

Chief's Intro

We are now well into 2008 and I think the theme for this year will be working together and partnerships. The year has started swiftly with plenty of meetings to keep me busy.

The weather hasn't been too bad, but we are regularly checking the local weather reports to keep ahead in terms of flooding. Of course we aren't miracle workers and can't control the weather, but this Council is working with a number of different agencies to help prevent any future flooding in the District. We've also got all the up-to-date contact numbers on our website (www.stratford.gov.uk) as well as a useful information sheet that was in issue 2 of Parish Talk that you can print off and display in your area. And there is an article in this issue on what you can do to protect your property.

In this issue you will find out about the Council's new inspection regime, CAA; the result of the Council's financial assessment from the Audit Commission; the new refuse & recycling service; Long Marston Eco-town; West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS); an update on the Council's planning service and some dates for your diary.

We've got a busy year ahead as our Corporate Strategy comes to an end in March following which we will launch the 2008 – 2012 Corporate Strategy with new priorities and targets. We've achieved most of what we wanted to do in our current Corporate Strategy and have learnt how to do things better. Our next Corporate Strategy is a 4 year programme focussed on outcomes. We will be able to update you in our next issue.

And finally we need your help from 1 August we have a new Refuse & Recycling Service and we need your help in getting information out to residents, whether that's through Parish Newsletters or village fetes, tell us what you've got going on in your area.

That's all for now.

Best regards

Paul Lankester
Chief Executive



Diary dates

The next **Parish and Town Council Chairmen and Clerks' Liaison Meeting** will be held on 13 February in Stratford-upon-Avon Town Hall at 6pm.

Items of interest appearing on the agenda are:

- 1. Presentation on the Council's future Waste and Recycling Service**
- 2. Guidance on Planning for Public Events**
Presentation from Licensing section.
- 3. Planning for Wildlife**
Presentation from Warwickshire County Council's Ecologist
- 4. Emergency Planning**
To receive an Update
- 5. Code of Conduct**
To receive a presentation from the District Council's Monitoring Officer on the Code of Conduct and the new Rules for Local Administration of the Code.

Business Forum Meeting

On 22 February 2008 at 2.30pm in Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon, the Council will be holding its annual business consultation meeting. This meeting is the opportunity for the business community to state its views in relation to the Council's spending plans for 2008/09 and beyond.

CAA - a new performance assessment framework

Despite receiving our GOOD rating in October last year, from 2009 the government's inspection regime for Council's - 'Comprehensive Performance Assessment' (CPA) will be scrapped. It will be replaced by a Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which will look at how well local public services are working together to improve quality of life for local people.

Although details of the CAA are not yet finalised you can find out more by visiting the Audit Commission's website <http://www.auditcommission.gov.uk/caa/>

Stratford District Council will be involved in a pilot for the new CAA inspection.

Building a Defence

If flooding is a risk to your parish or property, it makes sense to prepare in advance to avert a potential problem and there are now many alternatives to the tried, trusted, heavy and perishable sandbags.

Some of these products can be easily installed in advance, then simply clipped on and off when needed - such as the 'storm board' to protect large openings such as doors and windows, or air brick covers. It is even possible to get plastic skirts to surround your whole property, or temporary free-standing barriers which can protect a group of properties.

Once purchased these long lasting products can be quickly installed and if a community spirit is utilised neighbours could install the protection for each other when the occupants are not at home if flooding is expected.

Below are independent sites where information about these products can be obtained, the National Flood Forum also contains a wealth of other related articles to help defend and recover from flooding.

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/826674/830330/877142/877272/?version=1&lang=e>

<http://www.floodforum.org.uk/>

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact David Tiley, Stratford District Council's Flood Defence Officer, on 01789 260667, or email dave.tiley@stratford-dc.gov.uk or Carol Hemming Land Drainage officer on 01789 260662, or email carol.hemming@stratford-dc.gov.uk



New Refuse & Recycling Service coming soon.....

are you? ready!

On 1 August 2008 the District Council's Refuse & Recycling service is changing. The new and improved service aims to:

- Decrease the District's waste
- Increase recycling
- Save taxpayers' money

Above all, helping you not to let your rubbish cost the Earth.

3 bins – 3 steps.....

An example of how the collection diary will work when fully implemented is shown below:

WEEK 1 Kitchen waste collected with rubbish in grey bin


WEEK 2 Kitchen waste collected with garden waste in green bin

Dry recycling collected in blue bin

WEEK 3 Grey Bin

WEEK 4 Green Bin & Blue Bin

Dry recycling - in your Blue Bin




You will be provided with a new **Blue wheeled Bin** to store all your recyclable material, such as paper, glass and cans plus **cardboard and HDPE & PET plastic bottles** instead of the boxes currently used.

This will be collected every other week.

Blue wheeled bins for:

- Plastic bottles
- Cardboard
- Glass
- Tins and Cans
- Paper
- Glass
- * Cartons



FROM 1 AUGUST

Green waste and Kitchen Waste - in your Green Bin



As well as garden waste, with the construction of a new recycling facility within the District in 2009 we will be able to collect your kitchen waste with your garden waste, in your **Green Bin**.

One week use your **Green Bins** for food waste and next week use your **Grey Bin** enabling you to have a weekly collection of kitchen waste.

The kitchen waste can be mixed directly into the green waste or put in a paper bag or wrapped in newspaper and placed in the bin.

Kitchen waste includes vegetable peelings, food scraps including meat, fruit and vegetable.



You will be notified when the Green Bin kitchen waste service is available.

General waste - in your Grey Bin



The waste that remains after you have taken out your recycling and kitchen waste will be collected in a new **Grey Bin**. Everything non-recyclable goes in your new **Grey Bin**. Really all that's left or put simply what you used to put in your black sacks.

Kitchen waste can be put in your **Grey Bin** on the weeks your **Green Bin** is not collected.



FROM 1 AUGUST

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS)

The WMRSS is a statutory document which provides a framework for development of the West Midlands Region for the next 20 years. Among other things, the WMRSS sets out how many new houses should be built and where, what improvements are required to the regions transport networks, where new employment opportunities should be created and how the environment should be protected and enhanced. The District's local planning policies, known as the Local Development Framework, have to be in 'general conformity' with the WMRSS.

The WMRSS is subject to an ongoing review which is being carried out in three phases as follows:

- **Phase One:** The Black Country Study (which is now complete)
- **Phase Two:** covers housing figures, employment land, centres, transport and waste.
- **Phase Three:** will cover rural services, culture and recreation, environmental issues and gypsy and traveller sites.

The Phase Two revision has now reached its preferred option stage. The Preferred option was endorsed by the Regional Assembly's Regional Planning Partnership on 22 October 2007 and was submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2007. A formal 12 week period of consultation commenced on 7 January 2008. Following submission of the Preferred Option the government has announced that further work is being undertaken to assess options for accommodating higher levels of housing growth. This further work will be completed and published by mid April and the consultation period has been extended to the 23 May to give people the opportunity to comment.

The spatial strategy set out in the Preferred Option remains essentially unchanged from the existing RSS, but has had to respond to the higher housing growth anticipated by the government's household projections. A key element of the strategy is to provide more development opportunities within the Major Urban Areas (MUAs) in order to reverse the unsustainable loss of people and jobs from these areas.

Beyond the MUAs in areas such as Stratford District the following policy principles apply:

- a) provision for housing will generally be concentrated in 'Settlements of Significant Development' although some peripheral development of other settlements may be considered in Local Development Documents, provided this does not undermine renaissance of the MUAs; **(NB there are no 'Settlements of Significant Development' in Stratford District.)**
- b) Rural renaissance across all rural areas of the Region, with a key role for market towns and larger villages.
- c) A network of vibrant town and city centres
- d) Transport networks improved to resolve infrastructure problems.

The sub-regional implications of the strategy are set out in more detail for the Coventry – Warwickshire area. The strategy recognises the opportunity to focus growth within the city of Coventry and the wider north-south corridor, (this includes Nuneaton, Bedworth, Warwick and Leamington). Development will be planned and controlled to ensure that it:

- a) maintains the RSS step-change i.e. a minimum of 50% growth in the Coventry and Solihull MUAs;
- b) Focuses growth on the North-South Corridor and Rugby, but limits growth in North Warwickshire and Stratford-on-Avon to local needs;
- c) Phases housing land release to encourage regeneration in the MUAs.

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS)

The strategy highlights the need for affordable housing, especially in the rural areas of north and south Warwickshire. The importance of the World Class Stratford initiative and the role of Stratford in the sub-regional visitor economy is recognised.

More specific guidance on the location of housing is provided in Policy CF2. Beyond the MUAs strategic housing development will be concentrated in 'Settlements of Significant Development'. The SSD's are Worcester, Telford, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Rugby, Burton-upon-Trent, Stafford, Nuneaton/Bedworth, Warwick/Leamington Spa and Redditch.

Areas for new housing, on a smaller scale, will also be accommodated within and adjacent to other urban areas and market towns of the Region. Development in villages should support the need to meet local housing requirements. In general, the principles of sustainability will lead to the majority of housing development in rural areas being focused on market towns and larger rural settlements.

The Preferred Option identifies specific requirements for housing, employment, office and retail development in the District which are summarised in the table below:

RSS Phase II Revision - Development Requirements for Stratford District	
Type of Development	The Preferred Option Requirement
Housing	5600 dwellings (net) between 2006-2026 or 280 per annum
Employment Land	17 ha rolling five-year reservoir. 51 ha indicative longer term requirement.
Comparison Retail Floorspace	25000 sq m between 2006-2021 and 10000sqm between 2021-2026. To be provided within Stratford-upon-Avon town centre.
Office Development	45000sq m between 2006-2026. To be provided within or on the edge of Stratford-upon-Avon town centre
Housing and Employment Needs of Redditch	3300 dwellings. Employment land – 8 ha 5 year reservoir and 24 ha longer term. To be provided within Bromsgrove and/or Stratford Districts.

The WMRSS is a key document for the region and will have a significant impact on the future development of Stratford District. It is important that the local communities of South Warwickshire take the opportunity to comment on the document during the consultation period. If you would like to view the draft policies and all supporting documents, copies are available for inspection at Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon and Alcester, Shipston and Southam Area offices and Stratford-upon-Avon Library. Copies of the Draft Submission and Overview only can be inspected at libraries in Alcester, Bidford-on-Avon, Harbury, Henley-in-Arden, Kineton, Southam, Studley and Wellesbourne.

All the documents can be [viewed and downloaded](#) from the Regional Assembly website: or hard copies or CDs can be obtained by contacting the Regional Assembly on (0121) 245 0200 or by emailing wmrss@wmra.gov.uk.

Planning Services - Restructure

The need for a restructure of Planning Services came from a poor customer satisfaction survey in 2004 and the Audit Commission Planning Service Inspection in July 2006, which concluded that it was a *“Fair service with uncertain prospects for improvement”*, which needed to improve customer service and value for money. There were also some budgetary pressures to reduce the overall costs of the service.

In July 2007 the Executive agreed to restructure the Planning Development team, with 4 senior manager posts replaced by 3 new senior manager posts; the number of front line case officers reduced from 14.5 to 13.5, with some changes to working practices, such as Conservation Officers now being responsible for some listed building applications and officer's workload increasing from about 190 to 200 applications a year.

The restructure will provide a more customer focussed service with managers being specifically responsible for delivering and monitoring improvements. It will be supported by improved IT and some calls being answered by the Contact Centre. There will also be annual savings of £87,000.

The four senior managers whose posts were made redundant have now all left the Council.

- One Planning Manager (Applications and Committee), Liz Nicholson, has been appointed and is in post. She is responsible for the team dealing with planning applications.
- The new Planning Manager (Performance, Quality and Enforcement) is Clare Eynon, who joins the Council in February 2008 and will be responsible for improving systems, processes and performance. She will also manage Planning Enforcement.
- The third new post is the Assistant Planning Manager (Applications and Committee), which should be filled shortly.

Over the past few months some other officers have left the Council due to promotion and others are on maternity leave. Temporary measures were introduced to provide reasonable customer service and maintain performance. These have included officers being unavailable before 2pm, over time working and the use of consultants. It is regretted that this has had some short term impact upon customers, but the service will start to improve once vacant posts are filled in February and March 2008.

Improvement in Use of Resources Assessment

Each year the Council is assessed by the Audit Commission on how well it is managing its Resources. The assessment current covers five headings:

- Financial Management;
- Financial Reporting;
- Financial Standing;
- Internal Control;
- Value for Money.

On 28 January 2008 the Audit Commission published the national results for 2006/07. An assessment is made ranging from Level 1 to Level 4 in each of these areas shown above with Level 4 being assessed as excellent and Level 1 Poor .

The results for Stratford-on-Avon District Council have seen an increase to Level 3 in all of the five areas assessed including Value for Money. The Council is now officially *“Performing Well”*, in each of these areas.



Have you found this useful?

Let us have your feedback email corporate.communications@stratford-dc.gov.uk.

If you have any suggestions for items in this newsletter, please contact Corporate Communications by 3 March 2008, the next issue is due in April 2008.

Designed by Print and Design tel 01789 260740 email design@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Meeting dates coming up in your area

Date	Time	Meeting	Venue
Monday 18 February	10.00 am	Planning and Regulation	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Monday 18 February	7.30 pm	Police And Communities Together (PACT)	Greig Hall, Alcester
Wednesday 20 February	7.30 pm	Police And Communities Together (PACT)	Parish Rooms, Bidford School
Monday 25 February	2.00 pm	Full Council	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Tuesday 26 February	6.00 pm	East Area Planning Committee	HRI, Wellesbourne
Thursday 6 March	6.00 pm	West Area Planning Committee	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Monday 10 March	2.00 pm	Executive	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Tuesday 11 March	6.00 pm	Dasset Area Community Committee	Southam College
Thursday 13 March	6.30 pm	Arden Area Community Committee	<i>To be confirmed</i>
Tuesday 18 March	6.00 pm	East Area Planning Committee	HRI, Wellesbourne
Thursday 20 March	6.00 pm	Avon Area Community Committee	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Tuesday 25 March	6.00 pm	Stour Area Community Committee	<i>To be confirmed</i>
Thursday 3 April	6.00 pm	West Area Planning Committee	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Monday 7 April	2.00 pm	Executive	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Thursday 10 April	7.00 pm	Police And Communities Together (PACT)	Henley Baptist Church Hall
Tuesday 15 April	6.00 pm	East Area Planning Committee	HRI, Wellesbourne
Thursday 17 April	7.00 pm	Police And Communities Together (PACT)	Earlswood Village Hall
Monday 21 April	2.00 pm	Full Council	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Thursday 24 April	6.00 pm	West Area Planning Committee	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Monday 28 April	2.00 pm	Executive	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Tuesday 6 May	6.00 pm	East Area Planning Committee	HRI, Wellesbourne
Wednesday 15 May	6.00 pm	West Area Planning Committee	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon
Wednesday 21 May	10.00 am	Annual Council Meeting	Elizabeth House, Stratford-upon-Avon