



Making a positive difference  
for energy consumers

Dr. Paul Wakeley  
Strategic Network Development Manager  
National Energy System Operator  
Faraday House  
Gallows Hill  
Warwick  
CV34 6DA

Email: [jack.presleyabbott@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:jack.presleyabbott@ofgem.gov.uk)

Date: 15 April 2026

[box.customerservice@neso.energy](mailto:box.customerservice@neso.energy)

Dear Paul,

Thank you for submitting the Centralised Strategic Network Plan (CSNP) Methodology to Ofgem for approval. This is a key step towards the development of the CSNP for the electricity and gas transmission and hydrogen transport and storage (T&S) networks in Great Britain (GB), and your efforts on this are commendable. In this letter we set out our decision on the submitted Methodology.

We recognise the complexity of the technical challenges involved in developing this Methodology and acknowledge the high quality of engagement you have provided throughout, both with ourselves and wider stakeholders.

Using NESO's Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) as an input, the CSNP will be an independently produced, long-term energy network plan to support GB in delivering a clean, affordable and secure energy system. In addition to this, we're also writing to you separately on our decision to approve the Methodology for the second transitional CSNP Refresh, which will plan the system for the 2030s<sup>1</sup>.

### **Our Decision**

Condition C17 of the Independent System Operator and Planner Electricity System Operator Licence Conditions (henceforth ESO C17) and condition C12 of the Independent System Operator and Planner Gas System Planner Licence Conditions (henceforth GSP C12) set out the requirement for NESO to produce the CSNP Methodology and our role in approving it before it is published by NESO. We have reviewed the Methodology against the requirements set out in these conditions and our CSNP Guidance<sup>2</sup>. **Overall, we consider that the proposed CSNP Methodology will provide a framework for producing the CSNP in line with the key requirements that we've set**

---

<sup>1</sup> [transitional Centralised Strategic Network Plan Methodology – Ofgem Approval](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Centralised Strategic Network Plan Guidance | Ofgem](#)

**out. Therefore, we approve the CSNP Methodology, subject to further detail being provided, as per the conditions that we set out in this letter.**

### **Our assessment**

We have assessed the CSNP Methodology against the requirements set out in the Licence Conditions and our CSNP Guidance, taking account of the evidence provided by NESO and the engagement that has taken place. **Overall, we consider that the Methodology provides a credible framework for producing the first iteration of the CSNP.** We consider it important that the CSNP is able to progress at pace using this Methodology, so it can plan the future network required to meet government's decarbonisation and energy security objectives in a timely and economical way. We acknowledge that the Methodology will evolve further, as future iterations of the CSNP are produced and the GB energy system develops.

The electricity elements of the CSNP Methodology set out a sound framework that defines the key stages and the intended progression from modelling future supply and demand, through identifying system needs and options, to appraising and selecting preferred network designs. The Methodology provides sufficient structure and clarity to convey how the CSNP for electricity will be developed. The Methodology aligns with the key expectations set out in our Guidance, including its whole system perspective, its use of multiple network designs and appraisal criteria, and its governance arrangements.

Similarly, the gas and hydrogen sections of the Methodology provide a sound basis for the development of the respective parts of the plan. We welcome the progress NESO has made in developing these sections and acknowledge the challenges faced, particularly on hydrogen T&S planning due to its nascency. These challenges include the uncertainties surrounding the repurposing of gas assets, the future of hydrogen infrastructure, hydrogen blending, and the consideration of offshore gas and hydrogen networks. These are all areas which will require further development in line with future government decisions, though NESO has developed a strong foundational Methodology which can incorporate these elements in future iterations.

**There are a small number of areas, some applicable to all three energy vectors – electricity, natural gas and hydrogen, where further methodological details are necessary to implement the CSNP process.** These additional details need to be developed in time for the relevant stage of the CSNP process. These details will ensure that when the plan is published, it can quickly and effectively be used to inform multi-billion-pound network funding decisions. **For these areas, we do not consider it proportionate or necessary to withhold our approval of the submitted Methodology,** as doing so could delay the development of the CSNP. We recognise that some aspects will naturally evolve through ongoing development in partnership between NESO, Ofgem, Government and industry, including through the CSNP governance arrangements. We also acknowledge that in some instances, it has not been possible to finalise details due to factors which are outside of NESO's direct control.

Considering these, we set out two conditions to our approval:

**Condition 1: For the following areas of the CSNP Methodology, NESO must submit further details on its proposed approach to us, for approval, by the specified dates.** These details are required as updates to the Methodology. The dates set out below will enable these further details to be approved and embedded in line with the current CSNP timelines. We will work closely with you prior to these dates to ensure these are developed to a mutually agreeable level of detail. Until this is provided and subsequently approved by Ofgem, these specific parts of the process should not be carried out.

**a. Option Delivery Dates – for electricity only – by 30 October 2026:**

- i. NESO must develop a process and guidance document for consistently deriving credible delivery dates for CSNP option submissions, for use by TOs and third parties, and submit this to Ofgem for approval. The process should set out an approach to considering risks and uncertainties that can be consistently applied by all option developers. This is important as delivery dates directly influence cost-benefit analysis outcomes, optimal delivery decisions, and underpin our regulatory funding and delivery incentives under the RII0-3 price control framework.
- ii. NESO and Ofgem must agree a process for how delivery dates for options submitted by TOs and third-parties will be assured and how NESO and Ofgem will act if submitted dates are found to fail NESO's scrutiny. It is critical that NESO as the independent system planner, supported by the regulator, have confidence that delivery dates are credible yet ambitious to enable the transition to net zero.

**b. CSNP Change Control – by 31 December 2026,** NESO must develop further details on the change control process and submit to Ofgem for approval. This is the process by which significant changes to CSNP inputs are monitored and by which NESO will consider whether the plan (or a part of it) should be reassessed. A robust change control process is essential to ensure that material changes<sup>3</sup> in project costs, benefits, or external conditions are identified and their impact on previous recommendations are checked to ensure the plan remains in the best interest of consumers.

**c. Monetisation of Environment, Community, Deliverability and Operability (ECDO) – by 30 October 2026,** NESO must submit to Ofgem for approval a clear and fully specified approach to the monetisation of ECDO criteria used in the Appraise step of the CSNP. A transparent and well-specified approach ensures elements are assessed consistently and without double-counting, so that final appraisal decisions are robust, comparable and defensible.

**d. Sensitivity analysis – by 31 December 2027,** NESO must submit to Ofgem, for approval, a sensitivity testing framework for the Appraise step of the CSNP. This is critical to ensuring CSNP decisions are resilient against credible variations in key assumptions such as costs, delivery dates or market conditions.

---

<sup>3</sup> The materiality of changes that trigger a reassessment are defined in the methodology and may be developed further as further details are developed.

**Condition 2: We have identified four other areas, outlined below where further development is required. For these, NESO should have due regard to Ofgem’s views, which it must seek as part of developing this detail, and by keeping us informed and engaged, such as through its CSNP governance framework or direct bilateral engagement.** We expect this condition to be met in good faith and don’t require any formal submissions to us for these areas of the Methodology. These areas are:

- a. Resilience Events
- b. Offshore Transmission Owner (OFTO) Build and Offshore Coordination
- c. Hydrogen
- d. Interconnectors

For areas of operational detail that NESO has set out in Appendix I of its CSNP Methodology submission that we haven’t covered in this letter, e.g. templates, Terms of Reference, procedural guidance, etc., we agree that these should be developed and maintained outside the Methodology, so they can be updated efficiently as learning emerges.

The conditions in this decision are targeted and time-bound and require that key outstanding areas are developed in a way that is transparent and subject to appropriate engagement with key stakeholders.

#### **Next steps**

Overall, we consider that your proposed CSNP Methodology meets the requirements of ESO C17, GSP C12 and our CSNP Guidance, and therefore, **we approve the CSNP Methodology for publication by 15 April 2026, subject to the conditions that we set out in this letter.**

We thank you for your leadership in preparing the first CSNP for Great Britain and we look forward to continuing to work with you on its successful development and delivery.

Yours sincerely,

**Jack Presley Abbott**  
**Deputy Director – Strategic Planning and Connections**  
**For and on behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority**