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**Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP**

Secretary of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

**By email only**

Dear Secretary of State

**Invitation to meet and discuss the urgent need for investment in Suffolk's transport infrastructure**

I am writing to you to voice my concerns on behalf of Suffolk County Council and the people we serve about the need for strategic investment in Suffolk's transport infrastructure — investment that, regrettably, has not been forthcoming.

Serious traffic congestion and disruption in and around Ipswich is now a way of life, particularly since the start of major repair works on the Orwell Bridge/A14.

These works have severely impacted travel times, affecting local businesses, road freight to and from ABP Felixstowe, and the overall quality of life for residents.

There are also a number of important transport projects in Suffolk which have been recognised as priorities for the health of UK economy or the wider East of England region, yet which have either been rejected for funding or not progressed by Government at all.

These include:

- Ely to Haughley rail improvements: While not a road scheme, this project would significantly support the local transport network and economy by unlocking capacity for both freight and passenger services across the East of England and beyond.
- A12/A14 Copdock Interchange: Previously expected to be part of the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) (2025–2030), it has now been delayed at least until RIS4 (2040).
- A11 Fiveways at Mildenhall: Similarly delayed.
- Notably, no major improvements to the Strategic Road Network in Suffolk have been included in RIS1, RIS2 or RIS3.

In addition, other key schemes have stalled, not due to lack of local support but due to central inaction or shifting priorities:

- A12 Four Village Bypass: A bid to divert traffic away from the villages of Marlesford, Glemham, Stratford St Andrew and Farnham was submitted and turned down.
- Transforming Cities Fund: Ipswich's bid was rejected on the basis that it did not meet the 200,000-population threshold, despite a clear strategic need.
- Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA): Our bids were overlooked due to the rural nature of the county.

In the last week, vital repair works have begun on the Orwell Bridge outside Ipswich which have had severe impacts on traffic on the A14 and Ipswich, reviving once again calls for the Ipswich Northern Route (INR) by-pass.

The importance of the A14 both to the regional and UK economy cannot be overstated.

Not only it is a vital artery supporting the Port of Felixstowe – Britain's busiest container port – it also links key logistics and industrial hubs worth billions to the UK economy.

Yet one simple road accident or broken-down vehicle can bring it grinding to a halt. This cannot continue.

Jack Abbott MP has said it is 'by-pass or bust' and has launched a petition calling for it to be built.

We are more than happy to work with Jack, and Government, in finding a solution to the traffic issues in and around Ipswich when the Orwell Bridge is closed. However, I would like to take this opportunity to ask you if the INR is in the current Government's priorities? If so, would it come at the expense of other transport schemes in Suffolk, and if so – which ones?

Also, with the imminent construction of Sizewell C, does the Government have plans to invest in better transport infrastructure in and around the county, including the proposed Major Road Network (MRN) upgrades between the A12 and the A14?

This council remains committed to developing sustainable transport to encourage people wherever possible to consider alternatives to private cars and thus relieving pressure on the environment and the road network.

However, we continue to face a fundamental question: How does the Government suggest we fund critical infrastructure investment when all conventional routes to national investment have so far failed us?

We appreciate that resources are limited and priorities must be made, but Suffolk's continued exclusion from significant transport investment programmes cannot continue if we are to meet our ambitions for growth, sustainability, and connectivity.

I therefore invite you to meet with me, senior transport officers, and Jack Abbott MP as soon as possible to discuss the future transport needs of Suffolk and Ipswich and how they may be funded.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Chris Chambers**

Cabinet member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste  
County Councillor Gipping Division