

## County Councillor's report: November 2022

### Funding for bus services

I asked the County Council how they were planning to collect people's views on how to spend the £50m of investment in bus services that I mentioned last month. It's clear that they don't have a formal process set up. Most of the money will already be allocated but if you (or other residents) have ideas on what should be priorities for investment please do contact me and I will pass it on.

### Consultation on County Council budget

People can have their say on the county council's Council Tax and spending proposals, until December 16<sup>th</sup>.

You can have your say at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget) and paper copies of the consultation can be requested via email at [haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk)

The council is consulting on:

- A proposed total increase of 2.99 per cent - 1.99 per cent for general Council Tax and one per cent for the adult social care precept – in line with the current budget planning and the expected level which will be set by the Government.
- People's views on a rise of 4.10 per cent, as the council has set in previous years, and 10.1 per cent - in line with inflation - which would require a referendum.

The other savings proposals the council is consulting on include:

- [Reducing the opening hours of the Norfolk Record Office \(NRO\) from 28 hours a week to 22.5 hours a week.](#)
- [Reducing weed spraying activities on the highway from twice a year to once a year.](#)
- [Reducing summer opening hours at Norfolk's recycling centres and closing all recycling centres on Wednesdays.](#)

'Savings' are in addition to the cuts consulted on earlier in the year. There are likely to be tough times ahead for council funding. They are waiting on the government's announcement of spending plans in November to know exactly what is going to be needed in the coming years but no one is expecting lots of new money to be washing around!

The medium term financial plan came to Scrutiny committee last month:

<https://twitter.com/MaxfieldEd/status/1583014498478489600?s=20&t=WtyRSdxnsTfUfc3ZonFBoQ>

### Schools funding

For anyone interested in schools funding and especially funding for Additional Needs, Norfolk County Council is deciding on school funding. The decisions sit with the [Schools Forum](#).

The big question is how the County repays the SEND overspend it has accumulated over the years (the most likely option is to take a slice of mainstream funding).

They are planning to cut the amount they spend on SEND provision by the independent sector massively (from £43m to £4m a year over the next six years). They hope to achieve this by bringing the planned new 'maintained' special schools online and increasing the spend through those schools

and SRBs; increasing SEND funding to mainstream schools from £20m to £27m; and “Investment in high needs framework/infrastructure, Community and School Cluster Teams including parent link workers” (up from £2m a year to £5m).

### Jubilee Trees for Norfolk

Norfolk residents are being invited to plant a tree in memoriam to honour Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Jubilee Trees for Norfolk was launched earlier this year to encourage people to “Plant a tree for the Jubilee” supporting the Queen’s Green Canopy. Norfolk County Council is now relaunching the scheme.

The County Council has made half-price tree packs available at seven tree collection points including Norwich (County Hall and Broadland Country Park), Acle, Long Stratton, Watton, Fakenham and King’s Lynn). Residents should apply online at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/jubileetrees](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/jubileetrees) and the packs will be ready for collection in the planting season between December 2022-February 2023.

Tree packs come in a range of bundle sizes and types including hedgerow, wildlife, small trees and taller trees. All saplings, which are between 40-60cm tall, are healthy and free of disease and sourced from carefully selected suppliers. There is a smaller discount on the heritage orchard packs, which are hand selected to pollinate and contain more mature trees.

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