

District Councillors Report Lighthorne

10th March 2020

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's budget consultation results

Stratford-on-Avon District Council recently undertook a [budget consultation](#) exercise to help inform the District Council's budget for the next financial year.

Highlights include:

- 85% of respondents thought the District Council offered 63% of respondents agree that *'it is important for the District Council to maintain current levels of service, even if this means increasing council tax by more than £5 a year.'*
- Residents would most like to see an increase in the CCTV and Crime Reduction provision.
- Residents would most like to see a decrease in the provision of Local Economy and Tourism Promotion.
- Financial support for the Fred Winter project (72%) was first choice for residents out of the new budget proposals, followed by funding for a Climate Change Strategy (53%).
- 64% of respondents felt the quality of Council services was good overall.

455 questionnaires were returned from 997 residents surveyed on the District Council's Citizens' Panel in January/February 2020, representing a response rate of 46.1%.

The District Council is expecting significant reductions in government grant over the next few years and the information from this survey will help the District Council prioritise its services.

Council Tax level for Stratford District

Stratford-on-Avon District Councillors have set the district element of the Council Tax at a meeting of the Council on Monday 24 February.

The amount residents will be asked to pay for a band D property is £144.12.

This means that all the services provided by the District Council cost £2.77 a week for a Band D household for a wide range of services including recycling and waste collection, planning, street cleaning, housing, housing benefits, leisure services and children's play areas.

The Council Tax from Stratford-on-Avon District Council for residents for 2020/21 for each of the valuation bands is:

A	£96.08
B	£112.09
C	£128.11
D	£144.12
E	£176.15
F	£208.17
G	£240.20
H	£288.24

	2019/20	2020/21	% Increase / (decrease)	% of the Council Tax
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	£139.12	£144.12	3.59%	7.5%
Warwickshire County Council	£1,431.81	£1,488.87	3.99%	77.0%
Warwickshire Police and	£227.98	£237.97	4.38%	12.3%

	2019/20	2020/21	% Increase / (decrease)	% of the Council Tax
Crime Commissioner				
Sub-total	£1,798.91	£1,870.96	4.00%	96.8%
Town and Parish Councils (average)	£61.02	£62.44	2.33%	3.2%
TOTAL	£1,859.93	£1,933.40	3.95%	100.0%

Green Waste Debate

There was a lengthy debate at the Full Council Meeting on a motion put forward by the Liberal Democrats to defer the introduction of a “Green waste charge” by six months. This was defeated by 19 to 12 votes.

It was agreed by all District Council Members that the introduction of Green Waste charge of £40.00 has not been fully explained to the residents of Stratford District which has caused an amount of disquiet among the householders.

The financial pressures Stratford District Council are under appear to be intensifying, which has meant that they have had to take difficult decisions this year which include the introduction of a charge for green waste collection.

Global Resettlement Scheme post-2020

To agree to the District Council resettling refugees under the Global Resettlement Scheme post-2020 and pledge to welcome a further 12 families to Stratford-on-Avon District between 2020 and 2024 subject to Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Cabinet approval to continue to participate in this scheme.

Reasons for the decision:

WCC Cabinet will consider a report on 19th March 2020 to agree Warwickshire's involvement in the Global Resettlement Scheme post-2020. WCC is therefore seeking provisional commitment to the new scheme from Districts and Boroughs.

Alternative options considered:

There is currently sufficient resource within the Housing and Communities Team to support the resettlement of 12 families over this period of time, any numbers lower than this may show a lessening of the Council's commitment to support this humanitarian work. Any higher than 12 would place significant additional strain on resources to the extent that it would require additional resource to complete effectively.

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Awareness Event-Exploitation

District Councillors undertook 2 hour training session to discuss "County Lines"

County lines is when criminal networks and gangs exploit children, young people and vulnerable adults so that they can move their business from big cities to smaller towns, coastal and rural areas to make more money.

A *county line* is where a gang establishes and operates a telephone number in an area outside of their normal locality to sell drugs (usually Class A drugs) directly to drug users, sell weapons and sexually exploit others.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) highlights the scale of the crimes which are destroying lives and communities involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, modern slavery and trafficking, grooming, criminal and sexual exploitation and missing persons. Profits from the county lines trade nationwide are estimated at about £500m.

The victims move around drugs and money for criminal gangs. They need a base to stay, so take over the home of a vulnerable person. This is known as 'cuckooing'. The vulnerable person may have a mental or physical illness, be a drug addict, a single mother or sex worker or promised free drugs in exchange for use of their house. The vulnerable person may also be sexually and physically abused throughout this process. Some even leave their home, becoming voluntarily homeless and leaving the gang to use their home. Others may be imprisoned in or not allowed back home.

In some areas there are local 'hubs' recruiting local children to distribute drugs.

Unfortunately, county lines, cuckooing and child exploitation are happening in Stratford District