

Assess the feasibility of offering “Rent A Linesperson” (RAL) service.

Feasibility Study



Assess the feasibility of offering Rent A Linesperson (RAL) service

24 November 2020 – ICE Initiative 30.20

Origins of this feasibility study

A Highway Services customer when planning a large scheme of overhead works requested if UK Power Networks could consider offering a service similar to our Rent A Jointer (RAJ) for underground LV connections for their overhead LV connections. We offered to review the feasibility of providing this service.

In the 2020/2021 Service Development Plan, we included an initiative to assess the feasibility of offering this service.

- 30.20: Assess the feasibility of offering a Rent A Linesperson (RAL) service
- Measure: - Feasibility study published by target date
- Target Date:- November 2020

Background

For a number of years UK Power Networks have provided the RAJ service offering, which has proved very popular with a number of our customers who have large schemes of metered and unmetered street furniture underground connections.

This RAJ service allows our customers to carry out the contestable elements of the delivery task (normally the site set-up, permits notices and suspensions, excavation, backfill and reinstatement) and offers them exclusive use of a jointing team for a defined period of time. Ideal for schemes and project work our customer own and drive their own agreed programme. This service is priced on application and a contract is set up between all parties.

RAJ is for underground low voltage (LV) connections and excludes overhead line connections. A customer requested if we could consider offering a service similar to our RAJ service for overhead LV connections. We offered to review the feasibility of providing this RAL service in our Eastern Power Networks (EPN) and South Eastern Power Networks (SPN) areas.

Initial feasibility study

During September 2020, a number of key stakeholders within UK Power Networks met to review the feasibility of offering this RAL service to Highway Services customers;

Les Walters	Operations Manager, EPN Colchester
Phil Baker	Operations Manager, EPN Bury St Edmunds
Ross Hillman	Operations Manager, SPN Maidstone & Canterbury
Tom Miles	Operations Manager, SPN Eastbourne & Tunbridge Wells
Sharon Alexander	Highway Services SPN Highway Assets Manager
Kevin Newnham	Highway Services Major Programmes Manager

Overall, the initiative was supported but with a few concerns that would need to be discussed and mitigated before the service offering could be reviewed more widely within our EPN and SPN Network Operations delivery areas.

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Concerns and Mitigation noted and agreed during initial feasibility study

1. Concern Noted – UK Power Networks has limited overhead line resource when compared to its underground resource and so sufficient notice would need to be provided by our customer.
Agreed Mitigation – our customer would need to provide an 8 week advanced notice period to allow us to review programmes and resource and provide our customer with bespoke price and availability.
2. Concern Noted – UK Power Networks would need to allow sufficient time for the putting people to work activities associated with overhead line activity.
Agreed Mitigation – our customer would need to give a minimum fifteen 15-day notice of tasks required to allow job packs to be raised and reviewed. The customer service rate per team would need to include the team rate plus elements of pre-site visits and Putting People to Work activity.
3. Concern Noted – if committing overhead line resource for periods greater than one-off service connections this may affect UK Power Networks’ ability to restore and maintain our customers’ electricity supply during periods of high overhead faults.
Agreed Mitigation - we would require a clause within the new RAL customer legal agreement to permit a “pause” in the agreed service date to allow for short-notice local or network system emergencies. Additional consideration should be given to include an element of sub-contractor resource when reviewing bespoke rates to allow flexibility of UKPN resource provision during periods of high workload.
4. Concern Noted – Overhead line connection activity may require increased traffic management and site requirements when compared to our current RAJ offering.
Agreed Mitigation - the new RAL customer legal agreement would need to clearly set out the minimum expected Traffic Management and Working at Height UKPN requirements to be arranged by our customer along with (where applicable) the site set-up, permits notices and suspensions, excavation, backfill and reinstatement.

Wider Feasibility Study

During October & November 2020, the wider EPN and SPN delivery management teams reviewed the outcomes of the internal feasibility study.

Agreement with moving forward with this service offering were agreed and signed-off by;
Pat Brooks Head of Network Operations, EPN
Ross Hillman Operations Manager, SPN

RAL Process

UK Power Networks will welcome enquiries from our Highway Services customers for this new RAL service offering from 01 January 2021. Upon receipt of an enquiry the appropriate Highway Assets Manager, James Cornish for EPN and Sharon Alexander for SPN, will review our customer’s requirements and approach the respective delivery areas to review resource availability and arrange for our service rates to be prepared on a bespoke basis.

If our customer wishes to proceed with this RAL service offering from UK Power Networks, both parties will enter into a legal agreement, this agreement would be similar to our existing RAJ agreement but with overhead-specific amendments and the agreed mitigation requirements highlighted above.

For further information on our new RAL service offering our customers should contact the following;
Sharon Alexander Highway Services SPN Highway Assets Manager sharon.alexander@ukpowernetworks.co.uk
James Cornish Highway Services EPN Highway Assets Manager james.cornish@ukpowernetworks.co.uk
Kevin Newnham Highway Services Major Programmes Manager kevin.newnham@ukpowernetworks.co.uk