

ANNE MILTON MP

Member of Parliament

for Guildford



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Andrew MacFaul
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AM/SC

14 November 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew MacFaul".

Connections Industry Review 2007-08

I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to your review.

Surrey County Council have been working in partnership with EDF Energy, and tell me that they have listened to, and supported, their plans for improvement. Unfortunately, despite all the plans and promises, their performance continues to decline and this is a serious issue for residents of Surrey generally, and my constituents in and around Guildford. My comment here is limited to the section on performance against standards on metered connections, commissioned by Surrey County Council Highways.

It is clear that you recognise that there is a discrepancy between the complaints submitted to you and the industry's submission of data. It is clearly necessary to address this, as only with accurate data will you be able to enforce any new penalties.

A spreadsheet supplied to me by Surrey County Council for the western half of the county shows a total of 50 faults and 48 service connections/disconnections outstanding for more than 30 days (against figures of 0 and 6 outstanding for less than 30 days), as at 12 November 2008. A large proportion of those are in my Guildford constituency. It is unreasonable for local authorities to be dependent upon one supplier, and reliant upon their delivery of services, but not to have sufficient back-up by Ofgem to ensure compliance.

Surrey County Council's own response to the consultation will point out the following:

- Only 40% of emergencies dealt with on time – half the OFGEM standard

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- Only 20% of multiple unit faults dealt with within 10 days – against an OFGEM standard of 75%
- Only 7% of new works completed within 15 working days – compared to an OFGEM target of 60%

Senior County Council officers are becoming increasingly frustrated and want to see Ofgem better equipped to deal with these delays.

I look forward to seeing the outcome of your consultation and the resulting effective improvements which you propose and implement.

Yes Jenny
Anne Milton

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cc David Munro, Executive Member for Transport, Surrey County Council
Jenny Isaac, Head of Surrey Highways