

# Ladbroke Parish Council 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## Report from District Councillor – Susan Ostrander

Headlines:

1. Local Government Reorganisation
2. 5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS)
3. Windmill Lane - update
4. Warm Homes
5. Support for Armed Services at Stratford DC

### 1. Local Government Reorganisation

As I have reported previously, and elsewhere, the government has decided to merge the functions of the District and County Councils into a Unitary Authority. Although central government will make the final decision as these changes are being considered, it is important that residents have a say in the future of their local councils. More information is available on the District Council's website: [Reshaping our Councils for the future of Warwickshire](#)

There are two alternatives under consideration:

- a. To merge all six local councils (Warwickshire County, Stratford, Rugby, North Warwickshire, Warwick, Nuneaton & Bedworth) into one across Warwickshire - or –
- b. To have two 'unitary' councils, which in our case would mean covering Stratford and Warwick District areas with a new South Warwickshire council.

The [Deloitte report](#) (on Stratford DC's website) evaluates the two proposals which were identified by Stratford Council in the "interim plan" in March and concludes that a **two-unitary model** emerges as the most advantageous structure for Warwickshire.

**A public engagement exercise is running from Thursday 7 August to Sunday 14 September and we encourage all residents to put forward their views.** Please have your say here: [Have your say - Shaping the future of our Councils](#).

Whilst there are arguments both ways, on present knowledge Stratford DC believe that a South Warwickshire Council (est pop 295000) would be the best for our residents. Those in favour of a large whole Warwickshire (est pop 617000) solution argue it will be a difficult transition to split up the big spending services such as social care, fire, highways and education (even though some of these are already organised on a district area basis). It is our view that as a principle, local government should be local, and the council taxpayer will be financially and democratically better served by a smaller unitary council. At its simplest there would appear to be lower council tax in the South Warwickshire proposal, and less remote services including better councillor representation ratios.

## **2. Housing Supply**

There have been challenges underway to the District's five-year housing land supply following the change to the national planning framework. The Government's *new* rules increased both the house numbers required and the method of calculation. Stratford District had been *well ahead* in housing numbers, until this change, at about 25 years housing supply. A public enquiry on 4 September at Bordon Hill near Stratford re-examined the District's new figure of 5.06 years. The appeal hearing came out with a ruling that we're now down to 2.74 years supply, well under the 5-year requirement. There are significant implications of this.

The area is now at risk of more housing being added to the outside of settlements across the area. Unsuitable housing applications that should be refused because they go against our local policies, may now have to be permitted just to get overall numbers up.

As a result, Stratford DC are looking at all the options to bring our supply back up to 5 years: using reserve sites, bringing empty homes back into use, and pressing developers to implement their permissions instead of land banking, which is a big part of the reason we are in this situation.

I will of course support my ward in considering each new application that comes forward. However, it is worth noting that simply refusing all new proposals means they will likely get passed in an appeal (until our numbers again exceed 5 years) and that we will then get no benefits from s106 or CIL monies. It may be better for us to allow some development but have some control over the conditions etc rather than refuse and lose all.

## **3. Windmill Lane Update**

Having requested some feedback on the status of the s106 the officer who was involved in this case has responded that the legal team at Stratford DC are awaiting a costs undertaking from the applicant's solicitor to allow them to begin work on the S106.

## **4. Warm Homes**

Despite the recent warmer weather Stratford DC is thinking ahead to the cooler months and is pleased to announce a new funding scheme available to residents to help keep homes warm and reduce the cost of energy bills.

The Warm Homes Local Grant (WHLG) is primarily funded by Stratford DC but complemented by funding from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The scheme will build on the success of the Home Upgrade Grant 2 scheme which saw 98 properties occupied by lower income households upgraded. The WHLG funding aims to improve the warmth and comfort of more of the worst performing

homes across the District, whilst also reducing energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty.

If residents are eligible for the WHLG scheme, an assessor will visit the home to determine the best energy efficiency measures, which could be various types of insulation or clean heating sources. Any approved measures will be installed completely free of charge.

Residents could be eligible if they are a homeowner or a private rented tenant, and if:

- They have a home [Energy Performance Certificate](#) (EPC) of D, E, F or G
- They have a combined annual household income under £36,000 (savings are *not* assessed) or receive means-tested benefits

The District Council is working with partners E.ON and Act on Energy to deliver WHLG and you can apply for the funding via the E.ON website: [Grant Finder | Check Your Eligibility for Home Efficiency Grants](#)

If you would like to know more about home energy improvement options or other funding schemes, you can visit the District Council's website: [Energy & Warmth | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

You can contact Act on Energy directly via phone 0800 988 2881 or email [advice@actonenergy.org.uk](mailto:advice@actonenergy.org.uk).

## **5. Stratford DC recognised for supporting our Armed Services**

Some good news! Stratford DC has been awarded a Silver Award from the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The prestigious award recognises employers who have actively demonstrated support for the Armed Forces community by implementing policies to help them.

To achieve the Silver award, organisations must proactively demonstrate that the Armed Forces community is not unfairly disadvantaged as part of their recruitment policies. They must also actively ensure their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards the defence community and understand issues for reservists, veterans, cadet force adult volunteers, and spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces.