

## **MDC Councillor report, August 2020**

### **The future of local government in Somerset.**

Last week Somerset County Council approved a business case for a single unitary authority for Somerset and has sent it to the Secretary of State.

Mendip District Council, along with Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West & Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council, are jointly contacting the Secretary of State expressing their disquiet about Somerset County Council's proposal for a single unitary authority for our county.

The Leaders of four of the five councils in Somerset will remind the Secretary of State there is not universal support for unitary. Here is the link to the joint statement from the leaders of the District Councils:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9384/30-07-20-Joint-Statement-from-the-leaders-of-Mendip-District-Council-Sedgemoor-District-Council-Somerset-West-Taunton-Council-and-South-Somerset-District-Council>

### **Pavement Licences**

Mendip District Council has been providing businesses with advice regarding tables and chairs being placed on the Highway, as new legislation has come into force. The Council have a duty to ensure that any outside tables and chairs are in a safe position - and not in the road. Businesses which place furniture outside their premises must have the appropriate Pavement Licence in place. Those who haven't, should apply for one urgently.

For further information on Pavement Licences visit the MDC website:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/pavement>

### **Business support**

The Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Simon Clarke, has announced £20 million in new funding to help businesses in England. Small and medium sized businesses can access grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 for new equipment and technology and specialist advice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20-million-in-new-grants-to-boost-recovery-of-small-businesses>

HM Treasury (HMT) has also confirmed that a change to EU State Aid Rules will allow more small businesses - those employing fewer than 50 staff and with a turnover less than £9 million - to access the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS).

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904897/200709\\_EST\\_letter\\_-\\_UKF\\_UiD.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904897/200709_EST_letter_-_UKF_UiD.pdf)

## **Energy Affordability Grant - applications open**

The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) is looking to support organisations to deliver innovative approaches to providing affordable warmth and Priority Service Register services in ways which adapt to the circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Grants of up to £20,000 are available for eligible organisations to support activities running from October 2020 – April 2021 that help households cut their energy costs and make energy efficiency improvements.

Recipients of the grants will receive mentoring and support from CSE and must be free to attend a networking/ skills sharing online webinar on Friday 2 October 2020.

The fund is open to all types of organisations as long as they are legally incorporated. Unincorporated organisations may apply if they team up with a larger organisation. Statutory bodies and private entities will be eligible if they can demonstrate a significant need for the funding.

To qualify for a grant, organisations must be currently delivering energy advice and outreach activities (or have done in the past 18 months). Organisations without this experience must be able to demonstrate that they have relevant links to other organisations that do.

Applications are open until midnight on Sunday 23rd August 2020.

For further information please visit the CSE website to download a copy of the application form. Specific enquiries about the fund can be sent by email to [wpdfund@cse.org.uk](mailto:wpdfund@cse.org.uk)