

7th May 2014

The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
9 Millbank
London
SW1P 3GE

Dear Ms Rossington

RIIO-ED1: Electricity Distribution Networks Operators' resubmitted business plans – publication, views and next steps

VONNE (Voluntary Organisations' Network North East) is a registered charity and is the support body for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) in the North East of England. We represent over 600 member charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, networks and social enterprises from across the region with further reach through our many networks. Our aim is to support and promote a thriving, effective VCSE, which contributes to the economic and social development of the North East.

We actively support Northern Powergrid's business plan and their approach to meeting and exceeding their social obligations. This letter explains the background to us working together and our ongoing relationship.

We were approached by Northern Powergrid in 2012 to help them understand how best to carry out their social obligations due to our knowledge and understanding of the sector we represent. Fuel poverty, vulnerable customers facing power loss and communities interested in energy generation or conservation schemes are all important issues and interests for our members.

We now work closely with Northern Powergrid on a range of interests and consider them valuable, responsible and committed partners to working for the best outcome for the VCSE. Many members have told us of their appreciation of the positive, pro-active approach they bring to engaging with the sector.

One of the projects we are piloting together is a community mapping exercise to identify key community members to give a priority call in case of powercut in their area. This has been well received by the community as an excellent proactive initiative and is being reviewed for rollout to other areas.

We recently organised a joint conference on community energy in the North East which was attended by over 100 delegates from the VCSE and received excellent feedback. We are planning on this event being annual and are in early stages of talks to co-ordinate activity around community energy in our region with Northern Powergrid's backing.

Northern Powergrid use our extensive reach into North East communities to encourage people to join the Priority Services Register. With our help they regularly reach nearly 2000 voluntary and community sector subscribers through our ebulletin and more from our regular website updates on their work.

We value the partnership approach and hope that this letter clarifies our support for Northern Powergrid and their ongoing plan for the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Brookes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

Carrie Brookes
Communications Manager
VONNE