

## County Council Annual Report 2025-2026

### Suffolk County Council confirms decision to bring Library Services back In-House

Suffolk County Council has confirmed that it will be bringing all 45 libraries back under its care and control. The decision, made at the Cabinet meeting, will ensure continued access to high-quality, community-focused library services across the county. As part of this move, the council plans to:

- Keep all 45 libraries open
- Maintain opening hours
- Create job security for all frontline staff
- Secure a sustainable future for Suffolk's library services

In addition to continuing its core library services, the council is investing £200,000 in mobile libraries, with a further £157,000 for new books and to replace public computers in libraries across Suffolk.

Looking to the future, Suffolk County Council envisions libraries becoming even more integrated into the wider community, serving as convenient access points for a range of essential council services. This includes providing information and support around Adult Social Care, offering health and social care services, facilitating Family Hub activities, and promoting digital inclusion. The aim is to make it easier for residents to access vital services and support, all within the welcoming, familiar setting of their local library.

### Nature recovery plan aims to revive Suffolk's wildlife

A new strategy has been drafted to help restore and enhance nature across Suffolk, and a consultation has been launched (Wednesday 16 April) for you to share your views.

Suffolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy is one of 48 across the country, aimed at addressing the decline in nature and identifying a network of areas to help it recover.

Together these strategies will form a national 'nature network', proposing actions such as the creation of wetlands, restoration of peatlands, planting of trees and hedgerows, and more sustainable management of existing woodlands and other habitats like grasslands.

Suffolk County Council has been leading on a strategy for the county, working closely with other local authorities, nature experts, and a wide range of interested organisations.

### £8m funding for Bus Service improvements

The funding from the Department of Transport's Local Authority Bus Grant can be used to create new bus services or enhance existing routes.

Following on from previous grants from the Department for Transport to improve bus services, totalling £3.7m of revenue funding between 2023 and 2025, the new grant which has been allocated for 2025/26 comprises of:

- £2,805,076 revenue for delivering new or enhanced services.
- £5,229,805 capital for new and improved bus stops, bus stations, bus priority measures or vehicle upgrades.

This money will enable Suffolk County Council to invest up to £5 million in capital projects to increase bus priority on congested streets, make improvements to bus stops and gain a better understanding of the journeys people are taking, paving the way for more innovative fare offers in the future. The council also plans to upgrade the current Real Time Passenger Information system, giving live updates on when buses will arrive at stops across the county.

The remaining £2.8 million will be spent supporting the existing services on the county's bus network and working with bus companies to finalise several route improvements and new services, set to launch later this year.

## Council remains opposed to pylon project, as application submitted

Primarily, the county council maintains that offshore and undergrounding solutions should be priorities for the scheme, not 114 miles of pylons cutting through countryside, sensitive landscapes and communities in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.

Previously, SCC has formally and strongly requested that National Grid pauses the Norwich to Tilbury proposals, to allow for effective consideration of offshore alternatives.

## 32,000 solar panels and counting for Solar Together Suffolk project

The group-buying programme enables Suffolk residents to buy solar panels and battery storage, helping to save money on their energy bills and cut carbon emissions. It is backed by Suffolk County Council and all local borough and district councils.

Solar Together Suffolk has been running for seven years, and in that time has:

- installed 32,024 solar panels at 2,651 Suffolk households
- installed 1,768 battery storage systems
- reduced 1,900 tonnes of carbon emissions across the county

## Suffolk County Council announces £63m A12 highway improvement proposals

Suffolk County Council has unveiled a full planning application for a package of highway improvements worth in the region of £63 million along the A12.

The works will be between the A12/A14 Seven Hills Junction and Woods Lane junction north of Woodbridge.

They aim to enhance transport connectivity, safety, and accessibility for all users, including motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, and public transport passengers.

## Suffolk secures more than £26 million bus funding over three years

Millions of pounds of investment are to take place in Suffolk's bus network over three years following allocation of Government funding.

Services, ticketing, and infrastructure will all benefit under the package worth nearly £27 million between 2026 and 2029.

Suffolk County Council will receive a total of £26,813,760 under the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG).

This funding will enable the continuation and expansion of new and improved services introduced over the past two years through LABG support and its predecessor, the Bus Services Improvement Grant (BSIP), many of which were shaped by community feedback.

Suffolk will receive:

- 2026/27 - £8,849,119
- 2027/28 - £8,937,920
- 2028/29 - £9,026,721

"With guaranteed funding in place we can deliver the improvements our communities have asked for—better services in our towns and rural areas, and more accessible stops.

"This investment will help us make bus travel a more attractive, reliable, and sustainable choice for everyone."

Last July Suffolk County Council announced a £2.8m investment in new bus routes and improved services following announcement of LABG funding of £8 million for 2025-26. As well as new routes, some services gained increased frequency and a Sunday schedule added.

Alongside the £2.8m revenue for delivering new or enhanced services, the county council also [previously announced £5.2m of capital funding from the DfT](#) for new and improved bus stops, bus stations, bus priority measures or vehicle upgrades.

For more details of public transport in Suffolk go to the [Suffolk On Board](#) website.

## Suffolk County Council proposes new 20mph speed limit policy for communities

A new 20mph speed limit policy to enhance road safety and improve quality of life across Suffolk's communities is to be considered by county councillors.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet is to discuss a proposal to give communities greater opportunity to reduce the speed limit, where appropriate, in residential and high-pedestrian areas to 20mph.

Studies have shown that reducing speed limits can significantly decrease the number and severity of road accidents.

Slower speeds also contribute to a more pleasant and liveable community, encouraging outdoor activities and fostering a sense of neighbourhood cohesion.

However, the proposal says that 20mph limits can be unpopular with motorists, and with police enforcement capacity limited it was important that such schemes were introduced with community backing to ensure as much local support as possible.

Communities, typically parish or town councils, will be invited to come forward with proposals for 20mph limits, supported by their local county councillor and backed by local engagement.

This could include formal surveys or consultation through neighbourhood plans to demonstrate community support.

It is anticipated that these community led schemes will be locally funded. As part of the new system Suffolk County Council has developed assessment criteria to consider observed average traffic speeds, the role and character of the road, and the presence of vulnerable road users.

Where average speeds are already low, there will be a presumption in favour of a 20mph limit, often supported by clear signage.

Where speeds are higher, additional measures such as traffic calming may be required to ensure good compliance.