

Monthly Report May&Jun'26 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

GENERAL UPDATES

The district wide monthly update can be found here - Download [Babergh's town & parish briefing notes](#).

May 2026 Suffolk County Elections

May was a bit busy with elections. I certainly got my 10,000 steps a day in delivering leaflets and felt fitter although my knees ached more. I was standing for Brook ward against the existing county councillor Christopher Hudson who retained his seat with a very clear majority against all other candidates. Overall, there was a major shift away from the previous conservative majority:-

Party	2026 # Seats	2026%	2021 # Seats	2021%
Reform UK	41	59%	0	0%
Green	13	19%	9	12%
Conservative	9	13%	55	73%
Labour	3	4%	5	7%
Liberal Democrat	2	3%	4	5%
Independent	2	3%	1	1%
West Suffolk Independent	0	0%	1	1%

It remains to be seen how this will pan out over the next few months. Reform have elected a leader - Michael Hadwen. There is now a cabinet & portfolio holders have been appointed - Christopher Hudson is the portfolio holder for Transport & Highways so I'm looking for a much more focus on the traffic issues & potholes in Sproughton & Pinewood as it is part of his ward!

Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation: Normal service has now resumed having been paused during the election moratorium. In Mid May, all six councils jointly launched the **Future Suffolk website**, providing a single hub for information, public engagement, and updates on reorganisation. Worth a visit - see www.suffolklgrhub.gov.uk

The district councils are continuing to look at the various workstreams to figure out how things will work post 31Mar28. My worry is partly about the staff - there will be job losses which is difficult for the people concerned. As usual people will probably jump ship beforehand which could mean its more difficult to deliver regular services. Babergh has held multiple meetings with staff to keep them updated on current status.

Later on this year the next big step in the process happens - the Structural Change Order due Q4'26. A Structural Change Order is "the mechanism by which an LGR programme controls and authorises changes to the agreed structure, governance, services, workforce, or operating model of the new council(s), ensuring that decisions are transparent, assessed, and formally approved." However, one of Reforms first steps has been to challenge the LGR '3 unitaries' decision with a Judicial Review which went in towards the end of June. I'd be surprised if this succeeds as you would think the Labour Government would have made the LGR decisions as difficult to challenge as possible - however - we watch and wait.

Better Recycling (formerly known as Simpler Recycling): Simpler Recycling has now been launched. We got our bins just in time during the last week of May. I, like most people are probably still getting used to sorting things out - I actually labelled the bin lids with what goes in so I don't make a mistake 😊. The vast majority of bins have been delivered - blocks of flats were done later than everyone else

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as more 400L ins needed to be ordered. Some bins took longer to get to the more remote homes. As I write we are now in the 4th week of 'Better Recycling' - call volumes have reduced and waiting times have also reduced, so I think people are getting used to the change. This change was mandated by the government who are attempting to standardise what we recycle - District Councils have just had to implement it!. The bit I like is that I don't have to drive somewhere to recycle glass - makes life a bit easier.

Joint Local Plan: We had a Joint Local Plan Working Group recently where options for a spatial strategy were presented. A **spatial strategy** sets out the big picture vision for how and where development should happen across the district so, how much development is needed (homes, jobs, infrastructure), where growth should be focused and which areas should be protected. Homes are often built where there are existing services and infrastructure (its cheaper) which generally means within or around a large village or town. I have spoken to a lot of people who are worried about building taking place to a large extent on the Ipswich Fringe - Ipswich has little land available for building new homes so look to surrounding councils to help out so, I feel they are right to be worried. I would look for a more balanced distribution across the area, which means development in Hadleigh and Sudbury and some development in the largest villages but there is some way to go before we agree to a strategy WHILE retaining the nature & character of the town/village and ENSURING NO COALESCENCE!

I mentioned in my previous report that at a recent planning committee meeting I asked for a deferral so that Highways could get some further data - which included asking the residents about the local parking situation. As a planning committee we want to make sensible well-informed decisions and that can't be done if information isn't available. So, I sat on the resubmission of the application - not certain that the Highways data was much better and was then told that it wasn't Highways policy to talk to residents - I then pointed out it would have been good if the committee had known this at the time of the original hearing - a point that wasn't well received, probably because it was justified!!.

PORTFOLIO

Greenhouse Gas Report

Babergh & Mid-Suffolk have to produce a report each year that shows progress towards net zero in line with its commitment to reach net zero by 2030. Each activity by the council has been assessed for its direct & indirect energy use e.g. electricity/gas use in buildings, direct fuel use in council owned vehicles & mileage in private vehicles used for council business. Usage is then converted into tonnes of carbon dioxide using the list of standard factors published by the government on an annual basis (it's a big spreadsheet!). Using 2018/19 as the baseline year, we've achieved a 42% reduction in emissions to date, with a 14% drop compared to last year—bringing total emissions for 2024-25 to 1,687 tCO₂e.

- 🏠 **Leisure Centres:** Emissions fell by 24% to 683.3 tCO₂e, though they remain the largest single source of emissions at 40%. Improvements in metering, solar integration, and battery storage are expected to drive further reductions.
- 🏠 **Sheltered Housing:** Emissions rose by 7.6% due to increased gas use during a colder winter. To achieve further reductions here will require building upgrades.
- 🚗 **Fleet and Waste Services:** Emissions from HVO-fuelled vehicles dropped significantly—waste fleet by 43% and public realm services by 43.3%.
- ⚡ **Electric Vehicle Charging Points:** Green tariff electricity use helped avoid over 5 tCO₂e in emissions.

We have completed the quick wins so achieving more reductions will get harder as we move towards 2030. In tandem with our Greenhouse Gas Report we have a Carbon Reduction Management Plan which

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covers the 'how' i.e. what we are planning to do next to continue on with reducing our emissions. There will certainly be further work on social/sheltered housing plus work on our leisure centres.

THE WARD ITSELF

Parking at Suffolk One: The plan is still the two step process: -

- 1) Extend existing double yellow lines at particular junctions. This needs a legal agreement called a TRO to be put in place - this process requires a period of public consultation. Ballpark cost at around £15,000 most of which goes on legal & admin fees. Our county councillor has agreed to fund half the cost. Highways Suffolk have said they do not have the money to fund the remainder. Which means money needs to come from elsewhere - I am looking for funding sources for this at the moment.
- 2) Implement single yellow lines with a parking restriction period. Similar to 1) in terms of process as a TRO is needed & public consultation. Funding is a tbd. I am focussing more on (1) at the moment - once that is being designed I can work on (2).

Traffic Solutions 4 Sproughton: Myself and Cllr Barber are meeting with Suffolk Highways in Sproughton next week to go through all the improvements listed in the Traffic Report I submitted to them. Money will be the sticking point again 😞

Nature Reserves: The legal agreement was sealed by Ipswich and sent back to Babergh. Our biodiversity officer has submitted the whole pack to Natural England for the formal and final designation. Capel St Mary LNR has also gone to Natural England and I am now working on a local nature reserve for Belstead.

Gipping River Path: The Public Right of Way team have now agreed access routes to the river across privately owned land. The team are aiming to do the repairs early July.

Ipswich Flood Barrier

It is looking hopeful that we can fund the feasibility study for this project- timing should be decided soon. Development costs are likely to be well into 6 figures but we have begun to look for funding for that too.

If you ever have an issue to raise with me please use the contact details below. I look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Davies

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