PAUL CLOVER/MARGARET MAYBURY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 5TH NOVEMBER 2026.

LGR Update

Following the Govt.'s decision to withdraw the process for creating three new unitary councils for Suffolk, the Govt. have now completed the first phase of their review and are satisfied that the criteria and process for LGR are robust and aligned to the Govt.'s priorities.

This means local elections will go ahead in May 2027 on existing council boundaries.

We now expect a fresh decision in relation to Suffolk by March 2027 at the latest.

This will be based on proposals submitted in September 2025. It is expected that the Govt. will seek further evidence and substantiation that three unitary authorities are in the best interests of the residents of Suffolk.

Shadow elections for unitary councils will take place in May 2028, ahead of those councils going live on 1st April 2029.

The Govt has awarded £1.35m towards the costs of implementing LGR.

Kingfisher Leisure Swimming Pool

Following the sudden closure of the swimming pool we are actively working with colleagues to explore the options available including the potential to adapt the pool at Thomas Gainsborough School in Great Cornard.

Social Housing Inspection outcome

Further to the Social Housing Regulator's inspection, Babergh DC has been awarded C2, which is the second highest on a scale of C1-C4. This is the highest for any council in Suffolk and represents a significant improvement on previous rating although there is still more work to be done.

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2026 (SHELAA)

The review findings have now been published using a red/amber/green system to assess Suitability/Availability/Achievability which is then used to calculate an overall rating. Any site that is rated as Red for any category will not go forward for further consideration.

Of the thirteen sites reviewed for Lavenham, seven have been rated as green for further consideration. Five are Amber for possible consideration and one site as red for no further consideration. These assessments are produced as a reference only evidence base document for the Joint Local Plan. It is not for consultation nor is it a proposal of sites for development.

Babergh Councillor changes party

Following the Green party's debate on Zionism and racism, Councillor Daniel Potter, ward member for Orwell has left the Green party to join the Conservatives. This means the new political line up for Babergh is nine Greens, nine Independents, seven Conservatives, four Liberal Democrat, two Reform and one Labour.

Emergency Ready

The Govt. has launched a 'Be Ready' campaign to help people prepare for emergencies like severe storms. There is to be a new Priority Services Register which residents can sign up to for free and this will also help gas, water and electricity companies identify customers who may need extra support in an emergency.