

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMISSION
HELD ON 14 DECEMBER, 2012 AT 9.30 AM**

P Councillor Brain (in the Chair)
A Councillor Vacancy
P Councillor Hassell
P Councillor Naysmith
P Councillor Rayner
P Councillor Watson
P Councillor Wright

**RSC
59.12/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCES, SUBSTITUTIONS AND
INTRODUCTIONS**

Councillor Gollop informed the Commission that he had resigned his position as a scrutiny member from this commission as he had now taken the position of Assistant Mayor and was attending this meeting in that capacity.

**RSC
60.12/12 PUBLIC FORUM**

None received.

**RSC
61.12/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**RSC
62.12/12 WHIPPING**

None.

**RSC
63.12/12 MINUTES - RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMISSION 19TH
OCTOBER 2012**

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting of the
Resources Scrutiny Commission held**

on 19th October, 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

**RSC
64.12/12 CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

1. The Chair reported that following the election of the Mayor of Bristol charring arrangements would be changed. The changes were expected to be confirmed by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee at a meeting in early January 2013. With regard to the Resources Scrutiny Commission the chair designate was Councillor Barbara Janke.

2. The Commission agreed to take the agenda report items in a different order from that published on the agenda, the new order being agenda items 7, 12, 9, 8, 10, 11.

**RSC
65.12/12 WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13**

RESOLVED - that the amended work programme 2012/13 be agreed.

**RSC
66.12/12 OPTIONS FOR NEW COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Commission considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services (agenda item no. 8) requesting comments regarding the options available for the new local Council Tax Reduction scheme which was scheduled for decision at the Cabinet meeting on 20 December, 2012.

The Commission were informed of the six potential options available to the Cabinet for decision. It was noted that the preferred option by the Mayor was Option 6. This was the second cheapest option available to the Council and had the additional advantage of retaining full council tax benefit for recipients as was currently received under the national scheme. The scheme would be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Commission accepted that Option 6 was the most favourable option for the 2013/14 financial year.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted and that Option 6 be supported.

RSC

67.12/12

ANALYSIS OF THE BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2012

The Commission considered a report of the Service Director, Finance (agenda item no. 9) summarising the Balance Sheet as at 31 March, 2012 regarding its assets, liabilities and reserves.

The Commission were informed that the Council's net worth was falling year on year and that overall the net worth fell by £130m. This was largely due to a significant increase, amounting to £102m, in the pension liability and a reduction in the value of assets mainly due to more schools achieving academy status and the transfer of the Colston Hall to the Bristol Music Trust.

It was noted that, despite the current trend, over the longer term period assets might improve in value.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

RSC

68.12/12

CORPORATE OUTCOME PERFORMANCE - 2nd QUARTER (2012/13)

The Commission considered a report of the Service Director, Finance (agenda item no. 10) giving an overview of progress against the Council's strategic outcomes at the end of Quarter 2, based on information provided by the designated Outcome Leads for each of the six Corporate Strategic Outcomes.

During debate the Commission Members felt that the titles of some of the items needed to better reflect outcomes. Also indicators should have greater commonality so that both Scrutiny and the Executive could clearly identify issues. In this regard Councillor Gollop offered to meet one or two Resources Scrutiny Commission members to agree the best method of presentation for future reports.

Concern was expressed at the low level of attainment regarding PMDS in Health & Social Care which had only achieved a compliance rate of less than 50%. The strength of concern was significant and the Commission formally requested that its concerns be passed onto the Chief Executive as a priority.

RESOLVED -

(i) that the Chief Executive be informed that the poor performance in respect of PMDS scores in Health & Social Care was not acceptable and should be given priority by senior management to improve the overall level of compliance;

(ii) that the report be noted and that Councillor Gollop meet one or two Resources Scrutiny Commission members to agree the best method of presentation for future reports.

RSC

69.12/12 LOCAL CRISIS AND PREVENTION FUND

The Commission considered a report of the Service Director, Strategic Housing (agenda item no. 11) relating to the Local Crisis and Prevention Fund.

The Commission supported the proposed Local Crisis and Prevention Fund scheme and considered that a local scheme would probably be an improvement over the current scheme emphasising that -

- the external provider must be reputable and that decisions were seen to be fair
- the changes to the administration of the fund should be effectively publicised as it passed from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to the Council;
- it was noted that the DWP would be publicising the changes in February and March 2013 but requested that the Council also ensure that effective publicity was given to potential applicants;
- former armed service personnel should be added into the priority framework;
- although the Commission were comfortable with the basic principles behind the new service, significant concern was expressed about the lack of formal political input into the procurement of the proposed service to date. The Members therefore felt strongly that this concern be made clear to the Cabinet meeting before it makes its decision.

RESOLVED - (i) that the report be noted;
(ii) that Cabinet be formally requested to consider the concern raised by

the Commission, in respect of the lack of formal political input into the procurement of the proposed service to date, prior to making a decision.

RSC

70.12/12 REVIEW OF THE AVON PENSION SCHEME

The Commission considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services (agenda item no. 12) on the key pension issues for Bristol City Council in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and the pension deficit payments due from the Council to the pension scheme.

The Commission considered ethical, or more socially responsible, investments should be given greater priority for the pension fund but were informed that investment control was strongly protected in law in order to ensure that assets covered liabilities. That was why contributions had to be increased.

Concern was expressed that increases in contributions to the pension fund were based on cautious assumptions about future performance.

The Strategic Director, Corporate Services explained that this was the case, however there was a statutory duty on the Council to respond to such forecasts and if it did not then the Actuary could force the Council to do so.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

RSC

71.12/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted that the next meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Commission would be a budget scrutiny meeting and would be held on 14th January, 2013 at 6 pm.

CHAIR

(The meeting ended at 12.10 pm)