ECCC FOLLOW UP INFORMATION – POWER DISRUPTIONS

Compensation for domestic / non-domestic consumers

1. Compensation arrangements for the domestic and non-domestic customers are the same in severe weather situations. However, for other categories of storm there are different levels of compensation for domestic and non-domestic customers.

Investment in the Distribution Network

2. The Distribution Network Operators submitted their revised RIIO-ED1 business plans to Ofgem in March 2014. Ofgem are currently assessing the plans before setting out their initial Proposals in July 2014. The Distribution Network Operators have requested £36 billion of total expenditure (totex) for RIIO-ED1, of which £9 billion is identified as direct investment into network assets.

Telephony resilience

3. Land-line carriers are moving to fibre to the cabinet (FTTC). The broadband service provided by BT is overlaid on the voice service. While the standard telephone socket is line-powered from the exchange newer equipment may not be supported and a “dial tone” may not be available in the event of the failure of local grid distributed power. This is particularly true for DECT (Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications) devices which will be useless unless they are connected to an uninterruptable supply (unlikely for most domestic circumstances).

4. For phones that draw their power from the Exchange; Telephone exchanges should have back up power for at least three days; however this cannot always be relied upon, and has been known to fail in the past. In addition load spikes when back-up generation kicks in can have destabilising consequences.

5. It is worth noting that overhead telephone lines have similar vulnerabilities to overhead power lines during severe weather events.

6. Additional information for the consumer can be found at http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/2014/02/will-your-landline-telephone-work-during-a-power-cut/

Single Emergency Number

7. I have received assurance that a plan for the implementation of the Single Emergency Number will be published by the Energy Networks Association by the end of May 2014.

Ofcom discussions

8. Secretary of State has not yet met with Ofcom Chief Executive, a meeting is planned for the summer, following the publication of the ENA timeframes for delivery.

9. The project team, lead from within the ENA, continue to engage with Ofcom on this work, in order to progress effectively.