

**Annex**

## **OSCOM ANNUAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

You will all know that this is to be my last Annual Report for OSCOM as Chairman as I am resigning and handing on to a new Chairman.

OSCOM has been in a very challenging position since starting with over 70 full agenda items per year and meetings starting at 5.30pm and ending very often after 9.30pm. There was always the fact we were called the Overscrew and Mutiny Committee probably because we were quite confrontational towards officers and members both at meetings and panels. Our aim in life seemed to be to find the best way we could 'catch out the officers'. I am glad to say we have overcome this attitude and gone back to the principles of being a 'Critical friend'

As with all years this one has been busy but we have concentrated on fact finding through a variety of methods including briefing notes, round table discussions, 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 Guildhall, High Street, Andover. The day started off with introductions followed by 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
- Disability Review

### 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 and I am pleased to say we have taken out all those items that are just for interest only. We now agree in advance need to know 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 discuss (not including the work programme which is discussed at each meeting). 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 focused approach has led to some very successful panel reviews this year.

### Panels

**Communications and Procurement Panel** – This Panel was led by Councillor Cockaday. The Panel's work focused 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 C Dowden. The Panel was set up following the Away Day and was referred to in last year's Chairman'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 Baverstock

This Panel 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 Hibberd

The role of the Panel 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 and produce recommendations for their future role, structure and composition.

**Council Tax Support Scheme Panel** – This Panel was led by Councillor

Baverstock. This Panel was set up to review the Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20 and beyond in light of the Governments 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 and this went to Cabinet on 25 April 2018.

**Budget and Audit Panels** have continued to be held with a number of items discussed including 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 and officers are very happy to provide these.

I hope all members of the committee both now and past will agree we have moved on and we are now getting far better results by looking at items in a more focused 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.

I would take this opportunity to thank all members who have been on OSCOM while I have been Chairman and congratulate the new Chairman, whoever he or she may be and hope they will continue to move OSCOM forward in a positive direction.

Chris Lynn