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

Date: 01 September 2025

Our Ref: NET/E/JF/1325

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 22 August 2025 (**the Letter**) setting out an application (**the Fourth 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 ■■■ Hydro Generator at **30 Loughdoo Road, Ballygally, Larne**. The extended period now applied for expires on **19 December 2025**.

NIE Networks has made three related previous extension applications; all of which have been approved by the Authority – the **First Application**, the **Second Application**, and the **Third Application**.

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

1. The Fourth Application

The Letter describes the relevant background¹ to the Fourth Application. 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 Fourth Application, that it received a valid

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 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.

application (for the Relevant Connection Offer) from the Connection Applicant on 20 December 2023, for the connection of a ■ Hydro Generator.

The First Application made relating to this Applicant was submitted on 22 February 2024, for the connection of a ■ Hydro Generator into Larne Main BSP. Extension was requested from 20 March 2024 to 7 October 2024; this was granted by the Authority on 15 March 2024⁶. The rationale behind this request claimed that there was insufficient capacity for generation with the existing 45MVA Transformers, adding that the transformers were being replaced with 90MVA Transformers by SONI. NIE Networks stated they were *“unable to provide a connection offer based on the transformers being replaced until the Transmission Project Agreement has been signed.”* This timeline was estimated at eight months, with the addition of three months per the licence standard to issue a connection offer.

The Second Application was submitted on 24 September 2024, for an extension from 7 October 2024 to 4 April 2025; this was granted by the Authority on 7 October 2024⁷. The rationale behind this request concerned the Transmission Project Agreement (TPA) not being signed. NIE Networks stated, *“the TPA has not been agreed due to the detailed design required at Larne Main to determine location of required cable sealing ends.”* Further time was required due to the complex nature of the substation.

The Third Application was submitted on 28 April 2025, for an extension from 11 May 2025 to 7 September 2025; this was granted by the Authority on 22 May 2025⁸. The rationale behind this request again considered the TPA not being signed. Along with this, NIE Networks noted that further time was needed *“to determine final capacity and what reinforcement is required.”*

The Fourth Application (made in the Letter) is for consent – under Condition 30(7) - for a longer substituted Condition 30 (6)(b) period out (from 7 September 2025) to 19 December 2025, this is the fourth extension application made by NIE Networks in relation to this Applicant.

The Application refers to NIE Networks progressing work for small scale

⁶ [2024.03.13 REDACTED C30 Loughdoo Road.pdf](#)

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

⁸ 2025.05.22 NIE C30 Loughdoo Road.pdf (awaiting publication on website)

applications associated with Larne Main. NIE Networks says that this connection is third in the queue at Buckna Central, stating, in regards to the jobs that are first and second in the connection queue - *“as NIE Networks gained more clarity on these applications the jobs were put on hold until the customer sent back required information. Therefore, these offers have been delayed.”* All three jobs would be on the same circuit.

NIE Networks states that they are allowing these customers until 19 September 2025 to reply to the 30 day letters issued, in relation to the acceptance of a connection offer, and cites this as a reason for requesting more time to *“determine final capacity and what reinforcement is required”* NIE Networks highlights they require a further 3 months for this application, from 19 September 2025, as the application will require a full HV and LV network study and time to issue required paperwork.

The Application also states NIE Networks will issue the relevant Connection Offer before 19 December 2025 should it be in a position to do so, should they know the required reinforcement works sooner.

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 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 21 August 2025. The Connection Applicant has provided a response via email on 21 August 2025. The Connection Applicant, in this response, stated “*I somewhat reluctantly agree to a further delay to the time for making an offer.*” The Authority also notes that they have expressed concerns about the time the connection process has taken so far.

“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 Guidance⁹
- (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

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 **19 December 2025**. 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

⁹ [Electricity Connections Review Decision Paper | Utility Regulator \(uregni.gov.uk\)](https://www.uregni.gov.uk/electricity-connections-review-decision-paper)

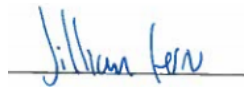
the progression of an offer three months after the reinforcement required at Buckna Central is determined and the network studies are complete. The Authority has also noted that the Connection Applicant has 'reluctantly' accepted the need for this application.

We would also take this opportunity to confirm that the (extended consented to) period ending 19 December 2025 is a "long stop" date. The obligation under Condition 30 of the Licence is (now), subject to applicable exceptions,¹⁰ to make a Relevant Connection Offer to the Connection Applicant for the ■ Hydro at **30 Loughdoo Road, Ballygally**, "as soon as practicable" and "in any event no later than" 19 December 2025. The Licence obligation is not (now) simply to offer connection terms by 19 December 2025.

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

¹⁰ Consonant with NIE Networks' licence obligations and its statutory duties set out in Articles 12 and 19 of the Electricity Order.