



Cllr Chris Chambers

**Gipping Valley
Division**

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**November 2024
Report**



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Government's new housing targets must put infrastructure first

Suffolk County Council has raised concerns in its response to the government's proposed reforms for planning policies for England.

In particular, it expresses fears about the lack of clarity around infrastructure, such as schools, transport, waste and community facilities when new housing developments are approved.

Last week, the government closed its consultation on plans to change the National Planning Policy Framework and other parts of the planning system.

The proposals include a significant increase in the number of new homes to be built across Suffolk – the government's own figures suggest that East Suffolk alone would see an 87% increase in the number new homes, compared those currently planned.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, said:

“Such a significant uplift in new homes in Suffolk, if not accompanied by the correct funding for affordable homes and infrastructure, will ring alarm bells with local residents.

“We've already seen from the new government that they are showing scant regard for Suffolk - with the approval of the Sunnica solar farm, the cancellation of our £500 million county deal and the withdrawal of Winter Fuel Payments. This cannot continue with huge pressure placed on the county with the new government's housing targets, without the appropriate infrastructure to sit alongside it.

“In my own division, the villages of Bramford and Great Blakenham have grown considerably, and many residents have commented that roads and other infrastructure only come after the homes, if it comes at all.

“This is simply not sustainable – infrastructure must be delivered in a timely manner. If residential developments emerge that are not included in local plans because of the new government's policy, then the onus must be on the developer to confirm how infrastructure will be delivered.”

Suffolk County Council is already very active in securing developer contributions and delivering infrastructure. It secures Section 106 contributions as well as funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy from district councils - but this is to maintain a baseline level of service rather than make a positive overall improvement to infrastructure.

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In its response to government, the council said that the simple question of “who pays” for the infrastructure needs to be answered when permissions are being granted. Local planning authorities should not be allowed to assume that other authorities and agencies will make up any difference.

Suffolk launches pothole prevention programme ahead of winter weather

Suffolk County Council has launched a pothole prevention programme to target areas of Suffolk’s road network that could worsen when the winter weather hits.

Teams with additional resources and the latest technology have already started visiting and treating locations susceptible to deterioration or where there are smaller defects that could grow as the colder and wetter weather strikes.

Building on the success of earlier trials with the Roadmender Elastomac and Dragon Patcher machines, teams will be deployed across Suffolk to use this equipment in addition to our usual Safety Defect Service that deals with larger defects as they occur.

Highways workers using the Roadmender Elastomac system will target urban roads that are at higher risk of damage to locate cracks and smaller potholes and carry out repairs. Unlike traditional methods, which require potholes to be saw-cut, excavated and asphalt to be compacted on top, Elastomac is a flowable material used to seal the repaired area.

Once applied, this adhesive, flexible material bonds with the existing road surface, preventing water getting in the cracks and extending the road’s lifespan. The process is more sustainable and efficient, reducing material movement and waste by 90%, lowering costs and minimising disruption.

With the Dragon Patcher machines, these clean the surface of the road using compressed air, preparing it for repair with an application of aggregate and hot bitumen material, and will target rural roads.

Fuelled by biodiesel, HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil), the patcher reduces raw material use, generates zero waste, and has demonstrated significant carbon savings compared to traditional patching techniques.

The locations have been carefully chosen, focusing on areas with a higher risk of potholes forming during winter. Highways teams will be working when weather conditions allow, from 7am to 5pm, moving across the county to treat the more vulnerable areas. Whilst the repairs are underway, traffic will be managed temporarily by staff on site, and there may be waiting times of up to 15 minutes.

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Highways authorities up and down the country experience an inevitable rise in potholes during the winter months. Water seeps into cracks in the road surface which freezes, expands then breaks up the road surface. The purpose of this preventative programme is to seal treated areas of Suffolk's road network to reduce water getting into cracks reduce the overall number of potholes forming.

For more information on our targeted project, please visit the <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks/pothole-prevention-programme>

Council to offer interest-free loans to make homes more energy efficient

Suffolk County Council will offer interest-free loans to help make residents' homes warmer, safer and cheaper to run.

Energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps will all be possible with loans of up to £15,000 to be repaid over a maximum of 7 years at 0% interest.

The £3 million project will be open to homeowners across Suffolk from November, but you can [register your interest now at Lendology](#).

Making homes more energy-efficient helps retain their heat and use less energy, meaning homeowners can save on their energy bills and reduce their carbon emissions. A warm home also has a positive impact on health and well-being.

Money for the loans comes from £3 million of funding received as part of the council's negotiations with the previous government to secure a County Deal.

It was allocated from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support an energy efficiency and energy generation 0% loan fund for people that cannot access grants currently available to low-income households.

The scheme supports Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan, by increasing the number of properties which have energy-efficient and low carbon energy measures installed.

An increase in demand for energy efficiency measures will also help support businesses providing those services, meaning jobs, skills development and investment in the green economy.

Suffolk County Council is partnering with Lendology CIC to deliver the interest-free loan scheme. Lendology CIC is an experienced Social Enterprise Lender, managing similar schemes with councils across the country.

For more information and to register your interest in an interest-free loan, visit [Lendology's website](#).

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Suffolk residents encouraged to share views on new Local Transport Plan

Suffolk's communities helped shape a new draft of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan by sharing their views back in February of this year and the county council is now seeking feedback on the final proposed document.

The plan which details activity between 2025-2040 sets out a long-term vision for transport in Suffolk and covers themes such as decarbonisation of transport, strengthening the local economy, promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion, and creating better-connected places that encourage a range of transport choices.

Alongside this county-wide plan, the county council has produced fifteen 'Area Transport Plans' and a 'Suffolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan' which are the funded implementation plans for the wider Suffolk Local Transport Plan. These plans outline how the Local Transport Plan's vision and objectives will be delivered in key locations across the county.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, said:

"After engaging with Suffolk's residents earlier this year about their travel habits, I am delighted to be able to present to them an updated Suffolk Local Transport Plan for the next 15 years.

"The plan presents the county council's vision for transport in Suffolk, highlighting the challenges and opportunities we have and the measures available to respond to them – this is why it's important we consider the views of all before we formally adopt our fourth document and its associated plans.

"We value the views of the local community and interested parties, so please share your thoughts, even if you only wish to comment on a small part of the plans."

The consultation is available via www.suffolk.gov.uk/LTP and the consultation will close on Monday 25 November 2024. The Local Transport Plan and its associated plans will then be presented to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet in 2025.

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Suffolk residents urged to share their views on local pharmaceutical services

Suffolk County Council is calling on residents to share their views on local pharmaceutical services as part of a regular review to ensure that these services continue to meet the evolving needs of the community.

The Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA), which is undertaken every three years in line with statutory requirements, is a comprehensive report designed to assess current pharmaceutical services and identify any gaps or areas for improvement.

Feedback gathered through this survey will help the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board, NHS England, and Integrated Care Boards make informed decisions about future service provisions, including any potential new pharmacy openings.

Councillor Steve Wiles, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection said:

“Pharmaceutical services play a vital role in the health and well-being of our communities. It is essential that we regularly assess these services to ensure that they are meeting the needs of our residents and are accessible to everyone. By completing this survey, people can have a real say in the future of their local healthcare services, and we encourage as many people as possible to get involved.”

Pharmaceutical services in Suffolk are delivered through community pharmacies—sometimes referred to as chemists—which include those located in supermarkets, online pharmacies, and specialist medical appliance contractors. These pharmacies not only dispense medicines but also offer essential healthcare advice and support, often serving as the first point of contact for health concerns.

Residents can complete the survey online by visiting <https://bit.ly/4f4PUYC>. The deadline for submissions is 8th November 2024.

By contributing to this important review, residents can help ensure that pharmaceutical services in Suffolk remain fit for purpose and responsive to the needs of the community.

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