



Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 5

Consultation

5.1 Appendix M –
Applicant's Response to
Section 51 Advice

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications:
Prescribed Forms and Procedure)
Regulations 2009

March 2026

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Appendix M: Applicant’s Response to Section 51 Advice

Meeting: 19 November 2024

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Topic	Meeting date: 19 November 2024	Applicant’s Response
Grid Connection	<p>The Inspectorate stressed the importance of providing detailed evidence to justify the final design of the overall project, particularly around the grid connection to the Weston Marsh substation. The applicant explained that there is a current presumption for an overhead line (assuming a 400kV steel lattice), partly driven by considerations relating to planning policy, soil conditions and the potential for the presence of buried archaeology in the area. The considerations around design and a single grid connection corridor will form part of the statutory consultation. The final proposed order limits and grid connection design options will be applied for within the Development Consent Order.</p>	<p>The Applicant has detailed the process of the Scheme’s design development within the Design Approach Document (Doc Ref. 7.3). Further, ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Doc Ref. 6.1) sets out alternatives, opportunities and constraints considered by the Applicant, including optioneering for the Grid Connection Route. These documents provide justification for the overhead line technology choice and rationale for the corridor selection.</p>
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>The Inspectorate advised on the benefits of carrying out a wide scope of engagement with the community around the proposed application. It was recommended that the applicant expand on its level of engagement with the local schools and communities. The applicant agreed to consider this approach. The applicant did advise that an update newsletter</p>	<p>The Applicant has detailed its approach to public consultation within the Consultation Report (Doc Ref. 5.1). The Applicant defined a Public Consultation Zone (PCZ) for its statutory consultation which extended approximately 2 km from the Scheme boundary at the time.</p>

	<p>following the non-statutory consultation held earlier this year was sent to Parish Councils and other stakeholders. Parish Council meetings have been attended on request to discuss the update.</p>	
<p>Statutory Consultation Programme</p>	<p>The Applicant was advised to regularly update the Inspectorate at key milestones on how the design aspects of the project are evolving and to provide as much detail on what the applicant will be consulting on during the statutory consultation period, as well as any agreements the applicant has with relevant statutory consultees. In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the Applicant said that there had been discussions with nearby private airfields in relation to the project which were being considered further. The applicant also said that they were aware of other projects in the area that are due to undertake consultation in a similar timeframe and if there is any overlap, they will seek to differentiate their consultation accordingly. Additionally, the applicant reported that it is due to progress Statements of Common Ground with relevant consultees soon.</p>	<p>The Applicant has maintained regular update meetings with the Planning Inspectorate throughout the pre-application stage as documented in the Section 51 Advice Log. As part of these meetings, the Applicant has provided an update on stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Technical engagement with stakeholders is detailed within each topic-specific ES Chapter (Doc Ref. 6.1). The Applicant is progressing Statements of Common Ground with key stakeholders which will be submitted and updated throughout the examination.</p>
<p>PEIR Update</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to include all information gathered from its assessments within the PEIR including how the project evolves over the coming months. The Inspectorate confirmed that it will not look at any draft PEIR documents. In answer to questions</p>	<p>The Applicant submitted a comprehensive PEIR as part of its statutory consultation materials. The Applicant has continued to engage with environmental stakeholders (including the Environment Agency, Natural England, and Lincolnshire County Council) as its assessments have</p>

	<p>from the Inspectorate, the Applicant said highway surveys were ongoing together with discussions with Lincolnshire Council 4 on the methodology to be used. Discussions with the Environment Agency on the Flood Risk Assessment and Water Framework Directive assessment are being planned. Discussions with Natural England regarding ornithology surveys had been held.</p>	<p>been refined through the preparation of the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the DCO Application.</p>
<p>Invoicing and Finance</p>	<p>The Planning Inspectorate clarified the terms of its pre-application service, as its published Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus (see paragraph 14) explains the daily rate for its pre-application fees and how costs are calculated for its different service tiers and invoicing cycle, while the government’s guidance on the Planning Act 2008: Infrastructure Planning (Fees) Regulations 2010 – cost recovery by the Planning Inspectorate and public authorities explains how applicants will be charged by the Planning Inspectorate (see paragraph 15)</p>	<p>Noted. The Applicant has paid the appropriate pre-application fee in accordance with the Prospectus.</p>
<p>Dates of forthcoming meetings</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to provide an updated programme document with more specific timescales for its remaining pre-application activities and milestones and the importance of providing detailed agendas in advance to denote any specific topics requiring advice from the Inspectorate. The Applicant stated that it will provide an updated Programme</p>	<p>The Applicant has submitted and maintained a Programme Document which sets out the key milestones for the Scheme through the pre-application period.</p>

	Plan with more refined meeting dates. The next meeting is expected to take place mid to late January 2025.	
Draft Documents	The Inspectorate expressed the importance of having advanced notice of what draft documents the Applicant requires to be reviewed to determine what resources need to be allocated. The Inspectorate advised that this needs to be at least three months before the DCO submission date.	The Applicant has decided not to proceed with the review of any draft application documents by the Planning Inspectorate.
Further Information	The Inspectorate requested further information on limits of deviation, potential flood mitigation and if the applicant is seeking an upper limit on the number of panels. The applicant agreed to provide an update on this at the next meeting along with what will be consulted on in the Statutory Consultation.	Information on the limits of deviation, flood mitigation and PV panels is set out with the DCO Application. The indicative proposals formed part of the statutory consultation materials.
Programme Document feedback (post-meeting note)	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 considers overall that it covers the expected content as set out in the government’s pre-application guidance at paragraph 10 , namely setting out realistic timescales and related information on its pre-application activities. However, in updating its Programme Document, the Applicant should:	The Applicant has submitted and maintained a Programme Document which sets out the key milestones for the Scheme through the pre-application period, including details of key stakeholder meetings.

	<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 dates in its programme timetable for the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone and any Evidence Plan meetings (it is stated that multiparty meetings may be requested and if so, these should also be included as soon as practicable) • 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 • identify and include the risks to achievement of the pre-application stage and the process by which these are managed • 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</p>	
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	<p>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>	
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Meeting: 23 June 2025

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Topic	Meeting date: 23 June 2025	Applicant’s Response
Land use and agriculture	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant regarding any loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, to state clearly in the application and policy compliance documents how it intends to address the National Policy Statements and the specific guidance on the use of alternatives like brownfield land. This could be a key issue during examination if the project moved forward. The more this issue and the specific paragraphs on this issue in the National Policy Statement can be addressed in the application documents the better. The applicant stated that it was continuing to undertake its Agricultural Land Classification surveys and that discussions had been held with Natural England regarding the scope of 6 these surveys across the grid corridor as well as the solar array areas.</p>	<p>The Applicant has assessed the impacts on BMV land within ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils (Doc Ref. 6.1) which also details policy and guidance which informed the assessment. Policy compliance is assessed within the Planning Statement (Doc Ref. 7.1).</p> <p>The Site Selection Report, which forms Appendix D to the Planning Statement (Doc Ref. 7.1), describes the site selection process undertaken by the Applicant including the consideration of brownfield alternatives.</p> <p>The Applicant has regularly engaged with Natural England on the scope of surveys, with details of engagement outlined in within ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
Overhead line	<p>The Inspectorate encouraged the applicant to clearly visualise in the application documents what the overhead line infrastructure would look like once built so that all parties have a clearer understanding, and to explain why the technology had been selected over alternatives. The Inspectorate signposted the applicant to the linear projects advice page, as the advice has a section on plans,</p>	<p>The Applicant has prepared visualisations to support its assessment in ES Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual (Doc Ref. 6.1) – see ES Figure 12-21: Photosheets (Doc Ref. 6.2) and ES Figure 12-22: LCC Photosheets (Doc Ref. 6.2). These visualisations also take into account the potential for other infrastructure to be present with</p>

	<p>illustrations and visualisations with examples. The Inspectorate advised further that visualisations of how any infrastructure may interact with other nearby projects and overhead lines would also be useful.</p>	<p>cumulative schemes also presented within the visualisations.</p>
Flood Risk	<p>In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the applicant confirmed it had agreed its flood modelling methodology with the Environment Agency. It confirmed it had based its Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) on the ‘worst-case scenario’ in respect of maximum heights for infrastructure. Alternative heights, materials and methods were being considered in order to seek to reduce other potential environmental impacts.</p>	<p>The Applicant prepared a worst-case assessment as part of the PEIR. Further modelling and refinement has seen a reduction in the maximum heights of the solar PV panels. The maximum heights of infrastructure are set out in the Design Parameters (Doc Ref. 7.4).</p>
Grid Connection	<p>In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the applicant explained that the siting of the new, proposed National Grid substation (to be delivered by NGET as part of the Grimsby to Walpole Project) has not yet been confirmed, but that the applicant showed the search area which had formed part of the consultation. National Grid are progressing the Grimsby to Walpole NSIP at pre-application, having commenced its own statutory consultation stage and sharing consultation material on the proposed, linked substation. The applicant has also been holding regular meetings with National Grid on the issue. Should the location of the substation move outside of the intended Order Limits, consideration will be given to the most appropriate way forward for the project.</p>	<p>NGET consulted on the indicative location of two substations at Weston Marsh towards the end of 2025. The Applicant subsequently consulted on a change to the Order Limits to incorporate the necessary land parcels to provide a connection to the planned Weston Marsh B Substation. Further details are set out in the Grid Connection Statement (Doc Ref. 7.5).</p>

<p>Environmental surveys</p>	<p>In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the applicant confirmed it had agreed its methodology with Natural England for ornithology surveys and that the majority of these had been completed for the project.</p>	<p>Noted. Details of ornithology surveys and engagement are described in ES Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
<p>Approach to design</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to review other Design Approach Documents as good demonstrations of explaining the design journey and evolution.</p>	<p>Noted. The Applicant has submitted a Design Approach Document (Doc Ref. 7.3) as part of its application. This has been prepared taking into account guidance on good design as well as examples from other NSIPs.</p>
<p>Adequacy of Consultation Milestone</p>	<p>The Inspectorate explained that the key purpose of the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone is to ensure that a project is not “seriously adrift”, taking into account any views from local planning authorities on the adequacy of consultation undertaken by that stage and whether any further statutory consultation is needed to address any changes to the design of the scheme. The Inspectorate added that it will be useful to understand in the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone whether the key statutory bodies are satisfied with the consultation and their input into this process.</p>	<p>The Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in November 2025. In its response to the draft shared with it, Lincolnshire County Council confirmed in writing it is content with the AoCM Report and is satisfied that an appropriate level of consultation has been conducted. A response from South Holland District Council was not received.</p>
<p>Programme Document</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to set out in the Programme Document what the main issues are in as much detail as possible, including the progress made in any surveys and methodology and any agreements reached with relevant statutory bodies.</p>	<p>The Applicant subsequently updated its Programme Document which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and uploaded to the Applicant’s website.</p>

Programme Document Feedback: November 2024

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Topic	Programme Document feedback	Applicant’s Response
Programme Document feedback	<p>The applicant supplied the Inspectorate with its initial programme document and feedback was provided on 19 November 2024. We note that the applicant has now published its Programme Document dated September 2025. The Inspectorate has reviewed the document and notes that it provides a clear programme timetable of the main events, approach to engagement and outcomes to the consultation phases, as well as the progress made in securing Planning Performance Agreements and Discretionary Advice Services.</p> <p>However, the Inspectorate offers the following comments:</p> <p>In accordance with the government’s published guidance Planning Act 2008: pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects guidance, the programme document should include the applicant’s view on the main issues for resolution and activities it will undertake to address those.</p> <p>The main issues should typically take the form of a table setting out the different topics and environmental issues/constraints arising from the proposed development and high-level summaries indicating whether</p>	<p>The Applicant has maintained the Programme Document throughout the pre-application period and periodically updated it as the Scheme progressed through the various milestones.</p> <p>The Applicant summarised the likely key issues and matters under discussion with key stakeholders in Section 4.1 of the Programme Document. The Applicant is progressing Statements of Common Ground with key stakeholders which will set out the matters in more detail.</p>

	<p>each issue has been resolved, either through mitigation measures or project redesign, and the activities the applicant is undertaking to consult parties during pre-application, including whether it has agreed the approach to the methodology used or the scope of its assessments with the relevant statutory bodies.</p> <p>The main issues table should be updated by the applicant at relevant points during the pre-application stage and should reach a degree of maturity and detail following the publication of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and statutory consultation. This section of the programme document is likely to give the Inspectorate and statutory consultees the most insight into the progress of the application and the extent of potential issues for examination.</p> <p>It is noted that the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) statement is intended to be submitted in November 2025. However, the applicant anticipates submitting the application in January 2026. The applicant should be aware that the Planning Act 2008: pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects guidance advises that the AoCM statement should be submitted no later than 3 months before application submission.</p>	
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	<p>Though the risks identified by the applicant have been included, in accordance with the government’s preapplication guidance, the applicant should set out the process by which these risks will be tracked and managed.</p>	
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Email: 23 October 2025

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Topic	Advice (Email) 23 October 2025	Applicant’s Response
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 	<p>Noted. The Applicant has reviewed the updates to the Pre-Application Prospectus. The Applicant has prepared a Land Rights Tracker (Doc Ref. 4.4), a draft of which was shared with the Planning Inspectorate prior to submission for comment.</p>

	delay or refuse service where pre-meeting expectations are not upheld e.g. an updated programme document or 9 issues tracker is not provided, on time, to inform a meeting agenda	
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Adequacy of Consultation Milestone: November 2025

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November 2025	Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM)	Applicant’s Response
<p>Adequacy of Consultation Milestones (AoCM) feedback Section 3.6 Section 3.6.1 Section 3.7.3</p>	<p>The applicant’s AoCM statement has been prepared and submitted having had regard to the government’s statutory pre-application stage guidance as well as the Inspectorate’s non-statutory 2024 Pre-application Prospectus. Having reviewed the applicant’s AoCM statement, the Inspectorate considers that it broadly sets out 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>However, the following advice is given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix E - it is noted that a response to the AoCM is included at appendix E. However, the AoCM does not make clear which local authorities were consulted about the AoCM. This information should have been included in the AoCM, as it is important that the views and any relevant supporting 	<p>The Applicant has sought to ensure the Consultation Report reflects the feedback provided by the Planning Inspectorate on the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Statement.</p> <p>Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council were consulted as the two host authorities for response as part of the AoCM. As set out in the AoCM Report prepared by the Applicant, Lincolnshire County Council provided a response which confirmed it is of the view that the Applicant has carried out adequate pre-application consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. South Holland District Council did not provide a response.</p> <p>The Consultation Report (Doc Ref. 5.1) sets out the statutory consultees that were formally consulted as part of the statutory consultation. The Applicant is not required to consult the MMO under Section 42(1)(aa) of the Planning Act 2008 as the Scheme would not affect, nor is unlikely to affect, any of the area specified in Section 42(2) of the</p>

	<p>material about the AoCM is included from all relevant local authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.6 - it is unclear whether the Marine Management Organisation and Greater London Authority have been consulted or whether the applicant is of the view that consultation with these authorities is not applicable. The applicant is advised to ensure that all relevant statutory consultees are consulted, and where the applicant has considered it unnecessary to include a specific statutory consultee, to provide an explanation as to why. • Section 3.6.1 - it is noted that a number of consultation bodies identified in the list of consultation bodies at appendix 1 of the EIA Scoping Opinion dated 10 July 2024 appear to have not been included at appendix C of the AoCM, including Rutland County Council and North Northamptonshire Council. Again, the applicant is advised to ensure that all relevant statutory consultees are consulted, and where the applicant has considered it unnecessary to include a specific statutory 	<p>Planning Act 2008. The Applicant is also not required to consult the Greater London Authority under Section 42(1)(c) as the Scheme is not in Greater London.</p> <p>Regarding Section 3.6.1, the Applicant notes that following an omission during the stage two consultation period, Rutland County Council and North Northamptonshire Council were notified on 2 December 2025. See Sections 7.2.6–7.2.7 of the Consultation Report (Doc Ref. 5.1) for further details).</p> <p>A copy of the Section 48 notice is included at Appendix D: Published Section 47 and Section 48 Notices (Doc Ref. 5.1).</p>
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	<p>consultee, to provide an explanation as to why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.7.3 - the applicant confirms the Section 48 notice included all details prescribed by Regulation 4(3) of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed 10 Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009. However, the AoCM does not include a copy of the section 48 notice. The applicant should ensure that the notice is included in the Consultation Report. <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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Meeting: 3 December 2025

Meridian Solar Farm -s51 Advice Library		
Topic	Meeting 03 December 2025	Applicant’s Response
Change Requests	<p>The Inspectorate made the applicant aware of the risks from making change requests to applications after acceptance (depending on the substance, extent and timing of such changes and if the changes amount to a materially different project) and to achieving more efficient examinations under the government’s planning reforms.</p> <p>The applicant said it was aware of the Inspectorate’s published advice and the legislative requirements for acceptance and examination and is working positively towards reducing the need for post-acceptance amendments, where feasible.</p>	<p>The Applicant subsequently undertook a targeted consultation to include additional land to facilitate the connection to the planned Weston Marsh B Substation. The Applicant has incorporated this change fully into the DCO Application documents.</p>
Statutory consultation and targeted consultation	<p>The applicant summarised its consultation activities, following its statutory consultation stage (which ran from 24 April to 8 June 2025). Since assessing consultation feedback, the applicant has modified its proposed development and held targeted consultation with a select group of statutory bodies, landowners and nearby residences on 38 proposed amendments. Consultation ran from 24 September to 22 October 2025 on the proposed changes.</p> <p>Post-meeting note: The Inspectorate respectively reminds the applicant to ensure that it clearly distinguishes</p>	<p>The Applicant has set out in the Consultation Report (Doc Ref. 5.1) and its appendices the various consultations and sets out separately the feedback received as part of each consultation stage.</p>

	<p>the consultation phases undertaken and demonstrates how feedback has been taken into account for each phase, within its Consultation Report (see paragraph 026 of the government’s guidance on the pre-application stage for further information).</p>	
<p>Grid connection</p>	<p>The point of connection to the National Grid for the Meridian project is to a new, proposed substation by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET). The substation will form part of NGET’s ‘Grimsby to Walpole Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project’ which will require a separate Development Consent Order (DCO) application.</p> <p>NGET commenced its consultation for Grimsby to Walpole on 18 November 2025, on proposed locations for two substations at Weston Marsh, disclosing the potential locations of the new substations in the process. Consequently, a gap exists between the Order Limits for Meridian and the proposed location of NGET’s substation, which would require an extension to the overhead line to the substation.</p> <p>The Inspectorate queried how the baseline for the newly incorporated land for the cable connection route would be established and whether further surveys would be required. If required for ecological receptors, the Inspectorate questioned whether</p>	<p>The Applicant subsequently undertook a targeted consultation to include additional land to facilitate the connection to the planned Weston Marsh B Substation. The Applicant has incorporated this change fully into the DCO Application documents.</p> <p>The Applicant has relied on survey information from NGET for the additional land parcel in agreement with the relevant stakeholders. This survey information is described within the relevant ES Chapters (Doc Ref. 6.1) and appendices.</p>

	<p>these could be undertaken in relevant seasons prior to an anticipated submission in March 2026.</p> <p>The applicant said it anticipated that some updates to its Environmental Statement would be needed and would review whether any further targeted consultation or additional surveys are required. The applicant added that it is continuing to liaise with NGET with regards to information sharing and desk-based research in relation to the grid connection corridor route.</p> <p>Post-meeting note: The Inspectorate advises that the applicant should ensure the environmental baseline is robust in order to underpin the assessment of effects within (where required) the Environmental Statement, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Water Framework Directive Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment and any other relevant documents. The applicant is advised to seek agreement on baselines for this area with relevant stakeholders and to clearly detail any assumptions made and agreements reached within the Environmental Statement.</p>	
<p>Crown Land</p>	<p>Crown Land was discussed and while Crown Land is near to the grid connection route and Crown Mineral Land is adjacent to some of the solar array areas, the applicant said that the design of the Order Limits seeks to avoid any direct impacts.</p>	<p>The Land and Crown Land Plans (Doc Ref. 2.4) illustrate the extent of the subsoil Crown Minerals Rights at Land Parcel D, with further detail contained within the Statement of Reasons (Doc Ref. 4.1).</p>

<p>Programme Document</p>	<p>The Inspectorate reiterated its advice that the applicant should update its Programme Document to include the latest progress on its programme activities. The Programme Document should also include a section covering the main issues emerging during the pre-application stage and the steps the applicant is taking to resolve or mitigate them. It is helpful to indicate what the significant environmental or built heritage constraints are which require assessment and any agreements reached with statutory parties on the proposed methodology.</p>	<p>The Applicant subsequently updated its Programme Document for submission to the Planning Inspectorate and the Applicant’s website.</p>
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Programme Document Feedback: January 2026

Meridian Solar Farm -s51 Advice Library		
Topic	Programme Document feedback	Applicant’s Response
<p>Programme Document feedback</p>	<p>The applicant supplied the Inspectorate with its programme document on 19 January 2026. The Inspectorate has reviewed the document. It is noted that the applicant has advised that it is preparing an Issues Tracker. The Inspectorate would refer the applicant to advice given on 15 October 2025 and 03 December 2025 and the guidance Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects - GOV.UK</p>	<p>The Applicant has commenced the production of Statements of Common Ground with key stakeholders. These will be submitted into the examination at the required deadlines.</p> <p>Responses to feedback received as part of the Applicant’s formal consultations are set out in the appendices to the Consultation Report (Doc Ref. 5.1). Feedback received as part of technical engagement activities is</p>

		summarised in the respective ES Chapters (Doc Ref. 6.1).
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Meeting: 26 February 2026

Meridian Solar Farm -s51 Advice Library		
Topic	Programme Document feedback	Applicant’s Response
Additional Targeted Consultation	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to ensure that any precedents relied upon in made DCOs for other NSIP applications, in terms of retaining optionality within the dDCO, are like-for-like and fall within the circumstances of the applicant’s proposed development.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to set out clear evidence and reasoning for the inclusion of the proposed new land parcels included within the Order Limits for the grid connection and subject to targeted consultation, including the outcomes of any relevant consultations with National Grid or other statutory bodies that may inform the suitability of the site.</p> <p>The Inspectorate also advised that the application documents should detail the field and desk-based surveys that have been undertaken for the additional land parcel to inform the Environmental Statement and other application documents. This should include any consultation undertaken and any assumptions or limitations applied. If any further surveys are proposed, the anticipated timescales for these should be set out where possible.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the comment by the Inspectorate. Any references to precedent within other DCO decisions is referenced in like-for-like circumstances.</p> <p>The justification for the inclusion of additional land parcels to provide a connection to the Weston Marsh B Substation is set out in the Grid Connection Statement (Doc Ref. 7.5). The feedback received and the Applicant’s response is set out in Appendix L: Additional Targeted Consultation (Doc Ref. 5.1).</p> <p>The Applicant has incorporated the details of the field and desk-based assessments for these additional land parcels into its Environmental Statement.</p>
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>The Inspectorate advised that, in terms of any outstanding agreements with statutory bodies on the scope of assessments needed</p>	<p>On the basis of the engagement undertaken to date, there are no outstanding queries or issues to</p>

	<p>and methodology used, applicants should progress these as far as possible prior to submission of the DCO application. Where any agreements remain outstanding or under discussion, the applicant should clearly highlight this within the application and set out the main issues involved.</p> <p>The Inspectorate further advised that, if the applicant can indicate an anticipated timescale for completion, this will assist both at the acceptance stage and during the examination.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant that the Consultation Report should avoid including unnecessary personal data , as this can result in significant redaction.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to clearly set out in the Consultation Report any regard they have had to the Inspectorate’s s51 advice, and to identify any areas where they have not been able to engage with the Inspectorate’s services during the pre-application stage under the Inspectorate’s 2024 Pre-application Prospectus.</p>	<p>resolve on the scope and methodology of the assessments.</p> <p>The Applicant is progressing Statements of Common Ground with key stakeholders. These will be submitted into the examination at the required deadlines.</p> <p>This Appendix has been prepared to clearly set out how the Applicant has had regard to the Inspectorate’s Section 51 advice.</p>
<p>Land Rights Tracker and Electronic Application Index</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant not to use special characters in the Electronic Application Index, as this can cause issues with the Inspectorate’s website.</p>	<p>The Applicant has amended the Electronic Application Index to remove any special characters.</p>

	<p>The Inspectorate advised that the draft Land Rights Tracker was generally acceptable; however, it would benefit from the inclusion of a column linking each Book of Reference plot to the relevant work no(s) to improve clarity. It would also be helpful to introduce colour-coding to show the stage of discussions, particularly whether Heads of Terms are agreed which will allow the Examining Authority to identify outstanding issues quickly (should the application be accepted for examination). The Inspectorate suggested Keadby Next Generation Power Station Project as an example which clearly sets out positions.</p>	<p>The Applicant has reviewed the feedback from the Inspectorate and the example provided.</p> <p>The Applicant has updated the Land Rights Tracker (Doc Ref. 4.4) to include colour-coding to assist with showing the maturity of discussions. The Applicant will update the Land Rights Tracker (Doc Ref. 4.4) with the corresponding work numbers, however, as the request was provided within a month of submission, this inclusion will be added to the next iteration of the Land Rights Tracker post-submission.</p>
<p>Submission Logistics</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant that it is not ideal to redact entire documents that contain environmentally sensitive information, and that where possible only the necessary sections should be redacted rather than the whole document, where this is feasible, as this supports clarity and usability of the submission.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that the pre-submission letter asks the applicant to confirm whether they are content for the acceptance documents to be published before the acceptance decision has been made.</p>	<p>The Applicant has considered the possibility of redacting the Badger Report (Doc Ref. 6.3). However, due to the spread of sensitive information throughout the report, a redacted copy would not be legible or suitable for publication. The Badger Report (Doc Ref. 6.3) has therefore been submitted as a confidential report.</p> <p>The Applicant has confirmed in writing that it is content for documents to be published prior to the acceptance decision.</p>

