# UK energy networks innovate with unified data template to accelerate net zero projects



Three of the UK's leading energy networks—UK Power Networks, Cadent, and SGN—have collaboratively developed a pioneering ‘Common Ask Template’ designed to streamline administrative processes and accelerate the delivery of local net zero projects. This template is reported to be the first of its kind, enabling local authorities to provide critical information to energy networks just once, using a simple, unified format. Serving over 25 million people, these networks aim to reduce repetitive paperwork and free up valuable council staff time by eliminating the need for multiple, differently formatted data requests.

This initiative is already gaining traction, with Hounslow Council adopting the template and an additional five local authorities within Greater London Authority’s Outer East London Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) using it. The shared format is expected to facilitate earlier and more efficient planning and installation of essential infrastructure projects, such as electric vehicle chargers and low-carbon heating systems. Councillor Katherine Dunne, portfolio holder for Climate, Environment and Transport at the London Borough of Hounslow, highlighted the efficiencies gained, noting the simplified data-sharing process saves time and reduces resource strain for councils, while reinforcing UK Power Networks' commitment to improving customer experience.

Lynne McDonald, head of local net zero at UK Power Networks’ Distribution System Operator (DSO), emphasised the reduction in administrative burdens for local authorities, allowing them to focus more on delivering tangible climate benefits. Meanwhile, Lorna Millington, future networks manager at Cadent, underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving the UK’s net zero ambitions by 2050, calling the project an exemplar of shared insight and partnership in the energy transition.

This Common Ask Template is designed for universal application across councils, from those in the earliest stages of climate planning to those with advanced energy modelling capabilities, supporting local net zero initiatives through to 2050. It aligns with broader efforts by these networks to modernise and decarbonise UK energy infrastructure. For instance, SGN’s 'Gas Goes Green' programme is pioneering the repurposing of existing gas infrastructure to carry hydrogen and biomethane, aiming for a cost-effective transition to net zero gas networks. The company’s recent trial using advanced pressure control demonstrated significant methane emissions reductions, an important step in curbing greenhouse gases from traditional gas grids.

Moreover, SGN and Cadent are actively engaged in the Capital Hydrogen project, which seeks to convert London's gas supply to hydrogen over the next two decades, supporting the city’s target of net zero emissions by 2030. This ambitious vision predicts the need for at least 40 terawatt-hours of hydrogen by 2050 to decarbonise heating, transport, and power generation across the capital.

Innovation funding also plays a critical role in these efforts. National Grid recently secured over £15 million from Ofgem’s Strategic Innovation Fund to support projects designed to enhance regional energy planning and maximise network capacity for low-carbon technologies. SGN itself has previously received funding to pursue innovation in hydrogen integration, ultra-rapid EV charging infrastructure, and digital safety enhancements for gas networks.

Together, these coordinated initiatives, including the new Common Ask Template, represent a strategic, multi-faceted approach to overcoming administrative and technical barriers. The collaboration between major gas and electricity networks highlights a collective commitment to advancing the UK’s climate goals through practical, scalable solutions that empower local authorities and streamline the path to a cleaner energy future.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/uk-electricity-and-gas-networks-create-template-to-cut-project-admin/), [[2]](https://www.yourlocalnetzerohub.co.uk/learn/collaborations-partnerships/cadent-and-sgn)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/uk-electricity-and-gas-networks-create-template-to-cut-project-admin/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/uk-electricity-and-gas-networks-create-template-to-cut-project-admin/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/uk-electricity-and-gas-networks-create-template-to-cut-project-admin/), [[3]](https://www.sgn.co.uk/news/uk-gas-networks-come-together-launch-green-vision), [[4]](https://www.sgn.co.uk/news/smart-gas-grid-trial-delivers-significant-cut-methane-emissions)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/uk-electricity-and-gas-networks-create-template-to-cut-project-admin/), [[5]](https://www.sgn.co.uk/news/energy-companies-set-out-hydrogen-vision-help-london-become-net-zero-2030)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/uk-electricity-and-gas-networks-create-template-to-cut-project-admin/), [[6]](https://www.nationalgrid.com/media-centre/press-releases/national-grid-secures-ps153-million-three-net-zero-innovation-projects-part-ofgem-fund), [[7]](https://sgn.co.uk/news/weve-been-granted-ps600k-funding-ofgem-six-innovation-projects)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/uk-electricity-and-gas-networks-create-template-to-cut-project-admin/), [[2]](https://www.yourlocalnetzerohub.co.uk/learn/collaborations-partnerships/cadent-and-sgn), [[3]](https://www.sgn.co.uk/news/uk-gas-networks-come-together-launch-green-vision), [[5]](https://www.sgn.co.uk/news/energy-companies-set-out-hydrogen-vision-help-london-become-net-zero-2030), [[6]](https://www.nationalgrid.com/media-centre/press-releases/national-grid-secures-ps153-million-three-net-zero-innovation-projects-part-ofgem-fund), [[7]](https://sgn.co.uk/news/weve-been-granted-ps600k-funding-ofgem-six-innovation-projects)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://industrialnews.co.uk/uk-electricity-and-gas-networks-create-template-to-cut-project-admin/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.yourlocalnetzerohub.co.uk/learn/collaborations-partnerships/cadent-and-sgn> - Cadent and SGN, both Gas Distribution Networks supplying gas to 16.9 million homes across the UK, have collaborated with UK Power Networks to create the Local Authority Common Ask template. This initiative aims to streamline data sharing between local authorities and energy networks, reducing administrative burdens and accelerating the delivery of local net zero projects. The template allows councils to provide necessary information in a unified format, enhancing efficiency and supporting the transition to low-carbon infrastructure.
3. <https://www.sgn.co.uk/news/uk-gas-networks-come-together-launch-green-vision> - In April 2020, SGN, along with other UK gas networks, launched the 'Gas Goes Green' programme. This initiative outlines a blueprint for transforming the UK's gas network into a net zero system by repurposing existing infrastructure to accommodate hydrogen and biomethane. The programme details the engineering challenges and policy actions required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, aiming to deliver a cost-effective and least disruptive path to decarbonisation.
4. <https://www.sgn.co.uk/news/smart-gas-grid-trial-delivers-significant-cut-methane-emissions> - SGN and Utonomy completed a six-month trial demonstrating that advanced pressure control can significantly reduce methane emissions from Britain's gas grid. Conducted between October 2024 and March 2025, the trial achieved a projected average reduction of 16% in methane leakage by optimising network pressure in response to real-time demand and weather conditions. This breakthrough is part of SGN's £6 million Intelligent Gas Grid programme, funded by Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund, aiming to modernise gas networks for a decarbonised future.
5. <https://www.sgn.co.uk/news/energy-companies-set-out-hydrogen-vision-help-london-become-net-zero-2030> - In October 2022, SGN, Cadent, and National Grid Gas Transmission unveiled a hydrogen vision to assist London in achieving net zero carbon by 2030. The Capital Hydrogen programme plans to transition London's gas network to hydrogen over the next 15-20 years, aiming to reduce emissions, generate jobs, and enhance energy independence. The feasibility study identified that by 2050, London will need at least 40TWh of hydrogen to decarbonise heating, transport, and power generation.
6. <https://www.nationalgrid.com/media-centre/press-releases/national-grid-secures-ps153-million-three-net-zero-innovation-projects-part-ofgem-fund> - In September 2024, National Grid secured £15.3 million from Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund for three net zero innovation projects. These projects include developing a strategy to reduce dependency on SF6, using digital tools to support regional energy planning, and maximising the capacity of the distribution network for low carbon technologies. The funding aims to accelerate the transition to a net zero future and deliver tangible benefits to energy networks, local authorities, and consumers.
7. <https://sgn.co.uk/news/weve-been-granted-ps600k-funding-ofgem-six-innovation-projects> - In March 2022, SGN was granted £600k from Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund for six innovation projects. These projects aim to address challenges in the UK's energy sector as it works towards achieving net zero targets. The initiatives include assessing the impact of introducing hydrogen to gas pipes, demonstrating the use of gas network infrastructure for ultra-rapid EV charging, and focusing on predictive analytics to improve safety and the digitalisation of the gas grid.