

Wellesbourne & Walton PC – Anne Parry’s District Councillor Report

South Warwickshire Council Consultation – HAVE YOUR SAY

An extensive public consultation has started across both Stratford and Warwick District Council areas on proposals to create a South Warwickshire District Council. It concludes on 24th October and both individuals, parish councils and organisations are encouraged to take part – the survey takes less than five minutes to complete.

Both Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils face a very uncertain financial future, although for slightly different reasons. Government funding for all Councils has reduced in recent years, and at Stratford-on-Avon yet further significant reductions are expected due to changes to the New Homes Bonus scheme this autumn, whereas at Warwick District the cost of delivering services, including refuse and recycling, is expected to increase significantly.

It is estimated that both Councils will have a shortfall of around £4-6m each year by 2025/26. Across the two Councils this means that £10m of annual savings are needed over the next five years to address this shortfall and help preserve services.

Faced with this financial pressure, and not wanting to see reductions in the current level of services, both Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils have been exploring a number of ways to work together to tackle this shortfall and reduce the impact on residents and service users.

Both Councils agreed the ambition to create a South Warwickshire Council earlier this year, and for this Council to be financially sustainable. **This consultation will help us understand whether you support this proposal.** Without the level of savings that could be expected through the creation of a South Warwickshire Council, there would be serious consequences on future service delivery.

The two Councils have similar sized budgets of approximately £17m. They serve similar sized populations, with a broadly similar net General Fund cost per head of population. They both serve a combination of towns and rural areas, with many challenges in common. There is a consistent geography already established for the South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership, the Shakespeare’s England Destination Management Organisation and the South Warwickshire Health Partnership. Residents of the South have consistent needs and concerns around areas such as rural transport, traffic and congestion and affordable housing.

During the last year both Councils have worked closely together on responding to the challenges from COVID. The pandemic has identified a lack of resilience in some service areas due to size of both authorities being relatively small. However, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick have already started sharing services to address these resilience issues and from August this year the vast majority of Senior Management Team posts are shared.

The Councils believe that merely sharing some services does not make sufficient financial savings and still leaves considerable duplication. Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils are therefore considering a proposal to fully merge, in which case a new District Council would be established covering the whole of South Warwickshire, the areas currently covered by Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils.

The link for the consultation is: www.southwarwickshire.org.uk

South Warwickshire Local Plan

Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils have commenced the initial stages in the development of a Local Plan and have undertaken a Scoping and Call for Sites consultation, which closed in June and has generated the submission of over 500 sites which are currently being reviewed by the joint policy team. This is the first stage in a long process and the consultation asked a series of questions about what issues the new Local Plan should cover and sought views on how we should tackle these issues.

Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS)

A new 5YHLS has been confirmed for the five year period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026 as 8.42 years which represents the highest level recorded and affords added protection to villages as only large scale development that has community support can be brought forward as a planning application for consideration. The last 12 months has also witnessed a continuation of very high levels of affordable housing. The next calculation will be prepared as at 31 March 2022 and will be published in the summer.

Planning and Enforcement

The planning teams continue to receive high levels of householder applications for extensions which reflects the increase of homeworking during Covid and the new hybrid model of working that is being adopted by many businesses to look at greater flexibility of working routines amongst staff combining a mix of office based with home working routines. Whilst applications have recently been taking 5 weeks to be validated this has now reduced to around 2 – 3 weeks despite the volume and staff shortages within the planning team.

Local Enforcement

The Council has recently reviewed its existing Local Enforcement Plan with a view to better targeting the investigation resources at the most serious issues. This was put out to consultation and the further information can be found by visiting: [Draft Local Enforcement Plan Consultation | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

Blue Bin Recycling

SDC is working hard to negotiate a revised contract for recycling waste across the district following the fire at Pure in July for the next 18-24 months until the new facility at Coventry is built and up and running. The cost implications of this interim service however are significant.

Household Waste & Recycling

Historically, the site in Wellesbourne was open seven days a week but following the closure due to the pandemic it reopened on a Saturday, Sunday and Monday – being the three most busiest days of the week. Since then the demand for the booking system has been monitored and throughout the last 12 months the Wellesbourne site has never been fully booked. As with all of the other sites, the morning can sometimes be busy, but the afternoons have good availability. Figures for September show the demand for slots range from 52% - 54% of capacity and therefore WCC has no immediate plans to extend the operational timetable.

Stratford Herald Covid Awards

The Stratford Herald has launched the Covid Response awards that will recognise the achievements of the district's businesses and organisations over the past 18 months.

The Awards will be a celebration of the positives to flow from the hardship, isolation, loss and worry caused by the coronavirus. There are eight categories covering a wide range of areas and Stratford-on-Avon

District Council will be sponsoring the **Community Response Award** – focusing on the many organisations, large and small, that stepped up to help people in the community during the last 18 months.

Nominations close at 5pm on Thursday 14 October with the winners announced at the ceremony on Thursday 25 November at Alveston Manor.

For more information please visit: <https://www.iliffemediapromotions.co.uk/covid-response-awards/>

Ward Population

New figures received in respect of ward populations have been published based on data from 2020 as follows: Wellesbourne West – 4086 and Wellesbourne East (which also includes Moreton Morrell, Newbold Pacey and Ashorne) - 3733

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Stratford on Avon District Council has received draft proposals from LGBCE which is recommending an increase of councillors across the district in reflect the increases in population with the housing growth etc. The proposal for Wellesbourne is to be included within three different wards: Wellesbourne North & Rural, Wellesbourne East & Rural and Wellesbourne South, which is attached.

Anne Parry

27 September 2021