

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

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

Date: 20 September 2025

Our Ref: NET/E/JF/1349

Dear Claire,

Application for consent to a longer period for the issuance of a Connection Offer at Site adjacent to 37 Hillhead Road Ballyclare, NIE Networks Reference: 24/10149.

Thank you for your letter received 8 September 2025 **(the Letter)** setting out an application **(the Second 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] PV at **37 Hillhead Road, Ballyclare**. The extended period now applied for expires on **21 May 2026**.

NIE Networks has made one related previous extension application, which was approved by the Authority – the **First Application**.

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

1. The Second Application

The Letter describes the relevant background¹ to the Second Application.

¹ 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

Reference is made to Condition 30 of NIE Networks' licence authorising participation in the activity of distribution **(the Licence)**.²

Condition 30 (6) (of the Licence) provides that (barring specified exceptions)

³ 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 Authority⁴ (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 obligation⁵ (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 Second Application, that it received a valid application (for the Relevant Connection Offer) from the Connection Applicant on 29 January 2025, for the connection of a [REDACTED] PV.

The First Application made relating to this Applicant was submitted on 15

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.

² [NIE Distribution Licence](#).

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

⁴ 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.

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

April 2025, for the connection of a [REDACTED] PV into Larne Main BSP. Extension was requested from 29 April 2025 to 22 September 2025; this was granted by the Authority on 29 April 2025⁶. The rationale behind this request claimed that they received a large number of Applications in the last year, that have had a *“knock on effect to the generation queue and the number of Applications NIE Networks can process in a week.”* NIE Networks stated, *“this work has taken considerably more resource and time to complete than it would take during normal application levels.”*

The Second Application (made in the Letter) is for consent – under Condition 30(7) - for a longer substituted Condition 30 (6)(b) period out (from 22 September 2025) to 21 May 2026, this is the second extension application made by NIE Networks in relation to this Applicant.

The Application refers to *“knock-on effects of the Generation Queue and the replacement of the transformers at Larne Main.”* NIE Networks says that this connection is second in the queue at Ballyclare Central, stating, in regards to the job that is first in the connection queue that a 30 day letter has been issued and upon their final decision, a connection offer will be issued on 23 November 2025.

NIE Networks cites this as a reason for requesting more time to *“determine final capacity and what reinforcement is required”* highlighting they will be able to determine required reinforcement on 21 February 2026. They then require a further 3 months as the application will require a full HV and LV network study and time to issue required paperwork.

The Application also states that *“should NIE Networks know the required reinforcement works sooner, the Connection Offer will be progressed as soon as possible.”*

Reflecting the points above, NIE Networks explains the rationale for seeking the consent sought in the Application as follows:

- *“This extension would allow a Connection Offer to be issued against the expected upgrades to the transmission system and available capacity on the distribution capacity.”*
- *This extension would facilitate a fair and transparent network capacity allocation and queuing process for the capacity*

⁶ 2025.04.29 DL NIE C30 Hillhead Road Redacted.pdf (Awaiting Publication)

available.

- *This extension will enable NIE Networks to progress the connection design and production of a connection offer subject to capacity becoming available.”*

NIE Networks says that not granting the extension “would result in a refusal to connect and would prevent [REDACTED] being connected to the network.”

2. Consultation associated with the 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 Application sets out consultation with the Connection Applicant, via email of 8 September 2025. The Connection Applicant has provided a response via email on 21 August 2025. The Connection Applicant, in this response, stated “Have you issued a letter direct to customer? I will make note of the new offer date.” The customer was contacted via email on 8 September 2025- there has been no response at the time of the letter.

“Affected Parties Consultation

The Application states, “In line with the process outlined in NIE Networks’ ‘Distribution Generation Application and Offer Process Statement’ NIE Networks are engaging with SONI in determining if there is Transmission Capacity available for this applicant.”

3. The Authority’s decision

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

- (a) our published Decision Paper Guidance⁷
- (b) our principal objective (and related statutory objectives) under Article 12 of the Energy (NI) Order 2003
- (c) the contents of the Application
- (d) the consultation with the Connection Applicant

⁷ [Electricity Connections Review Decision Paper | Utility Regulator \(uregni.gov.uk\)](https://www.uregni.gov.uk/electricity-connections-review-decision-paper)

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 **21 May 2026**. We consider the Application justified for the reasons set out in the Letter.

The Authority welcomes the commitment of NIE Networks to work with SONI in progressing the relevant connection applications to include that of the Connection Applicant.


Although we have accepted this request, we have noted NIE Networks' comments in this application around this extension request timescale and the progression of an offer three months after the reinforcement required at Ballyclare Central is determined and the network studies are complete.

We would also take this opportunity to confirm that the (extended consented to) period ending 21 May 2026 is a "long stop" date. The obligation under Condition 30 of the Licence is (now), subject to applicable exceptions,⁸ to make a Relevant Connection Offer to the Connection Applicant for the [REDACTED] PV at 37 Hillhead Road Ballyclare, "as soon as practicable" and "in any event no later than" 21 May 2026. The Licence obligation is not (now) simply to offer connection terms by 21 May 2026.

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

Please do return to us should you require any clarification.

Yours sincerely,



Jillian Ferris

Head of Networks

Duly authorised by the Authority

⁸ Consonant with NIE Networks' licence obligations and its statutory duties set out in Articles 12 and 19 of the Electricity Order.