

Annual Report – Special Responsibilities

(Under the South Gloucestershire Scheme of Members' Allowances, certain councillors who perform significant responsibilities over and above those of other councillors are entitled to receive additional allowances to recognise those extra responsibilities. The Scheme requires councillors in receipt of such allowances to report on their actions. This report is published on the Council's website).

Report for period: 2015/16

Name: Heather Goddard.....

Position held Chair of Communities Committee

A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

Since the May elections of 2015 the role has changed as instead of 3 parties shared decision making it now has a Chair from the majority party and two lead members. I chair the committee and also the Safer and Stronger strategic partnership and have a seat on the Local strategic partnership. This position also gives a place on the Policy and Resources Committee and I also have positions on two sub committees of that committee i.e. Joint Consultative committee which meet with the unions and the Appointment sub-committee.

I am a member of the Police and Crime Panel and a Director of Destination Bristol which oversees the opportunities to attract visitors to South Gloucestershire and its attractions and improve its economy.

As Chairman I have a close working relationship with both the Director ECS as well as Heads of Service. The main focus this year has been continuing the Council Savings Plan and looking at how we can deliver a more cost effective service for our communities.

Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

We have covered many issues in this year including giving more responsibility to our leisure Centres which are managed by the Circadian Trust who are challenged to run them more efficiently but I am pleased that they are also making big investments to respond to the demand caused by an area of great growth

One of our largest Parks (Page Park) won a Heritage Lottery bid and this has allowed the Friends Group together with our officers to plan a new innovative approach which is particularly satisfying for a relatively deprived area of South Gloucestershire. It was with a personal regret that we have been forced to reduce our Anti-Social Behaviour team, cut funding from the PCSO's which we have funded reducing some of the money we give to our voluntary sector who do such a good job in funding organisations which do much to enhance our communities and solve the problems that they face.

We have thoroughly reviewed many of the aspects of our Waste management such as looking and adopting the TEEP way to recycle our waste materials
We have introduced Van Trailer permits from April 2016 to restrict numbers of vans that can visit our Sort it centre, thus reducing some of the abuse that was happening. We have installed ANPR to undertake enforcement as required.

After an extensive consultation regarding improving our recycling rates and reducing the residual waste which we take to landfill (or its equivalent) we are introducing a smaller size of the residual bin from 280L to 140L. From research we know that over 50% of the waste which we are depositing in land fill is recyclable. We are confident that this move will reduce the cost of landfill for our council tax payers as well as making South Gloucestershire a greener place to live.

What “added value” to the local community have you been able to achieve through your special responsibilities?

As my special responsibility relates to communities I have been able to give informed advice to sporting organisations who have decided to take over our sports fields and run them and maintain them as part of the reduced council savings plan. This has involved much in depth discussion and a clearer role of my relationship with my local communities.

This is more evident with our communities who struggle to understand why we need to rationalise our library service to run in a more efficient manner which is a direct result of less funding coming in from Central Government. This has also meant we needed discussion with our local Members of parliament.

To a certain extent the involvement with parish Councils have also been stretched as they take on some of the work that the Unitary Authority can no longer afford to provide and as they implement Localism, but on the other hand they have to raise the parish precept in order to do this.

The relationship with officers has become more co-operative as the role of the Chair has become more like a Cabinet member in the close working relationship with the Director and Heads of Service to overcome the challenges as money is reduced to run the service.

How have your special responsibilities enabled the Council to be more effective?

I came to this role with a lot of experience as a cabinet member of two specific specialisms over 5 years with a strategic approach to problem solving. I have also taken the advantage of training opportunities provided by the council particularly the Courses provided by the LGA having undertaken training in Leadership Academy, summer schools, chairmanship and peer challenges courses to mention a few

This training has not only benefitted myself but also the council and its committee

In what ways has the exercise of your special responsibilities supported the core objectives of the Council?

The close working with the council and its officers and in the leadership team of my political controlling group as well as working with senior members of other political parties has given me a much clear strategic understanding to decipher a way forward to meet the objectives of council work.