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for energy consumers

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Dear Paul,

Decision and Direction to National Energy System Operator Limited (NESO) to submit the first Centralised Strategic Network Plan (CSNP) to Ofgem by 15 September 2028, instead of 1 June 2027 and publish the first CSNP by 15 December 2028, instead of 31 December 2027.

Thank you for your letter dated 23 March 2026 requesting derogations from NESO's Electricity System Operator (ESO) licence conditions C17.16 and C17.18 and Gas System Planner (GSP) licence conditions C12.16 and C12.18.^{1 2} We appreciate your continued engagement with Ofgem in support of the successful development and implementation of NESO's strategic network planning processes.

Centralised Strategic Network Plan

The CSNP will provide an independent, coordinated, and long-term whole-system approach to planning the electricity and natural gas transmission networks, as well as hydrogen transport and storage (T&S) networks across Great Britain (GB) to help meet the government's net zero ambitions. It will use the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) as its primary input to plan the energy networks required over the next 25 years and it will be updated every three years. The first CSNP is currently required to be published by December 2027, as per NESO's ESO and GSP licence conditions.

¹ [Licences and licence conditions | Ofgem](#)

² NESO's request letter is published along with this decision

Reasons for change to publication date

The SSEP will provide the blueprint for where generation and storage assets should be sited in a future net zero GB energy system, looking out to 2050. The first iteration will focus on electricity generation, including interconnection, storage infrastructure, and relevant hydrogen assets. It was originally planned for the SSEP to be published by 31 December 2026. However, due to refreshed energy generation data from DESNZ requiring a re-run of the SSEP modelling, the Secretary of State will now choose one option from a short list of potential plans in autumn 2026. That plan will go through public consultation and environmental assessments during 2027, and the finalised plan will be published in autumn 2027³.

We agree with you that as the CSNP relies upon the SSEP, the timing of the CSNP will need to change to align with the new timing of the SSEP, so that the time required to robustly plan the network as per the CSNP methodology isn't unduly compromised. We agree that this will allow for timely and adequate stakeholder input, ensure adequate time for the development of network options, provide sufficient time for analysis to be carried out and provide certainty on long-term network needs.

Adhering to the original schedule despite the delay to the SSEP will mean that NESO will not be able to produce the CSNP as per the approved methodology, and/or that the quality of the plan and NESO's ability to engage and consult effectively with stakeholders will be greatly impacted. We therefore agree that changing the dates by which the CSNP must be submitted to us and published should be amended to 15 September 2028 and 15 December 2028 respectively, to incorporate the change to the SSEP timeline.

Risks associated with changing the publication date of the CSNP to 15 December 2028

We have considered potential risks associated with the new timeline of the CSNP as follows:

- **Impact on electricity transmission network build:** There is a risk that a later publication of the CSNP could delay transmission build. However, without the SSEP, the CSNP doesn't have the key input it needs to start. We agree with NESO that the Second Transitional CSNP Refresh (tCSNP2 Refresh, also known as the Network Options Assessment report), alongside the Electricity Ten Year Statement (ETYS), will provide the signals for the transmission development required through the 2030's to mitigate this risk. Furthermore, NESO states that the ETYS dataset will provide the required information to downstream processes, including network charging and balancing.
- **Impact on gas transmission:** Gas demand forecasts are not expected to change within this one year of delay; therefore, we are not anticipating investment levels in the gas transmission system to be of the same order of magnitude as they are for electricity. We consider the risk from the delay to the CSNP on gas network development to be minimal. Where we require any specific advice from NESO on capability, resilience or security of supply related investment in gas transmission to consider any investments required ahead of the CSNP, we will raise an advisory duty request to ensure any infrastructure needs are appropriately assessed.
- **Impact on Hydrogen T&S network development:** The delay to the SSEP has already prompted government consideration of potential impacts on hydrogen network development, and as such the revised timeline of the CSNP does not cause

³ [Open letter to industry from Julian Leslie on Strategic Energy Planning](#)

any further impact to any funding decisions that government may wish to take on hydrogen network development.

The Authority's decision

We agree with your requests due to the reasons we have set out above.

Under LC C17.16 of the ESO Licence we direct NESO to submit the Centralised Strategic Network Plan to Ofgem by **15 September 2028**, instead of by 01 June 2027. Annex 1 sets out the direction to give effect to this decision.

Under LC C17.18 of the ESO Licence we direct NESO to publish the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by **15 December 2028**, instead of by 31 December 2027. Annex 2 sets out the direction to give effect to this decision.

Under LC C12.16 of the GSP Licence we direct NESO to publish the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by **15 September 2028**, instead of by 01 June 2027. Annex 3 sets out the direction to give effect to this decision.

Under LC C12.18 of the GSP Licence we direct NESO to publish the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by **15 December 2028**, instead of by 31 December 2027. Annex 4 sets out the direction to give effect to this decision.

If you have any questions in relation to this letter, please contact Eliot Leonard (Eliot.Leonard@ofgem.gov.uk) or me.

Yours sincerely,

Konark Anand
Head of Transmission Network Planning
For and on behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority

Annex 1

DIRECTION PURSUANT TO CONDITION C17.16 OF NATIONAL ENERGY SYSTEM OPERATOR'S ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OPERATOR LICENCE IN RELATION TO THE SUBMISSION OF THE CENTRALISED STRATEGIC NETWORK PLAN.

Whereas:

1. National Energy System Operator Limited (the "Licensee") is the holder of the Electricity System Operator Licence ("the Licence") granted or treated as granted under Part 5, section 167 of the Energy Act 2023 ("the Act").
2. Licence Condition ("LC") C17.16 states:

By 1 June 2027 and by 1 June of every third year thereafter, the licensee must (unless otherwise directed by the Authority) submit to the Authority for approval the proposed CSNP.

3. In line with LC C17.16, following a request from the Licensee, the Authority has decided to direct the Licensee to submit the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by 15 September 2028.

Therefore:

In accordance with LC C17.16, the Authority hereby directs the Licensee to submit the Centralised Strategic Network Plan to Ofgem by 15 September 2028, and by 15 September of every third year thereafter, instead of by 01 June 2027.

This Direction and the letter to which it is attached constitutes notice of the reasons for the decision pursuant to section 49A of the Electricity Act 1989.

Konark Anand,
Head of Transmission Network Planning
For and on behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority
15 April 2026

Annex 2

DIRECTION PURSUANT TO CONDITION C17.18 OF NATIONAL ENERGY SYSTEM OPERATOR'S ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OPERATOR LICENCE IN RELATION TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE CENTRALISED STRATEGIC NETWORK PLAN.

Whereas:

1. National Energy System Operator Limited (the "Licensee") is the holder of the Electricity System Operator Licence ("the Licence") granted or treated as granted under Part 5, section 167 of the Energy Act 2023 ("the Act").
2. Licence Condition ("LC") C17.18 states:

By 31 December 2027 and by 31 December of every third year thereafter, (unless otherwise directed by the Authority) the licensee must publish the CSNP in accordance with the latest CSNP Methodology (or other date as directed by the Authority and in a form approved by the Authority as set out in the Centralised Strategic Network Plan Guidance).

3. In line with LC C17.18, following a request from the Licensee, the Authority has decided to direct the Licensee to publish the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by 15 December 2028.

Therefore:

In accordance with LC C17.18, the Authority hereby directs the Licensee to publish the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by 15 December 2028, and by 15 December of every third year thereafter, instead of by 31 December 2027.

This Direction and the letter to which it is attached constitutes notice of the reasons for the decision pursuant to section 49A of the Electricity Act 1989.

Konark Anand,
Head of Transmission Network Planning
For and on behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority
15 April 2026

Annex 3

DIRECTION PURSUANT TO CONDITION C12.16 OF NATIONAL ENERGY SYSTEM OPERATOR'S GAS SYSTEM PLANNER LICENCE IN RELATION TO THE SUBMISSION OF THE CENTRALISED STRATEGIC NETWORK PLAN.

Whereas:

1. National Energy System Operator Limited (the "Licensee") is the holder of the Gas System Planner Licence ("the Licence") granted or treated as granted under Part 5, section 168 of the Energy Act 2023 ("the Act").

2. Licence Condition ("LC") C12.16 states:

By 1 June 2027 and by 1 June of every third year thereafter, the licensee must (unless otherwise directed by the Authority) submit to the Authority for approval the proposed CSNP.

3. In line with LC C12.16, following a request from the Licensee, the Authority has decided to direct the Licensee to submit the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by 15 September 2028.

Therefore:

In accordance with LC C12.16, the Authority hereby directs the Licensee to submit the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by 15 September 2028, and by 15 September of every third year thereafter, instead of by 01 June 2027.

This Direction and the letter to which it is attached constitutes notice of the reasons for the decision pursuant to section 49A of the Electricity Act 1989.

Konark Anand,
Head of Transmission Network Planning
For and on behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority
15 April 2026

Annex 4

DIRECTION PURSUANT TO CONDITION C12.18 OF NATIONAL ENERGY SYSTEM OPERATOR'S GAS SYSTEM PLANNER LICENCE IN RELATION TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE CENTRALISED STRATEGIC NETWORK PLAN.

Whereas:

1. National Energy System Operator Limited (the "Licensee") is the holder of the Gas System Planner Licence ("the Licence") granted or treated as granted under Part 5, section 168 of the Energy Act 2023 ("the Act").
2. Licence Condition ("LC") C12.18 states:

By 31 December 2027 and by 31 December of every third year thereafter, (unless otherwise directed by the Authority) the licensee must publish the CSNP in accordance with the latest CSNP Methodology (or other date as directed by the Authority and in a form approved by the Authority as set out in the Centralised Strategic Network Plan Guidance).

3. In line with LC C12.18, following a request from the Licensee, the Authority has decided to direct the Licensee to publish the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by 15 December 2028.

Therefore:

In accordance with LC C12.18, the Authority hereby directs the Licensee to publish the Centralised Strategic Network Plan by 15 December 2028, and by 15 December of every third year thereafter, instead of by 31 December 2027.

This Direction and the letter to which it is attached constitutes notice of the reasons for the decision pursuant to section 49A of the Electricity Act 1989.

Konark Anand,
Head of Transmission Network Planning
For and on behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority
15 April 2026