

Era of constant electricity at home is ending, says power chief

● The days of permanently available electricity may be coming to an end, the head of the power network said yesterday.

Families would have to get used to only using power when it was available, rather than constantly, said Steve Holliday, chief executive of National Grid. Mr Holliday was challenged over how the country would "keep the lights on" when it relied more on wind turbines as supplies of gas dwindled. Electricity provided by wind farms will increase six-fold by 2020 but critics complain they only generate on windy days.

Mr Holliday told Radio 4's *Today* programme that people would have to "change their behaviour". "The grid is going to be a very different system in 2020, 2030," he said. "We keep

thinking that we want it to be there and provide power when we need it. It is going to be much smarter than that.

"We are going to change our own behaviour and consume it when it is available and available cheaply."

Mr Holliday was speaking ahead of a speech last night to the Royal Academy of Engineering, in which he warned that the government was "looking more to communities and individuals to take power into their hands".

He also warned that pylons would still be used to carry power cables across the countryside because it was 10 times more expensive to bury them.

"As a society, we all need to be clear about what we can and cannot afford," he said.