

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: Pat Rooney

Position held: Labour Group Leader

A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

I lead the group and also devise the strategy for the Labour Group.

I devise the budget and present the Labour Budget having had it first passed through the Director for Corporate Services and Lawyer to ensure it is a valid, feasible and balanced budget.

I present at the Budget Council meeting in February. I speak on behalf of the Group on a wide breadth of issues at Committee meetings and public meetings ensuring that the policies and strategies agreed by the Group are adhered to.

I challenge and scrutinise Conservative policies and provide valid alternatives for group members to take to their committees and public arenas.

I attend the 3 leaders meetings to exchange views and also to provide the Labour Group view on matters arising.

I have attended PAG meetings for Devolution where I have put forward Labour views and concerns, Challenging views and theories from the Conservatives and Officers.

I am Labour Lead member for the Policy and Resources Committee which covers the policy and financial aspect of the Council and where I as Labour lead challenge the Conservative policies.

I attend the Resources Sub Committee which follows on from Policy and Resources and deals with much the same agenda.

I ensure that processes are in place so that Labour lead members and Labour Vice lead members are fully aware of key issues from Committee papers and the three Labour members on CAH and ECS meet prior to Committee meetings to rehearse Labour challenges to agenda items.

Processes are in place for all other committees so that no Labour group member will feel isolated or unsure of key issues and the strategies we agree as a Labour Group.

I also attend the Local strategic partnership meetings with business and partners from other agencies to put forward Labour views and challenges.

I also attend the Economic Skills Partnership which deals with the economic outlook and vision for South Gloucestershire and the wider West of England economic programme.

I am now working on the Ward Boundary review so that Labour has a constructive and workable business case to offer the Commissioners for their consideration.

I work with the Labour West Of England leaders and Mayor and meet regularly to discuss current topics such as Devolution and Metro Mayor.

I make sure South Gloucestershire Labour Group has a strong and credible voice around the table at all meetings, internal and public and provide balanced views and criticism.

I take the lead role on the public stage when required.

Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

I have played an active role in scrutinising the Devolution deal at 3 leaders meetings

I have put forward a balanced 2 year budget forward with Labour key asks which also consisted of two years funding for libraries to keep them open , we are awaiting the results of the consultation with regard to this matter. The Labour Group lead the way with campaigns and respective libraries then campaigned for their library to be kept open ,

The Labour Budget provided funding for the Kingswood Civic centre to remain open in Kingswood with the Labour Budget suggestion of leasing part of the building and it has now been agreed that the Civic Centre will be maintained by leasing part of the building so Labour has had a successful campaign in achieving this outcome.

I have achieved and maintained a cross party dialogue and remained agreeable even when the Labour Group have disagreed with the ruling group's policies.

I have always put forward the Labour Group's position with clarity ensuring that we have a valid viewpoint and clearly state the Labour case.

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

I have been able to gain publicity as leader and put press statement out each week. I have spoken on radio to support local issues, example: Civic Centre and on the library campaigns.

I am a member of a number of friends groups and can support and add weight to their cause locally in Kingswood.

I make sure local people are aware of the Labour views and stance on all issues by attending external meetings and speaking on key subjects especially budget matters and local campaigning issues.

I attend the Council Safer & Stronger meetings with the other agencies where the public question and challenge Councillors as to local issues in Kingswood.

I attend community and business events to speak with employers and volunteers to address their needs and offer support and advice where possible.

At Full Council the Labour Group provides alternative strategies on a regular basis and challenges the ruling group whenever possible in the public arena.

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

I have played an active part in the Devolution discussion by attending PAG s and challenging the Officers and ruling group. Scrutinising policies at committee meetings and in the public arena. Providing alternative balanced budget proposals that have been verified by the Director for Corporate Services and the Head of Legal services to support and help save Council front line services.

I have ensured that the Labour Group has been a viable, effective and responsible opposition party and has played its part in challenging and scrutinising the ruling group policies to enable a fairer and just outcome.

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

I have ensured that the Labour Group have carried out its duty of challenging and scrutinising the ruling groups policies but also supporting the Council's core objectives. I have ensured that the Labour Group has been an effective and responsible opposition party which has brought balance and reason to many policies of the Council , I have ensured that the Council has delivered its core objectives as leader of the Labour group.