

District Councillors Report February 2024 Baldwin Ward

At the last Full Council meeting held in January , the Council approved a new CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) for public consultation. The Levy is designed to cover the Infrastructure costs of the SWDPR proposals.

The proposal is to charge a much lower rate in the North of the District than the South and our amendment to examine the evidence and reconsider this was outvoted, although few arguments against our resolution were put forward.

The current majority of speculative applications are in our area, which clearly suggest that these attract a greater profit for landowners and therefore there should be scope to match the CIL charge for the rest of the District. A reduced charge will provide an incentive to develop more in our villages than other areas, as well as reducing the amount of money that Parish Councils receive from their share. Unsurprisingly the developers and agents are in favour of the lower levy.

The local infrastructure requirements are also unknown in respect of transport requirements as the promised modelling to inform site allocations has still not been carried out, despite the final sites being identified in the review. The Leader of the Council did offer the view that the planned railway halt at Rushwick would help with such transport difficulties and was offered a map to assist in knowledge of the area.

Being aware of local concerns on speeding and rural crime. Paul spent a morning accompanying the local police to observe their activities including speed awareness checks and security at farms. The Police and Crime Commissioner also attended part of the morning and members of the public were appreciative of the police presence dealing with such issues.

The government has now introduced changes to increase the validity periods of Parish Neighbourhood Plans in planning terms, to five years. Unfortunately, it now seems that the small print conditions may mean that some Plans will not qualify.

On specific issues , the Council has now recognised that the s106 agreement to fit out the pub at the Hundred House in Great Witley has not been adhered to and is engaging with the developer. It seems that terms with an operator to run the pub are being discussed and a timetable arranged.

Pam and Paul Cumming

Baldwin Ward