

## **ITEM 13                      Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18**

This Annual Report for OSCOM has been drafted by Councillor Chris Lynn, after his sixth year as Chairman. I should start by thanking Chris for his good work over these six years, and wish him well in whatever project he turns his hand to in the future.

Scrutiny through OSCOM is an essential part of ensuring that governance of Test Valley remains effective and accountable with the aim of improving the quality of public services. During the term with Councillor Lynn as Chairman, OSCOM has developed to be more focussed and therefore more effective.

This year, we have concentrated on fact finding through a variety of methods including briefing notes, round table discussions, and panels, plus the usual full items brought to the committee.

### Away Day

We held our annual Away Day on Saturday 22 July 2017 in the Andover Guildhall. The day started off with training by Dave Burn, the then Interim Democratic Services Manager, on 'Choosing the right subject to focus on and why'. Group workshops were held with the aim to compile a list of topics/areas which Members considered they would like to add to the Work Programme around the four Corporate priorities of 'Live', 'Work', 'Enjoy' and 'Contribute'. Feedback was taken from the group lists and a short list of subjects agreed on.

20 topics and 9 operational matters were identified. These topics were either added to the work programme, informally discussed with the relevant officers or scheduled as round table discussions.

### Discussions

Informal discussions were held between officers and members on a number of topics raised at the Away Day and the outcomes of those meetings were circulated to OSCOM members as briefing notes.

- Flytipping
- Elections
- Review of Car Park Strategy
- Hampshire Home Choice
- Landlord Rental Schemes
- Housing Development/Affordability

A discussion had also been held at OSCOM which had led to a special meeting with Test Valley Partners on accessibility within the Borough and challenges facing people with disabilities.

### Round table discussions

7 round table discussions have been held during the last year including

- Web Strategy
- Annual Review of the Corporate Action Plan
- Waste and Recycling in Test Valley
- Romsey Future
- Development of the Corporate Plan 2019/2023
- Future Plans for the Andover Magistrates Court
- Ward and Multi Ward grants
- Community Engagement

### **Items and Meetings**

The new form for bringing items to committee for discussions is working well. We now agree in advance what outcomes are required and how this will impact on both OSCOM and Cabinet.

There have been 11 meetings held since the last Chairman's Annual report and 19 items of business discussed. A number of these items have been considered by OSCOM on their way to Cabinet and Council.

Members and Officers have been working well together which has in my view, helped in a number of recommendations from OSCOM being agreed at Cabinet.

In particular our more outward-focussed approach has led to some very successful panel reviews this year.

### **Panels**

**Communications and Procurement Panel** – This Panel was led by Councillor John Cockaday. The Panel's work focussed on what lessons could be learnt about the way the Council communicated about procurement exercises and large projects. The Panel's recommendations were based on its findings in respect of both internal and external communications. The Panel reported back to OSCOM on 25 October 2017 and made 6 recommendations. 2 of those recommendations were amended by OSCOM and then went on to Cabinet on 18 November 2017 where all 6 were agreed.

**Call In** – This panel was led by Councillor Celia Dowden. The Panel was set up following the Away Day and was referred to in last year's Annual Report. At that time 4 Recommendations had been reported to OSCOM on 22 March 2017. These were then referred to Cabinet and then back to OSCOM and finally referred to Cabinet on 21 June 2017. They were then reported to Council on 6 September 2017 where they were agreed.

**Public Involvement Panel** – The Panel was led by Councillor Dorothy Baverstock, and was set up to look at public participation at OSCOM, the Borough Council more widely

and its service delivery. The key areas of focus were to evaluate the current position, methods and level of participation, attitudes to public participation and how to make it more attractive and consider the potential for improving the effectiveness of what we do. OSCOM on 22 March agreed that the findings of the Panel be referred to the Member and Community Development working group to develop the proposals further and to report back to OSCOM with proposed actions for onward submission to Cabinet.

**Planning Panel** – This Panel was led by Councillor Ian Hibberd. Its role was to review the role and operation of the Planning Control Committee and the two area Planning Committees and to gain a better understanding of how the Planning Committees operated, producing recommendations for their future role, structure and composition.

**Council Tax Support Scheme Panel** – This Panel was led by Councillor Dorothy Baverstock. It was set up to review the Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20 and beyond in light of the Government's programme to introduce Universal Credit and financial effect for Council and residents. The Panel recommended a range of options to OSCOM on 21 March 2018 and OSCOM agreed the options put forward, which went to Cabinet on 25 April 2018.

**Budget and Audit Panels** were held under the leadership of Councillor Ian Jeffrey, and discussed the External Audit Planning Report, Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2016-17, Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19 and Internal Audit Progress Report to 28 February 2018, Draft Annual Governance Statement 2017/18, External Audit Fee Letter, Internal Audit Report 2016/17 and Progress Report 2017/18, Annual Governance Statement, Annual Audit Results Report, Internal Audit Progress Report to 31 August 2017, Update on Appointment of New External Auditor, Annual Audit Letter, Internal Audit Progress Report 2017-18 to 17 November 2017, Review of Revenue Outturn 2016/17, Summary of 2018/19 Budget Position, Draft Corporate Challenge Options 2018/19, Proposed Fees and Charges 2018/19 as well as the management and forward planning of their work programmes.

### Briefing Notes

16 briefing notes have been circulated to OSCOM Members in the last year on a wide range of issues across the Borough with input from officers in a number of services. These have been well received by Members and have been very informative. Officers seem to be very happy to provide these.

I hope all members of the committee will agree we have moved on and we are now getting far better results by looking at items in a more focussed and defined way. I am glad the Cabinet, under the leadership of Cllr North, has recognised our worth and are now bringing items to us at a much earlier date so we can have an input, especially the Budget, the Corporate Plan and of course the Andover Vision and Romsey Future. I hope the input from a further 15 people helps Cabinet make better and more informed decisions.

Finally, Chris takes the opportunity to thank all members who have been on OSCOM during his time as Chairman, and wishes OSCOM continued success in the future.