

County Council report – January 2026

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

Millions of pounds of investment is 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

The funding is split into two areas.

Revenue investment will focus on:

- Maintaining and growing enhanced services based on local suggestions.
- Increasing publicity and travel information to help residents make informed choices.

Capital funding will deliver:

- Renewal and expansion of Real Time Passenger Information across Suffolk.
- Improved ticketing options and accessibility in partnership with bus operators.
- Investigations into bus priority measures to reduce journey times and encourage modal shift.
- Upgraded bus stops with new shelters, better footway links, and accessibility enhancements—many suggested by local communities.

Local authorities will have flexibility to use LABG funding to meet local needs—whether by reducing fares, introducing new routes, investing in zero-emission buses, or improving bus stops and stations.

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.

OPINION: How Suffolk is investing in our roads

By Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Operational Highways, Flooding & Ipswich

Potholes are undoubtedly the bane of a motorist's life and remain one of the most common complaints landing in councillors' inboxes.

In a recent newspaper column, the Ipswich MP claimed that Suffolk will receive £219.4 million over the next four years to address potholes.

However, this figure does not tell the whole story.

The Department for Transport's small print makes clear that the funding must also be used for footways, bridges, highway drainage, and street lighting, not solely for pothole repairs.

Moreover, the announcement assumes the government will fully deliver on this commitment.

Recent experience suggests otherwise. In the last two weeks, it has been confirmed that the postponement of the mayoral elections means Suffolk will miss out on its share of £37 million in the next two years, funding that was originally included in the devolution deal.

The MP went on to suggest that the additional funding would allow us to “renew worn-out road surfaces” and “end the endless cycle of emergency repairs.”

Most of the road funding is already spent on planned resurfacing and surface-dressing schemes.

This financial year alone, nearly 150 locations and more than 100 miles of road are included in such programmes across the county.

Preventative maintenance remains a key priority. Last autumn, Suffolk Highways trialled specialist equipment, including a Dragon Patcher and Roadmender, to repair defects before they developed into potholes.

During the trial, more than 3,500 defects were treated across over 230 roads. While assessments are still underway to determine value for money and where they can be best used, early indications suggest this approach could improve efficiency in the future.

There is no doubt that Suffolk's roads have steadily improved in the last ten years.

Independent surveys show a two-thirds reduction in A-roads classified as being in the worst condition since 2011, with nearly 300 miles of road moved out of the poorest category, while more than 350 miles now fall within the best condition band, bringing the total to 3,295 miles - 77% of Suffolk's roads.

This improvement has not come by chance. Since 2017, Suffolk County Council has invested more than £20 million of local taxpayer funds, resurfacing 1,000 miles of road and securing additional investment for drainage and pavements.

Suffolk has also consistently met the highest performance standards, enabling it to secure full funding from the Department for Transport under previous best-practice schemes.

The busier a road is the greater the chance that a defect could cause a problem, so Suffolk Highways gives greater priority to repairing roads that carry the most vehicles.

Regular safety inspections are carried out, with the frequency depending on how busy the road is.

However, potholes and other defects may still appear between inspections, especially after freezing conditions when water in the road surface freezes and expands, causing cracks.

This year alone the Suffolk Highways 2025/26 surface dressing programme, which concluded at the end of August, treated a total of 90 sites covering over 90 miles of road.

Similarly, this year's resurfacing programme will deliver works across 57 locations covering more than 11 miles. So far, 22 of the 58 resurfacing sites have been delivered with the remainder coming by the end of the financial year.

Yet there is more to be done. Progress cannot stand still. As a motorist myself, I want to see both local and national government commit further funding to our road network.

Motorists already face mounting costs—vehicle tax, fuel duty, and rising insurance premiums among them – so it is important we get something back.

Another charge is now also looming. In the recent Budget, the Chancellor announced plans for a pay-per-mile road tax for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

While the government has delayed implementation until April 2028 to work up the detail, road pricing, it seems, may soon be added to the growing list of financial burdens facing motorists.

I expect this is one promise that the government will keep.

Suffolk residents urged to apply quickly for free home energy upgrades

At the end of November 2025, Suffolk County Council secured £1.38 million from the government's Warm Homes Local Grant Fund.

Residents and landlords are urged to apply quickly, as the funding must be allocated by the end of March 2026.

The fund aims to provide free energy saving improvements to energy inefficient homes if residents are on a low income, receive certain benefits or live in a certain postcode area. This could be wall and loft insulation, solar panels or air source heat pumps.

**“Over recent years, Warm Homes Suffolk has made improvements to hundreds of properties, giving people warmer, safer homes and reducing their energy bills.”
Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs**

To be eligible, Suffolk homes must:

- be privately owned (either by you or your landlord)
- have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G (you can find this out when you apply)

Household income must usually be £36,000 a year or less - but if you earn more than that, you might still be eligible if either:

- you live in a certain postcode area
(certain areas of Beccles, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Lowestoft and Stowmarket)
- someone in your household is getting certain benefits
- you have a severe or long-term health condition, which is adversely affected by living in a cold home

Once these conditions have been approved, an assessment of your home will identify which measures are best suited to your property. These will then be installed by trusted contactors, for free.

To check your eligibility, or to find out more about how Warm Homes Suffolk could help you, visit www.warmhomessuffolk.org or call the team on 03456 037 686.

Statement on provisional local government finance settlement 2026 to 2027

Cllr Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council’s deputy leader and cabinet member for finance, economic development and skills, said:

“We are deeply disappointed by the government’s [provisional local government finance settlement](#). Our current understanding is that Suffolk County Council now faces a £6 million budget gap — £3.5 million worse than we had previously forecast.

“This is despite government assumptions that councils will raise Council Tax by the maximum amount every year, and the introduction of a so-called ‘fairer’ funding model. The government has shifted resources towards metropolitan areas at the expense of rural counties like ours, while injecting very little new money into the system.

“This settlement makes an already difficult financial position even more challenging. We will continue to press for a genuinely fair funding formula that properly reflects the needs and costs of delivering services in rural communities.”

Council secures £2.9 million from DfT Incentive Fund for 2025/26

Suffolk County Council has been awarded £2.9 million from the Department for Transport’s 2025/26 Incentive Fund for best practice in highways management.

The fund, introduced by the current government, rewards local authorities that demonstrate excellence in highway asset management and efficiency.

The award builds on the council’s strong track record of success in previous years, where it has consistently secured the maximum available funding under similar schemes.

Under the Incentive Fund scheme authorities must report:

- Highway maintenance spends over the past five years
- Road condition data, with trend analysis
- Pothole repair statistics for the last five years
- A 2025/26 resurfacing plan
- Show a balance of preventive against reactive maintenance
- Coordination with utilities to reduce disruption
- Climate resilience efforts
- Adoption of best practices and innovation

Suffolk County Council will spend a total of £47.3 million on highways maintenance in 2025-26.

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