STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

24 November 2026

Town Clerk's Open Report

1. Local Government Re-Organisation Update

- **To note the update.**

Background

At its previous meeting (Minute 58 2026/27), Council was advised that the Government had paused and was reviewing its proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire.

The original proposals were for two new unitary authorities: North Warwickshire, covering North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth and Rugby; and South Warwickshire, covering Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick. The original intention had been for the new authorities to become operational in April 2028, following elections to Shadow Authorities in May 2027.

Following its review, the Government announced on 29 October 2026 that it is minded to proceed with the two-unitary authority model for Warwickshire, although the final decision and detailed arrangements are still awaited. A further three-week period has been allowed for representations.

The revised timetable anticipates elections to the Shadow Authorities in May 2028, with the new unitary authorities becoming operational in April 2029. Elections in May 2027 will therefore proceed on the existing council boundaries.

The six Warwickshire councils have acknowledged the announcement and confirmed their commitment to working together to ensure a managed transition, protecting services and supporting staff.

For the Town Council, the focus remains on monitoring the implications of reorganisation, particularly the potential transfer of community assets and services. Officers will continue to engage with Stratford-on-Avon District Council to establish what assets may be available and the associated costs. Any potential transfer will need to be supported by a robust business case, demonstrating that it is financially and operationally sustainable.

2. Stratford-upon-Avon Strategic Partnership – Appointment of Town Council Representatives to Working Groups

- **To appoint Councillors to the Strategic Partnership Working Groups**

By Minute 39 (2026/27), the Council approved a revised approach to the operation and governance of the Stratford-upon-Avon Strategic Partnership.

Councillor Vos remains as the Town Council's representative on the Strategic Partnership Steering Panel.

As part of the revised arrangements, a number of Working Groups have been established to progress the Partnership's priorities. The following vacancies require consideration and appointment of Town Council representatives:

- **Town Centre Evolution** – To be appointed
- **Creativity, Culture and the Arts** – Councillor Rolfe, as the previous sponsor, has indicated her availability to continue supporting this area of work.
- **Investment and Funding** – To be appointed but it is understood that the Working Group to be established at a later date.
- **Town Transport** – Representation currently the Mayor, Councillor I Fradgley and MacDonald.

Councillors are requested to appoint representatives.

3. Community Infrastructure Levy

- **To note the receipt of Community Infrastructure Levy payment**

The Town Council has recently received Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds of £19,668.91.

Councillors are advised that the CIL Working Group would be meeting shortly.

4. Recording, Filming and Broadcasting of Council Meetings

- **To adopt a Recording, Filming and Broadcasting Policy**

Background

The right to record, film and broadcast meetings of the Council, its committees, sub-committees and joint committees is established under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. This right is in addition to the existing rights of the press and public to attend meetings.

The Town Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision-making and recognises that recording meetings can support public engagement, accessibility and accountability.

Whilst the legislation establishes the right to record, it is important that the Council has a clear policy setting out how recording will operate in practice, including reasonable meeting arrangements, the responsibilities of those recording and the management of any concerns raised by attendees.

Proposed Policy

The proposed policy confirms that recording includes any form of audio, visual or electronic recording and that recording is permitted in accordance with the applicable legislation and the Council's reasonable meeting arrangements.

It also recognises that some members of the public attending meetings may not wish to be recorded. The policy therefore provides that anyone who has concerns about being recorded should notify the Town Clerk or Chair before the meeting begins, enabling appropriate arrangements to be considered.

5. Shakespeare Institute

- **To consider whether the Council wishes to make a formal response.**

Background

It has recently been announced that the University of Birmingham Shakespeare Institute has outlined plans to leave Mason Croft and move to the University of Birmingham's Edgbaston campus in 2027.

The Institute has been an important part of the town's academic and cultural heritage since 1951, and its departure could have wider implications for Stratford's international reputation as a centre for Shakespeare studies.

A petition has been launched calling for the decision to be reconsidered. Whilst the Town Council has not been formally consulted on the proposals, Members may wish to consider whether to submit a response to the University expressing its concerns and seeking clarification on the future of the Institute and Mason Croft.

6. Standing Orders

- **That Council approves and adopts the revised Standing Orders**

Background

Following the decision taken at the last meeting, a Working Group was established to undertake a detailed review of the Council’s Standing Orders. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the Council’s procedures remain fit for purpose, reflect current legislation and good governance practice, and are consistent with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) model Standing Orders.

The revised document (Appendix) is based on the NALC Model Standing Orders 2025, with amendments to reflect the Council's own arrangements and terminology, including the use of the title Mayor for the Chair of Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council.

The Standing Orders set out the rules governing the conduct and proceedings of Council and Committee meetings, together with certain internal organisational and administrative arrangements. They are distinct from the Council's Financial Regulations, which separately govern financial management, accounting procedures and the responsibilities of the Responsible Financial Officer.

For clarity, provisions shown in bold type identify legal and statutory requirements which cannot be amended by the Council.

The Working Group has now completed its review, and the revised Standing Orders are presented to Council for consideration and adoption.

Town Clerk and Chief Officer