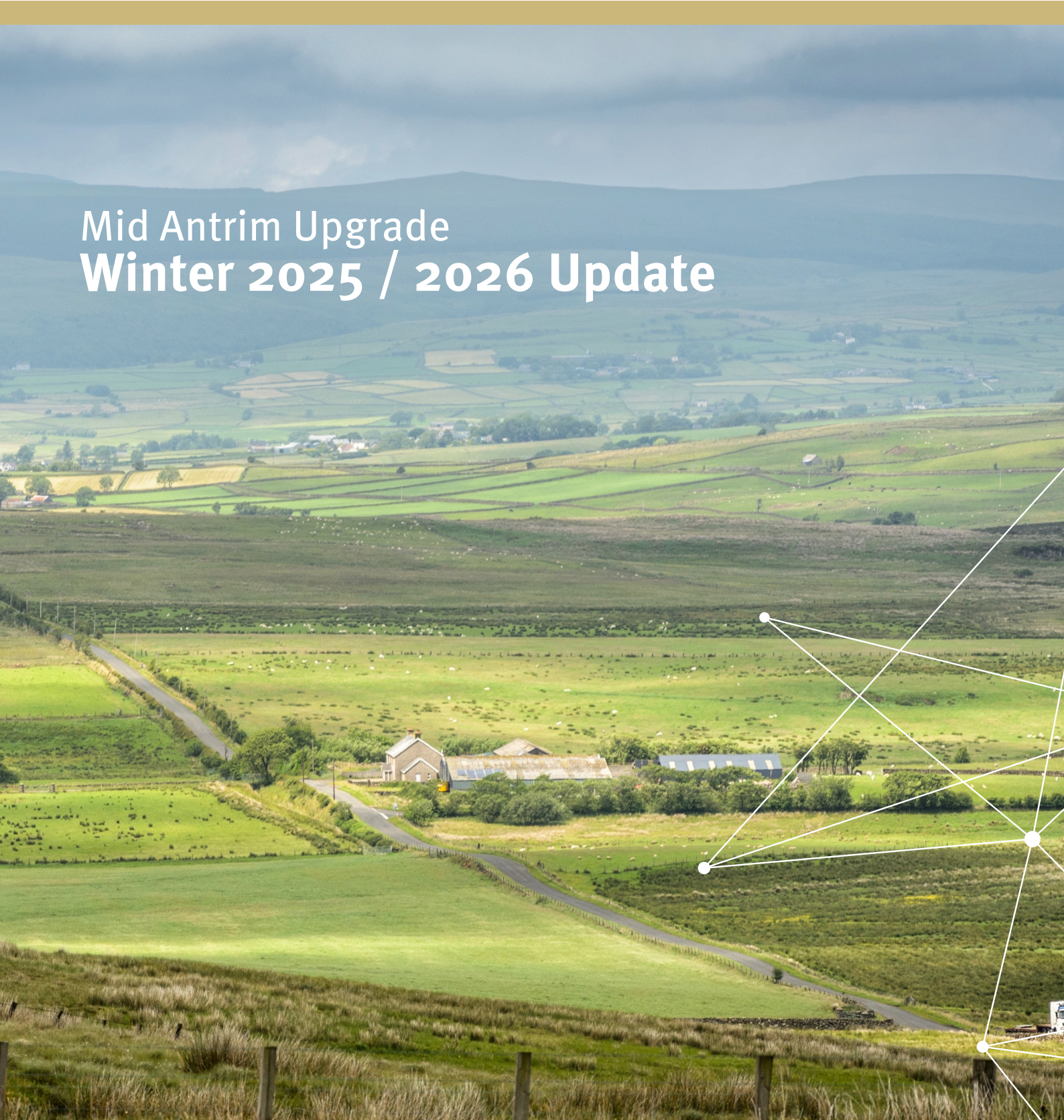




# Mid Antrim Upgrade **Winter 2025 / 2026 Update**









## Who is SONI and what do we do?



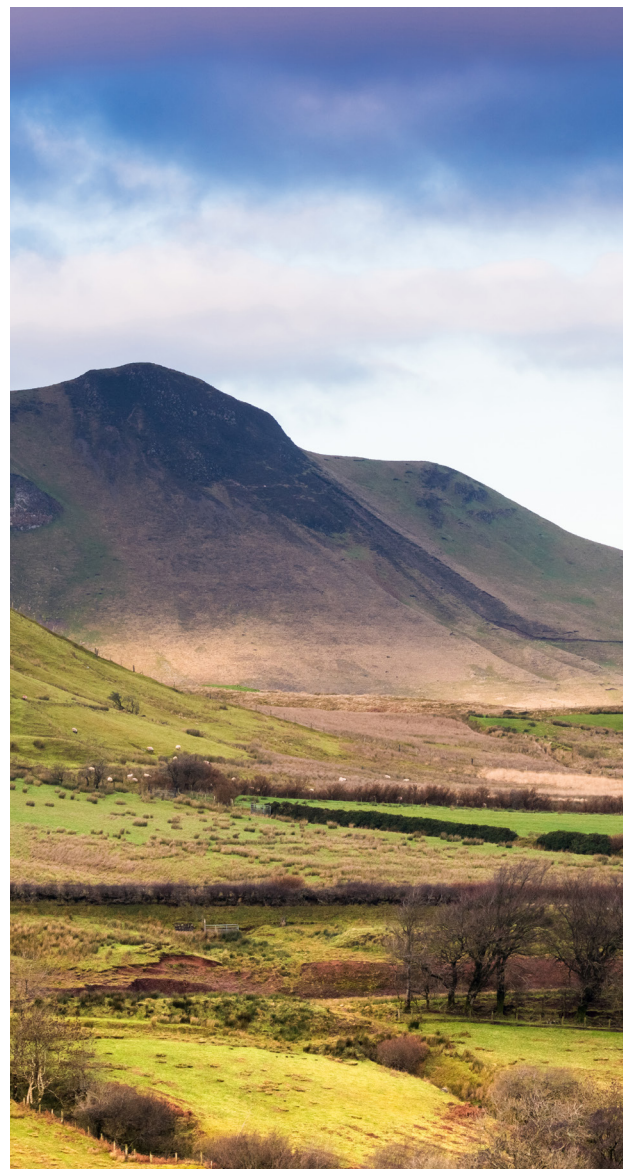
**SONI is Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator (TSO). We manage the electricity grid to ensure that power can flow from where it is generated to where it is needed.**

Our team of expert engineers manage the electricity grid, second-by-second, every day of the year, to ensure power can flow safely, securely and reliably to homes, farms, businesses and public services across Northern Ireland.

Electricity systems across the world are changing. At SONI, we have the crucial task of transforming the electricity system to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and support Northern Ireland's clean energy and climate action goals.

That means we must make changes to our grid infrastructure and how we use it to introduce more and newer forms of renewable energy.

By working together, we can deliver a cleaner, more economical and secure energy future for everyone in Northern Ireland.



## What is the Mid Antrim Upgrade project?

The Mid Antrim Upgrade is a high-capacity transmission system upgrade between the Kells and Rasharkin Main Substations in County Antrim. To accommodate the increase in renewable energy generation, required as part of Northern Ireland's climate change targets, the grid in the Mid Antrim area must be made stronger and more resilient.

Our proposals include a new switching Substation at Terrygowan, an uprate of the existing circuit between Kells and Terrygowan so it can carry more power and a new circuit between Terrygowan and Rasharkin. This will consist of mainly overhead line with additional underground cable entry into the Rasharkin Main Substation.

## Why are we doing this?

### To increase the amount of clean energy transported to where it is needed

Renewable energy is central to delivering a clean, low carbon electricity system, which will support Northern Ireland's climate change targets. There is currently a bottleneck on the transmission system between Kells and Rasharkin Main Substations which means we can't readily transfer all the clean energy that is available. By removing this bottleneck, the project will ensure clean energy generated in the North and West of Northern Ireland can be transported to bigger towns and cities in the East of Northern Ireland, like Antrim, Ballymena and Belfast, where there is greater demand. Once energised, the project will save consumers £15.8m per year.

### To strengthen the network

The network in the greater mid Antrim area was built a long time ago and it needs upgraded. With the electrification of heat and transport, we need to ensure the network is fit for purpose.

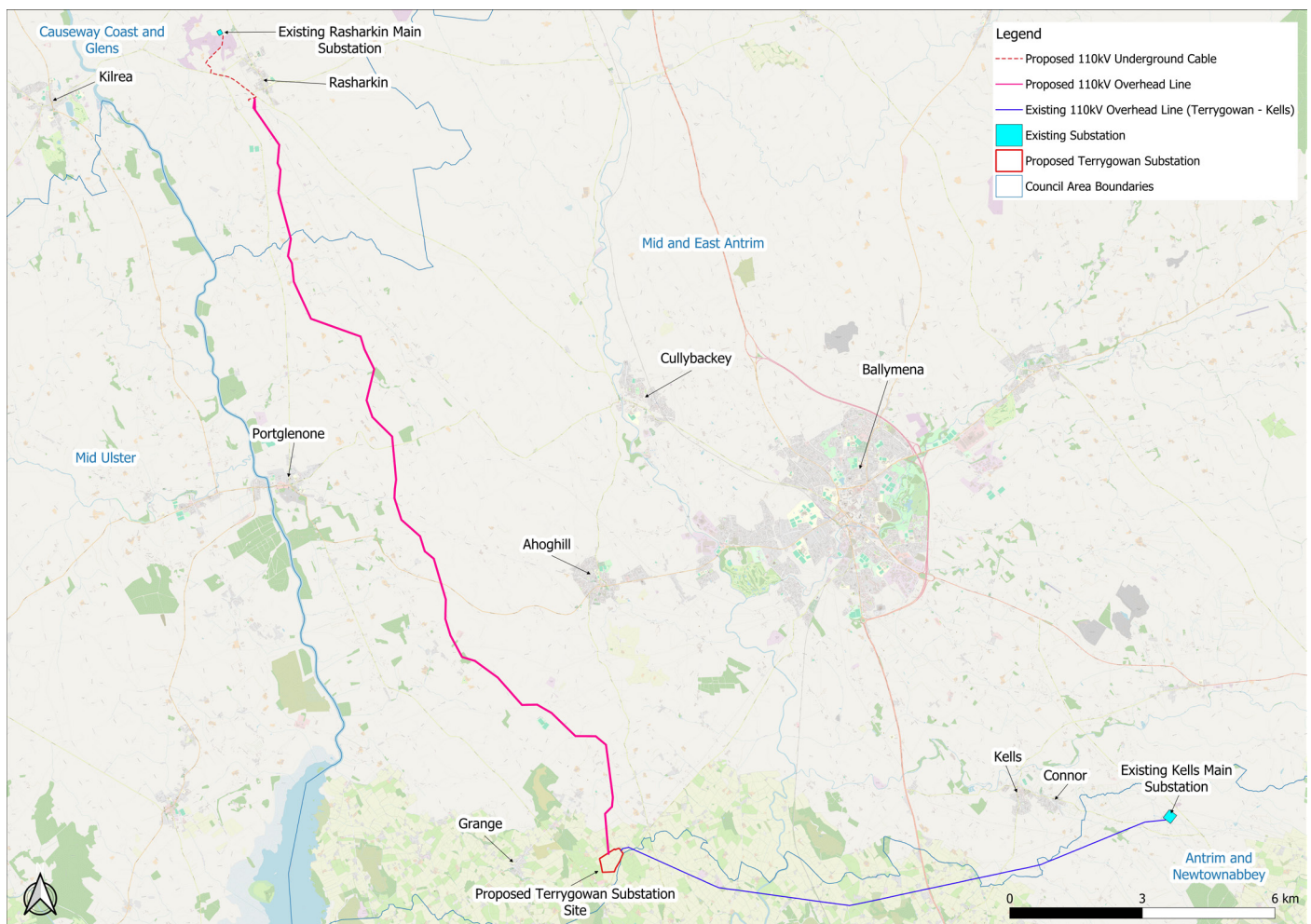
By upgrading the existing infrastructure, we will strengthen the network in the immediate area. This will bolster security of electricity supply for the increasing number of consumers who rely on the network locally.



## Project location

The map below provides an overview of the location of the Mid Antrim Upgrade Project. It displays the proposed location of the new substation at Terrygowan, the route of the upgrade section between Kells Substation and Terrygowan and the proposed route of the new circuit between Terrygowan and Rasharkin Main Substation.

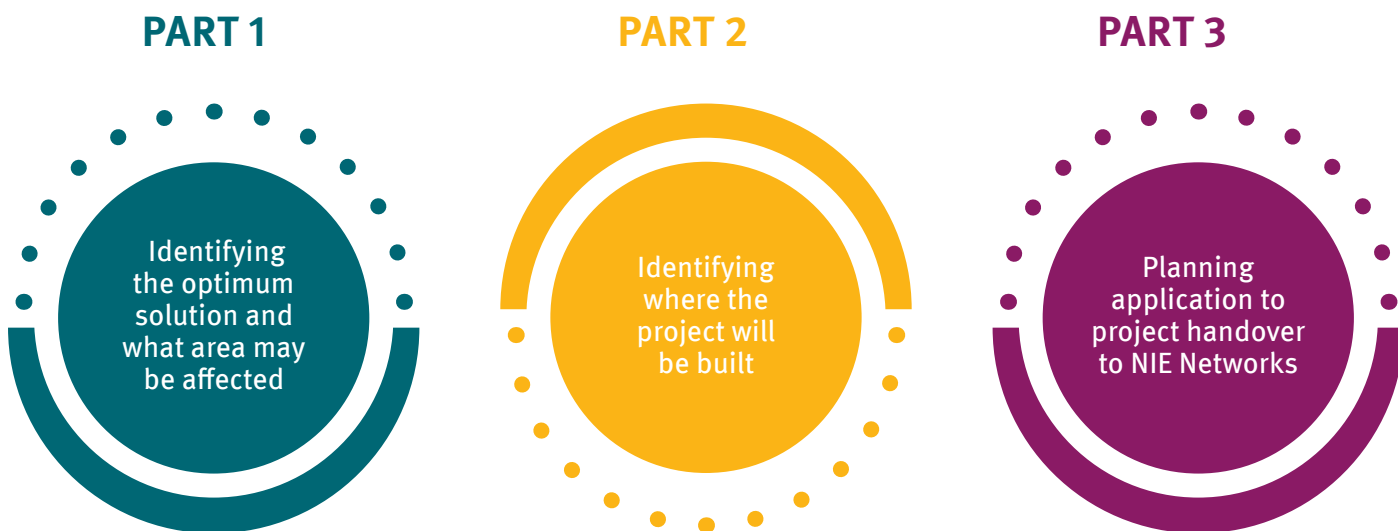
Three rounds of consultation have been carried out with respect to the proposals to determine the preferred location of the new substation and the route of the new circuit.





## Our 3-part process for developing the grid

We are committed to gaining your input on any decisions we make on our investment projects. Our 3-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.



### 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 option’. At this point, we engage with key stakeholders before we finalise the solution and the general 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’. We provide several opportunities for you to participate in the process at varied phases of the design process and tell us what you think before we finalise the location and apply for planning permission.

### 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.

## Our planning approach

The proposed Mid Antrim Upgrade Project, subject to final design, will extend across the boundaries of three local planning authorities: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. Given the cross-boundary nature of the project, several planning applications will be required for submission to the relevant planning authority.

Due to the complex characteristics of the project, it is intended to be brought forward in two phases. In phase one, it is intended that SONI will submit one planning application for the proposed new substation at Terrygowan along with some reconfiguration works and certain spans of the uprate section to Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. In phase two, a planning application for the majority of the uprating of the existing overhead line between Kells and Terrygowan in Antrim will be submitted to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in 2026.

This consenting strategy is the most effective way to deliver the Mid Antrim Upgrade Project on time and with minimal disruption. By progressing phases across three council areas, SONI is ensuring an efficient process that reflects the scale and complexity of the project. This approach enables meaningful stakeholder engagement, project flexibility and reduces the risk of delays.



## What has happened so far?

This project has completed Part 1 of SONI's 3-Part Process for Developing the Grid. During Part 1, we looked at the area surrounding Ballymena, Creagh and Kells and considered all environmental, technical, and economic factors to identify the best area for the new infrastructure to go.

Part 2 has been divided into three subcategories, 2a, 2b and 2c. 2a provided the opportunity to introduce the project to the public and wider stakeholders by providing general areas of study. 2b provided the opportunity to engage with the public on potential overhead line corridors and substation locations.

The completion of 2a and 2b presented the opportunity to undertake significant consultation with local communities, landowners, elected representatives and council officials. Six well attended public drop-in information events have already taken place with three taking place in November 2022 and three taking place in August 2023. SONI has also undertaken a Community Forum and Citizen Sounding Board, alongside online consultations and individual meetings.

## What is happening now?

SONI is now moving into 2c which will involve carrying out a period of statutory Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC) ahead of the submission of planning applications to the relevant planning authorities.

The different phases and the elements of each are outlined below:

### Phase 1

- A new switching substation at Terrygowan on lands at Whitesides Corner, and;
- An uprate of the existing double circuit between Kells substation and Terrygowan (one side only) to enable it to carry more power.

### Phase 2

- A new 110 kV overhead line between the new substation at Terrygowan and Rasharkin Main Substation which will be carried by twin wooden pole sets with steel towers at challenging angles, and;
- A section of underground cabling for entry into Rasharkin Main Substation.

During this phase of consultation, SONI will provide opportunities for the public to provide feedback in a number of ways.

We will also engage with key stakeholders including elected representatives, landowners, and council officials.

This consultation period provides SONI with the opportunity to obtain valuable feedback on our proposals before the formal submission of any planning application.



## What happens next?

At the end of this period of statutory Pre-Application Community Consultation, SONI will consider all feedback which has been provided prior to the submission of the planning applications to the relevant authorities. SONI will also prepare all reports and studies to be submitted alongside the planning applications.

The necessary consents will be sought by the SONI Landowner Engagement Team to access and assess the various land parcels required for the project. Once all the appropriate land access is granted and planning permission is approved, the project will be handed over to NIE Networks for them to begin construction.



## How can I provide feedback?

Your feedback is important to us; there are many ways to get involved and provide feedback. These include:

- Visiting the SONI Consultation Portal: [consult.soni.ltd.uk](https://consult.soni.ltd.uk)
- Attending one of our consultation events, where members of the project team will be able to discuss the project in more detail:
  - **Rasharkin Community Centre on Friday 28th November 2025 between 2pm – 8pm**
  - **Ross Park Hotel, Kells on Monday 1st December 2025 between 2pm – 8pm**
  - **The Bank, Portglenone on Monday 8th December between 2pm – 8pm**
- Email your submission to us at [midantrimupgrade@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:midantrimupgrade@soni.ltd.uk)
- Write your own submission and freepost it back to us at:  
**Mid Antrim Upgrade Project,  
 SONI, Castlereagh House,  
 12 Manse Road, Belfast,  
 BT6 9R**

We welcome your feedback until **30th January 2026**

You can follow us on: Facebook [/SONIElectricityNI](#) and LinkedIn [/soni-ltd](#), or visit our project website at [www.soni.ltd.uk](https://www.soni.ltd.uk)

## How we got here

Independent public participation charity, Involve, were appointed by SONI to facilitate a two-part engagement process consisting of a Community Forum and a Citizen Sounding Board. This process enabled as diverse a group as possible to learn more about the upgrade and route options, giving them an opportunity to provide feedback that we can use when developing the preferred option for the upgrade.

The Community Forum, which met on several occasions during previous stages of engagement, provided an opportunity for community representatives to come together to build their understanding of the proposed route options and substation locations. The Community Forum reflected the views of their organisation and/or community and provided information or insights that may need to be considered during project delivery.

The Citizen Sounding Board brought together a randomly selected group of people who live within the study area for the new overhead line and switching substation site and broadly represent the entire community. Members of the Citizen Sounding Board met on several occasions to learn more about the project, discuss their concerns and aspirations with one another, and then made recommendations about what should happen and how things should change.





## Landowner engagement

As part of our process to develop the grid, SONI is obligated to secure consents and access to the required lands on behalf of NIE Networks who will construct and maintain the new infrastructure.

Our Landowner Engagement Team have been committed to working constructively, openly and respectfully with landowners through all stages of the Mid Antrim Upgrade Project. At this stage we have completed various rounds of engagement with landowners across the project study area.

Further engagement will be carried out with landowners to ensure all consent and access arrangements are in place ahead of the construction of the project.





12 Manse Road, Belfast,  
Co. Antrim, BT6 9RT.

+44 (0)28 907 94336  
[soni.ltd.uk](http://soni.ltd.uk)