PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPATING CITIES

City profile for Bristol

Main characteristics of the town

Bristol is a unitary authority area, located in South West England on the river Avon between Gloucestershire and Somerset. It has also a short coastline on the Severn Estuary.

From the 13th century to 18th, Bristol was one of the top three cities after London and York. Growth and prosperity has been linked with sea. It intensified with raise of colonies and international North America trade.
The city population represents 441 300 inhabitants included in a surrounding Larger Urban Zone of about 1 070 000. Bristol is the England's sixth and the United Kingdom's eighth most populous city.
This age group makes up almost a quarter (23%) of the total population in Bristol and has increased by almost 50% since 2001.
Gross Domestic Household Income per capita for Bristol, 2010 was £13,784.
Housing is composed by 123 500 houses (66% of dwelling stock) and 62 550 flats (34% of dwelling stock).
The most recent data available on household composition estimates that almost half of all households in Bristol are couple households, a third are one person households, 10% lone parent households and the remaining 10% other multi-person households. Future projections indicate that the number of couple households is likely to fall, whilst the number of one person households is likely to increase.

In total, in 2008, it was estimated that around 21,900 (or 27%) children live in poverty in Bristol, 19,700 of these were aged under 16. These figures are not evenly distributed across Bristol. Wards like Stoke Bishop and Henleaze have incidences of child poverty below 4%, whereas Lawrence Hill has almost 60% of its children living in poverty, putting it in the bottom percentile of all wards nationally. Almost 2,300 children in Lawrence Hill live in poverty.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployment rate for Bristol is currently 7.9%, slightly higher than the national rate (7.7%), and greater than the South West average rate of 6.2%. Since 2001 there has been a significant increase in the number of international migrants coming to live in Bristol, particularly Somali communities and Polish residents coming to work in Bristol following the expansion of the EU.

University of Bristol and the University of West of England generate large student population that makes Bristol an attractive and young city.
Key Business Sectors (more than 5% Gross Value Added) that are in order: Banking and Insurance, Professional Services, Health and Social Care, Education, Creative Industries, Leisure and Tourism. Key employment sectors (more than 5% employment) are in order: Health and Social Care, Education, Wholesale and Distribution, Retail, Professional Services, Leisure and Tourism, Banking and Insurance, Public Administration and Defence.
Current share of jobs along food chain is estimated of 10%.

Main characteristics in terms of food and sustainability

The need to look at the food system for Bristol was identified by Bristol's 'Green Capital Momentum Group" in late 2009 following the production of "Bristol's Peak Oil Report". In the report 'Who feed Bristol?" (refer box below), it is said that "Bristol's food system is inextricably linked, now and in the future, with that of the wider region and the rest of the nation".

Who Feeds Bristol?

A large and extensive report has been commissioned both by Bristol City Council and NHS Health Services Bristol. The report carried out by an independent expert draws an in-depth and exhaustive overview of food issues in Bristol as a basis for a food systems approach.

Growing…

Bristol is located in one of the most productive area in UK. Indeed, there are about 5 500 dairy farms that produce 37%of English milk. The region is also home to Yeo Valley which is the leader of organic yogurt in the nation. It is important to notice that the South West contains 38% of England's organic producers. In the UK as a whole 17.5 million hectares is farmed organically equivalent to 4.2% of UK farmland. Over 10% of this land (1.9 million hectares) is in the South West. The region is also a major producer of livestock, accounting for 23% of England's cattle and sheep, with 90% being sold to the supermarket trade. "The suitability of the land for pasture combined with the presence of numerous large and small abattoirs, means that it is still possible for smaller-scale livestock farmers to survive economically despite the increasing market difficulties associated with the major consolidation that has occurred in the food business sector."

Vegetable production in the South West makes up 6% of Great Britain's production. The main crops produced in the region are potatoes, cauliflower, swedes, brassicas, carrots, parsnips and celeriac. There is some production of cider apples and soft fruit, but less than there was fifty years ago. Cereal production in the South West is mainly used for livestock feed because the climate is too damp and cool for producing wheat of the quality required for bread flour.
Face to this kind of high carbon footprint production (livestock and dairy), a local procurement with special regards to carbon impact could reduce the global carbon impact without disturbing the economy.

Bristol City Council allotments…

There are 107 allotment sites in Bristol as illustrated on the map below. While the majority of sites are managed by the City Council, some are run by Allotment Associations

Urban food production has gained popularity in recent years and alongside more traditional approaches current ideas include roof top growing and the combination of hydroponics and aquaponic to create innovative growing systems.

Food growing in gardens and allotments are a centuries-old tradition, both in Bristol and in England as a whole. Private gardens in Bristol may total 120 hectares.

City Council owned land in and around Bristol:

- Allotments : 199 hectares,
- Farmland/agricultural : 239 hectares,
- Grazing : 47 hectares.
-

Parks & green spaces total approximately 1900 hectares and while much is composed of historic landscape, childrens play areas considerate planting could and does include food growing from herbs to fruit orchards and specimen nut trees.

Community food growing…

The City Council owns a substantial amount of land in the city. With increasing interest from organisations and individuals who want to grow food in the city some of this land is being brought into use for urban agriculture by charities, community organisations, local groups and social enterprises.

Potentially these 2,000 hectares if used for food growing in the City could produce several thousand tonnes of produce, with a cash value of several million pounds, in addition to the educational and recreational benefits. 16% of Bristol's vegetable requirements could be grown within the city.

City farms…

St Werburgh's Farm in north Bristol is one of several city farms that were established as educational centres for their local communities starting with Windmill Hill City Farm in south Bristol. St Werburgh's City Farm has a semi rural characteristic despite its urban setting as its fields are located next to large allotment sites and public green open spaces. It's both a demonstration project for food production and provider of a range of activities for all ages.

Delivering…

The lack of infrastructures for local distribution is a barrier to increase direct sales to independent local retailers, to households, and to local restaurants and caterers.

St. Philip Wholesale market…

St. Philip's Wholesale fruit & vegetable market is a collective association of 36 independents and is the second largest wholesale market distributing in South UK. More important, St. Philip is a key infrastructure providing an alternative to the 'Big 4', the 4 supermarket chains that cover 90% of grocery market and 83% of vegetable and fruits in UK. It is an important hub providing market access for local food production around Bristol. Ideas are being discussed to explore how the Market might reinvent itself as a more inclusive city based hub for a wider range of sustainable food with access for the general public eg by providing café's and restaurants showcasing organic and locally grown produce.

75% of the food eaten by the Bristol population is provided by supermarkets. For fruits and vegetables this rate increases to 90%. St Philips Wholesale market supplies the independents.
Bristol has 70 supermarket outlets with more progressing through the planning system and these make up 1.5% of Bristol's food businesses. Bristol has a disproportionately high level of supermarkets even compared to the national level, resulting in the disappearance of many traditional independent greengrocers. For those who remain, there is a disparity in the geographical repartition: Westbury on Trym still has four registered greengrocers, whereas some parts of the City such as Brislington, Filwood and Lockleaze have none. In order to

support and where possible re-introduce small retailers, especially missing in many disadvantaged neighbourhoods, Bristol launched the ‘Independents’ campaign.

Campaign to save the high street …

The ever-growing share of food distribution in the hands of supermarket chains has dramatically reduced the number independents local shops in high streets in much of the UK. Bristol’s High Street Campaign identified 56 designated 'shopping area' in Bristol. Committed to a positive campaign the focus is to raise awareness to keep the 'high street' alive and vivid and encourage increasing interest and commitment from local people to support their local independent shops. To celebrate independent diversity local people had the opportunity to award the shops they liked best in their neighbourhoods.

40% of food is currently wasted throughout the food system from food production, distribution and retail to within households, restaurants and caterers. At the St Philips Wholesale market, significant quantities of fit-to-eat produce have to be sent to landfill, partly because of Defra standards on size, shape and appearance.”

Fareshare…

Fareshare SW, the local branch of national charity redistributes about 40 pallets of food per week that would otherwise end up in landfill. 4 staff and 45 volunteers operate a warehouse and distribute food to 80 charity organisations targeting homelessness charities, elderly, young children, refugees etc. Much more food could be collected but some large corporations are reluctant to participate because of the risk of adverse publicity that they waste so much food. Others are concerned about litigation. Local MP Kerry McCarthy is championing
a Food Waste bill in Parliament to address many issues to support greater efficiency in the food system.

Over 2,000 food catering businesses are registered in Bristol. Most of these are small and medium sized enterprises operating small cafés, takeaways and outside catering.
Around 25% of the catering businesses are institutional caterers for the health and education sectors (hospitals, care homes, schools, and colleges). 24% are serving businesses and work canteens. St Philips wholesale market supplies their fresh fruit and vegetable requirement.

Food for Life Partnership…

To address the UK's low take-up of school meals and general disengagement with food, the Food for Life Partnership developed a holistic 'whole school' approach with a 3 level award system to encourage activity in all aspects of the food system from food growing, to more sustainable food on the menu. This approach has resulted in entire families making more healthy food choices. 3 Bristol schools have reached the first bronze level with strikingly positive impact that extend far beyond food…

Enjoying…

Bristol has plenty of people who are passionate about food fuelling a growth in food growing projects. The Soil Association headquarters is based in Bristol, permaculture groups are active, with a growing number of community orchards and small community kitchens. There are some awards winning restaurants and cafes.
Regular food festivals and events are organised eg the organic festival and the VegFest is a huge vegan festival. There are regular 'Love Food' events with local suppliers, Slow food markets, and regular farmers markets eg weekly farmers market in Corn Street.

From public sector to community groups to individuals many local people are engaged in supporting sustainable food systems. Bristol's overarching strategic food group is the Bristol Food Policy Council, the Bristol Food Network is a longstanding group of food professionals and Bristol's Green Capital Momentum Group are all very dynamic.

The Bristol Good Food Charter…

The Bristol Good Food Charter was launched in June 2012 at the Food Conference and is being promoted to raise awareness and activity in all aspects of the sustainable food system in Bristol.

Nevertheless, "Supermarket sales data show that within their sales, purchase of 'cooking from scratch' fresh ingredients is declining, and that there is a relationship with customer age. Older customers buy more fresh ingredients, whereas younger customers buy more ready meals. Bristol, in common with the rest of the UK, is seeing a consistent and serious rise in the percentage of people, including children, who are overweight and obese. This is related to the food system both through car-dependant shopping habits, and through the shift in cultural patterns of eating with heavy promotion and availability of calorie-dense foods."
These observations published in "Who feed Bristol?" led the Bristol Food Policy Council to create the Good Food Charter as a communication vehicle to raise awareness and action in the city.

Opportunities and challenges for the development of sustainable food

Disengagement with food…

There is an alarming disengagement with food in many sectors of the UK population, characterised by lack of cooking skills and general understanding of food. *"It's not rare to see young people who don't eat breakfast or lunch and go all day long with sweet bars and soft drinks and have fast food for dinner"* This is now a multi generational issue.

Hartcliffe Health & Environment Action Group

(Hheag) …

Hheag hosts many not-for profit activities to holistically address a variety of local issues in Hartcliffe, one of the more vulnerable neighbourhoods of Bristol. Hheag runs a small food shop, a cooking school, a large community food growing site and more recently an orchard. Local people including those suffering from a range of physical and emotional issues including obesity, diabetes, heart disorder have the opportunity to reskill with classes to support young parents who are sometimes so disempowered by modern cultural norms that they place more trust in factory produced baby-meals than their own cooking. A qualified nutritionist in a well kitted household-like kitchen environment guides people one step at a time starting with seasonal vegetable soup and providing sufficient home economics instruction to reach an understanding that cooking meals from raw ingredients is better value than buying ready made meals. And within a few weeks confidence grows and people learn to cook for themselves to an extent they hadn't realised was possible

Disengagement with food in the Bristol is clearly more of a problem in vulnerable neighbourhoods where pressure exists to eat as cheaply as possible and fast food is heavily marketed as a solution. The overriding picture is that of the conflux of supermarkets quasi-monopoly, industrial food brand marketing pressure, the stresses of busy modern life, an economic crisis and more than one generation lacking basic cooking skills.

Rich pallet of initiatives…

While a share of the population 'divorced' with food on the one hand, on the other hand, the *Bristol Food Network* is consistently sparking a wide range of creative and colourful initiatives. Its rich newsletter and active website clearly demonstrate Bristol as one of the leading cities to promote sustainable and healthy food. The city's huge number of initiatives, large and small, demonstrates variety and maturity. Avon Wildlife Trust's *Feed Bristol Project* for instance (see below) encourages a wide diversity of people and groups to take part in wildlife friendly food growing reaching far beyond those already actively engaged in sustainable food.

Feed Bristol Project…

Situated in the outskirts of north Bristol on a 7 acres piece of land, this new project is twinned with 'Sims Hill Shared Harvest', a community supported agriculture scheme with 65 members divided in growing members, vegetable sharing members and supporting members. The second category is particularly interesting: engaging people with nature and food is not always easy when they don't have time to grow their own allotment. Vegetable sharing members help for 4 hours a week for 6 months and in exchange get access to vegetable year round.

Transitory and pervasive initiatives...

Inevitably some initiatives are likely to be more successful than others. Questions exist of their resilience, their capability to generate economic returns, their capacity to reach the disengaged. Certain initiatives by nature cut across all communities and social layers: i.e. teaching cooking classes to schools (see the *Square Food School* below) both positively impact on children and also their families, often those in greatest need.

Shrinking public funding…

The National Big Lottery's Local Food Fund a £57.5 million programme has funded 428 projects in UK that help make locally grown food accessible to local communities. 3 projects from the Bristol area - including the *Feeding Bristol Project* have benefited Beyond these projects the challenge seems to be how to keep everything afloat and to support the dynamic Bristol Food Network in a time of shrinking public sector budgets. Even if some initiatives tends

to be lighter and financially more autonomous as the Severn Project (see below), supporting them, developing synergies and promoting them extensively to increasing sections of the population, can need a helping hand, financially and in kind.

humour: "...how can you help youth to stop to be dependent if your project itself is dependent on subsidies?"

The Square Food School…

The Park is home to the Square Food Foundation and its training kitchen. Knowle West is one of the more vulnerable neighbourhoods in Bristol where poor eating habits are quite entrenched. Having previously had a good quality wholesome food café fail through lack of interest, the offering is now ‘transition food’ a mixture of wholesome and ‘junk food’ so it stays to some extent familiar and therefore accessible to local people.
This provides a progressive pathway to sustainable and healthy food.

The Severn Project…

The Severn project is an integrated food growing initiative and a recovery programme for a range of clients including those with a history of addiction. They are based on 3 sites: Keynsham, Whitchurch where farm shop and café are under construction and the Diesel Depot site and aim to create at 25 full time jobs. The aim is to be self funded based on funding for each client referral and on income on sale of produce. The director commented with

The City Farm Café…

St Werburghs City Farm café is a popular meeting place that promotes organic local food. The Café has set up an 'allotment trading scheme' where gardeners from nearby allotments bring their surplus produce and get stamps on a trading card they can then exchange for meals in the Café…

Initial focus of the Local Action Plan (LAP)

Bristol City Council launched the extensive *Who Feeds Bristol?* report at the Food Conference in March 2011 establishing a very well documented systemic investigation of strengths and weaknesses to promote sustainable food in Bristol. Key issues emerging for the report were initially prioritized through a participative public consultation online. The Bristol Food Policy Council (see ULSG) then began developing a structured work programme organised in short, medium and long term actions that will be used as the basis to establish the URBACT LAP.
Current LAP is very much a starting point developed from a series of consultations, conferences and feedback sessions initiated from the ‘Who Feeds Bristol’ report. Much more development needed to create a sufficiently inspiring vision to make the step change that we seek and the clear steps in how to get there.

The LAP focuses on the following areas:

- Promote sustainable food procurement in the Public Sector by working together with other agencies such as the Health Service supporting local produce by using the Bristol Pound launched in Sept. 2012;
- Support the local independents food businesses, regulating retail, preserving its diversity and in particular focusing on the transformation of the St. Philip wholesale market and the revitalisation of the High Street identified shopping areas;
- Support food growing projects in Bristol by providing land and whatever resources are available eg increasing their visibility through the local food newsletter, helping to market their produce etc
- Effect cultural changes towards both more sustainable and healthy lifestyles through the Good Food Charter communication programme
- Consolidate sustainable food initiatives supporting the Bristol Food Network's food newsletter and other initiatives (i.e. Food Trail Event, Bristol Independents campaign);
- Adopting carbon reduction target for public food
- Developing effective infrastructure and feedback processes to link food interests in the city

Approach and composition of the Local Support Group

Bristol City Council established the Bristol Food Policy Council in 2011 as the overarching strategic group to lead a step change in sustainable food systems in the city. Composed of influential food professionals from diverse areas of experience, the group is chaired by Professor Kevin Morgan from the Governance and Development School, City and Regional Planning of the Cardiff University.

Membership as follows

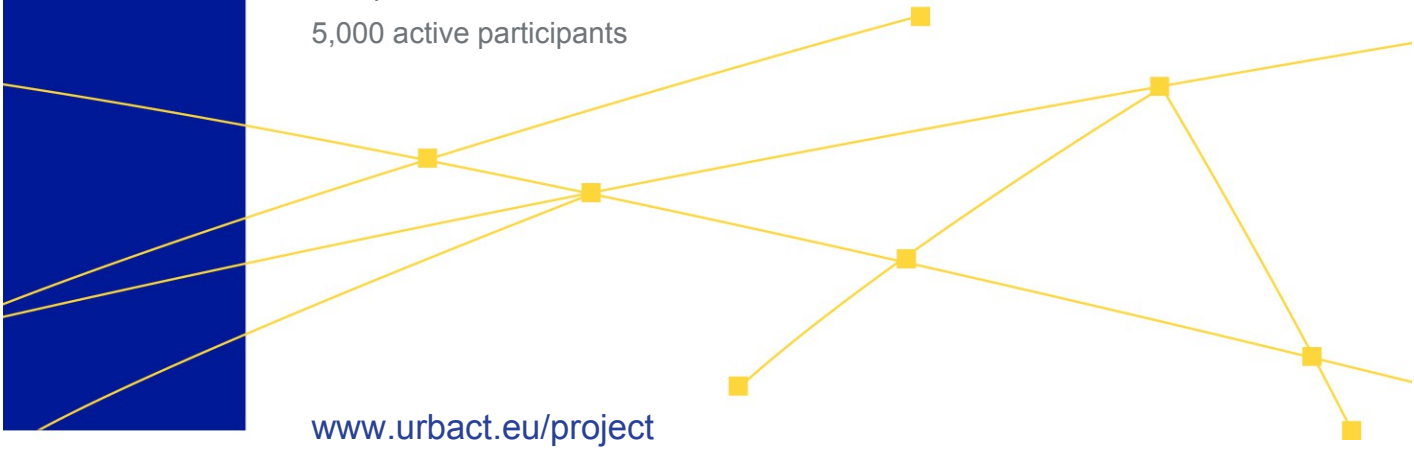
- **Governance and Development School: City and Regional Planning,** Cardiff University;
- Proprietor One Stop Thali independent restaurants;
- Consultant in Public Health;
- Lecturer in Food Production and Technology, Royal Agricultural College;
- Bristol Food Network;
- Chief Executive Southwest Food and Drink;
- Proprietor M&D Kidners Ltd, Wholesalers fruit & vegetables;
- Head of Communications and Events, Yeo Valley Farms;
- Programmes Director, Soil Association;
- Councillor, Executive Member: Festivals and Communities, Bristol City Council
- Vice Chair, Bristol Green Capital Momentum Group Bristol City Council;

Note: Bristol Food Policy Council is the first food policy council in the UK. While internationally there is a culture of food policy councils largely in North America and many other countries, their structure and approach varies considerably reflecting the context and local governance of those countries. The Bristol group has now met around 6 times and while successes have been achieved eg the launch of the Good Food Charter, the group is very much in its early stages of development and would welcome sharing and learning experiences with other cities, especially in Europe where there is a more established food culture. We seek a step change towards sustainable food systems for our city and anticipate inspiring and creative ideas to emerge while working alongside our URBACT Partners. Already from our activities in the EU URBACT Sustainable Food in Urban Communities programme we are seeing positive results as we raise the profile of our work and draw ever more interest from our community forging new links and consolidating networks

URBACT II

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants



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