

Report to Streatley Parish Council General Assembly (April 2021). Cllr Alan Law West Berkshire Council

During the last 24 months I have held the following positions at West Berkshire Council

1. Chairman of OSMC (Overview and Scrutiny Commission). This is the body that holds the Administration (The Executive and Officers) and the Council's external Partners to account. As well as the standard reviews of Council performance and finances, there were 2 notably major reviews and investigations.
 - a. Adult Social care budgeting and the reasons for its frequent overspending.
 - b. Legal and other professional advice given to Council in relation to the LRIE (London Road Industrial Estate) development agreement and subsequent high Court judgement.
2. Chairman of EAPC (Eastern Area Planning Committee) and Chairman of DPC (District Planning Committee)
3. Member of PAG (Planning Advisory Group). A small cross party group councillors who provide advice and guidance and act as an initial sounding board to the Planning Portfolio Holder and planning officers as they develop proposals and local planning Policies for the next Local Plan 2023 -2036. I have a particular interest to ensure the rural parts of the district, the AONB and the villages are adequately protected against inappropriate developments.

In my role as local Councillor, I assisted the Parish Council and local volunteers respond to the local impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic. Particularly as part of SERG (Streatley Emergency Response Group) set up by the Parish Council. I've received a great deal of positive feedback for the work of SERG from the community and this work has been recognised by a number of commendations, including one from Chairman and Chief Executive of West Berkshire Council.

Two other events (both somewhat linked) have stood out in Streatley during the last 24 months.

- a. Traffic congestion, mainly in the High Street, but also spilling over into other parts of the village at times. I have ensured two full traffic surveys were undertaken by West Berkshire Council's Highways officers. Both were unfortunately delayed and impacted by the pandemic but are now complete. The long term objective is to gather real data to assist with developing some proposed options to alleviate the problem. These options will initially be discussed with the Parish Council and it is hoped to then construct a public survey to ascertain which of the proposed options finds most favour.
- b. The Swan Hotel additional Car park application. This application created a lot of local interest although the majority of comments came from Goring (and elsewhere) rather than Streatley residents. There were however a number of residents, mainly centred on the High Street, who felt an additional car park would somehow alleviate the parking and traffic congestion in the High Street. I eventually, on balance, opposed the application because I felt there had been insufficient traffic analysis carried out and a similar Planning Appeal at a hotel in Sonning had concluded additional parking capacity could well increase overall traffic volumes and make congestion even worse. I also felt, along with the Conservation officer, the Environment Agency and others, that any economic benefits to the hotel and community would be at the cost of the countryside and our particularly sensitive landscape in the village.