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# Bristol City Leap

Case study

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city leap

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# Introduction

Bristol City Leap is a public private partnership between Bristol City Council and Ameresco. This innovative partnership aims to leverage private finance to accelerate Bristol's decarbonisation. Set up in 2023, the partnership set out a bold 20-year vision to make Bristol a cleaner, healthier and more prosperous city. It aims to invest over £1bn in reducing carbon emissions, insulating homes and offices, installing EV charging infrastructure and producing cleaner heat and electricity. We spoke to Hannah Spungin, Bristol City Leap's Deputy Director, about its developing approach to place-based decarbonisation. Our discussion forms the basis for this case study, which should be useful to others considering how to take forward place-based working.

Bristol City Leap is contracted to deliver all retrofit measures to Bristol City Council's owned homes. City Leap also leads on the delivery of major grant funded schemes for private sector households but doesn't undertake private contracts for single households. Alongside the delivery of works, City Leap provides grant programmes to support climate action by local communities, creating a long-term legacy for Bristol's people and communities. The partnership also works with Vattenfall, which manages the heat network service in the city.



Figure 1: The Bristol City Leap team

# Decarbonising houses

City Leap recognises that housing accounts for 28% of CO2 emissions in Bristol. Fuel poverty, cold homes and associated dampness, mould and condensation are major issues within the city's homes. To remediate this, the retrofitting of homes is needed to make residents' homes more healthy, more affordable, energy-efficient and climate-friendly.

There are around 200,000 homes in Bristol. Approximately 62% of these, or 120,000 homes, require retrofit works to bring them up to modern energy standards. Carrying out this work will require significant commitment, skills, resource and finance. With over 750 retrofits currently underway, significant progress is already being made.

The retrofit measures opted for will depend on the needs of the home and relevant funding criteria. However, these can include wall and loft insulation, ventilation, double glazing, and in some cases, heat pumps and solar PV.

## A place-based approach

Bristol City Leap recognises that there is now a need to start operating across tenure types, blending funding streams to reach owner occupied, private rented and social housing in a single area. Previous work in social housing has initiated this approach: retrofits have taken place in a clockwise motion across the city, with specific areas chosen for the volume of properties and measures being installed.

Building on this approach, the team compared maps of the city that are eligible for Warm Homes: Social (WHSHF) and Warm Homes: Local (WHL) grant funding, to highlight where there is a substantial overlap (see figure 2). The mapping highlights key targets for the place-based scheme. These include Henbury, Brentry, Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston.

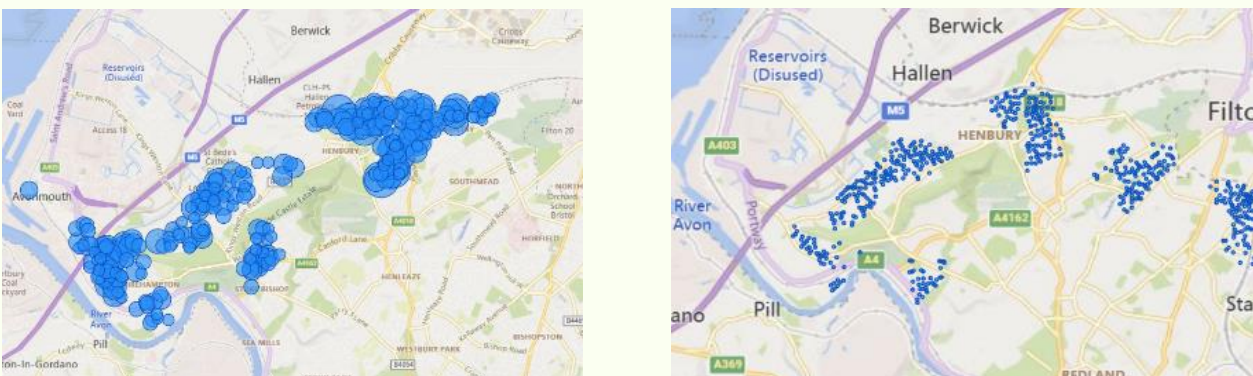


Figure 2 shows areas of Bristol that are eligible for WH:SHF (right) and WH:LG (left). In several of the areas highlighted, almost every home is eligible for one of the funding streams.

A second reason that these areas were chosen was owing to the property types in the areas. Some are dominated by system-built housing, which commonly have concrete walls with steel or iron bars that may be viewed as visually unappealing. Not only does this mean most energy efficient measures, such as solar panels, can be installed without planning barriers that seek to protect character, the works have multiple benefits. They address both the energy efficiency and aesthetics of the properties.

“The retrofit works will have multiple benefits, addressing both the energy efficiency and aesthetics of the area”.

Hannah Spungin, Bristol City Leap

## Benefits of a place-based approach

Part of the rationale behind this approach is to help increase economies of scale and deliver public funding and private sector finance more efficiently. Increasing the number of participants in each scheme should help reduce the time and cost, optimising the finance and helping it go further. Scaling up works so that the supply chain can work across multiple similar properties consecutively should also allow them to refine working methods and deliver high quality throughout.

To further amplify the impact of the place-based approach, Bristol City leap will also conduct a community impact assessment alongside the other project activities. The exercise will help the partnership understand the community’s concerns, aspirations and needs before entering an area. Doing this will provide a holistic perspective on the retrofit projects so that:

- Elements of the projects can be tailored to a place’s unique characteristics. For example, energy efficiency measures suited to the main building archetypes in the area can be prioritised
- Projects will be informed by the community’s perspective. For example, City Leap will be seeking to understand and alleviate any concerns around district heating, so that the installation of this heat type can continue progressing

## What does success look like?

As the definitions of a place-based approach in retrofit aren’t specifically defined, we asked Hannah what success would mean in this context. Hannah believes that success can be achieved at different levels:

- **Basic:** Delivering retrofit works across multiple tenures, ideally owner-occupied, private rented and social housing, at the same time

- **Intermediate:** Drawing additional regeneration resources into the area to provide infrastructure improvements alongside the home retrofits. This could include district heating, community infrastructure like schools and libraries, and other common spaces for the local community
- **Advanced:** Being able to go from delivering a housing project to a community programme, and providing a business case for future area-based community programmes

## Testimonials

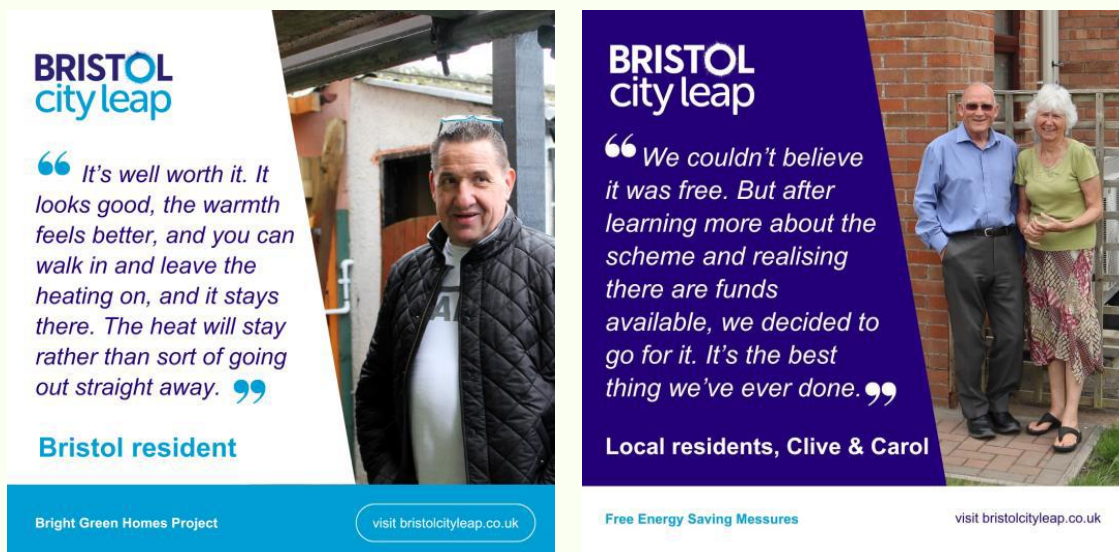


Figure 3: Testimonials from residents that Bristol City Leap has worked with. Source: [Bristolcityleap.co.uk](http://Bristolcityleap.co.uk)