

SDC M40 Campus

Section 51 Advice Log Version: 18 September 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

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	
Advice date: DD Month YYYY		
Topic	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given

SDC M40 Campus – Log of s51 advice given to others

Advice date: 11 September 2026

Person s51 advice given to	s51 advice given	Applicant regard to s51 advice given
Guy Cartwright	Dear Mr G Cartwright, I am writing in response to your emails dated 25 August 2026, which raised several points about the Scoping Opinion for the proposed SDC M40 Campus project. I have responded to the points you have raised below. The content of your comments will also be shared with the applicant, and the Inspectorate will advise the applicant to set out how it has had regard to your comments in its application. The purpose of a Scoping Opinion is to provide an applicant who proposes to make an application for an order granting development consent (DCO) with the Secretary of State's opinion as to the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in an environmental statement	

	(ES). The Inspectorate recognises that at the time of the scoping request, it may be necessary to leave certain matters open. For example, details of the proposed development may not have been finalised and, indeed, may not be finalised for some time. Scoping requests should be submitted with sufficient time to allow the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process to inform the final design. As such, the Inspectorate's comments in the Scoping Opinion are not intended to act as comprehensive technical advice regarding all environmental matters. The Inspectorate encourages applicants to engage with relevant statutory bodies to share environmental information in order to seek agreement on environmental assessments and matters. In addition, the ES should be prepared in line with best practice and case law. More generally, you may find useful information about the stages of a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP), how members of the public can get involved, the role of environmental impact assessment (EIA) and how applicants should take into account environmental information and feedback received from stakeholders in our advice notes.	
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	1. Noise assessment The applicant's Scoping Report proposed to scope in noise effects during the operational phase of the proposed development, including a detailed impact assessment in accordance with British Standard (BS) 4142:2014+A1 2019 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound. The host local authority (Buckinghamshire Council) agreed that noise should be scoped into further assessment. The Inspectorate would expect the applicant to engage with relevant statutory bodies, including Buckinghamshire Council's environmental health officer, about the detailed method of the assessment. The applicant's Scoping Report described optionality remaining in the proposed development design, including for the energy generation technology. The Scoping Opinion set out the Inspectorate's comments that options should be narrowed or, if flexibility was retained at the point of DCO application, that the ES should include assessments on a worst-	
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	case scenario for each remaining technology. In accordance with the Scoping Opinion, the ES must confirm the final study area for the noise assessment by reference to relevant guidance and the applicant must make effort to agree it with relevant statutory bodies. The final study area should be defined to include all sensitive receptors that could be subject to likely significant effects from operational noise. The Inspectorate will pass your comments regarding the 2011 Defra guidance <i>"Procedure for the Assessment of Low Frequency Noise Complaints"</i> to the applicant. 2. Water resources and Source Protection Zones Beaconsfield Town Council stated that the proposed development site overlies a Principal Aquifer and lies within Source Protection Zone 3 (SPZ3). The applicant's Scoping Report acknowledges this environmental constraint in paragraph 6.5.18 and proposes to assess effects from potential contamination of groundwater (including aquifers and SPZ) during	
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	construction and operation (see Table 36 and Table 37 of the Scoping Report). Beaconsfield Town Council's scoping consultation response was appended to, and forms part of, the Scoping Opinion. The Inspectorate expects applicants to explain in the ES how scoping consultation responses have been taken into account in preparation of the ES. 3. Cumulative effects The Scoping Opinion referred to Heathrow Airport expansion, East West Rail and High Speed 2 as these projects were flagged by the host local authority (Buckinghamshire Council) in its scoping response as nationally significant projects. The applicant's Scoping Report set out the proposed approach to cumulative effects assessment, which follows the Inspectorate's guidance in the Advice Note on Cumulative Effects. The approach would include identification of a long and short list of other existing and approved projects across development types and consenting regimes. The Inspectorate advise the applicant to consider the projects you have identified as part of its work.	
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	4. Expected employment figures The Scoping Opinion requires the ES to provide an estimate of direct employment with occupational breakdown, and separately indirect or induced roles in the supply chain. It requires the ES to explain any assumptions made in the calculation of these estimates. 5. Engagement with Affinity Water and Hedgerley Parish Council As of 11 September 2026, the Inspectorate has not received a response from Affinity Water to the scoping consultation. If a response is received it will be published on the project page on the Find a National Infrastructure Project website. It will also be forwarded to the applicant for consideration. The Inspectorate will pass your comments about proactive engagement with Hedgerley Parish Council during the pre-application process to the applicant. 6. Ultrafine particulate and ammonia The Inspectorate will share your comments about the potential for emissions to air from ultrafine particulate matter and/ or ammonia with the applicant. The Scoping	
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	Opinion requires confirmation in the ES as to whether selective catalytic reduction (SCR) abatement would be required and, if so, an assessment of any likely significant effects arising from its use. It states that effort should be made to agree the scope and methodology of air quality modelling for all relevant pollution sources with relevant statutory bodies, and this would include consideration of ammonia as a by-product of the SCR where required. Prior to operation of the energy centre, the applicant would also require an environmental permit from the Environment Agency, which would set controls in relation to emissions to air. The applicant's Scoping Report proposed to scope in assessment of particulate matter (PM) (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) from various sources during construction and operation. The Scoping Opinion was adopted on that basis. The Inspectorate will share the content of your emails with the applicant for consideration. The Inspectorate will not share your contact details with the applicant. If you wish to raise your concerns directly with the applicant, please contact them using the details available on the developer's website, which is	
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	accessible here and from the project page of the Find a National infrastructure Project website. A summary of the Inspectorate's response to you will also be published on the project page as section 51 advice. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. Yours sincerely, Environmental Services Team Planning Inspectorate	
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