

PAUL CLOVER/MARGARET MAYBURY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 6th NOVEMBER 2025.

Local Govt Reorganisation

The business cases for SCC's one unitary authority and BDC's three unitary authorities have now been submitted.

No option for two Unitary Authorities was proposed by BDC. However, this does not rule out the possibility that the Secretary of State may want to examine this option.

One Suffolk have now published their business case in conjunction with Grant Thornton. This claims savings of £78.2m in first five years and £39.4m p.a. thereafter.

Their calculations assess that three unitary authorities would cost £145.3m above present costs in the first five years and £13.1m more p.a. after that.

In contrast BDC claim that they will make annual savings of £34m per year and reinvest £20m in important services. The reinvestment of £20m will commence in year 1 of the new unitary authority in 2028 but the savings of £34m will not commence until year 3 (2030/31). By year 10 (2037/38) savings have been calculated as £70m. The Three Councils for Suffolk hope to unlock an additional £67.5m per year through localising Adult and Children's services. A decision is expected by the end of March 2026.

Melford Road Sudbury Junction

We have objected to plans build out the pedestrian island on the Melford Road Junction with Gainsborough Road and Girling Street on the basis of cost and necessity.

The plan is to narrow the one way system and introduce a cycle lane which rather than allow cyclists to continue round to the left on the one way system would take them on to Melford Road, stop and wait to cross a cycle crossing twice and then feed them back on to the one way system. Cyclists going along Melford Road direction would also rejoin main carriageway.

The carriageway in all directions would be narrowed and traffic would be forced to queue behind buses to allow embarkment/disembarkment of passengers. This would lead to congestion and pollution. There would be separate crossings for pedestrians and a Copenhagen crossing at the bottom of York Road. We conducted a recent survey of traffic flow and in two one hour sessions counted six cyclists using the carriageway around this junction. We have proposed that a better use of funds would be to extend and improve the cyclepath/footway running from Kingfisher Leisure centre to Baker's Mill.

New Councillor Enquiry System

A new enquiry system for Councillors has been developed to help ensure that enquiries are directed to the appropriate officer or department. The aim is shorten the timeline in responding

to information requests. In effect it will be a triage system that will also allow the Council to monitor enquiry volumes and how satisfactorily they are dealt with. The aim is that every contact is dealt with within five days.

Funding Summits

Any voluntary, community, faith, social organisations (VCFSE) are invited to attend a summit from BDC grants and funding team in order to learn more how to access various grants and funding.

The event will be held on Wednesday 19th November at Chamberlin Hall, Bildeston from 9am to 2.30pm. there will be a series of workshops and talks from BDC and its partners. Admission is free but reservations must be booked prior online.

Sustainable Communities Food Fund

Between £250 and £5,000 is available to small scale community pantries, fridges and food pop-ups. The grants can be used to purchase equipment, revenue costs and delivering training and workshops.

Living Well in Winter

The living well in winter grant returns offering funds to projects which deliver accessible, inclusive spaces and affordable activities to help people stay connected in winter. Further details are to be found on the Babergh website.

Rural Business Growth Fund

Any business looking to be more sustainable, diversify their offering or attract more visitors can apply for funding of up to £10k (£15k if projects strongly focus on net zero or farm diversification) from the Rural Business Growth Fund. Full details are to be found on the Heart of Suffolk website.

Better Recycling explained

A full explanation of the new bin recycling collection scheme coming in next year is now available on the Suffolk Recycles social media site. More information is also available on the Suffolk Recycles website.

Solar Together Suffolk

Group applications for solar panels and batteries are now open for registration for 2025. To date 32,000 solar panels have been sold via this scheme which enables residents to get a better value for money deal on saving the costs of their energy bills.