

STATEMENT OF CASE

Introduction

1. This Statement of Case provides the overarching case for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector¹.
2. Given the policy requirement for a rigorous examination of this major proposal, the applicant has prepared an "Overarching Technical Report" (OTR) dealing in detail with the policy applicable to the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector and focusing on key issues of the need for, and acceptability of, the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector in policy and environmental impact terms.
3. The OTR has been further informed by 16 topic specific Technical Reports (TRs), which inform the planning arguments and the planning balance. Having regard to the evidence and the planning balance the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is clearly acceptable.

Access to Tower 40

4. Chicken sheds have been granted planning approval and constructed since submission of the applications, and this new built form interrupts the originally proposed construction access route to Tower 40. Consequently, the applicant proposes a minor amendment to the redline around these new sheds. This is known as access track AT40B and is the applicant's response to this approval, which represents a de minimis alteration to the planning application boundary. This amendment has no change in terms of impacts of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. The amended application documentation is at **Appendix A** to this Statement of Case, which comprises amended plans and updated drawing schedule.

¹The references in this Statement to the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector also incorporate the works associated with the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.

The Proposal and the Site

5. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector (including its associated works) has been fully described in the CES and CES Addendum. The site of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector avoids all designated landscapes.

Policy Context

6. In assessing the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector the principles of the plan-led system, the requirement for planning to support wider Government strategies, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the precautionary principle and the biodiversity duty on Government have been applied.

Compliance with the Development Plan

7. The Local Development Plans relevant to these applications cross two plan areas. The Plans are the Armagh Area Plan (AAP) and Armagh Area Plan Alteration No.1 (AAP Alt 1) and the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP). Their plan periods have expired and they are not up to date as they have not been prepared in light of the RDS and SPPS. A number of policies within them have been superseded by regional policy. While there are no specific policies for overhead power lines in either the AAP, AAP Alt 1 or the DSTAP, the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is in accordance with a number of the environmental, transport and recreation policies of these Plans. In the AAP, these policies relate to ecology (albeit these have been replaced by Planning Policy Statement ((PPS)) 2), a specific policy for Navan Fort and AAP Alt 1 SLNCI 1. In the DSTAP these policies relate to TRAN 3, CON 1 (albeit this has been replaced by PPS 2), CON 2, CON 3, CON 4 (albeit this defers to PPS 6) and CON 6.
8. The proposal may be perceived to conflict with others polices to a limited degree, specifically due to the impact on settings of cultural assets. In the AAP, these policies relate to archaeological sites (albeit superseded by PPS 6 policies BH 1 & 2), listed buildings (albeit superseded by PPS 6 policy BH 11), and AAP Alt 1 policy LLPA 1 and AAP Alt 1 policy HP 1 (albeit superseded by PPS 6 policy BH 6).

9. Any perceived conflict with the Plans is heavily outweighed by other material considerations, in particular the overriding national and regional need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector, as well as compliance with other policy as explained below. In so far as regional policy has superseded development plan policy or covers a wider range of policy considerations, it is considered that overall it supports the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. It is necessary to consider the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI) policies PSU 2, PSU 8 and PSU 11 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and retained regional policies.

Need for the Proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector

10. SPPS paragraph 6.238 sets out the aim of the SPPS in relation to utilities which is to *“facilitate the development of such infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum”*. This has been the approach to the development of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.
11. PSRNI policy PSU 2 and PSU 8 sets out the requirements of major projects to demonstrate that there is an overriding national or regional reason for the development. There is no requirement that proposals must demonstrate imperative reasons of overriding public interest, but in any event the evidence demonstrates that need is also met. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is acceptable in principle in the countryside under PPS 21 policy CTY 1.
12. There are overriding regional and national reasons for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector, which derive from limitations to the existing transmission network. These limitations mean that there are risks to the transmission network that require to be managed, which restrict the flow on the existing interconnector. Such restrictions prevent the full operation of the Single Electricity Market (SEM), restrict the extent to which generation in each system can contribute to security of generation supply in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and will act as an impediment to the full operation of renewable energy.

Consequently, the need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is based on the strategic and operational needs of improving competition by removing constraints which restrict the efficient performance of the all island SEM; improving security of supply; and facilitating the development of safe and secure operation of renewable power generation. These are material considerations, which should be accorded very significant weight.

13. The need for the proposal is also policy-driven and there is broad support for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector at EU, UK and NI level. It is entirely appropriate to have regard to the support of national policy and strategies in this case. This is consistent with the PAC recommendation on the Moyle Interconnector (PAC Ref: C3/1994, PAC letter dated 18 January 1996) where the Commission accepted that “on the basis of the Government’s energy strategies for Northern Ireland, an overriding national and regional need has been established for this proposal. This is a very significant factor as far as the general principle of the acceptability in land use planning terms of interconnection with Great Britain is concerned” [emphasis added].
14. The wider Government strategies (such as the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and the Strategic Energy Framework (SEF)) which express support for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector demonstrate the national and regional need for the proposal, consistent with PSU 2. This too is a significant factor in demonstrating its acceptability in planning terms. Support is provided by Government through statements by the Minister for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) (now the Department for the Economy), the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (now the Committee for the Economy) and the Regulator. As noted by DETI’s consultation reply to the applications the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector has been designated a Project of Common Interest (PCI) for the purposes of EU Regulation 347/2013. A key aim of this regulation is to ensure that strategic priority networks in Europe are completed by 2020.
15. There is also clear acceptance in planning policy (i.e. PSU 8 and PSU 11) and the SEF that overhead power lines cannot be delivered without environmental impacts.

16. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is also supported by PPS 18 Renewable Energy. It will contribute directly to the regional economy through sustaining construction jobs, and indirectly by boosting confidence in the renewable industry sector. The proposal will facilitate renewable energy. The wider use of wind energy would bring significant benefits to both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland economies, whilst improving the overall diversity of supply and reducing dependence on imported energy. The development of further renewable generation is encouraged by both Governments. In combination, the need for the proposal (being increased competition in the energy market, security of supply, facilitating renewable energy, wide ranging Government support and the regional economic benefit) provides substantial and determining weight for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.
17. PSU 2 also allows account to be taken of the contribution of a proposal to the regional economy. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector will create wider economic benefit and sustain jobs in the construction of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector itself. It will also facilitate employment in the renewables sector and give confidence to investors seeking to invest in the sector, who view the ability of the existing transmission systems to absorb and manage wind powered generation as a key constraint. There will be savings from production costs and security of supply. In respect of reduced production costs, these were estimated all island at €20m per annum in 2020 rising to between €40m and €60m per annum in 2030. This cost can be split pro-rata between the jurisdictions, based on energy consumed, with approximately 25% to Northern Ireland customers and 75% to Republic of Ireland customers. In respect of the security of supply costs, in the short term, prior to the commissioning of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector customers in Northern Ireland are directly bearing a cost of approximately £8.9m per annum to ensure their security of supply. It is estimated that the all island cost will grow to approximately €19m per annum by 2030. In the absence of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector Northern Ireland customers will continue to fund increased security of supply costs.

Consideration of Alternatives

18. The applicant has thoroughly explored the alternatives to the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector in terms of alternative technologies and routes. The applicant and its expert advisors found that a 400kV AC overhead line is the best technical solution for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector and that the location of the proposed substation and the routing of the proposed overhead line are both considered to represent the best overall options among the many alternatives considered throughout the development process.

Undergrounding

19. Objectors have proposed the use of an underground cable as an alternative to overcome the visual impact of overhead power lines.
20. Policy PSU 11 advises when undergrounding should be considered from a visual impact perspective. This relates to mitigating wirescape in urban locations and even then, it is only expressed as a preference, not a requirement. There is no policy requirement or even preference for undergrounding cables in rural areas.
21. In fact, PSU 11 seeks to control overhead power lines in terms of their visual impact, particularly on areas of landscape sensitivity. The SPPS echoes the PSU 11 tests wherein it seeks to keep visual impact to a minimum and to ensure new power line proposals avoid areas of landscape sensitivity, including AONBs. The substation site and the overhead line route of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector avoid direct impacts to designated landscapes such as AONBs which are those of the highest sensitivity.
22. Undergrounding is not a suitable alternative and will bring with it its own environmental impacts with significant increased costs. Furthermore, undergrounding an AC cable has never, in fact, been carried out to the extent that objectors would seek it in this case.

Partial Undergrounding

23. The applicant has assessed partial undergrounding of the AC overhead line and concluded that it is feasible in specific circumstances (i.e. less than 10km and if the cost can be proven to be an environmental advantageous way of overcoming an otherwise unavoidable environmental or technical constraint to the preferred overhead line). However, partial undergrounding would have its own environmental impacts, which would include sealing end compounds which would have significant environmental impact in their own right, and would have to be accommodated in the landscape instead of pylons. It has been found that there is no justification for partial undergrounding; instead careful route selection and minimisation of intrusion has been proposed in this case.

EMFs

24. SPPS paragraph 6.250 states *“Any proposal for the development of new power lines should comply with the 1998 International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP)”*.
25. The overhead line and the substation are compliant with UK policy, and there is no significant impacts on farming, plants, animals or other wildlife. There is evidence that beehives can be affected by strong electric fields. However simple mitigation methods (such as earthing of the hive) eliminate the impact. In addition, there is expected to be no impact to medical devices, such as pacemakers and hearing aids, as a result of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. This has been confirmed by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, who are part of the Department of Health and are responsible for ensuring that medical devices in the UK work and are safe.
26. All residential properties including, specifically, the closest residential property, will be well within EMF exposure limits. A person standing directly under the overhead line would be within the exposure limits, so that plainly any persons living in dwellings near the overhead line would also be within those limits. All of the closest properties, both already constructed

and with planning consent, have been considered and it has been confirmed that they are compliant with the relevant exposure limits.

27. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector has been designed to comply with ICNIRP guidelines and the evidence also shows that there is no sustainable objection on grounds of perception of fear from EMFs.

Landscape and Visual

28. An in-built and robust degree of mitigation of the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector has been achieved through the process of consideration of alternatives, route selection and tower type. Adherence to the Holford Rules and other line routing environmental guidance has influenced the development of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. The process of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has found that there would be significant adverse impacts upon the landscape of some parts of the study area; but these impacts are not on designated landscapes. There would also be significant adverse effects on the visual amenity afforded from various locations from within the immediate area adjacent to the line route. However, the landscape and visual resource of the wider study area would not deteriorate to a significant degree and the overall impact upon landscape and visual amenity in general is therefore restricted to those receptors within close proximity to the towers and overhead line.

29. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector therefore will have landscape and visual impacts, but in accordance with policy (i.e. SPPS, PSU 8 and PSU 11) it has been designed to minimise landscape and visual effect through line route selection, avoiding areas of sensitivity, ecological, natural and built heritage (such as designated sites, scheduled monuments, etc). It is compliant with the requirements of policy. The substation has a landscaping plan provided in accordance with PRSNI policy DES 10.

30. The switch gear building and control building are the only buildings associated with the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. They are within the substation site which has been

located and designed to integrate with the countryside in accordance with PPS 21 policies CTY 13 and policy CTY 14.

Construction

31. The construction impacts of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector have been fully considered as part of the individual topics set out in the TRs and, whilst some impacts are likely, these will be mitigated through good construction practice techniques.

Traffic and Haulage

32. Traffic and haulage involved with the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector has been assessed. There will be an increase in traffic on some roads but these are considered to be not significant. The access to the substation has been designed having regard to PPS 3. In terms of site access points each tower access has been reviewed to check that all construction vehicle movements could take place. If this was not possible then temporary improvements including widening to the access have been identified or else traffic management arrangements put in place. Where widening involved hedge removal, hedgerow will be reinstated post construction. As a further check, each site access and the haul route to it from the nearest main road was assessed. In some instances the routes are wide enough for two-way traffic. On others, whilst the road is narrower there are informal passing opportunities where, if two vehicles meet (as occurs currently) they can pass each other at a number of locations. The latter represents the position for the majority of haul routes but there are a number of site access points that require temporary traffic management measures (e.g. one way systems). These have been established as feasible but final detail will be agreed with TransportNI and the contractor as part of the Construction Traffic Management Plan. Haulage routes have also been assessed and found to have short term moderate adverse impacts but no long term impacts.
33. Whilst the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector proposes the widening of some accesses for construction purposes, the applicant's preference is, in the spirit of protecting the

environment, to employ traffic management procedures to access the site, such that environmental impacts can be avoided.

Cultural and Built Heritage

34. The impact of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector on cultural and built heritage has been assessed and the limited impacts on the settings of archaeological remains which conflicts with PPS 6 policies BH1 and BH2 are permissible on the grounds that it is an exceptional circumstance. Adverse impact is predicted on the setting of a number of listed buildings under PPS 6 policy BH 11 and a historic garden under PPS 6 policy BH 6. Again these impacts must be balanced by the decision maker but the impacts are outweighed by the overriding national and regional need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.

Tourism

35. The proposal is compliant with PPS 16 policy TSM 8 tourism as no tourism assets are adversely impacted by the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector such as to significantly compromise their tourism value.

Community Amenity

36. PSRNI policy PSU 8 identifies impacts on communities as a consideration in assessing new infrastructure. The impacts on the community from the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector are predicted to cause temporary traffic disruption, increased journey times, impact on the physical nature of roads, disturbance to residents in close proximity to access tracks and impact on community activity including delaying or preventing sporting and recreational activity during the construction stage. No significant operational impacts are predicted, as maintenance traffic will be infrequent and there is no permanent land take from any residential, commercial and community facility. It is therefore accepted that there will be an effect on the community but the degree of impact is limited and would not outweigh the overriding national and regional need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.

Impacts on Chicken Sheds

37. There are currently four planning applications for chicken sheds where their application site includes land directly under the proposed overhead line. None have been built to date. If built in their approved location there would be no impacts on two of the chicken sheds as there is adequate clearance from the proposed 400kV line and adjacent towers. Of the other two, one would have moderate adverse impacts and the other would have major adverse impacts. Overall these impacts are outweighed by the overriding national and regional need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.

Land Use

38. Impacts on agriculture and business in the area have also been assessed. Only 3% of farms experience moderate adverse impacts and less than 1% of farms experience major adverse impacts. There will be major adverse impacts on one willow plantation. There will be a major to moderate adverse impact to two land parcels upon which the proposed substation is being built. These impacts are outweighed by the overriding national and regional need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.

Socio-Economics

39. There will be a positive impact on employment and indirect employment, and an indirect positive impact on the hospitality industry in the local area at the construction stage of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. There will be no significant impacts on visitor numbers or spending as a result of the construction and operational stages of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.
40. Studies by the applicant and EirGrid have shown the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector will help customers on the island of Ireland to save approximately €20m in 2020 and between €40m and €60m by 2030. This is considered to be a major positive cumulative impact.
41. The potential impacts to the Linwoods facility are disruption to normal operations due to construction traffic and the impacts to the bioremediation area. Because of the distance from

the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector there will be no direct impact on the Linwoods facility. The bio-remediation area would be directly affected in part through construction of Tower 71 and other associated works. It is likely that willow affected by the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector will need to be harvested to facilitate the construction of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. The Applicant now proposes as part of this application and by way of mitigation to tanker off the effluent and agree reasonable compensation with the landowner accordingly. The residual effect of the proposal to use tankers as a mitigation measure has been assessed as being of major adverse significance. This level of significance has been determined to be appropriate because of the uncertainty arising from the inability to gain access to the bioremediation area and in such circumstances it was determined that a conservative assessment should be applied.

42. The overriding national and regional need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector outweighs the socio-economic impacts created.

Noise and Vibration

43. Policy on noise is provided in the Noise Policy Statement. However, this does not replace British Standards. There will be only limited noise impacts from the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. Operational noise will be within accepted British Standard noise levels, while construction noise will be short term and limited to day time activity. Vibration from the construction of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector will be mitigated using low vibration piling.

Natural Heritage and Ecology

44. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector complies with the Habitats Directive. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector avoids all designated areas and impacts on protected species and habitats have been addressed through the provision of mitigation measures. In ecological terms the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector will have limited environmental impacts as a result of: the implementation of detailed mitigation measures; the relatively small footprint of development when compared with the large area of land covered by the proposal;

and the low land take and loss of habitat, which in any event is of low ecological value. The long term effect on biodiversity will be negligible. The proposal complies with PPS 2 policies and the overriding national and regional need of the proposal demonstrably outweighs the minimal impact on ecology.

Floodplain and Water

45. The proposal has limited impacts on the water environment. While some towers are located in the floodplain the location of these towers is required for operational reasons and to minimise environmental impact of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector. That location has wider environmental benefits of avoiding higher ground and heritage assets. If the Commission or the Department were to conclude that the proposal does not cleanly meet the exception in FLD 1, the proposal complies with the rationale underpinning the exception as operational needs were part of the routeing determination. Some ditches will be slightly diverted, and a number may require to have temporary culverting to allow access to the site. The preference is to not temporarily widen accesses or carry out any culverting to avoid environmental impacts. However, if required the proposal complies with PPS 15 policies FLD 1 and FLD 4 as the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is an exception which is anticipated in these policies. The proposal complies with PPS 15 policy FLD 3 as drainage at the substation has been assessed.

Contamination

46. An assessment of potential contaminated sites have been assessed and none present a risk in respects of contamination as no elements of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector are located on areas of potential contaminated land.

Air Quality and Climate Change

47. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector will cause no significant effects by reason of dust, and will contribute to climate change objectives of Government.

Telecommunications

48. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is compliant with PPS 10 policy TEL 2 as it will not interfere with terrestrial television services.

Trans-boundary Issues

49. The majority of transboundary impacts are non-significant apart from moderate adverse impacts on one LCA and visual impacts on two viewpoints. These impacts would not outweigh the overriding national and regional need for the proposal.

Joint Environmental Report

50. A Joint Environmental Report has been prepared and submitted that sets out the environmental considerations of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector and the North-South 400kV Interconnection Development in the Republic of Ireland. The JER has not raised any new issues that have not been considered above and that would outweigh the overriding national and regional need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.

Cumulative Impacts

51. Cumulative impacts have been assessed and found to be generally insignificant. Although there will be some significant landscape and visual cumulative impacts between the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector, the Tamnamore-Omagh 110kV project, other infrastructure development and the North-South 400kV Interconnection Development, the landscape and visual resources of the wider area along the proposed route would not be harmed to a significant degree.

Third Parties and Statutory Consultees

52. Third party submissions made in relation to the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector have been reviewed and taken into account during the application process and in the preparation of the Statement of Case and the various Technical Reports.

53. It can be noted that no statutory consultee objects to the applications and that there are a number of supporters of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.

Effect on Property Value

54. Some objectors raise the issue of property value in their objection. Property and land values are considered a private interest matter in the SPPS paragraph 2.3 which states:

“The basic question is not whether owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties would experience financial or other loss from a particular development, but whether the proposal would unacceptably affect amenities and the existing use of land and buildings that ought to be protected in the public interest”.

55. In this respect, the public interest in Northern Ireland as set out in the Government driven policy need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector, overwhelmingly supports the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector which outweighs amenity impacts on individuals.

56. The Courts have found in a human rights context that rights to respect for private and family life (ECHR Article 8) or to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions (ECHR Article 1 of the First Protocol) may be engaged if someone is severely and exceptionally affected by development carried out in consequence of a planning decision; and this may be reflected in the devaluation of property interests. The Court of Appeal in England has confirmed however that devaluation does not of itself involve a breach of Convention rights. The authorities emphasise not only the extremity of the effects that are required to engage the rights but also the need for private interests to be balanced against the public interest when assessing whether any breach of Convention rights has occurred.

57. In this case, to the extent that a balancing exercise needs to be carried out in the human rights context with respect to private and public interests, for the reasons given above there are compelling grounds to conclude not only that the proposals are acceptable in planning terms but that they involve no breach of Convention rights.

Precedent

58. Some objectors raise the issue that the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector creates a precedent for future applications. No precedent is created as all applications must be treated on their own merits. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector will only be granted if considered acceptable in planning terms, and approval of an acceptable proposal cannot possibly set a precedent for the approval of unacceptable development. Without prejudice to this principle, the very significant exceptional factors (such as the strategic need and the cross border regulatory and Governmental support) specific to the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector are limiting factors that prevent any future proposal from relying on the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector as a precedent. There is no merit in the argument that the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector sets a precedent for overhead lines. The use of overhead lines is already established in Northern Ireland with the grid being extensively characterised by overhead line development including the existing interconnector². No precedent therefore arises as a result of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector.

The Planning Balance and the Presumption in Favour of Development.

59. The Department and PAC must be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted having regard to the plan, and all other material considerations, unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. In furthering that objective of sustainable development the planning system requires social, economic and environmental factors to be balanced. No single one of these factors is promoted, but in case-specific proposals, the weight to be attached to each of these factors is a matter of planning judgment.

60. The relevant local development plans are time expired and out of date, as are many of their policies. The proposal complies with a number of their retained policies and current regional policies and may be perceived to conflict with others to a limited degree. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is a sustainable development which would have strong economic benefits by ensuring security of supply, increased competition in the electricity

² The Tandragee to Louth overhead line

market and facilitating the renewable energy sector. Its potential impacts on the environment have been minimised by avoiding areas such as designated landscapes, tourism assets and cultural heritage sites, as well as homes and towns. It would help support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. In the overall planning judgement of this case the benefits clearly outweigh the adverse impacts and no impacts have been identified that would cause the presumption in favour of sustainable development not to be applied. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is therefore clearly acceptable.

Conclusion

61. The evidence demonstrates that there are overriding national and regional reasons for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector, as required by policy. It has also been established that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. The proposal benefits from widespread policy support deserving of very substantial and determining weight. When considering the site specific circumstances of the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector it is accepted that the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector produces some environmental impacts that are unavoidable. However, none are of such significance that they would either individually or cumulatively outweigh the overriding national and regional need for the proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector and the benefits to be gained. The proposed Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector is clearly acceptable in planning terms.