

SDC M40 Campus

Section 51 Advice Log Version: 21 July 2026

This document comprises a record of the s51 advice that has been given by the Planning Inspectorate to the applicant (Slough Holdings UK 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.

SDC M40 Campus – Applicant meeting index

Date of meeting	Meeting overview
14 November 2025	Inception Meeting • Pre-application programme document • Stakeholder engagement • EIA scoping - GIS shapefile • EIA scoping - scope of project • EIA scoping - future section 35 direction • Service tier • Fast track procedure • Supplementary components • Draft document review service
21 January 2026	Section 51 Advice - Good Design
21 January 2026	Project Update Meeting: • EIA Scoping • Statutory Consultation • Section 35 • DCO Submission Timeline
27 February 2026	Project Update Meeting: • Consultation • Draft Order Limits • Future meetings and logistics
22 May 2026	Project Update Meeting: • Examples of good practice • Decarbonisation Readiness • Landscape, heritage and design • Order limits and utilities • Compulsory acquisition and land interests • Consultations and local engagement • Policy • Tier Service
15 July 2026	• Email advice - Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025
21 July 2026	Project Update Meeting: • EIA Scoping Opinion

	• ES chapter list and environmental management plans (EMP) • Updated advice pages • Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) baseline • Consenting Body • Project Update Meetings • Issues Tracker
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SDC M40 Campus – Log of s51 given to the applicant

Meeting date: 14 November 2025

Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
Pre-application programme document	The Inspectorate noted that the applicant should make a public-facing version of the Programme Document available, for example on the project website. The Inspectorate also advised that the Programme Document should be shared with relevant statutory parties to enable them to provide comments on the proposed programme.	
Stakeholder engagement	The Inspectorate reiterated that the Programme Document should be shared with statutory bodies and other key stakeholders to seek input on the applicant's proposed programme.	
	The Inspectorate advised that the GIS shapefile should be submitted at least 10 working days before the submission of any EIA scoping request. The Inspectorate also directed the applicant to Advice Note Seven	

	for guidance on scoping requests and GIS shapefile specifications.	
EIA scoping - scope of project	The Inspectorate advised that any EIA scoping opinion would relate only to the proposed development that constituted the NSIP. At that stage, this was the proposed energy centre. The Inspectorate advised that it may not be able to treat a scoping request as valid if the likely significant effects of the proposed energy centre could not be clearly identified.	
EIA scoping - future section 35 direction	The Inspectorate advised that, should a section 35 direction subsequently bring the proposed data centre within the NSIP regime, the resulting development could be materially different from that previously scoped. The applicant may therefore need to undertake a new scoping process.	
Service tier	The Inspectorate advised that, based on the information available at the meeting, the standard service tier appeared appropriate because the proposed energy centre was the only element meeting the threshold of the PA2008. The Inspectorate noted that this view could be reconsidered should circumstances change in the future.	

Fast track procedure	The Inspectorate reminded the applicant that specific requirements would need to be satisfied during the pre-application stage for a project to be considered under the fast track procedure. The applicant was advised to refer to the relevant prospectus. The Inspectorate also advised that eligibility for the fast track procedure would ultimately be determined by the Inspectorate.	
Supplementary components	The Inspectorate advised that information on supplementary components is available in the pre-application prospectus. The applicant was advised to contact the project mailbox if it intended to utilise any supplementary components.	
Draft document review service	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to provide a full draft Development Consent Order alongside draft application documents. The Inspectorate noted that this would assist in understanding how the order would be structured, including the treatment of associated development.	
Meeting date: 27 February 2026		
Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given

Consultation	The Applicant explained it was progressing its proposals for statutory consultation in line with the current legislative framework, whilst also monitoring timescales for implementation of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (PIA). The Inspectorate advised that it understands from Government that the secondary legislation and guidance would not be published before June 2026. The Inspectorate expects for transitional arrangements established by Government to allow for applications prepared under the current legislative framework to be capable of being assessed under any new acceptance test after the PIA provisions commence.	
Draft order limits	The applicant explained that the current draft order limits may change (and extend) as the design is refined. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to ensure that any amendments to the draft order limits relative to the boundary used in the EIA scoping should be explained in the environmental statement (ES). The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should submit a revised GIS shapefile if the boundary is subject to change prior to the applicant's scoping request. In accordance with the Inspectorate's advice note 7, it would	

	require the shapefile 10 working days in advance of the scoping request.	
Future meetings and logistics	The Inspectorate advised that ordinarily it does not hold applicant project update meetings whilst the EIA scoping opinion is under preparation. However, if required by the applicant's programme, it could host a meeting provided that the agenda does not have items related to the EIA and scoping process. As such, a meeting could be held to discuss the draft statement of consultation. The Inspectorate also advised the Applicant to, if granted, send the section 35 direction as soon as possible. Finally, the Inspectorate advised the Applicant to progress the necessary logistical arrangements, as this will support the timely publication of the project website.	
Meeting date: 22 May 2026		
Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
Examples of good practice	The applicant referred to examples of good practice, and the Inspectorate advised that the Planning Inspectorate NSIP project webpage provides examples of projects	

	which address overlapping planning and permitting considerations. The Inspectorate advised that relevant projects can be shared with the applicant as examples where helpful.	
Decarbonisation Readiness	The applicant queried the level of information expected within the application to demonstrate compliance with emerging decarbonisation readiness requirements for environmental permitting and associated guidance. The Inspectorate advised that further discussions with the applicant would be appropriate following adoption of the EIA scoping opinion.	
Landscape, heritage and design	The Inspectorate advised that the Examining Authority is likely to require assessment of long-distance viewpoints. It noted that no specific requirements are set, but early consideration is advised.	
Order limits and utilities	The Inspectorate advised that it would expect a connection statement to be provided. It confirmed that it can review draft documents if the applicant wishes to share examples. The Inspectorate advised that relevant guidance on utility connections should be considered by the applicant.	

Compulsory acquisition and land interests	The applicant provided an update on progress in negotiations with landowners. The Inspectorate advised that land and compulsory acquisition matters should be progressed at an early stage to reduce risk to the programme.	
Consultations and local engagement	The applicant outlined its approach to consultation and pre-application engagement, including whether, in light of anticipated timings around commencement of Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 reforms, it intends to continue with its plans for a statutory consultation and preliminary environmental information report (PEIR). The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should consider the implications for its programme and, where possible, continue to adopt a front-loaded approach to consultation. It advised that early and ongoing engagement with stakeholders should be maintained. The Inspectorate advised that the production of principal areas of disagreement summary statements (PADSS) can be helpful in identifying and progressing key issues. It also advised that an updated issues tracker submitted alongside the application would support clarity on outstanding matters.	

	The Inspectorate advised that consultation should be inclusive and ensure that participants are able to provide feedback in a way that is accessible and comfortable for them. The Inspectorate noted that new guidance following recent reforms is anticipated over the summer and advised that consultation materials and information provided should be proportionate. It advised that the applicant should avoid consultation fatigue by ensuring materials are clear, concise and not overly burdensome. The applicant sought advice regarding which Secretary of State (SoS) would determine the application noting that it is a combined project. The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should engage with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on this matter. It noted that this remains subject to ongoing consideration, and consideration will be given as to whether the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology should also be engaged.	
Policy	The Inspectorate queried whether consideration had been given to whether sections 104 and 105 of the Planning Act 2008 will be engaged and the relevance of	

	the emerging national policy statements (NPS) for data centres. The applicant confirmed that until an NPS for data centres is designated, it will proceed on the basis that the application will be considered under section 104 to the extent that energy NPSs have effect and section 105 in relation to the data centre. This is being kept under review pending progress on preparation of the NPS for data centres. The Inspectorate advised that while a draft national policy statement for data centres is being prepared, there are no defined timelines for its publication and subsequent designation. It advised that where a NPS is designated, information on transitional arrangements would be provided.	
Tier Service	The applicant explained that it proposes to proceed on the basis of the standard tier at this stage. The Inspectorate advised that, should the applicant wish to move to an enhanced tier, they should confirm this in writing to the Inspectorate.	
Meeting date: 15 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: 21 July 2026		
Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
EIA Scoping Opinion	The applicant sought clarification on several matters raised in the EIA Scoping Opinion	

	and explained its proposed approach to addressing other matters. This included: Assessment of retained landfill infrastructure – the Inspectorate advised that where operations are captured in the baseline, they do not need to be assessed as part of the cumulative effects assessment. Consideration should be given to whether there could be changes not captured in the baseline, for example from the proposed new Veolia depot, which may need to be assessed cumulatively. Heat recovery end user – the applicant explained that recovered heat was most likely to be used within the proposed development and that no firm proposals for offsite export had been identified. The Inspectorate advised that this should be made clear in the ES and agreed that an assessment of offsite infrastructure was unlikely to be possible in the absence of a proposal. Hydrogen conversion and connection – the applicant confirmed that the DCO application would not seek authorisation for hydrogen conversion and this would be subject to a separate consenting process; there is a lack of information to establish parameters for the connection. The Inspectorate acknowledged that any	
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	cumulative assessment of offsite connections would therefore be limited. The Inspectorate advised that consultation responses to the EIA scoping had raised the feasibility of future hydrogen connection via Project Union noting the distance of the closest pipeline from the proposed development, and that this matter should be addressed in the DCO application. Offsite connectivity – the Inspectorate advised that the applicant’s proposed approach using parameters-based assessments would be appropriate in line with the Inspectorate’s guidance on the Rochdale Envelope. Future baseline – the Inspectorate advised that the EIA scoping opinion required the applicant to quantify its assertion that the future noise baseline would be similar to the current baseline. The Inspectorate advised that it was satisfied with the applicant’s approach to assess landscape and visual effects using both the current and future baseline and flagged ID 2.2.4 in the EIA scoping opinion, which provides advice on this matter. Abnormal indivisible loads (AIL) – the Inspectorate that provided the ES set out how AIL during construction would be mitigated to avoid likely significant effects, it	
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	was content that traffic and movement remained scope out as an aspect. Reptile survey – the Inspectorate advised that the applicant’s approach to additional reptile survey, which was in line with industry guidance on survey protocols for British herpetofauna was an acceptable approach to establishing the baseline for assessment. Heritage assets – the Inspectorate advised that all heritage assets identified within the final study area should be addressed in the ES. For those where the applicant concludes there would be no effect, it would be acceptable to list these as part of a screening exercise with proportionate justification for screening out.	
ES chapter list and environmental management plans (EMP)	The Inspectorate advised that the applicant’s proposed ES chapter list and list of EMPs to be provided in outline with the DCO application appeared to be comprehensive. The Inspectorate has not identified any additional EMPs that it considers would be required at this stage but advises that this should be kept under review through the applicant’s ongoing engagement with statutory bodies during the pre-application stage.	

Updated advice pages	The Inspectorate advised its advice pages are scheduled to be updated to reflect amendments to the Planning Act 2008 from commencement of relevant provisions of the Planning and Infrastructure Act. The initial updates are scheduled for 27 July 2026 and will include replacement of AN7 EIA: process, preliminary environmental information and environmental statements and AN9 Rochdale Envelope with a new page on Pre-application guidance on EIA.	
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) baseline	The Inspectorate advised that the Government has recently published guidance for developers in relation to BNG for NSIPs, including what must be included in the baseline: What to include in biodiversity net gain baselines for NSIPs - GOV.UK. Land outside of the order limits does not need to be included in the baseline or shown on the BNG boundary plan. Biodiversity units created offsite would need to be registered on the biodiversity gain site register. In relation to the applicant's proposal to demonstrate habitat mitigation and compensation through BNG, a future Examining Authority is likely to want to understand how landscaping and ecological proposals meet the different legislative and policy tests, for example BNG, mitigation or compensation required to mitigate	

	significant residual adverse effects concluded in the ES and/ or mitigation or compensation required under the Habitats Regulations.	
Consenting Body	The Inspectorate advised that, prior to designation of the National Policy Statement, the applicant should continue to engage with MHCLG, should they need to until further notice.	
Project Update Meetings	The Inspectorate advised that, as the project approaches the submission date, it is helpful to have a couple of meetings arranged in advance.	
Issues Tracker	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to make clear in the issues tracker the rationale for why certain issues are identified as red and others as amber, and to clearly explain why some issues are unlikely to be resolved before submission.	

SDC M40 Campus – Log of s51 advice given to others		
Person s51 advice given to	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given

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