

What will the UK do with its internal climate refugees?

Published: January 13, 2026, 9:13 am

I had to go to the Fenland village of [Somersham](#) to get a Covid vaccine yesterday. Why the NHS directed me there, I do not know, but they did.

For those who do not know Somersham (and that will be about 99.9% of readers, I suspect, because it is out of the way even for this part of the world), it's pretty, small, surprisingly busy on a Monday morning and totally surrounded by flat fenland fields, all of which [might be underwater](#) if, or rather when, the sea breaks through the wholly inadequate flood defences that currently protect the Fens from rising seawater levels.

Wikipedia assures me that the village has a population of 3,800 people. And their future, as far as I can see, is as refugees.

Unless action is taken (and that which is underway seems paltry in scale), the time when Somersham will become depopulated can be measured as a blink even in the history of humankind: we may be talking decades, at most. Its fields will become polluted by salt water on a regular basis. And then there will cease to be a reason for the village.

Suella Braverman is in New York today, claiming that new agreements or refugees are required. Her sole aim is to keep people out of the UK. Her claim is that no one who is an economic migrant can be a refugee. What is more, discrimination is not a basis for fleeing your place of residence, in her opinion.

That is nonsense. But what I would point out to Suella Braverman is that she is Home Secretary and we have a refugee crisis in the making here in the UK. It won't become apparent quite yet. Only a few villages dotted around the coast have now, in effect, been abandoned to encroachment by the sea. But these things are always exponential, and unless you take action soon enough, they become impossible to manage.

Or, to put it another way, unless action is taken sometime in the fairly near future to save Somersham then it might be too late. It, and all the massive agricultural production of the region in which it sits, will be lost, creating simultaneous domestic

refugee and food crises for the UK, over and above any that will result from the international flow of hundreds of millions of people simply seeking, like the people of Somersham, to survive.

Of course, Somersham could be saved from this fate, but that will require that money be spent to create a common good. That is the sort of thing governments alone can do. Unfortunately, though, both Labour and the Tories claim there is no money left.

Unless we take action on issues like this, the crisis that we face in this country will be enormous. We are already food dependent. We would become much more so. And millions of people will need to be rehomed.

Are we ready for that?

And why are we talking about HS2, which is frippery, when there are so many more, such bigger issues to concern us?