Ufton Parish Council – 7th October 2025

District Councillor Report – Susan Ostrander

Headlines:

1. 5 Year Housing Land Supply
2. Recycling in Stratford
3. Warm Homes
4. Community Climate and Nature Fund – round 3

1. Housing Supply – important update

There have been challenges underway to the District's five-year housing land supply following the change to the national planning framework. The Government's *new* rules increased both the house numbers required and the method of calculation. Stratford District had been *well ahead* in housing numbers, until this change, at about 25 years housing supply. A public enquiry on 4 September at Bordon Hill near Stratford re-examined the District's new figure of 5.06 years. The appeal hearing came out with a ruling that we're now down to 2.74 years supply, well under the 5-year requirement. There are significant implications of this.

The area is now at risk of more housing being added to the outside of settlements across the area. Housing applications that should be refused because they go against our local policies in terms of location e.g outside the BUAB, may now have to be permitted just to get overall numbers up.

As a result, Stratford DC are looking at all the options to bring our supply back up to 5 years: using reserve sites, bringing empty homes back into use, and pressing developers to implement their permissions instead of land banking, which is a big part of the reason we are in this situation.

I will of course support my ward in considering each new application that comes forward. However, it is worth noting that simply refusing all new proposals means they will likely get passed in an appeal (until our numbers again exceed 5 years) and that we will then get no/little benefits from s106 or CIL monies. It may be better for us to allow some development but have some control over the conditions etc rather than refuse and lose all.

2. Recycling Success in Stratford District

I'm pleased to share that Stratford-on-Avon District is now officially one of the top performers in the country for recycling. According to the latest Defra figures, our District achieved the **third highest household recycling rate in England for 2023/24** – an impressive 61%.

This is a fantastic achievement, reflecting the efforts of our residents, the work of our Council officers, and our partnership with Biffa Waste Services. Thank you to everyone who continues to recycle and support our commitment to reducing waste.

We're not stopping there. From 14 April 2025, residents have been able to recycle even more items directly from home, including plastic bags, sweet wrappers, film and sleeves, fruit and vegetable nets, and packaging such as cheese, fish and meat wrapping.

With these additions, we're aiming to push our recycling rate even higher next year. Every small action helps us move closer to the top spot in England while protecting our environment for the future.

For more information on what can be recycled, please visit the District Council's website: www.stratford.gov.uk/recycling

3. **Warm Homes**

Now that people are starting to put on their central heating, cardigans etc, Stratford DC is pleased to announce a new funding scheme available to residents to help keep homes warm and reduce the cost of energy bills.

The Warm Homes Local Grant (WHLG) is primarily funded by Stratford DC but complemented by funding from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The scheme will build on the success of the Home Upgrade Grant 2 scheme which saw 98 properties occupied by lower income households upgraded. The WHLG funding aims to improve the warmth and comfort of more of the worst performing homes across the District, whilst also reducing energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty.

If residents are eligible for the WHLG scheme, an assessor will visit the home to determine the best energy efficiency measures, which could be various types of insulation or clean heating sources. Any approved measures will be installed completely free of charge.

Residents could be eligible if they are a homeowner or a private rented tenant, and if:

- They have a home Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G
- They have a combined annual household income under £36,000 (savings are *not* assessed) or receive means-tested benefits

The District Council is working with partners E.ON and Act on Energy to deliver WHLG and you can apply for the funding via the E.ON website: Grant Finder | Check Your Eligibility for Home Efficiency Grants

If you would like to know more about home energy improvement options or other funding schemes, you can visit the District Council's website: Energy & Warmth | Stratford-on-Avon District Council

You can contact Act on Energy directly via phone 0800 988 2881 or email advice@actonenergy.org.uk.

4. **Community Climate and Nature Fund – Round Three**

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has opened the third round of *its* Community Climate and Nature Fund (CCNF), with £150,000 available to support local green projects.

Eligible applicants include:

- Town and Parish Councils
- Formally constituted charities and community groups
- Sports clubs

Projects must meet at least one of the following aims:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Build resilience to the impacts of climate change
- Support research to access larger funding opportunities
- Enhance biodiversity

Applications are open until **April 2026**, with submissions reviewed quarterly. Upcoming appraisal dates are:

- 30 July 2025
- 22 October 2025
- 14 January 2026
- April 2026 (date TBC)

For consideration at the 22 October 2025 meeting, applications must be submitted by 5pm, **Monday 20 October 2025**.

Enquiries and applications can be sent to: climate.emergency@stratford-dc.gov.uk

It is interesting to see what projects have been funded so far: the first of the four assessment periods ended on 30 July 2025, and a total of 8 applications were approved. The following projects have been funded:

- £750 to Alcester Town Council to deliver low-cost, nature-based interventions to support habitat recovery along the River Arrow.
- £3,900 to Ilmington Parish Council to deliver a pond restoration project.
- £8,000 to Compton Verney House Charity to install a large air source heat pump at Compton Verney's Learning Centre.
- £2,400 to Pillerton Priors Village Hall to install a battery storage system to complement their existing solar panels.
- £1,234 to Bearley Parish Council to finish the upgrade of their village streetlighting to LED.
- £4,715 to Tysoe Village Hall to install a battery storage system to complement their existing solar panels.
- £10,000 to Alcester Town Council to fund a number of biodiversity related initiatives, including the rewilding of community green spaces, the enhancement of hedgehog habitats, and community engagement events.
- £7,600 to Bidford Parish Council to enable the continued provision of the Bidford Community Fridge and Café.