**West Suffolk District Councillor Annual Report – May 2022**

[**Supporting refugees - playing our part**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.suffolk.gov.uk%2Fcommunity-and-safety%2Fcommunities%2Fcommunity-engagement%2Fsupporting-afghan-ukrainian-refugees%2F&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869435399%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=5oRtNEdonLpfWIry0nB6gY5wRrEEBHkvD0le3Bt1cIs%3D&reserved=0)

**West Suffolk Council together with organisations and local authorities across Suffolk have pledged their full backing for the Ukrainian people, with the offer of help for refugees arriving in the County and support for the national Homes for Ukraine scheme.**

**We are part of Suffolk’s Ukraine Task Group alongside representatives from the county’s other local authorities, three Clinical Commissioning Groups, Health Outreach, Suffolk police, Suffolk Refugee Support, Anglia Care Trust and Community Action Suffolk.**

**The Task Group exists to ensure that refugees' arrival into Suffolk goes as smoothly as possible – considering how best to meet refugees’ health and wellbeing needs, what assistance can be provided with school admissions, and how we can offer support to help with integration and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), particularly if there are lots of people arriving in dispersed, rural locations.**

**In particular West Suffolk Council is helping with homing people and making the links to other support organisations. We have already been conducting a number of home checks on properties of residents who have applied to host refugees.**

**Questions about what we are doing across the districts and the county to support Ukrainian Refugees and information on how you can help is available on the** [**Suffolk Council website**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.suffolk.gov.uk%2Fcommunity-and-safety%2Fcommunities%2Fcommunity-engagement%2Fsupporting-afghan-ukrainian-refugees%2F&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869591625%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Hr5kBfgvQsu1BzjsT6Ui8xcG6K3FY7WeRU6KkZOEfxU%3D&reserved=0) **– you can also sign up to receive a weekly email update by sending your details to** [**refugeesupport**](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk)**@suffolk.gov.uk**

[**Cornhill marks milestone as countdown to completion begins (westsuffolk.gov.uk)**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.westsuffolk.gov.uk%2Fnews%2Fpr220404ws01.cfm&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869591625%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=5dfQCTyIdcpppxUIqT1XKpMAMuvbYjZG2N9VC3hIMHA%3D&reserved=0)

**West Suffolk Council is behind the redevelopment of the former Post Office. The building work being carried out by Barnes Construction, is scheduled for completion this summer. Once finished, it will:**

* **protect the Victorian Cornhill front while bringing it back into economic use and improving accessibility**
* **create a new commercial front onto St Andrews Street South, better connecting the historic town centre with the arc**
* **widen the Market Thoroughfare walkway at ground-floor level by more than 50 per cent, encouraging footfall between the historic town centre and the arc**
* **deliver two new ground floor commercial units, with 12 flats above**
* **benefit from energy efficiency measures including new windows, solar panels and an Air Source Heat Pump**

[**Council Tax Rebate Grant (westsuffolk.gov.uk)**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.westsuffolk.gov.uk%2Fcounciltax%2Fcouncil-tax-rebate-grant.cfm%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2Zjolzkw4t3eeO9dhx4ZEZWvwLtLR6A0FPS0-3rfqFSoC9aRAXcupLDoI&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869747867%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FQ0mjvRZ81i6lrgUylRNB2YeULXTCCqi6lWdH8B%2FA6k%3D&reserved=0)

**Households on direct debit**

We are in the process of administering over £6.3million of the Rebate Grant to more than 42,000 households whose residents pay their Council Tax by direct debit. Those who signed up to direct debit and have had their first successful Council Tax payment by direct debit before the end of April 2022 will receive their grant by the end of April 2022. New direct debit payers still awaiting their first successful direct debit payment will be able to check our webpage <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/counciltax/council-tax-rebate-grant.cfm> to see when they will receive the grant.

**Households not on direct debit**

This still leaves us over 16,000 households who do not pay by direct debit and for whom we hold no bank details.

Anglia Revenues Partnership will be writing to these residents encouraging them to complete a simple, secure online form so we can get the rebate grant to them as swiftly as possible. But there is no need for residents to wait for their letter. Instead, they can complete the form online at [www.angliarevenues.gov.uk/WSrebate](http://www.angliarevenues.gov.uk/WSrebate)

Eligible residents have until 31 May 2022 to complete the online form. After this date, any eligible households will have the rebate grant applied to their Council Tax bill to reduce their payments for the rest of the year. This is expected to take place around mid-June after which a new bill for a lesser amount will be sent out. We will then work with any residents who due to their circumstances end up in credit on their Council Tax account, to get the Rebate Grant transferred into their bank accounts as soon as possible.

If residents chose to complete a claim form and provide bank details, then the payments are subject to mandatory pre-payment checks designed to reduce the risk of fraud. If no issues are highlighted during these checks, then the process from claim to payment should take up to 10 working days.

**Discretionary grant**

West Suffolk Council has also received £270,300 to administer discretionary grants to those who we and our partner organisations identify as vulnerable and likely to be the most impacted by rising energy prices and the increased cost of living. This will include residents in band E-H properties who for Council Tax purposes are considered to be ‘severely mentally impaired’ and those who receive a Disability Reduction or Local Council Tax Reduction. There will also be a hardship scheme that people can apply to.

We will update you again when we are ready to launch these discretionary schemes.

**As guidance comes in we are putting information on our dedicated** [**webpage**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.westsuffolk.gov.uk%2Fcounciltax%2Fcouncil-tax-rebate-grant.cfm%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2Zjolzkw4t3eeO9dhx4ZEZWvwLtLR6A0FPS0-3rfqFSoC9aRAXcupLDoI&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869747867%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FQ0mjvRZ81i6lrgUylRNB2YeULXTCCqi6lWdH8B%2FA6k%3D&reserved=0)**on how residents will be able to claim the Government funded £150 Council Tax Rebate Grant. We are set up to do this as swiftly as we can. Payment can depend on things like how residents pay their Council Tax. We are asking people to keep an eye on the dedicated** [**webpage**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.westsuffolk.gov.uk%2Fcounciltax%2Fcouncil-tax-rebate-grant.cfm%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2Zjolzkw4t3eeO9dhx4ZEZWvwLtLR6A0FPS0-3rfqFSoC9aRAXcupLDoI&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869747867%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FQ0mjvRZ81i6lrgUylRNB2YeULXTCCqi6lWdH8B%2FA6k%3D&reserved=0) **for details on how and when the rebate grant will be paid.**

[**Campaign urges households to recycle glass properly (westsuffolk.gov.uk)**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.westsuffolk.gov.uk%2Fnews%2Fpr220317ws01.cfm&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869747867%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=m6WfFepv8uc5EY0WptUeyWJhKfhPFZXtLuh92%2F%2FsVyY%3D&reserved=0)

**Residents across Suffolk are being encouraged to get behind a campaign calling for people to recycle glass properly.**

[**Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP)**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.suffolkrecycling.org.uk%2Fsuffolk-waste-partnership&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869747867%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=SNidveLhOYcDCqGWspmg9deZyU6XRkEdd0MH3kadN6s%3D&reserved=0)**, which West Suffolk Council is a part of, has launched**[**‘Glass – It’s Better in The Bank’**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.suffolkrecycling.org.uk%2Fwhere-to-recycle%2Fglass-recycling&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.smith%40westsuffolk.gov.uk%7Ca43ac28297da4b93f34908da29ca02cc%7C44abcddb9c114bdfa5b399418b946f11%7C0%7C1%7C637868244869747867%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2Fr8NzfD%2FUr1JW8q%2BNXSrZuXnshnHollQzuD%2FgWEHzxo%3D&reserved=0)**, a 12-week campaign aimed at getting people to stop putting glass in their household recycling bins and to use a bottle bank instead.**

**Glass mistakenly placed in household recycling bins costs the Suffolk councils collectively around £500,000 a year .By putting it in the recycling bin and not a glass bank it can spoil other good recycling materials, especially card and paper that is collected with it - which means these have to be rejected.**

**Glass represents about half of all the wrong material in household recycling bins – other materials that are wrongly put into recycle bins include black rubbish sacks, food, nappies, textiles, and cartons – and rejection levels are currently running at around 20%.**

**The campaign runs until 31st May and will feature adverts on buses, at supermarket billboards and on a van touring part of the county, plus on social media and on radio.**

**The Suffolk County Council Household Materials Recycling Facility at Great Blakenham near Ipswich, where the bins are taken for sorting, is unable to separate glass from other materials.**

**District and borough councils, which collect rubbish, will be applying bin tags and stickers to recycling bins containing glass.**

**Crews will have a prompt in the cab to remind them to be on the look-out and recycling bins may not be emptied if they are found to contain glass. As it can spoil the whole load.**