

Consultation on proposed merger of Stratford District Council and Warwick District Council

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Local councils play important roles in residents' lives and it is important that you have a say in how services are delivered in the future. Please read the engagement document and/or go online to www.XXXXXXXXXXX.gov.uk for information about the issues. To give your feedback, complete this questionnaire and return it FREEPOST to arrive by **24th October 2021**; or answer the questions online via the webpage above by the same date.

Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils have appointed ORS, as an independent social research company, to manage the consultation and questionnaire responses. ORS will faithfully report the outcomes, in which the views of individual members of the public will be anonymous; but where feedback is from organisations or elected representatives or someone acting in their official capacity, it may be attributed.

All the questions are optional, and all information you provide will be processed by ORS in accordance with the latest Data Protection regulations. For further information, please see www.XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.gov.uk/privacy and www.ors.org.uk/privacy

There are currently separate councils providing services across Warwickshire in a 'two-tier' structure. Warwickshire *County* Council provides services for residents across the *whole* of the county, including education, social care for children and adults, and highways. Depending on where you live, Stratford District Council or Warwick District Council, provide *local* services for residents and businesses in their areas, including housing, planning, refuse and recycling collection, revenues and benefits, parks and open spaces, and leisure services.

Before this consultation, were you aware that Warwickshire County Council and your District Council each provide separate services in your area? PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

<p>Yes, aware</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Know something, but not all the details</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No, not really aware</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Don't know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
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Like many other councils, **Stratford-on-Avon** and **Warwick District Councils** are both facing increasing financial pressures on services due to reduced funding from government and increasing costs. Across the two council's annual savings increasing to around £10m each year by 2025/26 will be needed. The councils believe there is duplication of back-office and management functions, buildings and offices.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils need to consider changes to respond to these challenges? PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Faced with this financial pressure, and with a determination not to reduce the current level of services, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils have already embarked on a programme to share more services. However, the councils believe that merely sharing 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 effectively 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 councils believe there are a number of savings that a full merger would deliver, including through having fewer Councillors, reduced offices and public buildings, reduced costs of managing finances, and having single priorities across a wider area (please read the consultation document for further details of the proposal and impacts).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils with one new council to provide all district council services across South Warwickshire?

PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain the reasons for your answer.

PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils recognise that there are many different factors to consider when thinking about the future of local government in the area. They believe that it is important for any future arrangements to provide:

- » **Local public services:** keeping services as local as possible for as many residents as possible and a recognised local area that reflects how residents live their lives and how businesses operate
- » **Cost savings:** delivery of savings to support the overall budget
- » **Value For Money:** cutting out duplication, increasing economies of scale and improving efficiencies
- » **Stronger and more accountable local leadership:** democratic decision making that can be locally influenced and ensure that residents know how to raise issues to their local councillor and how to have a say on future service delivery
- » **Medium/long term sustainability :** frontline services that are sustainable, cost-effective and equipped to deliver good local services in the long-term

Please rate how important you think each of these criteria are using a whole number between 0 and 10, where “10” means that the criteria is critically important and “0” means the criteria is of no importance.

PLEASE WRITE IN A NUMBER BETWEEN “0” AND “10” IN EACH BOX

Local Public Services <input type="text"/>	Cost Savings <input type="text"/>	Value for Money <input type="text"/>	Accountability <input type="text"/>	Sustainability <input type="text"/>
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If the proposed merger of district councils was taken forwards, there would in future be a smaller number of elected district councillors representing each area. A new larger council would seek to use modern technology to improve access to district councillors, and establish arrangements for greater community participation in decision making.

Have you contacted a local district councillor in the last 12 months? PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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If a new larger council was created, with proportionally fewer councillors, how concerned would you be about being able to contact a district councillor if you had an issue to raise? PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Very concerned <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly concerned <input type="checkbox"/>	Not very concerned <input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all concerned <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area? PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Generally speaking, would you like to be more involved in the decisions that affect your local area? PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on the issue <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please let us know if there are any alternative options that address the identified challenges, any potential equalities impacts, or if you have any other comments relating to the possible merger of councils in South Warwickshire. PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

If you are responding ***on behalf of*** a BUSINESS or ORGANISATION, who do you represent?

Please give us the name of the organisation and any specific group or department.

Please also tell us who the organisation represents, what area the organisation covers and how you gathered the views of members.

PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

If you are providing your own PERSONAL RESPONSE, please answer the questions below...

Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils have a duty to promote equality and want to make sure all parts of the community are included in this consultation, but these questions are optional. All responses will be taken fully into account when making decisions, regardless of whether you provide these details.

What is your full postcode?

This will help us understand views in different areas

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PLEASE TICK ✓ ONLY ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

What was your age on your last birthday?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 to 74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 to 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 to 84 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 or over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say | |

Are you employed by Stratford-on-Avon or Warwick District Councils, and/or any other local authority?

- Yes
 No
 Prefer not to say

What is your gender?

- Male
 Female
 Other
 Prefer not to say

If yes, which local authority/ies employ you?

PLEASE WRITE IN

What is your ethnic group?

- White
 Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
 Asian or Asian British
 Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
 Any other ethnic group
 Prefer not to say

Are you a councillor at County, District or Town/Parish level?

PLEASE TICK ✓ ALL THAT APPLY

- No
 Yes – County Councillor
 Yes – District Councillor
 Yes – Town/Parish Councillor
 Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
 No
 Prefer not to say

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Please return the questionnaire by **24 October 2021**; to:

Opinion Research Services · FREEPOST SS1018 · PO Box 530 · Swansea · SA1 1ZL