# Birmingham's refuse crisis escalates as council director attends Cannes trip



In the midst of an escalating waste management crisis, Birmingham City Council's managing director, Joanne Roney, faced scrutiny for her decision to attend a business trip in Cannes, France, coinciding with the start of an all-out strike by refuse workers. The strike, which commenced last month, has resulted in over 21,000 tons of rubbish accumulating across Birmingham, leading to increasing concern for public health and cleanliness in the city.

As refuse collectors initiated their strike, local residents, including those in sheltered accommodations, reported significant issues with uncollected waste. Edgbaston MP Edgbaston noted the emergence of pests such as rats and cockroaches amid the refuse piles, raising alarm about the potential health risks associated with such conditions.

While Roney was attending her scheduled engagement at one of the world’s largest real estate conferences, Le Marché international des professionnels de l'immobilier (MIPIM) in Cannes, her absence during this critical period drew sharp criticism. Iain Duncan Smith, former leader of the Conservative Party, described her decision to be away from Birmingham as indicative of "peculiarly bad judgment," characterising the situation at the council as a "shocking shambles," according to the Daily Mail.

The importance of Roney's presence at the conference, however, was highlighted by council representatives who emphasised its potential to attract development interest in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands region. They also clarified that her trip was a "planned work trip" funded entirely by the private sector, and the duration of her absence remains unclear.

In light of the strike and ongoing waste crisis, Angela Rayner, the Deputy Prime Minister, visited Birmingham and urged the refuse workers to consider an "improved" deal, while helping to organise volunteer efforts to clear some of the accumulated rubbish.

The council declared a major incident at the end of March in response to the strikes, reflecting the severity of the ongoing refuse crisis. As the situation continues to develop, residents and council officials alike are grappling with the impacts of the strike and the visible consequences for public health and community standards in Birmingham.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.circularonline.co.uk/news/birmingham-bin-strikes-explained-what-is-the-dispute-about/> - This article explains the ongoing strike by waste management workers in Birmingham, the dispute over WRCO roles, and the uncollected waste issue, supporting claims about the strike's impact.
* <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20009/waste_and_recycling/3020/waste_and_recycling_industrial_action_-_faq_for_residents> - This page provides FAQs and updates on the industrial action affecting waste services in Birmingham, corroborating the council's efforts to address the crisis.
* <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/> - The official Birmingham City Council website would provide general information about the council's operations and policies, potentially offering context for Joanne Roney's role and responsibilities.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/angela-rayner> - This government webpage offers information about Angela Rayner, Deputy Prime Minister, and her role in addressing national issues, such as the Birmingham waste crisis.
* <https://www.mipim.com/> - This is the official website for Le Marché international des professionnels de l'immobilier (MIPIM), the real estate conference attended by Joanne Roney, providing context for her trip.