

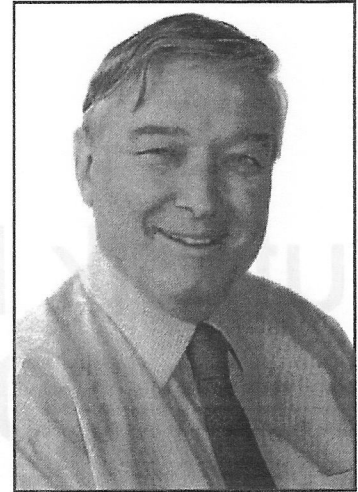
Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2031

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.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Guy McGregor'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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.

Suffolk's characteristics

About 114,000 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 population by district and borough.

District/Borough	Population
Babergh	88,300
Forest Heath	87,100
Ipswich	128,800
Mid Suffolk	84,300
St Edmundsbury	103,500
Suffolk Coastal	124,100
Waveney	113,700
Total	714,100

Table 1: Population by district

By 2021 the Suffolk population is expected to grow by a further 25%, 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 2021. That will be nearly one third of the total population. The forecast growth in the population reflects not only growth in the economy, in jobs and housing will be needed in the future. The East of England Plan provides for 80,000 homes and 63,000 jobs in the period up to 2021.

Growth in employment and housing on the coast 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 strategy sets out the community strategy and:

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

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	
Babergh	85,800
Forest Heath	62,200
Ipswich	126,600
Mid Suffolk	94,200
St Edmundsbury	103,500
Suffolk Coastal	124,100
Waveney	117,700
Total	714,100

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

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

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.