

£3.9 million investment proposal to protect and enhance Public Rights of Way

Suffolk County Council plans to invest nearly £4 million to improve and protect the public rights of way network.

The network, which provides more than 3,500 miles of off-road access for walking, cycling and horse riding, is supported by 3,770 structures including bridges, boardwalks, revetments and signposts.

A report to be considered by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet on Tuesday March 24 said the £3.9 million investment will enable replacement or refurbishment of 735 priority structures, with a particular focus on bridges and boardwalks in central and coastal areas.

It follows a comprehensive condition survey where the council has identified a programme of improvements to replace or refurbish ageing structures.

The report says that over the next five years, 1,800 structures will need to be replaced or undergo major refurbishment.

Of these, 735 structures have been prioritised for 2026/27 and 2027/28 due to their known condition.

The structures are spread across the county, with the largest impact in the central and coastal area of Suffolk.

These are predominantly bridges but there are also several boardwalks on key coastal and estuary routes.

The cost of this two-year programme is £3.9 million in total - £2.05 million in 2026/27 and £1.85 million in 27/28.

The current budget for infrastructure maintenance is £225,000 a year, but since this figure was set in 2020/21 costs have risen by more than 50% for materials and contractors' installation fees, as well as changes in specifications.

The council's investment plan comes at a time of significantly increased public use of the network.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, customer reports have risen by more than 50%, with 3,411 reports received in 2025 alone.

By investing now, the Council aims to reduce the risk of route closures, avoid rising revenue costs and ensure the network continues to provide high-quality access for residents and visitors.

Temporary closures—required when structures become unsafe—cost around £1,200 each time and place pressure on the revenue budget, which also funds the county’s annual grass-cutting programme.

The planned capital investment will help prevent these costs and protect essential maintenance services.

It will also help to meet the council’s objectives for health and wellbeing, strengthening the local economy and providing value for taxpayers’ money.

The full report can be read on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

Innovative EV charging for Suffolk’s conservation areas

Partnering with supplier, Urban Fox, the units are specially designed to blend into the historic streetscapes of such sensitive areas, which are subject to planning considerations.

This means that those living in conservation areas won’t be at a disadvantage, with thousands of other charge points being installed across the county on streets and in community spaces.

As part of its Plug In Suffolk programme, the county council was awarded £5.3 million to install 6,000 on-street and community charge points following a successful bid to the government’s Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund, the county council.

Urban Fox who are providing substantial private investment, will work closely with Suffolk County Council and local stakeholders to ensure charge points are installed in the most appropriate locations, reflecting community needs and minimising disruption during deployment.

The charge points will be suitable for long-stay or overnight charging, and drivers will benefit from an overnight off-peak tariff, and a dedicated resident’s tariff which always features discounted charging.

Unlike traditional charge points, Urban Fox will supply chargers that are fully retractable and sit flush with the pavement when not in use.

Find out more about [Plug in Suffolk](#).

Suffolk road schemes included in Government's five-year investment plan

Suffolk County Council has welcomed the government's announcement of its next five-year Road Investment Strategy (RIS) which features four key projects in the county.

The RIS is the Department for Transport's investment plan for operating, maintaining, renewing and enhancing the strategic trunk road network in England.

Known as RIS3, it runs from April 2026 to March 2031 and in Suffolk sees:

A12 improvements at Woodbridge – a recommitment by the government to funding its share during this period of the £63 million scheme to upgrade the A12 between the Seven Hills junction with the A14 and the Woods Lane junction, subject to Suffolk County Council submitting the Final Business Case, anticipated for later this year.

A140 - A1120 Earl Stonham junction improvements – this has been classed as a scheme 'recommended to continue', where the government accepts work on developing improvements should go ahead during this period. However, this is subject to affordability, value for money and deliverability assessments.

The junction is an historic staggered crossroads where queuing traffic causes congestion. The improvement scheme would realign the eastern A1120 arm, providing more space for vehicles to queue and avoiding vehicle conflicts by simplifying the junction.

Two other schemes in Suffolk have been earmarked for progression.

They are improvements to the **A11 Fiveways junction near Mildenhall** and the **A12/A14 Copdock interchange**.

These will see the government and National Highways continue to develop but not deliver them during the RIS3 period.

Both schemes remain uncommitted and with no guaranteed funding, but it does mean they have a better chance of being included in the next RIS after 2031.

Both Copdock interchange- a key junction serving freight traffic bound to and from the Port of Felixstowe – and the A11 junction have suffered from problems of congestion and design flaws.

Full details of the scheme can be found on the [Department for Transport](#) website.