

Planning Inspectorate's approach to casework during the pre-election period 2026

20.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Our approach to issuing decisions, reports and recommendations before the 7 May 2026 elections.

The Planning Inspectorate always aims to issue decisions and recommendations promptly. However, in the run-up to the 7 May 2026 elections (16 April 2026 to 7 May 2026), we want to ensure that appeal decisions or recommendations relating to proposals that have raised particular sensitivities or interest in an area cannot be seen to have influenced the election or have been used to electoral advantage by any interested body.

Appeals casework

In appeals, we will also hold back cases that may give rise to electoral sensitivities because of their nature or the issues involved. This might include:

- cases where there has been an extensive local campaign, or where the decision raises very controversial local issues such as inappropriate or unauthorised development in the Green Belt
- major greenfield housing
- renewables
- cases where there is an emerging neighbourhood plan

Whether a decision should be held back until the election results have been announced is a judgement taken by the inspector in conjunction with senior managers at the Planning Inspectorate, based on the circumstances of the case. We will, of course, ensure that any such delayed decisions are issued promptly after the election.

National infrastructure casework

As national infrastructure examinations are required to comply with a statutory time limit, once the preliminary meeting has been notified and the examination timetable has been set, the examination is expected to run to the published timetable.

Local plans

All scheduled local plan examinations and hearing sessions will continue during the pre-election period, and new examinations will also begin. However, to avoid making announcements that could be politically sensitive, the Planning Inspectorate will not be issuing any letters regarding the soundness or legal compliance of local plans, or final reports (including for fact check[1]), from 16 April until after the election day, for affected local planning authorities.

As some councils operate a longer pre-election period, beginning no later than 25 days before election day, from that date we will liaise with local planning authorities in those areas holding elections (or cross-border areas) about the publication of any material, including final reports, that could be seen as sensitive.

[1] The fact check report is the version of the report the Planning Inspectorate sends to the local planning authority to check for factual errors or inconsistencies. The final report is issued after this process has been completed.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/planning-inspectorates-approach-to-casework-during-the-pre-election-period-2026>