

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

20 FEBRUARY 2014

Report of: Head of Legal Services

Title: Recording and monitoring the implementation of action which is agreed at meetings

Ward: All

Officer Presenting Report: Sam Mahony, Democratic Services

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RECOMMENDATION

This report is presented to members for information.

Summary

This item responds to a request at the last meeting of the Board, that a report be presented on the arrangements which are being considered for the recording of action which is agreed at meetings, particularly as a result of public forum submissions. The report also summarises issues in relation to full Council which are being reviewed by the "Review of Governance" member working group.

The significant issues in the report are:

Set out below.

Policy

Not applicable.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Context

1. At the meeting of the OSM Board on 19 December, it was agreed;
“that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Board on the arrangements which are being considered for the recording of action which is agreed to at meetings, particularly action to be taken by the Mayor/Cabinet members, and action arising as a result of supplementary public forum questions”.
2. The Full Council on 17 December also requested that the “Review of Governance” member working group should consider whether supplementary questions raised at council should be minuted and also asked that consideration should be given to how actions agreed in response to such questions are logged and followed up. At the Member/Officer working group on 11 February, consideration was given to supplementary questions raised at Full Council. Group leaders and whips suggested that supplementary questions should not be recorded but that webcasts be kept for two years. This is currently being investigated. The working group was also of the view that any actions arising from a supplementary question should be recorded (this is being addressed – see paragraph 4 below).

Current arrangements

3. There are a range of measures in place for recording action which is agreed at meetings. These are :

Full Council
4. An action sheet is now produced for meetings which plots progress of all action agreed including any action arising in response to public forum items.

Cabinet
5. An action sheet is produced, listing all action agreed including any action arising in response to public forum items.
6. Prior to the adoption of the Mayoral model, under previous administrations, statements / petitions received at the Cabinet public forum were referred to the relevant service director, who would arrange for draft replies to be prepared, for the relevant Cabinet member to sign.
7. Once the Mayor was elected, the then Chief Executive took the view that to reply to each and every statement was not a good use of officer time. Since then (from December 2012 in effect) Cabinet has operated on the basis that statements / petitions will be received and

noted at the meeting (and where they relate to specific agenda items, will be taken into account when the decision is taken). Specific replies are only sent when the Mayor particularly identifies that a specific reply is required (i.e. this happens as an exception rather than as the rule).

8. It should be noted that any changes to procedure in relation to the Cabinet would require the consent of the Mayor.

Committees / scrutiny commissions

9. An action sheet is produced for most committees / commissions listing all action agreed.
10. The action sheet / schedule could be included with the agenda papers for each ordinary meeting of that committee / commission to help enable members to satisfy themselves that action agreed has been taken and monitor progress against medium / longer term actions.
11. A monitor of action which is agreed by the Mayor and executive members is also being produced for the OSM Board, following Cabinet member question time sessions.

Other Options Considered

None.

Risk Assessment

Members have raised concerns that some action agreed at meetings particularly that arising from public forum submissions is being overlooked. These arrangements will minimise the risk of this happening. They will provide assurance to members and a facility for them to check progress and query outstanding actions at the next available meeting, through having a formal item on the agenda for that purpose.

Public Sector Equality Duties

Not applicable.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

Members should note that any changes to the arrangements for Cabinet meetings would require the approval of the Mayor.

Appendices:

None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
Background Papers:**

None