

To whom it may concern

I wish to express my support for the application to Ofgem by Northern Powergrid entitled 'Customer Led Network Revolution'.

To explain my position, I was linked to the research undertaken by Prof. Harriet Bulkeley and colleagues at Durham University in my role on the project advisory group. I have not been directly involved in the research and do not co-author any of the project outputs.

The project focused upon securing a better understanding of customer behaviours in domestic and business contexts, drawing on a range of methods, including in-depth qualitative analyses and the use of experimental designs. What is important about this approach is that it takes seriously the concept of socio-technical systems - that is the degree to which aspects of norms and behaviour and intertwined with the design and use of specific technologies and systems. This is unusual in the context of research into distribution networks, which are typically technology led, or approached using a quantitative social science research method. Given the challenges facing DSOs to innovate and the necessity to better understand what individuals, households and firms actually do when engaging with energy technologies, including novel smart meter devices and home energy displays, it is vital that research is conducted which can adequately describe and understand these processes of change.

Aside from the findings produced to date, the wealth of data produced by the project is a significant resource, from which future understandings can be built. It is often the case that such datasets take several years beyond the formal end of a project to be fully analysed, interpreted and written up - thus exploited fully.

For all of these reasons, I hope that you can look favourably upon this application.

Yours sincerely,

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