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By Email Only: Eimear.Watson@soni.ltd.uk

Date: 8 August 2025

Our Ref: NET/E/BM/1307

Dear Eimear,

**Request for Authority's consent to Extend Connection Offer Timelines,
for a Connection Application for Heron Storage Limited's application for
Kells Ballymena BESS 100MW**

Thank you for your letter received 4 July 2025 (the **Letter**) setting out an application **(the Application)** made under Condition 25(5) of SONI's Transmission Licence ("the Licence") - seeking the Authority's consent for the extension of the period for the making of an offer by SONI to a Connection Applicant, for the connection of a 100MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at Kells Ballymena.

1. Condition 25 of the Licence.

Condition 25(5) provides, so far as relevant, as follows (our underlining added):

"[SONI] shall offer terms for [connection agreements] . . . as soon as practicable and (save where the Authority consents to a longer period, which consent may be given on the application of [SONI] following consultation by [SONI] with the person making the application and such other persons as [SONI] considers may be affected or interested) in any event not more than the period specified in paragraph 7 after receipt by [SONI] of an application containing all such information as [SONI] may

reasonably require for the purpose of formulating the terms of the offer . . .”

Condition 25(7) provides that the “*period specified*” in this case is three months, unless the Authority has consented to a longer period.

2. Background

The application (by the Connection Applicant), for the connection of the 100MW BESS, was deemed effective by SONI on 15 May 2025, with SONI stating it has until 13 August 2025 to make a Connection Offer.

SONI states in the application that there has been a recent influx of applications for connection to the transmission system received, with nine deemed effective in the past four months, in addition to four applications that are currently live. SONI identifies that, due to a lack of capacity on the Transmission System, each of these applications requires technically complex work to identify the Least Cost Technically Acceptable (LCTA) connection arrangement. This involves deployment of personnel over multiple areas, including contractual, technical, infrastructure, legal and regulation. Final arrangements would also have to be signed off in line with SONI’s Delegated Control Framework.

SONI states that the high volume of technically complex applications means ‘it is not possible’ for SONI to process connection applications within statutory timelines.

3. The Application

SONI is applying for an extension of the Condition 25 (7) period for the making of the Connection Offer, from 13 August 2025 to 31 October 2025, because of the difficulty in processing the number of these technically complex applications to the required level of quality control SONI require, to issue the Connection Offer within the statutory timelines.

SONI comments that, if this application is not granted, then SONI would, not be capable of issuing a connection offer by 13 August 2025 and, “*would*

not be able to issue a connection offer to the customer within the statutory timelines as we feel to try and do so could risk breaching Licence Condition 20.” as SONI’s initial consideration has concluded that there are no alternative actions that would facilitate a Connection Offer to be issued by 13 August 2025.

4. Consultation associated with the Application

An application by SONI under Condition 25(5) requires SONI to consult with “...the person making the application for connection, and such other persons as [SONI] considers may be affected or interested.”

SONI has identified affected parties as the Connection Applicant, and NIE Networks (as Transmission Owner).

Consultation with the Connection Applicant

SONI states in the introduction to the application that there has been ongoing discussion with the Connection Applicant, “*regarding not only the nature of the offer to be provided to them but also the need for a short extension.*”

SONI formally consulted the Connection Applicant on the decision to apply for extension, via email of 2 July 2025. On 3 July 2025, the Connection Applicant responded to the Consultation, supporting the request for extension, and stating that “*We note the rationale which you’ve set out and accept SONI’s extension request to on or before 31st October 2025.*”

Consultation with NIE Networks

SONI consulted NIE Networks via email of 2 July 2025. In response to this consultation, on 2 July 2025, NIE Networks responded “*I can confirm that NIE Networks are in support of the extension as described below.*”

5. The Authority's decision

We judge the Application against: (i) our principal objective and general duties set out in Article 12 of the Energy (NI) Order 2003; and (ii) the published Decision Paper Guidance.¹ We consider the Application to have been made in accordance with the Decision Paper Guidance.

Our decision is to:

- (i) accede to the Application considering it properly founded; and (accordingly)
- (ii) give consent to an extension to 31 October 2025 for the purposes of Condition 25(5) as regards the connection application made by the Connection Applicant for the connection of the Kells Ballymena 100MW BESS .

In making this decision we have had proper and full regard to the consultation responses from the Connection Applicant and NIE Networks, and note they both have supported the application for extension.

The Authority is satisfied that we should grant the Application based on the volume and technical complexity of the applications made.

However, we should remind SONI that the grant of consent (for an extension of time) relayed in this letter does not absolve SONI of its Condition 25 obligation to make a connection offer to the Connection Applicant as soon as practicable. The newly substituted Condition 25 period does not affect that key licence obligation.

This decision shall be published and placed in the Electricity Register.

We trust this is satisfactory. If you have any queries, please contact Jody O'Boyle.

¹ [Electricity Connections Decision FINAL.pdf \(uregni.gov.uk\)](#).

Yours sincerely,



Brian Mulhern

Director of Networks and Energy Futures
Duly authorised by the Authority