that works with communities to help them accelerate the just energy transition), Quartet Community Foundation (the local community foundation for the region, helping communities thrive and improve the lives of people who live here), Bristol Energy Cooperative (who develop renewable energy projects with and for the community), Bristol City Leap (an innovative partnership between Bristol City Council and Ameresco UK which will accelerate green energy investment in Bristol and help towards decarbonising the whole city), and Black South West Network (a Black-led organisation that supports the development of Black and Minoritised communities, businesses, and organisations whilst challenging systemic barriers). These are just a few of the large number of organisations contributing to Bristol's One City Approach.

Through CCA, Bristol communities are demonstrating their ability to:

- Bring benefits to local people through climate and nature action designed by and for communities;
- Strategically shape climate and nature initiatives to minimise risks, improve design and support a just transition through diverse insights and lived experience; and,
- Strengthen valuable local assets by attracting investment that increases resilience.

The case studies that follow provide compelling examples of the potential for the VCSE sector to contribute to net zero delivery via community-led climate action. Developing new financial tools and mechanisms to support and attract funding for these types of projects will be crucial for a just transition, ensuring that our journey to net zero creates new wealth and resilience in communities.

We hope this prospectus provides a conversation starter and we would love to hear from funders and partners looking to:

- Support local supply chains;
- Create new opportunities for local employment, and secure social and environmental benefits in Bristol's communities;
- Extend communal use and ownership of new assets through models such as social enterprise, as part of Bristol's just transition; and,
- Deliver upon their social value and Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) commitments.

To discuss this opportunity please get in touch with us: contact@bristolclimatenature.org



MARTIN FODOR CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE | BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

I am proud that Bristol City Council has been a key partner supporting the development of Community Climate Action Plans, and in the creation of this prospectus to help accelerate their implementation. I see community led action as key to achieving the city's climate goals, complementary to, and supported by, action at city, regional and national levels.

The projects contained in this prospectus demonstrate the ambition of Bristol's communities to lead practical projects that reduce emissions and improve residents' quality of life. They also demonstrate the entrepreneurial spirit of community organisations in the city, willing to develop projects and work with a range of funders and investors to realise their ambitions.

This prospectus provides an illustration of the range of opportunities which exist in the city, with dozens more like them. I am committed to helping community organisations realise these opportunities and the council is working to achieve this. Council resources are very limited and so we are particularly focusing on how we enable community organisations to secure funding and investment and are supporting that through the Net Zero Investment Co-Innovation Lab and the Mission Net Zero Project.





TOM BEALE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ASSOCIATE | COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN CLIMATE ACTION

Thousands of citizens across the city have contributed to the creation of CCA plans – outlining grassroots priorities for community-led action on climate change and nature recovery.

These plans provide a mandate for community organisations to take action in the face of climate and ecological crises that risk our health, living standards and economy – but more importantly, they put social justice at the heart of the response.

This prospectus builds on the strong foundation of CCA, tying together climate change and social justice to create proposals which support viable and impactful solutions to both, shaped by the needs of communities.

There is precedent for this in Bristol. For decades, communities and community-led social enterprises here have played a leading role in creating innovative, equitable, and just solutions to the climate crisis.

The Bristol Wood Recycling Project has been redirecting waste wood from landfills since 2004, providing affordable, salvaged timber to local communities, and rescuing over seven thousand tonnes of wood.

Bristol Energy Cooperative was formed in 2011 with a mission to increase local clean energy generation, and, partnering with local community centres, simultaneously build resilience into the foundations of our communities. In housing, the Ashley Vale Action Group was formed in 2000 to create a socially and ecologically sustainable community in an old scaffolding yard, demonstrating how housing can vastly improve outcomes for communities and people.

These projects and others have been successful not simply in terms of social impact but have also created financially viable business models powered by the support and investment from the communities they have sprung from.

To date, Bristol Energy Cooperative has invested over £13.4 million from over 2,000 members into renewable energy assets with a peak capacity of over 12 megawatts – enough to power 3,500 typical homes. These assets are held in community ownership, so the community and the city benefit from the investments over the long term.

In 2018, Bristol Wood Recycling Project raised community bonds from hundreds of investors to secure a permanent home, and in 2025 has paid off this investment on schedule.

Community-led schemes have also been crucial innovators, whether facilitating investment into community centres, in distributing surpluses through grants to support other projects to share in their successes or contributing to models that are replicated elsewhere such as for community owned renewable energy or community-led housing.

More recently, Ambition Community Energy's community owned 4.2 MW wind turbine demonstrates that the ambitions of the sector are sky high, viable and backed by sound business sense, skill, and experience.

The successes of the community-led net zero sector have not been in isolation. These projects have grown and developed within a strong ecosystem of support in Bristol.

LET'S HARNESS OUR COLLECTIVE WISDOM, EXPERIENCE, AND RESOURCES TO ADVANCE PROJECTS LIKE THESE FOR A JUST TRANSITION.

These successful enterprises have worked hard to engage their communities and build support from the grassroots. They have drawn heavily on the voluntary capacity of their members, supporters, and trustees. They have relied on the willingness of a local authority to work in partnership and experiment, to help them take advantage of the opportunities for action.

And to achieve their ambitions, they have also utilised every imaginable form of finance – charitable grants, impact investment, community shares, crowdfunding, joint ventures, and public investment partnerships.

Yet substantial barriers remain. Despite strong progress in industry standards and training for domestic retrofit, the commercial retrofit sector remains expensive and variable in its quality and approach. The community sector remains slower than private business to exploit new markets such as emerging markets in Natural Capital — not from a lack of skill but from a desire to do it with integrity, and to build community support along the way.

Finance remains the biggest barrier, and while there are now multiple different funding streams available to VCSE sector organisations, they may not be enough – or be accessible and flexible enough – to deliver both decarbonisation and greater affordability, especially for larger, more complex community buildings. The decarbonisation of the community 'estate' is a once-in-a-lifetime redesign of how our buildings are used and maintained; perhaps the financial solutions need to reflect the longer term thinking already demonstrated by communities.

This prospectus aims to kick-start a new conversation in Bristol about how we support and invest in community-led climate action. The proposals range from building retrofit to nature capital, from local flower growing to renewable energy, but each is grounded in local needs, and each offers powerful additional benefits and social value.

Let's harness our collective wisdom, experience, and resources to advance projects like these for a just transition.



KEY TO SOCIAL VALUE IMPACTS



ECONOMY AND JOBS

Boosts employment opportunities and economic prosperity for local people



EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Provides opportunities for learning, both for its own sake and to increase employability



HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Improves physical and mental health for local people



BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

Protects and/or enhances nature at a local level



REDUCED POVERTY

Supports people to be lifted out of economic or social poverty



HEALTHY EATING AND FOOD QUALITY

Contributes to the accessibility of good quality food



COMMUNITY FACILITIES & ASSETS

Supports the creation or maintenance of spaces for communities



STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Supports the growth of resilient local networks and social bonds

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION THEMES



TRANSPORT



FOOD



NATURE



WASTE & RESOURCES



ENERGY



BUSINESS & SKILLS



HOMES & BUILDINGS



ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE

PROJECTS



DECARBONISING THE FARM

Windmill Hill City Farm

Windmill Hill City Farm is the second oldest city farm in the country. It was established in 1976 by local people inspired to bring experiences of farming and the environment to a 4.5-acre plot in the heart of South Bristol.

Almost 50 years later, the farm is a much-loved asset at the heart of the community, supporting people from across Bristol to live active, healthy, and fulfilled lives in a friendly, sustainable neighbourhood. It has over 200,000 visits annually; directly benefits thousands through outdoor learning, health, and social care programmes; engages over 500 staff and volunteers; and provides venues for groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, art therapy groups, antenatal classes, NHS training, dementia groups and a woman-only football team.

Windmill Hill City Farm is inherently an environmentally conscious organisation and is committed to contributing towards tackling the climate crisis by becoming **net zero by 2030**. The farm recently completed a carbon audit demonstrating existing carbon emissions to be in the region of 101.6 tCO₂e, with 89% of emissions coming from energy use – primarily from space heating.

However, energy bills have also more than doubled in recent years, equivalent to the cost of a full-time post that could support the farm’s charitable mission. The farm has therefore developed a strategy to decarbonise its operations, reduce carbon emissions and running costs. At the same time, the farm will use the project to build on its educational and community work including the recently published Bedminster Community Climate Action Plan, to increase public understanding of climate change and support the community to take action.

The farm site in Bedminster has developed organically, with buildings added and adapted over the last 50 years. It includes 10 buildings of different ages, construction types and uses, heated through 6 gas boilers, 8 electrical heaters and a solar PV array. Technical feasibility studies building on the 2024 baseline carbon footprint assessment have indicated a strategy for a site-wide refurbishment of the farm’s energy use, including energy efficiency measures, low carbon heating systems, and on-site renewable energy generation.

At a cost of approximately £450,000, the revised energy strategy seeks to reduce the farm’s carbon emissions by up to 50% and save £20,000 in utility costs annually.



The strategy proposes connecting two buildings to Bristol’s District Heat Network which passes through the farm site; retrofitting air source heat pumps to four buildings; and installation of six separate solar PV arrays adding 21,000kW to the farm’s existing solar generation. At a cost of approximately £450,000, the revised energy strategy seeks to reduce the farm’s carbon emissions by up to 50% and save £20,000 in utility costs annually.

At the same time as reducing its own carbon impact, the farm will set out to inspire and support community action on climate change, creating an energy education hub by renovating a two-storey hay barn in the centre of the site. The farm would run climate action workshops in a large upstairs space, offer interactive educational activities downstairs and demonstrate different renewable energy generation techniques and energy efficiency home improvements. At a cost of £200,000, it will be in a prime position to take advantage of the farm’s high footfall, create learning opportunities and generate earned income.

“We have seen first-hand at Quartet Community Foundation how important trusted, local community organisations are in fostering connected, fair and green communities and believe that community climate action plans represent a real opportunity for community-driven, inclusive action in our region. We know that, alongside other forms of investment, philanthropic funding through funders like Quartet will be needed to make these plans a reality, and we’re keen to support this work however we can.”

Lucy Gilbert
Head of Research & Learning | Quartet Community Foundation

PROJECT DETAILS

THEME
Homes & Buildings Energy
INVESTMENT TARGET
£450,000 (blended finance)
ESTIMATED PAYBACK PERIOD
23 years
ESTIMATED CARBON SAVINGS
72 tCO ₂ e over 10 years

SOCIAL IMPACT CHECKLIST

 ECONOMY & JOBS	 EDUCATION & SKILLS	 HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH	 BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM
 REDUCING POVERTY	 HEALTHY EATING & FOOD	 COMMUNITY FACILITIES	 STRONGER COMMUNITIES



ENERGY CZAR

Eastside Community Trust

Eastside Community Trust is seeking investment to increase climate resilience and reduce carbon emissions from their buildings at Easton Community Centre and Felix Road Adventure Playground, paid for through savings in running costs. An investment of £240,000 will enable the refurbishment and updating of existing energy systems, targeting a saving of 50% of their annual utility bills.

The development of the Community Climate Action Plan for Easton and Lawrence Hill revealed the importance of community facilities in times of crisis. Just as during the pandemic community hubs were relied upon to support food distribution, vaccinations, and health and mental health services, planning for the impacts of climate change and energy instability highlighted the need for resilient community buildings able to provide safe spaces and crisis response during extreme heat or cold weather events. This requires at a minimum good quality building fabric and integrated energy systems.

Like many community organisations, Eastside Community Trust has inherited a variety of buildings dating from before energy efficiency was a priority. Easton Community Centre was built in 1989 and has suffered from significant underinvestment in the building fabric and works carried out on a tight budget, which have created more work in the future. There has been substantial investment made into some aspects of the building including being the first community building to get solar panels as part of Bristol Energy Cooperative in 2012. Other innovative projects have been less successful and require substantial refurbishment to bring them into use. Despite acquiring two solar arrays and heat pumps, energy bills across the organisation are still in the region of £30,000 a year.

Eastside Community Trust is seeking blended finance to invest £240,000 into energy efficiency at Easton Community Centre, Felix Road Adventure Playground, and the Raised In Easton nursery.

Eastside Community Trust is seeking blended finance to invest £240,000 into energy efficiency at Easton Community Centre, Felix Road Adventure Playground, and the Raised In Easton nursery. Based on detailed technical reports from Max Fordham and Bristol Energy Network, Eastside Community Trust has developed a high-level strategy for the refurbishment of the buildings, including improving building insulation and airtightness, updating air source heat pump heating systems and moving to more efficient 'point of use' hot water provision.

Additionally, the Trust will contract a specialist 'Energy Czar' to carry out the complex work of consolidating the existing systems and coordinating work to reduce carbon emissions and bills. The role will also produce manuals for the current operation and prepare a business case for future investment across both sites.



“Black South West Network sees the transition to net zero as an opportunity to radically shift who leads, who benefits, and whose knowledge counts in the climate and nature space. Our work focuses on ensuring that Black and racially minoritised communities, often excluded from investment and influence, are at the forefront of designing and delivering solutions that build local wealth, wellbeing, and resilience. Investment into community-led action must prioritise racial justice and long-term community ownership, ensuring that the transition is not only just, but transformative”

Sado Jirde
Director | Black South West Network

PROJECT DETAILS

THEME
Homes & Buildings Energy
INVESTMENT TARGET
£240,000 (blended finance)
ESTIMATED PAYBACK PERIOD
10 years
ESTIMATED CARBON SAVINGS
6.6 tonnes CO ₂ e annually

SOCIAL IMPACT CHECKLIST

ECONOMY & JOBS	EDUCATION & SKILLS	HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH	BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM
REDUCING POVERTY	HEALTHY EATING & FOOD	COMMUNITY FACILITIES	STRONGER COMMUNITIES

ENERGY LEARNING ZONE

Ambition Lawrence Weston

In May 2023, Ambition Lawrence Weston completed construction of England’s biggest onshore turbine. Standing 150m tall, the turbine has a 4.2 MW capacity, generating enough electricity to power 3,000 homes (the equivalent of all the homes in Lawrence Weston itself) and offset 87,600 tonnes of CO₂ over its lifetime. It is also 100% community-owned.

But Ambition Lawrence Weston’s ambitions don’t stop there. The Energy Learning Zone will sit underneath the community-owned wind turbine, creating a physical hub for learning ranging from school/youth visits to practical accredited courses.

Providing an accessible classroom and an observation tower, the Zone offers the opportunity for schools, colleges, universities and employers to inspire students. Visitors will learn how the turbine was developed and what’s needed to ensure a just transition and meet our Clean Power 2030 goals.

The Energy Learning Zone will highlight the vast range of careers and skills required to deliver projects like the turbine, from finance, community engagement and project management, to legal, construction and manufacturing. This demonstrates that involvement in renewable energy projects goes far beyond a single career path and offers opportunities across numerous sectors.

The Energy Learning Zone will be a sister site to the Green Skills Academy which will run from Ambition House Community Centre in Lawrence Weston, and will form part of a proposed city-wide strategy for accessible and local ‘one front door’ energy training, with virtual entry points to energy learning throughout the city. This approach seeks to coordinate training for the full range of retrofit and energy skills required to decarbonise the city, and build relationships with employers so that there is a clear pathway toward jobs.



Through embedding the Energy Learning Zone work within Ambition Lawrence Weston, the project seeks to build on the trust and strong relationships with the local community, supporting people to see the value of participation and helping make the programme inclusive of all.

This includes young people who care about climate change and don’t necessarily know what job/course they will do next, adults who have been unemployed for a long time and need to build their confidence, or experienced and competent tradespeople who could add a retrofit and zero carbon element to their skill base.

“It’s important to highlight the wide range of skills that goes into developing and implementing such a scheme and that they go well beyond the obvious technical ones. I think it would be great to have a ‘field’ space to make this more real. Primary and early secondary school kids need to be inspired early before they choose GCSE and post-16 courses. Older kids and adults could be inspired to see where their current skills could be used or what elements of upskilling could help future job resilience or a change of direction”

Caroline Bird
Senior Research Associate | University of the West of England, Bristol

PROJECT DETAILS

THEME
Business & Skills
INVESTMENT TARGET
£380,000 (blended finance)
ESTIMATED PAYBACK PERIOD
10 years
ESTIMATED CARBON SAVINGS
n/a

SOCIAL IMPACT CHECKLIST

 ECONOMY & JOBS	 EDUCATION & SKILLS	 HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH	 BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM
 REDUCING POVERTY	 HEALTHY EATING & FOOD	 COMMUNITY FACILITIES	 STRONGER COMMUNITIES



GLENCOYNE SQUARE SOLAR

 Southmead Development Trust

The Glencoyne Square Community Led Housing project is one of the biggest community-led housing schemes in the UK, building 177 flats alongside a library, a gym, commercial and community spaces. Southmead Development Trust is partnering with Bristol Energy Cooperative to reduce the carbon emissions from the scheme by installing 44 kWp solar PV on the roof (22 kWp per block).

In 2015 Southmead’s Community Plan highlighted the need to diversify the housing in the area to ensure there were smaller homes available for local people, supporting single people, younger families, and older families seeking to downsize. Building on the plan a resident steering group and project team at Southmead Development Trust were formed. This led to the development of a regeneration ‘Masterplan’ in 2018 and plans for the mixed development of Glencoyne Square as the first phase of the masterplan. The proposals received full planning consent in July 2024. Southmead Development Trust is working hard to deliver Glencoyne Square Community Led Housing, looking to partner with a housing association this year.

Sustainability is an important part of the project. The homes will be well insulated and equipped with mechanical ventilation with heat recovery units, increasing their energy efficiency, and the Trust will be planting more trees and wildlife-friendly plants. However, the original plans did not include onsite renewable energy generation, and the Trust is seeking to take advantage of over 1,400m2 of roof space available to install solar PV.

The best way to save money from solar PV is to use it on site, so the solar will be linked to the community and commercial units which will have the highest power consumption during the day, when the sun is shining. The Trust could use the ‘Solshare’ system to distribute power from the PV arrays to the eight different non-residential users on site, who would pay a much lower rate for any solar they use through Power Purchase Agreements.

The solar array will generate 37 MWh annually, saving £24,300 in energy bills over 25 years, and generating £5,700 in community benefit.

By partnering with Bristol Energy Cooperative, the scheme can secure social investment through local investors and member shareholders. Bristol Energy Cooperative’s investment will generate returns through direct sales to users and exports to the national grid.



PROJECT DETAILS

THEME
Homes & Buildings | Energy

INVESTMENT TARGET
£52, 800

ESTIMATED PAYBACK PERIOD
Bristol Energy Cooperative’s Purchase Power Agreements are for 25 years

ESTIMATED CARBON SAVINGS
76 tonnes CO₂e over 10 years

SOCIAL IMPACT CHECKLIST

 ECONOMY & JOBS	 EDUCATION & SKILLS	 HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH	 BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM
 REDUCING POVERTY	 HEALTHY EATING & FOOD	 COMMUNITY FACILITIES	 STRONGER COMMUNITIES

“It’s super clear that to achieve the transition to net zero, and to make it a just transition that leaves no-one behind, communities need to be in the driving seat for the changes that need to be made locally. It has been hugely powerful to see anchor community organisations and their communities mapping out concrete plans under the Community Climate Action project. At Bristol Energy Cooperative we’re excited to continue to partner with local groups to put these plans into action by investing in community-owned clean energy projects: creating community assets which in turn generate revenues to support other local climate and nature initiatives.”

Helen Martin
CEO | Bristol Energy Cooperative

THE FLOWER FARM

Heart of BS13

The Flower Farm grows chemical-free, seasonal flowers while promoting sustainable living. The farm is a central plank of the Heart of BS13’s family of social enterprises, offering commercial wedding and event floristry services alongside agroecological skills and training to local residents, schools and organisations.

Heart of BS13’s mission is to improve health and wellbeing in Hartcliffe and Withywood in South Bristol, an area that ranks among the top 10% for health inequality in England, ranks in the top 10% of multiple deprivation, and where residents face disadvantage due to intergenerational poverty. In this context, the charity works on the principle of using a social enterprise approach to close the loop between production and consumption, meeting local needs while simultaneously addressing personal challenges, building skills and confidence, and creating jobs. The Flower Farm sits alongside other social enterprises including the kitchen with the ‘Pay it forward meals’, ‘Closed Loop compost’ micro enterprise running alongside the flowers based at Hartcliffe City Farm.

Local ‘slow flowers’ offer a sustainable alternative to the UK flower industry, which relies heavily on imports (86%), with high carbon footprints and chemical usage. Using natural resources like sunlight and rainwater produces sustainable and seasonal British blooms, creating both carbon savings and local opportunities for training and employability skills. Post-Brexit import challenges, including taxes and delays, have also driven increased demand for locally grown flowers.

The Flower Farm sells into a range of markets including floristry services for weddings and funerals, or direct sales at local markets, alongside workshops and training programmes in horticulture and floristry. This creates wide ranging social impacts including addressing health inequality in areas of deprivation, supporting education and employability, minimizing carbon emissions, and promoting biodiversity and improving soil health.



The Flower Farm is seeking to raise investment of £155,000 to support the expansion and development of the cut flowers enterprise.



The Flower Farm operates from a 1.5-acre site at Hartcliffe City Farm. Over the past three years they have transformed the heavy clay soil using no-dig horticulture methods to improve crop cultivation, installed a 30-metre polytunnel, and built a timber-framed barn, which serves as a space for education, floristry, and events.

In addition they have established composting systems, enhanced pollinator pathways, created wildlife corridors, and developed habitats to promote biodiversity across the site.

The Flower Farm is seeking to raise investment of £155,000 to support the expansion and development of the cut flowers enterprise. This includes:

1. A new Polytunnel and full propagation set up plus additional infrastructure such as plant supports and tools, increasing plug plant production and profits from plant sales plus ability to grow straight flowers for maximum profit.
2. Solar and battery installation and improved field kitchen next to the barn.
3. A revamp of the website and ecommerce platform, including an AI-powered booking system.

Additional investment would be used for the construction of a studio for winter operations and expansion of the flower ranges and floristry services during winter; purchase of a small electric van to support deliveries and events; and investment in equipment including a shredder and mower for improved productivity. This investment will support the expansion of the enterprise to increase social impact and revenues, helping the Flower Farm to achieve profitability within three years.

PROJECT DETAILS

THEME
Business & Skills
INVESTMENT TARGET
£155,000 (blended finance)
ESTIMATED PAYBACK PERIOD
8 years

ESTIMATED CARBON SAVINGS
100 tonnes CO2e annually (60,000 stems of seasonal flowers)

SOCIAL IMPACT CHECKLIST

 ECONOMY & JOBS	 EDUCATION & SKILLS	 HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH	 BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM
 REDUCING POVERTY	 HEALTHY EATING & FOOD	 COMMUNITY FACILITIES	 STRONGER COMMUNITIES



RETROFIT FOR RESILIENCE



Over the past 4 years, Bricks Bristol has transformed St Anne’s House in south Bristol into a thriving creative and community hub grounded in community engagement, occupying 25,000 sq ft of ex offices. Through an ambitious refurbishment programme, Bricks aims to extend this transformation to the fabric of the building, to create a modern, energy efficient community building, and affordable housing.

St Anne’s House is community led by the St Anne’s Action Group, a group of local residents who meet monthly to guide the project and provide direct accountability to the community. The project is host to a wide range of social impact organisations including Ubuntu Play Therapy, Nightingale Valley Medical Center, The Community Pottery, MAYK Theatre, artists, and charities. The building provides affordable, accessible and secular spaces for events including kids’ parties, weddings, Paraorchestra, mending cafés, and yoga. The Bricks team also run a range of projects with the community in response to local ambition and priorities. These include youth sessions, holiday activities, intergenerational Morning Meet Ups, cooking clubs, breast feeding support, and production of the Briz magazine delivered to local households.

The poor design of the building not only makes it unaffordable to run, but it also means the building is less accessible and less pleasant to use. Today St Anne’s House has energy bills exceeding £50,000 pa, yet the building is consistently too cold in winter and too hot in summer. A whole-building retrofit will integrate fabric and energy measures, driving down carbon emissions and running cost while improving usability. The programme will include wall and roof insulation, double-glazing, low carbon heating, PV generation and battery storage, through a strategy focussed on practical delivery rather than maximisation.

The social value and carbon impacts of procurement will be paramount – as well as the final building performance. For this reason, Bricks will engage with smaller contractors in a phased, prototyping way.

Bricks aims to raise £1.5m in blended grant and loans to carry out its retrofit programme, for a target reduction in running costs of 50%.

This will allow them to work with local suppliers, explore more innovative solutions, avoid long periods where the building is not available to its users, and present cost savings through reduced prelims, profit margins, and priced-in risk.

The retrofit programme is the first phase of a wider regeneration strategy which includes:

- New-build affordable housing including an additional storey on the existing building
- Employment space on the East Car Park
- Extensive refurbishment of community facilities

Bricks aims to raise £1.5m in blended grant and loans to carry out its retrofit programme, for a target reduction in running costs of 50%.



“VCSE organisations that are grown and sustained by communities themselves hold answers to major societal issues that, if heard and invested in, could unleash major new possibilities for addressing climate change and inequalities. Our work at Voscur and a range of research shows the power of enabling communities to lead on change. We know that community-led decisions and community-run organisations offer a pathway to a more just transition. By investing in the community organisations within this prospectus, Voscur is certain that social investors will see outcomes that are currently unmapped and unimaginable.”

Rebecca Mear
CEO | Voscur

PROJECT DETAILS

THEME
Homes & Buildings Energy
INVESTMENT TARGET
£1,500,000 (blended finance)
ESTIMATED PAYBACK PERIOD
40 years
ESTIMATED CARBON SAVINGS
23.8 tonnes CO2e annually (55%)

SOCIAL IMPACT CHECKLIST

ECONOMY & JOBS	EDUCATION & SKILLS	HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH	BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM
REDUCING POVERTY	HEALTHY EATING & FOOD	COMMUNITY FACILITIES	STRONGER COMMUNITIES

PROTECTING COMMON LAND AND BIODIVERSITY

 Knowle West Media Centre

Knowle West Media Centre is collaborating with communities across South Bristol to explore new financial and governance models to support community land stewardship and address food insecurity, while protecting and increasing biodiversity and ecological resilience.

The concept aims to safeguard and enhance existing green spaces, improve access to green spaces, develop new green spaces and community supported food growing projects, and to allow communities to benefit from the emerging markets in Natural Capital.

Bristol has approximately 24% green space and ranks 3rd for green spaces in cities across England. Whether for relaxation, connecting with others, recreation, or growing activities, green spaces are essential for community health and wellbeing, with a vast array of associated benefits to physical and mental health, child development through play, social resilience, and associated cost savings to the NHS.

Simultaneously, such green spaces are crucial ecological habitats, valuable and precious in their own right, as well as providing essential ecosystem services such as providing fresh air and clean water, climate control, or natural flood defences.

However, local and national pressure to build homes is increasingly threatening green space in and around Bristol. National house building targets to deliver 1.5m homes over the next 5 years has led to proposals reducing environmental constraints on developers. Locally, the draft local plan proposes a 25.8% increase to the city’s existing housing stock over 20 years. The pressure to build more homes also poses threats to community needs for affordable homes, preservation of precious green space, and development in balance with the needs of the climate crisis.

In South Bristol, local campaign groups like the Northern Slopes Initiative have been instrumental in turning down planning permission for large-scale housing developments with limited affordable homes on local green spaces. New sites for development have recently been approved on Brislington Meadows, despite local opposition, while woodlands in St Anne’s have been sold, and others are up for sale. In some cases community groups have crowd-sourced



significant amounts of funding to buy these sites for the community, only to be undercut by much higher bidders.

In response to these challenges, local communities are stepping up to ensure our natural resources are protected in and around our city. Knowle West Media Centre is seeking to form a partnership with Common Nature to support the community to acquire land as community assets.

This model involves establishing a suitable governance structure, secure land purchase or leasehold with a blend of strategic charitable funding, crowdfunding, and value-aligned investment. Refinancing is based on income from effective land management, community supported agriculture, delivery of training, wellbeing and forest school programmes, provision of public amenity alongside the Natural Capital markets such as off-site Biodiversity Net Gain credits, which provides capital to allow the delivery and maintenance of ecological improvements over 30 years from developers.

“To make an impact on nature recovery, we need look beyond neighbourhood boundaries to put our natural resources first. Nature teaches us that the only way we will truly thrive as a species is through interconnection and collaboration. This is an opportunity for all sectors in society to come together and work towards solutions to protect nature, our communities and ourselves – and is the tip of the iceberg of reforming and renewing our relationship to land in and around our city.”

Annali Grimes
Creative Producer | Knowle West Media Centre

PROJECT DETAILS

THEME
Business and skills | Nature

INVESTMENT TARGET
£300,000

ESTIMATED PAYBACK PERIOD
3 years

ESTIMATED CARBON SAVINGS
14.14 tonnes CO₂e annually

SOCIAL IMPACT CHECKLIST

 ECONOMY & JOBS	 EDUCATION & SKILLS	 HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH	 BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM
 REDUCING POVERTY	 HEALTHY EATING & FOOD	 COMMUNITY FACILITIES	 STRONGER COMMUNITIES

A COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Hillfields Community Garden

Ensuring that the main community asset is well protected for future generations is very important to the people of Hillfields.

Hillfields is one of the oldest social housing estates in the UK. Hillfields Park Community Centre has been at the heart of social and community activity for decades, running essential front-line services and community activities ranging from food clubs and debt advice to community celebrations and after school sessions. Unseen and underfunded, Hillfields is one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Bristol and the UK.

Despite this, Hillfields Park Community Centre is one of only two accessible public buildings in the whole ward – the other being the library which is only open three days a week. However, in 2024 the charity running the building closed the doors and wound up. For decades the building has been difficult to heat, impossible to cool, expensive to run, and vulnerable to fluctuations in the price of gas, meaning that precious, hard won grant funding simply had to be used to pay the bills. With increasing summer temperatures, no shade and poor insulation the community centre is as heat vulnerable in the summer as it is in the winter.

In the face of a growing climate crisis, the centre creates significant carbon emissions. A group of local residents are now working to re-open the centre through local charity Hillfields Community Garden, and are aiming to tackle the issues that plagued the building (and previous charity) head on.

Based on an Independent Energy Assessment, emissions in the building mainly come from an outdated gas boiler, which supplies (some) heating and all hot water to the site. Expensive to operate, old and susceptible to faults, the gas boiler system has now failed and is no longer serving the centre. Replacing the boiler with electric immersion to provide hot water, and then installing a range of different electric heating and cooling units to the building in modular phases, will reduce costs and carbon emissions.

The Community Centre has a huge roof, which is both poorly insulated (losing considerable heat to the outside), and is ideally situated for solar panels to reduce energy costs and potentially generate income by selling back to the grid. The building also boasts 360° external access and is not overlooked or overshadowed.

Hillfields Community Garden are seeking to raise £43,000 in blended finance to allow the technical design and installation of air source heat pumps and a 20kW solar array.

Hillfields Community Garden are seeking to raise £43,000 in blended finance to allow the technical design and installation of air source heat pumps and a 20kW solar array to decarbonise their 660 m² community building, dramatically cutting emissions while improving energy efficiency and long-term resilience. With this upgrade, the community centre will achieve an immediate 90% reduction in carbon emissions, while also reducing heating and hot water bills by over a third, future-proofing the building against rising energy costs. The air-to-air system will provide efficient heating and cooling across all rooms, while solar will generate clean power year-round. The solar array system could generate 11,000–14,000 kWh/year, which would cover a significant portion of the building’s ~36,000 kWh/year electric demand.

Creating a modern energy efficient community building with lower operational costs is essential to creating a community facility at the heart of our community. Hillfields Park Community Centre has huge potential to have a real and lasting difference to thousands living in Hillfields as it provides an important space for community cohesion and protection, creating a stronger community and a fairer and greener future.



“The one thing we can change is how our bills are generated, and how we use the building for an even greater good. Investing in the building to improve its energy efficiency will ensure we can reduce our building’s energy costs, reduce our use of fossil fuels and carbon emissions, and ensure that we can redirect limited funds into delivering activity for our local community which has high levels of deprivation.”

Sarah Rogers
CEO | Hillfields Community Garden

PROJECT DETAILS

- THEME**
Homes & Buildings
- INVESTMENT TARGET**
£43,000 (blended finance)
- ESTIMATED PAYBACK PERIOD**
7.9 years
- ESTIMATED CARBON SAVINGS**
27.04 tonnes CO₂e annually

SOCIAL IMPACT CHECKLIST

-  **ECONOMY & JOBS**
-  **EDUCATION & SKILLS**
-  **HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH**
-  **BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM**
-  **REDUCING POVERTY**
-  **HEALTHY EATING & FOOD**
-  **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**
-  **STRONGER COMMUNITIES**



FINANCING NET ZERO

This Community Climate Action Prospectus is one of several elements of the Net Zero Investment Co-Innovation Lab. The project aims to create new investment vehicles to address the climate & nature emergencies, while delivering economic, social & environmental benefits locally.

Two financial mechanisms developed and launched through this innovative project are Bristol Climate Action Fund and the Green Growth West Fund.

BRISTOL CLIMATE ACTION INVESTMENT

Forty years ago, it was common for UK councils to borrow money from their residents as an alternative to borrowing from institutional lenders such as banks or the Public Works Loan Board.

Community Municipal Investment represents a reinvention of this approach for the internet age. The innovations of crowdfunding and internet-based technology provide a powerful new model for councils to raise money from residents and the general public as an alternative to traditional sources of borrowing. This not only provides a competitive source of finance for capital and investment programmes, but also strengthens the relationships between councils and the communities they serve.

Bristol City Council has been a pioneer of this approach, having been part of a 2019 innovation project with the University of Leeds and Abundance Investment, which developed the concept. In 2025, Bristol Climate Action Investment was launched through Abundance, enabling local people to directly support green initiatives while earning a financial return. The scheme also received a 50% impact boost; for every pound invested by local residents, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation will part-match the investment – helping accelerate progress on Bristol's climate projects.



GREEN GROWTH WEST FUND

The Green Growth West Fund is a new £100m impact fund for the region. It will be managed by Amber Infrastructure Limited, working with BBRC who are currently providing investment readiness services to the region on behalf of the Mayoral Combined Authority, identifying investment opportunities and investment for the region.

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority has provided an initial £10 million investment into the fund, to provide confidence to potential investors and demonstrate the region's commitment to lead on the green economy. The fund is seeking to secure a further £90 million in private and public investment over the next 12-24 months.

The ambitious initiative is designed to invest in the region's mid-scale infrastructure and growth-ready businesses to help them seize the opportunities of the Net Zero transition. The fund could supercharge the region's renewable energy, low-carbon transport and nature recovery efforts, supporting the creation of 9,000 green jobs and helping to generate £300 million of turnover growth for local businesses.

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- The Community Climate Action project has provided the foundations for this project, through the creation of Community Climate Action Plans. This was established in 2020 with funding from the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:

- Community partners contributing to this prospectus: Ambition Lawrence Weston, BRICKS, Eastside Community Trust, Heart of BS13, Hillfields Community Garden, Knowle West Media Centre, Southmead Development Trust and Windmill Hill City Farm
- Lab partners: Abundance, Bristol City Council (project lead) and BBRC

THANKS TO THE PROJECT TEAM:

- Anna Ralph and Lizzi Testani, Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership
- Tom Beale, Social Enterprise Associate





Bristol Climate &
Nature Partnership