

## **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Referral to Cabinet 3<sup>rd</sup> October 17**

### **Referral;**

OSM met on 20 September and Members wished a number of areas to be referred to the Mayor and Cabinet and to be raised as a referral from scrutiny at the next cabinet meeting. Details as follows;

- 1 Concern about the number of vacancies and interim appointments at senior management level.
- 2 The continued failure to produce a meaningful forward plan, highlighted by the addition of an item at 36 hours notice to the last cabinet meeting.
- 3 Concern was expressed about the delay in appointing the head of paid service and replacement chief executive. More detail behind these concerns is given below, but in addition OSM requested that the Mayor or a member of Cabinet, and a strategic director/chief executive should attend our meetings.

### **1 Senior Vacancies and Interims**

There are now a significant number of vacancies that have not been filled as well as many others where the role is being filled by an interim appointment. Interim appointments do not go through the full selection process and salary rates are not controlled in the way they are for permanent appointments.

Members asked for a report to our next meeting scheduling management vacancies by grade and department, and interims by grade and department, together with an outline of the strategy for filling posts with permanent appointments in the current competitive market place. Ideally we would ask Marvin or Craig to discuss this report at Mayor's question time at our next meeting. The former Chief exec had indicated that this was a matter of serious concern that needed attention and members feel that delay in facing up to these issues is only making the situation worse

### **2 Forward Plan**

Cabinet will be fed up with me commenting on lack of a forward plan of any detail. However, the issue of late notice reports for cabinet reached a new low this week, with notification of a late report being given on Monday for decision on Tuesday, not providing adequate time to read the report let alone give comment on it. (This is the street lighting report where the timeline for the decision has been known for some 18 months).

OSM is concerned at the Council's inability to plan its decision making and requests target dates be set for a key decision contract renewal register and a fit for purpose forward plan.

OSM believes this is critical good practice to be applied and is necessary for Cabinet and Extended Leadership Team to function let alone for scrutiny.

This has been raised repeatedly on an informal basis, but failure to improve the situation means we feel we have to raise this formally as the current process is unacceptable.

### **3 Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service**

OSM members believed these roles were vital in the organisation in all circumstances, but become critical at times of significant change and ongoing uncertainty. Members were concerned that the delaying of the announcement until the last possible time only added to the uncertainty for staff.

Members felt it was essential that a permanent appointment be made to both these posts to ensure full accountability

OSM debated these issues at some length, and debated whether we should formally submit these comments to cabinet. The overwhelming view was that all these issues are an indication of an organisation that is in trouble, and that OSM has a responsibility to raise these matters given their significance and request urgent action.

Appendices - Appendix A – Extract draft minute of OSMB 03 October 2017

**Extract Draft Minute – from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September 17;**

**Chair's Business**

The Chair, Councillor Gollop, raised a number of concerns and sought OSMB's agreement to refer them to Cabinet for reply. Details as follows;

- 1. Head of Paid Service.** Concerned that the new Head of Paid Service had not been announced and that at a time of significant change within the organisation the arrangements for permanent appointment to the vacant role of Chief Executive should be made as soon as possible.
- 2. Vacancies at senior level.** Noted that there were a significant number of vacancies at senior level that had not been filled within Bristol City Council. There were also many others where the role was being covered by an interim appointment, which did not go through the full selection process and salary rates were not controlled in the way they were for permanent appointments. Suggested that OSMB request a report for the next meeting scheduling management vacancies by grade and department, and interims by grade and department, together with an outline of the strategy for filling posts with permanent appointments in the current competitive market place. Ideally this report would be discussed with the Mayor at OSM Question Time on 1st November.
- 3. Population of the Forward Plan.** Continued serious issues with the lack of detail on the Forward Plan, including the increasing issue of late notification of reports, for example, a decision relating to street lighting (which had been known about for around 18 months) was added to the Cabinet agenda on Monday of this week for decision on Tuesday. Suggest submitting a comment to the Cabinet stating OSMB's concern at the Council's inability to plan its decision making and to request that target dates be set for a key decision contract renewal register and a fit for purpose Forward Plan.

OSMB noted the points raised and unanimously agreed to support Councillor Gollop's suggestion to refer the issues to Cabinet for action/reply.

***RESOLVED; that OSMB refer the issues outlined above to Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 17 for action/reply as necessary.***