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Dear Minister,

In October 2024 National Energy System Operator (NESO) was commissioned by the Scottish, Welsh and UK governments to produce the first ever Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) for Great Britain.

The SSEP will help accelerate and optimise the delivery of a reliable, clean and affordable future energy system. It will provide greater clarity to industry, investors, consumers and the public on the shape of our future reformed energy system. The SSEP will act as a foundational input into wider energy system planning and delivery, underpinning the Centralised Strategic Network Plan (CSNP), Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESP) and DESNZ's Reformed National Pricing (RNP) programme. The decision on the preferred pathway for the SSEP will begin the creation of a shared framework to support informed national, regional and local decision-making, balancing the priorities of people and places with the needs of an integrated energy system for Great Britain.

This is the opportunity to set the strategic direction for the future energy system, supporting economic growth, energy security and the development of the industries, supply chains and workforce needed to deliver our future energy needs. Today I am pleased to share the next step, the SSEP Pathway Options Report with you and the other co-commissioners. I know that the team involved in creating it are looking forward to the opportunity on 9 September to brief you on the insights it provides. All pathways are consistent with the overarching legislative context and regulatory requirements placed on NESO. Each pathway represents different trade-offs between cost, land use and the deployment of emerging technologies. Strategic environmental assessments have underpinned the development of the pathways too, considering the important interactions of the six presented pathway options with the environment in which we all live. Taken together this represents the culmination of eighteen months of design, analysis and engagement by NESO.

As set out in the co-commission, NESO has engaged regularly with the Scottish, Welsh and UK governments to develop pathway options. In line with the methodology for the SSEP, also



approved by Ofgem, these pathways options have been informed by significant stakeholder engagement. Alongside the central Pathway Options Report, an accompanying Stakeholder Insights Report details the key insights and themes from stakeholders which informed pathway development. This included over 180 engagement events with more than 250 organisations and considered almost 1,000 comments across five feedback rounds. The stakeholder perspective goes beyond the energy industry, with societal research and forums with representatives of different sections of society also informing the work.

All pathway options necessarily present varying opportunities and implications for technology choices and speeds of adoption across different parts of Great Britain. To produce a plan of this scale inevitably involves trade-offs and uncertainties. As a result, advice on low regret decisions across the pathways is highlighted too. The co-commission also provides for the views of the Scottish and Welsh governments to be presented to the Secretary of State at this stage, for example, on the socio-economic ambitions that you have for clean energy.

This submission is a significant milestone in the creation of the first SSEP I believe it can provide you, and the co-commissioners, with the evidence needed to inform the decision and ensure a more strategically planned energy system which is reliable, clean and affordable for the future. Following the confidential process involved in the selection of the preferred pathway option for SSEP, NESO looks forward to stepping up our engagement further. Not only with the stakeholders who have informed this work to date, but more widely, through public consultation on the draft SSEP early next year, to final publication of SSEP by the end of 2027, and then RESP and CSNP in 2028.

Yours sincerely



Fintan Slye

Chief Executive

