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By email to: [OfgemDataServices@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:OfgemDataServices@ofgem.gov.uk)

Dear Greg

**Consultation on Data Best Practice (DBP) guidance and Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan (DSAP) guidance**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. This letter should be treated as a consolidated response on behalf of UK Power Networks' three licensed distribution companies: Eastern Power Networks plc, London Power Networks plc, and South Eastern Power Networks plc. It is not confidential and may be published on Ofgem's website.

We have reviewed the suite of documents and have a number of comments. Our specific comments on the documents themselves are appended to this letter as Appendix 1. Otherwise, our general comments pertain to: the timing of this consultation; compliance to the guidance documents; and the 2021 Ofgem review on data and digital monopolies.

Generally, the guidance documents and the recommendations within are aligned with other industry best practice, and appear logical. We also note the principles in the guidance documents, and the examples within the supporting information documents. We understand as per paragraph 1.20 of the consultation document that the supporting information documents will be treated as living documents and licensees do not need to adhere to them in order to operate within the licence conditions.

As you will no doubt be aware, DNOs such as ourselves are heavily focussed on finalising their Initial Business Plan Submissions. This coupled with the fact that these documents will not apply to DNOs until RIIO-ED2 commences, means that our review and feedback is reflective of this. In line with Ofgem's standard practice we would expect that DNOs would be consulted regarding the content of these documents prior to their application to DNOs and our response to that future consultation will be more considered. We believe that a good time to conduct this will be when Ofgem consults on the RIIO-ED2 licence conditions in the second half of 2022 and the first quarter of 2023 as practical learning on the application of these documents from other sectors would be valuable input that should be available by then.

Regarding the upcoming Ofgem review on data and digital monopolies in 2021, we would welcome more detail as and when this is available to enable our teams to best plan for this, as electricity distribution companies are in the midst of preparing their RIIO-ED2 Business Plan submissions.

Beyond the inclusion of a Digitalisation Licence Condition for RIIO-2 licensees, it is unclear how Ofgem will monitor compliance, particularly to the principles listed across the two guidance documents covered by this consultation. We would welcome Ofgem publishing their thinking on how they believe compliance to the DBP and DSAP should be measured.

I hope that our response is helpful. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', followed by a stylized flourish.

James Hope  
Head of Regulation & Regulatory Finance  
UK Power Networks

Copy: Matt Webb, Head of Enterprise Data, UK Power Networks  
Steve Mould, Senior Asset Information Engineer, UK Power Networks  
Paul Measday, Regulatory Returns & Compliance Manager, UK Power Networks  
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## Appendix 1

- **Consultation document**

- The definition of “Energy System Data” in paragraph 1.36 is broad e.g. this will technically capture all HR information as we only have such data by virtue of the Act.

Instead, “Energy System Data” should be defined as “Asset and Network Data”. This is immediately more obvious and literal, serving the spirit of the definition’s intention.

It also needs to have caveats for exclusions around where other legislation etc. prevents licensees from publishing e.g. Data Protection Act or advice from security agencies. We note this is mentioned later in the DBP guidance but it would benefit from an explicit paragraph stating this.

- We note in paragraph 1.20 that the non-binding Supporting Information documents may be changed without consultation. We seek clarity on how licensees are to be involved in the making of these changes and how they will know that such changes have been made without an associated consultation.

- **Data Best Practice guidance**

- Principle 2. Use common terms within Data Assets, Metadata and supporting information

This principle raises questions on who sets what would be considered as “common terms” in the energy sphere. The common usage of terms is something that happens organically/naturally over a period of time. Given Network Operators are relatively nascent in publishing their DSAPs, and Ofgem yet to publish their DSAP, this principle is ahead in its thinking. Therefore, we suggest that this Principle instead be:

**“Begin to** use common terms within Data Assets, Metadata and supporting information”

As it stands at the moment, if a licensee does not use common terms, it would be in breach of its licence conditions. This appears to be against the spirit of the principle to encourage network operators to converge towards common terms so that users can better find the data they seek.

- Principle 4. Enable potential Data Users to understand the Data Assets by providing supporting information

In paragraph 3.7, the inclusion of the term “maximum benefit” is too strong, and means a licensee would have to do all it can to allow a user to achieve this. It could be read that the licensee should provide the Data Asset no matter the cost, which would not be in the interest of customers. Furthermore, as it stands, it is not clear how “maximum benefit” would be measured. Therefore, we suggest the removal of “maximum”.

- Principle 6. Learn and deliver to the needs of current and prospective Data Users

This principle needs a caveat on costs or licensees would have to develop products/services at any cost. For instance, a Data User may want a particular widget to be available to use on a licensee website but the cost may be substantial and not envisaged in its price control settlement. Ultimately, licensees are funded by customers, therefore the costs of providing data services should be considered.

- Principle 11. Treat all Data Assets, their associated Metadata and software scripts used to process Data Assets as Presumed Open

In this principle, “all Data Assets” would capture HR, Finance, Customer data – which should all be out of scope. Instead, we suggest replacing “all Data Assets” to “Asset and Network Data”. This is similar to the point we raise at the start of this Appendix, and captures the spirit of the principle.

Furthermore, paragraph 3.22 would benefit from the inclusion of caveats around security/triage. We believe this principle would benefit from an explicit paragraph calling out exceptions to Presumed Open such as privacy laws or security considerations.

- **DSAP guidance**

- The schedules for publishing the Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan included on page 6 are missing a caveat to exclude electricity distribution licensees until the appropriate licence condition for them applies in RIIO-ED2.
- In paragraph 3.15, we believe this paragraph would benefit from the addition of “expect to” before “start” on the second line.