

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 Trevor Jones

Position held: Chairman, Development Control West Committee (DC(W))

A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

To work with the Lead Members for the other two parties and then three Lead Members on the DC (East) Committee to ensure that the planning process is carried out efficiently and openly according to relevant legislation both National and Local

To work with Council Officers and Executive Members, to the same end.

To help and advise all Members of DC (West), and, indeed, any other Councillor who seeks advice on planning matters.

To coordinate Committee and Sites Inspection Committee activity with officers at all levels

To support the implementation of Planning Policies, both National and local and Councillors in their understanding of them.

Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

Supported the implementation of planning service budgets and monitoring of spending against them through regular Lead Members' meetings with Senior Officers and the Executive Member.

Mediating between members of the public, Councillors and Officers to address disputes achieve better understanding on all sides with the aim of the reducing the number and cost of Appeals against decisions

Regular Briefing meetings with Members of the Major Sites Team have facilitated Member understanding of further phased development in the Cheswick, Frenchay and Cribbs-Patchway developments, together with the Stoke Gifford Extracare Village and additional sports pitch provision.

In addition other outline, full and reserved matters have been considered or are close to being considered across the area from Thornbury and Falfield to Land East of Harry Stoke and the Bristol Business Park.

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

All Members recognise that Planning issues arouse the passions of residents, especially when it affects them directly....I actually have four dwellings being built in the garden next to mine, the scaffolding is being remodelled outside my office window as I write this!

I have always found meetings in affected communities to be the best way to address residents' concerns, enabling full conversations about planning legislation!

That usually entails, whenever possible, attendance for the full length of an Applicant's Public Consultation event, especially in my own and neighbouring wards. Misconceptions and perceptions can be then addressed at the earliest opportunity.

As Chairman I am always happy to work with and support other Members of the Committee whenever required/possible

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

Joint Meetings of the Lead Members for Planning enable detailed discussion of historical, current and anticipated developments. These often facilitate briefings by senior officers on larger/ more complicated developments, which all Committee Members are invited to attend.

Such applications are often visited, when completed, during the “Annual Tour” as a “training aid” for Members.

Quarterly Activity statistics for both planning and enforcement teams are also compared with historical data.

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

The aim is to implement the current requirements of the Authority's Core Strategy, updates and additional policies, such as the Joint Spatial (JSP) and Joint Transport (JTP) Plans once approved, to ensure that new development is centred on the Authority's preferred areas, thereby protecting the Green Belt and maintaining settlement boundaries whenever possible.

This has obviously proved difficult when dealing with speculative developments, especially in the Thornbury area, where members continue to challenge both developers and Planning Inspectors.

Members do their utmost to address the wants, needs and aspirations of the residents of South Gloucestershire whenever possible, while always recognised the pressure brought to bear on the Council to meet housing targets.