

Landowner Charter 2026



Delivering a cleaner
energy future



**Working with
Northern Ireland's
landowners to
deliver a cleaner
energy future**



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Our commitments to landowners

01

Early Trust & Collaboration

You will be contacted directly by the SONI Landowner Engagement Team, usually by face-to-face communication, when a project begins in your local area. Landowners will be contacted as early as possible in a project life cycle with the Landowner Engagement Officer **committed to building a working relationship throughout**.

02

Dedicated Support

Where possible, the Landowner Engagement Officer you meet at the beginning of the project will be your **sole point of contact through the engagement** process to the point of handover to NIE Networks. SONI understands that consistency in communication and contact can provide comfort and reassurance to landowners that they are being heard.

03

Respectful Engagement

SONI understands the emotional attachment and the livelihood your property provides. Taking this into account, our Landowner Engagement Team **will always proactively seek to be sensitive and respectful** in their conversations with landowners about their property.

04

Safety First

We explain why overhead lines, poles and towers are needed, how they are designed, and what they mean for your property. Our Landowner Engagement Team **provides guidance on safe working practices** and discusses safety and design considerations where infrastructure is located near farm buildings.

05

Integrity, Honesty & Fairness

SONI's Landowner Engagement Team will be clear in **managing expectations and communicating** with you. During routing discussions, landowners will be actively engaged and informed about any factors that could result in the project design being located within their property.

06

The Right Expertise

SONI aims to hire people with an agricultural and communications background. We understand the **importance of clear and transparent communication**, at all stages of a project, and of our Landowner Engagement Team understanding your needs and business.

07

Ongoing Engagement

Throughout a project lifecycle, SONI will consult and engage with you on a regular basis to provide key updates on projects affecting your property. The SONI Landowner Engagement Team will **make themselves available during all business hours** to answer queries from landowners and/or their professional representative as required.

08

Valuing Landowners

SONI recognises the important role landowners play in hosting grid infrastructure. Our Landowner Engagement Team **values the time and effort involved** in reaching mutually beneficial outcomes and will work with you at times that suit you, including evenings and weekends.

Welcome to our Landowner Charter

As Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator, SONI is committed to ensuring our network of transmission infrastructure delivers electricity safely, reliably, and securely to homes, farms, and businesses across Northern Ireland.

We recognise it would be impossible to do this without the co-operation of the thousands of landowners who allow us to plan to install new transmission infrastructure equipment on, or under, their land.

The electricity grid is vital public infrastructure for energy security and ensuring power can flow from where it is generated to where it is needed while also supporting Northern Ireland's decarbonisation journey.

In this Charter, we detail our commitment to landowners and the standards of engagement you can expect from us when we are discussing proposed apparatus on your land.

William Sufferin

Senior Landowner Engagement Lead



About SONI

SONI is Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator (TSO). We manage the high-voltage electricity grid, ensuring that power can flow safely, securely and reliably from where it is generated to homes, businesses and public services across Northern Ireland.

We are also responsible for planning ahead so that Northern Ireland's electricity grid can meet the needs of everyone today and in the future. This includes identifying where existing parts of the grid, such as substations, overhead power lines and underground cables need to be upgraded, as well as where new grid infrastructure is required. We cannot do this alone. Landowners and local communities must be at the heart of how the electricity grid develops and changes, and we are committed to engaging openly and meaningfully to get the best outcome for everyone.

Who you'll work with



SONI plans new grid projects, develops routes, engages with landowners and communities, and seeks planning permission and landowner agreements.



NIE Networks builds, owns, operates and maintains the electricity network infrastructure.



During the development stage, your main point of contact will normally be **SONI**. Before construction begins, we will introduce you to the **NIE Networks** team who will take the project forward.



Our role in working with Northern Ireland's landowners

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

SONI makes every possible effort to secure this access by voluntary agreement, either through voluntary easement which often has a compensation package attached or by voluntary wayleave which includes a defined annual rental payment.

Why we need grid infrastructure

As the electricity transmission grid operator, SONI has a legal responsibility to plan the upgrade of the grid in an efficient, economic, and coordinated manner. This means we plan for more and different types of grid infrastructure to support the flow of more renewable energy across Northern Ireland.

The grid was built at a moment in time and for an electricity system largely based on fossil-fuel generation. To facilitate new types of electricity generation, which can be more variable and weather dependent, and help meet climate change targets set by the Northern Ireland Executive, the grid needs to be upgraded. SONI has responsibility for gaining landowner consents and planning permissions for these new infrastructure projects on behalf of NIE Networks.

The more renewable generation we require in the form of turbines and solar farms, the more, or different, grid infrastructure we need to transport it in the form of underground cables, overhead lines, and pylons.

We know this transition will have a major impact on our local communities and landowners. We need to work together to explain why we're undertaking this important task to ensure they are at the heart of this change and feel its benefits in the form of cleaner, cheaper, more secure electricity in the future.

As we continue this crucial body of work in the coming years, SONI will continue to listen to the needs of local communities and landowners to understand what more we can do to ensure they have a central role in a cleaner, cheaper, more secure energy future.

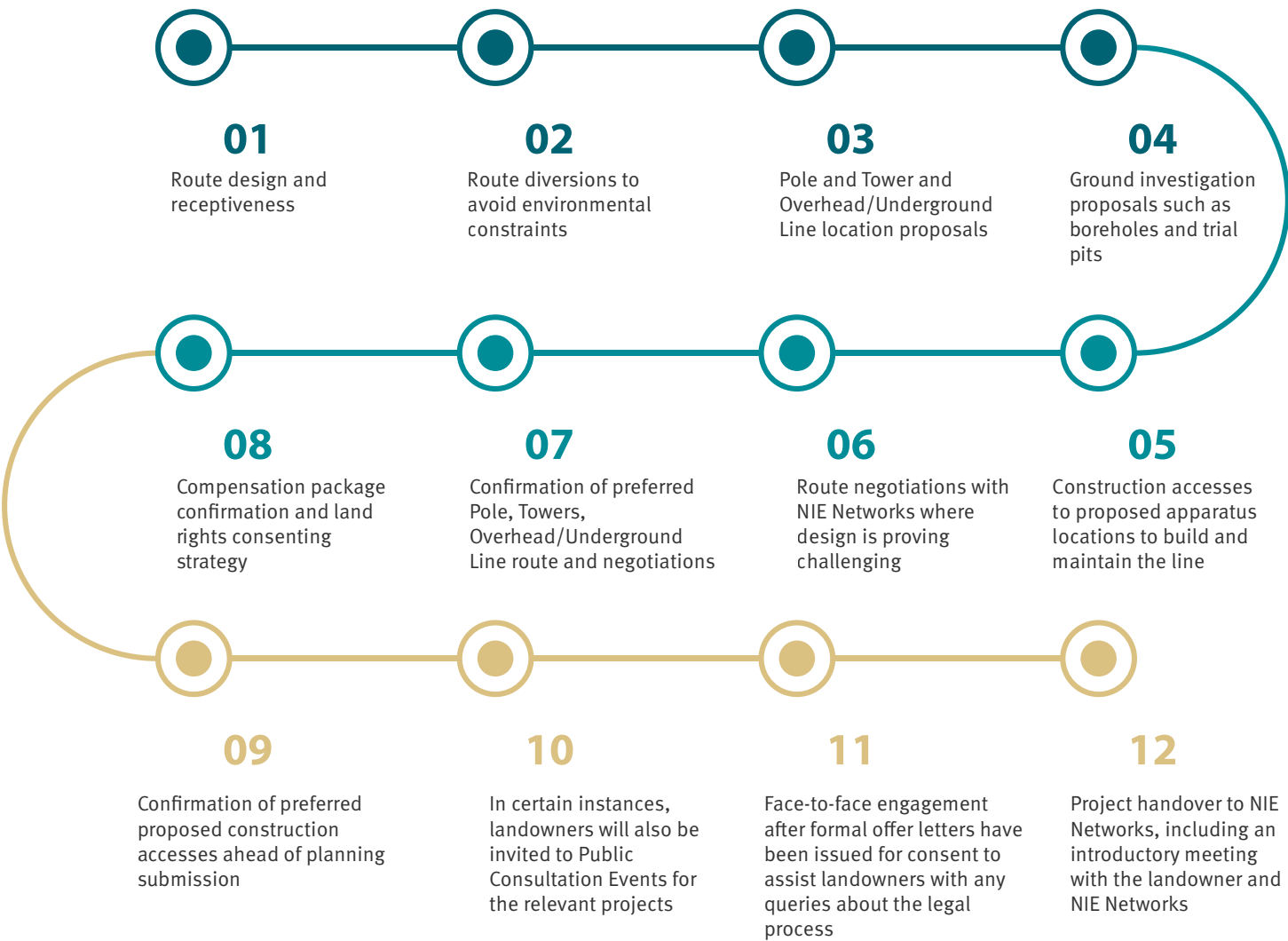
What to Expect

In this section we set out the standard practice and process which the Landowner Engagement Team will follow during the lifecycle of a new linear project before it is handed to NIE Networks for construction. Depending on circumstance, the process set out below will also be completed for uprate projects, land acquisition, and third-party access landowners.



Example Landowner Engagement Journey

The example below shows a typical sequence of face-to-face engagement you can expect from SONI following initial contact referencing, and the purpose of each stage.



Land Rights and Compensation

We would like to direct you to SONI's Landowner Compensation Policy which can be accessed [here](#)

This policy sets out SONI's approach to securing land access on a voluntary basis for the purpose of planning new overhead transmission network infrastructure and the payment of compensation to affected landowners.

All efforts will be made to secure voluntary agreement. However, there may be circumstances where voluntary agreement is not achievable, and in these circumstances, land rights may need to be compulsory acquired, in line with the provisions of the Electricity Order (NI) 1992.

Professional representation

We are acutely aware that some of the conversations and discussions we have with landowners are difficult and sometimes hard to understand.

We understand that not all landowners wish to represent themselves for various reasons. If you do not feel comfortable dealing with SONI directly, we are committed to covering reasonable professional agent and legal costs for any required advice.

Details of our cover will be communicated to landowners on each specific project.



Our Commitment to You

At SONI, we recognise and understand that proposed infrastructure on your land can initially be a challenging issue and not always welcome. We recognise, respect, and celebrate the crucial role landowners play in hosting this vital infrastructure across Northern Ireland.

As Northern Ireland's grid operator, we are committed to working constructively, openly, and respectfully with landowners at all stages of our project development process to try to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all.

We will provide landowners with clear practical information on the landowner engagement process when we begin to speak with potentially affected landowners across route corridors so that you can understand what we will ask from you.

We strive to have a good working relationship from our first initial meeting until we hand our projects over to NIE Networks for construction. We believe that positive, clear, and open communication with landowners can help us achieve our targets and goals.

Importantly, we will explain why a particular development project is needed. We will do this in the most timely and efficient manner possible.

Our Landowner Charter describes the level and quality of services that you can expect from us.



Contact SONI

We are committed to engaging with all stakeholders in a courteous, clear and respectful way. If you have any queries or questions regarding proposed apparatus or existing infrastructure, please contact our Landowner Engagement Team.

William Sufferin

Senior Landowner Engagement Lead

07392 280905

william.sufferin@soni.ltd.uk

SONI website

<https://www.soni.ltd.uk/about/in-the-community/landowner-engagement/>

Jason Kerr

Landowner Engagement Officer

07876 686301

jason.kerr@soni.ltd.uk

Additional useful contacts

Ulster Farmers Union

The largest democratic voluntary organisation representing farmers and growers in Northern Ireland.

475 Antrim Road, Belfast,
County Antrim, BT15 3DA

info@ufuhq.com

NIE Networks

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIE Networks) is the owner of the electricity transmission and distribution networks in Northern Ireland, transporting electricity to over 910,000 customers including homes, businesses and farms.

120 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5HT

www.nienetworks.co.uk/contact

Rural Support

Rural Support provides a listening and signposting service for farmers and farming families across Northern Ireland through its support line. It can also provide face-to-face support, help with sourcing information and advice about a wide range of issues.

Unit 3, Part 2nd Floor, Molesworth Place, Molesworth Street, Cookstown, County Tyrone, BT80 8NX

info@ruralsupport.org.uk

Support line: 0800 138 1678

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