

Welcome to the January 2022 report. May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year. You will already know that Omicron numbers are high so please do keep yourselves and others updated on the latest guidance. Included within the report this month is a piece on Fostering, as some of you may know as part of my role I sit on a fostering panel and get to meet lots of new and potential fosters and kinship carers. If this is something that you've been thinking about then please do have a read and find out more.

Energy projects continue, we have an extension for Sizewell C but Nautilus and others are making waves in our local area where even more people are effected.

As with the guidance, I will not be attending town and parish meetings in person unless they are held virtually or when the guidance changes, however, as always, you can get in touch any time.

04.01.22 there is a flood alert for this morning from Lowestoft to Bawdsey Please do keep up to date and if you're not signed up to receive alerts then please do consider doing so.

Best wishes for 2022.
TJ

Suffolk proves time and time again we have the resolve and grit to get through this – we must do so again

A Joint Letter on Behalf of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders.

- Suffolk Leaders write jointly to thank people for their determination and resilience this year
- But urge everyone to get a booster before the New Year as Omicron cases surge
- They also thank NHS colleagues for their hard work in delivering the booster programme, as well as other public agencies and volunteers

Dear Suffolk resident,

As we reach the end of another turbulent and memorable year, we would like to thank you all for your resilience, determination and kindness to others that you have shown in 2021.

However, the UK now faces a new variant. Omicron cases continue to surge across the county, and we edge towards the new year with unease and uncertainty.

Once again, we need you all to step-up your efforts to keep cases low in Suffolk. This means we must follow guidance and – most importantly – get your booster vaccination.

Suffolk has proved time and time again that we have the resolve and grit to get through this – and we must do so again.

At this point scientists cannot say with any certainty that Omicron is less severe, but we do know that it is more transmissible. To avoid a situation where our infection

rate gets out of control, causes harm to those who are vulnerable and overwhelms our local hospitals, your actions and behaviours are vital.

The Government has now introduced Plan B and this means we should carefully consider the number of people we choose to mix with and decide what social contact is worth it. There are ways to protect ourselves when we do get together. These include wearing a mask (unless you have an exemption), washing your hands, ensuring proper ventilation and doing a lateral flow test before and after a social event. It's these small acts that keep us and those we love safe.

We also urge everyone to get boosted now. Science shows that vaccinations, especially the top-up booster dose, helps protect us from Omicron.

For those of you who may need to book either your first, second or booster vaccination please do so online at [NHS.gov](https://www.nhs.gov). For local information about drop-in clinics please visit the Suffolk and North Essex COVID-19 Vaccination Service. This also includes a link to Waveney services. Please get boosted now!

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our NHS colleagues for delivering the booster programme in Suffolk. From 7,000 people a day, we have now been tasked by the Government to vaccinate more than 18,000 each day. This is an enormous endeavour.

Suffolk ranks the highest in the East of England for the number of people vaccinated and this is because of the excellent systems we have in place. As we have proved successfully throughout this pandemic, such a huge ask can only be achieved by every Suffolk agency working together including public sector, blue light services and community and voluntary groups. We'd like to thank these agencies and all the volunteers who will be needed to achieve this.

We are fully supporting our NHS colleagues with the booster programme. Our work includes redeploying staff, offering premises including council buildings and communicating key messages and information. We are also offering free travel across Suffolk, either by bus or taxi, to anyone who needs to attend their vaccine appointment (for information visit: www.suffolk.gov.uk/GetVaccinated). This service is open to everyone in Suffolk.

We understand, especially in the run up to the festive season, that people may worry about the new variant and what 2022 may bring. However, there are many reasons to remain positive and hopeful. We have a hugely successful vaccination programme in Suffolk. Without doubt this has saved numerous lives and with the booster drive, will continue to do so. We also know that by working together, as we have done throughout the pandemic, we can keep our local communities safe.

Thank you for your continued support.

We hope that you enjoy a safe and happy Christmas with your friends and families.

Thank you,

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Chair of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board and
Leader of Suffolk County Council

Councillor John Ward, Leader of Babergh District Council

Councillor Steve Gallant, Leader of East Suffolk District Council

Councillor David Ellesmere, Leader of Ipswich Borough Council

Councillor Suzie Morley, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council
Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of West Suffolk District Council
Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk

Free bus and taxi services across Suffolk for all those travelling for a vaccination

People in Suffolk can today take advantage of free bus and taxi rides to get to their vaccination appointment or to a vaccine drop-in clinic.

The offer is open to **anyone** in the county who needs help getting to their appointment or a drop-in clinic for a first, second or booster vaccination. This will be in place until December 29th.

The free travel is part of Suffolk's system-wide approach to deliver on the Government's programme that everyone over the age of 18 gets their booster vaccination by the New Year.

Both the free bus travel and the Vaxi Taxi offer is now open to all.

Stuart Keeble, Director of Public Health at Suffolk County Council, said: "It's important that we remove any barrier that people may face in getting their booster.

"For some people this barrier might be transport so we've offering free travel to make it extra easy for everyone.

"It's critical that we vaccinate as many people as possible in order to protect ourselves and those around us from severe illness."

Ed Garratt, Chief Executive of the Suffolk and North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Groups, said: "It's so important that everyone eligible comes forward for their vaccination.

"Through this arrangement we are making it even easier for people to attend their appointment. So if you do not own a vehicle, cannot afford travel costs or live in a rural area which is not served by public transport, please take advantage of this free offer.

"Please book your booster vaccination appointment through the National Booking System – which is accessible though our website – www.sneevaccine.org.uk – or attend one of the many walk-in clinics which are available and please arrange your transport through this scheme."

For bus travel: From today, people can use any Suffolk bus for a free return journey. You will simply need to show the bus driver either your text or email with your vaccination appointment confirmation. For those who have been invited by phone or are visiting a drop-in clinic you will just need to tell the bus driver which vaccination centre you are going to. suffolkonboard/boosterbus

For taxi travel: The Vaxi Taxi scheme is open to everyone aged 12+ and consists of a free return journey to your vaccination appointment. For a list of the taxi companies signed up for the scheme, please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/GetVaccinated. Children will need to be accompanied by a parent or carer during the journey and at the vaccination site.

For community transport: please contact the Connecting Communities operator where you live. Click on the appropriate council area on the map for booking information.

[Lists of each travel option and helpful links, including the nearest bus routes](#), as well as details of vaccinations clinics and sites.

[Book a vaccination appointment](#).

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-booster-vaccine/>

Help is at hand this Christmas and New Year

Suffolk residents can still seek support over the festive period.

Help is available for anyone who is self-isolating, facing financial difficulties or struggling with their health and wellbeing.

Many people may not have had the Christmas they had hoped for, as Covid infection rates continue to rise locally and nationally.

In recognition of this, the Collaborative Communities Board – consisting of partners from Suffolk’s councils, police, health bodies and charitable organisations – want to remind people of the support systems in place to help with a range of issues.

This includes Home, But Not Alone, which provides assistance with obtaining groceries and medication to those unwell with Covid, or self-isolating, who cannot arrange delivery of these items themselves or don’t have friends or family to help out.

Anyone in genuine need of help can call the service – staffed on weekdays between 9am and 5pm – on freephone 0800 876 6926. It remained open on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and over the festive bank holidays for emergency calls only.

Those requiring support with financial difficulties resulting from Covid should contact the Suffolk Advice and Support Service on 0800 068 3131, between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

The one-stop service offers advice from partners, including the Citizens Advice Suffolk Alliance, on a range of money worries such as debt, rent or mortgage arrears and credit cards.

Chrissie Geeson, chair of the Collaborative Communities Board, commented:

“Councils, organisations and volunteers across Suffolk have been at the forefront of supporting our communities since the pandemic began, and will continue to provide

this vital assistance as we face the challenges posed by Omicron and an increase in Covid cases experienced nationally.

“Although this is a time of uncertainty for many, please know that you are not alone and can rely on support over the Christmas period, and beyond, if in genuine need.

“I’d also urge people to consider how they might be able to assist their family, friends or local communities without putting themselves at risk. A small act, like dropping off shopping to a neighbour who is self-isolating, can make a real difference and ensures that our services are able to help people who perhaps don’t have support networks in place or anyone to turn to.”

Suffolk residents facing financial hardship and in desperate need of food can find information on Food Banks currently accepting self-referrals.

A one off £500 support payment may also be claimed by those self-isolating due to Covid who meet the Government’s eligibility criteria.

District and borough councils are administering the Government funded scheme and further details can be found by visiting:

- Babergh District Council
- East Suffolk Council
- Ipswich Borough Council
- Mid Suffolk District Councils
- West Suffolk Council

Support is also at hand to help with health and wellbeing, with www.sneevaccine.org.uk providing the latest information on Covid vaccinations – including locations of walk-in clinics, details on free transport to help with attending vaccination appointments and answers to frequently asked questions about the vaccines.

Help with staying mentally well is available on Wellbeing Suffolk’s website, which offers free online advice to help with feelings of stress, anxiety and depression, as well as self-referral forms for anyone aged 16 and over in need of mental health services.

People experiencing loneliness can use the Suffolk County Council funded Buddy Up initiative, provided by Community Action Suffolk. The service matches those facing isolation with a trained volunteer from their local community, who can help them with getting a new hobby, attending social activities or joining local groups. Further information on using the scheme, or applying to be a volunteer, can be found at: www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/projects/buddy-up/ or by calling 01473 345400.

Primary School application deadline approaches

Parents and carers have until Saturday 15 January 2022 to submit applications to secure their child’s place at a Primary, Infant or Junior school for September.

Applications should be made for children born between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2018 who are due to start primary school from September 2022. An application for a full-time school place must be made even if a child is already

attending a nursery class in an infant or primary school, a pre-school or a children's centre next to a school site.

Councillor Rachel Hood, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills, said:

"The best chance for parents and carers to secure their child's place at one of their preferred schools is to complete their application by the closing date of 15 January.

"Parents and carers can list up to three schools on their application form, in order of preference, and we recommend applying for more than one school."

Before making a school application, parents and carers need to consider how they will get their child to and from school. School Travel eligibility is based on a child attending the nearest suitable school that would have had a place available. This might not be the catchment area school. To find out more about SCC's school travel policy please visit www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

If you are planning to move house, or you think your circumstances may change before September, it is still essential to make an application on time.

Applications should be made online as this will mean parents and carers will receive a confirmation of their application. They can then log on to the online service on National Offer Day (Tuesday 19 April 2022) to see their school place offer and they will also be sent a confirmation email. If a parent or carer is unable to apply online then they should complete a paper application (CAF1), however these cannot be acknowledged, so it is suggested parents and carers obtain proof of postage. For those who completed paper applications, offer letters will be sent out by second class post on the National Offer Day.

Applications can be made at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions, where further advice and guidance is also available. Alternatively, parents and carers can call 0345 600 0981 for a paper application (CAF1).

Suffolk County Council continued with its good track record of offering places at preferred schools with 94.98% of parents in Suffolk being offered a place for their child at their first preference primary school last year.

If parents and carers do not apply by the closing date, their application may not be dealt with until after places have been offered to those who applied on time.

Show Social Care a little love this winter.

Last week the county council launched its first ever dedicated campaign about Social Care.



The campaign is designed to help the public understand more about the Social Care sector in Suffolk, how the various partners and organisations work together to provide care for people, celebrate the amazing care professionals that work in the sector and ask the public for a little patience and flexibility as we all navigate through one of the toughest winters any of us can remember.

Adult Social Care in Suffolk is made up of a close partnership of different organisations including local councils, NHS Trusts, and several private care providers who, when taken together, employ around 22,000 individuals countywide. On any given day the sector supports over 9,500 people to live independently for longer whilst enjoying their lives to the fullest. The sector faces considerable challenges however, including the recruitment and retention of key workers, the increasing complexity of care packages and the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, especially on care homes, home care and front-line workers.

To try and demonstrate how busy the sector is, every day the county council's Customer First contact centre handles, on average, over 551 phone calls, webchats, or emails from people about adult social care. On Christmas Day alone, there will be around 1,200 care home staff working hard to ensure that the 5,662 people currently living in Residential or Nursing Homes in Suffolk get to enjoy a good Christmas. Then, on top of that, there are the 3,000 or so home care workers who will be out and about across Suffolk, offering help and support to people who are receiving care within their own homes. Therefore, it is so important that we all show the Social Care sector a little love and support this winter. Please be patient when contacting any Social Care service. They are all working as hard as they can to provide essential support for people. They will do their best to answer you and provide the best care possible as quickly as they can.

I also hope that this campaign will change the way we think and talk about those people who have made working in Social Care their career and passion. Too often

those working in the sector are either incorrectly swept up and talked about as if being part of the NHS or worse, forgotten about in conversations entirely. These incredible people have made the choice to dedicate their working lives to the care of others. Whether social workers, mental health practitioners, occupational therapists, home care workers, care home and nursing home staff, and every other role I don't have space here to list - all of them, together, deserve our praise and thanks for the value they bring to people's lives, and our wider community (and yes – I think they should be paid more too). But, to start with, I invite you to join with me in challenging anyone you see or hear using words like "unskilled" to describe anyone working in Social Care. Ask them to stop, think, and then try again - because of all the words we could use to describe these wonderful people, "unskilled" is certainly not one of them. They are professional care givers and need to be treated with the respect they deserve.

I know that changing perceptions can take time, but we must make a start, and that start is this new campaign.

You can get involved very easily. To start with show your support for Social Care by sharing the council's posts on your own social media, using the hashtag #SupportSocialCare. You can help by being a little bit patient when contacting Social Care. Or go further and offer to collect an elderly neighbour's prescription or just by pay them a visit to see how they are.

However you decide to get involved, please show Social Care a little love this winter.

Over 10,000 new LED streetlights installed across Suffolk

Suffolk's LED replacement programme has reached a new milestone, with over 10,000 streetlights upgraded with new, sustainable LEDs.

Bouygues Energies & Services, the contractor leading the programme has successfully installed 10,799 new lanterns and counting as part of the project to replace all 43,400 streetlights in the county. These lanterns use less energy and produce a more natural and focused light than the traditional orange glow of streetlights.

The project, which is due to complete by the end of 2022 will also allow opportunity for other streetlight owners within Suffolk such as Parish and District Councils to upgrade their streetlights as part of this process.

This upgrade supports Suffolk County Council's ambitions for becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030. The benefits include; supporting a reduction in carbon emissions by saving energy and reducing light pollution, as well as providing clearer images on CCTV, traffic cameras and dashcam footage for the benefit of public safety.

The teams have been working their way through the west of the county and are making progress in Stowmarket and Sudbury.

Aside from the reduction in energy usage and minimising light pollution, the project will also bring down ongoing maintenance costs for the authority. The County Council expects to reduce its annual electricity costs on the streetlights by around 76%, saving more than £1.7 million a year.

By upgrading the lighting system with smart technology, this will increase the control the County Council has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs.

Prior to commencing in towns or parishes, Suffolk Highways is contacting those councils in case they wish to upgrade their parish-council owned street-lighting at the same time. All heritage-style lanterns which have been identified will be upgraded towards the end of the programme.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member responsible for Operational Highways and Flooding, said:

"Despite the obvious challenges we have faced since the start of this project, I am extremely happy with the progress being made to replace all county council streetlights in Suffolk.

"The project brings many positive changes, with the main one being the reduction in energy use. This will go towards Suffolk County Council's ambitions to become a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030. I congratulate the teams involved for their hard work and determination during trying times and look forward to seeing more of the county benefiting from these upgrades."

Ian Blackmore, Managing Director Bouygues Energies & Services Ltd, said:

"We always work in partnership with our clients to ensure we have a full understanding of what they want to achieve and work alongside them in reaching their targets.

"When we are able to help achieve significant savings such as these in terms of energy, carbon and cost it makes that relationship even more rewarding. To have overcome the challenges we have faced and to achieve the 10,000 street-lighting upgrades reflects the energy, hard work and determination of all those involved."

Keep a look out for signs in your area to see where the teams are working next and follow @Suff_highways on Twitter for regular updates.

Katch scoops honour at Community Rail Awards

Katch, Suffolk's electric taxi bus service, is all abuzz after winning a national award.

The on-demand service won the Influencing Positive Change & Sustainability category in the Community Rail Awards.

Katch is led by Suffolk County Council in partnership with CarsSmart, and with support from East Suffolk Council, Framlingham Town Council, Wickham Market Parish Council, Community Rail Network, East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership and Greater Anglia.

The award was presented at an evening held at the Guildhall in Southampton.

Councillor Alexander Nicoll, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, said:

"This award for Katch is well-deserved recognition of the hard work, led by Suffolk County Council in partnership with others, to create the service as a new and green travel solution for people in a largely rural area and offers an alternative to private car use.

“Katch plays an important part in Suffolk councils’ commitment to growing the region’s passenger transport in a sustainable way and to cutting carbon to help reach the Government’s ambition of zero emissions by 2050 and the County Council’s own target of being carbon neutral by 2030.”

Aaron Taffera, Chair of the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership, said:

“I’m delighted that this project has been recognised for making a real difference to some of our rural Suffolk communities and for its sustainable credentials, which is helping people to travel and visit the area in an environmentally friendly way.”

Alan Neville, Greater Anglia’s Customer and Community Engagement Manager, said:

“We are really proud of our community rail partnerships and are thrilled that the work that they do across the region to support communities, promote sustainable travel and help our region’s branch lines to thrive has been recognised at these national awards.”

Jools Townsend, chief executive of the Community Rail Network, said:

“Despite another challenging year, the array of entries defied expectations, showing how community rail adapted and responded, supporting communities through the pandemic, maintaining positivity, and continuing to help people get the most from local railways and stations. Huge congratulations to all our winners, and thanks to all who support community rail, as this grassroots movement continues to go from strength to strength.”

Katch is a travel solution for residents and visitors in Wickham Market and Framlingham, as well as enabling people using the Ipswich – Lowestoft train line to book the taxi bus for a journey to Snape Maltings from Wickham Market railway station in Campsea Ashe.

It uses electric vehicles operating as shared taxi buses serving Framlingham - Wickham Market - Wickham Market Railway Station (at Campsea Ashe) - Tunstall - Snape Maltings - Snape.

Katch serves fixed bus stops and journeys can be booked on-demand by telephone or via the Katch app, charging fares in line with a bus service. Payment can be made by contactless card or cash.

The service was launched last May, initially as a one-year pilot, and was recently extended to serve popular arts and entertainment complex Snape Maltings.

Katch is available seven days a week, Monday to Friday 7.50am to 8pm, Saturday 8am to 8pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 10am to 6pm.

Journeys can be booked up to 30 minutes in advance via the Katch App or telephone by calling 01728 554455.

The cost of a return journey is £7 and a single journey is £4 for an adult or children's fares are £3 return and £1.50 single.

For further information about Katch visit www.katchalift.com

Urgent need for more Suffolk foster carers as number of children in care rises

With more children coming into care in Suffolk every year, the need for foster carers to come forward has never been greater.

In the last five years, there has been a 13% increase in the number of children coming into care in Suffolk. In the year 2016/2017 there were 834 children in care compared to 919 in 2020/2021. Nationally this figure is also rising quickly and the total number of children in care is expected to hit 100,000 by 2025.

Whilst we're witnessing a steady growth in children in care, the number of foster carers being recruited is not keeping pace.

In Suffolk we have started to see a reduction in local children coming into care but overall, the numbers of children in care are still increasing. This rise of children in care is partly due to the increase in unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children being accommodated as part of the Home Office's national transfer scheme. Children and young people are also staying in care longer as Suffolk County Council are seeking long term solutions for children and there have been delays in the family courts process due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Suffolk Fostering Service is therefore renewing its appeal for people to come forward if they think they could provide a child in care with a safe and loving home – whether this is in a full time or part time capacity to fit around other commitments.

"Foster carers play a huge role in the lives of children and young people in their care. We have some wonderful families in Suffolk who've committed much of their time to support young people in need – but we still need more people who can provide a safe and loving family home to come forward."

"Children in need of foster carers are some of the most vulnerable members of our society and helping them grow into successful, confident and resilient young adults can be hugely rewarding."

"Foster carers are able to fit work or other commitments around the care they provide and are also paid generous fees and allowances and supported around the clock by a dedicated team of professionals. So, if you're looking for a more rewarding career and can offer a Suffolk child a loving and secure home, please get in touch with the Suffolk Fostering team."

Suffolk Fostering Service is Ofsted Outstanding rated and is the longest established provider of fostering services in the county, offering competitive fees, 24-hour support services and up to 21 days paid leave per year.

If you are looking for a new challenge or career and think you could become a carer please request a free pack at www.suffolk.gov.uk/foster or call 01473 264800.

Suffolk County Council approves extra £20m investment in highway drainage and footpaths

Cabinet members have committed an extra £20 million over the next three years into further improving Suffolk's highway drainage systems and footpaths.

In recognition of the increasing maintenance demand on these areas, councillors approved the use of £10 million to specifically deliver an increasing number of

drainage schemes that deal with problems that affect larger numbers of people, and a further £10 million to improve footpath quality and access.

Suffolk Highways will use the drainage investment alongside funding from the Department for Transport to increase the number of highway flooding sites which are resolved, providing a highway network that is more resilient and accessible during heavy rain and severe weather events.

The footpath investment will be focused on urban areas and busy footpaths in rural areas - providing a safer and more accessible network that supports people accessing local bus services, health care services and local shopping precincts.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for operational highways and flooding, said:

"Committing this extra funding is a very welcome boost to our already significant improvement programmes in highways.

"The integrity of our county's drainage systems and footpaths are incredibly important to our livelihoods; functioning drainage systems and well-paved paths support us all to safely travel for work, social or leisure purposes or to access essential services.

"£20m divided across drainage and footpath services will enable our highways teams to resolve more drainage issues, where there may be significant highway or property flooding; and footpath improvements to provide a safer and more accessible network in urban and busy rural areas.

"I look forward to working closely with the teams to ensure that the additional funding is used appropriately; targeting areas that require essential improvements, on a priority basis. I will continue to keep Suffolk's residents informed on how any additional funding is going to be used."

Children's services and adult care at the heart of Suffolk County Council's new budget plans

Suffolk County Council has outlined how it plans to spend money on public services in 2022/23.

- More money to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Extra resources for adults in need of care
- Additional funds to prevent flooding and fix footpaths

Under the proposals, the council's budget for 2022-23 would rise by 4.5% (from £598.2 to £625.4m). This additional money is generated by a 2.99% increase in Council Tax, and an increase in grants received from the Government.

The proposals will be presented at a scrutiny meeting in January, then put forward for approval by councillors in February.

Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council, said:

"I've worked with my colleagues to propose a budget which will not see any reductions in our services, and invests further where it is most needed. Our aim is

always to provide the best possible services for everyone in Suffolk and provide value for money.

“This has been a difficult budget to consider, particularly as Covid continues to make life challenging on every level, including our finances.

“We also continue to face rising costs and hugely increasing demands on our services year on year, particularly our adult care and children’s services.

“But this is a budget which helps us to respond to these demands, and meets our priorities for next year. For example increasing our family services budget by £1.1m from next year, to specifically to address the recommendations made by the recent independent SEND review – this is in addition to our previous commitment of £45m to develop SEND provision.”

The council’s priorities are to:

- promote and support the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk
- strengthen the local economy
- protect and enhance the environment
- provide value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer

Some of the detail of the budget proposals, includes:

- £1.1m increase for the family services budget, specifically to address recommendations made by the recent independent SEND review
- £1m additional funding for Suffolk Highways over the next four years, for example to fund road signs and responsible verge cutting
- £10m to specifically deliver an increasing number of drainage schemes (over the next three years)
- £10m to improve footpath quality and access (over the next three years)
- £12.8m to decarbonise the buildings that we own (by 2030)
- Investments this year to set up future borrowing for bigger schemes, such as SEND and carbon reduction

Regarding Council Tax, the proposed 2.99% increase would be made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 1.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care.

This means costs for a household would look like:

- Band D property: £27.60 per week (80 pence per week increase from 2021-22)
- Band B property: £21.47 per week (62 pence per week increase from 2021-22) (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)

Councillor Rout continued:

“Proposing an increase in council tax is not a decision we take lightly, particularly when our costs of living are going up too.

“However, I think there is increasing recognition of the pressure our services are under. In our public consultation, there were more people who agreed that council

tax would need to go up next year, compared to those that didn't. This was especially true for funding adult care.

“By paying this extra each week, we are all helping the council to provide its key services, and helping support those who need it most.

“If anyone does have concerns about paying their council tax, they may be eligible for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which is managed by our borough and district councils. You could receive help if you are on a low income, even if you are working.”

The budget proposals will be presented at a Scrutiny Meeting on Tuesday 11 January 2022, with the final budget discussed at a Full Council meeting on 17 February 2022.

The Scrutiny meeting will be available to stream on Suffolk County Council's YouTube channel, and public questions can be submitted in advance, details available at www.suffolk.gov.uk