

Shepway Energy Park - EN0110017

SSE Newchurch Solar Limited

Section 51 Advice Log

Version: 11 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 Planning Inspectorate to the applicant, SSE Newchurch Solar Limited and their consultants during the pre-application stage. It will be updated by The Planning 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 Planning Inspectorate's draft record of advice before it is published.

The applicant will use this advice log as the basis for demonstrating regard to s51 advice within the application.

Project name s51 Advice Log - Index	
Date of meeting	Meeting overview
13 December 2025	Project Inception Meeting
4 August 2025	<p>Project Update Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latest Project Update - Draft Document Review - Environmental Update - Non-Statutory Consultation Feedback - EIA Scoping - National Grid Substation Location - AOB <p>Post-meeting advice on the applicant's Programme Document.</p>
28 October 2025	<p>Email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-application prospectus
11 February 2026	Inspectorate comments on the Programme Document

Project name - s51 Advice Library

Topic	Meeting date: 4 August 2025
Latest Project Update	The Inspectorate advised that an Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) statement should be scheduled 3-months before the end of the pre-application period. The AOCM statement should include any comments from relevant local authorities on the adequacy of the applicant’s consultation activities at that stage.
Draft Document Review	The Inspectorate advised that at least 6 weeks notice is required for any draft document submission to ensure that resources can be allocated to carry out effective checks on the documents.
Environment Update	The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should make sure they differentiate between areas of flood zone 3A and 3B.
Non-Statutory Consultation Feedback	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to differentiate in its analysis of consultation feedback the issues raised in relation to the stages of development and any differences between similar topics (such as separating ‘constructions effects’ from ‘operational effects’).
EIA Scoping	<p>The Inspectorate advised that any decision not to undertake Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys for the cable route should be supported by evidence and agreement (or recorded disagreement) from relevant statutory bodies, considering context and recent Secretary of State decisions.</p> <p>Contact details for consultees would have been provided with the scoping opinion and would be the most appropriate to use for contact purposes.</p>
National Grid Substation Location	<p>The Inspectorate advised that sufficient information on the probable location of the proposed National Grid substation should be obtained from National Grid in time for statutory consultation, to ensure members of the public are able to provide informed responses.</p> <p>The applicant responded that its talks with National Grid about its Town and Country Planning Act 1990 application for the new substation were ongoing, with further information on</p>

	<p>the siting options for the substation expected to be available in November.</p>
<p>AOB</p>	<p>The Inspectorate requested that an update on statutory undertakers and the progress of draft protective provisions, the number of landowners involved and progress with voluntary agreements, and whether any crown land and special category land is involved, would be welcomed at the next project update meeting</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that the applicant might find it beneficial to monitor other solar projects currently in examination, to track for example common Examining Authority questions and procedural decisions. For example, Examining Authorities are typically requesting a statement of common ground between applicants and national grid in relation to the siting and consenting of new National Grid substations under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 route.</p>
<p>Programme Document feedback (post-meeting advice)</p>	<p>The Inspectorate has undertaken a review of the applicant's Programme Document (July 2025 edition), which broadly follows the government's guidance on the pre-application stage regarding the expected content of Programme Documents at paragraph 10. The Inspectorate considers that it provides enough detail about the proposed development and the identified risks, as well as a comprehensive overview of the applicant's approach to consultation.</p> <p>However, the applicant should seek to include appropriate detail (and update this information at regular intervals) on the progress made against the main issues for resolution and any agreements reached with relevant statutory bodies on its proposed methodologies and assessment outputs. This information will help keep the Inspectorate and other parties informed of the progress of the application. The applicant should also state whether an Issues Tracker will be used and a Potential Main Issues for Examination document to be submitted with its DCO application. It is also helpful to indicate if the Programme Document has or will be shared with relevant statutory bodies for their views on the proposed programme.</p> <p>Additionally, the 'Key Project Stages and Anticipated Milestone Dates' table should include timescales for consultation on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) with relevant local authorities, the publication of the SoCC and Preliminary Environmental Information Report, any targeted consultation if needed, likely dates for project update meetings with the Inspectorate, any multiparty meetings or the evidence plans process (if these</p>

	<p>are being pursued by the applicant), and for submitting the AOCM statement.</p> <p>It would also be helpful if the Programme Document could indicate whether any non-DCO licences or consents need to be sought, as well as whether the applicant intends to submit a Design Approach Document and Policy Compliance Document with its DCO application.</p>
Topic	Advice (email): 28 October 2025
Pre-application Prospectus	<p>The Inspectorate has advised that, following a six-month review, the Pre-application Prospectus has been updated. Applicants with live projects at the pre-application stage should familiarise themselves with the revised document and consider any implications for their engagement with the Inspectorate.</p> <p>Key updates include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of land and rights negotiations tracking as a core service feature. All applicants are now expected to develop and share a tracker using one of two standard templates, regardless of service tier. • Clarified expectations for applicants ahead of meetings with the Inspectorate. This includes confirmation that the Inspectorate may delay or refuse service where pre-meeting requirements, such as the timely submission of an updated programme or issues tracker, are not met.
Topic	Inspectorate comments on the Programme Document (February 2026 edition)
Programme Document	<p>The applicant supplied the Inspectorate with its updated programme document. The Inspectorate considers that it continues to provide a clear and comprehensive programme timetable of the main events and approach to engagement, including a change to the submission date, which is now expected in February 2027.</p> <p>The Inspectorate notes that the applicant intends to provide draft documentation for review in November/December 2026. The applicant should consider the typical 6-week turnaround for a review and how public holidays and resourcing around these holidays could impact this timeframe. The applicant should also consider allowing time for a post review, draft documents feedback meeting, which should be held in good time ahead of the submission date.</p>

	<p>The applicant should also account for a date for submitting an Adequacy of Consultation Milestone statement to the Planning Inspectorate, to be received three-months before the application is made.</p> <p>In respect of the main issues section, while the applicant has set out a list of topics, it would benefit from some information denoting what the main environmental and/or built heritage constraints are in the area, together with any protected landscapes and the level of Flood Zones, where specific assessment might be needed and / or the methodology and scope of surveys / mitigation to be undertaken, which may need agreement with statutory parties at pre-application. This will assist the Planning Inspectorate and others to understand the general geography of the site and surrounding area against the planned infrastructure, and the extent of issues requiring resolution before the application is submitted. The applicant may wish to review the Programme Document produced by One Earth Solar as a good example.</p>
--	--