

Public

Ref: FOI/25/251

National Energy System Operator

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13 February 2026

Dear requester

Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information which was received by NESO on 18 January 2026.

Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) as we believe that the requested information falls within the definition of environmental information as set out in Regulation 2(1) of the EIR. The exemption at Section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) covers information that a public body is obliged to consider under the EIR and has the effect of routing all requests for environmental information via the EIR rather than the FOIA.

Request

You asked us:

Please provide any information held by the National Energy System Operator (NESO) relating to electricity network planning, grid connections, or transmission infrastructure associated with the proposed (also referred to as Hope / Barningham Moor Wind Farm).

In particular, I request copies of, or access to, the following information held by NESO:

1. Any correspondence (including emails, letters, briefing notes, or meeting records) between NESO and:

- The project developer (including Fred. Olsen Renewables or any associated special purpose vehicle);*
- Network companies (including National Grid Electricity Transmission or distribution network operators);*

- *Government departments or regulators,*
 - *where such correspondence relates to grid connection options, reinforcement requirements, or strategic network planning for Hope Moor Wind Farm.*
2. *Any internal assessments, modelling, studies, or analysis undertaken by NESO relating to:*
- *The suitability or feasibility of connecting Hope Moor Wind Farm to the electricity network;*
 - *The identification of required transmission or distribution infrastructure to facilitate the project.*
3. *Any references to Hope Moor Wind Farm within:*
- *The Centralised Strategic Network Plan (CSNP);*
 - *Draft or supporting documents informing the CSNP;*
 - *Regional or sub-regional network planning material.*
4. *Any information relating to the anticipated timing, cost estimates, or scale of network reinforcement works required to enable the connection of Hope Moor Wind Farm.*

Our response

We confirm that we hold a very small amount of recorded information in scope of your request. Our Connections Team hold email correspondence with Fred. Olsen Renewables and internal emails that include comments on the project timeline for Hope Moor Wind Farm and the connections reform process. We are withholding this information on the basis of the following EIR exceptions:

Regulation 12(4)(e)

In relation to the internal emails, we are relying on Regulation 12(4)(e) (Internal Communications). The ICO's guidance advises that: *"The underlying rationale behind the exception is that public authorities should have the necessary space to think in private."*

Regulation 12(5)(e)

For correspondence between NESO and Fred. Olsen Renewables, we are relying on Regulation 12(5)(e) of the EIR which 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.

We believe that information relating to specific connection agreements is commercial in nature and our use of this exception is primarily in respect of the potential consequence to the developer's commercial interests.

Commercial companies develop generation projects and are independent of NESO and the respective transmission owners. 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. Disclosure could also damage the developer's bargaining position whilst investment and build decisions remain outstanding. It could also affect the value and viability of an upfront investment before the project is connected.

NESO 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.

We understand that local communities close to where projects are being considered or developed have a clear interest in understanding more about specific projects and the decision-making process and that there is a wider public interest in understanding how projects are developed and approved and how renewable energy infrastructure is used and sited.

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 small amount of correspondence we hold in relation this project.

Questions 2, 3 and 4

We confirm that we do not hold recorded information in scope of questions 2, 3 and 4 of your request.

In addition to undertaking centralised IT searches of our Microsoft 365 tenancy for "Hope Moor" and "Barningham Moor", we asked colleagues in relevant NESO teams to check if they held recorded information scope of your request. Our Energy Insights and Analysis Team have confirmed that there is no record Hope Moor or Barningham Moor within our [Future Energy Scenarios \(FES\)](#) data. Our Centralised Strategic Network Plan does not exist yet.

As the Electricity System Operator for Great Britain, it's our job to move electricity safely, reliably and efficiently through the system. We balance the system in real time to make sure that supply always meets demand. We don't generate or sell electricity and we're not responsible for the infrastructure needed to move electricity around, like pylons and cables. This infrastructure is owned and maintained by Transmission Owners (TOs). In Great Britain, we have national and local transmission networks.

Where a generator is connecting directly to the transmission system, NESO manages the connection application and connection contract. These connections are to one of the Transmission Owners' networks and we work with the TOs to help customers connect.

If a generator is not connecting directly to the transmission system, their connection will be to one of the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs). If the connection is at a distribution level, the connection contract will be held with the DNO and not with NESO.

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 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.](#)

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 TEC Register is a publicly available list of projects that hold contracts for Transmission Entry Capacity (TEC) with NESO. These include existing and future connection projects and projects that can be directly connected to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) or make use of it. The current TEC Register is published here: [Transmission Entry Capacity \(TEC\) register | National Energy System Operator.](#)

The [Existing Agreement \(EA\) Register](#) details all projects that applied for "Gate 2" in the Connections Reform process where the developer consented to the inclusion of a project in the EA Register. If a project does not appear on the EA Register consent may not have been given for

inclusion, or the project may not have applied for “Gate 2”. The Register does not outline any outcomes or results of the connections reform process.

We have checked the current TEC Register and the EA Register and neither have an entry for Hope Moor or Barningham Moor Wind Farm contained within them.

The EIR only apply to information held by the public authority at the time that the request for information is received (Regulation 3). Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR allows a public authority to refuse a request if it does not hold that information when an applicant’s request is received.

All EIR exceptions are subject to public interest test (PIT) however the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) recognises that it is not possible to carry out a meaningful PIT where information is not held.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of your 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)