

District Councillor report Lighthorne Parish Council 8th November 2022

Financial Plan

Stratford District Council have just started looking at their five-year Medium Term Financial Plan and there will be many tough decisions to take. SDC are doing their planning and decision making without the benefit of knowing how much funding they will get from Central Government.

Local Plan

SDC are in the early stages of developing the Local Plan which will run through until 2050. SDC are developing a South Warwickshire Plan together with Warwick District Council. The scale of the impact, this plan will have by 2050, at a very conservative estimate will be approximately £7 to £8 billion.

Economic Growth

SDC are laying the foundation for economic growth, the work of the Council supports the local economy and has paid £73 million supporting over 7,000 businesses through 13 different Covid Grant Schemes and reliefs. SDC received £1.227 million in additional resources grant to provide support to businesses.

Local Enterprise Partnership

SDC are working closely with the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hub. Together we helped 39 businesses, created 135 jobs, and safeguarded a further 703 jobs. Businesses all across the District were helped.

University of Warwick

Stratford District Council are working with the University of Warwick to enable the development of the Innovation Campus at Wellesbourne. This is a development of national significance and will, over time, have a huge positive impact on not only the District but also the West Midlands

Wellesbourne Airfield

SDC are working hard to enable the development of the Wellesbourne airfield site for industrial and commercial uses whilst at the same time retaining an enhanced airfield operation.

Porterbrook Rail Innovation Centre

Stratford District Council are co-operating with the Porterbrook Innovation Centre at Long Marston where they are developing a hydrogen powered train. We are cooperating with them on the potential enhancement and development of the site. We have also introduced them to a senior representative from the

University of Warwick which will probably lead to cooperation between Porterbrook and the University.

Help with Energy Bills

The cost of energy bills this winter is very worrying for many, many people – and especially for those with higher energy use. The payments available which are designed to help with energy bills. **If you are struggling, please contact our partner Act on Energy for full advice and support.** You can call them for free on **0800 988 2881**.

The **Energy Bills Support scheme** is now underway and people should have received their first monthly payment; this is a part payment in the £400 grant that the government has committed for everyone with an electricity meter. How you receive the money will depend on your supplier and what type of electricity account you have (for example if you pay by Direct debit or a prepayment meter). If you haven't received your payment, follow up as soon as possible with your electricity supplier. Be very aware of scams though – your electricity supplier is arranging the payment and you will never be asked for bank details. If you're unsure, contact your electricity supplier – the contact details will be on your electricity bill.

The £400 grant which you don't need to repay, is in addition to the **wider package of help** for people on certain means-tested benefits (often referred to as the £650 benefit payment). The second part of this payment is in November. Contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if you think you should have received this payment.

The **Winter Fuel Payment** is also payable to UK households with someone over the state pension age. You can find out more here: www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment

If you are of pension age, you may also be getting the **Warm Home Discount**. The Discount is available from the larger energy suppliers to help those with vulnerabilities pay their energy bills over the winter. The money is now paid *automatically* if you fit the criteria. Contact your supplier if you think you should be included and be scam aware.

The **Energy Price Guarantee** was brought in on 1 October to help with energy costs. The £2,500 'cap' is not a cap on total bills; that figure is based on a typ-

ical user – so the more you use – the more you pay. The Guarantee puts limits on unit rates so your final bill will still be determined by the amount of energy you use. When the scheme was announced, it was due to run for two years. But changes announced in the last couple of weeks mean that the **Energy Price Guarantee will now run until April 2023** – and what happens after April is currently under review.

