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AlertMe response to Smart Metering Spring Package – Addressing Consumer Protection Issues

Context

AlertMe provides easy to use and affordable Home Energy Management for consumers that allows them to see their energy in real time and historically. It identifies where they are wasting energy and helps them to make changes to save in the region of 15-25% on energy use and bills and, as a consequence reduce their carbon emissions. AlertMe is the only real time, in-home, online and Smartphone-enabled service of this type in Europe. We provide our services both directly to consumers and also through partners.

Unlike other services that provide visibility alone, we also give consumers control and automation. Our platform is designed to incorporate emerging applications such as the integration and automation of smart home appliances as well as integrating microgeneration (Solar PV). AlertMe is designed to work both independently and in tandem with Smart Meters.

By providing these services we can empower consumers to take control, make decisions that are right for them and help them to achieve sustainable change in energy consumption. In this way we believe that AlertMe can play a significant part in helping the Government to achieve its objectives in CO₂ reduction, energy sustainability and energy security.

AlertMe's response to the consultation covers Chapter 4 – Commercial Interoperability and in particular, Technical Interoperability. This response broadly covers Questions 13-16:

We support Ofgem's approach with regard to Commercial and Technical Interoperability and specifically in how this relates to the presence or absence of communication services and real-time visibility within the home, i.e. The Home Area Network (HAN) and Real Time Display (RTD) or In Home Display (IHD).

As the IHD and HAN are an integral part of the Regulator's and Government's recommendations for the mandatory Smart Meter rollout, we do not believe that consumers receiving their Smart Meter as part of an 'Early Mover' programme should be permanently disadvantaged through an absence of such capabilities.

This view naturally supports the consumer's freedom to switch provider, but also their access to and visibility of data that will enable them to benefit from the introduction of smart technology. A Smart Meter that only provides Smart Data to the utility supplier is of limited benefit to the consumer.

- In the case of 'Early Mover' without a HAN/IHD capability, consideration needs to be given to upgrade or retrofit to bring the consumer proposition up to the minimum standards offered to consumers through the mandatory rollout.

- In the case of 'Early Mover' with HAN/IHD capability, the proposition must be equally portable for the consumer to retain their historical data and integrate their Smart Meter either with the new supplier HAN services or independent third party technology.

AlertMe works both in tandem with and independent of Smart Electricity Meters and this gives the consumer the option to retrofit the technology for real-time visibility of data independent of the 'Early Mover' Smart Meter capability, thus bridging the gap to minimum standards for these consumers.

We believe that consumer empowerment, engagement and buy in are vital for the success of both Smart Meter and Smart Grid strategies; providing an opportunity for *all* consumers to view and manage their home energy information and cost is vital whether they are part of the mandatory rollout programme or an 'Early Mover' programme.

***NB Chapter 3 Privacy** Please note we support Ofgem's proposals with regard to Privacy covered in Chapter 3.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

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