



Western Power Distribution Local Investment Workshops

West Midlands

September 2020

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1 | OVERVIEW

In September 2020, WPD's distribution managers hosted a series of three workshops to gather feedback from its stakeholders across the company's West Midlands region. Owing to the circumstances regarding Covid-19, the workshops were held online using the Zoom platform, rather than in person.

Most of the workshop attendees represented local authorities, although other parties involved in the growth agenda, such as representatives from the housing, EV charging and consultancy sectors, were also in attendance. The feedback from all three workshops has been collated and summarised in this report.

Each workshop covered a different geographic area within the West Midlands region, as follows:

Telford and Stoke	9 September 2020
Birmingham and Tipton	15 September 2020
Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester	16 September 2020

This workshop series, which gave stakeholders the opportunity to get involved in WPD's RIIO-ED2 Business Plan development, was designed with a number of objectives in mind. In addition to virtually 'meeting' their distribution manager and local teams, stakeholders were able to find out about WPD, its challenges and planned local investment, and discuss network constraints and capacity issues. WPD, meanwhile, aimed to further its understanding of local growth agendas, including Local Energy Plans, and to collect information on stakeholders' ambitions around electric vehicle charging, heat pumps and other low-carbon technologies (LCTs). The company also used the workshops as an opportunity to explain its Future Energy Scenarios, share best practice and obtain feedback on any other areas of interest for stakeholders.

The workshop was split into three sessions:

- Introducing WPD
- Supporting the Growth Agenda
- Supporting the Transition to Net Zero

Each session began with a PowerPoint presentation given by a local distribution manager or WPD staff member to provide attendees with an overview of the topic in question. Each presentation was followed by a discussion in breakout rooms, aimed at gathering targeted feedback from stakeholders.

WPD instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate the workshops and to take notes of the comments made by stakeholders. Comments have not been attributed to individuals to ensure that all stakeholders were able to speak as candidly as possible.

2 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each workshop session opened with a presentation by a WPD representative, which was followed by group discussions in breakout rooms designed to elicit stakeholder feedback. In addition to discussing the topic covered during the presentation, stakeholders were asked to feed back on a number of outputs falling under some of the priority areas identified by stakeholders at previous engagement events in order to inform WPD's RII0-ED2 Business Plan. The priority areas are detailed below and the individual outputs listed under these categories can be found in Appendix 2 of this document.

- Network reliability
- Network resilience (to severe weather)
- Connections
- Community energy
- Whole system approach to achieve Net Zero
- Innovation and new services

This report contains summaries of the findings from the breakout discussions, as well as verbatim comments and written feedback from stakeholders.

SESSION ONE: INTRODUCING WPD

- A great many stakeholders attended the West Midlands events with a view to sharing their Net Zero ambitions and were keen to discuss how WPD could support them in achieving those ambitions.
- Stakeholders felt that WPD had a key role in supporting the green recovery, and there were calls for the company to continue to focus on customer service as its workload increases, consider the carbon impact of its fleet and provide guidance to councils to enable long-term planning.
- It was noted that network resilience was particularly important in rural areas, and there were calls for WPD to collaborate with other agencies such as Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency on flood defences. Cable undergrounding was generally seen as an effective way of driving resilience and sustainability.

SESSION TWO: SUPPORTING THE GROWTH AGENDA

- Attendees were keen to collaborate with WPD, with 89% of survey respondents indicating that they would be willing to engage more with the company. Local authorities stated that they were in favour of a localised approach, and a number of stakeholders felt that WPD should engage with a broader range of projects under DFES.
- Stakeholders had mixed expectations with regard to the impact of Covid on volumes of developments. However, there was general agreement that the societal impacts of the pandemic, such as increased homeworking, would have implications for growth plans and WPD's future workload.
- Stakeholders outlined their growth plans, such as new housing developments. Several attendees noted that they had encountered issues with grid capacity, particularly in relation to connecting LCTs. It was felt that WPD could improve the situation through early, active engagement and by taking a long-term approach.
- Attendees generally agreed with WPD's outputs around community energy and connections, and the idea of a Community Engineer seemed particularly welcome. Suggestions as to how WPD could further support community energy projects tended to be tied to better communication, from pre-application information to technical support.

SESSION THREE: SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

- The majority of survey respondents (79%) indicated that their local authority had set a target date for reaching Net Zero, and achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 seemed to be a common goal. Several stakeholders were also involved in wider Net Zero strategies and targets, such as WM2041 and the LEP strategy.
- EVs seemed to feature most heavily in local authorities' plans to connect LCTs, although stakeholders were also considering solutions involving heat pumps, hydrogen, solar power and battery storage.
- WPD was advised to provide measurable targets under its Net Zero and innovation outputs. Stakeholders confirmed the importance of regular engagement with those looking to connect LCTs and suggested that WPD do more to promote the annual call for innovation project ideas.
- There was widespread agreement that WPD has a key role to play in Net Zero and innovation. Stakeholders felt that the company should focus on educating and engaging stakeholders and work with other DNOs and utilities to drive change and apply innovative solutions.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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

- 96% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop either 'very interesting' or 'interesting'.
- 43% of stakeholders 'strongly agreed' that they had had an opportunity to make points and ask questions, while 54% 'agreed'.
- 89% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the right topics were discussed on the day.
- 46% thought EQ Communications' facilitation was 'very good', with 50% opting for 'good'.
- A large proportion of attendees thought that the online format worked 'very well' (43%) or 'well' (39%).

3 | ATTENDEES

A total of 46 stakeholders attended the three West Midlands workshops, representing 29 organisations. The organisations represented at the workshops are shown below:

- Birmingham City Council
- BP Chargemaster
- Bromsgrove District Council
- Cannock Chase District Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Coventry City Council
- East Staffordshire Borough Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- FLOH Consulting
- Gloucester City Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Midlands Energy Hub
- Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council
- Places in Common
- Redditch Borough Council
- Redrow Homes Midlands
- Richborough Estates
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Gloucestershire Council
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
- Transport for West Midlands
- Worcester City Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Wychavon District Council

4 | SESSION ONE: INTRODUCING WPD

The first presentation of the day outlined WPD's role as a Distribution Network Operator (DNO), the implications of its transition to Distribution System Operator (DSO) and its approach to working on a regional level. In addition to outlining the business planning process, the presenters updated stakeholders on WPD's response to Covid-19.

Stakeholders were also asked to give feedback on WPD's draft outputs on network reliability and resilience, which included a 12-hour target for restoring customer supply, the installation of flood defences and the reduction of tree-related faults.

The transition to Net Zero seemed to be a common priority across the three workshops, with councillors framing their interest against their Local Plans and carbon neutrality targets. Broadly speaking, stakeholders had attended the events to learn about how WPD could support them in achieving their goals, to increase their collaboration with the company or to ensure a joined-up approach between local authorities.

A number of local authorities planned to use low-carbon technologies in new developments as part of their Net Zero ambitions, and some were keen to discuss the impact of grid constraints and restrictions on these projects and explore how future capacity needs could be met. Other areas of interest included network resilience to extreme weather, community energy and vulnerable customers. Stakeholders were interested in the use of low-carbon technologies in rural areas, as well as urban issues such as on-street EV charging.

Local authorities and businesses reported that Covid had resulted in changes to their ways of working, including a rise in homeworking and online meetings. Several stakeholders expected their workload to increase as they began to deal with the backlog that had built up over lockdown, warning that this may have a knock-on effect for WPD's staff. It was also noted that lockdown had resulted in changes to energy use and led to higher unemployment levels, impacting fuel poverty. A number of stakeholders were concerned about the impact of Covid on mental health.

The green recovery was at the forefront of many stakeholders' minds. Some saw opportunities for greater ambition, including the chance to focus on EV roll-out, develop local systems and encourage community energy projects, although others warned that some of these solutions may not be suitable for rural communities. Stakeholders felt that WPD should support the green recovery by continuing to provide good customer service as its workload increases, including for Priority Services Register (PSR) customers, and by taking its carbon impact into account as working practices change. It was agreed that it was important to prioritise planning and construction as lockdown eased, and WPD was called on to provide guidance to enable councils to return to long-term planning.

Stakeholders generally agreed with WPD's outputs in the areas of resilience and reliability, although one stakeholder questioned whether the company could be more ambitious with regard to the volume of faults. WPD was asked to focus on long-term collaborative planning and provide network reinforcement where necessary with a view to meeting increased demand, thereby avoiding future network reliability issues. The importance of network resilience for rural areas was highlighted, and WPD was advised to collaborate with other agencies such as Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency around flood defences. At two of the three events, there were calls for WPD to increase cable undergrounding with a view to increasing resilience and fostering sustainability.

1. WHY HAVE YOU ATTENDED TODAY?

“WPD is a partner in the Regional Energy Systems Operator project, which focuses on all strategic aspects of energy at a city level (including distribution and transmission) and works to decarbonise the city. I’m here to make sure that suitable connections are made and to make sure that we’re joined up with the neighbouring authorities.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I run three EVs and am interested in the situation with network access and the difficulties relating to on-street charging.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I’m the low-carbon project officer for Solihull Council and am creating the Net Zero project for the borough. As we’re at the start of our journey, I’m here to learn more and want to find out how WPD can support us in this process and how we could collaborate together in future.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I’m here today to increase my knowledge specifically around zero-carbon technology, which we are beginning to implement more and more into our new developments.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I’m interested in community energy, climate change and engaging hard-to-reach communities.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“We do a lot of work in Stoke with developers. We work with large developments that involve LV and HV.”

Stakeholder, Telford and Stoke

“My particular interest is network capacity for microgeneration. We’d like to invest more in renewable energy, but grid capacity is a barrier to that.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I’m here from Malvern Hills District Council. There’s a bit of a rural edge to Malvern Hills, and I am interested in how we can actually provide capabilities for EVs and so on in this rural environment.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I work with Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership through the Midlands Energy Hub. I am particularly interested in looking at the grid across Worcestershire in terms of constraints and restrictions and how they impact developments. I am interested in decarbonisation and also three-phase in order to do dynamic grid balancing, improve the fault level and look at key substations.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I’m here from Worcester City Council. I am the chair of the City Council’s environment committee, so I am very keen to learn how WPD can contribute to our goal of carbon neutrality by 2030.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“Both of our Local Plans are under review, so we are working closely with our local planning manager and team on that. They feel that the network doesn’t overly influence their selection of where they put sites. I am interested in hearing your thoughts on that. We are also developing a low-carbon housing development plan and I’m quite keen to look at three-phase for that. We are going to have heat pumps, EV charge points and hopefully some solar, so there’s quite a bit going on.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“My responsibility is more internal focused to the council and what we are doing to get our own house in order. We are finalising our Net Zero plan at the moment and aspire to develop renewable energy in our patch.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“Mental health is my big concern, so making sure those people who are suffering in any way are getting the help they need.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“We’ve got an interest in developing business land. I’ve got a particular interest in green energy, and what options we’ve got for taking things forward.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“We’re looking at the role of community energy in the green energy initiative.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I’m here to learn more about the move to zero carbon and also the impacts of extreme weather. Our rail department has been impacted recently by adverse weather.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I’m attending to see how we can deliver the growth expected in the coming decades and how we can provide future energy requirements in light of Net Zero. I’m also interested in on-site generation of electricity, particularly on big development sites.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“We are also keen to facilitate connections to local clean energy projects, such as heat pumps, which is challenging for more rural parts of the county.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I’m from the Midlands Energy Hub. My role is to help the local authorities and the LEP to deliver on energy projects.”

Stakeholder, Telford and Stoke

2. WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR YOU IN LIGHT OF COVID-19 THAT WE NEED TO CONSIDER? AND HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOU WITH THE GREEN RECOVERY?

“New planning regulations have been published, which I strongly welcome as there are so many barriers to building houses. Getting planning moving is key. Construction is a way out for the economy.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“For us, the focus has shifted from longer- to shorter-term thinking. We would benefit from guidance from WPD in terms of priorities and long-term planning. What are they hoping for from local authorities in this regard?”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I’m elderly and we don’t go out any more so rely on tech and communication. We can’t visit grandchildren, etc., which changes the profile of when power is being used.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I think, speaking from the Marches LEP point of view, we are doing everything to reach that green recovery.”

Stakeholder, Telford and Stoke

“Our biggest problem is the suppliers. We can get the work in, but it’s more the suppliers. We are struggling now.”

Stakeholder, Telford and Stoke

“Whilst this has all been shut down, there is going to be a serious backlog. People that are leading that now are going to feel it in a few months’ time.”

Stakeholder, Telford and Stoke

“WPD only have a small resource of people doing the works. They could be reducing their quality of staff as they will have to bring in lots of people to get them over the hump. The upshot of that is you’re setting yourself up for a lot of issues down the line due to poor service. They need to deal with people who come on a first come, first served basis.”

Stakeholder, Telford and Stoke

“We’ve been working from home and will be for the foreseeable future, but our workload as planners has never stopped. Although we were still sending quotes, it was only essential connections that were being considered.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I’d also like to echo previous thoughts on mental health. We worry that WPD are too understaffed to deal with increased PSR call-outs and would like to hear what your contingency plan is in case the pandemic gets worse over winter.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“Before Covid we suffered chronic traffic and resulting air quality problems. As businesses are returning, we’re noticing more people traveling in more vehicles, particularly tradesman taking separate vans to jobs. I see that you have bought around 200 extra vans, and I can see that these are diesel vans.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“Covid has caused problems with planning, for example, site visits. It’s definitely slowed things down. The backlog of work is building and it’s a live problem.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“We worked hard to get people working from home and there have been no major delays. If anything, we have been more ambitious to meet targets in some areas.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“From a local authority point of view, our style of working has changed due to Covid, as we are working from home a lot more now.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“There has also been increased emphasis on EV roll-out and more thought about how to develop our local systems.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“There also seems to be more localised resilience in terms of food. People are also helping each other more now, creating a sense of community spirit. This increased community spirit could maybe spin out into community energy projects down the line.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I am concerned that this view of localism has far too much of an urban scope and am worried that rural communities don’t have enough say over their lives.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

3. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE OUTPUTS STAKEHOLDERS HAVE SUGGESTED WE DELIVER AROUND NETWORK RELIABILITY AND RESILIENCE?

“The network needs to be reinforced in advance to meet the potential demand, but that tends not to be a preferred strategy. I worry that we will see a similar issue with electrical heating, depending on how the government legislates in the years to come.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“There needs to be greater understanding about how the outputs relate to planning and to putting in the infrastructure itself. I would like to see earlier conversations about future development needs, meaning that urban planners and developers can be proactive rather than reactive. These conversations can lead to more collaboration and greater support.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“To be honest I live rurally, and we get a lot of power cuts. What’s interesting is equipment failure when the power comes back on. Network resilience is important for rural areas.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“WPD should look at undergrounding rather than cutting trees, so we can move forward sustainably.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“For flood defences, could you work with other agencies on water management like Severn Trent Water, to have more joined-up thinking? They’re doing some programmes that are actually positive for aspects like biodiversity. There’s also North Worcestershire Water Management and the Environment Agency.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“Are you redesigning your support teams to make sure they’re Covid proof?”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“Undergrounding of cables should be encouraged as much as possible to increase resilience.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“It doesn’t feel very ambitious in terms of the volume of faults, but it may be appropriate given the size of the network.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“The government’s white paper for planning, if it goes through, might produce pressure to protect landscapes.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

5 | SESSION TWO: SUPPORTING THE GROWTH AGENDA

The presenters outlined WPD's Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES) and its approach to engagement and explained some of the company's draft outputs around community energy and connections. During the subsequent breakout room discussions, stakeholders were asked to give details of their own local growth plans and consider WPD's approach to supporting the growth agenda.

The largest proportion of survey respondents described their experience of DFES engagement as 'neutral' (59%). However, stakeholders were in favour of the bottom-up localised approach allowed for by DFES. Those who felt that WPD could go further advised the company to consider a wider range of projects under its DFES approach, as well as city ecosystems. Some councillors were keen for the company to provide more information on local barriers or heat maps at a ward level.

There was widespread interest in closer collaboration with the company, with 89% of survey respondents indicating that they would be willing to engage more with WPD. It was felt that WPD should engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including those involved in the Net Zero agenda, with the aim of capturing varied and representative views. To this end, attendees advised WPD to engage with city authorities, the public, community energy groups, landowners and planning committees.

New housing featured heavily in stakeholders' growth plans, including 10,000 new homes in Tewkesbury and 200 houses in Lower Bullingham. Capacity was a widespread issue, particularly where green technologies were involved. Stakeholders urged WPD to take a long-term approach by providing enough capacity to meet demand over the next ten years, rather than only considering local authorities' immediate needs. Stakeholders also welcomed early engagement with the company, and felt it would be beneficial for WPD to become a statutory consultee on planning projects.

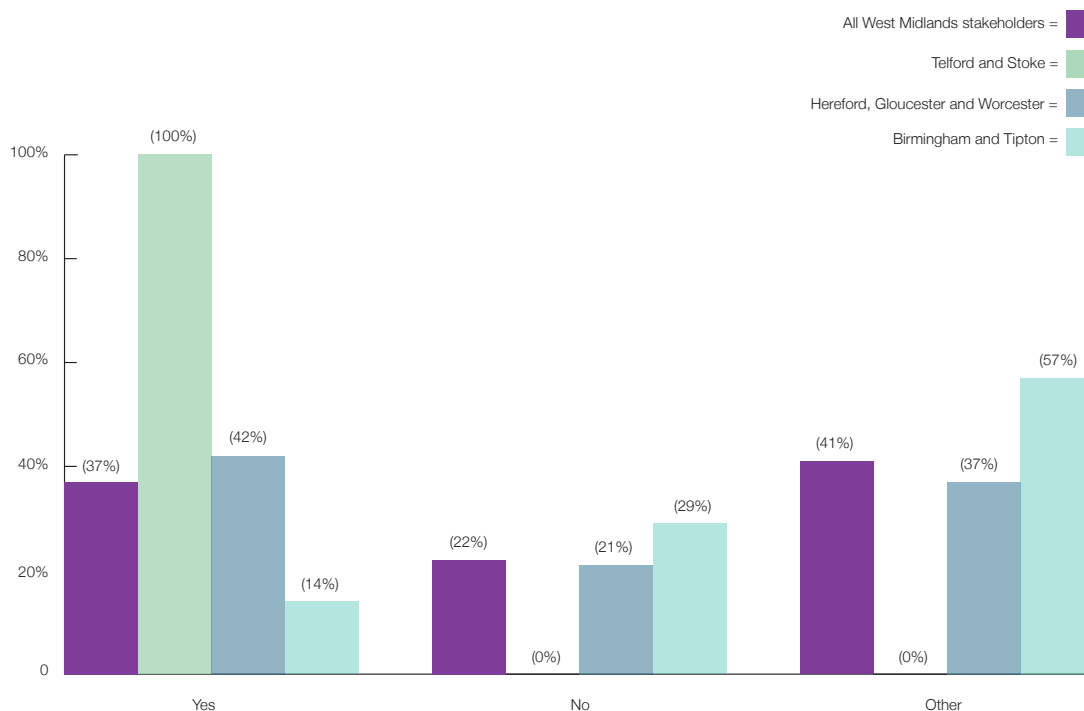
Stakeholders were split as to whether Covid would affect volumes of developments, with 32% stating that it would affect volumes, 32% reporting that volumes would not be affected and 36% saying they were not sure. It was felt that the societal impacts of Covid, such as increased homeworking and lower levels of commuting, would have a knock-on effect on energy use and ultimately impact growth plans. For example, homes would require more energy, there may be less demand for EV chargers in car parks and carpooling would have additional safety implications.

Community energy was widely expected to play a significant role in future. It was felt that communities would benefit from community ownership and local generation and consumption. Stakeholders were broadly supportive of WPD's outputs around connections and community energy, and the idea of a Community Engineer in each licence area proved particularly popular. Several attendees agreed that broader pre-application information would be helpful, particularly information aimed at local authorities. Stakeholders also agreed that WPD should focus on improving cross-border working practices, calling for more information sharing between DSOs.

Stakeholders agreed that community groups were held back by factors such as variable costs and limited understanding of complex issues, such as constraints. With this in mind, it was felt that WPD could primarily support community energy groups by improving its communication, from demonstrating the potential of community projects to providing technical support and regulatory assistance further down the line.

1A. DO YOU AGREE WITH OUR APPROACH TO DFES ENGAGEMENT? IS THERE MORE WE SHOULD BE DOING?

Have you / your organisation engaged with us with as part of our DFES planning?

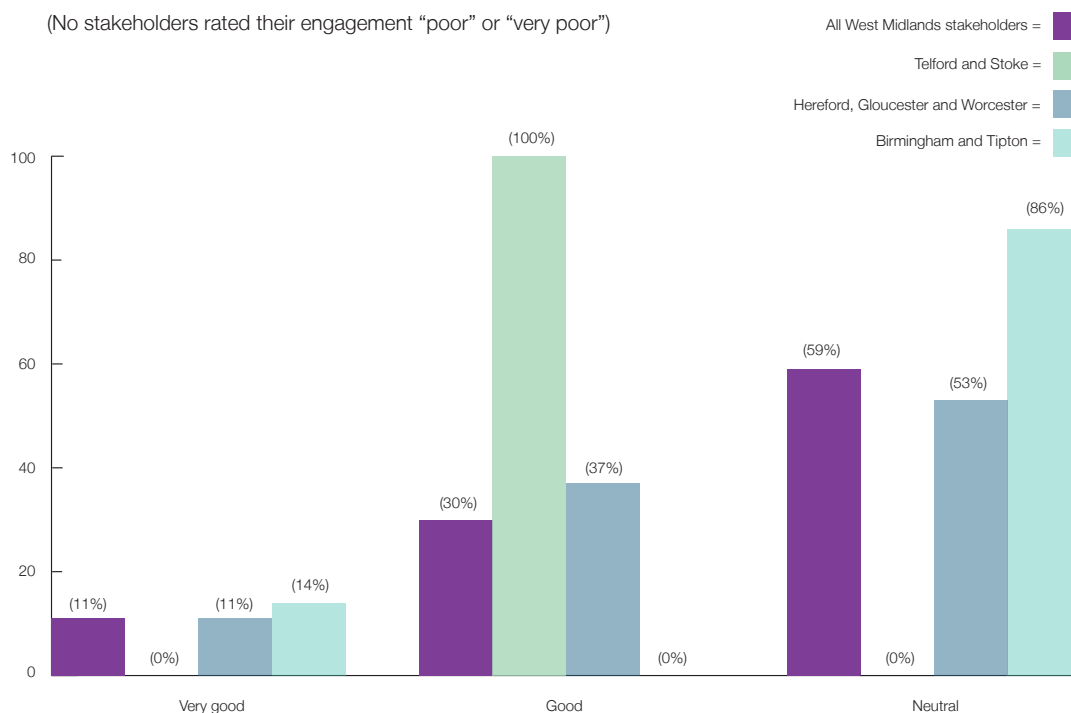


Survey comments:

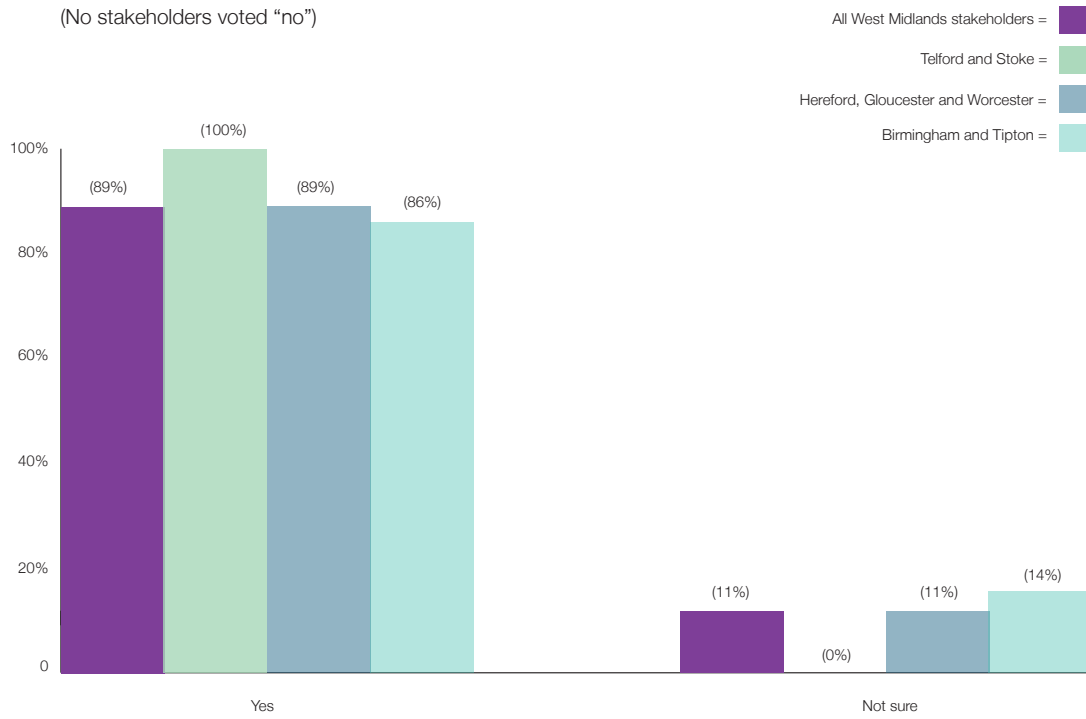
“Limited engagement previously, [namely through] providing housing trajectory information.”

If you have engaged with us as part of our DFES planning, how would you rate this engagement?

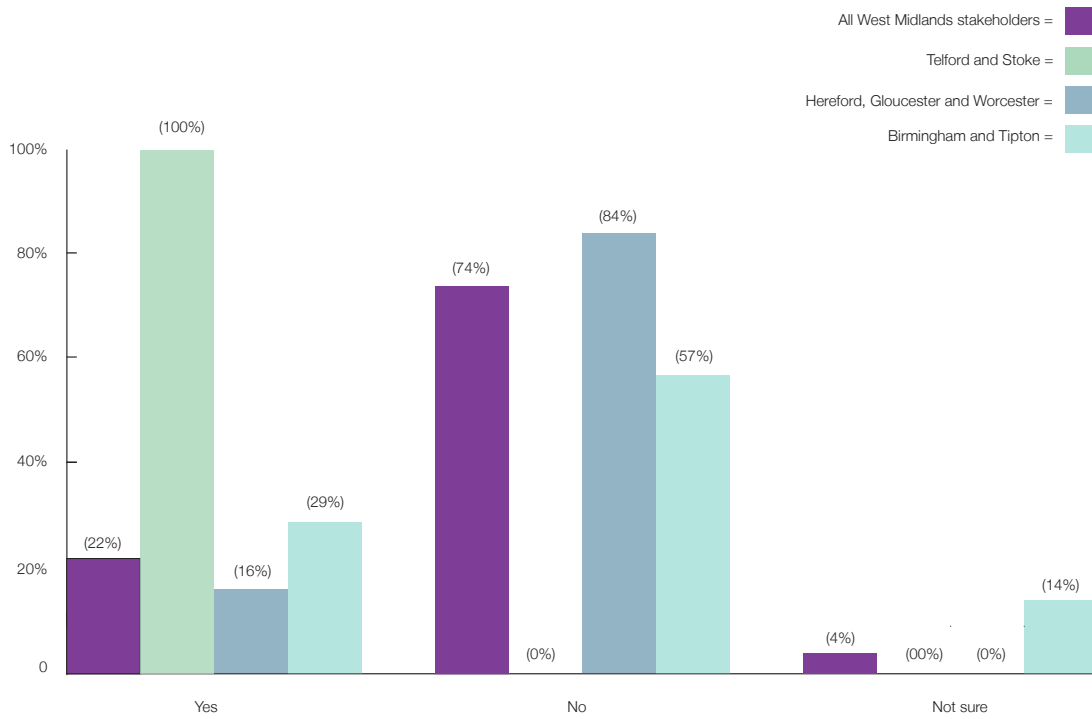
(No stakeholders rated their engagement “poor” or “very poor”)



Would you be willing to engage with us more?



Have you heard of our Energy Data Hub?



“I think that DFES engagement is an area that requires focus from WPD. There needs to be earlier dialogue than there is at present.”

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

“We have the Regional Energy Systems Operator project, so we’re mapping out all of the potential sources of energy throughout Coventry, including things like mine water, heat recovery from the sewers and heat from waste. I’m worried that the approach to DFES engagement might be a bit narrow for our purposes, as we’re not interested in wind power due to our city topography.” **Coventry City Council**

“This approach needs to think about whole city ecosystems.” **Coventry City Council**

“DFES is something that I’ve used with all three councils, but it is a useful tool to demonstrate the energy requirements that will be needed in their areas. I think people quite like it because it brings energy to a local level and you can start demonstrating the requirements. People can relate to it and see what it really means for that area.” **Midlands Energy Hub**

“Through your increased working with local authorities, will you be able to say where there is a particular barrier, for instance, to an upgrade of a substation or with a connection problem? Engaging with the local authority may enable you to unlock some of those problems if there are any solutions there.” **Worcester City Council**

“We’re aware of where our local substations are, but we’re not aware of their capacity. Some kind of capacity mapping might be of interest, in which planners can see the reach of a substation. Often planning gets green lit because someone sees a nearby substation on a map, but they aren’t aware of the exact parameters or capacity of it.” **Herefordshire Council**

“We like to know as much as possible for our individual wards. Could these heat maps possibly be organised by political wards?” **Redditch Borough Council**

“The bottom-up approach is particularly critical with these greener heating systems that are going to be rolled out in the years to come, particularly when trying to retrofit older houses.” **Cotswold District Council**

1B. ARE THERE ANY OTHER STAKEHOLDERS WHICH WPD SHOULD BE ENGAGING WITH?

“WPD needs to engage more with local city authorities, as they understand city-wide needs.” **Coventry City Council**

“There is an education piece for the public. For example, the clean air zone in Birmingham has received enormous pushback.” **Places in Common**

“I’ll answer for Shropshire, but they have got a wider stakeholder group now. They’ve got them for their own borough / district, which engages with relevant people. You get the normal suspects but also a wider range, including people who are intrigued in the environmental side or the development side. All the groups who are for Net Zero are really engaging. Collaboration is key.” **Midlands Energy Hub**

“Herefordshire did have quite a few community energy groups.” **Herefordshire Council**

“Landowners for EV charging and charging hubs. If a new substation is needed, engaging with landowners in those areas would be good.” **BP Chargemaster**

“The planning committee who develop 10-year plans, they would give the best scenarios regarding future developments.” **Herefordshire Council**

“WPD needs to work with industry to alter patterns of work to smooth out the load. Industries need to regulate their peaks and spread this out more so you can better balance the distribution.” **Customer**

“I’m also very interested in local authority surgeries.” **Cannock Chase District Council**

2A. WHAT ARE YOUR GROWTH PLANS (INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, DOMESTIC)?

“We’re having capacity problems with the enterprise zone at the moment. We’ve got 200 new homes planned in Lower Bullingham, so why not increase the capacity now for the 1,200 homes that will eventually be built there over the next 10 years? We know we need 5,000 new homes in our area, but you’re only increasing capacity to take on the 200 homes that are being built in the immediate future.”
Herefordshire Council

“We expect fewer retail spaces and offices and more residential areas. This provides great opportunities for some really efficient zero-carbon options.”
Coventry City Council

“The new planning regulations saw an 88% uplift in housing demand because of affordability. We’ll probably have to deliver houses quicker and plan for the next five years rather than forty. The political desire for green technologies is huge.”
Worcestershire County Council

“We’re going through our Local Plan process, looking at housing numbers and what they’re likely to be. The review process is every five years and also applies to non-residential builds. We want more grid. We aren’t able to do it at the moment.”
Telford and Wrekin Council

“We are looking at our five-year plan. Our big thing is getting more people to move into the town. I would like to see more development that way.”
Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council

“Around 40,000 homes could be needed looking forward, and we need to open a dialogue with WPD about this.”
Tewkesbury Borough Council

“We’ve just been awarded garden town status and we have circa 10,000 new homes earmarked for delivery in our plan.”
Tewkesbury Borough Council

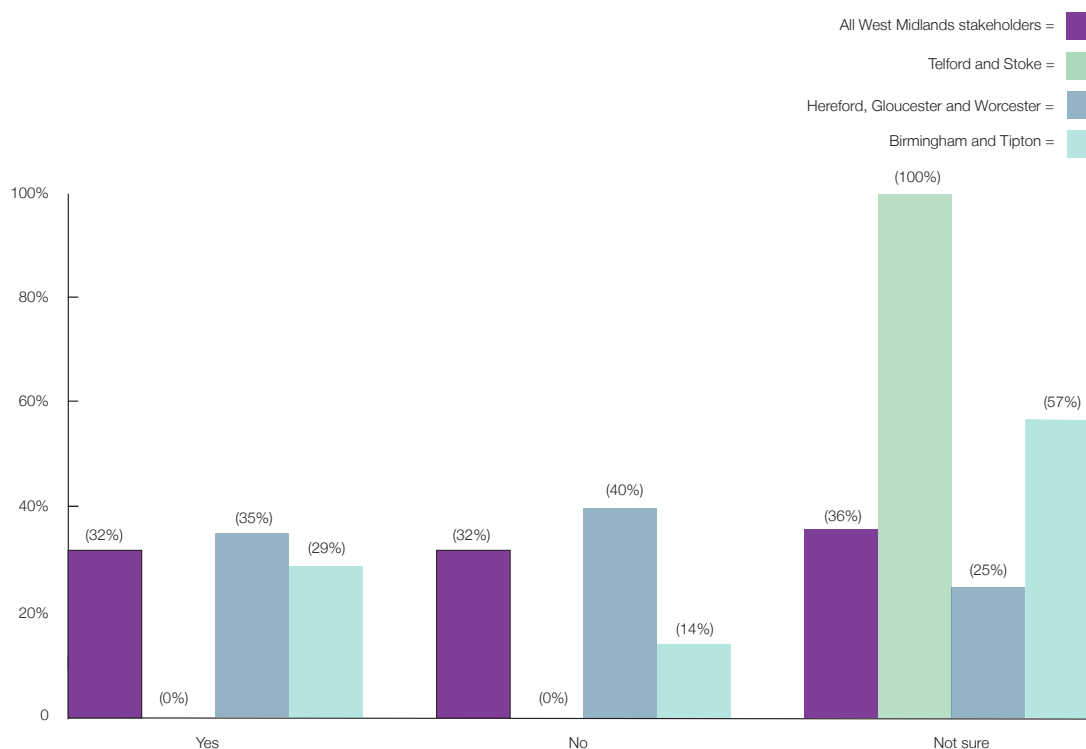
“In planning, we have Local Plans relating to what needs to go where. Early conversations and active engagement would support us in our efforts.”
Coventry City Council

“WPD should be a statutory consultee for planning projects, as that would smooth things with the development process, but would it have the capacity to deal with the huge number of applications?”
Worcestershire County Council

“The former Rugeley power station is our main development, between Rugeley and Lichfield.”
Cannock Chase District Council

2B. DO YOU EXPECT DELAYS TO THE VOLUMES YOU ARE PREDICTING AS A RESULT OF COVID-19?

Do you expect delays to the volumes of industrial / commercial / domestic developments you are predicting as a result of Covid-19?



Survey comments:

“Application caseload is currently extremely high.”

“Looking like changes in the nature of demand.”

“Uncertainty surrounding Covid – we don’t know.”

“I think that increased working from home as a result of Covid will modify our growth plans, as offices are a relatively controlled energy output, but homes have a more variable carbon output.” **Coventry City Council**

“Another challenge raised by Covid is reviewing how much need there will be for EV chargers in car parks (due to potential lower footfalls) and for all-new low-carbon public transport systems. Understanding these new behavioural patterns will be a challenge but will be hugely interesting.” **Coventry City Council**

“Working from home will affect new projects that require shared usage, such as ultra-rapid transit and carpooling. I’m sure that they will progress, but we need to make sure that they are safe.” **Coventry City Council**

“For us, it’s brought forward some plans because there’s been additional funding available. We’ve put forward for a towns fund which we’ve already been given some money from, and the government have released some additional money as part of that. We have put forward a place offer for a rapid charging hub for EVs as part of that money.” **Worcester City Council**

“We’ve experienced delays. 50% of our work programme is done as new connections (nationwide) and 50% is done on existing supplies. All installs stopped in March and our workforce was redirected onto maintenance of the network. We were classed as key workers (as a fuel provider) so have worked throughout the pandemic. Around a month ago work started to normalise.” **BP Chargemaster**

3. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE OUTPUTS STAKEHOLDERS HAVE SUGGESTED WE DELIVER AROUND CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY ENERGY?

“They feel about right to me.”

Stakeholder, Telford and Stoke

“I’m delighted to see the support for local energy projects.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“There was a mention in an earlier slide about resources for community groups. It’s partly about encouraging groups to get together, so if we have access to some of these resources, we might be able to put these out to local groups that are interested. I know groups in Evesham that are interested in starting an energy group but are not sure where to go, so some of these resources might be useful.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I think what you are doing with planning, like talking to us, should be really helpful. I understand the complete pressures of capacity issues and that, but one thing that can really hold up low-carbon projects is the long lead time required to obtain connections.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I’d like to know whether WPD supports the cross-party Local Electricity Bill going through Parliament at the moment. If passed, it would encourage and enable local supplies of renewable energy, as local people and local groups would be able to generate it more easily. This could help to resolve fuel poverty and alleviate restraint at local levels.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“For pre-applications, the more information that stakeholders could receive about connection capacity, the better. Anything that could be done to expand that range of knowledge would be fab.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“Has WPD thought about being proactive by including additional information in pre-application documents for growth projects, aimed particularly at local authorities? This could help move them along more smoothly.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“I would maybe like to see cross-border cooperation expanded to outside of WPD’s own patches. For example, here in the Cotswolds, most of the patch is operated by SSEN and WPD oversees a small corner. If a new connections or innovation project followed identical steps and templates in both DSOs, it would be great if they could be shared between each other.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“Can we look at other countries and see what they are doing in the community energy arena?”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I really like the approach to engage with stakeholders on a very granular level. That would take their needs into account.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“It needs a joined-up approach; we don’t want to have to talk about things with numerous parties.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“It could be time well spent for WPD to guide people drawing up the initial documents and signposting them in the right direction when it comes to innovative schemes involving newer technology. This additional guidance and information for authorities approaching them for the first time would be invaluable.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

4A. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK COMMUNITY ENERGY GROUPS CAN PLAY IN THE FUTURE? IS THERE ANYTHING MORE WE COULD DO TO SUPPORT IT?

“Yes, community energy companies are definitely necessary, so I like that they feature heavily in the outputs. We are collaborating with a major distributor and this project will hugely involve community energy groups. There is really innovative stuff within this type of set-up, and it can give communities ownership over their assets, enabling them to reap the benefits.”
Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“The latest technology in small areas is where we will win.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“I see community energy as being a real opportunity. As to what WPD can do, if we’re keeping generation and consumption local, then the wider network’s not seeing it.”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“There have been discussions between WPD and community energy projects; you just need to make sure you carry them on in the journey, so they’re not left behind. In the future they will have a larger role to play.”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I would agree that the significant focus on community energy is good, that these projects can be useful for offsetting and it would be great to have set-ups in our own communities that support their energy systems.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“If the WPD site was more user-friendly, it might generate a lot more publicity on how people install solar panels as you’re breaking down the barriers for how to do it.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“I would welcome having a specific target of how much more energy per substation you would like to take in. That way we could also plan for the future accordingly.”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“The variation in costs is an issue. You obtain a quote and then once you look to accept, you get hit with bigger costs. Things are omitted from original quotes, such as traffic planning, and this is very frustrating.”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“There is always an issue with understanding how the systems work, and it can be hard to motivate communities to get involved, as they may not see it as a priority. I think that more technical support, in areas such as connections, and regulatory assistance could improve engagement.”
Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“Thinking back to the Quirk Review on community management and ownership, WPD could potentially provide support to local bodies and help them to secure assets, emphasising the social value for the community.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“People need support in order to make their case towards getting grants for developing their projects and WPD is well placed to provide it.”
Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“WPD should play a role in providing data and communicating with community energy groups so they understand the potential.”
Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“It is probably a way of getting around constraints. It’s about matching demand and working with communities on achieving that. A little assistance from WPD to local communities about how they can go around it would be great, so as to give them more knowledge and experience.”
Stakeholder, Telford and Stoke

4B. STAKEHOLDERS SUGGESTED WE COULD HAVE A DEDICATED COMMUNITY ENGINEER IN EACH OF OUR LICENCE AREAS – WOULD YOU SUPPORT THIS?

“I’m very interested in ideas of community energy and especially a dedicated Community Engineer in each of the license areas. I think it’s good to have that connection with the community groups directly. I’m working with a few community energy groups across Worcestershire on projects as part of what we do across the Energy Hub and LEP, so local engagement would be very welcome and it could be a good method of triage for some projects that people have and that maybe aren’t as viable as initially thought.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“A dedicated Community Engineer to liaise with WPD and community groups would be interesting, I’d like to see how such an engineer could get out and about and be available to communities.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I think that having a real person on the ground in specific license areas would provide a lot of assurance to communities. I would support it.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“The dedicated Community Engineer is great. It would be great to have a zero-cost advice portal for new connections. It would mean that people would feel far less anxious about their projects.”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

6 | SESSION THREE: SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

The third presentation outlined WPD's efforts to support the transition to Net Zero, including the use of low-carbon technologies (LCTs), such as electric vehicles and heat pumps, as well as efforts to minimise losses.

During the breakout discussions, stakeholders were asked about their organisation's targets for Net Zero and plans for low-carbon technologies. They were also asked to feed back on some of WPD's draft outputs around Net Zero and innovation.

Over three quarters (79%) of survey respondents reported that their local authority had declared a climate emergency and set a target date for reaching Net Zero. Several stakeholders were guided by wider initiatives such as WM2041, a plan to achieve Net Zero in the West Midlands by 2041, and the LEP strategy. A number of councils were keen to learn from other organisations and take a collaborative approach, ensuring that their strategy encompasses other bodies such as emergency services, and there was general agreement that goals should be ambitious but achievable. Targets for Net Zero ranged from 2030 to 2050, with a considerable number of councils working towards 2030.

Several councils were investigating the option of electric buses or taxis, including Worcestershire County Council, Gloucester City Council and Herefordshire Council. A heat pump network was planned for Solihull town centre, and a number of councils, such as those for Bromsgrove District and Tewkesbury Borough, were considering heat pumps for their office buildings. Although some saw domestic heat pumps as a potential solution, some councils had run up against barriers such as archaeological considerations, insufficient grid capacity and the absence of legislative incentives.

Some local authorities, such as Gloucestershire County Council, were developing an EV charger strategy, and Cannock Chase District Council reported that its main focus was improving EV infrastructure. However, some had reservations over the affordability of EVs and charging points for residents. Although there were concerns over the limitations of on-street charging for terraced housing, some organisations were overcoming this by installing charging hubs or car park charging points. Tewkesbury Borough Council and Herefordshire Council reported that they had made their fleet electric, and several other local authorities had plans to follow suit. A number of organisations had discussed hydrogen as a potential solution in terms of powering refuse vehicles and injection into the gas grid, although it seemed that the technology did not yet feature in concrete plans. Others planned LCTs included battery storage and solar panels.

Stakeholders broadly agreed with WPD's outputs on Net Zero and innovation, although there were calls for more specific targets that would allow WPD to be held accountable. The company was advised to clearly communicate the scope of the annual call for innovation project ideas and potentially broaden project eligibility. There was agreement that stakeholders looking to connect LCTs require regular engagement, particularly in terms of network availability, and stakeholders once again raised the need for increased capacity to host community energy projects.

Several suggestions around the outputs centred on education, with calls for the company to educate the general public and developers. WPD was encouraged to facilitate innovation by educating local authorities and community groups on existing projects and enabling opportunity sharing among local authorities. It was felt that WPD and other DNOs should adopt a leadership role to drive change, in addition to working with other utilities to develop innovative solutions. Stakeholders were also keen to learn from successful innovation projects within the region and further afield.

1A. WHAT ARE YOUR TARGETS FOR NET ZERO?

“We are part of a significant piece of work called WM2041, which covers how the West Midlands will become Net Zero by 2041. It contains transport strategies with zero carbon at their heart, as well as a multiple ownership vehicle strategy, which covers company cars, private cars and buses.”

Transport for West Midlands

“We have declared a climate emergency and our Net Zero target is 2030.”

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

“We have put targets in place in Coventry and the next stage is taking the strategy citywide, encompassing hospitals, fire departments and the police. Nothing will get set in stone until we have brought these bodies on board. We are also working towards the West Midlands targets.”

Coventry City Council

“Some local authorities have pushed the dates further back, but a considerable amount are working to 2030.”

Herefordshire Council

“We have the LEP strategy, which although not technically Net Zero has some targets which will take us on that journey because they’re up to 2030. We are going for a 50% reduction in carbon emissions, and that’s for the whole of Worcestershire. We have another target to double the size of the low-carbon economy. We are also looking to treble the amount of renewable generation in Worcestershire as well, so that ought to be achieved by 2030.”

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership

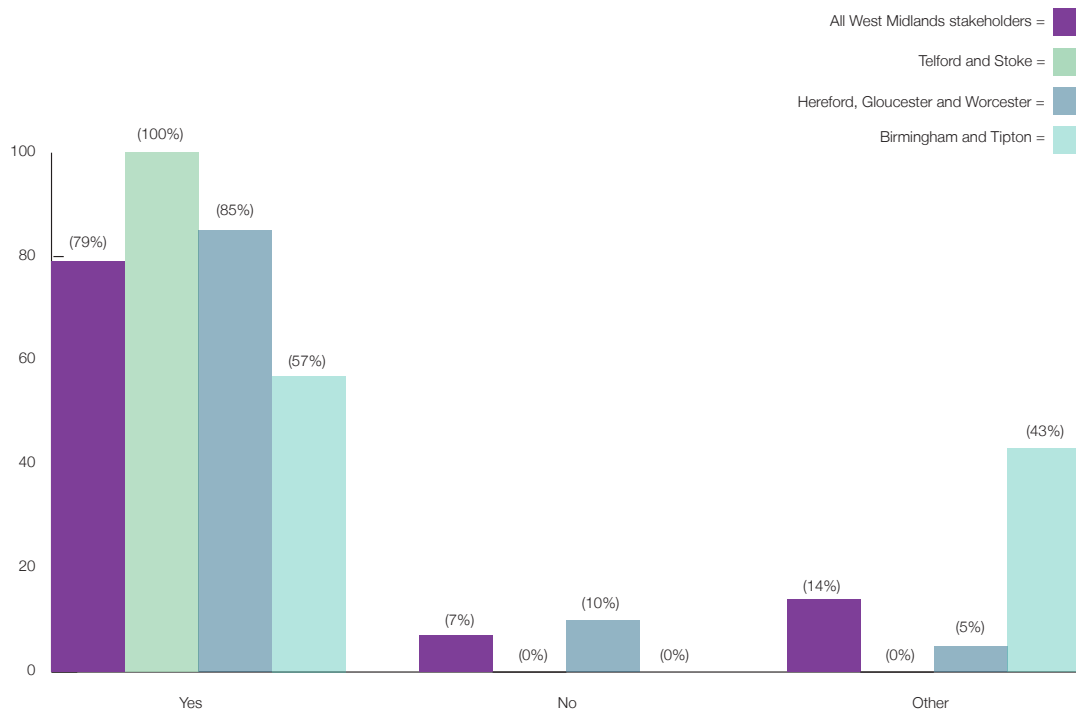
“Worcestershire County Council’s Net Zero plan is going for approval to cabinet at the end of October. That’s only for our county council zone, i.e. the emissions we have control over, and the target is Net Zero by 2050.”

Worcestershire County Council

“We’re going for Net Zero by 2030 in Tewksbury, but unfortunately it is not a borough-wide ambition. However, it’s good to have a starting point.”

Tewkesbury Borough Council

Has your local authority set a target date for reaching Net Zero?



“Details on how the borough will be carbon neutral in 2030 will be launched early next year.”
Telford and Wrekin Council

“The Greater Manchester combined authority ambition to Net Zero is probably the most comprehensive one I’ve seen. How we can replicate that in the Marches, Shropshire or Staffordshire, I have no idea.” **Midlands Energy Hub**

“We’ve still got our target to achieve carbon neutrality across the whole city by 2030.”
Worcester City Council

“As an organisation, we are going for Net Zero by 2045 in the Cotswolds, but we are aiming for a 75% reduction by 2030. We are working with consultants to put together as achievable Net Zero goals for our community as possible. They need to be at least as ambitious as the national goals and possibly exceed them.” **Cotswold District Council**

“We hope that the Regional Energy Systems Operator project will help to create a coherent strategy in terms of meeting supply and demand and help to incorporate all of the proposals.” **Coventry City Council**

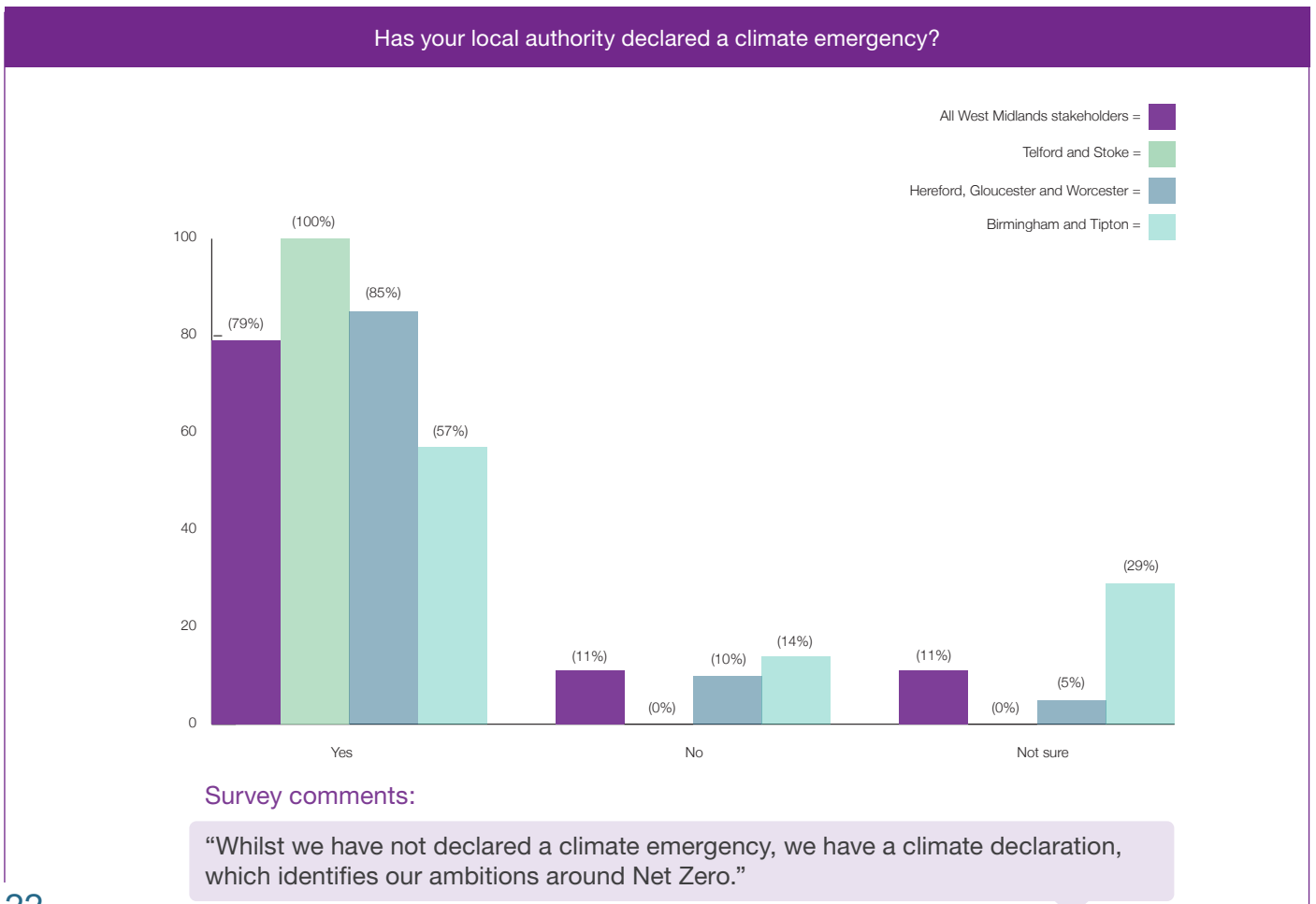
1B. HAS YOUR ORGANISATION DECLARED A CLIMATE EMERGENCY?

“I believe our target is Net Zero by 2050 but we have declared a climate emergency.”
Bromsgrove District Council

“My authority declared a climate emergency last year.” **Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

“A very large number of councils, so the majority, have declared a climate emergency.”
Herefordshire Council

“We have declared a climate emergency in Bromsgrove and in Redditch but have not yet set any targets. We are signed up to the LEP strategy, and obviously 2050 is the ultimate target, but what our councillors want to see is more of a plan as to what is achievable and what is needed to meet different levels of decarbonisation.”
Bromsgrove District Council / Redditch Borough Council



2A. WHAT LOW-CARBON TECHNOLOGIES ARE YOU PLANNING TO USE AND HOW / WHEN WILL YOU BE ROLLING THESE OUT? (E.G. HEAT PUMPS, BATTERY STORAGE, ELECTRIC FLEETS, ETC.)

“We have a £300,000 government grant for taxi chargers, which doesn’t go too far so we need to maximise it. A map of our district showing opportune areas for charging points would be helpful.”

Worcestershire County Council

“We’re looking at charging points for our taxi tanks. The taxis are keen to have them, but they need to be rapid-charging models. The bus station has also been future-proofed for the introduction of electric buses in future. We’d like to do heat pump systems, but Gloucester’s Roman remains are putting up barriers to that.”

Gloucester City Council

“We’re looking to put charge points in a college, which seems odd as it mainly caters for students, but more second-hand electric vehicles will become available and our plans are for 10 years plus.”

Forest of Dean District Council

“We have a nature reserve and we want to introduce EV charging points there to support people accessing the nature reserve.”

Malvern Hills District Council

“We’re currently establishing outputs for renewable energy in the local authority and things that we can do in relation to offsetting. Identifying low-carbon projects will also be part of this work, in addition to an EV strategy.”

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

“We are planning a heat-pump-based heat network in Solihull town centre, which will initially be backed up by gas, but will eventually run by the pumps completely.”

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

“We don’t think that electrical vehicles are the best option for our refuse vehicles but believe that hydrogen could be a way forward. This idea has been well received. In addition, we are planning to introduce an electrical bus fleet.”

Coventry City Council

“We are keen to look at storage, as we have capacity issues on our network at present and have put in a bid on a battery capacity factory. We are also exploring flywheel technology as an option too.”

Coventry City Council

“I know we’re looking into a heat pump system for council-owned buildings. We’re looking to have more residential properties above commercial high street properties equipped with three-phase.”

Bromsgrove District Council

“We’re making sure that with new developments, charging infrastructure is there from the start. Our main focus is on improving EV charging infrastructure. This is likely to be the main way that people decarbonise their homes. That said, we have to be mindful that we are in a deprived area. The hydrogen route has also been discussed. Consumer affordability is our key concern.”

Cannock Chase District Council

“With new council house builds, they have to meet carbon neutrality standards. Because of the extra cost, we’re building fewer houses. Affordability is crucial and we have to work based on what residents can afford.”

Cannock Chase District Council

“Solar energy is the only activity at a community level. Some have talked about combined heat and power (CHP) and heat pumps, which are interesting and a big part of the way forward.”

Places in Common

“We’re looking at carbon sinks. Through the transport we are looking at EVs. With renewable energy we are looking to allow for new technologies and energy-efficient buildings for development. It’s all about how we can intertwine through the Local Plan narrative. I think the new houses are not allowed to be connected to a gas main. I can imagine they will be looking at air / ground source heat pumps. It will have to be evidence-based to see what is viable.”

Telford and Wrekin Council

“Generally, I’d say there’s been more funding coming forward from the government, so I think that means we are likely to speed up various projects. In particular, we might be looking at domestic heat pumps through the Midlands Energy Hub.”

Bromsgrove District Council / Redditch Borough Council

“Local authorities can borrow very cheaply for upgrading power systems, which is great for our plans to make our city centre decarbonised here in Gloucester. This will include far more rapid-charge EV charging points, which will help to increase the EV uptake in future.”

Gloucester City Council

“We are having a fleet assessment at the moment through the Energy Saving Trust. It’s likely we will transform at least some of our fleet to EVs fairly quickly. Worcestershire County Council have put in an electric bus bid for Bromsgrove. We are also looking at more solar, and we are looking at EV charge points and renewable generation across both districts.”

Bromsgrove District Council / Redditch Borough Council

“We have quite ambitious aims. We are very keen to see faster growth in connections for EVs than the demand-based pathway favoured by WPD. We feel that if we go quicker, it will encourage a quicker take-up within the community.”

Cotswold District Council

“We are looking into hydrogen quite seriously in terms of injection into the gas grid, but production hasn’t really been looked at quite so much. We could use it as part of a grid balancing service or part of localising energy, but that’s as far as thinking has gone with hydrolysis.”

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership

“There’s an action plan appended to the zero-carbon plan and we do have targets within that which are specifically over the next two to three years, particularly around electrification of our fleet, investment in renewables, making sure our buildings are more energy-efficient and preparing for hydrogen.”

Worcestershire County Council

“In Worcester we’ve got a huge number of terraced properties. When it comes to on-street charging for EVs, that’s not something that the county council is yet in a position to allow, so I’m wondering how on earth we are going to make the strides forward in terms of EV ownership.”

Worcester City Council

“In Bromsgrove we are going to be having thirteen 50 kW chargers at individual sites.”

Bromsgrove District Council / Redditch Borough Council

“We are looking at having a large distribution of 7 kW chargers, which present less of a connection issue, combined with maybe six hubs across the county where people can do a rapid top-up charge.”

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership

“We’ve gone electric on the fleet.”

Herefordshire Council

“We have funding-dependent plans to create an EV bus fleet. We have interactions with the planning department to get new builds to use heat pumps and solar, but again it all comes back to the grid capacity issue.”

Herefordshire Council

“It’s crucial that WPD engage with the North Magazine development scheme. That’s an enormous development and we won’t be able to meet our environmental targets if WPD don’t make sure that capacity is available for it.”

Herefordshire Council

“We’re driven by government legislation and building regulations. As an influencer, we need extra encouragement through legislation to take up heat pumps, for example.”

Forest of Dean District Council

“We’re more restricted in planning policy terms, so it’s looking at what else we can do to encourage and deliver LCTs in new builds.”

Tewkesbury Borough Council

“We’ve done some large projects with councils. There are not many in this area, but Nottingham and Derby have done lots. Nottingham have 200+ charge points and have a big budget for this kind of work. It’s being taken very seriously, and they have dedicated Council staff on it.”

BP Chargemaster

“In Gloucestershire, we are working hard to establish a strategy for rolling out EV chargers on the ground. The vehicle technology will improve a lot in the years to come, so that rapid charging will become far more commonplace. We would like to see more charging hubs and car park charging points, so that lies at the heart of our strategy too.”

Gloucestershire County Council

“We are also hoping to be able to harness smart-grid technology to feed power from EV batteries back into the grid in order to charge other vehicles. We just need to see how things will progress in the development of the network.”

Gloucestershire County Council

“For our office buildings, we are planning to replace the older heating systems with heat pumps. The idea underpinning these changes is using less energy rather than using it more efficiently.”

Tewkesbury Borough Council

“We would like to explore carpooling schemes within communities and move away from everyone having multiple cars on their drives. They would be electric vehicles of course.”

Tewkesbury Borough Council

2B. DO YOU PREDICT ANY DELAYS TO THE ADOPTION OF LCTS AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

“We’ve had to put on hold a multistorey car park development which would have had charge points.”
Cotswold District Council

“There’s a danger that post Covid, money will be spent elsewhere, but we have got to consider these kinds of schemes as a dual benefit of making it a better future for everyone. There’s real potential to ensure recovery considers challenges pre Covid and learnings since Covid.” **Places in Common**

“Covid has brought forward some of the changes to public transport. We’re moving away from people wanting to use bus services and moving towards more individualised transport.”
Transport for West Midlands

3. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE OUTPUTS STAKEHOLDERS HAVE SUGGESTED WE DELIVER IN RELATION TO NET ZERO AND INNOVATION? DO THESE SEEM RIGHT?

“Public readiness is the issue – the general public are not yet ready to engage and this comes down to education.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“WPD should be engaging and educating developers.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“We currently have a small taxi charging project. We’ve found network access with the right capacity for ultra-fast charging is challenging. It would be good to receive simple information about network availability for this in different areas. I think the information should be presented on a plate so that we can plan installations.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“I think that it’s horrendous that it’s not a legal requirement for things like solar panels and EV charging points to be installed on new homes. Please use us as a trial model here in Tewkesbury. We want this technology as standard.”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“WPD is working with us on the Regional Energy Systems Operator project and the input is really helpful. Shared planning is the way forward in order to ensure that the infrastructure is in place.”
Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“I feel that there may need to be a more bespoke approach to shared e-transport schemes, such as the e-scooter schemes being rolled out during lockdown. As a society, we need to learn to value them better, as they could make people’s lives a lot better. WPD could play a role here.”
Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“There needs to be greater emphasis on opportunity sharing, as local authorities would be very keen to get involved in innovation projects when the opportunities come up.” **Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton**

“Microgeneration seems to be a huge issue. If we’re going to have a push for community energy, we need an increased capacity for the grid to take it in.”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“If DNOs got together and said: ‘this is how it needs to happen’, and it was endorsed by government, it would help. DNOs have a higher profile and use a science- and evidence-based approach that people trust. You’re engineers and you can influence. You have more strength and confidence to drive change.”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I’m concerned that local authorities and community groups do not have the money or appetite to take on a major cutting-edge technological risk. I’m wondering whether WPD could play a facilitator role in providing a business template and an explicit endorsement for projects that have been successful?”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“With the annual innovation project, WPD should highlight how broad the potential scope could be. For example, in Gloucester, we have an Archimedean screw project, which will use the power of the river to create energy. It would be great to know that viable projects like this could receive WPD support too.”
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“In the East Midlands, you have Nottingham, which is doing amazing work on innovation. It would be great have joined-up connections and learning points across the entire Midlands. Don’t treat the East Midlands and West Midlands as separate entities.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“We should look at the experience of other countries with similar typography and geography.”

Stakeholder, Birmingham and Tipton

“These outputs are very soft. We need exact figures and specific targets. These are interpretable and will be difficult to hold WPD to. We need delivery metrics.”

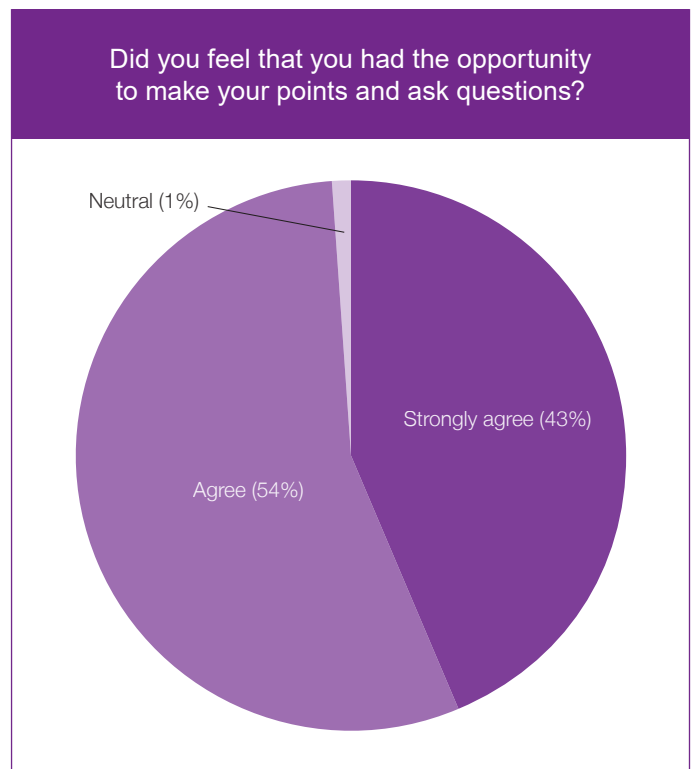
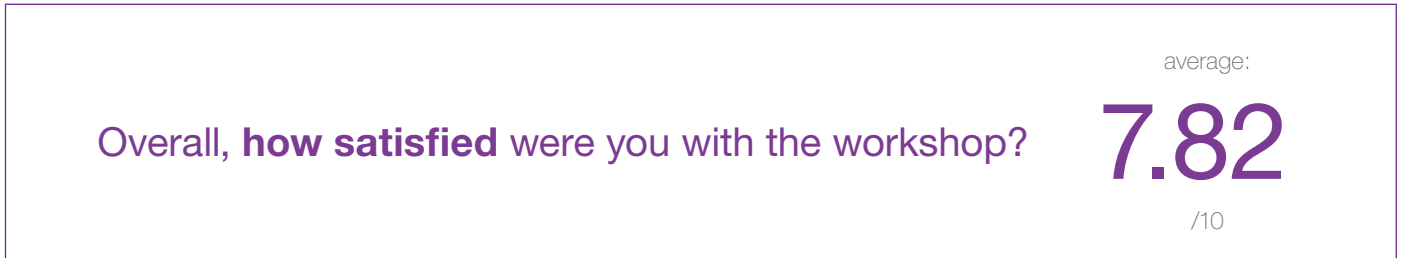
Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

“I was asked by a constituent whether WPD are talking to water utilities about industrial heat recovery from wastewater systems. If you’re not, can that be set up?”

Stakeholder, Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

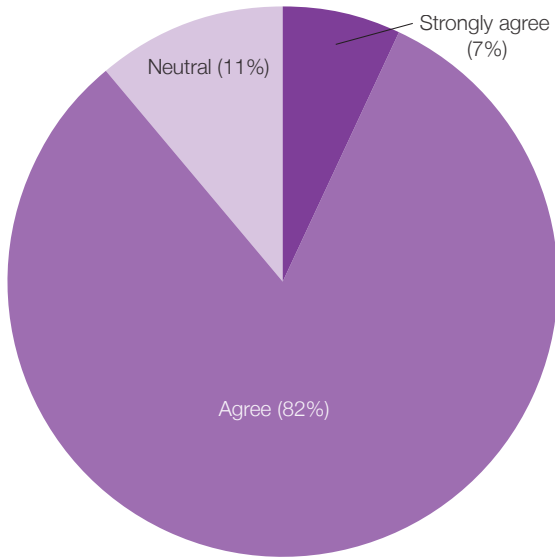
7 | APPENDIX 1: EVENT FEEDBACK

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

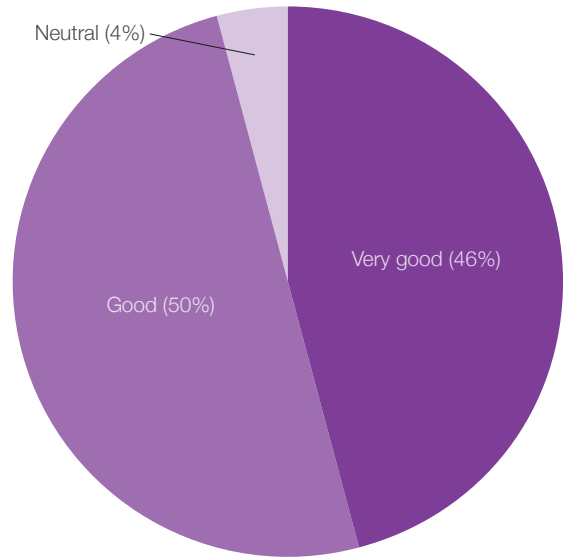


“There is so much to get through and each topic could have half a day dedicated to it. Perhaps have fewer presentations and time for more discussion.”

Did we cover the right topics for you on the day?



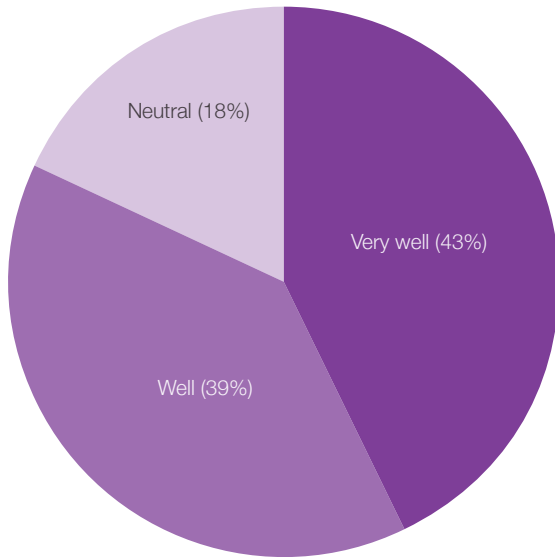
What did you think of the way the workshop was chaired by your facilitator?



“Some more focus on next steps, maybe for another day. Overall a useful meeting; well run, very relevant and interesting.”

“It was very well conducted to ensure all opinions were sought after.”

How well do you think the online format worked?



“Very smooth and fluid considering the new method and technology used, i.e. Zoom.”

“Very well run, although a face-to-face event will always be better.”

“Given the geographical spread, probably better turnout than you would get with an in-person meeting.”

Any other comments?

“A well-run event that moved smoothly with a logical transition from one topic to the next. It would be interesting to hear the outcome at a future meeting when the WPD plans are finalised.”

“Once again, it’s great to share with many diverse opinions.”

“Very good to have opportunities for direct engagement, thank you.”

8 | APPENDIX 2: OUTPUTS

NETWORK RELIABILITY & RESILIENCE

Volumes of faults will be no higher than in ED1 but in ED2 there will be a reduced impact on the customer.
Inspect, maintain and repair defects on our network in line with our policy.
Reduction of tree related faults on high voltage (HV) and extra high voltage (EHV) overhead networks due to use of LIDAR but in ED2 there will be a reduced impact on the customer.
Further improve our asset condition data to ensure we efficiently improve the health of our network.
Continue to focus on restoring supplies quickly and will continue to target achieving more than 85% of customers (that are not automatically restored) within one hour.
WPD will continue to focus on restoring customer supplies within 12 hours.
In ED2 we will complete a resilience clearance programme on the EHV network.
In ED2, we will continue to install further flood defences to reflect updated data from the Environment Agency.
Underground or divert overhead lines that are adjacent to or cross school playing areas.

CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY ENERGY

Provide new connections quotations and energisation in line with customer requirements.
Provide our broadest range of pre-application information ever to support customers looking to connect to the network.
Engage with local authorities and local enterprise partnerships to understand their requirements for strategic investment in terms of changes in demand or network use.
Improve DNO/IDNO cross border working practices and promote competition in connections (to ensure that the consumer is best served under the process).
During ED2 the significance of Community Energy projects will be further enhanced, including the introduction of an annual call targeted especially at community groups and their representatives.
Have a dedicated Community Engineer in each of our licence areas.

NET ZERO & INNOVATION

Engagement with stakeholders on an annual basis to create refreshed Future Energy Scenarios.
Our popular annual innovation project ideas call will continue throughout ED2 with priorities set through stakeholder engagement. Our team of dedicated innovators will also scope and propose projects along with colleagues across the business.
A new interactive “ideas portal” will be developed aimed at staff, third parties, communities and other stakeholders where suggestions for new projects can be made.
Develop a balanced scorecard approach to identify the areas where flexible services will benefit the customer.
Ensure customers aiming to connect new LCTs (such as electric vehicle charge points) are engaged regularly, with new services and processes developed to respond to their needs and provide clarity on connections rules.

