



Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) NEWSLETTER

Issue 4, October 2024

Introduction

What is an NSIP?

An NSIP is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. They are a certain type of project, over a certain size, and considered by the Government to be so big and nationally important that permission to build them needs to be given at a national level, by the responsible Secretary of State. The thresholds for NSIPs are set out in sections 15 to 30A of the PA2008. Instead of applying to the local authority for planning permission, the developer must apply to PINS for a different kind of permission called a Development Consent Order (DCO). The PA2008 process was introduced to streamline the decision-making process for major infrastructure projects. Since then, over 110 NSIPs have been consented in the UK. PINS is responsible for undertaking Development Consent Order (DCO) examinations and writing a report with recommendations to the Secretary of State to aid their decision-making.

Parish and town councils are key stakeholders and consultees in the NSIP process. Suffolk has to deal with a very large number of NSIPs, particularly related to energy developments, so raising awareness of the current status of all of Suffolk's NSIPs with parish and town councils is important to allow for their fullest engagement in the process of NSIPs affecting their area.

Suffolk County Council's (SCC) Scrutiny Committee discussed on 30 June 2023, the impact of NSIPs on Suffolk's communities and how the Council works with communities to encourage consultation responses that are reflective of the views of local people. The CEO of SALC, Sally Longmate, highlighted the pressures and issues parish councils face in relation to NSIP's. The documents related to that meeting are available on the SCC website, and a recording of the meeting is available on YouTube.



1 - Video of Scrutiny Committee 30th June 2023

SCC Scrutiny Committee documents:

[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(30-06-2023\),%20Scrutiny%20Committee](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(30-06-2023),%20Scrutiny%20Committee)

Recommendation f) from the Scrutiny Committee states that parish councils should be updated about the status of Suffolk's current and potential NSIPs. This newsletter will be provided every couple of months, prepared by SCC officers, and circulated through SALC.

Guidance for Town and Parish Councils



Getting to Grips with NSIPs

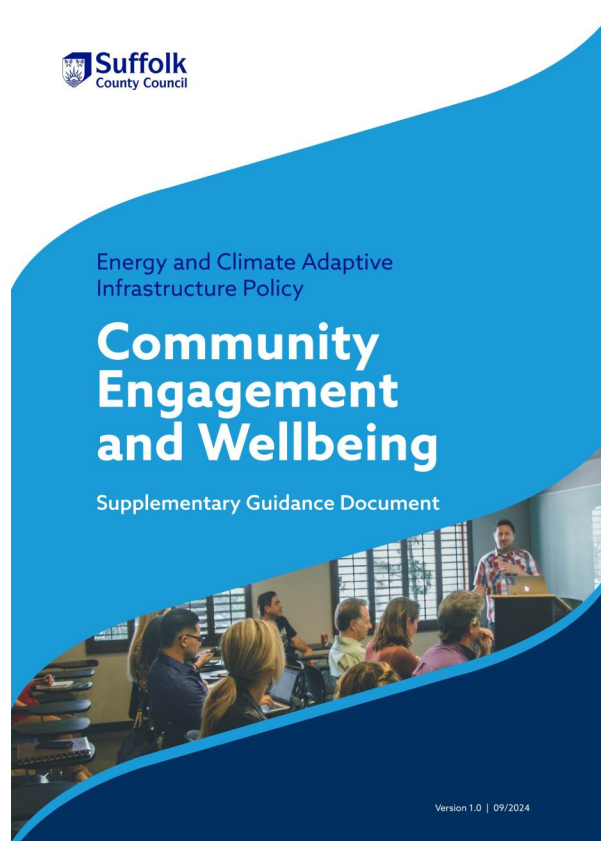
Advice for Town and Parish Councils on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)

The Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) and Suffolk County Council (SCC) have produced a guidance document on how town and parish councils can engage more effectively with the NSIP process. The guidance includes explanations of key documents, stages, and procedures within the NSIP process. In drafting the guidance, SALC's experience in the governance and procedures of town and parish councils has been complimented by the SCC's significant knowledge and expertise in the NSIP process to inform potential roles that town and parish councils can play in NSIP projects.

More information : link to the guidance document [Use this link to view the document](#)

Link to the Suffolk Association of Local Council's dedicated page for local councils on NSIPs - [use this link](#)

SCC Guidance for NSIP Developers: Community Engagement and Wellbeing



This Guidance document was written by Suffolk County Council (SCC), for NSIP Developers to take account of.

How the document came to be:

Following a public question to the meeting of the County Council on 21 March 2024 regarding the well-being of communities and the mental health impacts of nationally significant infrastructure consenting, from the chairman of Friston parish council Mr Michael Mahoney, officers have been working with Cllr Richard Rout, Deputy Cabinet Member for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, to consider how to address this very important issue. The council's Head of Public Mental Health has engaged further with Friston Parish Council and worked with the Council's NSIP team to explore solutions. Officers sought advice from leading UK experts on health impact assessments and community engagement to inform the discussion.

What the document aims to do:

As responsibilities for community engagement lie with developers, the Council's greatest lever is to influence developers. Hence, the Council has developed guidance for project promoters about community engagement and safeguarding the well-being of communities, which was published in September 2024. This guidance appears to be first of its kind in the United Kingdom, and its publication has been shared widely with Government officials, the Planning Inspectorate and local authorities across England.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/energy-projectsand-the-wellbeing-of-communities>

Suffolk County Council has published other guidance on NSIPs. The most recent guidance documents are aimed at developers/ promoters of NSIP schemes. These can be found on Suffolk County Councils website here: [NSIP information for developers and project promoters - Suffolk County Council](#)

Regional Energy Planning - proposals by the energy regulator, Ofgem

Suffolk County Council has responded to a consultation from the regulator Ofgem, about the proposed system of Regional Energy system planning. The proposed new system has the potential to manage the development of energy infrastructure much better and allow greater local accountability and much better management of change.

The Consultation can be found at: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/consultation/regional-energy-strategic-plan-policy-framework-consultation>

And the response from Suffolk County Council can be seen at:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/Suffolk-County-Council-RESP-Consultation-Response-081024-FINAL-redacted.pdf>

Local authority roles in the NSIP process

During the NSIP process, the role of the county and district council is that of a statutory consultee who can try to persuade/advise, but local authorities cannot force changes upon the developer, as they are not the decision-makers. Neither the county nor the district council are responsible for designing or delivering any scheme. However, they are important stakeholders who often can shape the design and mitigation of projects.

Parish and town councils hosting, or being adjacent to, proposed NSIPs are also statutory consultees. It is important for these councils to provide the local community perspective in the process, aiming to influence design, mitigation, and community benefit proposals.

NSIP Project Updates

(Projects in Alphabetical order)

Glossary

- NSIP = Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
- PINS = Planning Inspectorate
- SCC = Suffolk County Council
- SALC = Suffolk Association of Local Councils
- DCO = Development Consent Order

Bramford to Twinstead

Location: Babergh

This project proposal by National Grid is to construct a new 400 kV power line between Bramford to Twinstead to reinforce the electricity transmission network.

Update (October 2024):

The Secretary of State granted Development Consent on the 12 September. Officers were pleased that the Development Consent Order requires submission of detailed construction

management plans instead of just relying upon the high-level outline versions submitted with the application. National Grid have announced Balfour Beatty as their main contractors and discussions are expected to commence shortly in respect of the construction.

More information:

- Link to Bramford to Twinstead's National Grid webpage: [Link to National Grid's website](#)
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Bramford to Twinstead can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020002>

East Anglia ONE North and TWO Offshore Wind Farms (Scottish Power Renewables (SPR))

Location: East Suffolk

East Anglia 1 North and 2 is a proposal to create connections to a new substation at Friston via High Voltage Alternating Current undersea and underground cables.

Update (October 2024):

It is noted that East Anglia TWO has been successful in the government's recent Contract for Difference auction round. For more information on this:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tidalwave-of-clean-energy-investment-worth-billions-unlocked-ahead-of-investment-summit>

SCC is continuing to deal with Discharge of Requirements (DoRs) with colleagues at East Suffolk Council.

More information:

- Link to East Anglia ONE North's webpage: https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/east_anglia_one_north.aspx
- Link to East Anglia TWO's webpage: https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/east_anglia_two.aspx

- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to East Anglia ONE North can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010077>
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to East Anglia TWO can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010078>

Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm

Location: Off East Suffolk coast / Essex

A wind farm, proposed off the East Suffolk coast, with the landing point and onshore infrastructure proposed to be in Essex.

Update (October 2024):

The Planning Inspectorate accepted the Five Estuaries application for examination on 23 April 2024. On 21 May 2024 the Council's Cabinet approved the Council's relevant representations for the project, which raised issues relating to landscape and seascape impact (including on the Suffolk and Essex Coasts and Heaths National Landscape), impact on Suffolk's local highways network, cumulative impacts with other projects and the possibility for benefits and legacies in the domains of skills and employment.

The examination formally started after the close of the Preliminary Meeting which was held on 17 September 2024 and Issue Specific Hearings were held on 18 and 19 September 2024, at which the Council made representations on landscape and transport issues.

More information:

- Five Estuaries Website: <https://fiveestuaries.co.uk>
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Five Estuaries can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010115>

LionLink

Location: East Suffolk

LionLink is the proposal by National Grid Ventures Electricity Submission for a subsea electricity link between Suffolk and the Netherlands, which will also connect with Dutch windfarms.

Update (October 2024):

The LionLink Interconnector Scheme is in a pre-application phase of development with further (primarily offshore) surveys taking place this year, with statutory consultation and Preliminary Environmental Impact Report due in 2025. SCC continues to seek coordination between LionLink and Sea Link, including a shared cable corridor, even though LionLink is currently promoting a separate cable corridor, from the Southwold/Walberswick area down to Saxmundham.

More information:

- Link to LionLink's National Grid website page: [Link to National Grid's website](#)
- Link to SCC's response to the non-statutory consultation: [https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/councils-concerns-for-lionlinks-impact-on-suffolk-coastline#:~:text="The%20impact%20of%20LionLink%20on,on%20the%20borders%20of%20Minsmere.](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/councils-concerns-for-lionlinks-impact-on-suffolk-coastline#:~:text=%20The%20impact%20of%20LionLink%20on,on%20the%20borders%20of%20Minsmere.)
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to LionLink can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020033>

Nautilus

Location: East Suffolk

Nautilus is a National Grid Ventures proposal to create a Multi-Purpose Interconnector with Belgium. Currently the plans would see the project make landfall between Sizewell and Thorpeness, with cables running to Friston, where the interconnector would be sited, connecting to the Grid at an as-yet unbuilt substation.

Update (October 2024):

Suffolk County Council (SCC) is deeply disappointed that the regulator has refused to permit an alternative brownfield location, outside Suffolk, to connect the Nautilus project, which

would have significantly reduced the cumulative adverse impacts of energy infrastructure on the people, and environment of the county.

SCC's views on the additional costs risk and impacts of this minded to decision are set out in this response: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/ofgem-nautilus-consultation-scc-response14-08-24-final-redacted.pdf>

More information:

- Link to Nautilus's National Grid website page: <https://www.nationalgrid.com/national-grid-ventures/interconnectors-connecting-cleaner-future/nautilus-interconnector>
- Link to the Suffolk County Council page on Nautilus: [Nautilus - Suffolk County Council](#)
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Nautilus can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020023>

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm

Location: Off East Suffolk coast / Essex

A wind farms, proposed off the East Suffolk coast, with the landing point and onshore infrastructure proposed to be in Essex.

(No Update this Issue)

Update from previous issue (August 2024):

North Falls indicates a submission of their DCO applications in early 2024.

More information:

- North Falls Website: <https://www.northfallsoffshore.com>
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to North Falls can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010119>

Norwich to Tilbury

Location: Babergh and Mid Suffolk

This project proposal by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) is to construct a new 400 kV electricity transmission line between Norwich and Tilbury.

Update (October 2024):

Following the Statutory Consultation which ended in July, National Grid are considering the thousands of responses that they received. The Council made representations concerning the need to pause the project to consider alternative solutions to the onshore 400kv grid upgrade between Norwich and Tilbury which consists of conventional 50m high lattice tower pylons with underground sections across the Dedham Vale National Landscape and potentially also within the Waveney Valley. The Council made a number of change requests in respect of the proposed scheme including re-routeing to avoid airfields and heritage assets and extending the areas to be undergrounded either side of the Stour and Waveney Valleys.

The Council has also written to NGET, Ofgem, and the Secretary of State, setting out the case for a pause and the consideration of alternatives. To find these documents, please follow the link and view the last 3 documents at the bottom of the page under "Supporting documents". - [Norwich to Tilbury - Suffolk County Council](#)

More information:

- Link to Norwich to Tilbury's National Grid webpage: [Link to National Grid's website](#)
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Norwich to Tilbury can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027>

Sea Link

Location: East Suffolk

Sea Link is a proposal for a subsea, grid reinforcement link between Suffolk and Kent. Currently there is a proposed converter station near Saxmundham, connected by underground cables from a landing point between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness.

Update (October 2024):

The Council formally objected to the latest Sea Link proposals in response to a targeted consultation by National Grid Electricity Transmission this summer, because of proposals for the building of a new bridge and for construction work to take place on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The scale of a new permanent access bridge across the River Fromus near Saxmundham, to access a proposed converter site, was deemed by the Council as hugely disproportionate. Plans show that it could be up to six metres in height with a span of over 150 metres, including embankment. Updated plans from National Grid also revealed that core working hours are being proposed to include 7am to 5pm on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

In response to Sea Link's latest public consultation, the council has submitted a 29 page document outlining these and a variety of other potential impacts, that the scheme would have on local communities and the environment.

National Grid expects to submit its application for development consent in early 2025.

More information:

- Link to Sea Link's National Grid website page: <https://www.nationalgrid.com/the-great-grid-upgrade/sea-link>
- Link to Sea Link Grid Reinforcement Statutory Consultation Suffolk County Council Response: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(12-12-2023\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-12-2023),%20The%20Cabinet)
- Link to Suffolk County Council's Sea Link web page - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-nsips/national-grid-electricity-generation-sea-link>
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Sea Link can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020026>

Sizewell C

Location: East Suffolk

Sizewell C is a 3.2-gigawatt EPR nuclear power station.

Sizewell C announced formal commencement on 15 January 2024.

Update (October 2024):

Sizewell C has been progressing preparatory works including the recent opening of office accommodation at the Ancillary Construction Area (ACA), which is located on the Land East of Eastlands Industrial Estate (LEEIE) on Lovers Lane in Leiston. In August the project was awarded £5.5bn of funding from the government under the Sizewell C Development Expenditure (Devex) subsidy scheme to progress works to bring the project to the point of a Financial Investment Decision (FID).

The £23m Sizewell C Community Fund opened for applications in July 2024. The first round of applications closed on 6 October 2024, with funding decisions for that round expected in January 2025. A second round of funding is expected to open immediately after the first round closes.

More information:

- Link to the Sizewell C website: <https://www.sizewellc.com>
- Link to Suffolk County Councils webpage on Sizewell C: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects-including-nsips/sizewell-c-nuclear-power-plant>
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Sizewell C can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010012>

Sunnica

Location: West Suffolk

Sunnica is a proposed 1,130 hectares (2,792 acres) Solar Farm development across Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

Update (October 2024):

On 12 July 2024 the Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP, the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, granted development consent for Sunnica Energy Farm against the recommendation of the Examining Authority which handled the case. Suffolk County Council, alongside Cambridgeshire County Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council and West Suffolk Council, had opposed this large solar farm project straddling West Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire, due to its scale and the degree of impact on the landscape and on communities.

The four councils sent a Pre-Action Protocol letter to the Secretary of State to challenge the decision to grant development consent, but the claim for judicial review did not proceed because Cambridgeshire County Council and West Suffolk Council withdrew from the action. This left East Cambridgeshire District Council unable to afford to continue and Suffolk County Council was advised that the case would not be likely to succeed without support from a district council.

More information:

- Link to Sunnica's website: <https://sunnica.co.uk>
- Link to Suffolk County Council's webpage on Sunnica: [Sunnica Energy Farm - Suffolk County Council](#)
- Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Sunnica can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010106>

White Elm Solar Farm

Location: Mid Suffolk

White Elm Solar Farm is a proposed solar farm development planned to be located on land north of Mendlesham in Mid Suffolk. The solar farm would have a design capacity of up to 200 MW.

(No Update this Issue)

Update from previous issue (August 2024):

A soft launch for the scheme has taken place, with an introductory letter being issued to the local political stakeholders, including SCC, Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council, and the

Parish Council of Mendlesham, Wickham Skeith, Cotton and Thwaite, which set out preliminary timelines for pre-application activities, including Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping, non-statutory and statutory consultation.

More information:

Link to White Elm Solar Farm's Website: <https://www.whiteelmsolarfarm.com>

Link to the PINS webpage where all public documents relating to White Elm Solar Farm can be found: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110003>

Other NSIPs

The following NSIPs in Suffolk have currently no significant updates to report:

- SPR: East Anglia One and Three: Both are consented. East Anglia One (EA1) is complete; East Anglia Three (EA3) is under construction. The EA3 converter station is currently being constructed at Bramford and works along the cable ducting route are being undertaken.
- Gull Wing Bridge: Thousands of Lowestoft residents made history on 7 September 2024 as they walked, wheeled and drove for the first time across the town's new, world-leading and unique Gull Wing bridge. The civic opening ceremony will take place on Tuesday 19 November. <https://gullwingbridge.co.uk>
- Drax: (formerly Progress Power) at Eye Airfield: Consented. Construction is ongoing.

In addition, there is the possibility in the medium term of additional NSIPs, in relation to hydrogen infrastructure, water reservoirs, energy generation and potentially, in the longer term, further National Grid infrastructure. Future newsletters will update on further developments.

Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils