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

Date: 19 June 2026

Our Ref: NET/E/JF/1483

Dear Eimear,

**Request for Authority's consent to Extend the Connection Offer
Timelines for the Magherakeel Battery Project at Herons Storage (MEC
50MW and MIC 50MW)**

Thank you for your letter received 8 June 2026 (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 Battery Storage Project (50MW MEC and 50MW MIC), 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 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 initial application (by the Connection Applicant) for the connection of the Magherakeel BESS at Heron Storage (MEC = 50 MW & MIC = 50 MW), had been received by SONI on 14 February 2025, this was then deemed effective on 26 March 2025, with SONI stating it had until 24 June 2025 to make a Connection Offer.

This is the second such application that has been submitted to the Utility Regulator, seeking consent for the extension of the period for the making of an offer by SONI to this Connection Applicant.

The First Application for extension relating to this Applicant was submitted on 30 April 2025, for the connection of Heron Storage Limited's Magherakeel Battery Project (MEC = 50 MW & MIC = 50 MW). This extension was requested from 24 June 2025 to 24 June 2026; this was then granted by the Authority on 17 June 2025¹. The rationale behind this request claimed that there was no further capacity for generation where the connection applicant sought to connect the BESS system (Magherakeel Substation).

However, SONI outlined that the Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) did not contain specific provisions on the modelling of a BESS, in connection studies. SONI observed that wind generation and market prices may not be perfectly correlated, and there would be a “*significant risk*” BESS schemes “*may seek to discharge at times when there is a high market price but also significant local wind availability.*”

The Second Application (made in the Letter) is for consent – under Condition 25(5) - for a longer substituted Condition 25 period out (from 24 June 2026) to 14 August 2026, this is the second extension application

¹ [2025.06.17 SONI C25 Magherakeel BESS DL 24 June 26_0.pdf](#)

made by SONI in relation to this Applicant.

SONI highlights that following completion of studies for the BESS, *“a new issue emerged relating to a potential overload on the Omagh – Strabane B circuit, in conditions where the wind is low, the BESS is charging and C30 is on.”*

3. The Application

SONI is applying for an extension of the Condition 25 period for the making of the Connection Offer from 24 June 2026 to 14 August 2026. SONI has outlined why this period is required, due to issues surrounding a potential overload on the Omagh – Strabane B circuit. SONI states that it has *“carried out extensive studies around this issue, using deterministic snapshot cases as well as a full year probabilistic assessment to investigate this further.”*

SONI states it has considered an alternative option of connecting the scheme to Dromore, instead of Magherakeel, which would require a long circuit as well as a substation extension. SONI concluded that due to Dromore also having capacity issues, it would require deeper reinforcement and an extension to assess and to allow time to conclude their analysis for the BESS and consider, review and document their approach.

We also note that SONI consulted on the Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) at the end of 2025² and has stated that it has prepared a report to the UR seeking approval to update the TSSPS to include the BESS provisions amongst other proposed changes. This will be important to the consideration of the offer.

SONI says if the extension is not granted, then SONI would not be able to issue a Connection Offer in line with Condition 20 (Operation of the Transmission System and the System Security and Planning Standards) of the SONI Transmission Licence, within the Condition 25 offer timeline.

² <https://consult.soni.ltd.uk/consultation/transmission-system-security-and-planning-standards-review>

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 consulted with the Connection Applicant via email of 3 June 2026. In the Connection Applicant’s formal response, via email of 8 June 2026, they have stated that *“We agree to the extension set out below.”* Along with this, the Applicant also requested access to the information that was used to model the connection offer.

On 4 June 2026, SONI consulted NIE Networks (TO) on the decision to apply for extension. On 8 June 2026, NIE Networks replied to the consultation, stating *“NIE has no objection to this application for an extension.”*

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.³ 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 14 August 2026 for the purposes of Condition 25(5) as regards the Connection Application made by the Connection Applicant for the connection of the BESS.

³ [Electricity Connections Decision FINAL.pdf \(uregni.gov.uk\)](https://www.uregni.gov.uk/Electricity%20Connections%20Decision%20FINAL.pdf).

In making this decision we have had proper and full regard to the consultation responses from the Connection Applicant and NIE Networks. We note that the Connection Applicant and NIE Networks have supported the application, whilst acknowledging the related queries raised by the Connection Applicant.

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

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 (jody.oboyle@uregni.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,



Jillian Ferris

Head of Networks

Duly authorised by the Authority