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Mr Ian Hook
Senior Executive Officer
Scrutiny Unit
House of Commons
London
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National Energy System Operator
Faraday House
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7th April 2025

Dear Mr Hook,

Thank you for your invitation for the National Energy System Operator (NESO) to appear before the Public Bill Committee for the Planning and Infrastructure Bill on the 24th April.

As my team discussed with your colleagues, although I welcome the Committee's invitation, I do not believe that NESO's is best placed to provide the Committee with the information it requires to sufficiently scrutinise the Bill.

NESO is an independent, public corporation with responsibility for balancing electricity supply and demand in Great Britain, planning the future of the electricity and gas systems, and providing independent advice to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Ofgem. NESO does not build or own any infrastructure, such as electricity network or generation, so its experience with the planning system is necessarily limited.

Beyond the areas set out below, NESO does not have established positions on the legislation itself. However, as NESO continues its evolution, grows its regional presence and whole system expertise, I expect our experience and knowledge of the planning system to grow in parallel, providing the opportunity in future for us to advise further in this area.

In 2024 we published advice to the Government on delivering clean power by 2030 for Great Britain¹. We advised that to achieve clean power by 2030, reforms to the planning and consenting processes are required. This would pave the way for significant volumes of new electricity network infrastructure and generation to pass through the planning system at speed and begin construction, whilst maintaining community consent.

Community consent and maintaining public support is vital to the delivery of net zero in Great Britain. Those asked to host energy infrastructure should continue to be effectively engaged throughout the development process, even as it accelerates, and should feel tangible benefit from the critical role their areas play in building a clean, secure and low-cost electricity. NESO is supportive of the intent shown in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to establish provisions for a

¹ <https://www.neso.energy/publications/clean-power-2030>

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community benefits policy, though the detailed design of this policy is a decision for the Government.

Our advice also noted that reforms to the grid connections process are required. As the Committee may be aware, NESO submitted a package of ambitious grid connections reforms to Ofgem in December 2024. These reforms, if approved, would move the current process from connecting projects on a first come, first served basis to a process that prioritises ready-to-connect projects that align with the Government's plan for clean power by 2030 and once developed, the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan².

Although we believe our reforms would be effective, we welcome the Government's inclusion of grid connections legislation, adding further strength to the proposal we have designed.

If we can be of any assistance to the Committee in any areas that sit within NESOs remit and expertise, we would be happy to help.

Thank you once again for your invitation.

Yours sincerely,

Fintan Slye

Chief Executive Officer

National Energy System Operator

² <https://www.neso.energy/what-we-do/strategic-planning/strategic-spatial-energy-planning-ssep>