

Sirs,

Following the issue of your initial proposals for DPCR-5 and, in particular, new supply connections, we would make the following comments:

- Connections incentives and obligations – The main issue that we come up against when applying for new connections is the length of time that it takes to, firstly, get a quote, and secondly, to get the actual works done. Rather than incentives and obligations the main concern is the complete lack of customer service. Having been involved in a number of new connections, it would appear that one of the main reasons for this is a lack of resource. We have a supply upgrade running at the moment with Central Networks who, I would add, have provided a good level of service in the past. Central Networks have passed this particular job onto Carillion to manage on their behalf. This was put on hold because the person who allocates jobs was on annual leave. This is despite the fact that the payment of over £32k has already been paid. We then find that when this person returned, the PM who deals with area has gone on leave so, again, no action can be taken? This results in a two week delay because of staff holidays which, in a competitive market, is totally unacceptable. The lack of competition in this market means that we are unable to get this works done by another company so are completely in the hands of the DNO's. Penalties and incentives are an option but, if there is a lack of resource, then these will have little benefit.
- Price comparency is also key. The above job is an upgrade from 75 kva to 105kva and is costing over £32k. As far as I am aware, we have no option but to accept this quote if this upgrade is required. We are unable to test the market to see if this quote is competitive. Once accepted, there is then no urgency from the DNO to deliver the product.
- We are looking for the DNO's to take some ownership and responsibility to ensure that quotations are delivered in reasonable timescales (not simply 6 weeks as is currently the case) and then every effort is made to complete works in a timely fashion and that staff holidays are not used as an excuse. This is covered in Chapter 11 (Broad measure of Customer Satisfaction). This section is KEY as if this improves, this is the indicator to confirm that the level of service is acceptable. In the case above, however, where the job has been outsourced to Carillion, who would the responsibility lie with (Central Networks or Carillion) and would Carillion have the same liabilities as Central Networks for any Customer service levels?

Regards

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