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ENA RESPONSE TO OFCOM'S DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2008-2009

Energy Networks Association (ENA) is the industry body that represents licensed electricity and gas transmission and electricity distribution companies in the United Kingdom. ENA appreciates the opportunity to respond to Ofcom's Draft Annual Plan 2008-09. The Energy Telecommunications Users Group (ETUG) is an ENA sub-group responsible for dealing with all matters relating to telecommunications.

The main concerns of the Energy Industry, regarding the replacement of deterministic services (20CN) with non-deterministic services (21CN), are already well documented in previous ENA responses to Ofcom.

- Ofcom's Annual Plan, April 2004 - March 2005
- Letter from ENA Chief Executive to Ofcom Chief Executive August 05
- Phase 1 consultation on the Telecoms Review
- Next Generation Networks – Future arrangements for access and interconnection.
- Letter from ENA Chief Executive to Ofcom Chief Executive October 06

In the Draft Annual Plan 2008-09 you identify that in the process of 21st Century Network (21CN) being deployed: "it is important to ensure that consumers do not suffer during the period of migration. This means making sure that consumers and businesses are informed of any likely impact on their services, and that the risks of service failure are managed carefully".

Since 2004 ENA has engaged with BT, Thus, C&W, Ofcom, Ofgem and other Government bodies to highlight the Energy Industry's concerns about the risk of service failure likely to be introduced through the migration of private wire services from the existing legacy platform (20CN) to NGN (21CN).

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This active engagement has led to significant attention being given to the issues the Energy industry has raised over the past 4 years. Unfortunately the risks to the Energy Industry's protection and control services are still very real and require immediate clarification, in order that a suitable timeframe remains available in which to mitigate those risks. The possible impact on the industry's ability to support the Critical National Infrastructure must be considered and monitored by Ofcom, as ongoing dialogue takes place.

Although BT, Ofcom and Ofgem have been very receptive to the concerns expressed by ENA on behalf of the Energy Industry, the fundamental questions raised have still to be answered:

- Can Telcos provide private wire services compliant with the Energy Industry specified requirements?
- How much will the services cost?
- When will the services be available?
- Can a notice period of 5 years be given?

Conclusion

ENA is concerned that Ofcom's draft annual plan has again overlooked the concerns already expressed by the Energy Industry.

If Ofcom wishes to effectively implement a strategy for fixed telecoms that will be of wider economic benefit to UK plc, I would suggest that securing clarity from BT about their long-term intentions, supported by facts and figures, be added to your key areas for 2008/09.