

Thank you chairman for the opportunity to report on the activities of Stratford on Avon District Council over this last 12 months.

The principle role of the District Council cover planning issues both permission and enforcement, environmental health including licensing, food hygiene, refuse collection and street scene and administering of the council tax reduction scheme, some housing benefit and council tax collection for all precepting authorities. Working with partners, the council has an aim to ensure that people can live and work in a safe environment.

Like everyone, I would think here tonight, the council has rising costs and minimum increases in money coming in to pay for them, so it does become a balancing act. Over the years the direct financial support from central government has reduced dramatically and is due to be phased out completely by the early 20's. Over the last year the council has been working towards this scenario which will result this year in council officers working in different ways. This will free up more space at Elizabeth House which will be let. We currently have 4 tenants within the offices. It is the wish of the council that we maintain minimal increase in its share of the council tax which has resulted in only a 1% increase this year.

In the last year we received a report on the findings of the peer challenge. A peer challenge is a process whereby the effectiveness, value for money and working standards are evaluated by other authorities. The result of that challenge showed the authority in very good light but we were challenged in that there was an opportunity to invest for the future prosperity of the district. Accordingly today the cabinet approved the following:-

The council also adopted CIL the Community Infrastructure Levy which in certain situations will put a responsibility on developers to fund certain parts of infrastructure. This levy replaces some of the other funding sources that developers had to contribute to in the past. One major difference is that there could be opportunity that funding will percolate down to the parish councils for projects within their community.

This year the council has been very proactive in both liquor and taxi licensing enforcement which has resulted in some taxi drivers having their licenses suspended for a period of time through to the revocation of a license for a licensed premise within Stratford Town. The council did take some stick for the last one but at the end of the day the risk was too great in as much as there were twice as many people within the premise than allowed, on more than one occasion.

Turning towards Henley in Arden. We are all very fortunate to live and work in a town which has great characteristics in its people and buildings. The Core Strategy, with its policies both on Green Belt and Special Landscape Area has protected Henley well in the last 12 months. There have been two major developments given planning permission this last year, one being Haven Pastures, the other being Henley College where the principle would have always been in favour to develop there because the site was classified as brownfield. Further work needs to be done with regards to the exit/entry to that development.

Planning enforcement has been very proactive, most cases can be settled through discussion, some will go to appeal. There has been one case recently where a resident took the council to appeal, the resident lost the appeal and will now probably have a bill to pay in five figures to cover the council costs.

The residents have helped, yet again, this year to ensure that the council remains one of the top recycling authorities in the country.

One of the continuing issues that cause concern within the town is the dog mess on the pavements. The council has appointed a new dog warden who's focus is to tackle the issues around dog fouling and irresponsible dog ownership. Even though he has only recently started I understand that he has already been in contact with the Henley Parish council.

Throughout this last year, I have remained Deputy Leader, served on the cabinet, the regulatory committee, leader's policy advisory group, employment and appointments committee and the member development working group and sat on numerous licensing panels. I have also completed 31 hours training. As an aside, through the member development working group we have opened up training sessions to parish councillors, since its inception in the summer Of 2017 it is encouraging to note that 150 parish councillors have attended training sessions.

Besides the above committees I have also attended parish council meetings in Henley and Ullenhall, spoke at planning committees and undertaken ward casework.

That concludes my report chairman. Thank you.