# Ward member Report

# 02-08-2024

## Planning Policy

Angela Rayner [Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government] has issued her intended actions to increase Social Housing build based on demonstrated local need, and to deliver affordable housing for young people who are priced out of the housing market. She has stated that local planning is essential to meet local needs and will be respected provided that the demonstrable need is reflected in the plan. The emphasis will be placed on supporting “elected Mayors” in the “development and agreement of Spatial Development Strategies [SDS]”. “The Government will also explore the most effective arrangements for developing SDSs outside of Mayoral areas. . .”

Following on from my recent comments regarding settlements having an up-to-date Housing Needs Survey [HNS] or Neighbourhood Development Plan NDP], I think that this gives indication as to how important these maybe should the West Midlands Mayor look outside his current area of authority. As a reminder, HNS and NDPs need to be made reviewed and, if necessary, revised every five years I am informed to carry full weight.

The document also confirms that the current National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] is also to be revised.

## Planning Applications

The main Application in the Ward remains the Anaerobic Digester project. This Application has been in the system now for nearly two years. The time span has not been because of dereliction of effort by the Planning Officers at SDC but simply because of the complexity of impact on the locality, the claimed benefits, and clear local harm such a project will impact the environment and quality of life of residents living close to the proposed site; and, in my opinion, the insignificant National benefit that the relatively infinitesimally small contribution to the national consumption of gas, and, 40% of the production being Carbon Dioxide as a financially beneficial by-product. The calculation as to support or refuse the application comes down to Harm vs Benefit. Importantly, should the application be refused, and the applicant go to appeal, then the process of assessment must be seen to have been conducted properly, and this has added to the time taken to ensure a safe and reasonable decision.

## Welfare and Support

A final reminder that the HUGS2 scheme for help with home insulation and alternative energy systems soon closes. Those without mains gas and with a joint income of below £36k p.a. are eligible.

If any in your parishes have problems with Housing associations and need support, please let me know if I can support your residents.