



www.soni.ltd.uk

Castlereagh House

12 Manse Road, Belfast BT6 9RT

Telephone +44 28 907 94336

Email info@soni.ltd.uk

Hilda Clements, Principal Planner,
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Strule House
16 High Street
Omagh
Co Tyrone
BT78 1BQ

developmentplan@fermanaghomagh.com

21st December 2018

[By email]

Re: Submission to the *Draft Plan Strategy for the Fermanagh & Omagh Local Development Plan 2030*

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your email of 25th October 2018 in relation to the *Draft Plan Strategy for the Fermanagh & Omagh Local Development Plan 2030*. SONI welcomes the opportunity to comment and requests this submission is taken into consideration in the preparation of the plan.

SONI, which has been part of the EirGrid Group since 2009, is responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity – now and in the future. SONI develops, manages and operates the electricity transmission grid. This brings power from where it is generated to where it is needed throughout Ireland. The grid also supplies power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of electricity and powers the distribution network. The distribution network in turn supplies electricity to homes, businesses, schools, hospitals, and farms.

The electricity transmission grid's importance in supporting our society and economy should not be understated in the local area plan. SONI values the inclusion of policies and objectives in the future plan to protect strategically important utilities infrastructure, such as the electricity transmission grid and to improve connectivity, in terms of electricity, within the city and to adjoining jurisdictions. All inclusions which support the a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity are needed for SONI to successfully implement its strategy for grid development, which is imperative to meeting targets for electricity generation, climate change, and security of energy supplies.

In relation to *Draft Policy PU02 - Overhead Electricity Lines*, SONI supports this provision and the council's approach to essential electricity infrastructure projects that will support economic and social development. SONI appreciates the policy clarification which highlights the challenge in routing in particular overhead power lines because of the nature of generator and demand locations.



SONI supports and understands the principle underlying the criteria and will always seek to comply, having regard to routing principles. However, it may not always be possible to avoid sensitive locations and features such as AOBNs, which are often spatially very large designations. SONI carefully plans its routes and sites for new transmission grid infrastructure based on a careful consideration of a wide range of issues. The final route for any line is a carefully considered balance of technical, environmental and landowner considerations. Where it is not possible to avoid an avoid sensitive locations and features, SONI will always document reasons for same.

For clarity it is suggested that It additional wording in included that areas of landscape sensitivity be avoided **where possible**, following a consideration and balancing of all issues. This wording will ensure that all location options are considered in the development of new infrastructure, each having due regard for the particular receiving environment. It should be noted that many of the existing transmission lines already travel through or approximate to sensitive locations and features and any proposal for works in the future for the purpose of repairing and renewing these lines should be supported in policy to ensure the secure and reliable supply of electricity across Northern Ireland.

SONI would welcome the opportunity to meet with the planning team at Fermanagh & Omagh District Council to explore the matters raised in this submission and formulate provisions in the plan that reflect the requirements of the electricity transmission network.

Should you have any comments in regard of this submission please contact the undersigned. SONI once again welcomes the opportunity to participate in the making of the new plan and look forward to making further submissions in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Tomas Bradley, MRTPI
Senior Planner