

Received by email
From Tom Riordan, Leeds City Council

We welcome the efforts by Northern Powergrid to engage more widely in relation to its business plan and future direction. Energy supply companies, for a long time, perceived non-supply stakeholders (ie. those who are neither domestic nor commercial customers) as perhaps having little vested interest or reason to input into their business decisions.

However, the needs of both domestic and commercial companies are clearly stated through the voice of local authorities to realise the energy security needed for growth in our localities. In Leeds, the ability to enter into discussion around the requirements of the central business district and beyond is not an issue for any single customer. If Northern Powergrid is to grow its customer base it must do so through meeting the needs of citizens and commercial organisations seeking to develop here.

One of the key requirements that we have highlighted to Northern Powergrid is for reliable and resilient energy infrastructure that looks beyond the needs of industries present in Leeds today. Issues around capacity and network resilience at a national level are a concern and this is true also for all local critical infrastructure.

Discussing and conveying the impact of power outages on a locality at these stakeholder meetings has resulted in the development of a pilot project. This project will enable real-time outage notifications to be sent to the council on an agreed threshold. Although not yet scalable, this demonstrates that the industry is listening to the needs of non-supply 'customers'. This also leads to the further work necessary for vulnerable customers already been highlighted through this consultation.

Clearly there are a range of other issues of importance, not least environmental impacts, energy supply technology and its applications (ie. 'smart' meters and communication by wire) and supply costs.

One outcome from the consultations will be further discussions with Northern Powergrid around the resilience of Leeds and the dependency of a growing complex city on its supplies. Both Leeds and the Leeds City Region are significant centres of manufacturing and the timely availability of new supplies at affordable costs are issues we intend to follow up in the near future.

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