

Equalities and Communities Impact Assessment

Name of document being assessed:	The draft South Norfolk Landscape Susceptibility in relation to Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
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Name of officers completing assessment:	Carole Baker, Adam Banham, Lola Poole
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Date of assessment:	16/04/2025
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1. Introduction

The proposed new document is the draft South Norfolk Landscape Susceptibility in relation to Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The aim of the draft SPD is to provide guidance for those seeking to identify suitable sites for the location of energy generation, storage and transmission projects in meeting local and national policy requirements. It will also be used to inform the Council's responses to such proposals in the context of national and local planning policies and the need to reasonably minimise any adverse effects on the landscape and communities of South Norfolk, and to provide guidance as to which types of development may or may not be appropriate within different landscapes.

The energy-related development scenarios considered in the draft SPD are:

- solar photovoltaic panels (small scale up to 5MW, medium-field scale up to 15MW, and larger-scale 15to 50MW);
- anaerobic digestion (AD) plants (farm scale up to 1ha in size and larger installations up to 5ha)
- battery storage facilities
- overhead powerlines
- underground cable routes
- substations

The South Norfolk Landscape Susceptibility in relation to Energy Storage, Generation and Transmission SPD is a new document but does not introduce new planning policy nor does it allocate any land for development. Its purpose is the implementation and interpretation of the Council's adopted development plan.

The draft SPD provides guidance on the implementation and interpretation of policies in the Greater Norwich Local Plan ([GNLP](#)) Policies 2 and 3, which itself was subject to a detailed [Equalities Impact Assessment](#) (October 2023). Whilst few direct impacts were found for protected groups, more generally the GNLP is assessed as having a positive effect towards reducing socio-economic inequality by planning for new homes, jobs, and infrastructure.

In assessing this new draft SPD, officers referred to the duties on councils. These are that the Council must not discriminate in the way its activities are designed, developed and delivered, and must consider its duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conflict that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between two persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

2. Assessment against protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010

Protected Characteristic	Potential Impact		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Race		✓	
Sex		✓	
Religion or Belief		✓	
Sexual Orientation		✓	
Marriage/Civil Partnership		✓	
Pregnancy/Maternity		✓	
Gender Reassignment		✓	

3. Which additional Communities characteristics does this policy impact?

	Potential Impact		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Health		✓	
Place including Rurality	✓		
Low Income and Poverty		✓	

4. What do you believe are the potential equalities impacts of this policy?

The draft SPD was written on behalf of South Norfolk Council by The Landscape Partnership, with input from South Norfolk Council planning officers. Colleagues at South Norfolk Council carried out this impact assessment, and it has been reviewed by the Assistant Director - Planning.

Positive Impact
Some energy projects will be associated to various community funding schemes. These may enable the improvement of local facilities, which will be to the benefit of all the local community including those groups with protected characteristics. People of all protected groups above will have equal opportunity to benefit from the additional energy generation capacity. These benefits may extend to climate change adaption, better national energy security, and possibly lower energy bills.
Negative Impact
The guidance within the SPD has not emerged as relevant to, or as having a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics.
Neutral Impact
The SPD is not expected to have any impact on any of the following protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Race, Sex, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Pregnancy/Maternity or Gender Reassignment. Most energy-related infrastructure will be located away from large residential areas, therefore the greatest impact will be about perceptions of loss of countryside and change to the landscape. The rural location of energy projects is unlikely to disproportionately affect any one demographic or group with protected characteristics However, it is recognised that the approach towards providing guidance as to which types of developments may or may not be appropriate within different landscapes to reasonably minimise any adverse effects on the landscape and communities of South Norfolk will overall have a positive impact upon all the residents of South Norfolk District and likely lead to greater benefits in the long term.
Issues or Opportunities that may need to be addressed
Energy projects frequently provoke community opposition, but this opposition is not limited to any demographic of the community or any groups with protected characteristics. A benefit of the draft SPD is that it is intended to improve the quality of planning applications submitted, and an outcome of this could be better quality development that is more acceptable to residents. The draft SPD will primarily impact applicants, agents, landowners, and developers involved in proposing energy-related schemes requiring planning applications. The impacts are anticipated to be positive by providing additional clarification and guidance on appropriate development types within various landscape areas, which aims to reasonably minimise adverse impacts on the landscape and communities of South Norfolk. A benefit of the draft SPD is that it potentially improves the quality of planning applications submitted.

5. What do you believe are the potential communities impacts of this policy?

Positive Impact
Place including rurality - Economic opportunities arising from job creation stimulating economic growth in rural areas and providing new opportunities for residents. - Infrastructure improvements can lead to improved local infrastructure such as utilities and roads benefiting rural communities. Health - Transitioning to renewable energy sources can reduce air pollution, contributing to overall healthier living environments. Low Income and poverty - Energy saving costs arising from community energy schemes, alleviating energy poverty. - Involving low-income households in community energy projects can promote social inclusion and provide financial benefits.
Negative Impact
Place including rurality - Displacement and disruption as a result of development and construction can disrupt local communities - Energy projects in particular large-scale ones may lead to the loss of productive agricultural land. - Negative impacts are possible where new infrastructure is located close to individual properties. The most likely homes to be affected will be isolated homes in rural areas. - The operation and management of energy infrastructure could involve minor inconvenience to nearby communities Health - Any construction project is likely to involve some disturbance, such as noise, dust, and odour but these can be managed by planning conditions associated with the planning application process.
Neutral Impact
Place with rurality The SPD can help guide energy projects to align with existing policies and maintaining consistency in regulatory frameworks.
Issues or Opportunities that may need to be addressed
None identified.

6. How is it proposed that any identified negative impacts are mitigated?

The potential community impacts identified as negative in this assessment will be effectively mitigated and managed through the planning application process and the implementation of specific planning conditions. Such conditions might include landscaping to screen visual impacts and controlling hours of operation during routine maintenance to ensure minimal disruption and to maintain the integrity of the landscape.

The draft SPD is anticipated to have neutral and positive impact on individuals or groups with protected characteristics protected under the law. Whilst there may be some positive impacts, they are expected to be inclusive and equitable, ensuring that no specific group is disproportionately affected.

A six-week public consultation will be carried out on a draft version of the SPD and its supporting documents including the draft Equalities and Communities Impact Assessment, consulting with a broad range of audiences such as parish and town councils/councillors, statutory bodies, interested groups and the general public. This will provide the opportunity for the local community and other interested parties to provide comments in relation to any protected characteristics, with their representations being considered when amending the final version of the SPD.

Any positive or negative impacts that may arise following the adoption of the SPD will assist officers in providing measures that seek to mitigate any negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics.

Signed by evaluator:

Signed by responsible head of department:



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Please send a copy of the reviewed document to
equalities@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

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