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**Leader outlines key achievements in Chichester District over past year**

Supporting people facing homelessness and focusing on looking after the natural environment are some of the key achievements that have been outlined by the Leader of Chichester District Council.

At a Full Council meeting on Tuesday 16 July councillors officially received the Annual Report for the year 2023 – 2024 which outlines the council’s progress on key areas.

“One of the main things we have been working on over the past year has been supporting people who have been made homeless, and like many local authorities across the country, this continues to increase,” says Councillor Adrian Moss, Leader of Chichester District Council. “This year we managed to secure some more temporary accommodation which is currently being used for people who have been made unintentionally homeless. However, the need for this support is ongoing and so we are continuing to look for additional temporary accommodation to help people through their situation and on to permanent accommodation.

“Over the next year another of our key priorities will be to develop a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy which will set out how we can continue to support people at risk of suffering from homelessness.

“The council also has a huge role to play in the health and wellbeing of our residents. I’m pleased to say that our excellent Wellbeing and Social Prescribing Teams have continued to support our communities, reaching more than 2,000 adults and young people over the past year, supporting them with a range of health and wellbeing issues and social isolation.

“In addition, our fantastic Supporting You Team has helped more than 2,750 residents with a variety of issues related to the Cost of Living crisis, and helped many people get back on an even keel.”

Chichester District Council has overseen the delivery of 322 new affordable homes and also supported a Community Land Trust to secure 12 new affordable homes in Easebourne. The council sought funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund and worked with registered providers to deliver 21 homes to support sponsorship and resettlement programme for refugees.

Councillor Moss adds: “We also submitted the Local Plan for examination. This plan is crucial for the Chichester local plan area as it identifies housing requirements, development areas for economic growth and locations for new homes in the area it covers. This has been a huge and challenging project, but our Planning Policy Team have worked tirelessly on it and we now await an inspection date from the Planning Inspectorate.”

The council has also carried out much work around the climate change crisis, and is currently preparing the second Climate Emergency Action Plan as well as developing a Biodiversity Strategy, which will also include a key project to enhance the condition of local chalk streams.

“We know that people in the district value and appreciate their environment and we have been working to do what we are able to as a council to address a range of issues. We have been successful in our bid to the Environment Agency for funding so that our coastal experts, Coastal Partners, can design and deliver improvements to the coastal defences at Selsey. In addition, we are also working on a project to secure funding for a special plan to help protect Chichester Harbour from flooding and improve its habitats.”

Another priority for the council is helping the local economy to thrive. One way the council has been doing this is by setting up a programme of events across the district, as well as working with and encouraging other organisers to bring their events to the district. Council-led events that were particularly successful were the laser light shows in February and the combined Chichester Cross Market & More and Summer Street Party in July, these are just a fraction of the events projects that the council has been delivering. The council is currently working with the student unions at the University of Chichester and Chichester College to ensure that the council’s events programme represents people aged under 25.

The council has also issued a range of grants to support business growth and also organised a very successful event to help hospitality, tourism and leisure businesses reduce their carbon footprint and their costs.

Cllr Moss adds: “We still have many challenges, but we will continue to work hard and do our best for residents. A significant part of this is ensuring that the council is prudent and efficient and that funds are used wisely. This year we worked hard to achieve a balanced budget in the medium term, and we will continue to regularly review our finances in order to ensure a positive financial outlook for the future.”

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact Clare Hawkin, Senior Communications Officer at Chichester District Council on**

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