# PAUL CLOVER/MARGARET MAYBURY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR GREAT WALDINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 9TH 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.

**EV charging bays – Gt Waldingfield**

We have been contacted by Plug-in Suffolk seeking our views on the installation of EV charging bays in Braithwaite Drive on land which is owned by Babergh Council. Residents living within 50 metres of the proposed site will be contacted in due course for their views.

I have responded, highlighting the problem of the siting of EV charging bays in Bantocks Road which impedes access for buggies and mobility scooters. I also raised the following points: - the bays can be used by non EV vehicles thus defeating their intended use and questioning the criteria by which sites are decided upon. E.G. is it the case that installation occurs where Babergh own the land? I also enquired as to present usage rates.

I was assured that this was not the case and that many factors were taken into consideration including the number of private driveways and the findings of a detailed site survey. Plug-in Suffolk were unable to supply usage rates as these belong to a third party contractor who said that the information is commercially sensitive. Apparently Babergh should receive a monthly report. As we were able to source this information for the EV charging bays in Lavenham we should be able to secure tis information.

**Speed Group Meeting**

I have written to the police and to Suffolk highways with a view to convening a meeting of all the relevant parties concerned with the unresolved high numbers of speeding vehicles in the village, asking for proposed dates. As soon as responses are received we will circulate proposed diary dates.

**Footpath 11**

The start date for commencement of works to Footpath 11, we have been informed is 16th November. Hopefully this will help maintain and improve access as the winter months approach.