

Ufton Parish Council – 6th January 2026

District Councillor's Report: Susan Ostrander

Headlines:

1. South Warks Local Plan Update
2. Housing applications & 5 Year Housing Land Supply
3. Consultation – Second Homes and Council Tax
4. Safer Neighbourhood Team - additions
5. Road Closures

1. South Warwickshire Local Plan – Progress Update

Parish Councillors will recall that the public consultation on the Preferred Options of the South Warwickshire Local Plan closed in March 2025. A very high number of responses were received — over 22,600 in total — all of which are available to view online via the South Warwickshire Local Plan website ([South Warwickshire Local Plan - Preferred Options 2025](#))

The exceptionally high volume of responses is one of several reasons for the revised timetable that was agreed by the Cabinets of both Councils in December. Further delays have arisen from national changes, including the need to take account of revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in December 2025.

Many local authorities nationally are facing similar pressures, as they work to submit their Local Plans by December 2026, when the planning system is expected to change. Government funding has been made available to assist this work, but this has also created very high demand for specialist consultants and expertise across the country. Additional pressures include reliance on partner organisations, such as the County Council and the Highways Authority, which affects overall capacity and timescales.

The current timetable anticipates that a first draft of the Plan (Regulation 19) will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate in June/July 2026, where it will be tested for “soundness”. Subject to the Inspector’s feedback, the Plan is then expected to be submitted for independent examination (Regulation 22) ahead of the final submission deadline of 12 December 2026.

Councillors have expressed concern for some time that the increasingly complex and shifting national environment has placed the timetable at risk. It is worth noting that contingency time built into the programme has now been fully used.

A summary of consultation responses is available in the document [SWLP PO Consultation Statistics.pdf](#) However, it is important to stress that the ongoing

assessment is a technical one, focusing on the planning merits of each representation rather than the number of comments received. A review of responses indicates that there is a degree of repetition and, in some cases, organised or targeted campaigning.

2. Five-Year Housing Land Supply and Speculative Development

Following the recent recalculation of the District's five-year housing land supply by a Planning Inspector, there has been a predictable increase in speculative planning applications. Many of these proposals do not comply with existing District policy, most commonly because they are located in open countryside.

Enquiries with Severn Trent Water confirm that Southam, Ladbroke, Stockton, Harbury, Bishops Itchington and Long Itchington are all served by the same sewage treatment works at Southam. In their response to the Local Plan consultation, Severn Trent highlighted a significant risk in accommodating increased demand both now and over the next 25 years.

There are currently outline proposals for almost 600 dwellings within this catchment area that the Council is aware of.

Of immediate concern is a site adjacent to Bishops Hill for 230 homes. The view at District level is that this application should be refused. As a minimum, any proposal would need to be significantly reduced in scale and appropriately phased.

3. Council Tax Premium on Second Homes – Consultation

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has launched a consultation on a proposal to introduce a Council Tax “premium” on second homes across the District. Since April 2025, Councils have had the power to charge up to double Council Tax on second homes. At present, second homes in the District pay full Council Tax, with no discount or premium applied.

Following the consultation, the Council will decide in February 2026 whether to introduce a premium of up to 100%. If approved, this would take effect from 1 April 2027. In line with statutory requirements, owners of second homes would be notified by 31 March 2026.

The Council is carefully considering how this policy could operate locally. While second homes can reduce the availability of housing for local people, it is important that any approach is proportionate and well evidenced. Views submitted through the consultation will play a key role in shaping the final decision.

The consultation is open until Monday 2 February. Further information and details of how to respond can be found on the District Council website: [Council Tax Premiums on Second Homes Consultation | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](https://www.stratford.gov.uk/second-homes-consultation)

4. Police: Safer Neighbourhood Team Update

PC Hanna Rankin has been joined by two new Police Community Support Officers on the Southam beat: PCSO Cowley (6007) and PCSO Withers (6013).

I am sure Parish Councillors will wish to join me in welcoming them. Additional policing support is particularly valuable for our rural villages, where visibility and engagement remain important.

5. Southam Bypass – Overnight Closures

There will be overnight closures of the Southam Bypass between 15 and 23 January, from 8.00pm to 6.00am, adjacent to the new Aldi site. These closures will take place on weeknights only.