

Wellesbourne and Walton PC – January 2021 District and County Councillor Report

SDC Budgets and Council Tax

The economic impact of Covid-19 on the district as a whole has been severe and the net shortfall against the 2020/21 budget is already projected at more than £4m without the known effects of Lockdown 3 and reflects the impact of the pandemic on fees and charges originally budgeted. Part of the net revenue shortfall in 2020/21 will be financed by the release of £2.355m from ear-marked reserves into general reserves.

The introduction of charges for the Garden Waste Service will be implemented from April 2021 together with increases to off-street parking fees. There has been a positive response in signing up for the Garden Waste Service as residents take advantage of the early bird offer of £35 pa per bin rather than £40 when applying prior to 28th February 2021. Based on approximate numbers of households with gardens (excluding flats) over 20% of households have already signed up.

Householders who pay to have their garden waste taken away will be issued with a non-transferable permit to attach to their green bin. Householders who choose not to take part in the scheme have the choice of home composting or taking their garden waste to a Household Waste Recycling Centre.

For more information please visit [Garden Waste Service | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

With regard to the proposed increases to off-street parking fees this reflects an increase of 20p per hour Residents are reminded that parking in the Bridgefoot multi-storey car park is FREE for the first hour.

Expenditure for 20/21 has been reduced by £236k which includes savings from joint working appointments with Warwick District Council (WDC) and decisions not to fill a number of vacant posts. Working more closely with WDC is currently estimated to provide savings of £1.25m over the next five years and SDC plans to accelerate opportunities with WDC which deliver added value benefits to residents.

Council Tax is likely to increase by the maximum allowed by £5 per household next year and by 2% per annum thereafter, ie SDC Council Tax for a Band D property would increase in April 2021 from £144.12 to £149.12 per annum.

In terms of the Council Tax 'cake', SDC only receives 7.5% of Council Tax paid by residents as Warwickshire County Council has 77%, the Police 12.3% and Towns/Parishes 3.2%

Green Waste

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New Waste Contract

SDC is to enter into a joint waste contract with Warwick District Council, known as the 123+ service. This decision was ratified by full Council in December and is now subject to Warwick DC adopting the same policy position.

- 1 weekly separate food waste collection;
 - 2 weekly mixed recycling collection in a wheelie bin;
 - 3 weekly general residual waste black bin collection in a 140, 180 or 240 litre bin;
- plus an optional 2-weekly chargeable garden waste service.

(Stratford-on-Avon District Council had already approved this and would commence on 1 April 2021, having delayed implementation due to the Covid-19 pandemic). The disposal of nappies and adult pads is also being considered for regular collection.

Gypsy and Traveller Plan

In December Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Cabinet agreed the draft version of its Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation.

The SPD is one of a number of SPDs that accompanies the Core Strategy, and provides detailed advice and guidance to applicants when submitting planning applications relating to Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. When adopted, it will be used by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to help reach decisions on whether to approve or refuse planning applications.

The consultation draft sets out the need for additional accommodation within the District and identifies areas where new Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites may be suitable, subject to planning permission, as well as guidance on what any new sites should look like in respect of their design and layout.

The SPD does not allocate specific land for new permanent sites as this can only be done through a higher level policy document. Prepared as an interim measure, the contents of the SPD will be subsumed into a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan in due course. The Council has started work on a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and is currently exploring options to identify new permanent sites.

The draft Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople SPD is currently out for a six week period of public consultation between 7 January and 19 February 2021. During this time the draft SPD will be available to view online at www.stratford.gov.uk/gandt along with details of how comments can be made. There are no sites proposed in the Wellesbourne area, however it is recommended that the parish council reviews and comments accordingly.

Public Open Space

At Full Council, consideration was given to a proposal to revise and update the mechanisms used to deliver and maintain Public Open Space (POS) in Stratford-on-Avon District.

Concerns had been raised by many residents in new developments regarding the 'hidden' charges levied by private management companies appointed by developers to maintain the POS. Furthermore, the quality of the maintenance work carried out was often of concern. The proposal sought to eliminate the risk of future 'fleecehold' charges being levied on householders and to improve the quality of POS within new developments.

The Council has resolved that, in the event that a Town or Parish Council decide not to take ownership of a designated public open space in relation to any relevant planning permission granted after 1 January 2021, Stratford-on-Avon District Council would generally take ownership of the land and responsibilities for maintenance and that this be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework. This decision will ensure that all future POS is properly kept and maintained.

COUNTY COUNCIL

COVID-18 Update

The impact of Lockdown 3 appears to be taking effect and figures released on 25 January show that for the SDC area the seven day rate/100,000 is now decreasing – 254.4/100,000 (284 last week) and the over 60's day rate is 165/100,000 (218 last week) (with 69 cases over the last seven days), which when compared to other districts in Warwickshire for all ages is Nuneaton & Bedworth 392/100,000, North Warwickshire 424/100,000, Warwick 297/100,000 and Rugby 359/100,000.

The situation regarding SWFT Hospital Beds has decreased with 94 (107) confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 8 (x) patients in ICU (figures in brackets are from 22 Jan). The capacity has consequently increased to 16% from 10%, with the number of 'open' beds at 352.

New Testing Facility

A new Lateral Flow Testing facility has been launched at the Courtyard Theatre in Stratford and is for people without any Covid symptoms. To date 4190 tests have been undertaken with 19 positive results. Booking a test is online via [Stratford-upon-Avon COVID Community Testing Events | Eventbrite](#)

Vaccinations

The vaccine rollout has now started and gaining momentum in GP practices together with the Hospital sites; and WCC is involved with the setting up of the mass vaccination site at Stoneleigh Park which opened this week. This will complement another mass vaccination facility in Birmingham at Millennium Point which is being used as an alternative facility offering earlier access, however residents may prefer to await an invitation to go either to the medical centre in Wellesbourne or at Southam Clinic – depending on which GP practice they are registered with.

Essentially the three hospital hubs will be using the Pfizer vaccine and local GP's will be administering the OxfordAZ vaccine. Roving teams are carrying out vaccinations in care homes amongst staff and residents and it is anticipated to have all care homes in Warwickshire vaccinated by the end of the month, as this is a priority area.

Waste and Recycling

The Household Waste and Recycling Sites in Wellesbourne and Leamington will continue to be operated via the booking system throughout the Lockdown period, unless there are changes to the guidelines by the Government.

Local Elections

The local county elections are still planned to be held in May, however any form of canvassing and campaigning through the distribution of literature continues to be banned until further notice in view of Covid restrictions.

Council Tax

WCC Council Tax is likely to rise by 3% (with 1% ring-fenced for Adult Social Care) and Warwickshire Police precept increased by £15.

Anne Parry