

County Council report – February 2026

Suffolk County Council backs 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 has been agreed by county councillors.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has backed the proposal to make it easier to reduce the speed limit, where appropriate, in residential and high-pedestrian areas to 20mph. Under the new scheme any applications for a 20mph limit in an area where recorded average traffic speeds are 28mph or under is likely to be approved.

The scheme was approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on Friday January 9.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Transport Strategy, said: "I am delighted this proposed policy has been accepted, it will make a real difference to the quality of life of our communities.

"This update to the 20mph policy reflects a greater demand for lower speed environments where people live.

"It is not a blanket speed-reduction policy, it is simply a more efficient way of introducing a 20mph limit on roads where it is appropriate to do so."

Under the new scheme 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.

Assessment criteria will consider observed average traffic speeds, the role and character of the road, and the presence of vulnerable road users.

Schemes will still need local funding, as is currently the case, except where they align with existing council programmes as part of the Local Transport Plan.

Under the scheme, areas with recorded speeds of:

- Below 28mph – likely to be accepted, with a speed limit sign only, although signs warning that a 20mph zone is ahead may be required
- Between 28 - 32mph - unlikely to be acceptable with signing alone. Gateway signing and traffic calming throughout the area may be required
- Above 32mph - Unlikely to be acceptable without extensive traffic calming measures such as road humps, plus night-time lighting. It would also be subject to a Road Safety Audit

The new policy will come into immediate effect for all new applications.

Nationally significant Anglo-Saxon burial ground found at Sizewell C site

- **Ancient graves of two high-status individuals found with weapons and personal items**
- **Discovery sheds fascinating new light on Suffolk society in the 7th century**
- **Remarkable archaeological find to feature on BBC Two's *Digging for Britain***

Among the most remarkable discoveries is a high-status grave containing two individuals buried alongside a fully harnessed horse, weapons, and personal items. These finds, dating to the 7th century, suggest the individuals were elite members of Anglo-Saxon society and reflect their complex burial traditions.

The team from Oxford Cotswold Archaeology (OCA), working on behalf of Sizewell C, identified at least 11 burial mounds, known as barrows, along with cremation and inhumation burials. All had been carefully arranged across a prominent point in the landscape near Theberton in Suffolk.

Despite poor bone preservation caused by the local sandy soils, detailed excavation and recording have preserved valuable information about burial practices and social status in early Medieval Suffolk.

Len Middleton, OCA's Project Officer leading the site, said:

“Excavating a section of the Sizewell Link Road has been an exciting experience for me and the team. The site is an early Anglo-Saxon barrow cemetery dating from the 6th to 7th centuries, with both inhumation and cremation burials, many furnished with weapons, jewellery, and vessels. Soil conditions have resulted in little preservation – we are instead left with striking sand silhouettes that capture the outlines of the bodies in remarkable detail.”

“One barrow, containing a horse and two individuals buried with weapons and personal items, stands out as a ‘princely’ burial – part of the same elite tradition seen at Sutton Hoo, Snape and Prittlewell. Discoveries like this are of national importance because they deepen our understanding of power, belief, and identity in early medieval England, and how those ideas were expressed along the East Anglian coast.”

Other significant finds from recent Sizewell C excavations include evidence of Roman industrial activity, such as a well-preserved pottery kiln discovered in Middleton, and an extremely rare Iron Age oak ladder found at the same site.

Excavations at Goose Hill, north of Sizewell, reveal a long history shaped by its coastal setting - from Early Bronze Age farming to Roman salt production and Second World

War coastal defences. Archaeologists also uncovered Beaker-period activity, including a well-preserved cremation urn.

Suffolk County Council appeals against incorrect government Red highways rating

Suffolk County Council has called on the Department for Transport to correct a report it says wrongly labels the authority in the worst category of a new ratings system.

The move comes after a meeting with department officials (DfT) by Councillor Paul West and senior highways officials.

The new system ranks highways authorities using a traffic-light system based on effectiveness in spending the government's highways maintenance funding.

The council says the DfT failed to include in its assessment £10 million of highways funding it brought forward from 2025/26 and invested early in 2024/25.

Had this been included, Suffolk would have received an Amber rating for highways expenditure, consistent with its ratings in road condition and best practice, rather than an overall Red.

Councillor West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Operational Highways, said: “That £10 million delivered much welcomed resurfacing ahead of time, but we have now been unfairly penalised for it.

“We fully support transparency in the reporting of highway maintenance performance, but transparency can only be meaningful if the data being published is accurate.

“We have demonstrated to the government where it has gone wrong and we want it to recognise its mistake and correct the rating to Amber.

“Make no mistake, we ultimately want a Green status, but it is important that we at least have a ranking that accurately records where we are.”

Council set to approve much-needed provision for children with complex needs

Papers published today set out plans for the new provision, which will provide purpose-built Ofsted-registered accommodation, improving outcomes for children and reducing reliance on high-cost, private placements.

Following a successful bid, £1.4m of Department for Education funding has been secured for the project, which will be match-funded with a further £1.4m from Suffolk County Council.

Nationally, councils are facing growing demand and increasing complexity of need. Suffolk is facing the same pressures, with more children coming into care, and children entering care later with lived experiences meaning that they often require more specialist care and support at higher costs.

A lack of choice in the current care market means there is a critical need for local, Ofsted-registered placements for children with complex needs in Suffolk.

If approved, the new accommodation will deliver much-needed additional capacity to support children with complex needs in Suffolk. The proposed home will provide a stable, therapeutic and nurturing environment, designed to improve the health, education, and behavioural outcomes for the children cared for.

The numbers of children in Suffolk County Council's care fluctuate daily. There are currently around 900 children in care in Suffolk, with approximately 20 requiring residential accommodation.

It is estimated that the current cost for a child with complex needs living in private provision is approximately £16.4k per week. In the proposed accommodation, this cost would reduce to approximately £12k per week, offering a saving of up to £4.4k per child per week.

The papers outline that for two children living at the accommodation, this would represent an annual saving of £454.8k and by Year 3, a potential saving of £1.4m.