

Northern Ireland Energy Stakeholders Support the LirlC Interconnector

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Progress in the development of the LirlC Interconnector between Scotland and Northern Ireland has been welcomed by the chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Economy Committee and a range of Northern Ireland energy stakeholders at an event held at Stormont. Key stakeholders such as NIE, the Utility Regulator and SONI joined politicians and civil servants from the Department of the Economy at an event designed to foster a strong sense of partnership in the delivery of the circa £750 million project, Phillip Brett said.

“This Executive wants to see this project succeed and provide the people of Northern Ireland with the opportunity to use affordable, sustainable and secure power to grow our economy and deliver on net zero. Make no mistake, this Committee is completely behind the building of this essential piece of electricity infrastructure, and we will play a vital role in making sure it becomes a reality on time.”

He added that time is of the essence in moving the project forward and recognised that delay could still leave the success of the project in the balance.

“There is no time for delay, and we as a committee are keen to see a coordinated, committed plan from those in this room to enable this much needed infrastructure investment into Northern Ireland. It is clear that we are charting complex new territory for Northern Ireland here, but we would urge that we do not allow ‘perfect to be the enemy of the good’. We have a moment in time available to us, an opportunity.”

Also contributing to the event was Derek Hynes, Managing Director of NIE Networks who added that NIE was fully behind the project, which he said was a significant benefit to the people of Northern Ireland.

“NIE Networks has been impressed by how Transmission Investment has gone about its business here in Northern Ireland. TAQA Transmission’s recent investment in LirlC is a show of confidence in Northern Ireland’s ability to attract international investment. We look forward to working with the LirlC team to connect this new asset to the grid.”

SONI, the Northern Ireland System Operator Chief Executive Alan Campbell noted that there were big challenges for the system in achieving the Northern Ireland renewable energy and net zero ambitions, but added that those challenges were being overcome,

“We at SONI see LirlC as part of the solution to the challenge of reaching net zero and protecting security of supply and we will work with them on the technical requirements for this.”

Stakeholders agreed that this was an opportunity to develop strategic infrastructure which will provide long-term benefits for Northern Ireland. They also recognised that maintaining the pace of progress and realising the full benefits is complex, relying on timely decisions and inputs from stakeholders in the room.

Founded in 2011, TI is a leading developer and investor in electricity transmission infrastructure assets. TI develops, builds, manages, and operates transmission assets with best-in-class sector knowledge and experience, and manages one of the largest offshore electricity transmission portfolios in Great Britain, consisting of approximately 4GW and £3billion in capital employed. The company was recently acquired by TAQA Transmission, making a commitment to supporting the energy transition and growing in the UK and beyond.

TAQA Transmission is responsible for the planning, construction, operations and maintenance of high-voltage power and bulk water transmission networks within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and beyond. TAQA Transmission provides safe, sustainable, economic, and reliable transmission networks that connect generation plants to distribution companies, as well as other customers.

TAQA Transmission is a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi National Energy Company PJSC (TAQA). For more information, please visit www.taqatransmission.com.

The LirlC interconnector between Scotland and Northern Ireland is expected to be operational by 2032.

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For further information contact Barry Turley on 07734256318