

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department for the Economy

UPDATE ON ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Published on Wednesday 1 October 2025

Dr Archibald (The Minister for the Economy): The North's electricity demand is met by many sources including renewable generation, imports through our interconnectors and our three fossil fuel power stations at Kilroot, Ballylumford and Coolkeeragh.

On 7 December 2024 Storm Darragh caused unprecedented damage at Ballylumford power station. The electricity system performed well during the incident and continuity of supply was maintained.

Department officials engaged with the operators of the power station throughout and met regularly with the independent system operator (SONI) and the independent Utility Regulator (UR), who each have statutory roles in maintaining the security of our electricity supplies.

Generation at Ballylumford gradually returned to service with full operation being achieved in July 2025.

In June 2025, the large C30 generator at Coolkeeragh power station was taken offline for planned maintenance. The generator was due to return in mid-August but has not done so due to technical challenges. Department officials continue to engage regularly with SONI and UR to monitor the situation, they also met with the operators of Coolkeeragh. The Department is advised that the station is now planned to return to service mid-October 2025.

Because of these challenges SONI has had to run the generating units at Kilroot up to the point that the permitted annual run hour limits, set by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency would have been reached.

Security of electricity supplies is a top priority for my department and currently an operational requirement of the system is to have large generators operating in at least two separate locations. Having considered all available information the Department determined that operating the system without the availability of Kilroot would present an unacceptable level of risk to the security of supplies.

My officials therefore engaged with officials at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and provided evidence that in the circumstances it was necessary to increase the permitted running hours at Kilroot.

On 30 September, the Executive agreed that this was an appropriate course of action, and the operating hours permitted have been increased. Today SONI has advised that the system is operating as normal.

I would like to thank DAERA officials for their diligence and hard work in relation to this issue.

Next Steps

Going forward my officials will continue to engage with DAERA officials to monitor the situation and address any further changes that may be required.

We will continue to work SONI, UR, and the owners and operators of all our power stations to ensure that the system remains resilient now and in the future in line with our energy strategy The Path to Net Zero.