

**From:** Michael.Hewitt [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 10 November 2020 16:05  
**To:** Denise Dickson [REDACTED] >  
**Subject:** SONI DRAFT TRANSMISSION DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020-29

Dear Denise,

I hope you are well.

SONI operates and plans the electricity grid in Northern Ireland. This includes interconnection with neighbouring grids and the wholesale electricity market. We send power from where it is generated to where it is needed, at the most economical price possible.

I am very pleased to be contacting you in relation to SONI's consultation on the [Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland \(2020-29\)](#).

As the electricity system operator for Northern Ireland, SONI is committed to transforming the power system for future generations and our Transmission Development Plan (TDPNI), which is updated and proposed for approval annually, outlines what projects are needed over the next 10 years in order to support the local economy and decarbonisation.

At SONI we are committed to working closely with key stakeholders to deliver a safe, secure and reliable electricity supply in Northern Ireland; and would welcome the submission of evidence to support any insights and commentary you may have. An email has also been issued to your Chief Executive advising of this consultation.

The proposals detailed within the TDPNI will ultimately support Northern Ireland's future renewable energy targets; with Minister Dodds MLA, recently outlining an ambition for no less than 70% of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030 – a stronger and more flexible grid will be needed.

The TDPNI also sets out how we will ensure the continued security of the electricity grid by proposing a number of projects which will improve its strength and resilience. At certain times, SONI must limit the amount of wind energy deployed across the grid. This can happen when the amount of available wind energy could cause instability to the power system due to capacity issues. SONI is working hard to minimise constraints; proposed projects outlined in the *TDPNI 2020 -2029* will provide higher network capacity in areas where renewable output is constrained due to congestion, ultimately reducing cost to consumers.

As SONI advised in autumn 2019, the investment required in NI grid to make it ready for increased volumes of clean energy, to reduce costly constraints and to strengthen it for economic development is c£500m over the next decade.

Within the TDPNI 2020-29 we are proposing a number of essential upgrades to the Northern Ireland grid including:

- Modernising parts of the grid in the Belfast Metropolitan Area, so that it can fuel long-term economic growth in the city centre
- We are also looking to mid-to-north County Antrim, here the grid is at capacity and we need to strengthen it to increase the flow of electricity from renewable sources
- The North West is another key region for works. We want to strengthen the grid here to support economic development and to facilitate decarbonisation of Northern Ireland's electricity supply.

SONI has no vested interest in adding to the grid; we do not own the assets and we only propose new infrastructure such as cables, overhead lines, pylons and substations when they are absolutely needed.

We have developed comprehensive consultation processes to support our individual infrastructure projects through planning and remain committed to early, meaningful, transparent engagement.

As well as hearing from your council on individual local projects we would like to hear from council on the TDPNI as our overall plan.

The consultation runs from 10 November to 11 December 2020 following this we will update our plans before submitting it to the Utility Regulator for consideration.

Submissions can be made by email to [info@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:info@soni.ltd.uk). Please include "Response to TDPNI Consultation" in the title of any email response. If sending by post, please address to: TDPNI 2020-2029, SONI Ltd, 12 Manse Road, Belfast, BT6 9RT.

I hope your Council will be in a position to respond to this important consultation. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you require any further information about the consultation process.

Kind regards,

Michael

**Michael Hewitt**  
Projects Manager  
Grid Development

 Desk: 02890707825

 Mobile: [REDACTED]

 E-mail: [REDACTED]

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Registered in Northern Ireland  
Registered No: NI38715  
Registered Office: 12 Manse Road, Belfast, BT6 9RT

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