

Question 6 – Clive Stevens**Re: Bristol Energy**

Dear Grant Thornton

Jon - I read your excellent report about the history and mistakes made by the Council regarding Bristol Energy. One conclusion is that Scrutiny was side-lined at critical points, either because they didn't get access to the information in time and/or they were prevented from doing anything about it (for example by suspending their call-in power). This happened on both George Ferguson's and Marvin's watch. Given that Scrutiny is widely acknowledged nationally as a vital process to ensure better decisions are taken, it seems that preventing Scrutiny doing its job is poor Governance. I hear Marvin's repeated call "I'm here to get things done". And indeed Bristol Energy got done and the poor Bristol taxpayer got done over.

Questions:

Q1. Are you aware of any mayoral authorities where you are satisfied that Scrutiny is functioning very well?

Answer: Effective scrutiny holds decision-makers to account and helps secure service improvements whatever the decision-making model in place at the Council. Currently, we are not aware of any mayoral authorities where we are satisfied that scrutiny is operating effectively, as our understanding is limited to those where we have undertaken specific reviews and prior to the completion of our 2020/21 audits. There may be examples that we are not yet aware of.

Examples and guidance can be found on the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny website, along with the statutory guidance issued by MHCLG in May 2019 'Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities.

Q2. If so, which ones please?

Answer: As note above we are unable to name any notable practice examples for authorities with elected mayors. Notable practice examples equally apply to those councils which have a strong leader model. These examples could be shared at a later date once we have spoken to these councils and they have agreed for their details to be shared.