

Our local community is being overwhelmed by major infrastructure development. We are told that we have a voice and can engage with the planning process, but very few people truly understand what's actually going on here. Clear, understandable information is distinctly lacking and because so many different projects are due for development at the same time in the same place, people are totally and utterly confused about what's even being proposed. More often than not, as soon as electrical infrastructure is mentioned, people automatically assume that pylons are being discussed and they don't really have the first idea about what substations, connection hubs or converter stations are or what's due to go where, when. Even media coverage gets in a muddle and just this morning for example, we were told on the BBC news that Sea Link will be bringing wind power onshore at Aldeburgh, but of course, Sea Link will be just that – a sea link between Suffolk and Kent and won't connect directly with the wind farms at all. This problem with information is further compounded by the fact that, even if people do try to get up to speed with things, they are confronted with lengthy documents that seem deliberately designed to confuse and are almost impossible to navigate which makes it an incredibly complicated and lengthy process to work it all out: it took me a whole year! How can we possibly get our voices heard or make informed decisions if we aren't informed in a meaningful transparent way?

You may not know this, but this region is currently undergoing radical Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution. It would be enough to be addressing this massive issue on its own, but dealing with it alongside multiple major infrastructure projects is leading to an untenable workload at all levels of local government. People are spread too thinly and compromise has become the name of the game. It simply won't be possible to meet an ever-increasing workload and at some point, it is inevitable that the system will reach breaking point. Surely, we all have a responsibility to prevent this point from being reached in the first place by controlling the number of NSIPs that are concurrently imposed in one small region?

We are all shocked at the increasingly profound impact that construction of Sizewell C is already having on our region and since the nuclear power station site itself hasn't even been accessed yet, this is just the tip of the iceberg. What will East Suffolk look like when there are 10,000 workers on site at Sizewell and when construction of all the other projects is added on top of that as well? This question really matters to us, but we fear that we are being written off as NIMBYs simply for asking it and that more and more infrastructure will continue to be crammed into this little corner of East Suffolk, until the cumulative impacts of so much concurrent construction in one small area become overwhelming. This is significantly impacting our mental health and well-being as well as our physical health and we exist with a constant background level of stress and anxiety which is becoming harder and harder to manage. The big questions are, is it reasonable to expect a whole community to bear such a disproportionate burden of stress and is it fair to keep imposing more and more infrastructure development into one small region until we feel as if we are about to be pushed right over the edge?

Please listen to our local knowledge about what it's like to be living in what is already beginning to resemble a construction site and weigh up whether the considerable socio-economic and environmental costs of building Sea Link at a basically inaccessible site right next to Saxmundham in this unique, richly biodiverse, agriculturally productive area is actually a realistic proposition – especially when a holistic, long-term strategic alternative solution to transmitting offshore wind power that our North Sea neighbours are employing is available. Thank you.