

Claire Whiteside  
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Ltd  
120 Malone Road  
Belfast  
BT9 5HT

**By Email Only: Claire.Whiteside@nienetworks.co.uk**

**Date: 22 May 2025**

**Our Ref: NET/E/JF/1224**

Dear Claire,

**Application for consent to a longer period for the issuance of a Connection Offer at Site adjacent to 520m NW 30 Loughdoo Road, Ballygally, Larne, NIE Networks Reference: 23/12670**

Thank you for your letter received 14 May 2025 (the **Letter**) setting out a revised version of an application **(the Third Application)** made by NIE Networks Limited **(NIE Networks)** for an extension to the period within which NIE Networks is required to make a connection offer **(the relevant Connection Offer)** concerning a [REDACTED] Hydro Generator at **Larne Main BSP**. This superseded a version of the Third Application submitted on 28 April 2025. The extended period now applied for expires on **7 September 2025**.

NIE Networks has made two related previous extension applications; both approved by the Authority (the **First Application** and the **Second Application**).

In this letter we shall refer to the person making the application for the relevant Connection Offer as the **Connection Applicant**.

## 1. The Third Application

The Letter describes the relevant background<sup>1</sup> to the Third Application. Reference is made to Condition 30 of NIE Networks' licence authorising participation in the activity of distribution **(the Licence)**.<sup>2</sup>

Condition 30 (6) (of the Licence) provides that (barring specified exceptions)<sup>3</sup> NIE Networks is obliged to make an offer for connection to the distribution system *as soon as practicable* and (by operation of Condition 30 (6)(b)) *in any event within 3 months*

*"after receipt by [NIE Networks] of an application containing all such information in relation to the required connection as [NIE Networks] may reasonably request."*

Condition 30 (6) is to be read alongside and reflects the provision made in Article 20(3) through to Article 20(5) of the Electricity (NI) Order 1992 (the **Electricity Order**).

Condition 30 (7) of the Licence allows NIE Networks to make an application to the Authority<sup>4</sup> (following requisite consultation) for a consent (in writing) that the period specified in Condition 30 (6)(b) shall be substituted by a longer period and subject to any conditions as specified in the consent.

Significantly, the making – or grant - of a Condition 30(7) type application does not alter NIE Networks' licence obligation<sup>5</sup> (under Condition 30(6)(a)) to make a connection offer *as soon as practicable*. The primary obligation (recorded in Condition 30(6)(a) of the Licence and Article 20 the Electricity Order) - to make a connection offer *as soon as practicable* - remains.

NIE Networks states as part of the Third Application, that it received a valid application (for the Relevant Connection Offer) from the Connection

---

<sup>1</sup> What follows is a summary of the Application. It is not intended to be a complete rehearsal. All parts of the Application have been considered in making the decision set out in this correspondence. Failure to mention parts of the Application (or related correspondence) should not be taken as representing any failure to have regard to those parts.

<sup>2</sup> [NIE Distribution Licence](#).

<sup>3</sup> Recorded in Article 21 of the [Electricity \(NI\) Order 1992](#) (the **Electricity Order**): see Condition 30(6) (d) of the Licence.

<sup>4</sup> In this correspondence we use the words "us" "we" "our" "UR" "Utility Regulator" and "Authority" interchangeably to refer to the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation.

<sup>5</sup> Which aligns with the statutory duties reflected in Articles 19 and 20 of the Electricity Order.

Applicant on 20 December 2023, for the connection of a [REDACTED] Hydro Generator into Larne Main BSP. It was identified in the First Application that the existing 45MVA Transformers at Larne Main BSP were at capacity for generation, but were due to be replaced with 90MVA Transformers, which would free up sufficient capacity to facilitate a potential Connection Offer to the Connection Applicant. NIE Networks said it would be unable to provide a Connection Offer based on the Transformer replacement until the relevant Transmission Project Agreement (TPA) had been signed, which was expected to take approximately 8 months (from December 2023). The Authority approved the First Application via Decision Letter dated 15 March 2024.<sup>6</sup>

There then came the Second Application - made to the Authority on 24 September 2024 - for extension of the requisite (long-stop) period from 7 October 2024 to 4 April 2025.

NIE Networks outlined in the Second Application that the previously envisaged timetable for the signing of the TPA had not been met due to detailed design work required at Larne Main BSP (to determine the location of required cable sealing ends). NIE Networks anticipated the TPA would be signed by the end of December 2024, with 3 months further needed for the Relevant Connection Offer to be designed and issued to the Connection Applicant. The Authority approved the Second Application, via Decision Letter dated 7 October 2024.<sup>7</sup>

In the 28 April 2025 version of the Third Application NIE Networks claimed that the Condition 30 date for the issue of a connection offer (which had been extended to 4 April 2025) was now 11 May 2025, due to a combination of the connection application being on hold, and Storms Darragh and Eowyn. At a meeting on 29 April 2025, the Authority asked for more details about the period the connection application was on hold for, and raised issues with NIE Networks adding days to the Condition 30 Licence standard attributed to these Storms (echoing issues raised in recent Decision Letters). On 14 May 2025, NIE Networks submitted a revised third application to the Authority.

---

<sup>6</sup> [2024.03.13 REDACTED C30 Loughdoo Road.pdf](#).

<sup>7</sup> [2024.09.25 NIE C30 Loughdoo Road DL - redacted.pdf](#).

Within this revised third application, NIE Networks stated that the connection application had been on hold for nine days, *“as the customer needed to provide site location maps.”* NIE Networks also commented in the covering email to the application, regarding the ‘storm days’, that *“we have since learnt that these do not count towards the License Standard.”* Therefore, in the revised third application, NIE Networks applies for extension of the Condition 30 period, from 13 April 2025 (including the nine days the connection application was on hold) to **7 September 2025**.

We welcome that NIE Networks has taken our position on the License standard and ‘Storm Days’ into account, between its submission and resubmission of the third application, and that explanation is provided about why the connection application was on hold. However, the Authority notes that the revised version of the Third Application was submitted on 14 May 2025, including an identification of the Condition 30 period as running to 13 April 2025. Accordingly, whilst the Third Application was submitted with the necessary information - as per the Authority’s 2017 Electricity Connections Decision<sup>8</sup> **(the Decision Paper Guidance)** – it was not received in line with the expectations set out in the Decision Paper Guidance.

The Decision Paper Guidance states that the Authority *“would expect to receive a request from the licensee at least two weeks before the end of the three-month connection application period.”* The submission date of the revised third application on the 14 May 2025 does not fulfil the stated expectations.

Moving on, NIE Networks details the rationale for the Third Application as another delay in the signing of the TPA, for the replacement of the 45MVA Transformers with the 90MVA Transformers. The work on establishing the location of cable sealing ends is now complete, with the TPA expected to be returned by SONI on 6 June 2025. NIE Networks describes the connection as third in line for the connection queue at Buckna Central, with the first connection in the queue due to be made a connection offer by 9 June 2025, with an acceptance deadline of 7 September 2025. NIE Networks comments that it requires further time after the status of the first connection in the queue is clarified, to determine the final capacity on this circuit and what reinforcements are required. We note that the need for extra time to

---

<sup>8</sup> [Electricity Connections Decision FINAL.pdf](#).

undertake this assessment had not been referred to in the first and second applications.

## **2. Consultation associated with the Third Application**

Condition 30(7)(a) of the Licence provides that NIE Networks must consult with the Connection Applicant when making an application (for extension) under Condition 30(7).

The Third Application sets out such consultation with the Connection Applicant, via email of 28 April 2025. We would observe that this consultation with the Connection Applicant does also not align with the expectations (for consultation) set out in our Decision Paper, with the Condition 30 period running to 13 April 2025.

In their response of 28 April 2025, the Connection Applicant stated *“I support the extension request.”*

## **3. The Authority’s decision**

In making our decision on the Third Application we have regard to:

- (a) our published Decision Paper Guidance<sup>9</sup>
- (b) our principal objective (and related statutory objectives) under Article 12 of the Energy (NI) Order 2003
- (c) the contents of the Third Application
- (d) the consultation with the Connection Applicant
- (e) clarifications sought and received from NIE Networks in the period following receipt of the Letter.

Having considered the matter fully, the Authority hereby confirms that it provides the consent sought in the Application. It follows that the period under Condition 30(6)(b) of the Licence (in respect of the application for connection made by the Connection Applicant for the [REDACTED] Hydro) is now extended until **7 September 2025**. We consider the Application justified for the reasons set out in the Letter.

---

<sup>9</sup> [Electricity Connections Review Decision Paper | Utility Regulator \(uregni.gov.uk\)](#)

We welcome the commitment of NIE Networks to work with SONI in progressing the relevant connection applications to include that of the Connection Applicant.

We would also take this opportunity to confirm that the (extended consented to) period ending 7 September 2025 is a “long stop” date. The obligation under Condition 30 of the Licence is (now), subject to applicable exceptions,<sup>10</sup> to make a Relevant Connection Offer to the Connection Applicant for the [REDACTED] Hydro at **Loughdoo Road** “as soon as practicable” and “in any event no later than” 7 September 2025. The Licence obligation is not (now) simply to offer connection terms by 7 September 2025.

This decision will be published and placed on the Register in the normal way.

NIE Networks is asked to reflect on our above observations, as to the expectations explained in the Decision Paper Guidance.

Our expectation is that further applications for Condition 30 type extensions will be presented in accordance with our observations.

Please do return to us should you require any clarification.

Yours sincerely,



Jillian Ferris  
**Head of Networks**  
**Duly authorised by the Authority**

---

<sup>10</sup> Consonant with NIE Networks’ licence obligations and its statutory duties set out in Articles 12 and 19 of the Electricity Order.