

Our Ref:
Your ref:

15 March 2022

Via Email Only:
info@soni.ltd.uk



2 Church Street
Newtownards
BT24 4AP

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: draft Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland (NI), 2021 – 2030

Thank you for the notification of the consultation in relation to the draft Transmission Development Plan. I am responding in my capacity as Principal Planner from the Local Development Plan (LDP) section of the Council's Planning Department.

It is recognised that SONI has a key role to play in the implementation of Northern Ireland's new Energy Strategy to achieving an average of at least 70% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030. This is an important step towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. It is recognised that this transition will require investment in the transmission network to ensure secure, safe, delivery of power to residents and businesses within the Borough. It is also noted the Network Asset Replacement Projects and Development Projects in the South East Planning Area for the next decade. It is recognised that it is essential for all, not least the businesses of the Borough to have access to an affordable, secure supply of energy.

Ards and North Down Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and has developed a 'Roadmap to Sustainability'. The Council's Community Plan (outcome 5) recognises the need for a well-managed sustainable environment.

The Council is currently formulating a Draft Plan Strategy for the Local Development Plan (LDP) which shall set out strategic growth for the Borough over a 15-year timeframe. To support this growth, it needs to be underpinned with the necessary infrastructure. The Council shall be further engaging with SONI on this matter.

Supporting the needs of residents, the local economy and protecting the environment should be key considerations in SONI's assessment of the operational needs of the electricity grid in NI to 2030. As Councils move forward with Local Development Plans, new locally distinct planning policy shall emerge. Plans will also be accompanied by reviews of landscape character areas. The document could perhaps reflect and recognise this new evolution of planning policy emerging through the LDP process with reference to the planning policy cited.

Yours faithfully,

Leona Maginn MRTPI

LDP Principal Planner