

tRESP

Frequently Asked Questions

January 2026

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Please read:

Introduction

This FAQ document provides details on NESO's revised approach to Strategic Energy Need (SEN) within the transitional Regional Energy System Plan (tRESP). It explains what's changing since the request for information (RFI) process in May–October 2025, and the tRESP consultation in September–November 2025. It also explains why these changes are happening, and how they impact our customers and stakeholders. Our aim is to ensure transparency, clarity, and to help our customers and stakeholders to participate in collaborative planning to support the next electricity distribution investment planning period (known as ED3) and beyond.

For questions that are not covered by this document please visit the [RESP web pages](#) to view the [RESP FAQs](#), [tRESP FAQs](#), and other RESP information.

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tRESP & Full RESP

1) Why has NESO developed tRESP?

tRESP (the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan) has been designed to support the electricity distribution network operator (DNO) business planning process for 2028–33. The business planning process is part of Ofgem's 'price control framework', the mechanism used to set DNO business plans. The title of the mechanism for the period 2028–33 is RIIO-ED3, where 'ED3' means this is the third time electricity distribution network business plans have been set using this framework. 'RIIO-ED3' is referred to as 'ED3' in this document.

tRESP is designed to support the transition from the current approach to planning energy distribution networks in Great Britain to the new RESP framework. Full RESP will be whole energy in scope, including electricity and gas distribution networks. NESO's full RESP role was set by Ofgem in the [RESP Policy Framework](#) in April 2025.

You can read more on the [NESO website](#).

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2) How will tRESP deliver benefits to local areas?

tRESP will benefit local areas by helping DNOs to identify the network investments they will include in their business plans for 2028–33. There are two key components of tRESP that will help to do this:

- Strategic energy need (SEN) – tRESP will identify potential areas for proactive network investment ahead of need. These may include large housing growth zones or regeneration areas, industrial decarbonisation clusters, and maritime ports, which will then be used by the DNOs to inform plans to serve that demand. Further details on SEN are provided in this document.
- Pathways – the tRESP Pathways will help the DNOs to plan other types of network investment that they will also propose to deliver during 2028–33. These types of investment will support things like electricity generation projects and ensuring network capacity for electric vehicles and heat pumps to connect.

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In addition to tRESP, DNO plans will also be informed by the connections applications they receive from their customers, and their own stakeholder engagement as part of their business planning work.

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What does tRESP mean to me?

3) We are a community energy organisation, what does tRESP mean to us?

The tRESP is in place to inform the business plans of the electricity distribution operators (DNOs) for the upcoming price control period (2028 to 2033), in advance of the Full RESPs being published in 2028. Through tRESP, the DNOs' business plans will reflect the combination of local need and ambition, including context on community energy targets, and national targets.

tRESP includes recognition of local energy priorities, helping to increase the visibility of community and local energy targets. It also sets out projections for future supply and demand of volumes of low-carbon technologies. These outputs could be used by community energy organisations to support funding and planning applications.

tRESP is part of a journey towards the initial Full RESP and beyond. It is vital that community energy organisations remain involved in this process as it develops beyond tRESP so that strategic energy planning can continue to represent the sector in a meaningful and useful way.

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4) I work for a heavy industrial user looking to decarbonise, what does tRESP mean for me?

As part of strategic energy needs, we captured industrial decarbonisation projects. We received approximately 270 energy needs related to industrial decarbonisation, roughly 11% of all RFI responses. 33 industrial decarbonisation submissions qualify as strategic energy need (SEN), across nine of the 11 RESP areas.

Industrial decarbonisation is not directly modelled in tRESP Pathways because it involves large and highly location-specific demands, which are currently best handled by DNO inputs to network plans. The tRESP Pathways successfully standardise the approach to setting the scale and distribution of high volumes of small demands, given the short timelines to deliver tRESP. There is significant complexity and variation in industrial energy demands.

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It is important to note that tRESP is only one of the inputs to DNO network planning, and projects can also be considered in network plans based on connections activity or direct engagement with the local electricity distribution network operators.

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5) We, as an electric vehicle charging provider, are struggling to get a connection for a Motorway Service Area (MSA). What will tRESP do?

Strategic energy need (SEN) received Request for Information (RFI) responses that were MSAs and were assessed as part of our RFI evaluation process. The result of our evaluation will be communicated to DNOs. They will further assess the need for investment based on Ofgem's ED3 business plan guidance.

We encourage you to continue to engage with your local DNO to support the development of their investment plans for electricity distribution networks.

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6) I am part of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) team in my local area, how have LAEPs been considered in tRESP?

When producing the tRESP Pathways, DNOs fed back LAEPs' information to ensure alignment where necessary. In addition, in the tRESP Nations and Regions Contexts, we have assessed the status of LAEP development in each local authority across GB and reported on this in the 'Targets and Ambitions' section.

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7) I am looking at the demand from data centres, how have you considered this as part of tRESP?

Data centres are not directly modelled in tRESP Pathways because they involve large and highly location-specific demands, which are currently best handled by DNO inputs

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to network plans. Data centres at early development stages that do not have a connection agreement with a DNO could have responded to the Request for Information (RFI) for strategic energy need. Data centre submissions were then assessed as part of our RFI evaluation process.

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8) What does tRESP mean for IDNOs?

The scope of tRESP is to inform the ED3 price control for electricity distribution network operators (DNOs); IDNOs are not subject to the same price control regulation. If IDNO projects intend to connect at the distribution level, information relevant to tRESP flows via the DNOs. IDNO projects which plan to connect directly to the transmission network are not within the scope of tRESP. The Independent Networks Association (INA) has been an active member of the tRESP technical working group during the development of tRESP.

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9) I work in the ports and maritime sector, what does tRESP mean for me?

The ports and maritime sector is not directly modelled in tRESP Pathways because it involves large and highly location-specific demands, which are currently best handled by DNO inputs to network plans. Developing projects that do not have a connection agreement with a DNO could have responded to the Request for Information (RFI) to be considered as part of strategic energy need (SEN). Through our SEN product, several GW across Great Britain has been assessed as strategic or put forward as a case for proactive investment within ED3.

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10) I work for a local authority but didn't get involved in tRESP. What are the next steps?

NESO will host RESP Forums for all 11 nations and regions in February 2026, providing transparency and nation and region specific insights. Forums are open to anyone with

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an interest in the energy system in their local area, with a particular focus on our RESP role and the strategic plans we will be producing. Local authorities will also be invited to get involved in the full RESP governance, due to be established from Autumn 2026.

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Pathways

11) What are the tRESP Pathways?

The Pathways set out how technologies such as electric vehicles and heat pumps are expected to grow in each nation and region between 2024 and 2050. Ofgem will ask DNOs to use these Pathways when developing their business plans for 2028–33.

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12) What data has informed the Pathways?

The Pathways reflect national and regional ambitions and priorities, as described in the nations and regions' contexts.

To reflect expected increased energy demand, NESO's modelling for the tRESP Pathways also incorporates assumptions about changing energy demand, including electrification trends such as the shift to electric vehicles and heat pumps.

The tRESP Pathways Methodology will provide further detail on how the Pathways were developed.

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13) Are large new housing developments included in tRESP Pathways?

New housing developments are not part of the standardised technology volumes in the tRESP pathways. Growth in housing is an assumption that DNOs are expected to add based on local evidence when developing their ED3 business plans. However, volumes of

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electric vehicles, small solar and heat pumps are included in the tRESP pathways, per Grid Supply Point area. These technologies may be linked to housing growth, in particular in new builds.

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14) How have you taken into account the UK's Government Clean Power 2030 and the connections reform outcome?

The final tRESP Pathways were adjusted at Grid Supply Point area level for large generation and storage based on the 5th of December 2025 connections reform outcome, which implements the UK Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan. This input reflects where generators and storage will be allowed to connect by the end of 2030 and by the end of 2035.

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15) What happens if energy demand grows faster than expected?

NESO's modelling includes flexibility to adapt to changing demand scenarios, ensuring resilience under different growth trajectories.

In full RESP, expected to be published in 2028, we will update the 11 regional energy strategic plans every three years, ensuring changes to future energy demand can be incorporated.

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16) Have the tRESP Pathways been updated to reflect the heat pump ambitions in the UK Government's Warm Homes Plan?

There are different numbers in 2030 for the roll out of heat pumps in the Warm Homes Plan and in tRESP.

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However, there is no significant difference in the overall number of heat pumps in operation by the end of the next DNO investment period, 2028–33, and no difference between them in 2035.

This is because the tRESP Pathways achieve the UK Government's Carbon Budget 6 in 2035. Therefore, even though there is marginally slower growth in heat pumps to 2030 in the Warm Homes Plan compared to tRESP, the growth in heat pumps required post 2030 to align with Carbon Budget 6 means that this difference will not have an impact on the investments required in electricity distribution networks in the next investment period.

We have therefore decided that the tRESP Pathways do not require updating to reflect the Warm Homes Plan's heat pump roll out ambition in 2030.

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Strategic Energy Need

17) The tRESP Consultation said that tRESP would provide analysis of Strategic Investment Need, but the final document talks about Strategic Energy Need. What's changed?

Within the final tRESP you will see that we've changed our language from 'Strategic Investment Need' (SIN) to 'Strategic Energy Need' (SEN). This doesn't represent a change in our methodology or scope. Rather, we have changed our language so that it better describes what is in tRESP. We made this change through discussion with the regulator, Ofgem, to ensure stakeholders understood the role of our analysis in the ED3 business planning process.

This is because tRESP will only identify where there is a strategic energy need (i.e. the need or demand for energy). It is not in the scope of tRESP to consider available capacity on the distribution networks.

It is for DNOs to consider the difference between demand and capacity that will demonstrate the need for investment.

The DNOs will be responsible for using the information in tRESP and other inputs to identify areas of strategic investment need (SIN), as part of their network planning activities.

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In full RESP, NESO will consider both Strategic Energy Need and Strategic Investment Need.

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18) How were stakeholders involved in shaping the tRESP SEN methodology?

Through the RESP GB Steering Committee, the SEN methodology was shaped with input from Ofgem, DESNZ, Scottish Government and Welsh Government. The approach was also refined through engagement with all DNOs, in sessions facilitated by the ENA (Energy Networks Association).

Feedback received from stakeholders during the September 2025 tRESP consultation was also used to help shape the final tRESP SEN methodology.

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19) What has changed in the methodology for assessing Strategic Energy Need since the tRESP Consultation?

The core elements of our methodology, centred around assessing strategic value and uncertainty, has remained the same throughout the tRESP process. The methodology has been added to in two areas, in response to feedback from Ofgem and the DNOs.

Firstly, we have removed generation and storage projects above certain thresholds (above 200 kW within Scotland, or above 5 MW within England and Wales) from our consideration of strategic energy need, to take account of projects that would already require a Transmission Impact Assessment (TIA).

Secondly, we introduced some additional criteria for considering the case for proactive investment ahead of need in Grid Supply Point areas. This was to ensure that our analysis effectively filtered out investment that would happen through existing regulatory and commercial mechanisms and could therefore have an unnecessary impact on customer bills. These additional filtering steps have ensured that tRESP SEN is additive, rather than duplicating existing business-as-usual investment.

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20) How have different areas across Great Britain been categorised in terms of Strategic Energy Need?

In response to our call for information, we received around 2,500 responses from a wide range of stakeholders. We have analysed the responses to understand what they mean in terms of energy need in each of the nations and regions.

We have considered strategic energy need at a Grid Supply Point area level; this enables us to breakdown Great Britain based upon how the local electricity system is organised. Each Grid Supply Point area represents a catchment that is served by the same connection point to the higher voltage transmission network. You can read more about how we have defined our Grid Supply Point areas in the tRESP Pathways Methodology and Detailed Design.

Each Grid Supply Point area has been categorised as follows.

1. **Needs that have been assessed as strategic to the nation or region**; and that we consider will be pertinent to future demand, although there is either uncertainty whether this will fall within the ED3 price control, or they already have sufficient certainty to be included in the tRESP Pathways.
2. **GSP areas to be considered for proactive investment**; these are a smaller subset of the strategic needs, which we suggest should be considered for proactive investment ahead of need in the ED3 price control. GSP areas to be considered for proactive investment are underpinned by energy needs that are unlikely to be supported by existing business-as-usual network investment mechanisms, which require higher levels of certainty of need. This helps ensure the network is ready to support future economic growth and decarbonisation activities.
3. **Early stage or needs within the scope of transmission connections reform**; these are needs that are at an earlier stage of development and do not yet require network investment but should be kept under review. This category may also include generation or storage above 200 kW within Scotland, or above 5 MW within England and Wales, which is already captured through connection reform.

The data captured within these categories forms the SEN Data Workbook, which is provided to the DNOs to inform ED3 business planning. The SEN Data workbook will be used as the starting point for creation of the In Development Register (IDR), used to

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inform NESO's next revision of SEN within our first Full RESP, which will commence in late-2026.

Almost all the evidence we received from customers and stakeholders informed this analysis, with a very few pieces of evidence being deemed out of scope (for example, because they related to the electricity transmission network rather than the distribution network).

The regulator, Ofgem, will decide how DNOs should consider each category in their business planning activities for ED3.

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21) How did NESO ensure stakeholders across Great Britain could engage in the SEN process?

We ran a request for information process 27 May to 30 September 2025, which was open to any customer or stakeholder that wished to provide a submission. The process was advertised on [NESO's website](#), presented during our public [RESP Forums](#), promoted within the [September 2025 tRESP consultation](#), and promoted further through a public webinar with [Regen](#). Our RESP nations and regions teams also engaged with their local customers and stakeholders. Targeted bilateral meetings were also conducted with distribution network operators (DNOs).

Customers and stakeholders that had submitted by the 30 September 2025 deadline were also invited to provide any missing data until 31 October 2025. NESO recognises that some stakeholders face resource challenges. NESO provided support to RFI respondents as part of the RFI process May–September 2025 and extended the deadline to end-October 2025 to give respondents more time to submit additional information.

In the vast majority of cases, we had enough information in the RFIs to be able to assess them as part of our analysis. In a small number of cases, where there were gaps in data, we were able to gather the information required through follow up discussions.

All RFI inputs were assessed using an objective, repeatable automated tool to ensure any subjectivity or bias was removed. The process for our assessment has been published in the tRESP SEN methodology, which will be published as part of the final tRESP.

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22) Who provided evidence through the RFI process?

NESO received around 2,500 RFI submissions, from over 400 different stakeholders across Great Britain; the level of response is a huge testament to the need for SEN and the ambitions across our nations and regions. We had a huge variety of customer and stakeholder input to the SEN RFI process, including local authorities, industry, developers, operators, ports and consultancies.

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23) How will the evidence you received from stakeholders who responded to the RFI be used and support future investment?

In response to our call for information, we received around 2,500 responses from over 400 stakeholders. We've analysed the responses to understand what they mean in terms of energy need in each of the nations and regions.

All evidence submitted is securely stored and was used to inform NESO's assessment process. In addition to the public document, we will contact those who made a submission by the end of February 2026, to let them know which SEN category their RFI submissions received following NESO's assessment.

We will not publish the details of individual stakeholders' data, much of which is confidential and commercially sensitive. Unless stakeholders have asked us not to, we will share the data provided through RFI with the relevant DNO so that this can inform their business planning activities for ED3.

All the evidence provided will also be used to inform full RESP, through inclusion in the In Development Register. We will undertake analysis of the register, according to the approach set out in the RESP methodology. This ensures that projects not ready for tRESP will be considered as part of our future strategic energy planning activities.

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24) How have you ensured that your analysis of SEN has been robust?

NESO developed our assessment process following close collaboration with Ofgem and the DNOs, ensuring to build on existing business-as-usual processes and align with Ofgem's policy objectives. The outcomes of this alongside other stakeholder feedback captured within our September 2025 consultation have been brought together into our final methodology published alongside tRESP.

To support the SEN process, NESO developed an automated tool to support us in the extraction and assessment of information from the 2,500 RFI responses submitted to us in an objective, repeatable and consistent manner. Alongside this, any manual activities were subject to rigorous peer reviews and assurance, including senior management.

Across November and December 2025, NESO met with all DNOs to test emerging SEN results, draw on their stakeholder insight, as well as capture any changes to notable data points, such as connection status.

Throughout the assessment of evidence received during the RFI process, NESO has engaged various internal and external assurance parties to ensure both our processes and outcomes are robust and have followed our methodology.

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25) What role does Ofgem play in this process?

Ofgem set the scope for tRESP, for NESO to deliver. On SEN, Ofgem provided input to ensure the tRESP SEN methodology aligns with their objectives for tRESP. Ofgem will direct the DNOs on how to use tRESP in the development of their business plans. Ofgem will be the final approver of all DNO business plans for ED3.

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26) Is NESO supporting projects and not supporting others? If my project isn't in a Grid Supply Point area considered for proactive investment, or if I did not provide evidence to support the process, will I be disadvantaged?

NESO is committed to supporting areas to deliver the clean, secure and affordable energy needed to unlock economic growth and job opportunities across the whole of Great Britain.

The future energy network needs vary across Great Britain and so some areas will require a greater level of investment than others to accommodate local ambitions. As a result, not all submissions have been identified as requiring investment ahead of need. Submissions may have lacked sufficient detail, overlapped with existing network investment mechanisms, or been at an early stage of development.

This analysis does not seek to support individual projects. Rather, it has used a fair and robust process to identify those areas of the electricity distribution network where there is a case for proactive investment ahead of need.

Projects are not disadvantaged if they are in a Grid Supply Point area that is not considered as having a case for proactive investment as there are alternative routes through which areas of investment can be identified. tRESP, including strategic energy need, is one of several inputs into the DNO business planning process and does not represent an investment decision. We are encouraging local areas to continue to engage with their local DNO to support the development of their investment plans for electricity distribution networks.

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27) What if I disagree with NESO's analysis of Strategic Energy Need?

tRESP SEN is our report to the regulator, Ofgem, with the outcome of our analysis on areas of the electricity distribution network that should be considered for proactive investment ahead of certain need. It does not constitute an investment decision.

Ofgem will direct DNOs on how they should utilise tRESP as part of their business planning activities for ED3. You should continue to engage with your local DNO as part of their business plan engagement, including if you feel there is a case for further investment ahead of need.

tRESP does not replace in any way the normal connections processes to the electricity distribution networks. These should be observed regardless as to whether the local Grid Supply Point area has been indicated as having potential for proactive investment ahead of certain need.

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28) Why is there a Grid Supply Point area to be considered for proactive investment ahead of need in some areas but not others?

The future energy network needs vary across Great Britain and there may be a case in some areas for proactive investment in electricity distribution networks ahead of need. In others, investment will continue through the normal regulatory and commercial mechanisms.

To identify areas that should be considered for proactive investment we have used a fair, impartial and evidence-based approach, applied in the same way across every nation and region. NESO also conducted consistency analysis between nations and regions to understand where there might be limitations in the evidence base received to help identify strategic energy need.

There are a number of possible limitations in the evidence available to support identification of need, with the output reliant upon evidence received by NESO through the request for information that ran during May–October 2025. The geographic spread across Great Britain will be influenced by that evidence, including factors such as the volume of evidence received, level of detail provided, and varying future electricity

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network needs across Great Britain. Due to the pace required to deliver the tRESP output to help in inform the next electricity distribution price control investment plans, it has not been possible to consider these factors in detail.

For full RESP we will have a much greater amount of time to be able to give much more holistic consideration of strategic energy need as set out through the recent full RESP methodology consultation.

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29) Does tRESP SEN effectively establish a limit for strategic investment in electricity distribution networks?

No. The aim of SEN is to ensure efficient, strategic investment, aligned with Ofgem's ED3 objectives and long-term system resilience. The move to SEN should, in fact, enable significantly more proactive strategic investment in ED3 than previously, highlighting areas of need will help to unlock future spending.

The move to SEN is to help unlock additional, proactive investment, beyond business-as-usual network investment, which would not have otherwise occurred.

Many of the submissions we received were unknown to networks so would have been unlikely to have been picked up through other energy planning mechanisms.

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30) Might the category of a Grid Supply Point area impact whether a project in that area is prioritised for a connection to the distribution network?

No; the outcomes of tRESP have no bearing on the connections process. Regardless of the outcomes of tRESP, if you are considering a project or programme that requires a connection you should engage with your DNO in the normal way. All distribution connected projects must still apply to their local DNO for a connection through existing processes, regardless of whether they are in an area of SEN.

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31) Do I still need to engage with my local distribution network operator (DNO?)

Yes. DNOs are developing their business plans for 2028–33, and customers and stakeholders are strongly encouraged to participate in this work. In addition, tRESP does not replace or affect the existing distribution network connections process.

Contact your local DNO for further details on how you can get involved. Please follow the link to the websites for each of the [DNOs](#).

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32) How will the approach to Strategic Energy Need be different for full RESP?

We do not anticipate the same evidence gathering approach for the full RESP. Our [RESP methodology consultation](#) contains details on how we plan to develop areas of strategic need in the future. The consultation closed on 16 January 2026. We are now working on producing the final proposed version of the methodology, for submission to Ofgem and DESNZ for approval.

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