

Morven Hawthorn Pit Grid Connection Project

Section 51 Advice Log Version: 23 April 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 Morven Offshore Wind 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
26 June 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome and introductions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Section 51 advice b) Security and protection of information policy 2. M3 Portfolio, Morven project overview & MHPGC 3. Post EIA Scoping key activities 4. Land Update 5. Programme Document and Issues Tracker 6. Administrative aspects 7. AOB
29 October 2025	Programme document review and update to pre-application prospectus
23 April 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme 2. Consultation 3. Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker 4. Protected Provisions 5. Pre app prospectus 6. Next steps

Project name - s51 Advice Library

Topic

Meeting date: 26 June 2025

Marine Licence

The applicant told the Inspectorate that it is having conversations with Marine Directorate: Licensing Operations Team and the Marine Management Organisation regarding the consents and approach to EIA in Scottish waters, alongside the works located within English waters to be consented under the Planning Act 2008. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to continue consulting with the bodies to avoid contradicting conditions and to give some certainty about the overall project delivery.

DCO Process

The Inspectorate informed the applicant that whilst there is a statutory timescale for the development consent order (DCO) process, there is ambition from the government to shorten the timescales where possible. The Inspectorate advised that whilst this may not apply to this project it may still be helpful to make stakeholders aware of this to aid with their own resource planning.

Evidence Plans

The applicant told the Inspectorate it will be holding evidence plan meetings (Steering Group and Expert Working Groups) as part of the evidence plans process and it would like the Inspectorate's engagement. The Inspectorate confirmed that under the standard tier it would be able to attend up to five evidence plan meetings in an observational capacity. These would be in addition to the six meetings per annum allowed for in the standard tier service. Any meetings not included in the programme document would need six weeks' notice. More information about this is available in the evidence plan section of the pre-application prospectus.

Breeding Season Bird Surveys

The Inspectorate advised the applicant that Natural England often prefer two consecutive years of breeding season bird surveys.

Post Meeting Note: The applicant confirmed that it has completed surveys for breeding birds in the 2023 and 2025 breeding seasons. The applicant will seek to agree with the Expert Working Group as part of the Evidence Plan Process that the use of two non-consecutive years affords a representative baseline. A similar approach will be taken with the applicant's wintering bird surveys.

Crown Land	<p>The Inspectorate asked whether there was any Crown Land at the proposed landfall sites.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note: The applicant has identified a parcel of Crown Land within the Scoping Red Line Boundary. As the project seeks to reduce optionality of sites, the applicant will present a Crown Land plan should this identified parcel remain within the selected landfall and selected draft Order Limits for the application.</p>
Programme Document	<p>The applicant questioned whether the Inspectorate would review a draft version of the programme document or just receive the final copy. The Inspectorate advised the draft programme document can be submitted to the Inspectorate for comments ahead of being published on the applicant’s website. The Inspectorate confirmed that the programme document is an iterative document which the applicant should update at key milestones.</p> <p>The applicant informed the Inspectorate that the issues tracker would be provided following planned scoping workshops.</p> <p>Post meeting note: In addition to providing comments on the draft programme document, the Inspectorate also refers the applicant to the ‘Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects’ published guidance for full information on producing their programme document.</p>
Timescales	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant that when it comes to giving key dates or submission dates for the project, to give a specific month as opposed to a quarter.</p>
Topic	Programme Document Review: 29 October 2025
Programme Document	<p>The Inspectorate notes that the draft programme document is broadly compliant with the Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects - GOV.UK.</p> <p>In terms of further information within the document, the Inspectorate would find it helpful for the timeframes for the submission of the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone and draft document review to be provided.</p> <p>Also, the Inspectorate notes that only one project update meeting has been scheduled before the proposed application submission date. It would be helpful to have some indication of when other project update meetings will be requested to</p>

	<p>enable the Inspectorate to deploy resources effectively. Similarly it would also be helpful to list any future meetings with key stakeholders to enable those parties with their own resourcing.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advises the applicant to continue to follow the information provided in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus - GOV.UK</p> <p>The Inspectorate welcomes the intention to provide future iterations of programme document with an updated Issues Tracker throughout the pre-application period. In addition, the Inspectorate notes that the applicant will be aware that one of the mandatory components of the pre-application service as set out in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus, is demonstrating regard to advice. As such this should be clearly reflected in the application documents.</p> <p>The Inspectorate confirms that, once finalised, the applicant must ensure that the Programme Document is hosted and maintained on the applicant's website.</p>
<p>Update to Pre-application Prospectus</p>	<p>Important information about updates to our pre application services</p> <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 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 • clarified expectations of applicants when preparing to interact with the Inspectorate at meetings – including clarified rights for the

	<p>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.</p>
Topic	Meeting Date: 23 April 2026
Programme	<p>The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should clearly distinguish the Scottish elements of the proposed development from the English elements within the application documents. The applicant confirmed that this would be explained in the submission.</p> <p>The Inspectorate noted that several applications have recently progressed through the process and advised the applicant to review more recent Development Consent Orders, including Scottish projects with English grid connections.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to update its programme documentation with the intended submission date once confirmed.</p> <p>The applicant explained that it intends to undertake consultation even if legislative changes occur. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to monitor updates to relevant guidance.</p>
Consultation	<p>The applicant confirmed that the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) for the local authority is being prepared. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to remain aware of local community demographics when planning engagement activities.</p>
Land rights and negotiations tracker	<p>The applicant asked how much detail the Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker needed. The Inspectorate advised the documents should contain as much detail as possible, including the type of land and the status of negotiations.</p> <p>The applicant asked whether the tracker is published. The Inspectorate advised that it is an internal document.</p> <p>The Inspectorate asked whether there are any issues with access to land for survey work. The applicant advised that all landowners are positively engaged. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to notify it promptly if this position changes.</p>
Protected Provisions	<p>The Inspectorate asked about the need for protective provisions. The applicant advised that several stakeholders</p>

	<p>may require them, including National Grid, the Environment Agency and the lead local flood authority. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to where possible, agree with the protected parties the Protective Provisions before submitting the application.</p>
<p>Pre app prospectus</p>	<p>The Inspectorate asked whether the applicant intends to submit draft documents as part of the standard tier. The applicant advised that it may do so and would consider this further.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that if the applicant intends to submit draft documents a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) should be submitted for review. The applicant advised that it submitted its HRA Stage 1 Screening to Marine Directorate: Licensing Operations Team (who consulted NatureScot), and also to Natural England and received comments from both. The applicant advised that as part of its formal consultation on its Preliminary Environmental Information Report, it will also be publishing a draft HRA Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment, and a Marine Protected Area/Marine Conservation Zone Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report.</p> <p>The Inspectorate noted that Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) becomes mandatory for all NSIP applications submitted on or after November 2026, with a 10% net gain requirement. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to follow BNG advice and that documentation at submission, including the Environmental Statement and HRA should clearly differentiate between BNG enhancement measures and any mitigation measures.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that the issues tracker should be updated regularly throughout pre-application and should help form the basis for discussion with the Planning Inspectorate and with stakeholders.</p>
<p>Next steps</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to make full use of the standard tier of pre-application services that is available to them.</p>