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Slow Reserve Transition Plan

Date: February 2026

Version 4.0

Version	Change
Version 1.0	N/A
Version 2.0	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update to dates and timings 2. Inclusion of Linked Window provision
Version 3.0	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full details of linked windows 2. Details of temporary relaxation of Maximum Utilisation Period
Version 4.0	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further clarification on Linked SR Windows – page 3 2. Updated guidance on Procurement Volumes – page 5 3. Addition of Day 1 Readiness Plan and Timings – page 10

Purpose

This document sets out how NESO will transition from the existing Short Term Operating Reserve (STOR) service to the new Slow Reserve (SR) service in March 2026. Included in this plan is:

- High level plan
- Details of linked SR service windows and associated temporary requirements to relax the maximum utilisation obligations.
- Procurement requirements
- Contingency plans
- Provider Onboarding (pre-qualification)
- Transition timings

We intend to keep this document updated as we progress towards SR service go-live in 2026 and provide market participants with more detail on supporting material, webinars and mock auctions, etc and associated key dates.

Please share any feedback on this document to box.futureofbalancingservices@neso.energy

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Transition Plan Summary

All dates in this Transition Plan are based on an intended go-live date of **31 March 2026**. Please note, dates may be subject to change and appropriate communications and updates will be issued if this is the case.

The introduction of Slow Reserve, which replaces the legacy STOR service, will support NESO’s regulatory requirement to restore frequency deviations within 15-minutes, and create a new reserve product (positive and negative) that meets changing system needs, and opens the market up to more technology types.

NESO intends to transition all of its requirement from the existing STOR service to the new Slow Reserve service as a ‘a hard-stop’ such that all STOR procurement will cease entirely at the point in which the full procurement of Slow Reserve (positive and negative) commences on 31 March 2026. Therefore, there will be no phased approach where STOR and Slow Reserve are procured or utilised in parallel, with the procurement of STOR scheduled to end with the final auction on **30 March 2026**.

This will enable NESO to:

- Reduce complexity when setting its buy-order for slow acting response
- Avoid setting uneconomic market signals from the two staggered auctions.

The following table sets out the current key dates for SR go-live.

Key Dates:

Dates	Item
14 October 2025	SR Service Terms and Procurement Rules published on our website
Early December 2025	SR onboarding and all required system integration with NESO commences
Mid Dec	Confirmation and full detail of linked SR windows and duration of transition period.
Feb-Mar 2026	Drop-in sessions, EAC sandbox and mock auctions
17 March 2026	EAC opens 14 days ahead of 1st auction to receive sell-order submissions.
30 March 2026 (05:00)	Final STOR Auction for Operational Day 31 March 2026.
31 March 2026 (14:00)	First SR auction (+/-) fully co-optimised with existing response and reserve services.
31 March 2026 (23:00)	First Slow Reserve Operational Day commences.
1st April 2026 (05:00)	Operational STOR service ends.
(TBC)	Transitional Period (linked SR Windows) ends and enduring SR service commences.

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Linked SR Windows

NESO will be linking certain contiguous SR Windows for **Positive Slow Reserve (PSR) only** through the procurement process for an initial transitional period from the go-live of Slow Reserve.

To address the increased scheduling complexities that the Slow Reserve service design introduces beyond the existing STOR service, we need to ensure we maintain system security over the daily peak demand periods as we move away from the legacy STOR windows to the enduring SR service and embed new scheduling systems and processes.

By linking SR Windows for a transitional period, NESO can:

- introduce the service in a managed way, minimising the scheduling complexities across the daily peaks.
- embed and test the resilience of our enhanced scheduling and dispatch systems in a live environment, before moving to the enduring SR service.
- Allow full service flexibility outside of the linked SR Windows.

There will be three separately procured linked SR Window periods for each operational day during the transition period, as follows.

Local time	04:00	04:30	05:00	05:30	06:00	06:30	07:00	07:30	08:00	08:30	09:00	09:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	13:00	13:30	14:00	14:30	15:00	15:30	16:00	16:30	17:00	17:30	18:00	18:30	19:00	19:30	20:00	20:30	21:00	21:30	22:00	22:30			
Linked window					Morning (6:00-10:30)				Midday (10:30-15:00)				Evening (15:00-21:00)																												

The three linked SR windows are supported by a detailed review of historical demand and STOR availability. These cover:

- A morning window which will run from 06:00 to 10:30
- A midday window which will run from 10:30 to 15:00
- An evening window which will run from 15:00 to 21.00

Please note that these times are local time.

Linking of SR Windows is permitted under the SR Procurement Rules (section 7) by the issue of a formal Linking Notice and requires that SR units;

- must submit auction sell-orders of identical MW volume across all PSR Windows in the linked period (e.g. all 9 windows in the morning period covering 6:00 – 10:30), in order to be a valid sell-order. Invalid orders will be rejected at submission.

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- will not be required to submit sell-orders for all or more than one of the individual linked periods in an Operational Day – but are free to do so if the SR unit has the capability.

For the avoidance of doubt, all other PSR Windows, outside of the aforementioned linked SR Windows, will be unaffected during the transition period. The Negative and Optional services are also unaffected.

The transition period will remain in place whilst we embed the new SR service and monitor all aspects of the enhanced scheduling and dispatch systems and processes. We expect the assessment phase may take at least 10 weeks to fully complete, which would mean that, provided there are no issues, we would expect to remove the Linking Notice no earlier than June 2026.

In advance of the first SR auction opening in March 2026, we will formally communicate the linked SR windows via a 'Linking Notice' as is required under the SR Procurement Rules. When we are ready to cancel or change the Linking Notice we will give at least 2 weeks prior notice.

Temporary relaxation of maximum utilisation obligations

To minimise the impact on market participants during the transition period, we intend to relax the SR service obligation that SR units must be capable of delivering energy (if instructed) continuously for the entire Contracted Service Period.

In a scenario where there were no linked SR Windows imposed by NESO, the minimum obligation for the firm service would be to have the capability of providing continuous energy (if instructed) for the minimum 4 contiguous SR Windows.

Where NESO has imposed linked SR Windows, the Contracted Service Period would consist of all contiguous linked SR Windows, and therefore energy could be required continuously for several hours (up to 6 hours) as a mandatory obligation.

Whilst we would not expect many instances of SR units being instructed for any longer than 2 hours, the service terms do not allow for any flexibility around the continuous delivery obligation. We therefore **intend to relax the continuous energy requirement** during any NESO imposed linked SR Windows, to align with the individual SR units MUP (being not less than 2 hours) declared during SR pre-qualification. To facilitate this, providers will be required to do the following;

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- Following receipt of each Bid-Offer Acceptance or Instruction with respect to any SR Unit, and where the SR Unit is approaching its maximum utilisation period, the Registered Auction Participant shall contact the NESO control room OEM on the designated telephone number (provided at prequalification) no later than thirty (30) minutes before expiry of the SR Unit's registered maximum utilisation period, to agree a time for that service instruction to end. NESO will issue a BOA or Cease Instruction to align with this agreed time.
- Once that time has been agreed, the SR Unit shall ramp back to its baseline in accordance with the issued BOA or Cease Instruction, and the normal rules in the prevailing Slow Reserve Service Terms concerning Recovery Periods shall then apply.

This relaxation of the continuous energy delivery will only apply to Linked SR Windows whilst they are in place and do not apply to any other SR Windows. Once the Linked SR Windows are removed the normal obligations for continuous energy delivery will apply.

Volume Procurement

As with all NESO services, our procurement strategy for the Slow Reserve service will aim to meet system requirements at the lowest overall cost compared with alternative options.

For both Positive and Negative Slow Reserve we intend to procure 1800MW volume in each of the 48 daily settlement periods, where flexibility in the BM is insufficient, and where negative Slow Reserve can address the requirement, we will seek to procure this service and will value it based on the cost of credible alternative actions. However, full details of the final procurement volumes will be communicated through the Slow Reserve Requirement Forecast dataset on the NESO Data Portal, in accordance with NESO's established protocols for Ancillary Services.

Even though we set and publish a target requirement at 1800MW, the daily price curve will vary across each SR window and may lead to under procurement for some periods should sell-order prices be too expensive.

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In line with all our day ahead auctions, the buy curves will not be published ahead of the auction. Maintaining a "double blind" auction ensures efficient and fair operation of the market. Once the auction has completed the buy curves are published alongside the results on the data portal.

Positive STOR to Slow Reserve Procurement

Under the hard stop approach the 1,700MW of firm STOR (positive only) procurement will cease on 30 March 2026. Slow Reverse procurement will subsequently commence on 31 March 2026 for the 1 April 2026 operational day.

The firm STOR product was procured only in certain periods of the day (STOR Windows) and not in all 48 Settlement Periods across the STOR day, with the Optional STOR service covering the remaining periods. For positive Slow Reserve we intend to procure a firm MW volume in each of the 48 daily settlement periods, where appropriate, with the Optional service also covering all settlement periods.

Figure 1 below illustrates the transition of positive Committed STOR to Firm Slow Reserve procurement across the transition from STOR to Slow Reserve. Note, final positive Slow Reserve volumes are still to be published, and only highlighted in the following examples for illustrative purposes.

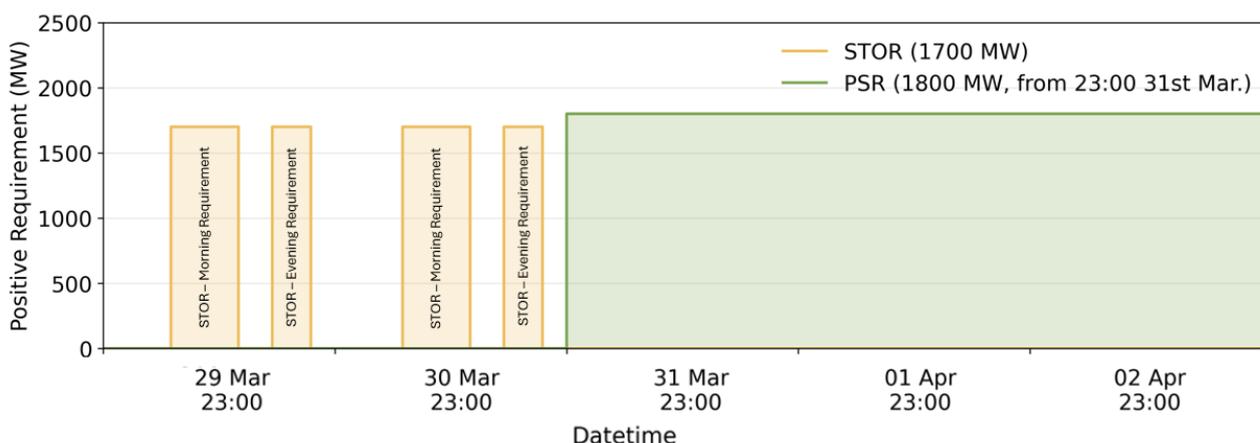


Fig. 1 – Positive Slow Reserve and STOR Requirement and Planned Procurement

Negative Slow Reserve Procurement

Since there is no negative STOR product, there is no transition to consider, and the full negative Slow Reserve requirement will be procured from go live on 31 March 2026.

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For negative Slow reserve, there is a continuous requirement for negative reserve, however meeting this requirement does not always incur cost due to the self-despatch position of flexible units in the Balancing Mechanism.

For negative Slow Reserve we intend to procure 1800MW volume in each of the 48 daily settlement periods, where appropriate. However, full details of the final procurement volumes will be communicated through the Slow Reserve Requirement Forecast dataset on the NESO Data Portal, in accordance with NESO's established protocols for Ancillary Services.

Note, negative Slow Reserve volumes are to be determined and only highlighted in the following examples in figure 2 for illustrative purposes.

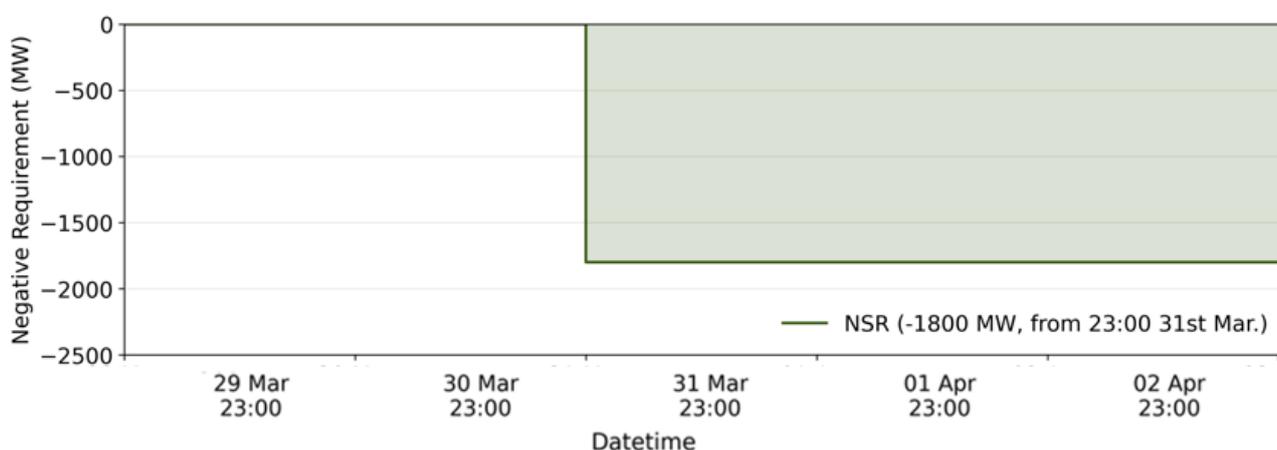


Fig. 2 – Negative Slow Reserve Requirement and Planned Procurement

Contingency Plan

Should there be insufficient volume qualified for Slow Reserve by 30 March 2026, then NESO will procure volume first through the Slow Reserve auction and any remaining volume in the BM market. This won't delay the go-live of Slow Reserve. Having communicated the hard-stop approach to industry, subsequently keeping the STOR market open would not provide the right signals or incentivise provider transition.

NESO will ensure that providers are given ample time to prepare for onboarding and complete the pre-qualification checks.

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Provider Onboarding (Prequalification)

All providers looking to participate in Slow Reserve will need to register in the Single Markets Platform (SMP) to prequalify their units as part of the onboarding process.

There are also a number of system integration requirements for Slow Reserve, including;

- Open Balancing Platform (OBP),
- Auction Platform (EAC),
- Operational Metering and Performance Metering – which vary between BM and non-BM units (see below).

Onboarding will include full end to end testing of the new system integrations.

NESO commenced early onboarding from early December 2025 for all existing STOR providers and all new market participants wishing to participate in Slow Reserve and continue to assist providers through system integration testing, ensuring a smooth transition and maximum participation in Slow Reserve from go live.

Note: For existing STOR Providers there will be no “lift and shift” of the STOR portfolio into SMP due to legacy system constraints. Whilst we recognise this is more onerous on STOR providers, it does allow the opportunity to revisit all unit parameters and ensure they are correct and compliant with the Slow Reserve service. Please note that, unlike Quick Reserve and Optional Fast Reserve, Slow Reserve and STOR will not be operational together, and therefore providers should not be available for the two services simultaneously.

There are some different onboarding obligations for BM and non-BM providers to adhere to:

BM units

- **Registration** – through the NESO Single Market Platform (SMP).
- **Performance Metering** – BM units are required to satisfy the requirements for the submission of new Performance Metering data specification through a new API interface with NESO, Details are published under the ‘How to Participate’ section of the Slow Reserve webpage. **Provider testing required.**
- **Balancing Systems** – no additional systems integrations are required. Operational Data submissions (including Operational Metering) are as per existing BM data exchanges (e.g. EDL/EDT).

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- **Operational Metering** – no additional systems integrations are required beyond the existing BM requirements.
- **Auction Platform (EAC)** – Upon successful onboarding, providers are granted access to the EAC Platform via SMP. A sandbox environment and mock auctions will be available ahead of service go-live to allow providers to test and familiarise themselves with the auction platform.

Non-BM units

- **Registration** – through the NESO [Single Market Platform \(SMP\)](#).
- **Performance Metering** – non-BM units are required to satisfy the requirements for the submission of new Performance Metering data specification through a new API interface with NESO. Details are published under the 'How to Participate' section of the [Slow Reserve webpage](#). **Provider testing required.**
- **Balancing Systems** – non-BM providers are required to interface with NESO's Open Balancing Platform (OBP). **Provider testing required.**
- **Operational Metering** – non-BM providers are required to submit Operational Metering via the existing iEMS/iHost interface. Details are published under the 'How to Participate' section of the [Slow Reserve webpage](#). **Provider testing required.**
- **Auction Platform (EAC)** – Upon successful onboarding, providers are granted access to the EAC Platform via SMP. A sandbox environment and mock auctions will be available ahead of service go-live to allow providers to test and familiarise themselves with the auction platform.

Provider Testing

Providers are encouraged to engage with NESO as early as possible, as testing will typically take place on a first come, first served basis. System testing is expected to take a number of weeks. However, during busier periods such as closer to service go-live, end-to-end testing could be expected to take longer.

NESO will provide drop-in sessions and proactively work with existing STOR providers and new providers to understand their intentions to participate in Slow Reserve. For all providers (new and existing) initiating the pre-qualification process as soon as possible

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will be paramount as this will provide a clearer view on volume qualifying for Slow Reserve prior to transition.

During the onboarding process we will be monitoring the successful prequalification closely to feed into our go-live decisions.

To commence pre-qualification all providers should reach out to NESO, either via their Account Manager or via commercial.operation@neso.energy

Slow Reserve – Day 1 Readiness

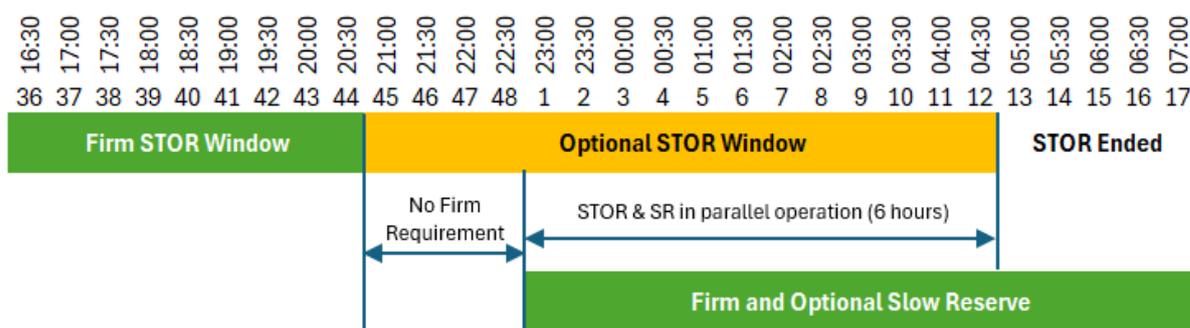
STOR and Slow Reserve Overlap

The STOR day runs from 05:00 – 05:00, with the two Committed STOR windows for STOR Season 6 (19th January 2026 – 1st April 2026) running from:

- 06:00 – 13:00
- 16:30 – 20:30

Committed STOR will cease at 20:30. Optional STOR will continue until 05:00.

In contrast the Slow Reserve service day runs from 23:00 – 23:00 each day with a firm requirement across the entire day.



NESO will run STOR to its natural conclusion on the final service day. This approach overlaps with optional STOR and SR for 6 hours only, from 23:00 – 05:00.

Providers of units prequalified for both services are reminded that availability declarations should only be made for one service in any period.

Service Documents

The following service documents are due to be updated ahead of the SR service go-live and by latest of week commencing 16th March

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1. **Slow Reserve Service Terms** – to be updated with the appropriate ‘effective date’.
2. **Procurement Rules** – Dynamic Response, Balancing Reserve and Quick Reserve Procurement Rules to be updated for co-optimisation with SR to become effective on the appropriate ‘effective date’.

Onboarding

Onboarding has commenced for BM and non-BM. Once a unit becomes prequalified, a number of steps and access to systems are triggered, including:

- **Form C** – Issue of Form C to the provider
- **EAC** – Unit onboarded to EAC.
- **OBP** – Unit onboarded to OBP (if non-BM)

Note: No unit will be prequalified (set to ‘approved’) until all testing has been complete and successful.

SMP Updates

SMP is now open for registration of Slow Reserve units and assets, as of 15th January.

EAC Access

The first Slow Reserve auction is scheduled for 14:00 on 31st March 2026, and therefore the auction itself will be open from 17th March 2026 in order to accept provider sell-orders.

Units will have access to EAC from 03:00 on the day after they have Prequalified.

For reference:

- **The EAC Sandbox** is now open and will remain open indefinitely for new providers to interact with past service go-live.
- **The Slow Reserve Mock Auctions** will run from 16th Feb to 16th March, at which point the live Slow Reserve auction will open (17th March) on the production environment, 14 days ahead of the first auction on 31st March.

OBP Access (non-BM only)

NESO will arrange an onboarding timeslot (between 15:00 – 20:00 on 31st March) with each provider to finalise and confirm their OBP connection, by connecting to OBP production endpoints.

After successfully connecting, Physical Notifications and Availability Declarations can be submitted.

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However, service providers should not submit declarations for any period preceding 23:00 31st March 2026.

BM Providers should continue to submit declarations, baselines, and dynamic parameters via existing BM routes.

ASDP

ASDP will cease facilitating STOR instructions from 05:00 onwards at the agreed end date of the service, bringing an end to the STOR service.

There remains a requirement for providers to submit Settlement/Performance Metering after the operational day. ASDP will remain active for a short period to provide sufficient time for Settlement/Performance Metering submissions before being disabled.

Operational Metering

Access to provide Operational Metering is required before a unit can be prequalified.

Therefore, units are able to submit Operational Metering even ahead of being set to 'Approved' in SMP. Operational Metering for unit is also agnostic of the service, so a unit could already be providing the same metering for 'say' Quick Reserve.

BM Providers should continue to submit declarations, baselines, and dynamic parameters via existing BM routes.

Settlement Metering

STAR API access is to allow all providers (both BM and non-BM) to submit Performance Metering no later than 24 hours after the end of an operational day. So, the earliest that Performance Metering is required for the first operational day is by 23:00 02/04/2026 (24 hours after the end of the first operational day).

NESO will open the API on 30th March at 10 a.m. Providers will need to use the Settlement API and not the onboarding API. All data sent between 30th March at 10:00 and 31st March at 22:59 will be cleared, to allow for the first SR service day.

The following table sets out the key dates for onboarding to Slow Reserve, NESO will share further details on the 'step by step' Onboarding process and timescales shortly.

Table of Dates and Events

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Phase	Item	Date	Summary
Service Approvals	A18 Decision	Oct 2025	Ofgem Slow Reserve Article 18 decision published October 2026 and SR Procurement Rules and Service Terms published on NESO website.
Service Delivery	Linked Windows	Mid Dec 2025	NESO to publish to industry the confirmed plan for go-live 'Linked SR Windows' for the Transition Period.
	Onboarding	Early December 2025	To ensure all potential providers able to participate in Slow Reserve from go-live and are set-up and ready for the first auction, NESO will commence onboarding of (starting with any non-contractual activities) from early December. This will include SMP/unit registration, EAC set-up, OBP and STAR registration and testing, and Ops metering and Settlement metering testing.
	SR Auction Open	17-Mar-26	EAC auction opened to receive Slow Reserve sell-orders 14 days prior to the first Slow Reserve auction.
	Settlement Metering	30-Mar-26	API on 30th March 10am - providers will just need to use the Settlement API and not the onboarding API. All data sent between 30th 10am and 22:59 31st March will be cleared, to allow for the first SR service day.
Service Transition	Last STOR Day Ahead Auction	30-Mar-26	To align with the proposed Slow Reserve auction timings, the final procurement of firm day ahead STOR is planned for 30 March 2026.
	Last STOR Operational Day	31-Mar-26	
	Hard Stop		
	Declarations and Baselines	31-Mar-26	First OBP access enabled to submit PNs and declarations from 15:00 for periods post 23:00 31 st March 2026. BM to submit operational parameters as per existing route.
	First Slow Reserve Auction		NESO to submit first Slow Reserve buy-order, and the first auction to take place on the EAC platform at 14:00, co-optimised with the Dynamic services, Quick Reserve, and Balancing Reserve.

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	First Operational Day	1-Apr-26	First Slow Reserve operational day. Utilisation of firm capacity procured in day ahead auction and receipt of optional declarations. Note 1 April Operational Day commences at 23:00 on 31 March 2026.
	Settlement Metering	2-Apr-26	First Settlement Metering data expected by 23:00.