

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: 2016-17

Name: Councillor Maggie Tyrrell

Position held: Liberal Democrat Lead Member for Adults and Housing ..

A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

Lead the Liberal Democrat group in all matters relating to Adults, Housing & Public Health (AH&PH) on the Children, Adults and Health Committee.
Lead for the Liberal Democrat Group on issues related to AH&PH at Council meetings.
Attend agenda briefings to shape the agenda & ensure relevant items and required information comes to the committee.
Attend briefings with senior officers.
Communicate with Liberal Democrat group members to ensure they are informed of issues.
Liaise with other spokespersons over issues of joint interest.
Liaise with departmental officers regarding casework referred by colleagues.
Sit as member of Appointments Panel for senior officers of Children, Adults and Health (CAH) Department.
Speak to the media on AH&PH matters on behalf of the Liberal Democrat group when required.

Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

Service provision was maintained despite ongoing pressure on budgets. A fall in demand for residential places compared to a rise in support in the community indicated that strategic plans were having an effect.

My previous experience of similar projects helped ensure that service users at Turnberries were treated sensitively when the provision was closed and that people had alternatives in the community or at other day centres that suited their needs.

New contracts were agreed to provide services for various groups of service users. Housing related services were of particular note and I went to meetings with residents of sheltered housing schemes to make sure they understood and approved of the new systems, particularly in relation to emergency calls.

New charges in extra care homes were introduced and people already resident were protected from rises in the charges.

I took part in the appointment of a new Head of Adult Services.

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

I influenced several areas of work, in particular the Housing Support Services and the transfer of people with learning difficulties from Turnberries to ensure that the interests of service users were at the forefront of the decisions taken by the Committee.

I worked on behalf of a number of individuals and other Councillors where my knowledge of the services provided by the Council proved useful and ensured that any difficulties were dealt with swiftly.

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

I continued to advise colleagues on whether amendments to proposals are required or advisable and I lead the group debating issues at Committee or Council. I offered alternative solutions and tried to minimise the effects of budget cuts on service users by influencing the direction of policy at an early stage, before a formal decision was made at committee.

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

The Conservative Group hold the overall majority on Council and their policies and decisions need to be challenged to ensure they have considered the full extent of the effect of those policies on residents in all the communities of South Gloucestershire. The responsibility of a lead member of an opposition party is to ensure that all aspects of the way policies are formulated and implemented are thoroughly scrutinised and in the best interests of the residents. This includes ensuring that residents have a voice and are properly consulted before decisions are made.