

# Parish Report – December 2022

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Upper Gipping Division

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For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit:

[www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving)

Latest SCC COVID information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email:

[refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk) or [ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

## Full Council Dec 1<sup>st</sup> – Motions Debated

Our Group submitted a Motion calling for a more comprehensive public transport strategy in Suffolk – one that serves the rural communities better through demand-responsive services and community transport, as well as investigates the viability of a workplace parking levy to increase funding for public transport. The Motion also called for the Conservatives to submit their failed Bus Service Improvement Plan to the Scrutiny Committee. This Spring, SCC were notified by Government that it would be receiving zero funding from their Bus Back Better bid. The Department for Transport stated the bid was not ambitious enough. The Conservatives claimed they are doing all they can to improve public transport and rejected our Motion.

Labour submitted a Motion calling for significant investment into the recruitment and retention of social care workers, highlighting the current £2.9m underspend in the Council's budget for adult social care. Our Group was fully supportive of the Motion, referring to our attempt to increase funding for social care at last year's budget period. Back in February, our Group submitted a budget amendment to increase the Adult Social Care Precept by 1% - generating £3.6m in additional funds. However, similar to our budget amendment, the Conservatives all voted against the Motion.

Our Group will continue to support ways to generate further financial support for our social care workers, as well as look to retain and enhance public transport for rural communities - for which a reliable service is an necessary economic and social driver."

## Cabinet 8<sup>th</sup> November

The Cabinet met to discuss the Q2 forecasts of the Council's budget. Currently, there is a worry as they have reported a £12.2m budget gap – largely due to inflation and energy prices. The Council will use Reserves to cover this cost. However, this cannot be a long-term solution. Our Group are concerned that the Council will not be fully funded by this Government to deliver the same services to residents.

The Cabinet also met to agree a new road enforcement scheme, and to apply for new Government powers to penalise drivers who commit offences affecting buses. The trial for the

scheme has selected four sites in Ipswich for a cost of over£200,000. Our Group believes this money could've been spent more appropriately on bus priority measures, new bus lanes, and maintaining rural services.

### **Suffolk County Deal – Update**

As part of the government's Levelling-up Strategy, Suffolk CC are currently negotiating a deal for more devolved powers. It was announced this month in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement that Suffolk will look to install a directly elected leader, known as a Mayor.

Our Group were told by the Conservatives that this wouldn't happen, however it appears to be a part of the deal for more powers to be devolved to county council. There are potential issues with the new mayoral role, as a Mayor can be elected from outside the majority party and has the power to select a Cabinet that is also outside of the majority – which could create a gridlocked political system.

### **SEND Services – Update on Lincolnshire Report**

Last year, Suffolk CC's SEND services were criticised in a damning report conducted by Lincolnshire Council. Our Group received an update this month outlining the progress our SEND services have made to implement the report's recommendations.

We were told 22 of the 32 recommendations have been actioned, and the remaining 10 will be completed by the end of 2022. The delivery of 1317 new specialist school places by 2026 has been agreed and 826 of these places are now open. The number of Education Health Care Plans (ECHP) has increased to 6847 in September 2022, from 5849 in September 2020.

### **Suffolk looks for more hosts!**

New hosts coming forward to help accommodate guests that are already in Suffolk can sign up via the Suffolk County Council website, by [completing our online form](#) or emailing [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk).

Accommodation must be available to guests for a minimum of 6 months. Hosts will be eligible to receive the £350 thank you payment for up to 6 months or more, depending on the date your guests arrived in the UK (12 months starting from the date your guests first arrived in the UK).

If you know anyone that might be interested, please encourage them to visit [Ukraine: Could you help a family in need? | Suffolk County Council](#)

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