



Independent Networks
Association

New London School of Economics report highlights the benefit of competition in utility connections

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Today the London School of Economics (LSE) has published the report ‘Building Back Faster: Utility connection competition and UK policy priorities for the 2020s.’ The report hails the ‘quiet revolution for new developments’ brought about by the introduction of competition in utility connections, highlighting the benefits this has brought to developers in delivering new homes and buildings.

The report also warns that these benefits could be at risk if awareness of competition in connections remains low amongst policymakers; poor policy decisions, without proper consideration of independent networks, could undermine ambitious government plans for rapid development, not only for new homes, but also for hospitals and other premises.

The report’s author, Dr Tony Hockley says: “The revolution in utility connections is extraordinary. It is a fascinating story of gradual competition growth, over 20 years. It has lacked the dramatic headlines of other markets, and the usual rollercoaster of deregulation and reregulation. The change needs to be more widely recognised. Otherwise it risks being undone as an unintended consequence of future energy policy decisions.”

The Independent Networks Association (INA) sponsored the LSE’s research. Commenting on the report INA Chair, Vicki Spiers, has said:

“This report shows the strong and steady growth in independent networks, since competition was introduced two decades ago. However, because our high levels of service have not attracted government or regulator intervention, we have often gone under the radar. We hope this report will help policymakers understand the importance of our sector in delivering their aims, so that we can play our full part in contributing to the decisions they are taking on the future of the system. That way we can ensure independent networks will be able to help deliver the country’s aspirations on housebuilding and net zero, as we seek to build back faster from the effects of COVID-19.”

Notes to editors

1. The Independent Networks Association (INA) was formed at the start of 2020 through the merger of the Competitive Networks Association (CNA) and the Association of Independent Gas Transporters (AIGT). Bringing together the bodies that represent



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Independent Distribution Network Operators (INDOs) and Independent Gas Transporters (IGTs).

2. IDNOs develop, operate and maintain local electricity distribution networks. IGTs develop, operate and maintain local gas transportation networks. IDNO and IGT networks are not linked to geography. IDNOs and IGTs operate across Britain, competing for connection contracts on a commercial basis.
3. In 2019 independent networks connected 80 per cent of new homes to the gas grid and 71 per cent of new homes to the electricity network.
4. Dr Tony Hockley is a Visiting Senior Fellow at the LSE. The research paper was sponsored by the INA through a contract with LSE Enterprise Ltd.
5. The report 'Building Back Faster: Utility connection competition and UK policy priorities for the 2020s' can be read in full here:

<https://ina.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/LSE-Report-Building-Back-Faster-October-2020.pdf>.