

Public

Ref: FOI/25/096

National Energy System Operator

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Dear requester

Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 18 August 2025. Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). This is because we have determined that information in scope of the request meets the definition provided at Regulation 2(1)(c) of the EIR.

Request

You asked us:

Please could you provide me with a list of any confirmation letters which NESO has provided in support of applications to the UK Government for AI Growth Zones (AIGZs).

For context: the UK Government has stated in guidance for entities making applications for AIGZs that they need to demonstrate access to at least 500MW of power capacity in their region by 2030. One of the ways in which the applicant can demonstrate this is with "A confirmation letter from...NESO...setting out a secured connection agreement or formally allocated capacity." See: [AI Growth Zones: open for applications - GOV.UK](#)

I would like you to provide me with a list of any such letters which NESO has provided; and a copy of any such letters. If it is not possible to provide me with a copy of the letter in full, I would like you to provide me with details of (1) the AIGZ application it was in support of and (2) the amount of power capacity involved.

Our response

We can confirm that we hold information in scope of your request.

The full text of the Power Availability criteria for the AI Growth Zones applications ([AI Growth Zones: open for applications - GOV.UK](#)) is:

Sites must demonstrate access to at least 500MW of power capacity by 2030. To demonstrate this, applicants must provide the following:

- *A confirmation letter from National Grid, the National Energy System Operator (NESO) (or the relevant transmission operator) setting out a secured connection agreement or formally allocated capacity, OR*
- *A credible behind-the-meter solution supported by detailed technical documentation (e.g. feasibility studies, supplier Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs), permitting timelines).*

While 500MW by 2030 is the minimum requirement, sites with greater capacity will be viewed favourably.

NESO has been asked for and provided one letter in support of an application to the UK Government for AIGZs. This letter was provided to Apatura on 21st May 2025 in respect of the [Ravenscraig project](#), and an extract of that letter where it relates to power capacity is provided below.

Extract from letter:

This letter is to confirm that Apatura holds connection agreements with NESO for the following sites in Scotland. We understand that Apatura is actively progressing modifications to these agreements to incorporate final demand for data centre usage, complementing their existing energy storage projects ... In addition, as outlined in your expression of interest, Apatura is currently working to modify connection offers for further sites to support the development of data centre infrastructure within Scotland. For reference, the following table summarises the connection agreements currently held by Apatura that are being considered for modification:

Substation Node	Connection Offer Reference Number	Energisation Date for BESS	MW Demand Capacity
Newarthill	A/SPTL/GPCB/23/GREE-EN(0)	2028	250
Wishaw	A/SPTL/GPC/23/CSTLH-EN(0)	2030	300

Denny	A/SPT/GPC/23/GLEN-EN(0)	2028	300
Grangemouth	A/SPT/GPC/23/NCLTN-EN(0)	2030	250
Lambhill	A/SPTL/GPC/23/LMBL-EN(0)	2029	300
Currie	A/GPC/25/WEST-EX(0)	2033 (Demand only)	200

Advice and assistance

Artificial Intelligence Growth Zones: the application process for AI Growth Zones is managed by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). Applicants to AIGZs will submit their application to the Department of Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT). When a connection agreement is signed between NESO and a developer / project owner, both parties will hold a copy of the agreement. If a developer has a connection agreement, there would not necessarily be a requirement for them to request a specific letter from NESO for the purposes of an AIGZ application. If required, DSIT may contact NESO (with the consent of the applicant) for confirmation of the validity of information provided in the application relating to a connection offer. As per the Power Availability criteria listed above and on the AI Growth Zone application website, a developer may provide a 'confirmation letter from National Grid, the National Energy System Operator (NESO) (or the relevant transmission operator) setting out a secured connection agreement or formally allocated capacity', or a 'credible behind-the-meter solution supported by detailed technical documentation (e.g. feasibility studies, supplier Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs), permitting timelines)' in support of their application.

Government departments are subject to the FOIA and EIR and you may wish to request further information on applications for AIGZs from DSIT: [Make a Freedom of Information \(FOI\) request to DSIT - GOV.UK.](#)

Connections Reform: NESO is currently rolling out a programme of connections reform ([Connections Reform | National Energy System Operator](#)). This is a major programme of work involving all projects that connect to or use the transmission system. The reform package, including modifications to the Connection and Use of System Code (CUSC), was approved by Ofgem in April 2025 ([Decision on Connections Reform Package \(TM04+\) | Ofgem](#)). The Connections Evidence Submission window closed on [26 August 2025](#) and NESO is now carrying out initial checks on all submitted evidence. All projects for which evidence has been submitted will be assessed and assigned a status (Gate 1 or Gate 2) based on their readiness and Strategic Alignment with the UK's clean energy goals. Further information on the criteria is available [here](#):

Evidence handbook and other G2WQ submission resources | National Energy System Operator.

Results are to be communicated to Customers no earlier than Thursday 28 August.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. If you want us to carry out a review, please let us know within 40 working days and quote the reference number at the top of this letter. You can find our procedure here: [Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations | National Energy System Operator](#). The ICO's website also provides guidance on the internal review process: [What to do if you are dissatisfied with the response | ICO](#).

If you are still dissatisfied after our internal review, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). You should make complaints to the ICO within six weeks of receiving the outcome of an internal review. The easiest way to lodge a complaint is through their website: www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints. Alternatively, they can be contacted at: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF.

Thank you for your interest in the work of the National Energy System Operator (NESO).

Regards,

The Information Rights Team, National Energy System Operator (NESO)