

To: South Central Members

Date: 31st October, 2025

Subject: Chair's Report

First of all, I want to, again, thank you for attending this conference and I also want to thank everyone who has worked hard to organise the conference, today. An additional thanks also goes out to Cllr. Beth Rowland for assisting us securing this venue.

This report shows the highlights of what we have been doing this year, more detailed reports are available from the Executive Officers on our webpages.

Candidates and Campaign Successes:

Let me start with campaigning:

- As a region we had success as a region in Oxfordshire where we took control of the County Council for the first time. I want to thank all members who worked so hard to achieve this and our Regional campaigning staff.
- We had significant success also in Buckinghamshire, where we gained more Cllr seats than anywhere in England.
- We have excellent campaign staff who have aided a number of local parties this year and will continue to do so next year. We now have a full complement of campaign staff. They have a stall in the hall and please do go and talk to them.
- Our region now works closely with the Campaigns Department, financially supporting an enhanced team of field staff. We now have three campaigns officers, a media officer and a Regional Development Officer. We regularly meet with them to discuss progress being made and to ensure that work undertaken is aligned with our objectives. Their work has focused on supporting the 12 held seats and building up the next tier of winnable seats.
- A point of caution from our Campaign Chair Gareth Epps who says: With budgets constrained, it's been hard to develop other activity as planned but I'm happy to talk to local party teams about where to get advice and how to advance going forward. With Mayoral elections, every local party however small can make a big impact and support Cllr. Martin Tod in his campaign. Gareth is open to discussing any campaigning issues with any of our Local Parties.

Candidates:

- We now have two candidates in place – Martin Tod is our Mayoral candidate for Hampshire & The Solent. Special thanks to all the team who made this selection happen – it was the first of its kind for South Central.
- Charlie Murphy – has been selected as our PPC for Portsmouth South.
- There are currently three selections underway (advert placed and in progress) – Romsey & Southampton North, East Hants & Hamble Valley. These three seats have been designated as Moving Forward + seats. Several other constituencies are starting the process, and more are planned for the new year.
- Assessment days for the approval of new candidates are taking place regularly. Please be aware that anyone applying for a seat must be on the list of approved candidates.

Returning Officers:

- Training on the new selection rules took place over the summer. We now have 8 Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) who are qualified to take on selections under the new rules, and 3 full Returning Officers who can select for Moving Forward + seats and those that attract 6 or more applicants.
- HQ is ambitious about getting PPCs selected much earlier in this parliament. Kathy Newbound, Chair of the Regional Candidates Committee, is happy to discuss with any local parties regarding their selections.
- There is always a need for people to come forward to train as AROs or candidate assessors. Please consider whether you would be able to help the party by taking on one of those voluntary roles.

2. Diversity & Outreach Work:

- Helped to update the Diversity Statements for all the local parties, where possible, across the region by providing group and one-to-one support for Diversity Officers across the region.
- The Regional Diversity Officer created the Diversity Statement for the Hampshire & the Solent Mayoral constituency.
- We have highlight engagement activities, community projects, or grassroots mobilization efforts.
- On a monthly bases we have continued to engage, via Zoom calls, with local party Diversity Officers from across the region

- Worked with other regional diversity officers from across the country, so that we can identify what they are doing that would be beneficial to us and share what we have been doing.
- For a more detailed report please see the report on South-Central webpage.

Treasurers Report

Below is a summary of the main report from the Treasurer. You can find the full report again at the South-Central webpage.

- Finances are tight but getting better.
- We should be able to repay our debts by 2028/29. This debt accumulated supporting our parliamentary candidates at the last GE. Which was successful for us as a region.
- We also spent funds supporting areas where they were local elections to assist them in their campaigns. We also support standing costs for Regional staff, and we have limited funds to support weaker LPs next year
- We need support raising funds and we will be approaching our MPs for that support
- We have funds to support Cllr. Martin Tod to pay his deposit for his mayoral campaign
- Membership is reducing and I feel we need a push, it serves to improve our standing in the region and also provides with much needed funds.
- On the whole our finances have been brought under control

3. Challenges and Goals for the Coming Year:

- Supporting local parties to win more council seats – **have done and will continue to do so**
- The local government structure is changing and we need to get ahead of the curve on this. We are keeping in close contact with HO on the matter.
- Evaluate and agree on the potential constituencies where we can win new parliament seats – **done**
- Maintain and develop more substantial relationships with our current MPs, in the region.

- We need, as a region, to develop a better social media presence – maybe work with the Party and ALDC to secure some training in this area
- We need to focus on increasing our membership and representation from the ethnic minority communities
- As a regional executive we need to be more serious and focused on fundraising. We need to look at innovative ways to do this
- I would also like to see more collaboration between local parties in the region so that we can support and learn from each other. Stronger county structures that enable better synergy especially when it comes to recruitment and campaigning. We have started to have periodic meetings with all the Chairs of the Region and we want to further develop this.

This year has been a remarkable period of progress for our party. We have achieved significant victories. Our campaigns have successfully increased public engagement and amplified our voice on key issues. Membership growth needs to expand as does our grassroots movement so we can be more effective in our efforts. While we faced certain challenges, each has provided valuable lessons. Looking ahead, we are committed to building on this momentum and continuing to champion the values of fairness, equality, and innovation.

However, I would strongly assert that we are stronger together, than not. One of the main focuses for us next year will be to further develop better supportive campaigning effort across the region.

Thank you, again for attending the Conference and I look forward to seeing you all and more members at future events.

Warm Regards



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