

# “The Right Man for Bristol”

## Gender, Representation and the Mayor of Bristol

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### Population of Bristol by Gender



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## Executive Summary

This report presents factual data on the over-representation of white middle-aged, middle-class men in the decision-making bodies that govern the city of Bristol:

- ❖ 76% of Bristol City Councillors are male; 96% of Bristol City Councillors are white.
- ❖ Public Sector Boards based in Bristol are almost exclusively led by white males.
- ❖ Private Sector Boards of Bristol-based companies are made up predominantly of men (79%) and at least ten of the largest employers in Bristol have Boards comprised entirely of men.
- ❖ Bristol is lagging behind the national average in all sectors when it comes to equality of representation.

In 2012 Bristol voted in a referendum for a new power structure – the introduction of a directly elected Mayor. However, at the close of nominations 14 of the 15 candidates standing for Mayor were men, and 14 of the 15 candidates were white. Early promises that a mayoral model would provide a revolution in the way our city is run, together with improved legitimacy and accountability, begin to look misguided against this backdrop.

This report argues that the power-brokers of the City of Bristol are routinely overlooking people from certain demographic groups by maintaining a preference for keeping power within one particular demographic (white, middle-aged, middle-class men) to the detriment of all. Using factual data and survey data, supplemented with fourteen interviews with some of the city's key players, the report considers what is lost for the city and what might be gained by a radical programme of inclusion. The recommendations stem from what the interviewees considered the three crucial blockages to participation for women and other under-represented groups within the current set-up: Caring, Cash, and Culture.

# “The right man for Bristol”

## Gender, Representation and the Mayor of Bristol

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- On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012, *The Bristol Post* ran an article on Bristol’s forthcoming Mayoral election entitled “Marvin Rees – the wrong shoes, but the right man for Mayor?”<sup>1</sup>
- On 19<sup>th</sup> June @Mayor4Bristol tweeted “Marvin Rees is the right man for Labour, but is he the right man for Bristol?”
- On his visit to Bristol in April 2012, David Cameron suggested that in a Mayor, Bristol “needed a Boris”:<sup>2</sup> “our dream is to have real heavyweight, influential figures.”<sup>3</sup>

In May 2012, Bristol was the only city in England to vote to vary its current system of local governance, choosing to exchange a council-elected leader for a directly-elected Mayor. On 15<sup>th</sup> November, the electorate goes to the polls to choose its first Mayor and also its first Police and Crime Commissioner. But it appears that the media and many public figures decided even before the referendum on one aspect of the Mayor: he will be a man.

This research was undertaken by Bristol Fawcett Society in the run-up to these elections in order to ensure that Bristol’s community groups, councillors and Mayoral candidates have the relevant knowledge at their fingertips so that the governing bodies of the city can respond to the needs of the people. This project seeks to explore the corridors of power in Bristol and to investigate, with our decision-makers themselves, what the processes are that might be stopping us from being representative, why this matters – and what we can do to improve the situation.

### Findings

This report finds that Bristol is below the UK national average with regard to representation of women in the higher echelons of power. The UK itself is one of the poorest examples in Europe of equality of representation among politicians and business leaders. The City of Bristol is largely run by middle-aged, middle-class white men, a power nexus better suited to a Charles Dickens or Jane Austen novel, than a 21<sup>st</sup>-century city hoping to compete in a global marketplace.

Bristol does not necessarily need a female Mayor, but Bristol clearly needs a Mayor who has a deep understanding of the current absence of female and minority talent in the corridors of power, and a

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<sup>1</sup> *This is Bristol*, 20 June 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Helen Holland.

<sup>3</sup> *This is Bristol*, 24 April 2012.

strong commitment to change the culture and context of the city's political landscape. A Mayor who fails to take a proper and informed account of 50% of Bristol's population is a Mayor who consigns Bristol to the political and business backwaters.

### **Methodology**

The method of research includes basic quantitative analysis of gender within the major organisations which wield power within the city, alongside the collection of qualitative data in the form of fourteen interviews with key players and leaders in Bristol's power networks. Some of those interviewed wished to remain anonymous but the list included the following:

**Table 0.1 – List of Participants and Organisational Affiliations**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliations</b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>
<b>Jane Emanuel</b>	Advice Network	30 May 2012
<b>George Ferguson</b>	Independent Mayoral Candidate, Merchant Venturer, Board member	19 July 2012
<b>Geoff Gollop</b>	Conservative Mayoral Candidate, Councillor, Chair of Business Forum (Business West/Bristol Chamber of Commerce), Deputy Lord Mayor, formerly Lord Mayor	3 October 2012
<b>Helen Holland</b>	Labour Councillor, Former Leader of the Council	27 June 2012
<b>Barbara Janke</b>	Liberal Democrat Councillor, Former Leader of the Council	17 July 2012
<b>Daniella Radice</b>	Green Mayoral Candidate	20 September 2012
<b>Marvin Rees</b>	Labour Mayoral Candidate, Former Director of Bristol Partnership	11 July 2012
<b>Jon Rogers</b>	Liberal Democrat Candidate, Councillor, Deputy Leader of the Council	13 September 2012
<b>John Savage</b>	Labour PCC Candidate, Chair of University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Bristol, Head of the Bristol Initiative, Chief Executive of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce, Executive Chairman of Business West, former High Sheriff for Bristol, Merchant Venturer	10 September 2012
<b>Matthew Symonds</b>	Former Councillor, Manager (Participation) at Voscur	29 May 2012
<b>Anonymous</b>	Board Member	7 June 2012
<b>Anonymous</b>	Council Official	1 June 2012
<b>Anonymous</b>	Council Official	10 July 2012
<b>Anonymous</b>	Academic	7 June 2012

Two of the anonymous participants held key roles ‘behind the scenes’ of the official power structures, one was a Bristol-based academic, and one a past and current member of several boards in both private and public sectors.

The report is divided into three sections. The first section presents factual data about representation and inequalities in Bristol covering the political sphere of power in the Council, and the business sphere of power in the public and private sectors. The second section considers why equality of representation matters and what change could be brought about by radically altering the power-landscape. The third section examines why it is that white middle-aged, middle-class men are so over-represented in our governing bodies. The fourth section offers some possible and realistic solutions which the new Mayor could enact on *her* first day.

The main focus of this report is gender. Some evidence is also presented in relation to other equality strands, however due to time and resource limitations it was not possible to be fully intersectional in our approach. In particular, we regret that it was not possible to evidence or collect data within the time framework in relation to disability. However, given the responses of disabled people in relation to their quality of life in the most recent Bristol City Council Quality of Life Survey, further investigation should surely be a Mayoral/Council priority.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> BCC (2012d).

## Section One

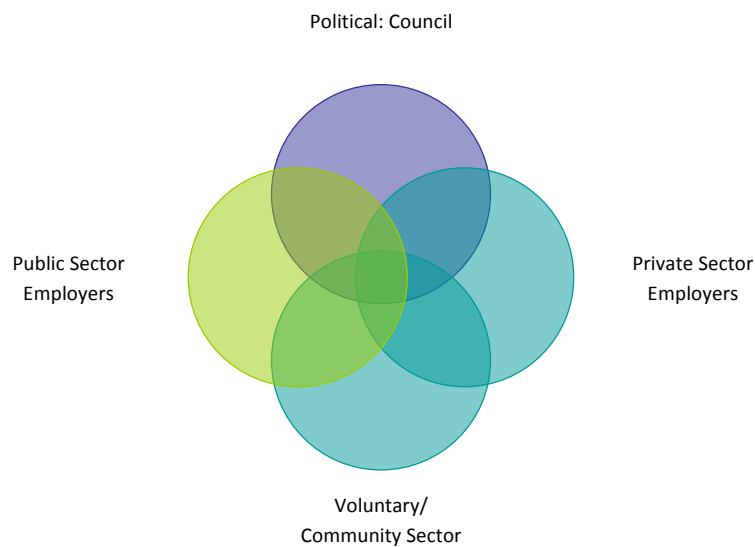
### Current Inequality

*People don't have a map of power or how it works for the whole city.*

*Helen Holland*

All fourteen interviewees agreed that there is no clear power structure in Bristol. Whilst they confirmed that the Council held power, opinion diverged in accordance with political outlook in relation to whether power also lay with traditional and exclusive networking groups such as the Merchant Venturers<sup>5</sup> or with the more modern alliance of non-governmental organisations and community groups under the Voscur<sup>6</sup> umbrella. A diagram of the power in the city might be portrayed as below.

**Figure 1.1 – Power in Bristol**



<sup>5</sup> The Society of Merchant Venturers, founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, is a powerful entrepreneurial and philanthropic organisation. See <http://merchantventurers.com/>

<sup>6</sup> Voscur is the umbrella organisation in Bristol that supports, develops and represents Bristol's voluntary and community sector. See <http://www.voscur.org/>

The analysis undertaken in this report directly examines the three most predominant wielders of power in the city: the Council, Public Sector Employers and Private Sector Employers, in relation to equality of representation. At the intersection of these hubs of power lie formal and informal networks. The main formal networks such as Bristol Partnership,<sup>7</sup> the Local Enterprise Partnership,<sup>8</sup> the Merchant Venturers and Voscur are therefore also included in the analysis.

## Political Power

*Representation – there's a bit of a myth that progression in equalities is linear and we are always moving forward. There's a general belief that things have never been so good, and yet the number of women councillors went down in May 2011.*

*Anonymous Council Official*

*I think the difficulty in Bristol in respect of women is that the reality is not as it appears. The political leadership we've had until very recently, with the Head of the Council being female, [...] and we've got a woman Chief Executive [...] makes it look more balanced than it actually is. [...] The forward-facing stuff looks more gender balanced, but the internal demography...*

*Jane Emanuel*

The City of Bristol is represented in the national government of Westminster by four white MPs, of whom 3 are women. This gender distribution bucks the national trend - women are 22% of MPs in the UK<sup>9</sup>. However, the position is very different for the local government of the city.

The City of Bristol is currently governed by a seventy-member Council who make decisions on Caring, Housing, Council Tax, Transport, Communities, Children and Young People, and Business in Bristol. Councillors are directly elected to the Council by ward (two per ward) voted for by the electorate every four years.<sup>10</sup> The Cabinet of the Council is made up of the Leader of the Council and seven executive members drawn from the Political Party which has overall control of the Council, or from more than one party where there is minority control.

Of the current seventy Councillors, seventeen (24%) are female, and fifty-three (76%) male. This is a poor reflection of the population of Bristol of which 50.3% are female according to the 2011 census.<sup>11</sup> It also compares poorly to the national average of gender imbalance in local government which is 35% female.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The Bristol Partnership is the local strategic partnership of interests from the public and private, voluntary, community and education sectors. See <http://bristolpartnership.org/>

<sup>8</sup> The West of England Local Enterprise Partnership supports business growth in the region. See <http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> CFWD, 2012a.

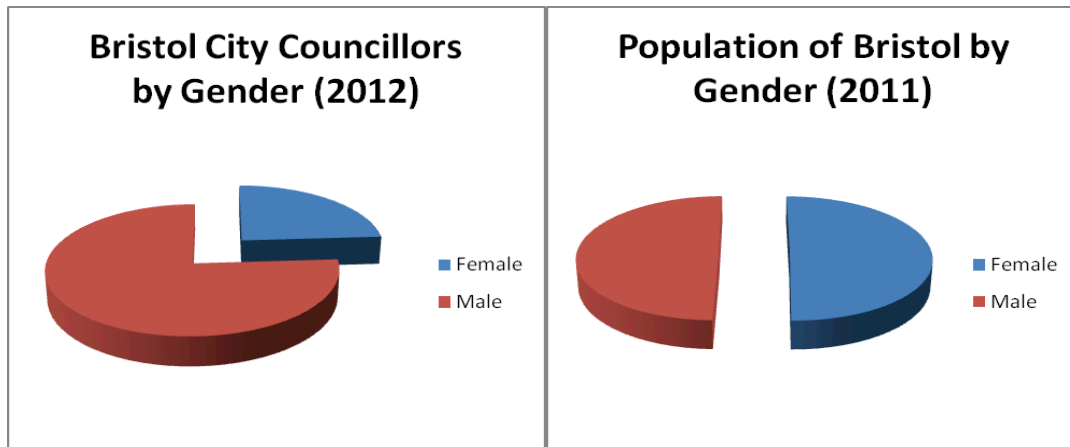
<sup>10</sup> Currently the voting is staggered across the city, so there will be new Councillors from different parts of the City every three out of four years. The City Council is currently asking for electors' views on whether this should change, see <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/how-often-should-we-elect-our-councillors-consultation>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://bristolresearchnetwork.wordpress.com/2012/08/06/2011-census-first-release/>

<sup>12</sup> CFWD, 2012b.



**Figure 1.2 – Bristol City Councillors and Population of Bristol by Gender**

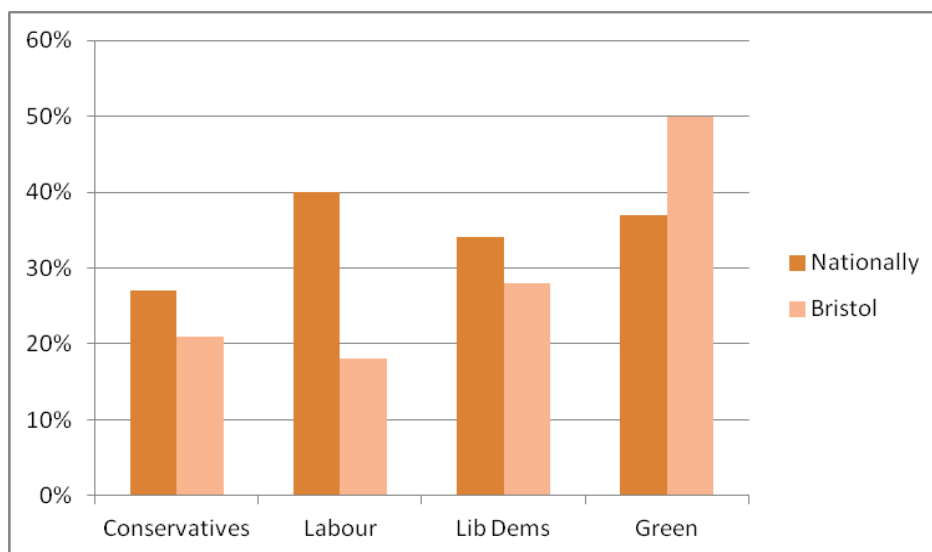


Source: BCC

Nationally, the percentage of women candidates for local office has remained steady for the last ten years. However, there has been significant disparity at a national level between the political parties in relation to number of women candidates fielded. Liberal Democrats and Conservatives have both seen a decline in the number of women candidates for local office over the last five years, whilst Labour has seen an increase. The number of women candidates fielded by the Green Party has remained high.<sup>13</sup>

In terms of elected local councillors as of May 2012, across England the Conservatives had 27% female councillors, Labour 40%, Liberal Democrats 34% and Greens 37%. These national figures are shown below in comparison with Bristol City Council which has no independent councillors or members of other smaller parties.

**Figure 1.3 – Percentages of Female Councillors by Party**



Source: CFWD (2012b) and BCC

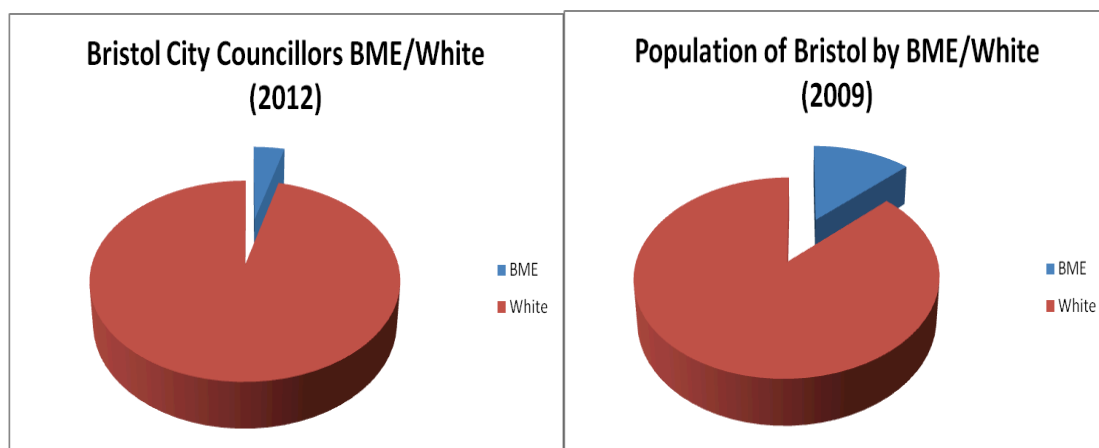
<sup>13</sup> CFWD, 2012b: 3-4.

All the political parties, with the exception of the Green Party, fare poorly in comparison with their national achievements/limitations. Despite their improvement at a national level, just 18% of the Labour Party councillors in Bristol are female, putting them below the Conservatives both locally and nationally.<sup>14</sup> The Conservative Party has 21% female councillors in Bristol which is even beneath their shockingly low national level of 27%. The Liberal Democrats have 28% female councillors in Bristol, again below their national average. The three main political parties of Bristol City Council are all under-performing in relation to equality and diversity and it is incumbent on them to consider strategies and means for improvement. The Centre for Women and Democracy has criticised all four parties for fielding women in marginal seats as opposed to 'safe' seats.<sup>15</sup>

### Ethnic Minorities

Three (4%) of Bristol City Councillors are of Asian background. This is the same as the national average of BME members in local governance (4.1%). However, there are no Councillors of Somali or Caribbean heritage, despite members of these groups having a significant presence in the city. The 2009 ONS Data (the most recent survey for which data is available) shows that those identifying as belonging to BME groups (including those who define themselves as mixed race) made up 13.5% of Bristol's population.

**Figure 1.4 – Bristol City Councillors and Population of Bristol by ethnicity**



Source: BCC

Figures on the proportion of BME constituents per ward from the 2011 census are not yet available. When such data is available it would be useful to compare this against voter turnout and to undertake research into the potential disenfranchisement of ethnic minorities in the city.

### Geographical/Class Inequality

It has long been acknowledged that Bristol is a geographically-divided city in terms of wealth and opportunity. How this might affect equality of political participation, however, is very difficult to determine. The following analysis presents information in relation to the residence of Councillors,

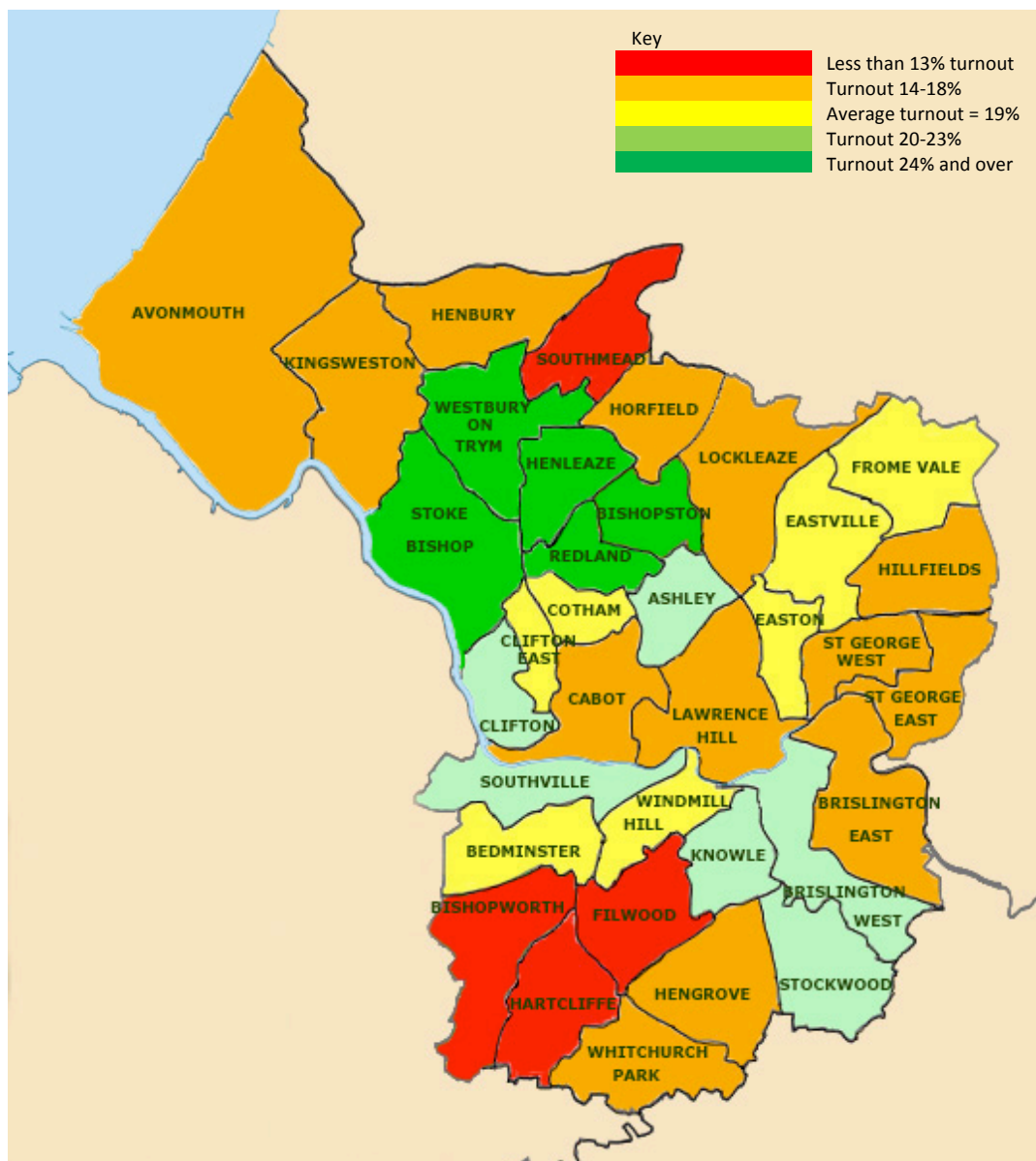
<sup>14</sup> For the May 2013 Council elections in Bristol, Labour has selected candidates from all-women shortlists. Furthermore, Labour has taken on board criticism about women being fielded in marginal seats and aims to put women candidates in winnable seats. (Correspondence with Roger Livingston, Political Assistant, BCC, October 2012).

<sup>15</sup> CFWD, 2012b:7.

voter turnout by ward, and areas of multiple deprivation. The information, however, cannot and does not confirm any relationship between these three things: it is used simply to give a suggestive picture of the political participation landscape.

A breakdown of voter turnout by ward in the Mayoral referendum (May 2012) reflects a shocking and divisive lack of engagement in the political process by geography. Figure 1.5 shows voter turnout in colour bands with the highest turnouts coloured in green (Henleaze ward recorded the highest turnout at 32%) and the lowest turnout in red (Filwood ward at just 10%). The percentages show voter turnout at the polling station against the number of eligible polling station votes. This can only give a general impression since postal votes are not broken down by ward.

**Figure 1.5 – Map of Voter Turnout by Ward for Mayoral Referendum**



Source: BCC

<sup>16</sup> With thanks to David Brown for the map.

In the table below, information is presented by ward on:

- voter turnout in the May referendum;
- the number of current Councillors residing in each ward; and
- the number of areas within the ward ("LSOAs" or Lower Super Output Areas) ranked in the bottom 10% in the country for multiple deprivation.<sup>17</sup>

Bristol has 32 areas categorised in the most deprived 10% in England for multiple deprivation of which 14 are in the most deprived 5% and 1 in the most deprived 1%.<sup>18</sup> There are 60,665 people living within these areas in Bristol which is 14% of all residents living in Bristol.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 1.6 – Voter Turnout (Mayoral Referendum) by Ward / Councillors' Residence / Areas of Deprivation 2010**

Ward	No. of eligible polling station voters	Polling station votes verified	% of votes verified of total eligible PS voters	No. of Councillors resident in ward	No. of Areas of multiple deprivation in ward
Ashley	9,759	2,035	21%	5	2
Avonmouth	8,313	1,339	16%	1	
Bedminster	8,771	1,656	19%	2	
Bishopston	8,901	2,306	26%	3	
Bishopsworth	7,505	970	13%	1	1
Brislington East	7,726	1,317	17%	1	
Brislington West	7,510	1,503	20%	3	
Cabot	10,510	1,529	15%	2	1
Clifton	7,925	1,787	23%	4	
Clifton East	7,616	1,410	19%	1	
Cotham	8,287	1,575	19%	1	
Easton	8,229	1,530	19%		
Eastville	7,784	1,506	19%	7	
Filwood	7,478	741	10%	1	5
Frome Vale	7,422	1,386	19%		1
Hartcliffe	7,277	845	12%	1	4
Henbury	6,821	1,145	17%	1	1
Hengrove	7,651	1,276	17%	2	
Henleaze	6,693	2,275	34%	3	
Hillfields	8,565	1,336	16%	2	
Horfield	8,092	1,414	17%	2	
Kingsweston	6,757	1,144	17%	2	2
Knowle	7,526	1,571	21%	2	1
Lawrence Hill	9,849	1,348	14%		6
Lockleaze	7,092	1,013	14%	1	2
Redland	7,950	1,977	25%	4	
St George East	8,078	1,159	14%		
St George West	7,542	1,184	16%	1	
Southmead	7,251	860	12%		2
Southville	8,791	1,740	20%	4	1
Stockwood	7,455	1,478	20%	1	
Stoke Bishop	6,965	1,825	26%	2	
Westbury on Trym	6,707	2,082	31%	3	
Windmill Hill	8,734	1,658	19%	3	
Whitchurch Park	7,172	1,078	15%	4	3
TOTAL	276,704	50,998	18%	70	32
Postal Votes	42,189	26,171	62%		

Key

Less than 13% turnout
Turnout 14-18%
Average turnout = 19%
Turnout 20-23%
Turnout 24% and over

Source: BCC

<sup>17</sup> "Lower Layer Super Output Areas are relatively small areas, each with an average population of 1,500 residents [...]. Nationally there are 32,482 LSOAs in comparison to over 8,500 wards. In Bristol there are a total of 252 LSOAs." BCC, Deprivation in Bristol (2010:3). There are approximately 7 LSOAs per ward.

<sup>18</sup> BCC, Deprivation in Bristol (2010).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The information in the table gives rise to an interesting comparison between wards of very low voter turnout and number of areas of multiple deprivation. Of the four wards with less than 13% turnout (Bishopsworth, Filwood, Hartcliffe and Southmead) all have areas within the ward which fall into the bottom 10% for multiple deprivation nationally (the number of areas are 1, 5, 4 and 2 respectively). Three of these wards – Filwood, Hartcliffe and Southmead – have LSOA's in the lowest 4% for multiple deprivation in the UK.<sup>20</sup> A further six wards containing areas of multiple deprivation have a turnout below average of 14-18%. Only three wards with areas of multiple deprivation recorded higher than average voter turnout (Ashley, Knowle and Southville), which might be explained by the fact that these wards also have Super Output Areas that are 'less deprived than average', and therefore the ward contains considerable high levels of socio-economic diversity.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, voter turnout seems to correspond with affluence as well as deprivation – such that wards with several Super Output Areas comprising the least deprived 10% in the UK (Bishopston, Henleaze, Redland, Stoke Bishop, Westbury-on-Trym) also recorded voter turnout above 25%.<sup>22</sup> Correspondence with a number of local people involved in campaigning within and across political parties at the time of the referendum suggests to us that the wards with a historic reputation for high turnout were targeted disproportionately during the referendum campaign, which strategy can only further entrench patterns of voter engagement.<sup>23</sup>

The count of councillor residence by ward also hints at the possibility that participation in public life more generally may be influenced by where people live. It must be emphasised however that there is no individual relationship between Councillor-residence and active service for the Ward that the Councillor represents. Many Councillors have long and complex ties to the ward they represent through work, family or proximity despite not actually residing in the ward. Other Councillors have moved a significant number of times for personal reasons and continue to serve their ward excellently. Taken as a whole, however, this information raises some interesting questions about political participation – why is it that Ashley, Clifton, Eastville, Redland, Southville and Whitchurch Park produce or claim so many people willing to commit to public life?

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<sup>20</sup> Lawrence Hill, which is made up entirely of LSOA's in the lowest 10% of multiple deprivation, is an exception.

<sup>21</sup> See BCC (2010), Deprivation in Bristol 2010, map on page 13.

<sup>22</sup> See BCC (2010), Deprivation in Bristol 2010, map on page 13.

<sup>23</sup> With thanks to Dr Thom Oliver for this and other observations. Correspondence with Christina Zaba (A Mayor for Bristol Campaign), Rob Telford (Green Party) and others.

## Public Sector

*We recognise that although our workforce diversity has improved in recent years progress has been slow and we still do not have a workforce that reflects our local community, particularly at senior levels.*

(Bristol City Council, 2012:13)

As the Council notes implicitly within its equalities strategy, power in the city does not lie simply with the political representatives, but is also held by the largest employers.

The once clear line between public and private sectors has been eroded in recent years. For the purposes of this report, Further Education colleges, the two universities and Lloyds Banking Group are included as public sector.<sup>24</sup> Individual public sector employers are by far the most significant employers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.<sup>25</sup> Of the six institutions within Bristol/South Gloucestershire who employ over 5000 people, five are public sector employers: Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Ministry of Defence, North Bristol NHS Trust, University Hospitals NHS Foundation and the other is the part-public, part-private, University of Bristol. In addition to these, there are twenty-three public sector employers who have a Bristol-based staff size of between 200-5000. For the purposes of this report, analysis of gender balance in the management structures of these organisations has been focussed on those solely based in the region or those with their headquarters in their region.<sup>26</sup> So for example, the Ministry of Defence (whose six ministers, five Chiefs of Staff, and four senior officials are all male) has been discounted from the analysis because it is run from London, along with eleven of the smaller public sector employers. The two Councils are also not included. The data has been collected from the websites of the companies or from accounts held with the Charity Commission. The research focuses on the gender-balance of the management 'boards' of the public sector employers. I have used the term 'boards' throughout to refer to the top leadership structure of each organisation in Bristol, although within specific organisations these might be termed 'board of governors' or an executive management team. For the two universities the figures are given for both the executive team and the board of governors or 'Council' as it is called at the University of Bristol.

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<sup>24</sup> ONS includes Lloyds as public sector, FE colleges have been moved back and forth between public and private over the last few years, and the universities are considered not public sector.

<sup>25</sup> 528,000 people (12.4% of working-age population) were employed within the public sector (figures including FE colleges and Lloyds but not universities) in the South West in 2010 (ONS 2010:10).

<sup>26</sup> Public Sector Employers with bases in Bristol and South Gloucestershire employing over 200 staff not included in this analysis are presented in Appendix A.

**Table 1.8 – Bristol-based Public Sector Organisations: Leadership by Gender**

	No. Of Employees	Chair	CEO/2nd	No. Of Women on Board	Total on Board	% of women on Board
Avon & Somerset Police	1001-2500	White Male	White Male	1	7	14%
Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS	251-500	White Male	White Male	5	13	38%
Avon Fire and Rescue Service <sup>27</sup>	1001-2500	White Male	White Female	1	5	20%
City of Bristol College	1001-2500	White Male	Male	5	15	33%
Environment Agency, The	251-500	White Male	Male	4	13	31%
Filton College	751-1000	White Male		4	11	36%
Higher Education Funding Council	251-500	White Male	White Male	4	15	27%
NHS Direct Bristol	200-250	White Male	White Female	7	14	50%
NHS SG	501-750	Same board as above				
North Bristol NHS Trust	5001+	White Male	White Female	4	15	27%
Planning Inspectorate, The	251-500	White Male		1	9	11%
University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust	5001+	White Male	White Male	5	15	33%
University of Bristol Executive	5001+	White Male	White Male	2	7	28%
University of Bristol Council		White Male		8	32	25%
University of the West of England Executive	2501-5000	White Male	White Male	2	8	40%
University of the West of England Governors			White Female	4	15	27%
VOSA	251-500	White Male		2	8	40%
<b>Total</b>				<b>59</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>29%</b>

Source: BCC (2012a) and Internet

Analysis of the public sector offices with a head office in Bristol or South Gloucestershire showed that 29% of board members are female. National research undertaken in 2009 gave a figure of 33.3% female board members across the UK on public sector bodies.<sup>28</sup> Again, similar to the situation with political representation, Bristol is found to be less diverse at the top than the national average.

The number of women on public sector boards is particularly poor when considered against the fact that nationally the public sector employs more women (65%) than men<sup>29</sup> and is also a more significant employer for women with 40% of women's jobs based in the public sector compared to 15% of men's jobs.<sup>30</sup> Whilst exact figures are not available for the city of Bristol, in 2010 in the South West, 42% of women were employed in the public sector compared with 15% of men.<sup>31</sup> One obvious contributing factor as to why such a large employer of women should fail to translate relevant work experience into board membership is that women are under-represented in the higher earnings

<sup>27</sup> Avon Fire Authority, as opposed to Avon Fire and Rescue Service, is comprised of 25 Councillors from the four authorities (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset), of which six are female and the chair is a white male. <http://www.avonfire.gov.uk/avon/fire-authority-home/fire-authority-members>

<sup>28</sup> Sealy, Doldor and Vinnicombe, 2009:15.

<sup>29</sup> Brinkley, 2012:5.

<sup>30</sup> TUC, 2010:3.

<sup>31</sup> TUC, 2010:9.

bands and over-represented in the lower earnings bands.<sup>32</sup> The government has set a target that 50% of all new appointees to public sector boards be female by 2015.<sup>33</sup>

While the picture painted by the data above is bleak, the figures taken on their own may yet over-represent both the amount of power held by women, and the willingness of those recruiting to boards to appoint women. Many boards have executive/non-executive members and many also include women who are on the board by dint of their job title, rather than having been an external appointee to the board. Whilst nearly a third of an average board may be female, the positions of greater power are more often than not held by men. For example there are six members of the University of Bristol Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Board. The Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors are all male. The two women on the board are situated in the Registrar's Private Office.

Perhaps the most striking and significant fact is that *all* of the chairs are male with the exception of the Chair of Governors of UWE (who is a woman and also a Merchant Venturer) and *all* are white. Out of fifteen public sector organisations with their head office in Bristol, every single one is headed-up by a white man (UWE's executive leader is a male Vice-Chancellor).

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<sup>32</sup> BCC: 2012c:26.

<sup>33</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011), 'Women on Boards' February 2011



## Private Sector

*Which organisations hold power in Bristol? [...] a lot of the interest is on infrastructure, big companies like Airbus of Bristol Water, or exciting little companies like Aardman, or the Watershed. Who runs all these places? Men.*

*Jane Emanuel*

A lot of companies have made significant attempts to benefit their businesses by developing work practices that enable retention of expertise and diversity of knowledge. Practices such as flexible working and enhanced maternity leave have benefited women and men as well as business itself. However, women and other minority groups remain seriously under-represented at the top of business structures; at management level and on boards. This has a knock-on effect for local political representation: the average age of a Councillor is 58,<sup>34</sup> reflecting economic security and ability to be flexible in relation to working hours. It also reflects the inequality of representation in formal networking groups such as Business West and the Local Enterprise Partnership since these groups draw their members from local business leaders.

The first objective of Bristol City Council's Equalities Plan 2012-15 is addressed at altering the excess of white men at Senior Management level.<sup>35</sup> This is in line with central government policy which has endorsed Lord Davies' 2011 report on 'Women on Boards' with a recommendation that companies listed in the FTSE 100 should be aiming at 25% female board members by 2015. When I spoke to the Business Secretary, Vince Cable MP about this issue, he confirmed the government's commitment to promoting women to senior management positions and suggested that this could be an area of economic expansion for women given the recent cuts to public services.<sup>36</sup>

Whilst more people are employed within the private sector than the public sector in the South West as a whole (a total of 1,963,000 compared to 528,000 employed in the public sector),<sup>37</sup> the power of this sector is reduced somewhat by its spread.<sup>38</sup> Out of the 122 private businesses in Bristol and South Gloucestershire who employ over 200 people, there are only two employers with 2501-5000 staff: Airbus in the UK and GKN Aerospace. A further five employ between 1001-2500 and the remainder employ fewer than 1000 people. Accessing the relevant data on private companies was considerably more difficult than for the public sector employers. Included in the analysis were companies with significant bases in the Bristol/South Gloucestershire area even when the head office of the company was not specifically located in the region. This reduced the number to thirty-eight possible companies.<sup>39</sup> Of these, the relevant data was found on the Internet for twenty-nine of the companies. Data was requested from the remaining nine companies by telephone. Again the term 'board' is used throughout and refers to the relevant leadership structure although the internal names for such people included partners in law firms, directors, trustees, governors, etc. For some companies, where the information was available, analysis was undertaken on Bristol-based staff

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<sup>34</sup> The Councillor's Commission, 2007:13.

<sup>35</sup> BCC, 2012:13.

<sup>36</sup> In conversation 15<sup>th</sup> September, Bristol Sweet Mart.

<sup>37</sup> ONS, 2010: 20.

<sup>38</sup> Included in the 'private sector' are charitable and Not-For-Profit educational establishments clearly outside of the public sector.

<sup>39</sup> A table of private sector companies with significant bases in Bristol or South Gloucestershire but not included in analysis can be found at Appendix B.

only. So for example HP Labs has 18 directors internationally of whom just three are female, but the analysis here has considered only Senior Researchers and Managers at the Bristol HP Lab.

**Table 1.9 - Bristol-based Private Sector Organisations: Leadership by Gender**

	No. of Employees	Sector	Chair	No. of Women Directors on board	Total Directors on board	% of Women on Board
Aardman Animations	501-750	Creative/Cultural	Male	4	9	45%
Admiral Harding Ltd	200-250	Manufacturing		0	6	0%
Airbus in the UK	2501-5000	Manufacturing	Male	0	9	0%
Alexandra	200-250	Manufacturing				
Badminton School	200-250	Schools		8	14	57%
Baileys Caravans	251-500	Manufacturing	Male	2	11	18%
Bristol & West Plc (Bank of Ireland Financial Services)	751-1000	Financial Services	Male	1	6	17%
Bevan Brittan LLP	200-250	Legal Services		16	47	34%
Bond Pearce LLP	200-250	Legal Services		12	72	17%
Bristol Grammar School	200-250	Schools	Male	6	19	32%
Bristol Port Company, The	251-500	Transport Services		0	8	0%
Bristol Rovers Football Club Plc	200-250	Leisure	Male	0	8	0%
Bristol Water Group plc	251-500	Public Utilities	Male	0	19	0%
Burges Salmon LLP	501-750	Legal Services	Male	12	77	16%
Clifton College	501-750	Education		3	13	23%
DAC Beachcroft LLP (Bristol only)	251-500	Legal Services		11	42	26%
Essilor Ltd	251-500	Manufacturing	Male	1	5	20%
Hargreaves Lansdown	501-750	Financial Services	Male	1	9	11%
HP Labs Bristol UK	751-1000	Business Services	Male	2	9	22%
Institute of Physics Publishing	251-500	Manufacturing	Male	5	12	42%
Integral	501-750	Construction	Male	0	4	0%
ISG Pearce Group	251-500	Construction	Male	1	14	7%
Jordans Ltd	200-250	Business	Male	0	9	0%
Jordans International		Business	Male	0	6	0%
Jordans Publishing		Business	Male	2	6	33%
KPMG	200-250	Financial Services	Male	0	3	0%
Merlin Housing Society	251-500	Miscellaneous	Male	5	14	36%
Mitie Group	751-1000	Engineers	Male	2	3	67%
Motability Finance	200-250	Financial Services	Male	1	11	9%
Nisbets	501-750	Distribution	Male	1	6	17%
Osborne Clarke	501-500	Legal Services	Male	8	36	22%
St Monica Trust	501-750	Health and Welfare	Male	4	8	50%
Teleperformance	501-750	Business	Male	1	7	14%
TLT Solicitors	501-750	Legal Services	Male	0	2	0%
Veale Wasbrough Vizards	200-250	Legal Services	Male	1	3	33%
<b>Total</b>				<b>110</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>21%</b>

Key: *No response from company/Unable to find data.*

Source: BCC (2012a), Websites, Correspondence

The percentage of women in leadership roles in Bristol-based private companies is 21%.

According to central government there is a clear business case for increasing the number of women on boards:

*Evidence suggests that companies with a strong female representation at board and top management level perform better than those without and that gender-diverse boards have a positive impact on performance. It is clear that boards make better decisions*

*where a range of voices, drawing on different life experiences, can be heard. That mix of voices must include women.*

*(BIS, 2011:3)*

The government's recent review on women on boards in the private sector gave clear recommendations for FTSE-listed companies which included a target of 25% minimum representation by 2015 and the annual disclosure of gender-mix on boards by such companies. In addition Lord Davies' review recommended that the "chairman should disclose meaningful information about the company's appointment process and how it addresses diversity in the company's annual report including a description of the search and nominations process."<sup>40</sup> The government review is supported by recent empirical research which found that while there is recognition that it is of benefit to increase diversity on private boards, board members are nonetheless recruited on how well they will 'fit in' "with the values, norms and behaviours of existing board members who are largely men."<sup>41</sup> Leadership frequently recreates itself in its own image, which is to say that those who have power subconsciously seek out those most similar to themselves with whom to share the power.

Bristol's private sector should at the very least aim to follow the government lead, but could become a UK-city leader in gender-diversity with a radical shake-up of its board members.

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<sup>40</sup> BIS, 2011:4.

<sup>41</sup> Doldor, E., Vinnicombe, S., Gaughan, M. and Sealy, R. (2012)

## Networking/decision-making Communities

Key figures from private and public bodies frequently join together to make major decisions on the running of the city. Some of these groups are official and transparent and have been specifically set up by power-brokers in order to harness power from across the city and region, and work within a specific agenda to allow Bristol to grow and develop. Such groups include the Bristol Partnership and the Local Enterprise Partnership. Others, whilst potentially equally influential, are less transparent, such as the Merchant Venturers. Yet others have grown out of specific power-hubs such as business (the Chamber of Commerce) and the voluntary or community sector (Voscur) and function in order to strengthen people's access to influence or to share and coordinate information. Something that became clear in the course of this research was the extent of overlap in membership between some of these powerful bodies in Bristol.

### Bristol Partnership/ West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

The Bristol Partnership brought together leaders from the public, private, Not-For-Profit and community sectors and aimed to work towards implementing and realising the Bristol 20:20 plan<sup>42</sup>. It included an Equalities Action Group which despite having "a bumpy ride" (Matthew Symonds) nonetheless did at least exist. Further, it promoted representation beyond the political structure through active engagement with voices from different sectors. However, the Conservative/Liberal Democrat national coalition government formed in 2010 dropped the requirement for Local Strategic Partnerships and so the Bristol Partnership lost its power which was redeployed with the creation of the West of England LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership). Action on equality is not at the forefront of the LEP which has a focus on regeneration. It does not include representation from the voluntary or community sector.

*[The LEP's] existence represents the view that economic regeneration is the key.*

*Jane Emanuel*

*The Equalities agenda of the Bristol Partnership has dropped from sight with the advent of the LEP and so has the channel for feeding both up and down with the neighbourhoods, thereby sometimes missing emerging neighbourhood priorities, or seeing overarching themes.*

*Helen Holland*

**Table 1.10 – Bristol Partnership and LEP Board Members by Gender**

	Chair	No. of Women on Board	Total on Board	% of Women on Board
<b>Bristol Partnership</b>	White Male	4	16	25%
<b>West of England LEP</b>	White Male	2	10	20%
<b>Total</b>		6	26	23%

*Source: BP and LEP websites*

<sup>42</sup> see <http://bristolpartnership.org/vision-for-bristol>

All the listed board members of the Bristol Partnership and the West of England LEP are white.

### **Business West/Bristol Chamber of Commerce**

Business West brings together the three Chambers of Commerce in the West (Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire). There are eight people on the board of Business West of whom two are female. The Chair of the board is female. Bristol Chamber of Commerce is comprised of company members: 850 chamber members and 2000 associate members. Together these companies employ over 110,000 people across the city region.<sup>43</sup>

### **Merchant Venturers**

*What do they do? Meet and money comes out.*

*Anonymous Board Member*

The Merchant Venturers have become significantly more transparent in recent years and do publish a list of members on their website along with information on their philanthropic work. However, membership is through private introduction thus ensuring and limiting membership to reproduction in its own image. Five (7%) out of seventy-one listed members are female and the Master is male.<sup>44</sup>

### **Voscur**

The Voluntary Organisations Standing Conference on Urban Regeneration (Voscur) exists to develop and represent Bristol's voluntary and community sector. It has six core values of which 'equality' is listed as the first. Voscur has a board of twelve of which seven are male and five (42%) are female. The chair is male.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Information as given on Business West website.

<sup>44</sup> Information as given on Merchant Venturers website.

<sup>45</sup> The Chief Executive of Voscur is female. Information from Matthew Symonds.

## Section Two

### ***Why does it matter?***

Responses to why equality of representation is important can be divided into four categories: it matters for democracy; it matters because those who are affected by the decisions have little input into the decision-making process; it matters for accountability; and it matters because the landscape of political decision-making could be improved by the equal inclusion of women and minority groups. These are discussed in turn below.

### **Improving Democracy**

*If the question is should there be more women in positions of power, of course there should. [...] half of the population is female.*

*John Savage*

On the face of it, the question seems obvious: how can we think that we live in a democracy when half the population are discouraged to the point of exclusion from seeking public office by dint of their gender? The fact that women and other minority groups remain so disproportionately under-represented in public office is reflective of a fault in the functioning of our democracy. According to John Stuart Mill, unless all sectors of society are represented proportionately “there is not equal government, but a government of inequality and privilege: one part of the people rule over the rest; there is a part whose fair and equal share of influence in the representation is withheld from them; contrary to all just government, but above all, contrary to the principle of democracy, which professes equality as its very root and foundation.” (Mill, 1861).

The notion that a ‘true’ democracy should be representative of the larger population has been embraced in the UK both on a national level and at a local level. The 1998 White Paper ‘*Modern Local Government in touch with the People*’ laid out the principles for the changes expected in local governance which included the “need to break free from old fashioned practices and attitudes.”<sup>46</sup> The report went on to state that whilst councillors were unrepresentative of their local demography they nonetheless “do their very best to represent their communities, whether or not they share the same background. **But the general position cannot be healthy for local democracy.**”<sup>47</sup> This report was followed in October 2006 by a White Paper entitled ‘*Strong and Prosperous Communities*’ which went even further in its commitment to diversity on the basis of it being a prerequisite for a healthy functioning democracy: “If democratic representatives are to command the confidence of their communities then they need to reflect the diversity of their local communities”<sup>48</sup> and “Local councillors are the bedrock of local democracy.”<sup>49</sup> The ‘Government Response to the Councillors Commission’ (2008) reiterated this message, highlighting the loss of talent for the local community and the country’s democracy with the over-representation of white, male, middle-class, 50+-year-olds in the nomination pool.

<sup>46</sup> Prescott; 1998: Foreword and Introduction.

<sup>47</sup> 1998, 3.59, emphasis added.

<sup>48</sup> 2006: 50.

<sup>49</sup> 2006: 52.

Bristol City Council has followed central government's lead and in 2008 BCC declared that they were "committed to equality of opportunity" and that this commitment included democratic representation within the Council itself: "It is crucial that the council reflects [Bristol's] diversity".<sup>50</sup> In order to give effect to these beliefs, the Council agreed an 'Equalities Plan' in March 2012. Whilst the plan demonstrates admirable values and sets ambitious targets to raise the number of BME/disabled/female members at management level across Bristol, it gives little in the way of concrete examples of how it intends to achieve its targets. Furthermore, it neglects its own backyard – the Council itself – which as seen above, is appallingly unrepresentative of the people it is supposed to stand for, and worse than local government across the rest of the UK. The Equality and Diversity section of BCC's website comes with a strap-line announcing "it is our diversity that helps us serve you better". One might well ask, 'What diversity is that exactly?' The current local government structures cannot be considered anything other than "government of inequality and privilege" (Mill, 1861).

### **Effective Decision-making: "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu"**

*A council [that is] made up of a disproportionate number of people of a certain type of background, not even a third of women, and yet that council is setting a budget that has huge impact on policies that affect women, such as health, children, facilities education, it is inevitably not going to be informed by first-hand experience of these issues. I may be being a bit unfair on some male councillors (who for example do play a big role in child care etc), but many don't have this first-hand experience. The same goes for BME representation, with only 3 BME councillors out of 70, the views and experiences of these groups is not going to be very well represented.*

*Matthew Symonds*

*I am very wary of generalising, but do think women, by the nature of our society, bring everything that a man can bring with a greater understanding of the needs of families and a stronger emphasis on environment, health and wellbeing, and the value of investing in preventative measures.*

*George Ferguson*

The most persuasive argument for the inclusion of all sections of society within the decision-making process is that decisions are ill-judged and not beneficial to the target group, or the wider society, if they do not include those with direct experience of the topic. For example, women are the primary users of the public bus service in Bristol<sup>51</sup> yet only two out of the ten members of the BCC Transport Scrutiny Committee are women. The West of England Joint Transport Executive Committee has four primary members from the four councils of the area: all are male. Clearly it is possible for men to make solid and accountable decisions on issues that primarily affect women, but the interviewees felt that all too frequently this did not happen. The three white male 50+-year-old Mayoral Candidates interviewed for this research showed admirable awareness of their own limits in this

<sup>50</sup> BCC, 2008:2.

<sup>51</sup> Bristol Fawcett (2011).

regard. For example, Jon Rogers argued that “the more inequality there is in the society, the unhappier everyone is, right from the very bottom to the very top, every single person at every stage of the way is disadvantaged by inequality.” George Ferguson spoke about how he was currently living in Hartcliffe and therefore gaining a more intimate knowledge of the issues contributing to deprivation in the area. Geoff Gollop told of how an encounter with a partially-sighted Councillor brought home to him some of the realities of trying to negotiate the health care system as a disabled user: “And that made me realise the one thing I can’t do, I am what I am, I can’t imagine what it’s like to be in a situation where you are disabled and made to feel that actually, you’re a nuisance for the people who I assumed would be helping to care for you.” Candidates Daniella Radice and Marvin Rees both indicated how they would use their personal experience of being overlooked, patronised or excluded on the basis of gender/ethnicity, along with their deep political understanding of equalities issues, to inform their views on representation.

But is awareness enough? If the candidates are serious about addressing the issue of equality and getting women and minority groups around the decision-making table they need to present concrete actionable plans of how they propose this be done. These plans need to address equality of representation within their potential Mayoral Office, within the Council, and with regard to the message on inclusion that they send out to public and private power-holders in the City, to the media, and therefore to the population as a whole.

## Improving Accountability

*Groups that are under-represented are more likely to believe that their perspectives are overlooked and disengage from the democratic process.*

*(White Paper 2006: 50)*

*It’s just that decisions should be made by the people, closest to the people that they’re going to affect.*

*Daniella Radice*

When asked about the importance of equal representation, many of the interviewees felt the significance of poor representation lay in the knock-on effect of disenfranchisement from the political process within the electorate, which is to say, why should we bother to engage politically when the people who govern the city do not share our identity? Voting patterns based on polls across the country arguably support this premise in relation to gender – women appear to vote less than men, but only marginally.<sup>52</sup> There is more persuasive evidence that participation in voting is affected by class (see deprivation analysis/Bristol by ward) and ethnic identity.<sup>53</sup>

The interviewees noted that the loss of political participation had a detrimental effect on accountability: even when white able-bodied men are making correct and useful decisions for issues

<sup>52</sup> Data on demographic trends in voting is not available since ballot papers are not recorded with accompanying personal data. However on the basis of voting-intention surveys, Ipsos MORI estimated in relation to the 2010 and 2005 General Election that 1% more men voted than women.

<sup>53</sup> Marvin Rees, who has worked with Operation Black Vote, spoke of his personal experience in the disenfranchisement of BME minority groups.



that primarily affect ethnic minorities, disabled people and women, the fact of not being at the decision-making table acts to exclude and disenfranchise those groups from the process, whatever the actual decision outcome.

*[...] in mainstream politics black and Asian people and people from historically marginalised groups were grossly under-represented, we were always playing catch-up. Decisions were being made around the tables of power and they weren't there. But if we only indulge our feelings of disappointment and frustration, then disengage and don't get involved, then who sits at those decision-making tables? It will be the same old people, the very people we understand to be making politics something that doesn't work for most people. We can't afford that. I don't see the guys from Eton giving up on politics."*

Marvin Rees

### Improving Democracy-in-process

Interviewees who had themselves experienced the role of carer felt it gave them an enormous political benefit both in terms of which issues needed to be prioritised and in terms of how political issues and dialogue proceeded. Current and past leaders of Bristol, whatever their gender, explicitly recognised that the women they came across politically and in business frequently had an added advantage in negotiating. Geoff Gollop argued that women often came to problems with "calm rational thought" which improved the debate and that "female logic" was needed to make better decisions. As the Davies report<sup>54</sup> has made clear, there is a wealth of research that demonstrates a direct relationship between women in leadership, enhanced governance, strong business performance and better management of risk.

Barbara Janke commented: "Women are not only equal to men in negotiation. In public life, they are very often better. This is because their whole life experience teaches them that gains can often only be made – or losses minimised – by negotiation rather than the use of force." In the following anecdote, John Savage captures how cultural stereotype and experience manifest into concrete difference between women and men, and how changing roles can have economic benefits.

*For my first big job I ran a biscuit factory. This is forty-odd years ago, so it was mostly populated with women of course, and it was a bit old-fashioned, we are back in the 70s. [...] But I changed something particular in that factory against all the odds. I noticed something particular that was consistently happening and I stopped everything one day and took all the male fork-lift truck drivers away from their jobs [...] and replaced them with women. The incidence of damage inside the factory went to zero. [...] You know I was watching the way the women were doing their jobs and then we had men driving like grand-prix drivers.*

John Savage

Carers acquire skills through thinking primarily of someone other than themselves, and through the

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<sup>54</sup> BIS, 2011.

detailed planning that is frequently required when looking after children, older people, or disabled people. These skills – calmness, ability to adapt, the loss of significance of individual personality – are all skills which could be transferred to public life, to the benefit of the public.

The need for the inclusion of a representative amount of women in public life was a message relayed by **all** by the interviewees.

## Section Three

### ***Future Inequality?***

All of the interviewees spoke about the apparent feeling of disenfranchisement experienced by the people of Bristol, whether they lived in the affluent Westbury-on-Trym or the multiply-deprived Lawrence Hill.

*I have been to meetings where I hear people from some of the more deprived areas of Bristol talking about the fact that they feel excluded from decision-making. But actually I know that people from the more affluent areas of Bristol feel they are excluded from decision-making. So it is across the whole authority that people in general feel excluded.*

*Geoff Gollop*

The leaders and key players interviewed believed that this feeling of exclusion from the decision-making apparatus in the city was responsible in part both for the record low turnout for the referendum and for the result of the vote. Just twenty-four percent of the electorate of the City of Bristol voted in the Mayoral referendum. 35,880 (11.25%) voted against having a Mayor, whilst 41,032 (12.87%) voted for a Mayor. The voter turnout was therefore low, and the margin between the 'no' and 'yes' votes minimal.

Bristol's complicated power structure has the potential to be revolutionised by the introduction of a Mayor. At present, interviewees generally felt that the different segments (Council/Public Employers/Private Companies/Networking Groups) of the city used their power to pull in different directions. Some recognised the achievements and vision of the Bristol Partnership's 20:20 plan and lamented the demise of this strategic partnership. None, however, thought that the LEP had been able, or even had a mandate, to fill this void in terms of providing the city with a singular vision and focus towards which all groups could work. Those who were pro-Mayor, and even those who had voted 'no', stated that they *hoped* the role of the Mayor would provide a leadership platform for the city which could take up the disparate voices of these decision-making bodies and pull them together, thereby providing both a solid direction for all to work together for the future of Bristol, and also a public and accessible face of 'power' which could counteract the current display and entrenchment of disenfranchisement.

*You never get perfection, but yes the Mayor is a chance for us to have a single notion of direction, and then you need to tune the cylinders of the engines to be going all at exactly the right moment.*

*John Savage*

There are fifteen candidates for Mayor of Bristol. One (7%) of these – Daniella Radice – is female, and one (7%) – Marvin Rees – is BME. Representation therefore for women is significantly worse among Mayoral candidates than in any of the power forums discussed above. If this city is serious about enhancing political inclusion then we have to ask ourselves: why? Why is it that women are so grossly under-represented in all power-structures across the city? Why does Bristol as a city have an

even worse record on gender and BME equality in representation than the national average? What is it within the city's corporate, political and informal power-structures that works towards excluding people on the basis of their gender or ethnic heritage? And, since the Mayoral candidates reflect an even worse picture for women and ethnic minorities in terms of political inclusion, how can we work towards mitigating this imbalance? What positive steps can be taken to include rather than exclude people from political participation on the basis of their gender or ethnic heritage?

### ***What is holding women back?/What is pushing men forward?***

Responses to this question can be divided into three categories, the first two of which raise practical impediments, and the third which considers more abstract impediments: caring; cash, and culture.

### **Caring Responsibilities**

*The councillor role needs a complete overhaul anyway, but it doesn't lend itself to flexible working. It lends itself to people who are a) not working; b) have no trouble working in evenings or being available to people in evenings. There's no childcare provision, it's just not designed in a way to be accessible.*

*Anonymous Council Official*

In the recent survey undertaken by Bristol Fawcett of women and women's organisations in Bristol,<sup>55</sup> respondents were asked to give their views on topics such as public sector cuts, representation, violence against women, and caring. The responses indicated a strong concern with the burden of caring responsibilities. Even when caring was not the direct topic of focus, the respondents repeatedly made reference to it as a fundamental criterion for understanding other topics. So for example, when talking about jobs, about public sector cuts, and about transport, women linked their difficulties with these issues in relation to caring responsibilities.

- I am particularly concerned about the cuts in welfare benefits and the way in which the caps on housing benefit and on total benefits will impact [...] women's ability to support themselves and live independently of their partners, particularly if they have small children, and work in low-paid jobs and/or have been out of the workplace for a few years due to caring responsibilities. The costs and availability of decent childcare and the cuts (actual and proposed) to Tax Credits are also an issue.
- As a woman I am currently experiencing many problems getting employment that is part time and fits around the demands of looking after my family (children and parents). I have not had this level of difficulty before – it's been 11 months and I have had short term work and had to take ad hoc very part-time hours at a cafe that is much less well paid than my previous work.
- I think transport is probably THE most important issue and we need to understand the gender elements of this – impact on safety when the bus doesn't arrive or you are left standing at a bus stop for ages; the fact that if you have caring responsibilities, and especially if you have caring responsibilities *and* a job, it is probably not realistic to be expected to ride a bicycle all the time... I never could figure out how I could get the kids to school, get the shopping on the way home and fit a day's work in between.

Although this report is primarily concerned with representation, it is apparent from the survey that Bristol women feel that their Caring Responsibilities limit their economic opportunities and ability to

<sup>55</sup> See <http://wearstheshoes.wordpress.com/2012/10/11/bristol-mayoral-pcc-candidates-representing-womens-interests/>

engage in society at all levels. Caring Responsibilities as an issue permeated across every single governance issue for the respondents to the survey and it is therefore not surprising that this was frequently listed as a practical barrier to full participation in democracy by the leaders interviewed. Whilst experienced councillors noted recent improvements such as an increase in morning meetings rather than 2pm starts, thereby accommodating those with school-age children, leaders with significant experience such as Barbara Janke, Helen Holland, John Savage, and Marvin Rees all felt that caring remained a barrier for many women's participation in public life.

It is the men and institutions of Bristol who need to adapt. An average man is routinely more likely to be practically able to commit to public service because a woman is taking time out to care for *his* children or parents. This results in certain skill-deficits for both the individual men, and for society as a whole. This impacts on the substance and manner of decision-making, to the disadvantage of all.

Outside of the political arena, those who talked about their experience on public and private boards also raised childcare as a particular barrier, but added the impact on career into the mix. Board members both private and public, Merchant Venturers, and those who sit on the LEP are recruited/invited into those groups usually by dint of their experience or charitable profile. Such experience has been built up over a life-long career and this process can exclude many women who take time out for children and are therefore less present as partners, directors, managers.

*I spoke to other friends who are board members. They said that they have had to choose to take either a step backwards or not go for the top as the lifestyle there is not palatable or conducive to managing the family work/life balance. We then talked about how men should open up and admit to themselves that it would be OK to change and themselves take on some of that role. I posed this question to my husband and he said he would be worried that it would affect his career opportunities! I think that said it all.*

*Anonymous Board Member*

The impact of caring, particularly of taking time out of work to raise children, has a significant knock-on effect for the recruitment of women onto public and private boards and to a role in public life. It disadvantages women across all economic strata, but of particular relevance to participation as city leaders is the impact on long-term prospects for high-flyers both in terms of pay and status. Women who have children frequently return to lower paid or skilled jobs and often on a part-time basis.

Caring Responsibilities affect the participation of women across the nation, but Bristol has a unique opportunity with the Mayoral Election to become a UK-leader by fundamentally altering the long-term barriers to equal representation both in political and business forums. Bristol could revolutionise its economy along with its democratic diversity by providing free or widely-available and substantially-subsidised childcare. The economic case for the provision of universal childcare has been coherently made by the IPPR (2011). Countries that have higher maternal employment rates, such as the Scandinavian countries, tend to have affordable and high-quality childcare provision alongside comprehensive parental leave policies. Becoming a mother is the most significant factor in

explaining gender inequalities in the labour market, with short- and long-term career penalties in earnings for women who have children.<sup>56</sup>

## Cash

Councillors currently receive a basic annual allowance of £11,416.<sup>57</sup> For those who take on particular roles or sit on committees there are additional allowances.

Mayoral candidates and councillors alike spoke of active political representation as a luxury generally to be afforded only by those of economic privilege. The cost of campaigning for public office was felt to be a prohibitive barrier for those wishing to stand as independent candidates, even for those of middle-class background.

*The role of councillor appeals to retired white men who can afford it.*

*Daniella Radice*

*I couldn't have afforded to run my own campaign [for Mayor] if it was to come out of family finances. Just getting selected cost us over a thousand pounds, leaflets printed, mailings sent out. I haven't got the spare money to run a city-wide campaign.*

*Marvin Rees*

*Age is the other big issue, the councillors are disproportionately aged over 50 and a lot are retired, young people need to earn an income or have family so this can be a barrier to them standing in council elections. Although employers are required to give time off to carry out council duties, they don't have to pay you.*

*Matthew Symonds*

Respondents felt that the common demographic profile of councillors (White, 50+, male, economically comfortable) was a direct result of economics. Women are more liable to be absent from this profile because they earn less than men and are less likely to be economically independent. Due to this financial barrier, the responsibility to ensure equality of candidates falls squarely on the political parties. Several interviewees spoke about a wish to overhaul the current Council system suggesting various different models from European and Scandinavian countries in order to overcome this problem.

For example, the Green candidate, Daniella Radice spoke about Green Party policy to reorganise the Councillors "so there is more local control and ownership of the services of the Council." She argues that the job should be made smaller, "more localised, still having a real say, power, but in a different structure it might be able to bring more people into politics." According to Radice the ratio of citizens to councillors in Ashley is around 11,000 citizens to two councillors, "whereas in other European cities the ratios are a lot lower so you might have two thousand people per councillor, so the Councillors can be more representative and have a chance of getting to know people better." Marvin Rees echoed these sentiments with his argument that, "We have many establishment figures

<sup>56</sup> IPPR (2011).

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/councillors-allowances-and-payments>

who are controlling the decision-making. We need ordinary people to be organised to get more involved in politics so that they can get some meaningful power over their lives and communities."

Economic barriers are also an issue for board members.

*In March I did 12 days for 2½ days pay. We are contracted for 2½ days a month, but it is a lot more work. I am in a fortunate position. We can afford for me to work part time or give up my part time role so I can remain at the level and do the Board work because I could not physically do both jobs.*

*Anonymous Board Member*

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has found that at the current rate of progress it will be 98 years before women receive parity in pay.<sup>58</sup>

## Culture

*Social immobility doesn't only mean that good people don't go up, it also means that rubbish people don't come down. They get stuck at their level. So we have to recognise the context that there are people in positions of power who are not there because they are inherently more talented but because they were born to be there.*

*Marvin Rees*

*Why are there so few women on the Council? The patriarchy. Often unconscious belief that men know what they are doing, we buy into it.*

*Anonymous Council Official*

Political culture came up frequently as something which both put off and actively prevented women and minorities from getting involved in public life.

Those who had experience of the Council spoke of a "whole way of working [which] makes it unattractive to women, to actually put themselves forward" (Jon Rogers). Geoff Gollop felt strongly that the macho "bullying and intimidation" in council meetings rendered them "not fit for purpose" and also believed that the majority of Councillors would agree with him. Others spoke of a "confrontational" style and councillor politics being "quite a hefty boys' game". This is supported by information from the Councillors Commission suggesting that women are more likely quit after only one term as they are put off by the culture.<sup>59</sup>

Those women and minorities who had entered "the hefty boys game" talked of mentors who were crucial to overcoming this hostile culture. Helen Holland spoke at length of the importance that women mentors and women's networks had been to her throughout her time as a councillor: "having the support of women is very important [...] because you get more empathy and understanding of what the other constraints are." Marvin Rees, Geoff Gollop and John Savage argued convincingly that many potentially fantastic political candidates were lost to the city through

<sup>58</sup> The Guardian, 'Wasted talents: female executives failing to get foothold in top firms, survey shows', 20<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

<sup>59</sup> The Councillors Commission, 2007:98.

being overlooked due to inequalities, be they wealth, race, religion, gender or disability. George Ferguson told of a report he had commissioned into why women leave architecture and cited reasons from “male chauvinist attitudes [...] to family pressure and cost of child care to a macho working environment and uncivilised working hours”.

Some councillors clearly feel that the council environment does not generate confidence or encourage citizens to consider putting themselves forward. This culture overlaps strongly with the pervasive feeling of disenfranchisement in Bristol. A future Mayor and future business and community leaders need to work at changing the culture and changing the representation of that culture to the public.

As well as making political or public roles unappealing to certain sectors of society, the Council, boards, networking groups and the media frequently reinforced an image of political and business culture being the preserve of white males. Interviewees gave differing examples of how the local media encouraged and actively confirmed political roles in a male image – such as seen with the title of this report. Examples included outright vilification – where the media and/or fellow council members had actively targeted a female politician in a gender-specific manner resulting in serious abuse by the wider public. More subtle examples of embedded gender assumptions have been found in the presentation of political programmes on television and radio both locally and nationally (where male presenters and guests outnumber women to a shocking degree),<sup>60</sup> or the treatment of political figures (where the looks and clothing of female politicians and executives take precedence over their political or business outlook).<sup>61</sup> Bristol Fawcett members attending public and private meetings concerning the Mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner candidates have on several occasions noted officials, politicians and agenda-setters referring to the future Mayor and PCC as ‘he’ or talking of these roles in masculine-specific terms.

There is a clear responsibility for *institutional* change by the Council and Business forums along with the networking/exclusive clubs such as the Merchant Venturers. As Marvin Rees points out above, the current culture impacts negatively in two ways because as well as holding people back due to gender, ethnicity, disability, it also maintains people in positions of leadership due to their gender, ethnicity, and able-bodiedness whatever their ability.

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<sup>60</sup> Women in Journalism, 2012.

<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that this also occurred with the Post’s coverage of the only BME Mayoral candidate Marvin Rees where the ‘political’ interview spent significant time discussing appearance rather than policy. (*This is Bristol*, 20 June 2012).



## Conclusion and Recommendations

*It is not surprising that the candidates for Mayor of Bristol are almost all men. The assumption in the media has from the start been about the Mayor being a strong man. The idea of a strong woman has not been openly dismissed. It just hasn't been seriously talked about publicly. The history of women leaders belies this attitude. India, Israel and the UK have all been led by very powerful and successful women."*

Barbara Janke

Current national and local politicians along with the media have already set the mould in their own minds and the minds of the public that Bristol's Mayor will be male. This undoubtedly impacted on both decisions by individual women on whether to put themselves forward for the role, and on the selection committees. The result is just one female candidate. This obvious gender-biasing on the behalf of those already in political power is replicated on a smaller scale and at local level for Councillor elections for some of the political parties and in the minds of the electorate.

Having a female Mayor, or having a proportionate representation of female Councillors would not automatically result in a feminist or pro-women agenda, of course. But the persistence of inequality of representation has and does result in a power-base that prioritises predominantly male leisure pursuits (a football stadium) over the socio-economic needs of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Labour, Liberal Democrat, and Conservative parties should prioritise equal representation in the selection process for candidates for Council elections (e.g. use all-women shortlists as Labour have done) until they achieve a reasonable gender balance (between 40-60%).
- Equalities and diversity training should be mandatory for all newly-elected Councillors, and also for people taking up positions on public sector boards and on citywide power-broking groups such as the LEP.
- The Council and its partners should support the development and implementation of a Women's Strategy for Bristol.
- The Council should consider signing the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life.<sup>62</sup>
- Programmes encouraging voter participation should be undertaken along the lines of the work pioneered by Operation Black Vote in wards of particularly poor turnout.

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<sup>62</sup> CEMR, 2006.

- The Mayor and Council and Business forums should embed permanent links with minority-group young people through school-programmes and Higher Education bodies to encourage civil participation, particularly through the use of shadowing and mentoring schemes.
- Leaders in political, business and public life should make their commitment to addressing under-representation of women clear, and lead by example. This could include refusing to participate in boards or media panel events where only white men are proposed.
- All public bodies including the LEP should undertake effective equality impact assessments, which include gender impact, of all their proposed actions.
- Local media should question the absence of women in Bristol's corridors of power and should question the absence of political engagement with issues of concern to women. If local media comment on or highlight the appearance – rather than policies - of public figures this should be done in equal measure, not treating women or men differently.
- Local media should examine the way news about politics and business is presented to ensure gender-neutrality in news content and gender-equality among presenters and guests for political and business forums.
- The Mayor should prioritize the provision of good quality, free or heavily subsidized childcare provision in appropriate locations. Private and public sector employers should work with the Mayor and Council to provide such facilities for their employees.
- Employers should provide male employees with equal access and incentives to take up parental leave and benefits as are offered to female employees. Employers should further positively promote and encourage their male employees to take up caring roles and seek to employ and value those men and women who have developed skills commonly associated with caring.
- The Mayor and Council should implement research into disenfranchisement in the city within an inequality context, in particular covering economic deprivation, geographical location, people with disabilities, and the Caribbean and Somali communities.

## Section Four

### Appendices

#### Appendix A – Additional Public Sector Employers

These public sector employers all have sizeable bases in Bristol or South Gloucestershire. Most of them had a national board of governors and it was not possible to find detailed information on local management structures.

**Table 4.1 – Public Sector Employers not included**

	<i>No. of Employees</i>
British Broadcasting Corporation	1001-2500
Department for Work and Pensions	501-750
Department for Work and Pensions/Bristol Disability Benefits Centre	251-500
HM Prison Service, Bristol	251-500
HM Revenue and Customs	251-500
HMP + YO1 Ashfield	251-500
JobCentre Plus	751-1000
Lloyds Banking Group	2501-5000
Ministry of Defence	5001+
NHS Blood and Transplant	751-1000
Ofsted	251-500
Serco - Home Affairs Division	251-500
SG Council	5001+

#### Appendix B – Private Sector Employers not included

Board locations is given where it was easily encountered, but for some of the companies the chain of ownership – once established that the head office was not in the South West – was not followed due to limited time.

**Table 4.2 – Private Sector Employers not included**

	No. of Employees		Board Location
Accolade Wines	751-1000	Distribution	International
Aon Hewitt	200-250	Pensions, Insurance Services	Chicago
AstraZeneca	251-500	Manufacturing	London
Atkins Highway & Transportation Engineers	501-750	Transport Services	Surrey (UK)
Aviva	251-500	Financial Services	London
Babcock	251-500	Manufacturing	London
BAE Systems	501-750	Manufacturing	London
Balfour Beatty Mott	251-500	Transport Services	Surrey (UK)
Bristol Mail Centre	1001-2500	Distribution	
Bristol Marriott Hotel	251-500	Hotels	
Bristol News & Media Ltd.	200-250	Manufacturing	London (Northcliffe Media)
BT Group	751-1000	Business/Professional Services	London
Call Credit Information Group	200-250	Business/Professional Services	Leeds
Capita Business Services Ltd	501-750	Business/Professional Services	London
Computershare Investor Services plc (UK)	1001-2500	IT Services	
Cooperative Legal Services, The	200-250	Legal Services	Manchester
Cornhill Direct	200-250	Financial Services	Surrey (UK)
Culina Distribution	200-250	Distribution	Market Drayton
Deloitte LLP	251-500	Accountants	

DHL Exel Supply Chain	751-1000	Distribution	
DHL Express	200-250	Mail Services	
Direct Line Insurance	501-750	Insurance Services	Croydon
Ernst and Young	200-250	Business/Professional Services	
Everything Everywhere	1001-2500	Telecommunications	Hatfield
First Bristol	751-1000	Transport Services	
First Great Western	751-1000	Transport Services	Swindon
Friends Life	1001-2500	Financial Services	London
GE Capital	251-500	Financial Services	London
GKN Aerospace	2501-5000	Manufacturing	Redditch
Greencore Group	200-250	Manufacturing	Chesterfield
Haden Building Management	200-250	Engineers	Balfour Beatty
Hanson Aggregates & Concrete	251-500	Distribution	Maidenhead
Hovis	251-500	Manufacturing	Windsor
HSBC Life UK	251-500	Financial Services	
IBM UK	200-250	IT Services	Porsmouth
Indesit	251-500	Manufacturing	Peterborough
Inter Route	251-500	Transport Services	
IOS Ltd	200-250	Distribution	
Jardine Lloyd Thompson	200-250	Insurance Services	
Kappa Yate	200-250	Manufacturing	
LV=	251-500	Insurance Services	Bournemouth
Lloyds Banking Group	2501-5000	Financial Services	
Magnox Ltd	251-500	Public Utilities	
May Gurney	251-500	Environment Sector	Norwich
MBDA	501-750	Manufacturing	
Nat West Insurance Services	251-500	Financial Services	
Network Rail Infrastructure	1001-2500	Transport Services	London
NFU Mutual Insurance	200-250	Insurance Services	Stratford
Nokia	200-250	Telecommunications	Finland
Palmer and Harvey McLane	200-250	Distribution	Hove
Price Waterhouse Coopers	251-500	Financial Services	London
RAC Motoring Services	501-750	Transport Services	
Simply Health	251-500	Financial Services	Andover
Smith & Williamson	200-250	Financial Services	London
Smurfit Yate	200-250	Manufacturing	Dublin
ST Microelectronics	200-250	Manufacturing	Geneva
TNT Express Service	200-250	Distribution	Atherstone
Tulip Fresh Meats	251-500	Distribution	Warwick
Unum	200-250	Insurance Services	Dorking
Western Power Distribution	251-500	Public Utilities	Midlands

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Bristol Port Company – Information not listed on web, failed to respond to request. Information from Companies House.  
Bristol Rovers <http://www.bristolrovers.co.uk>  
Bristol Water PLC <http://www.bristolwater.co.uk>  
BT Group [www.btplc.com/](http://www.btplc.com/)  
Burgess Salmon <http://www.burgess-salmon.com/>  
Call Credit Information Group <http://www.callcredit.co.uk>  
Clarke Willmott <http://www.clarkewillmott.com>



Computershare <http://www.computershare.com/uk>  
Clifton College <http://www.cliftoncollegeuk.com/governance/>  
Cornhill Direct <http://www.cornhilldirect.co.uk/>  
Culina Distribution <http://www.culinalogistics.co.uk/>  
DAS Beachcroft <http://www.dacbeachcroft.com>  
DAS Legal Expenses Insurance <http://www.das.co.uk/>  
Deloitte LLP <http://www.deloitte.com>  
DHL Exel and DHL Express [www.dhl.co.uk](http://www.dhl.co.uk)  
Ernst and Young <http://www.ey.com>  
Essilor – Information from Companies House.  
Everything Everywhere <http://everythingeverywhere.com/>  
First <http://www.firstgroup.com>  
First Great Western <http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk>  
Friends Life <http://www.friendslife.co.uk>  
GE Capital <http://www.gecapital.co.uk>  
GKN Aerospace <http://www.gkn.com/>  
Greencore <http://www.greencore.ie>  
Hanson Aggregates <http://www.heidelbergcement.com>  
Hargreaves Landown <http://www.hl.co.uk>  
Hovis <http://www.hovisbakery.co.uk/>  
HP Labs Bristol <http://www.hpl.hp.com>  
HSBC Life UK [www.hsbc.co.uk](http://www.hsbc.co.uk)  
IBM UK <http://www.ibm.com/ibm/uk/en/>  
Indesit <http://www.indesit-service.co.uk>  
Institute of Physics Publishing <http://iopublishing.org>  
Integral <http://www.integral.co.uk>  
ISG Pearce Group <http://www.pearcegroup.co.uk/>  
Jardine Lloyd Thompson <http://www.jltgroup.com>  
Jordans – Supplied data by telephone  
Kappa Yate <http://www.smurfitkappa.com>  
KPMG <http://www.kpmg.com/UK/en/WhoWeAre>  
Merlin Housing Society <http://www.merlinhs.co.uk/Aboutus/OurBoard.aspx>  
Mitie Group <http://www.mitie.com/investors/leadership/our-non-executive-directors>  
Motability Finance <http://www.motability.co.uk/about-us/patrons-and-governors/>  
Nisbets – Failed to respond to telephone/email request, information from Companies House  
Osborne Clarke <http://www.osborneclarke.co.uk/contact-us/peoplefinder.aspx?page=20&search=Bristol+#tag>  
SEA Systems – Declined to give relevant information  
St Monica's Trust <http://www.stmonicastrust.org.uk/why-were-different/trustees>  
Teleperformance <http://www.teleperformance.com/en/a-people-company/corporate-management.aspx>  
TLT Solicitors [http://www.tltsolicitors.com/people/people\\_search\\_results](http://www.tltsolicitors.com/people/people_search_results)  
Veale Wasbrough <http://www.vwv.co.uk/site/people/peoplesearch>  
Bristol Partnership <http://www.bristolpartnership.org/vision-for-bristol/the-partnership/partnership-board/executive-board-members>  
Business West <http://www.businesswest.co.uk/about/our-board/board-members>  
Merchant Venturers <http://merchantventurers.com/about-us/membership/>  
West of England LEP <http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/about-us/board/>