

Energising Belfast

Part 2a Engagement Report

January 2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 Part 2a Engagement summary report

SONI, the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland, is planning to bring forward the 'Energising Belfast' project.

Currently, Greater Belfast is served by an existing transmission line from Ballylumford in Islandmagee to Castlereagh substation which was built in 1943. Energising Belfast will reconfigure and modernise the section of the transmission grid from Carnmoney to Castlereagh.

Energising Belfast will future proof the transmission system in Belfast, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal and all partner councils in the Greater Belfast area.

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 Energising Belfast project during Part 2a of SONI's [three-part process](#) for developing the grid.

2 Background

2.1 SONI background

SONI is the electricity transmission system operator (TSO) for Northern Ireland. It is responsible for the consistent and reliable transmission of electricity on the high-voltage grid, matching supply, and demand 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).

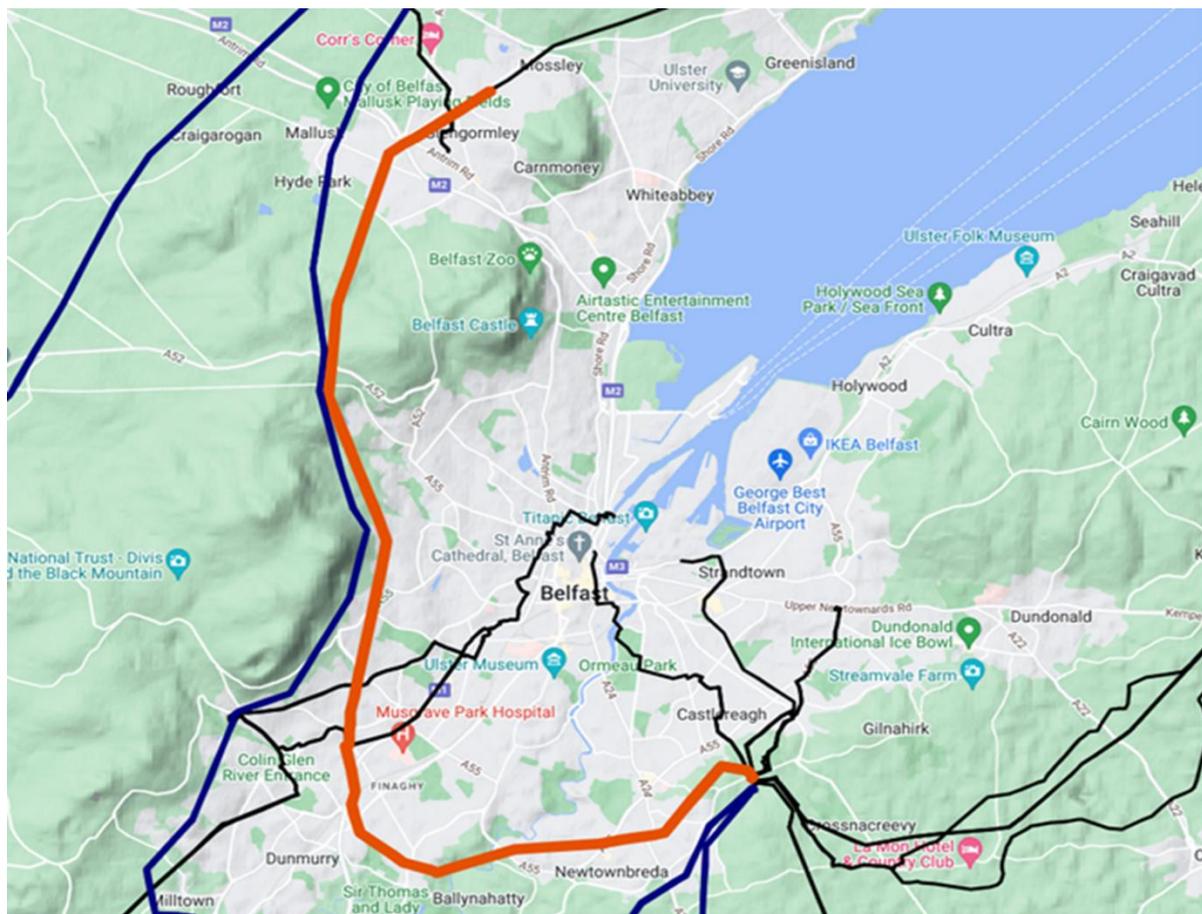
2.2 Project background

Energising Belfast will future proof the transmission system in Belfast, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal.

Energising Belfast will ensure that Belfast, its people, and its businesses have the clean energy needed to grow. A thriving city centre is vital to the prosperity of the entire city and region and this project will deliver a grid ready to power the clean energy transition. This project will support the aspirations of Belfast City Council's 'Belfast Agenda' to increase the employment and residential population in the city.

Currently, the Greater Belfast area is served by an existing transmission line from Ballylumford in Islandmagee to Castlereagh substation. Energising Belfast will reconfigure and modernise the section of the transmission grid from Carnmoney to Castlereagh by installing new state-of-the-art underground cable with added capacity, as well as new substations in the City Centre. The project will also involve the installation of a fourth transformer at Castlereagh substation. It represents £39.5 million investment in transmission grid in the Belfast Metropolitan area.

Figure 1. Existing transmission network in Greater Belfast



Legend

-  Existing Carnmoney-Castlereagh 110kV double circuit
-  275kV network
-  110kV network

This project will enable the future removal of the Carnmoney to Castlereagh 110kV overhead line.

Most of the development, which requires planning permission, will take place within the boundary of Belfast City Council, with necessary works within Castlereagh substation in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, which will be subject to a CLUD application. Delivery of the project will enable the future removal of overhead lines in Belfast City Council, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.

SONI's planning application for the project is being submitted to and will be decided by Belfast City Council.

Following engagement with local key stakeholder groups during Part 1 of SONI's three-part engagement process and using the information from studies, SONI are proposing to deliver:

- a new 275/110 kV transformer at Castlereagh Main substation;
- new substations at or near to Belfast North Main (off Whitla Street) and Belfast Central Main (off Little Patrick Street);
- a new high-capacity underground cable connecting Donegall Main (near Broadway roundabout) to Belfast North Main and Belfast Central Main.

2.3 Part 2a engagement

SONI's [three part process](#) puts stakeholder and public consultation at the heart of how the transmission grid is developed. Issues raised by those consulted and the public throughout the consultation process are set out in detail within the report. The feedback provided at this early stage will help inform the final plans for the project, which will also be subject to a further consultation phase. Any comments made to SONI are not representations to the Planning Authority and do not in any way affect the statutory right to make representations to the Planning Authority, with regard to any application submitted to them, in respect of this proposal.

This phase of the consultation was officially launched on 11th October 2022 with a launch event held in Belfast with key stakeholders and closed on 25th November 2022. Throughout the consultation period for this phase of the project, which encompassed two separate open public information events, as well as several direct engagements with interest groups, council officials and elected representatives. SONI made significant efforts to share information with the public and obtain feedback on this project. The feedback received throughout the consultation period will help inform the further development of the project, including the route of the underground cable and substation site locations.

3 Engagement Strategy

3.1 Purpose of Part 2a

SONI takes a structured and professional approach to public engagement which was guided by a detailed engagement and communications plan, which was drafted at the outset of the project and updated throughout the consultation period.

In undertaking extensive consultation at this early stage, SONI's main aim was to ensure interested stakeholders had access to up-to-date and accurate information about the proposal and were provided with sufficient opportunity to provide feedback that could be considered as the plans are developed.

3.2 Who has been consulted

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

Governmental

- North Belfast MLAs / North Belfast MP
- East Belfast MLAs / East Belfast MP
- South Belfast MLAs / South Belfast MP
- West Belfast MLAs/ West Belfast MP
- Strangford MLAs/Strangford MP
- Councillors from Belfast City Council / Councillors from Castlereagh South DEA and Castlereagh East DEA of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council/
- Belfast City Council Planning Committee / Lisburn and Castlereagh City Planning Committee
- Council officials (Chief Executive/ Director of Development/EHO)
- Relevant statutory authorities (e.g., DfI Roads / PSNI)

Residents / Community

- Residents
- Community Groups / Associations

Businesses/special interest groups

- Regional Lobby Groups
- Local Traders Groups/Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)
- Individual Businesses

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

3.3 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 process. Identifying potential stakeholders subsequently informed SONI's methods of appropriate consultation, which are outlined within this report.

In keeping with best practice, SONI employed a variety of community consultation techniques to ensure they accessed all appropriate stakeholders.

As documented, SONI hosted a public launch event with invited key stakeholders, and two separate drop-in public consultation events and a number of individual engagements with other stakeholders.

It should be noted that there is no statutory requirement for consultation at this stage, and this engagement exceeds requirements for statutory Pre-application Community Consultation, which will follow later in 2023.

In line with best practice, each consultation event hosted by SONI had an open invitation and was advertised through the local press. A campaign of social media activity on Twitter and LinkedIn also shared information on the project, and directed people to SONI's Consultation Portal, where feedback could be submitted.

SONI also established a dedicated webpage containing information about the project; distributed copies of advertisements containing details of each event in high footfall areas; made a dedicated email address and relevant contact details publicly available.

By utilising a number of engagement methods, as set out above. SONI ensured that as many people as possible in the local area were made aware of the consultation events, and stakeholders were informed of how to provide feedback.

3.4 Drop in consultation events

SONI remained mindful of the fact that not everyone in the local community can be expected to have the same level of understanding of planning and energy issues, and therefore prioritised staffed exhibitions and drop-in sessions.

In an effort to ensure participation was genuine, respectful and as inclusive as possible, SONI hosted two separate consultation events, in separate locations (Belfast City Centre and Castlereagh).

The chosen venues, The MAC, Belfast and the Four Winds, Castlereagh are accessible, and they cater for all audiences in the local area. The staffed exhibition, drop-in format of the events allowed for meaningful participation.

Events were held from 12noon – 2pm and 4pm – 7pm each day in order to offer a range of suitable times for participants. These steps were taken by SONI to encourage greater attendance by different groups of people.

Each of the events 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.

Representatives from SONI, including engineers working directly on the project, as well as environmental and stakeholder engagement consultants were on hand to answer queries, provide clarification and encourage feedback at each event. SONI also:

- Produced a project-specific brochure;
- Developed a short video to explain the objectives and main features of the proposal;
- Established a dedicated project section on the Consultation Portal, webpage and email address;
- Provided contact information including telephone number and dedicated project email address;
- Made questionnaires available for members of the public to provide feedback;
- Provided general corporate brochures about SONI and their commitment to public engagement;
- Endeavoured to record discussions held with members of the public at each consultation event.

As outlined above, SONI provided a broad range of information materials 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 each consultation event. SONI also provided access to information relating to the proposal online, via the SONI Consultation Portal and a dedicated project webpage on its website.

Given SONI's three-part process for developing the grid, which places early stakeholder engagement at its heart, this phase of consultation (2a) took place before the submission of the Proposal of Application Notice to Belfast City Council (the planning authority), which we expect to occur later in 2023.

This allows the local community to provide meaningful feedback to SONI before any route or site location was chosen for the project, providing an opportunity for the public to influence the various elements of the project.

The proposed development and relevant information therefore has the potential to evolve throughout the design process, incorporating a number of factors, including public feedback.

During the consultation events, SONI engineers explained the general start and end points of the underground cable and explained how the route was yet to be determined. They also demonstrated the location of the existing Belfast North Main and Belfast Central Main substations, and explained that new substations would be required close to these locations.

At each event, SONI representatives explained the purpose of the consultation phase it was undertaking.

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

4 Part 2a Engagement

4.1 Pre-consultation engagement

Ahead of the Part 2a consultation phase formally opening, SONI engaged with key stakeholders in the broad area affected by the project. This included engagement with elected representatives from all levels, as well as officials from Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.

Early engagement with elected representatives and Council officials meant they were made aware of the proposal, allowed SONI to gather important feedback about any potential concerns and also ensured that public representatives were brought fully up-to-speed about the proposal and had access to up-to-date and accurate information. This was considered particularly important to SONI as it ensured local representatives were well equipped to respond to any constituent queries about the project.

SONI continued to engage with elected representatives and Council officials throughout the engagement process, ensuring they were made aware in advance of all public events hosted by SONI. If necessary a written record of the meetings referenced above are available on request.

4.2 Drop-in Consultation Events

SONI hosted two separate drop-in consultation events in October 2022. These included:

Venue	Date	Time
The MAC, Belfast	Wednesday 19 th October 2022	12pm – 2pm 4pm – 7pm
The Four Winds, Castlereagh	Wednesday 26 th October 2022	12pm – 2pm 4pm – 7pm

As outlined above, each of the events 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.

Representatives from SONI, including engineers working directly on the project, as well as environmental and stakeholder engagement consultants were on hand to answer queries, provide clarification and encourage feedback at each event.

In order to generate awareness of the events in the local area, adverts for the events were placed in the following local papers:

- Belfast Telegraph.
- Irish News.
- News Letter.

An advert notifying both events appeared on the following dates:

- Tuesday 4th October;
- Tuesday 11th October;

- Tuesday 18th October

The advert outlined the objective of the project, broadly what is being proposed, and the details of the drop-in consultation events.

SONI also issued copies of the advertisement to the following high-footfall local centres:

- McClay Library, Queen's University Belfast
- Crescent Arts Centre, University Road
- Botanic Train Station
- Lanyon Place Train Station
- Laganside Bus Centre
- Belfast Central Library, Royal Avenue
- Ulster University Belfast Campus, York Street

Invitations to the consultation events were also emailed directly to all elected representatives (North Belfast, East Belfast, South Belfast, West Belfast, Strangford MLAs/MPs, all Belfast City Council Councillors; and Castlereagh South DEA Councillors, Castlereagh East DEA Councillors from Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council).

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

Attendance at the events is outlined below:

- Wednesday 19th October 2022 – approximately 4 attendees
- Wednesday 26th October 2022 – approximately 5 attendees

A key aim of the consultation events was to gather feedback from members of the public which SONI could then take into consideration at an early stage and as the project progresses. Therefore, attendees were encouraged to complete feedback forms and return them to SONI. SONI staff also completed Record of Engagement forms that documented conversations held with attendees at the events.

During the consultation events an enlarged version of the map below showing the study area for the underground cable/substations was presented to attendees by SONI engineers, and attendees had the opportunity to ask questions.

Figure 2. Energising Belfast cable/substation study area



4.2 Feedback received by SONI

A total of three feedback forms were completed and provided to SONI by attendees at the events, while a Record of Engagement form was completed and returned by SONI staff for three participants. These provide a record of topics discussed with attendees at the events.

The feedback provided by attendees was recorded and analysed by SONI, so that it could feed into the project design process moving forward. Feedback forms received at consultation events were also uploaded to the SONI Consultation Portal. This is documented below.

4.3 Information received via Consultation Portal and email

As well as providing feedback via consultation events it was also possible to submit feedback to the SONI Consultation Portal or via post or email.

Two corporate responses were received via email from Belfast City Council and FSB Northern Ireland. In addition to these, two individual responses were received via the SONI Consultation Portal.

4.4 Overview of Information Provided in Feedback Forms and Consultation Submissions

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

<u>Overview of Feedback Forms and individual submissions received by SONI</u>
Based on the information in the 5 individual submissions provided:
3 respondents indicated they live within the project study area
1 indicated they did not live in the project study area
1 did not indicate if lived in the study area
3 respondents indicated support for the proposals
1 indicated they are undecided
1 did not indicate
The following comments were made in submissions:
Potential disruption to businesses is a concern
Is laying cable along the Westlink an option?
'Positive' keep highlighting benefits
Opportunity to remove pylons in the Four Winds area must be seized
Power network plans and infrastructure in Belfast should prepare for future street heat networks

While feedback forms completed and returned by attendees at the consultation events were small in number at this early stage of project development, it nonetheless provided SONI with important insights.

This information fed into SONI's approach to the ongoing consultation for the project, meaning it could continue to review its own approach to how people are made aware of the event, 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.

4.5 Overview of SONI Record of Engagement Forms

Included below is an overview of the information provided in the SONI Record of Engagement forms completed during Part 2a of the consultation. These forms were completed by SONI staff to reflect conversations with attendees at the consultation events.

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.

<u>Overview of SONI Record of Engagement Forms</u>
Topics discussed (as highlighted by SONI representatives)
Removal of overhead lines
Battery storage
Climate Change targets
Renewable energy
Planning process
Construction timeline

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

Based on the information recorded by SONI staff during discussions at the events, broader energy issues, such as climate change targets and greater use of renewable energy were key points of interest for attendees, as well as the future removal of overhead lines, which the Energising Belfast project enables.

All feedback provided will be extensively reviewed by SONI and considered in detail during the design process, ahead of the next phase of consultation on the project.

4.6 Corporate responses

Corporate responses to the consultation were also received by email from Belfast City Council and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Northern Ireland. These are summarised below:

Belfast City Council

- *Belfast City Council broadly welcomes the approach being taken by SONI within the Energising Belfast Project. We appreciate the efforts to minimise disruption to residents and businesses in Belfast.*
- *The benefits of the project align with both Belfast City Council and the city ambitions to enhance resilience, to become net zero, while supporting economic development, as set out in the Belfast Agenda, the Belfast Resilience Strategy, the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, Belfast Region City Deal and the Draft Belfast Economic Strategy.*
- *Council would welcome regular updates and meetings with SONI in relation to the Energising Belfast project so that officers and Elected Members can support local engagement and enhanced communication around this initiative and others.*

FSB Northern Ireland

- *FSB appreciates the commitment to early and ongoing engagement with stakeholders. In principle, we are supportive of the aims of the project to strengthen security of supply, support economic development, and to enable the electrification of heating and transport.*
- *FSB is concerned that project delivery, including new substations and underground cable, may cause disruption to small businesses. We would urge that as plans are developed and finalised for the underground cable and substation sites, there is a concerted effort made to avoid or minimise potential disruption.*
- *Using land immediately on the shoulders of the Westlink as a corridor, would avoid routes that might otherwise negatively affect a range of retail, hospitality and service businesses within the study area.*
- *The construction programme should seek to coordinate with other works that will be ongoing across the city within the same timeframe, to minimise disruption.*

4.7 Direct engagements

In addition to consultation events and responses to the consultation, SONI also held direct meetings with key stakeholders. Some of these meetings took place prior to the formal consultation period opening. Information from these meetings was incredibly valuable, prompted further engagement and identification of other key stakeholders. A number of the engagements involved umbrella groups or representative bodies including representatives from a range of different backgrounds/sectors which enabled feedback from diverse sources. What follows provides a summary of the feedback received from key stakeholders.

The grid infrastructure and implications associated with the Energising Belfast project affect a number of Parliamentary/ Assembly constituencies and two Councils. These are the North Belfast, West Belfast, South Belfast, East Belfast and Strangford Parliamentary/Assembly constituencies, Belfast City

Council and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, respectively. As such, for this engagement, written briefings were issued to the MPs and MLAs within the North Belfast, West Belfast, South Belfast, East Belfast and Strangford Parliamentary/ Assembly constituencies, the elected representatives on Belfast City Council and from the Castlereagh East and Castlereagh South DEAs of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. Correspondence evidencing this engagement are appended to this report.

In addition, a number of meetings were set up to brief key stakeholders and groups. To support our engagement a slide deck was shared during each meeting, which is also appended to this report.

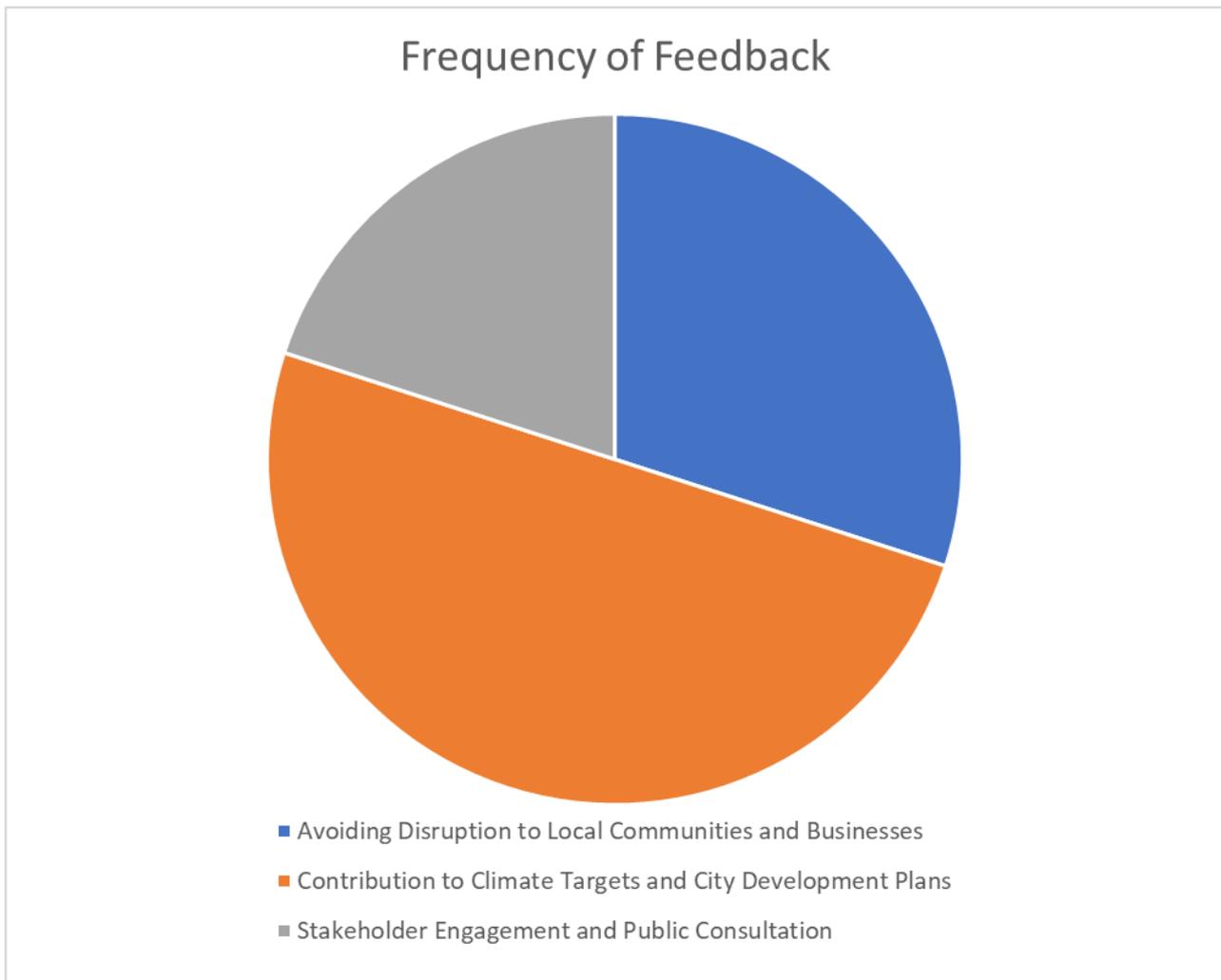
Meetings which took place were as follows, all meetings took place virtually via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or similar platforms:

- Belfast City Council Key Officers
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Key Officers
- Belfast Chamber
- Belfast City Council Resilience & Sustainability Board
- Belfast City Council Climate Commission
- Belfast City Council Planning Department
- Party Group Leaders of Belfast City Council
- Streets Ahead Programme

Summary of Key Feedback

Feedback collated from the stakeholder engagement meetings was analysed and key themes have emerged. These themes, including extracts from the meetings with the stakeholders, are outlined below.

Figure 3. *Frequency of feedback*



4.8 Summary of feedback from Energising Belfast stakeholder meetings

Included below is a summary of the main issues and comments raised during stakeholder meetings.

Theme	Selected comments from stakeholders
Key Theme 1: Avoiding Disruption to Local Communities and Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'The long-term benefit of the project, whilst undoubtable, is at the moment nebulous, whilst short-term disruption is more certain'. - 'The cumulative impact of Energising Belfast and other major pipeline projects such as Glider Phase 2 and the York Street Interchange could lead to serious disruption in the City Centre'. - 'I am concerned about disruption to local businesses caused by Energising Belfast works, although I accept that the long-term benefits of the project would far outweigh any short-term disruption.'
Key Theme 2: Contribution to Climate Targets and City Development Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communications around Energising Belfast should focus on the benefits that it will bring, such as security of supply, increased integration of renewables and green jobs, etc.'. - 'Do SONI/ NIEN have a blueprint for working towards climate targets?' - 'I am interested in what options SONI have considered for wind and tidal electricity generation'. - 'How will Energising Belfast impact initiatives aimed at developing Belfast as a city in the coming decade, such as the Belfast Agenda and A Bolder Vision for Belfast?' - 'Is Energising Belfast funded by the Belfast Region City Deal?'
Key Theme 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Public Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thank you to the project team for the update and for the proactive stakeholder engagement conducted to date.' - 'We would like to have a meeting ahead of the next formal phase of consultation (Part 2c), as cable route and site locations are firmed up'.

5 Conclusion

As outlined in this report, this early-stage consultation carried out by SONI in relation to the proposed Energising Belfast project exceeds the statutory requirements and goes beyond provision specified within both The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the relevant regulations and guidelines.

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 provide feedback to inform a future planning application. SONI will endeavour where possible, to ensure that all feedback made by stakeholders and the local community during this phase of consultation is taken on board by the project team.

As referenced above, SONI will continue to engage with stakeholders as the project progresses, and in tandem with further technical, environmental and feasibility studies, will come forward with a further phase of consultation later in 2023.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Energising Belfast Press Release & Social Media

Electricity Grid to be upgraded for Belfast zero carbon future



SONI, the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland, has today launched its ‘Energising Belfast’ project, at an event hosted by the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at Allstate NI’s offices in Belfast city centre.

If approved, the £39.5million ‘Energising Belfast’ project will modernise parts of the transmission grid in Greater Belfast to prepare it for the future of electric vehicles and home heating using electricity. The project will deliver a new high-capacity underground cable through Belfast City Centre, as well as a new transformer at Castlereagh Main substation, increasing the reliability of the electricity system in Greater Belfast. Other additional improvements, such as building new substations at or next to existing sites in the city, are also being explored.

Speaking at the launch Mike Brennan, Permanent Secretary of the Department for the Economy said:

“Energising Belfast is significant in its potential to enable the economy in Belfast and wider Northern Ireland to grow with cleaner electricity and help to deliver the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy and the 10X Economic Strategy.

“It is helping in providing opportunity to deliver affordable clean electricity and to promote Northern Ireland as an attractive location for renewables investment. Our energy revolution will be based on Northern

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 11, 2022

Today we are pleased to launch the **Energising Belfast** project which will ensure that Greater **Belfast**, its people and its businesses have the clean energy needed to grow. For more details visit the consultation portal: consult.soni.ltd.uk

“
A thriving city centre is vital to the prosperity of Belfast City and the region. This project will prepare the transmission system, ensuring Belfast is equipped to avail of the economic growth opportunities, as Northern Ireland transitions to net zero. ”

Alan Campbell
Managing Director, SONI

SONI

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SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 11, 2022

Energising Belfast will future proof the transmission system in **Belfast** to handle greater levels of clean energy. To find out more, please visit our consultation portal: consult.soni.ltd.uk

Press release on the launch available here soni.ltd.uk/newsroom/press...

“
This project will future-proof the transmission system in Greater Belfast to ensure businesses have the secure electricity supply they need to expand in the near-term and into the future, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal. ”

Alan Campbell
Managing Director, SONI

SONI

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SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 12, 2022

At SONI we want to work together with all stakeholders to strengthen the electricity grid and make it more resilient.

Please come and have your say at our consultation events on the **Energising Belfast** project.

Find out more here: consult.soni.ltd.uk

Energising Belfast

SONI, the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland, are currently planning an upgrade of the electricity grid in Greater Belfast.

The 'Energising Belfast' project will strengthen the electricity grid, with a new high-capacity underground cable and new substations to provide additional power into the city centre.

The new cable will connect Donegall Main substation to substations at or near Belfast North Main and Belfast Central Main. We are currently reviewing a range of options and could construct substations at or adjacent to existing substation sites, in the city or at new sites close by.

We are in the early stages of the project and are consulting with local communities, businesses, and all interested parties to hear your views and answer your questions.

Please come and meet us at one of our drop-in consultation events (right), or find out more by visiting the SONI Consultation Portal: www.consult.soni.ltd.uk

Consultation Events

Wednesday 19th October

The MAC, Belfast
to Exchange St West
Belfast
BT1 2JG

Afternoon sessions: 1:30pm - 3pm
Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

Wednesday 26th October

The Four Winds
113 Beaufort Park
Belfast
BT9 6LX

Afternoon sessions: 1:30pm - 3pm
Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 14, 2022

In his latest blog, SONI Managing Director, Alan Campbell discusses our **Energising Belfast** project, see more here: [linkedin.com/company/soni-ltd](https://www.linkedin.com/company/soni-ltd)

To find out more and have your say, please visit our consultation portal: consult.soni.ltd.uk

Energising Belfast

A globally connected business network powered by businesses across Northern Ireland.

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 13, 2022

Our consultation on **Energising Belfast** is now open, watch this short video to find out more about the project.

To have your say, please visit our consultation portal: consult.soni.ltd.uk



1:34 55 views

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 17, 2022

Join us on Wednesday 19th October at the MAC, **Belfast** from 12noon-2pm and 4pm-7pm at our in-person consultation event for the **Energising Belfast** project.

Members of the project team will be available to answer any questions.

Find out more here: consult.soni.ltd.uk



Energising Belfast

SONI, the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland, are currently planning an upgrade of the electricity grid in Greater Belfast.

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Please come and meet us at one of our drop-in consultation events (light, or find out more by using the SONI Consultation Portal: www.consult.soni.ltd.uk

Consultation Events

Wednesday 19th October

The MAC, Belfast
16 Exchange St West
Belfast
BT1 2NH

Afternoon session: 12:00pm - 2pm
Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

Wednesday 26th October

The Four Winds
13 Newton Park
Belfast
BT9 6LX

Afternoon session: 12:00pm - 2pm
Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 19, 2022

Join us today at the MAC, **Belfast** from 12noon-2pm and 4pm-7pm at our first in-person consultation event for the **Energising Belfast** project.

Members of the project team will be available to answer any questions.

Find out more here: consult.soni.ltd.uk



Energising Belfast

SONI, the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland, are currently planning an upgrade of the electricity grid in Greater Belfast.

The 'Energising Belfast' project will strengthen the electricity grid, with a new high-capacity underground cable and new substations to provide additional power into the city centre.

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We are in the early stages of the project and are consulting with local communities, businesses, and all interested parties to hear your views and answer your questions.

Please come and meet us at one of our drop-in consultation events (drop-in held out more by visiting the SONI Consultation Portal: www.consult.soni.ltd.uk)

Consultation Events

Wednesday 19th October

The MAC, Belfast
10 Exchange St West
Belfast
BT1 2JH

Afternoon session: 12:00pm-2pm
Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

Wednesday 26th October

The Four Winds
111 Ravenhill Park
Belfast
BT8 6LX

Afternoon session: 12:00pm-2pm
Evening session: 4pm-7pm

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 21, 2022

At SONI we want to hear your views on our planned upgrade to the electricity network in Greater **Belfast**.

Join us at our second consultation event on the **Energising Belfast** project at the Four Winds, Castlereagh.

Find out more here: consult.soni.ltd.uk



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SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 24, 2022

Join us on Wednesday 26th October at the Four Winds, Castlereagh from 12noon-2pm and 4pm-7pm at our in-person consultation event for the **Energising Belfast** project. Members of the project team will be available to answer any questions.

Find out more here: consult.soni.ltd.uk



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1



SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 26, 2022

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Evening session: 4:00-7:00



2





SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Oct 27, 2022

Thank you to all to all those who attended our consultation events on the **Energising Belfast** project.

Your feedback will help shape our final plans for this project.

If you couldn't attend you can still have your say here: consult.soni.ltd.uk



SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Nov 4, 2022

Have you had a chance to find out about our **Energising Belfast** project? Help us plan for our upgrade to the electricity network in Greater **Belfast**, visit our consultation portal to find out more and have your say: consult.soni.ltd.uk



SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Nov 15, 2022

Our consultation on **Energising Belfast** is still open, watch this short video to find out more about the project.

To have your say, please visit our consultation portal:
consult.soni.ltd.uk/consultation/e...



Energising BELFAST
Upgrading the electricity grid for a cleaner energy future

1:35 39 views

3

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Nov 18, 2022

1 week left to have your say on the **Energising Belfast** Project, our plan to strengthen the electricity transmission grid to ensure Greater **Belfast**, its people and businesses have the clean energy needed to grow.

Visit our consultation portal to respond: consult.soni.ltd.uk



We're doing this.



So we can all do this.

1

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Nov 22, 2022

3 days to go before our consultation closes in the **Energising Belfast** project. Help us plan for a cleaner energy future.

Visit our consultation portal to have your say: consult.soni.ltd.uk/browse

Energising BELFAST

We're doing this.

SONI So we can all do this.

SONI Ltd @soni_ltd · Nov 24, 2022

The consultation on the **Energising Belfast** project closes tomorrow. You have 1 day left to have your say on the project. Help us plan for a cleaner energy future.

Visit our consultation portal to have your say: consult.soni.ltd.uk

Energising BELFAST

We're doing this.

SONI So we can all do this.

SONI Ltd
3,305 followers
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Today we are pleased to launch the Energising Belfast project which will ensure that Greater Belfast, its people and its businesses have the clean energy needed to grow.

For more details visit the consultation portal: <https://lnkd.in/eVY3bCX> ✓

Energising BELFAST
Supporting the electricity grid for a cleaner energy future

“
A thriving city centre is vital to the prosperity of Belfast City and the region. This project will prepare the transmission system, ensuring Belfast is equipped to avail of the economic growth opportunities, as Northern Ireland transitions to net zero. ”

Alan Campbell
Managing Director, SONI

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Energising Belfast will future proof the transmission system in Belfast to handle greater levels of clean energy. To find out more, please visit our consultation portal: <https://lnkd.in/eVY3bCX> ✓ ...see more

Energising BELFAST
Supporting the electricity grid for a cleaner energy future

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This project will future-proof the transmission system in Greater Belfast to ensure businesses have the secure electricity supply they need to expand in the near-term and into the future, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal. ”

Alan Campbell
Managing Director, SONI

SONI



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At SONI we want to work together with all stakeholders to strengthen the electricity grid and make it more resilient.

Please come and have your say at our consultation events on the Energising Belfast project.

Find out more here: <https://lnkd.in/eVY3bcX>



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Our consultation on Energising Belfast is now open, watch this short video to find out more about the project. ...see more



Energising BELFAST
Upgrading the electricity grid for a cleaner energy future

Energising Belfast

 23 2 reposts

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In his latest blog, SONI Managing Director, Alan Campbell discusses our Energising Belfast project - ...see more





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Join us on Wednesday 19th October at the MAC, Belfast from 12noon-2pm and 4pm-7pm at our in-person consultation event for the Energising Belfast project.

[...see more](#)



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Our consultation on Energising Belfast is now open, watch this short video to find out more about the project.

[...see more](#)



Energising Belfast



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Thank you to all to all those who attended our consultation events on the Energising Belfast project.

...see more



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Have you had a chance to find out about our Energising Belfast project? Help us plan for our upgrade to the electricity network in Greater Belfast, visit our consultation portal to find out more and have your say: <https://lnkd.in/eVY3bCX> ✓




We're doing this.




So we can all do this.

SONI Ltd
3,305 followers
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One week left to have your say on the Energising Belfast Project, our plan to strengthen the electricity transmission grid to ensure Greater Belfast, its people and its businesses have the clean energy needed to grow.

Visit our consultation portal to provide feedback on the proposals:
<https://lnkd.in/eVY3bCX> ✓




We're doing this.




So we can all do this.

SONI Ltd
3,305 followers
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3 days to go before our consultation closes in the Energising Belfast project. Help us plan for a cleaner energy future.

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We're doing this.

SONI **So we can all do this.**

SONI Ltd
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2 days left to have your say on the Energising Belfast Project, our plan to strengthen the electricity transmission grid to ensure Greater Belfast, its people and businesses have the clean energy needed to grow. [...see more](#)

That's why at SONI, operator of the electricity transmission system, we're currently planning an upgrade of the electricity grid in Belfast.

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The consultation on the Energising Belfast project closes tomorrow.

You have 1 day left to have your say on the Energising Belfast Project, ou ...see more




We're doing this.



SONI **So we can all do this.**

SONI Ltd
3,305 followers
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Our consultation on the Energising Belfast Project – our plan to future proof the transmission system in Belfast – has now closed.

Thank you to everyone who responded, your feedback and collaboration will help shape our final plans for this project.



“
This project will future-proof the transmission system in Greater Belfast to ensure businesses have the secure electricity supply they need to expand in the near-term and into the future, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal.
”

*Alan Campbell
Managing Director, SONI*



SONI

APPENDIX 2: Online Consultation Portal and Feedback Received

Energising Belfast Project

CLOSED 11 Oct, 2022, 9:00am - 25 Nov, 2022, 11:59am

VIEW

DASHBOARD

SUBMISSIONS



What is the 'Energising Belfast' project?

The 'Energising Belfast' project will ensure that Belfast City Centre, its people and its businesses have the clean energy needed to grow.

A thriving city centre is vital to the prosperity of the entire city and region and this project will deliver a grid ready to power the clean energy transition. This scheme will support the aspirations of Belfast City Council's 'Belfast Agenda' to increase the employment and residential population in the city.

The project will future proof the transmission system in Belfast to ensure businesses have capacity and the power they need to expand in the near-term and into the future, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal and all partner councils in the Greater Belfast area.

SONI are responsible for the design and securing planning consent and NIE Networks will lead on the construction phase of the project.

The project will deliver a new high-capacity underground cable in Belfast City Centre, as well as a new transformer at Castlereagh Main substation. We're also assessing if it's possible to build new substations at or next to existing sites in the city, or at new sites close by. This will mean we can remove older overhead lines in the future, and prepare the transmission system in the Greater Belfast area for future population and economic growth, as well as the electrification of heating and transport.

Share



Submissions

6 submissions have raised observations relating to this consultation.

Themes

General Comment

Materials

 SONI Energising Belfast Brochure.pdf
8.09 MB

 SONI Belfast OVERVIEW MAP.pdf
3.69 MB

Dashboard

[View graphs and filter submission data for this consultation](#)

 [Subscribe](#)

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 economic price possible. The grid safely brings power from generators and sends it to NIE Networks. They then supply electricity to every home, farm, community and business in Northern Ireland via their distribution network.

Investing in and improving the transmission 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 cleaner energy future.



Why are we doing this?

Meeting electricity needs

We work to ensure Northern Ireland's electricity needs can be met minute by minute, as well as making plans for future electricity requirements. In doing this, we have identified that parts of the network serving Greater Belfast need to be replaced or upgraded.

Building a reliable system and preparing for renewable energy

Based on our analysis, we've identified a solution so that the electricity network serving Greater Belfast will continue to operate reliably in the near future and be prepared for future economic and population growth. The project will make sure that Belfast residents and businesses have the power they need to facilitate the electrification of heating and transport – as we work to decarbonise the power system for future generations. This is vital if we are to deliver our climate ambition of at least 80% renewable generation by 2030.

What areas will be affected?

A new high-capacity underground cable will connect Donegall Main substation (near Broadway roundabout) to substations at Belfast North Main (off Whitla Street) and Belfast Central Main (off Little Patrick Street), please see map below.

We are currently reviewing a range of options and could construct substations at or adjacent to existing substation sites in the city or at new sites close by. A new 275/110 kV transformer will also be installed at Castlereagh Main substation, while some minor modifications will be required to overhead lines at towers within the existing Finaghy substation.

What's the next step?

We're now in Part 2 of our [three-part process for Grid Development](#). This follows on from the preliminary work we undertook during [Part 1](#) where we identified the need for the project. During this process, we'll assess our options on sites for new substations in Belfast City Centre and determine the routes for new underground cables, in consultation with local stakeholders. This consultation period will allow us to gather as much information as we can from those who live and work in the area. We're looking at how best to deliver the project, what areas may be impacted and how we keep disruption to a minimum.

What is the study area?

Studies undertaken by SONI have concluded that refurbishment of the existing tower line which passes through Belfast, including several built-up residential areas, is impractical due to the disruption it would cause to residents and the local community.



Following engagement with local key stakeholder groups during Part 1 of our three-part engagement process and using the information from our studies, we're proposing to deliver:

- a new 275/110 kV transformer at Castlereagh Main substation;
- new substations at or near to Belfast North Main (off Whitla Street) and Belfast Central Main (off Little Patrick Street);
- a new high-capacity underground cable connecting Donegall Main (near Broadway roundabout) to Belfast North Main and Belfast Central Main.

This option is supported by NIE Networks, who construct, maintain and own the grid infrastructure. We are committed to engaging, communicating and consulting with you on an ongoing basis. Over the coming months, we will use your feedback and collaboration to help inform our final plans for this project.



What are the benefits?

Security and reliability of supply: These improvements will build a more resilient and reliable grid, making sure that everyone has power when and where they need it.

Meet future needs: These improvements will help meet the growing and changing electricity needs of Greater Belfast. This includes the electrification of transport systems, vehicles, heating and the development of housing, offices and large energy users.

Sustainability: This project will make sure that Belfast has the capacity and flexibility in the grid to handle greater levels of renewable energy, to deliver our climate ambition of at least 80% renewable generation by 2030.

Economic: These improvements will support future investment, economic and population growth – aligning with the vision of the Belfast Region City Deal.



How can I get involved?

The consultation is open from 11 October to Friday 25 November.

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



Make 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.

Or



Attend one of our consultation days

12-2pm or 4pm-7pm, **19th October 2022** at the MAC, Belfast, BT1 2NJ.
12-2pm or 4pm-7pm, **26th October 2022** at the Four Winds, Castlereagh, BT8 6LX.

Or



By Email

Email your submission to us at energisingbelfast@soni.ltd.uk

Or



By Post

Write your own submission and freepost it back to us at 'Energising Belfast, SONI, Castlereagh House, 12 Manse Road, Belfast BT6 9RT'.

Our approach to consultation and engagement

We have six clear pledges which reinforce our approach to engaging with our stakeholders in the development of projects like this.

1. **Deliver information in a clear, transparent, and accessible way.**
2. **Encourage participation and provide opportunities to engage.**
3. **Build a trusted working relationship with stakeholders.**
4. **Listen to and consider feedback.**
5. **Respect people, their property and their communities.**
6. **Act with integrity, honesty and fairness.**

We're inviting you to give feedback on the Energising Belfast project.

We encourage you to engage with us and have your say as early as possible during the consultation period.

You can follow us on [LinkedIn - SONI Ltd](#) or [Twitter - @soni_ltd](#), or visit our project webpage for specific information about the project.

We welcome your feedback up until 25th November 2022

SONI-C11-7 FSB Response to Consultation on the 'Energising Belfast' Project 24 Nov, 2022 - 7:25pm	
Author: <i>Hidden</i>  1	FSB NI response to consultation on the 'Energising Belfast' project Theme: General Comment The attached letter has been submitted to the Energising Belfast Project Team on behalf of the FSB Northern Ireland.
SONI-C11-6 Preparing for street heat networks served by big heat pumps 18 Nov, 2022 - 9:05pm	
Author: <i>Andy Frew</i>  1	Preparing for street heat networks and big heat pumps Theme: General Comment Power cables in the street should be arranged so as not to obstruct the installation of insulated pipe networks for district heating, and ideally installed at the same time to minimise traffic disruption. Power network plans in Belfast should be capable of changes to connect large heat pumps, possibly next the river or harbour. To limit the overall size of the power system needed to decarbonise heat supplies to NI homes, big heat pumps linked to street heat networks in urban areas should be running at different times from heat pumps in rural areas, ideally when wind energy is available. This can be helped by linking large scale storage of hot water above ground and warm water underground to supplying heat in cold weather. If heat supply in urban areas can be decarbonised like this first, we can concentrate on insulating rural homes to reduce loads on the extended rural power grid, removing boilers burning imported oil that has high carbon emissions. hide ^

SONI-C11-5 Anon - FW01 26 Oct, 2022 - 12:00pm	
Author: <i>Hidden</i>	General Feedback Theme: General Comment I feel I have been provided with all the relevant information and I am satisfied with the level of expertise at this consultation event. Ronan from SONI provided a very good presentation. Based on the information provided, I am supportive of this proposal.
	Topics of Interest Theme: General Comment I am interested in the topics of, legal, material assets, statutory process, undergrounding of cabling and planning.
SONI-C11-4 Anon - MAC03 19 Oct, 2022 - 5:00pm	
Author: <i>Hidden</i>	Potential Disruption Theme: General Comment I am concerned about potential disruption to businesses. Would cabling along the Westlink be a potential solution?
	Non project related issue - Grid Connection Theme: General Comment I am concerned that small businesses are struggling to connect to the grid and I would like to see an improvement in this area.
	General Feedback Theme: General Comment I have been provided with all the relevant information regarding this proposal and I am satisfied with the level of expertise at this consultation event. I am supportive of this proposal and the benefits for economic growth and reducing emissions. These benefits should be promoted and explained.

SONI-C11-3

Anon - MAC02

19 Oct, 2022 - 5:00pm

Author: *Hidden*

General Feedback

Theme: General Comment

I am satisfied with the level of expertise provided at this consultation event. I feel I have been provided with the relevant information. I am not yet decided on whether I support this proposal

SONI-C11-1

Energising Belfast Project

27 Oct, 2022 - 3:18pm

Author: *Sean Boyle*

Four Winds Environmental Enhancement

Theme: General Comment

I support, in principle, the proposed infrastructure improvements proposed in the Energising Belfast Project.

The opportunity to remove the overhead power lines and pylon infrastructure in the Four Winds area, is one which must be seized upon, when the network upgrades are being implemented. As a home owner living under the 6 line 110kv cables, and immediately adjacent to an overbearing pylon, I can testify to the negative impact this outdated and unsuitable technology has on the local environment.

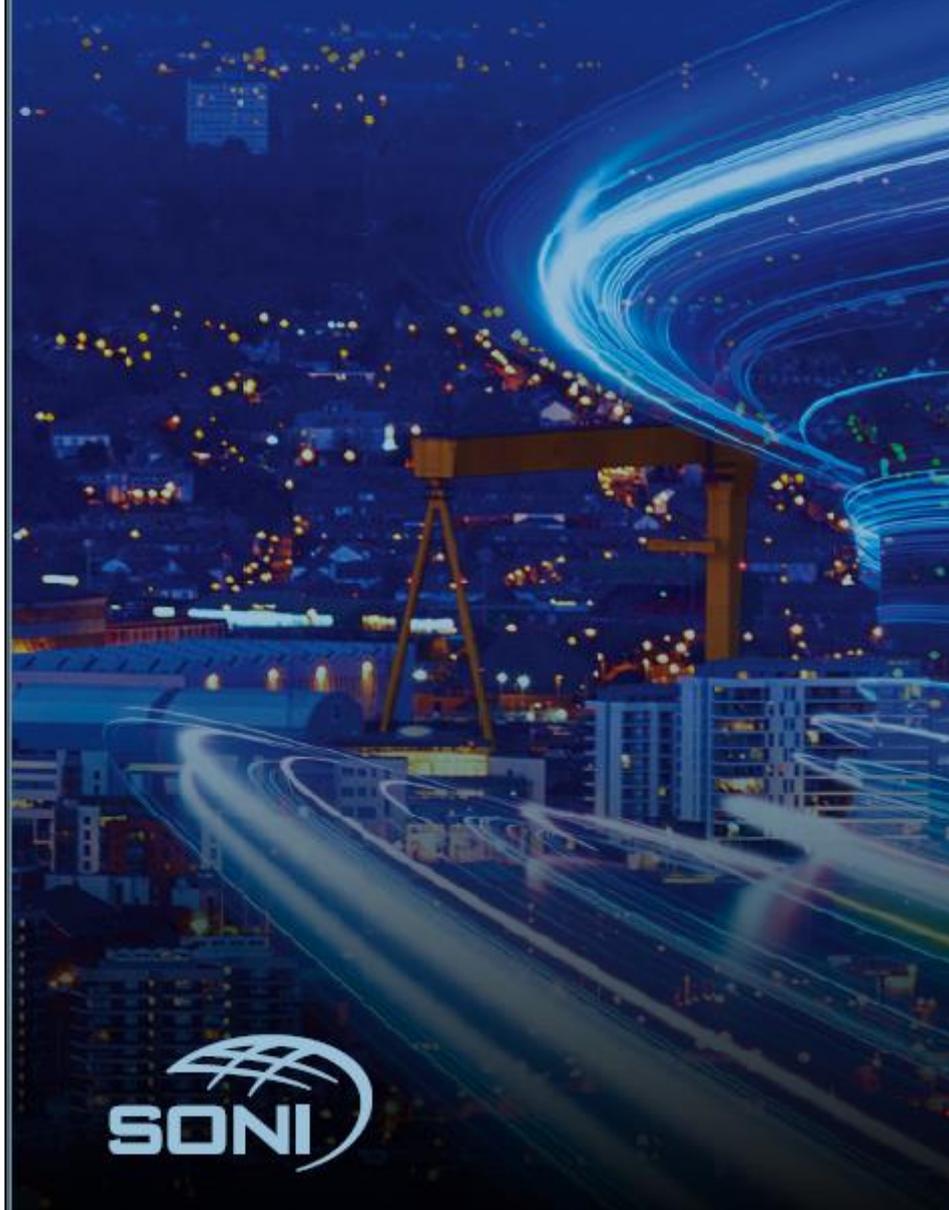
There is however a lack of detail in the proposals, albeit this Project is clearly at an initial stage and I like many of the neighbours I have spoken to, would welcome more substantive details on the enhancements proposed.

[hide ^](#)

APPENDIX 3: Project Brochure



Energising
BELFAST
Upgrading the electricity grid for a cleaner energy future





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 economic price possible. The grid safely brings power from generators and sends it to NIE Networks. They then supply electricity to every home, farm, community and business in Northern Ireland via their distribution network.

Investing in and improving the transmission 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 cleaner energy future.

What is the 'Energising Belfast' project?

The 'Energising Belfast' project will ensure that Belfast City Centre, its people and its businesses have the clean energy needed to grow.

A thriving city centre is vital to the prosperity of the entire city and region and this project will deliver a grid ready to power the clean energy transition. This scheme will support the aspirations of Belfast City Council's 'Belfast Agenda' to increase the employment and residential population in the city.

The project will future proof the transmission system in Belfast to ensure businesses have capacity and the power they need to expand in the near-term and into the future, supporting the economic and social vision of the Belfast Region City Deal and all partner councils in the Greater Belfast area.

SONI are responsible for the design and securing planning consent and NIE Networks will lead on the construction phase of the project.

The project will deliver a new high-capacity underground cable in Belfast City Centre, as well as a new transformer at Castlereagh Main substation. We're also assessing if it's possible to build new substations at or next to existing sites in the city, or at new sites close by. This will mean we can remove older overhead lines in the future, and prepare the transmission system in the Greater Belfast area for future population and economic growth, as well as the electrification of heating and transport.



Why are we doing this?

Meeting electricity needs

We work to ensure Northern Ireland's electricity needs can be met minute by minute, as well as making plans for future electricity requirements. In doing this, we have identified that parts of the network serving Greater Belfast need to be replaced or upgraded.

Building a reliable system and preparing for renewable energy

Based on our analysis, we've identified a solution so that the electricity network serving Greater Belfast will continue to operate reliably in the near future and be prepared for future economic and population growth. The project will make sure that Belfast residents and businesses have the power they need to facilitate the electrification of heating and transport – as we work to decarbonise the power system for future generations. This is vital if we are to deliver our climate ambition of at least 80% renewable generation by 2050.

What areas will be affected?

A new high-capacity underground cable will connect Donegall Main substation (near Broadway roundabout) to substations at Belfast North Main (off Whittia Street) and Belfast Central Main (off Little Patrick Street), please see map on page 7. We are currently reviewing a range of options and could construct substations at or adjacent to existing substation sites in the city or at new sites close by. A new 275/110 kV transformer will also be installed at Castlereagh Main substation, while some minor modifications will be required to overhead lines at towers within the existing Finaghy substation.

What's the next step?

We're now in Part 2 of our three-part process for Grid Development. During this process, we'll assess our options on sites for new substations in Belfast City Centre and determine the routes for new underground cables, in consultation with local stakeholders. This consultation period will allow us to gather as much information as we can from those who live and work in the area. We're looking at how best to deliver the project, what areas may be impacted and how we keep disruption to a minimum.



What is the study area?

Studies undertaken by SONI have concluded that refurbishment of the existing tower line which passes through Belfast, including several built-up residential areas, is impractical due to the disruption it would cause to residents and the local community.



SONI - Energising Belfast Brochure
Page 6

Following engagement with local key stakeholder groups during Part 1 of our three-part engagement process and using the information from our studies, we're proposing to deliver:

- a new 275/110 kV transformer at Castlereagh Main substation;
- new substations at or near to Belfast North Main (off Whitla Street) and Belfast Central Main (off Little Patrick Street);
- a new high-capacity underground cable connecting Donegall Main (near Broadway roundabout) to Belfast North Main and Belfast Central Main.

This option is supported by NIE Networks, who construct, maintain and own the grid infrastructure. We're committed to engaging, communicating and consulting with you on an ongoing basis.

Over the coming months, we will use your feedback and collaboration to help inform our final plans for this project.

SONI - Energising Belfast Brochure
Page 7

What are the benefits?

Security and reliability of supply: These improvements will build a more resilient and reliable grid, making sure that everyone has power when and where they need it.

Meet future needs: These improvements will help meet the growing and changing electricity needs of Greater Belfast. This includes the electrification of transport systems, vehicles, heating and the development of housing, offices and large energy users.

Sustainability: This project will make sure that Belfast has the capacity and flexibility in the grid to handle greater levels of renewable energy, to deliver our climate ambition of at least 80% renewable generation by 2030.

Economic: These improvements will support future investment, economic and population growth – aligning with the vision of the Belfast Region City Deal.



How can I get involved?

There are many ways to get involved and provide feedback.

These include:

• Visiting the SONI Consultation Portal: <https://consult.soni.ltd.uk/>

• Attending one of our consultation days:
12-2pm or 4pm-7pm, **19th October 2022** at the MAC, Belfast, BT1 2JL.
12-2pm or 4pm-7pm, **26th October 2022** at the Four Winds, Castlereagh, BT8 6JX.

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

• Write your own submission and freepost it back to us at 'Energising Belfast, SONI, Castlereagh House, 12 Manse Road, Belfast BT6 9RT'.

• You can follow us on LinkedIn - [SONI Ltd](#) or Twitter - [@soni_ltd](#), or visit our project webpage for specific information about the project.

We welcome your feedback up until 31 October 2022.

Our approach to consultation and engagement

We have six clear pledges which reinforce our approach to engaging with our stakeholders in the development of projects like this.

1. Deliver information in a clear, transparent, and accessible way.
2. Encourage participation and provide opportunities to engage.
3. Build a trusted working relationship with stakeholders.
4. Listen to and consider feedback.
5. Respect people, their property and their communities.
6. Act with integrity, honesty and fairness.

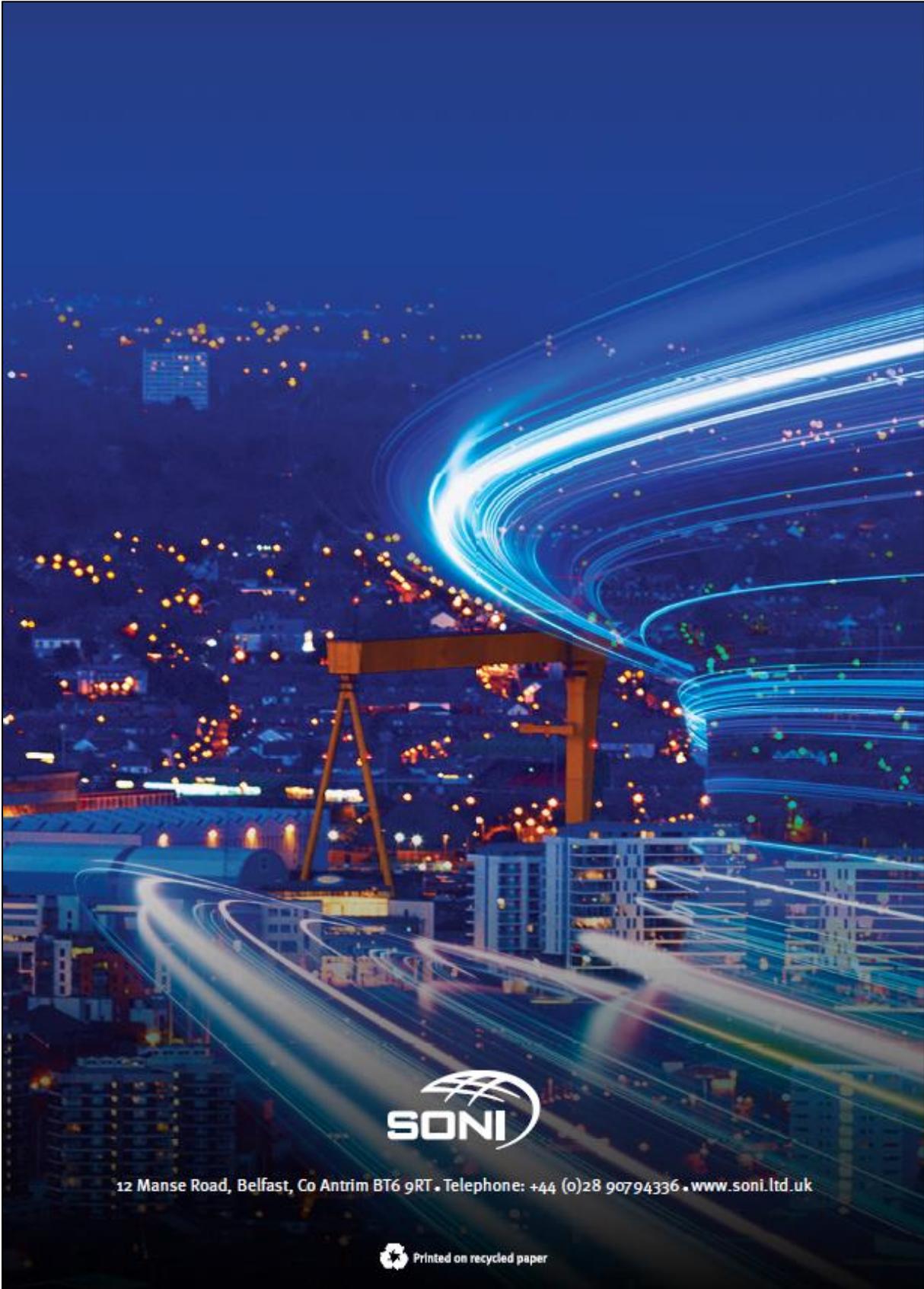
We're inviting you to give feedback on the Energising Belfast project.

We encourage you to engage with us and have your say as early as possible during the consultation period.

SONI - Energising Belfast Brochure
Page 8



SONI - Energising Belfast Brochure
Page 9



12 Manse Road, Belfast, Co Antrim BT6 9RT. Telephone: +44 (0)28 90794336 • www.soni.ltd.uk

 Printed on recycled paper

APPENDIX 4: Correspondence and Engagement with Elected Representatives

Figure 1: An example of the first correspondence sent to engage with elected representatives, here with South Belfast SDLP MP, Claire Hanna.

Dear Claire,

I hope you are well.

I am writing to you regarding the 'Energising Belfast' project, which will install a new high-capacity underground cable in Belfast City Centre. The project will also require new substations in the City Centre to support the electricity network in the Greater Belfast area. This will enable older, existing overhead lines to be removed in future.

Energising Belfast is being developed by SONI, the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland and NIE Networks, with funding approved from the Utility Regulator. The project will require planning permission from Belfast City Council.

This project is necessary to future proof the transmission system in Belfast to ensure businesses have capacity and the power they need to expand in the near-term and into the future, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal.

Energising Belfast will support the decarbonisation of heating and transport and will prepare the grid to facilitate greater levels of clean energy, helping to deliver our climate ambition of at least 80% renewable electricity generation by 2030. During Part 2 of our three-part Grid Development Process, we are undertaking an extensive range of consultation to inform and obtain feedback on the project, and we would be keen to hear your views.

Should you wish to receive more information about the project, we would be happy to arrange a briefing.

You can also attend one of our drop-in consultation days, please see details below:

Wednesday 19th October 2022
The MAC, Belfast (10 Exchange St West, Belfast, BT1 2NJ)
Afternoon session: 12noon - 2pm Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

Or

Wednesday 26th October 2022
The Four Winds (111 Newton Park, Belfast, BT8 6LX)
Afternoon session: 12noon - 2pm Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

In the meantime, should you have any queries, please contact Ciaran McCartan, SONI's Senior Communications and Engagement Specialist.

Yours sincerely,
Jack

Figure 2: An example of the second, 'follow-up' correspondence sent to engage with elected representatives, here with West Belfast People Before Profit MLA, Gerry Carroll.

Dear Gerry,

Further to my previous email, please see below a reminder of our drop-in consultation events for the Energising Belfast project:

Wednesday 19th October 2022
The MAC, Belfast (10 Exchange St West, Belfast, BT1 2NJ)
Afternoon session: 12noon - 2pm Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

Or

Wednesday 26th October 2022
The Four Winds (111 Newton Park, Belfast, BT8 6LX)
Afternoon session: 12noon - 2pm Evening session: 4pm - 7pm

Please feel free to share these details with your constituents.

In the meantime, should you have any queries, please contact Ciaran McCartan, SONI's Senior Communications and Engagement Specialist.

Kind regards,
Jack

Figure 3: An example of the third correspondence sent to engage with elected representatives, here with East Belfast UUP MLA, Andy Allen.

Dear Andy,

I am writing to you to provide an update on our consultation on the 'Energising Belfast' project.

Energising Belfast is being developed by SONI, the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland and NIE Networks, with funding approved from the Utility Regulator.

During Part 2 of our [three-part process](#) for developing the grid, we are undertaking an extensive range of consultation to inform and obtain feedback on the project.

We recently held public consultation events at the MAC, Belfast and the Four Winds, Castlereagh during which we received valuable information to inform our final plans for the project.

This phase of our consultation will remain open until Friday 25th November, and feedback can be provided via SONI's Consultation Portal: <https://consult.soni.ltd.uk/>

Please feel free to share this information with your constituents. I have attached a graphic which can be shared on your social media channels.

In the meantime, should you have any queries, please contact Ciaran McCartan, SONI's Senior Communications and Engagement Specialist, at ciaran.mccartan@soni.ltd.uk.

Yours sincerely,

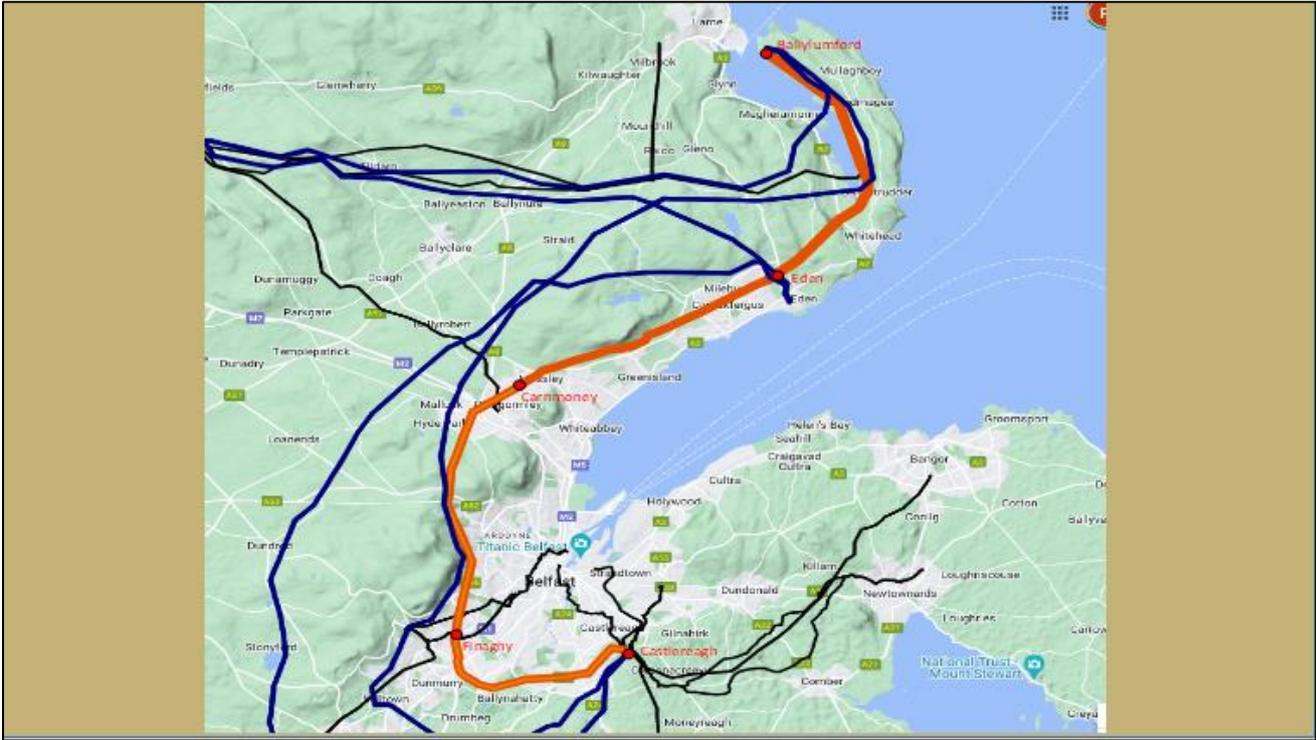
Jack

**APPENDIX 5: Slide Deck Shared During Stakeholder Engagement Meetings for
Part 2a**

Energising Belfast

22 November 2022









Belfast Region City Deal
It's a big deal
#BRCityDeal

The Belfast Agenda
Your future is the Belfast's Community Plan

SONI



Our Energising Belfast consultation is now open until Friday 25 November

IN PERSON.

Attend one of our consultation days.
Wednesday 19 October, 12:00-14:00 or 16:00-19:00, at The MAC, Belfast, BT1 2NJ.
Wednesday 26 October, 12:00-14:00 or 16:00-19:00, at The Four Winds, Castlereagh, BT8 6LX.

ONLINE.

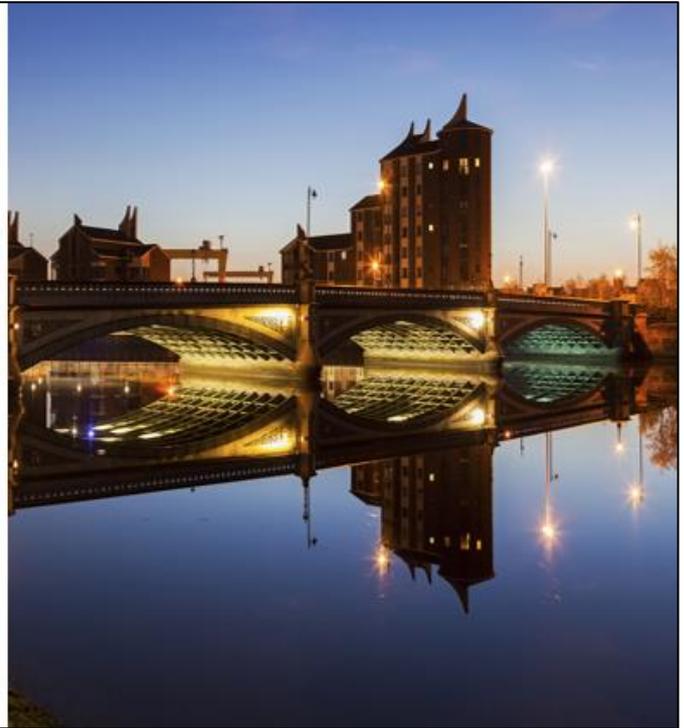
Make a submission via our consultation portal.
<https://consult.soni.ltd.uk>

EMAIL.

Email your submission to us at
energisingbelfast@soni.ltd.uk.

POST.

Send your submission to
Energising Belfast, SONI, Castlereagh House, 12 Manse Road, Belfast BT6 9RT



APPENDIX 6: Energising Belfast Project Webpage

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 economic price possible.

The Northern Ireland Climate Change Act has set targets for at least 80% of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2030, and for net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

To prepare for this significant increase in clean energy, 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 is 'Energising Belfast'?

The 'Energising Belfast' project will ensure that Belfast City Centre, its people and its businesses have the clean energy needed to grow. This project will make sure that Belfast has the capacity and flexibility in the grid to handle greater levels of renewable energy to deliver our climate ambition of at least 80% renewable generation by 2030.

A thriving city centre is vital to the prosperity of the entire city and region and this project will deliver a grid ready to power the clean energy transition. This scheme will support the aspirations of Belfast City Council's 'Belfast Agenda' to increase the employment and residential population in the city.

The project will future proof the transmission system in Belfast to ensure businesses have capacity and the power they need to expand in the near-term and into the future, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal and all partner councils in the Greater Belfast area.

What are the benefits of this project?

The project will create a high-capacity underground electricity connection through Belfast which will:

- **Strengthen the network and ensure consistent security of supply**

Improve the efficiency of the electricity system, ensuring a more efficient and secure electricity supply on a sustainable basis.

- **Power up Belfast City Centre for a clean energy future**

Ensure that Belfast residents and businesses have the power they need to facilitate population growth and the electrification of heating and transport, as we work to decarbonise the power system for future generations.

- **Support Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets**

It is projected that Northern Ireland will require at least another 1,300 Megawatts of electricity from clean sources to meet the 80% renewable electricity ambitions for 2030. This means that the grid itself will require unprecedented change, Energising Belfast will ensure that the grid is made stronger and more flexible in order to carry increasing amounts of clean energy like wind and solar. This project will enable this change, supporting the decarbonisation of heat and transport customers in the Greater Belfast area.

APPENDIX 7: Images from Consultation events

Image from Consultation Event at the MAC Belfast, 19th October 2022



Image from Consultation Event at The Four Winds, 26th October 2022



APPENDIX 8: Advertisement for Consultation events



HELP SHAPE A CLEANER ENERGY FUTURE FOR GREATER BELFAST

At SONI we plan for the future of the electricity grid and operate it every minute of every day. As Northern Ireland continues its move towards cleaner energy, the electricity system must also evolve. The grid needs to be made stronger and more flexible to accommodate increasing amounts of clean energy while also meeting the growing needs of our society and the economy.

That's why we are currently planning an upgrade of the electricity grid in Greater Belfast. The 'Energising Belfast' project will strengthen the electricity grid, with a new high-capacity underground cable replacing existing overhead lines from Carrmonee through Belfast to Castlereagh - with new substations to provide additional power into the city centre.

We are in the early stages of the project and intend to submit a planning application in 2023. Before then, we are consulting with local communities, businesses, and all interested parties to hear your views and answer your questions. You are welcome to attend one of our

Public Consultation Days, please see details below:

19 October 2022 (12:00-14:00 or 16:00-19:00)

The MAC, Belfast, 10 Exchange St West, Belfast, BT1 2NJ

Or 26 October 2022 (12:00-14:00 or 16:00-19:00)

The Four Winds, 111 Newton Park, Belfast, BT8 6LX

To find out more about the project you can visit our consultation portal at consult.soni.ltd.uk/browse or email at energisingbelfast@soni.ltd.uk or write to us at Energising Belfast, SONI 12 Manse Road, Belfast, BT6 9RT.

We welcome your feedback up until Friday 25th November 2022.

