

Eastern Green Link 3 and Eastern Green Link 4 EN0210003

National Grid Electricity Transmission

Section 51 Advice Log

Version: 16 March 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 Inspectorate to the applicant (National Grid Electricity Transmission) and their consultants during the pre-application stage. It will be updated by the 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 Inspectorate's draft record of advice before it is published.

The applicant will use this Advice Log as the basis for demonstrating regard to section 51 advice within the application.

Project name s51 Advice Log - Index	
Date of meeting	Advice overview
23 May 2024	Inception Meeting (published as separate document)
16 September 2024	Project Update meeting (published as separate document)
30 October 2024 - Email	Feedback on Programme Document
01 April 2025	Update on proposed Statutory Consultation Preparation
05 June 2025 - Email	Applicant website
04 September 2025	Post Statutory Consultation Project Update Meeting
27 October 2025	Post meeting advice
27 October 2025	Update to Pre-application Services
25 February 2026	Project Update meeting

Project name -s51 Advice Library

Topic

Meeting date: 30 October 2024

Email containing feedback on Programme Document

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 that it satisfactorily covers the expected content as set out in the government’s pre-application guidance at paragraph 10, namely:

- “the date the applicant intends to submit their application
- a comprehensive timetable of the applicant’s pre-application process, the main events with dates and milestones demonstrating how the pre-application process will be completed (using the maximum target of 2 years as a benchmark)
- the applicant’s view on the main issues for resolution and activities they will undertake to address those
- the applicant’s proposals for engaging with statutory consultees and local authorities during the pre-application period and any intended financial support agreements, such as Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs)
- the applicant’s identification of risks to achievement of the pre-application stage and the process by which these risks are tracked and managed
- cross references to the SoCC required by [section 47 of the Planning Act](#)”.

The Programme Document provides enough detail about the proposed development, timetable and activities for the pre-application process, as well as the applicant’s approach to engagement with statutory consultees and other parties. It would be helpful, despite the application being at an early stage, if the applicant provided a clearer estimate for which quarter in 2026 the application is currently intended to be submitted in. It would also be helpful if the applicant included a better indication of activities that will be undertaken to track and manage risks in the next iteration of its document.

Topic	Meeting date: 01 April 2025
Programme Document	<p>The Inspectorate queried the applicant on the publishing of its next iteration of the Programme Document and the applicant confirmed that it will be publishing in approximately two weeks. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to include regard to the responses on the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) from the local authorities in the Programme Document.</p> <p>The Inspectorate also advised to include pictures and maps within the Programme Document to help understand the context, the proposed route, optionality and order limits. It was also suggested that a map be included to show where the project crosses between the England and Scotland border.</p> <p>The Inspectorate also advised to include the consultation materials being used for the statutory consultation in the programme document with the hyperlinks for easy access.</p>
Transboundary Screening	<p>The Inspectorate updated the applicant that it will be undertaking the transboundary screening and will update the applicant before it intends to start its Statutory Consultation in May 2025 so that applicant can go to European countries, if identified, at the same time as statutory consultation.</p>
New Flood Risk and coastal erosion data from EA	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant that it should get advice from their flood risk advisors regarding the new national flood and coastal erosion risk information from the Environment Agency (EA) to consider any implications before the applicant commences statutory consultation.</p>
Assessments	<p>The Inspectorate advised to consider the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) Regulations 2023 regarding the assessment of PM_{2.5}.</p> <p>The Inspectorate also highlighted the requirement of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) to further Protected National Landscapes and advised the applicant to demonstrate how the applicant has considered this when submitting the proposed application.</p>
NSIP Commitments register / S42 documents	<p>The applicant questioned if the Commitment Register should be submitted at the s42 stage and whether the Inspectorate would like to receive it all in the bundle or separately to which the Inspectorate confirmed that the information sent to the Inspectorate should be the same as sent to the statutory consultees. The Inspectorate to confirm whether it needs the information in the spreadsheet format.</p>

River Transport Option Assessment	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to ensure there is enough information in the PEIR and it is progressed enough to have consultation on it, considering whether further consultation is required and recommended seeking advice from the statutory consultees on this.
Cumulative and combined assessments	The Inspectorate advised the applicant that that there has been, in relation to some cases, a conflict between the Natural England and Inspectorate's tiering of cumulative and combined assessments, which if not explored and addresses can take up a lot of examination time and it would be beneficial if the applicant can agree the baseline positions before it submits the application.
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AOCM)	The applicant questioned whether it would be appropriate to submit the AOCM document in Q1 of 2026 with anticipated submission in summer 2026. The Inspectorate confirmed that the guidance is to submit the AOCM three months before the anticipated submission date and it would be happy to have it early, but it should include statement from the local authorities confirming the consultation was adequate. The Inspectorate also advised to inform the local authorities that it will be submitting this information to the Inspectorate.
Electronic Application Index	The applicant queried if the Inspectorate still need the electronic application index at the submission of the application to which the Inspectorate confirmed that it is still required to be submitted.
AI use guidance	The applicant asked whether there was any guidance on the use of AI and the Inspectorate signposted to some published guidance and suggested having this as a standing agenda item in future meetings.
GIS Shapefile	The applicant queried whether it should submit the GIS Shapefile again to the Inspectorate as it has changed since last submitted at the scoping stage, to which the Inspectorate confirmed that the applicant should only submit this once the project is finalised with changes prior to the submission of the application.
Draft Documents	The applicant confirmed that draft documents will be submitted next year, and the Inspectorate advised that the draft documents should only be submitted once they are to a satisfactory standard. The applicant also queried whether draft documents should be shared with the statutory consultees. The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should consider sharing the draft documents with the stakeholders. The guidance is set out in the pre-application prospectus.

Topic	Email date: 05 June 2025
Applicant Website	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant that on its website the Programme Document was under a heading of 'PINS documentation' and advised the applicant that this could be renamed to encourage other parties using the website to engage with the document.</p>
Topic	Meeting date: 04 September 2025
Draft documents	<p>The Inspectorate advised that the draft documents should be substantially complete to enable meaningful feedback and should be submitted in a single batch. The applicant is planning to submit the draft documents in April 2026, but this can change based on documents readiness.</p> <p>The Inspectorate suggested applicant to provide a list of statement of common ground documents to be submitted along with the document status with draft documents. The applicant noted this request but noted that this would be subject to stakeholder agreements. A review meeting may be arranged after the draft documents review if requested by the applicant.</p>
Programme Document	<p>The Inspectorate advised that in relation to future meetings leading up to submission, that these be listed in the programme document so that they can be scheduled ahead of time. It was requested that it is helpful for the applicant to submit a tracked changed version of the programme document when it is updated.</p>
Issues Tracker	<p>The applicant shared their issues tracker with the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate recommended that the applicant consider including a RAG colour code, which corresponds with the tracker i.e. Green, Amber and Red, which confirms the rating of the issue, the applicant confirmed that they will update accordingly.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that the tracker will not be published on the website.</p>
HRA process	<p>The Inspectorate advised applicant to look at the North Sea Offshore Wind Farm (OWF) applications submitted to Secretary of State (SoS) in the last year. The applicant can see what matters were discussed and the outcome before it submits the DCO application. The applicant was advised to look at different OWF's to see how the developers have approached HRA mitigation and compensation and SoS's responded as a result.</p>

Consultation report and ES	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to document the host authority changes clearly in the Consultation report. It should also be noted and clarified in the ES that scope of the application remains unchanged.
Hedgerow Assessments	The Inspectorate confirmed that categorising all hedgerows are important is likely to be acceptable as baseline classification, noting that this should in theory provide a worst-case scenario. The Inspectorate did however advise for the applicant to consider how this approach to the baseline interacts with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to clearly explain the hedgerow survey limitations especially where stretches of hedgerow surveyed have not be surveyed. In relation to an example of a hedgerow assessment, the applicant was advised that this had been submitted on a number of applications such as the Cambridge Wastewater DCO.
Agricultural Land	The applicant queried, following the issuing of the scoping opinion, what further information the Inspectorate would require to scope out temporary loss of agricultural land during the maintenance phase. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to clearly demonstrate and provide information on the likely maintenance activities that would be carried out. Applicant was advised to ensure DCO drafting matches in relation to activities described in the ES to avoid ambiguity. Enough details should be provided to demonstrate that effects are insignificant.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	The Inspectorate advised that the BNG regulations may evolve until submission and applicant was asked to be prepared to explain how its matrix aligns. The Inspectorate suggested having this as a standing agenda item in future meetings as this was a matter that both the applicant and the Inspectorate would need to consider as new guidance is published.
AI user guidance	The Inspectorate confirmed no changes to guidance and suggested having this as a standing agenda item in future meetings.
Topic	Email date: 27 October 2025
United Nations Convention on the Laws of the SEA (UCLOS) and the Section 81 exemptions in the Marine and	The applicant set out in its presentation that in its view, under the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) and s81 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA), cable installation beyond 12 nautical miles (NM) is exempt from requiring a marine licence and that the deemed marine licence (DML) within the development

Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA)	<p>consent order (DCO) would be structured to reflect licensable activities within and outside of 12 NM.</p> <p>The Inspectorate deems that the applicant should seek its own legal advice on the drafting of the deemed marine licence. However, regardless of the consenting strategy, the Environmental Statement should assess any likely significant effects arising from the installation of the cable as part of the proposed development, including cumulative effects as relevant.</p>
lessons learnt from other DCOs using PINS commitments register template	<p>There are no clear lessons learnt as the component has not been included in applications for a sufficient period of time. The applicant however should ensure that as many securing mechanisms are in place as possible and where these are not in place, the applicant should be clear in providing justifications and reassurances that these are realistically able to be secured for confidence to be had in the measure. The Inspectorate would encourage the applicant to follow published guidance and therefore submit the commitments register as a separate appendix to the ES.</p>
lessons learnt to achieve proportionality and avoid repetition between documents	<p>As noted above, this register is a relatively recent addition to applications and therefore whilst unable to identify lessons learnt, the Inspectorate encourages the applicant to consider the use of cross referencing to avoid duplication but also discuss approaches with the parties responsibility for using and discharging measures and requirements to which the documents relate. Consideration of who will be using the documents, how and when should inform the drafting.</p>
Topic	Email date: 27 October 2025
Pre-application Prospectus update	<p>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>As an applicant 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

	<p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarified expectations of applicants when preparing to interact with the Inspectorate at meetings – including clarified rights for the Inspectorate to delay or refuse service where pre-meeting expectations are not upheld e.g. an updated programme document or issues tracker is not provided, on time, to inform a meeting agenda
Topic	Meeting date: 25 February 2026
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AOCM)	The Inspectorate advised that it would be preferable for the AOCM to be submitted concurrently with the draft documents to support an efficient review process. However, it is recognised that programme constraints may limit the ability to achieve this alignment.
Targeted consultation/ Consultation Report	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to clearly document the forthcoming targeted consultation within the Consultation Report, including clarification of any local authority boundary or responsibility changes occurring during that period and stakeholder engagement. The Inspectorate also reminded the applicant to re-run the GIS shapefile, considering land parcel changes, to ensure that no statutory consultees are omitted.
DCO submission	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to reconsider an August submission, as it overlaps with the school summer break and may create resourcing challenges for the Inspectorate and some local authorities. The Inspectorate iterated the need to keep the Inspectorate updated on the potential date nearer the time. It also reiterated the need to inform/update relevant Local Authorities and stat bodies on the applicants anticipated submission date.
Review of reports	The Inspectorate recommended that the applicant review the most recent recommendation reports and decisions made by the Secretary of State on projects when considering their own strategies. The applicant confirmed that this approach is already being undertaken.

Issues Tracker	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to include anticipated timeframe of resolution of the issues with statutory parties/ stakeholders which will help the appointed Examining authority during Examination.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	The Inspectorate advised that in the absence of published guidance for NSIPs on BNG, that the applicant should seek to adhere to the latest draft guidance in the preparation of the application.
In-combination assessments/ HRA	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to seek agreement with Natural England on issues such as assessment of waterbird assemblage in addition to individual species and to continue recognising and proactively managing these matters.</p> <p>The Inspectorate requested a concise overview of applicants HRA position at the next project update meeting. Additionally, Inspectorate advised to ensure that HRA is procedurally robust. For example, ensuring that an assessment of likely significant effect does not rely on mitigation to rule out effects. Mitigation should be applied at stage two in assessing adverse effects on integrity.</p>
Land rights tracker	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to provide an issues tracker alongside the land rights tracker, noting that the two documents are interdependent. It also requested that the land rights tracker reflects the parcels of lands as identified within the draft BoR, when these are submitted for feedback.
Letter of No Impediment (LoNI)	The applicant queried whether the LoNI could be submitted during the examination rather than at application. The Inspectorate advised that providing a transparent position at application would clarify when consents and licences are likely to be agreed. Updates should then be provided during the examination on matters resolved and outstanding.
Environmental Mitigation and Commitments Register (EMCR)	<p>The Inspectorate advised that it is preferred that the REAC is submitted as standalone document and not as an appendix to any document. This is because it is a standalone document which cross refers across the application and is often updated throughout the examination.</p> <p>The applicant is reminded that during examination the statement of common ground will be frequently revised and therefore the applicant should consider submitting the outline</p>

	management plans and statements of common ground as standalone documents.
Structure of the Environmental Statement (ES)	The Inspectorate was content for each technical chapter to not include a full planning policy section but that this information should be included and cross-references within the wider ES.
Decommissioning	The applicant set out that decommissioning effects of the proposed development were to be address in the offshore EIA chapters but not the onshore EIA chapters. The Inspectorate advised that the EIA should demonstrate the likelihood on significant effects during decommissioning and any mitigation in place before scoping this out of the ES.
Transboundary effects	In response to the applicant's query, the Inspectorate advised the applicant to justify in the application documentation where transboundary effects have not been assessed. This should be based on the absence of transboundary effects.
Construction scenarios in ES chapters	In response to the applicant's query regarding the onshore ES chapter not assessing alternative construction scenarios, the Inspectorate advised that the assessment should demonstrate the realistic worst-case scenario for each identified impact has been assessed.
Ornithology	The Inspectorate confirmed, following an update on matters pertaining to HRA and Red-throated diver, that in the absence of agreement of conclusions on adverse effects on integrity with SNBCs, that including a without prejudice outline plan (e.g. a vessel management plan, construction environmental management plan or similar) to secure a potential seasonal restriction mitigation measure would be suitable. This matter could then be examined by the appointed examining authority.
AI guidance	The Inspectorate has emailed applicant the updated Inspectorate AI guidance which can be found here: Use of artificial intelligence in casework evidence - GOV.UK Procedural Guide: Planning appeals – England - GOV.UK