

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Full Council

11 January 2022 at 2.00 pm



### Members Present:-

**Councillors:** Mayor Marvin Rees, Donald Alexander, Lesley Alexander, Kerry Bailes, Jenny Bartle, Nicola Beech, Marley Bennett, Fabian Breckels, Andrew Brown, Craig Cheney, Jos Clark, Sarah Classick, Amirah Cole, Asher Craig, Chris Davies, Carla Denyer, Tony Dyer, Richard Eddy, Emma Edwards, Jude English, Lily Fitzgibbon, Tessa Fitzjohn, Martin Fodor, Lorraine Francis, Geoff Gollop, Zoe Goodman, John Goulandris, Katy Grant, Fi Hance, Tom Hathway, Helen Holland, Gary Hopkins, Katja Hornchen, Jonathan Hucker, Philippa Hulme, Farah Hussain, Chris Jackson, Hibaq Jama, Ellie King, Tim Kent, Heather Mack, Mohamed Makawi, Brenda Massey, Henry Michallat, Yassin Mohamud, Paula O'Rourke, Barry Parsons, Steve Pearce, Ed Plowden, Guy Poultney, Kevin Quartley, Tom Renhard, Tim Rippington, James Scott, Sharon Scott, Steve Smith, Ani Stafford-Townsend, Lisa Stone, Christine Townsend, Andrew Varney, Mark Weston, David Wilcox, Chris Windows and Tim Wye

### 1 Welcome and Introductions

The Lord Mayor welcomed all attendees to the meeting and made a safety announcement in relation to the emergency evacuation procedure.

### 2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were heard from Councillors Ali, Bradshaw, Geater, Goggin, Hartley and Morris.

### 3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Breckels, Brown, Clark, Gollop, Goodman, Goulandris, Hance, Hussain, Kent, Makawi, Plowden, Stone and Wye declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with reference to the Golden Motion to be discussed at item 15 and would not be present for the item.

### 4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

On the motion of the Lord Mayor, seconded by Councillor Goulandris, it was



**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021, Extraordinary and Ordinary Full Council meetings held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and Extraordinary and Ordinary Full Council meetings held on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 be confirmed as correct record and signed by the Lord Mayor.**

**5 Lord Mayor's Business**

There was none.

**6 Public Petitions, Statements and Questions**

There were no public petitions submitted to the meeting.

The Full Council received and noted the following statements (which were also referred to the Mayor for his consideration/ information)

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
PS01	Juliet Gellatley – Viva	Plant-Based Treaty
PS02	United Voices of the World	Proposed changes to the licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEVs)
PS03	Helen Powell – We Love Stoke Lodge	Stoke Lodge TVG Application
PS04	Paul Collins	Proposal to Close Kingsdown Sports Centre
PS05	Jill Tarlton	Trees Will Save Lives
PS06	John Tarlton	Bristol needs more trees and more green spaces.... Not more office blocks
PS07	Anita Bennett	St. Christopher's School, a valuable community asset
PS08	David Redgewell	Bus Service Changes
PS09	Clare Meynell	Bristol Fair Renting Campaign
PS10	David Redgewell	Equalities of Access to meetings

All the statements were presented to Full Council.

The Full Council noted that the following questions had been submitted:

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
PQ01 & PQ02	Paul Collins	Consultation On The Draft Leisure Facilities Investment Strategy: Proposal To Close Kingsdown Sports Centre



PQ03	Ann Devereaux	Predicted flooding at Baltic Wharf
PQ04	Susan Sadie Hackett	Plans for Social Housing in Bristol
PQ05	Anita Bennett	St.Christopher's School, what Planning and Education mean by 'alternative provision for SEN'
PQ06	Anita Bennett	Deaths on Spike Island Plan
PQ07	Philippa Harding	Minimum Allocation of Open Space on Site
PQ08 & PQ09	Helen Powell	Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee
PQ10	James Griffiths	Resi-mercial development of Broadmead
PQ11 & PQ12	Esther Giles	St Christopher's site on the Downs
PQ13	Barry Cash	Portishead Railway Line
PQ14 & PQ15	Nigel Shipley	Impact of Climate change
PQ16 & PQ17	Suzanne Audrey	The Role of the Elected Mayor
PQ18 & PQ19	Tom Bosanquet	FixMyStreet
PQ20 & PQ21	David Redgewell	Greater Bristol and Bath City Region Bus Network
PQ22	Ken Bain	Church Road BS7
PQ23 & PQ24	Rob Bryher	One City Transport Board
PQ25 & PQ26	Jen Smith	Unlawful Exclusions
PQ27 & PQ28	Joanna Booth	Night Time Economy Advisor
PQ29	Michele Morrice	Residential property for children with disabilities in the Bristol area
PS30	Claire Gronow	Climate Change Decision Making

Within the time available, the Mayor responded verbally to questions PQ01, PQ02, PQ03, PQ04, PQ05, PQ07 and PQ08 also responding to supplementary questions.

## 7 Petitions Notified by Councillors

There were none.

## 8 Petition Debate - Keep green urban spaces safe from sudden 'Brownfield' labelling.

The Full Council considered a report of the Director – Legal and Democratic Services setting out details of a petition 'Disabled Adult Play Parks'. The petition had reached the 3,500 signature threshold to qualify for a Full Council debate.

Anita Bennett, the petition organiser, Jill Tarlton and John Tarlton were invited by the Lord Mayor to present the objectives of the petition.

The Full Council debated the petition.



Following the debate it was:

**RESOLVED:**

**That the petition and the comments from the debate be noted and referred to the Mayor for response.**

## **9 Political Proportionality and Allocation of Committee Seats**

The Full Council considered a report which sought approval of the allocation of seats on Committees in accordance with the statutory requirements concerning political balance following the establishment of the 'Knowle Community Party' political group.

The Lord Mayor moved the report and the recommendations contained therein.

Councillor Varney, Deputy Lord Mayor, seconded the motion.

It was then:

**RESOLVED:**

**That Full Council reviewed and approved the allocation of seats on committees in accordance with the statutory requirements concerning political balance and approved the allocation of Committee Seats as set out in the report.**

## **10 Appointment of Chair of Audit Committee**

The Full Council considered a report which proposed a change of the Chair of Audit Committee.

The Lord Mayor moved the report and the recommendation set out therein. Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Varney seconded the report.

There was no debate and it was:

**RESOLVED That Councillor Andrew Brown be appointed as Chair of the Audit Committee.**

## **11 Council Tax Base 2022/23**

The Full Council considered a report which set out, in line with Regulations, the amount calculated by Bristol City Council as its Council Tax base for the financial year 2022-23.

Deputy Mayor Councillor Cheney moved the report and the recommendations continued therein. Councillor Rippington seconded the report.



Following debate it was:

**RESOLVED:**

**That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Bristol City Council as its Council Tax base for the financial year 2022/23 shall be 127,917.**

**12 Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit 2021/22**

The Full Council considered a report which presented the Collection Fund Surplus at 31 March 2021 on the Council Tax and the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) elements of the Collection Fund.

Deputy Mayor Councillor Cheney moved the report and the recommendations contained therein. Councillor Rippington seconded the report.

Following debate, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That an estimated deficit as at 31 March 2022 on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund, net of grants, of £9.763m be declared for 2021/22 and shared between this Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and the Avon Fire and Rescue Service in proportion to their 2020/21 precepts on the Collection Fund.**
- 2. That an estimated deficit as at 31 March 2022 on the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) element of the Collection Fund, net of grants, of £4.236m be declared for 2021/22 and shared between this Council, Avon Fire and Rescue Service and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) in proportion to the appropriate year demands (Bristol 94%, WECA 4%, Avon Fire and Rescue Service 1%).**

**13 Appointment of External Auditor for 2023/24 and onwards**

The Full Council considered the report of the Audit Committee and recommendation of appointment of an external auditor for 2023/24 onwards.

Councillor Dyer moved the report and the recommendation contained therein. Councillor Cheney seconded the report.

There was no debate and it was:

**RESOLVED: That Full Council approved the recommendation of the Audit Committee to accept Public Sector Audit Appointments' (PSAA) invitation to 'opt in' to the sector led scheme to appoint an**



**external auditor to audit Bristol City Council's Financial Statement for financial years commencing 2023/24 onwards.**

## **14 Annual Report of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Decisions**

The Full Council considered a report which summarised the findings made in respect of the Council by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2020/21.

Following a debate it was:

**RESOLVED: That the annual report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Decisions be noted.**

## **15 Motions**

Following a short adjournment, it was then moved by the Lord Mayor that standing order CPR2.1(xi) be suspended to allow the meeting to go past the 30 minutes time limit for motions. Following a vote it was agreed to proceed up until a 60 minute limit.

### **Motion 1 –Stamping out Discrimination against Renters**

Councillor Rehnard moved the following motion:

This Council notes that:

- The private rented sector (PRS) in Bristol has grown to circa 30% of homes in the city.
- Private renters face a host of challenges, including disrepair and lack of affordable rent.
- Local Housing Allowance covers very few properties in the private rented sector due to soaring and out of control rents.
- Tenants in receipt of housing benefit or universal credit may also face the prospect of 'DSS (Department of Social Security) discrimination', where landlords and estate agents refuse to rent properties to welfare recipients.
- 'No DSS' policies have been found to be unlawful and discriminatory under the Equality Act.

This Council observes that:

- It may be that landlords and letting agents overtly practice DSS discrimination, e.g. by listing properties as 'no DSS' on websites;
- More likely is that some landlords and letting agents indirectly discriminate against benefits claimants, e.g. by using affordability or referencing checks that automatically fail benefit recipients, or by systematically favouring non-benefit claimants when assessing tenancy applications.



- Despite alleviating measures such as the council tax reduction scheme, people are struggling financially. More people currently rely on benefits due to the pandemic, so the effects of any DSS discrimination is likely to be acutely felt.
- Bristol City Council has limited powers over the private rented sector, however, the Bristol City Council landlord licensing scheme may refuse to license landlords where there is sufficient evidence that they practice direct or indirect discrimination. This will include any 'no DSS' policies relating to prospective tenants.
- It may also include refusing to allow prospective tenants on Housing Benefit and Universal Credit to view affordable properties and requiring guarantors in cases where that prospective tenant's income from their benefits is sufficient. The evidence would have to show that renters on benefits have been treated differently to others not on benefits.
- DSS discrimination is only one of many issues facing benefits claimants, and one of the primary issues is the current level of Universal Credit.

This council resolves:

- To defend the right to decent and affordable housing; and will work to eliminate DSS discrimination from Bristol.
- To strengthen our work further, include explicit anti-discrimination clauses in all future property licenses. In practice, this would mean that landlords are contractually required to not refuse to rent to people based on their age, sex, race, disability, if they have children, or their type of employment or income, and that to refuse to rent to people based on these criteria is unlawful discrimination and would break their contract with Bristol City Council.
- To use official communication and media activities to improve awareness that benefits discrimination is unlawful, as well as denouncing discrimination against benefits claimants clearly on the Council website detailing ways to recognise DSS discrimination and what actions to take in response.
- To create a local action plan to stamp out 'No DSS' practices, including developing a clear, proactive process for challenging and transforming the behaviour of those who discriminate.
- Support renters in challenging and reporting letting agents and landlords who are discriminating against them, and in taking those challenges to The Property Ombudsman/Property Redress Scheme.
- To approach the West of England Authorities to discuss the revision of the West of England Code of Good Management Practice. Such discussion will focus on the addition of wording to the effect of 'you must not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, language, sexuality or any other factor that might place an individual at a disadvantage. This includes indirect discrimination against those in receipt of Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) benefits, referencing the previous initials (DSS) of the department.'
- To ask the Bristol Homes & Communities Board to consider this issue, monitor actions taken to address it, and make recommendations accordingly.
- For the Mayor and Party Group Leaders write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling for the benefit cut to Universal Credit to be reversed, and call for benefit levels to be raised and uprated in line with rents so they are realistic for places like Bristol.





The motion was seconded by Councillor Hornchen.

Following debate, the Lord Mayor invited Councillor Renhard, as mover of the motion to speak.

Following final remarks, upon being put to the vote, the original motion was CARRIED (44 For, 7 against, 1 absentions) and it was

#### **RESOLVED:**

##### **This Council notes that:**

- **The private rented sector (PRS) in Bristol has grown to circa 30% of homes in the city.**
- **Private renters face a host of challenges, including disrepair and lack of affordable rent.**
- **Local Housing Allowance covers very few properties in the private rented sector due to soaring and out of control rents.**
- **Tenants in receipt of housing benefit or universal credit may also face the prospect of ‘DSS (Department of Social Security) discrimination’, where landlords and estate agents refuse to rent properties to welfare recipients.**
- **‘No DSS’ policies have been found to be unlawful and discriminatory under the Equality Act.**

##### **This Council observes that:**

- **It may be that landlords and letting agents overtly practice DSS discrimination, e.g. by listing properties as ‘no DSS’ on websites;**
- **More likely is that some landlords and letting agents indirectly discriminate against benefits claimants, e.g. by using affordability or referencing checks that automatically fail benefit recipients, or by systematically favouring non-benefit claimants when assessing tenancy applications.**
- **Despite alleviating measures such as the council tax reduction scheme, people are struggling financially. More people currently rely on benefits due to the pandemic, so the effects of any DSS discrimination is likely to be acutely felt.**
- **Bristol City Council has limited powers over the private rented sector, however, the Bristol City Council landlord licensing scheme may refuse to license landlords where there is sufficient evidence that they practice direct or indirect discrimination. This will include any ‘no DSS’ policies relating to prospective tenants.**
- **It may also include refusing to allow prospective tenants on Housing Benefit and Universal Credit to view affordable properties and requiring guarantors in cases where that prospective tenant’s income from their benefits is sufficient. The evidence would have to show that renters on benefits have been treated differently to others not on benefits.**
- **DSS discrimination is only one of many issues facing benefits claimants, and one of the primary issues is the current level of Universal Credit.**

##### **This council resolves:**

- **To defend the right to decent and affordable housing; and will work to eliminate DSS discrimination from Bristol.**





- **To strengthen our work further, include explicit anti-discrimination clauses in all future property licenses. In practice, this would mean that landlords are contractually required to not refuse to rent to people based on their age, sex, race, disability, if they have children, or their type of employment or income, and that to refuse to rent to people based on these criteria is unlawful discrimination and would break their contract with Bristol City Council.**
- **To use official communication and media activities to improve awareness that benefits discrimination is unlawful, as well as denouncing discrimination against benefits claimants clearly on the Council website detailing ways to recognise DSS discrimination and what actions to take in response.**
- **To create a local action plan to stamp out ‘No DSS’ practices, including developing a clear, proactive process for challenging and transforming the behaviour of those who discriminate.**
- **Support renters in challenging and reporting letting agents and landlords who are discriminating against them, and in taking those challenges to The Property Ombudsman/Property Redress Scheme.**
- **To approach the West of England Authorities to discuss the revision of the West of England Code of Good Management Practice. Such discussion will focus on the addition of wording to the effect of ‘you must not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, language, sexuality or any other factor that might place an individual at a disadvantage. This includes indirect discrimination against those in receipt of Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) benefits, referencing the previous initials (DSS) of the department.’**
- **To ask the Bristol Homes & Communities Board to consider this issue, monitor actions taken to address it, and make recommendations accordingly.**
- **For the Mayor and Party Group Leaders write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling for the benefit cut to Universal Credit to be reversed, and call for benefit levels to be raised and uprated in line with rents so they are realistic for places like Bristol.**

## **Motion 2 – Front Garden Tree Scheme**

Councillor Varney moved the following motion:

Full Council notes that;

1. We are deeply concerned about the climate emergency and ecological emergency. This year has yet again seen record temperatures, unpredictable weather patterns, damaging weather events and continued habitat and biodiversity loss across the world.
2. In order to help mitigate the impact of climate change, we urgently need to plant more trees across the city in line with national and local policies. The UK Government plans to treble tree planting rates by 2024 and Bristol City Council has pledged to double the tree canopy cover in Bristol by 2050.
3. Street trees have innumerable benefits such as absorbing pollution, reducing the risk of flooding, countering the ‘heat island’ effect of the urban environment, increasing biodiversity and providing wildlife corridors, boosting economic activity, helping with people’s mental health, and even reducing road rage and crime.
4. The lack of suitable sites for street trees across the city and the high cost of installation is very worrying.



5. Many thousands of front gardens across the city would provide suitable sites for tree planting with nearly all the benefits of street trees but with vastly reduced expenditure.
6. The Citizens Assembly on Climate Change recommend that tree cover should be increased as part of creating 'ideal environmental neighbourhood future streets'.
7. The 2020 One City Climate Strategy states the 2030 goal on the natural environment that 'The natural environment in Bristol will be restored, protected and enhanced to deliver climate change benefits' and specifically to 'The city's natural environment (including canopy cover and biodiversity) has been restored, preserved and enhanced to maximise carbon sequestration in carbon sinks, climate resilience and health and wellbeing'

Full Council believes;

1. Increasing tree cover must be a top priority for the Council, it's partners, and the citizens of Bristol in our collective fight against the climate emergency.
2. To increase the tree cover across Bristol, Bristol City Council should work with local residents and community groups to expand tree coverage through the use of front gardens for trees.
3. Where possible, native species should be planted for the benefit of local wildlife.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Call for an investigation into the feasibility of setting up a Front Garden Tree Scheme to be run by Bristol City Council officers.
2. Ask officers to look at how such a scheme would operate, such as how members of the public could participate, how front gardens would be assessed for suitability, how appropriate species would be chosen, installation and aftercare, annual targets, scheme costs and sources of funding.
3. Investigate working with the Woodland Trust and other charities to procure free or cheaper trees that can be used as part of the scheme.
4. Ask for a report into the findings to be submitted to Full Council within six months.

Councillor Kent seconded the motion.

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, the altered motion was CARRIED (58 Members voting for) it was

**RESOLVED:**

**Full Council notes that;**

1. **We are deeply concerned about the climate emergency and ecological emergency. This year has yet again seen record temperatures, unpredictable weather patterns, damaging weather events and continued habitat and biodiversity loss across the world.**
2. **In order to help mitigate the impact of climate change, we urgently need to plant more trees across the city in line with national and local policies. The UK Government plans to treble tree planting rates by 2024 and Bristol City Council has pledged to double the tree canopy cover in Bristol by 2050.**
3. **Street trees have innumerable benefits such as absorbing pollution, reducing the risk of flooding, countering the 'heat island' effect of the urban environment, increasing biodiversity and providing**



wildlife corridors, boosting economic activity, helping with people's mental health, and even reducing road rage and crime.

4. The lack of suitable sites for street trees across the city and the high cost of installation is very worrying.
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Full Council resolves to:

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2. Ask officers to look at how such a scheme would operate, such as how members of the public could participate, how front gardens would be assessed for suitability, how appropriate species would be chosen, installation and aftercare, annual targets, scheme costs and sources of funding.
3. Investigate working with the Woodland Trust and other charities to procure free or cheaper trees that can be used as part of the scheme.
4. Ask for a report into the findings to be submitted to Full Council within six months.

Meeting ended at 5.00 pm

CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_

