

## **Stratford on Avon District Councillor's Monthly Report for December 2023**

**Mike Rice, Liberal Democrat District Councillor for Henley-in-Arden**

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### **Henley has become relatively more deprived**

Henley East and Beaudesert is now among the most deprived neighbourhoods in the whole of Stratford District. What's more, its relative poverty is getting worse. Only three neighbourhoods have more poverty, down from six with more social deprivation as recently as 2015.

According to a new initiative from Stratford District Council, only two parts of Stratford town – Mount Pleasant East and Maybird – along with Alcester North, scored higher than Henley East and Beaudesert for seven key indicators of poverty, including income and employment as well as education and health.

Many more District neighbourhoods, however, have also become relatively more deprived in recent times. Between 2015 and 2019, as many as 37 Stratford District neighbourhoods showed increased poverty, of which Henley East and Beaudesert was one of the most stricken.

These figures form the background for a new social inclusion initiative 'Growing Opportunities – Stratford-on-Avon 2023-25' that was discussed at a meeting of the District Council's Cabinet on 4 December.

The initiative seeks better to understand the reasons for the inequalities before putting forward ways to create better choices and opportunities for local residents. A detailed action plan has been developed alongside the report. This will see the District Council work with other members of a social inclusion partnership of local organisations to achieve results.

Partner organisations include a wide range of local bodies, including Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Citizen's Advice, Orbit Housing Association, Stratford Foodbank and Stratford Youth Collective.

Noting that the challenges facing Stratford communities have evolved in recent years, the report says that, post-Covid, it is focused on supporting the most vulnerable families through their cost-of-living challenges. Its priorities reflect what Stratford's communities care about and need.

Expected outcomes will be interventions for the most socially-excluded residents across Stratford District to improve education, employment and training as well as increase income and reduce debt.

The initiative updates Stratford's Social Inclusion Statement 2019-2024 with the government's Levelling Up agenda.

## **South Warwickshire Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan**

This important document, the joint responsibility of Stratford and Warwick District Councils and which has close links with the South Warwickshire Local Plan, has now been finalised following a public consultation earlier this year in March.

Covering the next five years to 2028, the Plan will be implemented in April 2024, subject to adoption by both Councils at their next full meetings. The 56-page document may be obtained by contacting: [economy@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:economy@stratford-dc.gov.uk).

The Plan has three thematic priorities of People, Places and Productivity. These have been used to develop a concise set of relevant programmes. Of particular interest to Henley is the short-term objective for 2024-2025 of strengthening and protecting High Streets by resisting the loss of retail and/or commercial space to residential use, and of supporting rural towns in delivery of their Neighbourhood Plans.

### **What do you think of policing in Henley?**

Warwickshire's Police & Crime Commissioner, Philip Seccombe, wants to know what you think about policing in our area and more generally in Warwickshire.

He has launched a 'Your Police, Your Views' consultation to ask people across Warwickshire for their observations. He's interested in what priorities people would have for policing in the year ahead and their views on the Police Precept, or what they should be asked to pay as part of their Council Tax for the police service.

The survey may be completed here:

[Your Police, Your Views - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire \(warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/your-police-your-views)

The survey closes on 22 December 2023.

### **Pensioners' Parking Permit for Stratford**

Online purchase of the pensioners' parking permit is now possible, making it much easier for Henley residents of pensionable age to park in the centre of Stratford for a fraction of the usual cost.

This is the link: [Concessionary State Pension Age Permit](#)

Permits cost £50 per year and may be used at any time of the week at Bridgeway Multi-Storey Car Park or Bridgeway Surface Car Park, which are within the one-way system next to the river. Visits are limited to a maximum stay of four hours in any 24-hour period.

Alternatively, permits may be purchased from the District Council's offices in Stratford. Applicants will need to show their car log book, their driving licence and a valid insurance document showing their address and vehicle registration number.

One hour's free parking is still available at the same Bridgeway car parks for all residents and visitors. Disabled parking for Blue Badge holders remains free of charge in all District Council car parks.