

So, you have learned an NSIP is coming your way?

An introduction to NSIPs for elected members

10 October 2025 – online 10:00 am

Welcome

- Meet the team
- This is the second of two online events to help ...
 - Demystify NSIPs and the NSIP process
 - Understand how NSIPs differ from local planning
 - Explore what this means for your role & local authorities
- Been to a PAS event before?
 - Frank, friendly and open
 - Honest – we work together for the good of the sector
 - Interactive – please ask questions / share thoughts (log into Slido)

Housekeeping

- Please keep mic on mute until invited to speak
- It is always nice to see people
- Use SLIDO to ask questions and answer polls:
<https://app.sli.do/event/wiww6vmRDG42nDTm3HsSVu>
(code: 3090906)
- The chat function is open and monitored
- It is impossible to cover everything today - but we do want to stay in contact

Note - we will be recording the meeting for the presentations only



Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
 - a couple of Slido polls about your area
- Understanding NSIPs & local authority roles
 - some nuts and bolts, Garreth
 - experience and lessons from South Norfolk & Broadland, Claire
- Maximising opportunities: community benefits
 - leveraging NSIPs for local gain, Mark
- Questions and discussions
- Close
 - further support and info available
 - a few wrap up polls as you leave

First polls

About your area

- Is your council currently working on an NSIP application (or several)?
- What types of NSIPs are most relevant?
- What's the local community view?

<https://app.sli.do/event/wiww6vmRDG42nDTm3HsSVu>

(code: 3090906)



NSIP – some nuts and bolts

Garreth Bruff, PAS

NSIPs, DCOs, SOCC, LIR, ExA, IP, RR, IAPI ...

- What are NSIPs?
- Why are they different?
- Why are they important?
- What does that mean for you and your role?



Parallel planning systems?

	Local Planning	National Infrastructure Planning
Legislation	Town and Country Planning Acts	Planning Act 2008
Responsibilities for managing the planning process	Local Planners	Developer led with Planning Inspectorate
Decision maker	Local Planning Committee / delegated decision	Secretary of State
Policy context	Local Plan and NPPF	National Policy Statements
Process and steps to consent	Planning Permission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-app is optional • Validation of application • Public consultation • Scrutiny by planning officers • Recommendation by officers • Decision by planning committee • Discharge of planning conditions 	Development Consent Order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-app is statutory (for now) • Acceptance of DCO • Pre-examination • Examination • Ex A recommendation • SoS decision • Discharge of requirements

Defining an NSIP

- Legally defined in **Planning Act 2008**
- “Infrastructure” = one of five types
 - **Energy** (power stations, solar & wind farms, pylons & pipelines)
 - **Transport** (airports, seaports, highways and railways)
 - **Water** (dams & reservoirs & pipelines)
 - **Waste water** (WWTW, sewerage systems and storage)
 - **Waste** (Hazardous waste facilities, incinerators)
- “Nationally significant” = BIG
 - Energy generating station is 50+ MW onshore (rising to 100+ MW)
 - Electric lines are 132KV+ and/or over 2km long
 - Highways have an area of development over 15 Ha

Consenting an NSIP

- Permission through **Development Consent Orders (DCO)**
 - Decision by relevant Secretary of State – DfT, DESNZ, Defra
 - Advised by PINs, who form the Ex A
 - Host and neighbouring must be consulted
- DCOs are Statutory Instruments with a range a powers:
 - Planning permission
 - Compulsory purchase
 - Work on highways and streets
 - Listed building consents
 - Tree felling/lopping
 - Power to enter land and survey

Super permission - one stop shop providing all the powers or authority for a scheme, but environmental permits & marine licences

Policy Framework

- National Policy Statements (NPS):
 - Overarching need for infrastructure
 - How applications are assessed
 - How impacts and mitigations are judged
- Policy for all categories of NSIPs:
 - Energy produced by DESNZ (6)
 - Transport produced by DfT (3)
 - Water, waste-water and waste produced by Defra (4)

Where NPS are up to date, the PA2008 generally **removes the right to question the need for a NSIP**, ie need has been established by Ministers

The DCO Process

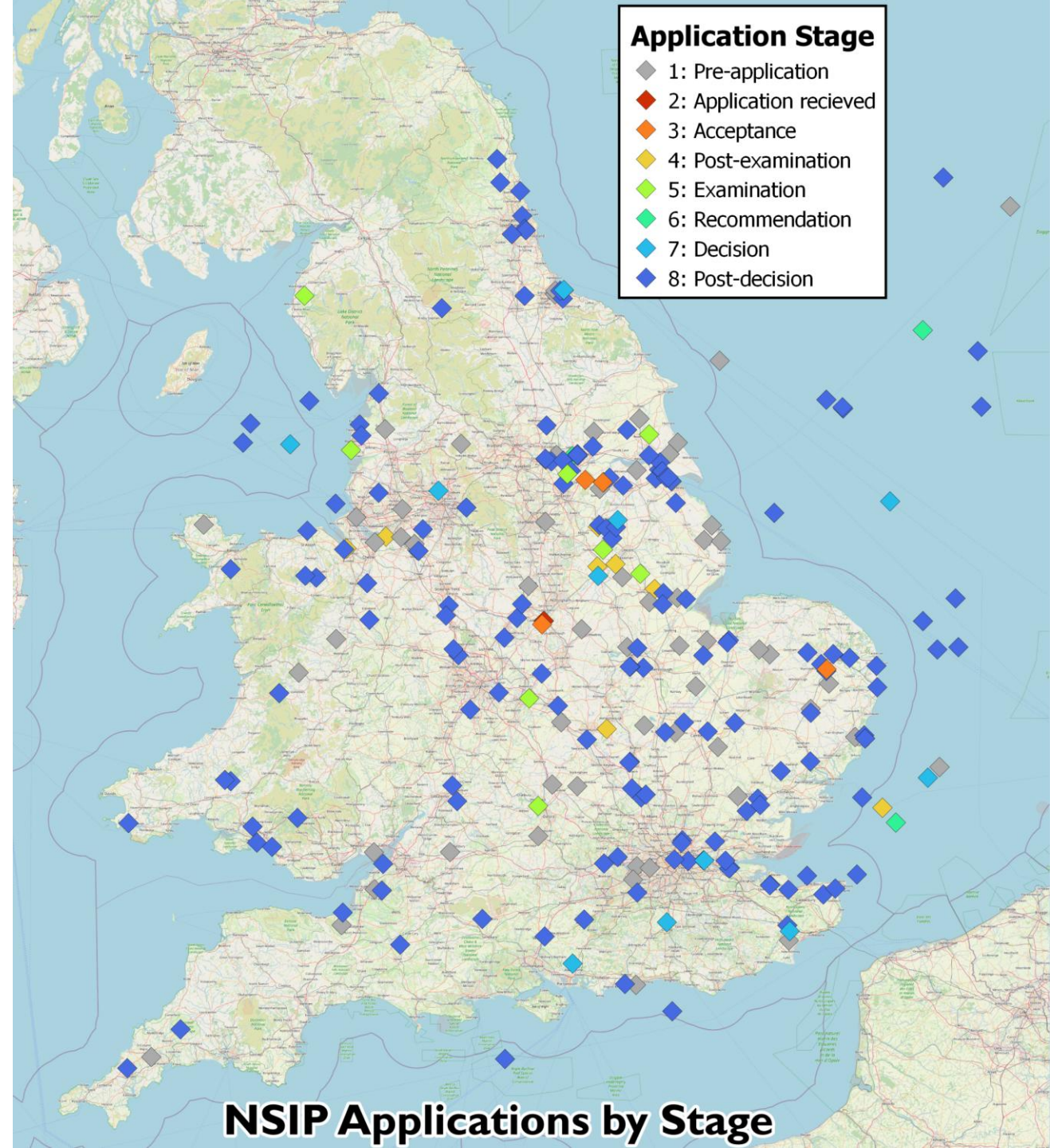


Avg 1–2 years	Max. 28 days	Circa 3 month	Max. 6 months	Max. 3 months	Max 3 months (plus 6 wks)
1. Pre-application	2. Acceptance	3. Pre-examination	4. Examination	5. Recomm'd'n	6. Decision (& window for JR)
Duty on applicant to consult on proposals (currently	Applicant applies to PINS who decide if to accept	ExA appointed, Interested Parties Relevant Reps Preliminary meeting	Largely a written process Some hearings	ExA prepare a report and make a recommend'n to SoS	SoS decides whether to grant or refuse. A 6 week period for challenges in High Court

NSIPs now

- **Business & Commercial - 2**
- **Energy – 186**
- **Transport – 73**
- **Water – 7**
- **Waste & hazardous waste – 3**
- **Waste Water – 2**

September 2025



NSIPs in the future

- **Mission led Government**
 - Clean energy superpower
 - Fast track 150 NSIP decisions
- **Broaden the regime**
 - Data centres, gigafactories and laboratories
 - Onshore wind
- **Raise thresholds for energy NSIPs**
 - 50MW to 100MW
- **“Streamline” the system**
 - Remove stat pre-app
 - Minimise opportunities for JR

The failure of the planning regime has not just left us without the homes we need. Britain also lacks other key infrastructure ... such as transport and energy, or gigafactories and data centres needed for industries of the future.

HM Government Plan for Change, December 2024

Solar farms

- UK Solar Roadmap target of 45-47 GW by 20230
 - Current capacity 18 GW
- Additional 27-30 GW
 - Rooftop potential 9-10GW
 - Ground mounted solar needs to generate 65% of our need
- Planning consent
 - 75% through TCPA (local)
 - 25% through NSIPs



Making headlines

The Great Grid Upgrade

- 17 major projects
- Cables, pylons & substations
- £30 billion investment
- Chesterfield to Willington, Yorkshire Green, Norwich to Tilbury, Bramford to Twinstead etc, etc,

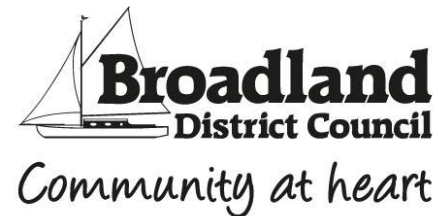


Role of an elected member

- Cost recovery
 - Ensure your planners negotiate a PPA
- Early engagement
 - information and advice
 - managing expectations - minimising negatives, maximising positives
- Community benefits
 - what is possible and what is needed?
- Working collaboratively
 - neighbouring areas
 - town and parish councils
- Empowering officers
 - scheme of delegation

Learning from local experience in South Norfolk & Broadland

**Claire Curtis, South Norfolk
DC & Broadland Council**





Claire Curtis
BSC (Hons) Town and Country Planning DipTP
MRTPI.



Area Planning Manager and NSIP Lead for South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council

I am a chartered Town Planner and have worked for 36 years, firstly for South Norfolk Council and then for the last 5 years as a member of the 'One team' for both South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council.

My first dealings with NSIP's was in 2017 with **Orsted Hornsea Project Three** offshore windfarm. Since then, I have dealt with and dealing with **RWE Vanguard** and **Boreas off-shore windfarms**, **Equinor Sheringham Shoal** and **Dudgeon** extensions off-shore windfarms, 3 National Highway DCO's, National Grid's **Norwich to Tilbury** (just accepted for examination), **East Pye Solar farm** (pre-app) and **Tasway Energy Solar farm** (pre-app).

The stages I have dealt with and presently dealing with: Pre-applications, formal DCO application/Examinations and discharges of requirements.

SNC and BDC don't have a specific NSIP team, so whilst I am the lead officer for both council's for NSIP's, I also manage a multi-disciplinary area planning team.

Pre-Applications

‘Put your house in order’

It is really important, in my experience, to as early as possible establish/set into place the following:

- Point of contact – who is going to lead the Council’s engagement/responses ?
- Procedures – What is your scheme of delegation ?
- Early and consistent engagement with developers, whatever your Council’s view of the Project be that be one of ‘Objection’, ‘No strong feelings either way’ or ‘Support’.
- Resourcing and PPA/funding
- Working with other Host Authorities – for example establishing a close working relationship between a District Council and County Council or across boundaries.
- Understanding your role in the process – we are effectively a ‘Consultee’ and not the determining authority. This helps with managing the expectations of your communities.
- Good communication between officers and members.
- Map out timelines and build in resilience

Pre-Application Guidance

Guidance /advice for LPA's (published August 2024 - last update 16 December 2024):

- Pre-Application stage – *“This pre-application stage is where the local authority can influence the applicant’s preparation of their NSIP application. Design and construction elements of the proposed development are not yet fixed at this stage, giving the local authority the opportunity to use their local knowledge to work with the applicant to shape their proposals and address concerns.”*
- Local authorities can:
 - find out more about the project from the applicant to understand the likely impacts on their local communities
 - begin to consider any mitigation needed to reduce or resolve the impacts that may be caused by the construction, operation and decommissioning of the development
 - review the content of the draft DCO (including requirements) and any relevant control documents, such as draft Environmental Management Plans
 - begin to develop the content of their local impact report (LIR).
 - provide the applicant with information to help inform their consultation by responding to the applicant’s request for comments on their Statement of Community Engagement
- *“The applicant should engage local authorities in the early stages of preparing their application and programme document. The local authority should participate in the applicant’s engagement activities, such as taking part in topic based working groups or technical briefings. The applicant should be aware however that this is not a statutory requirement for the local authority. The local authority should engage with the applicant even if they disagree with the project in principle. Early engagement with the applicant will not undermine any objections or submissions they may make during the next stages of the NSIP process.”*

- One of the main issues most Council's and communities struggle with is the vast amount of documents that form part of an NSIP Project, particularly the Environment Impact Report.
- Actually, finding the relevant documents/plans throughout the process on both the developer's website and the Planning Inspectorate website can be problematic, particularly for your communities and this has caused concerns and frustration with a number of our NSIP Projects.
- In response we developed a webpage specifically in respect of NSIP's, not only to assist our communities but also officers and members.
- This includes an interactive NSIP map.
- We have also added renewable energy map to our website due to the amount of renewable energy TCPA's.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are large scale developments relating to energy, transport, water, or waste.

The following pages give details of how these are considered, the projects which are taking place in Norfolk and how they relate to Broadland and South Norfolk, together with links to further information.



Website Links:

[Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

[Map of Energy and Electricity NSIPs | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

[Renewables mapping | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

Post Consent & Discharge of Requirements (conditions)

This is part of the process which I consider has the biggest impact on the Council and its community and is often overlooked/not thought about, until the developer starts to build out their Project.

Consider an NSIP DCO a little like an outline planning permission with some details included but mostly the full details will be submitted under the Discharge of Requirements.

Give consideration to the following:

- Ensure in the pre-application stage and formal submission, you fully review the draft DCO and the requirements (conditions)
- Requirements will be formally submitted and require a formal decision, just the same as a discharge of conditions application, so use your systems to help manage these. If I say I have dealt with 68 discharges of requirements, since 2022 , that perhaps put things into context.
- Continue and have regular engagement with the developers
- Good communication between officer and members
- Knowledge of what lies outside the planning functions, in terms of other legislation and areas of responsibility
- Be prepared for TCPA applications associate with the NSIP DCO, we have had 30 applications for drainage works, temporary accesses and a temporary junction as they fell outside the order limits
- Resourcing and PPA/Funding
- Ensure that it's communicated to communities the contact details of the developers who will have a Community Liaison Team.
- The developer is the first point of contact and are expected to resolve issues, the Council should only need to step in, if issues cannot be resolved. The LPA will be responsible for enforcement of the requirements



Maximising local opportunities from NSIPs: community benefits

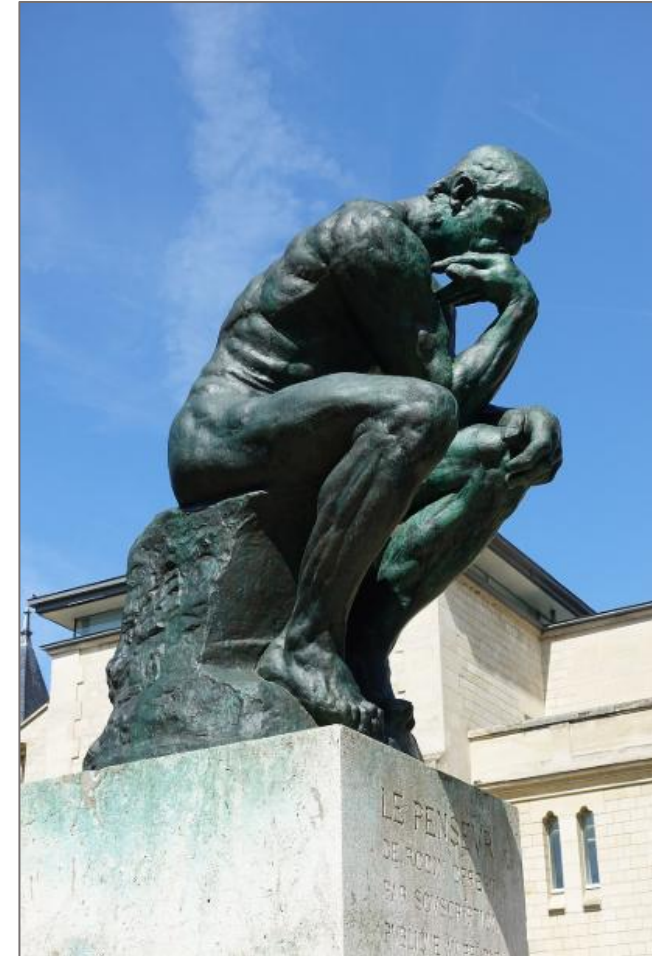
Mark Williets, North Kesteven DC



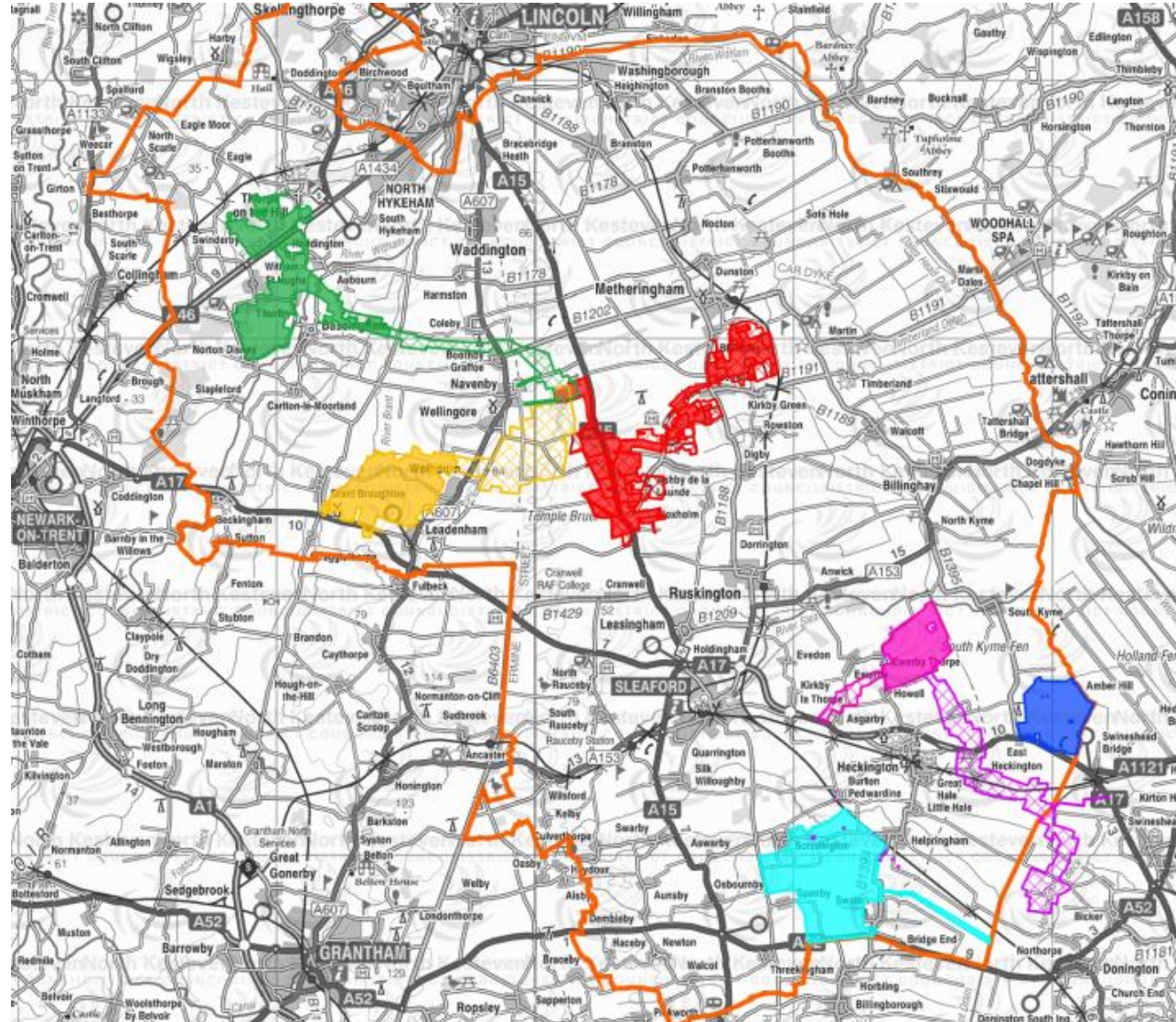
North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Taking Part in the Process

- Engagement in NSIPs is a choice
 - What is the project?
 - What is its likely impact(s)?
- Currently no legislative basis – community benefit is a discretionary part of the process
 - Needs good will on all sides
 - Developing and maintaining relationships
 - Engagement and collaboration with promoters
 - Understanding and representing the views of stakeholders
 - Realism
- Mandating for community benefit is on the horizon for renewable energy schemes
 - Unlikely to be the silver bullet
 - All of the above will still be necessary
- By taking part in exploring community benefit your position on the project is not weakened
- NK experience is that it is worth pursuing

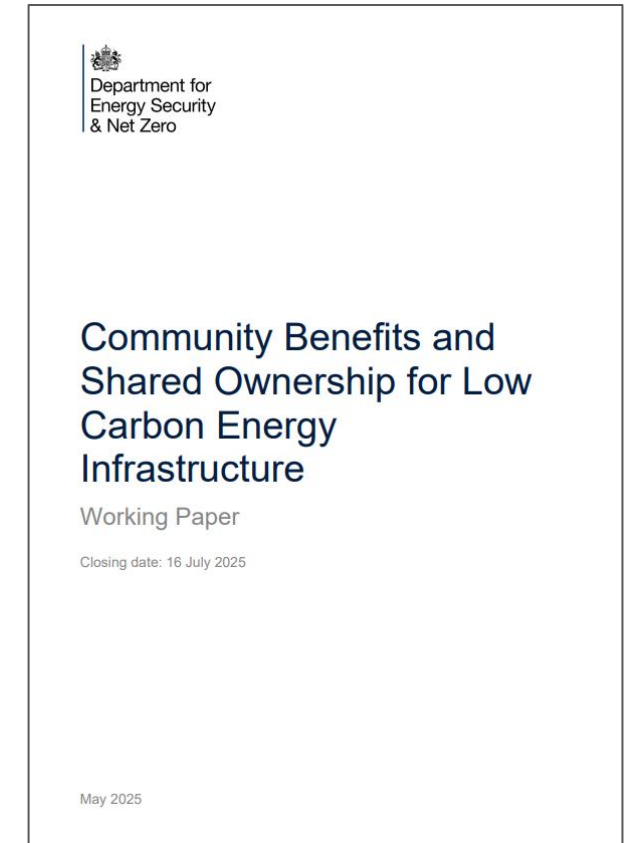


NK and NSIPs



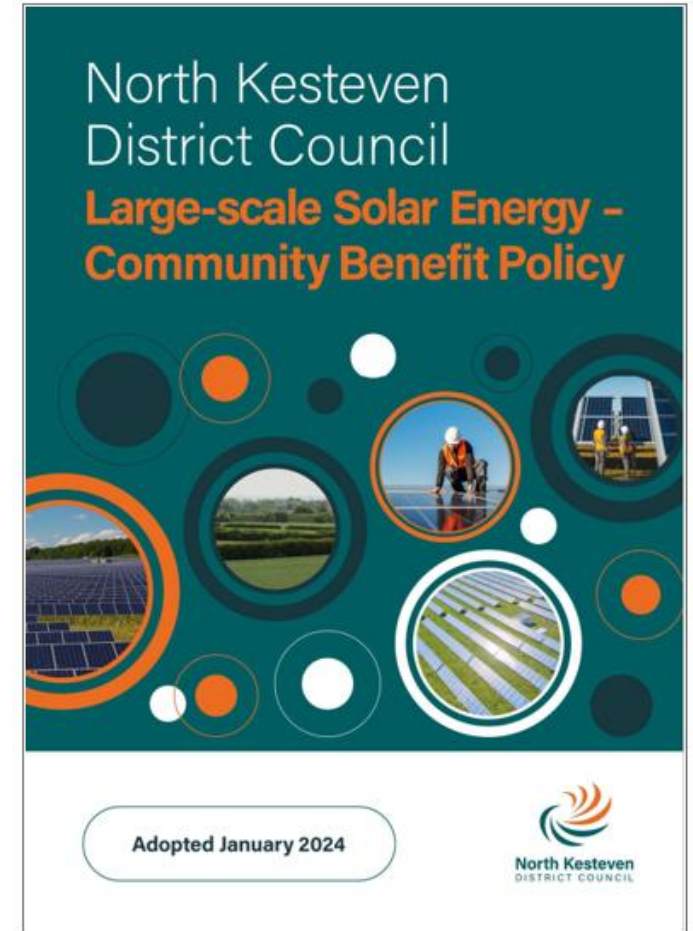
Evolution of the debate

- The National Infrastructure Commission (now part of NISTA) report ‘The Second National Infrastructure Assessment’ in October 2023 advocated for “a meaningful and consistent approach to community benefits”.
- The Rt Hon Ed Milliband, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero during the debate on the Clean Energy Superpower Mission on 18 July 2024 stated that:
“.... communities need benefit. Communities are providing a service to the country when they host clean energy infrastructure, so there needs to be benefit for those communities.”
- In May 2025, DESNZ consulted on a working paper “Community benefits and shared ownership for low carbon energy infrastructure” – the formal response is awaited



Benefits – the NK journey

- Heckington Fen Solar Farm – first solar NSIP – examination 19 September 2023 until 20 February 2024
- Politically-led desire to secure meaningful benefits for our communities
- Research identified a limited set of examples
 - Most notable was Essex CC and Longfield Solar NSIP
- Work led to adoption of Community Benefit Policy in January 2024
 - Exemption where export below 5MW/year
 - Fixed payment per MW/year based on export and storage, standalone BESS and substations
- Policy explores how funding might be used but does not set out specific guidance nor how funds would be administered
- Policy is not a Supplementary Planning Document



Use of Funding

“There’s only so many times you can paint the village hall”

- Quote reflects the fact that the funds can be substantial
- Reflecting on DESNZ 2025 consultation and our policy drafted in 2023 and adopted January 2024, there is good alignment
 - Skills, apprenticeships and learning
 - Decarbonisation opportunities – moving households off fossil fuels, supporting retrofit programmes, investing in renewables
 - Active travel initiatives and delivery
 - Biodiversity programmes – potentially supporting LNRS
 - Community infrastructure
- Locally the debate on-going about the scale of investment, its geography and governance
 - Skills, education, learning best done at a sub-regional scale
 - Striking a balance between the immediate host community and the wider district



Progress to date

- An in-principle agreement to prepare a draft Community Benefit Agreement for £12.8m across the lifetime of an NSIP
- An in principle commitment to prepare a draft Community Benefit Agreement for a TCPA solar farm amounting to £800,000 across the lifetime of the development
- 2x S106 agreements (one signed & one in draft) for skills and education contributions of £50,000 per annum for the lifetime of the respective NSIP developments
- A s106 agreement to secure £130,000 to monitor a 30% BNG over the lifetime of an NSIP development

What's next for NK

- Lincolnshire Reservoir
 - Visitor economy
 - Education/skills/jobs
 - Local contracts
 - Active and sustainable travel
 - Biodiversity, ecology, wildlife
 - Community projects



The future?

- DESNZ consultation response
 - Understood to be imminent
 - Opportunities to continue to work with the Department
- Widening the range of projects where community benefit can be sought
- Engagement with stakeholders
 - PAS provides access to Government
 - Local Government networks – PAS role
 - Working with NIPA
 - Solar Energy UK – industry trade body

Questions and discussion

Useful sources of Information

- The [NSIP Hub](#) hosted by Planning Inspectorate
- Planning Inspectorate [advice for local authorities](#)
- PAS [project on NSIPs](#) and website
- [NSIP Centre of Excellence](#) hosted by Suffolk

Email pas@local.gov.uk

Web www.local.gov.uk/pas

Finally thank you for joining



Please fill out feedback polls in Slido

1. Have you attended a PAS event before?
2. Have you found today's event helpful?
3. To what extent do you agree that *The content presented during this session improved my understanding of the topic and provided insights I can apply or share with my colleagues*
4. Your key "Take away" from today's session

