**Report for Lavenham parish council 30/11/22 by County Councillor Robert Lindsay**

**Bus motion**

At full council this Thursday (1st December) I will be proposing a motion to try to get a proper strategy in place for investing in buses in the county, the county having failed to win a penny in its latest bid for “Bus Back Better” money.

Many of our former rural scheduled routes have disappeared to be replaced by dial a ride services. But dial a ride services are not properly promoted, nor is there any check on them by the county to see if they are working. My motion asks that SCC and the community bus provides monitor demand annually and aim to bring back scheduled routes for those routes that prove popular. The motion also asks the county to recognise in the next iteration of its Local Transport Plan (currently being drawn yup) that we need to increase the ratio of journeys by bus to journeys by car in the county. We are also asking that it investigates a workplace parking levy for Ipswich, as has been recommended by officers.

**Special Educational Need services – Update**

Last year, Suffolk CC’s SEND services were criticised in a damning report conducted by Lincolnshire Council which contained 32 recommendations. This month our political group on the county was told that 22 of the 32 recommendations have been actioned, and the remaining 10 will be completed by the end of 2022.

The delivery of 1,317 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 6,847 in September 2022, from 5,849 in September 2020.

**Suffolk looks for more hosts for Ukrainian refugees**

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**](https://suffolk.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=6a4b611d774833befc266f91b&id=1df8ec4d94&e=6f11f42378) or emailing **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

**Suffolk to have a “Directly Elected Leader”**

Suffolk County Council’s leader has agreed to a deal with central Government that will create the post of directly elected leader of the county council. This person will be able to appoint their own cabinet from existing county councillors. But the Government have at this stage not made clear what powers, if any, it is devolving from itself to the elected leader. The prospect of an elected leader of a different political party to the majority of county councillors could create stalemate.

**Automatic Numberplate Recognition**

This week, (8th November) Suffolk’s cabinet is likely to decide to apply to the Government to give itself powers to enforce moving traffic offences. This will allow it to use numberplate recognition cameras to fine people for driving on streets or through bus gates where private motors have been banned. It intends to pilot four roads in Ipswich to start with. Each camera costs around £20k plus £5k annual maintenance fee and it wants the fines at each site to at least cover the costs at each site.

**Roundabout Magazine**

Roundabout magazine’s printer is on its last legs and they need £10k-£12k. They have about £4k already in their kitty so I have match funded that with another £4k from my locality allowance. Nedging PC are holding that £4k contribution in their account until the magazine publishers purchase the machine.

**Budget**

Suffolk County Council is predicting a £16.2 million overspend on its £625m budget for the full year to March 2023, according to its Q2 projections. This is mainly due to a surge in spending on children in care. There are six children in particular who warranted very intensive care which required purchasing places in very expensive special homes.

But there is also more spending on specialist school travel (taxis) for Special Needs children and higher inflation is driving costs higher than expected. The overspend will be met by extra cash from reserves.