Planning Inspectorate

East West Rail

Section 51 Advice Log
Version: 21/09/2026

This document comprises a record of the s51 advice that has been given by the Planning Inspectorate to the applicant East West Rail Company 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.

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06 November 2024	Development Consent Order (DCO) submission Non-Statutory Consultation Environmental Scoping Report Programme Document Pre-application Fees Draft Documents Review New Advice Page
05 February 2025 (email)	Programme Document Feedback
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18 June 2025	Universal UK project Construction Disruption Crown Estate Land Consents and Licenses Main Issues Tracker Engagement with Local Authority's Service Tier Programme Document Project Update Meetings
29 September 2025	Section 35 Direction Environmental surveys Impact on utilities Planning and Infrastructure Reform Bill

	Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government consultation response Future project update meetings
23 October 2025	Pre-application Prospectus Update
13 November 2025	Statutory Consultation Ecological Surveys Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Planning Infrastructure Bill (PIB) Design Update Sessions Pre-application service Future Project Update Meetings
04 February 2026	Programme Considerations Pre-application Inspector Engagement Structure of Application Documents Draft Documents Review Service Multiparty Meetings and Evidence Management Programme Development and Next Steps
28 April 2026	Draft Development Consent Order Consultation Red Line Boundary Changes Programme Document
13 July 2026	Scheme Evolution Environmental Assessment Approach Digital Approach Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker Draft Development Consent Order Document Essay Plan

15 July 2026	Advice in relation to amendments to the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008)
16 September 2026	Advice in relation to amendments to the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008): Guidance on the pre-examination stage of an application
24 September 2026	Issues Trackers and Statements of Common Ground Compulsory Acquisition and Land Rights Consultation Reporting Code of Construction Practice Design Principles Funding Statement Environmental Statement and Supporting Documents Pathfinder Group and Pre-examination Process Environmental Plans and Documentation

East West Rail – Log of s51 given to the applicant		
Meeting date: 06 November 2024		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Development Consent Order (DCO) submission	The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider the most appropriate date for DCO submission to avoid periods of the year when the 28 day acceptance period is affected by bank holidays (such as over the Christmas period) as this can cause difficulties in obtaining input from local authorities.	
Non-Statutory Consultation	The Inspectorate advised that it would be beneficial for the Applicant to provide non-technical summaries of reports to ensure that these are accessible to the general public.	
Environmental Scoping Report	The Inspectorate normally advise Applicants to seek their Scoping Opinion via the Planning Inspectorate separately to any statutory or non-statutory consultations to avoid responses from statutory bodies and other stakeholders being sent to the Inspectorate and not the Applicant about	

	consultation rather than scoping or vice versa. The Inspectorate explained to the Applicant the difficulties which could be caused by submitting the Scoping Opinion request over the Christmas period. The availability of local authority and statutory body staff during these periods can affect the ability of these organisations to be able to respond or to provide detailed responses to the Inspectorate within 28 days.	
Programme Document	The Inspectorate noted that it is now usual practice to receive the Programme Document ahead of the project update meeting so that feedback can be provided on this further to the guidance - Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus - GOV.UK The Inspectorate advised that the Programme Document will need to be provided to them as soon as possible as it is a key component of the pre-application process. Once received the Inspectorate will provide feedback. The Applicant will then be required to publish the document on its website.	
Pre-Application fees	The Inspectorate explained that it will not provide a breakdown of hours spent on the	

	project and that the pre-application fee is a fixed fee per year of service and will be invoiced twice per year in October and April. The standard tier of service allows for up to six meetings per year of service.	
Draft Documents review	The Inspectorate explained that it is important for the Applicant to provide well developed documents when requesting a draft document review to enable the Inspectorate to provide detailed feedback to the Applicant.	
New Advice Page	The Inspectorate made the Applicant aware of its new advice page on Good Design and further advice on linear projects will be available in due course - Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Good Design - GOV.UK	
Email date: 5 February 2025		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Programme Document Feedback	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 notes that it follows the	

	expected content structure as set out in the government's pre-application guidance at paragraph 10. However, in updating its Programme Document, the applicant should: • include whether the local authorities, statutory consultees and others are content with the proposed programme • indicate how they will seek input from the Local Authorities on the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone statement. • include clear dates or defined timescales (month rather than quarters) in its programme timetable for the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (expected to be scheduled three months before the submission of the application), consultation period with local authorities on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), publishing the SoCC, any expected project update meetings with the Planning Inspectorate, and any timescales for obtaining other consents or permissions (if required). It would also be helpful if the Programme Document explained how the design	

	approach will be managed and communicated during pre-application as well as any relevant information about the development of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) and Explanatory Memorandum. The applicant will need to publish its updated Programme Document on its website as soon as practicable	
Meeting date: 7 March 2025		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Examination documents	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to ensure documents submitted include version numbers to assist in the examination.	
Scoping Opinion	It was noted that due to an internal error, Natural England (NE) did not respond to the scoping opinion. NE stated it will be continuing communication direct with the applicant. The Inspectorate advised that although NE did not respond, it is important for the applicant to engage with them as a statutory consultee to attempt to identify and resolve issues prior to examination.	

Programme Document	The Inspectorate explained the importance of providing it with an updated programme document. It further noted that the document helps to outline when meetings are required and draft documents are to be reviewed etc. This is for the applicant to take the lead on when they meetings will be best suited to take place.	
Project update meetings	The Inspectorate noted that project update meetings should cover non-statutory consultation feedback and how the applicant is engaging with the Local Authorities together with Statutory Parties communication. The Inspectorate also explained that the applicant can communicate any highlights and updates on the project via email/telephone to the case manager at anytime and the project update meetings are here so it and the applicant can come together for a discussion and for the applicant to seek any advice required.	
Environment Agency update	The Inspectorate noted that the Environment Agency has published flood and coastal erosion risk data in 2025 following the release of its "National assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in England 2024". Further updates are also expected to follow. The applicant should ensure that assessments take account of	

	updated data sets as these become available through Defra's Data Services Platform.	
Meeting date: 18 June 2025		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Universal UK Project	The Inspectorate noted that the potential impact of the Universal UK project should be continually assessed.	
Construction Disruption	The Inspectorate noted that Examining Authorities are frequently challenging time periods for construction work. The applicant should demonstrate its consideration for alternative time periods and justify its proposals. The Inspectorate also emphasised the importance of respite periods for local communities and interested parties.	
Crown Estate Land	The Inspectorate explained the importance of reaching agreements with the Crown Estate during the pre-application stage to prevent future delays to the project.	
Consents and Licenses	The Inspectorate advised the applicant to create a tailored list of consents and	

	licenses in preparation for the examination period.	
Main Issues Tracker	The Inspectorate highlighted the importance of having a key on the applicant's issues tracker that explains the RAG rating system.	
Engagement with Local Authority's	The Inspectorate does not have specific advice on applicants' approach to engaging with local authorities and cannot advise local authorities how to engage with projects. The applicant should continue to engage and hold consultations with local authorities which it deems necessary. The Inspectorate would like to remain updated on this matter.	
Service Tier	The Inspectorate explained that the supplementary pre-application components are only required for applicants subscribed to the enhanced service tier. The applicant can use these tools to aid the examination process, but this is optional.	
Programme Document	The Inspectorate advised that the Programme Document should only be updated if changes have been made to the project. It also suggested it should contain links to the project website and consultation	

	webpages to aid readers to locate relevant materials. The Inspectorate explained that the applicant was required to publish the Programme Document of the project website.	
Project Update Meetings	The Inspectorate advised that slide packs and the applicant's questions should be received at least a week before project update meetings. The Inspectorate explained that the applicant can communicate with the case manager via email/ telephone at any time.	
Meeting date: 29 September 2025		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Section 35 direction	The Inspectorate noted that the applicant had received its Section 35 direction in 2019 and queried whether the proposed development still aligned with it. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to engage with the Secretary of State for the Department for Transport on the matter.	
Environmental surveys	The applicant explained that it had obtained access to approximately 50% of the land	

	required for survey work, citing issues with landowner permissions. The Inspectorate queried how the applicant intended to assess worst-case scenarios, given the limited amount of survey work completed to date. The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should endeavour to complete as much survey work as possible to ensure the Environmental Statement is robust.	
Impact on utilities	The applicant conveyed that the project's impact on existing utilities could result in multiple Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) being included in its Development Consent Order (DCO). The Inspectorate advised the applicant to consider how this could impact the current scheme.	
Planning and Infrastructure Reform Bill	The applicant explained that it is considering its approach to engagement and consultation in relation to the project going forwards, on the assumption that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill will become law. The applicant noted it is considering producing an informal Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) that incorporates best practice and feedback from local authorities. The Inspectorate noted that the full implications of the Bill will remain unclear until its formal introduction. It	

	advised that certain procedural requirements may still apply depending on when the project was first presented to the Inspectorate, referencing previous implementation of the pre-application service tier in October 2024, which prescribed when applicants were expected to pay the fee dependent on when their scoping submission was made. Consequently, the Inspectorate emphasised that the applicant may still be required to produce a formal SoCC and undertake a traditional statutory consultation.	
Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) consultation response	The applicant advised the Inspectorate that it was preparing a response to the MHCLG consultation on streamlining infrastructure planning The Inspectorate enquired if the applicant would be willing to share its response to the consultation and advised the applicant, should they wish to submit this, to do so at least two weeks prior to any scheduled project update meeting to allow sufficient time for internal review and to ensure it could provide comments during discussions.	
Future project update meetings	The Inspectorate requested that the applicant provide additional background information on the proposed EWR DCO	

	project at the next project update meeting due to changes in resourcing. The Inspectorate also asked for an update on the progress of the applicant's environmental survey work to ensure it remains informed of key developments.	
Email date: 23 October 2025		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Pre-application prospectus	The Inspectorate has advised that, 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. Applicants 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 rights negotiations tracker in 1 of 2 available templates, irrespective of the service tier they have subscribed to • Clarified expectations of the 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 update programme document or issues tracker is not provided, on time, to inform meeting agenda.	
Meeting date: 13 November 2025		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Statutory Consultation	The applicant confirmed that the 'You Said We Did' Autumn update report will be published soon. The main goal of this is to maintain the dialogue with the public and keep them updated on the progress of the project. [Post meeting update: The You Said We Did report was published on 19 November 2025	

	and is available at East West Rail | You Said We Did]	
Ecological Surveys	In response to the Inspectorate's feedback at the previous meeting, the applicant's ecologist presented a detailed update on the project's approach to surveys and collection of baseline data. It stated that the survey approach was reviewed on an annual basis with NE. It explained that the approach to survey was not to gain access to every land parcel but to target areas where baseline data were critical for design. It is also using data collected from previous phases of the project and other NSIPs in the area. The applicant stated that the percentage of access for bird surveys was therefore much higher than for example bats. The Inspectorate asked if there are any land parcels that were considered critical to survey, for which the applicant had not been able to gain access. The applicant confirmed that there were no issues in this regard. It stated that the focus for access is woodland and it is using s172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 where needed to obtain access. For bats, the applicant was confident that its habitat suitability modelling, together with other collected data, would provide a robust baseline for assessment. It confirmed that	

	circa 68% of crossing points for bats had been surveyed and it would make precautionary assumptions where access was not available to identify flightlines. The Inspectorate advised that any limitations encountered or assumptions made should be clearly described in the ES. The applicant confirmed this would be done.	
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	The applicant provided an update on its engagement with NE in respect of HRA. It holds workshop sessions with NE every 6 weeks with 10 completed to date and workshop 11 planned in early December 2025. The applicant stated that outputs are being agreed through a written log with NE. The applicant stated that the spatial extent of assessment was agreed and at present there are no significant disagreements. The applicant confirmed that the main area of consideration for HRA is impacts to the Eversden and Wimpole Wood Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and bat qualifying features.	
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	The applicant stated that it is developing a bespoke method for BNG calculation in the absence of specific guidance for NSIPs. It is seeking to coordinate BNG with the scheme design and mitigation to achieve no	

	landscape scale barrier. The applicant is engaging with Defra regarding BNG. It stated that it has also established a BNG forum. The Inspectorate asked about participants in the BNG forum. The applicant stated that a range of stakeholders are involved, including local authorities, other developers and statutory bodies.	
Planning Infrastructure Bill (PIB)	The applicant presented an update on its approach to pre-application consultation in light of the PIB. It stated that the PIB removes the requirement for a SoCC, however the applicant will still work with local authorities to identify the best way to engage with local communities. The applicant stated that it would not produce a full preliminary environmental information (PEI) report (PEIR) as part of the consultation but will present further information about environmental impacts of the proposed development and proposed mitigation. The Inspectorate advises that there are obligations on the applicant under the Aarhus Convention in respect of public participation in decision-making on environmental matters. In the absence of a PEIR, the Inspectorate asked the applicant how it intends to progress pre-application consultation with relevant statutory environmental bodies and	

	if this would continue through established lines of communication. The applicant stated it was working on a forward plan, and it would be sharing assessment outcomes for discussion when Available. It was in discussion with the local authorities about possible use of a tracker as a basis for regular reporting to cabinet meetings.	
Design Update Sessions	The applicant confirmed that they will run a series of design update sessions before consultation takes place in 2026. The Inspectorate requested more information about how and where the sessions would be hosted and how they would be promoted. The applicant explained that the focus of these sessions will be on the new or materially different aspects of the project and in locations best suited to the need for targeted local engagement.	
Pre-application service	The applicant provided information in respect of their response to the MHCLG consultation on streamlining infrastructure planning. The Inspectorate advised that, if there are aspects of the pre-application service for the current project that the applicant considers are not working well, they are welcome to raise these with the case manager. The applicant noted that they would do that.	

Future Project Update Meetings	The next Project Update Meetings (PUM) will take place in January 2026, and the applicant requested the Inspectorate's views on matters to be discussed. The Inspectorate advised that this could be considered ahead of the next meeting.	
Meeting date: 04 February 2026		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Programme Considerations	The Planning Inspectorate advised the applicant it would be appropriate to review the pre-application programme. The Inspectorate advised that it would be beneficial to maintain dialogue as the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) and control documents are worked up, and to understand the perspectives of the host authorities. It would also be timely to begin considering the approach to requirements in the Development Consent Order (DCO). While this does not require immediate decisions, it is an issue that should be factored into longer-term planning.	
Pre-application Inspect or Engagement	The Inspectorate reflected positively on similar experiences from other projects,	

	where the appointment of a pre-application Inspector helped to identify and facilitate resolution of issues in advance of an application being submitted. The Inspectorate explained the role of the pre-application Inspector including providing advice during the pre-application stage and providing a handover briefing to the examining authority (ExA) once appointed.	
Structure of Application Documents	The applicant explained that the scale of the proposed development meant that there would be a large volume of application documentation. There was discussion about potential benefit in the applicant's EIA team and the Inspectorate meeting to talk about its approach to format and structure of the environmental statement (ES) and associated management plans. The Inspectorate has experience from previous projects that could assist the applicant to produce an ES that parties involved in any subsequent examination find easy to navigate and obtain information needed to support participation.	
Draft document review service	The Inspectorate advised that the pre-application prospectus sets out its draft document review offer. This includes control documents such as management plans. Review would be undertaken by the case	

	team with support from a pre-application inspector. The Inspectorate confirmed that review of the draft ES project description chapter and the habitats regulation assessment (HRA) would typically be carried out by the environmental services team (EST). EST will take ownership of reviewing draft ES descriptions and Habitats Regulations information, expanding into control documents and management plans under the enhanced tier. The Inspectorate confirmed that advice is normally issued 6 weeks after receipt of documents. The Inspectorate request that all documents for draft review are submitted as a package at the start of the review period. The Inspectorate advised that draft document review approximately 6 months prior to DCO application seemed reasonable in terms of a balance between maturity of documentation and sufficient time to consider any advice issued.	
Multiparty Meetings and Evidence Management	Multiparty meetings can be held prior to DCO submission and form part of the existing service offer. These are seen as valuable in maximising the prospects of an efficient examination. The Inspectorate	

	encouraged the applicant to identify a list of potential bodies to engage through multi-party meetings in its next programme document iteration. The Inspectorate emphasised the importance of evidence-based engagement. The Inspectorate advised that an ExA will deal with all evidence submitted during the examination, including new issues that might not have been raised during the pre-application stage. A pre-application Inspector can seek to facilitate resolution of disputes with consultation bodies during the pre-application stage with a view to capturing the positions of interested parties.	
Programme Development and Next Steps	The Inspectorate advised ongoing dialogue to refine the pre-application programme is welcome. The Inspectorate also requested visibility of the consultation materials once finalised, together with clarification of how the earlier project stages relate to the DCO application.	
Meeting date: 23 February 2026		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**

Enhanced Tier Meetings and Programme Structure	The applicant enquired whether the enhanced tier service could accommodate a mix of 1 hour meetings and longer 'deep dive' meetings. The Planning Inspectorate advised that where it suited the programme to do so, it would be happy to consider longer meetings and that longer meetings could be a sensible way to enable more meaningful discussion of complex topics. The applicant also proposed a programme for pre-application meetings. The Inspectorate confirmed it would take away the suggested programme for consideration and respond to the applicant with further thoughts. Following this, the date of the next project update meeting can be arranged.	
Scope, Third-Party Funding and Clarity of the NSIP Application	The Inspectorate emphasised the importance of clarity around third-party funding as the project moves towards NSIP application. It will be important to be clear what is and is not included within the NSIP application, particularly where elements rely on third-party funding, as this may imply funding or delivery risks. The Inspectorate highlighted the need to clearly define what constitutes the NSIP, how meeting time is allocated across topics, and how issues are worked through and responded to in writing.	

	The Inspectorate provided advice regarding the risk of confusion during consultation where workstreams are running in parallel. There is a tendency for stakeholders to comment on “the NSIP” when issues actually relate to separate but parallel pieces of work. Minimising this confusion will be important for the applicant. Care will be needed to ensure consultees provide feedback on the correct elements of the scheme. The applicant also asked how such issues might play out during examination, particularly in terms of identifying gaps early and resolving or removing them from consideration ahead of examination. The Inspectorate reiterated their objective of smoothing the DCO process as much as possible through effective preapplication engagement and confirmed with the applicant that it would be difficult to pre-empt now any questions or concerns that may be discussed at the examination stage.	
Red Line Boundary and Project Definition	The Inspectorate queried the current definition of the proposed development, noting that new elements are being presented and that the red line boundary appears to be evolving. The Inspectorate asked for clarification of how the current	

	boundary relates to the boundary submitted with the scoping report. The applicant advised that only minor changes and extensions are anticipated, with no inclusion of new protected sites. Boundary refinements are expected as part of ongoing design development, however the scheme presented at consultation will have an order limits boundary that is as close as possible to the intended application boundary. The applicant confirmed that, once changes are finalised, they would talk the Inspectorate through them in detail. The Inspectorate noted that future clarity on this point would be extremely helpful.	
Meeting date: 28 April 2026		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Draft Development Consent Order	The Inspectorate advised that clarity is required on the works that are proposed to be authorised by the DCO, including the associated development that is to be included within the Order. Providing a clear list or outline schedule of works intended to be included in the DCO would assist the Inspectorate in understanding the project and advising effectively.	

	The Inspectorate advised that the availability of funding will be a key consideration within the examination of the project and by the time of applications EWR will need to be able to demonstrate that third party funding, indicated for some elements of the project, has been secured.	
Consultation	The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should continue efforts to ensure all Local Authorities have a shared and consistent understanding of the DCO process, what matters can and cannot be resolved through the DCO and how ongoing engagement will feed into examination preparation. The Inspectorate advised that references to accelerated works within consultation material should be clarified, particularly where works may be undertaken in advance of the DCO, to ensure transparency and appropriate opportunities for community engagement.	
Red Line Boundary Changes	The Inspectorate advised that a clear comparison between the scoping boundary and the current red line boundary should be provided, including identification of any further areas where boundary changes have occurred.	

Programme Document	The Inspectorate advised that the most up-to-date programme document should be made publicly available and that any changes to anticipated submission dates should be clearly communicated. The Inspectorate welcomed exploration of collaborative issue tracking and advised that such tools could be used to support the development of SoCGs, provided regulatory requirements are met.	
Meeting date: 13 July 2026		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Scheme Evolution	The applicant provided an update on scheme evolution following consultation and scoping. The Inspectorate noted that the comparison plans showing changes to the red line boundary were helpful in understanding the extent of evolution and whether any additional consultation or engagement may be required. The Inspectorate noted that the changes presented did not appear vastly different from those presented in the red line boundary submitted with the Scoping Report, but advised the applicant to continue to keep potential consultation implications under review as the design	

	develops.	
Environmental Assessment Approach	The applicant outlined its proposed approach to undertaking environmental assessment in areas where elements of design are not currently confirmed, including the use of utility corridor zones and assumptions relating to utility easements. The Inspectorate advised that environmental assessments should be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance and should be supported by a clear and robust justification for the proposed assessment methodology. The Inspectorate advised that the basis on which effects have been assessed should be transparent within the Environmental Statement and that the applicant should be able to demonstrate that the extent of development assessed represents a reasonable worst-case scenario where appropriate. The Inspectorate requested further clarification regarding the purpose of the easement corridor shown on plans and how it is intended to be used to inform the assessment. The Inspectorate advised that any flexibility sought through the application should be clearly explained and supported by a suitable assessment methodology. The	

	applicant confirmed it would continue to develop the approach and provide further detail in due course.	
Digital Approach	The applicant outlined proposals for providing digital and interactive environmental information alongside application documents. The Inspectorate welcomed the applicant's intention to improve accessibility and understanding of application documents. The Inspectorate advised that it should remain clear which documents comprise the formal application and examination suite, and that any digital platform should not create uncertainty regarding the status of application documents or representations submitted on them. The Inspectorate highlighted the importance of maintaining clear audit trails and ensuring consistency between any externally hosted information and the documents submitted to and published by the Inspectorate. Consideration should also be given to accessibility requirements and the needs of users who may be less familiar with digital tools. The Inspectorate advised that it would give further consideration to the proposals and discuss them internally.	

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	The applicant provided an update on ongoing Habitats Regulations Assessment work and engagement with Natural England. The Inspectorate noted that documents could be submitted separately for review and comment where appropriate. No specific concerns were raised regarding the approach outlined.	
Land Rights and Negotiations Tracker	The applicant presented an emerging land and rights negotiations tracker and explained that some information was not yet available, and sought the Inspectorate's view on the proposed column headings. The Inspectorate sought clarification regarding anticipated timescales for future iterations of the tracker. The applicant advised that additional information was expected to be available closer to submission. The Inspectorate advised that the proposed approach would be considered further internally. **Post-meeting note**: The Inspectorate advises that the proposed land and rights negotiations tracker column headings are suitable for this early stage and can be reviewed closer to submission.	

Draft Development Consent Order	The applicant provided an update on the development of the draft Development Consent Order. The Inspectorate drew the applicant's attention to relevant advice concerning the use of flexibility and the Rochdale Envelope approach. The Inspectorate advised that any proposed advanced or enabling works should be clearly described and that the Environmental Statement should explain how such works have been taken into account within the assessments. The Inspectorate further advised that any other consenting regimes or permitted development rights relied upon for advance works should be clearly identified and appropriately addressed within the application documentation.	
Document Essay Plan	The applicant explained that a series of essay plans would be provided to the Inspectorate ahead of the formal draft documents review service to support the development of application documents. The Inspectorate sought clarification regarding the purpose and intended level of detail of the essay plans. The applicant confirmed that the documents would provide an outline structure and summary of the proposed content. The Inspectorate advised that it would consider the proposal further	

	and provide comments where appropriate.	
Email date: 15 July 2026		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Advice in relation to amendments to the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008)	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	
Email date: 16 September 2026		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**

Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-examination stage of an application	The recently published "Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-examination stage of an application" sets out in paragraph 2.1 that the pre-examination stage should normally takes no longer than four months. The applicant has asked for the Inspectorate's advice on completing the pre-examination stage within three-months. The Inspectorate advises that this would be exceptional and difficult to achieve, but any endeavour to so would require a number of contributing factors, with the failure to deliver any one of them posing a risk to the three month timetable. Those contributing factors currently identified (but not necessarily limited to) are: • The receipt by the Inspectorate of a high quality application at the point of submission where the applicant has worked closely with the relevant local authorities to ensure that preparation of Local Impact Reports has commenced before Acceptance. • The opening of the Relevant Representation (RR) period shortly after Acceptance, lasting for at least 30 working days.	

	• The Application will need to be of a sufficiently high quality to enable the Rule 6 (R6) letter to be issued within 21 days after the closure of the RR period, alongside the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (IAPI). Government guidance anticipates that prescribed authorities will be well prepared to submit focused and issues-based Relevant Representations. However, this is likely to be influenced by applicant engagement and behaviour, and it is recognised that resource and capacity constraints may affect both the extent and timing of input from prescribed authorities. • No amendments or updates to the scheme following Acceptance. The achievement of all these factors to a satisfactory standard and timeframe could potentially allow the Examining Authority to hold a Preliminary Meeting (PM) no later than 28 days after the R6 is issued, marking the end of the pre-examination stage and the commencement of the Examination. It is important to note that, notwithstanding the above, there may be a number factors which have not been identified here which	

	could also pose a risk to a three month timetable once that stage has commenced, which the Inspectorate cannot account for at this time.	
Meeting date: 24 September 2026		
Topic	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Issues Trackers and Statement of Common Ground	The applicant outlined its proposed approach to issues tracking and Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs), explaining that issues raised by stakeholders would be recorded through a structured tracking process. The applicant indicated that it had envisaged submitting a final SoCG at the end of Examination. It also suggested that as agreement was reached on specific issues, these could be documented in a draft SoCG, and by doing so building the SoCG during examination. Live issues would remain on the issues track The Inspectorate advised that issues trackers can play an important role in supporting the development of SoCGs and informing the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (IAPI). The Inspectorate explained that a well-developed issues tracker, focused on the principal and examination-relevant matters, could reduce the need for	

	repeated SoCG updates during Examination. The Inspectorate welcomed sight of draft shared issues trackers being developed between the applicant and host local authorities and suggested that a separate discussion on the role and structure of issues trackers and SoCGs would be beneficial. Further discussion took place regarding the potential for agreed issues trackers to replace or reduce reliance on Principal Areas of Disagreement Statements (PADS). The Inspectorate advised that issues trackers should record stakeholder positions and focus on matters that are likely to be relevant to Examination. Consideration should also be given to securing stakeholder agreement to the contents of the tracker. It was agreed that further discussions on the format, content and operation of issues trackers would be beneficial.	
Compulsory Acquisition and Land Rights	The applicant sought feedback on its proposed approach to tracking land rights and compulsory acquisition matters. The Inspectorate acknowledged the applicant's work to date and advised that further consideration was required regarding how land rights information could best support the examination process.	

	The Inspectorate noted that any approach should allow the Examining Authority to identify affected parties, understand outstanding objections and determine the progress being made towards resolving those objections. The Inspectorate also highlighted the practical challenges associated with managing large-scale land rights information and indicated that further internal discussions would be undertaken before providing additional advice to the applicant.	
Engagement and consultation summary	The applicant provided an overview of the information it planned to include in its application relating to engagement and consultation. The Inspectorate referred the applicant to paragraph 8.5 of government's pre-application steps guidance for guidance on what an engagement summary can focus on. The applicant offered to provide a draft example of its engagement and consultation summary ahead of submission.	
Code of Construction Practice	The applicant presented its proposed approach to the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) and supporting construction management documentation. The Inspectorate advised that the relationship between the Code, supporting	

	management plans and the DCO should be clearly explained. In particular, the applicant should ensure that stakeholders are able to understand how the various documents are secured through the DCO and certified document process. The Inspectorate advised that the overall structure of the construction documentation should clearly communicate the framework within which construction activities would be controlled. Subject to a small number of detailed comments, the Inspectorate considered the proposed approach to be broadly appropriate. The Inspectorate's detailed advice comments are: • It should be clear if the CoCP is an outline version, in which case it should be subject to a DCO requirement for submission and approval of a final version. It should explain any proposed phasing of discharge. • It should define terms, such as SACR. • It should provide a description of the role of all tier documents. • If reference or reliance is made to railway industry standards, extracts of these documents should be included.	

	• The description of construction working hours should include any proposed working hours outside of the standard local authority hours, the activities for which these might be required, frequency and any proposed approval process.	
Design Principles	Discussion took place regarding the proposed design principles and their relationship with the DCO. The Inspectorate sought clarification on how design flexibility would be secured whilst providing sufficient certainty regarding the final form of the development. The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should consider how the DCO framework would demonstrate the approval mechanisms for final design details and how stakeholders could understand the extent of any flexibility being sought. Further clarity on the interaction between design principles, parameter plans and subsequent approvals may assist in explaining the proposed approach.	
Funding Statement	The applicant outlined its approach to the Funding Statement, including the treatment of third-party funding contributions. The Inspectorate advised that the Funding Statement should clearly demonstrate that	

	sufficient funding would be available to deliver the project and explain how any uncertainties relating to third-party funding arrangements would be addressed.	
Planning Statement	The Inspectorate had no comments regarding the Planning Statement essay plan provided by the applicant for review.	
Environmental Statement and Supporting Documents	The applicant presented its proposed approach to the Environmental Statement, including Chapters 3 and 4. The Inspectorate advised that significant utility diversions and tunnelling works should be appropriately described where relevant and that supporting figures and explanatory information should provide sufficient clarity to readers. The Inspectorate has the following detailed advice comments on the applicant's approach: • The description of the proposed permanent works must include the maximum parameters that have been used as the basis for assessment. It should explain any major upgrade or repair works that may be required. • Any proposed station car parking should be described, including the location and number of spaces.	

	• Any on-site biodiversity net gain proposals should be described. • The construction description should include environmental mitigation and floodplain compensation, and temporary drainage arrangements as relevant. • An illustration of a typical temporary construction compound would be beneficial to aid understanding. • The location and limits of deviation for temporary construction compounds should be shown on the temporary works plan. The Inspectorate indicated that it would be beneficial to review further draft material as it became available, including content relating to traffic and transport, Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) matters and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). It was agreed that separate discussions on BNG and HRA matters would be useful as the relevant documentation progressed.	
Pathfinder Group and Pre-examination Process	The applicant provided an update on the Pathfinder Group and discussions taking place with host local authorities, MHCLG and the Planning Advisory Service. The applicant proposed future opportunities for	

	the Inspectorate to participate in multiparty discussions intended to support examination preparedness and improve understanding of pre-examination processes. The Inspectorate advised that it was open to attending future sessions where appropriate, subject to understanding the proposed agenda and resource requirements. Further discussion also took place regarding the likely operation of the pre-examination period, including the timing of the IAPI and Rule 6 notification. The Inspectorate advised that further internal consideration of these matters was required and that additional advice would be provided in due course.	
Environmental Plans and Documentation	The applicant sought advice on the potential use of cross-referencing between environmental plans and Environmental Statement documentation to reduce duplication across the application documents. The Inspectorate agreed to consider examples provided by the applicant and provide feedback on the proposed approach. Post meeting note: Provided that all cross references are clearly set out, the Inspectorate is content with the applicant's proposed approach.	

	The Inspectorate also requested a copy of the presentation slides following the meeting and advised that an update on environmental survey progress should be provided at the next project meeting.	

East West Rail – Log of s51 advice given to others		
Person s51 advice given to	**s51 advice given**	**Applicant regard to s51 advice given**
Name and/or organisation	Summary of s51 advice given and link to advice register	Applicant to complete