



Western Power Distribution Stakeholder Workshop Birmingham March 2020

1	Introduction	03
2	Executive Summary	04
3	Attendees	07
4	Introduction: the RIIO-ED2 Business Planning Process	09
5	Network Reliability	12
6	Network Resilience	19
7	Cyber Resilience	24
8	Whole Systems Approach to Net Zero	27
9	Innovation and New Services	36
10	Environment	44
11	Electric Vehicles	50
12	Vulnerability and Fuel Poverty	59
13	Connections (Afternoon Session)	68
14	Workforce Resilience (Afternoon Session)	73
15	Digitalisation, Data and DSO (Afternoon Session)	77
16	Workshop Feedback	79

1 | INTRODUCTION

On 4 March 2020, Western Power Distribution (WPD) hosted the fifth in a series of six stakeholder workshops aimed at gathering feedback with a view to co-creating its business plan for the next price control period, R10-ED2, which runs from 2023–2028. The workshop took place at Villa Park in Birmingham.

The event consisted of four presentations given by WPD representatives, with stakeholders giving their feedback during three round-table discussions and via several electronic votes over the course of the day. The full presentation can be found online here: <https://www.westernpower.co.uk/downloads/132043>.

The workshops covered the following topics:

Workshop One	Workshop Two	Afternoon Sessions
Network reliability Network resilience Cyber resilience Whole systems approach to net zero Innovation and new services	Environment Electric vehicles Vulnerability and fuel poverty	Safety and health (<i>not held on the day due to being undersubscribed</i>) Connections Workforce resilience Digitalisation, data and DSO

Stakeholders were asked to review the 14 headline priority topics that had been suggested by stakeholders in previous years, removing or adding to them where necessary. They were then asked to suggest commitments for WPD to deliver under these priorities. In the spirit of co-creation, the topics for each workshop were split into two sets, with half of the tables discussing the first set and the other half discussing the second set in tandem. Halfway through the workshop, stakeholders were asked to review, amend and add to the commitments suggested by a neighbouring table under different priorities in order to truly co-create these with the group as a whole.

Following each round-table discussion, stakeholders were asked to vote electronically to indicate which priorities they felt were the most important under each topic area. Each stakeholder had three votes to cast on each question, with the option of allocating all three votes to one particularly important priority or splitting their votes between two or three priorities. Importantly, the voting options also included those priorities that had been suggested in the discussions.

WPD instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate the workshops and take notes of the comments made by stakeholders.

Every effort has been made to faithfully record the feedback given. In order to encourage candour and open debate, comments have not been ascribed to individuals. Instead, notes have been made of the type of organisation that each stakeholder represents.



2 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop began with an introductory presentation from Richard Allcock, Stakeholder Engagement Manager. Richard explained WPD's role distributing power to nearly 8 million homes and businesses across its network area. He then explained WPD's business planning process and how stakeholder engagement feeds into the company's business plan.

INTRODUCTION: THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

Andrzej Michalowski, Planning and Regulation Special Projects Manager, outlined the regulatory framework in which WPD operates and explained how stakeholder commitments will be applied by the company. Stakeholders were then asked to introduce themselves and state their primary reasons for attending the workshop.

- Stakeholders in Birmingham were very keen to discuss network planning, particularly in light of the push for net zero by 2050. EVs, battery storage and heat pumps were all key components of these discussions.
- Grid resilience and reinforcement were also widely cited, with many concerned about the grid's capacity to cope with both predicted future demand and the increase in extreme weather events due to climate change.
- Delegates from across the spectrum wanted to talk about the future of energy, especially insofar as it pertained to vulnerable and fuel-poor customers, with many feeling that a broad communications strategy to clearly and simply convey the implications of DSO to all WPD's customers was critical.

CO-CREATING OUR BUSINESS PLAN COMMITMENTS: WORKSHOPS ONE AND TWO

The main workshop was split into two sessions. The first workshop session was presented by Ben Godfrey, Network Strategy Manager, and included the following topics: network reliability; network resilience; cyber resilience; whole systems approach to net zero; and innovation and new services. The second workshop session was introduced by Alison Sleightholm, Resources and External Affairs Director, and included the following topics: environment; electric vehicles; and vulnerability and fuel poverty. The topics considered in both workshops and some detail of the priorities discussed are shown below.

Network reliability

- Stakeholders' top priority in this area, 'decarbonisation, lobby for a UK energy plan' was a new suggestion made at the Birmingham event.
- Investing in the network ahead of need was seen to be critical in preparing the grid to reliably support a decarbonised energy system.
- Delegates created a further two new priorities that were subject to a public vote: 'use flexibility and generation for increasing demand and power cut support' and 'data science and intelligent network control'.

Network resilience

- The top priority in this area was 'scenario planning / data analysis', followed by a new priority identified through the discussions: 'maintain a local workforce (workforce resilience)'.
- Many delegates wanted to see WPD conduct robust asset health analyses, and either replace, remove or relocate assets deemed to be at risk.
- Stakeholders voted on an additional priority that was created as a result of the discussions: 'strategic undergrounding of cables'.

/ continued

Cyber resilience

- Stakeholders voted for 'network security – risk of power cuts due to a cyberattack' and 'incident recovery plans' as WPD's top priorities in the area of cyber resilience.
- 'Consider risk of terrorism', particularly at substations, was identified as an additional priority.
- A key commitment under cyber resilience was in the ability to isolate areas of the network in the event of a cyberattack to prevent more widespread damage.

Whole systems approach to net zero

- Stakeholders' top two priorities were 'invest ahead of need (lobby government / Ofgem)' and 'predict future changes and uptake of localised WPD future energy scenarios', with the former being a new priority identified during the discussions.
- A centralised approach was urged with respect to many of the priorities, with a national energy policy framework seen as critical to enabling the innovation, investment and confidence needed to meet the UK's net zero target of 2050.
- Delegates suggested a range of additional new priorities, including 'communication and education with customers', 'WPD develop or partner on storage solutions' and 'set up a wider infrastructure planning board'.

Innovation and new services

- The most popular priority in this area was 'collaborate with industry to offer tariffs to encourage flexibility', followed by a new priority, 'help fuel-poor to access low-carbon technology (including lobbying government / developers)'.
- Key commitments under encouraging a wider take-up of flexibility were the need for better, clearer information and communication and the creation of a standardised tariff.
- Delegates created an additional three priorities that were voted on: 'facilitate holistic solutions for new technologies', 'smart meter roll-out' and 'separate network for electric vehicles'.

Environment

- The most two most popular priorities in this area, 'sustainability in procurement, supply chain', and 'education, helping staff and customers reduce their own carbon footprint' were new priorities identified as a result of the discussions.
- Delegates wanted WPD to lead by example in reducing its business carbon footprint, using its influence to drive change and sustainability down its supply chain.
- Delegates created an additional four priorities: 'pioneer electric plant equipment', 'visual impact of WPD's amenities / equipment', 'reduce network losses from equipment' and 'charge more for connecting fossil fuel generation'.

Electric vehicles

- The most popular priorities were 'ensure network capacity and infrastructure for electric vehicles' and 'lobby for national EV strategy ensuring standardisation'.
- Standardisation of charge points was seen as critical to a wider take-up of electric vehicles, although there was some debate over whether this was the role of WPD, government or the market.
- Other new priorities that were voted on during the workshop were 'monitoring EV market (including new technology and hydrogen)' and 'consider rural customers'.

Vulnerability and fuel poverty

- The two favoured priorities in this area were 'educate and inform customers of support available and energy efficiency measures', which was newly suggested, and 'protect the interests of vulnerable customers in the switch to a smarter network'.
- Providing education, advice and financial support to increase energy efficiency was seen as a more responsible, 'future-proofed' solution to tackling fuel poverty.
- Delegates created two further priorities that were voted on: 'identifying fuel poverty' and 'lobby government to regulate a national landlord register with standards'.

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

In the afternoon, there was the opportunity to attend one of four optional afternoon sessions on specific topics. Most of them followed a similar format as the morning workshops (a discussion on priorities and commitments), albeit without a formally facilitated discussion. The 'digitalisation, data and DSO' session, however, followed a more informal format.

- 'Safety and health' was not hosted in Birmingham as it was undersubscribed.
- 'Connections' was hosted by Vanessa Buxton, Connection Policy Engineer.
- 'Workforce resilience' was hosted by Carl Ketley-Lowe, Engineering Policy Manager.
- 'Digitalisation, data and DSO' was hosted by Ben Godfrey.

Connections

- In terms of the business plan, two new priorities ranked joint first: 'investment ahead of need' and 'investment in local development plans'. Stakeholders wanted to see WPD strategically invest in the network, as well as to work more closely with local authorities on their development plans. In addition, stakeholders wanted to see the simplification of the connections process for generation and the speed of the connections process in general improved.
- In terms of the ICE plan for 2020/21, 'network capacity, allocation and reservation' was ranked top by stakeholders with 33% of the vote, with one stakeholder requesting a consistent approach to this with IDNOs. The second priority was 'low-carbon technology' with 22% of the vote and 'availability of information' with 19% of the vote. However, no commitments were suggested against these.

Workforce resilience

- The top priorities on this topic were 'a happy, healthy and motivated workforce where WPD is the employer of choice' and 'retention and upskilling of a specialised, highly skilled workforce'. However, it should be noted that only three stakeholders voted on this.
- A range of commitments were proposed around how to appeal to a younger workforce, such as flexible working packages, greater ability to conduct work from home, bike-to-work schemes and gym memberships.

Digitalisation, data and DSO

- Stakeholders advocated the converging of data sets across the DNOs, with some citing different standards of data currently shared as prohibitive to its most effective use. This was felt to be of particular importance for local authorities, with accurate forecasting models required to plan for the necessary investments in network planning for net zero.
- Delegates wanted data sets to be downloadable, twinned and anonymised, and urged greater access to DSO data on a micro / macro scale. In that respect, it was felt that data packaged for scale could unlock investment on different levels.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

After the workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. Some of the key findings are shown below:

- 100% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop either 'very interesting' or 'interesting'.
- 52% of stakeholders 'strongly agreed' that they had had an opportunity to make points and ask questions, while 47% 'agreed'.
- 92% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the right topics were discussed on the day.
- 97% thought EQ Communications' facilitation was either 'good' or 'very good'.
- 89% felt the venue for the day was either 'good' or 'very good'.

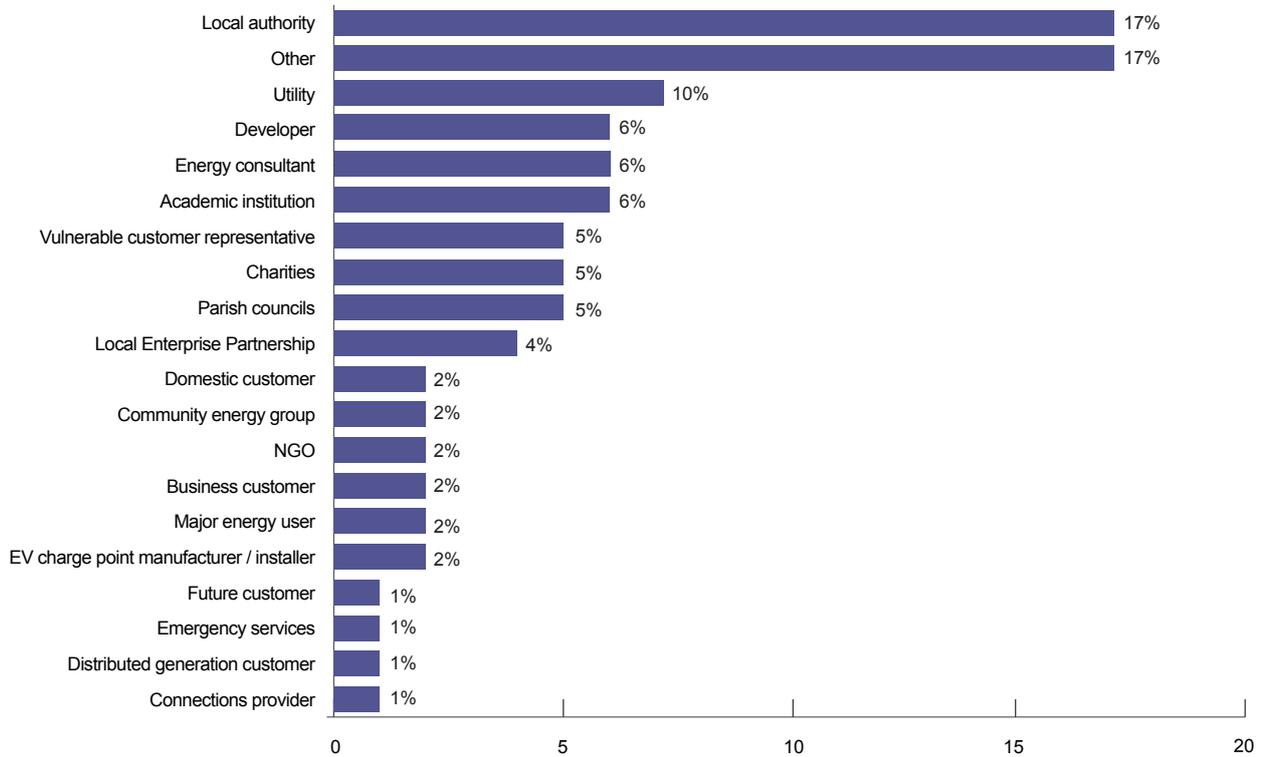
3 | ATTENDEES

A total of 79 stakeholders attended the workshop, representing 64 organisations. The organisations represented on the day are shown below.

- ABB Power Grids UK Ltd
- Accent
- Act On Energy
- AgilityEco Services
- Arcadis
- Aston University
- Babcock International
- Birmingham Airport
- Birmingham City Council
- Birmingham Energy Advisory Service
- BP Chargemaster
- British Red Cross
- Cadent
- Cannock Chase District Council
- Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Centrica plc
- CoGen
- Combe Fields Parish Council
- Coventry City Council
- Coventry University
- Daventry District Council
- E.ON
- EDF Energy
- Electricity North West
- Energy Capital (WMCA)
- Energy Confidence with Phil Beardmore
- Energy Systems Catapult
- ESC Ltd
- Freedom Group
- Geldards LLP
- Hockley Heath Parish Council
- K.B. Services
- Landmark Associates
- Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council
- Lucy Electric
- Major Energy Users' Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Marches Energy Agency
- Midland Metro Alliance
- Morrison Utility Services
- National Grid
- Nortech
- North Warwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau
- Nottingham City Council (Marches LEP)
- Piparia Consulting Ltd
- Redrow Homes Ltd
- RTG Group
- Sedgeberrow Sustainable and Manageable Energy
- Shropshire Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- Southam Town Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Taylor Wimpey (North Midlands)
- Technical & Development Services Ltd
- The National Energy Foundation
- University of Birmingham
- University of Warwick
- Warwickshire Police
- Wattify Limited
- Whitwick Parish Council
- Worcestershire LEP
- Wychavon District Council
- YES Energy Solutions

ATTENDEES

During the electronic voting, delegates were asked to identify which stakeholder group they belonged to. The graph below summarises the results.



4 | INTRODUCTION: THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

Planning was high on the agenda in Birmingham, whether that was delegates representing local authorities concerned about designing and implementing an EV charging network, parish councillors questioning how to influence developers to install three-phase cabling in new developments, or stakeholders from community energy projects wanting to discuss the phasing out of oil as a heating source and the introduction of alternative forms of energy generation. Similarly, those representing large connections customers wanted more clarity from WPD on design and pricing amid concerns that new planning conditions for the EV charging network were making some proposed sites unfeasible, while others wanted more transparency on where deficiencies in the network lay to allow for more strategic development planning.

Many stakeholders were keen to find out how WPD's new business plan was going to reflect and support the reality of the climate emergency and the imperative of reaching carbon zero by 2050, or, in some cases in some authorities, by an even earlier target. In these cases, delegates were concerned about available capacity, along with the cost and ease of connecting to the grid and the smarter use of data to find untapped capacity and assist with the placement of renewable development projects. There were also anxieties around the capability of the grid to cope with predicted increased demand, with questions raised over WPD's ability to invest ahead of need in reinforcement, and future network reliability—and resilience—in the face of both higher demand and more extreme weather events. It should be stressed, however, that while delegates voiced concerns over the future, there was also a good deal of enthusiasm for innovation, collaboration and finding solutions in tandem with WPD. In that regard, the potentially revolutionary capabilities of increased storage on the network were highlighted, along with innovative strategies that might lead to a greener, less fossil fuel-dependent world.

Stakeholders across the spectrum wanted to talk about the cost of energy and what support WPD could provide for vulnerable and fuel-poor customers, particularly as the whole energy picture becomes more electricity-oriented. A broader customer focus was emphasised here, with many pointing out that a larger communications project to explain the 'narrative' was needed in the shift to DSO, with better education on smart meters, energy efficiency and the cost implications of a move towards greater renewable generation. Some delegates praised WPD for their exemplary consultancy work with their stakeholders, the point being that the infrastructure for meaningful communication and dialogue was in place; it simply needed to be expanded to reach more customers.



1. WHY HAVE YOU ATTENDED TODAY?

"I chair the neighbourhood plan; we're still looking for refinements or inputs, especially EVs and coping with new housing. All developers should run three-phase power. We've got stuff about being environmentally friendly, but nothing specific." **Parish council**

"I run an oil buying syndicate for villages. We're faced with these people changing their heating in the next 10 years. The answer is to be insulating houses and facilitating community energy." **Community energy group**

"We're looking to get something out of the relationship between planning and WPD. It's frustrating trying to get the design and price from you. We're getting more planning conditions for charging points for cars, which has an impact on the cost and makes some sites unfeasible." **Major connections customer**

"I'm from a district council, on the planning policy team. I am here to look at how your business plan will fit with our new development planning. I want to find out where there are any deficiencies in the network and how you are moving forward with that." **Local authority**

"We have just declared a climate emergency. The big issues we are facing at the moment include one or two issues about adequate supply for new development. We have some issues with new generators being able to connect. It's about forward thinking and planning to make sure that when development does want to take place, the grid can manage it." **Local authority**

"We specialise in helping local stakeholders find untapped capacity on the network. When money goes into providing low-carbon technologies, our stakeholders tell us that we are faced with development challenges. We have just declared a climate emergency. We look at how best to interpret the money invested so that we can get the best for our area. We analyse the capacity and development of the area. It's a lot of data that is hard to understand when planning local projects. We want to make the data meaningful and understandable on the journey to zero carbon." **Energy consultant**

"We receive funding from Western Power Distribution. I'm here to find out more about WPD's social practices and what you are doing to support vulnerable consumers." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"I'm from an energy advice charity and work with WPD on coordinating visits to homes of potentially at-risk customers. I would like to explore different ways that I can identify potentially vulnerable customers in partnership with WPD." **Consumer body**

"I'm planning a portfolio holder for the District Council. I'm interested in 'can the system cope?' really. We're instructed to go to net zero carbon. Will the electric system be able to cope throughout the system?" **Local authority**

"We are currently going through conversations around our development plan, including 40,000 additional homes, and we're already encountering issues where businesses are struggling with connections, or, critically, with their own power generation and getting that back into the grid. And so if we're to go carbon neutral, how that can be facilitated by WPD and enabled, for our developments? And also, with regard to EVs, as a council we're wanting to invest around 20 chargers in the district, and have a few already installed." **Local authority**

"We want to work with WPD to deliver a more environmentally friendly network. I'm particularly interested in the move to DSO and also EV. In this country we've seen the complete failure of electrical smart metering and I'm interested in how we believe we're going to get to delivering tens of millions of charge points across the country. Skills sets are changing. For example, whereas we normally use a jointer to deal with a cut-out change, they don't have any telecoms experience so we need to help and position ourselves as enablers." **Major connections customer**

INTRODUCTION: THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

“Our role is to help foster innovative in the drive to net zero. We are funded partly by the government and partly by projects and competitions. I am the head of the digital and data team, with a focus on how digital and data can help achieve net zero, both from a whole systems approach and for domestic consumers.”

Energy consultant

“Then there’s the storage side of things, and I don’t think people understand that. They understand the EVs, but storage is the next step. And there’s such an opportunity there. It’s how that’s communicated.”

Local authority

“With all DNOs, not just WPD, as demand side response comes in, including storage: we need innovation. There’s a history there, there’s more fight for capacity, and there needs to be more of a solution-finding process. It’s never engineers’ fault, but that’s part of the business that’s not customer-facing.”

Energy consultant

“We want to know how we get to net zero, what needs to happen on the way and how consumers are going to understand the narrative. People don’t understand smart meters and why they’re needed. We cannot afford to fail here. DSO is the single largest change we’ve seen in energy industry and we need better planning.”

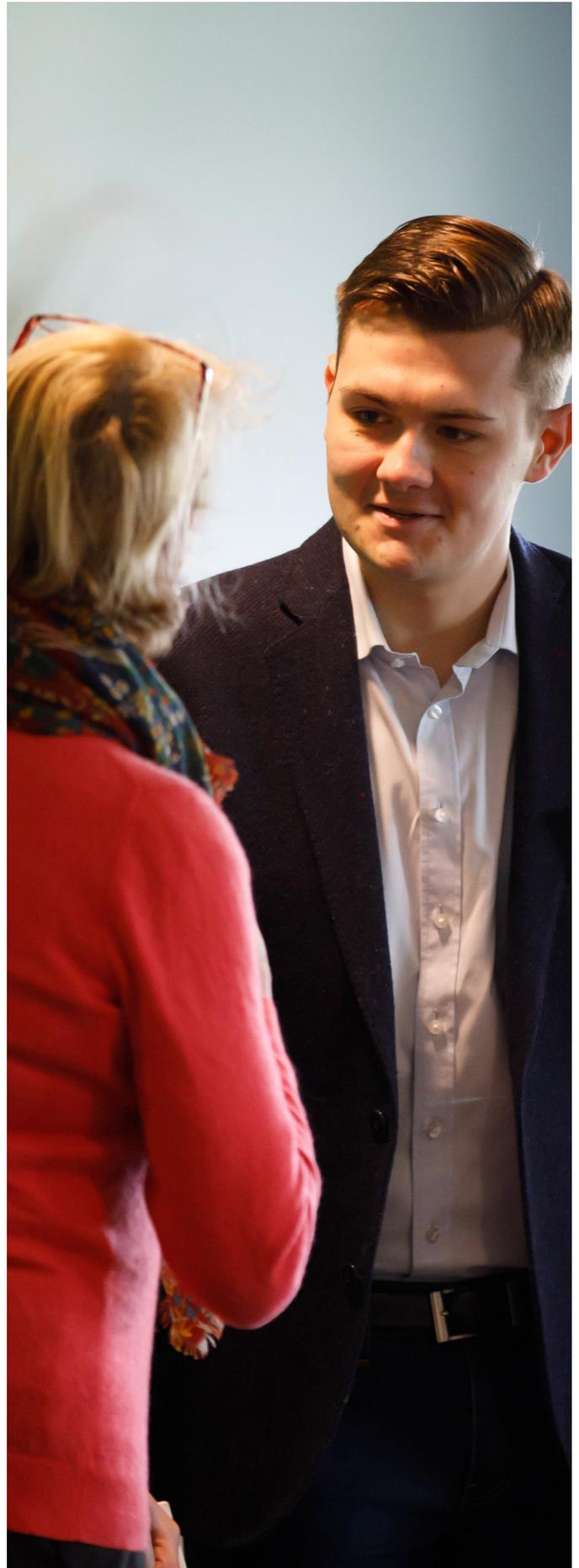
Utility

“We must go back to basics when it comes to telling consumers about the transition and what’s in it for them, for instance regarding smart meters. There are two elephants in the room, and those are costs and heat. There must be clarity about our plans and their benefits, and we must explain why their bills going up.”

Utility

“I manage a small parish council and I’m also a member of the customer collaboration panel for WPD. I’ve been to many stakeholder events and WPD has the most genuine consultations I’ve ever been involved in.”

Parish council



5 | NETWORK RELIABILITY

The most favoured priority suggested by stakeholders when asked to vote on the theme of network reliability was 'decarbonisation, lobby for a UK energy plan', with 23% of the vote. This was a new priority that emerged as a result of the discussions. In second place was 'overall health of network assets', with 14%, followed by another new priority, 'use flexibility and generation for increasing demand and power cut support', with 12% of the vote.

As well as voting on and discussing already established priorities, delegates created a further six priorities as a result of the workshop: 'data science and intelligent network control', 'maintain reliability in light of increased demand (e.g. EVs, heat pumps)', 'local workforce / workforce resilience', 'capacity constraints inhibit new development', 'sustainability' and 'industry leadership'.

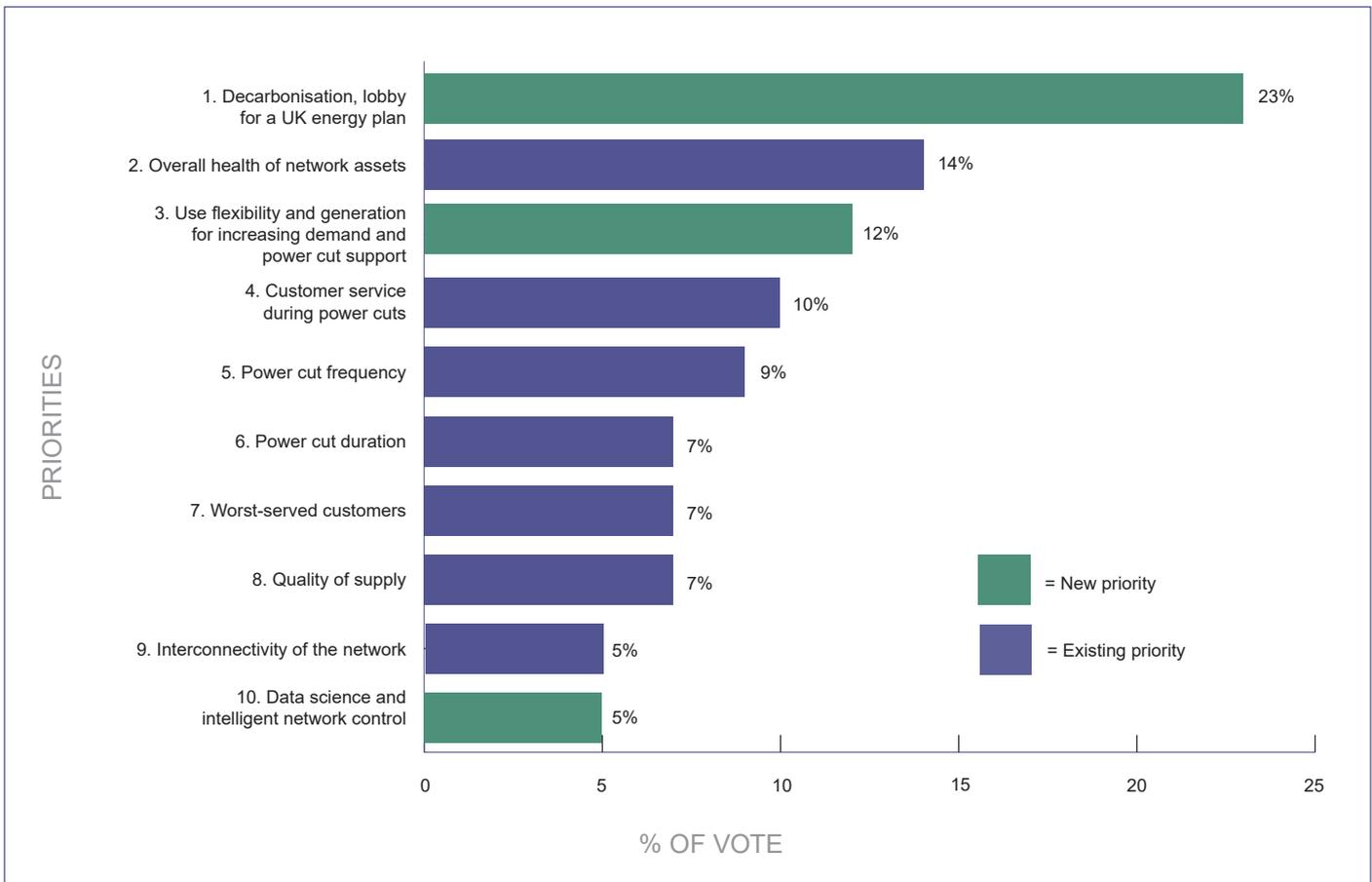
Stakeholders made it very clear that that lobbying the government and Ofgem was critical to both improving network reliability and preparing the network to reliably support a decarbonised energy future. They wanted to see WPD able to invest ahead of need to create more capacity and reinforce the network in areas of stress and weakness. A commitment to invest ahead of need also arose against several other priorities, including 'worst-served customers', 'interconnectivity of the network', and 'maintain reliability in light of increased demand (e.g. EVs, heat pumps)'.

Delegates saw that a cohesive national policy framework was crucial to the implementation of a decarbonisation strategy and suggested collaborating with local authorities and industry leaders to share and generate data, methodologies and evidence to make that case to government. A further commitment to investment in new technologies such as battery storage was also stressed, with many citing the storage of renewable energy, and its potential as a backup source during power cuts, as vital to overall network reliability.

Healthy network assets were seen as critical to network reliability, particularly in the light of increased distributed generation and demand in the form of EVs and heat pumps. Delegates wanted to see WPD undertake a thorough assessment of its ageing assets, mapping them, monitoring them for stress and malfunction, and replacing them where necessary. Again, the point was made that new and existing assets needed to be properly future-proofed to be able to bear the demands of increased electrification.

PRIORITIES

The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order during the electronic voting. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, as well as some new priorities that were suggested during the table sessions.



NETWORK RELIABILITY

The table below includes new priorities that were suggested by stakeholders during the table sessions but were not included in the electronic voting afterwards. These are numbered for reference purposes. The order does not imply prioritisation.

Additional stakeholder priorities (not voted on during the electronic vote)				
11. Maintain reliability in light of increased demand (e.g. EVs, heat pumps)	12. Local workforce / workforce resilience	13. Capacity constraints inhibit new development	14. Sustainability	15. Industry leadership

PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities in the electronic voting. Where no commitments were suggested against a given priority, this has been noted.

Priority 1: Decarbonisation, lobby for a UK energy plan — Proposed Commitments		
a) Lobby for the ability to invest ahead of need	b) Collaborate with local authorities on making the case for a UK energy plan	c) Research and invest in battery storage and hydrogen

“Lobbying government is key. Local authorities and industry leadership need to come together to make that case. Local government has an obligation to lay down local plans for 10 years and more, but we can’t decide where to put a house if we don’t know where the electricity is going to be.” **Local authority**

“Is there a question here about whether this needs to go to another level following Brexit? Post Brexit the UK is going to have to better inform and have better business output. This kind of issue could become more critical in a post-Brexit world. The commitment for this would be lobbying for an energy plan for the UK.” **Developer**

“Thinking of reliability as regards moving to more renewables, a work package to think about power cuts and how to improve power storage seems like a good idea.” **Local authority**

“WPD will need to lobby Ofgem to achieve this.” **Major connections customer**

“It comes back to the idea of local ownership. WPD could work with local councils to get them to set up local battery systems. The company needs to work to encourage these bodies more.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“We are working closely in the development of technology to produce hydrogen rather than diesel. This is much cleaner for the customer. We are working closely with Birmingham City Council with feeding initiatives like green buses and hydrogen into the grid to restore customers.” **Developer**

“Investing ahead of need. You need a strategy for this.” **Major connections customer**

“I don’t know if WPD need to lobby, but instead provide data. Give the government the right data that supports a positive decision.” **Consumer body**

Priority 2: Overall health of network assets — Proposed Commitments			
a) Review assets in light of climate change and extreme weather events	b) Monitor and conduct a health survey of ageing assets	c) Create a map of ageing assets	d) Continue to maintain and update assets
e) Ensure assets are future-proofed to cope with EVs and heat pumps	f) Share and communicate capacity constraints	g) Continue to train, upskill and future-proof WPD workforce	

“This feels like a priority because I think extreme weather conditions are likely to be more common. Is the health of your network assets sufficient to deal with that?” **Energy consultant**

“You need to have more communication among other DSO and utility suppliers to learn how they’re changing and improving their networks.” **Local authority**

“One of the challenges is that there wasn’t any monitoring put in at the time of the asset being put in.” **Business customer**

“There should be a map showing ageing assets. I am aware of a difference in the Coventry area where a lot of distribution substations are under stress. We need to inform the community. If you look at the data you see things are different but you don’t know whether they are meaningful.” **Energy consultant**

“Could there be a pushback on minimum schemes? On section 16, the DNO have to provide the most cost effective scheme. But sometimes that means they’re not always the newest equipment, and sometimes they are not replacing it. Actually, if they are to update the cost into a large connection quotation, it ought to be future-proofed.” **Energy consultant**

“[You need] timescales to reinforce the network and that runs into planning ahead. We’ve got a massive site of 1,300 units, which is going to take 20 years, by which time EVs and heat pumps will definitely be in use. Do we need to be initiating things now for the benefit of 10 years’ time or can it wait and be rolled out later? We need more information as early as possible.” **Major connections customer**

“In Worcester, one person who took out a unit wanted to put in lots of solar panels, but the substation couldn’t handle this. In other words, the overall health of assets is important. We need to know whether current assets can be used for new purposes. Even though we want to go into renewables ourselves, we cannot.” **Local authority**

“We need a regular health check about the restraints of the network communicated to all parties involved in the supply chain.” **Major energy user**

“You need to retain or improve the skill level of your staff going forward, particularly when there are going to be significant changes with meeting net zero, EVs and infrastructure change.” **Utility**

Priority 3: Use flexibility and generation for increasing demand and power cut support — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, and gained 12% of the vote, no formal commitments were articulated against the priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comments were, however, captured during the workshop.

“Some of the distribution networks have introduced batteries where they have planned outages.” **Trade association**

“When it comes to this new priority of innovation in renewable generation, could WPD not collaborate more with local authorities to get things off the ground more effectively?” **Emergency services**

Priority 4: Customer service during power cuts — Proposed Commitments

a) Share good practice within WPD	b) Design a self-service app	c) Ensure more frequent, multi-channel communications / promote the 105 number	d) Focus on PSR customers for additional support
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“Spread good practice among staff and make sure that everyone knows when something has been done well.”
Domestic customer

“As well as calling out to people there should be a self-service app where you can log in and get an update on supply restrictions.” **Business customer**

“On your website during a power cut, I’d like to be told that the power is off rather than having to put my post code into the website.” **Parish council**

“For customer service during the power cuts, there isn’t enough awareness of the 105 number. It needs to be promoted better. During Storm Ciara, many people contacted WPD for help through a general contact line and were then forwarded on to the 105 team.”
Emergency services

“Perhaps WPD could publicise the PSR more widely to better serve their customers during outages.”
Consumer body

“During power cuts, make sure PSR customers don’t lose out.” **Utility**

Priority 5: Power cut frequency — Proposed Commitments

a) Maintain levels of service and business as usual	b) Focus on worst-affected: rural areas and vulnerable customers	c) Use data to monitor frequency, e.g. diesel used for backup generators	d) Look at impact of cable theft
e) Work in partnership with manufacturers to install backup battery systems	f) Set a target for improvement but don’t lose sight of cost	g) Monitor the communications risk associated with power cuts	h) Create dedicated power cut teams

“As a customer, I’ve never had a power cut. All I would ask is for you to maintain this level of service.”
Major connections customer

“I’m confused about why maintaining the service is a priority when it’s your core business.”
Major energy user

“If they want to be radical why don’t the distribution companies measure how much diesel the customer has to use when in a power cut? WPD should work with these customers to measure how much of the problem they are having to back up rather than putting the problem onto them.” **Energy consultant**

“Consider the impact of cable theft on power cut frequency.” **Local authority**

“It’s interesting to get the feedback in terms of where people think WPD has moved to. Is a great movement required? If so, how much will that cost and will people be willing to pay that? It’s a case of diminishing returns maybe. The targets may become more challenging to achieve.” **Energy consultant**

“Just keep up with the innovations.”
Domestic customer

“You need to provide us with clear communication of the risks and the solutions available in the event of a power cut. We need information straight from WPD. That would be better than this information coming from a third party trying to sell us things.”
Major energy user

Priority 6: Power cut duration — Proposed Commitments					
a) Maintain core levels of service and business as usual	b) Focus on worst affected: rural areas and vulnerable customers	c) Use innovative technologies to reduce duration	d) Set a target for improvement measured against cost	e) Focus on better, quicker communications with customers	f) Implement robust service-level agreements

“Focus on vulnerable customers. Ensure an incremental improvement.” **Consumer body**

“It would be good to see that the duration between interruptions is increased beyond the 25 months that has been presented. Power cut duration should be reduced considering the fact that there is far more disruption on the network with new technology.” **Business customer**

“Perhaps there could be an incentive mechanism in coordination with LAs to promote battery storage to mitigate outage times.” **Local authority**

“It’s not important because it doesn’t happen that often. If it happened, it would be a massive issue. We need to have robust SLAs and keep to them. It’s about communication with customers as to what’s going on. I’ve found that communication has dropped. Automatic notifications have got better, but the speed of specific responses has got a lot slower.” **Local authority**

Priority 7: Worst-served customers — Proposed Commitments					
a) Focus on rural areas: ensure they’re as well served as urban areas	b) Map worst-served customers to tailor specific support mechanisms	c) Invest ahead of need to improve service to worst-served	d) Prioritise worst-served customers who are also vulnerable and fuel-poor	e) Incentivise battery storage as cost effective, sustainable backup	f) Ensure communications reach all: not everyone is online

“WPD need to ensure that rural areas are served as well as urban areas.” **Local authority**

“The issue is that the areas worst-served aren’t recorded.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Is there a relation between the worst-served customers and where they are? Are rural areas particularly prone to issues of reliability, or just generally disadvantaged areas?” **Local authority**

“I’m a trustee of a charity that looks after people living in fuel poverty in rural areas with no gas supply. Electric heating is the only thing a lot of people have. These people are extremely vulnerable in the event of a network fault.” **Major energy user**

“Some gas boilers need batteries. There needs to be focus on the most vulnerable, especially if we’re moving towards electric heating. If your lights are off it’s one thing but when heating goes off is when it gets dangerous. It’s about sending a signal. ‘A storm is coming, make sure your batteries are charged.’” **Energy consultant**

“What about economically disadvantaged people? If we’re moving towards automaton, that’s cutting off a large proportion of people that don’t feel the benefit of automation, for example, those who don’t have broadband or computers in their houses. There’s an important link between fuel poverty and worst-served customers.” **Local authority**

Priority 8: Quality of supply — Proposed Commitments

a) Provide innovation funds and incentives to explore new technological solutions	b) Upgrade cables as standard as they come to the end of their life	c) Create scenario plans for 100% renewable energy and increased local generation on the network	d) Focus on improving quality of supply to big energy users and communicate work undertaken
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“WPD could explore technology to help quality of supply.” **Major energy user**

“I’m just wondering, while you’re replacing this or that service cable, why not also upgrade it?” **Energy consultant**

“It’s more of an issue of quality of supply. Some of the bigger more energy-consuming businesses have very small tolerances in which their equipment can work. Half-second dropouts can cause hundreds of thousands of pounds of damage. They should put UPS in to protect themselves, but it is an issue.” **Local enterprise partnership**

Priority 9: Interconnectivity of the network — Proposed Commitments

a) Invest ahead of need to future-proof the network	b) Focus on making the network flexible
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“Yes, that’s right. You need to put a future-proof infrastructure in place.” **Local authority**

“I like the idea of supporting flexible services to enable the network to have the charge that it needs in the future.” **Emergency services**

“Lobbying government is key. Local authorities and industry leadership need to come together to make that case. Local government has an obligation to lay down local plans for 10 years and more, but we can’t decide where to put a house if we don’t know where the electricity is going to be.” **Local authority**

Priority 10: Data science and intelligent network control — Proposed Commitments

a) Invest in upgrading to systems capable of intelligent network control	b) Work with data available to improve fault level management
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“One enabler for network reliability is data and data science. Use data more scientifically to ensure a reliable network, for instance with AI and intelligent grid control. Sweat your assets to achieve this. The investment required is cheap, so it should be simple.” **Utility**

“You definitely should invest in data science.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 11: Maintain reliability in light of increased demand (e.g. EVs, heat pumps) — Proposed Commitments

a) Lobby government for the ability to invest ahead of need	b) Work with government to create a national energy strategy	c) Create a point of contact with community energy groups: be transparent over issues such as capacity	d) Forecast to accurately predict future power needs	e) Communicate to all customers how you will maintain reliability
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“There’s a link with having an identified officer doing the work. At the moment, there’s no communication.” **Community energy group**

“Maintain reliability in light of increased demand. The networks you used to put in were future-proofed; everything was oversized. Now it’s always on the limit. It’s tight on the design, which is good from a cost point of view but it’s less capacity.” **Major connections customer**

NETWORK RELIABILITY

Priority 12: Local workforce / workforce resilience — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“I believe that over the last 20 years you have been getting a lot, lot better at all the stuff on there.”
Local authority

Priority 13: Capacity constraints inhibit new development — Proposed Commitments

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| a) Focus on reducing fault currents | b) Focus on providing flexibility services for new connections | c) Collaborate early on local development plans |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|

“Fault current issues are an issue in the Marches. Existing connections are going to take more energy so it’s going to get worse and worse.”
Local enterprise partnership

“Early planning discussions. The planning authorities should get you involved at an earlier stage.”
Major connections customer

“Capacity constraints hold back future developments. For example, in Coventry we want to develop the industrial area but there needs to be capacity invested to allow that to be fully realised.” **Local authority**

Priority 14: Sustainability — Proposed Commitments

- a) Better support for connecting microgrids and local generation

“Sustainability and microgeneration.”
Major connections customer

Priority 15: Industry leadership — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Lobbying government is key. Local authorities and industry leadership need to come together to make that case. Local government has an obligation to lay down local plans for 10 years and more, but we can’t decide where to put a house if we don’t know where the electricity is going to be.” **Local authority**

6 | NETWORK RESILIENCE

When asked to vote on their priorities around network resilience, delegates favoured ‘scenario planning / data analysis’ with 26% of the vote, followed by a new priority, ‘maintain a local workforce (workforce resilience)’ with 23%. In third place was ‘flood protection’ with 21%.

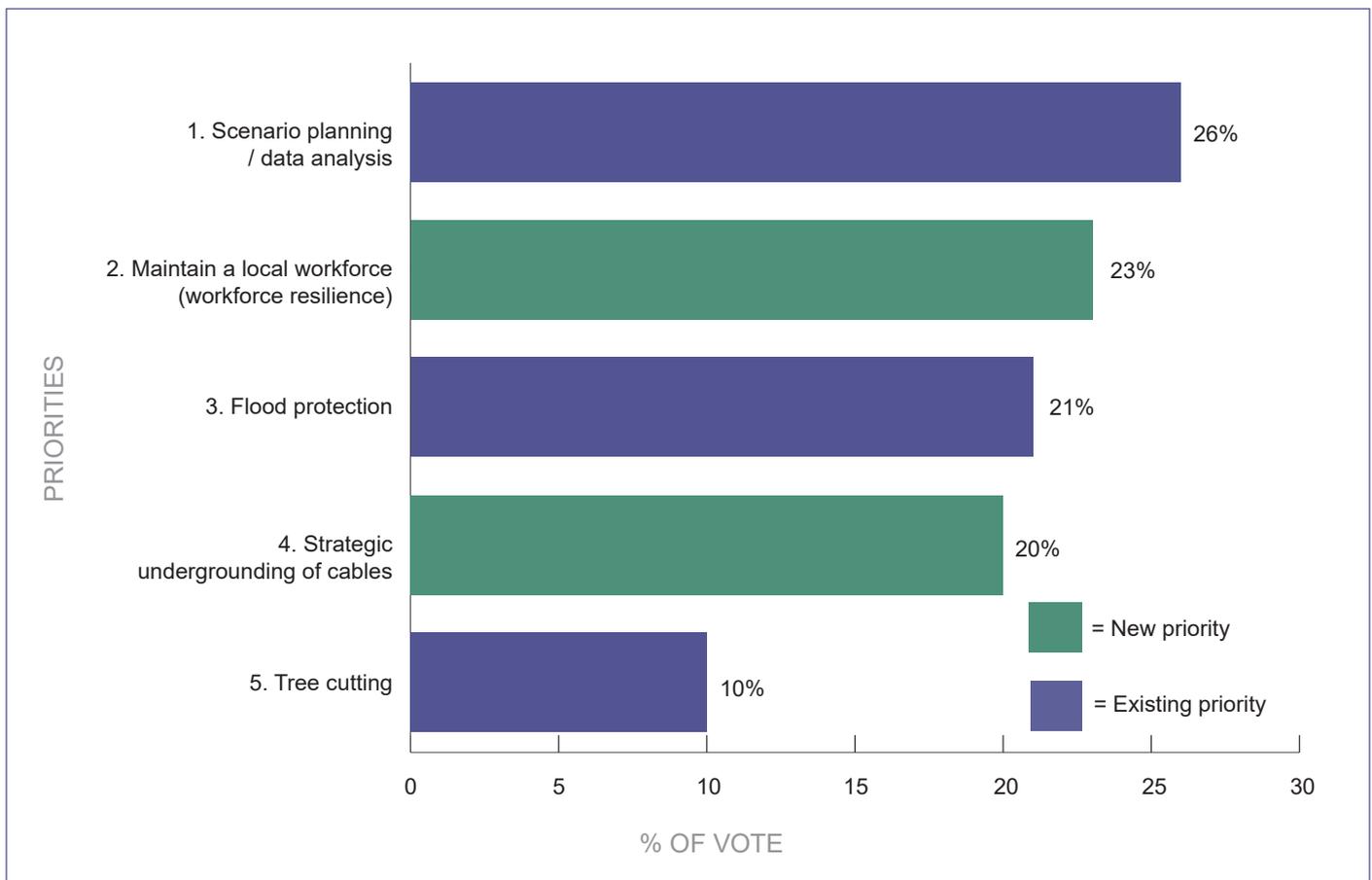
As a result of the discussions, stakeholders created an additional seven priorities: ‘strategic undergrounding of cables’, ‘resilience planning support for communities’, ‘lobby BEIS / Ofgem for access to data from smart meters’, ‘resilience to physical terrorism’, ‘decarbonisation’, ‘climate change preparation’ and ‘asset health / network infrastructure’.

Discussing ‘scenario planning / data analysis’, stakeholders wanted to see WPD publish their disaster recovery plans and share them with local authorities and other key stakeholders so that emergency actions could be better aligned. As part of a robust scenario planning process, they urged WPD to assess buildings, communities and assets deemed to be at risk, expressing frustration that new housing and industrial development continued to be planned on floodplains. To try to mitigate this, they urged WPD to lobby to become a statutory consultee on planning developments.

This same concern was reflected in the commitments articulated around ‘flood protection’, where delegates wanted to see WPD have the authority to advise against, or even block, developments that would clearly be at risk of future flooding. They also urged a comprehensive review of network assets deemed to be at risk, and suggested their removal and relocation, or—where this was not possible, or cost prohibitive—construction of formidable defence systems. Stakeholders felt that the ‘one in 100 years’ flood risk metric was no longer fit for purpose, particularly in the light of the back-to-back storms at the start of 2020. This commitment spoke to an anxiety over climate change that wove through the discussions in general, and the need for WPD’s planning to adequately, and realistically, address the challenge of more extreme weather events in the future.

PRIORITIES

The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order during the electronic voting. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, as well as some new priorities that were suggested during the table sessions.



NETWORK RESILIENCE

The table below includes new priorities that were suggested by stakeholders during the table sessions but were not included in the electronic voting afterwards. These are numbered for reference purposes. The order does not imply prioritisation.

Additional stakeholder priorities (not voted on during the electronic vote)					
6. Resilience planning support for communities	7. Lobby BEIS / Ofgem for access to data from smart meters	8. Resilience to physical terrorism	9. De-carbonisation	10. Climate change preparation	11. Asset health / network infrastructure

PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities in the electronic voting. Where no commitments were suggested against a given priority, this has been noted.

Priority 1: Scenario planning / data analysis — Proposed Commitments			
a) Publish and share disaster recovery plans with key partners and stakeholders	b) Identify key target groups, communities, assets and buildings that are vulnerable	c) Lobby to be a statutory consultee on planning development	d) Collaborate with the Environment Agency and other partners on scenario planning

“Will WPD commit to sharing their resilience plan? What are you then going to do relating to the plans?”
Utility

“You should be a statutory consultee on planning! Could you suggest a change? We’re going to have to change a lot.” **Landowner**

“Identifying at-risk areas using data would be helpful.”
Local authority

“Keep up to date with the Environment Agency for flood plans.” **Utility**

Priority 2: Maintain a local workforce (workforce resilience) — Proposed Commitments
While this was established as a new priority, and received 23% of the vote from stakeholders, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“It’s becoming more and more critical. You need to put more resources into it. You need to be properly resourced as an organisation. You need to be ahead of the game.” **Local authority**

Priority 3: Flood protection — Proposed Commitments

a) Review the flood risk planning metric in light of climate change and more extreme weather events: one in 100 years no longer fit for purpose	b) Undertake a review of vulnerable assets and ensure substations in flood risk areas have adequate defences	c) Formalise engagement with LAs on housing development: advise against building on floodplains	d) Push for and incentivise new innovative solutions to flood defence
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“I think everyone should review their flood risk planning. The one in 100 year rule needs reviewing.”
Energy consultant

“WPD has spent a lot of money on helicopters with the VIDAR system. It needs to keep investing in this new technology and keep working to develop it.”
Emergency services

“Put in more flood protection for substations in vulnerable areas.” **Local authority**

“For flood protection, the key thing is ensuring that all of its assets are protected.” **Emergency services**

“Another important aspect is making sure that the flood protection systems in place are tested fairly regularly.”
Emergency services

Priority 4: Strategic undergrounding of cables — Proposed Commitments

a) Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of undergrounding	b) Review the rules and thresholds for determining the need for undergrounding in light of extreme weather events	c) Partner with other utilities to minimise disruption	d) Liaise with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to determine which areas are best for undergrounding
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“Undergrounding definitely.” **Parish council**

“Strategic undergrounding and the costs around it.”
Major connections customer

“Where they possibly can they should go underground.”
Developer

“The cost element needs to be considered.”
Consumer body

“I was just wondering about whether you’re committing to putting stuff underground rather than overhead lines? That way no trees need to be cut down. I do understand there is planning and costing involved, but I was wondering about that.” **Vulnerable customer representative**



Priority 5: Tree cutting — Proposed Commitments

a) Maintain your tree trimming programme but ensure trimming is done only when necessary	b) Replace every tree that is cut and consider different types of tree e.g. slow growth	c) Engage with landowners and stakeholders over rewilding: have a minimum impact on biodiversity	d) Inform LAs and parish councils when tree cutting will take place	e) Make tree cutting part of a thorough planning process: work pre-emptively to prevent issues	f) Engage, educate and inform customers as to their role, e.g. don't plant trees close to overhead wires
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“Essentially WPD should try not to cut trees down – or at the very least only when necessary.” **Local authority**

“Consider the type of trees you are replanting and engage with landowners about rewilding.” **Consumer body**

“We understand the idea of clearing trees, but what about replanting them? I'd like to see measures to see how many trees have been cut down without being replanted. Aim for at least one to one.” **Parish council**

“Where commercially viable, you should replant the trees you cut.” **Connections provider**

“Overall I'm happy with WPD's commitment to replant any tree that is cut down. Maybe even plant two trees!” **Local authority**

“If you replant trees it provides you with good PR.” **Utility**

“Formalised engagement with local authority planning.” **Energy consultant**

“Maybe you should think about where you're going to plant those trees so as not to affect the network. It needs to be a compromise.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

Priority 6: Resilience planning support for communities — Proposed Commitments

a) Work with parish councils to identify customers who need extra support, e.g. care homes

“Taking the cue from the last one, potentially, WPD could offer a service helping local areas to produce local disaster plans. You could have a register of critical customers, such as private nursing homes. Work with parish councils.” **Parish council**

Priority 7: Lobby BEIS / Ofgem for access to data from smart meters — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“One priority could be working more closely with Ofgem to streamline the access of smart meter data. They should lobby BEIS for access to data.” **Business customer**

Priority 8: Resilience to physical terrorism — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Do you include terrorism and physical attacks on assets? It would be easy to take a substation out with explosives.” **Local authority**

Priority 9: Decarbonisation — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Strategic development. Then you can start being clever with your renewables and all that stuff. You can do it all on site if it’s done cleverly enough.” **Local enterprise partnership**

Priority 10: Climate change preparation — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comments were, however, captured during the workshop.

“Measures to protect against climate change should prepare for cooling as well as heating. WPD should consider whether heat pumps can be used to modulate the heat of transformers.” **Major connections customer**

“Do temperature changes due to climate change affect the network? Potentially through sagging power lines? This might be something to consider as a separate priority.” **Major energy user**

Priority 11: Asset health / network infrastructure — Proposed Commitments

a) Prioritise a review of at-risk assets

b) Replace, or defend, at-risk assets

“Review assets.” **Parish council**

“We need a regular health check about the restraints of the network communicated to all parties involved in the supply chain.” **Major energy user**



7 | CYBER RESILIENCE

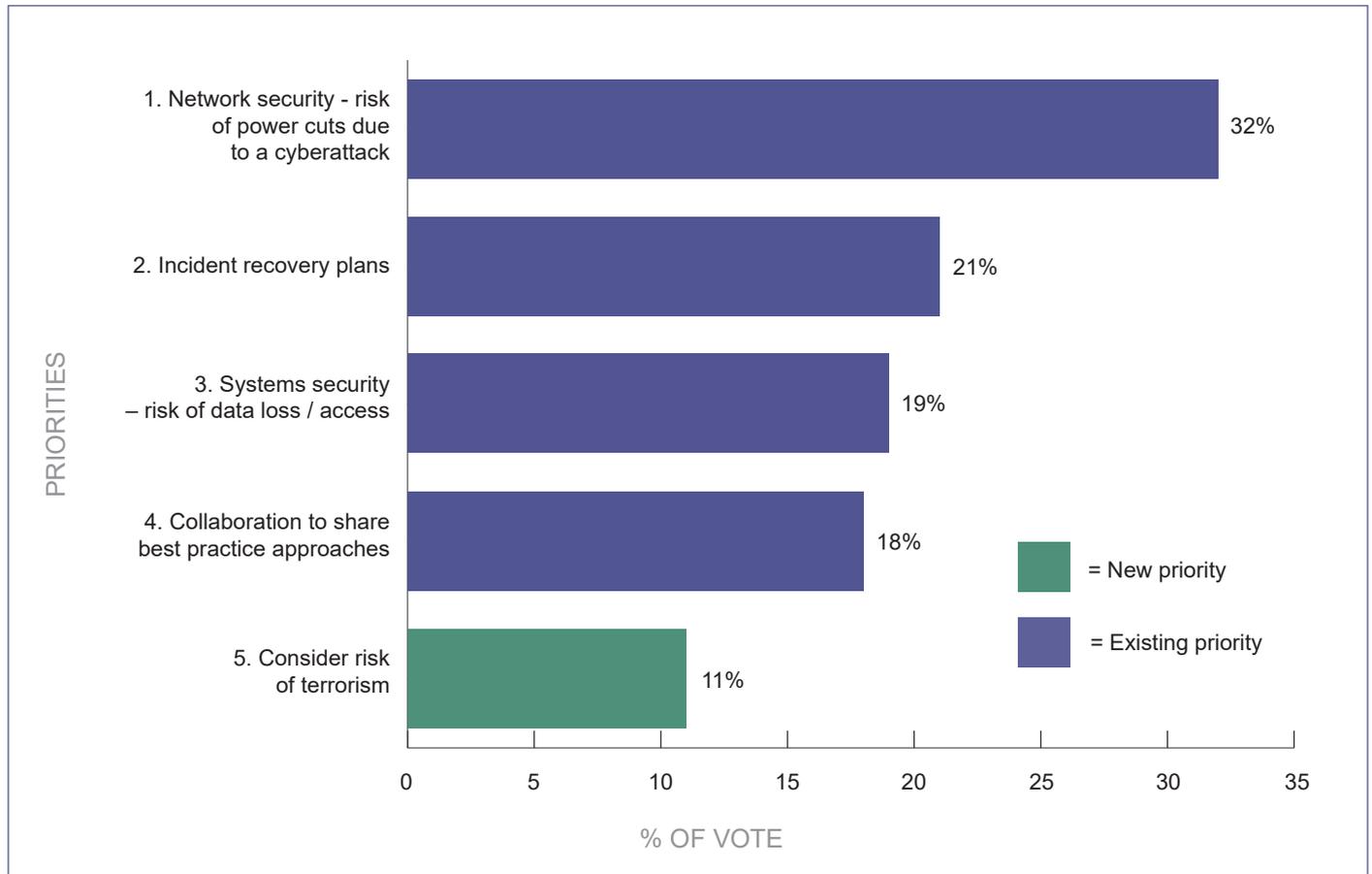
Stakeholders voted on their top priorities under the heading of cyber resilience. The most popular priority was ‘network security – risk of power cuts due to a cyberattack’ with 32% of the vote, and the second favourite was ‘incident recovery plans’ with 21% of the vote. An additional priority surfaced as a result of the discussions: ‘consider risk of terrorism’, which received 11% of the vote.

Discussing network security, delegates felt that in the shift to DSO, particularly with the use of smart meters and integrated smart networks, WPD needed to be hyper-aware of the risks associated with capturing and utilising data on this scale. They suggested a greater compartmentalisation of the network to isolate issues when they arose, and this commitment was also articulated against the priority ‘systems security’, as a focus on closed and localised circuits to seal off and protect the wider network from an attack. Stakeholders also wanted to see WPD keeping up to date with emerging threats and attacks, training their workforce to identify phishing scams and other attacks that target human vulnerability, and compensating customers when, and if, loss of service occurred.

Collaboration and partnership working were key commitments articulated against ‘incident recovery plans’, with the collation of resources in the event of an incident seen as paramount, along with the sharing of best practice and guidance to improve the overall quality of WPD’s incident recovery response. An integrated cyber protection model across DNOs was advocated here, as well as a suggestion to send telecoms and power down the same lines, to more greatly benefit from the more robust levels of protection deployed by telecoms companies. Other delegates wanted to see a greater commitment to workforce resilience: the training of dedicated staff to enact recovery plans in the event of an emergency was seen to be of long-term benefit.

PRIORITIES

The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order during the electronic voting. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, as well as some new priorities that were suggested during the table sessions.



The table below includes new priorities that were suggested by stakeholders during the table sessions but were not included in the electronic voting afterwards. These are numbered for reference purposes. The order does not imply prioritisation.

Additional stakeholder priorities (not voted on during the electronic vote)

6. Third-party tech services

PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities in the electronic voting. Where no commitments were suggested against a given priority, this has been noted.

Priority 1: Network security – risk of power cuts due to a cyberattack — Proposed Commitments

a) Consider the increased risks associated with smart meters and networks	b) Compartmentalise the network to isolate issues	c) Compensate customers for loss of service	d) Keep up to date with changing and emerging threats
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“What security is there in place to mitigate attacks on smart meters? WPD should consider closed circuits for protection.” **Emergency services**

“It feels like it’s increasing in frequency and severity, so you have to put resources into that. It’s a shifting landscape and it’s an arms race.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“I know for our nuclear control rooms that they are isolated from any external networks. If you look back to people’s reaction last summer with south-eastern trains, the reaction was very minor. A cyberattack could be many times worse because of the recovery time.” **Utility**

Priority 2: Incident recovery plans — Proposed Commitments

a) Coordinate across relevant partners and share resources	b) Take guidance and best practice from other organisations	c) Ensure staff are highly trained to deal with incidents	d) Implement excellent discovery and response plans
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“Why not have telecoms and power being sent down the same line to benefit from the huge levels of protection used by the telecoms companies? There would need to be greater collaboration between WPD and telecoms companies for this to take off.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Collaboration is how WPD should approach their obligations. DNOs need to be more open to learning from other sectors that face similar challenges. DNOs do not necessarily have the expertise required to set best practices, so should coordinate with other DNOs to develop an integrated cyber protection model.” **Energy consultant**

“Make sure your internal training is top notch so that people can spot phishing and that kind of stuff easily. Most cyberattacks look for human vulnerability. The hard stuff is in place, but it’s the people that need to be trained up.” **Local authority**

“Making sure you’ve got adequate recovery in place.” **Local authority**

Priority 3: Systems security – risk of data loss / access — Proposed Commitments

a) Ensure localised / closed circuits	b) Make sure assets and infrastructure are secure, given that site security is essential	c) Ensure baseline data from Ofgem and level of data security is achieved	d) Communicate with and reassure customers as to what you are doing to protect their data, and why
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“What security is there in place to mitigate attacks on smart meters? WPD should consider closed circuits for protection.” **Emergency services**

“It’d be good to understand what the baseline for Ofgem is on, regarding whether you’re doing too much and overspending.” **Utility**

“Consumer data needs to be protected, but the risk is more to WPD’s reputation.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 4: Collaboration to share best practice approaches — Proposed Commitments

a) Take a proactive approach to integrating systems and data from other sources, such as smart cities	b) Work with government to identify threats on a national level
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“It’s broader than this. It needs to be about collaboration, such as integrating with telephone smart metering and data protection. We need to be working together as one smart city.” **Major energy user**

“I guess you work closely with the government in terms of identifying who the big threats are? Maybe making it more apparent if you are.” **Local authority**

Priority 5: Consider risk of terrorism — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority and received 11% of the vote from stakeholders, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Do you include terrorism and physical attack on assets?” **Local authority**

Priority 6: Third-party tech services — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Historically, attackers could not control enough electrical appliances to bring down a network by overloading it the way that they could do with telecommunications networks, but that is changing with the uptake in smart appliances.” **Energy consultant**

8 | WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO NET ZERO

When delegates were asked to vote on the order of their priorities under the theme of using a whole systems approach to net zero, the most popular were ‘invest ahead of need (lobby government / Ofgem)’ with 17% of the vote and ‘predict future changes and uptake of localised WPD future energy scenarios’ with 13%. New suggestions that were voted on included ‘communication and education with customers’, ‘WPD develop or partner on storage solutions’ and ‘set up a wider infrastructure planning board’.

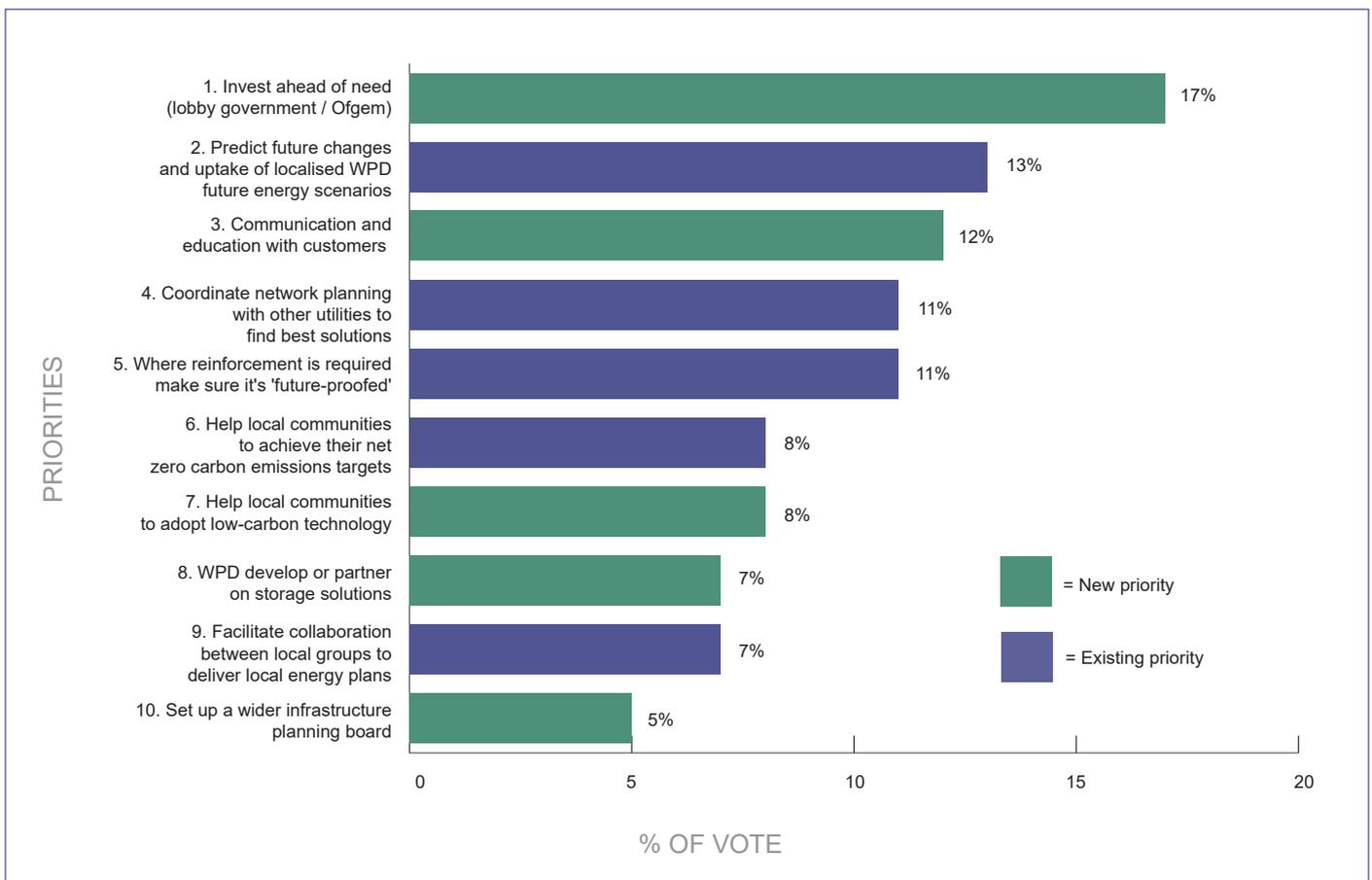
Stakeholders created a further nine priorities as a result of the discussions that were not voted on, including: ‘make it inclusive’, ‘deliver capacity for local generation’, ‘engage with government and regulatory bodies’, ‘plan for a more ambitious net zero target, e.g. 2030’ and ‘use price / tariffs to encourage flexibility’, reflective of an overarching feeling in Birmingham that a whole systems approach needed to be both centralised and deeply localised in order to be effective.

That belief in a centralised approach was witnessed in the top priority, ‘invest ahead of need’, where delegates affirmed that in order to prepare the network for greater localised generation and demand, WPD needed to be able to reinforce ahead of time. Many advocated for a national energy policy framework to drive investment and innovation, and enable a degree of confidence in the realisation of ambitious local net zero plans. Working with other organisations on a centralised level, such as the Home Builders Federation, would allow WPD to have a say in planning regulations to drive net zero. A note of caution was struck, however, at the idea of unbridled investment, with some questioning who would bear the costs of increased spending. This question of affordability, and indeed inclusivity, was also raised against other priorities, notably in ‘communication and education with customers’ and ‘make it inclusive’.

Discussing ‘predict future changes and uptake of localised WPD future energy scenarios’, stakeholders saw the need for WPD to formally lead on a combined, collaborative strategy that involved both central and local bodies: manufacturers and government in dialogue with local authorities and local energy groups. Turning again to Ofgem, delegates called for greater diversity in regional regulation, so that WPD could ‘bet on’ or invest in regionally specific projects. They also called for more district area energy scenarios so that collectively a sense of regional specificity and cost could be calculated when looking at the future energy picture.

PRIORITIES

The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order during the electronic voting. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, as well as some new priorities that were suggested during the table sessions.



WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO NET ZERO

The table below includes new priorities that were suggested by stakeholders during the table sessions but were not included in the electronic voting afterwards. These are numbered for reference purposes. The order does not imply prioritisation.

Additional stakeholder priorities (not voted on during the electronic vote)				
11. Energy efficiency	12. Make it inclusive	13. Facilitate EVs	14. Availability of generation	15. Deliver capacity for local generation
16. Engage with government and regulatory bodies	17. Plan for a more ambitious net zero target, e.g. 2030	18. Use price / tariffs to encourage flexibility	19. Balance demand and generation	

PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities in the electronic voting. Where no commitments were suggested against a given priority, this has been noted.

Priority 1: Invest ahead of need (lobby government / Ofgem) — Proposed Commitments		
a) Lobby government for the creation of a national energy policy framework	b) Work with the Home Builders Federation	c) Focus on affordability: who will bear the cost of investment?

“We currently have experts telling us it’s going to cost up to a million pounds to go carbon neutral. WPD need to ensure major energy users that this will be worth the investment.” **Major energy user**

“It does need government lobbying; you need to work with HBF. We’ve been working with water companies, and we’re asking them to work with local authorities to come up with local plans.” **Energy consultant**

“Investing into future-proofing wouldn’t necessarily be a problem if WPD was doing this out of their profits and hitting shareholders rather than customers. They could take 2% of their dividends to shareholders and put it in an investment fund to deal with these investments needed.” **Local authority**

Priority 2: Predict future changes and uptake of localised WPD future energy scenarios — Proposed Commitments		
a) Formalise a cross-utility approach, involving manufacturers, government, developers and other DNOs and energy providers	b) Lobby for regional regulatory variations: map and create district area scenarios	c) Model current distribution versus predicted changes to customer use and demand

“There needs to be a collaborative approach. You need charge point developers, manufacturers, new legislation and someone to take hold of it all. You need to lobby government and collaborate with the rest of the industry. There needs to be a clear policy framework. You also need to get consumers involved.” **Utility**

“My commitment would be to lobby for some major regional regulatory variations by placing big bets in line with regional strategies. If we don’t try some fairly big strategies on large areas then the investment isn’t going to happen.” **Energy consultant**

“I can’t think of anything to add but I’d like to put weight behind predicting future changes. The national picture doesn’t always reflect district area scenarios. We need to get that discussion going so we can look at other locations if necessary and can get a better idea of costs.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**

Priority 3: Communication and education with customers — Proposed Commitments

a) Take a leadership role in organising coordinated customer engagement on changes to the energy system	b) Encourage behavioural change in the way energy is consumed	c) Create clear action plans for all customers that detail what to expect from the future energy system and how to participate
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“Customer and consumer needs should be explicit in WPD’s priorities. Rather than talking only to parties that are somewhat disassociated from customers, WPD needs to identify what customers actually need. What is WPD doing to bring customer engagement to the forefront of these priorities?” **Energy consultant**

“Perhaps WPD could follow the example of LAs by using a website to encourage behavioural change.” **Local authority**

“Customers are the ones with the money to spend on things like battery storage, so WPD should focus on them.” **Major energy user**

“WPD should be clear about what these commitments physically involve for them.” **Business customer**

Priority 4: Coordinate network planning with other utilities to find best solutions — Proposed Commitments

a) Lobby for a policy framework that allows an incentive for strategic cross-utility planning	b) Collaborate better with gas networks: share best practice and hold quarterly meetings	c) Synchronise network planning to reduce overall costs	d) Improve communication and transparency across networks
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“A lot of this is micromanaging what is a macro problem. We’re looking at WPD for a reason, but what about the rest of the network? It needs to be managed at a national level. How do market forces come into a monopoly? How efficient is it that various organisations are reinventing the wheel separately?” **Consumer body**

“On our business plan we had a request for an incentive for this. A whole systems incentive. We put in for that, but I wonder about WPD being worth inclusion and getting the recognition from Ofgem.” **Utility**

“Nobody will thank us if you dig up the road, and then Cadent do, then the water company, and you don’t coordinate and share those plans.” **Energy consultant**

“Can we make sure to take note of the fact that WPD need to publicly outline exactly what they plan on doing to meet their zero carbon target? This is very important.” **Major connections customer**

“Are you going to commit to quarterly meetings with them? We have no coordination for that at our group.” **Utility**

“Talk of working with gas, I have no gas on my street. I haven’t got choices as to what I can do. Now they’re putting hydrogen into the system, but I couldn’t get gas when I looked into it ten years ago.” **Major connections customer**

Priority 5: Where reinforcement is required make sure it's 'future-proofed' — Proposed Commitments

<p>a) Lobby for ability to invest ahead of need, but ensure robust tests and plans are in place to minimise the risk of stranded assets</p>	<p>b) Work with local partners to focus on reinforcement in line with local plans</p>	<p>c) Work with developers to incentivise smarter reinforcement approaches in line with DSO</p>	<p>d) Prioritise reinforcement for low-carbon generation</p>	<p>e) Consider the impact of climate change (e.g. flooding) when reinforcing</p>
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“My commitment would be to lobby for some major regional regulatory variations by placing big bets in line with regional strategies. If we don't try some fairly big strategies on large areas then the investment isn't going to happen.” **Energy consultant**

“That's right, investment ahead of need should be a priority.” **Energy consultant**

“In the rewiring Britain low-carbon strategy from Ofgem there is a vague reference saying they might relax their role on pre-emptive reinforcement but it requires a massive plan from a regional area showing no stranded assets. This is still a big ask.” **Energy consultant**

“Clients I work for have a frustration that they'd like to be able to have things reinforced on an ongoing basis rather than waiting. So future-proofing is great, but how much is it going to cost? WPD needs to work with local partners. The network companies are constrained by the extent to which they can do that.” **Energy consultant**

“Talk to local authorities so you can foresee their development proposals. After all, investment plans are driven by development pressure. Wider infrastructure planning is required, and it must be ongoing.” **Local authority**

“With future-proofing, it's about offering developers options to improve.” **Major connections customer**

“There could be a revolving loan fund to facilitate investment in infrastructure that is low-carbon.” **Energy consultant**

“We've had some experience of flooding on the back of Storm Dennis so it feels pretty real to us. There's going to be more flooding and the force of it will increase. We need to be prepared for this to happen even more in the future.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Bipartisan planning. Everyone needs to get together centrally. Plan for the transition.” **Community energy group**



Priority 6: Help local communities to achieve their net zero carbon emissions targets — Proposed Commitments				
a) Develop case studies: set up a trial village	b) Focus on key areas suitable for renewable energy generation	c) Take a leadership role in education and communication: engage communities, schools and young people to demystify the process around local generation	d) Have more involvement with local plans at the drafting stage	e) Engage more with local authorities on enabling their more ambitious net zero targets, e.g. 2030

“In energy efficiency, you could set up a trial village to see how sustainable energy alone works within a community.” **Consumer body**

“It sounds difficult to plan something if you don’t understand what you’re aiming for. I’m not sure how a local community does that. Use a whole systems approach. The generators are important; sources need to be green.” **Parish council**

“The actual method will be different in different areas. We need to be helped. Support local communities and show them how it’s been done before.” **Community energy group**

“Children are bright and have so much knowledge about climate initiatives.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“The age of consumers needs to be considered when it comes to the educational programmes about the benefits of net zero. It will be difficult, as we older adults have to approach our lives differently, whereas kids only have the experience of the green agenda, as the environment is being discussed far more in schools now.” **Emergency services**

“WPD needs to communicate why changes are being made.” **Consumer body**

“The planning authorities can start writing it in policies.” **Local authority**

“WPD should be clear about what these commitments physically involve for them.” **Business customer**

“Better engagement would mean steering the development process, so when the consultation goes out, WPD can come and say ‘this is what we’ll have to do to meet you’ if we are proposing a new development. What we need is a planning policy that ties in with the developers, their infrastructure and where the engagement is, so where WPD can actually feed into investors and say: ‘this is what we suggest’.” **Local authority**

“We’re looking to align our targets with local authorities. The 2050 target is far too late. WPD need to set a higher standard of at least 2030.” **Major energy user**

“A lot of people have targets but you need to very clearly lay out exactly what you need to do to meet that target. It’s easy to set targets but tell people exactly how you will achieve them.” **Major connections customer**

“In being clear and public about the steps you’re taking to meet your targets you’ll also be able to inspire and pull ideas of best practice from other companies.” **Local authority**

“WPD needs to commit to engaging with local councils over the next few years to help them hit their targets by providing clarity on their options.” **Major energy user**

“Engaging with local plans, that are set in an area, so we know what the understanding is for what’s been committed to. That ensures that the infrastructure is prepared for in advance rather than looking forward.” **Local authority**

“You need to move to electric; we could have wind power, solar power and insulation in our village. A developer-built house with air source heat.” **Community energy group**

Priority 7: Help local communities to adopt low-carbon technology — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority and received 8% of the vote from stakeholders, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comments were, however, captured during the workshop.

“Many people feel that the green agenda is being forced upon them and they don’t understand why.”

Emergency services

“They also don’t like the green agenda as they will have to spend more money on cleaner technologies. WPD needs to find ways to propose these changes in a more palatable way.” **Major connections customer**

“There needs to be more education to help local communities, as they don’t know what net zero really is and what benefits it could bring at a local level. People are hostile to the concept because they can’t see the point of spending so much money on it.”

Consumer body

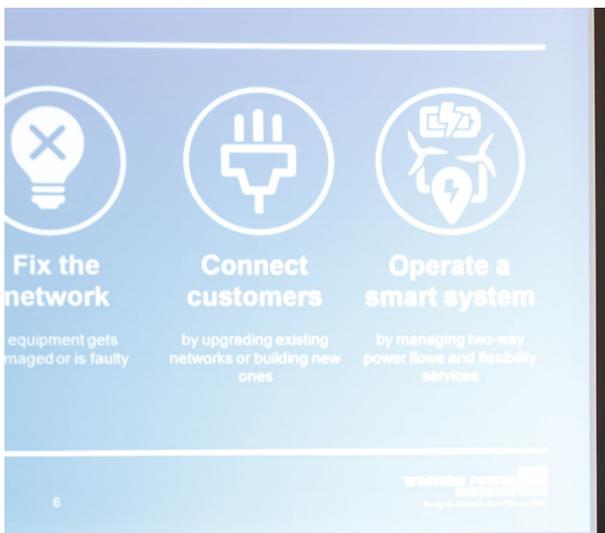
Priority 8: WPD develop or partner on storage solutions — Proposed Commitments

a) Lobby to own storage on specific applications and projects

b) Enable more flexibility by developing storage solutions

“At the moment WPD can’t hold storage assets, is that right? Allowing storage which gives you that buffer on the network is crucial for the flexibility. Who owns it I’m not sure, but WPD should be open to it or support someone else in the network to make that happen.”

Energy consultant



Priority 9: Facilitate collaboration between local groups to deliver local energy plans

— Proposed Commitments

a) Provide consultancy services for local energy groups	b) Focus on providing key data: interactive capacity maps, database of local energy groups and networks, etc.	c) Partner with and coordinate developers working on new connections	d) Proactively engage with local authorities: collaborate on making realistic, deliverable local plans
e) Incentivise local energy production	f) Lead on creating a joint task force comprised of industry, a combined authority, local authority and government	g) Make a target to engage hard to reach energy groups	

“WPD could formally work with community energy initiatives in solar and wind.” **Local authority**

“We’re moving towards more local supply where different locations have different priorities. There does need to be flexibility within regions so that local generation and supply can be implemented. With new developments coming through you have to look at all energy vectors and local facilities. If you have energy from a waste plant you might look at sharing those assets around the community. The regulations need to not be a barrier to people trying to solve issues locally.” **Energy consultant**

“WPD needs to commit to engaging with local councils over the next few years to help them hit their targets by providing clarity on their options.” **Major energy user**

“We’ve been working with water companies, asking them to work with local authorities to come up with local plans.” **Energy consultant**

“The Route to Zero Task Force [based in Birmingham] is about pulling together best practice to give a strong idea of exactly how to achieve targets.” **Local authority**

“We’ve had great success setting up community networks. For examples, we facilitated PV for a local hospital in Stoke and also for local community housing in the form of 300 council houses. We’ve had great trouble interconnecting and it’s all transient so it’s difficult to know what the overall plan is. We could easily have a 400-watt power station in Stafford, for example. In Stoke you’ve got disused mines for battery storage. This geographical area has lots of opportunities for these kinds of things. Are you talking about it? If we get going, we need to know that you’re thinking of integrating it. The council will back us for these types of scheme in principle, but they want someone to take the first step.” **Landowner**

“There’s so much talk about batteries and it’s going to be done on a local scale so setting up banks for that type of things means interconnecting them. We’ve got a local development where we’ve got 2,000 houses going up. It would be useful to have a power station there fuelled by biomass, for example, which is carbon neutral. We’re going to need a lot of power. It’s not a massive investment, either, for a local area.” **Landowner**

“What scale are the local energy plans at then?” **Vulnerable customer representative**

Priority 10: Set up a wider infrastructure planning board — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority and received 5% of the vote from stakeholders, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“There need to be improvements in infrastructure planning and seeing as it’s currently segmented, we should commit to setting up a wider infrastructure planning board.” **Local authority**

Priority 11: Energy efficiency — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“We’ve talked about consumption, but what about the shocking energy efficiency in our homes? Also, there are better ways to transport yourself. We need to think of better ways of travelling and consume in a different way.” **Business customer**

Priority 12: Make it inclusive — Proposed Commitments

a) Communicate with vulnerable customers on changes to the energy picture

b) Collaborate with suppliers on improving affordability

“I think the thing there that is sometimes missing is not leaving people behind. If you’re not in the right house, if you can’t afford it, will you be left behind? It’s about inclusiveness, basically.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“It’s all about communication. It’s knowing the areas and who’s there and how to communicate with them.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“I think it’s the suppliers that make electricity expensive. You find that you pay around 80 pounds per year to WPD. It’s a very minimal amount and actually as a contractor I’d give these guys more money to make the network more resilient so we can add [power] onto it.” **Major connections customer**

Priority 13: Facilitate EVs — Proposed Commitments

a) Conduct R&D into inductive charging

“You should help facilitate EVs as a priority.” **Business customer**

“In the future there will be a lot more EV charging. There needs to be universal charging as standard and research and development of inductive charging should be explored as part of this.” **Local authority**

Priority 14: Availability of generation — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Consider energy availability as a priority. It may be that there’s a need to do what they did with broadband, which is put in a specific cable network for EVs and heat pumps, and that would require a different timescale. Do we actually have the energy-producing capacity to fund all this?” **Domestic customer**

WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO NET ZERO

Priority 15: Deliver capacity for local generation — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Things like solar panels are not going to provide the infrastructure or capacity for main use which is at night.” **Local authority**

Priority 16: Engage with government and regulatory bodies — Proposed Commitments

a) Ensure the regulatory model is fit for purpose

“Demand can sometimes have unintended consequences for supply networks. They have no control over demand, but it can end up costing them a lot in reinforcement costs. The regulatory model needs to change.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 17: Plan for a more ambitious net zero target, e.g. 2030 — Proposed Commitments

a) Align with local authorities' targets for better implementation

b) Do a feasibility study: network net zero target versus customer target

“At the moment I think with the current bandwidth 2050 is the only realistic target and it's whether we can lubricate that to make it sooner.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“You also need to decide whether you want to be a leader or a follower on this. Do you want to strive forward or not?” **Parish council**

“Is 2050 the right date?” **Facilitator**

“With the 2050 target, you've kind of dismissed it saying 2050 is OK but I don't really know. Is it 2040 or 2035? I'm genuinely not sure about when it needs to be. So if the next round of flexibility starts in 2027 or something then will we have time? I really don't know. My instinct is that you should be pushing it nearer to now.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Lots of local authorities are looking at 2030. 2050 is the legal target but we want WPD to be looking ahead.” **Local authority**

Priority 18: Use price / tariffs to encourage flexibility — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“WPD could incentivise renewable energy in terms of pricing. Renewables are on higher tariffs.” **Local authority**

Priority 19: Balance demand and generation — Proposed Commitments

a) Encourage and enable the development of microgeneration

“You want to get to the stage where you're enabling someone to do their own microgeneration. Enable and encourage people to get there.” **Local authority**

“I think you could also incentivise microgeneration. If there's a clearer incentive and way to knock off your bill people will be more keen to get solar panels, etc.” **Major connections customer**

9 | INNOVATION AND NEW SERVICES

Delegates were invited to vote on their most pressing priorities under the heading of innovation and new services. The top priority was ‘collaborate with industry to offer tariffs to encourage flexibility’ with 15% of the vote, the second was a new priority, ‘help fuel-poor to access low-carbon technology (including lobbying government / developers)’ with 14%, and the third was ‘roll out network flexibility to all areas for commercial customers’ with 12%.

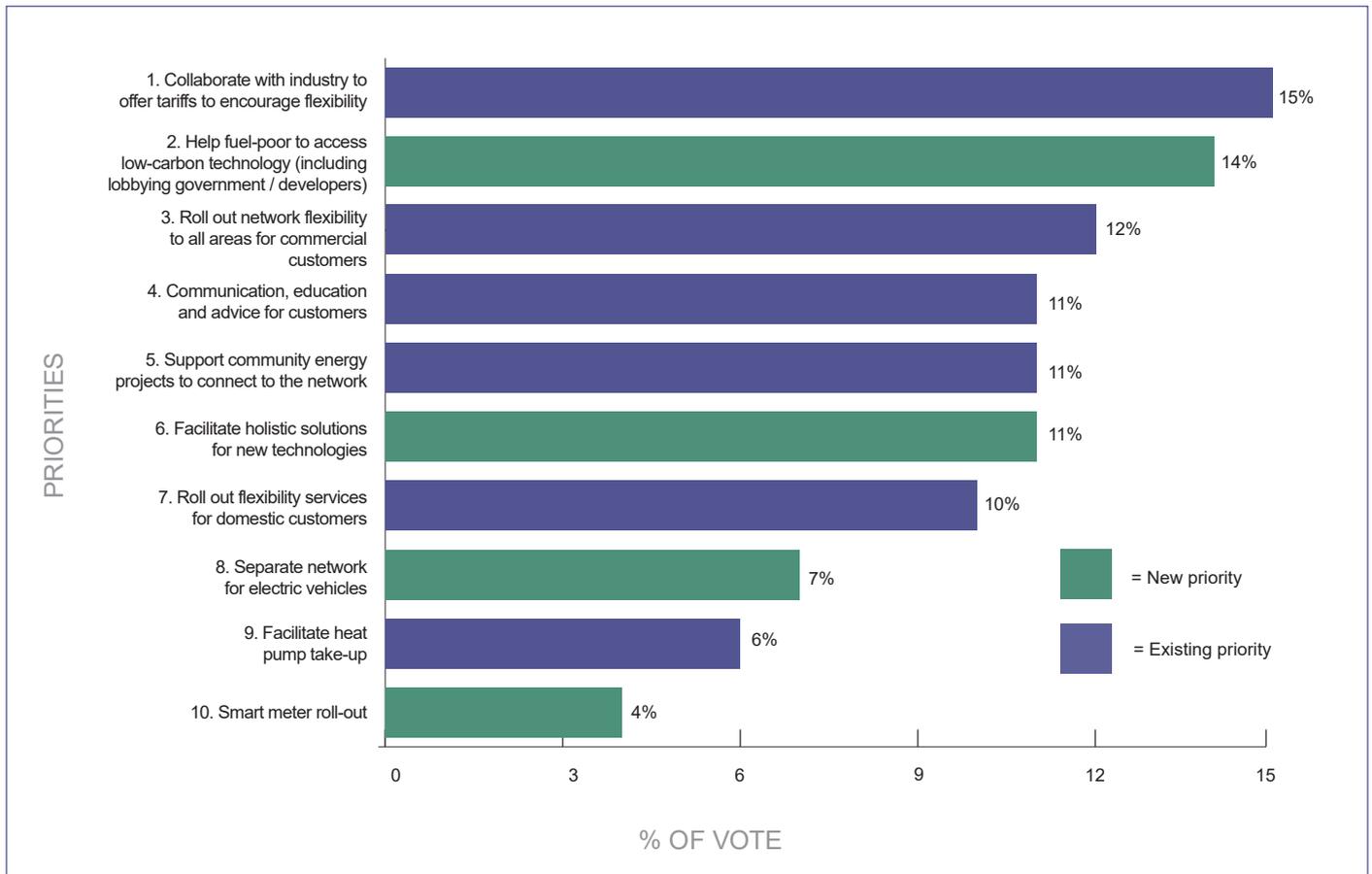
As well as creating the new priority named above, delegates created a further eight new priorities, many of which were reflective of their concerns and interest around innovation and new technologies, including: ‘facilitate holistic solutions for new technologies’, ‘separate network for electric vehicles’, ‘three-phase cabling to new properties’, ‘smart meter roll-out’ and ‘scale up investment in rolling out innovation more widely’.

Stakeholders in Birmingham were very keen to discuss flexibility services and strongly urged WPD to create a strong, simple message that would communicate the benefits of flexibility to all customers, domestic and commercial. The development of a standardised tariff, in collaboration with suppliers, was seen to be key to a wider take up of flexibility. Similarly, under the priority ‘roll out network flexibility to all areas for commercial customers’, delegates urged WPD to remove any barriers to participation, such as complicated bureaucracy, with one large connections customer confessing that it was simply ‘too difficult’ to go ahead with flexibility on their campus. Other suggestions, such as greater automation and a wider roll-out of smart meters, were all felt to be ways to ease the process of flexibility.

Accessibility was similarly important in the second most popular priority, this time in a consideration of how to make new services available to all, particularly the fuel-poor. Many saw that they would be the primary beneficiaries of services that lower energy use and cost, but conversely would be the least able to access them. A centralised approach was suggested in this case, with some advocating a two-tier electricity tax, whereby those who could afford to pay their energy bills would subsidise those who could not. Others pointed to the relative unaffordability of new technologies, such as heat pumps or PV installation, as areas for concern.

PRIORITIES

The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order during the electronic voting. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, as well as some new priorities that were suggested during the table sessions.



INNOVATION AND NEW SERVICES

The table below includes new priorities that were suggested by stakeholders during the table sessions but were not included in the electronic voting afterwards. These are numbered for reference purposes. The order does not imply prioritisation.

Additional stakeholder priorities (not voted on during the electronic vote)				
11. Three-phase cabling to new properties	12. Facilitate EVs	13. Scale up investment in rolling out innovation more widely	14. Raise profile of WPD to help deliver change	15. Retrofitting for viable low-carbon technologies

PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities in the electronic voting. Where no commitments were suggested against a given priority, this has been noted.

Priority 1: Collaborate with industry to offer tariffs to encourage flexibility — Proposed Commitments		
a) Educate all customers (domestic and commercial) on flexibility services: keep the message simple	b) Demonstrate the sustainable and financial benefits	c) Devise a standardised tariff for flexibility that increases accessibility for all

“It needs to be as simple as possible and there needs to be a massive educational piece about it. I think 95% of the population know nothing about it.” **Utility**

“Show benefits to businesses beyond sustainable: financial.” **Major energy user**

“Encouraging suppliers to offer agile tariffs would be good.” **Energy consultant**

“Make sure people who have the information don’t get penalised because they’re essentially sticking with what they’ve got. If there’s a clever pricing mechanism to promote to people who are self-aware, the 90% of people will just stick with what they’ve got.” **Local authority**

Priority 2: Help fuel-poor to access low-carbon technology (including lobbying government / developers) — Proposed Commitments
a) Set a two-tier electricity tax: those that can afford to pay subsidise those who cannot

“The people who are most likely to benefit from this, i.e. the fuel-poor, are the least likely to make use of it.” **Local enterprise partnership**

“Make sure no customer is left behind and facilitate access to these services for poorer customers.” **Local authority**

“If you can afford to pay for electricity your bill should offset the cost to people that can’t. A two-tier tariff system could fix a lot of affordability issues with innovation and new services.” **Major energy user**

Priority 3: Roll out network flexibility to all areas for commercial customers — Proposed Commitments

a) Target big businesses who could make best use of flexibility	b) Focus on smart technology: improve data sharing and move to an automated process for flexibility	c) Financially incentivise flexibility	d) Remove the bureaucracy: make it as easy as possible to participate
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“Target big electricity consumers because they are in a good position to be more flexible.” **Domestic customer**

“The end user needs to be smarter. People need to be on smart equipment. Tesco, Sainsbury’s and others need to be working smartly, turning fridges off when they don’t need them. WPD’s smart equipment needs to be smarter. The smart meters aren’t necessarily connected to the equipment. This is a question about demand side response.” **Developer**

“WPD should move from quite a manual process like picking up the phone and asking people to turn things down to an automated one.” **Business customer**

“Commercial customers understand pricing structures but there is still work to do for flexibility. If we could get them using their energy better that would help the whole network.” **Local enterprise partnership**

“I’m concerned about some of the bureaucracy involved in dealing with this and some of the legislation here. We can’t pass from one set of our bars to another set of our bars and it’s costing the university substantial amounts so we’re having to switch off our generators and it’s making us less carbon-neutral. It seems such a shame because we would like to sell this to the network but we’re constrained. We’d like the ability to ship it out to yourselves if we are able to but there’s too much bureaucracy. I think with the flexibility it’s quite difficult and we decided not to go ahead [with our scheme]. We’re looking to 2030 but we also have a constraint because we can’t move it around the campus, which therefore means we have to shut one side off or another. I understand it completely, but it seems to me that there’s a problem in those situations where we try to get larger capacity. The blockage is that while we’re trying to pass it across the bar there’s other customers between us, for example, your business partners.” **Major connections customer**



Priority 4: Communication, education and advice for customers — Proposed Commitments

a) Set a target for customers reached with advice on new services

b) Hold workshops and forums for schools, charities, developers and stakeholders

c) Advise and educate on smart meters, load awareness and the benefits of new services such as flexibility

“The households in fuel poverty that we’re supporting haven’t got a bloody clue about all this stuff. Is there anything we can do as a charity to enable us to understand these nuances so we can better support people moving forward?”

Vulnerable customer representative

“I think that things can go further. There needs to be more education about the behaviours behind energy use. People can’t just assume that a smart meter will bring down their bills, as they aren’t aware of the effects of their behaviour on their bills.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“Make sure no customer is left behind and facilitate access to these services for poorer customers.”

Local authority

“The biggest obstacle to smart meters being taken up is a lack of awareness about the big picture. There needs to be better advice about where smart meters sit in the future energy picture. WPD could teach people about why smart meters are important in helping to balance the grid in future.”

Consumer body

“When we look at previous big changes, for instance with measurement, it was all done through schools. Because it is such a huge change in the way we work, you’ve got to educate right from the word ‘go’.”

Domestic customer

“With agile tariffs and energy-saving technologies, you need to educate people so they can understand the wider benefits and that they can make savings. People can be suspicious about their usage being monitored.”

Consumer body

“It’s everyone’s role to educate, but WPD have a good route to influence.”

Domestic customer

“Children are great at talking to their parents so go through the schools.”

Parish council

“For the end user it’s about how they can make savings. It’s not just about seeing savings on their bill but letting them know how they could be saving.”

Major connections customer

“You should hold more targeted workshops for specific kinds of stakeholders as well as broader workshops, because people have different levels of interest and knowledge.”

Utility

“For new builds it’s got to be forums like this and all the big PLCs. For existing properties, it’s a difficult one. We need to concentrate on specifics.”

Energy consultant



Priority 5: Support community energy projects to connect to the network — Proposed Commitments

<p>a) Lobby government for community energy subsidies, such as a new feed-in tariff</p>	<p>b) Facilitate local grids by providing storage</p>	<p>c) Engage communities that could benefit and provide hand-holding, advice and consultancy</p>	<p>d) Lobby to change building regulations, e.g. every home to have PV</p>	<p>e) Promote the benefits and methods of self-generation: community geothermal, solar PV, etc.</p>
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“WPD can lobby the government for another type of feed-in tariff.” **Energy consultant**

“We need subsidies for the communities, and also investments.” **Local authority**

“Yes, but it’s also about hand-holding, consulting. They need someone who knows what they’re doing.” **Vulnerable customer**

“I quite like the idea of community energy projects. Something about WPD being able to support that would be useful”. **Local authority**

“WPD could lobby the government and local authorities to include solar panels and heat pumps on housing as part of the planning regulations. Previously, councils have just focused on social housing, but it needs to go further. As a general rule, innovation needs to be rolled out more widely.” **Emergency services**

“Can WPD help local authorities to change the building regulations? It’s about more than just PV.” **Local authority**

“The grid model is going back towards the town model from the start of the 20th century, rather than a centralised model. I think that WPD needs to commit to local community energy projects. Some people in an area are generating more than they actually need and could sell it back to the local community using a microgrid model. This could be achieved with the council, which could arrange local distribution: the council can buy back the energy and sell it on.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“The biggest problem is that, again, it’s up to the councils [...] that we have to somehow change the regulations, I suppose, because there isn’t enough self-generation, there’s no battery storage, it’s not there yet. Personally, I think all houses should have self-generation, but they won’t because it’s false economy, as the houses that are built in my area, the ones that have the solar panels on the roof, are the first ones that go.” **Local authority**

“Facilitate local grids with energy storage.” **Energy consultant**

“Would you look at geothermal as well?” **Major connections customer**

Priority 6: Facilitate holistic solutions for new technologies — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, and received 11% of the vote from stakeholders, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Investors look at risk and I’m trying to see how any of these topics change my attitude to investment. Something has to increase local investment in batteries and things. There are some good things happening in flexibility but if you are an investor you can’t tap into one of these and make money from them. The level of application of innovation doesn’t seem to hit the right scale. Maybe this ought to be a separate priority: to scale up and out what is already happening.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 7: Roll out flexibility services for domestic customers — Proposed Commitments

a) Provide financial incentives	b) Look at all energy vectors: work and share data and best practice with suppliers and other DNOs	c) Approach customers with a simple message and demystify the process of flexibility	d) Work with partners to speed up smart meter roll-out	e) Develop battery storage
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“A link person whose job is to communicate specifically regarding financial incentives and community energy.”

Community energy group

“It’s important that WPD work with the other DNOs. However good WPD are at working with the end consumers, it’s unfair to others in other parts of the country.”

Utility

“My understanding from the domestic is that a lot needs to be done on the methodology and at the moment, how it’s done, it all needs sorting out. There are issues around data access. There are areas where WPD could share a lot more information.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“From a consumer’s point of view, it’d have to be something that is standard. It’s just too complicated with all the different tariffs. If they’re switching, they need to understand what they’re switching for. It’s got to be really simple. When you’re talking about domestic people, they don’t like those gadgets. They need to be given that trust that the gadgets work.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“On the business side, it’s firstly about helping them to understand how they’re using energy at the moment. Secondly, it’s about helping them to manage their own energy. Thirdly, it’s about flexibility. I’m working with companies that have different solutions, so for me it’s about how they get to showcase what they can do and offer. They can give that network benefit to WPD. Then we can do that brokering bit and show other companies how they can save their money. Collaboration is important. We work with tech companies and others.”

Consumer body

“Regarding flexibility, for commercial customers, flexibility comes at a cost, which at a certain low scale is a bit prohibitive. It’s really only a concern for commercial customers. It’s often the communications aspect.”

Local authority

“A mixture of the financial and environmental incentives because people know that they would be getting value out of something.”

Connections developer

“With incentives through tariffs, time of day tariffing needs to be linked to things that are happening within the building.”

Business representative

“The network could partner with virtual assistants such as Alexa to facilitate flexible services.”

EV charge point manufacturer / installer

“The smart meter roll-out has taken too long. Who is responsible for the roll-out? Could WPD play a coordinating role to speed this up? Without them, you’re not going to have a low-carbon and flexible energy future.”

Emergency services

“As take-up of EV comes on, the battery power will be bi-directional, so have you considered EV as part of a network storage plan? If customers plug into the network, you might have a lot of supply from EV. Have you factored that in?”

Major connections customer

“Demystification is very important. Media speculation fuels the paranoia around smart meters and allowing energy companies to control your electricity supply.”

Domestic customer

“Incentivise renewable energy.”

Local authority

Priority 8: Separate network for electric vehicles — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, and received 7% of the vote from stakeholders, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comments were, however, captured during the workshop.

“It needs to be a separate network for EVs so that you can control it.” **Major connections customer**

“You need to have the control.” **Community energy group**

Priority 9: Facilitate heat pump take-up — Proposed Commitments

a) Lobby government to mandate heat pumps in new builds

b) Provide more information for consumers: what do heat pumps do? How do they work? What do they cost?

c) Provide financial incentives

“There should be a policy that ensures new housing developments are meeting a certain environmental standard.” **Local authority**

“I echo what the last group flagged about communicating what this actually means. People don’t know what a heat pump is.” **Major connections customer**

“People can’t afford the upfront cost of a heat pump. Even if the savings will be returned over 10 years people don’t have the money to front that installation.” **Major energy user**

“More generally I think it’s a policy issue.” **Local authority**

“It’s a policy issue. At the moment it’s very disjointed. Councils like ours are doing bits and bobs, and you are giving grants and the government are giving grants, but it needs more joined-up thinking.” **Local authority**

“Regarding heat pumps, I think there needs to be incentives at the moment. If my boiler packed in tomorrow, I’d choose a £1000 gas boiler over a £9000 heat pump. Also, gas is cheaper to run so at the moment it’s a no-brainer. That’s the only way to ensure mass take-up of heat pumps.” **Major connections customer**

Priority 10: Smart meter roll-out — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, and received 4% of the vote from stakeholders, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comments were, however, captured during the workshop.

“In terms of flexibility of demand, I’m Economy 7, with my EV, and on smart meters, they were fitted and couldn’t cope with our system and had to be taken out. So I’m not convinced. From my point of view it doesn’t tell me much.” **Local authority**

“With smart meters, the data alone may not be enough if you’re not sure what you’re supplying.” **Parish council**

“As for Economy 7, you didn’t need a smart meter to get a different price, so smart meters aren’t necessarily part of demand side response. To facilitate any flexible services for low income households, we need to get a programme that lets them take part.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

Priority 11: Three-phase cabling to new properties — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Three-phase cabling to new properties should be compulsory, in my view.” **Parish council**

Priority 12: Facilitate EVs — Proposed Commitments

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| a) Improve communication on EVs to build consumer confidence | b) Lobby government for a national EV policy | c) Enable the installation of more charge points |
|--|--|--|

“Under the new priority of facilitating EVs, there has to be a change in consumer habits. People need confidence that if there is an emergency in the night, they will have enough charge to get to where they need to. They also need to know that if they go to the supermarket, their car will be fully charged by the time they come out. There has to be a group communication piece not only from WPD, but from all the DNOs, the energy providers and the car manufacturers.” **Connections provider**

“Increase charge points to facilitate EV take-up.” **Connections provider**

Priority 13: Scale up investment in rolling out innovation more widely — Proposed Commitments

- a) Set regional investment growth targets

“The target for this investment growth needs to be clearer. Regional investment growth for example, or low-carbon technology investment.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 14: Raise profile of WPD to help deliver change — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Raise the profile of WPD so it can deliver change.” **Utility**

Priority 15: Retrofitting for viable low-carbon technologies — Proposed Commitments

- a) Ensure retrofitting is flexible enough for changes to technology

“Part of the challenge around changing technologies is that we don’t know what’s going to happen in five years’ time, especially when this comes to retrofitting homes. You need to make sure that retrofitting is flexible enough to incorporate changes to technology.” **Major connections customer**

10 | ENVIRONMENT

Delegates were asked to vote on the priorities established under environment, and two of the most popular were new priorities: ‘sustainability in procurement, supply chain’ and ‘education, helping staff and customers reduce their own carbon footprint’, both with 15% of the vote. An already established priority, ‘carbon emissions from WPD vehicle fleet’, also scored 15%.

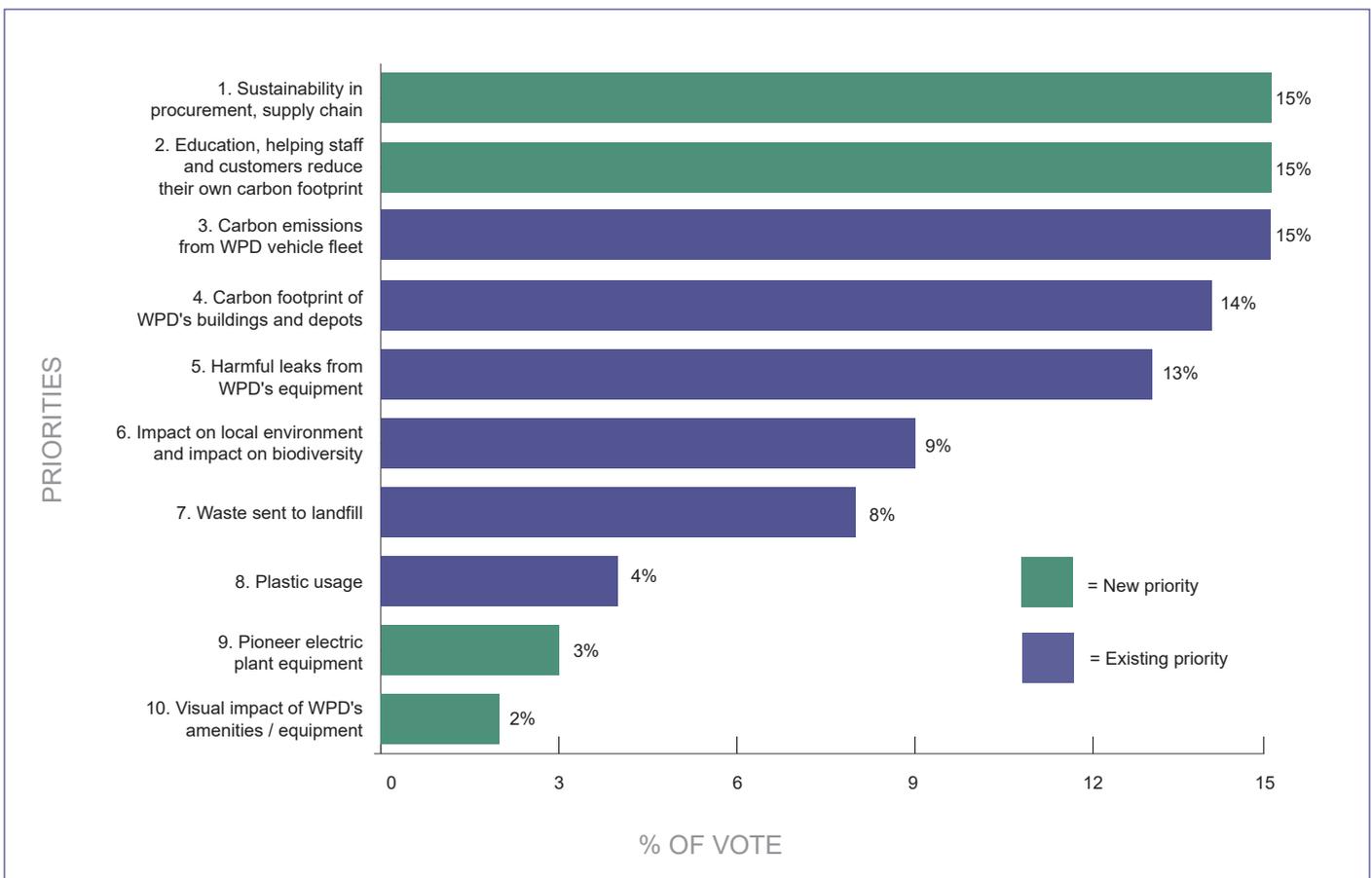
Delegates created four further priorities during the discussions: ‘pioneer electric plant equipment’, ‘visual impact of WPD’s amenities / equipment’, ‘reduce network losses from equipment’ and ‘charge more for connecting fossil fuel generation’.

Delegates were very clear on the critical nature of sustainability down WPD’s supply chain, seeing that any commitments and initiatives to reducing carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity were essentially negated if a company or supplier they were using was not committed to the same end goal. They wanted to see WPD lead by example here and share best practice down the supply and procurement chain. This use of power and influence to change the behaviours of WPD’s suppliers was extended to discussions around other priorities – when talking about converting WPD’s fleet to electric under ‘carbon emissions from WPD vehicle fleet’, for example, or generating renewable energy from its buildings under ‘carbon footprint of WPD’s buildings and depots’. In all these cases, stakeholders felt that if WPD led, others would follow. Ensuring sustainability down the supply chain also arose as a commitment against the priorities of ‘waste sent to landfill’ and ‘plastic usage’.

Education was widely discussed, with delegates pointing out the importance of encouraging the sustainability practices of WPD to continue in the homes of both its staff and customers. Targeting influential staff for training for a trickle down effect was a key commitment raised, as well as providing incentives for staff to use public transport, cycle to work, and reduce their single plastics use. Another interesting point around staff training was articulated against ‘impact on local environment and impact on biodiversity’, where delegates asked whether better training on biodiversity and the impact of WPD on the natural environment could influence those working on infrastructure projects out in the field.

PRIORITIES

The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order during the electronic voting. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, as well as some new priorities that were suggested during the table sessions.



ENVIRONMENT

The table below includes new priorities that were suggested by stakeholders during the table sessions but were not included in the electronic voting afterwards. These are numbered for reference purposes. The order does not imply prioritisation.

Additional stakeholder priorities (not voted on during the electronic vote)	
11. Reduce network losses from equipment	12. Charge more for connecting fossil fuel generation

PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities in the electronic voting. Where no commitments were suggested against a given priority, this has been noted.

Priority 1: Sustainability in procurement, supply chain — Proposed Commitments		
a) Lead by example	b) Share best practice down supply chain, e.g. hydrogen fuel for larger vehicles	c) Ensure decarbonisation down supply chain

“You have to lead by example. Don’t ask something of your supplier if you are not doing it yourself.”
Energy consultant

“Your supply chain. Including staff commutes, who you’re supplying to, the entire value chain.”
Local enterprise partnership

“Sharing knowledge. For example, with hydrogen vehicles.” **Consumer body**

Priority 2: Education, helping staff and customers reduce their own carbon footprint — Proposed Commitments		
a) Encourage and incentivise staff to reduce their carbon footprint by subsidising cycle to work schemes, public transport, etc.	a) Invest in carbon reduction training for key influencers in the workplace	c) Publish and promote advice for customers and staff on reducing fossil fuel use

“I understand what you’re doing as a company, but what can the staff do at home? What about staff cars? I think you need broader staff education regarding cleaner vehicles.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“I think it’s crucial to train key influencers within your organisation.” **Local authority**

“I think it’s worthwhile but it’s trying to convince the people.” **Local authority**

“A related area is a support from WPD for energy efficiency initiatives. By promoting energy efficiency, is that a way of reducing energy consumption?”
Energy consultant

Priority 3: Carbon emissions from WPD vehicle fleet — Proposed Commitments			
a) Set a target to replace all smaller vehicles and grey fleet with electric	b) Install and expand EV charge points at depots and office car parks	c) Set an example to your supply chain with conversion to EV and share best practice	d) Make a cost-benefit analysis of switching to EV
e) Conduct research into alternative fuels for larger vehicles, such as hydrogen and bio-diesel	f) Make wider use of drones for network surveillance	g) Encourage staff to use public transport	

“You have diesel vans and you’re telling the whole country to switch to electric. That doesn’t look great.”
Major energy user

“BT have an electric fleet; the fact that you don’t by this stage isn’t great if I’m honest.” **Major energy user**

“If you put a system involving solar charging on your car parks, that could be good.”
Vulnerable customer representative

“What control do you have on subcontractors’ vehicles? Do you control what effect those guys have on the environment?” **Consumer body**

“I think you should make the entire fleet EVs as soon as possible, as long as you can continue to meet their business requirements and it doesn’t impact on the customers’ bills. It has to be cost effective.” **Utility**

“Are you looking at hydrogen vehicles?”
Energy consultant

“WPD could sometimes use drones instead of vehicles.”
Energy consultant

“Encourage staff to use public transport.”
Local authority



Priority 4: Carbon footprint of WPD’s buildings and depots — Proposed Commitments			
a) Convert buildings to generate renewable energy	b) Set a minimum EPC standard across all buildings	c) Conduct a specifications review across all buildings (materials and area requirements) and roll out a retrofitting programme	d) Set a target for % minimum reduction in emissions
e) Run buildings from renewably generated stored energy	f) Offset future emissions by planting trees	g) Implement working from home schemes and downsize / shut down unnecessary buildings	

“I would love to see WPD run all of its buildings from stored energy overnight. They can lead the way in using energy stored at a time when it’s not adding to grid constraints.” **Energy consultant**

“WPD should aim to achieve EPC-A and DEC-A ratings for all facilities.” **Major energy user**

“If you have large vehicle parking areas just put a solar array over the top, making it covered parking.” **Local authority**

“WPD could work with the local authority and create a carbon offset woodland sponsored by WPD.” **Local authority**

“20% reduction of your carbon footprint would be a reasonable starting point, but then should get higher over time.” **Local authority**

“Introduce work from home.” **Major connections customer**

“You should review your specifications. 11 kV substations mounted on concrete do not have to be as big as they are. You are digging up too much land and wasting too much concrete. That also feeds into cost savings.” **Major connections customer**

“Consider downsizing in general. The days of large offices are over.” **Local enterprise partnership**

Priority 5: Harmful leaks from WPD’s equipment — Proposed Commitments			
a) Eliminate the use of SF6 and other old technologies, such as oil coolant	b) Invest into research into alternatives to SF6	c) Set a target for % reduction in harmful leaks	d) Encourage innovation around heat capturing technologies

“With the new networks being installed, what standards do those cohere to? Could you have a commitment to use other oils that replace SF6s?” **Energy consultant**

“Invest in innovation projects to look for a replacement for SF6.” **Utility**

“The target for reduction in harmful leaks should be the same, or more, than what you had in RIIO-ED1.” **Utility**

“WPD should use heat capturing technologies to combat harmful leaks.” **EV charge point manufacturer / installer**

Priority 6: Impact on local environment and impact on biodiversity — Proposed Commitments

a) Replace lost biodiversity by planting two trees for every tree cut down	b) Partner with parish councils, local authorities and nature reserves on biodiversity and environmental initiatives	c) Create an environmental fund for local groups to access	d) Educate workforce on WPD’s impact on local environment and how they can mitigate adverse effects	e) Draw up guidelines for infrastructure and construction workers working in environmentally sensitive areas	f) Avoid placing infrastructure on flood plains
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“Plant more than two trees for every tree cut, or however many you can afford.” **Local authority**

“WPD should partner with local councils to support spending on the local environment.” **Local authority**

“WPD needs to join up with local partners to maximise its local impact and avoid unplanned events.” **Energy consultant**

“It doesn’t necessarily need to be trees. It could be rewilding or providing further environmental funding to third parties.” **Local authority**

“WPD needs to make sure that its workforce is educated about environmental issues.” **Emergency services**

“In working with any contractors you should ensure you’re working only with companies with the best environmental practices.” **Major energy user**

“Keep away from flood plains.” **Local enterprise partnership**

Priority 7: Waste sent to landfill — Proposed Commitments

a) Implement a waste hierarchy: reduce, reuse, recycle	b) Review your procurement strategy: how much waste are your suppliers recycling, or sending to landfill?	c) Set a zero waste to landfill target date	d) Research / invest in waste to energy plants	e) Focus on recycling initiatives for EV batteries
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“A lot of organisations have already done this. Prioritise the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle.” **Major energy user**

“WPD should commit to sending zero waste to landfill, including by recycling where possible. I work on a site where we do work for WPD and we have nearly achieved this already.” **Business customer**

“Similarly, heat storage could be a big part of your electric alternatives.” **Major energy user**

“In terms of electric vehicles, it’s fine for domestic cars and when you look at utility vehicles you’ll have to look at hydrogen fuel cells so where does that fit in? If you don’t address the HGV problem you’re going to struggle.” **Parish council**

“Supply chain.” **Local enterprise partnership**

Priority 8: Plastic usage — Proposed Commitments

a) Investigate alternatives to PVC ducting

b) Reduce and phase out use of single-use plastics

c) Look at plastics use in the procurement and supply chain

d) Not all plastics are bad: understand the life cycle of plastic and use appropriately

“Take single-use plastics out of operation altogether, then take it from there.” **Local authority**

“WPD needs to stop using plastic bags for its customer resilience packs and its marketing materials.” **Consumer body**

“You have to make sure that single-use plastics are going to the right place, and that you’re using plastic in the right places as a business decision.” **Parish council**

“Alternate to PVC ducting.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 9: Pioneer electric plant equipment — Proposed Commitments

a) The technology is not there yet, but invest and research for the future

“Consider electric plant equipment.” **Major connections customer**

“We’re technologically dependent. Maybe it’s about the next five years.” **Major energy user**

Priority 10: Visual impact of WPD’s amenities / equipment — Proposed Commitments

a) Consider visual impact of substations: keep them tidy

b) Maintain wild flowers and ecology around WPD infrastructure

“In our town, there are a number of substations. Sometimes they’re left to get a bit unsightly with weeds. It’s not great in terms of the visual environment. So maintain local infrastructure, including substations.” **Parish council**

“Is there a way of keeping it tidy while keeping bee food? You can maintain wildflowers in an attractive way.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 11: Reduce network losses from equipment — Proposed Commitments

a) Future-proof equipment to reduce losses

“[Launch] initiatives to reduce network losses from your equipment.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 12: Charge more for connecting fossil fuel generation — Proposed Commitments

a) Prioritise and incentivise alternative, green connections

“What about the use of the point of connection mass which you’d use to bring in new connections? It’s about finding greener point of connection types.” **Major connections customer**

11 | ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Delegates voted on their top priorities under the heading of electric vehicles, and the most popular priority was ‘ensure network capacity and infrastructure for electric vehicles’ with 30% of the vote. The second most popular was ‘lobby for national EV strategy ensuring standardisation’, with 20%, followed by ‘facilitate electric vehicles on a mass scale’ with 10% of the vote. The top two priorities were new ones identified during the discussions.

As well as discussing priorities previously identified at other workshops, stakeholders created a further ten additional priorities, including: ‘monitoring EV market (including new technology and hydrogen)’, ‘consider rural customers’, ‘on-street charging’, ‘innovation’, ‘cheaper connections for charge points powered by renewables’, and ‘analysis / research’.

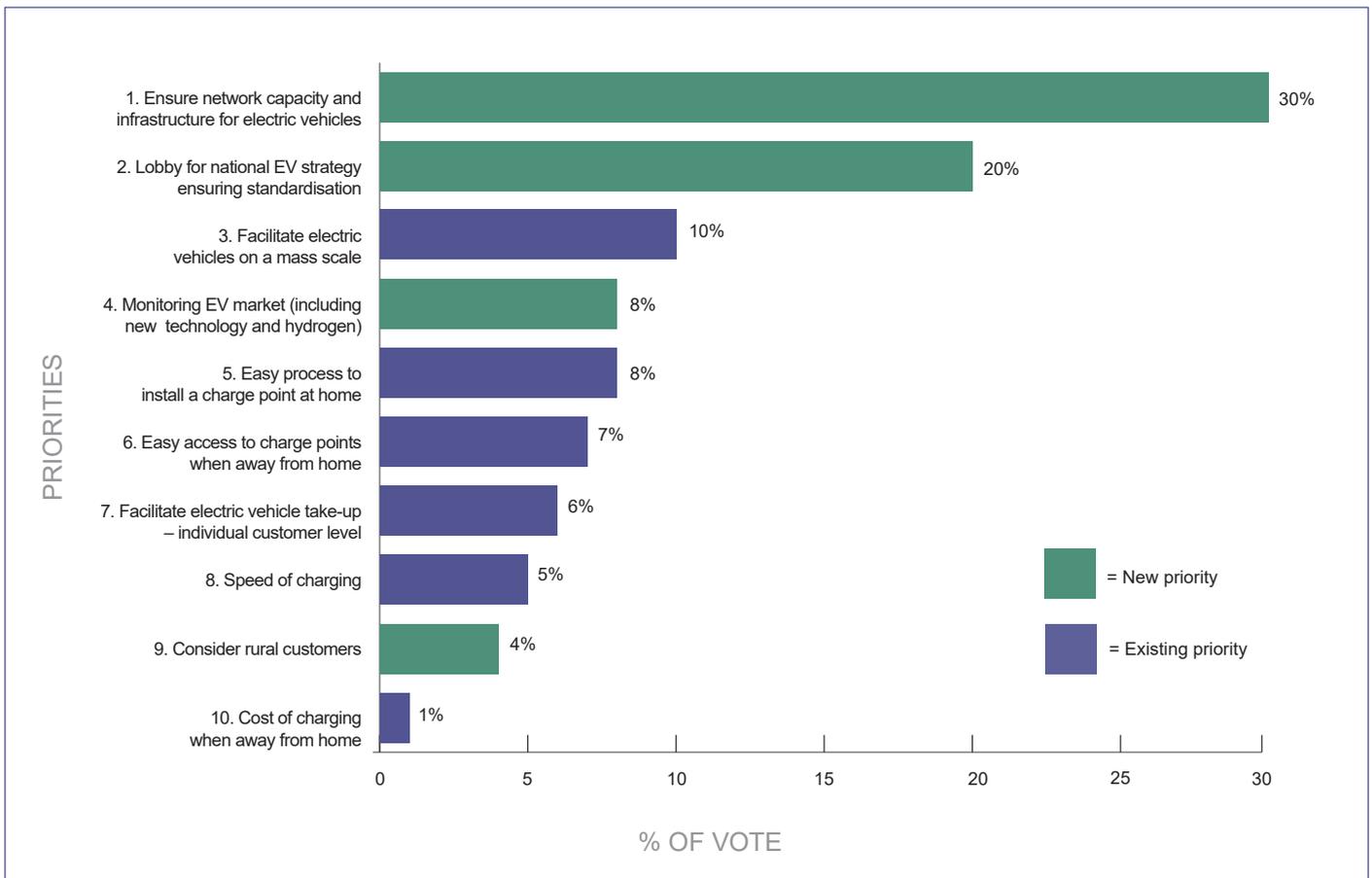
Almost a third of those present voted for ‘ensure network capacity and infrastructure for electric vehicles’, demonstrating its critical importance to stakeholders in Birmingham. Delegates were well aware that the current regulatory guidelines do not allow for investment ahead of need and advocated designing an EV scheme on a small scale to make the case for anticipatory investment to Ofgem.

This push for a centralised, nationalised approach was also reflected in the second most popular priority, ‘lobby for national EV strategy ensuring standardisation’. Many stakeholders felt that EV charge points needed to be standardised in order to facilitate a wide take-up of electric vehicles nationwide. Leadership on this by WPD was advocated, as was wider collaboration between DNOs with joined-up thinking and collaboration across licence areas. Similarly, national safety standards with regard to EVs were also highlighted for attention, with some concerned about the dangerous properties of lithium batteries.

It is important to note, however, that there was some disagreement over both a national framework and standardisation, with some feeling that the government would not be able to determine any standardisation, and that WPD’s primary responsibility was as an infrastructure provider and therefore lobbying for a national EV strategy was not WPD’s role. Other disagreements surfaced against the priorities ‘speed of charging’ and ‘cost of charging when away from home’, with some delegates feeling that WPD could have little impact in these areas, and that the market would dictate the availability, cost and speed of charging when away from home.

PRIORITIES

The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order during the electronic voting. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, as well as some new priorities that were suggested during the table sessions.



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The table below includes new priorities that were suggested by stakeholders during the table sessions but were not included in the electronic voting afterwards. These are numbered for reference purposes. The order does not imply prioritisation.

Additional stakeholder priorities (not voted on during the electronic vote)			
11. On-street charging	12. Lobby to install smart meters and battery / charging infrastructure	13. Innovation	14. Cheaper connections for charge points powered by renewables
15. Analysis / research	16. Longevity / future	17. Connections scheduling	18. WPD own usage

PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities in the electronic voting.

Priority 1: Ensure network capacity and infrastructure for electric vehicles — Proposed Commitments

- a) Make the case for investing in network capacity to Ofgem by designing an EV scheme on a small scale in a variation on section 16 of the Electricity Act

“In terms of your licence condition, there must be something there that says if someone is installing a cable, and I know you could install a 35-millimetre cable, and that would give you the chance for multiple chargers there. But you can’t quote for that, with that view in the future.” **Energy consultant**

“If you could not insist but design a scheme on a small scale, it’d be a variation on section 16, which ought to be varied.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 2: Lobby for national EV strategy ensuring standardisation — Proposed Commitments

- a) Lobby government for standardisation of EV charge points
- b) Work with government on EV safety standards
- c) Work collaboratively across licence areas and industry

“Thinking from the end user perspective I need to know that there is a collaborative approach from all DNOs because if I am away from home I need that consistency. It would be a great thing for WPD to lead that. If it’s a collective approach, I guess we need national minimum standards.” **Utility**

“WPD’s role is as an infrastructure provider. You have to think about how the future is going to look, and how you will fulfil those needs when required. You should show you are ready to facilitate but you shouldn’t be leading the process.” **Utility**

“Lithium batteries are bombs. There’s nothing about safety on there. There’s very little by way of national regulation on building and storing lithium batteries. It’s got to be a link back to government on there. WPD needs to work with government on safety standards.” **Local enterprise partnership**

“Lobby the government to put forward a national EV strategy.” **Major connections customer**

“Standardisation of EV charging components.” **Consumer body**

“Standardisation won’t be imposed by government, it’s not realistic.” **Parish council**

Priority 3: Facilitate electric vehicles on a mass scale — Proposed Commitments			
a) Formalise partnerships with local authorities on planning for EVs: share data, case studies, best practice, and enable their plans for the charging network	b) Educate and engage with key stakeholders, particularly developers	c) Invest ahead of need in the network to ensure enough capacity	d) Work on providing useful data, e.g. a health indicator about local network usage
e) Consider cost: who will pay? How can costs be minimised?	f) Work with local authorities on electrifying public transport	g) Support communal, on-street charging projects	h) Work on forecasting future use, create viability exercises and consider how requirements may change over time

“Engagement on local authorities. Local authorities want charging points. How can you work better with them to support their needs for charging?”
Consumer body

“Local authorities need WPD’s assistance in developing realistic approaches to EV charging. Educate with available resources.” **Energy consultant**

“If everyone in the domestic market was to go for EV, how would you manage that?”
Major connections customer

“If there could be a health indicator about network usage to communities that would be good. Open LV are doing something like showing people management information at a community level.” **Energy consultant**

“I would be disappointed if there were local developments without electric chargers because the supply wasn’t there.” Local authority

“I worry that WPD won’t be able to cope with the sheer number of vehicles that will be entering the grid and there needs to be a conversation about how the reinforcement work will be paid for.”
Emergency services

“For local government, the problem is cost. Installing charging points would probably be out of budget for many councils. WPD needs to help share the costs.”
Local authority

“WPD could collaborate with local authorities and providers on the electrification of public transport.”
Utility

“The government needs to bring in grants to households if they’re serious about the mass roll-out of electric vehicles.” **Utility**

“The reality is that the vast majority of people can’t afford an electric vehicle. We need to switch to electric but who is going to pay for it? The assumption is that the customers will foot this cost but most can’t afford to.” **Utility**

“I’m thinking about London’s electric buses that can do 160 miles between a charge. Thinking through the rest of the country, most of the buses where I live are 15 years old and deregulated, so it makes me wonder where the money’s going to come from to get them all upgraded. How can a bus on long distance journeys outside London doing inter-urban journeys much longer than 160 miles at a time cope? Will battery technology have to improve radically to do all those journeys?”
Major connections customer

“Could you have several charging spots along, say, a road of terraced houses, so people know they’re there and can park their cars and charge?”
Vulnerable customer representative

“It’s making sure the network is there. It will be a massive selling point if we can say that we can provide a charging point for each home. We want assurances from WPD that we will be able to have the load. Electric charging on houses is 7kV and commercial is 22kV. It’s making sure that that network is there not just for homes but for businesses as well.”
Major connections customer

“To facilitate the issue you need to know what the demand is going to be so that just relates back to being involved with planners early on.”
Major connections customer

“If the standard of a substation needs to be increased, it will involve a cost. The issue is just finding the balance to make sure that vulnerable customers aren’t affected.” **Emergency services**

Priority 4: Monitoring EV market (including new technology and hydrogen) — Proposed Commitments

a) Partner with EV manufacturers to monitor and anticipate EV hotspots	b) Use data to monitor how EV public transport, including taxis, uses the network	c) Focus on innovation projects that use monitoring for charging solutions	d) Monitor the trialling of hydrogen buses	e) Consider using surplus energy to create hydrogen
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“It is crucial to be able to anticipate where EV hotspots are using data and information on vehicles coming into the UK. You want certainty on where vehicles are going to land, for instance Teslas in Solihull.” **Utility**

“We buy a lot of EVs our end and we know what’s coming into the UK. You should use data for infrastructure planning and monitor the market.” **Utility**

“A lot of people think that there needs to be a lot of reinforcement on the network but actually WPD have done a lot of monitoring, for example, through their Electric Nation project.” **Major connections customer**

“Have you thought about EV taxis in big cities? I have it on good authority that the electric range of EV black cabs is 80 miles, which is nothing. That means they’re spending a lot of time charging. Do you have data on this in terms of how much time they’re actually spending charging?” **Parish council**

“My company is working with WPD to work on a managed charging solution. We monitor and see the substation load grow, and decide when to put control systems in place. This was an innovation project to push boundaries. There is a question about who pays for it. Initially it is WPD.” **Business customer**

“I don’t think there will be the demand because the technology will outlay electric vehicles, i.e. things going to hydrogen, where they’re trialling hydrogen buses.” **Local authority**

“Is hydrogen going to go ahead? Are you considering that?” **Major connections customer**

“As a fuel hydrogen is fine, but there is the question of how you make it. That could be where WPD gets involved. Could surplus energy in the network be used to make hydrogen?” **Consumer body**

Priority 5: Easy process to install a charge point at home — Proposed Commitments

a) Collaborate with manufacturers and industry	b) Ensure control and standards of installation and charge point	c) Simplify the process of applying for a subsidy for installing a charge point	d) Consider customers without private land: provide on-street charging infrastructure	e) Offer communication and support to customers throughout the process
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“I think there’s got to be more discussion with the manufacturers of the vehicles, because I understand that the charging mechanism is different for the different fittings of different vehicles.” **Local authority**

“An issue with trying to meet original equipment manufacturers is that they don’t turn up when you meet with them.” **Utility**

“Can we work with EV manufacturers and retailers? If I see an EV manufacturer has a tie-in with WPD and some sort of benefit is offered, that could be an incentive.” **Local authority**

“My experience of this in the village is that you have someone coming to install one and you don’t really know if they know what they’re doing. I’m talking about cowboy traders. You don’t really see a standard and it’s not being articulated. The other people in our area would naturally ask you about this.” **Parish council**

“To install at home with a subsidy you need to access a government website to find a registered installer, fill in all kinds of paperwork then wait because the government need to go back to you. It’s not easy to access the subsidy.” **Consumer body**

“For local government, the problem is cost. Installing charging points would probably be out of budget for many councils. WPD needs to help share the costs.” **Local authority**

“It’s in your best interest to get this working, so if I want an electric car and I don’t really know how to get one and how to charge it, shouldn’t you be promoting this? Even just to tell me that if I’m thinking of getting an electric car, I need to get this installed, I need to be charging at this time for example overnight. I don’t and Joe Bloggs doesn’t know what goes in to running an electric car.” **Distributed generation customer**

Priority 6: Easy access to charge points when away from home — Proposed Commitments

<p>a) Don't over-plan: keep in mind the expanding mileage range of many EVs</p>	<p>b) Provide consistency and reassurance that customers will be able to charge wherever they are</p>	<p>a) Consider the costs of reinforcing the network</p>	<p>d) Work with local authorities on providing reliable communal charge points at park and rides, service stations and in rural areas</p>	<p>e) Create a standardised, accessible map of charging points</p>	<p>f) Work with other DNOs to provide a UK-wide, consistent charging network service</p>
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“Don't over-plan.” **Energy consultant**

“Look at novel places to install charging points. It is frustrating that, as an example, some parkways have them, and others don't. This results in inconsistency.” **Local authority**

“With all of this EV and electric heating being worked into infrastructure, people who aren't going to have an EV are paying for all this and they're not going to be able to benefit from it.” **Utility**

“West Midlands authority's 'medium' scenario is looking at 10,000 on street parking charge points with super fast charging at places like supermarkets. There is a project going on to try and coordinate it with Virgin. People mean different things when they talk about infrastructure. There is a whole culture shift that needs to happen in the transport network about park and ride and shared driving. As part of that you need to have much more holistic approach with other sectors rather than investing in electric customers and ending up with a massively over-specified network.” **Energy consultant**

“A lot of people travel large distances but they're only at the very edge of the curve and if you were to design it on that basis, there would never be enough charge points or power for anyone.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**

“A lot of people are put off by the thought having to drive to distant places in order to charge. This won't be such a problem as the network expands but people need reassurance that it will improve.” **Major energy user**

“The key to this is mapping. Have one standardised easy accessible map of charging points.” **Major energy user**

“Working with local councils and their development plans is important in this.” **Major energy user**

“I've recently been to car parks in Leicester and Coventry where there were a lot of chargers and no one using them. I suspect people like me tend to charge at home.” **Consumer body**



Priority 7: Facilitate electric vehicle take-up – individual customer level — Proposed Commitments					
a) Engage widely with customers on the options, cost, availability of grants and subsidies and changes to infrastructure associated with EVs	b) Lobby government for the ability to invest ahead of need in the network and install three-phase cabling as standard into new homes	c) Consider affordability and fairness: don't leave people behind	d) Focus on electrifying public transport	e) Make WPD's role clear: explain to customers they are neutral and not trying to sell them anything	f) Offer flexible tariffs and educate customers on their benefits

“Engage vehicle manufacturers and stakeholders around this idea of ‘energy as a service.’” **Energy consultant**

“WPD should educate users to understand the behavioural change required in the transition from petrol and diesel to EVs.” **Local authority**

“There’s a big psychological problem. People want to have a fully charged battery at all times but that’s not necessary.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**

“I don’t think people have any idea about the charging network.” **Landowner**

“Communication again. Your biggest priority should be providing information about the cost and the potential pitfalls of electric vehicles.” **Utility**

“A lot of people don’t know that it costs a lot less to run an electric car than it does to run a regular car. It seems obvious to us but not to everyone.” **Major energy user**

“Unless WPD facilitates the installation of charging points, especially in the toughest areas where people do not often have driveways, it cannot facilitate electric vehicle take-up.” **Energy consultant**

“It’s the government’s responsibility, not yours, as they deemed that it is going to happen.” **Domestic customer**

“WPD should be ready to capitalise on investing ahead of need.” **Local authority**

“You’re considering the three-phase supply to new houses. [...] I just wonder what had happened to it.” **Energy consultant**

“We want to know if we need to liaise with you to connect to three-phase.” **Local authority**

“Having just bought a company that does that, there are a lot of subsidies that already do that. I don’t know if that’s up to WPD to add value in that arena, other than the infrastructure – you need to make sure it’s there. It’s already well down the commercial route so maybe a monopoly network company shouldn’t provide it.” **Utility**

“It’s not just cars, we need to consider public transport in this conversation.” **Major energy user**

“It’s critical to get across the message that WPD are a neutral partner in the roll-out of electric vehicles. People will be sceptical if they feel like they’re being sold something.” **Utility**

“WPD should encourage load assessment for domestic users and ensure they understand that they cannot have a power shower and EV charger on 60A for example.” **Local authority**

“WPD should educate users to understand the behavioural change required in the transition from petrol and diesel to EVs.” **Local authority**

“It would be interesting to say to people that if you have an electric car and you charge it overnight, you are given a special tariff so that you plug in overnight. Have a late night tariff like when you used to have electric radiators.” **Parish council**

Priority 8: Speed of charging — Proposed Commitments

a) Conduct trials and demand modelling based on upward take-up and rapid charging away from home	b) Focus on increasing the speed of charging	a) Collaborate with industry, manufacturers and supply chain to advance rapid charging	d) Educate customers on fast charging, including the risks	e) Ensure correct information is on charge points and develop the ability to share information about damaged or defective charge points	f) Work on providing the capacity needed for rapid charging
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“Modelling the idea that at home, you would want it trickle speed. But away from home, you would want high speed.” **Consumer body**

“Again this is about knowledge. High speed charging damages batteries and really should only be used in emergency situations. People don’t know this and you need to educate people.” **Major energy user**

“As long as people know how long it’ll take to charge they will work around that. People need to know and trust the information about charging.” **Utility**

“WPD needs to focus on capacity management to keep pace with demand. While speed of charging is driven by commercial entities, WPD should make sure that it does not block options, as this could push developers to install certain capacities for the wrong reasons.” **Energy consultant**

“I disagree with most of the priorities listed here. Speed of charging is a technical aspect, and the market will dictate that. You won’t have much impact.” **Utility**

“Expand on the Electric Nation trial and keep it up to date.” **Consumer body**

Priority 9: Consider rural customers — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, and received 4% of the vote, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“You need better charge point management in rural areas because chargers are harder to get to.” **Landowner**

Priority 10: Cost of charging when away from home — Proposed Commitments

a) Educate and inform customers: provide charge point maps that explain cost

“WPD should lobby the government to regulate this cost, even if it’s not their exact responsibility.” **Utility**

“Again, this is something that could be included in some kind of standardised map of charging points.” **Major energy user**

Priority 11: On-street charging — Proposed Commitments

- a) Work with local authorities to provide on street charging

“Engagement on local authorities. Local authorities want charging points. How can you work better with them to support their needs for charging?”
Consumer body

Priority 12: Lobby to install smart meters and battery / charging infrastructure — Proposed Commitments

- a) Work with Ofgem on having more of a role in smart meter and battery storage roll-out

“What’s needed is a bigger disruption of the regulatory framework at the moment. If WPD were allowed to install smart meters and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, then they’d have the business processes in place to extend to do that but they aren’t allowed to. If it became WPD’s mandated position to deliver this infrastructure all the way to maintaining them too, that would be great.” **Business customer**

“You must liaise with bodies if you want to put in a hub, for example. There should be liaising between the council that’s trying to find a location and WPD themselves so we know whether WPD can provide power, and how. Surely you need storage plus a hub to cover the high levels of electricity demand.”
Local authority

Priority 13: Innovation — Proposed Commitments

- a) Consider the uptake of hydrogen and low-carbon fuelled vehicles

“What is being done to explore new alternatives to electric vehicles? You would have thought low-carbon fuels could be pioneered so that we are filling up with biofuels.” **Business customer**

Priority 14: Cheaper connections for charge points powered by renewables — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comments were, however, captured during the workshop.

“We need cheaper and quicker connections from WPD for renewable energy.” **Developer**

“If WPD say they are giving renewables discounts then it’s giving them brownie points.” **Local authority**

Priority 15: Analysis / research — Proposed Commitments

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| a) Forecast where capacity will be needed as demand increases | b) Promote approved charge point installers, based on analysis and research | c) Share information and best practice with key partners |
|---|---|--|

“It’s making sure the network is there. It will be a massive selling point if we can say that we can provide a charging point for each home. We want assurances from WPD that we will be able to have the load.”
Major connections customer

“We’ve got smart chargers, we do the control, we do the surveys, but there isn’t a joined-up approach. Everyone is trying to do the same thing but in different ways. We’re all trying to do the same thing and these guys here are struggling to get things installed.”
Parish council

Priority 16: Longevity / future — Proposed Commitments

a) Think long term: how long will an EV last?

b) Forecast long-term costs and affordability, particularly with regard to vulnerable people

“At this session last year we were talking about the difficulty of finding on street parking. Now we’re on a 15-year timeframe. How on earth are we going to get all the charging infrastructure in in 15 years? Digging up all the pavements is going to be so disruptive.”
Major connections customer

“I have colleagues in London who would jump at the chance of an electric vehicle but have nowhere to charge it. At the other end of the spectrum people are so poor that they only get a second or third-hand car, wouldn’t dream of getting an electric car and therefore aren’t going to benefit from any of this.” **Utility**

“React to the anticipated uptake of EVs.” **Utility**

Priority 17: Connections scheduling — Proposed Commitments

a) Provide installation dates for enabling new connections

“There need to be firm dates provided to facilitate connections for chargers.”
EV charge point manufacturer / installer

Priority 18: WPD own usage — Proposed Commitments

a) Electrify WPD’s own vehicle fleet



12 | VULNERABILITY AND FUEL POVERTY

Delegates were asked to vote on their most favoured priorities under the heading of vulnerability and fuel poverty. The most popular priority was ‘educate and inform customers of support available and energy efficiency measures’, with 28%, and ‘protect the interests of vulnerable customers in the switch to a smarter network’, with 14%. The former was a new priority identified by stakeholders during the discussions.

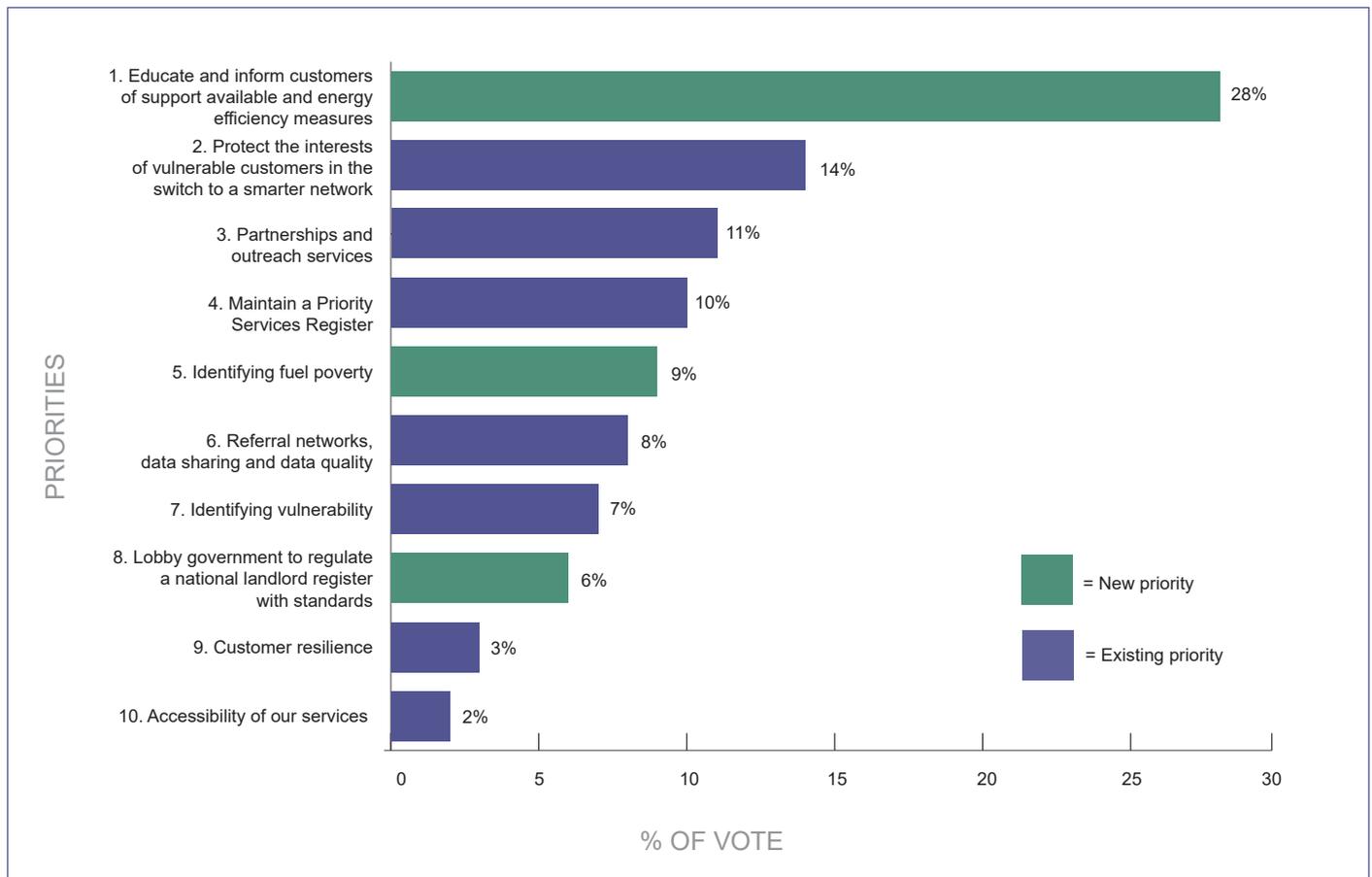
Delegates created a further eight new priorities as a result of the workshop, including ‘identifying fuel poverty’, ‘lobby government to regulate a national landlord register with standards’, ‘flexibility levy: align future energy policy with PSR’, ‘person-centred approach (across energy vectors)’ and ‘reduce cost to customers’.

At the top of the agenda in Birmingham when thinking about vulnerability and fuel poverty was the need to educate and inform customers of the support available and to advise on energy efficiency measures. Stakeholders saw very clearly that by retrofitting homes and providing good insulation, those in fuel poverty would save money on energy costs. It was felt that this was a better, more sustainable and future-proofed way of providing support than other, more short-term benefit schemes. They advocated the creation of a fund specifically for the support of energy efficiency services and suggested various ways of communicating it to customers, such as on the electricity bill. Other suggestions involved looking to alternative schemes that provide support for those in fuel poverty, such as in London and Scotland, where each fuel-poor household has a budget and on-hand advice for managing bills and energy use.

The emphasis on energy efficiency measures was also reflected in the next most popular priority, ‘protect the interests of vulnerable customers in the switch to a smarter network’, particularly when considering the costs involved with retrofitting properties for heat pumps. Stakeholders saw that in many ways the energy system was becoming more complex, and potentially more expensive, and urged WPD to mitigate the effects of this on those who might be least able to cope. Keeping messaging simple was urged, as well as the use of trusted partners and forums to increase awareness around new services and technologies such as EVs and smart meters and keep customers informed on their rights with prepayment meters. Some saw incentives as a good tool to encourage vulnerable customers to participate in energy efficiency, with the incentive not necessarily financial but perhaps a new technology that could be useful to the customer, such as battery storage as a backup power source in an emergency.

PRIORITIES

The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order during the electronic voting. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, as well as some new priorities that were suggested during the table sessions.



VULNERABILITY AND FUEL POVERTY

The table below includes new priorities that were suggested by stakeholders during the table sessions but were not included in the electronic voting afterwards. These are numbered for reference purposes. The order does not imply prioritisation.

Additional stakeholder priorities (not voted on during the electronic vote)					
11. Flexibility levy: align future energy policy with PSR	12. Balance development of network and capacity against all demographic groups	13. Person-centred approach (across energy vectors)	14. Look at design of energy tariffs	15. Reduce cost to customers	16. Guarantee standards

PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities in the electronic voting.

Priority 1: Educate and inform customers of support available and energy efficiency measures — Proposed Commitments		
a) Provide education and advice on efficiency measures, e.g. home insulation	b) Create a fund for energy efficiency improvements and inform customers how to access this support, e.g. on the electricity bill	c) Learn from other fuel poverty schemes, such as those in Scotland

“As a new priority, focus on energy efficiency. Rather than giving people money, I’d like to see that people don’t need to spend more by having efficient homes.”
Energy consultant

“Ask the more affluent to pay a little bit extra on their bill so that it goes towards those in fuel poverty.”
Energy consultant

“Devolved fuel poverty schemes in Scotland and London have a budget for each household and people are there to work out what works. There is no one-size fits all approach; there needs to be more advice and WPD could facilitate this.” **Energy consultant**

“Round up bills and put it towards fuel poverty.”
Energy consultant



Priority 2: Protect the interests of vulnerable customers in the switch to a smarter network

— Proposed Commitments

<p>a) Incentivise vulnerable customers to participate in new services</p>	<p>b) Understand the barriers to participation: keep messaging simple, be creative with engagement and don't leave anyone behind</p>	<p>c) Create forums and use trusted partners to improve awareness around EVs, prepayment meters and smart meters</p>	<p>d) Don't divert too much focus onto the roll-out of the EV network</p>	<p>e) Maintain a focus on the fuel-poor when considering the extra costs associated with reaching net zero, such as retrofitting for heat pumps</p>
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“For me, there’s a social obligation for everyone involved here. We’re entering a new phase that requires more creativity. If people do transition to heat pumps, the building must be secure and thermally efficient, which will in turn be beneficial for us. All the priorities here are important, but during the transition we need to ensure the interests of vulnerable customers are protected throughout.” **Utility**

“If you are affluent you can afford an electric vehicle and participate in benefits from it. Not only can I afford the vehicles but I can also see the benefits around reward schemes. People shouldn’t be left behind.” **Business customer**

“If a gas boiler and a heat pump are not cost comparable, how do you change people over to a heat pump? We need to consider who will pay for this.” **Utility**

“All customers are paying. If we are going to support services for a select few, how do we justify leaving people behind?” **Energy consultant**

“All customers are paying. If we are going to support services for a select few, how do we justify leaving people behind?” **Energy consultant**

“It ties in with identifying people who are vulnerable and communicating with them. You want to do that through tried-and-tested partners to get that message across.” **Vulnerable customer representative**



Priority 3: Partnerships and outreach services — Proposed Commitments			
a) Focus on cross-resourcing: build services in tandem with building network operation	b) Provide continuous funding	c) Identify key stakeholder and community networks to provide education and information on available services and support	d) Work on signposting to identify vulnerable and fuel-poor customers
e) Collaborate with other DNOs and suppliers on disconnections	f) Distinguish between crisis and day-to-day support	g) Encourage innovation by sharing resources, data and expertise between partners	

“Working together can make a huge difference. If you can fund something that gets the various agencies working together, it benefits the communities. You need to promote understanding and cross-resourcing.”

Parish council

“It’s really about funding. And I really can’t knock WPD as they provide funding all year round, not just in winter, which is great. Please continue funding local community groups.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“Partnership and outreach services tied in with working with local partnerships to target these people is important, as WPD only has so much manpower. It needs to work with local bodies far more. There needs to be far more local funding to help people with these issues.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“WPD must have community engagement teams in place to talk to people on a local level, right? Are there people who can go out and seek partnerships?”

Emergency services

“Well it’s also where you live. If you’re in the country it might not matter so much but if you’re in the middle of a city and the electric goes off for 10 minutes it’s mayhem.”

Major connections customer

“WPD needs to join up with other essential services, such as water, to support priority customers.”

Energy consultant

“A lot of people that are vulnerable won’t go to the charities charged with identifying vulnerability. We need to get local GPs and support workers to know the easiest ways to bring those people to your attention.”

Major energy user

“In terms of your disconnection policy, you have the right and ability to turn customers off. But how much liaison is there between the suppliers and yourself in terms of what the disconnection policies are? When people are being turned off, it has a negative impact and publicity on the whole sector.”

Energy consultant

“It may be easier to maintain a local register. Currently, local resources can react directly in the event of a power cut, but if the information was centralised, it would remove it by a step.”

Business customer

Priority 4: Maintain a Priority Services Register — Proposed Commitments					
a) Maintain current levels of service and improve where possible: measure against industry standards	b) Employ targeted communication and offer customers their preferred method of communication	c) When cleansing the data, inform customers of other relevant services	d) Set up a contingency fund to help the most vulnerable	e) Focus on creating one PSR across all utilities and network areas	f) Consider changing the name of the PSR to build trust

“WPD needs to ensure consistency and accuracy by comparing itself against the practices used by other DNOs. There needs to be industry standards.”
Energy consultant

“How often do you liaise with people on the PSR? Maybe you need to have more targeted communication with the people on it.”
Vulnerable customer representative

“WPD needs to make sure that the PSR is regularly maintained and cleansed.” **Emergency services**

“With the PSR, would you set up a contingency fund to buffer vulnerable customers?” **Landowner**

“All services related to the PSR need to be collated.”
EV charge point manufacturer / installer

“WPD could lobby for a more centralised data pool on vulnerable customers which could be shared between DNOs and other services.” **Energy consultant**

“Sometimes we sign people up to two different PSRs, but really all the utilities should have one PSR and all feed into it. Ofgem are talking to Ofwat, so it will happen, but it’s worth keeping the pressure on.”
Vulnerable customer representative

“Perhaps the title is wrong.” **Local authority**

“I think the word ‘register’ has connotations, doesn’t it?” **Local authority**

Priority 5: Identifying fuel poverty — Proposed Commitments			
a) Create a PSR for fuel-poor customers	b) Set targets for funding fuel-poor initiatives	c) Use data and mapping services to identify areas of fuel poverty	d) Work with partner organisations on identifying fuel poverty

“Why don’t you have a fuel poverty register? Is there any communication between you and the energy suppliers? Is it not really in your remit? You could argue that there’s two people chasing the same thing.”
Parish council

“I’m not sure that we have enough information about the type of people on the register to make sure there’s fair access across ethnic groups, income groups, geographical regions, etc.” **Energy consultant**

“Find new partners that cover areas you haven’t already covered.” **Parish council**

“In that context of fuel poverty, would you cap the data and share that with somebody in order to identify [fuel-poor customers]? In my own personal view in the villages there is an area or location where you can see where the issues are, and you put some measurements in so you know where the actual problem is.”
Parish Council

VULNERABILITY AND FUEL POVERTY

Priority 6: Referral networks, data sharing and data quality — Proposed Commitments

a) Grow referral networks in partnership with local authorities, PHE, hospitals, food banks and social services	b) Create better signposting for referrals and educate on the benefits	c) Data share across utilities	d) Collaborate with the Department for Work and Pensions
e) Build trust in smart meter data	f) Lobby government for a system to share data legally across DNOs	g) Monitor who is accessing vulnerability services to improve data quality	

“Grow referral networks.”
Major connections customer

“Work with the NHS to identify people who are temporarily vulnerable, for example when they get discharged from the hospital.” **Parish council**

“If I identified someone, I would not know how to put them on the register. I would go to the WPD website. It should be clearly signposted.” **Parish council**

“Signposting is about interacting with someone and understanding that they need support. Then you need to know what step is next.” **Parish council**

“Are there any ways you can share common ‘backroom’ services between DNOs?” **Parish council**

“It’s important to give information to the Department for Work and Pensions.” **Local authority**

“There needs to be education on how smart meter data is used and its security in order to build trust.” **Local authority**

“At the moment we need a government body to bring together these registers and mediate their sharing. WPD could lobby for this.” **Major energy user**

“When sharing certain data, we can say there were certain amounts of people of this age or this ethnicity, which could actually be used by you to plan and focus your engagement more on the people that are missing out, so protecting the interests of vulnerable customers. There’s a whole data set that’s going unused there that could be used.” **Distributed generation customer**

Priority 7: Identifying vulnerability — Proposed Commitments

a) Expand referral networks and signposting: partner with local authorities, community groups, public sector bodies, food banks	b) Use available data and map areas prone to vulnerability	c) Carry out a vulnerability census	d) Improve visibility of WPD, the PSR and vulnerability more generally	e) Continue to train WPD’s workforce to identify vulnerability
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“If you have lots of community groups who are able to know how to signpost, picking up on people who should be considered, that’s how it happens.” **Parish council**

“You need to data mine to find out what we know about vulnerability and see whether we can map it to what we know about life in the UK. Let’s find out who we are missing.” **Energy consultant**

“One thing you could promote is doing something for colleagues. If your employees are recommending services that helps remove some of the stigma. You can also talk to people about the PSR not in terms of themselves but in terms of who they might be able to help.” **Utility**

“Not many people have got time to volunteer. As a company you need to get to know your customers. It’s almost a census you have to do where you ask the customers for the data.” **Major connections customer**

“Present vulnerability in different ways in order to help people identify themselves as vulnerable. The marketing literature is mainly targeted at elderly people, meaning it often goes to pharmacies and doctors’ surgeries. There are other people who could be vulnerable, such as young carers and single mothers. The marketing needs to be improved for the PSR so that the full range of people can self-identify as vulnerable.” **Charity**

Priority 8: Lobby government to regulate a national landlord register with standards

— Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, and received 6% of the vote, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“Lobby government to regulate and register landlords and enforce standards. It is a common stance to create new rules and regulations with no facilities in place to enforce them.” **Consumer body**

Priority 9: Customer resilience — Proposed Commitments

a) Focus on tackling scams	b) Maintain customer resilience packs, with better information on managing power cuts	c) Create an auto-dial for relaying emergency messages	d) Improve awareness of customer rights
e) Liaise with neighbourhood policing	f) Use innovative services: make the most of smart meter data and battery storage as back up power	g) Prioritise worst-served and least resilient customers for support, regardless of cost	h) Address increased frequency of storms and flooding due to climate change

“A lot of customers don’t know who WPD are, so you should create awareness so that vulnerable customers aren’t exploited by scammers during power cuts.” **Parish council**

“Please continue funding local community groups and maintain resilience packs, which go down so well with consumers.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“How does that work with customers who don’t have a mobile phone? Could there be an option with dial-up, for example?” **Local authority**

“Awareness of rights about prepaid meters crosses into peace of mind too.” **Emergency services**

“WPD should make people aware of their financial rights in terms of their emergency medical equipment.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Liaising with neighbourhood policing might be good solution here.” **Local authority**

“Battery storage can be explored as a means to improve resilience.” **Local authority**

“How do smart metres play into data collection?” **Local authority**

“What about the worst-served? WPD are probably doing work in those areas but it could be committing to do more.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Climate change increases the existing risk, as the frequency and severity of events will increase.” **Energy consultant**

Priority 10: Accessibility of our services — Proposed Commitments

a) Make services opt-out, rather than opt-in	b) Maintain landline and paper communication	c) Continue to translate crucial services and information and engage more widely with communities where English is not the dominant language	d) Maintain consistency across all services: accessibility needs to be business as usual
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“Think about having an opt-out rather than opt-in service.” **Major connections customer**

“Definitely keep phone lines and paper communications. Don’t rush to digital.” **Utility**

“Does that also include people for whom English is not their first language? Continue to make sure that the power cut information continues. If you’re not aware of the services available to you, you are vulnerable. With us, we have a priority to do that. A big campaign is underway for extra support.” **Utility**

“One of the things around accessibility is consistency. We try to spread the message, but we need a longer-term plan for people so they know where the services are.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

Priority 11: Flexibility levy: align future energy policy with PSR — Proposed Commitments

a) Lobby government for ability to use cost savings from flexibility demand side response

“Cost savings from flexibility demand side response, there are opportunities there. Ensuring future energy policy with eco is aligned with demand side response.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

Priority 12: Balance development of network and capacity against all demographic groups — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comments were, however, captured during the workshop.

“One of the issues here in Birmingham is that there are many illiterate and non-native English speakers here. The local focus in the targeting can help improve the accessibility of the PSR. WPD shouldn’t have to provide the language skills, but instead should work with the local communities more closely to spread the word and tap into the potential language skills on the ground there.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Does WPD have a contract with LanguageLine? We use it in the Red Cross for people calling in and people going out. WPD could consider using phone interpreting services more widely.” **Charity**

Priority 13: Person-centred approach (across energy vectors) — Proposed Commitments

While this was established as a new priority, no formal commitments were articulated against this priority in the discussions. The following verbatim comment was, however, captured during the workshop.

“We were looking at getting on the PSR, but one thing is actually that people don’t identify as vulnerable. A few things are to ask for a central funding for a full whole system, person-centred approach.” **Utility**

Priority 14: Look at design of energy tariffs — Proposed Commitments

a) Lobby government to make changes to the system: affluent and commercial customers to offset costs for fuel-poor customers

b) Focus on rising block tariffs

“Scalable design of energy tariffs for Distribution Use of System charges.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Rising block tariffs: the more you use, the more it increases.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“The commitment must then be to lobby.” **Utility**

Priority 15: Reduce cost to customers — Proposed Commitments

a) Work with suppliers to bring down energy costs

b) Set up a ‘customer insurance’ fund to support the fuel-poor

“You have to work with suppliers because you’re not setting the price to customers ultimately.” **Major connections customer**

“With an insurance system, you could say should there be a similar system for fuel poverty where everyone helps people who are fuel-poor. Then when WPD put their plan together they could act as an influencer to Ofgem.” **Major connections customer**

Priority 16: Guarantee standards — Proposed Commitments

a) Set a target to improve response times

b) Set a target for providing compensation for loss of service

“WPD reacts pretty well on the ground when things go wrong. Sending text messages during power cuts is useful.” **Business customer**

13 | CONNECTIONS (AFTERNOON SESSION)

This session covered priorities and commitments for both the upcoming business plan as well as the 2020/21 ICE work plan.

In terms of the business plan, two new priorities ranked joint first: ‘investment ahead of need’ and ‘investment in local development plans’. Stakeholders wanted to see WPD strategically invest in the network, as well as to work more closely with local authorities on their development plans. ‘Connection application process’ was ranked joint third with 15% of the vote. Stakeholders wanted to see WPD work with the industry and the regulator to simplify the connections process for generation, as it was felt it was currently too cumbersome.

‘Low-carbon technology (including EV)’ was ranked fifth with 11% of the vote. Stakeholders felt that there could be some way of incentivising developers to install low-carbon technologies as part of all new builds.

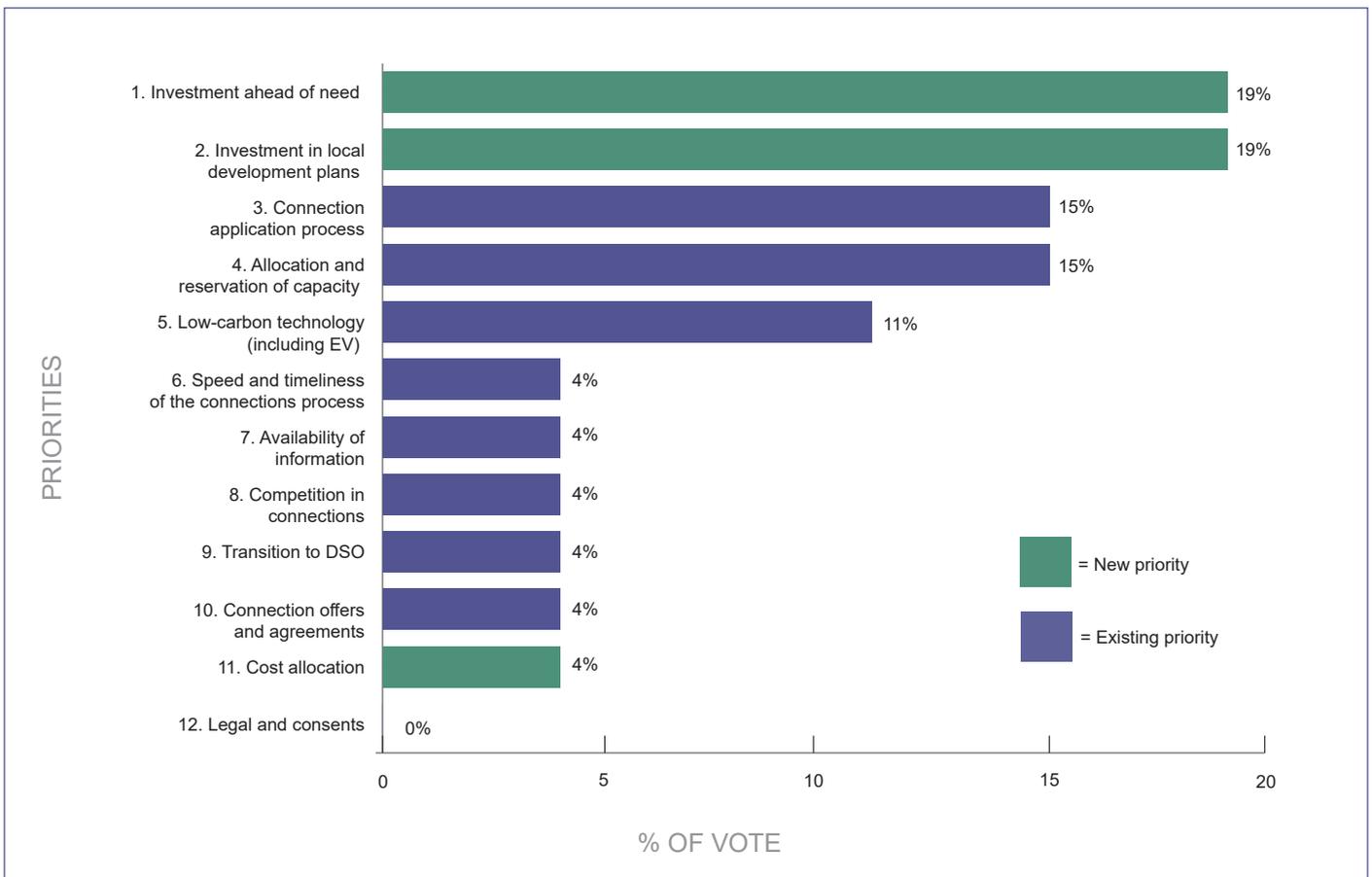
Meanwhile, several stakeholders complained about the speed of the connections process. While it was noted that it is important to ensure accuracy, many stakeholders wanted to see the process speeded up – potentially even to fast-track some basic connections. In that context, ‘speed and timeliness of the connections process’ was ranked sixth, with 4% of the vote.

In terms of the ICE plan for 2020/21, ‘network capacity, allocation and reservation’ was ranked top by stakeholders with 33% of the vote. In that context, one stakeholder called on WPD to develop a consistent approach to this with IDNOs. The second priority was ‘low-carbon technology’ with 22% of the vote, followed by ‘availability of information’ with 19% of the vote. However, no commitments were suggested against these.

Instead, stakeholders suggested a series of commitments against ‘communication’, which was ranked fourth with 11% of the vote. This included holding connections focus groups in local areas across WPD’s network area. Two new priorities were suggested for the ICE plan: ‘acceptance period for generation’ (with stakeholders requesting a longer period for generation schemes), and ‘work with developers to facilitate their adaption of heat pump technology’.

PRIORITIES (BUSINESS PLAN)

Stakeholders were given three votes each to allocate to their choice of priorities below by way of a written feedback form completed at the end of the session. The list of priorities was those that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, although there was space to write down and vote on new priorities. The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order. In total, nine stakeholders completed these feedback forms.



PROPOSED COMMITMENTS (BUSINESS PLAN)

During the afternoon sessions, which were run without facilitation, stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities for the business plan. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities when individually ranking via written feedback forms. Owing to the unconstructed nature of these discussions, in some instances priorities included on the written feedback forms had no specific commitments attached to them or were not commented on by stakeholders and are therefore not included below.

Priority 1: Investment ahead of need — Proposed Commitments

- a) Increase the amount of strategic investment in the network

“It would be useful to make public if there’s a decent business case for investment ahead of demand.”

“Going forward that needs to be increased. We all wanted to see this in ED1.”

Priority 2: Investment in local development plans — Proposed Commitments

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase the level of collaboration with local authorities on their development plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Lobby to become a statutory consultee on planning applications |
|--|---|

“You need to work on the relationship between WPD and local authorities to inform each other’s plans on where development is going to be so that at an earlier stage we can plan ahead. I’d like to see WPD becoming one of the statutory consultees on the planning process as part of your business plan rather than having it as a voluntary commitment.”

“Our current [local authority] policy is that 10 per cent of energy has to come from renewables but in 18 months’ time it will be 20 per cent. We need some conversations about that. You need to know that’s going to happen, even if you can’t facilitate it.”

“It kills people’s planning applications if they can’t fulfil a condition where there’s no weight behind it.”

“A lot of businesses are run by renewable energy and they buy from a supplier, but they are nowhere near that renewable energy source.”

Priority 3: Connection application process — Proposed Commitments

- a) Work with the industry and Ofgem to simplify the connections process for generation

“In terms of making the application process easier, you might make it easier for your demand customer but immensely more complicated for a generation customer. It used to be really easy, back when we had a G59. Today we put in an application but I’m being asked for very precise detail that I hadn’t even thought of because I’m still at the draft stage. Some of it we end up making up! I’m two years away from engaging with the supplier so how can I be asked to put in data to two decimal points?”

“My experience with WPD has been fantastic but it’s the process I take issue with. In terms of a commitment for you, review with industry the application process for ED2. Go to Ofgem and say that customers are saying that the application process for generation is too complicated.”

“Personally, I think that you should only have to provide the essential information at that first stage.”

“The country is desperate for people like us [generators]. The barriers are bigger. I had a delay of five weeks just getting an application accepted because of the level of detail required.”

“I’m as constrained by National Grid as by WPD. It depends on location. It depends on what works are taking place on the grid. I know it’s not always realistic to demand a connection but I just want a simple answer as to when you can provide me with a connection or not.”

CONNECTIONS (AFTERNOON SESSION)

Priority 5: Low-carbon technology (including EV) — Proposed Commitments

a) Explore the potential to offset costs for developers to facilitate low-carbon connections

“When you get developers putting buildings in, they opt for the cheapest solution, and putting in renewable energy connections is more expensive, so they don’t do it.”

“There’s a priority here around offsetting costs for developers to facilitate low-carbon technology, potentially in the form of a financial incentive for delivering those low-carbon technologies.”

Priority 6: Speed and timeliness of the connections process — Proposed Commitments

a) Increase the speed of the connections process

b) Assess whether basic connections can be fast-tracked if they do not require reinforcement

“[With my PV connection] it seemed a very long time from application to implementation. No one even came out to see us. It’s the length of the assessment process. If that was my experience, then other people might be exasperated.”

“From my point of view, I’m happy to allow three months to ensure an accurate scheme because some of our projects are worth millions and millions of pounds.”

“I had meeting with a guy from my local council who had an application in for a heat pump. 60 days is your stated period, but he had to wait three months. I’d like to see a quicker application process.”

“There’s certainly a big difference between domestic PVs and a major multi-million pound scheme.”

“If there’s no reinforcement for a basic connection, can you do fast-track connections?”

Priority 11: Cost allocation — Proposed Commitments

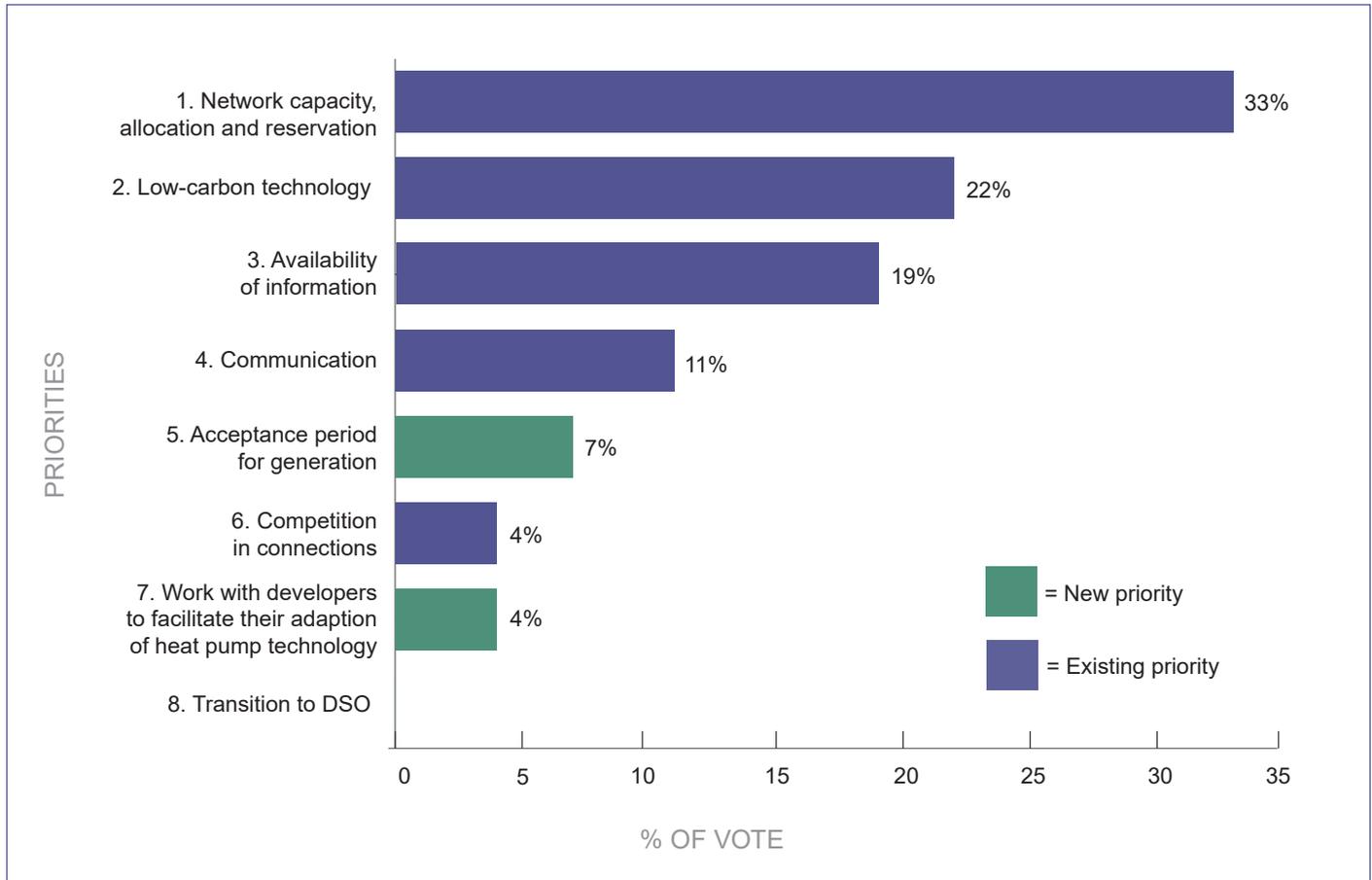
“It may well be captured in this list but it’s the cost allocation in terms of who pays the connection charging boundary. This would be key for me.”



CONNECTIONS (AFTERNOON SESSION)

PRIORITIES (ICE PLAN)

The graph below details the priorities for the 2020/21 ICE plan ranked in order as part of a written feedback form completed at the end of the session. It includes those priorities that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, although there was space to write down and vote on new priorities. In total, nine stakeholders completed these feedback forms.



PROPOSED COMMITMENTS (ICE PLAN)

Stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities when individually ranking via feedback forms. Those priorities that did not have any suggested commitments have not been included below.

Priority 1: Network capacity allocation and reservation — Proposed Commitments

- a) Develop a consistent approach between DNOs and IDNOs

“I wanted a clarification regarding the option outlined under network capacity allocation and reservation. Is it a consistent approach in terms of who developers go to, whether it's an IDNO or yourselves? I have the feeling that there is more certainty when you go with an IDNO.”

“When is your milestones programme coming in?”

CONNECTIONS (AFTERNOON SESSION)

Priority 4: Communication — Proposed Commitments

a) Hold connections focus groups at a local level, using local case studies

b) Ensure that messaging is consistent across different regions

“There’s a lot of good communication but it’s done very much at a local level. Make it more local with real examples of how things work rather than having connections-only events. More as a focus group for a region, or even in terms of you going out to them yourselves to get your message to them. Encourage that local link but at the same time, ensure consistency in what message you are providing.”

“Do you do presentations to district councils?”

“If you speak to the local WPD teams, they may have time to come out and speak to you, but I want WPD to make sure that they’re all saying the same thing.”

Priority 5: Acceptance period for generation — Proposed Commitments

a) Consider a longer acceptance period for generation schemes

“With accepting a connection offer, it takes months and then it’s always the lawyers that slow things down. Six months isn’t long enough because we need to obtain certain consents before we can progress and then I have to reapply and hope the capacity is still there. When your funding is £200 million, there are a lot of permissions and different processes running alongside one another. We’d like not to have to accept an offer just to get the ball rolling all over again. I’d suggest a longer acceptance period for generation schemes.”

“I’d support that too. Sometimes getting the funding is difficult.”

Priority 6: Competition in connections — Proposed Commitments

a) Increase the amount of contestable connections available

b) Engage with ICPs to share best practice even on non-contestable works

“I think we need to open up more activity to competition. Try to remove more barriers in terms of what becomes contestable and what isn’t.”

“With some of the non-contestable works, the ICP has come up with solutions which were then adopted by the DNO. Open up engagement with that non-contestable side even if we’re not directly involved in them.”

14 | WORKFORCE RESILIENCE (AFTERNOON SESSION)

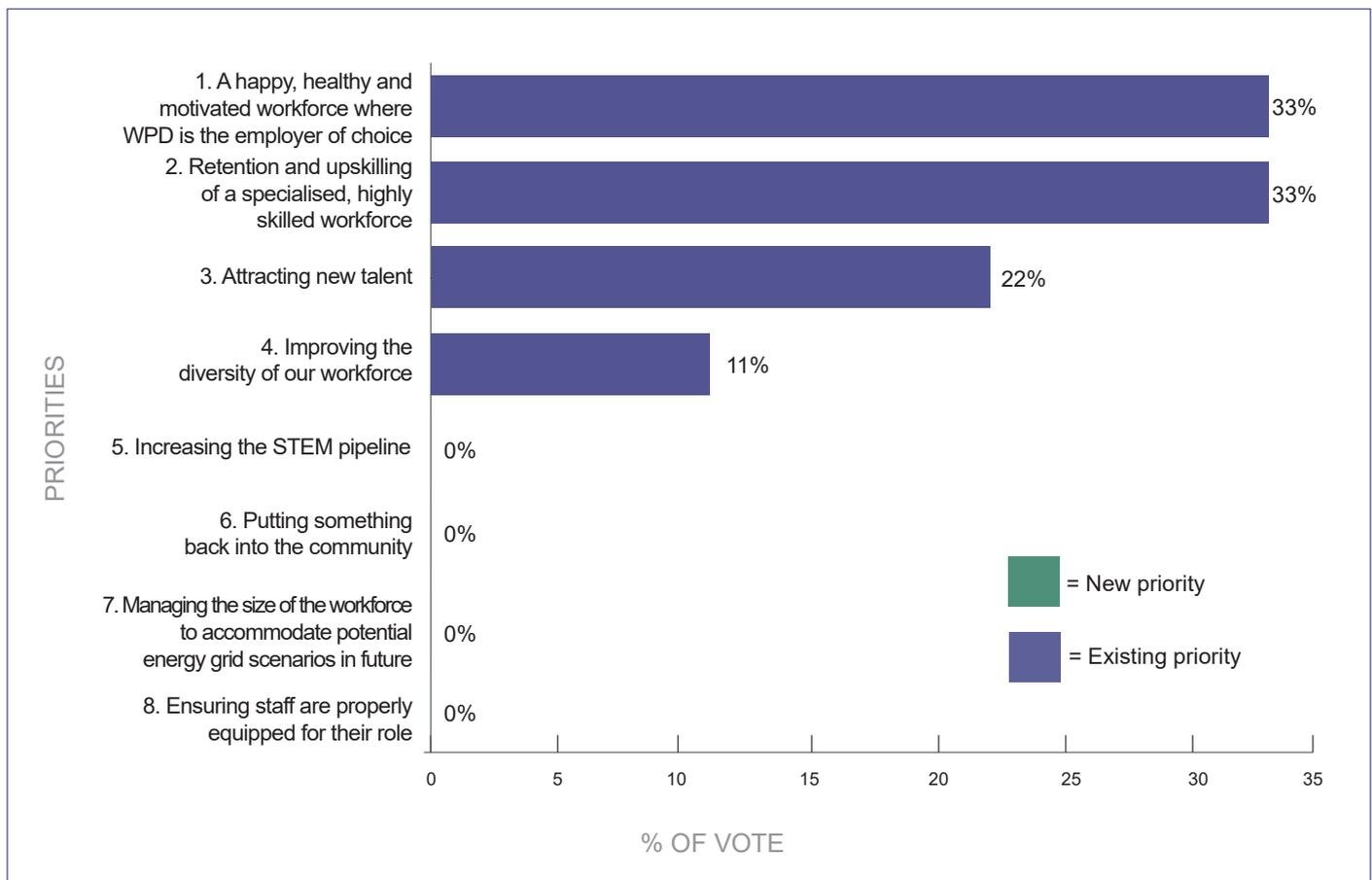
Three stakeholders ranked the priorities in this session, in which ‘a happy, healthy and motivated workforce where WPD is the employer of choice’ and ‘retention and upskilling of a specialised, highly skilled workforce’ were identified as most important.

Stakeholders broadly agreed with the priorities, but felt that additional ones should be included. These related to increasing the size of the workforce to accommodate the future potential scenarios on the energy grid and ensuring that all employees are properly equipped.

Some of the suggested commitments centred around initiatives to appeal to younger workers, such as flexible working packages and home-working, but some were more general, such as bike-to-work schemes and gym memberships. Delegates also wanted to see WPD being more proactive in its recruiting methods in order to spark more interest among potential employees.

PRIORITIES

Stakeholders were given three votes each to allocate to their choice of priorities below by way of a written feedback form completed at the end of the session. The list of priorities contains those that had been previously suggested by stakeholders, although there was space to write down and vote on new priorities. The graph below details the priorities for this topic ranked in order.



PROPOSED COMMITMENTS

During the afternoon sessions, which were run without facilitation, stakeholders were then asked to start identifying commitments against these priorities. These have been set out under the priority headings below, which are in the order that stakeholders ranked the priorities when individually ranking via written feedback forms. Owing to the unconstructed nature of these discussions, in some instances priorities included on the written feedback forms had no specific commitments attached to them or were not commented on by stakeholders and are therefore not included below.

Priority 1: A happy, healthy and motivated workforce where WPD is the employer of choice — Proposed Commitments		
a) Support flexible working programmes, including flexible retirement plans	b) Introduce new worker benefits and initiatives	c) Embrace the emergence of working from home

“You must underline your commitment to flexible working packages.”

“As society gears more and more towards seven-day weeks, people will continue to change their attitudes towards working patterns. If you can put in place more flexible working models, you can recruit workers more easily. This will be particularly useful with female workers.”

“Flexible retirement plans would be great to enable workers to phase out their hours as they get older. That means that you can enjoy the benefit of their skills for longer.”

“Are there any bike-to-work or car-pooling schemes that WPD could introduce?”

“Buying back holiday and BUPA cover could be nice incentives to offer to workers, paid from your base pay. If you offer it to workers, rather than forcing it upon them, it could prove popular.”

“Gym membership could be a good way of helping you to keep your workforce fit.”

“Subsidised travel schemes would be good.”

“WPD should embrace working from home more, wherever possible. I work at home three days a week and my company gets so much more out of me, as I’m not distracted by interruptions and meetings, and can really get my head down. I can also stay on top of my emails, which is great, as emails piling up really stresses me out.”



WORKFORCE RESILIENCE (AFTERNOON SESSION)

Priority 2: Retention and upskilling of a specialised, highly skilled workforce — Proposed Commitments

a) Simplify goals and outcomes in personal development plans	b) Create shadowing opportunities to upskill less senior staff	c) Train managers to effectively implement HR policy including development plan reviews	d) Consider the wider roll-out of a bonus scheme	e) Provide support for staff relocated to new offices
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“I would say that you could commit to spelling out your development plans more clearly to workers. That will make your workers realise how they can progress through the company.”

“Formal training or shadowing of more senior workers could help solidify the skills of less senior workers.”

“No matter how good your HR policy is, the quality of your review is down to your manager. You should consider committing to putting in place monitoring to ensure that managers perform highly in this area and support their teams properly.”

“Having looked at some of the figures, does WPD normally do exit interviews for people that leave?”

“Would it be possible to look into a bonus scheme for all employees rather than just the top management?”

“You should look to expand your support for people being relocated due to office transfers.”

“I think that it's good that internal candidates are prioritised for upskilling programmes. I also like that the academic-qualification barrier has been removed because experience can be equally valuable.”

Priority 3: Attracting new talent — Proposed Commitments

a) Evaluate your current engagement strategy for young people	b) Improve the perception of apprenticeships within the industry	c) Offer a more 'hands on' experience at career fairs	d) Use your existing workforce to better promote WPD and drive recruitment	e) Offer four-wheel drive training
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“When it comes to attracting young people, it's a two-step process. One stage is getting them through the door and then the next step is creating a sense of loyalty to the company, as young people aren't looking a job for life anymore. You should approach those two things in tandem.”

“Maybe WPD could overhaul its branding to make it more appealing to young people? They are drawn to appealing logos and visual branding, but, sadly, I don't think that WPD's current one would stand out to young people.”

“WPD should try and do something to improve the perception of apprenticeships, as they are an invaluable resource for some people. Something needs to be done to mend the pipeline.”

“Apprenticeships are absolutely the way forward to attracting great new talent. You're being paid while you learn.”

“The joy of getting youngsters into roles is that they're enthusiastic, energetic and not corrupted by bad habits. The base behaviour is key, as you can teach them the skills that they will need later.”

“Could you think about the straplines from staff surveys for your apprenticeship paraphernalia?”

“Could you bring a pole with you to careers fairs? Little ones will love climbing them and that could spark interest from a young age. It could create positive associations with the company and the industry as a whole”

“Can staff help with recruitment? They can help spread the word.”

“Four-wheel drive training would be both practical for workers and would be very appealing when you try to attract new talent.”

“The salary that comes at the end of the apprenticeship is amazing. You should crow about it more.”

WORKFORCE RESILIENCE (AFTERNOON SESSION)

Priority 4: Improving the diversity of our workforce — Proposed Commitments

a) Ensure WPD's diversity strategy remains cognisant to an ageing demographic

"There needs to be some kind of ambition to increase all kinds of diversity across the business. This will bring you a wider range of ideas."

"In my town, the council's workforce is a reflection of the demographics there, which are mainly white British and somewhat Polish. Ethnic minorities are low in number. However, we have an ageing population and a decreasing birth rate, so the workforce average age can't keep dropping. There may be a greater reliance on older workers in the decades to come, which WPD should consider in its planning."

Priority 5: Increasing the STEM pipeline — Proposed Commitments

a) Use apprentices to help engage with young people and inform their curriculum choices

b) Revise recruitment collateral to change perceptions that WPD requires high attainment

"Taking apprentices to careers fairs will help, as other young people can identify with them and see them as role models."

"A lot of schools have lost sixth forms, meaning that there are a lot more young people out there that you can employ who are no longer doing A-levels. Tapping into this potential employee base is a big opportunity for you."

"The educational attainment level in the secondary schools is low, so maybe the lack of applications from young people is down to the fact that young people don't feel that they're up to the roles that WPD is offering. Maybe WPD could look to tweak its recruitment materials to address this?"

Priority 6: Putting something back into the community — Proposed Commitments

"I like WPD's plans to sponsor football teams and community schemes."

Priority 7: Managing the size of the workforce to accommodate potential energy grid scenarios in future — Proposed Commitments

"One area that I would suggest is increasing numbers of staff so that you can manage all the new schemes coming into play on the network. If you don't, you may not be able to cope and your service level will drop."

"Your staff numbers will be key in future. You will need to put in so much more infrastructure and you don't want to overstretch the people that you have."

Priority 8: Ensuring staff are properly equipped for their role — Proposed Commitments

a) Ensure teams have the right tools to perform their jobs properly

"You need to ensure that all of your teams always have the right kit so that they can concentrate on their jobs. If they have all the right tools, they can concentrate on their work better. You can't just stop at making sure that your workers are trained properly."

15 | DIGITALISATION, DATA AND DSO (AFTERNOON SESSION)

This session followed a different format from the other sessions. There was a short presentation summarising WPD's digitalisation strategy followed by some open questions asking stakeholders for feedback on what they'd heard.

Stakeholders felt that different DNOs' data was shared to a differing standard and wanted to know when the data sets would converge. This was seen to be of critical importance for local authorities, with accurate forecasting models and interpretations required for the necessary investments in network planning for the net zero trajectory. Stakeholders also wanted to see two sets of guidance for local authorities: simple guidance for senior management, and tranches for site managers, universities and technical guidance. A variation of data for local authorities was also advocated, with some LAs confirming that they liked working with raw data and others wanting to move away from a per-project strategy and focus on a larger data picture.

Discussing data sets, delegates wanted to ensure they were downloadable and also questioned whether WPD had sufficient knowledge of the data sets to process them accurately. Giving the example of the placement of battery storage using data from the network websites, stakeholders cited a certain element of trial and error and called for more data to be put on the system to ensure increased confidence. Twinning data sets was seen to be a potential solution for this, although delegates felt that CIM was moving in the right direction in this regard and was generally comprehensive. Anonymising data sets to get around data privacy issues was also advocated.

Stakeholders were keen to discuss how the Ofgem decision on CLASS would affect WPD. It was felt that with data flows, people needed to know what was presenting itself in terms of tendering, and many were keen to see how CLASS services would work in terms of data transparency. Similarly, on the topic of commercialising existing assets and open data, one stakeholder cited the creation of a live DSI map, wanting to know if corporate asset renewal data already existed: a system-wide resource register was seen to be a good solution for this.

Open source data was also sought in terms of the kVA, with delegates wanting to know if WPD was responsible for the kVA capacity with sites that have resupply capacity and whether kVA was commercially sensitive. This led to a discussion around DSO data on a micro / macro scale, with stakeholders wanting to see data packaged for scale, which could unlock investment on different levels.

"If I visit DNO websites to access data, they're all to a different standard. I have varying levels of confidence in them. When will the data sets converge?"

"Have you factored in LAs and the colossal investments required for the trajectory we're on?"

"There are two sets of guidance required for LAs then: simple guidance for senior management, and then tranches for site managers, universities and technical guidance."

"Are there downloadable data sets?"

"I like raw data but most of the LAs I work with do not. They want to get away from a per-project strategy and think about the bigger picture towards 2040 for example."

"Looking at network websites, we can look at the data and work out where we can place battery storage. This is not always the case though, as there's a trial and error element. The more you put the data out there, though, the greater confidence there is."



DIGITALISATION, DATA AND DSO (AFTERNOON SESSION)

“Do you have sufficient knowledge of some of the data sets to process them properly?”

“If data sets can be twinned, for example, you know that you can get a similar result to what has been done previously.”

“In fairness, DNOs are moving in that direction with CIM, which is very comprehensive these days. Having a new information model is one thing, but outdated equipment can be a problem. It's also an issue when models differ within the same sector.”

“Can you anonymise data sets in order to get around data privacy issues? Perhaps with a brief this could be feasible.”

“I imagine the Ofgem decision on CLASS will have big impacts on you?”

“With data flows, people need to know what is presenting itself in terms of bidding opportunities (tendering).”

“With CLASS services, it's very interesting to know how this will all work in terms of transparency of data.”

“On open data we're trying to set up a live DSI map. Does corporate renewal asset data already exist?”

“Who is responsible for the data in terms of the kVA? With a utilities provider, you get gas and electric from them. Are you responsible for the kVA capacity with sites that have resupply capacity? Is it all open source?”

“Is kVA commercially sensitive?”

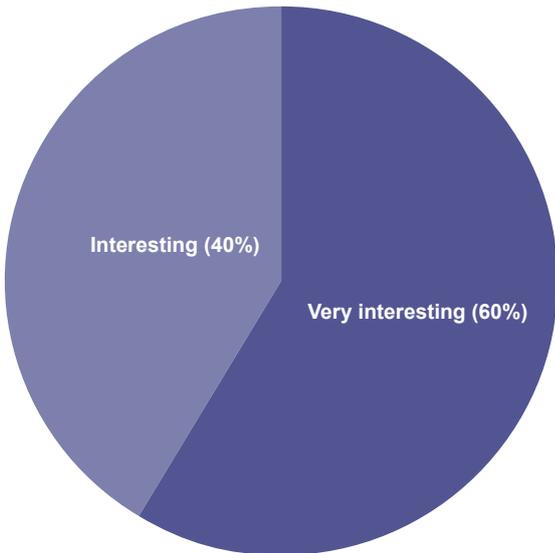
“It would be interesting to look at DSO data on a micro / macro scale. You need to unlock investment on different scales. There must be ways of packaging data for scale. Maybe we need more templates.”

“You need years to approach data with lenses. My slight frustration is that it feels like we've been talking about this for years.”

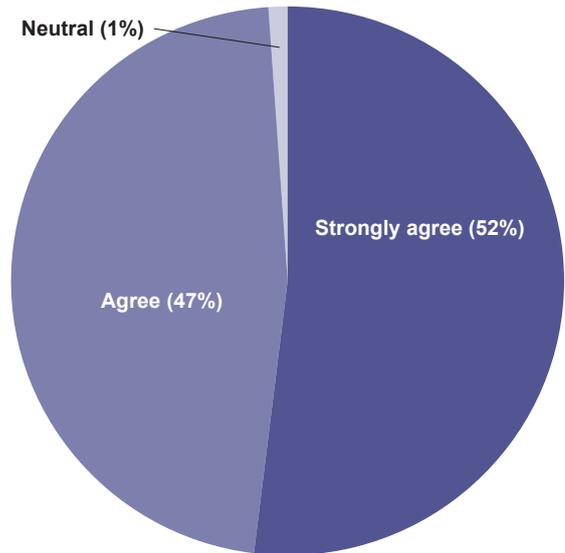
16 | WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

After the workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. The feedback was as follows:

Overall, did you find this workshop to be:



Did you feel that you had the opportunity to make your points and ask questions?



“The facilitator made group involvement easy.”

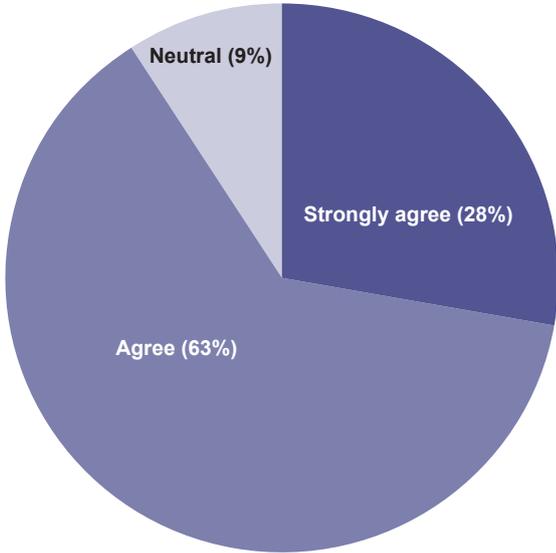
“The WPD staff listened and gave good feedback in their answers.”

“Very well run.”

“Well facilitated.”

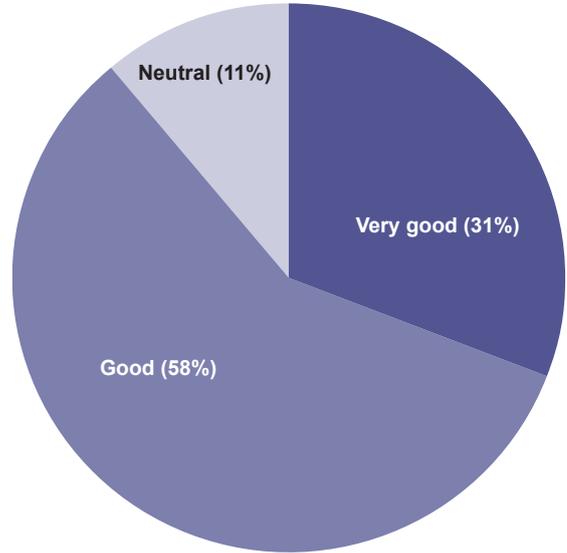


Did we cover the right topics on the day?



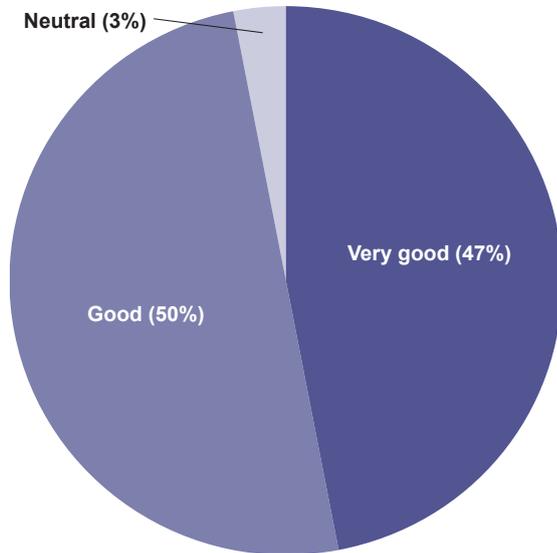
“Topics were well thought out.”

What did you think of the venue?



WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

What did you think about the way that the workshop was chaired by your table facilitator?



"Kept a good balance of views."

"Excellent."

"[Facilitator] was fantastic."

Any other comments?

"I go to a lot of these and this was good."

"A great event as always. WPD are always open to challenge and debate."

"Enjoyed the day and keen to be involved again."

"Genuine and valuable experience. Just as I expected. Thank you."

"Great mix on the tables. No 'leading the witness' in the approach adopted."

"Very informative session."

"Well worth attending and constructive."



