

Public

Ref: FOI/25/197

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Dear requester

Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information which was received by NESO on 11 December 2025.

Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). This is because information about connection agreements relates to a measure that could affect the environment and therefore meets the definition of 'environmental information' provided at Regulation 2(1)(c) of the EIR.

Request

You asked us:

I am contacting you as an interested party in the planning application known as Scout Moor II / Scout Moor Extension, currently submitted to Rossendale Borough Council under planning reference 2025/0267.

I would be grateful if you could confirm, for transparency and accuracy in the planning process, whether this project has been issued with a Gate 2 (firm) grid-connection agreement under the NESO Connections Reform.

Specifically, could you please clarify:

1. *Whether the project has secured a Gate 2 connection offer,*
2. *If not, whether it is currently considered Gate 1, pending assessment, or not within the priority pipeline, and*
3. *Whether the project appears in NESO's priority delivery pipeline for onshore wind in the North West region.*

Any information you can provide would assist greatly in understanding the project's deliverability and its alignment with the new grid-connection framework.

If helpful, the project is being developed by Cubico Sustainable Investments / Cubico UK Development (Wind 1) Ltd, and is located near Scout Moor, Rossendale/Rochdale.

Our response

We confirm that we hold some recorded information relating to this project.

NESO, in collaboration with the networks, industry, government and Ofgem has delivered a transformational change to the way that the grid connections process operates.

Information on Connections Reform is available here:

- [Connections Reform | National Energy System Operator.](#)
- [About Connections Reform | National Energy System Operator](#)

A key part of this reform is the introduction of the new Gate 2 to Whole Queue (G2TWQ) process, which ensures that only projects that are ready to go and are aligned to the [UK Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#) progress through to the new connections delivery pipeline.

The Gate 2 Criteria Methodology and Connections Network Design Methodology can be found here:

- [Connections Reform design documents and methodologies.](#)

Prior to the Connections Reform process, no project held a Gate 1 or Gate 2 offer.

On 8 December 2025 NESO published the results of the new connections delivery pipeline. Further detailed results data was published in January 2026:

- [Connections Reform Results | National Energy System Operator.](#)
- [Connections Reform: Detailed Results Data](#)

The published information provides a high-level view of the reformed pipeline. Further aggregated information on the new connections pipeline will be made available over the coming weeks and months.

The Existing Agreement (EA) Register details all projects that applied for "Gate 2" in the Connections Reform process where consent was given for inclusion in the EA Register:

- <https://www.neso.energy/document/373996/download>.

There is a reference to Scout Moor Wind Farm (Extension) on the EA Register which confirms that a Gate 2 application was made for this project. We are unable to confirm the outcome of that application and NESO is not able to provide any further information relating to specific developers or their projects other than that which is made publicly available.

The project that you are enquiring about is at a distribution level and the connection agreement will be held with the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and not NESO. You may therefore wish to contact the DNO, Electricity North West, to request further information. DNOs are subject to the EIR, although they are also subject to their own confidentiality obligations.

Regulation 12(5)(e) of the EIR states that a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that its disclosure would adversely affect the confidentiality of commercial or industrial information where such confidentiality is provided by law to protect a legitimate economic interest.

Information is covered by Regulation 12(5)(e) if:

- The information is commercial or industrial in nature;
- Confidentiality is provided by law;
- The confidentiality is protecting a legitimate economic interest;
- The confidentiality would be adversely affected by disclosure.

Information relating to specific developers and projects is commercial in nature and our use of this exception is primarily in respect of the potential consequence to the developer's commercial interests.

Whilst we review each request that we receive on a case-by-case basis, you will see from the responses published on our [Disclosure log | National Energy System Operator](#) that our decision to refuse your request is consistent with our decisions on similar requests for other projects.

Commercial companies develop generation projects and are independent of NESO and the respective transmission owners and distribution network operators. These development projects are competitive processes, both for the rights to supply electricity to the transmission network and also for funding from investors and any available government funding where applicable.

Given the competitive arena in which renewable energy projects are developed and implemented, a developer would not expect their commercial information to be published. This would, in effect, make it available to other developers who could use it to undermine future bids for other renewable energy projects.

NESO is bound by the confidentiality obligations under the Connections and Use of System Code (CUSC) and cannot share information about individual projects. Projects with existing connection agreements to the distribution network that wished to apply for Gate 2 contracts submitted their evidence to DNOs, who submitted it to NESO on their behalf. This information was provided to us by DNOs in confidence under the terms of the CUSC for the purposes of the Gate 2 to Whole Queue process.

NESO also falls within the scope of the Utilities Act 2000 and Section 105 of that Act makes it a criminal offence to disclose information: a) obtained under the Utilities Act 2000 and any other key energy legislation such as the Gas Act 1986 and the Electricity Act 1989, subject to specific exceptions; and b) where the information relates to the affairs of any individual or any particular business during the lifetime of the individual or so long as the business continues to be carried on.

You may find it helpful to know that this kind of confidentiality obligation is not limited to the energy sector. There are equivalent provisions in legislation governing other sectors (e.g. the Water Act 1989, the Telecommunications Act 1984, the Airports Act 1986, and the Broadcasting Act 1990). In our opinion, the information in question which is held by our Connections Team is subject to the restrictions at Section 105 of the Utilities Act and does not fall within any of the limited exceptions to that duty of confidentiality. Beyond this, there is also a common law duty of confidentiality based on the expectations of the developers.

All exceptions in the EIR are subject to a public interest test.

NESO acknowledges that there are a number of public interest arguments in favour of disclosing the requested information. There is a public interest in renewable energy development, particularly where the construction and development of such projects may have an impact on local areas. The general public may be interested in the dates and times of construction, the connection dates, and the timelines and scope of developments.

There is a public interest in ensuring no specific developer is materially disadvantaged through disclosing confidential commercial information, which is not released in respect of other projects. This ensures that there is a level playing field across all projects.

NESO has a public duty under our licence to facilitate competition within the energy market and there is a recognised public interest in allowing competition in the energy industry. Increased renewable generation is crucial to the Government achieving its net zero and clean energy targets and anything that unjustifiably inhibits the competitive development of that renewable generation runs counter to these goals.

NESO is the designated independent system operator and planner under the Energy Act 2023 and must remain independent, fair, and consumer focused. Disclosure could erode trust within the sector, hampering NESO's role and our ability to drive forward reforms and initiatives that would bring benefits to consumers and to the environment.

Having weighed up these public interest arguments, our opinion is that the balance of the public interest lies in maintaining the exemption and withholding the information for this project. NESO is ensuring that it is being as transparent as possible through the Connection Reform process, whilst preserving the commercial confidentiality owed to the developer and ensuring that NESO meets its legal and licence obligations.

The use of the EIR exception for similar information relating to the connection of windfarms was the subject of a Decision Notice (Reference IC-127537-Q8R6) from the Information Commissioner. Whilst we consider every request for information on a case-by-case basis, the Information Commissioner's analysis of the connections process and the application of this exemption is helpful context. This decision upheld the use of the exception by the National Grid Electricity System Operator prior to our transition to NESO. The full decision is available on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website.

This concludes our response to your request.

For information

The National Grid Electricity System Operator (NG ESO) was part of the National Grid PLC group of companies until 30 September 2024. On 1 October 2024 we became the National Energy System Operator (NESO) under government ownership (the Independent System Operator and Planner as designated in the Energy Act 2023). We use infrastructure owned by transmission companies to pass high voltage electricity onto Distribution Network Operators (DNOs). The DNOs then reduce the voltage and distribute electricity to homes and businesses around the country.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of your FOI/EIR 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)