



Committee	Strategic Planning Committee
Date	12/01/2026
Subject	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (Energy Projects) Update
Cabinet Member	Councillor Tom Daly Cabinet Member with responsibility for Energy and Climate Change
Report Author(s)	Bethany Rance Energy Projects Manager Bethany.Rance@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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Key Decision?	No
Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN

Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	
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Purpose/Summary

This report provides an update on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (energy projects) in and neighbouring East Suffolk which the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (energy projects) team engages on.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended:

1. That the Strategic Planning Committee notes the content of this report and work of the ESC Energy Projects team.
2. That the Strategic Planning Committee provides any recommendations as to the content of future updates (if required).

Strategic plan

How does this proposal support Our Direction 2028?

Environmental Impact	The team drives environmental resilience through working with project promoters on environmental mitigation and compensation, including Biodiversity Net Gain. This includes determining discharge of requirements relevant to environmental mitigation. The team provides input on projects which fit within the Council's climate change and Net Zero ambitions.
Sustainable Housing	The team ensures consideration of impacts on housing through the pre-application, consenting, and post-consent phases of all NSIPs.
Tackling Inequalities	A number of the work areas below relate to this theme, in particular the team works with project promoters on statements of community consultation to support digital inclusion to enable all members of our communities to engage with consultation on these projects.
Thriving Economy	The team works to ensure residents benefit from Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in East Suffolk, through securing appropriate compensation and mitigation through their engagement with the project promoters. This also includes engaging with central government, advocating for and supporting government proposals to make community benefits mandatory for local communities affected by these projects.
Our Foundations / governance of the organisation	<p>The Energy Planning Service is a planning function of the council, and fulfils the Council's statutory obligations in respect of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.</p> <p>The team provides statutory consultee responses across planning and infrastructure processes, ensuring legal compliance and transparency.</p> <p>The team considers and determines planning applications for</p>

discharge of requirement for DCOs, complying with statutory requirements and legal frameworks.

It also provides a vital mechanism through which improvements to the district can be secured for the benefit of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Justification for recommendations

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, which the Energy Projects team engages with, and relevant industry updates and consultation responses.
- 1.2. ESC's Energy Projects team is the Council's planning service which engages with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).
- 1.3. NSIPs are defined as large scale developments in England or Wales deemed of national significance due to their scale and/or importance (level of public interest), being determined by Government under the Planning Act 2008. NSIPs do not require planning permission from the local authority, the local authority is a consultee in the consenting process. The developer must make an application to the Planning Inspectorate for development consent. The Planning Inspectorate examines the application and makes a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State. It is the Secretary of State for the relevant department who then makes the final decision, guided by National Policy Statements written by the government. These policy statements provide the planning policy framework for different types of NSIPs.
- 1.4. NSIPs generally fall under the following categories of Transport, Energy, Water, Waste and Wastewater. Other major projects, including interconnectors, data centres, giga-factories, and laboratories are types of business or commercial development capable (on request) of being directed into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consenting regime at the discretion of the SoS under Section 35 of the Act.
- 1.5. East Suffolk Council (ESC) is a statutory consultee as host authority in respect of a number of NSIPs and therefore has an important role to play in the various planning stages which such projects go through.
- 1.6. ESC's Energy projects team is currently engaging with multiple energy NSIPs.

2. Sizewell C (SZC Co) Project Update

- 2.1. Sizewell C was granted development consent in 2022, and construction formally commenced in January 2022. Construction is anticipated to last 9-12 years.
- 2.2. ESC has extensive responsibilities throughout the construction and operational phases. For the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (energy projects) team, this centres around processing and determining all planning submissions made under the Development Consent Order. This includes determining discharge of requirement applications and responding to consultations on applications/permits/submissions from other regulatory bodies, including from Suffolk County Council.
- 2.3. In April 2025, the government announced that a further £2.7 billion of taxpayer cash had been made available for Sizewell C, bringing the total to £6.4bn ahead of the Final Investment Decision (FID) on the nuclear power station. In June 2025, the UK Government

officially gave a green light to the Sizewell C project, confirming £14.2 billion of investment as part of the government's latest spending review. In July, the Government confirmed Sizewell C's FID, securing full funding for the project. In November, Sizewell C reached financial close with a £5bn funding injection from 13 banks paving the way for full-scale construction to continue.

- 2.4. The agreements on private investment to fund the project were reached through the government agreeing to use the Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model. The RAB model works by consumers paying a surcharge on their bills during the construction phase, which helps lower the cost of capital and reduces the financial risk for investors. This surcharge will be added to bills through the construction and for the first three years of operation.
- 2.5. Now in the second year of construction, works are progressing across all sites. Work continues to build the new infrastructure required such as park and ride facilities to bus construction workers into site and improvements such as the A12 Two Village Bypass and Sizewell Link Road. At the beach and harbour area, sheet piles are being installed for the northern section of the temporary sea defence. Preparatory works on the marine bulk import facility (jetty) continue and will involve some closures and diversions of the right of way along the beach. The rail programme progresses at pace, with preparatory works starting in the autumn for the railheads at the Ancillary Construction Area and Temporary Construction Area. Upgrades to the East Suffolk Line and Leiston Branch Line are ongoing.
- 2.6. Works at both Park and Ride sites (northern at Darsham and southern at Wickham Market) continue. The northern Park and Ride began phased operation in November and will be followed by phased operation of the southern Park and Ride, planned from late December. Construction of the Abnormal Indivisible Load layby adjacent to the southern Park and Ride was complete by mid-December and will enable the police-escorting of large loads to site. Works at Yoxford roundabout remain on track to open in spring next year.
- 2.7. A project milestone was reached in November 2025 with the completion of the first stage of the Site of Special Scientific Interest crossing, known as the bailey bridge. The bridge joins the Main Construction Area with the Temporary Construction Area, which means movements of plant and equipment will be streamlined and it will ease pressure on local roads. The bailey bridge is the first of three crossings to be put in, and will be followed by a large temporary bridge, and a smaller permanent operational bridge. The bailey bridge was completed ahead of schedule. Completion was programmed for March 2026.

3. Sea Link (National Grid Electricity Transmission) Project Update

- 3.1. National Grid is proposing to reinforce the electricity network between Suffolk and Kent via a new 2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) link between a proposed substation near Friston in Suffolk and the existing Richborough to Canterbury 400 kV overhead line close to Richborough in Kent.
- 3.2. The Suffolk onshore scheme comprises a connection from the existing transmission network via a substation near Friston, including the substation itself. The substation near Friston already has development consent as part of other third-party projects. If the substation has already been constructed under another consent, only a connection into

the substation would be constructed by Sea Link. It also includes a high voltage alternating current (HVAC) underground cable of approximately 1.9 kilometres (km) in length between the proposed substation and a proposed converter station (below) and a 2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station up to 26 metres (including permanent access from the B1121 and a new bridge over the River Fromus) high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection & railings for walkways) near Saxmundham. This feeds into a HVDC underground cable connection of approximately 10 km in length between the proposed converter station near Saxmundham, and a transition joint bay (TJB) approximately 900 metres inshore from a landfall point (below) where the cable transitions from onshore to offshore technology. The landfall on the Suffolk coast is located between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness.

- 3.3. The formal 6-month Examination period started on 5 November, beginning with the preliminary meeting. The Examination is the statutory period during which an independent panel of Inspectors, known as the Examining Authority, scrutinises the application before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, who will make the final decision.
- 3.4. The Examination is expected to close in early May and will be followed by a three month period for the Examining Authority to make a recommendation on whether to grant development consent or not, and a subsequent three-month period for the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to make the final decision. A 6-week period for legal challenge will follow.
- 3.5. The first Open Floor Hearing for Suffolk was held on 5 November at Snape Maltings, followed by the first issue specific hearings on 11 November. Additional hearings will be scheduled for January onwards.
- 3.6. East Suffolk has so far engaged at every stage of the consenting process for the project, representing the views and concerns of local communities, elected members and technical officers. Key submissions into the examination so far include the Relevant Representation and Local Impact Report, both of which set out the matters to be examined in greater detail over the course of the 6-month examination period.
- 3.7. If development consent is granted, construction is anticipated to begin in 2027, with construction being complete in approximately 2031.

4. LionLink (National Grid Ventures) Project Update

- 4.1. LionLink is a new subsea electricity cable (known as an interconnector) proposed to run between Great Britain and the Netherlands. The project is being developed by National Grid Ventures (NGV) and Dutch partner, TenneT.
- 4.2. LionLink will enable the cross-border transmission of clean electricity via subsea cables. As an Offshore Hybrid Asset (OHA), LionLink will also connect into a dutch offshore wind farm.
- 4.3. The proposed Suffolk based elements of the of the project include: an onshore substation, underground high voltage alternating current (HVAC) cables between the substation and the proposed converter station, a converter station near Saxmundham, underground high

voltage direct current (HVDC) cables between the proposed converter station and landfall site located at Walberswick.

- 4.4. The project is in the pre-application phase, with statutory consultation planned for early 2026, which will include the publication of the preliminary environmental information report (PEIR). Statutory consultation is currently a legal requirement in the pre-application process and allows statutory consultees to provide their expert advice and concerns regarding the project, which helps shape the application before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The PEIR is a key document that provides an early, preliminary assessment of the likely significant environmental impacts of the proposed project, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.
- 4.5. The planning application is expected to be made to the Planning Inspectorate in late 2026. A 6-month examination will follow, followed by a three-month recommendation period and a three-month decision period.

5. East Anglia One North and Two (ScottishPower Renewables) Project Update

- 5.1. The East Anglia TWO and East Anglia ONE North offshore wind farm projects are progressing with the discharge of requirements attached to the Development Consent Orders.
- 5.2. In autumn-winter 2025, the team discharged the requirements associated with the onshore cable stage of works between landfall (located to the north of Thorpeness) and Snape Road to the east of Friston.
- 5.3. In late autumn-winter 2025/2026, the team has also been discharging the requirements associated with the substation stage to the northwest of Friston.
- 5.4. Enabling works at the substation site and along the onshore cable route are currently ongoing or have been completed in preparation for the main works at these sites. Requirements for these works were discharged over summer and early autumn 2025 and the team continues to monitor these works as they progress.

6. Norwich to Tilbury (National Grid Electricity Transmission) Project Update

- 6.1. The Project proposes to reinforce the high voltage (400 kV) electricity transmission network between Norwich Main down to Tilbury in Essex (184 km). The Project will involve new overhead power lines (400kV) as well as new substations at Norwich Main, Bramford (Suffolk), and Tilbury (Essex).
- 6.2. The Norwich to Tilbury project forms part of the Great Grid Upgrade being developed by National Grid.
- 6.3. National Grid consulted on their Preliminary Environmental Information Report (Under Section 42 of the Planning Act) on this project. The statutory consultation went live on 10 April 2024 and closed on 26 July 2024. ESC responded to statutory consultation.
- 6.4. The DCO was accepted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate in summer 2025. The examination is expected to commence in 2026.

- 6.5. ESC submitted a Relevant Representation in November 2025. This allows ESC to make submissions into Examination if we need to. We will maintain a watching brief and make submissions if needed.
- 6.6. We have and will defer detailed technical comments to the host authorities, While the project is outside our district, we intend to monitor its progress given potential regional and cumulative implications.

7. Sizewell A Project Update

- 7.1. Sizewell A ceased 40 years of electrical generation on 31 December 2006. The site is currently undergoing decommissioning, with a focus on waste management and hazard reduction. A number of facilities at the site have now been dismantled and cleared. The final stage of defueling was completed in 2014.
- 7.2. In autumn 2024, targeted and specialist explosive demolition of the turbine hall bases was carried out, following the grant of planning permission by ESC in summer 2024.
- 7.3. In November 2025, a collaboration between Sizewell A, Sizewell C, and Nuclear Restoration services was announced to repurpose 15,000 tonnes of recycled concrete from Sizewell A for Sizewell C.
- 7.4. The turbine hall at Sizewell A has been demolished as part of the site's ongoing decommissioning, led by Nuclear Restoration Services. The recycled concrete comes from Sizewell A's turbine alternator plinths and will be reused across Sizewell C's Main Construction Area as sub-bases for new foundation platforms.
- 7.5. This reuse was stated to reduce carbon emissions by avoiding long distance deliveries, conserving resources, and reducing pressure on local roads.
- 7.6. This is a first-of-its-kind achievement for Nuclear Restoration Services and showcases how collaborative working is enabling sustainable decommissioning.

8. Consultation Responses

- 8.1. The Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (energy projects) team also regularly engages with consultations about NSIP planning and reform.
- 8.2. We are currently reviewing the Regional Energy Strategic Planning - Methodology Consultation from the National Energy System Operator, which closes on 16 January 2026.
- 8.3. In 2025, the team responded to multiple national consultations, detailed below.
- 8.4. Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government – Streamlining Infrastructure Planning. A consultation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on streamlining infrastructure planning closed on 27 October. The consultation sought views on changes to guidance and secondary legislation under the Planning Act 2008 to streamline the infrastructure planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and reduce timescales for consenting. A key element of consultation was new guidance about consultation and engagement, following removal of statutory pre-application consultation requirements through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

We responded highlighting the value of pre-application in positively shaping proposals and providing local communities with a valuable opportunity to provide their views on the development proposals. We also highlighted the importance of this engagement to promoters, helping to increase their understanding of the local context, challenges and opportunities for projects, whilst building community relationships and trust. We raised concerns regarding the Planning and Infrastructure Bill's proposals to remove the statutory requirement for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project promoters to carry out consultation.

- 8.5. National Energy System Operator - the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan consultation. We responded to the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan consultation, from the National Energy System Operator, which sought stakeholder input for the first phase of a new regional energy planning approach. The goal is to create a strategic plan for energy infrastructure development in Scotland, Wales and nine English regions to better align network investments with local and national net zero ambitions.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. No funding implications to report at this time.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. No legal implications to report at this time.

11. Risk Implications

- 11.1. There are no risks specific to this report.
- 11.2. Strategic and corporate risks are entered on ESC registers.

12. Options

- 12.1. There are no additional options arising from this report.

13. Recommendations

- 13.1. That the Strategic Planning Committee notes the content of this report and work of the ESC Energy Projects team.
- 13.2. That the Strategic Planning Committee provides any recommendations as to the content of future updates (if required).

14. Reasons for Recommendations

- 14.1. To ensure that the Strategic Planning Committee are updated on the current work of the ESC Energy Projects team.

15. Conclusions/Next Steps

- 15.1. The Energy Projects team will continue to engage with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and the Development Consent Order regime, working and collaborating with other Council services, stakeholders, and partners.

Areas of consideration comments

Section 151 Officer comments:

The Section 151 Officer has no additional comments.

Monitoring Officer comments:

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted on this report and has no additional comments.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/EQIA:

There are no specific implications arising in terms of this matter from the content included within this report.

Safeguarding:

There are no specific implications arising in terms of this matter from the content included within this report.

Crime and Disorder:

There are no specific implications arising in terms of this matter from the content included within this report.

Corporate Services implications:

(i.e., Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Digital, Customer Services, Asset Management)

There are no specific implications arising in terms of this matter from the content included within this report.

Residents and Businesses consultation/consideration:

There are no specific implications arising in terms of this matter from the content included within this report.

Appendices:

None	

Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
None		