# **Parish Report – February 2025**

# **Councillor**

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**Devolution and Local Government Reorganization**

Following the publication of the government’s White Paper on devolution in December, the council held an extraordinary meeting on Thursday 9 January to decide whether to pursue inclusion in the Devolution Priority Programme. Councils had to submit an application for this ‘fast-track’ devolution by Friday 10 January, including a request for local elections in May to be cancelled if this would assist them to prepare for an accelerated process including mayoral elections in May 2026. The result of these changes is likely to be a joint mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk, and amalgamation of the county council, districts and borough council in Suffolk into one unitary council, or possibly two unitary councils. Unitary councils undertake all local services and replace a ‘two tier’ system of county and district/borough councils. The government will make a decision on which areas will be in the Devolution Priority Programme and whether their local elections will be cancelled by the end of January.

Nothing heard as of today 1st FEB

**MEETING WITH TCC HEAD TEACHER;** unfortunately she had a broken foot so could not meet but asked about the ongoing work with the DFE ; still looking at bringing 6th form to Thurston.

**POSSIBLE 20MPH SPEED LIMIT; I have sent th clerk the form and details of the procedure. There will be a cost of the speed survey and possible other work. Once you have agreed the ideal location there can be some discussion with the road safety team**

**FLOODING/ DITCH CLEARING. We have tried to get a resolution to the problem under the A14 flyover.**

**Suffolk’s SEND Needs Assessment**

The report states that SEND needs in the county are rising and expected to rise further, and that delays in EHCP assessment, ADHD and autism assessment and support, and access to mental health services for young people were unsatisfactory and in some cases getting worse, like speech and language therapy. The report recommends engagement with families and young people, address inequalities in service provision and improve planning for future services.

**Council Budget 2025-26**

One Tuesday 28 January, SCC Cabinet voted to approve the proposed budget for 2025-26. This included approving a maximum rise in council tax this year of 4.99%, including the 2% social care precept for adult care. the budget relies on delivering £28.4m of savings and mitigations across council services. Cost pressures for the council include care purchasing for adult social care, Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and placements for children in care. . The government is yet to come up with a solution for this issue, which affects many local authorities, not just Suffolk. The DSG debt is largely down to the cost of services for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

**SCC Carbon Net Zero**

At Cabinet on Tuesday 28 January, the annual report was presented which details the council’s progress towards its target of net zero carbon by 2030. The council is not on track to achieve this target. It has achieved a 2% reduction in emissions overall during 2023-24, but Scope 3 – the largest scope and the one the council has least control over, as it includes the emissions of council suppliers (for example home to school transport) – has increased by 2% this year due to an increase in the standard conversion factor for bus travel emissions, and a rise in staff travel due to increased demand for care services. The council is trying to reduce Scope 3 emissions, and currently 40% of the council’s top 100 suppliers have a carbon reduction plan for their businesses. It is unlikely the council would be able to be completely carbon free in future as large vehicles like fire engines would require fossil fuels, but it is possible that the council could offset remaining carbon emissions by planting trees in the county.

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Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/what-to-do-in-a-flood>

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>