

SP Energy Networks secures £275,000 of funding from Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund

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SP Energy Networks has secured £275,000 of funding from Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund to help further two of its innovative projects this year.

The two projects, Equiflex and LVOE, look to address key issues facing the electricity network as the UK moves to Net Zero; removing barriers to flexibility services and helping to balance voltage differences on the network caused by the uptake in adoption of low carbon technologies.

Equiflex, awarded £133,000 from the fund, aims to promote equal access to flexibility services for everyone. A way of balancing supply and demand on the electricity network, flexibility services work with users to change the way they use, store or generate electricity as required by the network operator. This can provide a financial benefit for the electricity users alongside overall cost savings by reducing the need for some network reinforcements.

However, access to the flexibility market can be limited. Equiflex, in partnership with Frazer-Nash Consulting Ltd, Energy Action Scotland and East Ayrshire Council, will investigate flexibility options, barriers to access these services and build a toolkit to advise stakeholders on how they can participate in the flexibility market. This will help ensure all customers are afforded an equal opportunity to access the potential savings associated with participating in the flexibility market.

Also, with a focus on potential future savings is the LVOE project. Awarded £142,000 of funding, the project aims to address the low voltage imbalance experienced on the network as more and more

households adopt low carbon technologies like EVs, solar panels and heat pumps.

The number of customers adopting these technologies is only expected to grow into the future, requiring substantial network upgrades to ensure everyone who wants to can install these technologies.

LVOE intends to explore the use of a low voltage power electronic device, known as the LV Optimiser, can help reduce the need for some of these upgrades, potentially offering multi-million pounds worth of savings. The project is part of SP Energy Networks' continued commitment to power electronics in line with its RIIO-2 innovation strategy and demonstrating their pioneering approach to using power electronics as an enabler for Net Zero.

Thanks to this funding, the project can move into the next stage of works, working alongside the University of Glasgow, carrying out literature studies to confirm the innovation gap and to verify and confirm the benefits of phase voltage balancing.

Graham Campbell, Director of Processes and Technology of SP Energy Networks, said: "Innovation remains at the heart of our business and key to achieving our commitments to our customers. We are committed to continuing our pioneering approach to flexibility and investigating the use of power electronics to improve the resilience and efficiency of our network to enable our customers to adopt low carbon technologies at the scale and pace necessary to reach Net Zero. "We are thrilled to secure £275,000 of funding from Ofgem to help take these projects forward."