



**Galloper Wind Farm Eastern Super Grid
Transformer Project**
Environmental Statement – Chapter 11 Planning Policy
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Galloper Wind Farm Limited



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11 PLANNING POLICY

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires the local planning authority, when dealing with an application for planning permission, to: *“have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.”*

11.1.2 It is therefore important to identify the documents which comprise the statutory Development Plan for the purposes of this section of the 1990 Act, and this is presented in the following sections.

11.2 Project Need

11.2.1 The Galloper offshore wind farm requires a super grid transformer (SGT) in order to be operational and deliver electricity to the UK national grid and therefore the ESGT is essential to the contribution of low carbon energy production in the UK.. A SGT was consented under the Planning Act for a project with an installed capacity of up to 504 MW. Project optimisation work has revised the project capacity down to 340 MW and with this an opportunity identified to simplify the onshore electrical infrastructure by relocating the SGT to an eastern part of the site (see Chapter 3, Project Description for further details). The revised infrastructure design has therefore benefited the project by reducing potential environmental effects of a critical electrical component.

11.3 Policy Duty of Planning Authorities

11.4 Relevant Planning Policy Documents

National Planning Policy

11.4.1 In March 2012, the Coalition Government rationalised and replaced the previous existing national planning policy and guidance documents for England with a single concise “National Planning Policy Framework” (NPPF). Most Planning Policy Guidance documents (PPGs), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and a variety of other planning policy documents have been replaced by the NPPF. The Sustainable Communities Plan dating from 2003 remains in force.

National Policy Statements

11.4.2 National Policy Statements (NPSs) are statements of policy in respect of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) which require development consent under the Planning Act 2008. The contents of NPSs may however be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for projects such as the ESGT, to which the policy guidance in NPSs is relevant but does not itself fall within the definition of an NSIP.

11.4.3 There are two NPSs which are relevant for the proposed ESGT:

- Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1, July 2011) (DECC, 2011a); and
- NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5, July 2011) (DECC, 2011c)

11.4.4

- 11.4.5 EN-5, together with EN-1, is the primary decision-making guidance document and covers the following relevant types of nationally significant infrastructure:
- Above ground electricity lines of 132kV and above; and
 - Other infrastructure for electricity networks that is associated with a NSIP.
- 11.4.6 EN-5 states that “*when considering impacts for electricity networks infrastructure, all of the generic impacts covered in EN-1 are likely to be relevant, even if they only apply during one phase of the development such as construction or only apply to one part of the development such as a substation.*”
- 11.4.7 EN-5 also sets out additional technology-specific considerations on the following generic impacts considered in EN-1:
- Biodiversity and geological conservation;
 - Landscape and visual; and
 - Noise and vibration.
- 11.4.8 In addition, EN-5 sets out technology-specific considerations for Electromagnetic Fields (EMF), which is not considered in EN-1. The advice given in EN-5 regarding environmental assessment has been taken into account in the relevant ES Chapters.

11.5 Regional and Local Policy Guidance

- 11.5.1 In addition to the NPSs, consideration within this ES is also given to the Development Plan. The ESGT lies within the administrative area of SCDC and Suffolk County Council which are within the East of England Region.
- 11.5.2 The Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan is currently being drawn up by SCDC. The plan will set out the planning policies, proposals and actions for the future development of the district to 2027 and beyond and will replace the previous Local Development Framework. Until the new local plan is fully developed and adopted, the saved policies of the previous Suffolk Coastal Local Plan will be material considerations in determining planning applications. More detail is provided on the saved policies in paragraph 10.5.7.
- 11.5.3 The Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan will form part of the Development Plan against which planning applications determined by SCDC will be assessed.
- 11.5.4 The Development Plan consists of the following documents:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - The Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan which itself consists of the following:
 - Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) *sets out the strategic vision for the district and our communities. This also includes the Development Management Policies which will be used in the determination of planning applications.*
 - Site Allocations & Area Specific Policies DPD (not yet produced) *will contain the policies applying to specific sites, locations and areas within the district. It will also allocate land for development, covering a variety of uses from housing, to new sites for employment and retail uses.*

- Area Action Plans DPD (not yet produced) *are documents focusing on the future development of specific towns or areas, with a specific focus on regeneration.*
- Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople DPD *will allocate land to accommodate the identified housing needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities.*
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)(not yet produced)
- Neighbourhood Plans *are documents prepared by Town and Parish Councils and contain specific policies for an individual parish, or group of parishes. They are required to be consistent with the NPPF and this Core Strategy.*
- Proposals Map *shows adopted policies in a geographical format and will be updated as each document is adopted. The Proposals Map will initially be derived from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (incorporating 1st and 2nd Alterations).*
- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 'Saved' Policies
- Suffolk Coastal Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs)
- Minerals and Waste Development Framework (produced by Suffolk County Council)

Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy & Development and Management Policies

11.5.5 The Core Strategy & Development Management Policies sets out the Council's overall approach to future development for the period to 2027 With the following relevant policies:

- SP12 – Climate Change
 - Encouraging and promoting schemes which create renewable energy where consistent with the need to safeguard residential amenity, the environment, and the landscape
- SP14 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - Biodiversity and geodiversity will be protected and enhanced using a fragment work based on a network of designated sites, wildlife corridors and links; rivers, estuaries and coast; identified habitats and geodiversity features; landscape character areas; and protected species.
- SP24 – Leiston
 - Protect and enhance the setting to the town
- DM27 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - Protect the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats
 - Maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats
 - Incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate
 - Development proposals that would cause a direct or indirect adverse effect (alone or combined with other plans or projects) to the integrity of internationally and nationally designated environmental sites or other designated areas, priority habitats or protected/priority species will not be permitted unless:

- (i) prevention, mitigation and, where appropriate compensation measures are provided such that net impacts are reduced to a level below which the impacts no longer outweigh the benefits of the development*; or
- (ii) with regard to internationally designated sites that the exceptional requirements of Reg. 62 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) relating to the absence of alternative solutions and Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest have been met.

Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies, Area Action Plans, and Supplementary Planning Documents

11.5.6 The above documents have not yet been released by SCDC and therefore will not be material considerations in the determination of the planning application for the ESGT.

Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan - saved policies from July 2013

11.5.7 When the Core Strategy was adopted by SCDC, it replaced a number of saved policies from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (1st and 2nd alterations). 114 saved policies remain and will form part of the Development Plan until they are replaced in a later site specific development plan document (SCDC 2013). The policies of direct relevance to the ESGT proposal are listed in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Saved Policies from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan

Saved Policy Number	Saved Policy Title
AP1	Conservation area – control of development & enhancement
AP13	Special Landscape Areas
AP122	Sizewell Gap
AP145	Leiston – Abbey Road

Suffolk County Local Transport Plan 2011-2031 (Suffolk County Council, 2011)

11.5.8 The Plan contains a number of objectives which have been developed to support the Government’s transport priorities including accessibility, congestion, safety and air quality.

11.5.9 The plan identifies key areas for growth and development within Suffolk including:

- The ‘Energy Coast’, including offshore wind and renewable energy focussed around Lowestoft and the development of Sizewell C nuclear power station

11.5.10 The Plan includes a congestion strategy, which focuses on minimising the impact of traffic in market towns, villages and rural areas. The document states that ‘Suffolk County Council strongly supports the provision of proper relief for these communities [village communities along the A12 e.g. Marlesford, Little Glemham, Stratford St Andrew, and Farnham] by the provision of a relief road and will work with the nuclear industry to secure its provision alongside any new power station at Sizewell’.

11.6 References

Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011a). Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (July 2011)

Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011b). National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (July 2011)

Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011c). National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) (July 2011)

Suffolk Coastal District Council (2013) Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document. July 2013.

Suffolk County Council (2011) Suffolk County Local Transport Plan 2011-2031