

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: 2019/2020

Name: Toby Savage.....

Position held: Leader of the Council.....

A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

As Leader of the Council, I continue to represent this Council at a local level through the day-to-day work of the Council, its work with residents, businesses and communities, at a regional level through our cross border work with neighbouring Local Authorities as part of the West of England Combined Authority, and on a national level through continued work with any lobbying to government alongside our local MPs.

Following the Council declaring a Climate Emergency, I have taken on the portfolio responsibility for Climate Change and have progressed this Council's work to be Carbon Neutral by 2030.

As part of my responsibilities as Leader, during this year I have been a member of the West of England Combined Authority's Committee and its Skills and Business Advisory Boards. I also took on additional responsibility while assisting the Cabinet Member for Communities and Tourism during a period of maternity leave.

Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

During 18/19, we have had some notable achievements:

Prudent financial management despite a challenging backdrop which led to an approximate £2million underspend, highly unusual in local government at the current time. This has been reinvested in supporting vital Council services;

A reassessment of all Council actions and procedures following the declaration of a Climate Emergency, which is now considered a golden thread through all Council activities alongside the delivery of value for money services. Following the declaration for South Gloucestershire to become Carbon Neutral by 2030, more than £12million has been invested into achieving this goal, alongside a range of initiatives and partnership working with our communities.

Continued work with our communities and promotion of environmental responsibility has resulted in further increases in recycling rates, with 2019/20 reporting an all-time high rate of 59.1%, despite the impact of Covid-19 on waste collection services towards the end of the financial year.

Securing of funding to support the regeneration of Kingswood High Street and the re-stabilisation and re-introduction of the historic Whitfield Tabernacle and Masters Church for which work on both having now commenced.

Securing of funding and/or commencement of WECA-funded infrastructure programmes, including the construction of the new Gipsy Patch Lane rail bridge, upgrades to Great Stoke and Wraxall Road Roundabouts, and the new Yate Park and Ride – which will all see completion in the 2020/21 year.

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

As well as the formal decision-making performed during Cabinet meetings, WECA Committee meetings and through individual Cabinet Member decisions, it is my behind-the-scenes informal discussions with partners and developing strong relationships that ensure continued progress towards achieving target outcomes.

Towards the end of the financial year, and leading into the 2020/21 year, I have also taken a leading role within the Council’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic, working with officers, partners and government to address the impact of the Public Health threat head-on, which has seen South Gloucestershire remain substantially better prepared and organised to respond to the Covid challenge than many other areas across the Country.

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

As mentioned above, as well as the formal decision-making performed during Cabinet meetings, WECA Committee meetings and through individual Cabinet Member decisions, it is my behind-the-scenes informal discussions with partners and developing strong relationships that ensure continued progress towards achieving target outcomes.

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

Exercising my special responsibilities supports the aims and goals of the Council Plan, Sustainable Community Strategy and the associated strategies around specific service areas that flow from these.

