

Lighthorne PC Report – February 2026

It's budget month at Stratford-on-Avon District Council so the last few weeks have been busy attending meetings and reviewing the various proposals. Council tax proposals being considered for SDC Council Tax are based on a £5 increase on D band properties.

As the ward member for a rural area, I am concerned that SDC has once again this year become very Stratford-upon-Avon centric rather than spreading cash reserves across the whole of the Stratford-on-Avon district.

The planned capital spend by the administration on Stratford projects is considerable with solar panels to the Leisure Centre and funding for car parks, recreation ground, streetscene, high street pedestrianisation and the Gateway project.

Fortunately, SDC has done a U-turn on the Avon Hydro Scheme proposals, and has allocated a budget in support of Neighbourhood Development Plans following the motion I seconded at Full Council in December. The reserve allocated to protect the flying functions of Wellesbourne Airfield also remains, which is equally welcome.

Planning remains my major concern, and I have written to the Head of Development to raise my concerns regarding the non-determination of the outline planning application for 300 homes off the Kineton Road and a decision not to legally defend the Appeal. The development of 300 homes in this part of the village would have a detrimental effect to all residents and cause significant traffic movements up Staple Hill and Moreton Paddox to the Fosse Way and into Lighthorne village.

An interim draft policy position statement on the 5YHLS planning policy has been put out for public consultation as of yesterday for the next four weeks. It is my view that this should have been a priority following the government's review of the NPPF in December 2024.

Proposed outcomes on the various options for new housing in the South Warwickshire Local Plan are unlikely to be announced until May/June and hopefully Long Marston will be identified as the favoured new settlement area for our district. I am equally concerned that the schedule for submitting the draft plan at the end of this year keeps slipping and consequently the timing is extremely tight.

The lack of a Five-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) continues to be a major concern with developers flooding the planning department with applications for new homes across the district.

A response on a single or two unitary council with Warwickshire is still awaited from the government and therefore it is unclear as to whether the next local elections will be held in either 2027 or 2028.

Progress continues with regard to a new GP facility in Upper Lighthorne, but this remains painfully slow.

Cllr Anne Parry, Wellesbourne North and Rural