

Stratford on Avon District Councillor's Monthly Report for December 2024

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

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South Warwickshire Local Plan

Many hundreds of pages were published online on 22nd November outlining the latest stage of the South Warwickshire Local Plan.

When it is finished in 2027, the Plan will say what may be built and where in Stratford and Warwick Districts until 2050, that is over the next 25 years.

There is still much to be discussed and many years for the Plan to be carried out, ensuring that the right infrastructure is in place.

Stratford District is expected by the new government to meet a housing need of just over 1,000 homes in each and every year of the Plan. However, existing housing schemes and other factors are likely to reduce this figure to just over 12,500 new homes in Stratford District by 2050.

Only one site in Henley has been chosen by the planners for a closer look. This is mainly the disused golf course to the north-west of Henley. It is about 125 hectares, or just over 300 acres. Assuming 20 homes per hectare as a rule of thumb, the planners reckon the site could fit in 2,500 new homes.

It should be stressed that the Henley site is just one of 24 “strategic growth locations” being considered by the planners. Many of these locations are potentially larger than the site in Henley. In addition, 12 possible new settlements are being looked at, each of at least 6,000 new homes.

The capacity of all these proposed sites far exceeds the number of homes required by the government or by local housing need.

Further analysis of the sites will now be carried out by the planners. Some sites will be rejected for a whole host of different reasons that could make them unsuitable.

Despite government pressure to build houses, the Liberal Democrat administration at Stratford District Council is determined to develop local communities with the infrastructure that's needed to support them.

As your District Councillor, I'm demanding that any plans to develop Henley should first and foremost meet local needs. Local communities must drive the process, not housing developers.

The next stage for the South Warwickshire Local Plan is a public consultation, starting in early January, when residents, businesses and Parish Councils may have their say.

Meanwhile, I wholeheartedly support the JPC in its efforts to shape the future of Henley through revising the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Although this work is being made more difficult by being carried out against a backdrop of uncertainty at Westminster and Stratford, it will set out how the community wants Henley to develop in future.

Henley residents must take the opportunity to get behind the JPC.

Meet your District Councillor

Please come along between 10.00am and 12 noon on Saturday, 14th December 2024, to the Community Library, Methodist Church, 115 High Street, to meet your District Councillor, Mike Rice.

Bring your local or private issues, or simply come along to have a chat about what's going on in Henley.