



# Smart Street

## *Engaged Customer Panel*

### *Lessons Learned Report*

23 October 2014

A large sign on two posts reads "SMART STREET" in bold, green, sans-serif capital letters. Below the sign is a white silhouette illustration of a cityscape on rolling hills. The illustration includes power line towers, a bus, a train, various buildings, trees, and wind turbines.

**SMART STREET**

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## VERSION HISTORY

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## GLOSSARY

CCC	Customer Contact Centre
CEP	Customer Engagement Plan
C <sub>2</sub> C	Capacity to Customers (second tier ENWL Project)
CLASS	Customer Load Active System Services (second tier ENWL Project)
DNO	Distribution Network Operator
ECP	Engaged Customer Panel
ENWL	Electricity North West Limited
LCN Fund	Low Carbon Networks Fund
Ofgem	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
PSR	Priority Services Register
SDI	Short Duration Interruption
SDRC	Successful Delivery Requirement Criteria

# 1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

## 1.1 The Smart Street Project

The Smart Street Project is funded via Ofgem's Low Carbon Networks (LCN) second tier funding mechanism. Electricity North West received formal notification of selection for funding on 29 November 2013. The Project is due to be completed by 31 December 2017.

As the demand for electricity is expected to increase and potentially double by 2050, the Smart Street Trials aim to test innovative technologies to enable distribution network operators (DNOs) to prepare networks to meet the expected increase in low carbon technologies, such as solar panels, electric vehicles and heat pumps. The Project has the potential to lower electricity consumption for many customers by helping appliances run more efficiently.

This document and the analysis therein forms part of the Project's dissemination output and specifically references the learning arising from the first in a series of strategic pieces of qualitative market research. The research has been undertaken with an engaged customer panel (ECP) to understand domestic customer reactions to Smart Street, to help formulate an effective awareness campaign aimed at customers, stakeholders and the wider community. This approach was previously used successfully in Electricity North West's other second tier LCN fund Projects, Capacity to Customers (C<sub>2</sub>C) and Customer Load Active System Services (CLASS).

Electricity North West will be launching a targeted awareness campaign aimed at customers in the Trial regions, stakeholders and the wider community. This approach should maximise accessibility to Smart Street customer-facing materials, allowing as many people as possible to understand the hypothesis of the Project, the associated technologies and its benefits to customers and potentially other DNOs.

The communication materials for this Project will summarise the scope, size and areas of the distribution network included in the Smart Street Project and outline the objectives and benefits of the Trials within the context of the UK's low carbon agenda. Customers will be provided with general information about Smart Street, its potential impact and benefits. The customer engagement materials will also clarify that installation of enabling technology may, on occasion, require a planned supply interruption.

Active customer participation is an integral part of Smart Street and will form an important part of the learning and development for future low carbon programmes.

## 1.2 Research Approach

The research approach referenced within this document was submitted as part of Electricity North West's Smart Street customer engagement plan (CEP) approved by Ofgem on 16 July 2014. In the CEP Electricity North West committed to:

- Communicate with customers from the outset by publicising the Smart Street Project in advance of the technology installation stage and to provide a basic understanding of the Project objectives and the importance of the low carbon agenda
- Communicate with customers via a number of tailored channels, such as written, audio and visual mediums, in such a way that there is no confusion with the smart meter rollout
- Be guided by feedback from the ECP in order to define its customer communication approach.

The ECP was selected to represent an appropriate cross-section of customers in each of the Trial areas. When recruiting customers to take part in the ECP, quotas were set around

gender, age and social grade in order to ensure the panel had a balanced demographic profile.

The recruitment of the ECP and moderation of focus groups was conducted by Impact Research, an independent market research agency. All research was carried out in accordance with the professional standards set out in the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

A two-phased approach was taken to sharing information with the ECP and testing awareness materials. This was a deliberate strategy based on previous experience with C<sub>2</sub>C and CLASS, to gradually develop, test and evaluate communication materials and provide clear information to customers.

Objectives of the first phase of the ECP were to:

- Educate the ECP on the role of Electricity North West and the Smart Street Method
- Develop an understanding, from the ECP's perspective, of the key elements of Smart Street that need to be highlighted in communications to customers
- Evaluate and appraise the proposed customer leaflet that will be used to raise awareness of the Trials.

Following completion of the first phase of the research, the proposed communication materials presented to customers were enhanced to incorporate the feedback of the ECP. The updated materials were then re-presented during phase two, to facilitate further discussion and to understand if there had been an improvement in the clarity and quality of awareness materials. The specific objectives for phase two of the ECP were to:

- Review the revised awareness materials
- Determine which version of the materials was the most appropriate to send to customers
- Evaluate a range of front cover options for the printed awareness materials to help increase potential readership beyond the front cover and improve return on investment.

In each phase of research, three 90-minute focus group discussions were administered:

- Group 1: Wigton (rural) domestic customers on Trial circuits
- Group 2: Wigan (dense urban) domestic customers on Trial circuits
- Group 3: Manchester (city) domestic customers on Trial circuits.

Domestic customers were the key target group, representing the overwhelming majority of the 67,000 customers served by Trial circuits. No customer engagement had taken place concerning any aspect of Smart Street prior to this piece of market research, other than published articles and web-based materials available on the Smart Street website.

The Smart Street team has now established how to engage customers in the Trial areas and the materials for engagement through feedback from the ECP. The feedback received from the ECP is presented in the summary of findings section of this report.

Further customer engagement will take place during the Trials to determine any customer impact of the Method. One of the key Smart Street hypotheses (hypothesis No. 2) is that:

*Customers within the Smart Street Trial areas will not perceive any changes in their electricity supply.*

To test this hypothesis a range of customer engagement activities will be undertaken during the life of the Trials. Key amongst these will be a series of customer focus groups. Understanding whether the customer notices any effect of the Trials is crucial to the viability of the solution. Therefore, facilitated surveys will be conducted with focus groups, one in summer 2016, half way through the Trials, and again in summer 2017 towards the end of the Trials. The key learnings from this customer engagement activity will be published towards the end of the Trials.

## **2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

This section of the report summarises the key findings of the first two phases of customer engagement.

### **2.1 Which awareness materials are most effective in educating the ECP on the role of Electricity North West and the Smart Street Method?**

#### *Insight*

In Electricity North West's previous second tier LCN fund Projects, CLASS and C<sub>2</sub>C, a key learning outcome was that in the main, customers initially required educating about the identity and role of Electricity North West before they were able to digest Project awareness material.

Only when Electricity North West's responsibility as a DNO had been established and an understanding reached of how this differs from the role of electricity generators and suppliers, could awareness material be effectively presented. The ECP also needed some information about why Projects such as Smart Street are necessary to meet future expected electricity demand.

The ECP were provided with a question and answer (Q&A) document (Appendix A) to read before the first ECP meeting which contained a series of frequently asked questions and useful information about Electricity North West. This approach build on the positive feedback received from the Q&A document, previously used as part of CLASS and C<sub>2</sub>C customer engagement activities, which assisted in clarifying the structure of the electricity sector and where Electricity North West is placed within it.

Information cards that had also proved effective in the CLASS ECP to explain how demand is likely to increase in the future were used in the same way for Smart Street. Based on previous experience, it was assumed that certain obstacles would be met, such as customers' inability or general reluctance to accept the expected take-up of electric vehicles and heat pumps. The main barrier to these methods is customers' limited exposure to these low carbon technologies in everyday life at present. At present customers find it difficult to make the connection between a reduction in fossil fuels, an increase in demand for electricity and the impact this may have on things like heating and travel.

#### *Action*

Due to time constraints, and the limit of two ECP meetings per area, the ECP approach was reassessed and the information cards were reduced to simply summarise the need to meet increased future demand. The information was received more favourably having removed the focus from the Climate Change Act; the switch to electric vehicles and heat sources, or indeed the scale of the likely increase in electricity consumption. Taking this approach, participants were less likely to debate the details or dwell on their suspicions of 'profiteering' by energy suppliers and DNOs.

### **2.2 Identifying the key elements of Smart Street to highlight in customer communication materials**

The ECP collectively agreed that one of the most effective ways of communicating with customers on the Trial circuits was through a customer leaflet. A leaflet offered a cost-

effective way of reaching all affected customers and disseminating key aspects of the Trials and overcame restrictions in communicating with those customers without access to the internet. Previous leaflets for C<sub>2</sub>C and CLASS were designed on the basis of the respective ECP feedback and both leaflets varied greatly. As such the Smart Street ECP feedback was influential in deciding upon the most effective awareness campaign for the Smart Street Project.

### *Insight*

During the first phase of focus group discussions two versions of the customer leaflet were presented to participants. One version was a concise leaflet (Appendix B), similar to that favoured by C<sub>2</sub>C. This provided a basic level of information and focussed on improvement in supply quality without any supplementary information about how the technology works in practise. The second version (Appendix C) was more akin to the CLASS customer leaflet which contained more detailed information about Electricity North West and why and how the Trials are being conducted. The leaflet also included a frequently asked question section, based on the most anticipated enquiries and learning from previous customer engagement activities.

During the first Smart Street focus group meeting it became apparent that a more informative version of the leaflet was preferred. However, the quantity of information and the way in which it was structured was regarded as off-putting by some. Participants asked Electricity North West to summarise the most important aspects of the Project more succinctly at the start of the leaflet and then provide further detail within the content for those customers who may want further information. Their key questions were:

- Who is Electricity North West?
- What is Smart Street?
- Why is it happening?
- How will it impact me?

Customers were overwhelmingly concerned about how the Trials were likely to directly affect them and their households. In light of this, the order in which the information was arranged in the leaflet received some criticism. Participants expressed concern about having to read the majority of the literature before these key concerns were addressed and they finally received reassurance that there would be: no requirement to install equipment in their home; they would not see increased bills; and there would be no major disruption to their electricity supply or disruptive works in the local area.

To summarise the Smart Street Method in a written format a concept board was shown to the ECP as follows:

**Concept: A smart step into the future**

electricity north west  
Bringing energy to your door

**Background**  
As we face the challenge of making the transition from fossil fuels to lower carbon means of electricity generation, homes are likely to be heated by electricity instead of gas and cars will be electric rather than petrol fuelled. This will mean that demand for electricity in Great Britain will rise significantly.  
To maintain current levels of service, the cost of upgrading the network would mean *higher bills*. However, using the existing network more efficiently could help meet this increased demand, without increasing your bills.

**Problem**  
Electricity loses voltage as it is distributed across cables and this means networks and appliances can operate less efficiently. This problem is set to increase as demand for electricity rises in the near future.

**Solution**  
**SMART STREET** will balance voltage so that our network and your appliances work in harmony.

**How?**  
As a customer your supply will be as **safe and reliable** as usual. These variations in voltage would be so small that you would not notice the difference. Innovative voltage control equipment will maintain a standardised level of voltage to your home whilst still remaining within statutory limits. The voltage control technology will be trialled between September 2015 and July 2017 on circuits that supply electricity to approximately 2.5 percent of our customers.

**What's in it for me?**  
When the **SMART STREET** technology is implemented across the region, it will help keep your **bills lower** and contribute to a more **energy-efficient** and **sustainable** future. The technology used will also help us **improve** the time it takes to restore your electricity supply on the rare occasion there is a power cut.

**Smart Street – coming to your street soon!**

The concept board is a tried and tested market research technique which can be effective in simplifying complex ideas into key aspects that may resonate with customers. The board was popular with the ECP and considered to be a good summary of a complicated concept. Several participants suggested it might be used to replace the leaflet in its entirety. Others favoured key elements from the concept board being incorporated into the leaflet to deliver the information more succinctly.

### Action

In preparation for the second phase of the ECP the first page of the leaflet was turned into a summary, akin to that used in the concept board (Appendices D and E). This outlined all key messages and was very well received by the ECP who felt this addressed all their questions at the outset while providing more information for those customers who might choose to read the remainder of the leaflet.

Initially focussing on these key messages and clarifying 'how will this affect me' from the outset reassured customers that they were unlikely to notice any difference in their supply.

### 2.3 What was learned from evaluating and appraising the proposed customer leaflet and which version of the materials was deemed the most appropriate to send to customers?

#### The front cover

The general consensus amongst the ECP was that the main challenge was to design the cover in such a way as to prevent customers from immediately discarding it. The design needed to avoid any images or text which could be construed as marketing/junk mail or information perceived by the customer to have no relevance to them.



## *Insight*

Based on previous leaflet design work for C<sub>2</sub>C and CLASS and in light of the fact that Electricity North West does not hold customer information, it was recognised that the customer leaflet would be delivered addressed, but not to a named recipient. This kind of mail, often addressed to 'the occupant' is generally perceived as junk mail. It was therefore apparent that the front cover needed to clearly distinguish the Smart Street leaflet from:

- Energy supplier sales related information
- Advertising and sales literature.

Participants fixated on the idea that unless the leaflet cover immediately struck them as important and more specifically, relevant to their household, they were likely to discard it without reading or even skim-reading the content. The ECP made a number of suggestions which they believed might be effective in focusing their attention and encouraging them to read the literature.

- Make the word 'important' more prominent and larger on the front cover
- Carefully select imagery specifically related to the electricity distribution industry (eg engineers at work on electricity pylons) to help differentiate from marketing literature and general junk mail
- Remove generic phrases such as 'investing for the future'
- Personalise the leaflet's cover, by adding the postcode or town name, to demonstrate the leaflet is relevant to the individual or local area.

## *Action*

The significance of the front cover design emerged early during the first round of focus groups. As such, the discussion guide for the second phase of focus groups devoted almost half of the session to discussing the cover's imagery, headlines, layout, text and format. A 'pick and mix' approach was adopted to select participants' optimal combination of image, text and layout to design the most effective front cover. The different cover designs presented to the ECP are included in Appendix F and referenced below.

During this exercise opinions were divided between an image only cover, 2a (Appendix D), and a heavily text based cover, 2b (Appendix E). Some participants felt the text based cover was too cluttered and busy. Additionally, in version 2b the vivid green background made the font difficult to read and was thought to be inappropriate, particularly for visually impaired readers. However, those who preferred 2b said they found it looked more official, likening it to literature from a government department. For that reason, they said they would be more inclined to read it.

The ECP results demonstrated that a mainly text based front cover was likely to generate greater impact and was less likely to be immediately discarded. The text based version was selected on this basis. However, the background colour was changed to the light green option, which was preferred by the majority and considered much easier to read than all alternative backgrounds.

Small changes were made to the front cover in order to help draw attention to the key points for example, the words 'Important information' formed the cover's title and the bold font maximised the prominence for greatest impact. The abstract reference to 'investing in the future' was considered an over-used marketing term and was replaced with a more personal reference to 'improving the electricity network that supplies your home'.

The ECP focused on the importance of appropriately selected imagery on both the cover and the internal leaves of the leaflet. The ECP repeatedly indicated a preference for an image of an engineer climbing an electricity pylon against a cloudy sky. This was considered a good visual portrayal of Electricity North West's role as a DNO. This image was included as a small insert in the prominent top left of the cover to supplement the text to form a hybrid text / image version for the final cover. The ECP feedback indicated a hybrid cover helped to break up the text and make the cover visually more appealing.

The inclusion of individual post codes or town name to the front cover was investigated, but the complications and costs involved were prohibitive within the scope of this Project. However, this idea might be considered in future customer engagement activities, particularly for smaller scale projects covering a more limited geographic area, requiring fewer versions of the leaflet.

## **2.4 Keeping communication positive but believable**

### *Insight*

The ECP felt that the first drafts of the leaflet versions 1a (Appendix B) and 1b (Appendix C), had a relatively negative tone. 1a had an entire page devoted to what to do in the event of a power cut, and 1b had a section on page 4 that discussed the 'problems' associated with bringing renewable generation onto the grid. This conflicted with the 'good news' message attempting to be conveyed. The issues associated with renewable generation led to confusion, as participants believed that renewable energy production is a positive development, yet the leaflet highlighted the potential for network problems associated with the connection of distributed generation.

ECP participants questioned 'what is the good news and how does that apply to me' when presented with leaflet 1a, headed 'Good News'. Based on the leaflet and stimulus materials, participants did not consider there were sufficient grounds to claim 'good news' as they equated this with a quantifiable and noteworthy financial saving or a significantly improved level of service.

In the case of Smart Street, any cost savings will be on such a small scale and not necessarily applicable to everyone on the Trial circuits. Furthermore, the 'good news' message was in some instances construed as antagonistic, raising questions about whether customer would actually see *any* benefit in light of increasing energy prices.

Customers in Electricity North West's distribution region will on average experience a supply interruption once every three years. The Wigton ECP commented on having experienced considerably more interruptions than the average, which might be expected because of the rural nature of their supply. For this group, the anticipated reduction in fault frequency was perceived as good news and relevant. However, for customers residing in the dense urban areas of Manchester and Wigan the reduction in fault frequency was not perceived as positively.

### *Action*

As a direct result of the ECP's feedback, the information about what customers should do in the event of a power cut was reduced. In line with the CLASS leaflet, this information was scaled back to a short paragraph providing a telephone number to call in the event of a supply interruption. This approach had the benefit of significantly reducing the concerns of the ECP about perceived negative effects of Smart Street and reinforcing the message that the Trials are not expected to have any discernible customer impact.

The section referring to the adoption of low carbon technologies was re-drafted in a more customer focused manner, emphasising the positive effect of the technology in enabling the network to adapt to the connection of new low carbon technologies.

In light of ECP comments and cynicism concerning tangible benefits, all reference to potential cost savings were removed. This was replaced with the more positive message about the potential for a small reduction in consumption, achieved through appliances and the network operating more efficiently. The potential for cost saving was implied in imagery, without explicitly mentioning the value.

The reference to fewer power cuts was retained, as this will be encouraging for those customers in more rural region of Wigton, who generally experience more power cuts than the regional average.

## **Layout**

### *Insight*

During the second phase of the focus groups, the text and information included in both leaflets was generally very well received. However, there were a few small layout issues that caused confusion.

The last sentence on the front cover of text based version 2b invited customers to visit the Smart Street website to find out more about 'this Project'. However this text followed a paragraph about smart meters and may have caused confusion between the Smart Street Trials and the rollout of smart metering.

The confusion this generated is at odds with a commitment in the CEP '*take care to communicate with customers via a number of tailored communication channels, such as written, audio and visual mediums, **in such a way that there is no confusion with the smart meter rollout***'.

Further confusion was caused in the FAQ section, where customers were invited to register on the priority services register (PSR) via a web link. This text was set apart from general PSR information using bold, large font. This was interpreted by the ECP as a web link to the general Smart Street Project website.

### *Action*

Both of the issues above were addressed in the final version simply by changing the font size and emphasis of the paragraphs. The web address was made larger and more prominent on the front cover. The contact information for the PSR was changed to the same font size as the rest of the PSR information with only the phone number and email address highlighted in a bold font.

## **Imagery**

### *Insight*

During the Smart Street ECP the importance of appropriate imagery was recognised in determining potential readership beyond the front cover and ultimately improving the return on investment. This was more apparent in Smart Street customer engagement than in ECP feedback associated with previous projects. The significance of selecting the most suitable images to the ECP became evident very quickly during the focus groups. During the first phase of meetings the image on the cover of leaflet 1b was regarded as more akin to sales and marketing imagery. Some participants perceived this image (of photovoltaic panels) as more likely to be associated with sales and marketing for solar generation systems. In light of the confusing messages about the benefits of renewable energy generation and the potential for network problems, this image resulted in lengthy and confusing debate centred about the key purpose of the leaflet.

Several versions of the front cover were mocked up for evaluation during the second phase of focus groups which sparked considerable interesting debate (Appendix F). In general, images depicting Electricity North West employees at work were preferred as these were

seen as accurately reflecting the role of a DNO and were distinct from other kinds of imagery often found on circular mail. Images with pylons were overwhelmingly preferred. Of the several options presented, those with a cloudy, grey sky were selected as more reflective of typical weather in the North West of England, rather than those depicting clear blue skies.

The image of a heat pump inside leaflet 1b was poorly received. None of the participants in any of the focus groups identified the equipment as an electric heat pump. Some assumed it was an air conditioning unit. As heat pump installation are not yet common place and unfamiliar to many customers, the relevance of this image, in light of the confusion it caused, was questioned.

Another image that was generally disliked was used in versions 2a and 2b. This was a picture of a woman stood in front of a boiling kettle, whose face was obscured by the steam. The ECP felt this gave the impression that her face had been deliberately blurred out. Many found this perplexing and this resulted in unhelpful debate about issues around permission to use her face in the image. This completely detracted the focus from the kettle, which had been selected simply as an image of a common domestic appliance.

Imagery in other stimulus material received more positive comment. The Smart Street video was found to be very helpful in illustrating a complicated concept. The sequence of images showing a series of light bulbs progressively dimming relative to the distance from the substation was considered useful in explaining the concept and this was easily grasped by the ECP.

The ECP also liked the energy efficiency logo similar to that found on appliances as it was familiar and expressed the idea of energy efficiency simply, without the need for further explanation. Participants suggested that these images should be incorporated into the leaflet in place of some of the less relevant images.

### *Action*

The participants' favoured image of an Electricity North West engineer climbing a pylon against the backdrop of a cloudy sky was incorporated into the cover in the final design. The image served to enhance Electricity North West's brand identity, broke up the text and helped to differentiate it from other kinds of marketing leaflets and circulars.

This resulted in a final hybrid design incorporating both text and image taking the best elements of the original designs (Appendix G). The hybrid offers the greatest potential to maximise the number of customers who would read the front cover and gain an understanding of the basic principles of the Smart Street Project. The benefit of the design should maximise the effectiveness of the campaign by reaching as many customers as possible, raising awareness of the Smart Street Project using materials which maximise their effectiveness, suitability, applicability and ease of understanding.

The relevance of every image was examined individually and those that were perceived as contentious or caused confusion, such as that of the electric heat pump and kettle were replaced.

The light bulb images from the video was considered for inclusion in the leaflet. However when taken out of the context of the video, it was extremely difficult to convey the narrative without additional explanatory text. Therefore, they were omitted from the final version of the leaflet. The image of the energy efficiency house and graph was included in the final version, after being positively reviewed by participants in the second round of focus groups.

### **3 THE LESSONS LEARNED FOR FUTURE INNOVATION PROJECTS**

This section of the report seeks to disseminate the key learnings from the summary of findings discussed in the previous section with a clear focus on the implications for any future customer engagement carried out by Electricity North West and other DNOs.

The lessons learned from the first two phases of qualitative research are specifically focused on achieving an effective awareness campaign and are as follows:

#### **Sufficient time should be allowed at the bid stage for ECP activity**

The timings at the start of the Smart Street Project became compressed due to the lead time required to mobilise Project partners and that needed for Ofgem approval of the CEP. This process has an eight-week window during which time no customers can be contacted for research purposes.

After receiving Ofgem approval, time was very limited for recruiting ECP participants, organising and conducting the initial focus groups; analysis; revising the leaflets between phases one and two; conducting the second phase of focus groups and then making final changes to the customer leaflet before print and despatch by the end of October to meet the Successful Delivery Requirement Criteria (SDRC).

Future second tier LCNF bids should allow for the eight-week Ofgem approval window when setting SDRCs for customer engagement activities. This should mitigate against the risk of reduced learning because of insufficient time to plan and execute research activities.

#### **Keep educational background information on the Project focused and concise**

Providing participants with background and context on the low carbon agenda, government targets, dates and expected increase in electricity demand is important. However, Electricity North West recognises that it can also be counterproductive, provoke debate and a certain degree of cynicism. ECP participants were suspicious of what they perceived as Government imposition of legislative targets on the taxpayer and higher fuel prices. Any reference to fuel bills including DUoS charges fuelled expressions of contempt towards the energy sector, as participants perceived suppliers to be large profit-making organisations.

Therefore, the background and context to introducing LCNF projects and the low carbon agenda should be very carefully considered and limited to key facts to provide sufficient information, without generating an inflammatory reaction from a generally wary public.

#### **Do not have pre-conceived ideas about customer information preferences**

Due to the success of the ECP activity in C<sub>2</sub>C an identical approach was adopted in the subsequent second tier Project, CLASS. However, whilst the process undertaken was the same, the outcome of the CLASS ECP was quite different as participants preferred to be furnished with more detail for the CLASS Project.

In Smart Street focus groups, sharing such a markedly abridged version of the leaflet (version 1a) was almost a redundant exercise as the extended and more informative version was seen to be more appropriate from the outset. Nevertheless, previous learning has shown that pre-conceived ideas need to be tested given that each Project is perceived differently by customers who are focused on the risks and benefits of the proposals.

Future projects should consider multiple versions of an extended leaflet, in addition to an abridged version. These might be designed in such a way as to provide the same information in a variety of different formats, tone with slightly differing focuses and different illustrations, etc.

## **The design of the front cover is critical with respect to customers reading the information**

The single biggest barrier to overcome in achieving an effective leaflet awareness campaign is first getting customers to read the literature and to not immediately dispose of it. The leaflet needs to look as 'official' as possible, to distinguish it from junk mail.

Customers' suggestions included increasing the prominence of the word 'important' and if costs allowed, personalising the front with individual postcodes or the name of the town.

It is recommended that multiple examples of front covers with various designs comprised of text, imagery and a hybrid of both are presented for participants to evaluate. However:

- This can be difficult to manage in a large group with differing options
- Reactions to the text will be influenced by the image, and vice versa.

Therefore a 'pick and mix' approach should be adopted in future ECP focus groups, offering a selection of different images, headline text and body text, enabling participants to piece together the ideal cover.

## **'Good news' needs to be genuinely regarded as good news by customers**

If customer communication is being promoted as 'good news' it must be perceived as good news by customers and needs clearly articulating. In the case of the Smart Street Project, the 'good news' was initially not sufficiently compelling for ECP participants to agree with this headline.

In light of this learning, a 'good news' message should only be used when there is a consensus amongst customers that there is a sufficiently clear, measurable and valid good news message with tangible benefits, and guaranteed cost savings or improved reliability of supply.

## **The relationship between DNO and supplier is still confusing for customers**

The same questions posed during previous ECPs are repeatedly raised including: will the leaflets be sent with your bill; and isn't that the best way to make sure it is read? Further clarification of the relationship between Electricity North West and electricity suppliers is required explaining that Electricity North West does not have access to customer details held by the supplier.

The learning outcome from C<sub>2</sub>C demonstrated that any direct communication with customers should address the public's current lack of awareness of Electricity North West and its role as a DNO. Brand awareness should be delivered in a simple, friendly, customer-facing manner, clearly delineating the DNO role from that of energy suppliers.

## **Information about the Trial Method should be simple and informative, so as not to create confusion**

It is often assumed that a lot of detailed information is needed to explain the Method, ie the technology behind the Method. However, for some this level of detail is too much and its inclusion can raise more questions than it answers.

The techniques and concepts behind large second tier projects are too complex for many customers to understand. Any attempt to explain decarbonisation, gain customers' acceptance of the problem, achieve credibility and enhance the appeal of the solution opened customers up to information that was deemed too technical and unnecessary.

The learning from the Smart Street ECPs has shown that there is a need to balance the appropriate level of detail, with an executive summary of the key information at the start. Those customers who require more detail can then read on to acquire the extra information.

## **Including advice on what to do in the event of a power cut can be interpreted as an indication that power quality is set to decrease**

The *'what to do in the event of a power cut'* message was considered to give a negative tone to the leaflet. Although popular with C<sub>2</sub>C, the information is considered to be less relevant for Projects such as CLASS and Smart Street and therefore should be more restrained.

The space given over to information regarding power cuts should be given careful consideration in light of the key elements of the Project in question.

The C<sub>2</sub>C ECP firmly believed that the main benefit of the C<sub>2</sub>C Method for them was an increase in power supply quality through short duration interruptions (SDIs) which increased the relevance of the information in the C<sub>2</sub>C customer leaflet. However, in Smart Street customers were less able to clearly define the benefit of the Method to themselves as they perceived very little, if any, discernible customer impact.

Reference to a potential increase in the number of SDIs was not favourably received by the Smart Street ECP and was seen to be sending a negative and contradictory message.

Mindful of the commitment at the outset of the Project to, *'be led by feedback from the ECP in order to define the customer communication approach'* it was necessary to adopt a flexible approach based on the learnings, for the overall benefit of the Project and the customer experience. Therefore, despite a commitment to include a reference to SDIs in the customer engagement plan, this was removed based on the negative feedback raised by the ECP and the confusion this generated.

Furthermore, as Smart Street is expected to improve the overall quality and reliability of the electricity supply, it was deemed more appropriate to focus the message on the positive aspects of the Project.

In line with findings on earlier Projects information highlighting Electricity North West's responsibilities to vulnerable customers and its priority services register were generally considered to be useful and positive by the ECP.

## **Expectations of bill savings are enticing, but need careful management**

When discussing benefits, the most appealing benefit is commonly considered to be a financial cost saving directly associated with a reduction in customers' electricity bills. In Smart Street the tangible saving may be relatively small for some customers and will certainly vary from one individual to the next based on their appliances and electricity usage. It is therefore inappropriate to allude to monetary savings at an individual level.

Customers are extremely sensitive and sceptical about ambiguous language. Unless savings can be clearly defined and quantified with a substantive cost benefit to the individual, detailed information or specific claims should be omitted from awareness materials. Customers are also sceptical of having any potential bill saving passed down from their supplier.

## **Outcome**

The recruitment of the ECPs in the three Trial regions was a proactive approach, informing customers about Smart Street and involved contacting a representative selection of customers on Trial circuits before the Trials started. An information leaflet was produced and sent to all customers on each of the Trial circuits. The content of the leaflet was influenced by the lessons learned above and can be found in Appendix G of this report or on the key documents page of Project's website.

## 4 CONCLUSION

The ECP provided an essential forum to gain constructive and independent feedback on Electricity North West's initial drafts of the customer leaflet. The second wave of focus groups re-visiting the original participants was valuable to assess their reaction to the changes based on their initial feedback.

Although several learnings from previous Projects such as C<sub>2</sub>C and CLASS were considered in the preparation for Smart Street customer engagement activities, new and unexpected findings emerged, some of which conflicted with findings from previous ECPs.

Therefore, the importance of using customer feedback in developing information materials should not be underestimated, and what represents a successful approach for one project, may not necessarily be appropriate for another.

This report summarises the key findings of the first two phases of customer engagement. More detailed information will be documented in a subsequent report which will provide more comprehensive details of the background, methodology and communication materials used to undertake this activity.

## 5 NEXT STEPS

As part of our commitment to inform customers about the Smart Street Trials, the final version of the 'Smart Street' leaflet was posted to approximately 19,500 homes and businesses on Friday 24 October 2014. Only 11 HV circuits out of the six selected primary substations will be directly affected by the new Trial technologies and intervention techniques. These 11 HV circuits provide supply to approximately 19,500 customers.

A copy of the final leaflet and briefing notes were issued to the Electricity North West customer contact centre, prior to the distribution, in anticipation of any calls. In addition, a process was put in place to deal with any enquiries / complaints the awareness material generated.

Phases three and four of the ECP will focus on perceived customer impact once the live Trials have commenced, and therefore will not naturally build on the work done in phases one and two. Nevertheless, a better understanding of customer expectation regarding the likely impact of Smart Street based on the information contained in the leaflet has been gained.

In addition to direct customer engagement, the customer workstream will also be responsible for training the customer contact centre (CCC) to deal with enquiries relating to Smart Street. These enquiries will be monitored to detect any customer impact on power quality as a result of the Trials.

There will be ongoing learning and dissemination as the Project progresses and the key learnings will be reviewed on an on-going basis to reflect customer feedback.


In line with the vision of the LCN Fund, all outputs and learning gained from customer engagement activities will be made available to other DNOs. Specifically, all communication materials developed in the Project will be publicised on the Smart Street website. All relevant learning will be shared at Smart Street learning events, through trade magazines and in other appropriate forums.



## 6 APPENDICES

### Appendix A – ECP questions and answers document


  
Bringing energy to your door

## Questions & Answers September 2014

Thank you for taking part in our customer consultation research

### Who's who in the electricity industry?

There are many different types of companies and organisations involved in supplying you with electricity:

- **The National Grid** is responsible for operating some of the power lines in the UK – the most powerful ones – and transmitting electricity from power stations around the country closer to where people live and work. The National Grid is a little like the UK's motorway network.
- **Distribution network operators** – sometimes called DNOs – maintain many of the UK's electricity wires and cables. Each region of the UK has a DNO to maintain the electricity network in that area. Electricity North West is the distribution network operator – or DNO – for the region in which you live. The DNOs connect the National Grid's network to individual homes, offices, and other buildings – a little like the UK's 'A' and 'B' roads and local roads.
- **Suppliers** are the final step in the process and are the people who send you bills for your electricity such as EON, British Gas, EDF and Npower. Some of the money you pay to your supplier is passed to DNOs to cover their costs in supplying you with electricity.



## What does Electricity North West do?

- Electricity North West manages and maintains the electricity distribution network in North West England.
- The network consists of overhead lines, underground cables, substations, transformers and other equipment.
- We are responsible for connecting your home or business to the electricity network, repairing the network when things go wrong and investing to replace worn out or old equipment.
- Electricity North West's network is 99.99% reliable. A typical home in the North West will experience a power cut once every three years and, on average, is without power for about an hour. These figures are only averages – some homes will experience problems more often, while some homes and businesses will never have problems with their power supply.
- You may remember before Electricity North West, we were part of United Utilities and before that we were known as Norweb.



**Investing in the North West**  
Electricity North West owns and operates the network in the North West of England. Any money we invest goes right back into the North West region.

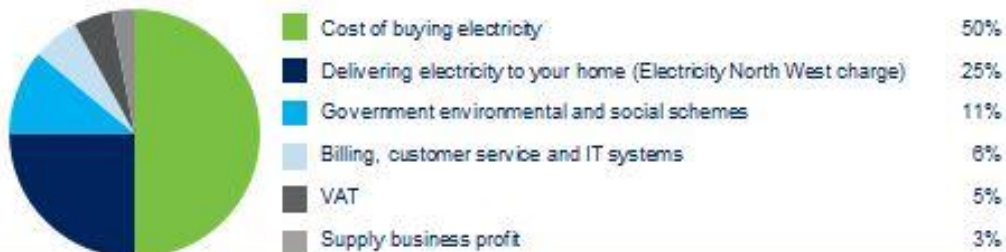
**We are responsible for planning for the future and making sure the network can cope with any changes in how electricity is used.**

## Why have I never heard of Electricity North West?

In many ways, Electricity North West is a 'behind the scenes' company. We don't send you a bill for our services. Instead, your supplier passes on part of what you pay them to us.

**2.4 million**  
We connect 2.4 million households (5 million people) to the National Grid.

### How a typical electricity bill is made up





## Why are we discussing Electricity North West ?

There are a number of issues and challenges facing Electricity North West. As well as experts inside the company thinking about these issues, we want to get the views of our customers who live in the North West.

Part of our role as distribution network operator (DNO) is to plan for the future. In 2007 the UK government set challenging targets to protect the environment by making significant reductions in carbon emissions and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels like gas and oil. This means that demand for electricity in Great Britain is set to rise significantly.

This will present new challenges to DNOs who will need to invest heavily in new network infrastructure (overhead power lines, pylons, underground cables and substations) to meet the increased demand. This programme of work would lead to disruptive roadworks and power cuts and could lead to higher bills for customers in the near future.

To minimise potential costs, disruption and carbon emissions, we need to develop smarter and more efficient ways of managing our electricity networks.

Electricity North West has developed an innovative and low cost solution called Smart Street. Smart Street will trial the use of innovative technology combined with our existing network infrastructure. It aims to make networks and customers' appliances perform more efficiently and make it easier to adopt low carbon technologies (solar panels, electric vehicles and heat pumps) onto the electricity network.

This innovative approach will keep electricity costs down for customers, reduce carbon emissions and help get the most from the existing network.

The Smart Street project will run until December 2017.



[futurenetworks@enwl.co.uk](mailto:futurenetworks@enwl.co.uk) • [www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet](http://www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet)

0800 195 4141 • Text 87070

(Start text message with Smart Street.

All text messages will be charged at your standard network rate).





**electricity north west**  
Bringing energy to your door

## Priority service register

Some of our more vulnerable customers may need additional specialised help from us if their electricity supply is interrupted. That's why we've set up a priority service register so we can provide extra support when you need it most. As part of our priority service we work in partnership with the British Red Cross who can help you with practical necessities when things go wrong.

You can sign up to our priority service register if you live in the Electricity North West area and:

- you are registered disabled
- you have a disabled dependant
- you are visual or hearing impaired
- you are seriously ill
- you have mobility problems
- you are over 65
- you have any other reason for needing our priority service.

To register, call us on 0800 195 4141 or complete the form on our website at: [www.enwl.co.uk](http://www.enwl.co.uk)

**Electricity North West**  
Bringing energy to your door

This leaflet is also available in Braille, large print and a number of different languages on request.

**electricity north west**  
Bringing energy to your door

Electricity North West Limited, 304 Bridgewater Place, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 6XG.  
01925 846 999

09/14/2014 16

## Good news

We are improving your electricity supply.

**SMART STREET**





## Hello. We are Electricity North West and we are proud to operate your local electricity network.

It's our job to deliver a safe, reliable supply of electricity from the national grid to your home through our network of overhead lines, underground cables and substations.

It's also our job to invest in the future of the electricity network and plan for the extra demand that we are likely to need in the North West. As we start to use less fossil fuels like oil and gas we will start to use much more electricity for heating and electric vehicles.

Instead of building new overhead lines, cables and substations, which is disruptive and expensive for electricity customers, we are trialling new, smarter and cheaper ways of using the existing network to cope with the extra demand.

It's all part of our continuing commitment to invest in ground-breaking technology to improve our service, reduce costs to you and prepare the electricity network for the future.

### How does this benefit you?

We have sent you this leaflet because we are trialling new technology on the part of the electricity network which supplies your home or business. Throughout the two-year trial period you will benefit from the new technology which enables us to restore power more quickly if your home or business is affected by a power cut. You will continue to receive the same reliable electricity service and you may see a small reduction in your electricity usage.

The trials affect around 62,000 customers in Manchester, Wigan, Egremont and Wigton. Occasionally we will need to turn off electricity to a small number of properties for a few hours while we install the new equipment, but we will contact you beforehand if we need to do that.

Understanding what you think is important to us. At the end of the trials we will contact some of our customers in the areas where the new technology has been installed to ask for feedback about their electricity supply during the trial period.

To find out more about this project, please visit [www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet](http://www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet)

Call us on **0800 195 4141**

Or text **87070**

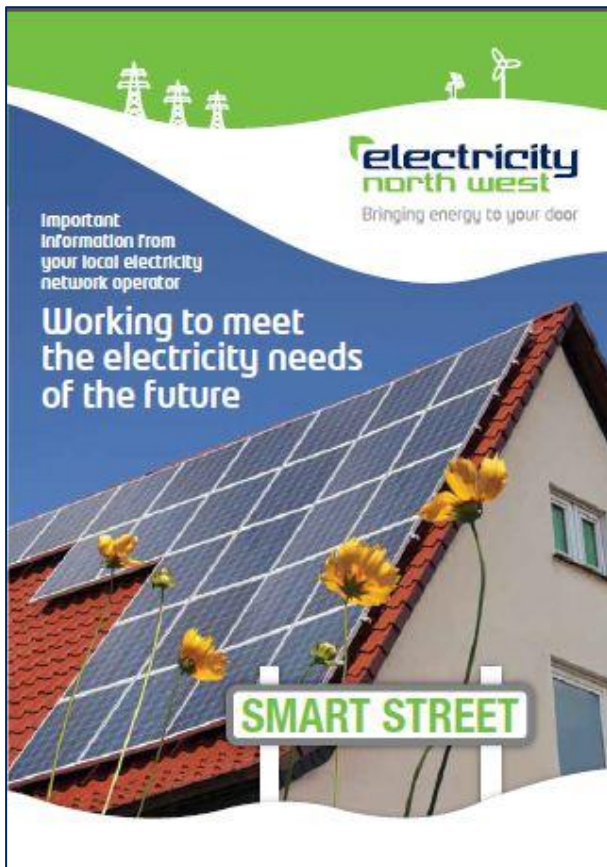
(Start text message with Smart Street. All text messages will be charged at your standard network rate).

### What to do if there's a power cut

Occasionally your electricity may go off because of a fault on our network or because of a problem in your home. If you do experience a power cut because of a network fault, the new technology we are installing will help us to restore your electricity much more quickly than before. If you are affected by a power cut, please follow the steps below to help us get your electricity back on as quickly as possible.

- Check your trip switches in the consumer unit next to your meter - you can do this by turning your trip switch on and off. If you don't know where your trip switch is, please call us.
- Check if your neighbour's power is on or if the streetlights are lit. If not, there may be a fault in your area.
- If your neighbours and the streetlights still have power, there are several reasons why your electricity may be off. Please call us so we can help you understand the cause.
- You can call us on **0800 195 4141** 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

For more information on what to do if there's a power cut please visit: [www.enwl.co.uk/powercuts](http://www.enwl.co.uk/powercuts)







## Meeting the electricity needs of the future

One of the challenges of running the electricity network at present is a loss of voltage as electricity flows through the network. This can result in your appliances performing less efficiently. The connection of large numbers of low carbon technologies (solar panels, electric vehicles and heat pumps) onto the electricity network in the future will make this worse.

To address this problem we have developed an innovative low cost solution called Smart Street. By combining innovative technology with our existing network, Smart Street will balance voltage so that our network and your appliances perform more efficiently, and make it easier to adopt low carbon technologies onto the electricity network.

This innovative approach will help keep costs down for customers, reduce carbon emissions and help get the most from the existing network.



### Trialling the Smart Street technology

An important part of the project is to trial the Smart Street technology and its impact on customers. The project involves a series of trials to test the technology, which will be installed at six primary substations and 38 local substations, supplying electricity to around 62,000 customers in Wigan, Egremont, Manchester and Wigan. This represents about 2.5 percent of our network.

We will conduct these live trials for a two year period starting in late 2015 until late 2017.



4



## How Smart Street will benefit you

We have sent you this leaflet because we are trialling Smart Street on the part of the electricity network which supplies your home or business. We are installing devices at your local substation which enables us to control voltage and make our electricity network perform more efficiently. Throughout the two-year trial period and beyond you will benefit from the new technology which enables us to restore power more quickly if your home or business is affected by a power cut. You will continue to receive the same reliable electricity service and you may see a small reduction in your electricity usage.

### Installing Smart Street technology

Over the next several months we will be installing 'street pillars' to house some of the new equipment on a small number of footpaths in the trial areas. We will also replace or install a small number of chambers under the pavement. If your property is very near to a new pillar or chamber we will write to you before we install it and we'll do our best to keep any disruption to a minimum.

We may also need to turn off electricity to a small number of properties for a few hours while we install the new equipment, but we will contact you beforehand if we need to do this.



### Engaging with our customers

Understanding what you think is important to us. At the end of the trials we will contact some of our customers in the areas where the new technology has been installed to ask for feedback about their electricity supply during the trial period.

To find out more about this project, visit [www.enwl.co.uk/smartsstreet](http://www.enwl.co.uk/smartsstreet)  
Call us on 0800 195 4141  
Or text 87070  
(Start text message with Smart Street. All text messages will be charged at your standard network rate).

5

## Frequently asked questions

**Can I opt out if I live or have a business in the trial area?**

You cannot opt out of the trials because the substations where we are installing this technology serve thousands of different customers. Please be assured you will continue to receive the same safe and reliable service throughout the trials.

**Am I likely to notice a difference in my electricity supply?**

It is unlikely that you will notice any difference in your electricity supply as a result of the trials taking place. One of the effects of installing the technology is an increase in the number of power cuts you would normally experience. But these power cuts will be much shorter than before – in most cases a power cut will last less than three minutes.

Occasionally you may experience a power cut because of a fault on our network. If this happens please call our 24 hour helpline on 0800 195 4141.

**What changes are you making to my electricity supply?**

We will install new technology to the electricity network which supplies your home or business. This will enable us to better manage the voltage in your area. You shouldn't notice a difference to your electricity supply and you may even see a small reduction in your electricity usage.

**Will there be any other effects on my appliances or local infrastructure?**

During the trials, voltage levels will remain within statutory safe limits. It is unlikely that you will notice any adverse effect on your appliances. The trials will not affect local infrastructure such as street lights and traffic lights.

**Why are you telling me this – is it a legislative requirement?**

Our industry regulator Ofgem expects us to communicate this information to you. Ofgem has set up the Low Carbon Networks Fund to support local electricity operators like Electricity North West to develop innovative solutions to meet the predicted huge increase in electricity usage. It's our responsibility to make you aware of any action we are taking to prepare your local electricity network for a sustainable future and how that might affect you.

**I rely on electricity for special medical needs - will I be affected by the trials?**

The trials will not directly affect you but you may want to consider joining our priority service register. We have set up this service for our more vulnerable customers who may need additional support during a power cut. As part of our priority service we work in partnership with the British Red Cross who can help you with practical necessities when things go wrong.

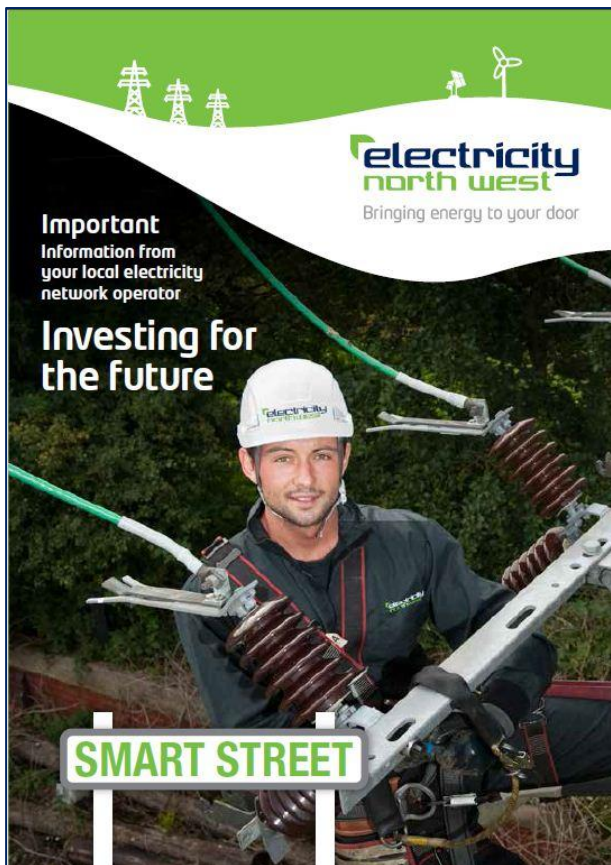
To register, call us on 0800 195 4141 or complete the form on our website at [www.enwl.co.uk/priority](http://www.enwl.co.uk/priority)

**This leaflet is also available in Braille, large print and a number of different languages on request.**



Bringing energy to your door

Electricity North West Limited, 204 Dalmeida Place, Salford West Park, Warrington, WA3 9JF. 01253 546 000



### Who is Electricity North West?

We operate the local electricity network and distribute electricity to all five million homes and businesses in the North West.

### What are we doing?

We are trialling smarter ways of managing the electricity network by installing new technology to supply electricity to your home or business more efficiently. This will help reduce costs for all electricity customers. The project is called Smart Street.

### Why are we doing this?

To help protect the environment we need to stop using fossil fuels like gas and oil and use cleaner sources of power. This means that in the future we'll need more electricity for running electric cars and heating systems.

### How will I benefit?

In the unlikely event of a power cut, we'll be able to restore power to your property more quickly than before. You may also see a small reduction in your electricity usage.

### Will I need a smart meter or other equipment installed in my house?

Smart Street is not related to smart metering so we don't need to install a meter or any other kind of equipment in your home.

To find out more about this project you can read the rest of this leaflet or visit [www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet](http://www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet)  
 Call us on 0800 195 4141  
 Or text 87070  
 (Start text message with Smart Street. All text messages will be charged at your standard network rate).

At Electricity North West it's our job to deliver a safe, reliable supply of electricity from the national grid to your home through our network of overhead lines, underground cables and substations. You may not have heard of us before, as you normally only need to contact us if you have a power cut.

In many ways we are a 'behind the scenes' company. We don't send you a bill for our services. Instead, your supplier passes on part of what you pay them to us.

### Changing the way we use electricity

It's also our job to plan for the future and help reduce the impact of fossil fuels like gas and oil on the environment. As we use fewer fossil fuels, we will start to use more electricity for heating and running electric vehicles. This means that demand for electricity will rise significantly, which will place a huge demand on our network.

The cost of upgrading the network to meet this demand will mean higher bills for customers. So we are trialling smarter, more affordable ways of using the existing network which will reduce costs for all our electricity customers in the future.

### Meeting the electricity needs of the future

One of the challenges of running the electricity network at present is a loss of voltage as electricity flows through the network. This can cause appliances in your home, such as washing machines, televisions, computers etc, to perform less efficiently. We also need to adapt our network to allow for the connection of large numbers of low carbon technologies such as solar panels, electric vehicles and new electric heating systems.

To meet this challenge we have developed an innovative low cost solution called Smart Street. By combining technology with our existing network, Smart Street will balance voltage so that our network and your appliances perform more efficiently, and make it easier to adopt low carbon technologies onto the electricity network.

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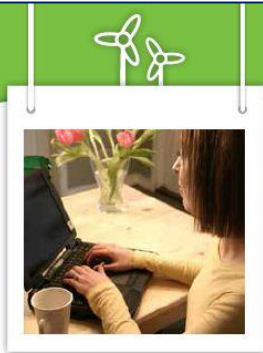
## Trialling the Smart Street technology

An important part of the project is to trial the Smart Street technology and its impact on customers. The project involves a series of trials to test the technology, which will be installed at six primary substations and 38 local substations, supplying electricity to around 62,000 customers in Wigan, Egremont, Manchester and Wigan. This represents about 2.5 percent of our network.

We will conduct these live trials for a two year period starting in late 2015 until late 2017.

## How Smart Street will benefit you

We have sent you this leaflet because we are trialling Smart Street on the part of the electricity network which supplies your home or business. We are installing devices at your local substation which will enable us to control voltage and make our electricity network perform more efficiently. Throughout the two-year trial period and beyond you will benefit from this new technology which enables us to restore power more quickly if your home or business is affected by a power cut. You will continue to receive the same reliable electricity service and you may see a small reduction in your electricity usage.



## Installing Smart Street technology

Over the next several months we will be installing 'street cabinets' to house some of the new equipment on a small number of footpaths in the trial areas. We will also replace or install a small number of chambers under the pavement. If your property is close to a new cabinet or chamber we will write to you before we install it and we'll do our best to keep any disruption to a minimum.

We may also need to turn off electricity to a small number of properties for a few hours while we install the new equipment, but we will contact you beforehand if we need to do this.

## Engaging with our customers

Understanding what you think is important to us. At the end of the trials we will contact some of our customers in the areas where the new technology has been installed to ask for feedback about their electricity supply during the trial period.

4

## Frequently asked questions

### How will Smart Street affect me?

It is unlikely that you will notice any difference in your electricity supply or any affect on your electrical appliances as a result of the trials taking place. Smart Street is not related to smart metering so we don't need to install a meter or any other kind of equipment in your home.

You will still receive the same reliable supply of electricity and if your property is ever affected by a power cut, we will be able to restore electricity to your home much more quickly than before.

On average customers experience a power cut once every three years because of a fault on our network. If this happens please call our 24 hour helpline on 0800 195 4141.

### Can I opt out if I live or have a business in the trial area?

You cannot opt out of the trials because the substations where we are installing this technology serve thousands of different customers.



### Will there be any other effects on my appliances or local infrastructure?

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**electricity north west**

Bringing energy to your door

Electricity North West Limited, 304 Bridgewater Place, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WIG 9JG. 01925 448 999

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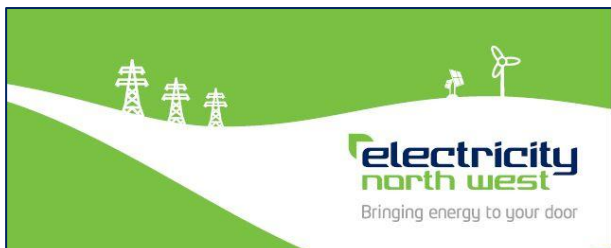
ENW4000014

Important information from your local electricity network operator

**electricity north west**  
Bringing energy to your door

Form address: Electricity North West Technology Forum, Leonard Street, Salford, Manchester M6 6EP





**Important information from your local electricity network operator**

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To help protect the environment we need to stop using fossil fuels like gas and oil and use cleaner sources of power. This means that in the future we'll need more electricity for running electric cars and heating systems.

**How will I benefit?**  
In the unlikely event of a power cut, we'll be able to restore power to your property more quickly than before. You may also see a small reduction in your electricity usage.

**Will I need a smart meter or other equipment installed in my house?**  
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The cost of upgrading the network to meet this demand will mean higher bills for customers. So we are trialling smarter, more affordable ways of using the existing network which will reduce costs for all our electricity customers in the future.



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We may also need to turn off electricity to a small number of properties for a few hours while we install the new equipment, but we will contact you beforehand if we need to do this.

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## Frequently asked questions

### How will Smart Street affect me?

It is unlikely that you will notice any difference in your electricity supply or any effect on your electrical appliances as a result of the trials taking place. Smart Street is not related to smart metering so we don't need to install a meter or any other kind of equipment in your home.

You will still receive the same reliable supply of electricity and if your property is ever affected by a power cut, we will be able to restore electricity to your home much more quickly than before.

On average customers experience a power cut once every three years because of a fault on our network. If this happens please call our 24 hour helpline on 0800 195 4141.

### Can I opt out if I live or have a business in the trial area?

You cannot opt out of the trials because the substations where we are installing this technology serve thousands of different customers.

### Will there be any other effects on my appliances or local infrastructure?

During the trials, voltage levels will remain within safe statutory limits. It is unlikely that you will notice any adverse effect on your appliances. The trials will not affect local infrastructure such as street lights and traffic lights.

### Why are you telling me this – is it a legislative requirement?

Our industry regulator Ofgem expects us to communicate this information to you. Ofgem has set up the Low Carbon Networks Fund to support local electricity operators like Electricity North West to develop innovative solutions to meet the predicted huge increase in electricity usage. It's our responsibility to make you aware of any action we are taking to prepare your local electricity network for a sustainable future and how that might affect you.

### I rely on electricity for special medical needs - will I be affected by the trials?

The trials will not directly affect you but you may want to consider joining our priority service register. We have set up this service for our more vulnerable customers who may need additional support in the unlikely event of a power cut. As part of our priority service we work in partnership with the British Red Cross who can help you with practical necessities when things go wrong.

To register, call us on 0800 195 4141 or complete the form on our website at: [www.enwl.co.uk/priority](http://www.enwl.co.uk/priority)

**This leaflet is also available in Braille, large print and a number of different languages on request.**



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Electricity North West Limited, 204 Bridgewater Place, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 5XG 01925 846 999

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**Important information from your local electricity network operator**

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Return address: Electricity North West, Technology House, Leasell Street, Salford, Manchester M6 5AP

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Appendix F – alternative leaflet covers presented at second ECP (A5)

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Important information from your local electricity network operator

**We are improving your electricity network for the future**

**Who is Electricity North West?**  
We operate the local electricity network and distribute electricity to all five million homes and businesses in the North West.

**What are we doing?**  
We are trialling smarter ways of managing the electricity network by installing new technology to supply electricity to your home or business more efficiently. This will help reduce costs for all electricity customers. The project is called Smart Street.

**Why are we doing this?**  
To help protect the environment we need to stop using fossil fuels like gas and oil and use cleaner sources of power. This means that in the future we'll need more electricity for running electric cars and heating systems.

**How will I benefit?**  
In the unlikely event of a power cut, we'll be able to restore power to your property more quickly than before. You may also see a small reduction in your electricity usage.

**Will I need a smart meter or other equipment installed in my house?**  
Smart Street is not related to smart metering so we don't need to install a meter or any other kind of equipment in your home.

To find out more about this project you can read the rest of this leaflet or visit [www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet](http://www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet)

**SMART STREET**

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**SMART STREET**

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Bringing energy to your door

We are improving your electricity network for the future

**Important information from your local electricity network operator**

**SMART STREET**


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Important Information from your local electricity network operator

**Investing for the future**

**SMART STREET**







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Important  
Information from  
your local electricity  
network operator

**Investing for  
the future**




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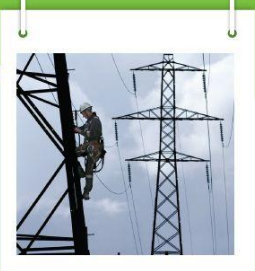
Smart Street  
coming to your  
street soon

**Good news from  
your local electricity  
network operator**



**SMART STREET**





**electricity north west**  
Bringing energy to your door

## Important information from your electricity network operator

We are improving the electricity network that supplies your home

**Who is Electricity North West?**  
We operate the local electricity network and distribute electricity to all 2.4 million homes and businesses in the North West.



**What are we doing?**  
We are trialling smarter ways of managing the electricity network by installing new technology to supply electricity to your home or business more efficiently. This will help reduce costs for all electricity customers. The project is called Smart Street.

**Why are we doing this?**  
To help protect the environment we need to use fewer fossil fuels like gas and oil and use cleaner sources of power. This means that in the future we will need more electricity for running electric cars and heating systems.

**How will I benefit?**  
In the unlikely event of a power cut, we will be able to restore power to your property more quickly than before. You may also see a small reduction in your electricity usage.


**Will I need a smart meter or other equipment installed in my house?**  
Smart Street is *not* related to smart metering so we don't need to install a meter or any other kind of equipment in your home.

To find out more about this project you can read the rest of this leaflet or visit:  
[electricitynorthwest.co.uk/smartstreet](http://electricitynorthwest.co.uk/smartstreet)

At Electricity North West it's our job to deliver a safe, reliable supply of electricity from the national grid to your home through our network of overhead lines, underground cables and substations. You may not have heard of us before, as you normally only need to contact us if you have a power cut.

In many ways we are a 'behind the scenes' company. We don't send you a bill for our services. Instead, your supplier passes on part of what you pay them to us to maintain your power supply.

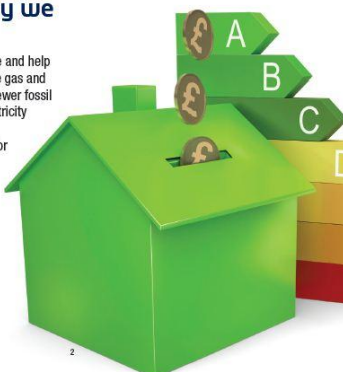


There are already 12,000 electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles registered in Great Britain.

## Changing the way we use electricity

It's also our job to plan for the future and help reduce the impact of fossil fuels like gas and oil on the environment. As we use fewer fossil fuels, we will start to use more electricity for heating and for running electric vehicles. This means that demand for electricity will rise significantly, which will place a huge demand on our network.

The cost of upgrading the network to meet this demand will mean higher bills for customers. So we are trialling smarter, more affordable ways of using the existing network which will reduce costs for all our electricity customers in the future.




## Meeting the electricity needs of the future

One of the challenges of running the electricity network at present is a loss of voltage as electricity flows through the cables. This can cause appliances in your home, such as washing machines, televisions, computers etc, to perform less efficiently. We also need to adapt our network to allow for the connection of large numbers of low carbon technologies such as solar panels, electric vehicles and new electric heating systems.

To meet this challenge we have developed an innovative low cost solution called Smart Street. By introducing new technology, Smart Street will balance voltage so that our network and your appliances perform more efficiently. It will also be much easier to adopt new low carbon technologies onto the electricity network.

This innovative approach will help keep costs down for customers, reduce carbon emissions and help to get the most from the existing network.



**Trialling the Smart Street technology**  
An important part of the project is to trial the Smart Street technology and its impact on customers. The project involves a series of trials to test the technology, which will be installed at six primary substations and 38 local substations, supplying electricity to around 67,000 customers in Wigan, Egremont, Manchester and Wigan. This represents about 2.5 percent of our network.

We will conduct these live trials for a two year period starting in late 2015 until late 2017.




## How Smart Street will benefit you

We have sent you this leaflet because we are trialling Smart Street on the part of the electricity network which supplies your home or business. We are installing devices at your local substation which will enable us to control voltage and make our electricity network perform more efficiently. Throughout the two-year trial period and beyond you will benefit from this new technology which enables us to restore power more quickly if your home or business is affected by a power cut. You will continue to receive the same reliable electricity service and you may see a small reduction in your electricity usage.

**Engaging with our customers**  
Understanding what you think is important to us. At the end of the trials we will contact some of our customers in the areas where the new technology has been installed to ask for feedback about their electricity supply during the trial period.

**Installing Smart Street technology**  
Over the next several months we will be installing 'street cabinets' to house some of the new equipment on a small number of footpaths in the trial areas. We will also replace or install a small number of chambers under the pavement. If your property is close to a new cabinet or chamber we will write to you before we install it and we will do our best to keep any disruption to a minimum.

We may also need to turn off electricity to a small number of properties for a few hours while we install the new equipment, but we will contact you beforehand if we need to do this.

Find out more at  
[electricitynorthwest.co.uk/smartstreet](http://electricitynorthwest.co.uk/smartstreet)

facebook.com/ElectricityNorthWest  
@ElecNW\_News  
youtube.com/ElectricityNorthWest

If you have any queries about Smart Street or your electricity supply call us on 0800 195 4141 Or text 87070 (Start text message with Smart. All text messages will be charged at your standard network rate).



## Frequently asked questions

### How will Smart Street affect me?

It is unlikely that you will notice any difference in your electricity supply or any effect on your electrical appliances as a result of the trials taking place. Smart Street is not related to smart metering so we don't need to install a meter or any other kind of equipment in your home.

You will still receive the same reliable supply of electricity and if your property is ever affected by a power cut, we will be able to restore electricity to your home much more quickly than before.

On average customers experience a power cut once every three years because of a fault on our network. If this happens please call our 24 hour helpline on 0800 195 4141.

### Can I opt out if I live or have a business in the trial area?

The substations where we are installing this technology serve thousands of different customers. So it is not possible for individual customers to opt out of the trials.



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north west

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304 Bridgewater Place, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 6XG  
0945 311 4900

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The trials will not directly affect you but you may want to consider joining our priority services register. We have set up this service for our more vulnerable customers who may need additional support in the unlikely event of a power cut. As part of our priority services we work in partnership with the British Red Cross who can help you with practical necessities when things go wrong.

To find out more about our services for vulnerable customers or to join our priority services register, call us on 0800 195 4141 or visit our website at: [electricitynorthwest.co.uk/priority](http://electricitynorthwest.co.uk/priority)

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