

**Stratford on Avon District Councillor's Monthly Report**  
**Mike Rice, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Henley in Arden**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023**

**123+ bin collections**

This scheme is now almost exactly a year old, having started on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022. Black bin collections are now made at three-weekly intervals, instead of two-weekly intervals, and food waste is now collected separately every week. Preliminary figures show that the amount of waste going to landfill has decreased by nearly 30% over the past year; perhaps as important, complaints about the service have reduced to a very slow trickle.

Residents may be wondering why they haven't been sent a bin collection calendar for August 2023 until July 2024. The decision was made not to print calendars and circulate them to all residents this year. It was felt that this would reduce waste and, more importantly, save many thousands of pounds in postage costs that would be better spent on helping residents in other ways.

However, residents may obtain a paper copy of the 123+ calendar from the District Council on request. The Council will be happy to print out a copy and send it.

Residents should either call the Council on 01789 260123 or email [123collections@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:123collections@stratford-dc.gov.uk) and an officer will be able to help them.

**West Midlands Combined Authority**

Much excitement has been generated in the media and at Stratford on Avon District Council during the past month when it was revealed that Warwickshire County Council (WCC) had been exploring the possibility of hurriedly joining the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) as a full constituent member.

A decision was needed before October this year so that full membership could happen before the next mayoral election in May 2024. Andy Street is the current WMCA mayor. In the event that WCC decided to become a full member of the wider regional authority – which includes Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton – the implication for Stratford District Council and five other local district and borough councils was that they would automatically become full members, whether they liked the idea or not.

Stratford District Council is currently a non-constituent member of the WMCA with limited voting rights. Should it become a full member of the WMCA, it would be competing with much larger regional urban areas within WMCA for government money to support transport, adult skills training and inward investment. It would also be expected to pay a much larger annual membership fee as a full WMCA member.

In the face of much opposition and media comment, WCC has backed down for the time being. Izzi Seccombe, WCC leader, said: “With the timeline set out for us, it has become clear that we could not deliver an evidenced case, nor the credible consultation required.” She added, however: “There will be time to consider this opportunity further, ahead of the next window for expansion [the next WMCA mayoral election] in 2028.”

District Council leader, Dr Susan Juned commented that she believed that residents benefitted from local government that was close to them, was able to listen to them and which represented them. “We also need stability,” she added. “There have been massive political changes at Stratford District Council with a change of control after more than 20 years. Now is the time to consolidate and make sure that the residents of Stratford district have their voices heard and get the support that is rightfully theirs.”

### **Sherbourne MRF will be opening soon**

Sherbourne materials recycling facility (MRF) is expected over the next few weeks to start processing dry recyclable material collected in blue bins from across the Stratford district, almost exactly two years after the Pure Recycling facility at Ettington was destroyed by fire.

Established in 2021 to develop and operate a new state-of-the-art facility on behalf of eight local authorities – Coventry, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Rugby, Stratford-on-Avon, Solihull, Walsall and Warwick – Sherbourne Recycling will process up to 47.5 tonnes of recyclable material every hour at its site in Coventry, with only the minimum of human intervention from five manual sorters. Between 25,000 and 30,000 tonnes of dry mixed recyclate is expected to be collected in blue bins from over 130,000 households in Stratford district annually.

Not only will the Sherbourne facility be able to handle 175,000 tonnes of material every year, it will also be the first of its kind in this country with the ability to receive and process low-grade plastics within the recycling stream. It will also be one of the first facilities of its scale in the world to make use of artificial intelligence, as well as several sorting robots and optical sorters, to achieve high rates of finished material purity from the widest range of recyclable household and commercial waste.

Since August 2022, temporary recycling for dry materials has been provided for Stratford district by Biffa at its Edmonton and Teeside facilities, after bulking of kerbside-collected material by Tom Whites Waste of Coventry. In future, dry recycling for Stratford district will be done by Sherbourne WRF.

Food waste will continue to be treated at Severn Trent Green Power’s Coleshill anaerobic digestion (AD) facility, which turns the waste into biogas. Biogas produced from this process is either converted to electricity and exported to the national electricity grid or further treated and exported to the national gas grid, supplying homes and businesses with renewable energy. In addition, the process also creates a nutrient-rich liquid bio-fertiliser. Green garden waste in Stratford district is taken to an In-Vessel Composter (IVC) treatment site at Ufton, near Southam.

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