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Big Road Projects Planned for the East of England Region

July 12, 2025

— Categories: *Economics*



The Department for Transport has confirmed that four significant road projects in the East of England will move forward over the next two years, while ten additional schemes remain under review for potential funding if they can prove both viable and cost-effective.

Confirmed projects include upgrades to the Lower Thames Crossing, improvements to the A12/A14 junction in Suffolk, a new link road connecting the A10 to the A47 west of Norwich, and a junction upgrade at Seven Hills near Chelmsford. These projects are

intended to ease congestion and improve links between growing communities, as well as unlock economic development and housing opportunities across the region.

Beyond these confirmed investments, the Department for Transport has published a list of ten other proposals “under consideration.” These include the Norwich Western Link, a 3.9-mile stretch designed to complete an outer ring road around the city, though its future remains uncertain after Norfolk County Council was unable to overcome environmental objections. Other proposals under review include dual carriageway improvements on the A10 between Ely and Cambridge and junction upgrades on the A127 in Essex, as well as enhancements to the A13 near Greys.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander made clear that public funding would only support projects with fully developed business cases and a clear economic return for taxpayers. Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander cancelled the £1.3 billion A12 widening scheme near Chelmsford as well as a £100 million dualling of the A47 between Wansford and Sutton, citing budget constraints. She also scrapped the proposed A47 dualling scheme between Wansford and Sutton because the government had already allocated over £500 million to A47 upgrades in the region.

Alexander told Members of Parliament that “only projects that are fully costed, affordable, and deliver a return on taxpayers’ money will be given the green light under my watch,” a stance that drew criticism from local business groups. The Suffolk Chamber of Commerce called the decision to reject certain plans a “significant strategic blunder” that would hold back growth in a region already grappling with congestion and limited infrastructure.

Ministers defended the cautious approach, noting that the East of England has secured major infrastructure investments, including the Sizewell C nuclear plant, the Lower Thames Crossing and East West Rail schemes. According to Transport Secretary Alexander, any future schemes must prove their worth in terms of job creation and economic benefits, especially at a time when public finances remain stretched.

With councils and MPs lobbying hard, the coming years will be critical in determining which of the remaining proposals attract DfT funding. Whether these road upgrades materialise will depend not only on costs and planning challenges but also on the ability of local leaders to make a persuasive economic case for further investment.

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