

# Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2031

## Part 1 - Transport Strategy



# Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the third local transport plan for Suffolk. At this time of financial constraint Suffolk County Council's priority is to aid sustainable economic recovery and growth.

Transport has a vital role to play in this. Good transport is essential for business and for people to access education and skills training. Maintaining our transport system, improving its reliability and reducing congestion are essential if we are to support the economic development needed for recovery and to place Suffolk in the strongest possible position to capitalise on emerging opportunities for future sustainable economic growth. I look forward to working with the new Local Enterprise Partnerships to ensure that transport investment supports our economic and business growth strategies.



Suffolk's local transport plan is in two parts. The first sets out the county council's long-term transport strategy to 2031. The second part is an implementation plan, setting out how the strategy could be delivered over the short, medium and long term, using a variety of funding and delivery mechanisms. This includes a short-term programme of county council investment for the next four years. The implementation plan will be reviewed over time to take account of any changes in priorities and funding levels.

Within this plan period we hope to see the delivery of a number of strategic transport improvements including:

- **dualling of the A11 between Barton Mills and Thetford**
- **the Ipswich major scheme, 'Ipswich- Transport fit for the 21st Century'**
- **the Beccles rail loop allowing increased frequency of trains between Ipswich and Lowestoft**
- **the Beccles southern relief road**
- **the Lowestoft northern spine road to help remove through traffic from the town**
- **Ipswich rail chord to improve freight connections from Felixstowe**
- **Copdock A14/A12 junction improvements.**

We will continue to work with local communities to determine more local priorities for investment which support community ambitions across Suffolk.

**Cllr Guy McGregor,**  
**Portfolio holder for Roads, Transport and Planning**

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**This document is the first part of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan.  
The second part sets out our plan for implementing the strategy.**

# Executive Summary

The local transport plan sets out Suffolk County Council's long-term transport strategy for the next 20 years. The key focus of the plan is to support Suffolk's economy as it recovers from the recession and to support future sustainable economic growth.

We want to maintain and, over time, improve Suffolk's transport networks, reduce congestion, and improve access to jobs and markets. We recognise that public funding for interventions, particularly at the start of the plan period, will be constrained.

Suffolk is a largely rural county with some significant urban centres. Much of the county has a high quality built and natural environment which is valued by residents, visitors and businesses. The transport challenges arising from the need to support economic growth are different across the county, reflecting the variety of growth sectors in the Suffolk economy and differences in housing growth pressures. The approach taken in developing this plan has been to consider the issues within each district council area. We have identified the key urban centres for growth where transport interventions can have a significant impact. These places are Beccles, Brandon, Bungay, Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe, Ipswich area, Haverhill, Lowestoft, Newmarket, Stowmarket and Sudbury.

The key challenge in the urban areas, where congestion is likely to increase, is to use more effective traffic management measures to get more out of the existing system and to reduce peak time traffic by encouraging greater use of sustainable forms of transport. In rural areas the key challenges are to ensure that people are able to access jobs, education and services; that the highway network is maintained in a good condition, and that the negative environmental impacts of transport are minimised.

A high priority is to support the growth of Suffolk's businesses so that they are able to capitalise on future opportunities. Transport will play a key role in this by reducing delay and wasted time and reducing the costs associated with the movement of goods and people.

Our local focus allows the county council to support the business sectors in different parts of Suffolk as well as those that are countywide such as the tourism industry. Some of the key areas for growth and development within Suffolk are:

- **Growth of ICT and ICT based businesses;**
- **Expansion of the Port of Felixstowe;**
- **The 'Energy Coast', including offshore wind and renewable energy focussed around Lowestoft and the development of Sizewell C nuclear power station;**
- **Construction of SnOasis;**
- **Development of University Campus Suffolk as a research centre;**
- **Development and growth of biotech in west Suffolk and around UCS;**
- **Growth of equine related organisations around Newmarket;**
- **Tourism, and local food and drink;**
- **Creative Industries;**

A number of strategic transport improvements are planned for delivery in the short/medium term. These include the council's major transport scheme Ipswich – Transport fit for the 21st Century, the Government's trunk road schemes to complete the dualling of the A11 and improve the A14/A12 junction at Copdock, the Beccles Loop rail improvement, and Ipswich rail chord. These improvements, taken together, will significantly enhance Suffolk's transport networks.

We have identified additional strategic road and rail improvements that are likely to be deliverable in medium to long term. These schemes would be funded from a number of sources. More details are given in Part 2 of this local transport plan.



# 1 Introduction

This is Suffolk County Council's third local transport plan. In this plan we set out our long-term transport strategy for Suffolk and explain how we will implement it.

## The Suffolk context

### Transport in a challenging economic climate

The county council is having to deal with significant funding reductions that present challenges on a completely different scale to anything that has been seen before. Our strategic partnership with Carillion will come to an end in the early years of this Plan and we will be looking to establish a new partnership which will continue to drive out costs and ensure that our highway network continues to be maintained to minimise the whole life costs of the assets.

A key policy objective for the county council is promoting and aiding economic resilience and private sector led growth through the current period of downturn, placing Suffolk in a position to emerge strongly as the economy recovers. Suffolk and Norfolk have joined together in the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, and will be working with other neighbouring Local Enterprise Partnerships to push forward business led economic growth. In this plan we show how transport will play its part in supporting and facilitating future sustainable economic growth by:

- **maintaining (and in the future improving) our transport networks**
- **tackling congestion**
- **improving access to jobs and markets**
- **encouraging a shift to more sustainable travel patterns.**

Business as usual is not an option. Funding reductions will provide significant challenges to the county council in providing transport services. Opportunities are being found to reduce the cost of our operations and openings will arise to work with others to secure mutually beneficial outcomes. Potential partnerships, such as with the health sector, could help to embed a greater transport focus in healthier lifestyle programmes. Stronger local communities may be able to find their own local solutions to issues such as speeding traffic or heavy lorries using village streets. Working with public, private and voluntary sector partners will present opportunities to achieve agreed outcomes and maximise value for money.

In the short term our ambitions for significant improvements to the county's road network will be constrained by available funds. The highways agency will also be working under similar constraints. Transport improvements to support economic recovery and growth are, however, very important and all opportunities to improve local networks will be explored. An underpinning priority is to maintain the current highway network in a satisfactory condition and prevent it from deteriorating and adversely affecting local transport, the economy and road safety. Suffolk's highway network is sensitive to frost penetration and the immediate effects of the recent severe winters on the county's road structure has been responded to by increased reactive maintenance - the longer-term effects on the road structure are yet to be realised. In the early period of the plan we will concentrate on dealing with the most severe deterioration.

Our strategy extends over twenty years and later in this period, and as resources permit, we want to make progress in the delivery of ambitious transport projects on the A12, and in Ipswich, Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Beccles, Bungay, Brandon and Sudbury. Alongside the Local Economic Partnerships and other partners we will also lobby strongly for improvements to the national road network in Suffolk – A11, A12 and A14; and to the rail system - Great Eastern Mainline, East Suffolk line, Ipswich to Cambridge and Peterborough services, and the completion of the Felixstowe to Nuneaton route, particularly for freight.

# 2 Supporting wider priorities

## Suffolk's characteristics

About 714,000 people live in Suffolk. Approximately one third of the population lives in the three main towns of Ipswich, Lowestoft and Bury St. Edmunds, a third in the market towns, and a third within the rural areas. Table 1 shows the estimated populations by district and borough:

District/Borough Population	
<b>Babergh</b>	85,800
<b>Forest Heath</b>	62,200
<b>Ipswich</b>	126,600
<b>Mid Suffolk</b>	94,200
<b>St Edmundsbury</b>	103,500
<b>Suffolk Coastal</b>	124,100
<b>Waveney</b>	117,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>714,100</b>

*Table 1: Population by District*

By 2031 the Suffolk population is expected to grow by a further 27%, one of the fastest rates in the East of England. Suffolk's population is also ageing, with forecasts estimating that approximately 250,000 people over the age of 65 will be living in the county by 2031. That will be nearly one third of the total population. The forecast growth of the population indicates that significant growth in the economy, in jobs and housing will be needed in the future. The East of England Plan provided for 60,000 homes and 57,000 jobs in the period up to 2021.

Growth in employment and housing on this scale will result in significant transport impacts and will require supporting investment in infrastructure and services.

## Transforming Suffolk

The Suffolk local transport plan supports 'Transforming Suffolk: Suffolk's Sustainable Community Strategy'.

The headline themes of the community strategy are:

- **creating a prosperous and vibrant economy**
- **improving learning and skills for the future**
- **creating the greenest county**
- **providing safe, healthy and inclusive communities.**



The key ambition is to support the local economy, attract world class businesses, and support and develop the local workforce, in the context of a shift towards a low carbon economy. This will help residents to achieve a high quality of life and create stronger and more self-reliant communities. While improving the local economy we also want to help make Suffolk a healthier, safer place to live and work; improve the level of educational attainment; and reduce the impact of harmful emissions. Working towards these priorities will assist in bringing Suffolk out of the recession and place the county in a strong position to capitalise on future opportunities for sustainable economic development.

Suffolk's Priorities	Challenges	Transport aims
<b>A prosperous and vibrant economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support sustainable economic growth</li> <li>• Use Suffolk's unique selling points to capture emerging markets</li> <li>• Reduce economic inequalities across the county</li> <li>• Transport and infrastructure to support sustainable economic growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve connectivity and accessibility</li> <li>• Maintain core transport networks. Balance capacity and demand for travel, through increasing the use of sustainable transport and reducing need for travel</li> <li>• Improve access to jobs and commercial markets for residents and businesses based in the county</li> </ul>
<b>Creating the greenest county</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing CO2 emissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced emissions from transport, including road maintenance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapting to climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining resilience of transport networks (e.g. coping with flooding, pot holes, winter damage)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving air quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced air pollutant emissions</li> </ul>
<b>Safe, healthy and inclusive communities (Protect vulnerable people and reduce inequalities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving health impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating an increase in walking and cycling</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the physical accessibility of the transport system, improving information about travel options, improving access to services for those without access to cars</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting regeneration and tackling deprivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting wider regeneration</li> </ul>

Suffolk's Priorities	Challenges	Transport aims
<b>Safe, healthy and inclusive communities (Protect vulnerable people and reduce inequalities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving road safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the number of casualties on the transport network</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving air quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing impact of poor air quality on local communities</li> </ul>
<b>Learning and skills for the future (Transform learning and skills)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving access to education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving accessibility to schools, colleges, universities and other places of learning</li> <li>• Access to broadband for online learning</li> </ul>

*Table 2- The relationship between the Suffolk priorities and our transport aims*

To ensure this Plan meets the objective included in the Suffolk Community Strategy to “Retain, enhance and value Suffolk’s natural and historic environment”, environmental checks on schemes will be undertaken at an early design stage. The impact of all new infrastructure works and maintenance activities will be considered, prioritising biodiversity and built environment assets for their own sake and opportunities taken to enhance biodiversity as an integral part of these projects.

Any development that would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will be subject to assessment under Part IV of the Habitats Regulations at project application stage. If it cannot be ascertained that there would be no adverse effects on site integrity the project will have to be refused or pass the tests of Regulation 62, in which case any necessary compensatory measures will need to be secured in accordance with Regulation 66.

## Transport and the Economy

The British Chamber of Commerce and the Confederation of British Industry have, in recent reports, both highlighted the importance of transport for the economy. About 80% of businesses regard the road network as vital to their business and a similar proportion report that they have been adversely affected by shortcomings in the transport network. In the East of England this figure was 85%. The key concern is around congestion and consequent unreliability of journey times. The cost of congestion nationally has been estimated at £7 to £8 billion per year. A study for the East of England Development Agency in 2008 showed that by 2021 congestion will cost the Ipswich economy about £17 million per year.

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce members highlighted local concerns about the impact that transport has on costs to business, through lost hours and operational difficulties. Transport is also seen as an issue in losing business and failing to attract investment with congestion cited as a key issue.

There are some serious additional challenges posed by public spending constraints. This includes the risk that there will be insufficient funding to adequately maintain the quality of the local and national road network let alone improve it.

In Suffolk our transport plans will support business and growth with a focus on:

- **the challenge of maintaining the highway network in good condition**
- **tackling congestion in the larger towns by more efficient management of traffic, reducing the demand for car travel and promoting more sustainable means of travel**
- **improved connectivity and accessibility in rural areas**
- **seeking improvement to the A11, A12 and A14 trunk roads connecting businesses in Suffolk to each other and to their markets**
- **seeking improvement to the rail network for freight and passengers**
- **relief for our market towns suffering from high levels of through traffic**
- **recognising that securing high speed broadband throughout Suffolk is very important at present in addressing accessibility and connectivity issues throughout Suffolk and supporting business growth.**

Transport is critical to the development of most of the key employment sectors for Suffolk. Maintaining our roads in a good condition, improving accessibility and developing a reliable sustainable transport network in Suffolk will be our focus. This will be essential for businesses in creating access to more jobs for more people, reducing travel costs and encouraging smarter ways to work.

## County Economic Strategy

Transport has a key role to play in delivering Suffolk's economic strategy, which identifies what needs to be done to develop key economic strengths. The long-term vision for Suffolk is to become the most innovative and diverse economy in the East of England with particular focus on the following areas:

- **developing key sectors**
- **business and enterprise support**
- **addressing inequalities**
- **improving infrastructure**
- **developing people's skills.**

The emerging Local Economic Assessment identifies key growth sectors in the county energy; food, drink and agriculture; information and communication technology; bio technology; ports and logistics; advanced manufacturing, creative industries, and tourism. These sectors combine existing and emerging areas of economic activity. The New Anglia Local Economic Partnership is looking to focus initially in stimulating growth in the energy sector and in tourism.



Figure 1 – Suffolk's economic selling points

Efforts to support the growth of key sectors will also help reduce economic inequalities across the county. We want to see greater opportunities for entrepreneurs, for employment and skills development, and for the physical regeneration of our towns. There are likely to be changes to current employment patterns as businesses adapt or new organisations are created. This has particular relevance for Lowestoft where there could be a shift of employment type based around development of the energy sector. Other employment opportunities that may develop across the county include information and communications technology research focussed around Martlesham; bio-technology in West Suffolk; growth of the Port of Felixstowe; development of nuclear energy at Sizewell; and growth of the tourism industry.

The movement of people and goods around the county will be crucial to delivering the council's priorities. A balanced sustainable approach to transport will make it possible for us to tackle congestion, improve the quality and reliability of our road and public transport networks, and improve accessibility to jobs, services and opportunities.

Our aim is to achieve this in a way that encourages the use of more efficient and healthier forms of transport, makes the use of the transport system safer and minimises the adverse impacts of transport on climate change and on the built and natural environment.

In December 2010 the creation of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership was confirmed by Government. Suffolk County Council as a partner is fully committed to working within the new body to develop the local economy.

## Creating the Greenest County

Transport is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Transport emissions account for 24% of total carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the UK. In the East of England the figure is 32.7% and 29.2% in Suffolk, but there are significant differences across the county (see table 3).

Area	Road transport as % of total CO <sub>2</sub> emissions
Babergh	37.6%
Forest Heath	34.5%
Ipswich	18.1%
Mid Suffolk	38.2%
St. Edmundsbury	23.3%
Suffolk Coastal	35.7%
Waveney	21.7%
Suffolk Total	29.2%
East of England Total	32.7%

Table 3- Road transport CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 2007



Transport emissions will grow significantly if no action is taken. In the longer term technological changes such as improved vehicle efficiency and the development of electric vehicles will help reduce emissions associated directly with transport. In the short to medium term the adoption of more sustainable ways of travel for people and goods will be required if there are to be significant cuts in transport emissions, or a reduction in the need to travel through greater use of information communications technology such as teleconferencing. It is in this area that it will be possible for local interventions to make a significant contribution.

Emission reductions in the transport sector will require a shift in the way transport investment is allocated and will require some difficult decisions. Most carbon reduction interventions have impacts on wider objectives, including economic growth, equality of opportunity, quality of life and the natural environment.

Potential emission savings in the transport sector fall short of cross-sector national targets and transport will rely on other sectors achieving more than their share of cuts. The transport sector is also heavily reliant on the development of renewable sources of energy to power electric vehicles.

In Suffolk transport will have significant influence on our ambition to make Suffolk the greenest county in England because of the high level of emissions attributed to transport. The principal ways in which transport can contribute towards the reduction of carbon emissions are by:

- **encouraging the use of more sustainable forms of transport**
- **improving the efficiency of the highway network**
- **more sustainable processes and use of materials to reduce impact of construction and maintenance on biodiversity, geodiversity, historic buildings and archaeological assets**
- **supporting developments in alternative fuel types**
- **investing in intelligent lighting, including part night lighting and dimming**
- **supporting developments in alternative fuel types**
- **promoting technological improvements and changes to business practice such as teleconferencing/teleworking and flexible working.**

Road maintenance is a significant contributor to carbon output in Suffolk and innovation and effective management through the Transport Asset Management Plan will influence our greenest county aspiration.

The county council and our district and borough council partners also have a key role in planning and encouraging a better relationship between the home, leisure, retail and employment. New developments will be required to provide facilities that promote walking, cycling and local public transport to access local employment sites and wider transport networks.

A scoping assessment of the implications for European sites and European Offshore marine sites from any transport scheme, at a project level, is necessary to demonstrate compliance with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Any scheme which is likely to result in significant effects on the interest features of a European Site will trigger a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Habitats Regulations Assessment is the assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would adversely affect that site's integrity.



## Safer and healthier communities

The cost of physical inactivity, poor air quality and noise associated from transport across towns in England has been forecast as being up to £25.4 billion per annum.

A healthier, more active workforce will reduce levels of absenteeism and increase productivity. Active travel also provides an effective intervention for more deprived and unhealthy members of communities. Greater levels of physical activity can reduce the need for costly clinical intervention.

Ways to improve health through transport include:

- **creating pedestrian and cycle-friendly environments that support active transport, in towns and on the wider rights of way network**
- **promoting road safety through education**
- **educating front-line health workers about transport options and the importance of communicating these to patients**
- **supporting engineering and enforcement to reduce the number of road crashes.**

A number of high noise level locations have been identified in Suffolk where there is significant exposure to traffic noise. The majority are on the trunk road routes but a small number of 'hotspot' locations have been identified for possible treatment on the A12, at busy junctions in Ipswich and on the A143 at Bury St Edmunds.

There are air quality management areas in Ipswich, Woodbridge, Sudbury, Newmarket, Felixstowe and Great Barton. Monitoring is being undertaken throughout the county and has identified further areas in Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds, Brandon and at other sites in Ipswich where there are concerns about air quality related to traffic emissions. The county council will work with district and borough councils to develop action plans targeted at air quality improvement in each air quality management area.

## Transport and Skills

The economy and skills are interlinked. Skills are also a driver of the economy. People with higher skills levels achieve more at work; they're more committed, more innovative, more productive, and more confident about taking risks and growing businesses. A key issue for developing skills in Suffolk is getting access to education and learning, whether this is at an institution such as school or college, or work-based learning such as an apprenticeship.

For young people, transport enables them to have greater choice about where to learn and which subjects they would like study. This group of people are much less likely to be able to afford their own transport than the general population and so rely heavily on public transport. Similarly for work-based learning, a difficulty in placing people is often related to transport. The group of people who are not in education, employment or training are also generally the group that find it hardest to travel, making transport critical in accessing learning and employment.

Demand responsive transport services, which form a key part of our public transport plans for rural areas, will go some way to alleviating some of these issues, but may still not be practicable for all, so other community based solutions need to be considered.

# 3 Transport issues in Suffolk

The strategic role for transport is to support and facilitate sustainable economic growth. Different places in Suffolk have different priorities. In this section we consider the key transport issues in different parts of the county.

## Babergh

Babergh is an economically diverse area, with industrial areas at the Ipswich fringe, Sudbury, Acton, Hadleigh and Brantham; traditional retail sectors in the two market towns; a high proportion of small businesses; and tourism and leisure based around the historic villages of Long Melford, Lavenham, Kersey, and the Orwell and Stour estuaries and the scenic 'Constable Country'. There is a significant agricultural base, and historically, Babergh has had a relatively high proportion of manufacturing and other industrial employment.

Babergh District Council has identified the following local economic strengths and it is likely that these sectors will be promoted and encouraged in the district:

- **non industrial employment – including public sector jobs such as teaching, health and welfare**
- **port and logistics**
- **information and Communications Technology**
- **manufacturing – reflecting the historical advantage/local tradition**
- **tourism and related leisure/hospitality service sector**
- **rural/agricultural/diversification – including farm shops and farmers markets.**

It is likely that Babergh's approach will be to create opportunities for jobs in these sectors by protecting existing and allocating new sites in the district in locations that meet the needs of the local economy. This will create sustainable new mixed use developments, and through flexible policies that support employment in the tourism/culture/leisure/hospitality, sectors and new ways of working, particularly home working. Key locations for employment growth are Sudbury/Great Cornard, Western Babergh, Ipswich Fringe East Babergh including Shotley, and Hadleigh/Mid Babergh.

The attractive landscape, estuaries, and coastline, and the historic towns and villages in Babergh form the base of an important cultural and historic leisure and tourism sector. Businesses in this sector are important contributors to the local economy and include leisure activities that attract spending all year round from people within the district and the immediate area, to the more conventional tourism associated with people visiting from outside the region on day trips, taking short breaks, and longer summer holidays.

The exact scale and location of housing growth will be determined through the Babergh Development Framework. It is likely that growth will be focussed at the urban areas and towns in the district namely Sudbury, Hadleigh and the Ipswich Fringe as well as at larger villages in the district. This will add further pressure to the transport networks in these towns, particularly Sudbury, and exacerbate localised incidents of congestion throughout the day. Where development falls outside of the larger settlements commuter trips will add further pressure to transport networks. The spatial focus of housing and employment growth shows the need for better accessibility for residents within the district to reach jobs and services. Access to education is also an important issue within the district, with only areas around Sudbury and Ipswich fringe being seen as having adequate levels of provision.

Sudbury has severe air quality problems in Cross Street as a result of heavy goods vehicle traffic and queuing at obstructions. The Air Quality Action Plan will identify a number of short-term cost-effective measures targeted at addressing the problems. A western bypass has been identified as providing relief and removing vehicles to reduce congestion and improve air quality. A funding bid for the bypass was rejected by the Government in 2003 on environmental grounds. Delivery of a bypass solution in the future will require significant work to overcome these concerns. In the short to medium term the management of town centre traffic will have to be carefully considered and mitigation measures proposed and implemented to address these issues.

Current levels of bus provision within the district are also limited, with even the larger settlements not being big enough to be able to justify their own internal bus services. Routes and timetabling is also generally limited throughout the district, with the key service being an hourly provision between Sudbury and Ipswich. Forecast levels of future development within Sudbury may be such that good town bus services may become commercially viable.

Severance issues also exist within Babergh due to the proximity of heavily trafficked roads to local communities, with the A12, A1071 and A137 particularly impacting on communities by the difficulty with which they can be crossed to reach services. When the A12 is closed this also creates further issues with vehicles using inappropriate roads to negotiate around incidents, putting greater volumes of traffic through local communities.

<b>Key transport issues for Babergh</b>
<b>Sudbury bus station development and surrounding town centre environment</b>
<b>Sudbury bypass</b>
<b>Sudbury town centre traffic management and Cross Street Air Quality Management Area</b>
<b>Great Cornard station</b>
<b>Residents parking, long stay parking, lorry parking</b>
<b>Hadleigh – local service, dial a ride</b>
<b>Hadleigh Benton Street</b>
<b>Lorry parking within the district</b>
<b>A12, A14 and Copdock improvement</b>
<b>Access to education (e.g. Suffolk One)</b>
<b>Linking new strategic development to town centres</b>
<b>Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail improvements to allow freight modal shift</b>
<b>Speed and management of A134</b>

## Forest Heath

It is likely that Forest Heath will grow by around 4,500 homes and 7,000 jobs by 2021. Most of the growth is expected to be in the major settlements of Newmarket, Brandon and Mildenhall. These developments will put additional strain onto the transport network, and where they are located on greenfield sites would be expected to be further away from traditional transport hubs and routes and so require greater investment to make them sustainable. Proposed development to the west of Mildenhall for example raises difficult issues about connectivity with the rest of the town.

Forest Heath already has high levels of out-commuting to employment sites in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and other parts of Suffolk.

It is anticipated that new jobs will be created across the district, but will predominantly be within traditional employment locations, such as Mildenhall and Newmarket. Growth is expected to reinforce the key sectors within the district of agriculture, activities linked to the air bases, horse racing, and tourism, with an aspiration for biotech investment in Mildenhall.

The planned Department for Transport scheme to dual the A11 from Fiveways junction to Thetford will bring significant benefits to this area and securing its delivery by Government is a key priority. The proposed scheme does not include a grade separated junction at Fiveways and it is hoped that this further improvement can also be secured to reduce congestion at the existing roundabout and maximise the benefits of the main improvement. There are also safety concerns crossing the A11 between Barton Mills and Tuddenham. We will work with the highways Agency and the Police to look at options for improvement.

The rural nature of Forest Heath raises areas of concern for access to services, with only Newmarket, Mildenhall and Brandon having reasonable levels of accessibility. This reflects the level of provision of public transport to services and the distances that many people have to travel.

An Air Quality Management Area has been declared in Newmarket and an Air Quality Action Plan will target measures at addressing the problems. Air quality issues are also present within Brandon as a result of congestion at a primary junction. An A1065 relief road for Brandon to give relief from through traffic has long been an aspiration. A potential delivery mechanism for a new road, funded from housing development, has been proposed and this may provide a good opportunity to secure this improvement.

As a Brandon relief road may result in a significant impact on the conservation objectives of Breckland Forest or Farmland Special Protection Areas, it is likely that a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment would be required for this scheme as it has potential to result in a likely significant effect. Mitigation would need to be sought and compensation agreed in order to reduce or negate any negative impacts for Natural England to approve such a document. If it cannot be ascertained that there would be no adverse effects on site integrity the project will have to be refused or pass the tests of Regulation 62, in which case any necessary compensatory measures will need to be secured in accordance with Regulation 66.

There are also peak period congestion issues along the A14, particularly at the A142 junction in Newmarket.

Bus provision throughout the district also generally offers a reasonable to poor level of service, with the only exception being in Newmarket where, due to the greater population density and employment, a greater level of service is able to be supported by operators. However, there is still a gap in provision for access by bus to Newmarket rail station and concern about the quality of the bus station in the town. Rail travel is slightly restricted with interchanges needed at Cambridge or Bury St Edmunds for connections to Ely or Peterborough.

#### **Key transport issues for Forest Heath**

**Newmarket bus station**

**Ely to Newmarket rail link**

**A14/A142 junction**

**A11 improvement and Fiveways junction**

**Local bus services**

**Brandon relief road**

**Mildenhall town centre and links to West Row, Beck Row and Lakenheath**

**Air Quality Management Area in Newmarket**

## Ipswich

Ipswich is the county town of Suffolk and so acts as a focal point for a significant proportion of the growth expected in Suffolk. Within Ipswich there is forecast to be an additional 15,000 dwellings, with an additional 5,000 in neighbouring districts on the edge of the town. The development in Ipswich will also support regeneration of areas within the town, with a significant area of regeneration around the Waterfront and further development of the education quarter. There is also the ambition to continue to promote employment-led mixed use development of Ipswich Village. Ipswich Borough Council also has ambitious plans for an expansion of the quality and scope of the town's retail offer, including new shopping centres. These exciting development opportunities will help transform the town but will also present some challenges.

Significant development within Ipswich, particularly employment, is anticipated to be focussed around the central area, and so could increase the transport pressures that currently exist within the town. The location of this development, which should result in shorter journeys for many, provides an opportunity to change the ways that people choose to travel. If travel patterns from development follow those currently seen there will be greater levels of congestion, with a consequent deterioration in air quality, more delays and longer traffic queues. Traffic modelling has shown that with the anticipated level of growth traffic could grow by over 15% by 2021. There will also be additional pressures on the A12/A14 at Copdock, Seven Hills Interchange and the Orwell Bridge.

Significant housing development is also proposed for the northern fringe of Ipswich and this, together with planned growth in Suffolk Coastal on the eastern fringe of the town will add significant pressure to radial routes leading to the town centre, the principal focus for employment. It will be important to ensure that transport is fully integrated with the development plans for these locations. We will work closely with the planning authorities and developers to ensure that robust travel plans are implemented to minimise traffic from the new developments and that necessary transport infrastructure and service improvements are properly funded by developers.

Many peak hour journeys in Ipswich are fairly short and yet are carried out by car. Congestion levels are already seen as a significant problem and we want to tackle this in order to ensure that future economic growth in the town is not jeopardised.

Bus service provision in Ipswich is generally good, and provides commercial services but there are some areas that are not well served. There are no orbital services so that passengers wanting to skirt around the town have to travel into the centre and then out again. There is currently a lack of multi-operator ticketing which exacerbates this problem. The availability and pricing of car parking within the town is also an important factor in the travel choices that people make. More than half of long-stay parking capacity in the town is privately owned and much of it at little or no cost to users.

Education facilities have been transformed over the past few years with the establishment of the new University Campus Suffolk, Suffolk New College and Suffolk One sixth-form college. These new facilities are important for Suffolk's ambitions to raise the levels of skills and educational attainment to be realised. They have also added additional pressures to the transport systems.

There are obesity and air quality issues within Ipswich that tend to be focussed around the more deprived areas of the town. Enabling people to shift to walking and cycling for local trips will go some way towards resolving these health issues. The four Air Quality Management Areas cover a significant part of the town centre and relate to heavy goods vehicle numbers as well as total traffic.

The Air Quality Action Plan developed to address the problems can be found at:

[http://www.ipswich.gov.uk/downloads/E-08-31\\_IBC\\_Air\\_Quality\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.ipswich.gov.uk/downloads/E-08-31_IBC_Air_Quality_Action_Plan.pdf)

The proposed Ipswich – Transport fit for the 21st Century scheme is a £21 million package of traffic management, smarter choices, bus, walking and cycling improvements to address the main transport issues facing Ipswich over the next period. More details are given in Part 2 of this local transport plan. This flagship scheme is at the heart of delivering our transport strategy for Ipswich.

The waterfront and town centre areas remain priorities for development and regeneration. There is a local aspiration for a new road crossing of the Wet Dock in Ipswich, promoted by Ipswich Borough Council in its draft Local Development Framework Core Strategy to improve access to the island site, which may come forward for redevelopment in the future. The county council supports this longer-term aspiration because whilst a new crossing would not provide significant benefit as a route for through traffic, it could improve the accessibility of this area. It will be necessary, alongside the Borough Council, to take a view on the deliverability of this proposal, particularly in relation to the economic viability of future development.

A shorter-term proposal has been developed to remodel the roads around the waterfront following a study by consultants Buchanan. In this proposal the connectivity between the town centre and the waterfront area would be improved by a reduction in the volume of traffic using the Star Lane gyratory with a consequent improvement in air quality. This scheme will be considered for implementation during the life of the plan.

<b>Key transport issues for Ipswich</b>
<b>Road condition</b>
<b>Urban realm improvements</b>
<b>Tackling congestion</b>
<b>Modernisation of bus stations</b>
<b>Reducing separation between town centre and waterfront</b>
<b>Better facilities for walking and cycling</b>
<b>Stronger neighbourhoods</b>
<b>Longer term – crossing for improved access to wet dock island site</b>
<b>Town centre masterplan</b>
<b>A14 improvements</b>
<b>Ipswich – Transport fit for the 21st Century</b>
<b>Extensive Air Quality Management Areas</b>
<b>A14 Orwell Bridge and Seven Hills Interchange Congestion</b>

## Mid Suffolk

Mid Suffolk is expected to grow by around 4,700 homes by 2021. This includes a large proportion in Stowmarket with additional development in key service centres and the fringe of Ipswich. Additional development in Stowmarket will place greater strain onto the transport network within the town and the A14, but there is an opportunity through the planning process to develop more sustainable communities and to make greater levels of provision for sustainable transport networks and services. Where new dwellings are established away from the larger towns it is important that local provision of, or access to, services is considered as part of reducing the need to travel to the larger towns.

The district is also planning for an extra 6,000 job opportunities being created, which will mainly be focussed in towns and villages along the key transport corridors of the A14 and A140, though will include some to the south-east at Great Blakenham and Claydon. With the proximity of these locations to primary road networks it



will be important to work with developers to ensure that measures are in place to encourage alternatives to car commuting to avoid increases in the volume of cars using the roads and increasing peak time congestion.

The predominantly rural nature of Mid Suffolk raises accessibility issues for residents in accessing key services, and while development will create opportunities for new services to be created there is also a danger that where there is no local provision it will generate greater levels of car use. Where services remain remote from some settlements it also raises issues about access by public transport. While issues exist across the district there are particular issues across some of the 'High Suffolk' area.

Bus provision throughout the district varies. Rail also provides some linkages with towns along the A14 corridor and joining the Great Eastern Mainline for access to Norwich and London. A new rail station at Great Blakenham is required as part of the proposed Snoasis development and will be essential to reduce the impact of that development and to improve the quality of local rail service provision. Further development within Stowmarket should be able to support commercially viable town bus services as an extension of the longer distance services that currently operate. There is some spare capacity on trains operating through the district, particularly on services between Stowmarket and Ipswich. Services running through to Cambridge and Peterborough can become busy and have some capacity issues, including for bicycles. We will work with the train operator to resolve these issues.

Severance issues also exist within the district, with local communities being separated by large volumes of traffic using roads. Speed through these communities is also of concern to local residents, while the management of heavy goods vehicles is a further concern with a number of distribution centres located in the district. This is a particular concern at Coddanham.

Safety problems on the A140 have been largely resolved by adjustments to the speed limits, however this will be kept under review.

<b>Key transport issues for Mid Suffolk</b>
<b>Town based bus services in Stowmarket</b>
<b>Stowmarket transport interchange</b>
<b>Tackling congestion in Stowmarket</b>
<b>Cycle network</b>
<b>Rural bus provision</b>
<b>Rural footpaths</b>
<b>Local access to key services</b>
<b>Lorry management</b>

## St Edmundsbury

St Edmundsbury will continue to be a location for growth which could amount to at least 10,000 new homes in the next 20 years as well as a growth in jobs. The growth will be concentrated mainly in the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, with the remaining dwellings being across the rest of the borough. The proposed concentration of housing within Bury St Edmunds will present transport challenges if we are to avoid increased congestion within the town and on roads leading to it, including the A14.

Growth throughout the rest of the borough and in neighbouring districts will also add to traffic in Bury St Edmunds as more residents and visitors travel to the town from across the sub-region to access key services

and retail. The level of growth within Haverhill will also impact upon the road network both within the town and the wider area if measures are not put in place to address increased levels of car use associated from extra car trips from them. Levels of safety and congestion on the A1307 between Haverhill and Cambridge in particular are likely to be of significant concern and we will work with St Edmundsbury and Cambridgeshire County Council to find solutions to these problems.

Economic growth within the district is also forecast to see the creation of about 13,000 new jobs, with strong demand in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. The location of additional employment opportunities will create additional pressure onto the road network within the district and larger towns if measures are not in place to ease the flow of traffic and to encourage the use of alternatives to single occupancy car commuting. Issues of accessibility to more remote employment locations will also need to be addressed, including links towards Cambridge and Stansted.

The development of the long-term employment growth at Suffolk Business Park on the eastern side of Bury St Edmunds is dependent on the provision of a new link road connecting to the A14 at the Rookery junction. This road is a priority to support development of the local economy and the county council will work closely with the borough council, Highways Agency and developers to try to secure its provision early in the life of this plan.

Improvement of rail services to Cambridge, Peterborough and Ipswich would be very beneficial. There have been some enhancements to the lines recently, however we will work with the operator to seek further improvements as journey times are relatively slow, there is often overcrowding, and a lack of room for bicycles. General improvement of public transport services – both quality and frequency in both towns and the rural area of St Edmundsbury is necessary.

As with the other districts within Suffolk, the rural nature of St Edmundsbury outside of the larger towns raises areas of concern for accessibility for those people without access to cars. Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill act as service centres for the surrounding populations and it is important that development throughout the rest of the borough supports access by public transport to sites. Apart from Bury St Edmunds none of the settlements have direct access to rail services.

There is an air quality issue within Great Barton due to the volume of traffic, heavy goods vehicle numbers and parking in the centre of the village. Queuing and the volume of vehicles can result in delays to journeys and can also create a segregation effect in hampering social interaction within the village on one side of the road to the other. A bypass is a long-term aspiration to help alleviate these issues. There are also congestion and safety concerns at the Bunbury Arms junction, and solutions will need to be considered with any further development at Thurston.

There are peak hour congestion issues at junctions of the A14 around Bury St Edmunds and within the town. Some junctions in Haverhill are also congested at peak times.

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other. The A143 also segregates parts of the village. There are also peak hour congestion issues at junctions of the A14 around Bury St Edmunds and within the town. Some junctions in Haverhill are also congested at peak times.

<b>Key transport issues for St Edmundsbury</b>
<b>A14 Junctions</b>
<b>Moreton Hall link road</b>
<b>Bury St Edmunds – relief roads for A134, A1101 and Westley as part of new developments</b>
<b>Air Quality Management Area at Great Barton (and bypass aspiration)</b>
<b>Rail connections</b>
<b>Haverhill to Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge bus connections</b>
<b>Haverhill North West relief road</b>
<b>Haverhill cycle network</b>
<b>Haverhill road condition</b>
<b>Rural footways</b>

## Suffolk Coastal

It is anticipated that there will be about 8,000 additional homes provided within the district by 2028. A significant proportion of this forecast growth will be concentrated to the east of Ipswich and at Felixstowe and the neighbouring Trimley villages, with the remainder dispersed between the market towns and larger villages across the rest of the district. This growth pattern will place additional strain onto the transport network throughout the district, particularly in areas around Ipswich, along the A12 and A1214 and along the A14 corridor where there is already some peak time congestion. The A14 is part of the trans-European road network linking the nationally important Port of Felixstowe to the rest of the country. It is important that the right balance is struck between catering for the needs of local and strategic traffic. Housing growth in these areas does however offer a greater opportunity for providing for and promoting alternatives to the car due to the proximity of the housing to service centres, employment and public transport networks that are already in operation.

Along with housing growth a need for a greater level of employment has also been forecast. Three strategic employment sites have been identified: the Port of Felixstowe with associated port related and logistics uses; Martlesham Heath business campus, with the development of high-tech industries linked to Adastral Park; and an extension to Ransomes Europark, as part of an employment corridor stretching across the Ipswich borough boundary. Other smaller-scale key employment areas are also present within the district that will play a role in creating a greater number of new opportunities. Agriculture and tourism related industries will also play a continuing role in the economic growth of the district, helping to maintain a strong and vibrant rural economy. The variety of locations for new employment will each raise particular transport challenges that will need to be addressed. These include managing large scale movements of lorries associated with the Port and the adjacent Air Quality Management Area and the development of the Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail route, through to congestion related to tourism along the coast.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty reflects its environmental quality. This quality makes the area attractive to visitors and tourism is a key element in the local economy. The traffic that this generates can lead to localised congestion problems and in some places the volume of tourist traffic is a threat to the very environment that people come to see.

Much of Suffolk Coastal is rural and this, combined with geographic limitations through the location of rivers, presents some issues for access to services by public transport. Accessibility in the coast and heaths area is a particular concern. Access to employment has also been identified as an issue throughout the district, in particular for the 16 to 24 age group. Opportunities exist to build on the recent innovative demand responsive public transport arrangements set up to service this area.

Woodbridge suffers from some localised congestion in the centre of the town and has had an air quality management area declared. This is the result of congestion around one junction. The draft Air Quality Action Plan can be found at <http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/envprotection/airquality/>

For much of the district the A12 provides a key north/south route and a link for the market towns and villages in the district and to the north in Waveney. The resilience of the road, in the face of issues such as flooding, is therefore a critical issue in that it can result in communities being further isolated. The impact of climate change (increased flooding, sea level rise) is likely to affect the A12 at Lattymere Dam, and the A1095 at Wolsey Bridge. It will also impact on the alignment of the Suffolk coast and affect the areas of outstanding natural beauty and public rights of way.

The East Suffolk railway line between Ipswich and Lowestoft runs through the district providing direct access to two market towns and several other villages. The line currently has limitations as to the level of service that is able to be provided. However, the service does provide connections to the centre of Ipswich and London, so there is an opportunity to encourage greater use of the service with or without any improvements. The current frequency is a train every hour from Ipswich to Saxmundham which is a viable alternative for commuting by private car using the A12. However beyond Saxmundham to Lowestoft the service is currently every two hours. Improvement works at Beccles to provide a passing loop is a key priority for the county council and it is anticipated that this work can be completed by Network Rail by the end of 2012, paving the way for a full hourly service between Ipswich and Lowestoft. Reinstatement of a passenger line to Leiston is a long-term aspiration.

There are also long standing issues of traffic volume through the villages of Marlesford, Little Glemham, Stratford St Andrew, and Farnham on the A12.

Suffolk County Council strongly supports the provision of proper relief for these communities by the provision of a relief road and will work with the nuclear industry to secure its provision alongside any new power station at Sizewell.

### Key transport issues for Suffolk Coastal

**A12 Four Villages relief road**

**A12 reliability – flooding**

**Sea level change and coastal erosion**

**East Suffolk line improvements – Beccles Loop**

**Lorry parking**

**Operation Stack**

**Felixstowe – local bus services**

**Lorries and large buses on rural roads**

**Congestion on Ipswich eastern fringe including A12, A1214 and A14**

**Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services in coastal area**

**Air Quality Management Areas in Woodbridge and Felixstowe**

## Waveney

It is likely that there will be growth of around 3,000 new dwellings and 5,000 new jobs in Waveney. Most of this development is planned for Lowestoft as part of a jobs-led regeneration project for the town. Some growth is also likely within the market towns. Growth in these areas will place additional demand onto the transport networks and, if no measures are put in place, will result in greater levels of congestion and delays to journeys, particularly in Lowestoft. Housing and jobs growth within Lowestoft and the market towns will, however make it possible to build upon existing sustainable transport networks and reduce the impact of potential traffic growth arising from the new developments

Throughout the wider district access to services by public transport can be difficult, particularly in the more remote parts of the district. Conditions are better in the market towns and a commercially viable bus service operates within Lowestoft. The East Suffolk line provides a rail service between Ipswich, Halesworth and Lowestoft at a two-hourly frequency. From the end of 2012 an improved service frequency will make this service more useful for many journeys. Trains connect Lowestoft and Norwich about once an hour.

In Lowestoft, as with most urban centres, there is a high dependency on cars for many short trips. This highlights the opportunity that exists to promote and improve cycling and walking for many trips within the town, particularly the peak hour trips to work that take place at the busiest times.

There are a number of long standing aspirations for highway improvements in Lowestoft that the county council is actively promoting. These include: completion of the northern spine road that will allow the re-routing of the A12 in North Lowestoft, and the improvement of Denmark road; a new access road south of Lake Lothing to unlock development sites in this regeneration area; additional pedestrian/cycle bridges across Lake Lothing; and, in the longer term a third vehicular bridge across Lake Lothing. Improvements to the Commercial Road junction would also unlock development sites on the northern side of the regeneration area.

The A12 between Lowestoft and Ipswich is an important route for both freight and people accessing Lowestoft, and the resilience of this road especially with regards to flooding is critical. For much of the district the A12 provides a key north/south route and a link for the market towns and villages in the district and to the north in Waveney. The impact of climate change (increased flooding, sea level rise) is likely to affect the A12 at Lattymere Dam, the A1095 at Wolsey Bridge and the B1127 at Potters Bridge. It will also impact on the alignment of the Suffolk coast and could significantly affect Lowestoft and Corton.

The East Suffolk railway line between Ipswich and Lowestoft currently has limitations as to the level of service that is able to be provided. However, the service does provide connections to the centre of Ipswich and London, so there is an opportunity to encourage greater use of the service with or without any improvements. The current frequency is a train every two hours, however improvement works at Beccles to provide a passing loop is a key priority for the county council and it is anticipated that this work can be completed by Network Rail by the end of 2012, paving the way for a full hourly service between Ipswich and Lowestoft. This is a viable alternative to commuting by car using the A12.

There is also scope to improve integrated transport links at the East Suffolk Line Stations to improve north/south access. Reinstatement of a passenger line to Leiston is a long-term aspiration.

<b>Key transport issues for Waveney</b>
<b>Lack of bus connections to/from Lowestoft, market towns and rural areas</b>
<b>Access to development sites south of Lake Lothing in Lowestoft</b>
<b>Impact of traffic in north Lowestoft</b>
<b>Impact of lorries in Beccles</b>
<b>Impact of lorries in Bungay town centre</b>
<b>Poor frequency of service on the East Suffolk line</b>
<b>Poor transport connections at rail stations on the East Suffolk line</b>
<b>Traffic congestion at Outlon Broad rail station</b>
<b>Lack of pedestrian/cycle bridges over Lake Lothing</b>
<b>Pinch points for north/south traffic in Lowestoft</b>
<b>Sea level change and coastal erosion</b>



# 4 Suffolk transport strategy

The broad aim of the Suffolk transport strategy is to support the sustainable economic development that is required to lift Suffolk out of the recession and provide sustainable future growth. Different interventions will be appropriate for different places. However it is possible to identify common themes for urban and rural areas.

Within the urban areas there are three strands to our approach:

- 1. reducing the demand for car travel**
- 2. more efficient use and better management of the transport network**
- 3. where affordable - infrastructure improvements, particularly for sustainable transport.**

This approach recognises that traffic congestion is a common theme in urban areas and that housing and employment growth is likely to intensify the pressure on our road networks, leading to unacceptable delays in many places unless we take action. Reducing demand on the road network will improve journey time reliability for car and bus users, while also benefiting pedestrians, cyclists and residents through lower volumes of vehicles and fewer air, noise and segregation issues. Within the larger urban areas advanced traffic management and control systems will help us achieve greater efficiency, and priority for buses at busy junctions. The technology will also enable us to provide better information to transport users on roadside displays and via the internet and mobile phones.

Our general approach in rural areas is to work with public transport operators and community/voluntary groups to improve levels of accessibility to key service centres. This includes the development of demand responsive bus services, which have been trialled with success in some areas of Suffolk, and refining timetabled services to provide better interchange and journey times. This will also be incorporated with better information to make it easier for people to plan their journeys. A review of options for the future provision of more community based rural transport services has been undertaken. A toolkit for communities has been developed and work is ongoing to build greater capacity in communities to take more responsibility for local transport.

Our public rights of way network can play an important role in rural areas and on the fringes of towns in providing traffic-free and safe routes for walking and cycling journeys. The use of this network will become very important given the likely financial constraints on providing new facilities such as pavements alongside roads in rural areas.

We aim to improve the quality, reliability and connectivity of our rural road networks over the life of this plan, including relief for communities suffering from high volumes of traffic.

We will also work with district and borough planning officers to reduce the immediate need for travel through better spatial planning so that homes and employment are better connected, and strong travel plan requirements for new developments to reduce car use. We also support the ambition of improving broadband accessibility to enable more home working and the ability to access services remotely, which will help reduce the need to travel.

We will encourage and assist local communities to take responsibility for tackling transport issues that directly affect them. Examples could include:

- **speed watch programmes**
- **car sharing**
- **community cars**
- **highway verge grass cutting**
- **local snow clearance, and salt and grit spreading**
- **local lorry watch**
- **monitoring of quiet lanes**
- **public path improvements.**

During the current period of reductions in funding for public services our priority will be to physically maintain the existing transport networks and to make their use as efficient as possible. The county council has aspirations for significant improvements to transport infrastructure in the longer term and we will take forward our plans to deliver these aspirations as and when resources permit, recognising that as we add to our infrastructure we are also adding to our future maintenance liability.

## Urban area strategy principles

Part two of the local transport plan contains summaries of the plans that have been developed for our larger communities. These plans reflect local differences between places but there are broad principles common to all.

The pressure on the transport networks in our towns will be significantly increased as a result of future growth in jobs and housing. In most places it would be neither financially possible nor environmentally desirable to increase road capacity to accommodate the forecast levels of increased traffic if travel behaviour in the future remains as it is today.

Our inability to provide significant additional traffic capacity, and wider sustainability objectives mean that we have to have another approach. Our general approach is to try to reduce the demand for travel by car; to get more from our existing transport facilities e.g. by traffic management improvements; and to improve our infrastructure where this is affordable, feasible and environmentally sustainable.

### Reduce demand for car travel

This approach will require working with planning authorities to ensure that service and employment provision is linked with the development of housing growth within the towns, and that within new developments alternative modes to the car are promoted as natural choices.

We will also try to influence the choices that people make about how to travel to work, school and other services, particularly in the peak morning and evening periods when most congestion occurs. Travel planning in residential areas, at workplaces and schools has been shown to be a very cost-effective way to reduce car travel.

The impact of new developments on congestion levels on the network must be reduced if future problems are to be avoided. We will also work with existing businesses to establish voluntary travel plans to encourage employees and visitors to reduce car use. The essence of this approach is to encourage people to take personal responsibility for the consequences of the travel choices they make.

## Making efficient use of transport networks

More reliable journey times and reduced congestion can be achieved by making more efficient use of the transport network, for example by reducing the amount of stop-start experienced on the road network, and through priority for scheduled public transport services allowing them to keep to time.

Urban traffic management and control is a tool that enables a level of control on the transport network to achieve greater efficiency, for example by managing queues at junctions and giving buses priority. We have recently introduced a system in Lowestoft. Extending this system to the larger towns would enable a greater level of network control to be applied. We can also integrate other information into the control system. This can include, for example, providing real time information for bus passengers, the number of spaces available in specific car parks and using reactive variable message signs to highlight incidents or poor air quality.

Effective maintenance of the network, shaped by the Transport Asset Management Plan, will play a big part in meeting and sustaining the objectives to encourage more walking and cycling. A well maintained route is much more likely to encourage regular use.

We also hope to improve the awareness of people about the choices available on how to travel. This can include information online, via mobile phones or using variable message signs on streets.

## Improve infrastructure

Complementary to this will be the development and promotion of sustainable transport networks in urban areas, so that alternatives to the car become natural choices for the short journeys that are typical in most urban areas. We aim to help develop and enable the provision of strong commercial bus operations where a town can support this, along with good stops, shelters and information and with good connections to other forms of transport. We also aim to provide safe continuous routes for cycling and walking, removing gaps and addressing barriers and disincentives to users.

While infrastructure improvements may be limited at the start of this plan period due to the funding restraints that are in place, smaller-scale high benefit schemes may still be possible to overcome barriers and gaps to improve networks for users. As the plan period progresses larger-scale schemes may become more viable, but funding of these schemes will still be dependant on the benefits they offer, their deliverability, and future maintenance costs.

We will also be investigating with partner organisations opportunities that exist for large-scale infrastructure projects in the medium to long term, and considering where improvements can be made to support alternatives to the car. This will require working with developers to secure funding. This will also include working with partners to monitor developments in emerging technologies, such as electric vehicles and charging points, and investigate opportunities for funding infrastructure to support growth.

# Rural areas

The transport strategy for the rural areas within Suffolk is based around five themes. Underpinning our work in rural areas is the need to strengthen communities so that they are better placed to address some local problems themselves.

## **1 Better accessibility to employment, education and services.**

Our review of rural transport has explored options for improving accessibility in rural areas within the context of the county council's current financial constraints. We are working with local communities to take forward local solutions including the important relationship between home to school transport and wider rural transport provision. Our plans to extend the coverage of demand responsive transport will be important. A toolkit for other community based transport solutions has been developed and work is ongoing to build greater capacity in communities so that they are able to take greater responsibility for local transport.

## **2 Encouraging planning policies to reduce the need to travel**

There is scope to reduce the need to travel by car even in rural areas if development is well related to existing settlements and to existing sustainable transport networks. We will work with the district and borough councils to ensure that development management policies reflect this aim.

## **3 Maintaining the transport network and improving its connectivity, resilience and reliability**

Maintaining our networks in a condition that adequately supports the recovery of the Suffolk economy is our highest priority. Our transport asset management plan provides the basis for our maintenance programme and is explained later in this document.

Our transport networks are susceptible to disruption from a variety of sources. These can include congestion following accidents and other incidents, natural events such as flooding. We are planning for those events so that the consequences can be better managed.

Issues for the transport networks as a whole, including the rights of way network are considered below.

## **4 Reducing the impact of transport on communities**

Many communities remain concerned about traffic impacts, particularly lorries and speeding. We will work with communities to establish local solutions, owned by the community, to deal with these problems.

## **5 Support the county council's ambition of improving broadband access throughout Suffolk**

Better broadband will be important to support new, 21st century businesses in rural areas. This provision can also help in bringing services closer to people, making remote working possible and reducing the need to travel so often.

## Cross boundary working

Transport issues do not stop at administrative boundaries so cross-boundary working is an important part of this strategy. Aspects that we will be working with our neighbouring authorities and relevant bodies such as the Highways Agency include:

### Cambridgeshire:

- **Cambridgeshire sub-region**
- **A1307- Haverhill to Cambridge corridor**
- **Ely to Newmarket**
- **A14/A142 Exning junction.**

### Essex

- **Haven Gateway sub-region**
- **access to Stansted Airport**
- **Sudbury and Haverhill (including A131 and A1017)**
- **A12**
- **Lorry management issues from A12 including A131/A134.**

### Norfolk

- **Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth sub-region**
- **Brandon**
- **A11**
- **connections to Norwich.**

## Working with developers

Management of future housing and employment development in Suffolk is critical to the delivery of our transport strategy. As part of our wider approach to encourage more sustainable development patterns the county council will continue to work with district and borough councils to ensure residential and employment developments are better connected and that developers pay a fair contribution towards necessary infrastructure and services.

In working with developers we will expect them to produce robust travel plans to minimise car use with challenging targets for levels of parking and traffic generation and attraction. These plans will be supported by significant contributions to the provision of local facilities for sustainable transport connecting new developments to employment and services. This will include pedestrian and cycle routes, the promotion and enhancement of existing bus services or securing new services, with an aim that each of these new or altered bus services should be commercially viable within five years.

We also expect developers to fund traffic management and bus priority schemes, measures to reduce air quality impacts etc. in addition to any work necessary to mitigate any adverse traffic impacts of their development on the existing highway network. This will include commuted sums for future maintenance.