

# 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: 2013-14** .....

**Name: Michael Bell** .....

**Position held: Labour Spokesperson DC East** .....

## A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

Lead the Labour Group delegates on the Development Control East Committee, by giving guidance and advice on planning applications. I attend the monthly Agenda Meetings, and the DC Spokes Meetings.

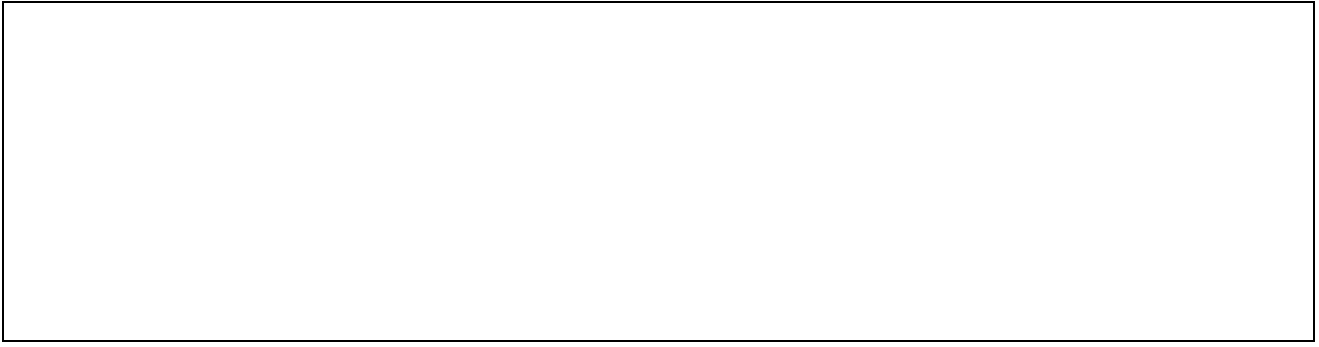
There are also tours to visit sites, to view the progress of previously passed applications.

I also attend regular trading sessions on new Planning Legislation.

## Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

I have attended a number of working committees which have involved associated planning policy issues – notably Gypsy Travellers, Policies Sites and Places, Community Infrastructure Levy, and contributed to the Core Strategy.

There have been several applications which in particular received a lot of public comments, such as the Yate Cinema Complex, and wind turbine and solar panel. They all needed careful judgement, and speaking and voting in front of large public audiences.



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

Being able to give much better advice to local residents, and fellow Labour Councillors who seek my assistance.

If asked , I give residents “a balanced advice” on applications, bearing in mind the appropriate Planning Law, and the aspirations and concerns of the community. A lot of advice I give is “procedural” helping residents understand the process involved in applications, covering the administration, the role of Planning Officers and the DC Committee, Site Visits, Objections and Appeals etc etc.

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

I have been able to give a considered contribution to planning issues.

Continually updating myself by attending training courses on Planning Legislation and issues., which can be very complex.

Liasoning with individual Planning Officers, and seeking clarification when necessary.

Using a balanced judgement on “Call In to Committee option.

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

**South Glos Council is going through a large transformation, with increased population, and many changes and developments throughout it's area. This is all contained in the Core Strategy.**

**I have and will, continue to support the Council through this period, but will also give residents views, which on occasion will differ.**

**In the years ahead there will be decisions in particular housing, environment and traffic related, for us to consider, and this will need well informed Development Control Committees to make the decisions**