



Expansion of Heathrow Airport (Third Runway)

Section 51 Advice Log Version: 14 July 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 (Heathrow Airport 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.

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Project name - s51 Advice Library	
Topic	Meeting date: 4 June 2025
Use of scoping addendum to supplement the scoping report of 2018	The applicant received a scoping opinion for the proposed development in 2018. Further design changes were made prior to a pause in project design in 2020. The applicant confirmed that it now intends to proceed with the application. It explained that the proposal has not changed significantly since the 2018 Scoping Report, although noted that the proposed draft Order Limits have been amended. The applicant confirmed that it intends to submit an addendum to the 2018 scoping report in July 2025 to reflect the revised proposals, current legislation, policy, guidance and assessment methodologies. The addendum would also be informed by engagement undertaken since the 2018 Scoping Report. The applicant highlighted that a scoping addendum approach was employed for the proposed Wylfa Newydd Nuclear Power Station. The Inspectorate agreed that an addendum to the scoping report is acceptable in principle, and that it had accepted such an approach previously for Wylfa Newydd, but noted that it had also advised against the approach elsewhere. The Inspectorate advised that when determining whether an addendum approach is suitable, the applicant should consider the scale and complexity of changes and the resultant volume of material. It advised that the larger the addendum, the higher the potential for confusion and queried whether a standalone scoping would be easier to understand. The applicant confirmed that in its view the changes since the 2018 scoping report are not sufficient to warrant a new standalone scoping report. The Inspectorate advised that if the applicant decides to implement an addendum based approach, then the combination of the original scoping report and opinion, and the scoping addendum should ensure that there is absolute clarity for the Inspectorate and consultation bodies regarding the changes to the proposed development, the scope of assessment and the basis for the proposed scope. It advised that if the scoping report addendum is difficult to understand or to read across with the previous scoping report and opinion, then it may not be able to agree to some matters.

	The Inspectorate advised that the addendum should reflect the structure of the original scoping report to provide consistency and make the information easy to access for all stakeholders. It advised that a summary table at the start of the scoping report addendum would be useful to identify the changes and how they affect certain aspects / matters. The addendum should clearly set out all relevant changes including but not limited to changes to the proposed development, the baseline (and future baseline taking into account projections), the legislative and policy context, relevant guidance, and case law. It should clearly set out which parts of the original scoping report remain valid and those which no longer apply. For each change identified, the addendum should clearly explain and justify whether this results in a change in the proposed scope, and what the proposed scope therefore is. The Inspectorate explained that the scoping opinion will generally focus on the areas of change, however the opinion may also address other matters depending on the information provided, the latest understanding of the project and any comments received from consultation bodies.
Consultee List for Scoping	The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (EIA) Regulations 2017 require the SoS to consult with bodies prescribed in the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) (APFP) Regulations. The APFP Regulations were amended in April 2024 by the Miscellaneous Provisions (MP) Regulations 2024. The transitional provisions state that the revised APFP Regulations do not apply to any proposed application for an order granting development consent where the applicant has started to consult under section 42 (s42) of the Planning Act 2008 before 30 April 2024. The applicant undertook statutory consultation under s42 between June and September 2019. The Inspectorate advised that for the purpose of preparing and adopting a scoping opinion, it would therefore identify statutory consultation bodies for the latest red line boundary applying the APFP Regulations <u>not</u> amended by the MP Regulations 2024. It noted that since the original scoping consultation body list was compiled, some of the bodies may have changed due to boundary changes or the abolition/ creation of new bodies. It also noted changes to the red line boundary

	or the likely effects of a revised proposal could result in the identification of new consultation bodies. The Inspectorate asked if the applicant intends to submit a Regulation 8 notification alongside the scoping report addendum. It explained that in the absence of a notification, the applicant would not be provided with a Regulation 11 list of consultation bodies with contact details, although confirmed that the consultation bodies names would be identified in the scoping opinion. The applicant confirmed it would inform the Inspectorate of its decision in due course.
Topic	Update to Pre-application Prospectus
Update to Pre-application Prospectus	IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT UPDATES TO OUR PRE-APPLICATION SERVICES 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. 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. Please note in particular: - 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 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: 8 December 2025
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Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	The Inspectorate informed the applicant that, on past applications, being clear on where enabling or associated works permitted outside of the DCO application affect the capacity of the airport, and how this in turn impacts the baseline, should be identified in the EIA.
Scoping opinion	The Inspectorate highlighted that health stood out in the scoping consultation responses as a key matter, particularly for local authorities. It noted that health is a complex matter for assessment and that, as set out in the scoping opinion, this matter should be discussed further with consultation bodies.
Assessment methodologies	The Inspectorate recommended that where agreement is not reached on assessment methodologies, this should be clearly set out in application documents. Understanding both sides of the argument is useful for the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate also highlighted that disagreements on methodologies can have a significant impact on the examination and therefore urged the applicant to seek agreements with relevant parties to support as smooth an examination as possible. The Inspectorate advised that socio-economic matters in the Gatwick application were disputed by a number of parties due to differing opinions on assessment methodology and assessment conclusions. The Inspectorate encouraged the applicant to be proactive with parties that may raise issues, to avoid the need for these matters to be resolved during the examination. The Inspectorate suggested that even if agreement is not reached, undertaking the work before examination would still be beneficial. Post-meeting note: The Inspectorate notes that the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) guidance on social impact assessment was published post-adoption of the scoping opinion and is available here: Placing people at the heart of Environmental Impact Assessment: ISEP launches new guide on Social Impact Assessment.
Baseline Data	The applicant asked the Inspectorate if it had any comments on it updating their baseline biodiversity data and whether reflecting this within an issues tracker is advised. The Inspectorate confirmed that tracking such issues is useful for understanding potential examination matters. It advised that

	it is important that the applicant demonstrates how it has had regard to interest groups requests for additional survey work. The Inspectorate emphasised that securing agreements with the statutory advisors is critical, as unresolved issues would need to be considered during the examination.
Primary Service: Issue Tracker Template	The applicant asked the Inspectorate if the purpose of the “Issue Tracker” was only to reflect environmental issues or whether it should also reflect non-environmental issues. The Inspectorate advised the applicant that it should include all issues that arise during pre-application, which are of significance to the delivery of the proposed application. However any matters relating to compulsory acquisition or land rights should be reflected within the “Land Rights Tracker” and if there is an inter-relationship between these matters, the applicant should signpost accordingly between these components for any future reader to understand.
Programme Document Post-meeting note	The Adequacy of Consultation Milestone will need to be programmed into the timetable for submission. It is helpful if this is provided to the Planning Inspectorate at least three months prior to submission. The Development Consent Order anticipated submission date will need to specify a month rather than a quarter date. It is advised that the programme document reflects the relevant local planning authorities with whom the applicant has Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) and/ or is discussing PPAs. PPAs may be structured to include joint working arrangements with other local authorities and/ or part of the NSIP process e.g. pre-application stage, with the view to discuss future PPAs following acceptance of an application. It is recommended that section 4 of the programme document be updated to reflect what parties the applicant is engaging with and possibly include a list of the main statutory bodies and local authorities affected by the application, including how the applicant is engaging with these parties. It is advised where possible that details of any recurring meetings with these parties also be reflected. Any issues can be captured in an issues tracker and/ or this information can then be used to update components 2, 3 and 8 of the enhanced tier components.

	Detailed in the Inspectorate's pre-application prospectus Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus - GOV.UK
	The programme document suggests that it is likely only one additional round of consultation will take place. The inspectorate would ask if September to October adequate time for consultation due to the size of the project affecting not only local residents. The applicant should confirm if a Statement of Community Consultation will be produced or if engagement with local authorities to determine appropriate means of consulting will take place.
	The programme documents should detail the activities to support intended design approach. It would be useful to have a separate table to 'Table 1' that reflects individual components that are intended under the enhance tier and detail the progress, if any, on these documents.

Topic	Meeting date: 14 January 2026
Consultation	The Inspectorate encouraged the applicant to apply the principles of "statutory consultation" outlined within the Planning Act 2008, prior to recent amendments to any future consultations it intends to carry out, noting that these principles would serve as a good baseline.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations	The Inspectorate reminded the applicant that any future changes to the Planning Act or associated infrastructure legislation must continue to align with the requirements of the EIA Regulations, as those regulations set the framework that must be met
Joint Evidence Base and Infrastructure Study (JEBIS)	The Inspectorate advised that the level of interaction between the Environmental Statement and JEBIS should be the deciding factor when considering whether the applicant should include the study within the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. The Inspectorate also noted that if the JEBIS is not included in the DCO application, interested parties will be unable to comment on it in their relevant representations.
Local Communities	The Inspectorate encouraged the applicant to actively manage relationships with local communities to minimise the risk of social issues arising and emphasised the importance of maintaining clear and consistent communication.

Air Change Process	The Inspectorate acknowledged that there is likely to be some uncertainty about flight paths/ envelopes during the examination of the application. However, the Inspectorate advised that the applicant, in consultation with all relevant consultees, should do all it can to ensure that the envelopes are as small as practicable. This would allow as much certainty as possible to local communities and help all parties to understand the likely significant effects of the project. The Inspectorate also advised that it is very likely that the examining authority would base its conclusions on the worst-case scenario.
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Topic	Email date: 17 February 2026
Programme document (intended design approach)	It would be useful for the table to include airfield layout, terminals, car parks, associated development (offices/ hotels etc), M25 improvements and landscaping across the application site. The table should also be produced having regard to the 'Criteria for 'good design' for airports infrastructure' section of the current ANPS. Also, a table comprising 'component/ document, purpose, expected delivery, status, dependencies' would respond to the request.

Topic	Meeting date: 5 March 2026
Register of environmental actions and commitments	The Inspectorate advised that it would be appropriate for the applicant to keep the register of environmental actions and commitments documents together in one volume of application documents. The Inspectorate noted that the document would be better presented as a standalone document rather than placed at the end of the Environmental Statement, as it is likely to be updated during the examination and is more straightforward to update as a standalone document than as an appendix. The Inspectorate also further noted that documents required to be certified should the Development Consent Order (DCO) be made could extend beyond the volume of application documents proposed to contain commitments and so the applicant should ensure that these are all clearly identified in the draft DCO.

Plans/ drawings	The Inspectorate appreciated the need for the applicant to show layers/ components of the proposed development on a number of plans and other drawings for the detail of a specific component to be understood. It did however advise that this should be considered alongside a reader being able to understand the proposed development and the relationship/ interactions between components. The Inspectorate advised the applicant that in developing its layered approach to the works plans, whereby different project element types are shown on different sheets, it may want to include a mini-diagram (inset plan) within individual works plan sheets to identify any overlaps. For example, where the M25 would pass under the runway. The Inspectorate also highlighted that, while it is challenging, plans and other drawings should be made as simple and consolidated as possible to avoid there being an excessive number of separate plans. The Inspectorate informed the applicant that it could not host an interactive PDF on the National Infrastructure website. The Inspectorate further advised that the applicant could place an interactive plan on its own website for people to engage with but that this would not form an application or examination document. The Inspectorate reminded the applicant that whenever something is shown on a plan, the applicant should ensure it is clearly and consistently referred to in the draft Development Consent Order.
Plans/ drawings Post-meeting advice	The applicant advised that it may provide some indicative plans to show how some aspects of the proposed development could be delivered. Where such plans are showing proposed mitigation, for example such as highway improvements, the Inspectorate considers that such plans may be better placed in draft outline or full management plans, or as figures supporting the Environmental Statement, rather than being published alongside the works plans. This would reduce any potential confusion about the role of the indicative plans.
Project update meetings (PUMs)	The Inspectorate requested that in future, any slides or agendas for pre-application meetings should be provided at least 10 days in advance, so resourcing and adequate responses can be provided by the Inspectorate at the relevant PUMs.

Topic	Meeting date: 21 April 2026
Consultation	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to consult on all components of the proposed development. The Inspectorate drew attention to the reference in the applicant's programme document to "statutory consultation", noting that in the meeting the applicant alluded to retaining some components of "statutory consultation", and not going forward with others such as the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). The Inspectorate advised the applicant to be mindful of the public-facing element of the programme document referring to "statutory consultation", to avoid confusion. The Inspectorate encouraged the applicant's idea of undertaking some live online consultation sessions for interested parties who would be unable to attend physically and noted that live online sessions are a useful mechanism to reach more people. The Inspectorate requested for the applicant to provide updates on their correspondence with statutory consultees over the past few months, particularly on assessment methodologies in the next project update meeting.
Design principles and documents	The Inspectorate encouraged the applicant to share their design principles and related documents with the Inspectorate as soon as possible, as it will be helpful for the Inspectorate to consider them early in the design process. The Inspectorate also encouraged the applicant to continue their involvement with the independent design review panel. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to be succinct when detailing the design process that was undertaken for the previous proposals (prior to 2020), and to go into greater detail on what has influenced the applicant on their more recent design decisions that influence the current proposed development. When the Inspectorate understands with greater clarity on what the applicant's evidence entails, they will be able to provide a more detailed response. The Inspectorate also welcomed the applicant to introduce the history of the evolution of the applicant's designs, including any specific points that the applicant wanted further advice on.

Green Belt use	The Inspectorate advised the applicant that the Examining Authority will carefully assess all Green Belt land which forms part of the order limits and the case for very special circumstances to justify its inclusion. The Inspectorate will require the applicant to provide clear justification within their application documentation to demonstrate why the uses proposed in the Green Belt cannot be accommodated within the existing confines of the airport. As part of this, the Inspectorate recommended that the applicant provide a clear picture of the factors considered during the design of the proposed development's layout, including the consideration of alternatives and for the applicant to robustly justify their preferred layout.
Programme document	The Inspectorate notes that within the 'engagement plan' table in the programme document, the applicant has listed ten, rather than nine, meetings within this period. The applicant was reminded that the nine meetings allowance will refresh from October.

Topic	Meeting date: 18 May 2026
Stakeholder Engagement Update	The Inspectorate advised the applicant that having an update at each meeting on a different subject, for example Planning, Environment and Transport, would be helpful for the Inspectorate.
Design Flexibility	The Inspectorate advised the applicant that, whilst it is appreciated that it may not be possible to provide detailed design information for some components of the proposed development until final design, it should include as much detail and certainty as is reasonably possible for each component in its application documents. This will lead to a smoother examination, as the Examining Authority will look carefully at the level of detail provided for different components, and would likely request further information if it was felt that more detail and certainty could be provided. The Inspectorate welcomed the opportunity to comment further on the level of detail that the applicant plans to provide for each component of the proposed development when this is known.
Scheme Development Report and Design Approach Document	The Inspectorate noted that, with regards to the scheme development report and design approach document, there could be duplication of information between the documents and with the Environmental Statement. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to reflect on this and to mitigate the risk

	of inconsistency arising from duplicating information and advised the applicant to ensure documents are proportionate in detail, consistent and accurate. The Inspectorate supported the applicant's proposed visual led approach as part of scheme development reporting, to supplement the text and reduce the overall volume of the document to make it as accessible as possible.
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Topic	Meeting date: 15 June 2026
Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS)	The Inspectorate advised that the Examining Authority will be guided by the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) when considering what is required from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) during any future examination. Based on the current ANPS, the key expectation is that the CAA would issue a letter of no impediment during the examination to confirm the applicant has engaged with the CAA to the extent that the CAA would expect, alongside assurance that any relevant security matters have been addressed to the CAA's satisfaction and therefore would not need to be a matter examined by the Examining Authority. The Inspectorate explained that it does not see the need for engagement between the Inspectorate and the CAA beyond what is set out in the ANPS. The Inspectorate noted that the Examining Authority will likely focus on whether the applicant has provided sufficient information for the CAA to confirm its position.
Engagement	The Inspectorate asked whether the CAA had any further thoughts on the level of engagement it may require with Heathrow and UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS). The Inspectorate advised that its main concern is avoiding scenarios that could create significant issues during examination. The first relates to the potential for the CAA to raise concerns about assumed inputs to the environmental impact assessment (EIA), such as likely flight pathways. If these were questioned during an examination, it could have major implications for the EIA and could be difficult to resolve during a six month examination. The second concern relates to ensuring that any environmental controls secured in any made Development Consent Order (DCO) are realistic and deliverable. The Inspectorate noted the importance of avoiding a situation where, at the later CAA air space change process, it becomes apparent that the scheme cannot be delivered within the mitigation and controls secured through the DCO. The Inspectorate emphasised the importance of early engagement between the parties to avoid such circumstances.

Topic	Meeting date: 25 June 2026
Environmental Statement	The applicant noted that the proposed draft revisions to the Airport National Policy Statement (the draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement) had been published and that it changes assessment requirements. It queried whether it should re-scope under the EIA Regulations. The Inspectorate advised that an Environmental Statement (ES) should be based on the most recent scoping opinion. However, a scoping opinion is written at a given point of time based on the information available. The Inspectorate acknowledges that policy may change in the intervening period between a scoping opinion being adopted and an application being made. The scoping opinion contains a statement acknowledging that agreements with consultation bodies can be made after a scoping opinion is adopted. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to seek to agree approaches with relevant consultations bodies and to provide a narrative of changes within the ES.
Introduction on approach to Environmentally Managed Growth (EMG)	The Inspectorate referred to the London Luton Airport Expansion (Luton) and that the Examining Authority (ExA) and Secretary of State (SoS) considered it necessary to secure some noise related restrictions on the face of the Development Consent Order, in terms of contours, flight numbers, and monitoring. While appreciating the nuances and differing circumstances between Luton and Heathrow, the Inspectorate encourages the applicant to look at the findings of the SoS and ExA carefully and consider whether it undermines the ability to effectively deliver noise restrictions and mitigation via EMG and/ or how the applicant will try to address such issues through an EMG framework. The Inspectorate advised that the EMG overseeing body is independent to encourage good levels of stakeholder trust. It referred to recommendations within the Office of Environmental Protection's review of the environmental assessment practice regarding post-decision monitoring and reporting. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to provide clarity between a 'threshold' and a 'limit' in the applicant's EMG approach, and to provide examples of mitigation that could be applied for exceedances of either level. The Inspectorate advised that an ExA would likely look for assurances that there is feasible mitigation available and that there is confidence in its success.

	The Inspectorate acknowledged the difficulty in reversing slot allocations. It recommended information be provided on whether the applicant can apply conditions to slots and whether it can leverage these to apply additional mitigation if EMG thresholds or limits are exceeded. The Inspectorate queried when the EMG process would commence, noting the potentially long construction period. It advised the applicant to carefully consider how to avoid any impacts occurring before monitoring starts. The Inspectorate emphasised that the ExA will be closely examining the EMG principle when the application is submitted
Consultation Scope and Materials	The Inspectorate noted that the recently published draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement contains requirements for community involvement and that the applicant should ensure that any forthcoming consultation seeks to meet those requirements.
Pre-application Prospectus primary components	The Inspectorate requests the applicant provides an up-to-date issues tracker and lands and rights tracker, as they are elements of the pre-application prospectus.