

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

20 January 2026

Town Clerk's Open Report

Agenda item 12

1) Clopton Bridge Railings

- **To consider a potential request for funding (CIL)**

The Council has received an approach from a local resident, supported by Councillor Rolfe, regarding the condition of the railings on Clopton Bridge. The railings are highly visible and form part of a key gateway into Stratford-upon-Avon. Concerns have been raised that their current condition presents a poor first impression of the town.

Background

The railings on Clopton Bridge are visibly dilapidated, with extensive paint chipping and areas of rusting evident along their length. Given the prominence of the bridge as an arrival point into the town, particularly for visitors, the condition of the railings has been highlighted as detracting from the overall appearance and welcome to Stratford-upon-Avon.

Councillor Rolfe and the Town Clerk met with the Deputy Chief Executive of Stratford-upon-Avon District Council to discuss this issue, alongside other matters raised by the resident. For the purposes of this report, focus is limited solely to the condition of the railings.

At that meeting, Councillor Rolfe suggested that Warwickshire County Council (WCC) should be approached in the first instance, as the bridge and associated infrastructure fall within their remit as the highway authority. It was acknowledged that any works undertaken by WCC would be subject to their existing programme of works and priorities.

The District Council indicated that it would potentially be supportive of improvement works being carried out and advised that, should WCC be unable to deliver the works within a reasonable timeframe, the District Council may be willing to consider resourcing the works themselves or in part.

As part of these discussions, the question was raised as to whether this Council would be prepared to commit Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds towards the project, should this be required to enable the works to proceed.

Options

In the first instance, it is proposed that WCC, as Highway Authority and responsible for Clopton Bridge, be given the opportunity to undertake the necessary works within their programme of maintenance before any alternative delivery or funding arrangements are considered. However, if this

does not happen and in order to expedite the matter, it is suggested that the Town Council considers whether it wishes to fund. The options available are to:

approve the use of CIL funds, not approve, or propose an alternative approach.

2) Historic Fire engines

- **To consider the Council's support for the preservation, restoration, and public display of the historic Stratford fire engines.**

The Town Council owns two horse-drawn, hand-pumped fire engines bearing the Stratford Corporation Fire Brigade logo. These vehicles are believed to date from the 1800s and we are told are in excellent structural condition.

While they are currently in storage, it is unfortunate that they are not on public display. In the past, the Town Council has sought to look to find a more suitable home to exhibit them, but without success. The new Stratford-upon-Avon Museum (SOAM) project has previously expressed interest in taking ownership.

The SOAM, following a detailed inspection, have confirmed that both historic Stratford fire engines are in excellent condition and recommended their restoration for public display, requesting that the Town Council does not dispose of them until the Museum has had the opportunity to save them.

SOAM have recently approached the Town Council regarding a proposed centenary event in March 2026 to mark 100 years since the fire at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1926.

Extract of email below

In an initial discussion with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) there are plans for a small exhibition on the SMT fire. Further details will be explored at an upcoming meeting at the Aston Fire Heritage Museum.

Proposed 2026 SMT Fire Centenary Event:

The event is planned to include:

A display of firefighting appliances and equipment in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, including:

- *The current fire engine with station staff (to be confirmed).*
- *A Dennis engine of the type used in 1926 (subject to agreement with Aston Fire Museum).*
- *The two 19th-century Stratford fire engines, likely transported on a trailer.*

A working horse-drawn hand pump engine, intended to demonstrate to visitors how the Stratford engines would operate once restored.

A procession of fire engines through Stratford to publicise both the event and the restoration project.

SOAM are asking that the Council consider supporting the event, funding the transport of the Stratford fire engines to the RSC for display, and endorsing the launch and ongoing support of their restoration project.

Further information has been requested in relation to anticipated costs and associated insurance; however, no response has been received to date. Should this information be provided, it will be reported to the meeting. Notwithstanding this, in order to expedite matters for March 2026, Councillors' attention is now required.

3) Community Infrastructure Levy

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

The Town Council has recently received CIL funds of £62,326, bringing the total CIL balance to £357,812. While these funds were initially earmarked for the cemetery extension, the award of CIL funding (pending) from the District Council would reimburse this amount.

Following the return of the RFO from maternity leave, a CIL Working Group will be established to review the overall allocation and level of funds.

4) Strategic Partnership - Community Infrastructure Levy

- **To consider utilising Community Infrastructure Levy**

Background

The Strategic Partnership (SP) was established following the adoption of the Town's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to oversee and support its delivery. The Partnership brings together key public, private and third-sector organisations to help shape the town's future, safeguarding what is valued while responding to changing needs. Councillor Vos and Councillor MacDonald (observer) represent the Town Council on the SP, and the Town Clerk currently serves as Deputy Chair.

Vision Document and NDP

The SP has recently undertaken a consultation on its Vision Document, the outcomes of which will be reported to its next meeting. In parallel, the SP has established a working group to review its future remit and role. As part of this work, it will be acknowledged that there is currently no dedicated resource or individual to drive forward the Vision Document or to support the delivery of the priorities set out in the NDP. This presents a challenge to effective implementation.

Funding Suggestion

The Town Council may wish to consider to support further delivery of the NDP priorities and Vision through its CIL funds for a time-limited Project Officer role, subject to any further detail.

Such an approach would demonstrate the Town Council's commitment to enabling the effective delivery of the Vision Document and the NDP, while recognising that there is currently no dedicated resource to progress these priorities.

A fixed-term, project-specific role would provide the necessary focus to progress agreed priorities, coordinate partners, develop any deliverable schemes, look to secure external funding, without creating a permanent staffing commitment.

It is considered that the use of CIL to fund a time-limited Project Officer, whose role would be explicitly and demonstrably linked to the delivery of NDP infrastructure priorities, would represent a lawful and proportionate use of these funds.

Options

To approve the proposal, to not approve or suggest an alternative.

5) Calendar of Meetings

- **To consider the calendar of meetings for 2026/27**

Further to the organisational review, a new committee structure is recommended for approval. Following the recent Council meeting, a Working Group has been established to examine this in more detail, with the names and terms of reference of the committees to be further considered. In the meantime, to facilitate scheduling for Councillors and the Town Hall, a draft calendar has been prepared, with proposed dates aligned to the recommended structure.

Town Clerk
14 January 2026