

Kingsway Solar Farm - EN010165

Kingsway Solar Farm Limited

Section 51 Advice Log

Version: 6 February 2026

There is a statutory duty under [section 51 \(s51\) of the Planning Act 2008](#) for the Planning Inspectorate to record the advice that it gives in relation to an application or potential application, and to make this publicly available.

This document comprises a record of the advice that has been provided by the Inspectorate to the applicant Kingsway Solar Farm Limited and their consultants during the pre-application stage. It will be updated by the Inspectorate after every interaction with the applicant during which s51 has been provided. The applicant will always be given the opportunity to comment on the Inspectorate's draft record of advice before it is published.

The applicant will use this Advice Log as the basis for demonstrating regard to section 51 advice within the application.

Kingsway Solar Farm s51 Advice Log - Index	
Date of meeting	Meeting overview
<u>13 November 2024</u>	<p>The meeting included an update on the project from the applicant's team including an overview of its evolving preapplication programme, its preparation of its EIA Scoping request, and the approach to undertaking non-statutory consultation.</p> <p>There was also a discussion between the Inspectorate and applicant's team about potential topics to discuss at the next project update meeting and when this should be held.</p>
<u>11 June 2025</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Updates • EIA Updates • Consultation Updates • Stakeholder and Engagement Updates • Programme Updates
<u>3 November 2025</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application Prospectus Update
<u>26 November 2025</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Consultation update • Stakeholder feedback and engagement • Programme through to DCO application submission • AOB
<u>6 February 2026</u>	Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) Document feedback

Kingsway Solar Farm -s51 Advice Library

Topic	Meeting date: 13 November 2024
Land options	<p>The Inspectorate asked for an update on landowner agreements and queried if it is affecting the current red line boundary. The Applicant said the project's Order Limits were evolving, as some land parcels had changed owing to ongoing negotiations with former and new landowners over the past twelve months.</p>
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping	<p>The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to avoid submitting their Scoping report close to the seasonal holiday, as it may not receive fully informed responses from relevant statutory bodies owing to reduced capacity. The applicant advised that they are considering the milestone and programme implications of delaying the submission of the Scoping Report until January and will update the Inspectorate in due course.</p> <p>The Applicant advised that they were having regard to the Inspectorate's new published technical advice on the Commitments Register and Scoping for Solar Developments.</p>
Grid connection	<p>The Inspectorate enquired with the Applicant if it will survey underground archaeology within the connecting corridors. The Applicant clarified that it will be refining the corridors and will undertake the necessary surveying based on any underground works that may be required.</p>
Ancient Woodland	<p>The Inspectorate queried if the ancient woodland that had been mentioned in previous meetings was still a factor within the red line boundary. The Applicant confirmed more ancient woodland is included within the boundary and the mitigation measures within the scoping report will demonstrate where buffers and setbacks are to be included.</p>
Preapplication process	<p>The Applicant asked the Inspectorate if there is a standard timeframe for submitting draft documents and receiving the Inspectorate's advice. The Inspectorate clarified that draft documents are usually submitted three months before submission of the DCO applications and feedback is usually given within six weeks of receipt. The more complete the documents are when provided to us, the more thorough the advice can be. The Inspectorate advised as part of the new pre-application process it now offers a draft document feedback meeting. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider when is best for the Applicant to submit documents and what the Applicant needs from the Inspectorate with regards to feedback.</p>

	<p>The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to map out when advice is needed and to plan project update meetings accordingly to their Programme Document timetable. The Inspectorate also advised as more decisions and acceptance decisions are made on Solar projects, it will show the standards expected on a range of matters. It was also recommended that the Applicant look at comments made on acceptance decisions, as well as having someone review the documents who hasn't worked on them, to assist with proof-reading and to ensure the narrative of documents make sense.</p>
<p>Planning Performance Agreements</p>	<p>The Inspectorate requested an update from the Applicant in the next meeting on the progress made with any Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with Councils and obtaining services of relevant statutory consultees to highlight any resource constraints.</p>
<p>Design</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to clearly demonstrate the design, setting out the story of how the project's design has evolved, and the reasons and decisions made, with regard to the criteria on design in the National Policy Statements, explaining if a design champion was being employed. The Applicant said that design was being reflected in its mitigation plans.</p>
<p>Programme Document feedback (post-meeting note)</p>	<p>The applicant supplied the Inspectorate with its initial Programme Document in line with the Expression of Interest process, after the publication of the 2024 Pre-application Prospectus. Having reviewed the document, the Inspectorate notes that it follows the expected content structure as set out in the government's pre-application guidance at paragraph 10 and provides dates for pre-application activities, such as Scoping and Statutory Consultation. However, in updating its Programme Document, the applicant should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out the main issues / topics identified arising from the proposed application, even if this includes initial information at this stage • include whether the local authorities, statutory consultees and others are content with the proposed programme • include relevant information against the identified risks and how these will be managed • whether the applicant will include an Issues Tracker and if this will be shared with local authorities, statutory consultees and others and indicate whether these parties agree with the status of the issues raised and any possible mitigation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include dates in its programme timetable for the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone, any Evidence Plan meetings and any multiparty meetings (if scheduling these), obtaining other consents or permissions (if required), when project update meetings might be held with the Inspectorate and the submission of draft documents for review (if anticipating to submit these) include any progress with any Planning Performance Agreements with relevant Local Authorities or statutory undertakers. <p>It would also be helpful if the Programme Document explained how the design approach will be managed and communicated during pre-application as well as any relevant information about the development of the draft DCO and Explanatory Memorandum. The applicant will need to publish its Programme Document on its website as soon as practicable.</p>
Topic	Meeting date: 11 June 2025
Scheme Update	<p>The applicant provided an update on the project. The applicant informed the Inspectorate there had been several changes in the organisational structure of their project team since the Inception meeting and that QUOD was now acting as the DCO lead. In addition, QUOD and Logika were acting as the Environmental Impact consultants.</p> <p>PEIR and Statutory consultation is due to begin in Q3 of 2025. The Statement of Community Consultation draft document was under review ahead of early engagement with the main Local Planning Authorities and would be published before consultation begins, together with the Preliminary Environmental Information Report and other consultation material.</p> <p>The applicant advised it was in discussions with the host authorities to enter into separate PPAs and that these negotiations were still in progress.</p> <p>The applicant stated that it had cost recovery agreements in place with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.</p> <p>The applicant confirmed the anticipated submission of the application is due in Q1 of 2026. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to keep it updated with any changes at the earliest opportunity regarding the submission date and to ensure that the Programme Document is updated accordingly. This would help facilitate resourcing around the Christmas period.</p>

	<p>Any updated Programme Document should also reflect the applicant's anticipated timeframes for holding Project Update Meetings with the Inspectorate.</p> <p>In answer to questions about the grid corridor, the applicant said that it was conducting surveys to narrow down the range of the grid connection route. The applicant advised of constraints of the grid corridor route in relation to Network Rail assets, an existing 400kv overhead line, the A11/A14 crossing and Devils Dyke Crossing. The applicant added that it was aware of the need of entering into early discussions with any statutory undertakers about agreeing and securing appropriate protective provisions within the draft Development Consent Order.</p> <p>In answer to other questions, the applicant said that it was still undertaking surveys of Best and Most Versatile land and Flood Risk, but that it was thought there is a low probability of flooding across the site.</p> <p>Relevant information would be contained in its consultation material, the applicant added. Feedback at the non-statutory consultation stage on the scheme boundary had been received and assessed by the applicant, which had resulted in a review of the scheme boundary that will be taken to statutory consultation.</p>
<p>Issues Tracker Table of Main Issues</p>	<p>The Inspectorate noted that whilst it wasn't a statutory document, the applicant was advised to include a table of main issues in its Programme Document, as this is helpful for the Inspectorate and Statutory Consultees to understand what the main issues are and the activities and progress made by the applicant against these, in terms of completing surveys and agreeing the methodology of assessments and any outputs / proposed mitigation measures with relevant statutory consultees.</p>
<p>Adequacy of Consultation Milestone</p>	<p>In relation to the adequacy of consultation milestone, the Inspectorate advised the applicant to inform it at the earliest opportunity of any delays as this will allow time for the relevant feedback to be given and addressed by the applicant before submitting the application, three months being the recommended time frame.</p>
<p>Draft Documents</p>	<p>The applicant advised that its draft documents for review would follow the submission of the Meridian Solar project, which is also being proposed by Downing Renewable Developments and that it intended to assess the feedback</p>

	<p>given in response to the Meridian draft documents feedback, to allow for any changes.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised it could provide a list of previous draft document feedback and AOCM statement feedback on other solar projects, which may assist the applicant.</p>
Topic	Advice (Email) 3 November 2025
Pre-application prospectus	<p>The Inspectorate has advised that, following a 6-month review of our services, our Pre-application Prospectus has been updated: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus. The update log at the bottom of the page summarises the changes and clarifications that have been applied.</p> <p>Applicants with a live project at the pre-application stage of the process, please familiarise yourself with the update and consider how it might affect your pre-application programme and interaction with our services.</p> <p>Please note in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of land and rights negotiations tracking as a primary service feature – this means it is now expected for all applicants to develop and share a land and right negotiations tracker in 1 of 2 available templates, irrespective of the service tier they have subscribed to. • Clarified expectations of applicants when preparing to interact with the Inspectorate at meetings – including clarified rights for the Inspectorate to delay or refuse service where pre-meeting expectations are not upheld e.g. an updated programme document or issues tracker is not provided, on time, to inform a meeting agenda.
Topic	Meeting date: 26 November 2025
Statutory Consultation	<p>The Inspectorate reminded the applicant to show how it has had regard to responses received during consultation in its consultation report that have led (directly or indirectly) to any changes to the project during preapplication, as well as comments that have led to no change (see the Inspectorate’s published advice on the consultation report for further information). The applicant said it was fully aware of the legislative requirements for consultation and was already drafting its report following these principles, from its analysis of feedback to date and the topics arising from consultation.</p>

	<p>The applicant had also identified a need to carry-out targeted consultation in January 2026 following some modifications to the Order Limits.</p>
Substations	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to review current solar application examinations where the siting of a National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) proposed substation is unknown and subject to separate consent under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To help prepare for examination, reviewing other examinations may provide insight into the type of questions Examining Authorities may ask in relation to (for example) Statements of Common Ground with NGET, DCO requirements and protective provisions, site selection and assessments, and the timescale for obtaining separate consent for a substation.</p> <p>The applicant confirmed that its connection agreement specifies a connection between the proposed development and NGET's new substation and would continue its discussions with NGET with a view to confirm relevant details at examination.</p>
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone	<p>The Inspectorate advised that if the AoCM statement is received later than three months before the submission of the application, this may limit the Inspectorate's ability to comment and for the applicant to take any corrective action if its pre-application programme is "seriously adrift" (see the government's guidance on the pre-application stage at paragraph 25).</p> <p>However, the Inspectorate said it is important to include the views and any relevant supporting material from local authorities (if available) than to strictly meet the 3-month target. The applicant said it would consider the timing of the AoCM in relation to its timescale for carrying out targeted consultation and the capacity of the local authorities to provide comment.</p>
Issues Tracker	<p>The Inspectorate reiterated that the applicant's Programme Document should include a summary of the main issues identified during the pre-application stage and the steps the applicant is taking to resolve or mitigate them (see the government's guidance on the pre-application stage at paragraph 10).</p> <p>In the absence of an Issues Tracker, it is particularly helpful if the applicant can provide high level summaries in the Programme Document about the progress made with statutory parties on agreeing proposed methodology, mitigation measures and assessments in relation to these identified issues.</p>

AOB	The applicant confirmed that it would not be using the draft document review service for this project.
Topic	Email date: 6 February 2026
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) Document feedback	<p>The applicant's Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AOCM) statement has been prepared and submitted having had regard to the government's statutory guidance on the pre-application stage as well as the Inspectorate's Pre-application Prospectus. Having reviewed the applicant's AOCM statement, the Inspectorate considers that it sets out clearly the applicant's consultation activities undertaken to date, confirms the approaches set out in the applicant's Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), and summarises the consultation responses and the way in which they are shaping the application.</p> <p>The Inspectorate notes at annexes F and G the responses from Cambridgeshire County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council to the draft AOCM statement, as well as the applicant's response to East Cambridgeshire District Council at annex H where it has sought to address the Council's concerns. Cambridgeshire County Council has shared its view that the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) at the time of statutory consultation "would have been stronger in content had the applicant carried out further data and survey work, as raised by officers in the consultation response", that the council "has not yet been engaged with on the noted issues tracker", and the deadline for submission of the DCO application by the end of March 2026 is "ambitious given the current amount of work that is required prior to submission".</p> <p>Additionally, East Cambridgeshire District Council had noted that the applicant had taken into account its feedback on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) in providing "greater clarity regarding where and when consultation activities would take place or where materials would be made available". However, it added that there "remains a lack of clarity as to how certain specific matters raised in response to the draft SoCC have been addressed, including, for example, engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities". The Council added its concerns "remain significant", especially about "the quality and effectiveness of engagement undertaken to date" and that the "submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application should be postponed until at least summer or late summer 2026".</p> <p>The applicant should consider whether any further consultation and / or survey work is needed prior to submitting its application, considering the responses received. The applicant will need to clearly explain in its</p>

	<p>Consultation Report at the 'acceptance' stage how it has complied with Chapter 2 of Part 5 of the Planning Act 2008, including how it has had regard to consultation responses. The applicant may also need to address the broader Gunning Principles in respect of public consultation, if it has received any complaints during pre-application about the extent of information provided to enable consultees to consider the proposal and make informed responses.</p> <p>The applicant is encouraged to seek agreement with relevant statutory parties on the extent of data or survey work needed before the application is submitted, to meet relevant statutory requirements and regulations and to ensure the application meets the satisfactory test. The applicant is encouraged to resolve, as far as reasonably practicable, any fundamental areas of disagreement with statutory parties on these matters, to ensure an efficient examination can take place and/or demonstrate clearly in its application documentation justification for taking a different approach.</p> <p>The Inspectorate's comments on the applicant's AOCM statement are made without prejudice to any decision on whether to accept the application for examination.</p>
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