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

**Date: 10 November 2025**

**Our Ref: NET/E/BM/1389**

Dear Eimear,

**Request for Authority's consent to Extend the Connection Offer Timelines for a Battery energy storage system (BESS) at EP Ballylumford Limited (MEC= 300 MW).**

Thank you for your letter received 31 October 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<sup>1</sup> consent for the extension of the period for the making of an offer by SONI to a Connection Applicant, for the connection of the BESS at EP Ballylumford Limited (MEC= 300 MW) to the Northern Ireland Transmission System.

We start by setting out the relevant terms of Condition 25 of the Licence. We then move to the Application:

**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*

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<sup>1</sup> In this correspondence we use the words "us" "we" "our" "UR" "Utility Regulator" and "Authority" interchangeably to refer to the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation.

*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 BESS at EP Ballylumford Limited, was deemed effective by SONI on 19 August 2025, with SONI stating it has until 17 November 2025 to make a Connection Offer.

SONI states in the application that, “NIEN(TO) has advised that it is not in a position to issue the associated Construction Offer within the agreed Transmission Interface Arrangements (“TIA”) timelines.”

## **3. The Application**

SONI is applying for an extension of the Condition 25 period for the making of the Connection Offer from 17 November 2025 to 24 November 2025.

SONI comments in the application that it was advised by NIE Networks on Friday 24 October it would be unable to get across the Ballylumford Battery Construction Offer on 3 November in line with its agreed Transmission Interface Arrangements (“TIA”) timelines, due to members of staff being on leave. Therefore, NIE Networks stated that “we won’t be able to get the Approval Paper signed on time.” This was originally scheduled to be issued on 3 November 2025, NIE Networks highlighted to SONI that it will issue “the formal Construction Offer on 7 November 2025.”

As part of the correspondence between NIE Networks and SONI, SONI

have queried if NIE Networks can issue a 'draft' Construction Offer by 3 November, allowing SONI to do continue processing this offer and stay within its licence standard date, NIE Networks has since stated that although a possibility, it will not be able to include any costs or connection charges, a section that wont be finalised until the formal offer estimated as 7 November 2025.

SONI have therefore asked for a one week extension to account for this delay on behalf of NIE Networks and further added to its application that, *"it may be possible to issue the Connection Offer earlier."* Depending on whether there are any questions regarding the costs or charges.

#### **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 consulted with the Connection Applicant and NIE Networks.

##### **Consultation with the Connection Applicant**

SONI sent an email consulting the Connection Applicant on the decision to apply for extension via email, on 29 October 2025. The Connection Applicant has not yet responded at the time of the application.

On 29 October 2025, SONI consulted NIE Networks (TO) on the decision to apply for extension. On 29 October 2025, NIE Networks replied to the consultation, stating *"we support this extension."* And further stated that, *"There were also circumstances beyond our control last week that led to this delay."* Claiming that it will try get the construction offer across on Monday evening.

The UR have since been in contact with SONI, SONI stated that it had only received a drafted Construction Offer as of 5 November, without the inclusion of connection charges or costs associated, this is despite the indication provided by NIE Networks that a draft should be issued on 3 November. At the time of drafting SONI confirmed that a construction offer has been issued on the afternoon of 6 November 2025

## **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.<sup>2</sup> We consider the Application to have been made in accordance with the Decision Paper Guidance.

We note that this extension request was to facilitate the delay in the provision of a Construction Offer which could not be provided by NIE Networks within the timelines, as members of its staff are on leave. As a principle we consider justifications such as “leave” or “insufficient management time” or “manpower shortages” are not an adequate response for a licensee to not fulfil its duties under its requirements. As such we will be writing to NIE Networks separately on this matter.

We recognising that this delay is outside the control of SONI, and SONI have only requested an addition week to process the offer, therefore our decision is to:

- (i) accede to the Application considering it properly founded; and (accordingly)
- (ii) give consent to an extension to 24 November 2025 for the purposes of Condition 25(5) as regards the Connection Application made by the Connection Applicant for the connection of the BESS at EP Ballylumford Limited (MEC = 300 MW).

In making this decision we have had proper and full regard to the consultation responses from the Connection Applicant and NIE Networks.

The Authority is satisfied that we should grant the Application based on the reasons set out in the Application.

We also 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. SONI should particularly consider if any of the other

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<sup>2</sup> [Electricity Connections Decision FINAL.pdf \(uregni.gov.uk\)](https://www.uregni.gov.uk/Electricity_Connections_Decision_FINAL.pdf).

potential options for connection would allow for the making of a connection offer, earlier than 24 November 2025.

We also encourage SONI to continue to engage with the applicant in a meaningful manner and to update estimated timelines when more relevant information enables it to do so.

Our expectation is that further applications for Condition 25 type extensions will be presented in accordance with our observations.

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.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Mulhern  
**Director of Networks and Energy Futures**  
**Duly authorised by the Authority**