

### **Ward Member Update:**

SDC cabinet has agreed to establish a Stratford-on-Avon climate change fund financed from the climate change reserve. It is to allow parish councils, community lead groups and charity groups within the District to enhance local climate change agendas. It was confirmed at full council that this should roll out at the beginning of 2024. It could be used for items such as solar panels on village halls, electric vehicle parking points etc.

At full council on Monday we voted for the growing opportunities plan 2023 to 2025. This is to help develop the Social Inclusion Partnership to meet the government's levelling up agenda. It is to help ensure that communities are given access to as many opportunities as possible.

We also voted to approve a procedure and appointment of parish/Town council reps who sit within Audit and Standards Committee at the council.

We also voted to approve The review of the polling districts and polling places ahead of the next General election. The staff strategy at the council. And the South Warwickshire Economic Development strategy and action plan.

I've attached information on the HUG2 scheme that I mentioned to give further context, and also below are requirements and some further information about the scheme:

[Energy Efficiency Grants | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#).

You will note that HUG2 eligibility requirements are:

- Property must NOT have gas central heating
- Property must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G
- Household must have a combined annual income under £31,000 (gross)

Below is further information on what levelling up is (this is a brief take out from the agenda we receive as councillors, if you are interested to read more [click here](#) for the full report)

1.2.1 Levelling-up is the government's aim to make life more equal in the UK, meaning there will be less of a difference between richer and poorer areas. The UK has a high level of 'regional inequality' compared to other countries and in this context means that some areas of the UK have more money, better opportunities, more housing and increased access to public services than other areas. The government wants to support areas that do not have the same wealth or opportunities that other areas in the UK might have. By focusing the right type of support in the right areas, the aim is that where you grow up or where you work will not negatively impact your future or your quality of life and health.

1.2.2 In response to the government's Levelling-up agenda and the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, SDC has been working with the Social Inclusion Partnership and Warwickshire County Council to deliver a Stratford-on-Avon District Council Plan. The County Council has developed a Countywide Plan and each District will have its own plan, albeit there are County deliverables within these. It is good timing that this plan is presented to The Cabinet in December following the Bill receiving Royal Assent on 26 October 2023 and now becoming law.

1.2.3 The Communities Team has been working with colleagues at Warwickshire County Council and the Social

Inclusion Partnership during the past 12 months, to develop a new plan for Stratford-on-Avon district. Social Inclusion Partners have shaped and been consulted with during meetings throughout 2023. The resulting plan (Appendix 1) provides the context and defined areas of focus considering the Levelling-up missions.

1.2.4 Should the plan be approved by The Cabinet and recommended for adoption to Council, an action plan will be brought to January 2024 Cabinet detailing the areas of focus and the specific actions to be delivered under the headings:

- Reducing rural inequalities
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Empowering and strengthening local communities
- Improving education and skills and increasing financial resilience