



## **Sustainable Travel Plan**

**2026 to 2031**

## 1. Introduction

This Sustainable Travel Plan builds upon the progress and foundations established in the University's previous Travel Plan for 2019–2024, recognising both the achievements and the changes in policy, behaviour and planning that have taken place over the past five years. It continues the University's commitment to addressing climate change, improving wellbeing and reducing environmental impacts through sustainable travel and transport choices.

Reflecting the University's Sustainable Development Goals commitments of:

- SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)
- SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)
- SDG 13 (Climate Action)

This plan is a strategic, outward-facing document. Operational delivery is managed through the annually updated Travel Action Plan, which sets out specific programmes, initiatives, and interventions against each objective.

### 2.1 Context and Policy Framework

The UK transport sector remains one of the largest contributors to domestic greenhouse gas emissions. National policy, including the Third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS3) continues to drive a shift towards active and low-carbon travel, supported by infrastructure investment and behavioural change. At the local level, Suffolk County Council's Local Transport Plan 2025–2040 prioritises decarbonisation, health and wellbeing, social inclusion, and the creation of places where walking, cycling, and public transport become the natural choice for everyday journeys.

The Ipswich Area Transport Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) both include active travel improvements directly relevant to the University, including enhancements to the Gipping River Path, pedestrian and cycle corridors linking Ipswich Hospital to the Waterfront, and pedestrian safety improvements in the immediate campus area. The University is working closely with Suffolk County Council's Transport Planning team to accelerate these connections.

The University of Suffolk recognises its role as a major generator of travel and its corresponding responsibility to limit negative impacts on local air quality, congestion, and carbon emissions. This plan fulfils the University's obligations under its Sustainability and Environmental Policy, supports delivery of the Carbon Management Plan, and contributes to the broader socio-economic and environmental health of Ipswich and the wider Suffolk region.

Central to our approach is the creation of an inclusive, people-centred campus and surrounding public realm that supports equality of opportunity in how staff, students and visitors access and move around the University. This Plan seeks to improve accessibility to and within the campus for all users, recognising differing needs, abilities and travel patterns, while strengthening connections with the Waterfront and wider Ipswich active travel network through collaborative delivery with local authorities, transport providers and the University community.

## 2.2 Air Quality

The University is situated adjacent to Ipswich Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) No. 3, which follows the Star Lane / Key Street / College Street gyratory. Vehicle movements associated with campus access contribute to congestion and air quality pressures within this zone. Reducing single-occupancy car use is therefore both an environmental and a civic responsibility for the University.

## 3. Vision

By 2030, the University of Suffolk will be a leading example of sustainable travel, where walking, cycling, public transport, and shared journeys are safe, accessible, and actively prioritised. Through strategic partnerships with transport providers, local authorities, and civic stakeholders, the University will deliver policies and initiatives that reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, lower carbon emissions, and enhance the health and wellbeing of staff, students, and the wider community.

This plan is organised around five strategic objectives, each aligned to our SDG commitments and our wider institutional sustainability agenda.

**Figure 1: Strategic Travel Objectives**

Ref	Objective
<b>OBJ 1</b>	Reduce single-occupancy car commuting and promote modal shift to active and sustainable travel modes.
<b>OBJ 2</b>	Improve and maintain high-quality walking, cycling, and active travel infrastructure on and around campus.
<b>OBJ 3</b>	Reduce carbon emissions associated with business travel and University fleet operations (Scope 3).
<b>OBJ 4</b>	Ensure travel provision is inclusive, equitable, and accessible for all members of our community.
<b>OBJ 5</b>	Engage staff, students, and external partners in sustained behavioural change towards sustainable travel.

## 3.3 Modal Shift Baseline and Targets

The data below is drawn from the University of Suffolk's participation in the 2024 Suffolk County Council Travel to Work Survey (n=222 UoS respondents, comprising 84% staff and 16% students).

Respondents were asked to identify all modes used on their journey to campus; figures therefore reflect multi-modal journeys and do not sum to 100%. The primary commuting

mode, the mode used for the longest part of the journey provides the baseline against which targets are set.

**Figure 2: Modal Shift**

Travel mode	Baseline	Interim target 2027/28	2030 target	Direction of travel
Walking / wheeling	<b>42%</b>	42%	<b>44%</b>	+2 pts - maintain and grow
Cycling / e-cycling	<b>4%</b>	7%	<b>11%</b>	+7 pts - key growth target
Bus (incl. Park & Ride)	<b>14%</b>	15%	<b>17%</b>	+3 pts
Rail	<b>10%</b>	11%	<b>12%</b>	+2 pts - maintain and grow
Car — sole driver	<b>53%</b>	48%	<b>43%</b>	–10 pts - headline target
Car sharing / passenger	<b>9%</b>	10%	<b>11%</b>	+2 pts
Motorcycle / scooter	<b>1%</b>	—	—	Monitor
Working from home	<b>&lt;1%</b>	—	—	Monitor

*Key finding: Walking is already the dominant sustainable mode at 42%, significantly above the HE urban campus average, reflecting the University's central Waterfront location. The headline challenge is sole-driver car use at 53%, above comparable urban university benchmarks. Cycling at 4% represents the greatest opportunity for growth.*

The targets set above are intentionally ambitious. They reflect both the University's genuine structural advantages and rural town disadvantages and a recognition that meaningful carbon reduction requires real behavioural change, not incremental adjustment. The rationale for each headline target is set out below.

- **Reducing sole-driver car use: –10 percentage points to 43% by 2030**

At 53%, sole-driver car use at the University of Suffolk is above the sector average for urban campus universities a figure that reflects the dispersed geography of the

Suffolk workforce and wider student population rather than a lack of alternatives. LCWIP infrastructure improvements, and car sharing promotion are all active levers available to the University.

- **Growing cycling mode share: +7 percentage points to 11% by 2030**

A cycling mode share of 4% is low for a central urban campus with direct Cycle Route 51 access, shower facilities, and a Cycle to Work scheme already in place. The gap between current provision and current uptake suggests that the barriers are behavioural and perceptual rather than infrastructural, which active engagement, campaigns, and the forthcoming LCWIP corridor improvements are well-placed to address. Moving from 4% to 11% over five years represents a near-tripling of cycling mode share.

- **Protecting walking mode share: maintain at ≥42% through to 2030**

Walking at 42% is an existing strength and a product of the University's compact, central location. The target here is not growth for its own sake but protection: as campus activity grows with the development of The Hold and potential new student numbers, the University must ensure that pedestrian infrastructure, lighting, and connectivity keep pace with demand. A modest stretch to 44% by 2030 reflects achievable gains from continued Waterfront public realm improvements and LCWIP pedestrian enhancements.

- **Public transport: modest growth targets reflecting external dependencies**

Bus and rail mode shares are set with more modest growth targets +3 and +2 percentage points respectively, as the University's direct influence over these modes is limited. Service frequency, reliability, and cost are primarily determined by Ipswich Buses Ltd, First Eastern Counties, and Greater Anglia. The University's role is to make these options as easy to use as possible through encouraging season ticket discount, intranet promotion, and active engagement with Suffolk County Council on service planning. Should service improvements materialise through the Local Transport Plan, these targets will be revisited upward at the 2027/28 review.

- **Car sharing: a bridging mode on the journey to zero**

A small increase in car sharing (9% to 11%) is targeted as a pragmatic bridge for those staff who live in areas of Suffolk not well-served by public transport, particularly those travelling over 20 miles (26% of respondents), for whom active travel is not a realistic daily option. Car sharing halves the carbon impact per person of a car journey and reduces congestion and parking pressure. The dedicated car sharing spaces and Teams channel provide existing infrastructure to build on; the priority is raising awareness and normalising the behaviour.

#### 4. Campus and Community

The University of Suffolk is a single-site urban university located on the Ipswich Waterfront, within walking distance of Ipswich town centre and station. Ipswich is the principal urban centre of Suffolk, with a population of approximately 139,600, and sits at the heart of the county's transport network with direct rail links to London Liverpool Street, Norwich, Cambridge, and the wider East Anglia region.

The campus is divided into two interconnected areas, the Waterfront site (including the Waterfront Building and James Hehir Building) and North Campus separated by Fore Street. The medieval street pattern and the River Orwell to the south limit vehicular access to a small number of crossing points, which can experience significant congestion during peak hours. This physical context makes the shift to active and sustainable travel both important and, given the campus's central location, highly achievable.

Figure 3: Site Plan



In Academic Year 2024/25, the University community comprised approximately 3,400 staff, students, and regular contractors. A breakdown is provided in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Ipswich Campus Headcount 24/25

Category	Headcount	Basis
Academic and professional services staff	663	FTE
Students	2,579	FTE
Security and cleaning staff	52	Mix FTE/PTE
Regular contractors	~50	Part-time/rolling

**Total****~3,400**

#### 4.1 Student Accommodation

The University's principal student accommodation is Athena Hall, located 300 metres from the Waterfront Building and providing up to 590 rooms. Additional accommodation is available at 75 Grimwade Street (49 students, adjacent to North Campus), Oxford Road (4 students), and Ormonde House (16 students, a twenty-minute walk from campus). Total recognised student accommodation capacity is 659 rooms.

Students living in University accommodation are strongly discouraged from bringing vehicles to campus, consistent with the University's Travel Policy and the limited parking provision in central Ipswich. The proximity of all student accommodation to campus means that walking is the principal mode of travel for resident students, supporting the University's active travel and carbon reduction objectives.

#### 4.2 Campus Opening Hours

Peak arrival and departure times for staff and students are 08:00–08:30 and 16:30–17:00. Building access hours are as follows:

- Waterfront Building (24 hours, intercom access 22:00–06:00);
- Library (Mon–Fri 08:30–19:00, Sat 09:00–17:00);
- James Hehir, Atrium, Long Street and Arts (weekdays 06:00–21:00);
- Health and Wellbeing (06:00–20:00);
- Sir Thomas Slade Court (07:00–21:00);
- Neptune Marina (08:00–20:00).

### 5. Governance

The Estates Directorate leads the strategic coordination and delivery of the Sustainable Travel Plan, with day-to-day oversight provided by the Sustainability Manager.

A Travel Plan Working Group provides cross-institutional governance, meeting quarterly to review progress, set priorities, and ensure delivery against the University's sustainability, estates, and people strategies. The Working Group's membership includes representation from the Students' Union, Schools and People and Culture, embedding both staff and students' perspectives in plan delivery. Its terms of reference include:

- Supporting the University's contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 3, 11, and 13
- Enabling and promoting sustained modal shift towards active travel, public transport, and reduced single-occupancy vehicle use
- Providing strategic oversight of Travel Plan performance, including progress against targets and KPIs
- Ensuring embedded decision making between travel, estates, sustainability, and wider institutional strategies

- Championing behavioural change and engagement initiatives across staff and student communities

Progress against this plan is reported annually through the Annual Sustainability Report to the university executive body and to the University's board of directors. The University also participates in the annual Suffolk County Council travel survey, which provides independent external monitoring of modal patterns across the campus community.

The University's Wellbeing Steering Group, comprising academic and professional services staff provides a complementary forum for promoting active travel as part of broader staff wellbeing, including the Workplace Wellbeing Charter commitments.

## 6. Travel and Transport Infrastructure

Detailed and up-to-date guidance on all sustainable travel options is available via the University intranet. This section provides an overview of current provision across each mode.

### 6.1 Walking and Cycling

The University's central location makes it highly accessible by foot and cycle from across Ipswich for those living in or immediately around the town. Pedestrian access is well-served by signed footpaths to all parts of campus, high-quality street and security lighting, and a clear emphasis on pedestrian priority over vehicles on both North Campus and within the Waterfront environment. The estate is checked and maintained regularly for defects.

Cycle access is good from most directions, with Cycle Route 51 running along the Waterfront to both the James Hehir and Waterfront Buildings and North Campus. The University is a member of the Ipswich Cycling and Walking Charter, a network of businesses and individuals committed to making Ipswich a safer and healthier place for everyday cycling and walking. Cycle route maps and parking information are available via [suffolkonboard.com](http://suffolkonboard.com).

**Figure 5: Cycling and Parking Provision**

Location	Spaces
Waterfront Building — reception (covered)	60
Waterfront Building — plaza	40
James Hehir Building — rear (covered)	28
James Hehir Building — front	20
Duke Street car park (covered)	26
Wharf car park (5 undercover)	26

<b>Library — University car park (covered)</b>	30
<b>Arts Building (covered and caged)</b>	12
<b>Atrium</b>	6
<b>The Hold</b>	20
<b>Athena Hall public car park (caged and covered)</b>	96
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>

To support modal shifts to cycling, the University provides: discounted bicycles through the Cycle to Work salary sacrifice scheme; pool bicycles and equipment for staff to use on work-related journeys; and shower facilities and lockers for both student and staff cyclists and pedestrians. The Student Union operate a cycle hire scheme for student for both leisure and regular commuting use.

## **7. Bus and Park and Ride**

The University is served by a network of local bus services operated primarily by Ipswich Buses Ltd and First Eastern Counties Buses Ltd, with stops on Grimwade Street/Fore Street and Long Street. High-frequency Park & Ride services (typically every 20 minutes) connect the University to London Road Park & Ride, Ipswich town centre, Suffolk ONE, Ipswich Hospital, and Martlesham Park & Ride. Park & Ride sites are located at London Road (A12/A14 interchange) and Martlesham (A1214/A12 junction). Full route and timetable information is available via [suffolkonboard.com](http://suffolkonboard.com). and on the university student and staff hub travel pages.

## **8. Rail**

Greater Anglia provides direct rail services from Ipswich on the Great Eastern Main Line to London Liverpool Street (approx. 70 minutes), as well as connections to Colchester, Chelmsford, Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge, Ely, Peterborough, Norwich, Felixstowe, and Lowestoft. Ipswich station is fully accessible with step-free access and lift provision.

The University maintains a corporate arrangement with Greater Anglia, providing a 10% discount on eligible season ticket products for staff and students, information is available on the student and staff hub travel pages. Cycle carriage is permitted subject to operator restrictions; reservations are required on intercity services. Up to date timetables and booking are available at [greateranglia.co.uk](http://greateranglia.co.uk).

## **9. Car Parking**

The University provides a total of 374 managed parking spaces for registered staff and students across University-owned and affiliated sites, managed through an Automatic

Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system operated by Ipserv with on-site enforcement. Parking charges are applied at a standard daily rate of £2.

Visitor parking is not available within University-managed car parks, so all visitors are directed to nearby public pay and display facilities, including Duke Street and Athena Hall. The University provides sustainable travel guidance to visitors in advance of travel and event attendance.

**Figure 6: Car Parking Provision**

Location	Type	Spaces
<b>North Campus (University-owned)</b>	General staff/student parking	558
	Disabled bays	9
	SU bus, Chamber of Commerce, Nursery	14
<b>The Wharf (University-owned)</b>	General parking	156
	Disabled bays	12
	Motorcycle	5
<b>Waterfront (University-owned)</b>	Disabled bays	7
<b>Athena Hall (privately owned)</b>	General / public pay & display	88
	Disabled bays	5
<b>University Avenue</b>	Disabled bays	4

The University provides dedicated coach and minibus drop-off and pick-up facilities on Long Street, with a maximum dwell time of 20 minutes. Motorcycle parking is available at designated locations across campus, with the option to use standard bays when these are fully occupied. Accessible parking is strategically located near key buildings to support safe and inclusive access for staff, students, and visitors.

The University's Estates maintenance programme is committed to enhancing accessibility across the campus and surrounding public realm, ensuring safe, clear, and well-maintained routes from parking and cycle areas to key buildings. These measures reflect the University's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, while supporting efficient and equitable use of campus access facilities.

## 10. Electrical Vehicles

As part of the University's Carbon Plan, four 7.4 kW electric vehicle (EV) charging units have been installed on North Campus (Figure 6). The underlying electrical infrastructure has been designed to allow for the future expansion of charging capacity in line with increased demand from staff, students, and University fleet vehicles. The University will monitor utilisation and travel patterns to inform the rollout of additional charging units. Expansion will be prioritised to:

- Support anticipated uptake of EVs among staff, students, and fleet users;
- Facilitate the transition of University fleet and operational vehicles to low- or zero-emission alternatives;
- Ensure charging provision is accessible, cost-effective, and aligned with site power capacity and operational requirements;
- Remain responsive to technological developments and changes in user demand.

Regular review and reporting will ensure that EV charging infrastructure continues to meet the University's sustainability objectives and supports modal shift and carbon reduction commitments across the campus estate.

## **11. Car Sharing**

Car sharing, defined as two or more individuals travelling together for the home-to-campus journey, is a key component of the University's sustainable travel strategy. The University actively encourages staff and students to participate in car sharing to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use, support modal shift, and lower campus-related carbon emissions.

Dedicated car sharing spaces are provided on campus exclusively for registered car sharers, ensuring a tangible incentive for participation. Engagement and coordination are supported through the staff and student intranet, which hosts guidance, tips, and resources to facilitate shared journeys. A dedicated Teams channel enables staff and students to connect with potential car share partners helping to match journeys efficiently and safely. For journeys extending beyond Suffolk, or where cross-county schemes are available, further guidance and support are provided on the staff and student hubs.

These measures collectively ensure that car sharing is accessible, practical, and promoted as an integral part of the University's wider Travel Plan objectives, contributing to reduced traffic congestion, lower emissions, and a more sustainable campus community.

## **12. Business Travel**

Business travel is a significant contributor to the University's Scope 3 carbon emissions and a key focus for demand management, modal shift, and decarbonisation. To inform planning, target-setting, and monitoring, the University has an established baseline of 176.72 TCO<sub>2e</sub> for all staff-related business activity. This baseline underpins the assessment of progress against Travel Plan objectives and the University's net zero commitments.

All business travel is guided by a sustainable travel hierarchy:

1. **Travel Avoidance:** Staff are expected to consider remote collaboration, videoconferencing, or other digital alternatives to reduce the need for travel, representing the primary strategy for mitigating Scope 3 emissions.

2. Sustainable Modes: Where travel is necessary, low-carbon options such as rail, bus, cycling, walking, and car sharing are prioritised. Existing discounts, season tickets, and supporting infrastructure are promoted to encourage uptake.
3. Efficient Vehicle Use: Private or University vehicles are used only when alternatives are impractical. Staff are encouraged to consolidate trips, plan direct routes, and preferentially use electric or low-emission vehicles.

This hierarchy is to be embedded in university policy, ensuring travel decisions support both operational efficiency and carbon reduction.

### **13. Travel Survey**

The University participates in the annual county travel survey coordinated by Suffolk County Council to support consistent monitoring of travel patterns across Suffolk, including modal choices and trends in commuting behaviour. This survey is undertaken each year as part of the broader travel monitoring framework and contributes to long-term transport planning in the region. Relevant results and reports are published by the County Council and made available on the Suffolk Annual Travel Plan Monitoring page and associated community sites, including [thewaytogosuffolk.org.uk](http://thewaytogosuffolk.org.uk).

Travel data from this process, together with internal travel surveys and site-specific monitoring, is used to inform the University's understanding of travel behaviour and underpins the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Travel Plan over its five-year period. This evidence-based approach supports the setting of appropriate targets, the assessment of interventions such as active travel, public transport integration, and business travel management, and ensures the plan remains aligned with wider sustainability and carbon reduction objectives.

### **14. Travel Action Plan**

The University's Travel Plan is delivered through the Travel Action Plan, a dynamic document that outlines the programmes, initiatives, and interventions required to achieve the objectives set out in this five-year Travel Plan. The Action Plan covers key areas including:

- Travel infrastructure
- Staff and student engagement
- Business travel management
- Monitoring and reporting

The Travel Action Plan is reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes in travel patterns, emerging technologies, operational requirements, and policy developments. This ensures that the University maintains a structured, evidence-based approach to delivering modal shift, supporting decarbonisation, and meeting its sustainability objectives over the full five-year period.

## 15. Monitoring and Reporting

Robust monitoring and transparent reporting are essential to the effective delivery of this Sustainable Travel Plan and the achievement of its strategic objectives.

Progress will be assessed against the five objectives and associated modal shift targets set out in Section 3. These targets provide the primary framework for measuring performance, with particular emphasis on reducing single-occupancy car use and increasing uptake of active and sustainable travel modes.

Monitoring will draw on a combination of data sources. The annual Suffolk County Council Travel Survey will provide the principal longitudinal dataset, offering externally validated insight into commuting patterns and modal share. This will be supplemented, where appropriate, by internal surveys, engagement activity, and operational data, including car park and cycle parking utilisation, to support a more detailed understanding of travel behaviour.

The Travel Plan Working Group will oversee performance on a quarterly basis, reviewing progress against targets and delivery of the Travel Action Plan. The Group will identify emerging issues, recommend corrective actions, and ensure alignment between strategic objectives, operational delivery, and wider institutional priorities.

The Travel Action Plan is the primary delivery and monitoring tool for the Plan. It translates strategic objectives into defined actions, responsibilities, and timescales, and is reviewed and updated annually to reflect performance, emerging evidence, and changing operational or policy contexts.

Progress will be reported annually through the University's Sustainability Report to the University Executive and Board, ensuring appropriate oversight, accountability, and alignment with institutional sustainability and carbon reduction commitments. Reporting will include performance against targets, key achievements, and priority actions for the forthcoming period.

A formal review of progress and targets will be undertaken at the mid-point of the Plan (2027/28) to ensure continued relevance, ambition, and deliverability considering external and internal changes.