



# Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) NEWSLETTER

Issue 3, August 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:**

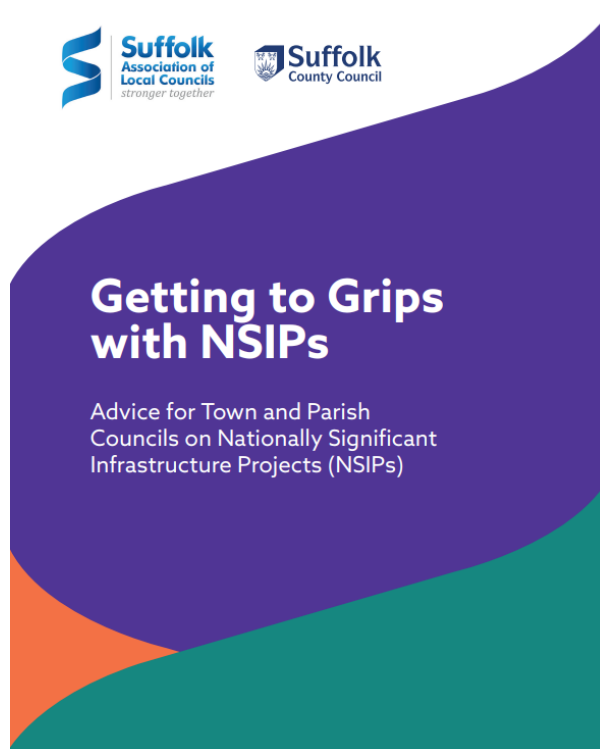
[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(30-06-2023\),%20Scrutiny%20Committee](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(30-06-2023),%20Scrutiny%20Committee)

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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](#)

Suffolk County Council has continued to publish guidance on NSIPs. The two 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](#)

## 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.

## Sunnica

*Location: West Suffolk*

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

The Secretary of State granted development consent for this application on the 12th of July 2024. Suffolk County Council has issued a press release in response to this: [Council's shock at solar farm go-ahead - Suffolk County Council](#)

On the 7th of August 2024, Suffolk County Council wrote to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Rt Hon. Ed Miliband MP, regarding his decision to approve the Sunnica solar farm. This pre-action protocol letter is the first step in potential judicial review proceedings against the Sunnica solar farm project, in a bid to secure appropriate funding for work that the council will have to do as a result of the scheme. The press release, along with more information, can be found here: [Council's legal action to challenge Sunnica compensation - Suffolk County Council](#)

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](#)

Link to Suffolk County Council's webpage on Sunnica: [Sunnica Energy Farm - Suffolk County Council](#)

## 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.

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](#)

Link to Suffolk County Councils webpage on Sizewell C: [Sizewell C nuclear power plant - Suffolk County Council](#)

## Nautilus

*Location: East Suffolk*

*Nautilus is a National Grid Ventures proposal to create a Multi-Purpose Interconnector with Belgium.*

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. It had been hoped that an alternative site on the Isle of Grain, in Kent, would be considered suitable. However, that location was rejected by Ofgem. Subsequently, Ofgem announced on the 15th July 2024 that it would consult on the concept of Nautilus connecting at Friston. The consultation is currently open and will close on 15 August 2024. Suffolk County Council has issued a press release in response to this: [Nautilus project could bring more harm to Suffolk - Suffolk County Council](#)

More information:

Link to the Suffolk County Council page on Nautilus: [Nautilus - Suffolk County Council](#)

## Sea Link

*Location: East Suffolk*

*Sea Link is a proposal for a subsea, grid reinforcement link between Suffolk and Kent.*

Thematic meetings are ongoing with various technical departments in the lead up to the expected application for the Development Consent Order (DCO) which has slipped from Q4, 2024 to Q1, 2025.

Sea Link is currently undertaking further engagement, which will take place between Monday 8th July, and Sunday 11th August midnight. The reason for the further engagement is due to changes taking place since the statutory consultation in December 2023. These changes include confirmation of the proposed access route to the converter station near Saxmundham, an associated bridge over the river Fromus, and other ancillary changes. Officers are currently drafting a response to this engagement. SCC is also discussing with NGET ways to help refine their proposals in order to reduce the environmental impact of them.

Suffolk County Council has issued a press release in response to this: [Sea Link project raises new concerns for Suffolk - Suffolk County Council](#)

More information:

- Link to Sea Link's National Grid website page: [Link to National Grid's website](#)
- 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>

## Bramford to Twinstead

*Location: Babergh*

*Bramford to Twinstead is a proposal by National Grid to reinforce its 400kV grid between Bramford and Twinstead.*

The Examination in Public finished on the 12 March 2024 and the Secretary of State's decision as to whether to grant Development Consent is expected in September. The Council is engaging early discussions with National Grid in respect of the Discharge of Requirements in case permission is granted.

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](#)

## 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.*

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 public on their website to view - [Please click here to visit the SALC FAQ page on energy projects to view the further guidance](#) .

On the 21st of May 2024, SCC and ESC jointly wrote to National Grid Ventures (NGV) to set out their concerns regarding the adequacy, effectiveness, and especially fairness of the consultation to date, highlighting the project's lack of detailed explanation and rationale presented to the public about the preferred landfall location. The full letter can be found here: [SCC ESC Letter to Lion Link Project - Adequacy of consultation and the rationale for a landfall uncoordinated with SEA Link 210524 FINAL \(suffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

On the 30th of May 2024 SCC and ESC received a response from LionLink about their joint letter, which can be viewed here: [ESC SCC response \(suffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

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.>

## 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.*

The Statutory Consultation began on the 10th of April and runs until Friday the 26th of July. A report setting out the outline of the Council's response was considered at Cabinet on the 21st of May 2024. SCC recognises there is a need for grid reinforcement, but it considers that it is premature for National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) to submit its DCO application until alternatives have been considered in full. The council has objected to the scheme on the grounds that it is inadequate. The details of the key issues identified by SCC's Cabinet can be found in the Cabinet Report. - [Agenda Item 8 - Statutory Consultation response - proposed Norwich to Tilbury 400kV grid reinforcement DCO\)application \(suffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

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](#)

## 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.*

### Five Estuaries

The application for Development Consent was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on Friday 22 March 2024. This means that PINS has until 22 April 2024 to decide whether to validate the application for acceptance. The council were consulted by PINS on the Adequacy of Consultation, we responded that we believed the developer has complied with the relevant provisions in the Planning Act 2008. On 21 May 2024, Cabinet considered the relevant representations covering subjects such

as visual impacts on the Suffolk Coast & Heaths National Landscape, impacts on Suffolk's strategic highways network, impacts on skills provision and cumulative impacts. The Council anticipates that the examination in public will be held in Autumn 2024, with a decision from the Secretary of State in Q1 2025.

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

More information:

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

## 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.*

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.

## 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.*

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

The Council is continuing to deal with Discharge of Requirements (DoRs) with colleagues at East Suffolk Council. Archaeology discharges are expected to be submitted in late July/early August.

## 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: 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. 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