

## **Comments on behalf of the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Partnership.**

The Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape is the brand for the legally designated Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB.

The associated Partnership is a non-constituted body made up of around 25 organisations many of whom are public bodies or statutory bodies which have the duties and responsibilities to meet the statutory purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB. It is anticipated that these partners, and other members of the Partnership, will provide separate consultation responses that reflect these and other interests and responsibilities.

These comments will use the term Partnership to refer to the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Partnership.

The Partnership considers the main issues to be:

1. How all relevant authorities will comply with the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), to create a new duty on relevant authorities to 'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' when discharging their functions in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB (now known as National Landscapes). The new duty replaces the previous requirement for relevant authorities to 'have regard' to the purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONBs and is intended as a more proactive and strengthened requirement.

The duty is a statutory one and applies to all relevant authorities when discharging any function that affects an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB. Relevant authorities include all levels of government and include government agencies and ministers. Statutory undertakers are also covered by the duty.

2. Impact of the offshore proposals on the nationally designated Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
3. Impact on the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty from the onshore substation and connection infrastructure