



**East Pye Solar
Outline Employment, Skills and
Supply Chain Strategy**

**Revision 1
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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.1 This Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Strategy ('Outline ESSCS') has been prepared on behalf of East Pye Solar Limited ('the Applicant') to set out the Applicant's commitment to promoting competition, innovation and skills within the communities surrounding the Scheme, as well as across the local authority area of South Norfolk and the wider county of Norfolk.
- 1.1.2 The Outline ESSCS forms part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) Application for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of East Pye Solar (hereafter referred to as the 'Scheme').
- 1.1.3 The Outline ESSCS describes the anticipated workforce profile, skills, equipment, and services required to deliver the Scheme. These measures require the engagement of relevant stakeholders.
- 1.1.4 In accordance with this Outline ESSCS, a detailed ESSCS will be prepared and submitted prior to the commencement of construction. The implementation of the detailed ESSCS will be secured through a Requirement in the **draft DCO [EN0110014/APP/3.1]** for the Scheme. The detailed ESSCS will identify opportunities relating to skills, the supply chain and employment which the Applicant commits to progressing post-consent in accordance with this Outline ESSCS. These initiatives will help support local individuals and businesses in accessing the employment, skills, and supply chain benefits associated with the Scheme.
- 1.1.5 **Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]** considers the likely significant effects of the Scheme on the population and socio-economic environment during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. As such, the chapter provides an assessment of the likely significant economic effects, together with information on the context and characteristics of the local and regional communities.
- 1.1.6 This Outline ESSCS may be subject to minor amendments as part of the examination stage of the DCO Application process. All amendments will be agreed between the Applicant and the local authority of South Norfolk Council (SNC) and will be determined by the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). Following this, the finalisation and implementation of the detailed ESSCS will be drafted substantially in accordance with the agreed Outline ESSCS and will be subject to approval from SNC as the relevant planning authority in consultation with Norfolk County Council (NCC).

1.2 The Scheme

- 1.2.1 The Scheme comprises the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a Solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station with a total capacity exceeding 100 megawatts (MW) and associated development including a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), up to three 132kV Project Substations and up to three 400kV Project Substations, Grid Connection Infrastructure and a new National Grid Substation. A description of the Scheme can be found in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 4 – The Scheme [EN0110014/APP/6.1.4]**.
- 1.2.2 The Scheme would be located within the Order Limits (shown on the **Location Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.1]** and **Works Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.3]** submitted as part of the DCO Application and secured by Article 3 of the **draft DCO [EN0110014/APP/3.1]**). The Order Limits contain all elements of the Scheme comprising the Solar PV Arrays, 132kV and 400kV Project Substations, the National Grid Substation, the BESS, Grid Connection Infrastructure, interconnecting cables within the Cable Route Corridor (CRC), Mitigation and Enhancement Areas and Highway Works.
- 1.2.3 The Solar PV electricity generating stations would be located across Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Scheme, with the BESS within the BESS Site. Site 6 does not contain electricity generation station, instead being retained as a Mitigation and Enhancement Area.
- 1.2.4 Highway Works (refer to the **Works Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.3]**) are sections of the highway network that will contain localised improvements, such as improvements to deteriorated road edges or temporary highway and traffic works required to safely accommodate the Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) deliveries to construct the Scheme. Highway Works will support the movement of construction vehicles on narrower sections of the local highway network within parts of the construction vehicle routes to and within the Order Limits (refer to **ES Volume 1, Chapter 11 – Transport and Access [EN0110014/APP/6.1.11]**).

1.3 Study Area

- 1.3.1 **Table 1.1** outlines the study areas used, either as direct study areas or geographical comparators.

Table 1.1: Study Areas

| Geographical Study Area | Definition |
|-------------------------|--|
| The Order Limits | The maximum extent of land anticipated to be acquired and/or used for the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Scheme |
| Local Area | The Local Area comprises of the following Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) surrounding the Order Limits: |

| Geographical Study Area | Definition |
|--------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Norfolk 006A • South Norfolk 006B • South Norfolk 009F • South Norfolk 009G • South Norfolk 011D • South Norfolk 011E • South Norfolk 011F • South Norfolk 012A • South Norfolk 012D • South Norfolk 012E • South Norfolk 013A • South Norfolk 014C |
| Local Authorities | South Norfolk Council which is a host authority |
| Country | Norfolk County Council which is a host authority in which South Norfolk Council is located and also the neighbouring county of Suffolk County Council |
| Regional | The East of England region |
| National | England |

2 Consultation

2.1 Scoping Opinion and Statutory Consultation

2.1.1 This Outline ESSCS has been prepared in response to consultation comments received throughout the pre-application stage. This includes responses received within the EIA Scoping Opinion from the SoS through the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in 2025 (**ES Volume 2, Appendix 2.2 - EIA Scoping Opinion [EN0110014/APP/6.3.2.2]**) and statutory consultation responses to the **Consultation Report [EN0110014/APP/5.1]**).

2.1.2 Respondents were keen to see local employment, skill and supply chain opportunities created by the Scheme and specifically NCC requested that an Outline ESSCS be prepared to set out commitments that are meaningful, deliverable and aligned with Norfolk's strategic ambitions for skills development and local labour market outcomes. NCC requested that the Outline ESSCS incorporates and clearly addresses alignment with Norfolk's NSIP Employment and Skills Framework (Ref 1) which guides expectations for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in Norfolk in relation to:

- Supplying local labour needs across construction and operational phases;
- Apprenticeship starts and completions;
- Engagement with education (site visits, curriculum input, work experience);
- Employment brokerage or supply chain mapping to help connect local SMEs and jobseekers to opportunities;
- Collaboration with existing programmes, training providers and local colleges; and
- Mechanisms for ensuring the delivery of commitments.

2.1.3 This Outline ESSCS aligns with NCC's NSIP Employment and Skills Framework.

2.2 Ongoing Non-Statutory Consultation

2.2.1 The Applicant is actively engaging with various stakeholders. Two dedicated employment and skills sessions have been held with the host authorities:

- 7th January 2026 with NCC. Attended by several NCC officers, including:
 - Head of Employment and Skills;
 - Senior Skills Co-Ordinator; and

- Principal Planner.
 - 9th January 2026 with SNC. Attended by the following SNC officers including:
 - Lead NSIP Officer; and
 - Planning Officer.
- 2.2.2 Feedback from the sessions was positive, with stakeholders expressing support for the approach adopted by the Applicant which underpins this Outline ESSCS.
- 2.2.3 Recommendations made by stakeholders in respect of existing programmes or local providers to collaborate with have been incorporated within the opportunities set out within this Outline ESSCS (Section 6) and mechanisms for delivery (Section 7).

3 Economic Baseline

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The economic profile of the local population and workforce is outlined and assessed in this section in order to identify whether there any disparities within the local and regional area which the Scheme may be able to address and help improve. It focuses on socio-economic indicators relevant to skills, supply chain and employment.

3.2 Labour Market Profile

Age Profile

3.2.1 There are approximately 16,600 people (Ref 2) living in the Local Area to the Order Limits accounting for 11% of the total population of South Norfolk (148,400 people).

3.2.2 The Local Area, South Norfolk, Norfolk and Suffolk have an older population profile in comparison to the East of England and England, with a higher proportion of the resident population aged 65+ and a lower proportion of working age (16 to 64 years) as shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Resident Population by Age Group

| Age | Local Area | South Norfolk | Norfolk | Suffolk | East of England | England |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0 - 15 | 15% | 17% | 16% | 17% | 19% | 18% |
| 16 - 19 | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 5% |
| 20 - 29 | 8% | 9% | 11% | 10% | 11% | 13% |
| 30 - 49 | 20% | 24% | 23% | 24% | 26% | 26% |
| 50 - 64 | 25% | 21% | 21% | 21% | 19% | 19% |
| 65 - 74 | 14% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 10% | 9% |
| 75+ | 15% | 13% | 13% | 13% | 10% | 9% |
| All Ages | 16,600 | 148,400 | 940,400 | 786,200 | 6,576,300 | 58,620,100 |

Source: ONS 2024 Mid-year population Estimates (Ref 2)

Migration

3.2.3 Internal migration data (Ref 3) from June 2024 highlights a negative net migration of 15 to 19 year olds both for South Norfolk and the East of England; this is likely due to school leavers moving away for higher education opportunities. This presents a possibility to expand apprenticeship programs as an alternative to university courses thereby helping retain

emerging young professionals locally and provide tailored sector specific training.

- 3.2.4 Furthermore, it is observed that a greater number of school leaver aged individuals are leaving and may not be returning in their early 20s (20 to 24 years old) suggesting a gap in graduate retention strategies. Despite universities such as the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the University of Suffolk drawing in students to the region, many graduates are likely to seek career opportunities elsewhere, emphasising an opportunity and need for stronger links between higher education providers and local employers.
- 3.2.5 By contrast, the highest inflow occurs among those aged 25 to 49 years which is a group who are likely to bring valuable industry experience. This represents an experienced potential talent pool to address immediate workforce needs. These individuals are also likely to contribute to broadening the range of skill levels while younger age groups or those seeking training take time to develop.

Unemployment

- 3.2.6 In the year July 2024 to June 2025 (Ref 4), there were 66,800 residents in South Norfolk aged 16 to 64 who were classified as economically active (this includes all those people in employment or available to work, for example the unemployed). This is equivalent to 85.0% of the population aged 16 to 64 years. The economic activity rate is higher in the South Norfolk area than the average for the East of England (81.6%) and England (79.1%). Data for the Local Area is not available.
- 3.2.7 Of those economically active residents in South Norfolk, 62,600 were in employment, representing an employment rate of 79.6%. Again, this is higher than the East of England (78.7%) and England (75.8%).
- 3.2.8 The remaining 4,200 economically active residents in South Norfolk were unemployed, which represents an unemployment rate of 6.4%. By contrast the unemployment rate is lower for the East of England and England which stand at 3.6% and 4.2% respectively.
- 3.2.9 Whilst not a measure of total unemployment, Claimant Count data (Ref 5) provides a count of the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), National Insurance (NI) Credits or Universal Credit (UC) principally for the reason of being unemployed and therefore provides an indication of people actively seeking employment. **Table 3.2** presents the Claimant Count data as of November 2025.

Table 3.2: Claimant Count (November 2025)

| Type | South Norfolk | Norfolk | Suffolk | East of England | England |
|--|---------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------|
| Number of Claimants (aged 16+) | 1,935 | 16,330 | 12,915 | 128,825 | 1,464,030 |
| Proportion of Claimants aged 16-17 | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| Proportion of Claimants aged 18-24 | 21.2% | 22.5% | 19.9% | 19.6% | 19.4% |
| Proportion of Claimants aged 25-49 | 53.5% | 53.6% | 55.9% | 57.3% | 57.9% |
| Proportion of Claimants aged 50+ | 25.1% | 23.6% | 23.9% | 23.0% | 22.5% |
| Claimants as a proportion of those aged 16 - 64 | 2.3% | 3.0% | 2.8% | 3.3% | 4.0% |

Source: ONS, Claimant Count

3.2.10 As of November 2025, there were 16,330 residents in Norfolk claiming unemployment related benefits, of which 1,935 were within South Norfolk. The number of claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16 to 64 is the lowest in South Norfolk (2.3%) relative to the other study areas. Conversely, the proportion of claimants who are 16 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years in South Norfolk and Norfolk is higher than the equivalent regional and national levels.

Economically Inactive Who Want a Job

3.2.11 In Norfolk, there are 18,300 individuals who are currently economically inactive who want to work (Ref 6). This represents 18.4% of those economically inactive. The proportion of economically inactive individuals who also want a job is lower in Norfolk than in Suffolk (20.2%), the East of England (19.1%) and England (20.2%). Data is not available for the Local Area. Barriers to entry such as lack of suitable skills and limited job opportunities may discourage these people to seek jobs. However, the expressed willingness to work represents an underutilised labour resource, as such, addressing these barriers through targeted intervention including skills training and flexible employment options could enable these individuals to enter the workforce.

Job Density

3.2.12 Job density data (Ref 7) for the year 2023 identifies that there are 449,000 jobs supported in Norfolk of which 65,000 jobs are supported in South Norfolk. The number of jobs in South Norfolk is fewer than the number of residents of working age (85,800 people) meaning that South Norfolk is a net exporter of labour. Expressed as a proportion of residents aged 16 to 64 years, South Norfolk has a job density figure of 0.77, meaning there are 0.77 jobs for every resident of a working age. The job density for Norfolk, the East of England and England are all lower at 0.82, 0.84 and 0.87 respectively.

3.2.13 This indicates that the creation of additional jobs would have a positive effect, contributing to increased employment opportunities and supporting economic activity within the local area.

Employment by Sector

3.2.14 The 2024 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) (Ref 8) provides an indication of the industrial sector of employment in the Local Area, South Norfolk, the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, the East of England and England as summarised in **Table 3.3**. The BRES data excludes those who are self-employed, government supported trainees and His Majesty's (HM) Forces and therefore employment reported by BRES is lower than the number of jobs reported by the Jobs' Density data.

Table 3.3: Employment (Workplace-based) by Industrial Sector (%)

| | Local Area | South Norfolk | Norfolk | Suffolk | East of England | England |
|---|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Agriculture, forestry & fishing | 5% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 1% | 1% |
| Mining, quarrying & utilities | 1% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Manufacturing | 9% | 8% | 9% | 9% | 7% | 7% |
| Construction | 17% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 5% |
| Motor trades | 4% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 2% |
| Wholesale | 5% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 4% |
| Retail | 7% | 7% | 10% | 9% | 8% | 8% |
| Transport & storage (inc postal) | 1% | 2% | 3% | 7% | 6% | 5% |
| Accommodation & food services | 5% | 6% | 9% | 8% | 7% | 8% |
| Information & Communication | 1% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 3% | 5% |
| Financial & insurance | 1% | 1% | 3% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| Property | 10% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| Professional, scientific & technical | 7% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 9% | 10% |
| Business administration & support services | 5% | 6% | 7% | 11% | 12% | 9% |
| Public administration & defence | 1% | 4% | 5% | 4% | 4% | 4% |
| Education | 7% | 7% | 8% | 8% | 9% | 8% |
| Health | 12% | 28% | 16% | 12% | 12% | 13% |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services | 3% | 3% | 4% | 5% | 4% | 4% |
| All industries | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Total employment | 4,350 | 61,750 | 391,500 | 352,000 | 2,987,000 | 28,415,000 |

Source: BRES 2024 (Figures have been rounded and may not sum)

- 3.2.15 South Norfolk supports employment of 61,750 jobs, of which 7.0% are located in the Local Area. Key sectors for employment in Local Area are in construction (17%), health (12%) and property (10%).
- 3.2.16 The BRES data indicates that there is a construction workforce already working within proximity of the Order Limits, totalling 3,705 people in South Norfolk of which 745 are working within the Local Area. This represents a workforce capable of supporting the construction of the Scheme.

3.3 Skills Market Profile

Not in Education, Employment or Training

- 3.3.1 **Table 3.4** records the percentage of 16 to 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Ref 9) in order to understand the levels of youth disengagement.
- 3.3.2 Norfolk records a higher proportion of 16 to 17 year olds who are NEET (4.4%) than for Suffolk (3.7%), the East of England (3.1%) and England (2.8%) which raises concerns about youth disengagement. Data for the Local Area and South Norfolk is not available.

Table 3.4: Proportion of 16 to 17 Year Olds Who are NEET (2021)

| Geography | Proportion of 16-17 year olds |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Norfolk | 4.4% |
| Suffolk | 3.7% |
| East of England | 3.1% |
| England | 2.8% |

Source: Department for Education

- 3.3.3 This indicator points to wider barriers faced by young residents in accessing and progressing through the education system and into work. The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) (Ref 10) emphasises the focus on supporting school and education leavers in making successful transitions into further education, training, and employment. The LSIP recognises the importance of high-quality careers guidance, employer engagement, and clear progression pathways to ensure young people are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and experience required to access local job opportunities.
- 3.3.4 These themes may be due to a lack of career guidance and aspiration-building for those aged 16 to 30, or transport barriers, particularly in rural areas, where lack of public transport and long travel times are a major constraint on access to education and employment.

Highest Qualification Level

- 3.3.5 The 2021 Census provides data on the highest qualification levels (Ref 11) obtained by residents aged 16+. **Table 3.5** summarises the qualification profile for the Local Area, the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, the East of England and England. The descriptions of each qualification level are included in **Table 3.6**.
- 3.3.6 Overall, the data demonstrates that Norfolk has the highest proportion of individuals with no formal qualifications and the lowest proportion of residents that hold highest level qualifications. This gap emphasises an opportunity to target upskilling and increase training across the area.
- 3.3.7 However, when looking at a more localised level, the Local Area and South Norfolk, there is a more balanced distribution of skillsets. This indicates that these localities are well positioned to supply labour across a range of job types, from entry level roles to more specialised or higher skilled positions.

Table 3.5: Highest Qualification Level of Residents aged 16+

| Highest level of qualification | Local Area | South Norfolk | Norfolk | Suffolk | East of England | England |
|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| No qualifications | 17% | 17% | 20% | 20% | 18% | 18% |
| Level 1 and entry level qualifications | 10% | 10% | 11% | 11% | 11% | 10% |
| Level 2 qualifications | 16% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 14% | 13% |
| Apprenticeship | 6% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 5% |
| Level 3 qualifications | 18% | 17% | 17% | 17% | 17% | 17% |
| Level 4 qualifications or above | 31% | 32% | 27% | 28% | 32% | 34% |
| Other qualifications | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% |
| Total | 13,780 | 117,219 | 767,096 | 630,359 | 5,148,281 | 46,006,955 |

Source: 2021 Census Table TS067 (Figures have been rounded and may not sum)

Table 3.6: Description of Educational Levels

| Educational Attainment | Description |
|--|---|
| Level 1 and entry level qualifications | 1 to 4 GCSEs grade A* to C, Any GCSEs at other grades, O levels or CSEs (any grades), 1 AS level, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic or Essential Skills. |
| Level 2 qualifications | 5 or more GCSEs (A* to C or 9 to 4), O levels (passes), CSEs (grade 1), School Certification, 1 A level, 2 to 3 AS levels, VCEs, Intermediate or Higher Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First or General Diploma, RSA Diploma. |
| Level 3 qualifications | 2 or more A levels or VCEs, 4 or more AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression or Advanced Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Advance Diploma, NVQ level 3; Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma. |

| Educational Attainment | Description |
|--|--|
| Level 4 qualifications or above | Degree (BA, BSc), higher degree (MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ level 4 to 5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy). |
| Other qualifications | Vocational or work-related qualifications, other qualifications achieved in England or Wales, qualifications achieved outside England or Wales (equivalent not stated or unknown). |

3.3.8 Overall, for all geographies, Level 4 or above qualifications are the most prevalent. However, the majority of largest levels of lower level qualifications are from localised study areas and the national average of educational attainment is higher than for other geographies; this indicates that the local areas fall below the national median level.

Highest Level of Qualification by Age

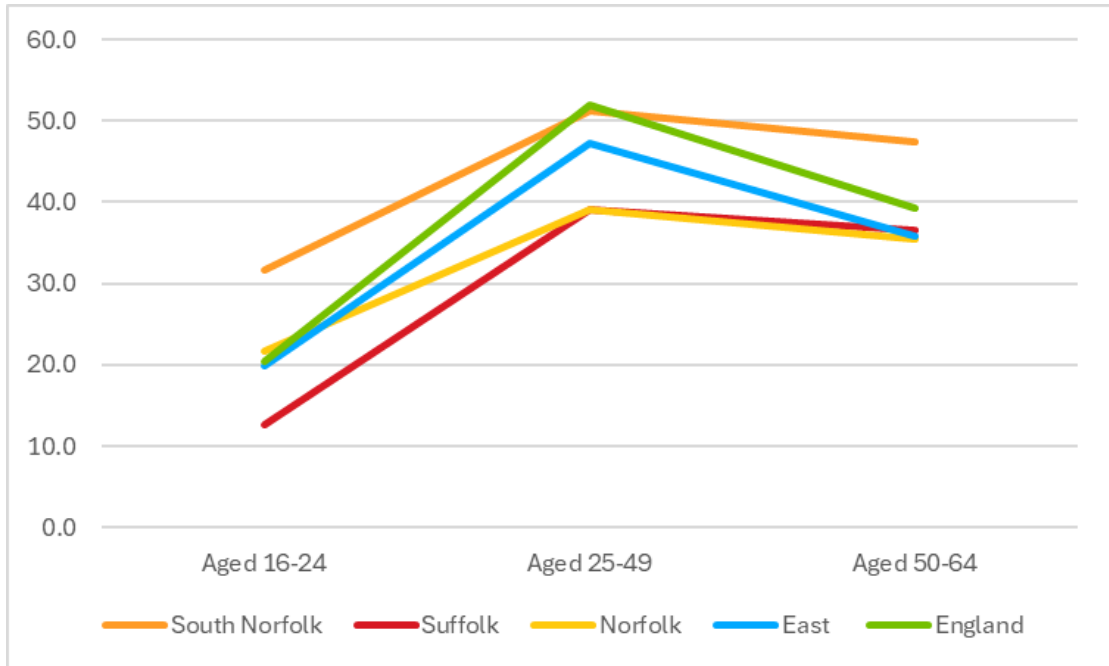
3.3.9 Illustrated in **Figures 3.1 to 3.5** are the proportion of residents by broad age group with respective qualifications (Ref 12) in the Local Area (when available), Norfolk, Suffolk, as well as the regional and national averages.

3.3.10 The most pronounced gap between geographies is observed within age group 25 to 49 years. Relative to the other age groups, those 25 to 49 tend to be more highly qualified, reflecting their position in mid-career stages where accumulated education and training is more prevalent. By contrast, individuals aged 16 to 24 are more likely to have no qualifications or to hold apprenticeships which reflects their early careers position.

3.3.11 From apprenticeship perspective, individuals aged 16 to 24 hold a greater number of apprenticeships in Suffolk; a comparatively higher number of apprenticeships than their counterparts in the other geographies. This suggests a stronger uptake in this pathway among younger residents in Suffolk; this may be a reflection on accessibility of schemes or encouragement from the schools.

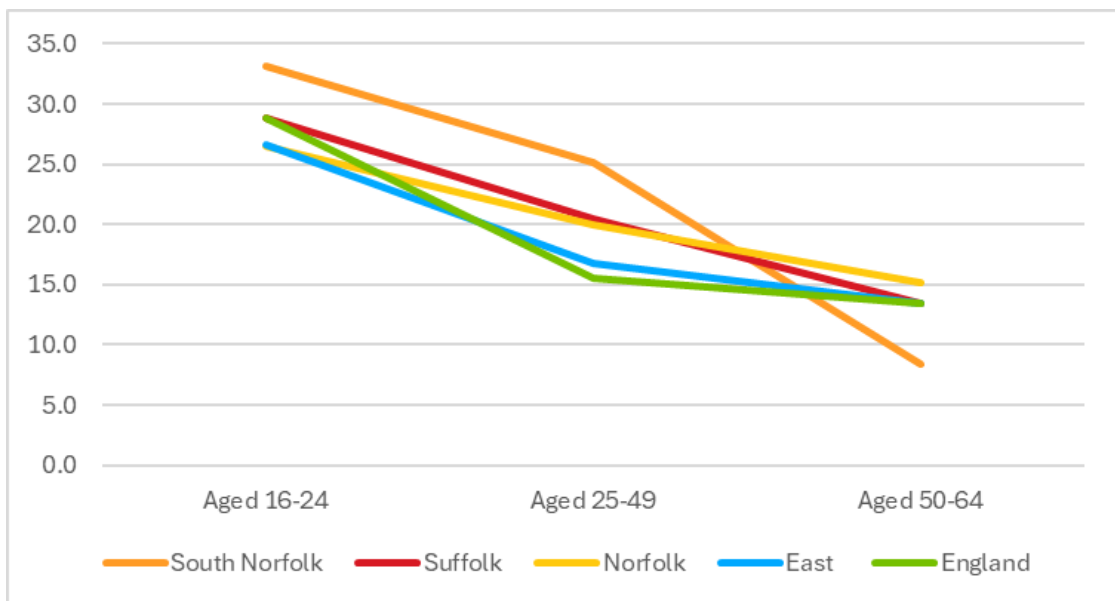
3.3.12 The 50 to 64 year old age group have the lowest proportion of individuals holding Level 3 qualifications relative to the size of the age group population. However, this age group hold a relatively similar proportion of qualifications when compared to other age groups for the other levels of education.

3.3.13 Across all age groups, South Norfolk records a higher proportion of Level 3 and Level 4 qualified individuals relative to the other geographies. This indicates a relatively stronger skills labour market profile which is a potential competitive advantage in attracting and retaining higher-skilled employment.



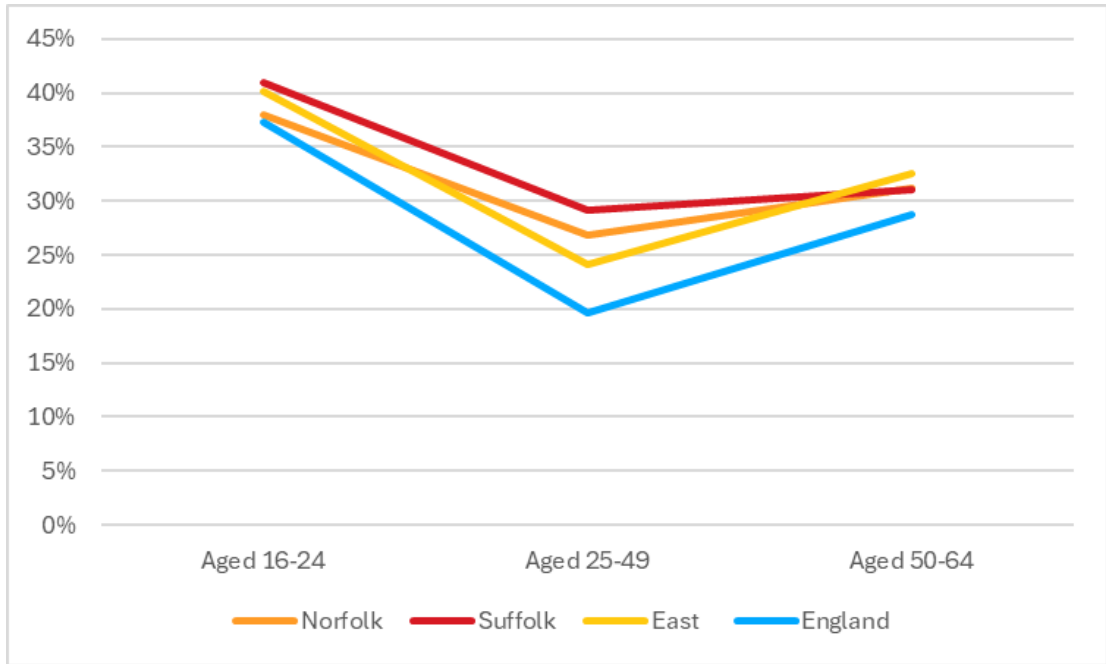
Source: Annual Population Survey

Figure 3.1: The Proportion of Residents with Level 4 Qualification in South Norfolk and Norfolk compared to Regional and National Averages (%)



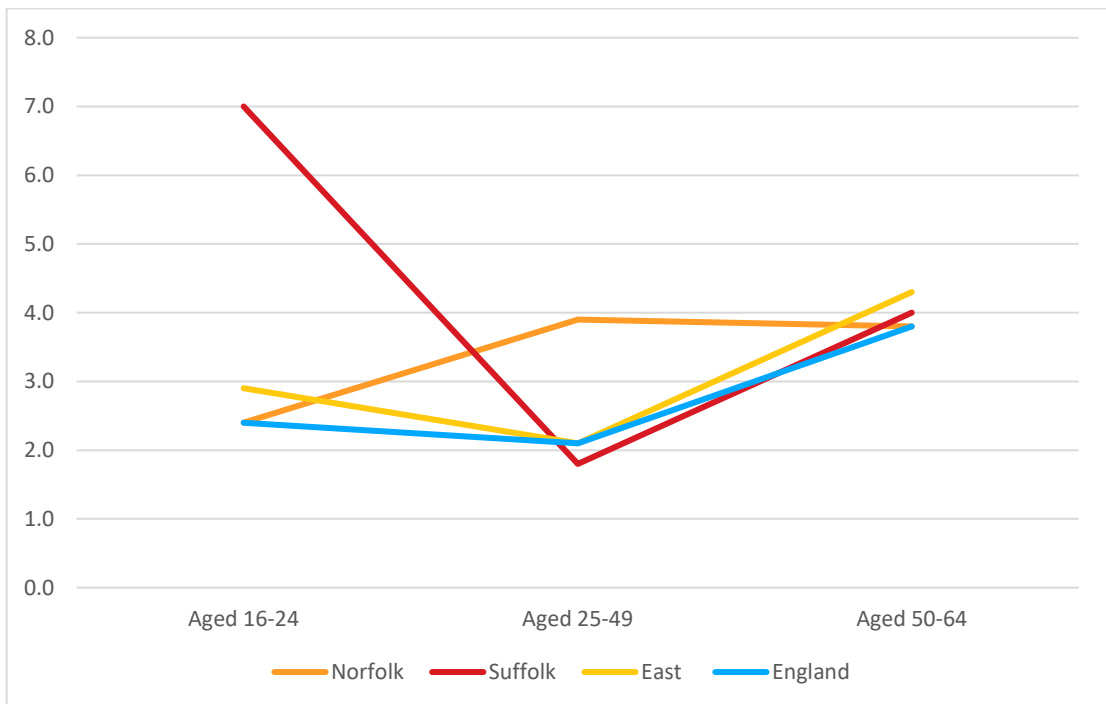
Source: Annual Population Survey

Figure 3.2: The Proportion of Residents with Level 3 Qualification in South Norfolk and Norfolk compared to Regional and National Averages (%)



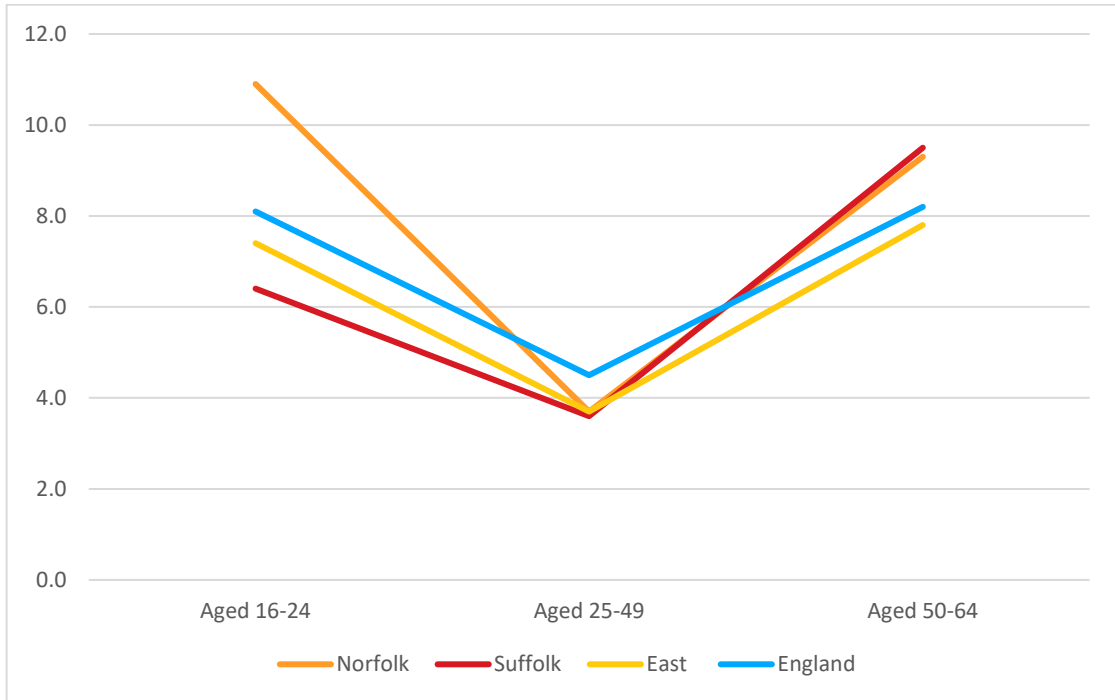
Source: Annual Population Survey

Figure 3.3: The Proportion of Residents with Level 1 and/or Level 2 Qualification in South Norfolk and Norfolk compared to Regional and National Averages (%)



Source: Annual Population Survey

Figure 3.4: The Proportion of Residents with a Trade Apprenticeship Qualification in South Norfolk and Norfolk compared to Regional and National Averages (%)

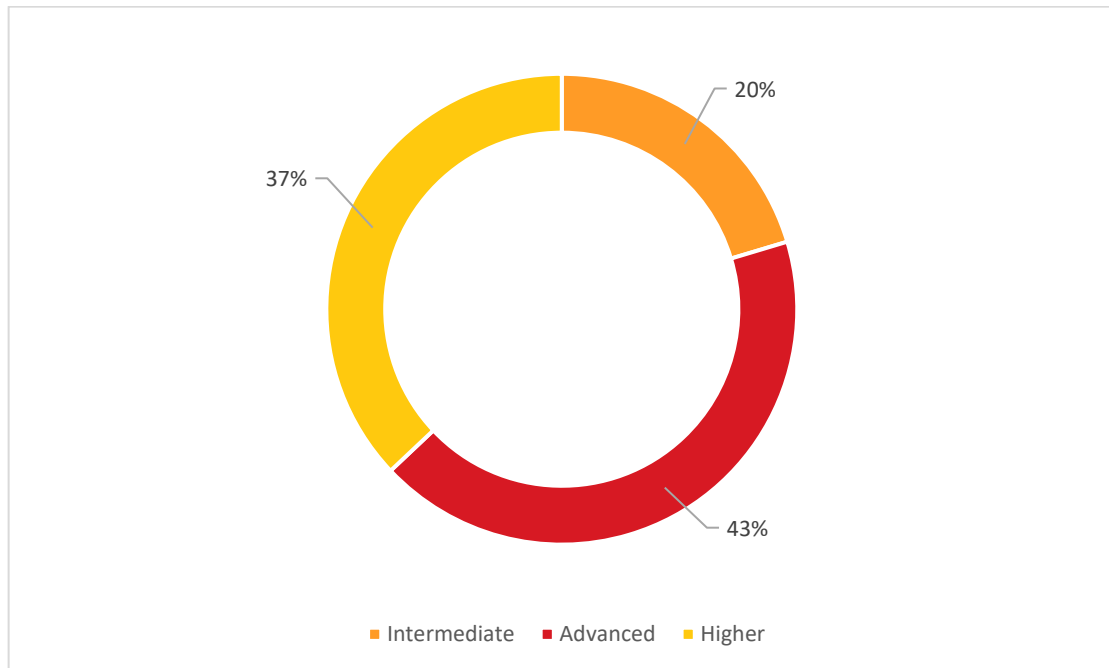


Source: Annual Population Survey

Figure 3.5: The Proportion of Residents with no Qualifications in South Norfolk and Norfolk compared to Regional and National Averages (%)

Apprenticeship Take-Up

- 3.3.14 Apprenticeships (Ref 13) in South Norfolk are generally high skilled, 86% of which are at an advanced or higher level. Both the regional and national provision are also high (81% and 84% respectively).
- 3.3.15 **Figure 3.6** illustrates the course level achieved in South Norfolk for academic year 2024/2025. This highlights that the majority of achievements are for higher level courses.



Source: Department for Education

Figure 3.6: Apprenticeships by Course Level in South Norfolk (2024/25)

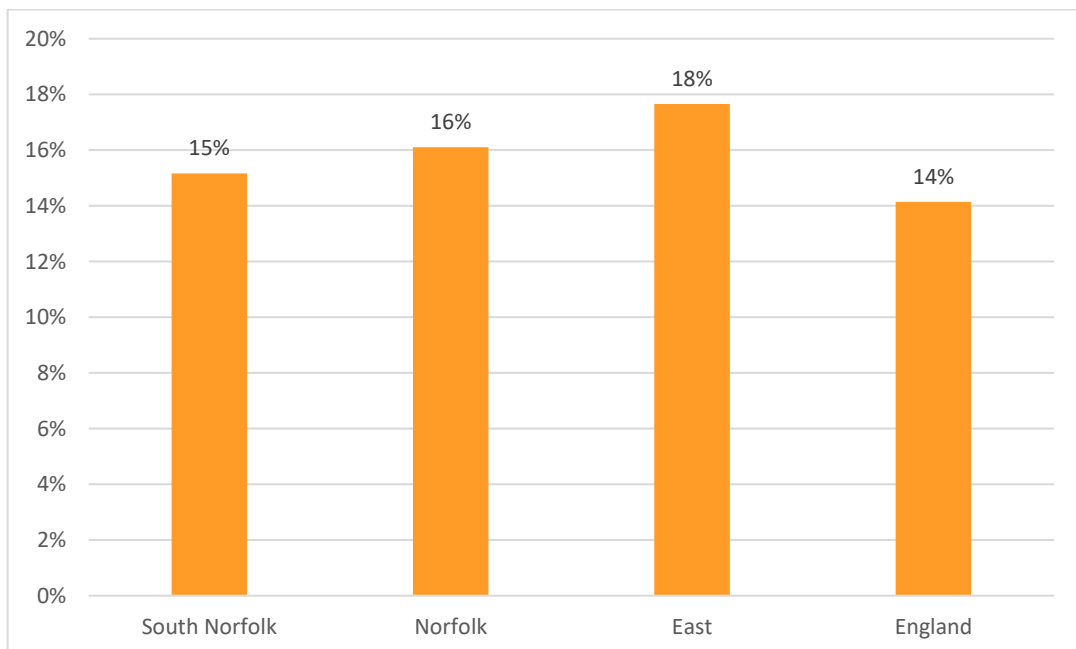
- 3.3.16 South Norfolk performs well on apprenticeship participation in general, with 910 total starts in the academic year 2024/2025. The age group most likely to enrol on these courses is 16-24 and, as such, the proportion is calculated from this population. The equivalent total starts per 1,000 residents in South Norfolk is 79 individuals per 1,000 residents aged 16-24. The equivalent for the East of England and England is lower; the participation per 1,000 residents is 59 and 56 respectively.
- 3.3.17 Additionally, apprenticeship achievement rates in South Norfolk are higher than both the regional and national averages at 59% compared with 55% and 56%, respectively. These rates may be a signal of efficient training provision, strong employer engagement in apprenticeships and better career prospects on completion of the qualification in South Norfolk.
- 3.3.18 Given South Norfolk's strong apprenticeship participation rates and the high proportion of advanced level apprenticeships across the area, it is important to ensure that sufficient capacity is maintained. In addition, the LSIP (Ref 10) highlights the need to improve accessibility to skills training which remains a challenge throughout the region.

3.4 Supply Chain Characteristics

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

- 3.4.1 The characteristics of the local supply chain in South Norfolk are detailed in this section.

- 3.4.2 South Norfolk’s business base is predominantly formed from small enterprises. Data from the UK Business Count (Ref 14) identifies that 90% of the district’s enterprises employ fewer than 10 people. This proportion is even greater within the construction sector, with 95% of enterprises operating with less than 10 people. This is both higher than the England average and is only one percentage point different since 2015, highlighting stability of smaller firm presence over time. For the transport and storage sector the narrative is consistent. These trends indicate that the local supply chain has a strong base in construction and logistics services, driven primarily by small businesses.
- 3.4.3 The nature of small enterprises makes for lower barriers to entry for new employees, offering flexible roles and typically smaller firms hire locally. This makes jobs accessible to people in the community. However, this structure may be limited to economies of scale and constraint to coordination and collaboration challenges.
- 3.4.4 **Figure 3.7** presents the share of businesses in construction. It shows that South Norfolk is comparable with the other geographical levels.
- 3.4.5 Construction and related trades represent the largest proportion of the local businesses across South Norfolk and the county, as well as at the regional and national level. Construction businesses account for 14-18% of all enterprises across the study area, with the highest share being in the East of England.



Source: UK Business Count

Figure 3.7: Share of Construction Businesses as a Proportion of Total Businesses (2025)

- 3.4.6 As a key sector within the local economy, this provides evidence of a foundation of local firms capable of supporting construction related activities such as site preparation, civil works, fencing, electrical installation and other ancillary elements of the Scheme. Benefiting from a local workforce in the construction sector means creating opportunities for residents to contribute directly to the delivery of clean energy infrastructure.

4 Economic Effects

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 An overview of the economic conditions and employment opportunities that may arise during construction, operational, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme are summarised in this section. The type of jobs, skills, equipment, and materials required for the delivery of the Scheme are also summarised. Together, this establishes the context and indicates the overall magnitude of socio-economic impact from which employment, skills and supply chain initiatives can be developed.
- 4.1.2 **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]** considers the likely significant effects of the Scheme on the local population and wider socio-economic environment across its construction, operational, and decommissioning phases. The section below draws on the assessment of economic effects detailed in that chapter.

4.2 Construction

- 4.2.1 The Scheme will create direct, indirect and induced jobs during the construction phase:
- Direct jobs are those supported by the Scheme activities within the Order Limits;
 - Indirect jobs are those supported by the Scheme's supply chain; and
 - Induced jobs are those supported by expenditure in the relevant area created by the Scheme's workers.

Direct Jobs

- 4.2.2 The construction phase of the Scheme is anticipated to commence in 2028 for a period of approximately 24 months. It is estimated that the construction phase would support an average of 278 workers per day, which is equivalent to 233 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. The estimated workforce is expected to peak at approximately 720 workers, equivalent to 604 FTE jobs. The peak month daily average will be up to 505 daily workers, equivalent to 419 FTE.
- 4.2.3 To consider the net direct impact, displacement must be considered. Displacement measures the extent to which jobs supported are offset by reductions in employment elsewhere in the study areas. The construction workforce is highly mobile, moving to where there is work or between construction projects as demand requires. The Norfolk Local Growth Plan: Norfolk Economic Strategy 2024-2029 (Ref 15) highlights challenges in the construction labour market due to a lack of core skills in the sector, particularly for green technology adaptation. Given this, a medium level of

displacement is applied, considered to be 50% in the Additionality Guide (Ref 16).

- 4.2.4 Applying a displacement rate of 50%, it is estimated that there will be approximately 360 net direct jobs created during the construction phase.

Indirect and Induced Jobs

- 4.2.5 The indirect and induced impact of the construction workers to other sectors is generated through supply chain (indirect) and worker expenditure (induced). A multiplier is used to capture this economic activity associated with additional local income and local supplier purchases. The scale of multiplier effects varies by intervention, industry and geography. The HM Treasury Green Book (Ref 17) ('Green Book') provides place-based (i.e. sub-UK) employment multiplier by employment category.
- 4.2.6 The Green Book's 'central' multiplier for the high-tech tradeable sector of 1.9 is used as the employment multiplier to calculate the indirect effect of the Scheme on the supply chain as it is the closest sector to the activities associated with the Scheme included in the Green Book.
- 4.2.7 Applying the 1.9 employment multiplier to the 360 net direct jobs supported over the construction phase, it is estimated that there will be 684 net indirect and induced jobs supported during the construction phase. The indirect and induced jobs will not be confined to the construction sector. The Scheme would support a diverse and multi-faceted supply chain across a range of industrial sectors.

Local Jobs

- 4.2.8 In total, the construction of the Scheme will support 1,044 net additional jobs (360 net direct jobs and 684 net indirect and induced jobs). There will be employment opportunities for local people. However, it is anticipated that a number of the construction jobs will be taken by people living outside South Norfolk and Norfolk, particularly specialised solar PV professionals.
- 4.2.9 A tiered approach of district, county and regional effects was reported in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]**. The indicative spatial distribution of jobs is derived through reference to data on employment in the construction of utility projects sourced from BRES. The data shows that in 2024 there were 40 people employed in this sector in South Norfolk, a further 160 people in the rest of Norfolk and a further 2,260 people in the rest of the East of England. The 40 people employed in this construction sector working in South Norfolk accounts for 6% of the gross direct number of workers supported by the construction of the Scheme (720 workers) and the 160 people from the rest of Norfolk accounts for 22% of the Scheme's gross direct workers.

4.2.10 However, because it is unlikely that all the current workers working in the sector of the construction of utility projects would be available to work on the Scheme, the proportion has been reduced by 50% (comparable to the displacement factor applied). This suggests that 3% of the construction workers of the Scheme could come from South Norfolk, 11% from the rest of Norfolk and 25% from the East of England, which reflects a leakage factor of between 50% and 70% from the regional and local level respectively. **Table 4.1** illustrates the net construction employment effect of the Scheme to each study area.

Table 4.1: Net Construction Employment Effect of the Scheme

| | Total | South Norfolk | Norfolk | East of England | England |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Gross Job Creation | 720 | 20 | 80 | 180 | 440 |
| Displacement (50%) | -360 | -10 | -40 | -90 | -220 |
| Net Direct Jobs | 360 | 10 | 40 | 90 | 220 |
| Indirect and Induced (net x 1.9) | 684 | 19 | 76 | 171 | 418 |
| Total net employment (direct and indirect) | 1,044 | 29 | 116 | 261 | 638 |

4.3 Operation and Maintenance

4.3.1 During the operational phase of the Scheme, there will be periods of maintenance requiring temporary workers. In particular, the full replacement of the Solar PV Panels is anticipated to happen once (after approximately 40 years) during the operational phase and this will take a maximum period of 24 months. The BESS could be replaced up to five times during the operational phase.

4.3.2 During this replacement period, it is estimated that an average of 129 workers would be supported, with a peak of 240 workers at any one time. Applying a displacement rate of 50%, (as applied during the construction phase) it is estimated that there will be approximately 120 net direct jobs supported during the operational phase based on the peak replacement scenario.

4.3.3 Further ad hoc maintenance and replacement of defective components may be necessary during the operational phase but these activities are anticipated to only create limited employment opportunities.

4.4 Decommissioning

4.4.1 The decommissioning phase of the Scheme is anticipated to take place over a period of 12 and 24 months at the end of the operational life of the Scheme (anticipated to be 2091). The specific method of decommissioning the Scheme is uncertain at present. However, it is assumed that the

decommissioning workforce will be similar to the construction workforce (360 net direct construction jobs at the peak). As with the construction phase, the decommissioning of the Scheme is expected to deliver positive indirect economic benefits to the economy and employment locally, driven by increased demand for goods and services arising from workforce expenditure.

4.5 Job and Skill Requirements

4.5.1 The jobs and skills that are likely to be required throughout the Scheme’s lifetime (construction, operational and decommissioning phases) are detailed in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Job and Skill Requirements of the Scheme

| Phase | Job Role | Responsibility | Skills Required |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Construction | Civil Engineering Workers | Preparation of the Solar PV Site. Work includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excavation using an appropriately sized tracked excavator The removal and storage of topsoil and levelling of the land as required Preparation and build of any access roads, internal to the Solar PV Site and for access onto and away from the Solar PV Site The digging of trenches; and Preparation for and laying foundations for the inverters, onsite substations and BESS. | Use of machinery, such as dump trucks, diggers and compactors. Use of cranes to lift the components into position. |
| | Labourers | Labour to place cabling and ducting in the trenches and to transport materials as required around the Solar PV Site. | No specific qualifications required. |
| | Building Construction | Labour to build the temporary storage sheds. Labour to build substation control and relay buildings. | Relevant construction qualifications required. |
| | Racking Structure Assembler | Manage a ramming or screw-piling machine to create the solar structure and assemble the associated structure. | Skilled workers required to control the ramming or screw-piling machines. Less skilled workers required to assemble |

| Phase | Job Role | Responsibility | Skills Required |
|-------|---|--|--|
| | | | other components of the structures. |
| | Panel Assembler | Individuals to manage the process of mounting the solar modules onto the structures. | Knowledge of electromechanics tools required. |
| | Electrical Engineering and Cabling | Connecting the panels with inverters, to onsite substations and transformers and to the network grid. | Skills for cabling and installation of equipment required. |
| | Cable Construction using trenches | Preparation of the Solar PV Site. Work includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excavation using an appropriately sized tracked excavator The removal and storage of topsoil The trench will be cleared and bottomed out Sand bedding will be installed at the bottom; and Cable installation will follow behind excavation. | Skill of using an excavator to remove layers of topsoil to produce trenches. |
| | Cable Construction using horizontal directional drilling (trenchless cabling technique) | Preparation of the Solar PV Site. Work includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch and reception pits will be excavated using a suitable excavator Work will then commence on the initial drill The bore will then be drilled to a size to accept the duct; and The pipe will then be installed. | Relevant qualifications and accreditations required to operate horizontal directional drilling that includes NVQ Directional Drilling Level 1 and 2. |
| | Security Guards | Protecting the Solar PV Site and Temporary Construction Compounds during the construction process. | Protect the security of the Scheme during construction. |
| | CCTV Workers | Setting up the security system. | Installation. |
| | Fencing Installation Workers | Installation of the perimeter. | fencing including any gates for access. |
| | Landscape Installation Workers | Installation of all landscaping such as planting. | Installation of the landscaping works area. |

| Phase | Job Role | Responsibility | Skills Required |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| | Delivery drivers | Drivers to deliver equipment and supplies to the Solar PV Site. | Appropriate driving license required. |
| Operational | Electrical Engineers | To monitor and trouble-shoot any problems. | Low Voltage (LV), Medium Voltage (MV), and High Voltage (HV) electrical specialists required. |
| | Performance Managers | To monitor and trouble-shoot any problems via software remotely from the office. | Skills and qualifications in software engineering. |
| | CCTV and Security | To monitor security of the Solar PV Site and Temporary Construction Compounds. | Protect the security of the Scheme. |
| | Landscape Monitoring and Managers | To deliver watering strategy and monitor and maintain the landscape/ecology areas within the Scheme. | Knowledge and skills in ecology and landscaping. |
| Decommissioning | Civil Engineering Workers | Work includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation and build of any access roads, internal to the Solar PV Site and for access onto and away from the Solar PV Site The digging of trenches Removal of foundations for the solar stations, onsite substations and BESS; and Earthworks required for site restoration works. | Use of machinery, such as dump trucks, diggers and compactors. |
| | Labourers | Labour to remove cabling and ducting in the trenches and to transport materials as required from the Solar PV Site. | No specific qualifications required. |
| | Building Construction | Labour to build the temporary storage sheds. Labour to demolish substation control and relay buildings. | Relevant construction qualifications required. |
| | Racking Structure Contractor | Manage a pile extraction or screw-piling machine to remove the solar structure. | Skilled workers required to control the pile extraction or screw-piling machines. Less skilled workers required to disassemble other components of the structures. |

| Phase | Job Role | Responsibility | Skills Required |
|-------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| | Panel Contractor | Individuals to manage the process of decommissioning and removing the solar modules from the structures. | Knowledge of electromechanics tools required. |
| | Electrical Engineering and Cabling | Decommissioning of electrical infrastructure including cabling, inverters, onsite substations and transformers. | Skills for cabling and removal of equipment required. |
| | Cable Construction using trenches | Work includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excavation using an appropriately sized tracked excavator The removal and storage of topsoil Cabling and cable ducting and sheathing to be cleared out; and Backfilling of decommissioned trenches. | Skill of using an excavator to remove layers of topsoil to produce trenches and restore land. |
| | Security Guards | Protecting the Solar PV Site and decommissioning compounds during the decommissioning process. | Protect the security of the Solar PV Site and decommissioning compounds during decommissioning. |
| | CCTV Workers | Decommissioning the security system. | Removal of CCTV system and equipment. |
| | Fencing Installation Workers | Installation of any temporary perimeter fencing including any gates for access at worker compounds. Removal of all other fencing and enclosure structures. | Installation of fencing. |
| | Waste and Contamination Specialist | Sorting of decommissioned materials for reuse, recycling, or disposal. Containment and restoration of any potential contaminants released during decommissioning activities. | Understanding of reuse and recycling capabilities of decommissioned infrastructure. Training for contaminant containment and restoration measures. |
| | Delivery drivers | Drivers to deliver equipment and supplies to the Solar PV Site. Drivers to remove decommissioned infrastructure. | Appropriate driving license required. |

4.6 Supply Chain and Procurement Opportunities

- 4.6.1 The Scheme will support a variety of supply chain opportunities for local businesses. It is anticipated that local suppliers will be utilised when acquiring certain materials and components. This will create partnerships between different stakeholders locally and in turn stimulate economic activity.
- 4.6.2 The procurement of all key equipment, whether undertaken by the Applicant or its contractors, will be conducted in accordance with standard competitive bidding practices. Final award decisions will be informed by technical compliance, price, and other key onboarding criteria. The key equipment required for the Scheme is outlined in **Table 4.3**.

Table 4.3: Equipment Requirements of the Scheme

| Solar PV Site | BESS | Substations |
|---|---|--|
| Inverters, transformers and switchgear to be incorporated in a conversion unit or to be standalone equipment. | Inverters, transformers and switchgear to be incorporated in a conversion unit or to be standalone equipment. | Transformers and switchgear |
| DC combiner boxes | Electrical cables (LV, MV) | Electrical cables (MV, HV) |
| Electrical cables (LV, MV) | Battery storage enclosures including battery modules | CCTV |
| PV Modules and mounting structure | CCTV | Perimeter and palisade fence |
| CCTV | Perimeter and palisade fence | Fibre chambers |
| Perimeter fence | | Welfare facilities and control building or container |

5 Economic Legislation, Policy and Industry Practice

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Outlined below are relevant local and national planning policies and frameworks, including economic development strategies, of the host authorities.
- 5.1.2 These applicable documents to this Outline ESSCS have been reviewed and a summary of the key policies and industry commitments aligned with the Scheme are provided.

5.2 Legislation

Equality Act 2010

- 5.2.1 The Equality Act (Ref 18) provides legal protection against discrimination in the workplace and wider society.
- 5.2.2 This Equality Act consolidates and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws via a single Act. Section 149 introduces the Public Sector Equality Duty, whereby there is a requirement for public authorities to have due regard to equitable consideration when exercising their function. These duties include eliminating discrimination as well as advancing equality of opportunity between persons with a protected characteristic and persons without. The Act defines nine protected characteristics: age, disability and/or long-term health problems (including those with mental health problems), sex, gender and gender reassignment / identities, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity / paternity, race, religion or philosophical belief; and sexual orientation.

Planning Act 2008

- 5.2.3 The Planning Act 2008 (Ref 19) establishes the development consent process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). The Planning Act provides the legal framework for the preparation, submission, and examination of applications for DCO. In determining such applications, the Secretary of State acts as the decision maker and is required to consider relevant National Policy Statements and additional relevant material in determining applications.

5.3 National Policy and Guidance

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy EN-1 (2025)

- 5.3.1 Section 3.3 of National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 (Ref 20) highlights the need to ensure a secure, reliable, and affordable supply of energy to support the UK's businesses, household and consumers. It recognises that energy infrastructure is critical to economic growth, productivity, and the transition to net zero.
- 5.3.2 Section 5.13 of NPS EN-1 outlines the principles for assessing socio-economic impacts, stating that the assessment should consider direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on employment, skills, tourism and local services. It also notes that decision-makers should give appropriate weight to the socio-economic benefits of proposed energy infrastructure, including job creation and wider economic opportunities.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure EN-3 (2025)

- 5.3.3 As expressed in paragraph 2.10.61 of NPS EN-3 (Ref 21), applicants should set out where there may be socio-economic benefits in retaining infrastructure after the operational life.
- 5.3.4 Paragraph 2.6.2 of NPS EN-3 states that where flexibility is sought in the consent, the likely worst-case social and economic effects of the Scheme should be assessed.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 5.3.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref 22) sets out national planning policies that reflect priorities of the Government for operation of the planning system and the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the development and use of land. The NPPF has a strong emphasis on sustainable development, with a presumption in favour of such development. The NPPF has the potential to be considered important and relevant to the SoS decision making. Provided below are details of the elements of the NPPF that are relevant to this Outline ESSCS:
- NPPF - Chapter 6 focuses on building a strong and competitive economy, stating that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach should allow for each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future; and

- NPPF - Chapter 8 focusses on promoting healthy and safe communities, highlighting the role of the planning system in creating places that promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and support healthy lifestyles. It encourages developments that contribute to community cohesion and well-being, including opportunities for employment, and the provision of social infrastructure.

Skills England: Sector Evidence on the Growth and Skills Offer (2025)

5.3.6 This document (Ref 23) provides a comprehensive analysis of skill requirement across ten priority sectors including for clean energy, construction, digital & technologies, and advanced manufacturing. The following points are highlighted:

- There is a need for more adaptable and responsive apprenticeship standards to keep pace with rapid technological change;
- Greater flexibility in delivery (including shorter duration apprenticeships and recognition of prior learning); and
- The importance of transferable and cross-cutting skills (communication, digital literacy, leadership) to underpin sector-specific technical competencies.

5.3.7 Emphasised also are issues relating to inclusion, gender, socioeconomic indicators. There is a particular underrepresentation in many priority sector, signalling for more work on outreach, greater employer engagement with young people, and improved careers advice.

Skills England: Sector Skills Needs Assessments: Clean Energy Industries (2025)

5.3.8 The clean energy sector is the focus of this document (Ref 24). Both priority jobs and skills, in addition to identification of gaps restricting the sector's growth are outlined in the assessment.

5.3.9 The key findings indicate strong projected employment growth in clean energy sectors. These include jobs in renewables, hydrogen, carbon capture, usage and storage, industrial decarbonisation. These roles are expected to require a mix of STEM skills, managerial capabilities, and skilled trades (electrical, welding, mechanical) spanning multiple qualification levels.

5.3.10 There are also some challenges mentioned within the report, collectively highlighting constraints on workforce development as there are disparities in opportunity and access to education and industry. These include:

- A shortage of educational providers and appropriate infrastructure facilities;
- Misalignment between current supply of further education achievement and employer requirements (technical, transferrable skills, industry specific knowledge);
- Structural barriers to entry limiting younger people; and
- Inequalities in representation by gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background, evident among entrants and throughout training pathways.

5.4 Local Policy and Guidance

Greater Norwich Local Plan (2024)

- 5.4.1 Both Broadland District and South Norfolk Councils have worked with Norwich City Council and NCC to prepare the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) (Ref 25). The GNLP plans for the housing and job needs of the area to 2038 and builds on the long-established joint working arrangement for Greater Norwich. It includes strategic policies to guide future development and plans to protect the environment. It looks to ensure that delivery of development is done in a way which promotes sustainability and the effective functioning of the whole area.
- 5.4.2 The GNLP aims to stimulate the economy and create a strong, enterprising, and productive economy built on Greater Norwich's strengths in knowledge-intensive sectors. It prioritises clean growth and innovation in areas such as digital creative industries, health and life sciences, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. Strategic employment sites around Norwich will deliver most of the new jobs, supported by improved transport links and infrastructure.
- 5.4.3 A key goal is to generate significant employment growth, particularly in high-value sectors, while ensuring accessible jobs across urban and rural areas. The GNLP also focuses on developing a highly skilled workforce through strong partnerships with local universities and colleges, fostering research expertise and innovation. Investment in new technologies, broadband, and mobile infrastructure will enable flexible working, support small businesses, and improve connectivity.
- 5.4.4 Overall, the GNLP seeks to drive sustainable economic growth, attract investment, and position Greater Norwich as a national and international leader in tackling global challenges related to energy, environment, life sciences, and climate change, contributing to the transition to a post-carbon economy.

Norfolk NSIP Employment and Skills Framework (2025)

- 5.4.5 An Employment and Skills Framework (Ref 1) has been developed by NCC. It is presented in spreadsheet form, specifically for NSIPs. This Framework, as part of the statutory consultation process, was provided to the Applicant and offers a consistent mechanism for securing socio-economic benefits from large infrastructure schemes by setting out clear commitments, example activities, and KPIs/metrics against which delivery can be monitored.
- 5.4.6 A full skills pathway is covered within the document, from school outreach and STEM engagement, as well as pre-19 work experience and apprenticeships, and including post-19 internships, graduate opportunities, and upskilling within the supply chain. There is also an emphasis on supporting disadvantaged cohorts, alignment with green skills priorities, and collaborative action on regional skills gaps. A requirement for an Annual Skills Report ensures transparency, accountability and continuous monitoring of progress.
- 5.4.7 This Framework provides the foundation for the approach set out in both this Outline ESSCS and the detailed ESSCS. By aligning with Norfolk's strategic priorities and adopting a structured framework of commitments, activities and KPIs, the Applicant ensures that employment and skills interventions are locally responsive, measurable, and capable of delivering long-term benefits.

Better Together for Norfolk. Norfolk County Council Strategy (2021-2025)

- 5.4.8 This document (Ref 26) outlines the strategic objectives being prioritised for the 2021–2025 period. These objectives include creating a vibrant and sustainable economy, providing better opportunities for children and young people, fostering healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives, building strong, engaged, and inclusive communities, and promoting a greener, more resilient future. The NCC's vision is for the County to be a place where everyone can start life well, live well and age well, ensuring that no one is left behind. The aim is to cultivate a vibrant, entrepreneurial, and sustainable economy, supported by the right jobs, skills, training and infrastructure. Additionally, communities should feel safe, healthy, empowered, and connected, with their unique characteristics respected and preserved.

Local Growth Plan: Norfolk Economic Strategy 2024-2029 (2025)

- 5.4.9 This strategy acts as NCC's Local Growth Plan, identifying local priorities to improve productivity, drive growth and improved standards of living and the key role that Norfolk can play in the Government's new Modern Industrial

Strategy which identifies clean energy as one of the eight growth-driving sectors identified and prioritised by the government. The strategy identifies Norfolk's strengths in clean energy production that will support the UK's transition to Net Zero through renewable energy, whilst including Norfolk's communities and businesses in the journey. The strategy seeks to ensure that local people benefit from jobs and new skills created by nationally significant infrastructure projects to maintain a lasting legacy for the local economy.

South Norfolk Council's Strategic Plan

- 5.4.10 The vision and priorities of the Plan (Ref 27) is to build a future where the community thrives, individuals are inspired, and the quality of life is continuously enhanced. The Plan prioritises:
- Enhancing the environment; build a cleaner and more sustainable future;
 - Growing a prosperous economy; creating opportunities for residents;
 - Enriching the Community; build strong communities; and
 - Moving with the times; deliver services that are innovative, efficient, and easy to use.
- 5.4.11 The Plan's overarching objective is to give businesses across South Norfolk the confidence to invest and grow, creating opportunities for residents and improving quality of life in an outstanding environment. It envisions a dynamic local economy that attracts investment, fosters innovation, and generates jobs, supporting businesses from startups to established enterprises for long-term prosperity.

Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills and Improvement Plan

- 5.4.12 The LSIP (Ref 10) is an employer focused initiative at the centre of the skills system, ensuring that further education, higher education, and independent training provision better reflects current and future labour market needs across Norfolk and Suffolk.
- 5.4.13 The LSIP aims to:
- Improve the alignment between skills supply and employer demand;
 - Strengthen training provision through employer engagement;
 - Address barriers to progression for young people; and
 - Support economic growth, productivity and inclusive access to employment opportunities across the region.

5.4.14 Specifically, the LSIP identifies net zero and clean energy as one of the region's core priority areas for skills development to reflect the scale of existing energy projects and future nationally significant projects in the area. This sector is positioned as one of the fastest growing.

5.4.15 The LSIP also aims to:

- Employer-led training development with the collaboration between local authorities, green industries and training providers;
- Promoting flexible and innovative training models, such as hybrid, short-course and part-time provision; and
- Improving awareness and accessibility of training for installers to reduce barriers to participation.

5.5 Conclusion

5.5.1 National and local planning policy frameworks support the transition to renewable and low-carbon energy generation, recognising the environmental, economic and social benefits these developments can deliver. In parallel with this, there is a focus for promoting clean energy with policies emphasised on the need to maximise local economic benefits, including through investment in training, apprenticeships and skills development. This approach enables local residents to access higher-skilled and better-paid employment within the green economy, ensuring that the move towards sustainable energy generation also reinforces local labour markets and enhances long-term community resilience.

6 Opportunities for Economic Improvement

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Outlined in this section are the opportunities for economic improvement relating to skills, supply chain involvement and employment, which the Applicant will progress to the detailed ESSCS. These measures respond to identified challenges and opportunities within the local labour market and reflect the anticipated effects of the Scheme.
- 6.1.2 The approach has been developed in accordance with Norfolk's NSIP Employment and Skills Framework (Ref 1). A focused section for Skills (Section 6.2), Employment (Section 6.3), Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (Section 6.4) and Supply Chain (Section 6.5), has been structured to reflect and align to relevant commitments within the Framework. Cross references are made within each subsection to demonstrate this alignment.
- 6.1.3 The detailed ESSCS will substantially be in accordance with this Outline ESSCS and will be submitted to and approval by SNC in consultation with NCC.

6.2 Skills

- 6.2.1 For the Scheme to be delivered successfully, a range of skills and disciplines are needed, as outlined in **Table 4.2**. Education and training initiatives aimed at providing essential skills can support the local workforce while increasing the availability of appropriately qualified workers needed to deliver the project.
- 6.2.2 The approach developed by the Applicant in relation to skills development aligns with NCC's NSIP Employment and Skills Framework, particularly the commitments on Supporting Primary and Secondary School/College STEM work, Pre-19 Work Experience and T Levels, Supporting Apprenticeships, Upskilling and the Supply Chain, and Post-19 Inspiration and Support.

Apprenticeships

- 6.2.3 Apprenticeships will be utilised in addressing both address skill shortages and to provide local residents with pathways into meaningful employment. South Norfolk shows strong apprenticeship performance, while the East of England has relatively underperformed in this area. The Scheme therefore represents an opportunity to build on existing apprenticeship strength while helping address local gaps.

- 6.2.4 The Applicant will seek opportunities to collaborate with local further and higher education providers, as well as alongside established initiatives such as Apprenticeships Norfolk, College of West Anglia, City College Norwich, East Coast College and UEA to support the program and delivery of apprenticeships.
- 6.2.5 Apprenticeship opportunities will be promoted throughout the construction and operational phases and will be aligned with the Scheme's skills requirements such as electrical installation, mechanical works, land management roles.

Workforce Training

- 6.2.6 Consideration of other partnerships will be explored by the Applicant in order to support the training of employees and workers on the Scheme.
- 6.2.7 Where feasible, the Applicant will seek to promote the development of transferable skillsets to aid workers affected by the Scheme to transition to adjacent or related careers. This may include supporting agricultural workers transition to land management and maintenance roles associated with the Scheme.
- 6.2.8 The intended initiative would be to support the achievement of vocational qualifications (e.g. BTEC, City and Guilds, NVQ, HNC, T-Levels) at various levels which are relevant to the delivery of the Scheme. With the aim of filling skill gaps required for the Scheme's delivery, attendance of relevant courses will be encouraged. Alternative career training to those directly or indirectly displaced by the Scheme (such as in the agriculture and tourism industry) is also intended.
- 6.2.9 The Applicant will explore collaboration with Further Education (FE) colleges (e.g. City College Norwich and East Coast College - Yarmouth) to expand capacity in the sustainability sector skills, including potential short courses in solar installation and renewable energy construction. This would support skills development, improve career progression and employment opportunities, and in turn contribute to higher incomes and an improved standard of living.

STEM Education and Career Advice

- 6.2.10 The Scheme will contribute to raising awareness and aspirations among young people, helping to the barriers identified in the local area where youth disengagement and under achievement are higher than average.
- 6.2.11 The Applicant will explore opportunities to work with schools, colleges and local authorities to deliver targeted outreach activities focused on renewable energy and STEM careers. This may include school talks, curriculum-linked workshops, and participation in established initiatives such as the local schools and Norfolk & Suffolk Careers Hub. These activities will support the

development of future skills pipelines by encouraging educational pathways leading to STEM-based careers relevant to the delivery of large-scale infrastructure projects.

- 6.2.12 The primary objective of these activities will be to inform, educate and inspire young people about STEM careers more broadly. However, given the Scheme's delivery timetable, some participants may also acquire the technical and professional skills necessary to progress into roles associated with the Scheme.
- 6.2.13 Site visits during both the construction phase and the operational lifetime of the Scheme may provide effective opportunities to engage and inspire students. The Applicant will therefore consider how best to provide an appropriate space or meeting point within the Scheme to facilitate the delivery of STEM-focused initiatives for local schools and groups. This space could be used to support learning about renewable energy and the solar farm, helping to establish the Scheme as an educational resource for the local area.
- 6.2.14 In addition, the Applicant will explore opportunities to provide structured work experience placements during the construction and operational phases of the Scheme. These placements would give local students and young people direct exposure to the renewable energy sector, supporting the transition from education into employment. Where possible, the Applicant will work with local schools, colleges and training providers to integrate these opportunities into existing careers programmes, ensuring they are accessible, inclusive and aligned with the wider objectives of Norfolk's NSIP Employment and Skills Framework.

6.3 Employment

- 6.3.1 The expected employment benefits of the Scheme are set out in Section 4. This section considers how these benefits can be maximised for local residents, including individuals from disadvantaged or under-represented groups.
- 6.3.2 The Applicant's employment proposals align with the Norfolk NSIP Employment and Skills Framework, particularly its commitment to Employment and Employability Support, by promoting local recruitment and targeted opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

Local Recruitment

- 6.3.3 The Applicant will work with established local networks to support recruitment for the Scheme, beginning with South Norfolk. This will include engaging with Norfolk Employment Service, Work in Norwich, Working Well Norfolk / Connect to Work and SNC's Help Hub Employability Team, and other relevant local initiatives. If suitable candidates cannot be sourced locally, the focus will then extend to Suffolk. Only if further capacity is

required would the Applicant look more widely across neighbouring authorities to access additional recruitment networks.

- 6.3.4 The Applicant will also seek to utilise local recruitment agencies and promote employment opportunities for the Scheme through targeted advertising, including on skills boards, in local newspapers and via local shops and services. Particular emphasis will be placed on roles that align with the existing local skills base, especially in technical and trade occupations such as general labour, mechanical installation, and landscaping.
- 6.3.5 In addition, the Applicant will explore opportunities to support agricultural workers in transitioning to more diversified agricultural practices, for example sheep rearing and grazing which can co-exist and operate with the Scheme.

6.4 Workforce Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

- 6.4.1 The Applicant's approach to diversity, equality and inclusion aligns with the Norfolk NSIP Employment and Skills Framework, particularly its focus within Employment and Employability Support on widening participation and supporting under-represented groups.
- 6.4.2 The Applicant will implement initiatives to promote equality and inclusion across recruitment and workplace practices, with the aim of achieving a diverse and inclusive workforce. Target groups for these initiatives would include:
- Workers under-represented by gender, ethnicity, or age (for example women in construction and engineering roles, under-represented ethnic groups, younger people aged 16 to 24, or older workers); and
 - Disadvantaged or under-represented groups, such as long-term unemployed individuals, ex-offenders and disabled people.
- 6.4.3 Particular target groups will be identified drawing on the expertise of specialist local job brokerage agencies.
- 6.4.4 Periodic reporting on the demographic profile of the workforce and the experiential quality of the workplace for workers could be recorded and documented using a voluntary survey. These surveys could collect data relating to age, ethnicity, gender and disability, enabling the Applicant to assess whether recruitment and employment practices remain fair, equitable, and inclusive.

6.5 Supply Chain

- 6.5.1 Measures to maximise benefits to local businesses will be optimised by the Applicant, from spending on goods and services during each phase of the Scheme.

- 6.5.2 The Applicant's approach to supply chain engagement reflects Norfolk's NSIP Employment and Skills Framework commitments on Supporting Apprenticeships, Upskilling and the Supply Chain, Regional Skills System Support: Information and Engagement and Regional Skills System Support: Resource.

Networking

- 6.5.3 The Applicant will identify and collaborate with local partners within South Norfolk and beyond to inform small businesses about contract and purchasing opportunities resulting from the Scheme. It is the intention of the Applicant to communicate with members and individuals interested in the energy sector in the region. This will be facilitated through engagement with Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and East of England Energy Group (EEEGR).
- 6.5.4 In order to boost the local presence within the Scheme and make use of the local supply chains, the Applicant will reach out to potential suppliers and organise 'meet the buyer' events.

Procurement

- 6.5.5 The procurement approach for the Scheme will have regard to the objective of maximising benefits to local businesses, while maintaining a competitive process to ensure effective and efficient delivery of the Scheme.
- 6.5.6 The Applicant will seek to engage with potential contractors at the early stages of the Scheme. Contracting opportunities will be actively promoted to maximise local visibility, including (but not limited to) via social media, local press and relevant industry publications.
- 6.5.7 In addition, the Applicant will work with local partners to help identify and engage local businesses interested in participating in the Scheme's supply chain.

International Supplies

- 6.5.8 Any international procurement associated with the Scheme will comply with all relevant national and international legislation. Appropriate policy and safety requirements will be applied throughout the transportation of goods, with risk assessments prepared where required and followed by all parties within the supply chain.
- 6.5.9 All international suppliers will be required to meet minimum standards in relation to environmental performance, professional conduct and ethical working practices. This will include, but not be limited by, adherence to principles agreed by the members of Solar Energy UK, including the exclusion of suppliers or manufacturers associated with slavery or forced labour.

Employment and Skills

- 6.5.10 The importance of the interrelation between the supply chain strategy and the employment and skills strategy is recognised by the Applicant. Where feasible and appropriate, supply chain strategy and procurement processes will be utilised by the Applicant as means of securing and implementing employment and skills initiatives. These may include embedding apprenticeship targets or training expectations within contractual arrangements with primary contractors, or through scoring received tenders with respect to their commitment to implementing employment and skills indicatives. Further detail on these measures will be set out in the detailed ESSCS.
- 6.5.11 The Applicant will seek opportunities to work with other projects in the area to ensure that employment, skills and supply chain initiatives are aligned and coordinated where possible. This includes collaboration with The Drovers Solar project, which is at a more advanced stage and also being brought forward by a separate IGP subsidiary. The Applicant will also seek to explore opportunities for coordination with other current and emerging solar farm projects, where appropriate. This coordinated approach will help to maximise local benefits and ensure a consistent framework for engagement with local education providers, training bodies and businesses.

7 Plan Delivery

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 The delivery of the ESSCS including its potential roles, responsibilities and timelines is described in this section.

7.2 Organisational Framework

7.2.1 The anticipated organisational framework for developing and delivering the detailed ESSCS work programme, post DCO consent, will include the following:

- The detailed ESSCS will be led by a dedicated Lead Project Manager responsible for driving the programme of works, under the oversight of a project committee. This committee is expected to include representatives from the Applicant, the Operator (where different), and the appointed EPC contractor responsible for delivering the Scheme;
- The work programme will be structured around a series of targeted areas for economic improvement, aligned with the opportunities identified in Section 6. Each strategic intervention, including measures such as increasing apprenticeship provision or improving awareness and uptake of STEM subject will be assigned a named lead and supported by one or more internal or external partners. These partners will contribute to delivery by providing locally informed knowledge, experience and capacity critical to successful implementation. Where relevant, additional resources such as professional services, capital funding, or access to physical facilities may also be required; and
- Where actions are successfully delivered, the outputs and outcomes defined in the detailed ESSCS will be achieved. Monitoring and reporting will be undertaken to track progress against these objectives and lessons learned will be used to inform the development of future ESSCS work programmes.

7.3 Engagement with External Stakeholders

7.3.1 The effectiveness of the detailed ESSCS will rely on ongoing collaboration with external stakeholders. To date, the Applicant has engaged with a range of local partners through the statutory consultation process. This engagement has informed an understanding of key challenges in the local labour market and has helped identify opportunities to maximise socio-economic benefits.

7.3.2 The Applicant intends to continue and broaden engagement with a long list of stakeholders, building on the above foundation. These include:

- NCC Skills and Employment Team;
- College of West Anglia;
- City College Norwich;
- East Coast College;
- University of East Anglia;
- Boost Programmes;
- NCC Careers Hub; and
- Apprenticeships Norfolk.

7.3.3 These organisations offer established networks, delivery capability and direct links to learners and jobseekers. Engagement with these partners will help ensure that the detailed ESSCS is aligned with local priorities, coordinated with existing initiatives and effective in delivering long-term socio-economic benefits.

7.3.4 There may also be opportunities to engage with local residents and community groups on matters relating to employment, skills and the supply chain, with the aim to build on the consultation undertaken during the preparation of the DCO Application.

7.4 Delivery Timelines

7.4.1 **Table 7.1** sets out a timeline for developing and delivering the detailed ESSCS.

Table 7.1: Timescales for Developing and Delivering the Detailed ESSCS

| Key Milestone | Actions |
|--|--|
| 2026/2027 – post DCO Application submission | Continued engagement with local stakeholders. |
| 2027 – Anticipated date for decision, assuming consent is granted | Develop the detailed ESSCS into the final document substantially in accordance with the Outline ESSCS, confirming the objectives and activities to be followed. Seek approval of the detailed ESSCS from SNC in consultation with NCC in accordance with the draft DCO [APP/3.1] for the Scheme. Send out invitations for contractors to tender for work (if relevant). Engage with local businesses and market opportunities to them. |
| 2028 – earliest start point for construction | Develop strategies with contractors to deliver and monitor detailed ESSCS requirements in contracts. |

| Key Milestone | Actions |
|---------------|---|
| | <p>Detailed ESSCS activities and outputs to be delivered during the construction and operational phases.</p> <p>Activities and outputs to be monitored and reported on consistently to determine their successful completion.</p> <p>Any amendments or additional programs to be added to the detailed ESSCS must be agreed with the relevant planning authorities.</p> |

8 Monitoring and Feedback

8.1 Monitoring

- 8.1.1 Effective monitoring, measurement and reporting of the detailed ESSCS objectives and are essential to assess the effectiveness of the strategy and determine whether it is achieving its intended outcomes.
- 8.1.2 In accordance with NCC's NSIP Employment and Skills Framework (Ref 1), implementation of the detailed ESSCS will be monitored and reported on an annual basis through the preparation of an Annual Skills Report. This report will summarise activities undertaken, present evidence of outputs and outcomes, and assess progress against agreed KPIs. It will also identify lessons learned and opportunities for continuous improvement. The report will be provided to SNC and NCC to ensure transparency and accountability.
- 8.1.3 A monitoring and reporting plan will be developed as part of the detailed ESSCS and submitted to SNC, as the relevant discharging authority, for approval in consultation with NCC.
- 8.1.4 Monitoring of the objectives and actions within the detailed ESSCS will be undertaken in accordance with the following principles:
- Consider how best to practically collect data, prior to defining measurable targets;
 - Developing Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely performance indicators;
 - Ensuring mechanisms that are used to monitor the performance of the objectives are relevant to the stated objectives in the detailed ESSCS;
 - Ensuring performance indicators are flexible to account for changing circumstances;
 - Consideration of the most practical and proportionate methods for data collection prior to setting measurable targets;
 - Development of Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely performance indicators;
 - Utilisation of monitoring mechanisms that are clearly aligned with the stated objectives of the detailed ESSCS; and
 - An application of flexible performance indicators capable of responding to changing circumstances over time.

8.2 Measurable Outputs and Outcomes

- 8.2.1 **Table 8.1** below sets out some potential measurable outputs and outcomes of the detailed ESSCS.
- 8.2.2 Outputs are the tangible results of pursuing the specific opportunities of the Scheme.
- 8.2.3 Outcomes are also the longer-term results of implementing the detailed ESSCS.
- 8.2.4 These outcomes should be measured and recorded periodically throughout the Scheme's lifetime. This information may be collected internally or externally using a combination of methods, which may include quantitative indicators (through primary data collected by the Applicant) as well as qualitative feedback gathered through survey-style questions, which may include:
- What objectives or goals have been achieved?
 - Have the specific outcomes been realised?
 - What would have happened normally?
 - Was it value for money?
 - Should anything have been done differently?
 - What lessons can be taken into other projects?

Table 8.1: Summary of Jobs and Skills Requirements

| Opportunity Area | Opportunity | Potential Outputs | Potential Outcomes |
|------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| Skills | Apprenticeships | Number of apprenticeships funded / taken up. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in proportion of population with no qualifications. ▪ Increase in energy sector based training. ▪ Increase in skilled young professionals (upskilling). ▪ Increase in personal incomes. |
| | Other Training | Number of relevant vocational qualifications achieved. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in proportion of population with no qualifications. ▪ Increase in sector based training. ▪ Increase in skilled workforce (upskilling). ▪ Increase in proportion of population with higher qualification. |
| | STEM Education and Careers | Number of schools engaged and events delivered, pupils participation levels and an awareness increase of STEM careers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take up of STEM subjects in further education. ▪ Increase in proportion of population with higher qualifications. |

| Opportunity Area | Opportunity | Potential Outputs | Potential Outcomes |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in skilled young professionals (upskilling). |
| Employment | Local Recruitment | Proportion of the workforce employed locally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in energy sector employment in the local area. ▪ Increased local economic benefits. |
| | Maximising Diversity of the Workforce | Proportion of workforce which are employed from the target groups. The number of employees who are happy with their working environment / culture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in employment levels for target groups. |
| Supply Chain | Business Networking and Support | Number of supplier events delivered. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in turnover of local businesses. ▪ Increase in personal incomes. ▪ Increase in living standards. |
| | Procurement Strategy | Number and value of contracts secured by local businesses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in turnover of local businesses. ▪ Increase in personal incomes. ▪ Increase in living standards. |

8.3 Safeguarding

8.3.1 IGP is a member of Solar Energy UK and a signatory to the UK Industry Supply Chain Statement, which states:

'We, members of the UK solar energy industry, condemn and oppose any abuse of human rights, including forced labour, anywhere in the global supply chain. We support applying the highest possible levels of transparency and sustainability throughout the value chain, and commit to the development of an industry-led traceability protocol to help to ensure our supply chain is free of human rights abuses.'

8.3.2 The Applicant is a wholly owned subsidiary of IGP. In light of this, the Applicant is committed to ensuring the safeguarding against exploitation and forced labour in relation to direct and indirect employment associated with the development, including throughout its global supply chain.

8.4 Whistleblowing

8.4.1 The Applicant is committed to upholding the highest standards of service across all areas of its operations. In support of this commitment, the Applicant encourages open communication and freedom of speech.

8.4.2 Accordingly, the Scheme will comply with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which provides protection for workers who raise concerns about specific matters, provided such disclosures are made in accordance with the Act and in the public interest.

- 8.4.3 A full policy that sets out how the Applicant will support and encourage the Scheme's employees to come forward and voice their concerns will be addressed in the detailed ESSCS that will be submitted to SNC as the relevant discharging authority in consultation with NCC for approval.

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- Ref 3. ONS, Migration - Table IM2024-T3: 2023 LA boundaries
- Ref 4. ONS, Annual Population Survey [from Nomis on 12 January 2026]
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- Ref 8. Business Register and Employment Survey 2024, Employees, [from Nomis on 9 January 2026]
- Ref 9. Department for Education - NEET and participation (2013). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-neet>
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- Ref 21. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023. National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3)
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- Ref 26. Norfolk County Council, 2021. Better Together for Norfolk. Norfolk County Council Strategy (2021– 2025)
- Ref 27. South Norfolk Council’s Strategic Plan South Norfolk Council (2024) *South Norfolk Council’s Strategic Plan 2024-2028*. Available at:
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