

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

22 July 2025

Town Clerk's Open Report

Agenda Item 11

1. Public Open Space

- **To consider the offer from Persimmon Homes to take ownership of Public Open Space at Sonnet Park on the Banbury Road: 20/02665/FUL**
- **To consider the offer from L & Q Group to take ownership of Public Open Space at Land off Oak Road, Tiddington: 15/02057/OUT and 18/01964/REM).**

Introduction

Due to timings previously, offers of Public Open Spaces (POS) have come straight to Council. However, with the advance notice given for this POS at Banbury Road, Community Services and Environment Committee considered at their recent meeting the future management of this open space and have raised a number of questions.

The offer of the POS at Tiddington was received on the day of publication of this report. Further details will follow / be reported at the meeting.

The Town Clerk is also endeavouring to get answers to some of the questions raised ahead of the meeting and will be reported at the meeting.

Background

The adoption of the Banbury Road, POS also incorporates a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS). These are increasingly common in new developments, many local councils are understandably cautious about assuming responsibility for them due to concerns over long-term maintenance liabilities, flooding risks, and the technical complexity of their design.

If the Town Council decides to decline, the land and associated fees will be offered to the District Council, which currently manages similar areas in the town. Should they also decline, the land will remain with the developer and may be transferred to a Management Company in future.

Financial

As members are aware, the Town Council does not currently own any other play areas within the town. If the Council wishes to consider this offer, several factors will need to be evaluated, including insurance, the duration of the fee, the entity responsible for conducting weekly inspections and risk assessments, the requirement for an annual ROSPA inspection, and the

overall costs related to general maintenance and replacement and be budgeted for accordingly.

Members are also asked to consider whether the Local Government Devolution proposals could result in the Town Council taking on responsibility for play areas within the town, and whether these would be accompanied by the necessary management funding fee as well.

The POS commuted sum for Banbury Road is £116,353.32 and this is index linked for a 30 year period.

The POS commuted sum for Tiddington has yet to be calculated but would be over a 20 year period.

Legal

Legal input would be required to ensure the transfer of ownership, the appropriate commuted sum was sufficient, and protection from future claims or unforeseen obligations.

Options

The options open to the Council, are to accept, decline or request further information.

Useful Documents

[Community-ownership-and-management-of-parks-and-green-spaces.pdf](#)

[RoSPA- Legal aspects of play areas: Ensuring compliance and safety standards | RoSPA](#)

[Development Requirements SPD](#) – Part L Open Space

2. Financial Regulations

- **To consider a revised limit for Banking**

Introduction

At the last meeting of Council, the new Financial Procedure Rules were confirmed. Since their adoption, an operational issue has arisen at the Town Hall which warrants further consideration.

Background

The current limit for the Council's current debit card is set at £1,000 as outlined in Financial Regulations 9.1.

However, this limit is now increasingly proving to be insufficient in practice. There are frequent situations where large or urgent payments are due, and the restriction creates delays, particularly when authorising officers are on leave or working part-time hours

A recent example highlighted the problem clearly: the cemetery vehicle was in for servicing, and the garage required immediate payment of the £795 invoice before the vehicle could be released. There were insufficient funds in the debit

card account to process. As Councillors are aware to top up the funds requires two Councillors to attend the Town Hall to authorise the fund transfer.

Such situations are far from ideal and place unnecessary strain on staff, councillors and operations. To address this and ensure more efficient day-to-day financial management, it is proposed that the debit card be increased from £1,000 to £2,000.

This adjustment is considered both practical and proportionate, reflecting the Council's ongoing financial responsibilities and staffing arrangements.

Options

Council is therefore requested to approve the increase in the bank payment limit to £2,000 not approve or suggest an alternative.

3. Mayoral Visit to Ireland

- **To consider a request for support for the Mayor's proposed visit to Shannon, County Clare, Ireland, in response to an invitation to Civic Reception.**

Background

The Town Council has been approached by a former classmate of the Mayor, Councillor Hunter, with a proposal to organise a Civic Reception in Shannon, in recognition of Councillor Hunter's appointment as the first female Irish-born Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Mayor was born and raised in Shannon before relocating to the UK, and the invitation carries personal and cultural significance.

Civic Heritage and Events Committee considered the matter at its meeting on 8 July and were supportive of the request.

Proposal

The Mayor is keen to accept the invitation and undertake the visit on a personal and civic basis. In accordance with protocol, the Mayor has advised that:

- She is willing to personally fund her travel and accommodation costs for the trip.
- A small contribution from the Mayor's Allowance may be used for incidental civic hospitality, such as gifts or refreshments during the reception.
- The visit would be scheduled at a time that avoids disruption to any key civic duties or engagements in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Options

To approve or not approve the request and associated use of Mayoral Budget.