

Public

Ref: FOI/25/319

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16 April 2026

Dear requester

Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information which was received by NESO on 17 March 2026.

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:

Public statements from the developer, TotalEnergies, indicate that a previously conceived 278MW project has been refined into a 98MW project (North Ray) connecting to the Wold Newton substation, with a second phase (connected to Grimsby West) described as "shelved." However, the Transmission Entry Capacity (TEC) Register suggests both components may still hold contracted capacity.

Please provide the following:

- 1. Project Split Correspondence: All internal and external correspondence (emails, meeting minutes, and briefing notes) between NESO (or its predecessor National Grid ESO) and TotalEnergies (including any previous developers such as Low Carbon) regarding the decision to split the original North Ray proposal into two or more separate projects/connection agreements.*
- 2. Guidance on Planning Regimes: Any records of advice or guidance provided by NESO to the developer regarding the use of the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) versus the*

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime in relation to these specific grid connections.

3. *TEC Register Status for "North Ray 2": Confirmation of the current status of the connection agreement for the phase connecting to the Grimsby West substation. If this project is "shelved," please provide any "Notice of Termination" or "Reduction in TEC" requested or processed for this site.*
4. *Substation Interface Agreements: Copies of the Bilateral Connection Agreements (BCA) or Construction Agreements for both the Wold Newton and Grimsby West connections associated with North Ray. (Note: Financial details may be redacted, but technical capacity, project names, and key dates should be disclosed).*
5. *Queue Management: Records of any "Milestone" checks performed by NESO for the North Ray projects under current Queue Management rules, and whether the "shelved" component has been flagged for removal from the queue.*

Our response

We have provided our response to each part of your request below.

1. *Project Split Correspondence: All internal and external correspondence (emails, meeting minutes, and briefing notes) between NESO (or its predecessor National Grid ESO) and TotalEnergies (including any previous developers such as Low Carbon) regarding the decision to split the original North Ray proposal into two or more separate projects/connection agreements.*

We have conducted searches of our email system and our CRM system and can confirm that we do not hold any correspondence in scope of your specific request.

We would like to provide some further detail and context to help your understanding of the reasons why NESO does not hold the information that you have requested. I can understand that you may have expected NESO to hold this information. The various organisations within the energy sector perform different roles and the information that we collect, receive, require, use, and create depends on the nature of the role.

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. National networks are like a motorway, while the local transmission networks are like the diverging smaller roads. The NESO operates the national part of the system. Once electricity arrives at local networks, Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) convert the high voltage power that NESO manages through the transmission network into a lower voltage and then send it on to the consumer using local 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.

Where large embedded projects are connecting at distribution level, these generators require a connection agreement with the DNO and with NESO. Large generators are categorised as:

- 100MW or greater in National Grid's transmission network
- 30MW or greater in Scottish Power's transmission network
- 10MW or greater in Scottish Hydro Electric's transmission network.

For smaller generation projects the DNO will make us aware of the connection via a different process.

This page of our website explains the different roles in connections: [NESO's role in Connections | National Energy System Operator](#).

The North Ray Solar Farm 2 is a DNO project. For the Connections reform process (see further information below) the DNOs requested information from their customers/developers which was similar to that collected by NESO from developers with transmission connection agreements (see Evidence Submission Handbook). Section 8.3 of the Gate 2 methodology confirms: *"DNOs will recommend to NESO the Small and Medium Embedded Generation* which, through their assessment, they believe has met the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria b)."*

Outside of the connections and connections reform processes NESO does not collect detailed information for distribution projects for network planning purposes because our focus is on the transmission network. You may wish to contact the relevant DNO, Northern Powergrid, to request further information. The DNOs are subject to the EIR, although they are also subject to confidentiality obligations.

2. *Guidance on Planning Regimes: Any records of advice or guidance provided by NESO to the developer regarding the use of the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) versus the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime in relation to these specific grid connections.*

We can confirm that we do not hold any information in scope of your request, for the same reasons as those explained above.

3. *TEC Register Status for "North Ray 2": Confirmation of the current status of the connection agreement for the phase connecting to the Grimsby West substation. If this project is "shelved," please provide any "Notice of Termination" or "Reduction in TEC" requested or processed for this site.*

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.

There is an entry for North Ray Solar Farm 2 on the [current TEC Register](#) (Project Number: PRO-004502) with the connection site listed as Grimsby West GSP. The current TEC register shows the contracted position at the date published and does not yet show the outcome of the connections reform/G2TWQ process. The TEC Register is published twice weekly, and is updated when contracts are signed or terminated, and when contractual milestones are met. If a project has been made a Gate 1 or Gate 2 offer this will be updated on the TEC Register once the Gate 1 or Gate 2 agreement has been countersigned by NESO. Until that point, the field specifying Gate 1 or Gate 2 will remain blank. The current contract is for 180MW. Any changes will only be reflected in the TEC Register once new contracts have been issued and countersigned. Should a contract be terminated the entry in the TEC Register would be removed.

There are two entries for North Ray Solar Farm 2 in the [Existing Agreement \(EA\) Register](#). This register details all projects that applied for "Gate 2" in the connections reform/G2TWQ 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 reform process.

We have checked why there are two entries for North Ray Solar Farm 2 and have received confirmation that the second EA Register entry is a duplication of the first entry and was included in error.

NESO will not provide any further information relating to specific developers or their projects other than that which is made publicly available due to confidentiality obligations and in accordance with the EIR exception at Regulation 12(5)(e) as set out below.

4. *Substation Interface Agreements: Copies of the Bilateral Connection Agreements (BCA) or Construction Agreements for both the Wold Newton and Grimsby West connections associated with North Ray. (Note: Financial details may be redacted, but technical capacity, project names, and key dates should be disclosed).*

We confirm that a BCA and Construction Agreement between NESO and the DNO is held in relation to the North Ray 2 Solar project. NESO and the developer have entered into a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement (BEGA). The BCA is not an agreement between NESO and the developer because this is not a directly connected project. For further explanation of embedded generation, please see [What is embedded generation and transmission connected generation? | National Energy System Operator](#). The BCA includes Grimsby West as the connection point and this is reflected in the public TEC Register entry. We are unable to provide a copy of either the BCA or the BEGA as these are subject to confidentiality obligations. We are withholding copies of the agreements under the EIR exception at Regulation 12(5)(e) as set out below.

5. *Queue Management: Records of any "Milestone" checks performed by NESO for the North Ray projects under current Queue Management rules, and whether the "shelved" component has been flagged for removal from the queue.*

Milestones for distribution connected projects are managed by the DNO, not by NESO. We can confirm that NESO does not hold recorded information relating to milestones for this project.

EIR exception in Regulation 12(5)(e)

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. 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.

Connection offers are made substantially in the form and under the terms of the Connection and Use of System Code (CUSC). The CUSC has exhibits containing proformas of the documents which set out the main content of the connection agreements with a developer, and you can find the CUSC and the proformas on our website: [Connection and Use of System Code \(CUSC\) | National Energy System Operator](#). NESO is bound by the confidentiality obligations under the CUSC and cannot share the specific terms put in place with a developer.

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 connections reform/G2TWQ process and will therefore not publish information where there would be an adverse effect on any party. The information in the TEC Register confirms where there is a project covered by an agreement. Where a project has received a Gate 1 or Gate 2 offer that information will be made available through the TEC Register once the offer is countersigned. Where a developer has consented to the information being made publicly available, the Existing Agreements register confirms whether a project applied for Gate 2 through the connections reform/G2TWQ process. The CUSC information outlines the substantial content of connection agreements 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.

Further information – Connections Reform

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 began informing Customers of the outcome of their applications and 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. NESO will not be disclosing information on the status of individual projects at this time. Further aggregated

information on the new connections pipeline will be made available over the coming weeks and months.

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)