

Key Takeaways from the Scotsman Article

Grid Reforms and Battery Storage

- **NESO Moratorium:** The National Energy System Operator (NESO) has introduced a moratorium on new battery storage projects entering the grid connection queue. As of early 2026, NESO reports that "all zones are full," particularly in southern Scotland, where capacity is significantly oversupplied.
- **Pipeline Oversupply:** The pipeline has grown tenfold to over **700GW**; this is roughly four times the capacity required to meet the UK's Clean Power 2030 targets.
- **Shift in Strategy:** NESO is transitioning from a "first-come, first-served" model to a "strategic approach". This prioritizes projects that already have planning consent and are "ready-to-build" to ensure only the necessary infrastructure is connected.

The Scottish Government and Planning

- **Planning Disconnect:** There is a documented **disconnect** between grid connection rules and the planning system. While NESO has paused battery storage connections, the Scottish Government continues to process and determine applications for energy projects on their individual merits.
- **Electricity Act Consent:** The Scottish Government's position is that there is **no change** to how applications under the Electricity Act are processed, regardless of NESO's new regulations.

Future Strategic Planning

- **SSEP Development:** NESO is indeed developing the first **Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP)**, co-commissioned by the UK, Scottish, and Welsh governments.
- **Expected Publication:** The first iteration of the SSEP is expected in **2026** and will focus on electricity generation and storage.
- **Policy Alignment:** The Scottish Government has confirmed it will only consider amending its **National Planning Framework 4** or marine plans *after* the final SSEP is published in autumn 2027.

Community Concerns

- **Rural Pressure:** There is high-profile pressure from rural Scottish community groups for a **pause** on major energy developments until a standalone national energy plan is finalized.
- **Conventions:** Multiple community council conventions have been held since mid-2025 across the Highlands, North East, and South of Scotland to call for planning system improvements.