Rollout workshop
22 February 2010

Text from flipcharts used at main feedback sessions

N.B. All content is as produced by the Stakeholders and does not represent a preferred option or view by Ofgem / DECC.

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DRIVERS FOR METER CHANGE

Morning summary

- More time needed as great input but discussions curtailed.
- Industry process review/change – resolve today's issues take forward today's benefits.
- Complexity of installation:-
    - communications
    - in home display etc.
- Meeting customer demands within constraints.
- Commercial Framework:
    - How paid for? – customers
    - Supplier interoperability

Afternoon summary

- Freedom for suppliers
    - Respond to consumer pull
    - Own plans
    - Infrastructure must be there
- Local coordination
    - Access
    - Carbon reduction
    - Communication
    - Fuel poor (social benefits)
    - Links with deployment
    - Third party: practical targets needed; loose vs mechanical
- Lessons from digital switchover should be captured
    - Especially re communication and access
- Minimize asset stranding by common charging frameworks

CONSUMER BENEFITS

Morning summary

- When you replace a meter, it is one of the most important opportunities for a customer to call the Customer Service Centre – call volume.
- Convenience – multi visits.
- Access: to the property, to the meter position, when convenient to the customer.
- Can we give a customer a straight answer on what a smart meter is – currently low level of awareness/interest – managing customer expectations?
- Exceptions handling (could mean additional costs for consumers).

Afternoon summary

- 2-3 tier comms must be considered (e.g. generic messaging, supplier comms).
- Consumer engagement.
- Ensuring positive consumer experience and protection.
- Code of Practice (code of service standards).
- Preparing for a new retail landscape and ensuring protection (consumers + wider industry).
    - So what does it mean?
    - Aftercare.

EXCHANGING METERS

Morning summary

- Little co-ordination between players or gas and electricity when exchanging 2m per annum now.
- Different approaches employed to gain access to consumers – from cold calling to formal letter.
- Ensuring enough trained and competent installers are available will be a challenge – 3-4 years to train a gas meter installer.
- Supply chain can be an issue – gaining enough equipment for other parts of the metering installation (i.e. pressure regulators have been challenges).
- Drivers are different for installers and energy suppliers and this needs to be recognised moving forward

Afternoon summary

- Need to understand the term local co-ordination – clarified as ‘local facilitation’ as local authorities have no wish to control but have the ability to improve roll-out efficiency
- Market led approach is preferable – risk assess options then only use government intervention when it is clear where market delivery is constrained
- All roll-out models will have a significant element of ‘business as usual’ – policy exchanges, meter failures, new installs, PPM to credit (and vice versa)
- Independent and comprehensive smart metering information from government assist the process of ‘getting over the threshold’
- Education is key – some reservations over whether the installer is the person to deliver this (especially when considering the installer is unlikely to an employee of the energy supplier)

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

Morning summary

- Existing data quarterly and processes
- Gaining access/flexibility of work force (smart scale)
- Safety
- Training/skills/QC/QA – smart
- Scale of workforce/supply chain - smart
- Existing v. new problems after installation
- Comms →Han/Wan – smart -→Flats
- Meter disposal
- What is 100%? → Percentage any cost?
    - Existing but will be more public
- Regulatory issue

Afternoon summary

Roll out options to address practical challenges (assuming WAN in place)

- Predominately supplier lead within code of practice
- Co-ordination is facilitated rather than mandated
- Split between national (independent) and local comms (supplier lead work with local authorities) →safety issues
- Facilitate government energy policy, → market led if correct framework in place to incentivise
- Mandate HAN (single option for consumer benefit) →separate WAN box becomes obsolescent
- Support single fuel supplier