

1. Councillors have voted in support of a £2m cost-of-living support fund for residents funded from reserves. The fund will support a range of projects to provide immediate and longer-term support to those residents hardest hit by the cost of living. Examples of projects:

- Support for low-income households, disabled people and vulnerable older people with measures to improve the energy efficiency of their homes
- Off-grid energy discretionary vouchers for households reliant on off-grid energy sources (oil and gas)
- Additional Discretionary Housing Payment allowance to help prevent residents becoming homeless
- Supermarket vouchers for residents in greatest need
- Further support for Dorset's network of social supermarkets, community fridges and food banks
- Additional pre-school hours for 3-4 year olds, enabling more parents to work
- 'Ready to thrive' locality programme to support children with their readiness to start school.

Dorset Council will work closely with partners such as Citizens Advice Dorset, Age UK, the NHS and Jobcentre Plus.

2. The government's Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS Alternative Funding) is now open for applications. The EBSS Alternative Funding is a payment of £400 to households who do not have a direct relationship with an energy supplier and therefore were unable to previously receive it. This includes residents living in park homes, houseboats or off the electricity grid or who pay for their energy through a landlord, housing manager or site owner. Applications can be made through an online form on the government website.

3. Work is in progress on advisory planning guidance on the subject of: Planning for Climate Change.

Under 3 main headings:

- Interim Guidance & Position Statement,
- Sustainability Checklist and
- Listed Building guidance.

Note – it is not planning policy. It is effectively a checklist for developers/applicants to complete. The Listed Building component promotes what can be done.

There will be consultation and briefing for Parish Councils soon.

4. A summary of comments from the consultation of the draft Dorset Council Local Plan is now published. All of the comments received from the 6,000 respondents have already been searchable on the council's website, but they have now been categorised against the draft policies and relevant areas of Dorset. The consultation, which took place in early 2021, resulted in over 50,000 comments on the separate policies, more than all of the most recent former district and borough local plan consultations combined.

5. Celebrate the King's Coronation with a street party

Dorset Council is encouraging residents to start planning their own street parties for The Coronation of The King and The Queen Consort.

It will be celebrated across the country and marked with a three-day bank holiday weekend from Saturday 6 May to Monday 8 May with opportunities for people to be part of the historic occasion.

You can find out more about the national celebrations on the royal website.

If you're planning a street party, you will need to apply for a temporary road closure, and we can help with that, head to our road closure page to find out more.

Dorset Council is waiving the costs of road closure applications and we welcome residents to apply. You need to apply by 31 March. So far there has been 17 applications for road closures in the Dorset Council area.

Holding a small outside event with neighbours, on private land, does not need council permission. However, if you plan a street party that involves the closure of a public road, we need to check the road is suitable.

Town and Parish Councils across Dorset will also be organising events, so keep an eye out for your local information sites to see what's happening near you.

National guidance on organising a street party for the Coronation is available on the government website. Meanwhile, the Coronation Big Lunch website is also full of good ideas for making parties go with a swing – more information is on the Eden Project website.

National events:

The Coronation takes place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6 May.

The Coronation Big Lunch, on Sunday 7 May, and a special Coronation Concert will be staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle by the BBC and BBC Studios

The Big Help Out, on Monday 8 May

Voluntary and community organisations funding: Funding is available from The National Lottery Community Fund website for voluntary and community organisations to hold events.

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