Meeting summary

NESO Independent Stakeholder Group (ISG)

This document provides a concise, non-attributed overview of the principal themes discussed at the inaugural meeting of the NESO ISG.

Date:	01/10/2026	**Location**: NESO London Hub		**Enter room name:** LH5.03	
Start:	12.45pm	**End**: 16.15pm			

Participants

Attendee	Attend/Regrets	Attendee	Attend/Regrets
Fintan Slye: NESO	Attend	Nina Skorupska: Chair	Attend
Claire Dykta: NESO	Attend	Aaron Gould: ADE	Attend
Katherine Iles: NESO	Attend	Carolyn Dwyer: National Preparedness Commission, Connected Places Catapult	Attend: online
Mike Thompson: NESO	Attend	Dame Dawn Childs: nLighten Data Centres and Pure Data Centres Group	Attend
Sian Ramirez Bower: NESO	Attend	Iain Smedley: Barclays	Attend: online
Ian Radley: National Gas	Attend	Janet Wood: New Power Report	Attend
Janine Michael: Centre for Sustainable Energy	Attend	Josh Buckland: EDF	Attend: online
Leanne Wood: Community Energy Wales	Attend	Mark Goldstone: CBI	Attend
Matthew Cole: Fuel Bank Foundation	Attend	Miya Paolucci: ENGIE	Attend
Nigel Pocklington: Good Energy	Attend	Prof. Goran Strbac: Imperial College	Attend

Prof. John Underhill: Aberdeen University	Attend	Simon Brown: Met Office	Attend
Trevor Hutchings: REA	Attend		

Minutes recipients

All the above plus:	Chris Norbury: E.ON	Lucy Yu: Centre for Net Zero	Deepa Venkateswaran: SSE

Agenda

#	Topics discussed	
1.	Welcome, introductions and purpose of the ISG	Chair: Nina Skorupska
2.	NESO reflections	Fintan Slye
3.	NESO strategy and external context	Claire Dykta
4.	Energy industry uncertainties, challenges and opportunities	Chair and all members
5.	Affordability: exploring member's perspectives	Chair and all members
6.	Formal close and next steps	Chair and all members

Discussion and details

1 Welcome, introductions and purpose of the ISG

The Independent Chair welcomed members and outlined the ISG's role in providing independent insight, constructive challenge and whole-system perspectives to support NESO's strategic thinking. Members shared the issues they would like the Group to explore, including consumer outcomes, resilience, investment, regional and local energy planning, cross-sector planning and the importance of clear and evidenced based communication on energy.

2&3 NESO reflections and strategic context

NESO reflected on its development as an independent organisation and its role in strategic energy planning and evidence-based advice to government and Ofgem. Discussion focused on the challenge of balancing affordability, resilience,

decarbonisation, economic growth and energy security, and on the need to prioritise areas where NESO can add distinctive value.

Members also highlighted the potential collective value of the ISG. Where strategic issues sit beyond NESO's direct remit, the Group's combined expertise could help identify wider system barriers, support constructive engagement and strengthen the case for action across the policy, regulatory and industry landscape.

4. Energy industry uncertainties, challenges and opportunities

Members identified a connected set of uncertainties requiring whole-system consideration:

- **Connections and growth:** The effectiveness and credibility of the connections process, visibility of future demand, and the importance of timely connections to investment and economic growth.
- **Resilience and security:** The interdependence of gas and electricity, extreme weather, long-duration storage, supply-chain pressures, skills gaps and cyber risks.
- **Changing demand:** Different rates of electrification across transport, heat, industry, agriculture and data centres, including demand that may not yet appear in formal plans.
- **Regional and national planning:** The need to align GB-wide, national, regional and local ambitions, while recognising differing capabilities, priorities and policy contexts.

5. Affordability: exploring member's perspectives

Members encouraged NESO to provide a clearer, evidence-based narrative on affordability. Discussion focused on the factors that drive energy costs for households and businesses, how different groups may be affected by future energy system decisions and investment choices, and the distinction between issues that NESO can control, influence or only advise on. Members also asked NESO to identify practical opportunities to improve affordability while demonstrating the long-term value of strategic energy system investment.

Cross cutting themes

- **Public communication and trust:**

  Members called for accessible, evidence-based communication that explains the energy transition through outcomes that matter to households, communities

and businesses. Clearer boundaries around NESO's responsibilities and influence were also considered important.

- **Local energy systems and flexibility**
  Members discussed the potential role of community energy, microgrids, heat networks, flexible demand and distributed resources in improving resilience, efficiency and consumer participation.
- **Whole-system collaboration**
  The meeting emphasised coordination across electricity, gas, heat, transport, water, digital infrastructure, suppliers, communities, businesses and government.
- **Consumer and societal value**
  A recurring theme was that the energy system should serve consumers, communities and the wider economy, and that local benefits and participation can strengthen trust and agency.

Action item log

ID	Description	Owner	Due	Status	Date
A1	Circulate the meeting record and maintain a log of questions and follow-up items.	Secretariat	13/10/2026	Complete	13/10/2026
A2	Develop a proportionate way to show how ISG insight is considered and how it connects to NESO's strategic priorities and decision-making.	NESO	30/11/2026	In progress	13/10/2026
A3	Provide concise briefing material to build members shared understanding of NESO's role, strategy and key issues.	NESO	30/11/2027	In progress	13/10/2026
A4	Continue developing evidence and accessible narrative on affordability and the value of strategic planning.	NESO	31/12/2026	In progress	13/10/2026

A5	Plan the next ISG meeting, including the proposed operational visit and sufficient time for strategic discussion.	Secretariat	31/12/2026	In progress	13/10/2026

Looking ahead

The meeting established an open and constructive foundation for the ISG. NESO will use the themes and challenge raised to inform the Group's forward programme and future strategic discussions. The next meeting is planned for February 2027 and is expected to combine an operational visit with further strategic discussion.

Independent insight | Constructive challenge | Whole-system thinking