# Marvin Rees faces scrutiny over financial ties with Bristol City Council contracts



Former Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees has come under scrutiny following the revelation that a company he established is receiving payments from firms involved in contracts worth millions with Bristol City Council during his time in office. Now ennobled as Lord Rees of Easton, he is obligated to declare his financial interests after his departure from office in May 2024, but the implications of these financial ties raise serious questions about transparency and accountability in local governance.

The company, Three and Two Ltd, was incorporated suspiciously close to the end of Rees' mayoral term, on April 19, 2024, prompting concerns that he has capitalised on his political position for personal gain. As the sole director of the firm, Rees describes it as a "personal services company for the member’s consultancy work and public speaking,” but this description hardly mitigates the ethical concerns.

Throughout his mayorship and since leaving office, Lord Rees has been a vocal figure at numerous events across the UK and internationally, frequently addressing topics such as the environment, race, class, international development, urban issues, and leadership. However, rather than being a champion of the people, these speaking engagements now appear to serve as a platform for monetising his political influence.

In the register of interests, Rees has identified several clients for Three and Two Ltd, including companies like Ameresco and Cambridge Management Consulting, which have previously benefited from lucrative contracts with the Bristol City Council. During his tenure, the council established a public-private partnership with Ameresco and Vattenfall for the Bristol City Leap project, a £1 billion initiative aimed at decarbonising the city. While these projects may have environmental merits, they also raise alarms about the potential for conflicts of interest, particularly as they coincide with Rees' post-mayoral financial pursuits.

Moreover, Rees' involvement with Ameresco has deepened since his exit from local politics, further entrenching his ties to a company profiting from council contracts initiated under his leadership. The Bristol City Leap initiative may have even secured accolades for its ambition, but the underlying ethical questions surrounding these partnerships cannot be overlooked.

Additionally, Lord Rees’ longstanding connection with Empire Fighting Chance, a charity that received significant assets from the council under a scheme developed during his administration, adds another layer of complexity to this situation. Critics have previously voiced concerns over his failure to fully disclose his interests in this charity, which now continues to work with him through Three and Two Ltd in ventures aimed at tackling gang culture in Central America.

As Rees speaks at high-profile events aimed at raising funds for this charity, the optics of his multiple roles only serve to amplify concerns surrounding the merging of public service and private profit—an issue that becomes even more pressing with a new Labour government at the helm, which is often seen as lacking in accountability and transparency.

Questions remain about how effectively Bristol’s new leadership will address potential conflicts of interest that could arise from such close relationships between former politicians and private firms. With the public increasingly aware of these dynamics, it is clear that a stronger opposition stance is essential to hold the government accountable, as the last election showed the appetite for reform in local governance. Public trust is paramount, but with figures like Lord Rees at play, it seems increasingly precarious.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://joannab.substack.com/p/ex-mayor-of-bristol-declares-hes> - This article confirms that Marvin Rees is being paid by Ameresco, a company involved in a significant contract with Bristol City Council during his tenure as mayor. It also discusses the establishment of his company, Three and Two Ltd, and its connections with companies benefiting from council contracts.
* <https://substack.com/home/post/p-159405543> - This piece highlights Marvin Rees's new position and his obligations to declare interests as a member of the House of Lords. It discusses the setup of Three and Two Ltd and raises questions about payments from companies like Ameresco and Empire Fighting Chance.
* <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/15661976/officers> - This page lists Marvin Rees as the director of Three and Two Ltd, a company he established close to the end of his mayoral term. It confirms the details of his appointment and role within the company.
* <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rulesofcourt.pdf> - This document, although not directly related to Marvin Rees, provides general legal context regarding the importance of transparency and the declaration of interests, principles relevant to Rees's situation.
* <https://www.mass.gov/guide-to-evidence/article-xi-miscellaneous> - Similar to the Virginia court document, this resource offers a broader legal perspective on the importance of declaring interests and potential conflicts of interest, relevant to understanding the implications of Rees's actions.