



# Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) NEWSLETTER

Issue 2, March 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:**

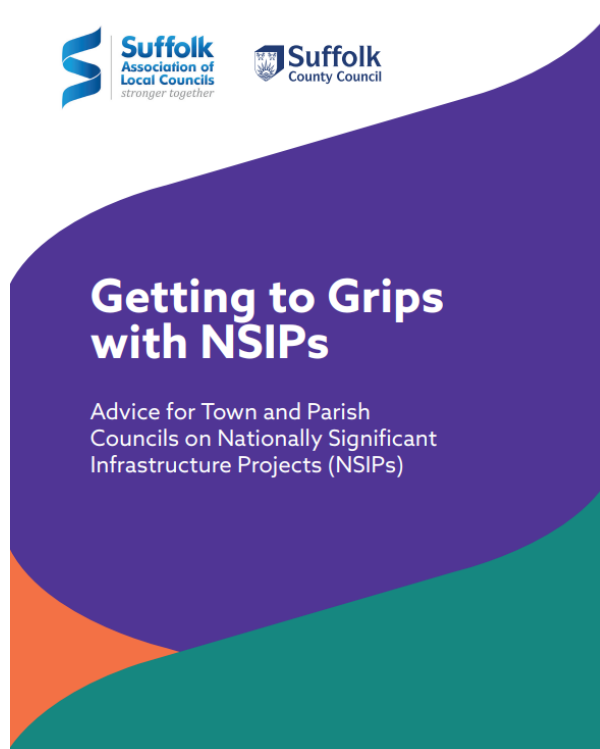
[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(30-06-2023\),%20Scrutiny%20Committee](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(30-06-2023),%20Scrutiny%20Committee)

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*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.*

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## Guidance for Town and Parish Councils



The Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) and Suffolk County Council (SCC) have launched 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](#)

## 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.

## Sizewell C

*Location: East Suffolk*

Sizewell C announced formal commencement on 15 January 2024.

Suffolk County Council officers are currently heavily involved in post commencement arrangements including governance, communications and administering the developer's financial and non-financial Deed of Obligation commitments.

Suffolk County Council continues to handle applications for Discharges of Requirements (DoR) and is working with East Suffolk Council on applications which are their responsibility.

More information:

Link to the Sizewell C website: <https://www.sizewellc.com>

Link to the Sizewell C PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Sizewell C can be found: [Link to Planning Inspectorate website](#)

## Sea Link

*Location: East Suffolk*

The Statutory Consultation for the Sea Link proposals, a subsea, grid reinforcement link between Suffolk and Kent, concluded on 18 December.

SCC's response to the Statutory Consultation set out the Council's stance in respect of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), stating that due to the outcomes of the Offshore Coordination Support Scheme (OCSS) and the review of connections in East Anglia that is currently being undertaken by National Grid Electricity Systems Operator (NGESO) being unknown, the Council is unable to make an informed preliminary conclusion with regards to the Sea Link project.

The Council also reiterated the need for coordination between National Grid Ventures' LionLink scheme and Sea Link with respect to landfall, cable corridors and converter station siting. Sea Link have planned to install additional ducting to accommodate further cables and the converter station site also can fit two further stations.

The Cabinet report, in addition, recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment & Finance writes to the National Grid Group and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) asking them to ensure full alignment of the project development of LionLink and Sea Link and that the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) considers both projects simultaneously, using a single panel of examiners to achieve coordinated consenting.

The recommendations of the Cabinet Report relating to SCC's response to the Sea Link Statutory Consultation were agreed at the Cabinet meeting held on 12 December.

- [SCC Sea Link Statutory Consultation Response \(suffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/sea-link-letter-to-the-secretary-of-state-at-desnz-151223-final-redacted.pdf)
- [sea-link-letter-to-national-grid-group-151223-final-redacted.pdf \(suffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/sea-link-letter-to-national-grid-group-151223-final-redacted.pdf)
- <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/sea-link-letter-to-the-secretary-of-state-at-desnz-151223-final-redacted.pdf>
- [sea-link-s42-response-letter-to-eso-regarding-coordinated-offshore-networks-151223-final-redacted.pdf \(suffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/sea-link-s42-response-letter-to-eso-regarding-coordinated-offshore-networks-151223-final-redacted.pdf)

Sea Link indicates that the submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application will be submitted in the second half of 2024.

More information:

- Link to Sea Link's National Grid website page: [Link to National Grid's website](https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/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>

## 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. The project promoter, National Grid Ventures, submitted their Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping request to the Planning Inspectorate on the 6th of March. The promoter's preferred landfall will be at Southwold or Walberswick. National Grid Ventures, has therefore, discarded the opportunity to coordinate their landfall and onshore cable corridor with the Sea Link project.

The Planning Inspectorate will consult the prescribed statutory consultees, including the County Council, on the Scoping Request. Officers are currently preparing a response.

The announcement and initial response from the Council:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/suffolk-county-council-considers-lionlink-proposals-unacceptable-and-unfair>

<https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/southwold/national-grid-announces-chosen-infrastructure-sites-and-rout-9355908/>

The project promoter for LionLink, National Grid Ventures, has also approached the parishes within the consultation zone, regarding the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for this project. This is because these parishes are identified by regulation as relevant consultation bodies. It is worth noting that this is not a consultation about the principle of the development, or a consultation regarding alternatives to it. Therefore, the EIA scoping should not be used to make representations on those matters.

On 8th March 2024 Suffolk County Council provided a briefing to parishes in relation to environmental impact assessment scoping at pre-application stage for LionLink which resulted in a question to SALC for assistance on how to deal with this in terms of the types of issues they should be addressing. SALC contacted Suffolk County Council to ask if they could help and provided some useful information which is now published on the frequently asked question page on SALC's website linked to infrastructure projects. This information has also been directly mailed to all parishes in membership of SALC and the dedicated page is open to the publish on their website to view - [Please click here to visit the SALC FAQ page on energy projects to view the further guidance.](#)

Information regarding Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping and the scoping request can be found at:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/frequently-asked-questions/scoping-process-faq/#6>

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN02003>

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=%20The%20impact%20of%20LionLink%20on,on%20the%20borders%20of%20Minsmere.>

## Sunnica

*Location: West Suffolk*

The Secretary of State has announced a further delay to the decision on Sunnica, with a new decision date being set for the 11th of April 2024. This is the third official extension to the Secretary of State's decision for development consent.

Link to the Secretary of State's statement on Sunnica: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-03-07/hcws322>

More information:

Link to Sunnica's website: <https://sunnica.co.uk>

Link to the Sunnica PINS webpage where all public documents relating to Sunnica can be found: [Link to Planning Inspectorate website](#)

## Bramford to Twinstead

*Location: Babergh*

The public examination of the Bramford to Twinstead proposals by National Grid to reinforce its 400kV grid between Bramford and Twinstead will close on 12 March 2024.

The Planning Inspectorate will have a deadline of 12 June 2024 to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) with a final decision on the Development Consent Order (DCO) expected on 12 September.

More information:

Link to Bramford to Twinstead's National Grid webpage: [Link to National Grid's website](#)

All papers submitted to the examination can be found on the PINS website: [Link to Planning Inspectorate website](#)

## 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.

SCC officers are attending Expert Topic Group meetings with National Grid with regards to their proposals to construct a new 400kV electricity transmission line between Norwich to Tilbury so that their views are made known before the Statutory Consultation stage is reached next year.

More information:

Link to Norwich to Tilbury's National Grid webpage: [Link to National Grid's website](#)

## North Falls Offshore Wind Farm & Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm

*Location: Off East Suffolk coast / Essex*

Both of these wind farms, proposed by different consortia, are proposed off the East Suffolk coast, with the landing point and onshore infrastructure proposed to be in Essex.

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm completed its Statutory Consultation in July, and as a result of the responses received, it has removed the northern section of the proposals. This has moved the project further from the shore, from 22km to 42 km, and has also reduced in size from 150 km<sup>3</sup> to 95 km<sup>3</sup>. The developer states that the changes will make a considerable difference to what will be visible from the shore, particularly from the Suffolk Coast. The changes reflect Suffolk County Council's (SCC) response to the Statutory Consultation, which highlighted concerns that the north-east section of the proposals would cause significant impacts on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, which could be eliminated by the removal of this part of the project. The changes publicised by the developer in the Community Newsletter (link below) are currently being reviewed by relevant officers.

Both North Falls and Five Estuaries indicate submission of their DCO applications in early 2024.

More information:

North Falls Website: <https://www.northfallsoffshore.com>

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

*Location: East Suffolk*

East Anglia 1 North and 2 has DCO consent. It is awaiting Government subsidy approval and is expected to move towards construction soon.

SCC is continuing to deal with DoRs relating to the scheme, together with colleagues at East Suffolk Council.

There are currently several DoR submissions from the developer relating to pre-commencement works including archaeology, ecology, and Public Rights of Way management.

## Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm

Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm is a proposed extension to the Galloper Offshore Windfarm consisting of up to 79 turbines. The wind farm is located 37km from the Suffolk coast at its nearest point. The scheme will make landfall between Frinton and Holland-on-Sea in Tendring, Essex.

A targeted consultation took place between 5 December 2023 and 31 January 2024 on proposals to extend the development consent order limit to within Orford Ness, Suffolk. This is to allow for areas to be included for the improvement of the habitat for lesser black-backed gulls, this is to compensate for a potential impact on the species from the proposed offshore wind turbines.

SCC officers provided a response to this targeted consultation which can be viewed on the County Council website.

It is expected that the development will submit their application for development consent at the end of Q1 2024.

More information:

Five Estuaries website: <https://fiveestuaries.co.uk>

## Other NSIPs

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

- SPR: East Anglia 1 and 3: Both are consented. EA1 is complete; EA3 is under construction. SCC has been made aware that recent poor weather has made construction more difficult in terms of highways access in the Bramford area.
- Gull Wing Bridge: Under construction. All sections of the deck excluding the central bascule are now in place as is the control tower. The final section of the deck was delivered on the 04/03/24. This SCC promoted scheme for a new bridge in Lowestoft will be completed in 2024 - <https://gullwingbridge.co.uk>
- Drax: (formerly Progress Power) at Eye Airfield: Consented. preliminary construction works.

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