

Report for Lavenham PC 6.11.25 by Robert Lindsay, County Councillor

Trees on High Street

I have had a few conversations with the county's arboriculturalist about the trees on the High Street. There was one in particular that had been shedding heavy branches onto the pavement and the front gate of one resident. The arboriculturalist tells me they have all now been pruned back/pollarded.

Bus funding

I was asked about the possibility of using parish/neighbourhood CIL for bus service improvements locally. This is allowed. The latest tranche of funding from the government's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is now all allocated.

Railway walk

I have been asked by a resident what can be done about overgrowth on the western part of the old railway path running to Long Melford, where it runs beside Lineage Wood. Having talked to the rights of way officer, this has never been a public footpath and the landowner has no duty to maintain access. With this report, I have attached a pdf of the definitive map for Lavenham so that you can see where I mean. However, I understand that Suffolk Wildlife Trust is in talks with the landowner about adopting the path as a public right of way, as part of the Defra funded "Connecting Constable and Gainsborough Country" landscape recovery project.

Local nature recovery strategy approved

On 9 September, the council's Cabinet voted to approve the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which was produced following a public consultation on the draft strategy between April and June this year. Most of the area mapped out for Suffolk's nature priorities is private farmland, and the strategy does not make improvement mandatory, but the officers who have produced the strategy will now work with landowners to support them and work to find investment for measures in the strategy. Landowners can use areas mapped in the strategy to produce 'units' of biodiversity for purchase by developers, as they will be required to meet the government's new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements which state that all development should be increasing biodiversity by a minimum of 10%. The units of biodiversity do not need to be onsite or near the development.

Post May 2026, the new Mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk will be in charge of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Predicted £20m needed from risk reserve to finance budget gap this year

After the second quarter of the financial year, the council is predicting that it will overspend by £20.4m by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, which it will balance by taking money from its Risk Reserve.

Alongside this is a forecast that the council's interest cost will increase to £4.9m to cover a surge in its "dedicated schools grant" debt. The soaring cost of education,

particularly special needs education, is no longer being met by schools grant the council gets from Government. The Government has promised to review the level of the grant. But in the meantime, in common with many other education authorities across the country, the council now has to borrow to make up the shortfall. The schools grant debt is forecast to rise by £70m to a total of £168m by year end.

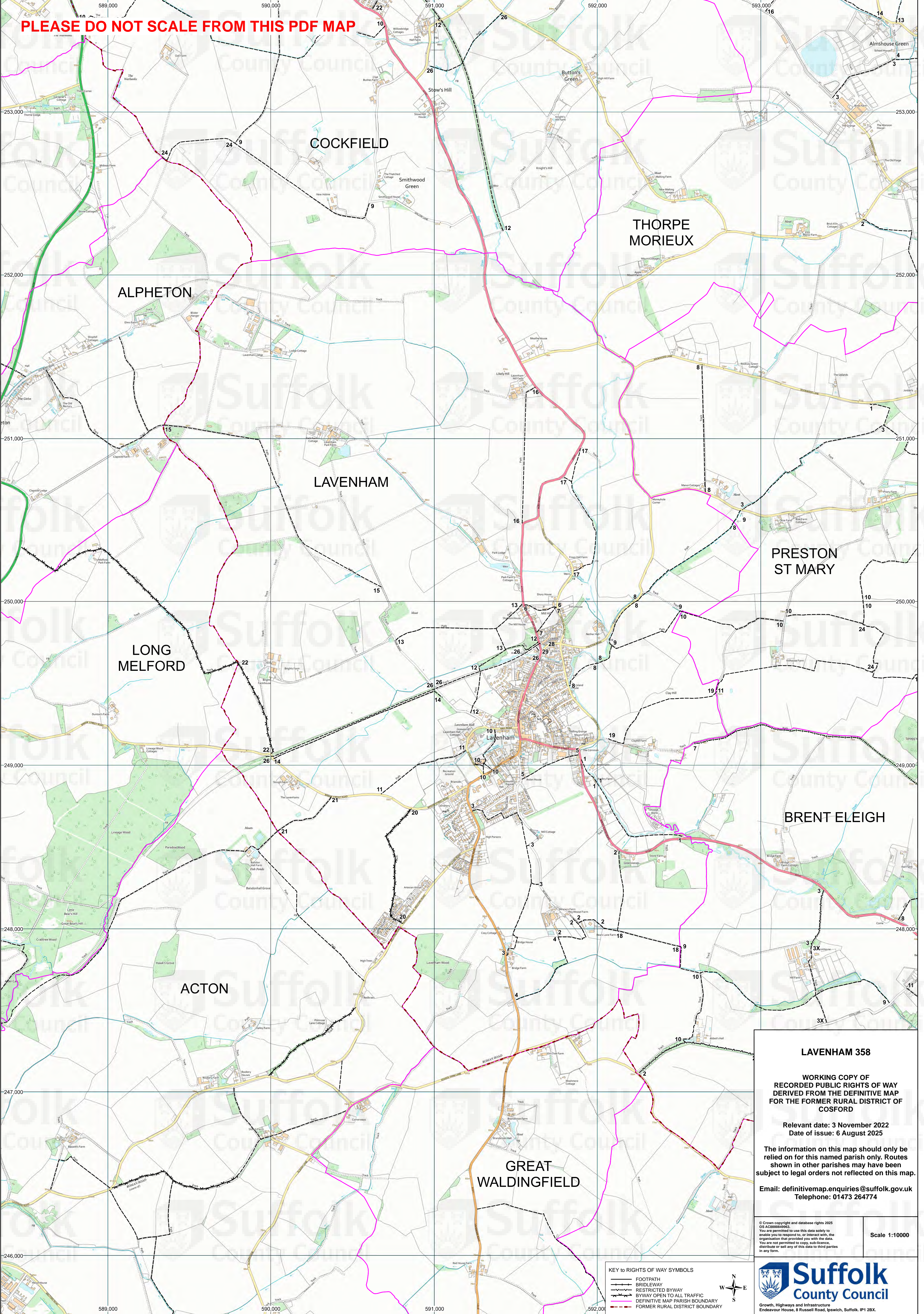
Other cost pressures for the council include placements for children in care, care purchasing and mental health services in adult social care.

Solar Together Scheme for 2025

The Solar Together Suffolk scheme, which has so far installed 32,000 solar panels at 2,651 Suffolk households, is now open for registration for 2025. The scheme also includes battery storage and EV charge points. The scheme requires householders to register online, and pre-approved solar PV suppliers then take part in a 'reverse auction' to bid for the work. After this, registered households will be emailed a personal recommendation which they can choose to accept or not. Telephone and email helpdesks are available to support residents in making an informed decision. The scheme is run by Suffolk's councils in partnership with iChoosr, who have been working with UK councils on the Solar Together scheme since 2015.

For more information and to register, visit <https://solartogether.co.uk/suffolk/home>

PLEASE DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS PDF MAP



LAVENHAM 358

WORKING COPY OF
RECORDED PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
DERIVED FROM THE DEFINITIVE MAP
FOR THE FORMER RURAL DISTRICT OF
COSFORD

Relevant date: 3 November 2022
Date of issue: 6 August 2025

The information on this map should only be
relied on for this named parish only. Routes
shown in other parishes may have been
subject to legal orders not reflected on this map.

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Scale 1:10000

KEY TO RIGHTS OF WAY SYMBOLS

- FOOTPATH
- BRIDLEWAY
- RESTRICTED BYWAY
- BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC
- DEFINITIVE MAP PARISH BOUNDARY
- FORMER RURAL DISTRICT BOUNDARY



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