

## **The Questionnaire – For customers**

Hello. Thank you for taking the time to complete our questionnaire.

We hope all the questions are clear, but if you have any difficulties please email [connections@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:connections@ofgem.gov.uk).

Once you have completed the questionnaire please send it back to us to the email address above. You need to return the completed questionnaire to us by 31 July 2014.

After we have read your answers we might want to have a chat with you to understand a bit more. We'll try and do this in August.

### Part 1 - About you

Question	Your response
What is your name?	
What is your position?	
What are your contact details?	

### Part 2 - About your business

Question	Your response
What is your company's name?	East Sussex County Council
What is the nature of your company's business?	Local Government
Why do you need to make new connections to the electricity distribution network?	Installation of new and replacement of existing street furniture including street lights, illuminated signs, bollards and traffic signals

What past experience does your business have in getting new connections to the electricity distribution network?	We have procured connections directly and through our street lighting maintenance contractors for over fifteen years. Previous to that Seeboard (DNO at the time) were also our maintenance contractor so arranged things directly.
What areas of the country does your business have facilities in that have required new connections to the electricity distribution network?	East Sussex
What type of connections do you make to the distribution network?	Unmetered connections

### Part 3 - About how you get a new electricity connections to the local grid.

Question	Your response
Does your business manage the process of getting a connection using your own staff, or do you use a consultant to guide you through the process?	Through our own staff and through our street lighting maintenance Contractor. We provide the details and our requirements and our Contractor places the orders.
What issues are important for you when getting a connection? Please rank in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 7 the least important.	<div>4 The cost of connection</div> <div>5 Customer service</div> <div>6 The time it takes to issue a connection quote</div>

	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 The time in which a connection can be made <input type="checkbox"/> 1 The certainty around the cost of connection and the timetable for delivery <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Ability to offer innovative connection solutions <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Other <u>Ability to complete works on site</u> (please specify)
In the past have you had quotes for connection(s) from a range of companies, or solely from the local DNO?  Please tick one box.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A range of quotes – <u>please go to part 4</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Just a quote from the local DNO – <u>please go to part 5</u>

## Part 4 – About how you choose between a range of quotes.

Question	Your response
You've indicated that you normally receive a range of quotes for connection, both from your local DNO and other independent connection providers. When deciding which quote to accept, what factors do you consider?	We <u>do not</u> normally receive a range a quotes but we have done in the past. ICP rates have generally been very similar to local DNO rates as they choose to pitch their prices very close. As the rates have been very similar and because they require batches of work to make it worth their while we have chosen to continue using the DNO as the ICP's seem to offer little advantage. Not all parties are prepared to sign to legal agreement required by DNO
Please rank these factors that you described in the previous question in order of importance to you, with 1	1. <u>Ability to complete work when and as required</u> 2.Price 3.Legal agreement

being the most important.	4. 5. Etc.
Please give an indication of who you have tended to award work to.	<p><b>Please tick one box only.</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Always the DNO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mainly the DNO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> About half and half between the DNO and others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mainly an ICP or IDNO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always an ICP or IDNO</p>
What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?	ICP only willing to undertake batches of work Pricing at DNO rates ICP not confident in DNO area Legal agreement required by DNO (take it or leave it approach by DNO) Scope of work allowed by DNO Resolving future issues
How has your view on who to award work to changed with experience?	ICP's seem like a good idea but are unable to genuinely compete on equal terms. An ICP would only work if the scope broadens and the ICP is based locally and able to undertake work as and when required.
When would you only seek a quote from the local DNO?	All of the time now

### Part 5 – About why you chose to use the local DNO

Before engaging with this process, were you aware that you could use a company other than the local DNO to complete your connection?

☐

**Yes**

☐

**No**

What do you think are the benefits in using a company other than the local DNO to provide a connection?

What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?

What would need to change in order for you to use a different connections provider?

### Part 6 - About how the cost of connections informs the location of new business development

How much opportunity is there for you to freely choose the location of new business developments?

None

How big a factor is the cost of connection in your decision on where to locate your business?

None

## Part 7- Other comments

The questions we've asked are designed for you to give us important information for our review. We'd also welcome any other comments about the market for new electricity connections, or problems you've experienced.

I came into the street lighting industry in 1998 and "Competition in Connections" was on the agenda at the first national meeting I attended. Sixteen years later and it is still not genuinely available to all on an equitable basis. Things have moved forward but progress has been painfully slow.

DNO specific requirements need to be replaced with national standards that allow ICP's to work freely throughout the country with ICP's certified and able to complete the full range of services currently provided by the DNO.

ICP's need to consider their pricing policies and not just pitch their offering at the same level as the DNO.