

# ADEPT President's Awards 2023

Entry form

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**Award category** Delivering Clean Growth

**Project Title** Centre of Excellence for Clean Growth supporting NSIPs

**Local authority entrant** Suffolk County Council

## Headline summary (150 characters max.)

As Govt selected NSIP Centre of Excellence, SCC leads the way on exemplary NSIP approaches to maximise clean growth potential and minimise impacts.

## Delivering clean growth: How is this project delivering clean growth, not just now but into the future – demonstrating ambition and vision, anticipating future challenges and future proofing growth including developing the workforce for the future? (150 words max)

SCC, as NSIP Centre of Excellence, takes a leading role on NSIPs at regional and national level. We have developed ambitious exemplary long-term approaches, in planning, but equally in promoting regional growth, skills and wider benefits arising from NSIPs, and sharing our experience and local perspective with government departments to shape national policy.

The scale and number of NSIPs creates regional workforce and skills bottlenecks. With our bespoke NSIPs Skills Coordination Function, SCC shows leadership to future-proof employment and skills investment from individual NSIPs for long term regional benefit, and influence the strategic utilisation of a finite workforce and supply of skills for the effective delivery of projects significantly contributing to the UK's clean growth ambitions.

To resource NSIPs internally, SCC has had to innovate, implementing a holistic matrix approach not constrained by traditional service boundaries, and investing in young professionals, building capacity and developing our future NSIP experts.

## Delivering clean growth: How is this project working across boundaries and with different partners to achieve long lasting clean growth? (150 words max)

SCC has established very strong partnership working arrangements on NSIPs with its District Councils, neighbouring local authorities, and regional public sector partners, including local training providers regarding clean growth skills requirements. The collaboration builds and shares capability across the system.

SCC recognises the high complexity of NSIPs, particularly of Sizewell C, and has established in all its directorates and amongst partner organisations strong ownership of dealing with impacts and opportunities of NSIPs.

Building capability in the wider system is a priority of SCC's Centre of Excellence, sharing good practice with other local authorities and stakeholders regionally and nationally. Supported by DLUHC funding, SCC organised a series of virtual seminars and a major local authority conference, and published an NSIP officer guide (see

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-nsips/east-of-england-nsips-centre-of-excellence>

), to increase knowledge and allow for CPD amongst local authority NSIP officers. This will allow local authorities to engage more effectively and constructively in NSIPs.

**Delivering clean growth: How is this project proactively engaging with business to tackle problems and find solutions, stimulating the clean growth sector at the same time? (150 words max.)**

SCC proactively works with Suffolk Chamber encouraging local companies into the NSIP supply chain, and with ORE Catapult (<https://catapult.org.uk/>) to target high growth potential companies and inward investment.

SCC aims to stimulate “win-win” situations, aligning the interests of developers and the public sector to achieve sustainable clean growth in the locality. SCC has initiated and hosts an innovative regional Skills Coordination Function for NSIPs, funded primarily through Sizewell C and other NSIP developers. This Function facilitates local skills and workforce development to not only serve the need of individual NSIPs, but to create a skills base within local businesses which provides a sustainable legacy.

SCC pro-actively and constructively engages with developers of all NSIPs in Suffolk, without prejudice to its political position on an individual project. SCC's approach facilitates effective engagement in the Development Consent process and for delivering NSIPs, whilst ensuring that local impacts are reduced and opportunities maximised.

**Delivering clean growth: How is this project going beyond the 3-5 year budget cycle to prepare for future challenges including the use or consideration of innovative funding solutions? (150 words max.)**

Resource planning for NSIPs is complex, due to the multi-layered nature of NSIPs, indicative but ever changing timescales with peaks and troughs, and the wide ranging input required from services across the council. Sizewell C's construction alone will take 12 years so long term resource planning is essential.

SCC has been innovating, in collaboration with developers, on setting up unbureaucratic Planning Performance Agreements, which provide sufficient certainty both for local authorities and developers as to medium term funding levels. With this certainty, SCC is able to commit to recruiting officers across a range of disciplines to deal with the increased resource demand resulting from NSIPs.

Taking a 5-year forward-look approach to managing NSIPs, with best estimates for resource requirements, impacts and project timescales, allows SCC effective workforce planning and informed decision making how best to resource projects, preferably using permanent staff – to retain corporate knowledge and develop its staff.

**All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry**

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) allowing for the transition to clean energy and climate resilience are crucial for the delivery of Net Zero and Clean Growth. Suffolk has one of the largest number energy NSIPs nationally, including Sizewell C, and its NSIP pipeline is ever growing. NSIPs do come with substantial challenges, e.g. in dealing with its local impacts, achieving community acceptance, maximising economic benefits, and dealing with the significant bottleneck in skills and workforce availability.

With its wealth of NSIP experience, SCC has established itself as NSIP Centre of Excellence (see East of England NSIPs Centre of Excellence - Suffolk County Council), sharing and further developing its experience and its exemplary approaches in dealing with NSIPs, both in the planning process, but also promoting wider local and regional growth, skills and other benefits arising from NSIPs. SCC's multi-faceted approach facilitates effective engagement in the Development Consent process and towards and in delivery of NSIPs, whilst ensuring that local impacts are reduced and opportunities maximised.

Further information at

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-nsips/east-of-england-nsips-centre-of-excellence>