

# 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: 2017-2018** .....

**Name: Councillor Pat Rooney**.....

**Position held: Labour Group Leader**.....

## A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

As Leader of the Labour Group I am responsible for drawing up the strategic and political policies to challenge the ruling Group on the Council ,  
I ensure that all members of the Labour Group fully understand and contribute towards our Group strategies .

### Communication :

I ensure that my open door policy enables all Group members to engage and communicate their individual concerns and views .

I liaise with all S Glos Labour CLP's , Branches and attend meetings to present reports and inform members on new initiatives and annual budget .

I ensure that a Group Report is produced twice a year to inform Labour colleagues in CLP 's and Branches .

I attend 3 Leader meetings which provide information to minority parties and also Strategic Partnership meetings with business , education . voluntary sector representatives .

I cascade information to colleagues to keep them fully informed at all times.

I speak on behalf of the Labour Group at meetings , make press / media statements .

### Management :

I have duty of care and wellbeing for the Group and also manage the Group's Political Assistant . I also oversee the role of the nominated Whip for the Group.

I attend the Appraisal meetings for the Political Assistant with the Head of Legal for the PA 's personal development and objective setting for following year .

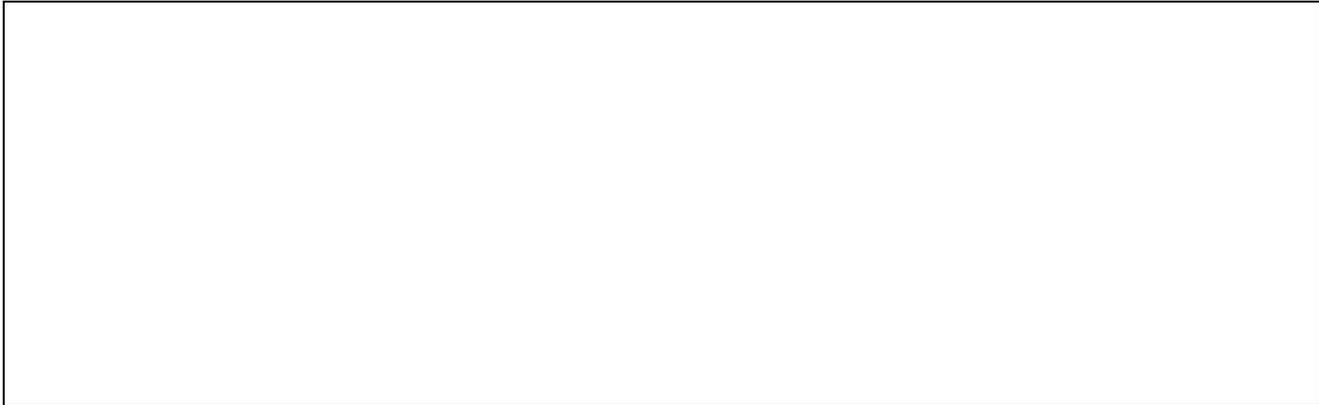
I devise the Shadow Cabinet structure to mirror the ruling Group's Cabinet set –up and also ensure that key Group Leads fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

### Events ;

I raise the need for 'Away Days ' for the Labour Group and help arrange Facilitators and venue .

I along with the Political Assistant and Facilitator devise an Agenda for the event to ensure it provides the greatest benefit for all Group members .

Following the Event , Action plans are drawn up by me from the work carried out and following consultation with members , implemented accordingly .



## Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

Following the review of Ward Boundaries which was at the request of the ruling Group the Commission published their report and we were pleased that many of the proposals we put forward in a full, comprehensive submission, were accepted and adopted by the Commission and I have worked with the Constituencies to explain and present the new Ward structure. The result being that Labour Branches have had to change and sitting Councillors will have to report to more than one Branch and CLP once the changes are implemented internally in July.

We have also had the Cabinet structure running for a year which has changed the way in which the Labour Group carries out its roles and responsibilities on the Council.

I have consulted with colleagues to devise a 'shadow Cabinet structure to enable Lead Labour Group members, nominated by Group, to carefully consider the Cabinet's Forward plan and challenge Cabinet decisions where necessary, have challenged the Tories at Cabinet and I have ensured that questions are asked of the Leader and Portfolio holders to hold them to account, to seek clarification where necessary and offer an alternative approach to improve the policy.

I ensure that Group members are fully informed and information is shared amongst the Group and I report back from all meetings I attend as Leader of the Group.

The Scrutiny Committee has their first Task and Finish report completed on the Labour initiative for Priority Neighbourhoods and this will then be presented to Council. The Labour Group Co Chair the Scrutiny committee with the Lib Dems. This has worked well and a different approach which was at my suggestion so that we have an 'in-road' into the Council agenda. I pushed for a special meeting to discuss the future protocol for Budget setting process and it was agreed that a Task and Finish group would be set up to discuss how this would be taken forward for future years and how Opposition parties would be able to challenge the Administration's budget proposals during the year at key dates in order to amend or offer alternatives. We will be dealing with the major two savings programmes, Bending the Curve and Transformation programme in the Autumn.

I arrange Leadership Team meetings with Deputy Leader and Political Assistant twice a month to ensure we are all fully informed and keep up to date with decisions made by the ruling group.

I ask the political assistant to arrange monthly Group meetings to maintain a flow of information and discuss policy.

Since The Labour Group successfully campaigned to keep the Civic Centre in Kingswood we have now discussed the creation of a Hub which will see the Library moving into the Civic Centre and a public café on the ground floor which will be adjacent to the One Stop Shop.

The public were against closure and we lead the campaign as local Councillors but also as

a budget item and I lead the campaign to secure the Civic Centre as Council accommodation and our only Council Chamber.  
The building is now being partially leased and training facility for the Council plus Council Chamber maintained .

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

I ensure that I am visible within the Community and speak on their behalf .  
As I sit on high profile strategic committees , it benefits the Community as I am able to raise issues , concerns and also publicise the work carried out by Labour Colleagues with business representatives and educationalists .  
I work alongside the Voluntary sector and due to my involvement with local initiatives , it benefits the community due to my position on the Council .  
I endeavour to be fully informed on a wide range of issues that I have access too and if the new administration maintain the PAG ‘s which was the Council’s information channel for minority parties , I will ensure that Labour’s voice is heard making constructive contribution towards Council policy .  
As the Labour Group Leader . I have presented amendments to the ruling Group’s budget which have been to benefit our residents .  
I have spoken on every opportunity open to me , to make sure that the 5 Priority Neighbourhood areas maintain their targeted resource and that we keep them high on the Council agenda .  
I provide local residents with as much information with regard to local initiatives via local leaflets , reports and press statements .

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

I ensure that the Labour Group fully contribute to the Budget procedure and challenge the ruling Group’s proposals where we believe we have better and will benefit residents .  
I challenge the ruling Group whenever their decisions are questionable or can be seen to be detrimental to particular areas of S Glos .  
I contribute at all meetings I attend , speaking on behalf of the Group and ensuring that Council has a robust and visible opposition party but that I do not stop or prevent Council efficiency without valid cause or valid reason ,  
I hold the ruling Group to account .  
I engage with Senior management and lower tiers of Officers in a constructive and effective way .  
I attend the West of England Combined Authority meetings when necessary but believe that the WECA Scrutiny committee is the place where business takes place and as the Labour Group in South Gloucestershire does not have a seat on this body as Bristol has

the larger Group , I ensure that I meet with Bristol colleagues to feed our views forward so that we do have a voice .I am especially interested in pushing the Skills and employment programme to improve Labour areas in South Gloucestershire . I continually challenge the way in which this will deliver to local wards where skills , employment and educational attainment are in urgent need of attention and funding .  
I have challenged the new Metro Mayor on how we will have claim for sufficient funding for our priority neighbourhood areas over and above the claims of the other authorities .

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

**I have ensured through robust challenges that the Council/s core objectives and overall mission statement :**

**‘Equality of opportunity for all ‘**

**Is carried out**

**Ensuring that high quality of inclusive services and facilities are provided and wherever this appears to be failing , highlight and challenge .**

**Working with diverse groups and recognising their distinct requirements and challenge where necessary.**

**Supporting good employment practices and policies .**

**Challenge any discrimination or harassment .**

**I have suggested a joint cross party statement to strengthen this Councils commitment to fighting against all forms of discrimination and hate by drafting a statement for agreement form the Administration and Lib Dem parties**