

EcoPower Suffolk Solar – EN0110019

Section 51 Advice Log Version: 20 July 2026

This document comprises a record of the s51 advice that has been given by the Planning Inspectorate to the applicant EcoPower Suffolk Limited during the pre-application stage. It will be updated by the Planning Inspectorate after every interaction with the applicant within which s51 advice has been given.

The applicant will always be given the opportunity to comment on the Planning Inspectorate's draft record of the s51 advice given before it is published on the relevant project page on the [Find a National Infrastructure Project website](#).

The role of the advice log at the acceptance stage

Section 55(4) of the PA2008 requires the Planning Inspectorate to consider, amongst other things, the extent to which the applicant has had regard to the s51 advice given by the Planning Inspectorate in connection with the application when deciding if the application can be accepted for examination. Section 51 advice includes:

- advice given about applying for an order granting development consent
- advice given about making representations about an application for an order granting development consent

The applicant will use this advice log as the tool for demonstrating:

- regard to the s51 advice given to the applicant by the Planning Inspectorate
- regard to any s51 advice given to others by the Planning Inspectorate

The applicant will submit a final version of this advice log which demonstrates regard to all s51 given by the Planning Inspectorate at the pre-application stage as part of the application.

EcoPower Suffolk Solar – Applicant meeting index

Date of meeting	Meeting overview
31 January 2025	Inception Meeting Note • The proposed development • Consenting programme • EIA scoping • Land rights • Specific decisions/ follow-up required? • Feedback on the applicant's initial Programme Document (post meeting note)
29 September 2025	General Project update • Additional land • Cable corridor Engagement update • Non-stat consultation feedback • Further engagement following stat con • Stakeholder engagement Environment update • Survey update • Scoping Next steps • Programme Update from PINS on expectation of new guidance
28 October 2025	Email - pre-application prospectus
16 July 2026	Email Advice - Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025
20 July 2026	• Stakeholder engagement update • Programme update • Questions / AOB

EcoPower Suffolk Solar – Log of s51 given to the applicant

Meeting date: 31 January 2025

Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
The proposed development	The Inspectorate asked questions about the site selection and advised the Applicant to explain its approach as to why the project was being treated as a single nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) in its consultation material (in view of the recent High Court judgment in 'Durham County Council and Hartlepool Borough Council v 1 Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and others' [2023] EWHC 1394). The Applicant clarified that the site selection was based on initial considerations regarding the availability of development land close to the Yaxley substation and the degree of built or ecological constraints within the local area. While broad zones for the indicative cable corridors have been mapped, this will be subject to further refinement	

	following the completion of the Applicant's 'feasibility study'.	
Consenting programme	The Inspectorate highlighted the importance of keeping the Programme Document updated at significant points during the pre-application stage and the type of additional detail to be included.	
EIA scoping	The EIA scoping request is expected to be submitted in April or May 2025, with the GIS Shapefile to be provided at least 10 working days before the scoping request is made. The Inspectorate informed the Applicant of its new, published Technical Advice pages on 'Scoping for Solar Projects' and the 'Commitments Register'. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to set up charging schedules with relevant bodies prior to scoping. The Inspectorate asked to be kept informed as the likely date for the Applicant's scoping request becomes further refined, to assist with resourcing requirements. The Inspectorate advised that should multiple and varied options remain under consideration at scoping stage, this may affect the ability of the Inspectorate and consultation bodies to provide detailed	

	comment and may also limit the Inspectorate's ability to agree to scope out aspects/ matters to enable the refinement of the ES. The Applicant acknowledged this point and explained it was currently necessary to retain optionality for the cable route but that where possible, it would refine the options prior to submission of the scoping request.	
Land rights	The Inspectorate stressed the need to manage and agree any protective provisions at an early stage regarding interference with the main railway line and main road, to avoid these becoming difficult examination issues, of which the Applicant was aware. The Inspectorate further advised that the site selection and the refinement of the Order Limits as the project progresses (taking account of relevant statutory consultation feedback and / or mitigation of built or environmental assets) should be reflected in the proposed development's design concept. The Applicant acknowledged this and stated that it was working to a set of design principles and would explain the evolution of the design in a Design Approach Document.	

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?	The Inspectorate also advised the Applicant to keep track of made DCOs for other major solar farms and any standards emerging in respect of protective provisions and the arrangements for securing any post consent matters. The Inspectorate also mentioned its X and LinkedIn posts, which issue a monthly map of all DCO applications listed on its register of projects and the different stages such projects have reached in the DCO process, which the Applicant may find helpful. The Applicant stated that its consultants and legal team were keeping abreast of made DCOs and potential examination issues.	
Feedback on the applicant's initial Programme Document (post meeting note)	Having reviewed the document, the Inspectorate considers that it appropriately covers the expected content as set out in the government's pre-application guidance at paragraph 10. The document provides enough detail about the proposed development, timetable and activities for the pre-application process at this early stage (which is to be supplemented by an Issues Tracker), as well as the Applicant's approach to early	

	engagement with statutory consultees and other parties. It would be helpful, however, if the Applicant could: • include any indicative dates for Project Update Meetings with the Inspectorate in its Pre-application Process Timetable; • include details of any draft application documents that may require a review by the Inspectorate; • explain whether other related non-DCO licences or consents need to be sought and the timescales; • explain whether the Programme Document has or will be shared with relevant statutory bodies (and when) for their views on its proposed programme; and • explain whether it plans to hold any multiparty meetings and / or if evidence plans will be pursued (and when). It would be helpful if the Applicant includes its intention to submit a Design Approach Document in the Programme Document, and whether a Policy and Compliance Document will also be submitted with the application. It would also be helpful if the Applicant could explain, briefly, how the Local Authorities	
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	will input on the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (noting that this may need to be included in a later iteration). The Applicant should then seek to publish its Programme Document on its website, as soon as practicable once its project is launched	
EcoPower Suffolk Solar – Log of s51 given to the applicant		
Meeting date: 29 September 2025		
Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
Project update • Additional land • Cable corridor	The applicant outlined certain evolutions of the design of the proposed development since receiving feedback from parties during the introductory, non-statutory consultation phase. The Inspectorate outlined that any main design changes should be explained in the applicants' design approach document (or equivalent) in how the proposed development has evolved from feedback and how it fits in with the design principles. The applicant should ensure the criteria on design in the National Policy Statements and relevant local policies is addressed in relevant application documents. The	

	applicant may wish to refer to the Inspectorate's published Advice on Design for further information about the typical issues that are likely to be covered at examination. The applicant agreed changes and reasons for changes would be captured in the relevant chapter of the final DCO environmental statement and the design document. The Inspectorate asked what level of feedback the applicant has received from the nearby business park. The applicant was not aware of any feedback from any of those businesses at this point but would capture any feedback received during the different consultation phases. The Inspectorate asked if the additional land will be included as optionality in the statutory consultation or would additional plots be finalised before. The applicant is including the additional land in the scoping boundary for now but is not likely to include the additional land within its statutory consultation. The applicant is seeing how this will bring forward any design related changes for stakeholders. The applicant is not likely to narrow the	
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	boundaries before the statutory consultation phase.	
Engagement update • Non-statutory consultation feedback • Further engagement following statutory consultation • Stakeholder engagement	Resident/Action Groups – the Inspectorate advised the applicant to continue to identify and engage with any action groups and respond to any issues or concerns they may have where feasible or collate common areas of disagreement, as this is likely to assist with a more efficient examination. The applicant confirmed that engagement is ongoing with all necessary stakeholders. In relation to discussions with other parties the Inspectorate advised that sharing and agreeing draft protective provisions with statutory undertakers at the pre-application stage is likely to assist, again, with a more efficient examination and may reduce the time taken during examination to agree such provisions and the number of questions asked by the Examining Authority. Being prepared to provide agreements (i.e. in the form of Statements of Common Ground) at acceptance or examination would assist in this regard. The Inspectorate outlined that it was notified in July 2025 of the White Elm project's withdrawal from the PA2008 process.	

Next steps and programme	The Inspectorate asked the applicant to provide as much detail as possible about the proposed development and the main issues arising from the development, before statutory consultation takes place. Enough detail should be provided in consultation material to enable consultees to give informed responses. The applicant confirmed it was aware of this principle. The Inspectorate also added that it is important to include in the Programme Document, the progress made against the main issues and any agreements reached with statutory parties on the applicant's proposed methodology or particular assessment outputs/ proposed mitigation. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to review the Programme Document produced by the applicant for One Earth Solar, as an example of how the main issues in that case were set out and details about the progress made against these. The applicant asked how often would the Inspectorate like these Programme Documents to be updated? As a guide, the Inspectorate advised that the Programme Document should be updated following each milestone in the pre-application stage (such as post-Scoping, following consultation on the draft SoCC, following statutory consultation and any further, targeted	
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	consultation, and following the draft document service and/ or holding multiparty meetings (where applicable)). The Programme Document is for the applicant to outline its focus on the approach and progress made on consultation (including securing PPAs and SLAs), what the main risks are and how these are being managed, and where input from certain statutory parties, local authorities, and the Inspectorate is needed. Updated Programme Documents assist all parties, particularly statutory consultees, to understand the timescales involved and ensure their contribution is programmed in the pre-application stage at the most effective point. The applicant advised that they will be in touch with regards to the next steps for scoping.	
Update from PINS on expectation of new guidance	The Inspectorate are continuing with the current legislation and procedures until any changes are made. Any updates will be provided when appropriate.	
Email advice: 28 October 2025		
Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given

Pre-application prospectus	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. Key updates include: • 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.	
Meeting date: 16 July 2026		

Topic	S51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
Email Advice - Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025	In light of the amended legal framework which will be introduced from 24 July 2026 by the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, the Planning Inspectorate issued written advice to the applicant on 15 July 2026 requesting for: - evidence within the submitted application in relation to duties under s46 and s48 of the PA2008 to be provided as an appendix to any engagement summary document that the applicant may choose to submit or, where the applicant chooses not to submit such a document, as a discrete document titled 'Section 46 and section 48 information' - evidence within the submitted application in relation to new s55(4)(e) of the PA2008 to be provided in a submission version of this expanded advice log template.	
Meeting date: 20 July 2026		
Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
Stakeholder engagement update	The Inspectorate acknowledged that the applicant has not had the opportunity to	

	meet with the Community Liaison Group (CLG) since the implementation of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (PIA). However, the Inspectorate supports the applicant's approach to statutory consultation and whether this has been appreciated by the CLG. The applicant confirmed that its last meeting with CLG was two weeks prior to the consultation and that it was not seeking to change how consultations are run. The applicant's approach is to proceed with a hybrid consultation report which will include elements of compliancy that links to the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) within a streamlined report that is outcome driven. The applicant has not yet discussed these changes with the CLG. The applicant asked the Inspectorate on whether this was in line with its expectations and whether there were any transitional arrangements that the Inspectorate would like to see the applicant provide. The Inspectorate supports this approach. The Inspectorate advised the applicant that there were two key elements that need to be demonstrated during the acceptance period, which are s46 and s48, and that the applicant should outline this clearly, demonstrating that it has carried this out within its consultation report. The rest of the	
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	consultation report's contents is left for the applicant to demonstrate. Despite this, the Inspectorate expects to see a streamlined report that focuses on outcomes such as how the applicant's design has evolved and how members of the public have contributed to it.	
Programme update	The applicant acknowledged the six-week timeframe for review of the Development Consent Order (DCO) documents within the new guidance and queried the Inspectorate on its preference for when it expects receipt. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to consider that, should the applicant be given substantial feedback on its draft DCO documents, the time will need to be accounted for in the changes to the documents before submission, and so the applicant should work back from the date of submission. The Inspectorate also requests that the applicant gives the Inspectorate plenty of notice of its draft documentation submission, so that resources can be allocated appropriately. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to consider other recent decisions issued on solar farm projects and to gather information with respect to the DCO documentation. Likewise, the applicant should research into queries around specific issues and how it	

	approaches these issues. The applicant should outline particularly unusual elements of its project in comparison to other solar farm projects, of which it would appreciate advice from the Inspectorate on. For instance, to underline specific wording it has seen in other DCOs of which it would appreciate the Inspectorate's opinion on. The Inspectorate also requests the applicant to send its queries to them well in advance so that resources can be put in place. The applicant should also bear in mind that with the introduction of the new guidance and system, practices are likely to change. The Inspectorate would also be able to advise the applicant on this, should it have queries.	
Questions / AOB	The Inspectorate asked the applicant to ensure all its contacts are current and in use. The Inspectorate [incorrectly] gave the applicant a recent example on Pear Tree Hill Solar Farm (post meeting note: correct project was the Connah's Quay Low Carbon Power project) where the examination was delayed due to a Royal Mail issue. There was an issue with Royal Mail's bounce back notification which resulted in the applicant not being made aware that key parties were consulted until after the relevant representation period had closed. The	

	Inspectorate is trying to shorten the pre-examination period of three months where possible, and this may be affected if email contact addresses are not kept up to date. Lastly, the Inspectorate advised the applicant to take note of the emphasis on the Initial Assessment of Principle Issues (IAPi) in the new guidance. The applicant should look to identify these issues as soon as practicable, to give clarity to what issues the applicant has addressed, where it currently stands with regard to the issues outlined, and what issues it deems to be outstanding, and which will need to be discussed during examination. This should tie into the advice the applicant will require from the Inspectorate during the pre-application stage when it submits its draft documents for review. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to submit any further questions to the Inspectorate, should it have any.	
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EcoPower Suffolk Solar – Log of s51 advice given to others		
Person s51 advice given to	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
