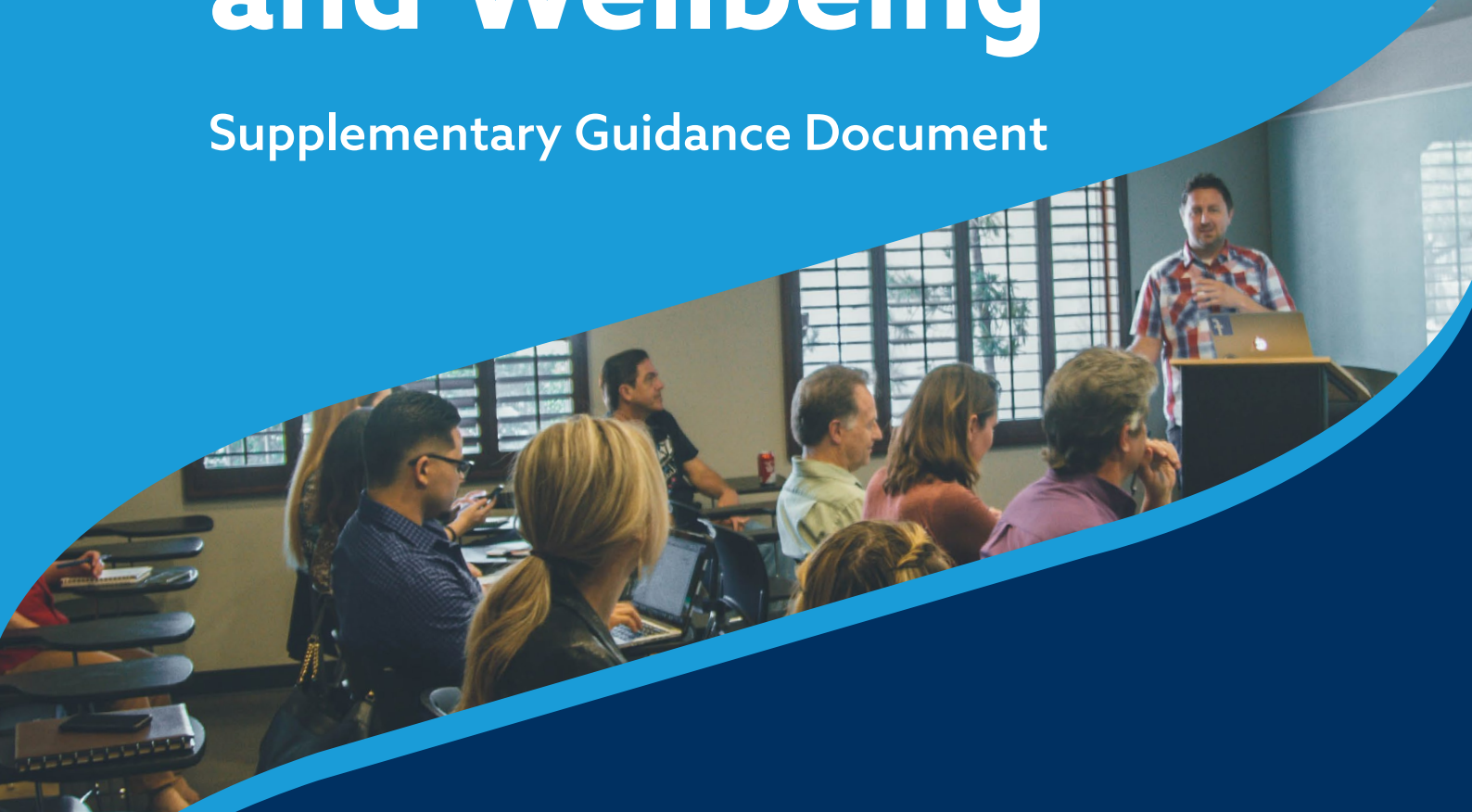


Energy and Climate Adaptive
Infrastructure Policy

Community Engagement and Wellbeing

Supplementary Guidance Document



This is a supplementary guidance document, to support the Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy, which was adopted by Suffolk County Council's cabinet, on the 16th of May 2023.

The scope and purpose of this Supplementary Guidance Document

Suffolk has natural and geographic advantages that make it attractive to project promoters for locating low-carbon technologies, and the consequent supporting infrastructure. This, therefore, creates significant challenges for the local economy, environment, and communities of Suffolk.

The Council considers that it is essential for project promoters to engage effectively and collaboratively with communities. Project promoters must have consideration for the impacts of their project on community wellbeing, both alone and in combination with other proposals, during all phases of the project, from the earliest stages of the pre-application period, through consenting, and during construction. In doing so, project promoters should recognise that:

- Individual energy and climate adaptive projects are part of a substantial, significant, widespread, and ongoing succession of infrastructure developments in this region, that are necessary to mitigate the impacts of, and adapt to the changing climate.
- Public understanding of the amount, extent, and speed of this requirement for new infrastructure is generally low, or at best, inconsistent.
- The technical processes of the national infrastructure consenting regime are neither appropriate, nor sufficient by themselves, to ensure that communities have an effective understanding of, and engagement with, the processes and delivery of change.
- The Nationally Significant Infrastructure Planning (NSIP) process is perceived by the public as exclusive and exclusory, being the province of experts, bureaucrats, and non-departmental public bodies. This characterisation of public perception is backed up by research^{1,2}, as well as the Council's experience of previous projects.
- The consenting process results in significant adverse impacts on community wellbeing, particularly where multiple projects are being consulted on and consented across the same communities.
- Distributional fairness, such as community benefits, or shared community ownership, are a necessary addition to, rather than a substitute for, procedural fairness³, which must be created through effective dialogue with the affected communities.

1 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421517308212>

2 <https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/doi/full/10.3828/tpr.2019.10>

3 Understanding Social Licence - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S030626192031237X>



Project promoters have critical obligations to ensure procedural fairness, as defined by the Gunning Principles⁴, given the inherent imbalance of power between the project promoter and communities. This is essential to ensure a fair process, secure trust in the process, and as a result, safeguard community wellbeing. This is likely to require the project promoter to go beyond the regulatory or legislative minimum, throughout project design, consenting, and construction. As such, it is critical for the project promoter, to:

- Provide communities with a genuine opportunity to engage in collaborative dialogue with the promoter, allowing communities to shape the emerging project effectively and demonstrably, from the earliest possible stage of its design and development.
- Ensure that effective engagement methods and approaches with host communities, as well as appropriate community mitigation, are established for the construction, and where appropriate, the operational or decommissioning phases of the project.

The purpose of this Supplementary Guidance Document is to outline in principle how the Council expects project promoters to:

1. **Secure effective dialogue with communities about change**, through their engagement with those who are expected to host NSIP proposals, to ensure a fair process and to protect community wellbeing.
2. **Ensure assessment of community wellbeing**, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.
3. **Secure and safeguard community wellbeing**, through effective and robust mitigation measures, that minimise or eliminate the adverse impacts of pre-application engagement, consenting, and construction.

The Council recognises that community wellbeing, and the adverse impacts on it of infrastructure projects, is a relatively new and developing field of interest, therefore, the Council will continue to review and update this guidance appropriately.

⁴ <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The%20Gunning%20Principles.pdf>

The need for the consideration of community wellbeing impacts

Through discussion with communities in Suffolk, that are experiencing the impacts of multiple NSIP schemes, the Council has identified that these communities feel that project promoters have, in forming and promoting their proposals, overlooked the adverse impact this has on community wellbeing.

Feelings of fear, mistrust, anger, and frustration are all reported, along with impacted sleep, and inability to plan for the future, due to the uncertainty created by the proposed development.

These concerns echo feedback received by the Suffolk Emotional Needs Audit, carried out by Suffolk Mind in 2022⁵. The audit showed that for people living in the Saxmundham, Leiston, and Aldeburgh area, (that in addition to Sizewell C, hosts multiple energy projects) the least met needs were Community, Security, and Control, and when asked what could improve wellbeing locally, responses included:

- Having more say when it comes to local development
- Places where people can talk about their emotional wellbeing
- More community events and activities

In addition to the impacts on the whole community, community leaders, i.e. parish councillors, also report increased levels of emotional distress, because of the demands of the role they play, in supporting the community to navigate the NSIP process.

Parish councillors report feeling overwhelmed, both by technical information that is challenging to understand and interpret, and by the amount of time that needs to be invested in the process. Therefore, the burden of responsibility weighs heavily on a small number of people.

Alongside their duty to represent the views of the community in the consultation process, parish councils also take their responsibility to support the wellbeing of their parish very seriously. However, they report that they receive no signposting, training, or guidance to assist them in this role.

The cumulative effect of these issues has resulted in considerable impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, the overall wellbeing of the community, and has also led to an apparent loss of identity.

One member of the public described how the association with the energy projects has, *"created a perception that the nature of our village and parish.....has been completely altered, and is now one to be defined by the presence of large industrial complexes, rather than what it actually is, a rural community.....It remains a small rural village, with living breathing people, who strive to protect its unique quality."*

⁵ Suffolk Mind Emotional Needs Audit Reports and Accounts - Suffolk Mind

Roles and responsibilities

Suffolk County Council

The Role of the County Council

Suffolk County Council is not the decision-maker for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). However, the County Council, routinely in collaboration with the relevant district or borough council, is a key statutory consultee, and its view carries significant weight with the Examining Authority (ExA) and, by extension, the Secretary of State (SoS). The role of the County Council is set out in more detail in the Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy¹.

The wellbeing of Suffolk's communities is a corporate priority for the County Council⁶, therefore the health and wellbeing impacts of the consenting, construction, and operation of NSIP projects is a significant concern for the Council.

In addition to representing and supporting its communities, the Council also has a role, with partners, in providing support to town and parish councils to enable them to engage effectively with the NSIP process, and to that end, has published guidance⁷ specifically designed to support them.

Engagement with the County Council

A robust and effective Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) will be essential to ensure effective collaboration and engagement with Suffolk County Council. The Council's expectations on PPAs are set out in its published guidance⁸. The Council also expects early engagement with project promoters on the Statement of Community Consultation⁹ (SoCC).

The Council expects, from the earliest stage, effective engagement to enable co-design of the project, between the promoter and statutory consultees, including the Council. Project promoters should ensure that the SoCC for the project is effective; in order that it not only meets the test of adequacy as defined in s55(5) of the Planning Act 2008, but also, that the quality and process of engagement, rather than just the extent, reach, and duration of consultation, facilitates co-design with communities and protects community wellbeing.

In its role as the Public Health Authority, the Council also expects engagement with its Public Health Directorate, alongside the Council's planning team, to discuss and agree the scope of mental health and wider human health impact assessments, within the Environmental Impact Assessment, and any required avoidance and mitigation measures.

6 <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/imported/master-corp-strategy-report-2022-26.pdf>

7 <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/getting-to-grips-with-nsips.pdf>

8 <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/planning-performance-agreements-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects.pdf>

9 Before a SoCC is finalised and published, an applicant must consult on its content with each local authority in whose area the Proposed Development is situated. The local authority's aim in responding to consultation about a SoCC should be to ensure that the people affected by a proposal can take part in a thorough, accessible and effective consultation exercise about a Proposed Development [s47 FAQs 2017](#)



Town and Parish Councils

Role and status of town and parish councils

Town and parish councils are specifically identified in the relevant regulations as a statutory party¹⁰ in all cases, when it is expected they will host all, or any part, of an NSIP development.

The role and function of town and parish councils and parish meetings is set out in section 9 of the Local Government Act 1972¹¹. Project promoters should therefore recognise that these are properly constituted and democratically accountable bodies, and that they are subject to the same or similar constitutional arrangements and codes of conduct as principal councils, that is, county, district, or unitary authorities.

In recognition of the limited capacity and resources of parish councils, the County Council encourages project promoters to consider providing financial support, to facilitate the engagement of town and parish councils with the NSIP process.

Engagement with town and parish councils

The project promoter should recognise that the scale of projects consented through the Planning Act 2008 is likely to have significant and widespread impacts on a locality, such as to reshape place, during construction and operation. Therefore, promoters should work effectively with town and parish councils, both the members and appointed representatives.

It is also likely that the host communities are not accustomed to significant and rapid change in their environment, or the character of place. Therefore, effective engagement with communities, that supports them through the process of change, and over which they can have meaningful and effective dialogue and influence, without prejudice to any in principle objections they may have, is essential.

Therefore, genuine, and effective dialogue between the project promoter, and representatives of the affected localities is critical, to allow those communities directly impacted by the scheme, to shape its design and delivery. Likewise, it is essential for project promoters to engage effectively with host communities during the construction of the project.

¹⁰ The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 Schedule 1 with Note: "relevant", in relation to a body, shall mean the body which has responsibility for the location where the proposals may or will be sited or has responsibility for an area which neighbours that location.

¹¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/part/I/crossheading/parishes>

Guidance

Part 1: Securing effective dialogue with communities about change

The case for a new approach to promoter's engagement with communities

The objectives of the promoter's engagement with communities should be strategic as well as tactical.

The default approach to engagement to date has had a tactical focus, on consulting communities by informing them about the emerging and evolving details of the project. Whilst this is necessary, it is not sufficient.

Engagement with communities must also seek to build effective functional relationships of trust, confidence, and understanding, between the community and the project promoter.

The Council considers that consultation should principally be focused, especially in the early stages, on building and maintaining trust, by creating an effective framework for dialogue, conflict resolution, and management. This will create a space into which informing the community about a project, and discussing issues and options around it, can then be placed.


To summarise: the objective of engagement should be to create a framework of trust, fairness, and mutual confidence in process, into which the detail of the project proposal, is then inserted. The Council considers that such an approach will not only significantly improve the quality and effectiveness of engagement but will also help to safeguard community wellbeing.

The Council recognises that this approach requires communities to engage and participate in the development of a framework for effective engagement, notwithstanding any objections that they may have, to either the principle, or details, of the emerging project.


The proposed approach to collaboration

To date, engagement undertaken by NSIP promoters with host communities has usually been focused on informing and consulting the target audience, therefore, covering only the basic levels of public engagement (see Figure 1¹²).

Figure 1: Spectrum of public participation: Increasing levels of public participation

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation 

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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The Council considers that this basic approach to engagement is insufficient; given both the complexity and level of impact on a community created by an NSIP, and the public awareness and anxiety around the scale, and pace of change, of the energy generation and transmission system.

Project promoters should therefore, in accordance with the spectrum of public participation, seek to **involve** and **collaborate** with host communities in the design and delivery of their projects.

The National Infrastructure Commission's Project **Level Design Principles Handbook**¹³ should underpin not only the approach to project design, but also the approach to engaging on design and placemaking with local communities. This is because, as Part 2, Why does Infrastructure Design Matter, states:

"Public acceptance of such rapid and extensive change can best be supported by processes that are designed to achieve highest quality outcomes. And public acceptance will become easier to achieve if efforts are made to engage, and collaborate with, those directly affected by change. We know that transformative change is essential, therefore transformative thinking is also required. And that, ultimately, is why infrastructure design matters."

Therefore, project promoters should focus on working with the representatives of town and parish councils as the properly constituted local body.

Based on good practice¹⁴, the Council considers that a good way for a project promoter to achieve community collaboration is for the project promoter to create a panel of people from the hosting parishes or towns. This should be one of various techniques utilised in developing relationships with local communities and actively seeking dialogue and community engagement throughout the approvals process and beyond.

13 <https://nic.org.uk/app/uploads/NIC-Design-Principles-Handbook-Digital-PDF.pdf>

14 Case Study 2 in <https://nipa-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Clifford and Morphet - NIPA II Project A extension project report - Final 1.pdf>

The purpose of this panel should be as follows:

- To establish a panel made up of a group of engaged individuals, who have the confidence of the communities they represent, and who can engage and work with the promoter, without prejudice to any objections they may have to the scheme.
- To ensure that the project promoter can have a genuine, open, and ongoing dialogue with community representatives, in order to understand the character of place and community, local concerns and opportunities, and how to achieve the best possible outcomes for those who are likely to be most impacted by the construction and operation of the project.
- To work with the promoter by engaging with emerging details of the project, that are fit for the public domain, regarding how the project will be built, designed, and mitigated. This will ensure that the panel can participate actively in place making, regarding those aspects of the development around which there is flexibility. This will also ensure the panel can understand those aspects of the design that are fixed by constraints, and critically, the nature of those constraints.
- To understand the multiple design options, or multiple potential outcomes. These options or outcomes will be explained to the panel, interrogated by the panel, and the panel will provide feedback to the project promoter.
- To recognise that prior to determination of the Development Consent Order and the appointment of lead contractors, design outcomes will remain provisional. Therefore, development of the detailed designs used for the Discharge of Requirements will need to be finalised, in discussion with the panel, before submission to the discharging Local Authority.
- Lengthy or detailed discussion of the need for, or alternatives to, the project, are not for discussion at meetings of the panel, but are for other fora.

It is anticipated that the relevant county and district councillors would be part of the panel throughout, in addition to parish representatives. Furthermore, relevant Local Authority Officers would also be present, to observe proceedings, support participants in their consideration of issues, and to assist the project promoter in the facilitation of effective discussions.

Where a project requires associated development, that is in the hands of a third party, such as the electricity transmission or distribution operator, it is expected that this party would also participate in the panel engagement process.

It is expected that meetings of the panel are likely to require a neutral chair.

Part 2:

Assessment of impacts on mental health and community wellbeing

Rationale

It has been recognised that the consenting and construction of major infrastructure projects can have an adverse impact on the mental health and wellbeing of communities¹⁵.

Furthermore, NPS EN-1 requires applicants to assess adverse health impacts of their project. It is also noted that the World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as, "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."¹⁶

It should be noted that many of the processes that are most likely to result in mental wellbeing impacts, take place outside the temporal scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This largely eliminates the opportunity to identify and mitigate these impacts through the EIA. Therefore, identification of potential harm and appropriate mitigation measures must be integrated into the pre-application consultation process.

Approach

The Council expects that the mental health and wellbeing impacts of the project will be assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment, alongside other human health aspects. The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)'s Guides to "Effective Scoping of Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment" and "Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment"¹⁷ provide general good practice guidance on assessing human health and should be used by project promoters as guidance.

15 <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-committees/hs2-phase-2a/written-evidence/043-Report-from-HS2---Mental-Health-Assessment-Scoping-Report---requested-by-Select-Committee-July-2018.pdf>

16 https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/publications/basic-documents-constitution-of-who/179f0d3d-a613-4760-8801-811dfce250af.pdf?sfvrsn=e8fb384f_1&download=true

17 Both guides are available at [Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment - November 2022 \(iema.net\)](https://www.iema.net)



There should be parity between mental and physical health in the assessments.

The mental health assessment should also consider the outlook of individuals in the community, i.e.

*"People's understanding or views of the project can be highly influential to their psychological and even physiological response to project changes. Such views may change through the project and depend on trust in the developer and regulators. Where there are strong and persistent concerns, sensitivity, particularly to mental health effects, is higher. Consider if there are people with strong views (or high degrees of uncertainty) about the project who may anticipate risks to their health and wellbeing and thus be affected by not only actual changes but also by the possibility of change."*¹⁸

¹⁸ IEMA guidance - [Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment](https://www.iema.net/) – November 2022 (iema.net)

Part 3: Safeguarding and supporting community wellbeing

Rationale

“Potentially affected individuals and communities may feel disenfranchised by transformative infrastructure change ‘over their heads’. Missed opportunities to achieve benefits of well-executed community engagement not only lead to feelings of disempowerment and frustration among stakeholders but can potentially negatively impact on individual and community health and wellbeing. Health impact assessments that effectively assess planning and engagement processes can play a role in mitigating these impacts.”

The health impacts of transformative infrastructure change: Process matters as much as outcomes - Environmental Impact Assessment Review - Vol 85 November 2020¹⁹

The Council considers that project promoters have a duty to take effective and robust measures to minimise and mitigate adverse impacts on community wellbeing, during the pre-application, consenting, construction, and decommissioning phases of their project. Given the spatial and temporal overlaps between projects, project promoters are expected to work collaboratively to minimise and mitigate these effects on community wellbeing.

The Council considers that community leaders, be they formally or informally appointed to such a role, have a duty to protect community wellbeing by supporting efforts of the project promoter and others, to build and maintain trust, cooperation, and effective dialogue, notwithstanding their in-principal objection to a proposal.

Principles for good continuous engagement

Early and continuous engagement with communities will not only improve community understanding of the project but will, as set out in the Guide to Effective Scoping of Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment; *“actively alleviate particular impacts upon mental health, by providing a sense of control, inclusion and participation. Such engagement activities could be considered primary mitigation.”*²⁰

¹⁹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S019592551930513X>

²⁰ Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment – November 2022 (iema.net)

Therefore, good community engagement should give participants confidence that their words and ideas count. This requires an honest approach, that openly recognises the scale of impacts, and the fact that the project may remake and radically change a place. Likewise, there should be a recognition that there will be non-tangible residual impacts on the community, including on the wellbeing of the community.

The key principles for good engagement, based on recognised best practice and the UK context²¹, include:

- Comprehensive and honest engagement, from the earliest stages of development.
- A clear explanation of the process and related timelines.
- Demonstrable and ongoing appreciation of, and responsiveness to, the impacts of multiple projects in the area, and the consequent impacts on the communities' wellbeing, and capacity to engage with a specific project.
- Clarity, around the purpose and scope of any specific engagement with communities, at different times during the formation of project proposals and around what the community is being 'asked' to contribute, or how they may influence any aspect of the proposal. For example, being clear when engagement is about one, or a combination of:
 - The specifics of the proposal
 - The principle of the proposal
 - The potential alternatives to the proposal
- Early signposting of any emerging proposals in principle, for community benefit or shared ownership schemes.
- Careful consideration of the timing of consultations. Considerations should include avoiding main holiday periods, unless holiday visitors are to be targeted in the consultation.
- Practical support, including phone helpline and drop-in events.
- A clear and effective feedback mechanism to address any comment, concern, or complaint.
- A regular in-person presence.
- A clear and comprehensive complaints and grievance mechanism.
- Where necessary and appropriate, a scheme for ongoing community engagement during the operation of the project.

By listening to local views and following up on these by making changes to the project, greater trust and confidence in the process will be engendered, which will contribute to the safeguarding of community wellbeing.

²¹ See also IEMA suggestions on what this means in the UK context here: <https://www.iema.net/resources/blog/2023/02/08/ia-outlook-journal-volume-15-public-participation-stakeholder-engagement-and-impact-assessment>

Mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts on community wellbeing

There are simple measures that can be taken to mitigate against the adverse impacts of the engagement and consenting process.

Good quality, timely, and accessible information

This should include the project promoter:

- Providing access to easily understood summary material, concise, and “plain-English” summary documents.
- Delivering information regarding the proposed infrastructure programmes to community leaders, should be supported by face-to-face conversations to ensure that community leaders can ask questions, and get responses, in a timely manner.
- Providing a clear and early explanation of how, or if, the proposal would result in compulsory purchase and related processes, or if there may be significant impact on individuals, which would need to be compensated for.
- Proactively distributing information regarding compulsory purchase, and discretionary purchase schemes, or, in the absence of such a formal scheme, the mechanisms to deal with situations where there is extreme financial hardship, and/or a pressing need to sell.
- Ensuring that access to compensation schemes does not generate an undue administrative burden on, and consequent anxiety for, an individual or community.
- Maintaining proactive, regular, in person contact with communities, via attendance at parish council meetings. Acknowledging the concerns of the community and working with them to develop a supportive and collaborative dialogue.

Project promoters should consider how parish councils will be supported to understand the technical and complex nature of these projects. Support should be provided from the outset of any proposals and should be consistent throughout the process. Such guidance should be complementary to that published by Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils²² (SALC), as well as any guidance provided by the relevant borough or district council.

Relationship management

Consideration should be given to the employment of an independent third party to act as a “relationship manager” between the developers, local authorities, and the impacted communities, to ensure conversations remain positive and helpful.

²² <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects-including-nsips/nsip-information-for-town-and-parish-councils>

Through discussions with people in affected communities it has been found that their strong feeling is that regular, good quality community conversations with project promoters and local authorities are highly valued, having a significantly positive impact on the wellbeing of the community.

The creation of a "relationship manager" role would provide a consistent, impartial, single point of contact for a community. This would foster greater trust and improved relationships between the community and the other parties involved, thereby reducing the negative impacts of the project, and both preserving the wellbeing of the community and assisting in the development of the project proposals.

Preservation and development of community assets

Project promoters should not only seek to understand the environmental and biophysical characteristics of a place, but also its societal and cultural characteristics: understanding what is important to people, what they love about where they live, and what they think would support their community to continue to thrive. Through engagement with the local community, project promoters should establish how these societal and cultural characteristics may be impacted by the project proposals.

Project promoters should invest in the development of community assets, as mitigation and enhancement. The identification of relevant assets should be undertaken in close collaboration with the community, and may include for example, proactively investing in supporting local community events, the enhancement of community buildings such as village halls or places of worship, or public spaces and community organisations, so supporting communities to continue to foster a sense of pride, allyship and belonging.

This will help not only to ensure better working relationships between communities and the project promoters, but ultimately result in better outcomes for local people.

Some measures to mitigate community wellbeing impacts are likely to be interlinked with other mitigation areas, for example Public Rights of Way. Therefore, the value to communities from such interrelated issues and opportunities, should be fully explored.



Promotion of good emotional health and wellbeing

Alongside effective communication about the proposed changes, communities should also be proactively helped to maintain their own wellbeing throughout the process, through provision of good quality information and support. This could be provided through the following means:

- East Suffolk Council has developed a WellMinds resource which, supported by Suffolk County Council, will be available to all parishes across the county. These resources should be proactively distributed in a range of formats, to communities affected by large scale development²³.
- Parish council representatives should be provided with suitable training and support to carry out their duties. Provision of funded Mental Health First Aid training for members of the community should be considered, along with networking opportunities, for people adopting this role, to liaise with others for support and supervision. In addition, training for the community in how to have supportive conversations about difficult subjects, such as suicidal ideation and self-harm, should be provided²⁴.
- Consideration should be given to the funding of local mental health organisations, to enable them to mentor those who volunteer to undertake wellbeing support roles. This would ensure that volunteers receive appropriate training, support, and guidance, and would also reduce the feelings of isolation and overwhelm often described by community leaders in these roles.
- It should be noted that volunteers should not be expected to provide specific mental health support to individuals. Where this is necessary, people should be supported to access professional interventions from the Suffolk Wellbeing Service,²⁵ or their local GP surgery.

Monitoring

Suffolk's Emotional Needs Audit 2022 provides baseline wellbeing scores for communities across the county. It may be beneficial for further audits to be carried out, in areas impacted by large scale development. However, to do so would require funding.

There is a potentially instrumental role for community members to play in monitoring and evaluation, in a way that builds community pride and ownership. Examples are emerging globally of how this may be done in the energy transition, and this approach is advocated in this guidance. The Council considers that all parties should explore the scope for collaborative and empowering levels of engagement, including:

- Follow-up activities and feedback
- Independent verification
- Two-way communication
- Partnerships
- Participatory monitoring
- Involvement in adaptive management²⁶

Provisional Key performance Indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of engagement and community wellbeing set out in the Appendix.

23 Well Minds East Suffolk <https://www.paperturn-view.com/?pid=ODc8797953>

24 <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/suicide-awareness-gateway-training>

25 <https://www.wellbeingnands.co.uk/suffolk/>

26 Morrison-Saunders, A. et al (2023) Distilling best practice principles for public participation in impact assessment follow up - Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal 41(1) <https://research-portal.uea.ac.uk/en/publications/distilling-best-practice-principles-for-public-participation-in-i>

Appendix

Provisional Key Performance Indicators for community engagement and the safeguarding of community wellbeing

Outcome reference	Indicator	Objective	Frequency	Measurement	Source of measurement data / method	Baseline (optional)	Volume and trajectory over years (Performance Targets - %, number, timescales etc. - or TBD ^s)								Comments
							Year 1				Year 2				
							Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Informing communities															
IN01	Provide good quality, timely, and accessible information to the community and its representatives.	Providing access to easily understood summary material that is concise and written in "plain-English".	Quarterly	% of survey respondents reporting 'good' access to concise and plain English information about the project from initial engagement through to follow-up via surveys.	Data collected from feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys	N/A									Evaluate quarterly results of feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys to track and inform improvements required.
IN02		Provide clear and early explanation of how, or if the proposal would result in compulsory purchase and related processes, or if there may be significant impact on individuals, which would need to be compensated for.	Quarterly	% of relevant survey respondents reporting clear and early explanation of how or if the proposals would result in compulsory purchase or if there may be significant impact on individuals through follow up surveys.	Data collected from feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys										Evaluate quarterly results of feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys to track and inform improvements required.
IN03		Proactively distribute information regarding discretionary purchase schemes or, in the absence of such a formal scheme, the mechanisms to deal with situations where there is extreme financial hardship, and/or a pressing need to sell.	Quarterly	% of relevant survey respondents reporting receiving access to information regarding discretionary purchase schemes and/or the mechanisms to deal with situations where there is extreme financial hardship, and/or a pressing need to sell through follow up surveys.	Data collected from feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys										Evaluate quarterly results of feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys to track and inform improvements required.
IN04		Ensure that access to compensation schemes does not generate an undue administrative burden on, and consequent anxiety for, an individual or community.	Quarterly	Overall decrease in % of relevant survey respondents reporting sentiment of undue administrative burden and consequent anxiety through follow up surveys.	Data collected from feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys										Evaluate quarterly results of feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys to track and inform improvements required.

Outcome reference	Indicator	Objective	Frequency	Measurement	Source of measurement data / method	Baseline (optional)	Volume and trajectory over years (Performance Targets - %, number, timescales etc. - or TBD*)								Comments
							Year 1				Year 2				
							Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
IN05		Maintain proactive, regular, in person contact with communities, via attendance at parish council meetings. Acknowledging the concerns of the community and working with them to develop a supportive and collaborative dialogue.	Quarterly	% of relevant parish council survey respondents reporting, in person contact with project promoter, via attendance at parish council meetings; that acknowledgement of community concerns is made, and the promoter is working with the parish council to develop a supportive and collaborative dialogue.	Data collected from feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys	N/A									Evaluate quarterly results of feedback surveys or community satisfaction surveys to track and inform improvements required.
Involving communities															
IV01	Build effective functional relationships of trust, confidence, and understanding with the community and its representatives.	During pre-application engagement, co-design and publish a framework for dialogue, conflict resolution and management with representatives of the host community, town and parish councils. Updating as necessary based upon user and community feedback.	Quarterly	Overall increase in % of survey satisfaction levels.	Data collected from feedback surveys	TBD									Evaluate results of feedback survey to enhance the framework as required.
IV02		Employment of an independent third party to act as a "relationship manager" between the developers, local authorities, and the impacted communities, to ensure conversations remain positive and helpful.	Quarterly	Overall increase in number and % of trust, confidence and understanding of the project from the community and its representatives from initial engagement with Relationship Manager to follow up surveys.	Follow up surveys	TBD									This measure will assess the effectiveness of the Relationship Managers approach to increasing trust, confidence and understanding of the project within the host community and its representatives.

Outcome reference	Indicator	Objective	Frequency	Measurement	Source of measurement data / method	Baseline (optional)	Volume and trajectory over years (Performance Targets - %, number, timescales etc. - or TBD ²)								Comments
							Year 1				Year 2				
							Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Collaborating with communities															
CO01	Create a panel of people from the hosting parishes or towns to establish community collaboration.	Create a panel of people from the hosting parishes or towns comprising engaged individuals, who have the confidence of the communities they represent, and who can engage and work with the promoter, without prejudice to any objections they may have to the scheme. Panel members could include relevant county and district councillors, parish representatives and local authority officers.	Quarterly	Number and percentage of key representatives (TBD) at town and parish councils and privately engaged individuals taking membership in the panel (and maintained).	Data collection	TBD								Regularly review participation rates and adjust strategies to maintain or increase engagement levels as needed.	
CO02		Provide the panel with emerging details of the project, that are fit for the public domain, regarding how the project will be built, designed, and mitigated. Engage with the panel to facilitate understanding of those aspects of the design that are fixed by constraints, and critically, the nature of those constraints.	Quarterly	Increase in % of panel understanding in aspects of constraints and their nature from initial engagement to follow-up survey.	Follow up surveys	TBD								Evaluate results of feedback survey and where necessary identify alternative means of collaborating with the panel to increase understanding as required.	
CO03		Support the panel to understand the multiple design options, or multiple potential outcomes. These options or outcomes will be explained to the panel, interrogated by the panel, and the panel will provide feedback to the project promoter.	Quarterly	% increase of panel confidence in the feedback they have provided to the project promoter on the proposed multiple design options or multiple potential outcomes based on their understanding of the relevant process and outcomes via follow up survey.	Follow up surveys	TBD								Evaluate results of feedback survey and where necessary identify improvements to the approach in order that panel have sufficient understanding to inform their feedback to multiple design options or multiple potential outcomes.	

Outcome reference	Indicator	Objective	Frequency	Measurement	Source of measurement data / method	Baseline (optional)	Volume and trajectory over years (Performance Targets - %, number, timescales etc. - or TBD ²)								Comments	
							Year 1				Year 2					
							Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
CO04		Development of the detailed designs used for the Discharge of Requirements to be finalised in discussion with the panel, before submission to the discharging Local Authority.	Once	Panel consulted in a collaborative capacity in the designs proposed before they are finalised and submitted to the discharging Local Authority.	Confirmation from panel	N/A										Measure to ensure the Panel are consulted.
CO05	Community collaboration.	Provide communities with genuine and meaningful opportunity to engage in collaborative dialogue with the promoter, allowing communities to shape the emerging project effectively and demonstrably, from the earliest possible stage of its design and development.	Quarterly	Number of genuine and meaningful opportunities provided to host communities to engage collaboratively with the project promoter measured by % of community attendees reporting high satisfaction levels via follow up surveys.	Follow up surveys	N/A										This measure will assess the quality of the opportunities offered to the host community to genuinely collaborate in a meaningful way.
CO06		After providing any significant new information about the project, offer face-to-face conversations with community leaders, allowing Q&A.	Adhoc	% of face-to-face sessions offered to community leaders measured against the number of releases of significant new information about the project.	Data collection from project promoter	N/A										Evaluate the opportunities given to consult with community leaders in recognition of new information about the project.
CO07		Provide effective engagement methods and approaches with host communities, as well as appropriate community mitigation, for the construction, and where appropriate, the operational phases of the project.	Quarterly	Number of engagements facilitated to host communities that include community mitigation measured by % of community attendees reporting high satisfaction levels via follow-up surveys.	Follow up surveys	N/A										This measure will assess quality of the engagements facilitated to the host community that include community mitigation.
CO08		In close collaboration with the host community, identify relevant community assets in the community and invest in their development as mitigation and enhancement.	Quarterly	Number and % of community assets receiving investment (as mitigation and enhancement) in their development as a result of collaboration with host community and/or their representatives.	Data collected from project promoter	N/A										Evaluate the number of community assets developed through collaboration with the host community.

Outcome reference	Indicator	Objective	Frequency	Measurement	Source of measurement data / method	Baseline (optional)	Volume and trajectory over years (Performance Targets - %, number, timescales etc. - or TBD*)								Comments
							Year 1				Year 2				
							Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Empower communities															
EM01	Improve the communities ability to maintain their own throughout the process, through provision of good quality information and support.	Proactively distribute the WellMinds resource developed by East Suffolk Council.	Quarterly	Number supplied to residents and % of residents confirming receipt/having considered the information through follow up surveys.	Data collected from follow up surveys	TBD									Evaluate the portion of host community that has received and considered the resource and if necessary, revise approach to provision to increase engagement with the resource.
EM02		Provide parish/town council representatives with funded, suitable training and support in respect of the project to carry out their duties in supporting the host community.	Quarterly	Number of parish/town Council representatives receiving relevant training and support, to support the host community.	Data collected from provider	TBD									Evaluate the amount of parish/ town council representatives receiving relevant training to support their role in the community.
EM03		Provide funded Mental Health First Aid training for selected members of the community along with networking opportunities, for people adopting this role, to liaise with others for support and supervision.	Quarterly	Number and % of people in host community receiving Mental Health First Aid training from commissioned provider.	Data collected from provider	TBD									Evaluate the portion of host community receiving Mental Health First Aid training and enhance promotion if required.
EM04		Provide funded training for the community on how to have supportive conversations about difficult subjects, such as suicidal ideation and self-harm.	Quarterly	Number and % of people in host community receiving training from commissioned provider.	Data collected from provider	TBD									Evaluate the portion of host community receiving training to hold supportive conversations and enhance promotion if required.

Outcome reference	Indicator	Objective	Frequency	Measurement	Source of measurement data / method	Baseline (optional)	Volume and trajectory over years (Performance Targets - %, number, timescales etc. - or TBD ²)								Comments
							Year 1				Year 2				
							Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
EM05	Increase engagement with SME's.	Work with commissioned local mental health organisations to understand capacity and where necessary, provide funding to enable them to oversee those who volunteer to undertake wellbeing support roles. This would ensure volunteers receive appropriate training, support, and guidance, and would also reduce the feelings of isolation and overwhelm often described by community leaders in these roles.	Quarterly	% of volunteer survey respondents satisfaction levels regarding their capability/competence in their community support role and feelings of isolation and/or overwhelm.	Surveys	TBD									Evaluate results of feedback survey and where necessary identify gaps and/or enhancements required to the support offered via local mental health organisations so that volunteers are able to undertake wellbeing roles effectively and reduce any feelings they may have of isolation and overwhelm. Where gaps or enhancements are identified, work with the local mental health organisations to provide the required support to the volunteers.
Monitoring															
MO01	Monitor, respond to and increase baseline wellbeing scores using Suffolk's Emotional Needs Audit 2022 as baseline.	Support Suffolk Mind to carry out regular wellbeing audits in the host area, monitor and increase/improve wellbeing scores.	Quarterly	% increase of wellbeing scores amongst host community	Suffolks Emotional Needs Audit	TBD									Evaluate the quarterly progression rates to track improvements in wellbeing scores.

