

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: 2013/4

Name: Ruth Davis

Position held: Deputy leader of Council, Policy and Resources Liberal Democrat lead member and Liberal Democrat group leader

A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

I kept a watching brief on all aspects of the council functions, as well as the strategic issues and policies coming to Policy and Resources Committee, advising and supporting committee lead members and other group members as appropriate on things that arose during the year affecting South Gloucestershire residents.

I had regular meetings with the other group leaders and the Chief Executive, and any appropriate directors, as issues arose, to give general direction and views how issues may best be addressed in the democratic process. This included input into meetings that the leader attended on behalf of the authority, such as the LEP and Government meetings.

Whilst keeping an overview of all partnerships I have attended and had input in to meetings of the Local Strategic Partnership, and the Economy and Skills Partnership, which involves other significant partners in the area, such as Health, Police, private business, colleges and the voluntary sector.

I am also a member of all the subcommittees of Policy and Resources that enables me to have detailed knowledge of personnel and resource matters.

I will continue leading on the council budget for our group as we continue to reduce our overall budget in line with our medium to long term projections.

I am ex officio on all council committees and attend when there are particularly sensitive items being discussed. I also took part in a domestic homicide review..

Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

Working constructively to agree an medium to long term financial plan, which involves restructuring and some reductions or ceasing of some council services.

Agreeing the Core Strategy with no legal challenge

Working with local parish and town councils to take on further areas of service from South

Gloucestershire.

Working up a proposal to transfer some services to a limited trading company.

Ensuring South Gloucestershire residents were represented fairly in the larger sub-region of the West of England

Supporting a successful Growth bid to Central Government

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

Ensuring that the principle of more local consultation, local decision making and accountability is achieved. Making sure that local residents and councillors feel included in decisions that affect them.

Working better with partnership organisations at a local level, such as the Yate Town Centre Partnership, and in priority neighbourhoods, and at the sub-regional level when agreeing economic plans.

Acting as a champion for South Gloucestershire and its residents in all situations.

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

By being more inclusive and working with other partners at all levels to achieve common goals, such as joint transport schemes and the City Deal and Growth Deal with other unitary authorities and other partners such as further and higher education and business. Agreeing to transform some of our offices into community hubs to include the police and other partners. Working with town and parish councils to take on responsibility for additional services that local residents want, such as enhanced street services when we have to reduce our levels of service. As resources are squeezed more and more it is essential that all areas of the community function as efficiently as possible, preferably working together to common goals.

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

Ensuring that the right people are contacted to have input into projects. Ensuring there is a clear understanding of issues by all involved in any decisions. Having the strategic oversight of how issues will affect other parts of the council and other organisations and residents.