

Ian Craig
Network Connections Major Projects
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited

Date: 30/11/2017

Our Ref: CNO/E/TH/272

Dear Ian,

Request for Authority's consent to further defer Connection Offer Timelines for the Steeple Road PV Windfarm, Connection Application, NIE Networks reference 15/14952.

Thank you for your letter of 16 November 2017 requesting further consent from the Authority for NIE Networks to extend the required three month timeline to issue a connection offer to **Steeple Road PV Windfarm**, Connection Application.

Having considered your letter we grant an extension to 30 April 2018 for this connection application as you request. We also wish to remind NIE Networks that we remain of the view that granting of extensions should be the exception rather than the norm and so NIE Networks should be mindful of this if considering further extensions in the future.

NIE Network's request for further connection offer extension

NIE Networks has noted that it has made a previous application for a Section S Offer in May 2015 for a generation cluster in the Kells area. It says that the subsequent change to the application criteria (removal of planning approval as a prerequisite) in August 2015, the NIRO scheme closure and a number of planning refusals has altered the geographical distribution of renewable sites to be considered with the consequence that the natural centre of the Cluster shifted considerably. NIE Networks notes that it has since applied to SONI, on 2 November 2017, for a Section S Offer to provide Transmission Works for the construction of a Cluster Substation at the new proposed location beside Kells Main Substation. The latest extension for this connection applicant, which we granted on 10 August 2017, is due to expire on 30 November 2017.

NIE Network's asks for a further extension for these connection offers from 30 November 2017 to 30 April 2018 under Condition 30 of the NIE Networks Distribution licence. We summarise the following information which NIE Networks provides in support of its request as follows:

- Granting an extension will enable NIE Networks to provide accurate connection offers (to do otherwise may result in a breach of licence condition if an offer were to be provided without accurate information);

- Granting an extension enables full assessment of applications and level of commitment to the Kells Cluster post NIRO and allows applicants to stay in the connection queue at Kells Cluster, where capacity is available (to do otherwise may risk the cluster in question not developing);
- Granting an extension supports the consulted and agreed upon queuing and capacity allocation process (Phase 1) (to do otherwise may lead to unfair treatment of this applicant under an undefined ruleset).
- Granting an extension facilitates the clustering process allowing the efficient development of the network as per Article 12 of the Electricity Order (NI).
- NIE Networks has consulted the connection applicant throughout the process. The connection applicant supports the request for extension.

The Authority's decision

The relevant section of the distribution licence is within Condition 30. This requires a connection offer to be made not later than 3 months unless consent to a longer period has been approved by the Authority.

You now request a further extension of the limit as provided for in Condition 30 from 30 November 2017 to 30 April 2018 for this connection applicant.

We welcome that your request meets the minimum requirements and process for requesting and granting an extension as set out in our 31 May 2017 connections review decision paper.¹

Having considered your request and reviewed the response from the connection applicant in question, the Authority is able to agree to the extension period requested.

We note that this extension letter will be published on our website. We will also keep a record of the information and decision on the Public Electricity Register as required by the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

We ask to be kept informed of progress.

Yours sincerely,



Tanya Hedley
Director of Compliance and Network Operations

¹ <https://www.uregni.gov.uk/sites/uregni/files/media-files/Electricity%20Connections%20Decision%20FINAL.pdf>