

**East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP)**  
**Deadline 4 Written Representation of oral statement at ISH2**  
**Cumulative Impact**

A variety of different cumulative impacts have been discussed, and it has been briefly mentioned by one particular town about the potential cumulative impact on that town.

East Suffolk has a number of market towns, and the market towns are very dependent upon their hinterland communities to survive. That hinterland is served by a lot of minor roads and by one main artery the A12.

The A12 increasingly gets congested or blocked, and this is expected to happen more often, as each of the major energy projects start whilst others continuing to progress. For much of its length north of Wickham Market it is a single-track road. Any incident causes disruption and displacement of traffic and the latter has a massive impact upon the local road network within the hinterland of the market towns.

The market towns are a fragile economy of local shops and small businesses. They have managed to maintain themselves as centres for shopping and social interaction, as well as centres for other basic activities such as pharmacies and doctors despite the current trend to online shopping. The towns are concerned that, particularly with the A12 now having to be improved at the same time as Sea Link commencing, their economic stability will be impacted as more traffic will lead to locals in the hinterland deciding to make fewer discretionary trips into the market towns.

With Sea Link commencing in 2027, the extra traffic it generates on the A12 and the major roadworks from the A14 to A1152 from 2027 to 2029, there is a substantially increasing likelihood of traffic diverting off the A12 when disruption occur and the volume will be greater.

The market towns consider this to be a possible tipping point leading to them being seriously impacted. The impact most feared is the loss of the facilities that currently exist in these towns due to reduced local footfall and the interaction that occurs between the populace there, and the immediate hinterland. The towns are concerned this will be either an irreversible change or will take years for them to recover. When market towns lose shops, replacement is difficult when footfall is impacted by external factors and the original shops do not come back until footfall can be demonstrated to have improved. Other businesses in the towns are also impacted and start to fail due to reduced footfall, leading to a downward decline in attractiveness of them as centres to visit.