

District Council Report

June 2022

+ Affordable housing continues to come on stream in the district as more houses are built. These will be offered through the housing list process and some will be available north of the Downs, where 50 homes will be available in Loxwood, including shared ownership. The Council is offering new houses west of Chichester, where in one week, 14 homes became available.

+ A new headline exhibition, The Art of Chichester: 60 Years of Creativity opens on Saturday, 25 June. The Art of Chichester: 60 Years of Creativity will explore the arts, culture and heritage of Chichester city centre and the district from 1962, when Chichester Festival Theatre opened, to the present day, embracing professional and amateur work across all art forms. Curated by David Elliott, the exhibition tells the story of how the arts have put Chichester and surrounding areas on the map, including:

- Chichester Festival Theatre - from its opening in 1962 to how it has become one of Britain's best-loved theatres.
- Pallant House Gallery - with its prize-winning extension.
- The success of Chichester novelist Kate Mosse.
- The district's many festivals - including Chichester Festivities, Festival of Chichester and the current Culture Spark 2022.
- A snapshot of some of Chichester's individual artists and makers.
- Arts, culture and heritage across Chichester District - including Petworth and Midhurst.

+ The ideas proposed for Midhurst, based on the objectives and strategy for the Vision are now being developed into a masterplan of proposals and the projects have been prioritised into phases. The first phase projects are under consideration for delivery with discussions to be held with key stakeholders.

+ The government have drafted the 'Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill' which includes proposals to make the regime for Pavement Licences under the Business and Planning Act 2020 permanent. The Business and Planning Act 2020 was initially brought in as an emergency piece of legislation in July 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to provide a quicker and cheaper service for licensed premises to apply to place tables and chairs on the public highway outside their premises.

The Business and Planning Act 2020 is currently set to expire on 30 September 2022 and currently we have 23 issued Pavement Licences.

The proposed Bill includes some amendments to the current provisions including amending the fee that councils can charge applicants, increasing it from £100 to £350 for existing licensed premises and £500 for new applicants. In order to support businesses during what has been an extremely challenging period, Chichester District Council decided not to charge for the grant of a Pavement Licence.

However, it would be appropriate to revisit that decision should the Pavement Licence process under the Business and Planning Act 2002 become permanent. The other proposals are to extend the public consultation and determination from 7 days to 14 days and extending the maximum duration of Pavement Licences from 1 year to 2 years. The fees charged and length of licence granted are likely to remain at the Council's discretion. The Bill is currently a draft piece of legislation and subject to change. This will be debated by Parliament before becoming law.

+ In the first 3 months of 2022 there were 156 businesses which started up in the district which is the same number as the same 3 months in 2021 and 29 higher than in the previous 3 months. The comparison against last year in terms of growth rate ranks the district at 23 out of the 309 English districts.

+ The Council is able to announce a new grant funded scheme for domestic energy efficiency improvement, known as Warmer Homes. Chichester District Council is part of a consortium of 21 local authority partners, led by Portsmouth City Council and AgilityEco, which has secured £32 million in

government funding for the scheme. Grants are available to homeowners who live in a property with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D or below and have a household income of below £30,000 per year or are on specific means tested benefits. Tenants renting in the private sector can also apply if they meet this eligibility criteria, but their landlords will be expected to contribute a third towards the total cost. Measures available include insulation, air source heat pumps, solar PV, high heat retention storage heaters and heating controls. Warmer Homes has two initiatives within it: Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme 3 (known as LAD3) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG). HUG is targeted at properties that do not have gas central heating or a gas boiler. LAD3 is open to properties with all types of heating. AgilityEco is using household data to target letters at those households that appear eligible for either of the two schemes

+ Update on the £150 energy bills rebate as of 13 May 2022. Payments for eligible residents who pay by direct debit commenced on 11 April 2022. So far over £3.8 million has been paid out to 25,604 residents. This equates to 71% of all payments being made as of 13 May 2022. Residents who do not pay their council tax by direct debit are being written to as they are required to provide their bank account details for the payments to be made. Letters are being sent out in tranches during May to manage the incoming customer contact that arises from this. The bulk of all energy payments will be paid by the end of May 2022. Where we have applications still to process, we will be reviewing what we can do in early June to ensure payments are issued as quickly as possible. Officers continue to work extremely hard to ensure eligible residents receive their payments as quickly as possible.

+ As part of HM Treasury funded Trees Outside Woodland programme in Chichester District, the Council took part in four tree planting pilots during the 2021/22 tree planting season; a subsidised tree scheme; planting trees in the farmed landscape; an agroforestry and orchard scheme; and an urban tree scheme. CDC distributed over 8,000 free trees to residents, community groups, parish councils, businesses and landowners. CDC planted three mini urban forests within the district, funded three agroforestry and community orchard projects, and funded five planting projects within the farmed landscape. In total over 12,000 trees have been planted across the district. We have

additional funding for the 2022/23 planting season, where they will be offering people within the district the opportunity to apply for subsidised trees. CDC will also have funding for more agroforestry and orchard projects, and trees in the farmed landscape projects.