

# **PE2095/D: Improve the public consultation processes for energy infrastructure projects**

## **National Energy System Operator (NESO) written submission, 31 October 2024**

Thank-you for giving NESO the opportunity to respond to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament in respect of the petition “PE2095: Improve the public consultation processes for energy infrastructure processes”.

The National Energy System Operator (NESO) was established on October 1, 2024, as a new and independent public corporation. NESO has impartial and strategic oversight of both the electricity and gas systems to ensure that Great Britain’s energy infrastructure is clean, secure, and affordable.

Operating independently of the UK Government and without commercial interest, NESO plays a key role in strategic planning of the energy system.

NESO does not generate or sell electricity, nor does it own or build infrastructure the electricity travels through. This ensures NESO is independent of companies with a commercial interest in generating electricity or building network infrastructure.

In northern Scotland, the transmission system is maintained and developed by SSE and in southern Scotland by Scottish Power. In England and Wales, it is maintained and developed by National Grid.

One of NESO’s key responsibilities is to assess Great Britain’s future electricity supply and demand needs and design a high-level coordinated network to meet those needs in a safe, efficient, and affordable way.

This process involves assessing a range of different network options to ensure electricity can get to where it is needed, when it is needed, and we work in close collaboration with Transmission Operators (TOs) throughout this process.

Our role is to develop a set of recommendations for network reinforcement and stress test network options provided to us, primarily by the three TOs, against a range of different future energy scenarios.

Any proposed new network infrastructure will be balanced against four high-level design objectives. That they are: economic and efficient; deliverable and operable; considers environmental impact; and considers impact on communities.

After we have put forward a coordinated network design recommendation, these designs are then used as an investment needs case by the TOs to take forward to the next stage of development to optimise further, refine and build. It is the responsibility of the TOs to decide upon potential route corridors as well as decisions on types of infrastructure to use, and crucially consulting with local communities and planning authorities on these proposals.

NESO is committed to engagement with the plans it produces and as we develop future energy infrastructure plans we will be consulting widely on them.

In terms of NESO's work on future infrastructure, several major pieces of work have been/will be published.

They include:

- **Pathway to 2030** documents including the Holistic Network Design (HND) will enable Britain's transition to net zero through 50GW offshore wind delivery by 2030 – representative of a £54bn investment in GB network infrastructure and consumer savings of £5.5bn.
- **Beyond 2030** report, which recommends a set of offshore and onshore network upgrades which total an additional £58 billion of direct investment in our electricity networks and facilitates the connection of an extra 21GW of offshore wind power, primarily of the coast of Scotland.
- **Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP)** will accelerate and optimise the national energy transition to clean, affordable and secure energy by assessing the optimal location for generation and storage of electricity and hydrogen.
- **Centralised Strategic Network Plan (CSNP)**, will provide a network blueprint for the country, detailing the specific offshore and onshore transmission infrastructure required to connect the sources and uses of energy detailed in the SSEP.
- **Clean Power 2030 (CP2030)**, this document will be published shortly and will provide advice to the Government on decarbonising the power system as part of the newly announced Mission Control for clean power by 2030.