

Report from Your District Councillors for Parish Council – January 2026

Local Plan

Parish Councillors will recall that we reported that a large number of responses were received to the public consultation which closed in March 2025 (more than 22600 at the final count) and these are available to view on line at [South Warwickshire Local Plan - Preferred Options 2025](#). The high return is one of a number of reasons for a delayed timetable which was agreed in December by the Cabinets of the two Councils. Other reasons for delay come from national pressures to take into account changes in the NPPF published in December 2024. Many other Local Authorities are in the same situation, trying to get their Local Plan submission in by December 2026 (when the system will change) with the government providing monies to assist many of them, creating a peak demand for specialist resources across the country. There are further related matters that have increased the burden on consultancy and staff resources, including dependency on others such as the county and highway authority. The new timing plan intends to see a first draft of the plan (reg 19) sent to the Inspectorate in June/July 26 where it will be tested for 'soundness'. Having considered responses to that, the plan is set to be submitted for independent examination (reg 22) before the last possible submission date of 12 December 26. Councillors have been concerned for some time that the shifting environment has placed timing at risk and the contingency 'slack' that was in the timing plan has been used up.

There is a summary of the responses at [SWLP PO Consultation Statistics.pdf](#) by the various sections, but it must be borne in mind that the current assessment in progress is a technical one that considers the planning merit of the representations - not the number of comments. Reading through some of these, there would appear to be a degree of repetition and targeted campaigning in some cases.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

The recent recalculation of the five year housing land supply by a planning inspector, has, as expected, produced a rash of speculative applications that do not comply with the District's policy, generally because they are in open countryside. Our enquiries with Severn Trent show that Southam, Ladbroke, Stockton, Harbury, Bishops and Long Itchington are all served by the same sewage works at Southam. In a local plan response Severn Trent have indicated a major risk in accommodating increased demand from now and over the next 25 years. There are outline plans in progress for almost 600 dwellings in this area that we know about.

Second Homes Council Tax

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has started a consultation on a proposal to introduce a Council Tax 'premium' on second homes across the District. From April 2025, Councils were given powers to charge up to double council tax on second homes. Currently, second homes in the District pay the full Council Tax without any discounts. Most of any money raised by such a tax goes to the County Council. The District Council has previously asked the County Council to confirm that they would spend the money raised in our District, on our District and they refused. If the premium is to proceed we could ask the question again, but suspect we will get the same response. Regardless, the government has assumed that the District Council has charged this rate on second homes and for the last two years has given a reduced financial settlement to take account of this assumption, whether it is actually charged or not.

Following the consultation, the Council will make the decision on whether to implement the Council Tax premium of up to 100% in February 2026. If approved the extra figure would take effect from 1 April 2027. To provide the required notice owners of second homes would be notified by 31 March 2026.

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The Council is considering how this could work locally. Second homes can reduce the availability of housing for local people, but careful consideration is needed. The views received through this consultation are essential in shaping this decision and deciding the right approach for the District and we should be grateful for them.

The consultation is open now until Monday 2 February. For more information and to take part in the consultation, visit: [Council Tax Premiums on Second Homes Consultation | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

Community Safety

We are aware that there was an attempted break-in in Warmington between Christmas and New Year with the offenders only reaching as far as the resident's garden. Hopefully one unexpected benefit of the cold snap will be to keep these incidents at bay. However, please report all incidents to the Police on 101 or via their website. What might not seem significant to each of us does help the Police build a wider picture.

At the time of writing, this coming Thursday, along with other members of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel, Natalie will be attending the Orientation Meeting at Police Headquarters at Leek Wootton. It is expected that the PCC and the Chief Constable will present their proposals for the precept for the coming financial year to the Panel.

The Police and Crime Commissioner has already opened the public consultation on his proposed budget and a link is attached here for residents to comment: [Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire](#)

Southam Bypass

There will be closures of the Southam bypass 15-23 January week nights 8pm – 6am adjacent to the new Aldi site.

HS2

The new Chief Executive Mark Wilde came and met Councillors at the MP's Forum in December. As you will have seen from the national news, he has a big agenda but at least he took the time to listen to local representatives. Whilst this was a bit of a first and we tried to look for a change to attitude of approach in the whole project and to improved consideration to local communities, specific detailed local commitments were not expected at this senior level (although we did have a go!) However, as a consequence of that meeting, he did say that community elements would now feature in his regular briefing from contractors.

As ever if there is a matter which residents feel we may be able to assist with, please do get in touch. With best wishes for the New Year.

Cllr Natalie Gist

Cllr Nigel Rock

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