



Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project

Part 2c Summary of Engagement Report

**December
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Prepared By:

Gravis Planning

1 Pavilions Office
Park Kinnegar Drive
Holywood
BT18 9JQ



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1. Executive Summary

SONI, the electricity transmission system operator (TSO) for Northern Ireland, has carried out Part 2c engagement for the 'Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase' project between October 2024 and December 2024, in line with our 3 Part Process for Grid Development.

The Moyle Interconnector is a high-voltage direct current (HVDC) link between Scotland and Northern Ireland, running from Auchencrosh in Ayrshire to Ballycronan More in County Antrim. To ensure that the growing needs of electricity consumers throughout Northern Ireland can be met, it has been identified that there is a need to increase the capacity of the Moyle Interconnector's connection to the grid to improve its efficiency.

Following Part 1, the project moved directly to Part 2c engagement. This is because the nature of the proposed works associated with the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project means that they can only practically be delivered in a relatively small geographical area. As such, the decision was made to streamline the project and move directly to Part 2c in the interest of efficiency. Part 2c encompassed a variety of consultation methods to ensure that all key stakeholders and residents had access to project information and the opportunity to submit feedback on the proposals:

- A drop-in public consultation event was held in Larne Golf Club in Islandmagee. This event had an open invitation and was promoted through a local newspaper, local elected representatives, and social media advertising.
- Direct invitations were issued to elected representatives across the project study area to engage in the consultation process by receiving a briefing on the proposals and having the chance to provide feedback ahead of the public consultation event.
- SONI Landowner Engagement team engaged with impacted landowners and made them aware of the public event.
- SONI's Consultation Portal ensured residents and key stakeholders could view project materials online and submit feedback on the proposals.
- A campaign of social media activity on Facebook and LinkedIn also shared information on the project, directing people to SONI's Consultation Portal.
- Other methods such as a dedicated project webpage and SONI email address were utilised to provide stakeholders with information on the project and the opportunity to provide feedback.

At the drop-in public consultation event, a total of 2 Feedback Forms were completed and provided to SONI by attendees, while 9 Record of Engagement forms were completed. A Record of Engagement can include engagements with several attendees i.e. a family, group of neighbours or work colleagues who have attended the event together.

The key topics discussed with members of the public and key stakeholders were construction, landscaping and visual impact, project methodology, underground cabling, soils and geology, human health, planning, statutory processes, communications / consultation, ecology, and air quality and noise amenity.

Chapter 5 of this report provides more detail on the feedback submitted by members of the public, key stakeholders, and elected representatives during private briefings and the drop-in public consultation event. It also provides a breakdown of the key themes and a summary of the main issues and comments raised by stakeholders.

Moving forward with this project, SONI will continue to engage with key stakeholders, elected representatives, landowners and residents as necessary.

SONI will now move to the final stage of its 3-Part Process, which involves securing the necessary land access and planning approvals prior to handing the project over to NIE Networks for construction.

2. Introduction

2.1 Part 2c Engagement Summary Report

SONI is planning to bring forward the 'Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase' project.

This report represents a concise, yet thorough assessment of the quality and extent of consultation activities that have taken place in relation to the proposed Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project during Part 2c of SONI's [3 Part Process](#) for developing the grid.

3. Background

3.1 SONI Background

SONI is Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator (TSO) and are responsible for managing the electricity grid to ensure that power can flow safely, securely and reliably from where it is generated to where it is needed. SONI are transforming the electricity system to deliver a cleaner, cheaper, more secure energy future for homes, farms and businesses across Northern Ireland.

SONI also operates the all-island wholesale electricity market with EirGrid through the Single Electricity Market Operator (SEMO) which has been in operation since November 2007.

In April 2014, SONI was given the responsibility to plan and develop the transmission network. The transmission network is owned and maintained by the Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIEN), the transmission owner (TO).

3.2 Project Background

To ensure that the growing needs of electricity consumers throughout Northern Ireland can be met, SONI have identified that there is a need to increase the capacity and improve the efficiency of the Moyle Interconnector's connection to the electricity grid.

This will bolster security of supply to meet rising levels of consumer demand in the context of population growth and the increased decarbonisation of heating and transport which we expect to accelerate in the coming years. It will also help to support the delivery of Northern Ireland's climate action targets. In addition, the project will increase the revenue generated from the Moyle Interconnector itself, which may be reinvested back into the asset by its owners (Mutual Energy) to further benefit consumers.

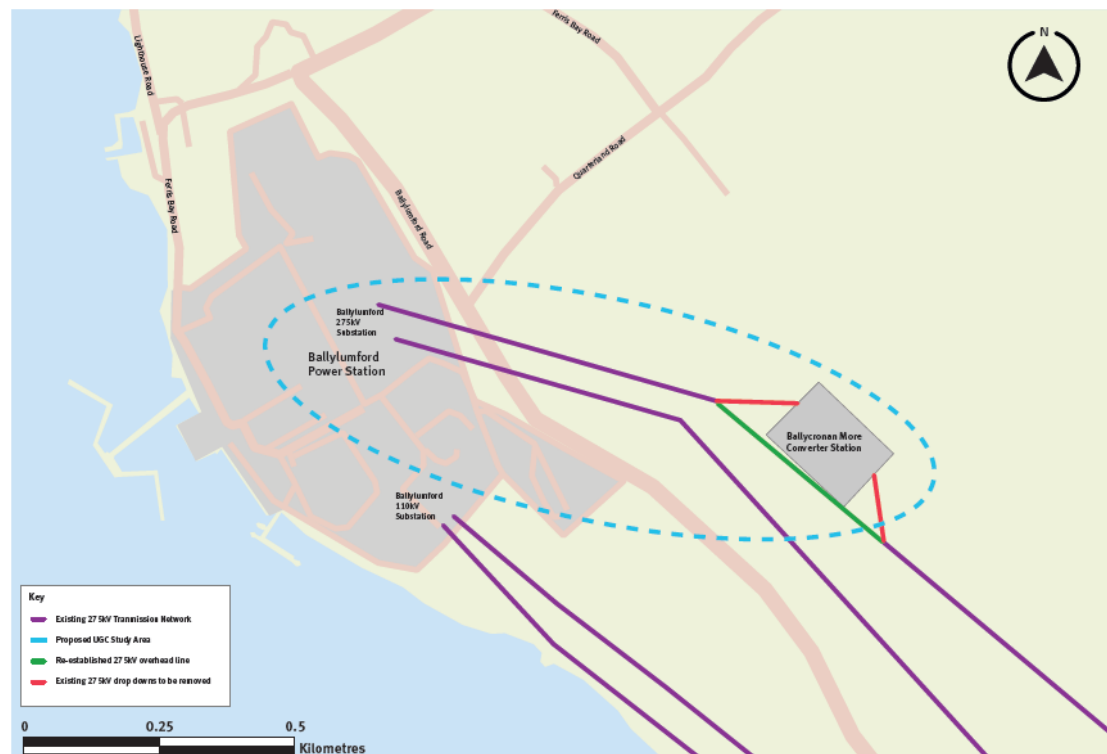
SONI carried out an assessment of the study area which includes the existing grid connection between Ballycronan More Converter Station, where the Moyle Interconnector makes landfall in Northern Ireland, and Ballylumford Power Station, which is connected to the wider transmission system servicing the rest of the region.

The assessment shortlisted several different options for delivering the project in this area based on multi-factorial criteria which included environmental, technical, and economic factors.

The Preliminary Preferred Option selected will involve:

- Connecting Ballycronan More Converter Station to Ballylumford Power Station through two new underground cables
- Removal of a small section of existing 275 kV drop down conductors which currently feed into Ballycronan More Converter Station from two existing towers
- Re-establishing a small section of 275 kV overhead line (OHL) between the two existing towers next to Ballycronan More Converter Station

Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project



Map of Proposed Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Study Area

The proposal falls within the planning authority of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC).

Assessments have taken place which determine that the relevant transmission towers can remain in their current location, meaning that a planning application is not required. Other elements of this project, including new cabling in the public road, are considered 'Permitted Development' under legislation. It is understood that a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development (CLEUD) will be sought.

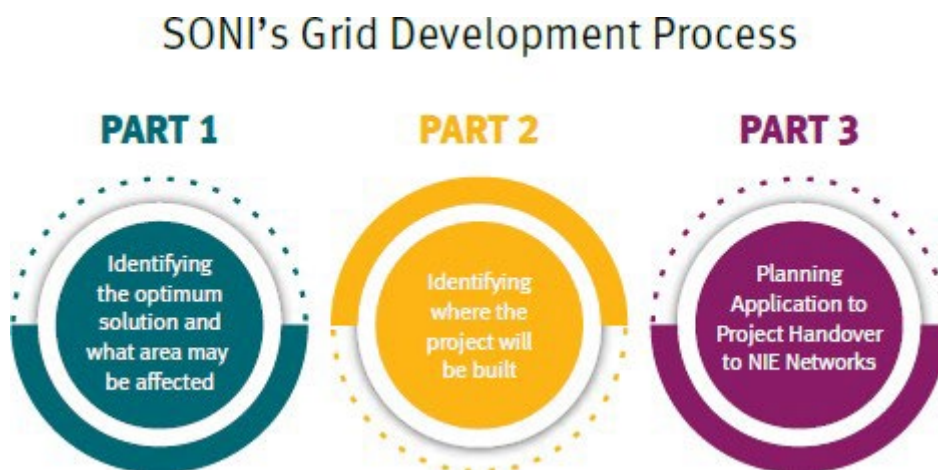
Necessary landowner consents will be sought by the SONI Landowner Team. SONI will then hand the project over to NIE Networks for them to begin construction.

3.3 Previous Engagement

SONI's [3 Part Process](#) puts stakeholder and public consultation at the heart of how the transmission grid is developed.

This project has already completed Part 1 of SONI's 3 Part Process for Grid Development. During Part 1, SONI looked at the area surrounding the Moyle Interconnector and considered all environmental, technical, and economic factors to identify the best technological solution and preferred option.

Through previous engagement with several local councils and elected representatives, SONI has gained a better understanding of what matters to communities, landowners, and businesses in the project area. The feedback received through previous consultation has helped to inform the development of this project including the study area for the underground cable route corridor between Ballycronan More Converter Station and Ballylumford Power Station.



4. Engagement Strategy

4.1 Purpose of Part 2c

SONI takes a structured and professional approach to public engagement, guided by a detailed Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan (SECP), and underpinned by our Public Engagement Model.

Undertaking extensive consultation ensured that interested stakeholders had access to up-to-date and accurate information about the proposal and were provided with sufficient opportunities to provide feedback that can be considered prior to a CLEUD being submitted.

Part 2c engagement typically involves a formal statutory consultation process associated with a planning application; however, the entirety of the proposed development either falls under the umbrella of Permitted Development (PD), which does not require planning permission, or does not meet the threshold of 'Major' within the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, which carries statutory requirements for Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC).

Despite there being no statutory requirement to consult, thorough engagement was undertaken. This process was multi-faceted to ensure opportunities to participate in the process was as broad as possible and included a series of engagement practices such as an online consultation, a drop-in in person consultation event and meetings with key stakeholders.

4.2 Stakeholder Mapping

Before any public consultation began, SONI carried out a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise to identify relevant individuals and groups in relation to the proposal. Broadly, these included:

Political / Governmental

- East Antrim MP / MLAs
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Councillors (Larne Lough DEA)
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Officers (Head of Planning and Senior Planning Officers)

Residents / Community

- Residents
- Community Groups / Associations

Stakeholders identified by SONI were reviewed and updated based on relevant feedback as the consultation period progressed.

4.3 Methods of Engagement

A key aspect of SONI's approach was giving careful consideration as to how they could reach those people most likely to be affected by the proposal and who may wish to be involved in the

consultation process. Identifying these stakeholders helped to inform which methods of consultation were appropriate to ensure participation. In keeping with best practice, SONI employed a variety of consultation methods to ensure that engagement was undertaken with all identified stakeholders appropriately.

SONI hosted a drop-in public consultation event in a local venue and held several individual engagements with other key stakeholders.

In line with best practice, this consultation event hosted by SONI had an open invitation and was advertised through the local press and a campaign of social media activity on Facebook and LinkedIn, which directed people to SONI's Consultation Portal (Appendix 1). The Consultation Portal ensured residents and key stakeholders could view project materials online and submit feedback on the proposals.

SONI also established a dedicated webpage containing information about the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project (Appendix 2), which provided contact details to allow stakeholders to get in touch with the project team or simply submit feedback.

By utilising several engagement methods, SONI ensured that as many people as possible in the local area were aware of the consultation event, adequately informed of the proposal and how to provide feedback.

SONI delivered briefings to local elected representatives ahead of the public consultation process by presenting a summary of the project and asking for their feedback on the proposals. This engagement included details of the subsequent public drop-in consultation events as well as details of the online consultation portal.

4.4 Drop-in Consultation Events

SONI is mindful of the fact that not everyone has the same level of understanding and knowledge of the energy sector and the planning system. A drop-in public consultation event was therefore hosted at a local venue within the project study area. This enabled people to learn more about these matters and the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project itself.

The chosen venue was accessible and catered for all audiences in the local area. The staffed exhibition and drop-in format of the event allowed attendees to view information on the project and discuss their concerns with members of the SONI project team.

The drop-in event was held from 2pm-8pm to offer an opportunity for participants to attend at a convenient time and to encourage greater attendance.

Representatives from SONI, as well as environmental and stakeholder engagement consultants, were available to answer queries, provide clarification and facilitate feedback at each event.

For the events, SONI also:

- Produced a project-specific brochure (Appendix 3).
- Established a dedicated project section on the SONI Consultation Portal to facilitate online feedback.
- Provided appropriate contact information.
- Supplied feedback forms at the consultation event for members of the public to provide feedback on the efficacy of the engagement process undertaken.
- Recorded a summary of project-specific feedback given by members of the public at the consultation event.

A broad range of information materials were provided by SONI to enable local communities and stakeholders to understand and respond to the proposal. All information produced by SONI was written in clear, accessible, and non-technical language and was made available at the drop-in consultation event. SONI also provided access to information relating to the proposal online, via the SONI Consultation Portal and a dedicated project page on its website.

This enabled the local community to provide feedback to SONI before plans are finalised.

During the consultation event, SONI engineers and project managers highlighted the study area for the proposed underground cable between Ballycronan More Converter Station and Ballylumford Power Station. This also included an explanation of the existing substation sites, removal of the drop-down conductors and re-establishment of a small section of overhead line. The project team also outlined the specific environmental, technical and social constraints relating to the selection of cable routes and specific sites.

At the event, SONI representatives explained the importance of this phase of consultation in engaging with the public to gain feedback on the proposals and help to inform the design of the project moving forward.

More information on the feedback received from this phase of consultation is set out within this report.

4.5 Social Media

SONI carried out a campaign of social media activity on Facebook and LinkedIn to share information on the project and to encourage stakeholders to get involved in the consultation process. These social media posts included a link to SONI's consultation portal where participants were encouraged to submit feedback on the proposals.

Examples of the social media activity undertaken as part of this consultation process are set out in Appendix 4 of this report.

A summary of the results obtained from the Facebook and LinkedIn posts, are set out in the tables below. This includes one sample Facebook post and one sample LinkedIn post.

Facebook	10/10/24	17/10/24
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Impressions	428	286
Reach	298	183
Engagement	4	0
Post Reactions	3	0
Audience Gender Split	N/A	N/A
Money Spent	N/A	N/A

LinkedIn	10/10/24	17/10/24
Impressions	1,593	986
Reach	N/A	N/A
Engagement	124	58
Post Reactions	33	18
Audience Gender Split	N/A	N/A
Money Spent	N/A	N/A

5. Part 2c Engagement

5.1 Pre-Consultation Engagement

Prior to the formal commencement of the Part 2c consultation phase, SONI began engagement with key stakeholders across the areas affected by the project.

Early engagement with elected representatives ensured they were made aware of new project information available for consultation during Part 2c. This meant that these stakeholders had access to up-to-date and accurate information. This was particularly important to SONI as it ensured that local elected representatives were well equipped to respond to any queries from their constituents about the project and to actively promote the consultation events. This early engagement also gave SONI the opportunity to collate valuable feedback from them as public representatives.

SONI sought meetings with all parties which had representation in the constituency where new cable routes were to be located (East Antrim). Where parties had more than one MP / MLA for the area, representatives were grouped together by party or the most appropriate representative to engage with was identified.

Engagement with Elected Representatives

Name	Method of Engagement	Date
Sammy Wilson MP, Cheryl Brownlee MLA (East Antrim, DUP)	Briefing (In-person)	Friday 11 th October 2024
John Stewart MLA (East Antrim, UUC)	Briefing (Teams)	Friday 11 th October 2024
Danny Donnelly MLA, Stewart Dickson MLA (East Antrim, Alliance)	Written information sent, as it was not possible to find a suitable date to meet.	Tuesday 1 st October 2024

Key Stakeholder Group Engagement

Name	Method of Engagement	Date
MEABC Planners	Briefing (Teams)	Wednesday 4 th December 2024

SONI continued to engage with elected representatives and key stakeholder groups throughout the engagement process, ensuring they were made aware in advance of any public events hosted by SONI.

5.2 Drop-in Consultation Events

SONI hosted a drop-in consultation event in October 2024 (Appendix 5):

Venue	Date	Time
Larne Golf Club, Islandmagee	16 th October 2024	2pm – 8pm

This event took the form of a staffed exhibition where the plans for the project were clearly displayed, with detailed maps available for more specific discussions with stakeholders as required.

To generate awareness of the event in the local area, an advertisement for the event was placed in the Larne Times on Thursday 3rd October (Appendix 6).

Invitations to the events were also emailed directly to the elected representatives listed above.

The public consultation events provided attendees with the opportunity to view accurate information about the project and discuss the proposal with members of the project team.

Approximately 15 people attended the event at Larne Golf Club.

A key aim of the consultation event was to gather feedback from members of the public which SONI could then take into consideration. SONI staff completed a Record of Engagement form to provide a project-specific summary of the discussions that were held at the event. Each attendee was also encouraged to complete a Feedback Form to detail their views on the engagement carried out.

5.3 Feedback Received by SONI

A total of 2 Feedback Forms were completed and provided to SONI by attendees at the events, while a Record of Engagement form was completed for 9 participants. A Record of Engagement form can capture an engagement involving more than one participant, for example work colleagues or a family who attend the event together.

The feedback provided by attendees was recorded and analysed by SONI, so that it could feed into project design and engagement processes moving forward. This is documented below.

5.4 Overview of Feedback Forms Completed at Drop-In Consultation Events

Included below is a summary of the feedback received by SONI via the Feedback Forms completed and returned by attendees at the events.

<u>Overview of Feedback Forms</u>	
Based on the information in the 2 individual submissions provided:	
2 respondents indicated they live within the project study area	
0 indicated they did not live in the project study area	
1 felt like they now understood what the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project involves	
1 felt like they now understood why the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project is needed	
2 respondents were satisfied with the level of engagement provided at the event	
People were made aware of the events through:	
Larne Golf Club (1 no.)	
Other (1 no.)	
The following feedback and suggestions were made in submissions:	
<i>Too early to give useful feedback – come back before work begins.</i>	

This information received from the event will inform SONI's approach to further communications and consultation for the project. SONI continue to review its engagement approach to project promotion , and to ensure relevant information is made publicly available. The information in the Record of Engagement forms, documented below, also played an important role in this.

5.5 Overview of SONI Record of Engagement Forms Completed at Drop-In Consultation Events

Included below is an overview of the information provided in the SONI Record of Engagement forms completed during discussions at the drop-in consultation event. These sheets were completed by SONI staff to reflect conversations with attendees.

The Record of Engagement forms provided SONI with the opportunity to identify specific issues

which could then be considered by the project team going forward. Please note that the frequencies provided are approximate.

<u>Overview of SONI Record of Engagement Forms</u>	
Topics discussed (as highlighted by SONI representatives)	Frequency
Air & Noise	1
Construction	5
Communication / Consultation	1
Ecology	2
Human Health	1
Landscape & Visual	4
Planning	1
Project Methodology	3
Soils & Geology	1
Statutory Process	1
Undergrounding	2



The issues recorded in the SONI Record of Engagement forms provide an important insight into the main areas of interest for members of the public who discussed the proposal with the project team at the consultation event.

All feedback provided will be considered by SONI ahead of the next phase of the project.

5.6 Summary of Feedback and Discussions Held During Drop-In Consultation Events

Included below is a summary of the main issues and comments raised by stakeholders at the public consultation events during part 2c of SONI's Grid Development Process for the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project.

Theme	Summary of Feedback
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerns with narrowness of road network surrounding Moyle Interconnector and what this could mean for construction / access for local residents. - DfI must ensure that any road diversions are suitable. - Wants to know if there are any risks associated with works at Ballycronan More Converter Station after energisation.
Communication / Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggestion that the consultation should be advertised more widely. - Other developers who have projects in the Islandmagee area have shown a lack of concern for local residents and consultation has been poor, which is why we were worried that this project was going to be another example of this.
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are concerned about increased EMF as a result of this project, especially given the cumulative impact of projects which are being developed in the local area (particularly BESS projects).
Landscape & Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We were told when the Moyle Interconnector was built that it would be dug into the valley and have a negligible visual impact on us, but this was not the case and the light emanating from it disturbs us in our property.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are any planning permissions required for this project? - What are the timescales associated with this project?
Project Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific questions raised regarding technical specifics around underground cable routes, switchyard logistics etc.
Soils & Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions regarding potential contaminated land nearby.
Undergrounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What will the underground cable route look like? Will the public be made aware of the final cable route once finalised? - Will the underground cable route cross public roads or private lands?

5.7 Information Received via Consultation Portal and Email

As well as providing feedback via the consultation event, it was also possible to submit feedback to the online SONI Consultation Portal, via post or email. It was possible to provide feedback from 9th October 2024 to 6th December 2024. An online submission was made by Mutual Energy, the owners of the Moyle Interconnector asset, which voiced support for the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project due to the benefits it will bring to consumers. A full copy of Mutual Energy's response is available to view in Appendix 7.

5.8 Overview of Feedback Received During Engagement with Key Stakeholders

The table below outlines a summary of the main issues and comments raised by key stakeholders, including elected representatives and planning officials, during Part 2c of SONI's Grid Development Process.

Theme	Summary of Feedback
Construction	- <i>What construction methods will be used, and what potential disruption will exist when the new underground cabling is being laid?</i>
Cable Route	- <i>What is the process for deciding the final cable route?</i>
Engagement	- <i>Have there been any issues in terms of landowner engagement to date?</i> - <i>Is there any social value involved in this project?</i>
Interconnection	- <i>How does this project relate to the Lirlc Interconnector?</i>
Landscaping / Visual Impact	- <i>What will be the visual impact of the proposed development?</i>
Other Projects	- <i>Given the positive nature of this project, there is a need to distinguish it from other controversial development proposals in Islandmagee (e.g., the proposed 'Gas Caverns' project)</i>

5.9 Summary of Part 2c Consultation

The information provided throughout this chapter provides an overview of the activities carried out during Part 2c of SONI's 3 Part process for the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project. It also outlines the feedback received, and the issues raised by members of the public, key stakeholders, and elected representatives at consultation events and through individual briefings.

Feedback was received via ongoing engagement with elected representatives and key stakeholders and from members of the public during the drop-in consultation event at Larne Golf Club. Hosting this event provided as many people as possible from across the area of the project with the opportunity to access information on the proposals.

In summary, the information gathered from SONI's round of community consultation shows the following key findings:

- 100% of those who completed Feedback Forms at the public events felt they had been provided with all relevant information regarding the proposal and were satisfied with the level of expertise provided at the consultation event.
- Air and noise, construction, communication / consultation, ecology, human health, landscape and visual, planning, project methodology, soils and geology, statutory process and undergrounding were key themes that developed from discussions during the drop-in consultation event and through individual briefings with elected representatives.

5.10 Finalised Proposals

Following Part 2c engagement, all feedback received from the public, landowners, key stakeholders and elected representatives has been collated and reviewed by the project team. This feedback has been beneficial in helping SONI move forward with the detailed underground cable design and other aspects of this project.

SONI will continue to inform the public and key stakeholders regarding the progress of the project before it is handed over to NIE Networks for construction.

6 Ongoing Engagement

6.1 Existing and Future Liaison Arrangements

SONI has taken several steps to ensure lines of communication remain open with stakeholders throughout the duration of the project, as it progresses through its 3 Part Process for Grid Development.

SONI will continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders to ensure accurate and up-to-date information is accessible, and any concerns are acknowledged and addressed where appropriate or possible. As has been done to date, all information materials and correspondence will include SONI contact details.

This engagement will likely take the form of providing stakeholders with written information materials as required and either face-to-face or virtual meetings to engage with these stakeholders if necessary.

7 Conclusion

This report presents a concise, yet thorough assessment of the quality and extent of consultation activities that have taken place in relation to the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project during Part 2c of SONI's 3 Part Process for Grid Development. A lengthy period of consultation has taken place to gain feedback on the proposals from those who live in or represent the local area.

The report outlines details on the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project as well as providing details of the engagement strategy that was used for this stage of consultation. The report goes into detail on the feedback received from stakeholders during the consultation events and through individual briefings with elected representatives and key stakeholder groups.

SONI has made extensive efforts to inform members of the local community about the proposal, provided stakeholders with up-to-date and accurate information and enabled them to submit feedback on the proposals. SONI has endeavoured to ensure that all feedback provided by stakeholders and the local community will be considered by the project team.

SONI will continue to engage directly with all stakeholders as the project progresses and until all the necessary consents relating to the project have been obtained.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project – Consultation Portal



Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project

OPEN 📅 3 Oct, 2024, 08:59 - 6 Dec, 2024, 17:00

[VIEW](#) [SUBMISSIONS](#)

SONI (System Operator for Northern Ireland) is Northern Ireland's electricity Transmission System Operator. Our role is to ensure power can flow safely, securely and reliably from where it is generated to where it is needed in homes, businesses, farms and public services across Northern Ireland. We also have the responsibility for planning the upgrades to the high-voltage electricity grid to meet Northern Ireland's energy needs today and in the future.

As part of our work to upgrade the electricity grid, we are bringing forward the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project.

There are many ways to get involved and provide feedback. These include:

Making an online submission

Provide written feedback by registering for a free account on this platform and make a submission using the link opposite. All submissions will be published for sharing ideas and information on this consultation.

Attending our consultation day

Members of the project team will be able to discuss the proposed plans of the project with you at our public consultation event:

- Larne Golf Club, 54 Ferris Bay Rd, Islandmagee, Larne BT40 3RT
- Wednesday 16th October 2024 from 2 - 8pm

By email

You can email your submission to us at info@soni.ltd.uk

By post

Write your own submission and post it back to us at 'Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project', SONI Ltd, Castlereagh House, 12 Manse Road, Belfast, BT6 9RT

We welcome your feedback until Friday 6th December 2024.

Share



Submissions

[+ MAKE A SUBMISSION](#)

Contents

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[About Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project](#)

Materials

20333_SONI_MOYLE_Brochure_v04.pdf
9.14 MB

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Your name [optional]

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

APPENDIX 2: Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project – Project Webpage

Home > The Grid > Projects > Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase > The Project

THE PROJECT

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

CONTACT

RELATED DOCUMENTS

The Project

SONI is the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland. This means we plan for the future of the electricity grid and operate it every minute of every day. We ensure that everyone has power when they need it at the most economical price possible.

To prepare for a clean energy future, SONI must make the electricity grid stronger and more flexible. The grid will need to carry more power, and most of this power will come from renewable generation that varies depending on the weather.

What will the project involve?

The Moyle Interconnector is a high-voltage direct current (HVDC) link between Scotland and Northern Ireland, running between Auchencroch in Ayrshire and Ballycroyan More in County Antrim. It has been identified that there is a need to increase the capacity and improve the efficiency of the Moyle Interconnector. SONI's preliminary preferred option will connect Ballycroyan More Converter Station directly to Ballylumford Power Station through two underground circuits.

What are the benefits of this project?

- Strengthen security of supply, helping to meet increasing consumer demand
- Improve renewable energy integration in Northern Ireland
- Increase interconnector capacity between NI and GB
- Increase revenue from interconnection which will benefit NI consumers.

Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase

Home > The Grid > Projects > Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase > What's Happening Now

THE PROJECT

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

CONTACT

RELATED DOCUMENTS

September 2024

The project is now at Part 2 of our 3-Part Process for developing the grid.

We are moving forward with plans which includes:

- Connecting Ballycroyan More Converter Station to Ballylumford Power Station through two new underground cables
- Removal of a small section of existing 275 kV drop down conductors which currently feed into Ballycroyan More Converter Station from two existing towers
- Re-establishing the small section of 275 kV overhead line (OHL) between the two existing towers next to Ballycroyan More Converter Station

At this stage of consultation, we are seeking feedback from members of the public, including local residents, elected representatives and key stakeholders. We know that no-one knows an area better than those who live and work in it, which is why this feedback is so valuable.

There are many ways to get involved and provide feedback. These include:

Making an online submission

Provide written feedback via the SONI Consultation Portal at consult.soni.ltd.uk

Attending our consultation day

Members of the project team will be able to discuss the proposed plans of the project with you at our public consultation events

Larne Golf Club, 54 Ferries Bay Rd, Islandmagee, Larne BT40 3RT

Wednesday 16th October 2024 from 2 – 8pm

Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase

Home > The Grid > Projects > Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase > Contact

THE PROJECT

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

CONTACT

RELATED DOCUMENTS

To contact us about the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase, please email info@soni.ltd.uk

By post, please address to: Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase, SONI Ltd, 12 Mainse Road, Belfast, BT6 9RT.

APPENDIX 3: Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project – Project Brochure



SONI
Delivering a cleaner
energy future

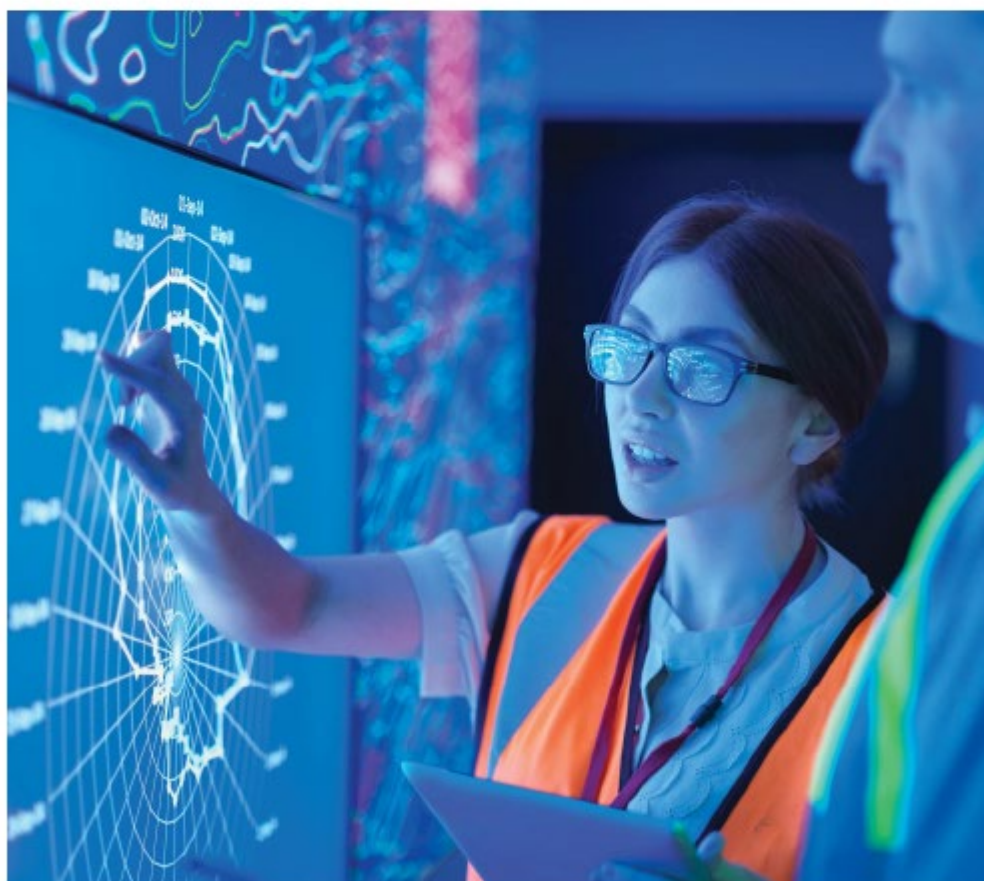
Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project Update

Autumn / Winter 2024

Who are SONI – and what do we do?

SONI is the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland. This means we plan for the future of the electricity grid and operate it every minute of every day. This includes interconnecting to neighbouring grids and running the wholesale electricity market. We make sure that everyone has power when they need it, at the most economical price possible. The grid safely brings power from where it is generated to where it is needed and also powers NIE Networks' distribution system, which in turn, supplies electricity to homes, farms and businesses.

As Northern Ireland continues its move toward cleaner energy, the electricity system must also evolve. Investing in and improving the grid is essential to make your supply of electricity more reliable and cost effective. It also supports economic growth, enables competition, and helps to deliver a clean energy future.



What is the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project?

The Moyle Interconnector is a high-voltage direct current (HVDC) link between Scotland and Northern Ireland, running between Auchencrosh in Ayrshire and Ballycronan More in County Antrim. To ensure that the growing needs of electricity consumers throughout Northern Ireland can be met, it has been identified that there is a need to increase the capacity of the Moyle Interconnector's connection to the grid to improve its efficiency. This is now known as the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project.

Why are we doing this?



Through increased connectivity with the GB grid, this project will bolster security of supply for Northern Ireland, helping to meet increasing consumer demand.

Northern Ireland's population is growing and to meet the growing needs of residents and businesses in the region, improved interconnection capacity is required to ensure that enough electricity is available when indigenous generation alone falls short of demand, particularly at peak times.



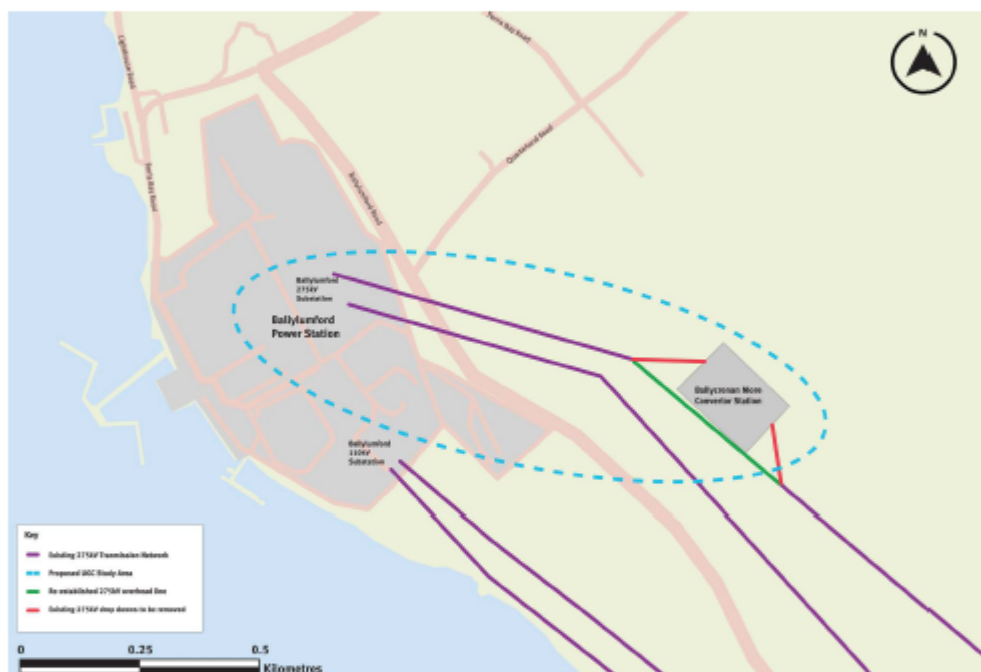
This project will help support the delivery of Northern Ireland's climate action targets and tackle climate change.

It is projected that Northern Ireland will require at least another 1,300 MW of electricity from clean sources to meet the legally binding target of at least 80 percent of electricity consumed to be generated from renewable sources by 2030. This project will strengthen the grid allowing renewable energy to be more easily transferred and reduce our reliance on fossil fuel generation.

What is the area affected by the project?

The map below represents the area which will be affected by the works required for the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project, including the area which immediately surrounds Ballylumford Power Station.

Electricity from the Moyle Interconnector is received at Ballycannon More Converter Station in Direct Current (DC) and converted to Alternating Current (AC) before it is connected with the Northern Ireland electricity transmission system.



Our Three-Part Process for Developing the Grid

We are committed to gaining your input on any decisions we make on our projects. Our Three-Part Process puts stakeholder and public engagement at the heart of how we develop the transmission grid. By working together, we can create a stronger electricity system for Northern Ireland – with the least possible inconvenience to you.

SONI's Grid Development Process



PART 1

Identifying the optimum solution and what area may be affected.

When we have thoroughly researched the potential solutions, we will have what we call 'a **best performing technology solution**'. At this point, we provide opportunities for you to have your say, before we finalise the solution and the location for the project.



PART 2

Identifying where the project will be built.

Once we have examined all locations within the general area for the project, we narrow our choice to what we call 'a **best performing location**'. Again, we provide opportunities for you to participate in the process and tell us what you think before we finalise the location.



PART 3

Planning application to project handover to NIE Networks.

Should we receive a favourable decision from the planning authority, we will hand the project over for NIE Networks to construct and energise. We will continue to engage with local communities and landowners in the vicinity of the project, and make sure everyone is kept informed.



What's happened so far?

Initial engagement has taken place with officials in Mid & East Antrim Borough Council and elected representatives during Part 1 of SONI's 3-Part Process for developing the grid. This enabled feedback to be provided at the earliest stage to help shape SONI's preliminary preferred option and our engagement plans moving forward.

At the end of this part, we decide what technology we are going to use (i.e., overhead line or underground cable), and the general area where we may locate the project.

What's happening now?

The Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project has moved to Part 2 of SONI's 3-Part Process for developing the grid.

At Part 2, we are moving forward with plans which include:

Connecting Ballycronan More Converter Station to Ballylumford Power Station through two new underground cables.

Removal of a small section of existing 275 kV drop down conductors which currently feed into

Ballycronan More Converter Station from two existing towers.

Re-establishing the small section of 275 kV overhead line (OHL) between the two existing towers next to Ballycronan More Converter Station.

At this stage of consultation, we are seeking feedback from members of the public, including local residents, elected representatives and key stakeholders. We know that no-one knows an area better than those who live and work in it, which is why this feedback is so valuable.

What happens next?

At the end of this stage of the consultation process, we will publish a report outlining all the feedback received from stakeholders. This will help shape the final plans for the project in tandem with environmental and technical studies.

How can I provide feedback?

There are many ways to get involved and provide feedback. These include:

1. Visiting the SONI Consultation Portal: consult.soni.ltd.uk/

2. 2. Attending our consultation day, where members of the project team will be able to discuss the project with you.

Wednesday 16th October 2024 from 2 – 8pm

Larne Golf Club, 54 Ferris Bay Rd, Islandmagee, Larne

BT40 3RT

3. Email your submission to us at info@soni.ltd.uk

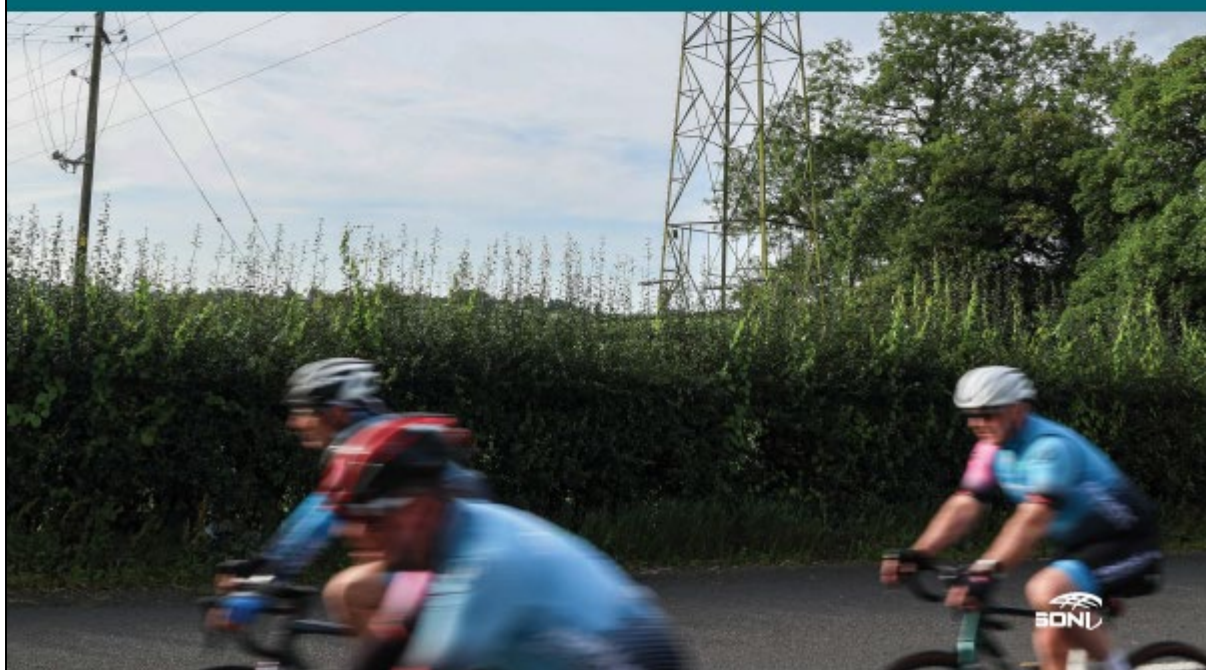
4. Write your own submission and post it back to us at:

Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project, SONI Ltd., Castlereagh House, 12 Manse Road,
Belfast BT6 9RT

We welcome your feedback until Friday 6th December 2024.

You can follow us on  Linked In at **SONI Ltd**  Twitter at **@Soni_Ltd**  Facebook at **SONI Ltd**


You can also visit our project webpage at
<https://www.soni.ltd.uk/the-grid/projects/>




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APPENDIX 4: Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project – Sample Social Media Activity



SONI Ltd
10 October at 14:58 · 🌐


 Upcoming Public Engagement Event


We have plans to increase the capacity and improve the efficiency of the Moyle Interconnector to help ensure that the growing needs of electricity consumers throughout Northern Ireland can be met.

To hear more about our proposed plans, join our project team on Wednesday 16 October (2pm - 8pm) at Larne Golf Club, 54 Ferris Bay Rd, Islandmagee, Larne BT40 3RT.


To learn more about the project, please visit: <https://www.soni.ltd.uk//the-grid/projects/moyle-interconnector-capacity/the-project/to>


Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project








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 3

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Upcoming Public Engagement Event 

We have plans to increase the capacity and improve the efficiency of the Moyle Interconnector to help ensure that the growing needs of electricity consumers throughout Northern Ireland can be met.

To hear more about our proposed plans, join our project team on Wednesday 16 October (2pm - 8pm) at Larne Golf Club, 54 Ferris Bay Rd, Islandmagee, Larne BT40 3RT.

To learn more about the project, please visit: <https://lnkd.in/eqXwVVPb>

Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project



**SONI**
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energy future

 Alicia Trainor and 31 others

4 reposts

LinkedIn

APPENDIX 5: Photos of Public Consultation Event



APPENDIX 6: Public Notice for Consultation Event



We're strengthening the electricity transmission network in the local area, and we want to hear from you.

SONI is planning to bring forward the **Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project**. The Moyle Interconnector is a high-voltage direct current (HVDC) link between Scotland and Northern Ireland, running between Auchencrosh in Ayrshire and Ballycronan More in County Antrim. To ensure that the growing needs of electricity consumers throughout Northern Ireland can be met, it has been identified that there is a need to increase the capacity of the Moyle Interconnector's connection to the grid to improve its efficiency.

This will bolster security of supply to meet rising levels of consumer demand in the context of population growth and the increased decarbonisation of heating and transport which we expect to accelerate in the coming years. It will also help to support the delivery of Northern Ireland's climate action targets.

At this stage of consultation, we are seeking feedback from members of the public, including local residents, elected representatives and key stakeholders. We know that no-one knows an area better than those who live and work in it, which is why this feedback is so valuable.

To find out more, please join us at our public consultation drop-in event:

2pm – 8pm

Wednesday 16th October 2024

Larne Golf Club, 54 Ferris Bay Rd, Islandmagee, Larne BT40 3RT

Or visit the online SONI Consultation Portal at consult.soni.ltd.uk

You can also email us at info@soni.ltd.uk, or write to us at Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project, SONI Ltd, Castlereagh House, 12 Manse Road, Belfast, BT6 9RT.

The consultation will be open for feedback until Friday 6th December 2024.

APPENDIX 7: Consultation Response from Mutual Energy

Response to consultation on Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project

Dear SONI,

We welcome the opportunity to comment on SONI's proposals for the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase Project

This response is on behalf of Mutual Energy Ltd ("MEL"). MEL owns and operates the Moyle Interconnector ("Moyle") and as such has a very keen interest in the Moyle Interconnector Capacity Increase project.

As SONI is aware, Moyle is capable of moving 500MW of electricity in either direction, however it is currently limited by onshore transmission constraints in Northern Ireland to a maximum of 450MW from Scotland to NI, and 400MW from NI to Scotland. Previously Moyle was also limited by transmission constraints in Scotland, but these have been lifted in recent years. The onshore constraints in NI therefore mean that the full benefit of the interconnector to consumers is not being delivered.

We therefore very much support the progression of this project to address the contingency related to the potential loss of the 275kV circuit connecting the Moyle Interconnector convertor station and to maximise the benefit of Moyle's 500MW technical capacity. This project will deliver significant socio-economic benefits for Northern Ireland consumers which we estimate are at least £5m per annum. In the context of a project cost of £9.5m¹ to make available a further 50MW of GB to NI capacity and 100MW of NI to GB capacity and an approximate cost of new interconnection of close to £1m per MW², this represents very good value for money. Aside from commercial benefits to the Moyle business, this project will lower wholesale electricity prices, benefit market integration, improve security of supply and facilitate more renewables at times of high wind.

MEL obviously wishes to see the Moyle Interconnector being used to its full technical capacity as soon as possible. We note that the delivery date quoted in recent iterations of the TDPNI has slipped, would encourage a timely delivery to deliver the tangible benefits of additional interconnection for consumers, and stand ready to assist where we can.

We look forward to future engagement and the successful delivery of the Moyle capacity increase in due course.

¹ Per SONI's draft TDPNI 2023-32

² Per OFGEM Decision on the Final Project Assessment of the Greenlink interconnector
<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/Greenlink%20FPA%20decision1633004200399.pdf>
Anecdotal market intelligence suggests that the cost of new interconnection has risen significantly since this decision was published.