

Regional Energy Strategic Planning (RESP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Public

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Introduction to RESP

In early-2025, NESO (National Energy System Operator) became responsible for producing Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESPs) for England, Scotland and Wales. The plans will help ensure that local areas get the energy infrastructure they need to meet local net zero and economic growth ambitions. The RESPs will form part of NESO's wider strategic energy planning activities, ensuring a joined-up approach between national, regional and local levels.

Ofgem awarded NESO the RESP role in [November 2023](#). Following their [public consultation](#) in July 2024, Ofgem published its final decision on the details of the [RESP role on 2 April 2025](#). The RESP framework policy sets out the scope of the RESP role and what NESO and its stakeholders will be doing to enable the development of RESPs across Great Britain.

Watch our March 2025 webinar '[An introduction to Regional Energy Strategic Planning](#)' for further information about NESO's RESP role.

The RESP role has been set up to develop plans across the nations and regions of Great Britain, spanning across all energy vectors – electricity, gas, and hydrogen networks – as part of one integrated energy system.

These different energy systems are currently planned separately. By moving to a joined-up whole-system approach, this will ensure investment is targeted where it's needed, enabling economic growth and supporting progress towards achieving net zero.

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FAQs

About RESP

Q. Where will the RESPs be developed?

NESO will be producing RESPs for the nations and regions defined by Ofgem. These are set out in Ofgem's RESP Framework Policy decision – April 2025 as:

- Scotland
- Wales
- North-East, Yorkshire and the Humber
- North-West
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- Central England
- East
- Greater London
- South-East
- South-West

The detailed boundaries for Scotland, Wales and the nine English regions are available in [the RESP Framework Policy decision](#), on slide 60.

Q. How does the RESP role relate to other SEP activities?

The RESP role will be delivered as part of NESO's wider strategic energy planning (SEP) activities.

These include the [Strategic Spatial Energy Plan](#), [Centralised Strategic Network Plan](#), and [Future Energy Scenarios](#).

For more information about how they interact, see our SEP Summary document.

Q. Will RESPs be separate entities or are they solely strategies enacted by NESO?

RESPs are 'regional energy strategic plans'. They are not entities or organisations.

NESO's RESP team will be made up of a central hub team, plus 11 teams across each of the devolved nations and regions.

For more information, please visit our website – [Regional Energy Strategic Planning \(RESP\) | National Energy System Operator](#)

[1.05]

Q. How does RESP relate to other areas of NESO's Strategic Energy Planning, including SSEP, CSNP, and Future Energy Scenarios?

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SSEP and Future Energy Scenarios (FES) will be used as national-level inputs to the RESP process, to ensure that the pathways developed for each devolved nation and region are coherent with ambitions at a GB level. This will include ensuring coherence between local ambitions, distributed demand growth, embedded generation, and ambitions at a GB level.

As our understanding of the local landscape and ambitions increases, RESPs will feed more granular, bottom-up data into SSEP and FES, as appropriate. RESPs will primarily drive investment in distribution networks. Where investments at distribution level are dependent on investments in transmission networks, we will need to ensure that the CSNP triggers sufficient transmission investments, considering the demands at the transmission/distribution interface.

[1.16]

Q. Who approves the RESPs? What is the decision-making process?

Ofgem will approve the RESP Methodology and NESO will be accountable for the development of RESPs in line with the steer of the regional Strategic Board.

Sign-off of each region/nation's RESP will sit with the relevant strategic board where a clear majority consensus can be reached. In the absence of a consensus, sign-off will revert to Ofgem.

[1.21]

Q. How have RESP boundaries been decided, and how do they align with energy network boundaries?

RESP boundaries have been set by Ofgem using sub transportation boundaries. The exact details can be found in [Decision on the Regional Energy Strategic Plan Policy Framework](#), on page 59.

Whilst the RESP regions do not wholly align with the energy network boundaries, the ability to conduct analysis over varying spatial granularities is an inherent technical capability for RESP. This will allow NESO to model impacts across boundaries.

[1.07]

Q. What was the purpose of the RESP Forums held in March and April 2025?

In March and April 2025, NESO ran its first series of RESP Forums in Scotland, Wales, and the nine English RESP regions. The purpose of the forums was to enable NESO to start building relationships with our stakeholders in the nations and regions, and to help us develop our understanding of the areas we'll be working with, through RESP. These forums enabled us to get stakeholder views on two of our priorities for 2025: the transitional Regional Energy Strategy Plan (tRESP) project, which will inform the DNO business plans for 2028-33, and; the Methodology that will set out our approach to producing RESPs.

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The forums were held online and were open to all with an interest in RESP and energy planning in their region.

We will continue to run RESP forums throughout 2025, to ensure that all stakeholders get the opportunity to participate. Please look out for further information about the next series of forums on the NESO website and visit the RESP pages. The March and April Forum slides, and a summary report, are available to download.

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RESP timescales

Q. What's the timescale for the development of the full RESPs?

The RESPs will draw on the most robust and up to date Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) outputs, ensuring that our analysis and recommendations are based on the most credible and current information. As communicated in December 2025, (subject to the UK Energy Secretary's decision on the SSEP pathway) delivery of the RESPs is now planned by the end of 2028.

[1.06]

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RESP boundaries

Q. Can NESO provide any further insights into RESP boundaries & how future MSA/devolution boundary alignments may/may not be influenced by these?

Ofgem has set out all RESP boundaries in their April 2025 publication, '*Decision on the Regional Energy Strategic Plan Policy Framework*'. Within this policy framework, Ofgem has set out eleven RESP 'regions', as follows:

- Scotland (as per the national boundary)
- Wales (as per the national boundary)
- England split into nine regions

As referenced in the Ofgem Policy Framework, the English regions' boundaries are 'based on a blend of sub-national transport bodies, and International Territorial Level 1 geographies'. However, the Ofgem Policy Framework recognises there may be circumstances that justify changes to the RESP boundaries, including, for example, in response to the English Devolution White Paper. Further details on the boundaries, and the process for any future change, is provided in Section 6 of the Ofgem Policy Framework.

[1.07]

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Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs)

Q. What is the consistent messaging on Local Area Energy Plans? (LAEPs)

Across the country, Local Area Energy Plans (LAEP), and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES, Scotland), are acting as an important catalyst for developing the local project pipeline. Where they exist, they will be an important element of the evidence base for each devolved nation and region's RESP. We're aware of the variety of approaches being taken to developing LAEPs across the country, and the pioneering work that is continually evolving, and maturing that methodology and insight. We'll work closely with local authorities to understand their methodologies and progress; to inform a consistent approach to utilising LAEPs within RESP development. Likewise, we're also aware that there isn't full coverage of LAEPs across the country, and we will design our methodology to ensure that those areas without a LAEP are not disadvantaged from having a full and meaningful role in RESP development.

[1.29]

Q. How will RESP work with LAEPs? Are there any gaps that can be filled to make LAEP delivery easier?

(As above)

Across the country, Local Area Energy Plans (LAEP), and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES, Scotland), are acting as an important catalyst for developing the local project pipeline. Where they exist, they will be an important element of the evidence base for each devolved nation and region's RESP. We're aware of the variety of approaches being taken to developing LAEPs across the country, and the pioneering work that is continually evolving, and maturing that methodology and insight. We'll work closely with local authorities to understand their methodologies and progress; to inform a consistent approach to utilising LAEPs within RESP development. Likewise, we're also aware that there isn't full coverage of LAEPs across the country, and we will design our methodology to ensure that those areas without a LAEP are not disadvantaged from having a full and meaningful role in RESP development.

[1.15]

Q. As RESP will be updated every three years, is there the potential for funding to be made available for LAEPs to also be updated, so the local data can influence the updated RESP?

Funding for local authority (LA) activities is not within Ofgem or NESO's remit. LA funding is a matter for Government.

[1.02]

Q. Can you share any examples where RESP has worked together on local planning? This is a new role that RESP has taken on. Therefore, we are setting up the teams, the capabilities, and the methodology, to undertake whole energy system planning.

[1.09]

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Q. What steps are being taken to ensure alignment and consistency between LAEPs, RESPs, SSEPs, and other regional or local plans, while avoiding duplication of effort?

The Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP), and the Centralised Strategic Network Plan (CSNP), will be key 'top down' inputs into each RESP. The timescales allow for this; their drafts will be published in Q2 2026, at a similar time to Strategic Boards (RESP) considering the first 'bottom-up' inputs into RESP. These bottom-up inputs include regional/devolved nations' credible decarbonisation ambitions in driving decarbonisation pathways.

NESO will work with, and consult, Strategic Board members and working groups, in ensuring alignment at this strategic direction setting stage; with further technical coordination happening during, and in concluding, the modelling of the RESP pathways.

One of the key RESP outputs will be establishing Consistent Planning Assumptions. These will be used for RESPs, and by DNOs and GDNs. These will be informed by reviewing assumptions used in existing and emerging energy planning activity. Local authorities and other local actors could choose to adopt these in their local plan (e.g. LAEP) methodologies.

[2.02]

Q. What support—financial, technical, or strategic—will be provided to local authorities to help them meaningfully engage with the RESP process, and develop robust LAEPs?

RESP teams will support local actors, including local authorities, engaging in RESP; providing proportionate support on local energy planning, and the interaction with strategic spatial planning.

Targeted proportionate support is likely to focus on sharing best practise, digital tools and data consistency, and aim to mitigate the risk of areas not being able to participate in RESP.

RESP teams are developing this approach, including engaging with stakeholders at, and outside, the RESP forums; with more detailed proposals to be included in the RESP Methodology consultation, later in 2026.

NESO will not, however, be able to provide funding or personnel to local spatial planning bodies. Currently, funding for RESP is via Ofgem, and ultimately consumers' energy bills. This was confirmed, and more detail can be found in Ofgem's consultation response (paragraph 4.3, page 40-41).

[2.03]

Q. How will communities, local energy groups, and educational institutions be involved in energy planning, and how is public engagement being supported to foster trust and awareness?

NESO strives to be open and transparent in everything we do, working collaboratively with a wide range of different stakeholders. That includes ensuring all stakeholders that want to be involved, have the mechanisms available to have their voices heard. RESP will provide structured engagement mechanisms for stakeholders at different levels to be involved. These include

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strategic boards, working groups, and other engagement mechanisms, to gather relevant perspectives to feed into RESP plans, and provide information as NESO develops regional plans. Working groups are expected to be implemented in each devolved nation and region in early 2026. More details will be shared via the RESP forums.

[2.04]

Q. How will RESP be integrated into local development and spatial planning frameworks, including statutory local plans, to ensure coordination and consent for future energy infrastructure?

Local plans, including spatial planning frameworks and allocations for new development, will be key inputs into RESP. Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) and Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) already use their input in their own business planning (such as the DNOs' DFES process).

RESP will seek to integrate these with other inputs. We will publish the proposed methodology to seek stakeholder input later in 2025. We are, and will continue, engaging central, devolved and local government, to understand how they may choose to integrate RESP into local planning activity. Ofgem has commissioned NESO to produce RESPs. Presently (June 2025), there is no statutory requirement for local planning authorities to integrate RESP into their plans. However, we are seeing encouraging engagement in designing RESP and local actor support (further details are included in the above response to, 'Local Authority Engagement & Support'), as authorities can see the benefits RESP can provide to local planning activity.

[2.06]

Q. Who will NESO or RESP engage with at the local level, and how can local authorities and combined authorities include NESO in their ongoing, or upcoming, energy planning activities?

For our first RESP Forums, held March – April 2025, our teams prioritised 'strategic' and 'upper tier' (combined, county, and unitary) local authorities and other 'network' organisations (e.g. DNOs, GDNs, net zero hubs, and other partnerships), asking for Forum invites to be shared amongst their contacts, including district/borough councils and other 'lower tier' local authorities. This was to make best use of our limited, albeit growing, capacity.

RESP teams are now prioritising engaging with all local authorities, and with businesses and communities across the RESP regions and devolved nations. This includes, but is not limited to: industrial clusters, business networks, community energy groups/networks, developers, and universities, etc.

Our teams can be contacted via box.resp@neso.energy

[2.07]

Q. How will RESP address technical opportunities and challenges, such as local energy trading, non-network interventions, and dynamic energy models, and how will these be resourced?

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NESO will deliver a technical coordination function to ensure coherent energy system planning within, and between, RESPs, and upward to transmission-level plans. The exact details of how we will gather data inputs, will be developed in our forthcoming methodology, in 2026. Our 'hub-and-spoke' delivery model provides the opportunity for place-based engagement and collaboration via teams across the regions and devolved nations, with supporting functions via a central team. The need for technical expertise is clear, and we are progressing recruitment to that effect; initially we plan to have a technical lead per devolved nation and region to support both regional and central tasks. Where required, we will engage with colleagues across NESO to leverage the diverse knowledge and expertise available to drive best outcomes for local actors and RESPs.

[2.08]

Q. What are the implications of Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) not taking a whole system approach, and how does this impact RESP development and delivery?

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) are buildings-focused strategies that local authorities in Scotland are required to publish. They set out how all buildings in a local authority area need to change, in terms of their energy efficiency performance and heat supply, to meet net zero. Although they are not explicitly taking a whole system approach, LHEES will still provide a valuable element of the evidence base for Scotland's RESP. In particular, the way we heat our buildings will change, therefore what that means for the underlying infrastructure.

We will work closely with local authorities to understand their LHEES to inform a consistent approach to integrating them into RESP development. We're also aware that LHEES is only one way local authorities engage with energy planning, and we will design our methodology to ensure that local authorities' input into RESP can go beyond LHEES where relevant.

[2.09]

Q. How will RESP ensure that non-network interventions (e.g., energy efficiency, flexibility, local markets) are given appropriate weight, especially if local plans are outputs of outcomes focused?

RESPs need to consider the whole energy system, right across the energy distribution networks, and include the interface with the transmission systems. This includes considering what's happening 'behind' the demand, generation or flexibility connecting. In other words, what activity could be changing this? And how might this impact the network and energy planning forecasts? Decarbonisation interventions that need consideration include, but are not limited to; energy efficiency, flexibility, heat networks, embedded generation, renewable heating, electric vehicle uptake, and other transport decarbonisation solutions.

RESPs will consider bottom-up inputs, ensuring decarbonisation activity and plans are given appropriate weight to maximise the accuracy of decarbonisation pathways, and ensure RESPs accurately reflect the whole energy system within the RESP region or devolved nation.

[2.10]

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Q. Do you recommend councils commission Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) now, or wait until the Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESPs) are published? Is there any funding available to support LAEP development?

The work on LAEPs is different in scope and will have a different methodology versus RESPs. For example:

- LAEPs typically look at individual buildings and the human and environmental infrastructure connecting them. Whereas NESO proposes RESPs go down to 'Lower Super Output Areas' (LSOAs).
- LAEPs are instigated and overseen by a lead local authority, identifying local ambitions, priorities and pathways. RESPs are to be delivered by NESO and will identify investment in the networks that will enable these ambitions, priorities and pathways to be achieved.

Whilst LAEPs present valuable input to RESPs, they are not a requirement to allow local authorities to engage with us. Whilst they are a beneficial input, they are not a required, or the only, input from local authorities, and other local actors, into RESPs.

We will provide targeted, proportionate support, to ensure all local authorities can input into RESP. We recommend local authorities consider their own needs as to whether to commission a LAEP.

Due to the different scope of LAEPs and RESPs, NESO recognises the benefit of LAEPs continuing beyond the introduction of RESP. We are, and will continue to, engage with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Energy Systems Catapult, and other organisations developing LAEP methodology. We do not have remit or control over LAEP methodology, or its key stages.

[2.12]

Q. Who would be considered 'local actors' in the process?

'Local actors' is a purposefully broad term, reflecting our need to work closely with multiple actors across RESP regions and devolved nations, if RESPs are to accurately plan and truly represent each area's decarbonisation needs.

This term encompasses entities and individuals involved in, have influence over, or an interest in, the energy landscape of a RESP region or devolved nation.

This includes, but is not limited to, network companies, other energy or related companies (e.g. heat network operators, generators, developers, consumers, etc.), democratic actors undertaking energy and/or spatial planning activity, such as local authorities, those advocating for community interests, and other local actors involved in energy system planning.

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The definition of 'local actors' excludes those without local engagement or those focused on wider policies.

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RESP Relationship with other Plans

Q. How does the RESP spatial plan link to the clean power target by 2030 and therefore to the local plan?

Through 'Clean Power 2030', we advised government on which network upgrades, market and policy decisions, could accelerate the development of a clean power system by 2030. The SSEP will take the UK Government's response to this advice – the Clean Power Action Plan – into account as background, or a starting point, for analysis on a longer-term basis.

The SSEP will set out a pathway for energy generation and storage infrastructure rolled out from 2030 to 2050. This will provide greater clarity to developers and confidence for network planning in the anticipated levels of electricity and hydrogen supply and storage.

SSEP and NESO's Future Energy Scenarios (FES) will be used as national-level inputs to the RESP process, to ensure that the pathways developed for each devolved nation and region are coherent with national ambitions. This will include ensuring coherence between local ambitions, distributed demand growth, embedded generation, and GB level ambitions. As our understanding of the local landscape and ambitions increases, RESPs will be able to feed more granular, bottom-up data into SSEP and FES as appropriate.

[1.03]

Q. Will there be a cross over with strategic energy systems with other regions? How will this be accounted for within the RESP?

NESO is the delivery body for an overarching, aligned, strategic energy plan for Great Britain – Regional Energy Strategic Plans, Strategic Spatial Energy Plan, and the Centralised Strategic Network Plan. As part of the delivery of these plans, NESO will ensure the separate plans align to form one plan. For RESPs, there will be a set of common planning assumptions developed which will ensure consistency across the devolved nations and regions, and the regional pathways will be coordinated across the devolved nations and regions to ensure there is consistency between these.

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Data Related

Q. How will you ensure the credibility of your data sources?

There will be clearly established criteria for determining the credibility of data sources, which will be published as part of the RESP Methodology consultation.

As part of this, we will establish a framework of data inputs, that effectively integrates different sources, both top down and bottom up.

Q. Will these be dynamic, updatable mapping/models and in the public domain?

It is NESO's intention to provide dynamic mapping of RESPs, with the underlying modelling assumptions, and key data, in the public domain. The RESPs will be updated every three years with a data refresh each year.

[2.11]

Governance

Q. How will RESP be integrated into local development and spatial planning frameworks, including statutory local plans, to ensure coordination and consent for future energy infrastructure?

RESP plans will be subject to review and approval by a regional strategic board. Each board will comprise of network companies, local government, and wider actors, who will provide inputs from different perspectives, throughout development of the RESPs.

The boards will also hold NESO to account: that a robust process to gather different views, and consider different criteria, has been undertaken through working groups and other engagement. RESP teams will support local development and energy strategies through their provision of local actor support, and place-based engagement.

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Nuclear Related

Q. What role is there for new nuclear in the energy planning process for net zero?

Nuclear (both traditional and Small Modular Reactors, or SMR) is earmarked as a scope technology for optimisation in the first SSEP (Strategic Spatial Energy Plan). We will apply our forthcoming methodology to understand the optimal technology types, volumes and locations, through our economic and geospatial modelling. Our model optimises for least cost to the consumer. It is then

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assessed against deliverables, such as meeting Government decarbonisation targets, and ensuring security of supply. We will also ensure the SSEP pathway reflects environmental and societal considerations, and cross-economy demands on land and sea.

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If you have a question for the RESP team, please contact us at box.resp@neso.energy