

Noel Gormley
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Ltd
120 Malone Road
Belfast
BT9 5HT

By Email Only: Noel.Gormley@nienetworks.co.uk

Date: 04 June 2026

Our Ref: NET/E/JF/1478

Dear Noel,

Application for consent to a longer period for the issuance of a Connection Offer at Airport Road, West Belfast, NIE Networks Reference: 26/01055.

Thank you for your letter received 27 May 2026 (the **Letter**) setting out an application **(the 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)** for a New Commercial Connection (10MVA), at **Airport Road West Belfast**. The extended period now applied for expires on **18 December 2026**.

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

1. The Application

The Letter describes the relevant background¹ to the Application. Reference is made to Condition 30 of NIE Networks' licence authorising participation in the activity of distribution **(the Licence)**.²

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](#).

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 Application, that it received a valid application (for the Relevant Connection Offer) from the Connection Applicant on 28 January 2026, for a New Commercial Connection (10MVA), meaning the existing Condition 30 (6) period expired on 28 April 2026.

The Application (made in the Letter) is for consent – under Condition 30(7) - for a longer substituted Condition 30 (6)(b) period out to 18 December 2026.

NIE Networks highlights in the application that *“due to the complex nature of demand applications and the requirement to complete a*

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.

detailed assessment of the high voltage network to determine upstream reinforcement requirements, the time to quote can sometimes extend beyond the 3 month licence period.”

NIE Networks explains that the capacity required for this connection is not currently available within the area of this application. To combat this, NIE Networks has proposed a new bulk supply point to provide further capacity on the system and allow for this connection to be made. To provide the supply from the proposed new bulk supply point, NIE Networks notes that SF6 switch gear would also be necessary, which is no longer offered. Therefore, an alternative connection point is said to need costed and agreed before a conditional connection offer can proceed.

NIE Networks therefore says that the period applied for is needed to continue to engage with the customer on a 33Kv switchroom location and other technical aspects of design, obtain pricing from suppliers for new circuit breakers that are non-SF6 and complete cable route assessments.

It is however cautioned that this connection will be dependent on the new bulk supply point being energised and the required time it will take to engage with SONI.

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

- 1. “Continued engagement with the customer on technical details and agreement on 33kV switchboard position*
- 2. Bespoke prices for new assets required to deliver this connection to be obtained*
- 3. The delivery timeline for this connection offer to be more accurately estimated as proposed new Bulk Supply Point works progress*
- 4. NIE Networks time to accurately design and cost connections taking account of the impact of others in the queue ahead of them.”*

NIE Networks states not granting the extension would result in failing to meet its licence standard.

We note, also, that whilst the Application was submitted to the Authority

with the necessary information - as per the Authority's 2017 Electricity Connections Decision (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 Authority considers that the connection application period (in this case) expired on 28 April 2026, and therefore the submission date (of the Application) of 27 May 2026 does not fulfil the stated expectations.

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 such consultation with the Connection Applicant, via email of 28 April 2026.

The Connection Applicant has not provided a response at the time of the Letter. However, NIE Networks has confirmed that “*verbal conversations indicate the applicant understands the need for an extension.*”

Alternatively, the applicants end client's project manager has provided a response via email on 29 April 2026, stating not only that this is a significant extension but also that it will have an “*extremely detrimental impact on our construction programme.*” This consultation was also followed by a meeting on 20 May 2026 to reach an understanding and for NIE Networks to provide clarity on the scope of work to be undertaken.

3. The Authority's decision

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

- (a) our published Decision Paper Guidance⁶
- (b) our principal objective (and related statutory objectives) under Article 12 of the Energy (NI) Order 2003

⁶ [Electricity Connections Review Decision Paper | Utility Regulator \(uregni.gov.uk\)](https://www.uregni.gov.uk/electricity-connections-review-decision-paper)

- (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 New Commercial Connection (10 MVA) at **Airport Road West Belfast** is now extended until **18 December 2026**. We consider the Application justified for the reasons set out in the Letter.

The Authority notes that NIE Networks has described this extension as enabling the issue of a *“defined timeline for the applicant to receive a connection offer and allow them to plan accordingly.”* The Authority hopes this will give NIE Networks the necessary time to accurately design and finalise the connection, ultimately benefiting the applicant by avoiding further delays.

We would also take this opportunity to confirm that the (extended consented to) period ending 18 December 2026 is a “long stop” date.

The obligation under Condition 30 of the Licence is (now), subject to applicable exceptions,⁷ to make a Relevant Connection Offer to the Connection Applicant for the New Commercial Connection (10 MVA) at **Airport Road West Belfast**, “as soon as practicable” and “in any event no later than” 18 December 2026. The Licence obligation is not (now) simply to offer connection terms by 18 December 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

⁷ Consonant with NIE Networks' licence obligations and its statutory duties set out in Articles 12 and 19 of the Electricity Order.