

REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF EDF ENERGY

Report of the Director of Environment

Author: Alan Armson, Strategic Client Manager, Hertfordshire Highways,
Tel: 01707 356552

Executive Member: Derrick Ashley

1 Purpose of the Report

To update the Scrutiny Committee on the performance of EDF Energy in dealing with street lighting electricity supply faults and new connections.

2 Summary

2.1 The report provides an update on actions taken by EDF Energy to improve their service for the repair of street lighting electricity supply faults and new electrical connections and reviews current performance.

2.2 The report also provides some details of what is happening outside Hertfordshire and gives an update on initiatives such as Competition in Connections and the Rent-a-jointer schemes.

3 Conclusions

3.1 The report concludes that progress continues to be made leading to some improvements in the level of service provided by EDF Energy. This has been achieved through the implementation of better working arrangements and communications between Hertfordshire Highways and EDF Energy. Further improvements are being sought.

3.2 The number of outstanding connections remains high. This is always dependent on the number of jobs added in any one month.

3.3 Discussions between Hertfordshire Highways and EDF Energy about Competition in Connections continue. Investigations are concentrating on developing a local Rent-a-jointer service to speed up electrical connections.

- 3.4 Having considered the information contained in the report, the Committee will need to decide whether and how further scrutiny of this issue should be undertaken.

4 Background

- 4.1 The two previous reports on EDF to the Environment Scrutiny Committee (17th June 2003 and 21st October 2003) explained the general background to this area of the highway service and the current levels of performance achieved. In April 2003 the Executive Member wrote to the Minister for Energy and Construction expressing concern about the level of service provided by the local electricity supplier, then 24Seven. This letter and the minister's reply were circulated to Members.
- 4.2 Efforts by Hertfordshire Highways and EDF Energy staff to maintain and improve on performance continue. Regular meetings between staff from both parties help to resolve any outstanding issues.
- 4.3 This report also looks into the issue of Competition in Connections, indicates what is happening elsewhere in the country and gives some background as to what has been done by other bodies involved.
- 4.4 The Executive Member held a meeting with EDF (12th March 2004) and a verbal report on the meeting will be provided to committee.

5 Fault Repair

- 5.1 A fault in this instance is a discontinuity in electrical supply to a street light or illuminated road sign.
- 5.2 The backlog of street lighting faults has reduced month on month since July 2003. The table below shows performance achieved since June 2003. It show the figures reported to the Committee in October and including cycle time to repair and percentage completed within EDF Energy's charter timescale (currently 14 days).

	Number of Faults			Average Cycle Time (Days)	% Meeting Charter (14 Days)
	Received	Closed	Backlog		
June	100	103	114	21	61
July	96	96	114	28	44
August	65	95	84	18	39
September	91	104	71	12	68
October	69	71	69	14	74
November	80	98	51	15	69
December	56	64	43	14	46
January	65	67	41	26	83

- 5.3 The slight increase in November is due to a combination of the end of British Summer Time, increasing ground moisture levels and the seasonal increase in customer-reported faults, usual at this time of the year. The 83% compliance with their customer charter in January is the best figure achieved to date by EDF Energy and their fault backlog is at its lowest on record. The average cycle time was high in January since it included some old jobs left incomplete from November and December. Figures for February will be available at the meeting on 23 March.
- 5.4 This overall continual improvement has been achieved by taking the following actions over and above those identified in the previous report;
- Hertfordshire Highways' Works Team reorganised to allocate staff responsible for the reporting of faults and liaison with EDF Energy at each area office;
 - EDF Energy has increased the resource level working to repair this type of fault, and
 - Hertfordshire Highways' officers have attended EDF Energy regional seminars, designed to further improve communication and ultimately delivery of the service.
- 5.5 Whilst these improvements are welcomed, further improvements are being sought to ensure that all links in the street lighting service are to a high standard.

6 New Connections

- 6.1 Electrical connections to the supply network to feed new lights or signs or existing units moved by more than 5 metres are classified as new connections.
- 6.2 The previous report (21st October 2003) to the Scrutiny Committee outlines the changes within EDF Energy to improve the service over that provided previously by 24 Seven.
- 6.3 Hertfordshire Highways has resourced appropriately to deal with the high volume of connection works that occur throughout the year. Personnel have been reallocated to create a structure that better reflects the need to co-ordinate with EDF Energy.
- 6.4 There are now four officers (previously one) within Hertfordshire Highways' Works Team each is responsible for dealing with one quarter of the County. This aligns with the devolution of resources to area level and gives the four local offices greater control of street works.
- 6.5 EDF Energy has now introduced a dedicated co-ordinator for scheme work (projects with more than 10 lighting units).
- 6.6 EDF Energy's recent co-location of co-ordination and resources departments at Potters Bar should facilitate a closer working

relationship between both parts of the connections operations. This has contributed to further improvements which include:

- proactive feedback from EDF Energy with works start and finish dates, and
- better reinstatement work

6.7 Information on the numbers of orders awaiting connections is produced and monitored by the Works Team of Hertfordshire Highways. Each week these figures are compared to those that EDF Energy produces. The table below gives figures for the previous 5 months. It relates to number of orders placed and not to numbers of individual units.

New connection Orders 2003/2004			
Month	New	Completed	Outstanding
September	142	67	279
October	61	72	268
November	41	60	249
December	33	35	247
January	54	39	262

6.8 The enhanced working arrangements between Hertfordshire Highways and EDF Energy outlined above, together with those detailed in the previous report (21st October 2003), have resulted in improved monitoring processes for these outstanding orders, leading to a clearer understanding of their status at any particular time.

6.9 As a result of recently introduced, more detailed monitoring, the status of the 262 orders outstanding at the end of January 2004 can be broken down as follows;

- 113 with Hertfordshire Highways to install new equipment, instruct EDF when equipment is ready for connection, clarify location details or adjust locations following local problems, and
- 149 with EDF under way or planned.

7 Competition in Connections

7.1 There has been widespread concern for many years over the cost and level of service from Distribution Network Operators (DNOs). EDF Energy currently performs this role in Hertfordshire. With competition among energy suppliers from the mid 1990's there was a desire for a more open market in the provision of network connections.

7.2 In 2000 the Office for Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) agreed to the formation of the Electricity Connection Steering Group (ECSG) and a separate Unmetered Connections Steering Group (UCSG) was also formed.

7.3 These national working groups have addressed and resolved a number of areas of concern. These include:

- a national accreditation scheme for jointers through Lloyds,

- a national inspection regime for contractors through Lloyds,
- the agreement of standards of service,
- the agreement of national and local specifications,
- procedures for road adoptions and, most importantly,
- the possibility for local authorities to employ contract Rent-a-jointers.

- 7.4 EDF Energy is the first and only DNO to offer the Rent -a-jointer scheme to all of its unmetered supply customers, although other DNO's have offered the scheme on a limited basis. However, where the scheme has been available local authorities have not been quick to take up this service. Those that have report that it can be hard to manage and that DNO's impose restrictive conditions.
- 7.5 The first trial in the UK of Rent-a-jointer was carried out in Kingston upon Hull during the summer of 2001. It is reported that the scheme proved to be more costly than the conventional arrangement.
- 7.6 Hertfordshire Highways continues its investigations with EDF Energy on Rent-a-jointer and other similar arrangements. EDF Energy has indicated that closer contact with their exiting jointers may allow the development of a model that overcomes problems experienced elsewhere.

8 HCC Property Services

The Energy Manager reports that EDF provide a good level of service to metered supplies to properties in the County portfolio. These are governed by different rules and regulations than those for unmetered highway supplies.

9. Access to Services

This report has no implications for access to services.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications for the County Council with regard to energy supply faults as these are actioned by EDF at their cost.
- 10.2 The cost of connections for new supplies are covered as part of the scheme costs associated with a particular project.

11 Conclusions

- 11.1 The report concludes that progress continues to be made leading to some improvement in the level of service provided by EDF Energy. This has been achieved through the implementation of better working arrangements and communications between Hertfordshire Highways and EDF Energy. Further improvements are being sought.
- 11.2 The number of outstanding connections remains high. This is always

dependent on the number of jobs added in any one month.

- 11.3 Discussions between Hertfordshire Highways and EDF Energy about Competition in Connections continue. Investigations are concentrating on developing a local Rent-a-jointer service to speed up electrical connections.
- 11.4 Having considered the information contained in the report, the Committee will need to decide whether and how further scrutiny of this issue should be undertaken.