

Submission ID: 14809

Written Representation at Deadline 2.

I would like to take this opportunity to make two brief points about the submissions at Deadline 1:

Firstly, a late submission from National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) was accepted into the examination at the discretion of the ExA and published on March 1st, only 6 days before Deadline 2. This was a very important submission and the ExA used its discretion wisely in accepting it.

However, many interested parties (including me) were completely unaware of its existence until coming across it by chance, while re-reading some of the 187 other submissions. It is true that we all received an email on 1st March from NI Mail Distribution, re-stating the message from a week earlier, that “the Deadline 1 submissions have been published” and “the Examination Library has been updated”, but no further details were given, and this looked therefore like a reminder.

It would have been so much more useful if precise information had been given in that message, to draw our attention to the fact that, for example, “a late submission has been received from NGESO and you will find it on page 12 of the D1 submissions.”

Perhaps such a protocol could be employed in future, to give IPs a greater chance to participate on equal terms in this examination.

Secondly, I note with disappointment, but not surprise, that National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) in their response, politely refuse your request to attend the Issue Specific Hearing on 23rd March 2023, stating that they have no need to do so, as they are already in dialogue with Equinor over their specific needs for protective provisions. However, you are not requesting their attendance for their benefit, but for the benefit of the public Examination as a whole “ and they are fully aware of that.

I therefore urge the ExA to persist in inviting, very firmly, all relevant branches of National Grid (e.g., NGET and NGESO) to attend the ISH in March, and remind them that Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project planning processes are carried out in public in this democratic country, and their presence is required in order to: “ensure that discussion can progress at pace, and evidence and conclusions can be tested, with the aim of reaching resolution before the close of the Examination. Your attendance will also ensure that we are able to make better use of Examination resources and of the time of the parties that are present.” [Extract from Rule 13 letter 22/02/23]

Finally, I would like to congratulate the Examining Authority on the depth, breadth and precision of Written Questions 1 and express the hope that the current thoroughness of this examination will be rewarded by a rational outcome.

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7th March 2023