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Business Plan 2
Consultation Report

April 2021



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Introduction

Western Power Distribution (WPD) consulted on the second draft of its RIIO-ED2 Business Plan in March and April 2021. The second draft Business Plan (BP2) contained 58 core commitments that had been produced further to feedback from over 2,200 customers and stakeholders as part of its consultation on the first draft of its Business Plan (BP1) earlier in the year.

The purpose of the consultation was to give WPD's stakeholders and customers an opportunity to comment on the revised set of core commitments in the second draft of the Business Plan. In addition, WPD sought to gather feedback on some specific topics and themes relating to the Business Plan. These topics and themes were:

1. The overall approach and changes made since BP1;
2. Expenditure and bill impact;
3. WPD's 'best view' of future energy needs (including electric vehicles and heat pumps);
4. Layout and structure of the Business Plan; and
5. Business Plan Commitments (including new commitments in BP2).

This report summarises the feedback received during the BP2 consultation between 24 March and 25 April 2021. WPD adopted a range of different methods to seek the views of their customers and stakeholders as part of its BP2 consultation. These are summarised in the methodology section of this report.

WPD instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to write up the feedback provided by stakeholders. Every effort has been made to faithfully record the feedback given. To encourage candour and open debate, comments have not been ascribed to individuals or organisations. Instead, where possible, notes have been made of the type of organisation each stakeholder represents.



Methodology

WPD consulted on the second draft of its Business Plan over a period of one month between 24 March and 25 April 2021. In total, 1,058 stakeholders and customers took part in its BP2 consultation representing 101 different organisations. Of these, 110 provided detailed responses to the consultation via the online response form or online workshop, with the remainder largely comprising responses from social media polls.

The consultation was made up of four different methods of engagement. Due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, this engagement all took place online. The methods ranged from online workshops and webinars through to online response forms and social media polls. These techniques allowed for a range of different levels of engagement, from information provision through to collaboration and co-creation. Different types of stakeholders and customers were included. This has all been summarised in the table below.

Engagement method	Level of engagement	Number consulted	Stakeholder types represented
Webinar	Inform	56	Usual full spectrum of stakeholders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy / utilities companies (e.g., E.ON UK) • Local authorities (e.g., South Hams District Council; Derby City Council; Herefordshire Council; Caerphilly County Borough Council) • LEPs • Expert stakeholder groups and major customers (e.g., Major Energy Users' Council; MOZES; Zero Carbon Shropshire) • Domestic customers • Environmental groups • Parish councillors
Online consultation	Consult	51	
Online stakeholder workshop	Consult	59	
Bill payer / consumer surveys	Consult	892	
Total stakeholder engagements on BP2:		1,058	

Stakeholders were asked to participate in the consultation via email. They were sent a series of emails inviting them to provide their feedback online or attend the webinar or online workshop. Over 7,000 stakeholders are held on WPD's database, all of whom were invited to take part via several emails over the course of the formal consultation period to ensure that they were given plenty of opportunities to participate. Ahead of any workshops, all stakeholders who have registered are contacted via telephone and email to remind them about the event to maximise participation.

The database undergoes an annual refresh to update contacts and to add additional stakeholders who have registered via the website or have worked with members of the WPD team over the last 12 months. In addition, the contact details of politicians are updated if there have been any local or national elections. To make sure that WPD remains on top of emerging issues in the sector, additional research is undertaken ahead of topic-specific engagements to enhance certain stakeholder categories to ensure they are up to date and comprehensive, or as new roles or stakeholder groups emerge.

The methodology for each type of engagement has been summarised below:



Webinar

- 56 stakeholders participated in the webinar, representing 35 organisations, which took place on 30 March 2021.
- The purpose of the webinar was to give stakeholders an opportunity to learn more about the second draft of the Business Plan and the changes made since BP1 to enable them to respond to the online consultation.
- The webinar did not provide an opportunity for feedback, although stakeholders were able to ask questions. The list of questions asked can be found in Appendix 4.

Online consultation

- The online consultation was hosted on WPD's website. It provided stakeholders with information relating to each question and asked for their views. It also provided a link to the full BP2 as a reference document.
- The online consultation posed open questions designed to elicit qualitative feedback as well as polling questions designed to elicit quantitative feedback.
- Stakeholders were able to complete and submit an online form. Alternatively, they were able to submit their comments via email.
- 51 respondents gave their feedback via the online consultation, representing 17 organisations. Of these, 3 submitted a response via the consultation email address, with the remainder responding via the online form.
- The stakeholder type was recorded as part of the online consultation, although the regional preference of stakeholders was not.

Online stakeholder workshop

- The online stakeholder workshop was held on 21 April 2021. In total, 59 stakeholders attended the online workshop representing 49 separate organisations.
- The workshop was split up into the same topics and themes as the online consultation, asking questions in the same format to supplement the responses received online.
- The only topic that was not covered in the online workshop that was included in the online consultation was expenditure, as it was felt there was insufficient time to cover it in the level of detail required.



- There were six short presentations each followed by breakout sessions in smaller groups to enable stakeholders to provide verbal feedback. These breakout sessions were followed by electronic voting using online voting software to gather quantitative feedback on each topic.
- Stakeholders were sent a copy of BP2 via email ahead of the workshop to provide them with additional background for the sessions.
- In the breakout rooms, if stakeholders did not answer a question, facilitators were briefed to ask them to confirm whether their silence was tacit approval or whether they felt unable to respond.
- In the electronic voting, stakeholders were given the option of 'don't know / can't say' if they felt they did not have sufficient information or expertise to take a view. The percentage of those who abstained has been set out under each voting question in this report. Where stakeholders then indicated a preference, the results have been set out as a percentage of the remaining votes.

Bill payer / consumer surveys

- WPD used its corporate Twitter and Instagram accounts to pose a series of polls based on some of the key topics, themes and new commitments in the second draft of the Business Plan. These polls were designed to collect quantitative feedback and did not provide opportunity for comment.
- In total, 892 responses were received. The profile of the respondents was not captured via the social media polls. For the purposes of the consultation, it has been assumed these represent the views of wider consumers or bill payers – although this cannot be corroborated.
- These questions were posed differently to those in the online consultation to ensure they were accessible for an online audience. The full list of questions and responses can be found in Appendix 3.

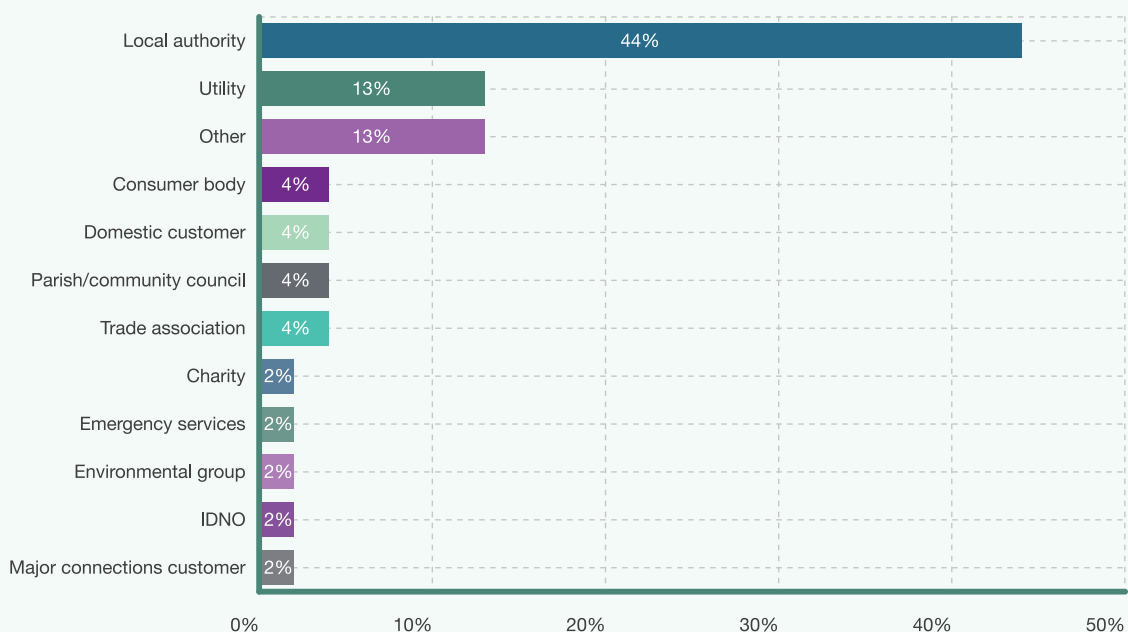


Executive summary

Participants

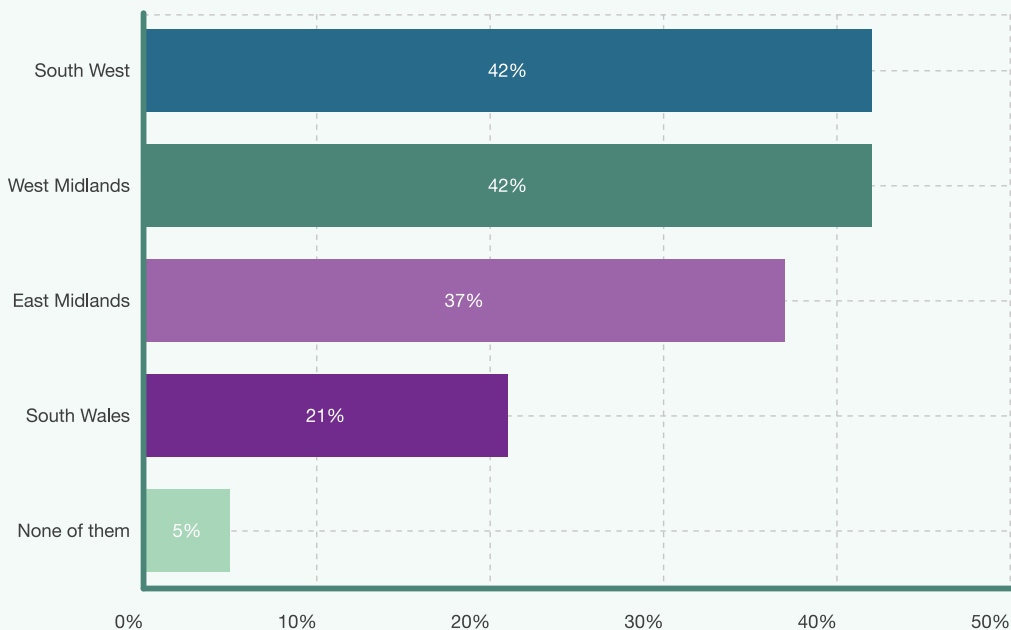
- In total, WPD consulted with 1,058 stakeholders and customers as part of the formal consultation period.
- Of these, a large proportion (892) were responses to social media polls with the remaining 166 participating via the other engagement methods: 56 attended the webinar, 51 responded to the online consultation, and 59 attended the online workshop.
- The 1,058 responses were from 101 separate organisations: 35 organisations participated via the webinar, 17 responded via the online consultation, and 49 organisations participated via the online workshop.
- In the online workshop, participants were asked to identify what type of stakeholder they were. 44% represented local authorities, 13% described themselves as utilities, and 13% identified as 'other'.
- When it came to online consultation responses, a large majority (71%) identified as domestic customers, 14% represented local authorities and 5% represented parish councils.
- In the online workshop, stakeholders were asked to identify which regions were most relevant to them in the online survey. They could choose more than one region. 42% of delegates indicated that the South West of England was most relevant to them, and the same proportion opted for the West Midlands. A full breakdown can be found in the Methodology section.
- 10 polls were conducted on Twitter and Instagram, which together received a combined 892 votes.

What type of stakeholder are you?





Which WPD region is relevant to you?



Overall Views

- The majority of stakeholders felt positively about the overall picture of WPD’s Business Plan for RIIO-ED2, with the increased ambition and stretched targets on business carbon footprint, Net Zero and capacity for low carbon technologies (LCTs). In particular, support for local government growth and energy plans was singled out for praise.
- This was echoed in the voting, where 74% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “I am supportive of WPD’s overall package of proposals for RIIO-ED2.”
- Areas where stakeholders thought that WPD could do more included: greater investment in rural areas to enable renewable distribution and connections for LCTs; making sure vulnerable and fuel poor customers are not left behind in the transition to Net Zero; and a clearer sense of the company’s commitment to leadership on Net Zero throughout the Business Plan.

WPD’s Best View of Future Energy Needs

- Delegates were split on whether WPD’s best view of the take-up of EVs and heat pumps was accurate. Some were of the view that it was much too low, and that WPD had ‘far, far underestimated for the future of the planet’, while others felt equally strongly that the figures were too high, given the cost of heat pumps and EVs, the absence of financial incentives, and the lack of a comprehensive, universal charging infrastructure for EVs.
- This was reflected in the electronic voting where 25% said there would be a far greater take-up and 20% said there would be a lot less take-up of EVs. Similarly, 20% said there would be a far greater take-up and 17% said there would be a lot less take-up of heat pumps.



- For most, regardless of their views, the proposed increase in capacity for LCTs was seen to be beneficial, and many emphasised that WPD would be best placed to show flexibility in a politically uncertain environment: a key point here was to retain the ability to ‘flex upwards or flex downwards depending on changes in [government] policy’.

Expenditure and Bill Impact

- In the discussions, most stakeholders felt that a small increase of £1 - £2 on the annual bill was an acceptable price to pay for increased green investment and a decentralised energy system that brought the country to Net Zero.
- This was not entirely reflected in the electronic voting, where the biggest proportion of votes – 34% – opted to keep bills the same as today (£96). 24% voted for a £2 increase, and 29% went for a £2 decrease. However, when voting electronically on the statement: “I would support increased bills in order to achieve greater change and ambition in WPD’s Business Plan Commitments”, 73% either agreed or strongly agreed.
- For those that supported increased bills to support greater change or ambition in the Business Plan, the most frequently cited reason was for greater investment to get to Net Zero, with a focus on transparency and value for money. A key comment here was: “If it’s going to get us to where we need to be quicker, it’s justified.”
- In the electronic voting, 37% of respondents felt that WPD’s expenditure plans were acceptable, but 35% were neutral. 49% of voters, however, wanted to see more expenditure.

Layout and Structure of the Business Plan

- Most stakeholders felt the Business Plan was clearly presented, contextualised and understandable, and this was echoed in the electronic voting, where 59% of stakeholders either agreed or strongly agreed that the Business Plan covered the right content and that nothing was obviously missing. 58% either agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the layout and structure of the Business Plan.
- Given the length of the document, there were suggestions to use a ‘find’ tool to improve accessibility and enable readers to quickly find the information most relevant to them.
- Delegates urged WPD to include more contextual information on technologies such as heat pumps, and a glossary of technical terms and acronyms was a pertinent suggestion.
- Voting electronically, 56% felt that the Business Plan was easy to understand, and 33% were neutral.

Business Plan Commitments

Overall Commitments

- The majority of stakeholders felt the core commitments were appropriate and covered the right areas.
- This general consensus was echoed in the electronic voting, where 72% agreed or strongly agreed with this question.



- Some delegates felt that there were too many commitments and that a streamlined set of ten commitments, centred around Net Zero, was potentially more achievable.

New Commitments

- Commitment 16, to provide a same day connections response for domestic customers by introducing online self-assessment tools for individual low carbon technology applications, was widely welcomed, with delegates singling out the speed of response for praise: 68% felt that this commitment was appropriate and ambitious enough.
- Commitment 47, to ensure capacity availability to enable Net Zero to be achieved across WPD's regions sooner than 2050 (some areas as soon as 2030), in line with the ambitions of stakeholders in each region, was similarly well received: 59% felt that this commitment was ambitious enough, and 24% wanted to see even greater ambition.
- Stakeholders felt that commitment 55, to deliver service improvements to drive business innovative efficiencies to assist our customers to reduce overall energy costs, needed more explanation. For example, an estimated value of the savings could be put against the commitment for clarity.
- Lastly, for commitment 58 to facilitate access to funding streams by providing support to community energy groups when making submissions to our calls for ideas, most stakeholders (63%) agreed with the level of ambition, while 14% wanted to see greater ambition.

Meeting the Needs of Our Consumers and Network Users

- Delegates were positive about the overall package of commitments under Customer Service, with 92% strongly agreeing or agreeing that the proposals were acceptable. The only comments for improvement centred around whether some of the response times were almost too laudable: many cited that they could reasonably wait longer than 5 seconds for someone to pick up the phone.
- There was more debate and split over the commitments under Customers in Vulnerable Situations, and this was borne out in the electronic voting, where 61% agreed they were appropriate, 18% were neutral, and 11% disagreed.
- The package around Connections was widely endorsed, with 86% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the proposals were appropriate: the ambitious timescales were widely welcomed, and delegates mentioned that as long as they were kept informed about extra capacity coming online, they would be able to feed it into their plans most effectively.
- For Social Contract, most stakeholders (67%) agreed that the package of proposals was appropriate, with a further 8% strongly agreeing and 17% saying they felt neutral. It was felt that WPD could perhaps go further in dedicating more days to employee volunteering, and it was also felt that the phrase 'community matters' needed to be more clearly defined.

Delivering an Environmentally Sustainable Network

- Stakeholders were mostly pleased with the package of proposals under Environment and Sustainability, and this was seen in the electronic voting, where 82% either agreed or strongly agreed that they were appropriate, with the stretched zero carbon target widely endorsed.



- A large majority (92%) felt that WPD's overall package of proposals under A Smart, Flexible Network were appropriate, but delegates called for more ambitious targets for better data, especially around the low voltage network.
- For Innovation, 83% of stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that the package of proposals was acceptable, though 11% felt neutral about this. The only comments related to collaboration with other organisations, which perhaps suggests that stakeholders want to see WPD go beyond internal innovation and forge wider-reaching partnerships.
- The package around Community Energy was welcomed, and 92% either agreed or strongly agreed that the proposals were appropriate. Some felt that a more valuable measure of success against the commitments could be how many projects there were up and running at the close of RIIO-ED2, rather than the number of surgeries held.

Maintaining a Safe and Resilient Network

- On Network Resilience, 89% either agreed or strongly agreed with the commitments, but it was abundantly clear that stakeholders were particularly concerned about flooding with the impact of climate change, with many feeling WPD might need to increase their flood estimates.
- There was concern around cyber security, with many pointing out that with greater electrification would come greater vulnerability to cyber-attacks. 75% agreed or strongly agreed that the overall package for Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience was appropriate, though 6% disagreed and 19% were neutral.
- As for Safety, 83% supported or strongly supported the package of proposals, while the remaining 18% did not think the package was appropriate or felt neutral about this. There was a discussion on whether WPD should invest in undergrounding the network further to improve its resilience to severe weather, and many delegates had suggestions for engaging school-age children on safety matters, including through social media and practical workshops on electricity.
- With regard to the proposals for Workforce Resilience, an overwhelming majority (88%) thought the proposals were acceptable – although one stakeholder strongly disagreed with this. In the discussion, one delegate noted the lack of women and younger people present at the workshop, while another stated that WPD should include neurodiversity in its definition of diversity.
- There was good debate around the question of improving network reliability further, so that the average customer experiences service better than one power cut every two years, lasting 24 minutes: some felt that for most customers, reliability is already very good, therefore reaching a point of diminishing returns, while others felt that WPD could improve on one interruption every two years. Voting electronically, 62% either agreed or strongly agreed that this commitment demonstrated the correct level of service, 21% were neutral, and 18% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.



Section One

Overall views

Section One summarises the feedback to Question 1 of the online consultation, which was also replicated in the online workshop. It was asked as both an open question and as a voting question in both formats.

Summary

When asked about their overall views of WPD's Business Plan for RIIO-ED2, the majority of responses were positive, with participants praising the focus and increased ambition on carbon reduction, stretched net zero targets, whole systems approach, increasing capacity for heat pumps and EVs, and support for local government's growth and energy plans. This was reflected in the voting, where 74% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I am supportive of WPD's overall package of proposals for RIIO-ED2." Stakeholders felt that the plans were an improvement on RIIO-ED1, and those who had participated in the entire consultation process 'since day one' stated that they felt their comments, feedback and concerns had been taken seriously as the plan had been refined and progressed.

Given the enormous scope and scale of the Business Plan, with many different voices, perspectives, and priorities involved in its creation, there were places where stakeholders thought that WPD could do more, go further, or make provisions for even greater change. Those representing rural areas in WPD's licence areas voiced concern that facilitating low carbon technologies (LCTs) in rural areas needed urgent prioritisation and investment, with some feeling that greater population numbers in urban areas skewed WPD's focus. In this way, a parallel could be drawn between making sure vulnerable and fuel poor customers were similarly not 'left behind' in the transition to Net Zero. Others wanted to see a clear demonstration of leadership in the package, whether that was in working with schools and colleges to inspire young people to work in green energy, sharing its learnings on low carbon operations with businesses in other sectors, or showing a clear pathway for customers to get to Net Zero.

On viewing the package as a whole, an important point was made that the idea of the 'golden thread' that connects and informs 'customer top priorities' to 'core commitments' wasn't always easy to follow, and that the results and feedback from the Customer Engagement Group on making sure no key areas of stakeholder priorities were overlooked were not clearly stated. Others felt that while the presentation of the core commitments in the consultation paper was very clear, the longer tables were poorly formatted, and more clarity in this design would improve them.

Stakeholders from local authorities were broadly supportive of the package, but most expressed concern that the numbers around EV and heat pumps might fall short for areas that were looking to deliver high levels of growth while meeting ambitious climate targets. Ongoing regular consultation with local planning authorities was stressed to ensure alignment with policies and development aspirations reflected in the local plans. Given the huge cost implications of this work, many stakeholders questioned WPD's and Ofgem's commitment to keeping prices flat. While the issue of fuel poverty was taken very seriously, some felt that there was a compromise to be struck between facilitating the roll-out of EVs and solar panels (which would benefit the most affluent customers), and adding one or two pounds to the bill, which would clearly disproportionately impact the least affluent.



What are your views on WPD's latest overall package of proposals for RIIO-ED2?

Are there aspects you: Strongly support? Would like to see change? Is anything missing?

Online responses:

- “I very much support WPD's carbon reduction ambitions for the business and for the wider community and I like its intentions to engage with local authorities and customers to support community energy projects. I like the plans to replace leaky cables and switch gear, hide cables in beauty spots and redo cabling that passes through school grounds. I appreciate concerns to keep customer bills as low as possible, but I think that a small extra cost to fulfil these ambitions is value for money, especially where vulnerable and fuel poor customers are being supported.” **Environmental group**
- “I have been with you since day one and you've listened to all the comments. It's a very good document and I think this is great going forward.” **Parish / community council**
- “I am interested in viewing the 'golden thread' that demonstrates how WPD have converted the 'customer top priority' into a 'core commitment' but have not yet been able to follow such threads. How does WPD demonstrate that it has enshrined the 'customer top priorities' into BP2 and thus that the customer is at the heart of BP2? In section 3.79 on page 59, the BP2 states 'This process was scrutinised by the Customer Engagement Group to ensure appropriate attributes were selected and no key areas of stakeholder priorities were overlooked'. It does not say that the CEG was satisfied with the responses that WPD gave to any challenges.” **Domestic customer**
- “Maximum investment in inter-county high voltage interconnected systems to allow maximum distribution capacity for renewables in very rural areas at times of low demand with no storage options for spare unused current capacity. Now National Grid are soon to be involved with this company, previous problems of renewable distribution capacity in rural areas should be prioritised for eradication with maximum investment from both companies.” **Domestic customer**
- “It's lacking the promise of real investment into renewables and EV infrastructure in rural areas and these areas are destined to be left behind, forgotten about and swept to one side in favour of high customer numbers in urban and semi urban areas.” **Domestic customer**
- “I am particularly supportive of the efforts to be prepared for new environmental demands: reducing your company's carbon footprint, enabling local energy generation through increased capacity and supply to replace fossil fuel consumption.” **Domestic customer**
- “The revised business plan is a big improvement on the previous version. The increased ambition is



encouraging, especially bringing your targets forward and supporting those local government schemes that are more ambitious than central government's. Of concern are 1. an understanding and allowance for the embodied carbon expended in getting to Net Zero for the company and its operations for others and 2. The lack of detail in how community energy will be supported, particularly financially, in areas of established fuel poverty." **Community energy group**

- "Good to see the aim of connecting more heat pumps and EV charge points. These should be targeted at properties which would benefit most with support for all to afford the technologies and additional support for lower income households where the costs are currently prohibitive." **Domestic customer**
- "I support all commitments, especially the focus on low carbon, service quality and speed. I would like to see more on how WPD will work with other utilities to enable faster, smart rollout of new services / tech to all parts; how WPD will work with schools / colleges to inspire young people to consider working in green energy; and how WPD will share its learning on low carbon operations with businesses in other sectors." **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- "The presentation of the core commitments in the consultation paper is very clear; the change column is very helpful. Without looking at the previous version, I don't know what has been removed. In the Business Plan, the longer tables are poorly formatted; a bit of attention would improve them a lot. It seems that stakeholders have chosen better outcomes if the increased cost is minimal. Some of the later questions (I had a quick look) suggest outcomes are not easy to predict. Overall, the package seems positive and balanced." **Parish / community council**
- "Your company will play an important role and has to be far more ambitious to drive the agenda to get to Net Zero rather than 'playing a part'. You should take leadership. I would like to see you showing a clear pathway for your customers to get to Net Zero, not just for your internal operations." **Government**
- "I strongly support this, although the numbers around EV and heat pumps are questionable and possibly post (Future Homes Standards) 2025 may short fall of what the true scenario maybe for areas which aspire to deliver high levels of growth as North Northamptonshire has in the past and will continue to do in future. Net zero aspirations need to be supported by good infrastructure planning for decarbonisation of transport and heat prior to 2025. Therefore, ongoing regular consultation with the Local Planning Authority is key." **Local authority**
- "I'm pleased to see the target put forward is more in keeping with the region's and Coventry's aspirations for achieving carbon reduction. On Connections (Core commitment 17): Further collaboration is needed with local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to encourage growth and work with neighbouring areas. It is stated that the ambition has increased. However, we do not feel that adding 'ad hoc' meetings is a commitment or increased ambition. We would recommend at least 6 monthly reviews with local authorities (and strategic partners). This collaborative approach should plan ahead strategically, ensuring investment in the zero carbon infrastructure which is needed by a dynamic city



with a commitment to the growth in the green economy along with aspirations for meeting future housing needs. WPD needs to work with city planners, inward investment teams and the sustainability climate change specialists in the council on a regular basis to understand the infrastructure needs for future development opportunities for zero carbon growth. This will also help to ensure alignment with policies and development aspirations reflected in the local plans and supplementary planning documents (SPDs). On Maintaining a Safe and Resilient Network: As some areas have very high service levels, we are at the point of diminishing returns in this area and feel the levels are appropriate. It would be useful to see and understand the data for high-risk areas which would benefit from some additional focus. On a Smart, Flexible Network: To support the energy transition, we strongly feel there should be a key focus in the area as WPD are an enabler of this process and without the infrastructure this will significantly hinder our journey to Net Zero. We would also strongly recommend further ambition on commitment 53 for whole systems projects to understand how power storage, generation and transport could be balanced effectively across cities and regions.” **Local authority**

- “Very ambitious. I particularly support the increased ambitions around connections, delivering a smart, flexible network, and innovation.” **Utility**
- “We are reassured to note the second draft of the Business Plan (BP2) demonstrates significant changes in the core commitments proposed, with a 60% increase in the scope of the core commitments, including a clear, stretching target for achieving net zero carbon within WPD’s own operations by 2028, and measures to ensure that we in turn can meet our own ambitions for net zero carbon by 2030.” **Local authority**
- “We welcome the opportunity to comment on BP2 and commend the stakeholder engagement WPD has undertaken to date to inform and prepare the business plan.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

- “I have been following all the way through. I’m a community representative. I have been very pleased with the way that comments have been considered. I like the way your priorities have been adjusted according to the comments.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- “From the overview, it does seem like the package contains a broad range of commitments and I feel that things are going in the right direction. I’m comfortable with the package.” **Local authority**
- “I’m in Cornwall and I’m concerned that this doesn’t go far enough to make the infrastructure resilient. Doing too little will stifle business and development. It’s knowing the problems we have in Cornwall with connections etc. and wondering what’s coming down the line when we all use EVs and electricity rather than gas. Massive changes are ahead. The US guy on climate change is saying we need EVs 20x faster than currently. Is WPD’s thinking in the past or in the brave new world?” **Business customer**
- “One of the things we notice is that even in the best-case scenario, the Business Plan doesn’t meet



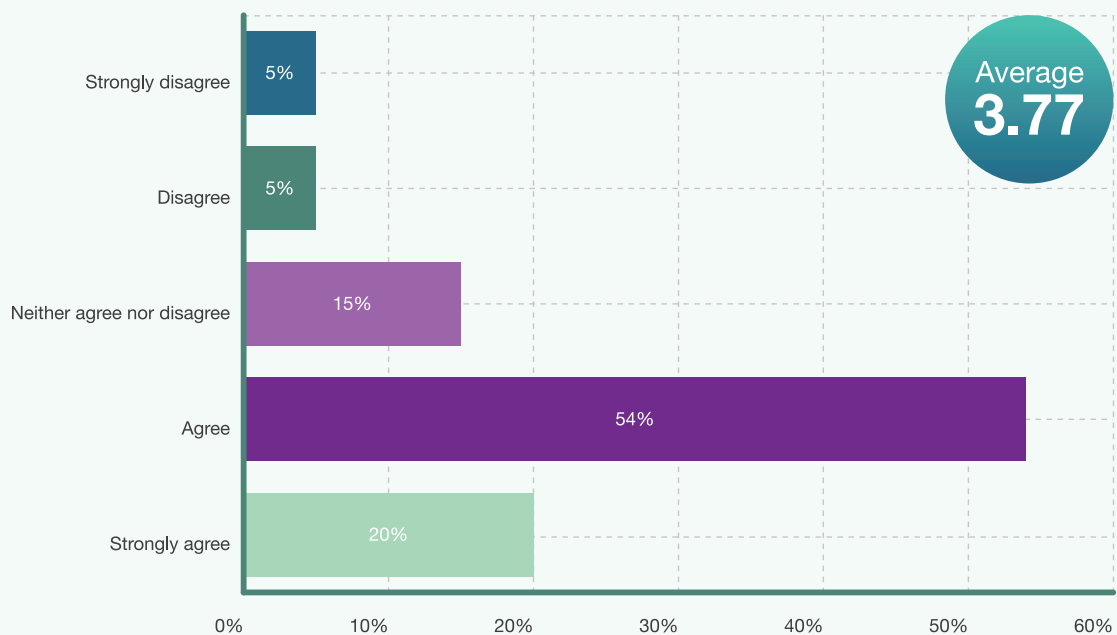
the 2030 target of our council. We wanted to get this message across last time. Many authorities are working towards 2030 and that scenario doesn't appear to be aligned." **Local authority**

- "There's a fundamental assumption that you need to balance the bill. I understand Ofgem does not want to raise bills. The most efficient way to decarbonise is to add to the bill. The government and local authorities are saying similar things, but the regulator is forcing your hand on cost. I recognise the issues such as fuel poverty, though many households cannot afford EVs and solar panels but could pay a few more pounds on the bill to make things happen. Your hand being decided for you is an issue with this business plan process." **Local authority**
- "This looks fine and is going in the right direction. It's about adapting to be a smart network to accommodate renewables, moving from gas to electric and heat pumps. In my area, WPD are looking at putting in three-phase to take care of battery charging for heat pumps. It's having a small additional cost now rather than digging up roads to reinforce the network later on. That's all going the right way." **Community energy group**
- "I'm delighted to hear about the whole systems approach. The National Grid – are they also regulated by Ofgem or someone else? I would welcome expanding this whole systems approach to looking at third party operators. Say we have large solar roof on an industrial estate. We're being told there's no capacity and it would have to be done by a private person. This is the opposite of whole systems. It would be very expensive and unattractive for a single industry. I know you're not allowed, but if you could install batteries at your substations, you're laughing." **Local authority**
- "I don't see why we are trying to keep the bills flat. Keep them flat in line with inflation maybe, which is reasonable I think." **Local authority**
- "I do like the plan in most of what you're doing. I am concerned about trying to supply all this electricity to 1.5m connections. The other news we are hearing recently is people getting rid of natural gas boilers. But they're effective of up to 84% and quite clean. How on earth can you supply all this electricity with 29 units of electricity to the old firm? It's a mega job what you've got to do." **Parish / community council**
- "I really like the look of the chapter on flexible energy systems, as this whole approach now seems to be moving in the right direction for the country. Within the industry, there does seem to be a shift towards a split between reinforcement and flexible approaches, which is right where things need to be." **Storage and renewables provider / installer**
- "I'm interested in the move to Net Zero and feel that this really needs to happen. I work with community energy projects and have run against up constraints, which WPD has been unable to resolve. I hope that these will be dropping away during ED2." **Local authority**



- “I know you’ve talked about whole systems, but the commitments only look at three projects. Would you be open to expanding this, given the comments made about storage and EV? There’s transport, too. I think there’s more value that could be unlocked from whole systems.” **Local authority**
- “I noticed that in the original plan you’d mentioned about reaching Net Zero by 2040 and now it’s changed to 2028. That seems very ambitious, so could you explain this change for me? I definitely support this as it’s potentially a massive challenge. I suppose I’m just wondering how they’d see that as being possible. It’s definitely the right way to go following government guidance.” **Utility**
- “Given that you’re talking about a £1 something rise, as a customer it doesn’t sound too bad over a year, but I guess it depends how you market it to people. People are starting to get into green issues and the question is how do we make sure that we’ve got enough resources in the bank?” **Local authority**

How do you feel about the following statement? “I am supportive of WPD’s overall package of proposals for RIIO-ED2.”



Don't know / can't say: 9%



Section Two

Our best view of future energy needs

Section Two summarises the feedback received on Questions 4 and 5 of the online consultation, which were also replicated in the online workshop. They were asked as both an open question and as a voting question in both formats. The online workshop asked the voting question for Question 5 in a slightly different format, which has been clarified below. A number of social media polls were also asked, which have been summarised below.

Summary

There was a good deal of debate over the accuracy of WPD's best view on the likely take-up of electric vehicles (EVs) and heat pumps in the five-year period. Some felt that they simply couldn't take a view, as they lacked the relevant knowledge and statistics, and that WPD's best view was perhaps better characterised as a 'best guess' that needed to be monitored over ED2. Others felt rather more strongly that WPD had underestimated the take-up of EVs and heat pumps, and that they needed to 'get serious before it was too late' and had 'far, far underestimated for the future of the planet'. On the other end of the scale, however, were those that felt that the figures were too high, given the lack of financial incentives for heat pumps in particular and the lack of comprehensive charging infrastructure for EVs. This was all reflected in the electronic voting, where 25% said there would be a far greater take-up and 20% said there would be a lot less take-up of EVs. 27% said that WPD's best view seemed about right, but 15% voters responded with 'don't know / can't say'. There was a similar swing on heat pumps, where 20% said there would be a far greater take-up and 17% said there would be a lot less take-up. 25% said the current view was about right, but 17% felt unable to say.

For many, whether they thought uptake would increase in line with WPD's predictions or fall short, the proposed increase in capacity was seen as beneficial. Many also stressed that WPD would be best placed to demonstrate flexibility when faced with so much uncertainty. It was repeatedly stated that government subsidies, loans, and incentives were going to drive the market, and that, for example, the downgrading of the EV grant had already led to a slowdown in the uptake of EVs, with 'the inducement and encouragement factor severely curtailed'. A key point here was to retain the ability to 'flex upwards or flex downwards depending on changes in policy'. Another point of uncertainty was raised regarding Covid-19 and lockdown, where in one local authority the use of public charging points had fallen by 27%. Given the difficulty in accurately forecasting precise numbers in such an uncertain environment, most stakeholders urged WPD to future-proof the network and provide for as much capacity as possible to allow the sector grow 'unconstrained', with the point made that take-up could grow even further if developers and consumers had the requisite confidence in the network.

There was more vocal hesitation around the take-up of heat pumps, with some expressing reservations over the cost of installing them and then insulating homes to stop increasing energy bills. Some felt that hydrogen presented a more sustainable solution for the future, and that the plan for heat pump capacity should be seen as a contingency. This point was echoed by others who saw the future of low carbon heating as rather more uncertain than low carbon transport, and liable to be upended by new developments in domestic heating technology. Others felt that the majority of consumers were priced out of LCHs, meaning that the less affluent were disproportionately impacted. Again, the point about making sure rural communities were as well connected was raised, with those representing Cornwall, Wales, Devon and Somerset urging an overhaul of infrastructure in these regions.

Discussing the acceptability of the cost of the proposals to support the connection of more heat pumps and EVs, views ranged between 'totally unacceptable', to 'far more investment is required', while there were some who felt ill equipped to answer the question. However, when it came to voting electronically, the balance was mostly tipped in favour of supporting the costs of the plans. In the workshop, when stakeholders were asked to vote on their agreement with the statement "I think the costs associated with supporting the connections of EVs and heat pumps is acceptable", the average score was 3.97, (where 5 was 'strongly agree' and 1 was 'strongly disagree'). Online, the question was split into two parts, with stakeholders voting on the acceptability of the costs of supporting



the connections of EVs and heat pumps as two distinct entities. Here, the acceptability of costs associated with connecting heat pumps was given an average of 3.42, and for EVs it was 3.45.

For those calling for greater expenditure, the predominant view expressed was that ‘these costs need to be borne’ and many felt that they would feel reasonably comfortable with bills rising slightly, on the condition that they might then fall again in the future. Others felt more strongly that doubling the expenditure would be safer to ensure net zero targets could be met. For those expressing reservations, the concern was where the money would be allocated if these targets were not reached, or if uncertainty in the market prevented the predicted uptake.

How accurate do you consider WPD’s best view to be regarding the likely take-up of electric vehicles (EVs) and heat pumps in the five-year period?

Online responses:

- “Best guess at present; needs to be monitored by the Performance Group during ED2.”
Domestic customer
- “Impossible to tell at the moment, so would be useful to also include minimum as well as maximum commitments. For example, we don’t know yet what percentage of low carbon vehicles will be from other sources e.g., H2 fuel cells, or how the new freeports might stimulate the market disproportionately in some places.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- “I think it might be on the low side but have nothing really to go on! It would be a pity to hold back progress because the capacity on the network is not there.” **Environmental group**
- “You’re playing. It’s time to get serious before it’s too late.” **Domestic customer**
- “Unlikely to be correct due to the huge uncertainty.” **Utility**
- “Conservative. Push higher.” **Domestic customer**
- “Hopelessly wrong.” **Domestic customer**
- “Consumers want even more decarbonisation, so do better than this.” **Domestic customer**
- “Far, far underestimated for the future of the planet.” **Domestic customer**
- “It seems quite conservative, given what a large area of the country WPD covers. It would be interesting to know how it aggregates with the best view of other DNOs and what that means for Ofgem’s overall idea of decarbonisation by 2030.” **Community energy group**
- “It will be higher and faster than that for EVs. However, this is surely an opportunity for you guys, especially with BEVs which will provide a huge storage capacity to mitigate demand spikes using renewable supplies. Demand management is already part of your strategy. You should get this massive national storage facility for free.” **Community energy group**



- “I am not at all convinced about the solutions for domestic heating. Heat pumps (either kind) are not very efficient, and the investment required in most existing housing would be massive. They have to run on low temp, with very small temperature differentials compared to current boilers. I don’t think anybody has the answer yet, so don’t invest on that basis. It should be contingency only; the eventual solution is more likely to be hydrogen fuelled boilers.” **Domestic customer**
- “Prior to the downgrading of the EV grant, I would have said that WPD’s view was to be prudent. Now I suspect that the uptake of EV cars will slow down. The grant now only applies to the smaller less desirable EV cars. The inducement and encouragement factor to switch has been severely curtailed. Norway’s astonishingly rapid uptake of EVs was supported strongly by grants throughout and now lead the world. Our grant system should have stayed.” **Domestic customer**
- “I think it is very generous given the lack of incentives for heat pumps. It requires government support, but I think having the capacity planned for will ultimately be beneficial.” **Domestic customer**
- “Rural areas again are neglected.” **Domestic customer**
- “Until there is enough charging infrastructure, EV will not be taken up. Until numbers increase, EV will be seen as more expensive than cars with an ICE or hybrid. Charging must lead. On heat pumps, you can’t simply swap a gas boiler for a heat pump. Is there a plan to stop supplying natural gas by a certain date? I doubt it, but what is the incentive to change? Supplying hydrogen by means of National Grid pipelines doesn’t appeal.” **Parish / community council**
- “WPD’s best view needs to have flexibility – the government hinted at bringing in the bank of new sales of ICE vehicles forward which they did, and as the scientific evidence grows climate action pressure grows. Estimates for the North Northants area for a 2040 net zero scenario would mean that 23,056 heat pumps would need to be fitted by 2028. The data from WPD falls short of this for the East Midlands area. The Council does not hold data related to the uptake of electric vehicles; however, the use of the public charge points fell by 27% during the recent Covid outbreak. There have now been over 16,000 charging episodes – so they are well used and need to expand.” **Local authority**
- “The government has already brought forward the ban on new ICE vehicles from 2035 to 2030 and given COP26 later this year, together with increased pressure from wider society, WPD needs to be highly ambitious in respect of planning for EVs. Car manufacturers are responding to the net zero challenge and more EVs are being brought forward to offer consumer choice but grid capacity and charge point availability will be factors in the take-up of these locally. Transport is the largest source of emissions in the UK, and it stands that as battery technologies develop their costs, capacity and charge times will improve, making – together with the assumed economies of scale – EVs an increasingly viable alternative for consumers. We therefore do not want a situation where network capacity / charge point availability curtails this in the wider net zero context.” **Local authority**
- “We know through government policy that heat pumps are a preferred approach to low carbon heating



and there is a need to start delivering these at scale in the not-too-distant future (adding further pressure on the network to accommodate). Although it would appear likely the roll-out of these will increase over time, it is important the network is future-proofed so as to not curtail their delivery, and to enable this sector to grow unconstrained.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

- “I’ve just come off a seminar about hydrogen for heating. That was really interesting. The heat pump was about 3x the price. They are huge installation costs and incredibly inefficient. I think hydrogen will be the way to go. I think the EV pick-up will be massive. But people will be looking at more destination charging rather than at home.” **Community energy group**
- “I’m interested in how Local Area Energy Plans and climate emergency plans will affect the picture in WPD’s eyes. Both of these things are always evolving, and the latter are very much still in the early stages for the most part. Are these sorts of plans being considered in your best view in relation to electric vehicles?” **Local authority**
- “The government’s change in policy on carbon zero earlier this week will put more pressure on the Business Plan. I believe that there will be more than 2 million cars on the road in the South West by 2028, as a result.” **Community energy group**
- “I’m struggling with the context and what all of these numbers mean. Clearly, the numbers are large, and they are going up, which is good, but I need more context to hang this all on.” **Local authority**
- “I’m concerned about rural isolated areas in mid Wales, Somerset and Cornwall. It’s all well and good having these EVs and heat pumps, but we need to make sure that the infrastructure is in place to bring the electricity to these regions reliably before we start with all of these future-facing technologies.” **Consumer body**
- “A four-fold increase in EVs is probably pretty accurate. There are cost and physical implications for EV uptake that need working through to make this more practical. It’s almost meaningless what the numbers will be in five years. We have to get the infrastructure in place as this is the direction of travel. The infrastructure needs to be in place so that people can start to use it.” **Local authority**
- “It’s difficult to know where this is going. EVs are probably easier, but have you factored in changes in vehicle ownership? Exeter has a car share scheme. That might make the EV figure too big because of changes in car ownership models. With heat pumps, what if some new technology displaces heat pumps? You need to take uncertainties into account.” **Business customer**
- “With EVs it seems we are notoriously bad at understanding and predicting when we are in a state of systemic change as a society. EV projections have been consistently short of what the market is actually doing. With a cliff edge system change it’s very hard to come up with actual projections. I cannot challenge the 2 million EV figure beyond saying it’s almost certainly an underestimate. Modelling



changes are anchored in the old world and not the new world by definition. The figures for heat pumps and solar look too low for me. The figures for onshore wind look too timid as well. What we as LAs want from WPD is not to look at these projections and then react to them. You should be proactive and view commitments as the minimum of what you must do. You should get ahead of the curve, positively enabling and accelerating towards a zero-carbon energy system.” **Local authority**

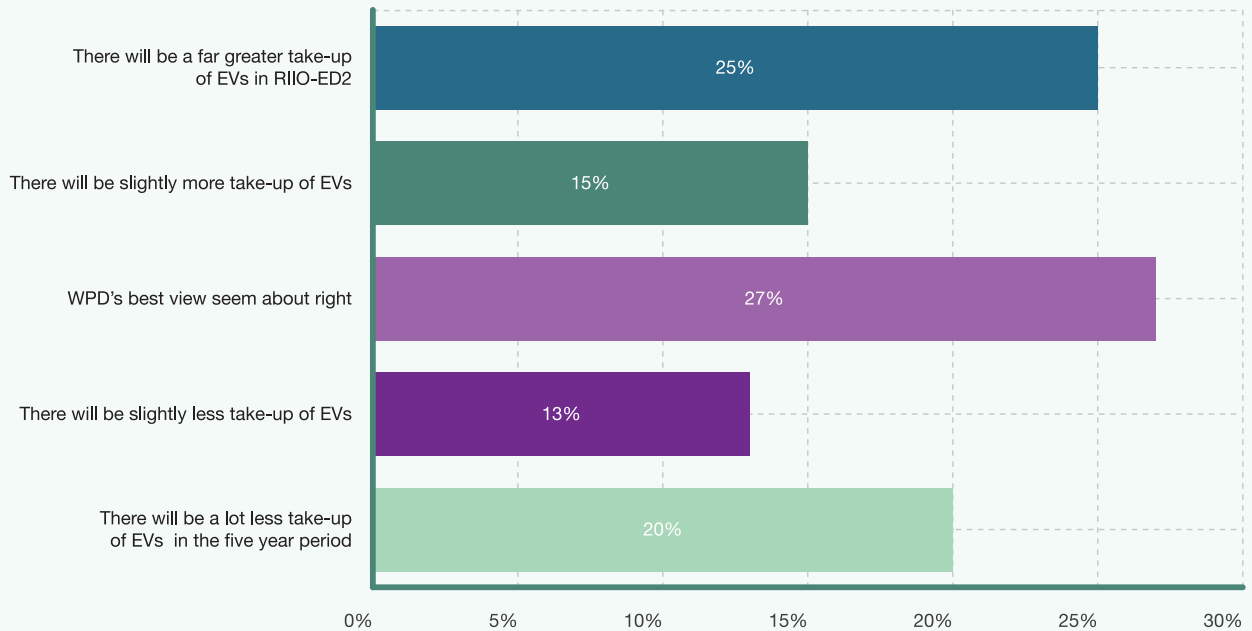
- “I think a key variant is what the government chooses to do. At the moment, most people are priced out of investing in key technologies. If the government does what it did with solar panels c.10 years ago, then I think the EV and heat pump numbers could move up significantly.” **Local authority**
- “The impact of government in deciding that new homes wouldn’t have gas has affected connections. EV grants being removed has dropped the steep incline of EV uptake. Based on policies now, these numbers are as accurate as they can be, but you need to be able to flex upwards or downwards depending on changes in policy.” **Storage and renewables provider / installer**
- “I think your assumptions are as good as they could be. A large part depends on central government decisions around funding. In our area, there’s a high level of deprivation. That said, we are trying to install as many charging points as possible. In the nicest possible way, I do hope you are underestimating, but realistically you’re probably quite accurate.” **Local authority**
- “A lot of it will be based on legislation. In South Wales we have two areas: urban Barry in the south, and then there’s the valleys to the north with a lack of off-street parking. In mid Wales, you’ve got long distances to cover so you’d need a more expensive vehicle with a bigger battery. All you can do is extrapolate based on how EVs are taking off now. Do these figures take into account hybrids? Going from half a million to two million is probably a good, educated guess.” **Community energy group**
- “I was going to ask you exactly the same question. Presumably, you have some confidence levels in the numbers you’ve come up with here. We don’t have access to the numbers that allow us to tell you whether we think these are sensible or not.” **Local authority**
- “We need to know the assumptions behind the figures, really, and how they’ve been made through future energy scenarios. They must have done some analysis of what the take-up of EVs will be through their strategies for clean growth. We don’t know what the government are going to do in terms of incentives and tax regimes. Are they going to carry on providing incentives for EVs, are they going to increase tax on fossil fuels? There are lots of inputs that could affect the figures.” **Local authority**
- “One would anticipate that by 2030 most people will be purchasing EVs given the government’s target date, so I think the figure seems low. I think it’s very unlikely that people will be rushing out to buy the last petrol vehicle in 2029, given that it will have no resale value. The target is a disincentive, so you need to be more ambitious. The heat pump figure looks low too. The uptake is low at the moment, but it will surge when people suddenly realise they need to do something about their central heating.” **Local authority**



- “There are a disproportionate number of people in poverty in this country. When I was a boy, food banks would have been something you’d find somewhere in Africa, but now they’re everywhere. At the moment there is a thriving second-hand car market where people on low incomes can get a car for as little as £800, but second-hand EVs currently cost several thousand pounds. When is the cost of a second-hand EV going to go down to the point that poor people can afford them? Because if they can’t afford a second-hand car, they will be forced onto public transport, which goes up in cost every single year, and in villages like mine the last bus is at 7pm and isn’t really practical. This hasn’t been thought through.” **Connections provider**
- “So far, we are seeing increasing numbers of electric vehicle points coming in. The heat pump side is not happening as yet, certainly not in a new build. The developments I’m seeing coming through are not having heat pumps in them yet. Moving forwards, EV vehicles will have a significant increase, but it comes down to price points and how affordable these will be for the wider population.” **Local authority**



How do you feel about WPD's best view on the take-up of EVs in RIIO-ED2?

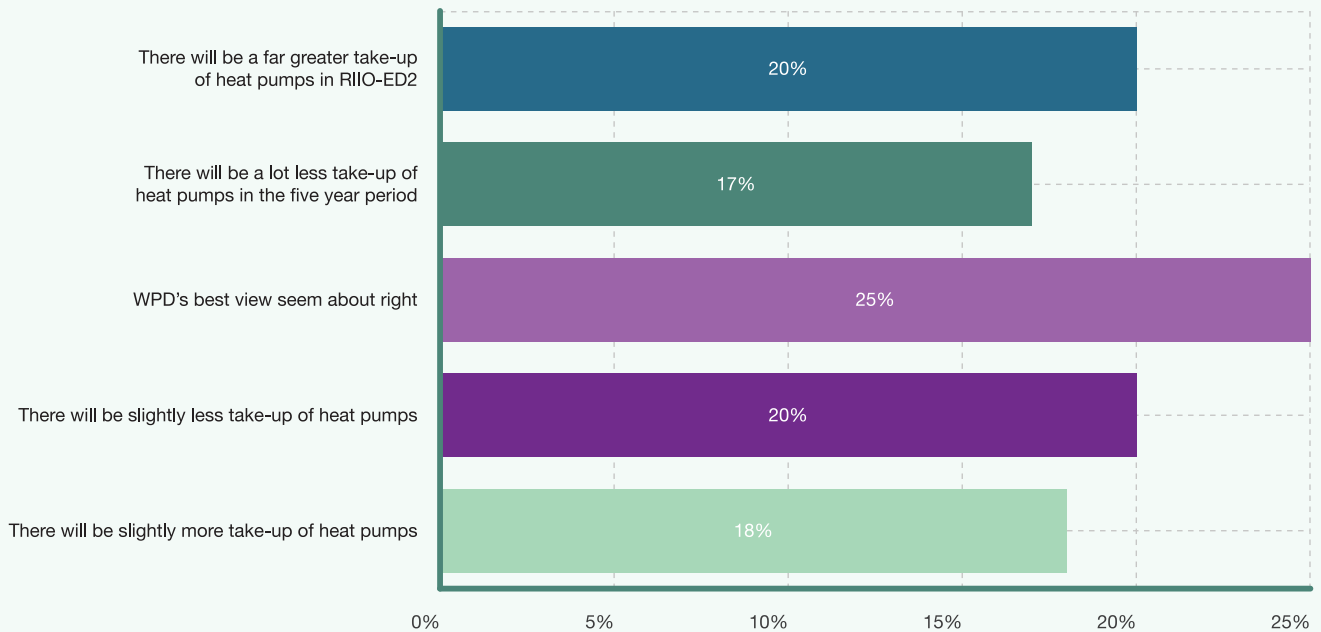


Don't know / can't say: 15%

This question was asked in two different ways as part of the social media polls. The first question was “We think that 1.5 million more electric vehicles will be on the roads in our region between 2023-2028. Do you agree?” In total, 90 customers responded to this poll. In general, customers were slightly more cautious with 34% saying there would be ‘more than 1.5m EVs’ – compared to about 40% of the respondents in the online consultation or workshop. The second question was “We’re aiming to connect up to 1.5m electric vehicles by 2028. Is that enough?” which was answered by 111 customers with a fairly even split – 52% responding ‘yes’ and 48% responding ‘no’. The full results of the social media polls can be found in Appendix 3.



How do you feel about WPD's best view on the take-up of heat pumps in RIIO-ED2?



Don't know / can't say: 17%

This question was asked as one of the social media polls. However, the question was simplified to tailor it to social media. It was expressed as “We think that 600,000 heat pumps will be installed in our region between 2023-2028. Do you agree?” In total, 76 customers responded to this poll. In general, customers were much more cautious with over two thirds (68%) thinking there would be ‘fewer than 600k heat pumps’ – compared to about 37% of the respondents in the online consultation or workshop. The full results of the social media polls can be found in Appendix 3.

What are your views on the acceptability of the costs associated with supporting the connection of electric vehicles and heat pumps at these levels?

Online responses:

- “It’s the future of the planet and life as we know it – invest more.” **Domestic customer**
- “Completely unacceptable.” **Domestic customer**
- “Very acceptable.” **Domestic customer**
- “I don’t know what these costs are so this question doesn’t make much sense. But clearly, they will require spend, which I support.” **Local authority**



- “Hope they are sufficient, but we have to be prepared for more ambitious programmes if the country wakes up to the looming environmental crisis.” **Domestic customer**
- “Far more investment in infrastructure to allow the connectivity of renewables and EVs is required.” **Domestic customer**
- “You need to be sure this is not wasted money if the expected levels are not reached for a variety of reasons such as lack of materials for EVs and unsuitability of heat pumps in some of the current housing stock.” **Domestic customer**
- “If this is really going to happen then it needs strong and effective (not like the Green Grant debacle) Government subsidies and incentives. There also needs to be some urgent research on the practical aspects of installing charging, vehicle to grid and heat pumps in the huge swathes of very variable existing housing stock in the UK. Before heat pumps must come insulation for any of this to work effectively. This should be an area where WPD could be working with their offset policy.” **Community energy group**
- “I think it’s currently not necessary; money could be spent on saving customer bills.” **Domestic customer**
- “These costs have to be borne. The public charging infrastructure for EVs is behind and inadequate. It is also sorely in need of standardisation with ease of payment at the forefront of the strategy. Integration is required between the various charging companies along the Tesla lines to gain public confidence.” **Domestic customer**
- “Unacceptable. As mentioned previously, the forcing of EVs is entirely unnecessary and any forced funding to this goal, be it tax subsidy or bill increase, is continuing the erosion of people’s personal agency and further evidence that the free market will soon be all but gone in the UK.” **Domestic customer**
- “It seems like there is limited information in the consultation document about the cost of such activities.” **Domestic customer**
- “Again, the rural networks and the fluctuations in supply caused by all heat pumps need major investment.” **Domestic customer**
- “Although we do not have a view on the figures presented, other than noting WPD’s prioritisation of the network reinforcement, we have no opinion on the level of expenditure, more a focus on the need to ensure maximum capacities are sought so as to not curtail authorities with ambitious net zero agendas.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

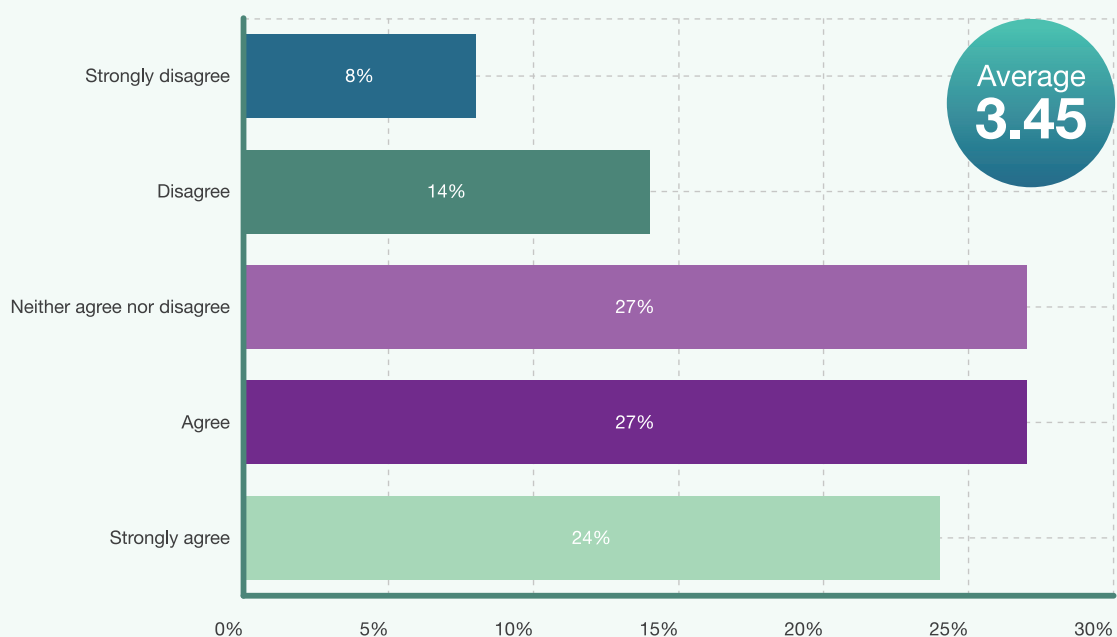
- “The estimate does not seem to be out of the ordinary, but it could be a little low in the end. I think



that there will be a snowball effect in the take-up, as more and more cars become available on the secondary market (with resulting cheaper prices) and more widespread infrastructure available. I think that more money may be needed here in the end.” **Community energy group**

- “They are a bit low in my opinion if we’re anticipating higher uptake.” **Emergency services**
- “I think it’s a reasonable cost for what you’re getting. I mentioned that it might be worth putting up the bills even more, so once we’ve got the infrastructure in, we could dip them again afterwards.” **Business customer**
- “From a supplier’s perspective we get questions from customers about why the bills have gone up so much and it’s usually due to distribution. Having this explanation there about why costs are going up so much is useful for that. My question is if you don’t meet these targets, if that money isn’t used then will it be reallocated appropriately? What happens to that investment?” **Utility**
- “I am on the planning committee in the Forest of Dean, and I am heavily invested in heat pumps and electric vehicles. The numbers look a bit low to me because if you look at the number of households in the area and the number of cars in the households, you can see that it is a pretty low percentage of cars being electric. I think it would be safer to be more ambitious and almost double those numbers.” **Local authority**

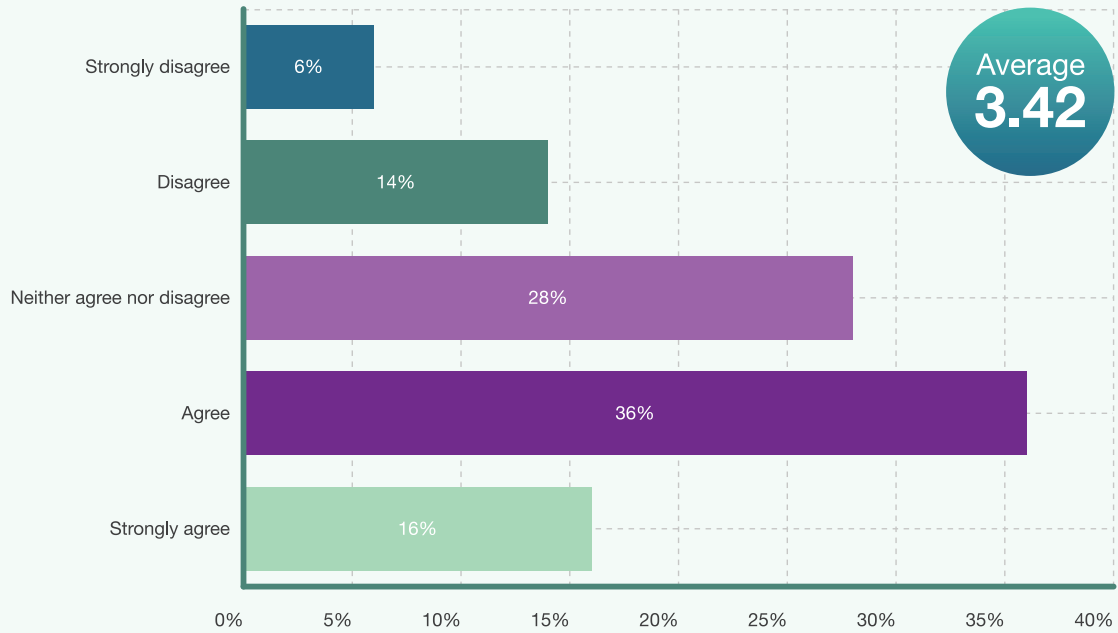
How do you feel about the following statement? “I think the costs associated with supporting the connection of EVs are acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 0%



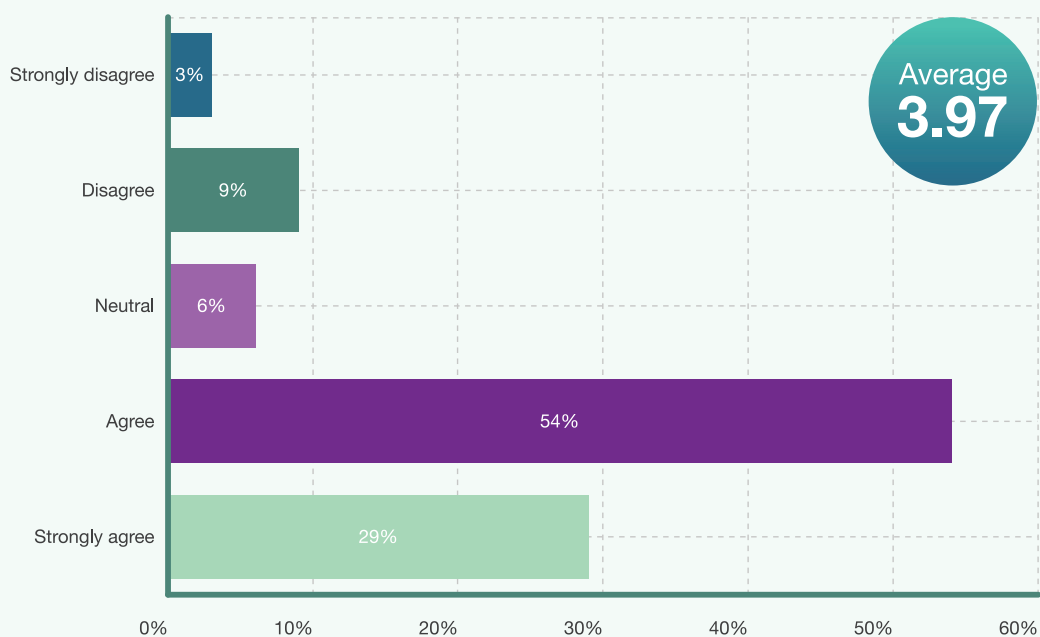
How do you feel about the following statement? “I think the costs associated with supporting the connection of heat pumps are acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 2%

NB. In the online workshop, this question was posed as a single question covering both heat pumps and EVs as the split cost was not available. See the following graph:

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think the costs associated with supporting the connection of EVs and heat pumps are acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 27%



Section Three

Expenditure and bill impact

Section Three summarises the feedback to Questions 2 and 3 (potential bill impact) and Questions 6 and 7 (our expenditure for RII0-ED2) of the online consultation. The questions relating to potential bill impact were included in the online workshop, but those relating to expenditure were not included. Open questions were supplemented by voting questions. A number of social media polls were also conducted, which have been summarised below.

Summary

Stakeholders shared their views on what they felt was an acceptable level for WPD's portion of the average domestic customer bill, currently set at £96 per annum. There were extremes of opinion in both directions, with 'nil' at one end, and £150 at the other, but for the most part, in the discussion, stakeholders felt that a small increase of £1 – £2 on the annual bill would be a reasonable price to pay for green investment and a decentralised energy system that brought the country to Net Zero. Interestingly, this did not quite play out in the electronic voting, where the biggest proportion of votes, 34%, opted to keep bills the same as today (£96). 24% voted for a £2 increase, and 29% went for a £2 decrease. However, when voting electronically on the statement: "I would support increased bills in order to achieve greater change and ambition in WPD's Business Plan Commitments", 73% either agreed or strongly agreed.

Representatives from community energy pointed out that decarbonisation and increased efficiency were likely to bring bills down in the long term, and others saw that increased investment now would 'reap rewards later on'. Other interesting suggestions were made along the lines of charging a rateable value, such as for council tax or water, where larger properties pay a higher amount, with smaller properties and households that have forms of renewable generation seeing lower costs, as an incentive. Those from local authorities, while mostly supportive of slightly higher bills, were keen to stress that many households would not be able to afford any increase, and that support mechanisms needed to be put in place to ensure these households were not disadvantaged as part of the transition. Many felt that being honest and transparent with the consumer base as a whole – as to how the energy transition to Net Zero was to be funded – would make these changes and conversations much easier to have, and that 'not paying now will cost more at a later date in terms of climate resilience'.

For those that did endorse increased bills to support greater change or ambition in the Business Plan (and not all stakeholders did), the predominant reason was to get to Net Zero. Stakeholders wanted to see WPD use that money to reinforce the network for greater capacity to take, and distribute, renewable generation, and to invest in EV charging infrastructure and carbon neutral heating solutions. Some also suggested re-investing extra capital into insulating homes for those living in poor housing stock or in fuel poverty. Others wanted bills to rise for some, but not for others, with a mooted 'the polluter pays' ethos. A proportion of stakeholders wanted to see bills remain flat, citing extra poverty, unemployment uncertainty, and increasing prices as a result of the pandemic. For most, a focus on value for money was emphasised, but it was felt that if WPD demonstrated the value of that extra investment, and were transparent with where it was going, the extra spend could be justified. In the words of one stakeholder, 'If it's going to get us to where we need to be quicker, it's justified.'

Voting electronically, 37% of respondents felt that WPD's expenditure plans were acceptable, but 35% were neutral, neither agreeing, nor disagreeing, echoing perhaps the feedback of one delegate, who responded, 'I lack the detailed knowledge of how you operate to comment.' 49% of voters wanted to see more expenditure, which was the most voted for option. Discussing any aspects of WPD's proposed expenditure that caused concern, some earmarked corporate activities as potentially too high, especially in the light of Covid and increased working from home, and others reiterated the point that rural investment did not feature highly enough. An important point was made that echoed throughout the workshop and feedback, around flexibility: flexibility to invest up, or down, particularly in network reinforcement and resilience, in line with any changes to government policy that might influence the take-up of renewable technologies.



What do you consider to be an acceptable level for WPD's portion of the average domestic customer bill in RIIO-ED2 (currently £96 a year)?

Online responses:

- "The same as now." **Government**
- "£98." **Environmental group**
- "It's not enough..." **Domestic customer**
- "Maximum £100 pa for the time being." **Local authority**
- "I would support a bill increase for additional green recovery investment." **Utility**
- "If it is in support of decentralised electricity generation then I would be happy with £120 per year." **Domestic customer**
- "It could probably be higher, given that decarbonisation and increased home efficiency is likely to bring bills down." **Community energy group**
- "£150." **Domestic customer**
- "Nil." **Domestic customer**
- "Current levels are ideal for now. Personally speaking, a small increase would be OK. Investment now will reap rewards later on." **Domestic customer**
- "Good if you can keep to the present charge level but not at the cost of failing to meet demand." **Domestic customer**
- "The overall figures for investment are far too low." **Domestic customer**
- "I think that given the size of the task ahead, the portion needs to be bigger." **Domestic customer**
- "It should be higher for households with a greater reliance on the services. Households which have forms of renewable self-generation should have lower costs and those without should be increased. This will encourage those to invest in renewable tech and reduce reliance on distribution. Levels of charging could be based on rateable value as is the case for council tax and water so larger properties pay a larger amount." **Domestic customer**
- "We would like to see the cost be proportionate to the value. We appreciate that there are large investment decisions in infrastructure required. We support access to low carbon technologies and would support further investment and ambition. We are, however, mindful of the pandemic which has affected many individuals and request that support mechanisms are put in place to ensure they are not at a disadvantage as part of the energy transition." **Local authority**



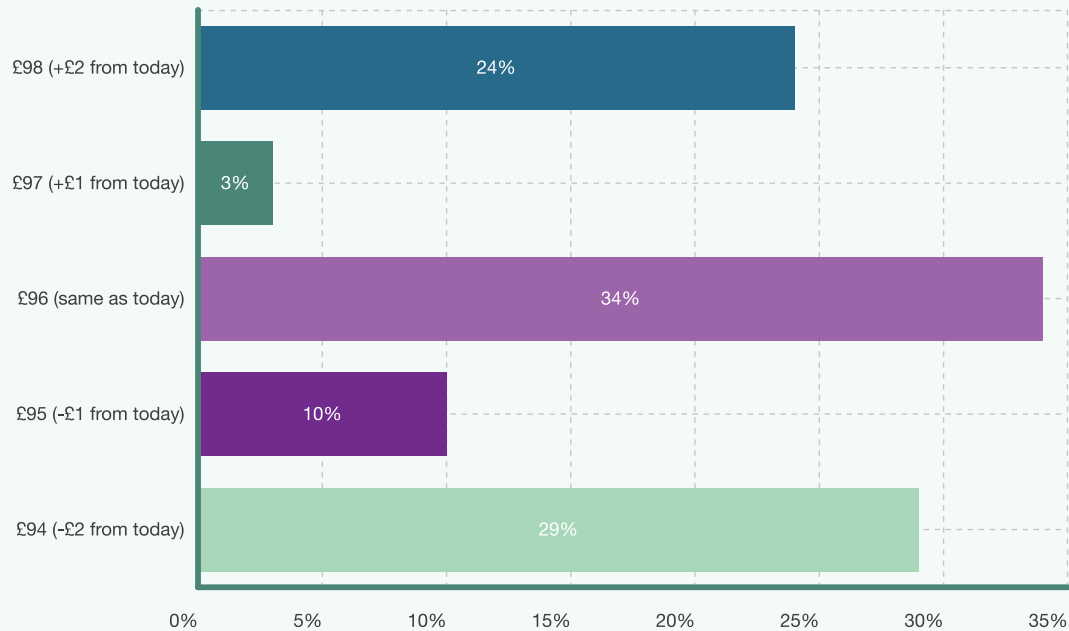
- “The current proposal – a £1.95 increase on the average domestic bill or 2.03% uplift – appears relatively negligible considering the work which is being proposed, including network reinforcement and investment on the road to Net Zero. However, it should be made clear to customers why the works are necessary, particularly from a net zero standpoint and the need to undertake works to deliver network resilience for the future. Notwithstanding this, however, affordability to local customers, particularly those who are most vulnerable or live in poorly insulated properties, is a key concern and it is important that such households are not unfairly burdened by increased bills.” **Local authority**
- “A few pounds more is acceptable. It should be communicated effectively that the consumer pays in order to support Net Zero. And not paying now will cost more at a later date in terms of climate resilience. It is clear that an upgrade in infrastructure will cost. But it should not be at the cost of the most vulnerable of our community who increasingly live in the private rented sector in poorly insulated homes. Note commitments 9-12 to support vulnerable customers.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

- “In Cornwall we have sunshine and wind, and we’re investigating geothermal. We can deliver energy at low cost, but our initiatives will fail because of the distribution system. Slapping on a bit extra to your part of the bill won’t make a big difference.” **Business customer**
- “People who cannot afford price increases must be protected whilst driving initiatives.” **Local authority**
- “My personal thoughts are, because I’ve worked with Western Power and I know what goes into and maintaining networks, that it’s very cheap.” **Business customer**



What is your response to the following statement? “I would like the WPD portion of the average domestic customer bill for RIIO-ED2 to be....”



Don't know / can't say: 8%

This question was asked as one of the social media polls. However, the question was simplified to tailor it to social media. It was expressed as “The cost of WPD’s service represents £96 of an average electricity bill per year. Do you consider this to be an acceptable charge to maintain the local energy grid?” In total, 98 customers responded to this poll. The majority (59%) answered ‘yes – it’s about right’.

Would you support increased bills in order to achieve greater change and ambition in our Business Plan commitments? If so, in what areas would you like to see greater investment? Or alternatively, do you support WPD’s current aim to keep bills as low as possible and therefore at or around the current level?

Online responses:

- “Yes. I would like to see further environmental ambitions and upgrade of the network.”
Environmental group
- “More green energy.” **Local authority**
- “Absolutely. No pain, no gain.” **Domestic customer**



- “Yes – you are needing to make many changes to restrict and adapt to climate change.” **Local authority**
- “A little.” **Local authority**
- “Increase bills. It’s the only way to make the future sustainable.” **Domestic customer**
- “Absolutely not.” **Domestic customer**
- “I would be happy for small increases if it is plain to see that electric vehicles are being catered for and more cables can be placed underground.” **Domestic customer**
- “Increase to provide greener options and motor charging points.” **Domestic customer**
- “I would accept an increase to meet environmental commitments, though I’m concerned about the impact on those with low incomes.” **Domestic customer**
- “High users should pay more for energy used.” **Domestic customer**
- “Keep bills as low as possible.” **Domestic customer**
- “If increased bills led to more support for efficiency measures in poorer communities, then I would support them.” **Community energy group**
- “[Keep the] current aim but do it better to pay for strategic challenges. No offence, I honestly believe you are a good company, but the answer is not to soak more of the national resource.” **Domestic customer**
- “I will support increased bills if that helps reduce carbon footprint.” **Domestic customer**
- “I think there is already enough being paid on the bills and changes should be made with all the extra upsurge in billing over the past few years. As a matter of fact I would love to see bills go way down lower.” **Domestic customer**
- “There will inevitably be increased bills with the required extra investment to update the grid capacity. I would welcome this as long as there was a concomitant investment in public EV charging infrastructure. This would include inductive charging and automatic penalties for ICE car obstruction of EV charging points. I would also like to see the cost of electric boilers come down, even if this means a subsidy.” **Domestic customer**
- “We’d be happy to work with WPD to identify innovative approaches here, e.g., on investing in social housing retrofit to reduce future bills and investing in decarbonisation of new developments.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- “We would be supportive of greater investment in infrastructure. However, we feel that could be achieved without raising costs significantly. We would recommend a review of the commitments to ensure it’s proportionate to the value provided.” **Local authority**



- “Yes, this would be supported if it enabled grid capacity constraints to be overcome to facilitate faster delivery of renewable and low carbon technologies (particularly decarbonised heat and transport) and secure reductions in emissions.” **Local authority**
- “Yes, greater investment to support grid restraints in retrofitting for the decarbonisation of transport and heat.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

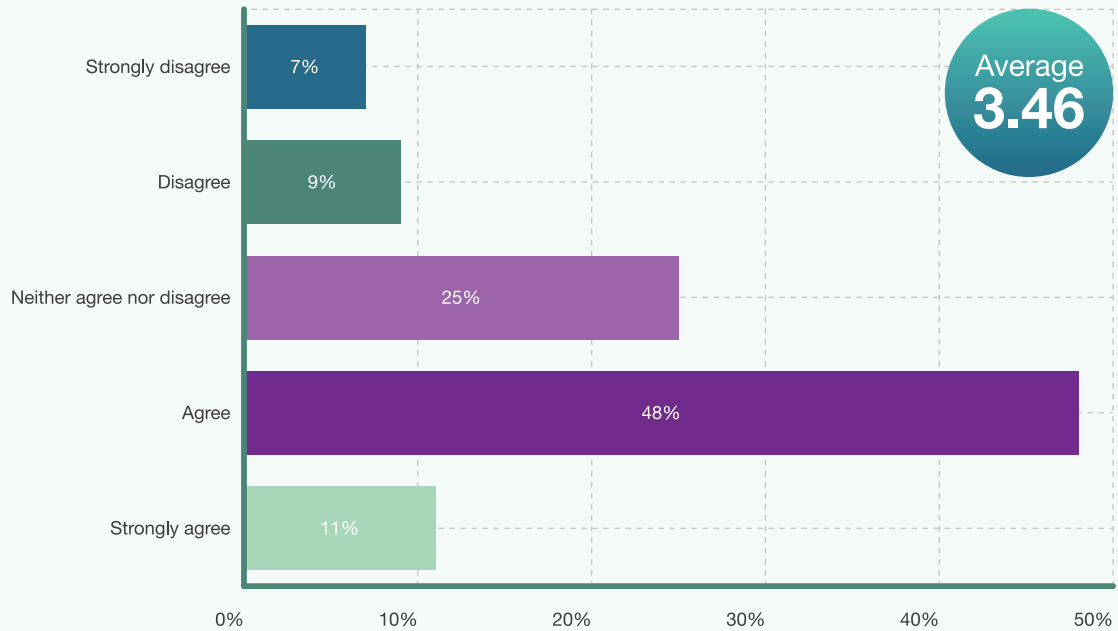
- “Some things need to be done to the grid in order to reinforce it so that we have a future on this planet and are able to mitigate the effects of climate change. On that basis, people worried about a pound or two extra on their bills seem to be missing the point. I’m less worried about minor additions to bills, but I would like to see what we’re getting for these increased charges.” **Local authority**
- “It depends on the value we’d get from a bill increase. I’d be keen to look at more future planning, and investment to open up opportunities. As a council we’re always looking at further collaboration. Have that as more of a dialogue.” **Local authority**
- “The next decade is going to be about the electrification of transport and heat. I can’t see how that can be achieved without reinforcement.” **Energy consultant**
- “It’s a small increase and you’re looking at being more flood resistant and more carbon neutral. I’d have no problem with an increase given that it’s going towards creating a different sort of network.” **Local authority**
- “Looking at the decarbonisation of heating and our fleet, at the council we’re having issues procuring the capacity to install the necessary charging. We would certainly pay the necessary fee for that capacity and once you have that in place, there’s a business case once that’s installed.” **Local authority**
- “I would be supportive of increasing it if it means that we move closer to carbon neutrality by 2035. I wouldn’t like to see a huge increase, but I don’t see a justification in keeping it the same. Only if it was directly connected to the carbon neutrality goal.” **Local authority**
- “I agree that a small proportionate change is justified. Obviously not a massive increase, just a small change. If it’s going to get us to where we need to be quicker, it’s justified.” **Local authority**
- “I completely agree. That is the basis of our response to WPD’s first draft Business Plan. Some additional spend could be added to make those net zero carbon targets a bit more stretching, and it could be justified on a slightly higher bill, though we are mindful of fuel poverty issues.” **Local authority**
- “If we can’t do it on the cheap, we need to make sure the infrastructure is there because there’s going to be such an increase in demand. It would be great if the bills could stay low, but infrastructure is more important.” **Local authority**



- “I assume that the figures don’t consider inflation. When they speak about figures staying the same over the next 10 years or so, if inflation is taken into account, in reality are those figures going down?”
Local authority
- “I would say that it is admirable to try and keep figures the same. Generally speaking, as in all technology, prices go down as the new technology comes in. I think keeping figures flat is the way to go. A lot of the core costs are revolving around employment and things like that rather than the actual technology.”
Local authority
- “With the current situation that we’re in, we need to be careful about adding a few pounds here and there, as lots of businesses are trying the same thing now. This is particularly important, bearing in mind that many people have lost their jobs during the pandemic. I support the ambitious plans being proposed, but we don’t want to overburden people on the cost front.” **Consumer body**
- “Cost will be a very serious question for households, particularly with the move to electrify everything, so I would support keeping things as flat as possible.” **Local authority**
- “I have personal opinions. As a sustainability officer I like the ‘polluter pays’ ethos. I do a lot of work around fuel poverty and there are lots of privately-rented properties that aren’t at all energy efficient and the tenants can’t afford and don’t have it in their power to update the property and make them more energy efficient.” **Local authority**
- “It is easy for people to say they support something until they have to pay for it. I think if what can be achieved can be done by keeping prices the same that would be best. People get enthused by attending events like this but then in reality it is undeliverable.” **Local authority**

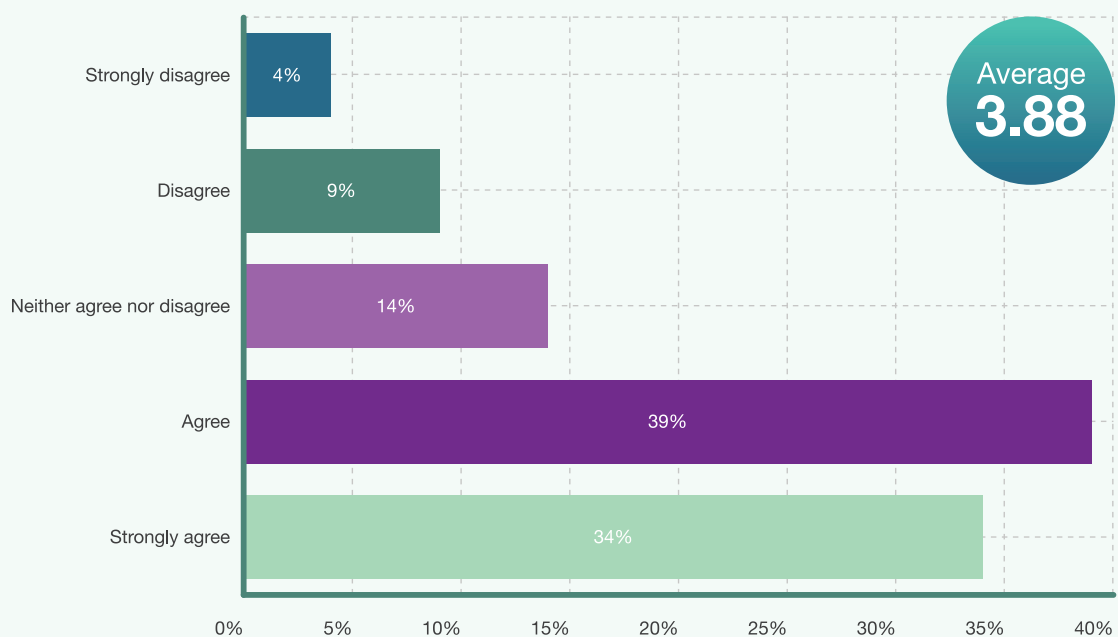


How do you feel about the following statement? “I am in agreement with WPD’s proposed approach to customer bills in RIIO-ED2.”



Don't know / can't say: 16%

How do you feel about the following statement? “I would support increased bills in order to achieve greater change and ambition in WPD’s Business Plan commitments.”



Don't know / can't say: 6%



This question was asked as one of the social media polls. However, the question was simplified to tailor it to social media. It was expressed as “Would you support an increase in your electricity bill for different levels of improvement in WPD’s service (Currently £96 a year on average)?” In total, 128 customers responded to this poll. The most common response (43%) was ‘£0 = improved service’.

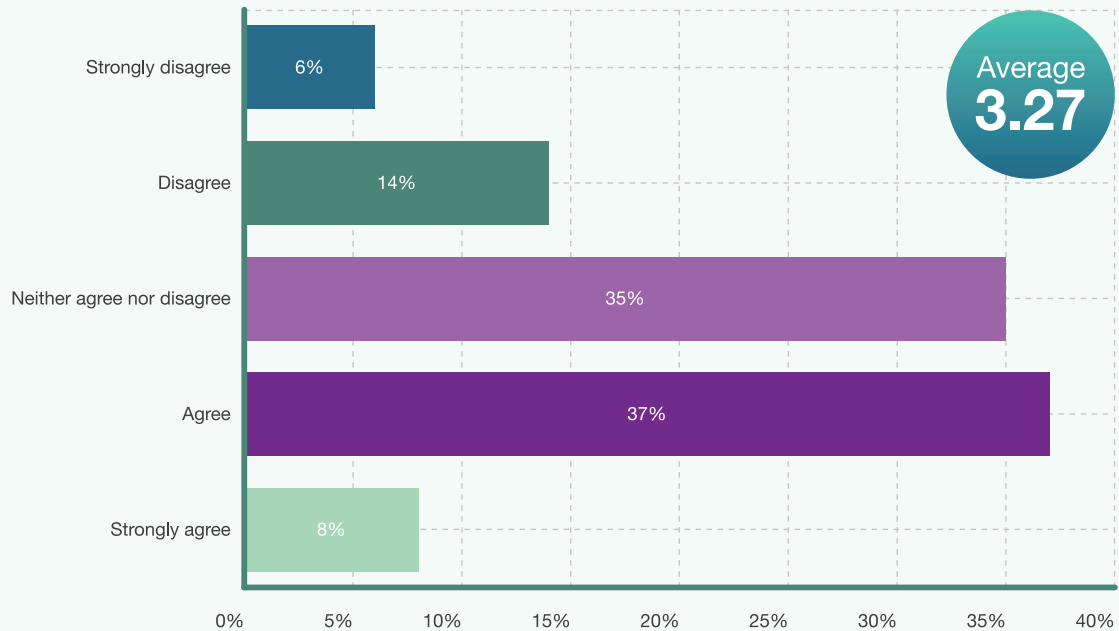
What are your views on the acceptability of WPD’s overall expenditure proposals for RIIO-ED2?

Online responses:

- “More investment required.” **Domestic customer**
- “Generally sound.” **Local authority**
- “I would support greater expenditure for green investment.” **Utility**
- “Looks OK, if a bit over-cautious. I’d push it up a bit if it were me.” **Domestic customer**
- “Not acceptable to decent hardworking people.” **Domestic customer**
- “Perfectly happy to support investment.” **Domestic customer**
- “Seem OK to an amateur eye but it’s essential we as a nation do what it takes to face the environmental challenges.” **Domestic customer**
- “More emphasis required on investment in old and substandard infrastructure on your system.” **Domestic customer**
- “Could be more ambitious – especially on strengthening the network to enable decentralised electricity generation.” **Domestic customer**
- “Too low given the climate and pollution challenges.” **Domestic customer**
- “Acceptable. Seems well balanced.” **Domestic customer**
- “I lack the detailed knowledge of how you operate to comment.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- “Capital investment needs a massive increase.” **Domestic customer**
- “It has to be clearer what part of the costs are associated with getting to Net Zero.” **Government**
- “We feel that WPD could go further if it was used to bring forward investment to support the infrastructure and plan the pipeline of activity as this is a key enabler to the market.” **Local authority**



How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall expenditure proposals are acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 4%

Are there any areas of our proposed expenditure that cause you concern? If so, please provide us with details.

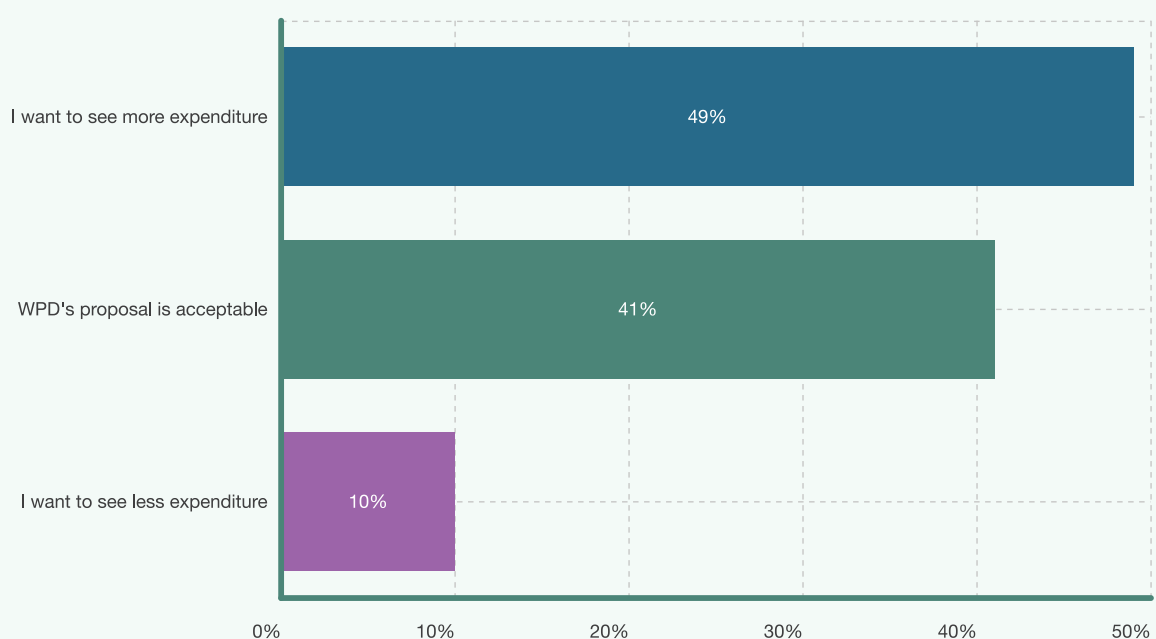
Online responses:

- “None.” **Local authority**
- “Investment in renewable distribution capacity.” **Domestic customer**
- “Network reliability should be a priority.” **Utility**
- “To be honest, I can’t see the expenditure table now and I’ve forgotten the details. Feed this back to your survey designer.” **Domestic customer**
- “Corporate activities is pretty high, especially if working from home will continue.” **Domestic customer**
- “Low voltage rural areas have been forgotten and will continue to be forgotten while profit is the priority.” **Domestic customer**
- “Renewables and EV infrastructure in rural areas are woefully under invested in.” **Domestic customer**



- “EV and heat pumps as noted above.” **Domestic customer**
- “More needs to be spent on strengthening the network to enable decentralised electricity generation.” **Domestic customer**
- “Anything related to ‘green’ or ‘renewable’ or ‘EV’ or any forcing of ‘heat pumps’ is a concern to me. Products should stand on the free market and people should hear all sides of a debate.” **Domestic customer**
- “Need more investment for the challenges, and investment in workforce.” **Domestic customer**
- “No mention of undergrounding of supply lines.” **Domestic customer**
- “It is not clear what proportion of the costs are associated with getting to Net Zero and whether the plans could be more ambitious.” **Government**
- “We have no particular concerns in terms of the expenditure, other than ensuring this is sufficient to ensure rollout of infrastructure can be maximised to facilitate Net Zero locally to enable ambitious local plans / targets to be delivered.” **Local authority**
- “Noted that WPD need to be flexible to respond to changes in government policy, as WPD are enablers of the technology being installed.” **Local authority**

Please let us know how you would like our expenditure to be planned for going forward.



Don't know / can't say: 24%



Section Four

Presentation and accessibility of the Business Plan

Section Four summarises the feedback to Questions 8 and 9 of the online consultation. The questions relating to potential bill impact were included as part of the feedback form for the online workshop but were not asked in the breakout sessions themselves. Open questions were supplemented by voting questions.

Summary

Many stakeholders felt the second draft Business Plan was well presented, contextualised and digestible. This general approval was echoed in the voting, where 59% of stakeholders either agreed or strongly agreed that the Business Plan covered the right content and that nothing was obviously missing. 58% either agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the layout and structure of the Business Plan.

There were a number of suggestions for improvement or clarity. Some felt that the commitments and current intentions were key, and the history and process of engagement should be at the close of the document. Others wanted it to include greater investment transparency and a metric for measuring success against the commitments, such as actual carbon saved via innovation projects.

Given the length and complexity of the document, some suggested a 'find' tool, or signposts, to enable stakeholders to access information that was of particular relevance to them. On accessibility, one stakeholder pointed out that some of the charts were not ideal for those who are colour blind, and another said it was difficult to navigate from an Android phone. Ensuring that all PDF feedback forms were editable before being sent to stakeholders was also suggested.

While some stakeholders found the Business Plan easy to understand, others felt that it wasn't aimed at 'normal people' and that less jargon would make it more accessible. Voting electronically, 56% felt that the Business Plan was easy to understand, and 33% were neutral. Delegates wanted to see more contextual information on products such as heat pumps and felt that having a glossary of technical terms and acronyms would be useful. Some felt the document could be shorter, and that 'less is more', or that the document could alternatively provide a two-page summary of the main points. For some, the length was a positive, but inevitably not everyone felt the same way. Others wanted to see the financial information plotted more clearly against the commitments, with greater transparency around increased costs and targeted investment.

What are your views on the overall content, layout and structure of WPD's second draft Business Plan?

Online responses:

- "Most of what I have read has been well presented and understandable." **Domestic customer**
- "Not sure if there isn't a bit much on stakeholder engagement (which is great) but I feel that



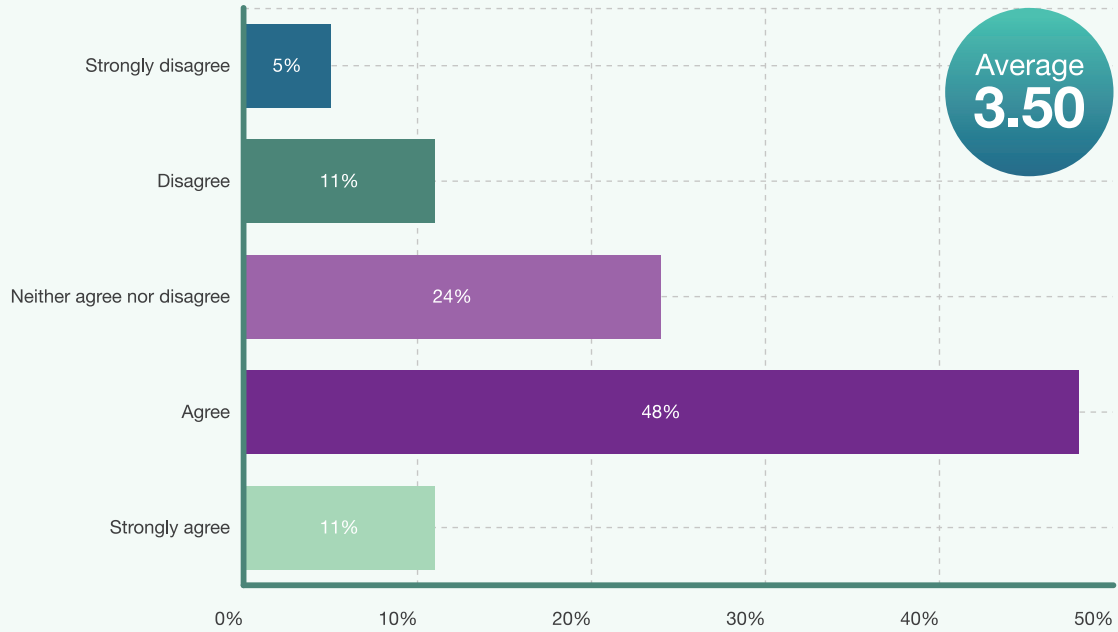
the 58 commitments and current intentions are key and should be the focus and written up front, while the history and process, etc., is less important and should be at the back in the document.”

Environmental group

- “Let’s see more investment transparency.” **Domestic customer**
- “Good. I hope it includes the measures by which you will measure your success on the commitments. And I hope that, wherever possible, these measurements can include actual carbon saved, e.g., by energy innovation.” **Local authority**
- “Too long.” **Utility**
- “I haven’t read it. I have a life. Please just sort out the switching mechanisms in Exmouth so we can use more of our stored battery power.” **Domestic customer**
- “Overall, it seems decent, but it’s not at all accessible at a quick glance – and I work in utility planning! It needs to be accompanied by something that makes more sense to customers.” **Domestic customer**
- “The link didn’t work. I accessed it from Instagram on an Android phone.” **Domestic customer**
- “Reasonable, given the nature of such a complex document.” **Domestic customer**
- “Apart from the financials it seems logical and well set out.” **Community energy group**
- “It would appear to be a thoroughly researched and well-planned draft in the midst of considerable future uncertainty.” **Domestic customer**
- “Content aside, it’s well presented.” **Domestic customer**
- “OK, but at over 200 pages who is going to read it all?” **Domestic customer**
- “A large amount of it is not aimed at the lay person.” **Domestic customer**
- “Excellent presentation, clear language. Some charts are not ideal for those of us who are colour blind – I’m happy to talk you through that if it’s helpful.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- “Overall... as with any document of such length, sometimes it’s difficult to find (or find again) a specific topic. Find is a useful friend, as in searching for ‘Totex’. The language used is mostly plain with only a few abbreviations needing an explanation to be found, so easy to follow. The tables (particularly the long ones) should use ‘repeat header rows’ and disable ‘allow row to break across pages’. They would look a lot better with some attention.” **Parish / community council**
- “From what was found, the response form was provided in PDF or online format. I was unable to edit the PDF (despite it being labelled ‘editable’) and have had to spend much time replicating the form into Microsoft format in order to send a response in. Please can this be considered in future consultations?” **Local authority**

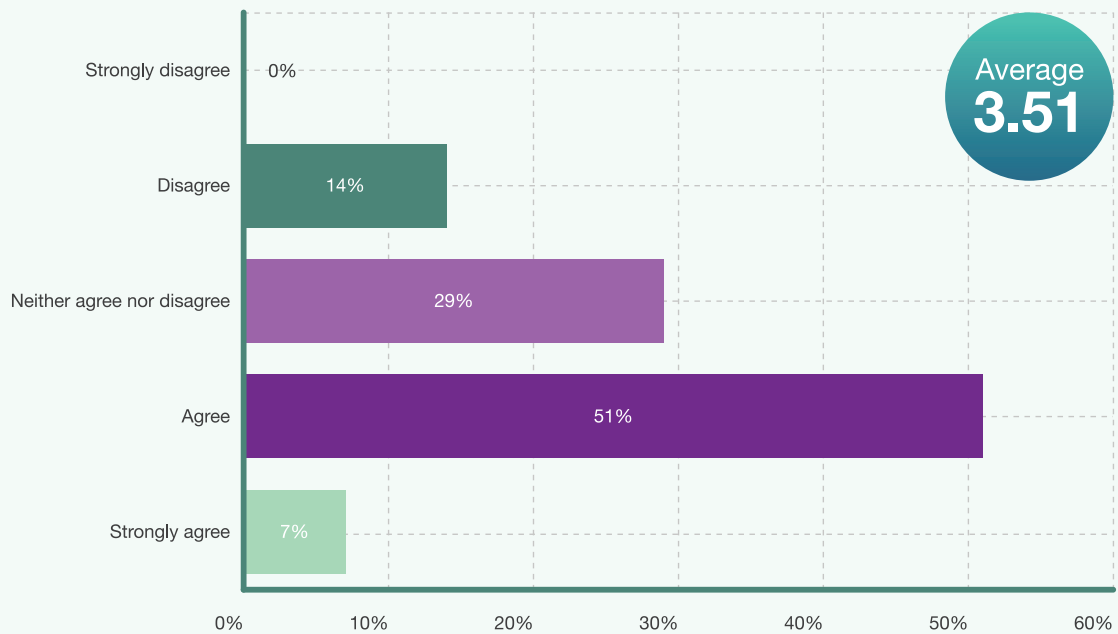


How do you feel about the following statement? “WPD’s Business Plan covers the correct content and there is nothing obviously missing.”



Don't know / can't say: 3%

How do you feel about the following statement? “I like the layout and structure of WPD’s draft Business Plan.”



Don't know / can't say: 8%



How easy is it to understand and what would you change to make it clearer?

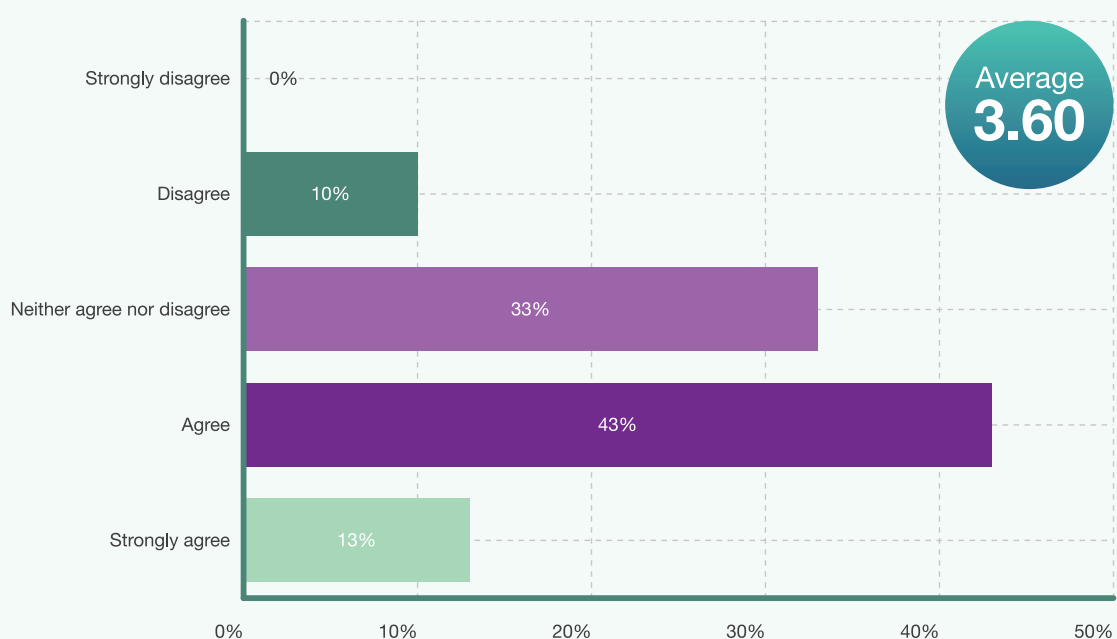
Online responses:

- “Very easy.” **Local authority**
- “I think that information about WPD’s latest commitments should be at the front of the document as this information is the most important and is surely what it is all about. A management summary would be useful. The history of how it all came about, the process gone through and stakeholder engagement seems less important to me and something to include at the back of the document. And there seems to be rather a lot of repetition. I think a shorter, more concise document would be more likely to be read. Less is more.” **Environmental group**
- “Could be shorter and in plain English. Very wordy and too detailed.” **Utility**
- “Complicated and hiding the real cost. Fuel poverty will increase markedly.” **Domestic customer**
- “It is very clear. I would like to see provision to be flexible in case electric car sales are higher than anticipated.” **Domestic customer**
- “The written material backed up by the webinar is sufficiently clear for a member of the public in my view.” **Domestic customer**
- “Keep it simple and honest, then the transparency will let the love for our planet shine through.” **Domestic customer**
- “Reasonably easy given the need for the amount and complexity of the content.” **Domestic customer**
- “Relate the financial information more directly to the core commitments.” **Community energy group**
- “I guess knowing more about the business, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats plus the workforce age profile and development requirements would help form an opinion of what costs lay ahead.” **Domestic customer**
- “Add a two-page general summary.” **Domestic customer**
- “Simple bulleted action points.” **Domestic customer**
- “It is a mighty read and one must be prepared to grapple with and grasp some of the inevitable jargon contained within it. I personally found it very informative, not being from an electrical nor engineering background.” **Domestic customer**
- “A good attempt to explain as well as plan for the service you provide.” **Domestic customer**



- “It feels like the document is not really aimed at normal people. The emphasis on aspects that are really not relevant to normal people. E.g., heat pumps are important but given the majority of people have no idea what a heat pump is it is perhaps necessary to offer an ‘idiots guide’ for these things.”
Domestic customer
- “[Have a] glossary of some of technical terms and abbreviations.” **Domestic customer**
- “I have probably answered this already. It has a look of being thrown together. Have someone who is fussy on layout and consistency and doesn’t care about the content; tidy it up.”
Parish / community council
- “Revert to an editable word document rather than the PDF.” **Local authority**
- “Lots of content which requires a lot of time to plough through. I appreciate the breadth of your audience / customer base but feel it would be useful if signposts could be made so the audience can quickly dive into relevant sections (or if the excellent interactive sessions were tailored to specific audiences?). Irrespective of this the content is considered to be good overall.” **Local authority**
- “The Plan is lengthy; a short version is welcomed. Online seminar and interactive workshops have supported the development of the Plan.” **Local authority**

How do you feel about the following statement? “WPD’s draft business plan is easy to understand.”



Don't know / can't say: 6%



Section Five

Business Plan commitments

Section Five summarises the feedback to Questions 10 and 11 (core commitments) and Questions 12, 13 and 14 (additional commitments in our second draft Business Plan) of the online consultation. The questions were also asked at the online workshop. At the online workshop, the questions relating to the core commitments were separated out under the three Ofgem themes: meeting the needs of consumers and network users; delivering an environmentally sustainable network; and maintaining a safe and resilient network. The report has been structured in the same way. A series of voting questions were asked in relation to the Business Plan commitments, some of which were asked as part of the online consultation and some during the online workshop. Several social media polls were also asked in relation to some of the commitments.

Summary

Overall commitments

There were very few core commitments that stakeholders disagreed with; for the most part, it was felt they were appropriate and covered the right areas. This general endorsement was witnessed in the voting, where 72% agreed or strongly agreed with this question. Some, however, felt that there were too many commitments, and that though they were all well intentioned, a ‘top ten’ streamlined set of commitments, centred around Net Zero, was perhaps more achievable. Others wanted to see more clarity on the community energy commitments, and some felt the net zero targets were not ambitious enough. Stakeholders from local authorities wanted to make sure that collaboration with other DNOs was a core commitment, particularly for those in areas that straddle two DNOs, and others wanted to make sure that a focus on expanding online communications was not done at the expense of more traditional methods, such as phone and letter. Most stakeholders agreed with the new commitments, although some felt that there could be more ambition to get customers to Net Zero, as well as the business, and that there was still a gap in the commitments around battery storage.

New commitments

Commitment 16: Provide a same day connections response for domestic customers by introducing online self-assessment tools for individual low carbon technology applications

The overwhelming sense was that delegates really welcomed the ambition and content of the commitment. 68% felt that this commitment was appropriate and ambitious enough. The speed of the ambition was praised, with a key comment being: ‘As someone involved in persuading people to take up LCTs, the last thing you want is anything that might slow them down in this process.’ There were some caveats around making sure that the online tool did not exclude customers who were not digitally literate, and local authorities questioned just how many domestic customers would realistically be making the applications themselves. The advice here was to make sure tradespeople and SMEs knew of the tool, as well as WPD’s customer base. Others worried that the same day target would divert resources from other areas of the business, and delegates from the connections industry had concerns that not all customers would have all of the correct information in order to make an accurate application. In this case, the advice was for WPD to assume generic information, such as the make and model of LCT, in order to generate an estimated quotation.

Commitment 47: Ensure capacity availability to enable Net Zero to be achieved across our regions sooner than 2050 (some areas as soon as 2030), in line with the ambitions of stakeholders in each region

Commitment 47 was also broadly welcomed by stakeholders. This was supported not only by comments and feedback, but also methods such as canvassing the digital room by inviting ‘thumbs ups’ to get a clear sense of consensus. 59% felt that this commitment was ambitious enough, and 24% wanted to see even greater ambition. Some delegates pointed out that not all local authorities were as prepared for Net Zero as others, and might need



more hand holding and consultation, while others made it clear that WPD should work with local authorities to make it clear what capacity was available, and when, and critically, how to make best use of it to minimise the risk of creating extra capacity that was not then fully utilised. A suggestion to complement this high-level commitment with a hyperlocal one was mooted.

Commitment 55: We will deliver service improvements to drive business innovative efficiencies to assist our customers to reduce overall energy costs

Stakeholders felt that commitment 55 needed more clarity. Respondents were unclear as to what was meant by 'service improvements' and felt that an estimated value of the savings needed to be put against the commitment to improve understanding. However, when voting on this commitment, 62% thought it was appropriate and ambitious enough. Interestingly, while 14% called for greater ambition, a similar proportion (12%) wanted to less ambition in this area.

Commitment 58: Facilitate access to funding streams by providing support to community energy groups when making submissions to our calls for ideas

Commitment 58 was welcomed, but again, some stakeholders asked for more clarity over what 'access to funding streams' meant in reality. 63% felt that this commitment was appropriate and ambitious enough.

Alternative commitments

Discussing alternative commitments, or whether stakeholders felt anything was missing, there was a clear appetite for a distinct 'rural renewables' commitment, with earmarked investment to ensure less well-connected parts of the country could participate in Net Zero. Others suggested tweaks and additions to already existing commitments included adding solar to the LCT online connections tool, greater ambition when it comes to connecting storage, and more frequent consultations with local planners and authorities. There was a clear desire for WPD to be a statutory consultee on planning applications, with much anecdotal evidence of new builds going up that were not serviced with renewable technologies, which was seen as blocking the road to Net Zero. Greater leadership was advocated here, along with a commitment to changing policy structures – such as the ability to invest ahead of need – in order to enable greater change.

Meeting the needs of our consumers and network users

Stakeholders discussed the overall package of commitments designed to meet the needs of WPD's customers and network users, and all of the recorded responses were positive, with praise for the breadth and detail of the consultation process and the changes made in response to each stage of stakeholder feedback.

Delegates were equally positive about the overall package of commitments under Customer Service, with 92% strongly agreeing or agreeing that the proposals were acceptable. Some shared their positive experience of WPD's customer service, and any comments for improvement were around whether some of the response times were almost too ambitious: most felt that they could wait longer than five seconds for someone to pick up the phone, and more than a minute for a response on webchat.

There was a bit more reservation expressed over the commitments under Vulnerability and Fuel Poverty, and this was echoed in the electronic voting, where 61% agreed they were appropriate, 18% were neutral, and 11% disagreed. Some delegates wanted more concrete figures around the threshold of fuel poverty, and others urged WPD to divert resources to specialist organisations working specifically in the field of fuel poverty, as they were felt to have the requisite experience and trust within the community. Others felt that WPD did not have the same 'grip' on fuel poverty compared to other utilities and organisations and wanted to see clearer pathways for people to emerge from fuel poverty. Some pointed out that the targets around the PSR could be more ambitious, particularly in the light of Covid, which has exposed previously invisible vulnerabilities.

The package around Connections was more widely endorsed, with 86% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the proposals were appropriate. The ambitious timescales were praised, and delegates felt that as long as they were kept in the loop about extra capacity coming online, they would be able to make best use of the power.

Discussing the commitments under Social Contract, delegates agreed that the volunteering time was perhaps too short, and that WPD could afford to be more ambitious here. Greater clarity around the language used in this commitment was also called for, as it was felt that 'community matters' was quite vague. Voting electronically, 69%



agreed that the package was acceptable, and 11% were neutral.

Delivering an environmentally sustainable network

Stakeholders were mostly pleased with the package of proposals under Environment and Sustainability, and this was reflected in the voting, where 82% either agreed or strongly agreed that they were appropriate. The overall ambition and stretched zero carbon target were particularly praised, especially by those who had participated in consultation processes that had made this change a reality. Leaky, oil-filled cables were singled out for concern, and delegates asked whether there was a more proactive way to measure the infrastructure and assets that needed replacing. It was also questioned whether this was best achieved as a sustainability target, and whether it might be better as a capital maintenance target. Some wanted to see WPD report clearly and transparently on the process of removing risks and have a commitment to do so.

A resounding majority of 92% felt that WPD's overall package of proposals under A Smart, Flexible Network were appropriate. Delegates wanted to see improved access to fresher, more granular data, especially around the low voltage network, to better enable connections for LCTs and flexibility. They also saw that better advice, support and consultation for customers in this area would be invaluable. Some suggested that even greater investment than that proposed was required to transform the energy system into one that was smart and flexible, and that funding constraints should not be allowed to get in the way of Net Zero.

83% either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals under Innovation. Stakeholders suggested greater collaboration with other companies and competitors to drive innovation forward and wanted to see more innovative methods and technologies integrated as business as usual across the sector as a whole.

The package around Community Energy was warmly received, as 92% either agreed or strongly agreed that the proposals were appropriate. Regular surgeries were seen as very useful, particularly when bridging the gap between different levels of expertise. Once again, stakeholders who had endorsed the community energy plans in the first rounds of engagement around the Business Plan were pleased to see they had been listened to, emphasising the importance of committing to this very extensive process of refinement. Some felt that a better measure of success against the commitments might be around how many projects there were up and running at the close of the period, rather than how many surgeries were held.

Maintaining a safe and resilient network

When asked about the overall proposals under 'maintaining a safe and resilient network', stakeholders affirmed that they thought the package was detailed, ambitious, and complete, and had been reassuringly improved through the consultation process.

Moving onto Network Resilience, a resounding 89% either agreed or strongly agreed with the commitments. Digging down into the feedback, it was clear that stakeholders were most concerned about increased flooding and the impact of climate change. In Herefordshire, for example, it was cited that they had had far above average 1 in 100-year floods, and that WPD might need to increase their flood estimates to ensure that it has adequate resources to both tackle flooding when it occurred, and to install decent flood defences. Others wanted to see numerical context around flood defences, so that they could analyse WPD's proposal more forensically. There was some debate around improving the length of average power outages, with some (who, admittedly, could not recall the last time they had a power cut) feeling that resources would be better spent on flood defences. Others, however, felt that eliminating 'worst served customers' and reducing outages was vital work and a 'brilliant undertaking'.

There was clearly a level of concern around cyber security, with many expressing the anxiety that with greater electrification would come greater vulnerability in terms of the security of the overall network. Some felt the commitment was lacking in detail, and others suggested conducting external reviews, with third parties assessing WPD's susceptibility to attack, as opposed to measuring the level of threat internally. Others wanted to see a level of investment proportionate to actual – rather than perceived – risk, but most saw that this was difficult to assess, 'because it's what you don't know you don't know.' Given the seriousness stakeholders placed on this topic, many were glad to see it had been made a higher priority. Some of the ambivalence around whether WPD were able to adequately tackle this was reflected in the electronic voting, where 65% agreed that the overall package for Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience was appropriate, 6% disagreed and 19% were neutral.

On Safety, many pointed out that greater undergrounding of cables, while expensive, would decrease the risks in many areas, from weather events and from people's exposure to high and low voltage cables. Some felt that the

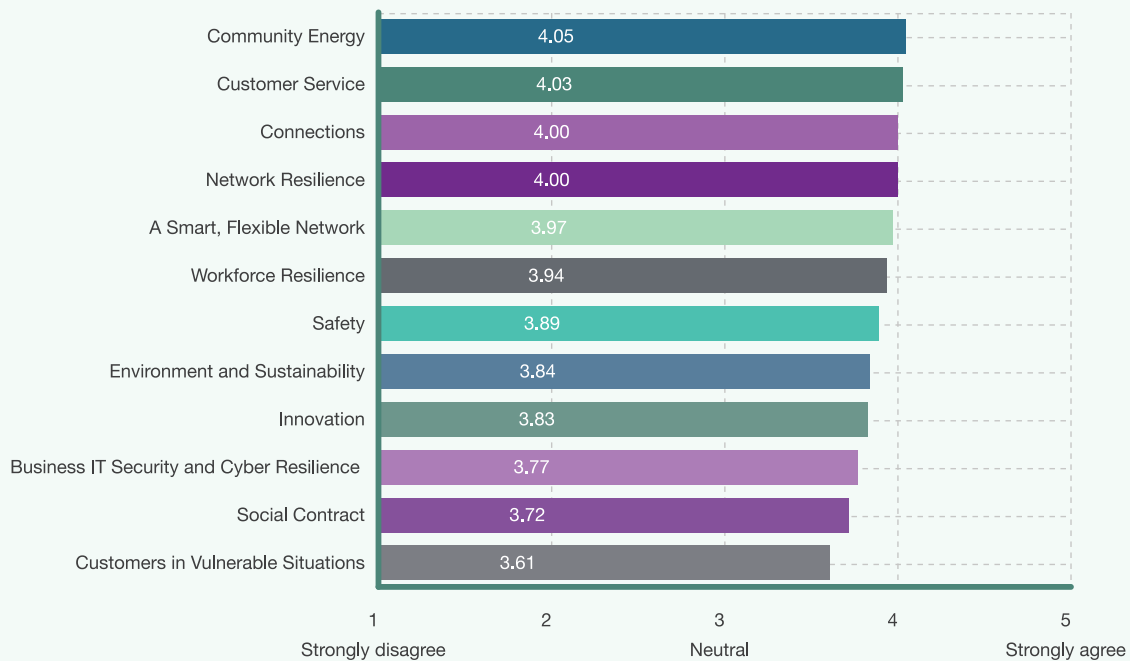


proposed safety packages sent out to schools were not likely to be as effective as something done with digital and social media, such as compelling, well-made content on YouTube, or more interactive digital exercises and learning done in schools. Others saw the value in going into schools as a way of getting young people interested in electricity and the potential of renewables, as well as educating them on possible career pathways in this area.

This was also explored in the context of Workforce Resilience, as stakeholders saw the need to diversify the workforce by including more women and younger candidates, as evidenced by the fact that the stakeholders participating in the workshop were overwhelmingly white, older, and male. They saw that the commitments under Workforce Resilience to ensure greater diversity sent out a positive message on the future of the company and the wider industry. Voting electronically, 83% either agreed or strongly agreed that the proposals under Safety were appropriate, and 88% either agreed or strongly agreed that the commitments under Workforce Resilience were correct.

There was a good deal of debate around the question of improving network resilience further, so that the average customer experiences service better than one power cut every two years lasting 24 minutes. Some felt strongly that investment needed to be proportionate to the value added, and that in some areas where reliability is already very good, there is a point of diminishing returns. Conversely, some worst-served customers stated that '24 minutes of power cuts per year sounded like a bargain'. However, given the geographical diversity of WPD's customer base, there was always going to be disagreement on this issue, with others feeling that WPD could improve on one interruption every two years, and that this commitment was not ambitious enough. Others felt that with the changes coming onto the network with the push for Net Zero, reliability might get worse, meaning this target might become too ambitious. For the most part, stakeholders appreciated the difficulty in satisfying all customers in this area. Voting electronically, 62% either agreed or strongly agreed that this commitment demonstrated the correct level of service, 21% were neutral, and 18% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Overall, for Network Resilience, 89% of stakeholders strongly agreed or agreed with the package of commitments.

Average responses on whether stakeholders agreed or disagreed that WPD's overall package of proposals for each area were acceptable





Overall commitments

Are there any core commitments you do not agree with? If so please tell us why?

Online responses:

- “No.” **Environmental group**
- “On 55, I suggest you simplify this to support community energy groups to access funding. The last few words are confusing.” **Local authority**
- “As commitments in themselves they seem fine. However, there is a weakness in the area of community energy. Workshops are not enough.” **Community energy group**
- “Network reliability is too vague.” **Utility**
- “The decarbonisation targets are far too weak – 2030 is the absolute latest you can get to Net Zero by.” **Domestic customer**
- “In essence, [they are] fine. Prediction of trends is difficult but taking the lead and generating the volumes and hence price reductions could change the situation from being a ‘follower’ to a ‘leader’ of change.” **Domestic customer**
- “Too many. Fewer and sharper would be better.” **Domestic customer**
- “Possibly too many commitments to aim for. However, they are well intentioned.” **Domestic customer**
- “I think there should be a bigger commitment to supporting the storage of renewable energy, particularly in the form of hydrogen.” **Domestic customer**
- “There are too many commitments, and I would rather see you commit and stick to a maximum of ten with how to get to Net Zero top of the list.” **Government**
- “For commitments 10,12,13 and 14 on customers in vulnerable situations, we feel this funding could be better utilised and more efficient in more localised established routes.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

- “Our local authority is split, so we have WPD and SSE, and the split happens where we have a lot of growth. We are keen that both WPD and SSE are engaged to ensure that capacity is addressed in our principal town where the majority of growth is happening. I don’t know if there’s anything within the commitments about engaging with other DNOs.” **Local authority**



- “About the number 16 one, like yourselves I guess the councils are always trying to work out how to get to those members of the public that are quite hard to reach. Will there be a way that they can also access this information? I know that some organisations have gone digital by default so that’s reassuring that you’re not leaving behind the people who aren’t online.” **Local authority**
- “That number 58, the funding streams one, they wanted to develop ideas but didn’t have the skills to do that, so there is some work to do there. The target of 2030 is great but it’s just having the resources to do that. With the online tools I agree with the previous speaker. The only thing is that we’re quite well off and can afford a computer, but others can’t, so you need someone to talk to on the phone.” **Local authority**

New commitments

Do you consider these new commitments to be appropriate? Would you like to change the level of ambition currently proposed (either increase or decrease)?

Online responses:

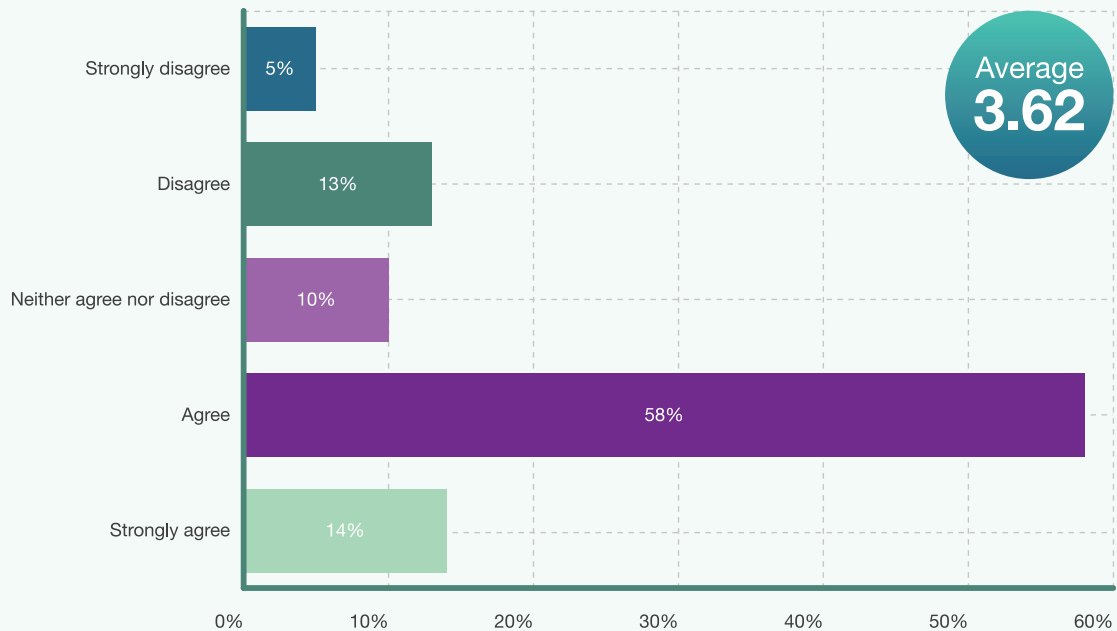
- “Very appropriate and responded well. Level of ambition seems good.” **Domestic customer**
- “Yes, but the focus should be on consumers meeting Net Zero, not WPD.” **Domestic customer**
- “Greater focus on decentralised electricity generation at household level.” **Domestic customer**
- “Yes, engagement with business, particularly a growing manufacturing industry is essential.” **Domestic customer**
- “There should be a commitment to energy storage.” **Domestic customer**
- “More undergrounding of supply lines.” **Domestic customer**
- “Higher distribution system investment in planning for the future in rural areas.” **Domestic customer**
- “We support the increased scope of the core commitments, and introduction of new core commitments to ensure that BP2 is fit for purpose and future-proofed, particularly in terms of environmental sustainability, for the period 2023-2028.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

- “The commitments are good.” **Emergency services**



How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s new core commitments are appropriate and ambitious enough.”



Don't know / can't say: 5%

Commitment 16: Provide a same day connections response for domestic customers by introducing online self-assessment tools for individual low carbon technology applications

Online responses:

- “On commitment 16, we would suggest support and signposting for those unable to connect, and also monitoring demand of areas where connections are being requested (accepted and declined) for future investment.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

- “On commitment 16, I think that seems quite a sensible commitment. I guess it’s the sort of response people would expect if they had the data ready.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- “On commitment 16, I think it’s a very good idea. I used to get a lot of people complaining. I fully support that.” **Parish / community council**
- “On commitment 16, having been through the process of trying to get EV connections with WPD over the past few months, I would welcome this greatly.” **Domestic customer**



- “Commitment 16 is great for digitally enabled customers, but those who are not will be excluded. You need to think about what to do with customers who are not online.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

- “Is there a demonstrated need for same-day response? It may outstretch you and prevent you from doing other things.” **Business customer**

- “WPD is not the only connecting agency out there, but you are the only DNO in your area. A connections focus is acceptable, but you can do other things that other market players cannot do. Connections may become a distraction from the core service. The key thing is that I don’t envisage most domestic customers doing this themselves. While it’s nice to offer this, really you should make sure that SMEs and tradesmen know how to use this.” **Local authority**

- “An online self-assessment tool hopefully takes pressure off WPD and increases efficiency.”

Local authority

- “I’m not well positioned to say because I’ve not read the whole Business Plan, but these look good. 16 looks ambitious, especially as it goes down to the LV level. I commend you on this.” **Energy consultant**

- “I like the self-assessment tool one (commitment 16). As someone involved in persuading people to take up LCTs, the last thing you want is anything that might slow them down in this process. I know the community energy groups I work with will appreciate any assistance. They normally whinge about WPD not having enough capacity!” **Community energy group**

- “I think the same-day response is a really good idea and is really positive. As a user, when you get a response quickly that’s really good. A very strong commitment.” **Local authority**

- “You’ve got a commitment in there for domestic customers in relation to an online self-assessment tool. Do you think that’s ignoring your business customers and developers? You could see your business customers looking at that and thinking ‘well what about us?’. As a tool it would be helpful for other customers to have something to access.” **IDNO**

- “Commitment 16 is amazing.” **Parish / community council**

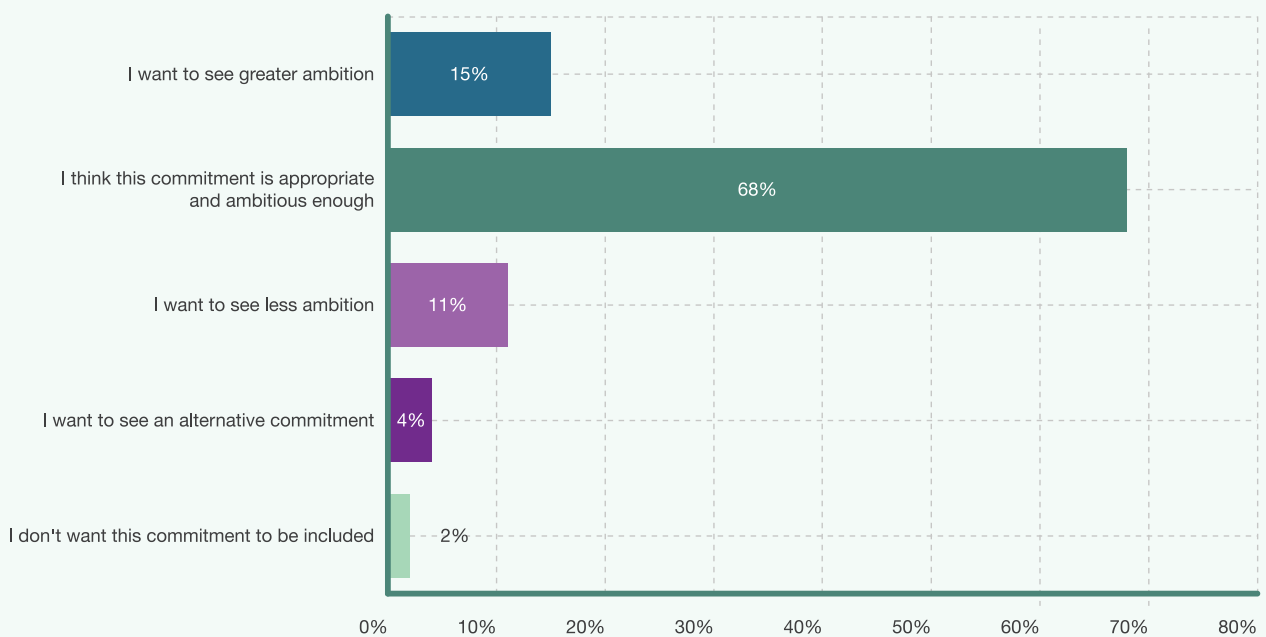
- “Re commitment 16, one of the things that I get asked about is connecting batteries to solar-panel systems. Would these kinds of connections be available under this commitment? As batteries and heat pump systems get more affordable, will there be an uptick in numbers? Maybe something more ambitious is needed.” **Community energy group**

- “I make a lot of connection applications, and for any low carbon technology, a big stumbling block is that unless you know from the start the make and model of what you’re going to put in, you can’t get a quote. That’s going to be a stumbling block for the average person trying to get low carbon technology. It would be good if WPD could assume generic information and caveat the quote, but otherwise you’re



going to have to have people investing time and money into finding what they're going to install, before they even know if they can get the connection.” **Connections provider**

How do you feel about the following new commitment? “Provide a same day connections response for customers by introducing online self-assessment tools for individual low carbon technology applications.”



Don't know / can't say: 5%

This question was asked as one of the social media polls. However, the question was simplified to tailor it to social media. It was expressed as “Would you like to see us provide a same day new connections response by introducing online self-assessment tools for low carbon technology applications?” In total, 32 customers responded to this poll. The same proportion (38%) answered ‘yes’ as answered ‘not interested’. The full results of the social media polls can be found in Appendix 3.



Commitment 47: Ensure capacity availability to enable Net Zero to be achieved across our regions sooner than 2050 (some areas as soon as 2030), in line with the ambitions of stakeholders in each region

Online responses:

- “I would like you to work in a whole system way, not only with National Grid but with people wanting to set up Local Distribution Networks, for instance when you are unable to accept large scale solar from, e.g., a new housing development or business park. If you could instead provide battery storage for LCTs at substations that would be even better.” **Local authority**
- “I think these are all excellent commitments. Although I have already broadly agreed with proposed expenditure levels, we are all going to have to be prepared for higher levels of investment from whatever source to be sure of reaching zero carbon (globally) much sooner than by 2050. Be prepared to be even more ambitious.” **Domestic customer**
- “With commitment 47, that’s laudable and great but is couched in high-level terms by regions. It suggests that any customer can install LCTs within a certain timeframe: a hyperlocal commitment could complement this high-level one.” **Local authority**
- “Capacity at your end is one thing. There is also LA capacity to actually deliver on your capacity. A two-pronged approach is required. There is no value in doing that without people turning it into actual usage. People need to be able to understand what capacity is becoming available and when. Turning this into plans on the ground is difficult. Commitment 47 needs to be complemented with support to ensure that the capacity is used.” **Local authority**
- “We are very supportive of commitment 47. It would be very useful if it could be communicated to us when capacity comes online. Knowing that capacity is becoming available can help our planning.” **Local authority**
- “I welcome this commitment. Obviously, this will support the UK’s net zero aspirations and the government’s ten-point plan by ensuring the electricity network is capable of achieving this well ahead of the government’s overall target of 2050.” **Energy / utilities company**
- “What the UK needs is for its electricity network operators to recognise the fundamental nature of their role. We need them to make the speedy enablement of decarbonisation at least cost an unequivocal imperative – and for this imperative to share equal status as those of maintaining safe and resilient networks, and profitability.” **Energy / utilities company**

Workshop responses:

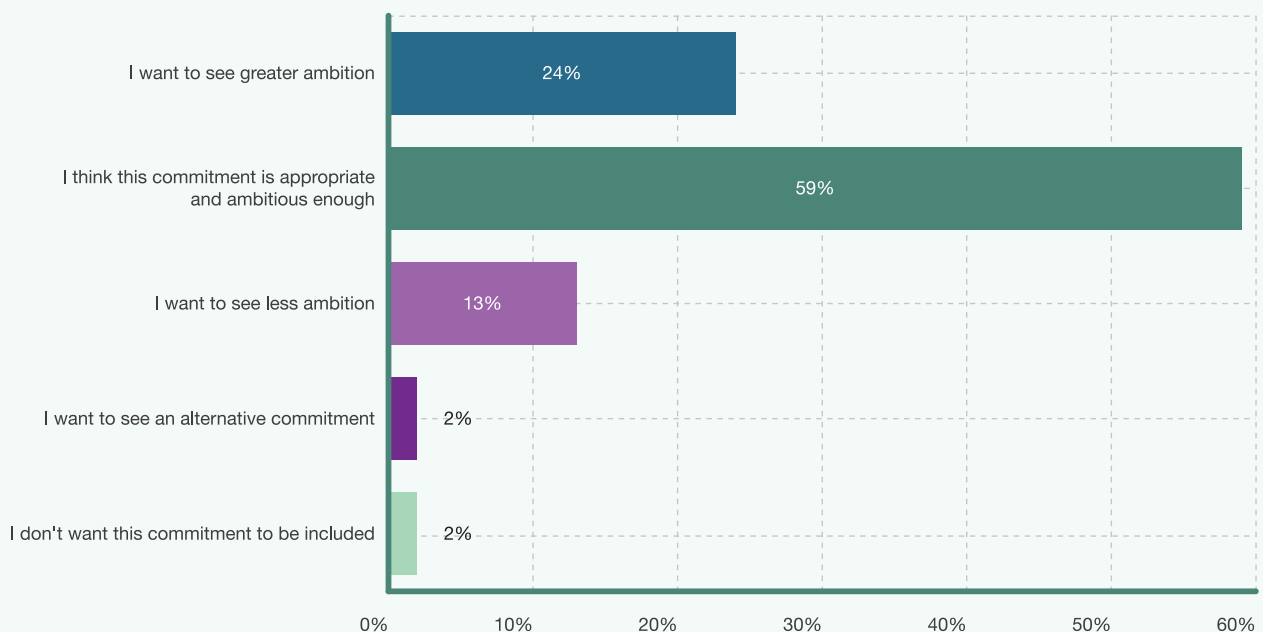
- “While I think that this commitment is appropriate, there is still scope to go further and find ways to seize upon opportunities to do more work with local authorities with less ambitious targets, as we don’t want



them to be left behind. There really needs to be more support and hand-holding for local authorities that are less organised on projects to facilitate a net zero transition and are slower out of the traps as a result.” **Local authority**

- “From our consultation response, I’m pleased to see about the capacity availability to enable Net Zero. As a local authority, we have an ambition to be Net Zero ourselves, and are trying to get that by 2030 but aiming for 2023, and with an ambition to be a net zero district by 2030. I’m also pleased to see the support to community energy groups, as we have quite active community energy groups within our district.” **Local authority**
- “I am worried about number 47. I’m just wondering if the industry will be able to meet this power that’s going to be needed.” **Parish / community council**
- “I think that is overambitious to get an increase in the network over the next nine years. You may get 50% there but not fully. It’s not possible.” **Parish / community council**

How do you feel about the following new commitment? “Ensure capacity availability to enable Net Zero to be achieved across our regions sooner than 2050 (some areas as soon as 2030), in line with the ambitions of stakeholders in each region.”



Don't know / can't say: 6%



This question was asked as one of the social media polls. However, the question was simplified to tailor it to social media. It was expressed as “We aim to provide enough electricity to enable Net Zero to be achieved in some areas as early as 2030. Is this soon enough?” In total, 83 customers responded to this poll. The most common response (43%) was ‘no, I want it sooner’. The full results of the social media polls can be found in Appendix 3.

Commitment 55: We will deliver service improvements to drive business innovative efficiencies to assist our customers to reduce overall energy costs

Online responses:

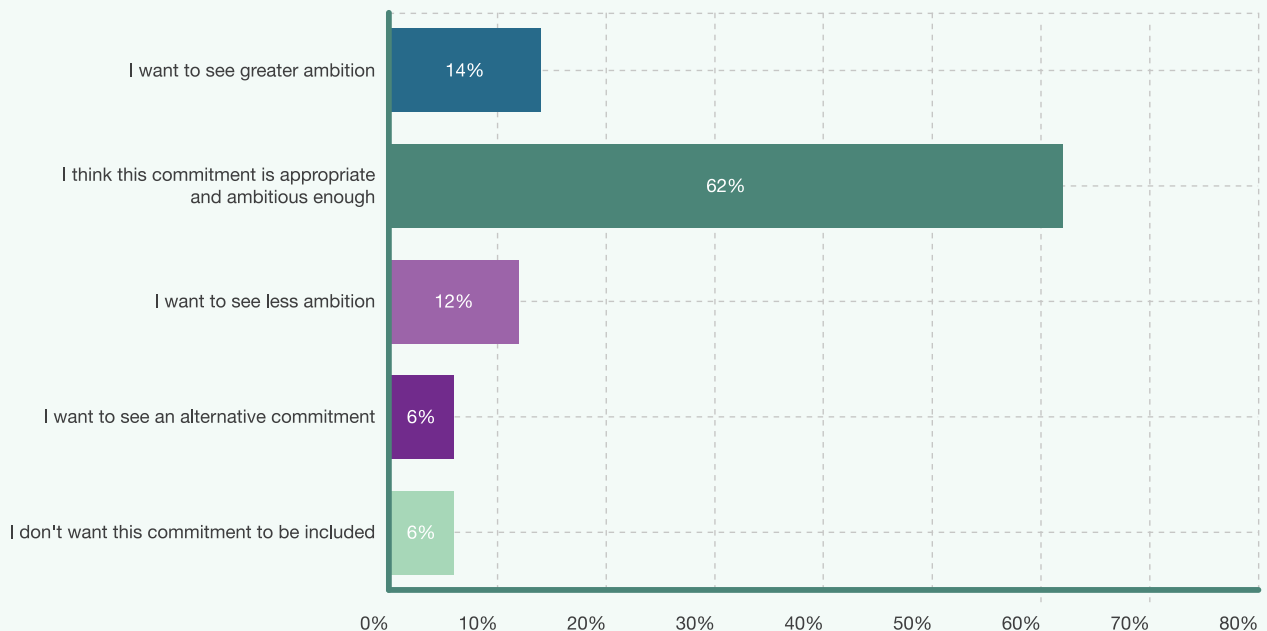
- “I want clarification of what ‘service improvements’ are to be provided, plus an indication of the expected reduction in customer costs to be provided.” **Domestic customer**

Workshop responses:

- “I would support this, but it is very wishy washy.” **Local authority**
- “This is a good objective and I thoroughly support it. However, the wording is not very specific, so I need some context so that I can comment on whether it is being achieved.” **Domestic customer**
- “This objective lacks clarity and I don’t know what the other obstacles being faced by WPD, companies and other customers are. There’s too much that we don’t know here.” **Local authority**
- “Number 55 seems to go against what we just voted for. Obviously, we want you to drive business efficiencies but not necessarily to reduce overall energy costs.” **Local authority**
- “On commitment 55, where you want to help customers innovate efficiencies, it would be more informative if you were able to get some feedback on the actual results on energy savings, i.e., give a sample of those customers.” **Local authority**



How do you feel about the following new commitment? “We will deliver service improvements to drive innovative business efficiencies to assist our customers and reduce overall energy costs.”



Don't know / can't say: 7%

Commitment 58: Facilitate access to funding streams by providing support to community energy groups when making submissions to our calls for ideas

Online responses:

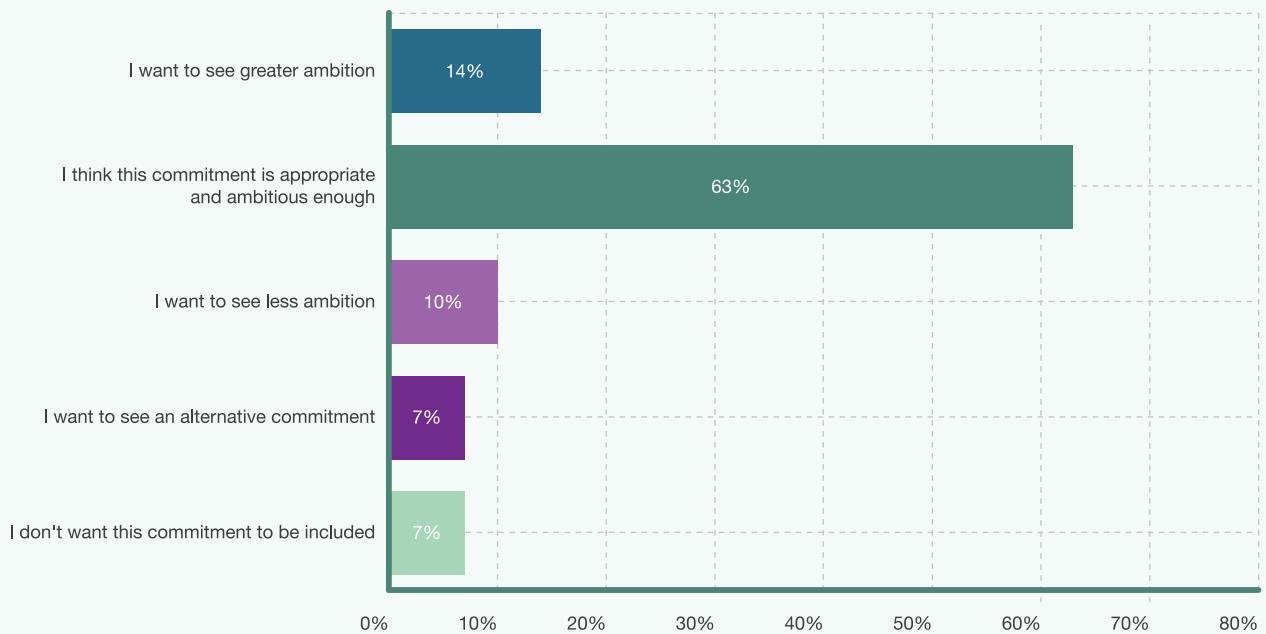
- “They are definitely appropriate. More detail is required over supporting community energy.”
Community energy group

Workshop responses:

- “Community energy groups are good to encourage. It's enabling more contribution into the network. I would support that.” **Local authority**
- “I welcome these, they all look positive. But the wording of 58 is clunky. What does ‘facilitate access to funding streams’ mean? Perhaps there could be a rethink to make it clearer what it actually means.”
Local authority



How do you feel about the following new commitment? “Facilitate access to funding streams by providing support to community energy groups when making submissions to our calls for ideas.”



Don't know / can't say: 6%

Would you like to suggest an entirely different alternative? Overall, is there anything you feel we have missed?

Online responses:

- “No – but I’d like to register strong support for WPD’s ongoing core commitment 43 for removing overhead lines in AONBs.” **Local authority**
- “Possibly engaging with planners and developers to ensure that the network is fit for purpose before any building work takes place. But I am told that you are not allowed to do this (since 1989).” **Environmental group**
- “Rational integration with home generators, solar panels and windmills.” **Local authority**
- “Rural renewables capacity investment.” **Domestic customer**
- “Please include advice on connecting solar to your LCT self-assessment tool.” **Local authority**
- “Your future-proofing is not very ambitious. Is there only a 30-year lifespan for new equipment?” **Domestic customer**



- “Still lacking infrastructure investment clarity.” **Domestic customer**
- “Personally, I would like to see WPD play a bigger role in leading from the front and setting the trends in line with government objectives and being funded, if necessary, to achieve the climate change goals.” **Domestic customer**
- “Bigger commitment to supporting energy storage and the manufacture of hydrogen and e-fuels.” **Domestic customer**
- “I think the move of your own vehicles to carbon neutral should be sooner. Even if it was through using biodiesel.” **Domestic customer**
- “Reduce costs to consumers substantially.” **Domestic customer**
- “Rural investment with interlinking low voltage investment.” **Domestic customer**
- “How to get to Net Zero in a clear and understandable way for customers.” **Government**
- “We would recommend further ambition in a smart, flexible network.” **Local authority**
- “Enabling large business to reach their net zero commitments in areas of grid constraints – as North Northamptonshire has such issues locally, with Corby being one such area.” **Local authority**

Workshop responses:

- “You need to engage with sustainability, planning departments and inward investment teams in local government not every 2 years but at least every 6 months. You also need to have an upfront investment programme instead of a reactive investment programme in order to ensure zero carbon infrastructure is in place to accommodate locating housing developers and businesses and industry rather than chasing the infrastructure afterwards. I’m all for maximising the use of existing resources to reduce investment needed, but in most instances in Coventry we are already close to capacity now, so we need to invest in upgraded infrastructure.” **Local authority**
- “We’ve seen a new development go up in our area and there are no solar panels to be seen, so I would like to see better planning rules, although I know that’s not WPD’s purview. That’s the trouble with leaving things to private enterprise; in some EU countries it’s the law that developers have to install solar panels.” **Emergency services**
- “The premise of maximising use of what you’ve got ought to be encouraging, but we know there are major developments going to happen and it always waits for the developer to come forward rather than doing forward planning. The first developer uses the infrastructure that’s already there and the second developer has extremely high costs to upgrade. So, there needs to be regular dialogue with planning, every 6 months or sooner, so we can plan and forward-think how to address upcoming needs of a particular area, which requires dialogue between you and developers and planners.” **Local authority**



- “There is lots of talk about enabling individuals to put in heat pumps, but we’ve got a new development round the corner with 3,000 houses, so shouldn’t you contact planners to make it mandatory for them to put in infrastructure for the beyond-2030 requirements?” **Environmental group**
- “Back in the day when I worked on the electricity board we used to plan for the future, but in 1989 we were prevented from building ahead of need because it devalued the business ahead of privatisation. These things need to be mandated by government and funded centrally. We were doing it right for 40 years but 1989 changed all that.” **Connections provider**

Meeting the needs of our consumers and network users

Is anything missing?

What are your views on the current scale of ambition proposed?

Are there commitments you would remove / change?

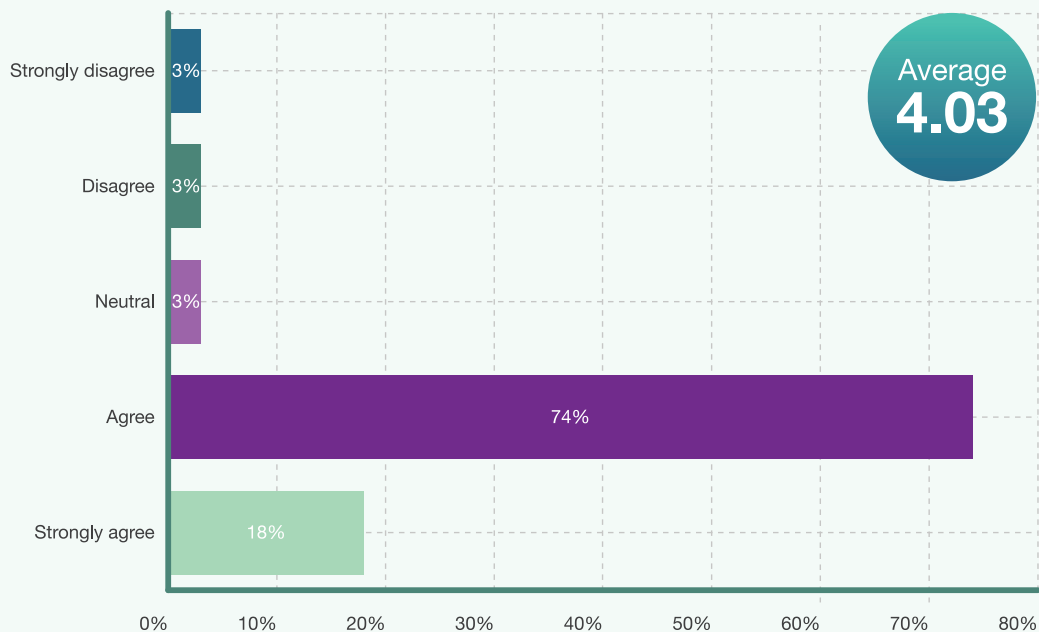
- “I think it all looks fine. It’s changed in response to the consultation responses made, and I think overall WPD are doing quite extensive consultation in a range of formats, so I think that looks appropriate.” **Local authority**
- “It looks appropriate. I think the commitments look right to me.” **Local authority**
- “Without having read the whole plan, the headline figures in there seem appropriate. You’re stretching yourself but make sure there are measures in place to make sure they’re achievable as well. You want to be ambitious but achievable.” **Local authority**
- “We support the increased ambitions set out in this category to ensure that WPD deliver a high quality and reliable service. We particularly commend improved commitments (10 and 11) to assist more vulnerable customers, including support for saving on their energy bills and the transition to a smart, low carbon future.” **Local authority**



Customer Service

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Customer Service is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 0%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

- “Getting things resolved with customers, it’s great that most of them will be sorted out within the first day, and with those that are not, it’s usually because they’re being unreasonable. It’s important we don’t give in to their demands just to meet targets.” **Business customer**
- “Customer service isn’t just about the obvious customers. As a utility, we should also be seen as customers perhaps. So, things like charging statements and communications around these statements. I don’t know if there’s a newsletter that is sent out on a daily basis, if so then I haven’t seen one.” **Utility**
- “It is appropriate and ambitious. I deal with two other DNOs and the customer service I get from WPD is exemplary.” **Utility**
- “Just to echo, we work with you every day and you are really good. The only thing that concerns me is to say that you’re going to respond to webchat in less than a minute and social media within 5 minutes, I don’t see it as necessary. You can cut yourself some slack there.” **Local authority**

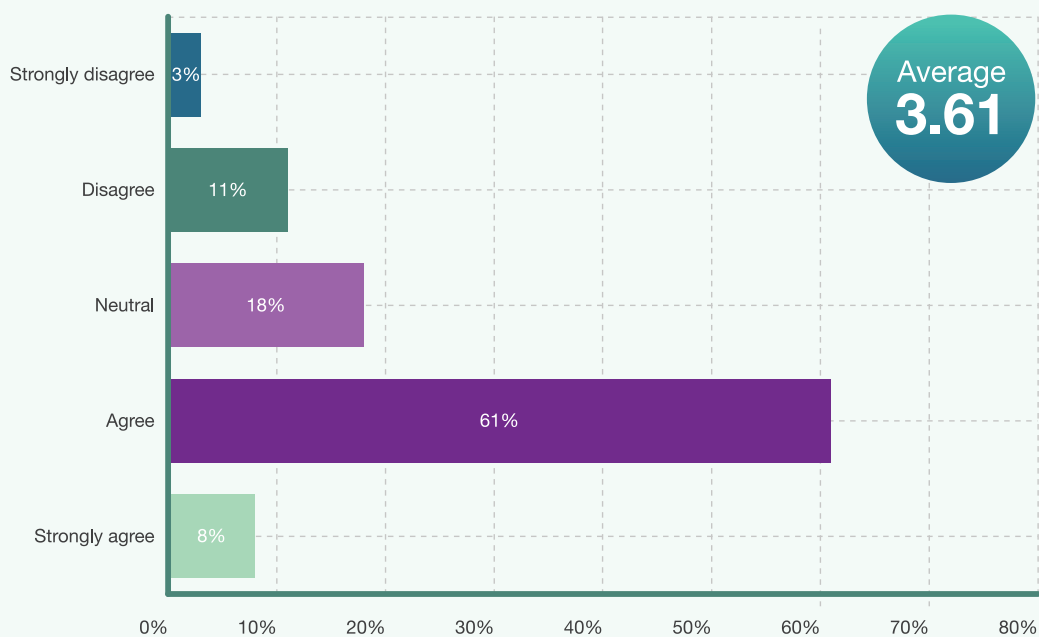


- “It does seem that when you have these huge teams, it’s great that you redirect resources to your phone lines. I’m pleased to hear that you are doing this.” **Local authority**
- “Perhaps rather than incremental improvements you could think about efficiency. Is less than 4 seconds a bit too short? Is it efficient to have that many people at WPD answering calls? Would 20 seconds still be acceptable?” **Storage and renewables provider / installer**

Customers in Vulnerable Situations

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Customers in Vulnerable Situations is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 5%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

- “It would be good to have spelled out how WPD views fuel poverty (in terms of the threshold at which a person enters fuel poverty) and which areas of the business are working to address it.” **Domestic customer**



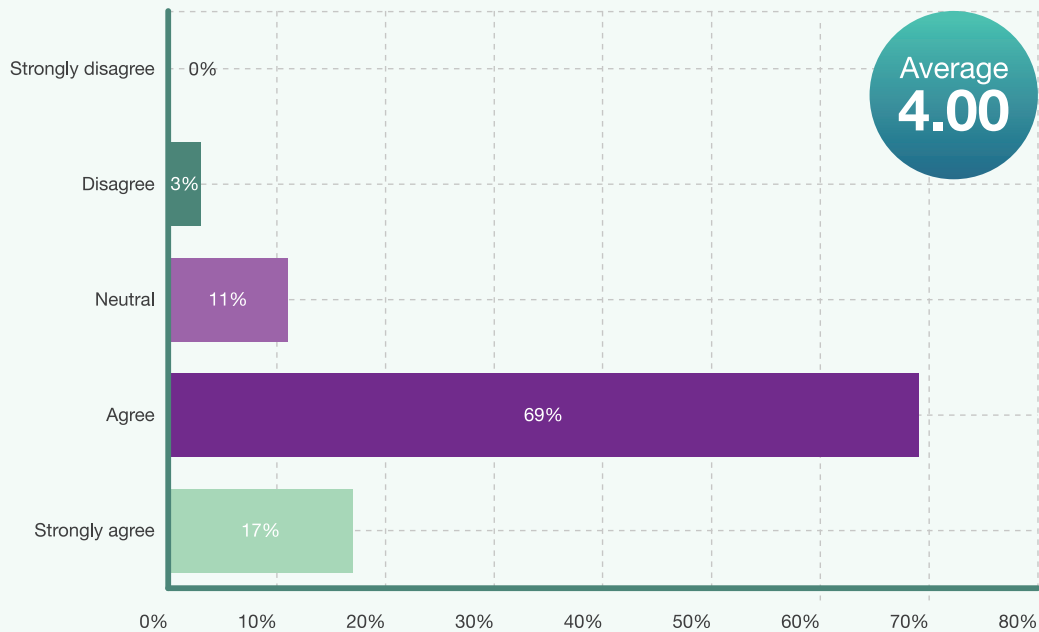
- “I would like to have something more concrete about how many partnerships are in place to provide a long-term solution to fuel poverty.” **Domestic customer**
- “We talked about specialist organisations in the not-for-profit sector that work with people and I think the resources should go to them. You could outsource this work and they would be more effective in terms of delivering.” **Local authority**
- “From where we’re sitting, we’re fairly well off but how would poorer customers take part in renewable energy action? I’m therefore not sure on that last point.” **Local authority**
- “I’m aware of WPD’s efforts and fully support them. What I want to know is what is still left to be done by WPD to get people out of fuel poverty? Other utilities are making statements about how many of their customers are in fuel poverty and what they are doing to tackle that. It doesn’t feel that WPD has the same kind of grip on the situation.” **Domestic customer**
- “I’m very interested in how to reach hard to reach customers – I think all the PSR customers should have a smart energy plan.” **Vulnerable customer representative**
- “40% of customers eligible for the PSR seems low to me. Do we know where it’s currently at? After the impact of Covid, I think it’s very worrying that there are 60% of customers we should know about that we don’t know about, so you should increase your ambition on that.” **Vulnerable customer representative**
- “I second that. You should have more ambitious targets than that regarding the PSR.” **Local authority**
- “To be honest, with the whole ‘helping people to save money’, there’s the same argument of whether or not this is WPD’s role, because they have no direct relationship with the end user. Are WPD going to be making outreach directly to the customer, or are they going to be pushing it through the suppliers who have contact with the customers? Is that WPD’s job fundamentally, and should they be spending money on this? Surely this should be a governmental or supplier issue to solve.” **Connections provider**
- “We are pleased to note that a coordinated approach and collaboration will be undertaken with others (including community energy groups) to co-deliver schemes. We consider that operating in a collaborative way will help to deliver optimum sustainable energy solutions.” **Local authority**



Connections

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Connections is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 10%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

- “When looking at commitment 17 with its increased ambition, what was the baseline from where you were starting? It would be good to know how things will be changing so that we have that clarity for our planning processes.” **Domestic customer**
- “Regarding the timescale, as long as we know when it’s going to be connected, we can get our ducks in a row for when we’re going to have the power.” **Local authority**
- “I have 59 years’ experience in connections, so I know what I’m talking about. You worry about it being too positive all the time, but I think at this stage of the process it should be positive. I fully support the timescales for the connections.” **Parish / community council**
- “I think that WPD is doing great on this front.” **Domestic customer**
- “We welcome the improved ambition to engage with local authorities on a more regular basis (every



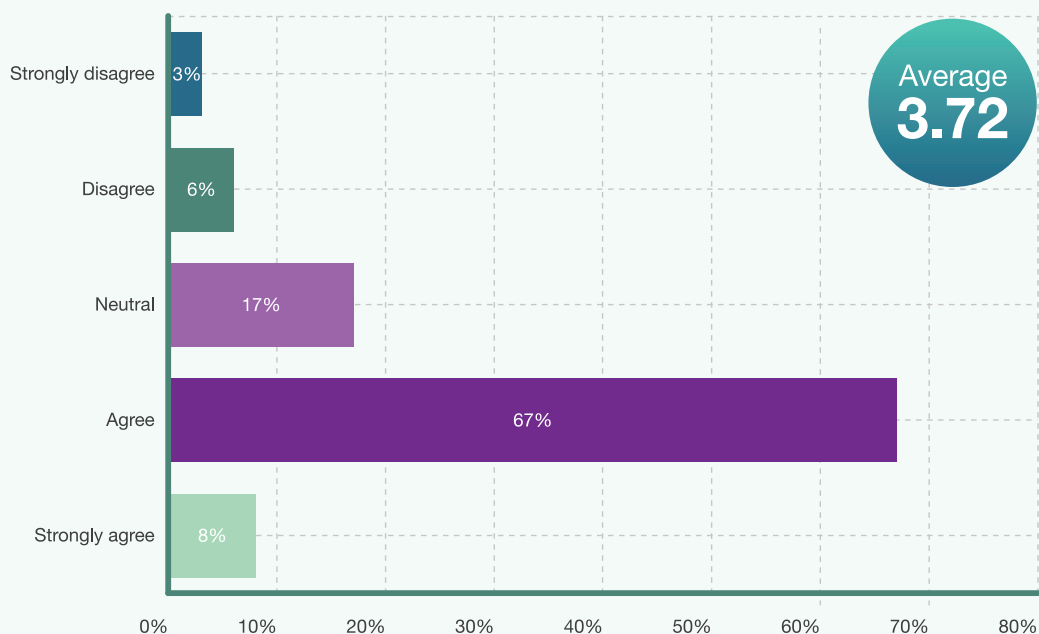
year) rather than on an ad hoc basis. This will assist WPD in recognising future growth demands as plans and strategies are prepared by local authorities, and an understanding on where capacity issues will need to be addressed and strengthened.” **Local authority**

- “This is particularly supported, as this reflects our response on BP1. South Somerset includes both WPD and SSEN licence areas, therefore a consistent cross-boundary approach to working practices and connection practices would be welcomed, particularly around Yeovil where the greatest proportion of future growth is directed. Developers are constantly raising network capacity as a significant viability issue in bringing large development sites forward. If there are significant infrastructure demands, this has particular consequences for the delivery of other infrastructure, including much needed affordable housing, and we fail to address the needs of our communities.” **Local authority**

Social Contract

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for its Social Contract is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 10%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop



- “Have you got a time allocation for the volunteering? I know Network Rail has a few days set aside in the year to do this sort of stuff.” **Local authority**
- “I think since you’re making such a big thing about volunteering, the number is quite low.”
Vulnerable customer representative
- “I agree. If you’ve got 6,000 employees, 1,000 days a year means one sixth of the workforce spending one day out, which isn’t very much.” **Local authority**
- “We’ve recently had a similar thing in our parish for HS2. I would like to ask if someone can enlarge what a community matter will be?” **Parish / community council**

Delivering an environmentally sustainable network

Is anything missing?

What are your views on the current scale of ambition proposed?

Are there commitments you would remove/change?

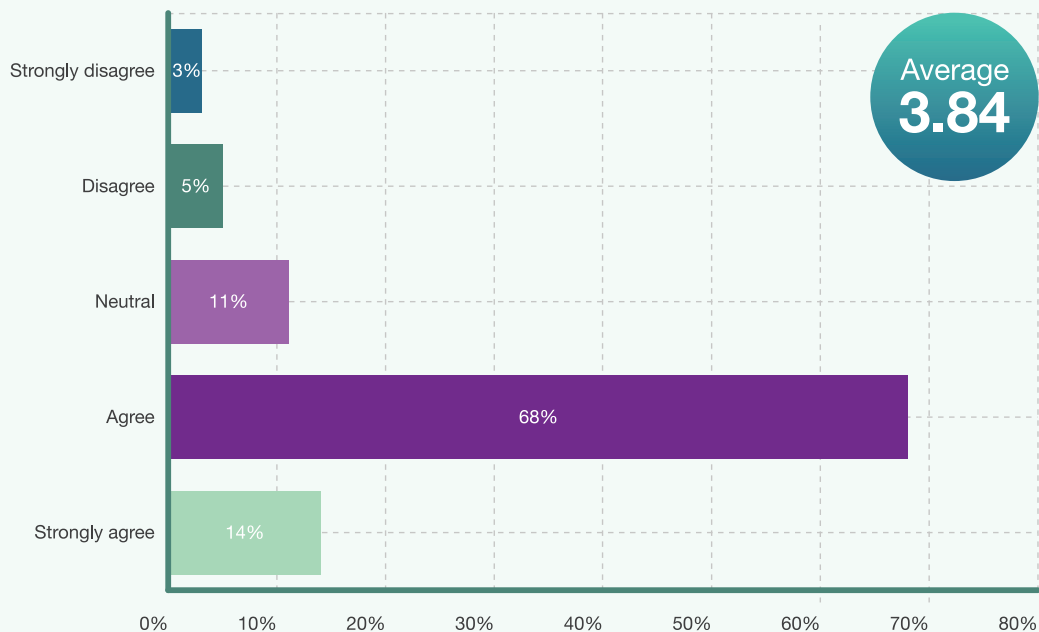
Stakeholders did not make any general comments for this area. All comments that were made related to specific topic areas and are therefore shown below.



Environment and Sustainability

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Environment and Sustainability is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 3%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

- “Leaky cables, this is something that is a serious issue, and we need more focus on it.”
Local Enterprise Partnership
- “I’d give a thumbs up to both of those, particularly the push to reduce the carbon footprint earlier.”
Emergency services
- “It’s good to see the target moved forward, that’s really good. Zero waste to landfill is really good as it used to be higher but now it’s zero so that’s good news. I can live with the less energy-efficient chemicals, but the chemicals that are dangerous should be removed completely eventually.”
Local authority
- “Another area is overhead cables. I know there’s an aesthetic impact but there’s also an ecological impact, and in some areas digging in the ground is not what you should be doing if it’s a sensitive area, so it would be good to see what you do with that.” **Local authority**



- “Is there more of a proactive removal of the type of cable that causes the oil leaks? Do they fail over a set amount of time and can you forecast it?” **Local authority**
- “The leaks from fluid filled cables and SF6 gas, I think the target is too stretching. We’ve got 10,000 of it still on the streets and you’ll never get them because of third parties. With the 5% leak as per the current British standard, I don’t know how you’re going to reduce this to 2.5%. Sorry to be negative but the targets is too overstretching. I just want them to be efficient.” **Parish / community council**
- “The scale of ambition looks good, and I’m pleased to see the net zero commitment brought forward.” **Local authority**
- “You are being very ambitious, actually. I would be interested to know how you are going to achieve that really. If you don’t make it, you don’t make, it but it’s certainly a good target to have.” **Local authority**
- “I welcome that improved ambition to be Net Zero. Obviously, it is an ambition and will be reported on through monitoring. I guess WPD will produce their own net zero strategy for their own operations, and it will be interesting to see how that will be developed, and whether there will be any opportunities for WPD to invest in carbon sequestration and woodland tree planting. That could have a beneficial impact on replacing trees that are cut down.” **Local authority**
- “I think it’s ambitious, and there’s nothing in there that I wouldn’t agree with. Energy companies should be out there taking the lead.” **IDNO**
- “I was in the Business Plan 1 meeting for this, and we pushed pretty hard for it to be moved back to 2028, so that’s very positive. It needs to align with the rest of the industry, and we at EDF are aiming for 2030 so when we saw 2040, we were somewhat disappointed. From a supply point of view, when we get questions from the customers, we just need information about where their money is going and why it’s going where it is.” **Utility**
- “I would like to respond more about cable replacement and switchgear upgrades. I’d almost say it should be a capital maintenance target rather than a sustainability target. What I do support is the opportunity to engage with surgeries because it enables us to discuss.” **Utility**
- “When it comes to environmental safety, removing chemicals etc., it’s important for you to publicly report your progress in removing risks and have a commitment to do so. You probably already have that as standard procedure, but it would be good to highlight it, just to be clear and specify what it is you’re going to provide so people can hold you to account.” **Local authority**
- “The Park Society appreciate the improved commitment to replace poor performing underground cables and to reduce leaks. We strongly suggest, however, that these are areas where innovative solutions for improving return on expenditure could be employed to reduce this pollution further!” **Environmental group**



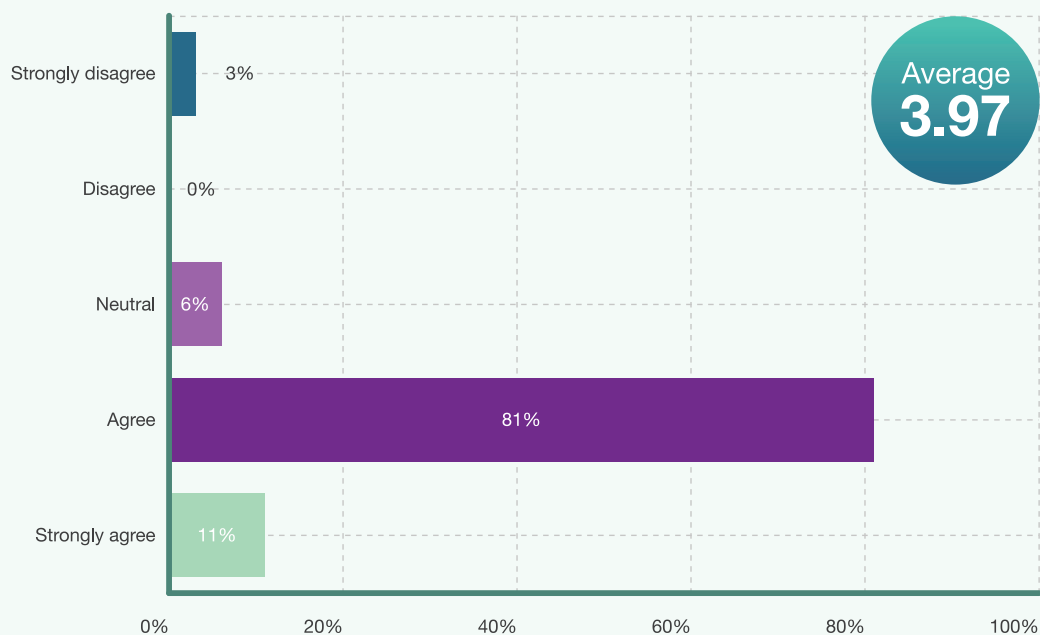
- “Given the lack of an environmental / biodiversity core commitment and the limited biodiversity responsibility evidenced, we continue to have concerns around the quality of the environmental risk assessment and its implementation for undergrounding the power cables (including route) without significant environmental harm.” **Environmental group**
- “Western Power’s environmental strategy, whilst focused on SF6, leaks and PCBs, remains silent on biodiversity. The responsibility to protect the local and regional environment from damage by WPD’s activities still appears to be specific to protected flora and fauna species. Similarly, the biodiversity enhancement tool is not due until the end of the period of the Business Plan – how then, does WPD intend to help address our biodiversity emergency before then?” **Environmental group**
- “We support the removal of overhead lines across the designated landscapes recognised by the Welsh Government for their special qualities and the wellbeing benefits that these landscapes bring to visitors and local communities alike.” **Environmental group**
- “Core commitment 43 still refers to ‘remove up to 50km of overhead lines in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ with no mention of National Parks; we assume this does not exclude the possibility of the overhead lines within the Brecon Beacons National Park being put underground. We note an error in 4.277 of the second draft Business Plan that still refers to 8km of overhead lines every year and sets a target of 40km in total.” **Environmental group**
- “In the Ofgem Sector Methodology Consultation, Table 44 shows that by October 2020 only £0.3m of the £6.3m allowance for South Wales undergrounding had been used. Whilst appreciating that the scheme does not finish until 2023, we found this of particular concern since we understand that if not spent, the allowance will be lost.” **Environmental group**
- “[We] support the increased ambition for WPD to achieve net zero carbon by 2028 in its own operations (from 2043 in BP1) and similarly the commitment to achieve 89% of the WPD fleet to be non-carbon vehicles (up from 79% in BP1). This demonstrates an overarching commitment to net zero carbon by WPD which aligns with many other organisations and local authorities.” **Local authority**



A Smart, Flexible Network

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for A Smart, Flexible Network is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 3%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

- “With the number of EVs that are being planned for, we should never lose sight of grid-to-vehicle connections. They are a wonderful opportunity to tap into.” **Community energy group**
- “How much focus will be placed on older buildings as part of network-upgrade commitments, which will be much more work to achieve? All new buildings should be covered as a matter of course, but are WPD’s commitments here just catching low-hanging fruit?” **Local authority**
- “My personal interest is the data area, so where can we connect. Surely there are opportunities for detailed heat maps for LCTs in certain areas. I need to have a proper look at your plan and how well we cover off the data provision in here. That’s going to be increasingly useful as we move throughout the decade. Getting data out into a user-friendly format is going to be extremely useful. I’d definitely welcome that from WPD.” **Energy consultant**
- “I mentioned it earlier, but we have concerns about our ambitious growth agenda at the council and matching that against the projected increase in heat pumps and EVs. Broadly I welcome what’s being presented but we need to have the infrastructure there before we can facilitate LCTs.” **Local authority**



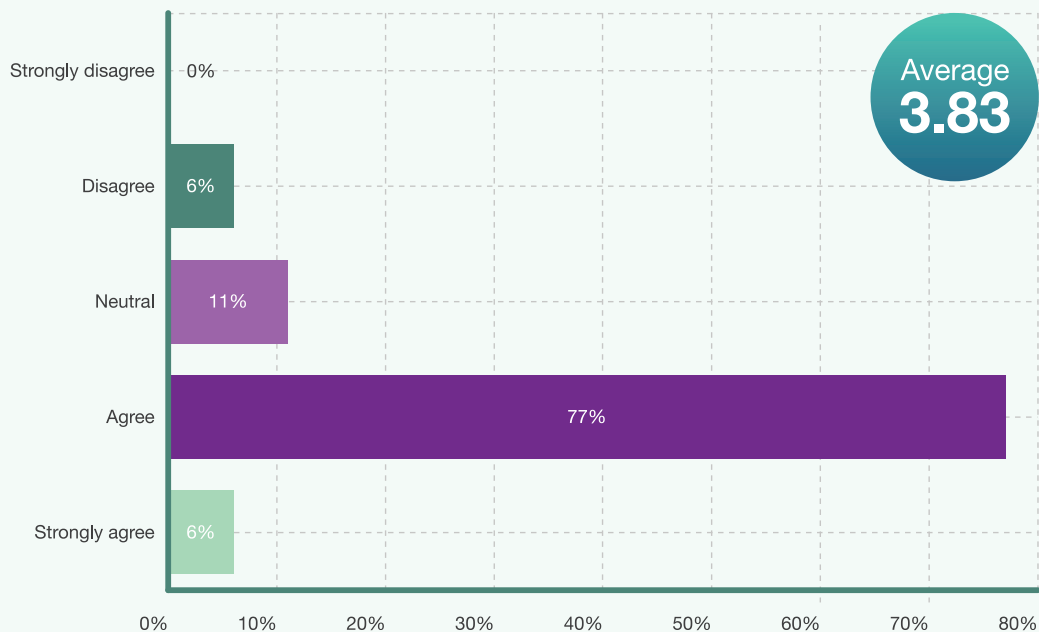
- “The more people are given advice that would specifically work in their area – which you must have at your disposal – the better. This means that instead of generic advice you’d be getting precise advice. For instance, they could say ‘you can’t have this in your area, but we could offer you this as an alternative’. We need granular up to date information from you on our area.” **Local authority**
- “It would be great if the customer staff having conversations about energy saving with customers can look at local data to give the best advice on what would work well in their area.” **Local authority**
- “On the one hand you’ve got the funding constraints, but on the other hand there’s the reality, which is no new petrol vehicles after 2030.” **Local authority**
- “What we don’t want to do is extend the life of petrol vehicles a really long time so they become super polluting, because there’s not enough EV capacity.” **Local authority**
- “You should go to the Government and say this is what we need to do, this is what we can do with the funding: do you want to give us more funding or reduce our target? That’s what you need to do.” **Local authority**
- “I commend all the EV and heat pump stuff, but it would be helpful to have something about connecting PV. People can put 2 kW on without consulting WPD, but at the moment you still find that a nuisance and it would be helpful if you could explain that you don’t or do want certain areas to be solar. It would help mystified customers to have an insight into that technical side of things at your end.” **Local authority**
- “Innovation, flexibility and smart technologies are very shiny and dazzling – mesmerising, almost – but we shouldn’t pretend that they will be anything like enough on their own.” **Utility**
- “We welcome the new commitment to ensure capacity availability to enable Net Zero to be achieved across WPD regions sooner than 2050 in line with stakeholder ambitions.” **Local authority**
- “Commensurate with improving capacity we are pleased to see the WPD commitment to connect 1.5m EVs and 600,000 heat pumps as an increased ambition from BP1. This reflects our response to BP1 where we stated that a higher ambition should be considered to provide greater opportunities to align with the Government’s Future Homes Standard (set for 2025) and the transition towards this standard being phased in from June 2022.” **Local authority**
- “We recognise that there are commitments emerging from car manufacturers that suggest they will move to fully electric manufacture before the Government’s 2030 deadline, with some looking at 2025 to implement this transition. It is likely that a greater take-up of EVs will therefore align with manufacturers’ approach, which will be influenced by an accessible EV charging network.” **Local authority**
- “We support stronger ambitions for delivering low carbon planning, updated Demand Future Energy Scenarios and regular local energy surgeries for local authorities. This will take account of planned growth to build up a best view for each licence area.” **Local authority**



Innovation

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Innovation is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 0%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

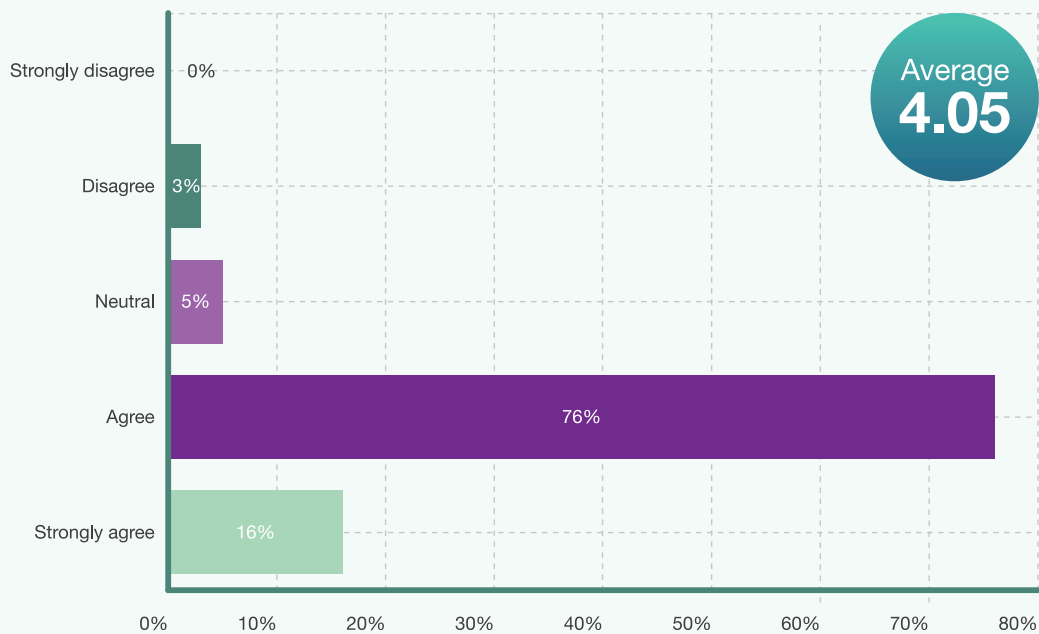
- “You should be sharing what you’ve done with competitors and stakeholders to drive innovation forward.” **Storage and renewables provider / installer**
- “I’m just wondering whether we should be talking about collaboration with other similar companies. I don’t know what sort of organisational collaboration you have with other people, and I don’t know if you have a research and development team that will be driving that innovation. Overall, how are you going to do it?” **Local authority**



Community Energy

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Community Energy is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 0%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

- “There should be thirty local energy surgeries in each operating area per year, not three as the slides incorrectly state.” **Business customer**
- “I’d particularly welcome the comment about communities. There are a lot of parishes taking an interest in energy generation in our area.” **Local authority**
- “I’m pleased to see community energy is being supported. It works well with the older people and is also innovative. Thanks to WPD.” **Local authority**
- “I support the local energy surgeries in terms of engagement with WPD. From our local authority perspective, it’s been really welcome. Having more regular surgeries is really helpful for us in developing our local plan and making sure the network is capable to deliver that growth going forward.” **Local authority**
- “I really welcome the commitment on community energy. It’s something we particularly responded to on



the first plan, so I'm pleased to see that response there by WPD in this Business Plan." **Local authority**

- "I'm surprised WPD have made so many improvements across the commitments. I think that's really welcome and just demonstrates that WPD have listened to extensive consultation." **Local authority**
- "It's just quantifying it. You're saying community energy surgeries, but it's the actual number of projects you have at the end of it that you should be measuring." **Local authority**
- "I like the idea of the community solar farms. I think it's a great idea for a whole community to be sharing the benefits of local production and community." **Local authority**
- "[We] approve of the active engagement with community energy groups that WPD has undertaken through the consultation and engagement process of developing the Business Plan, and the publication of guidance to assist such groups." **Local authority**
- "We support the increased ambition to provide a greater number of opportunities for community groups to engage with WPD, to enhance their confidence and understanding of WPD processes and connection requirements." **Local authority**
- "[We] particularly welcome the new commitment to facilitate access to funding streams by providing support to community energy groups. South Somerset has a number of proactive community energy groups, and further advice and facilitation to assist such groups in achieving their aims is supported." **Local authority**

Maintaining a safe and resilient network

Is anything missing?

What are your views on the current scale of ambition proposed?

Are there commitments you would remove/change?

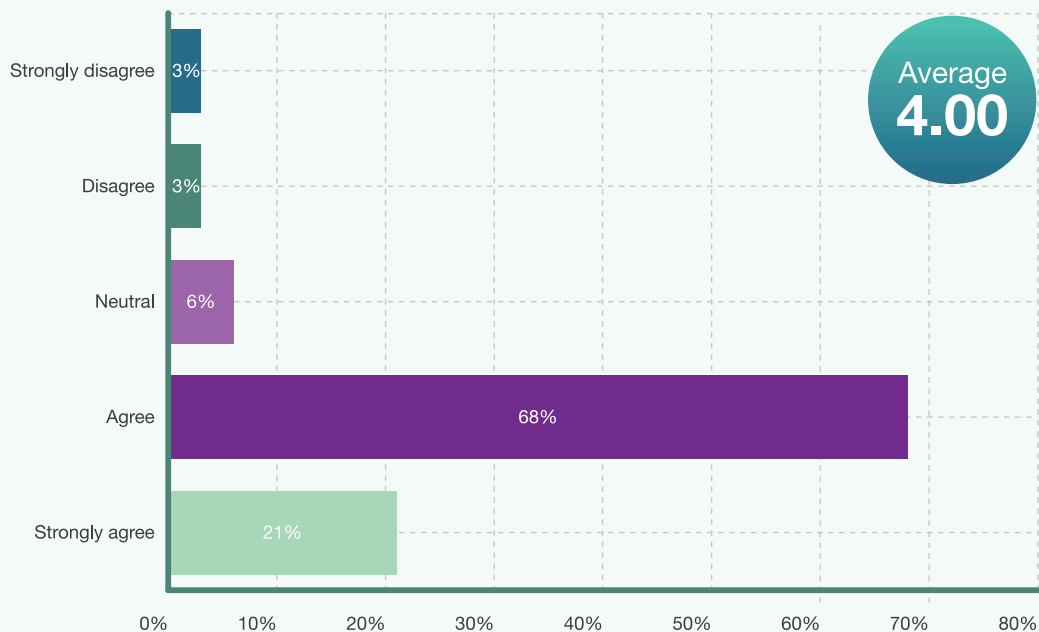
- "I think it's great; you've thought of everything and it's been improved upon since past consultations." **Local authority**



Network Resilience

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Network Resilience is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 8%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

- “In Herefordshire we’ve had a way above average 1 in 100-year floods. I wouldn’t be surprised if you had to heavily upgrade your flood estimates.” **Local authority**
- “I think, as things move forward, we are going to see more pressures in terms of flood risks.” **Local authority**
- “I assume you have an annual report. I didn’t have time to do the pre-read but the more of these that can be expressed the better. The Environment Agency are now really hot on sending us flood alerts. They do a lot by text message which reduces the pressure on phone lines, so I wonder if you do something similar.” **Local authority**
- “If you get low scores on network resilience, this may just be because people in some areas don’t experience floods. You should take this into account.” **Local authority**
- “It’s disappointing that WPD have not provided numerical context around flood defences. We need to know how many defences WPD need to put in place now, rather than in the future.” **Domestic customer**



- “Utilising innovation is key. I generally agree with the law of diminishing returns. Improving resilience can link in with generation.” **Local authority**
- “I think it looks really positive that, again, they’re improving those particular commitments in terms of network resilience, and obviously in terms of climate change adaptation. Every year we are seeing significant flood events happening around the country, so I think it’s reasonable to improve flood defences and vulnerable WPD assets. In terms of undertaking further schemes, that usually necessitates cutting back trees. In terms of environmental commitments, I wondered whether WPD have similar commitments to offset tree removal?” **Local authority**
- “You should be making sure you’re at least neutral to local species and trees. I would also be interested to know how many things you have susceptible to flooding and what zones they’re in. You want to make sure that everything in a highly susceptible flood zone is being treated.” **Local authority**
- “I cannot remember the last time I had a power cut. I honestly don’t feel that the network performance is wanting in my area. Flooding is more of an issue and money would be better spent protecting key network assets rather than minute performance improvement. We are fortunate that the network across the country is actually good enough.” **Local authority**
- “Power cuts are a continual problem for worst-served customers, so it is right to up that service output. Some people live in disaster areas.” **Business customer**
- “Eliminating worst served customers is a brilliant undertaking. In 2021 you wonder why this even exists anymore, so well done WPD for addressing this.” **Energy consultant**
- “We acknowledge the improved commitments to improving network resilience, particularly for the worst served customers. BP2 should recognise the rurality of the district and the challenges this presents to enable the delivery of a low carbon future as homes, businesses and developers transition to low carbon heat and power, with a particular focus on heat pumps in new developments and retrofitting off-grid properties that are not connected to the gas network. Also, the dependency on personal motorised mobility with the increasing demand for connection capacity to provide the necessary power for electrifying transport requirements.” **Local authority**
- “Through works to improve resilience we are aware that this often necessitates the removal of trees. To ensure that WPD acts in an environmentally sustainable way, we suggest that any trees lost to resilience plans are replaced on a three for one basis through an appropriate and accredited environmental scheme. This could be expanded for carbon offsetting of WPD’s own operations and also ensure that any habitat (trees) lost is replaced through a system of net gain (similar to biodiversity net gain advocated by government through the Environment Bill).” **Local authority**
- “We wish to be reassured that WPD will engage with energy providers to ensure that resilience and capacity strategies are reinforced by low carbon / renewable energy systems and battery storage



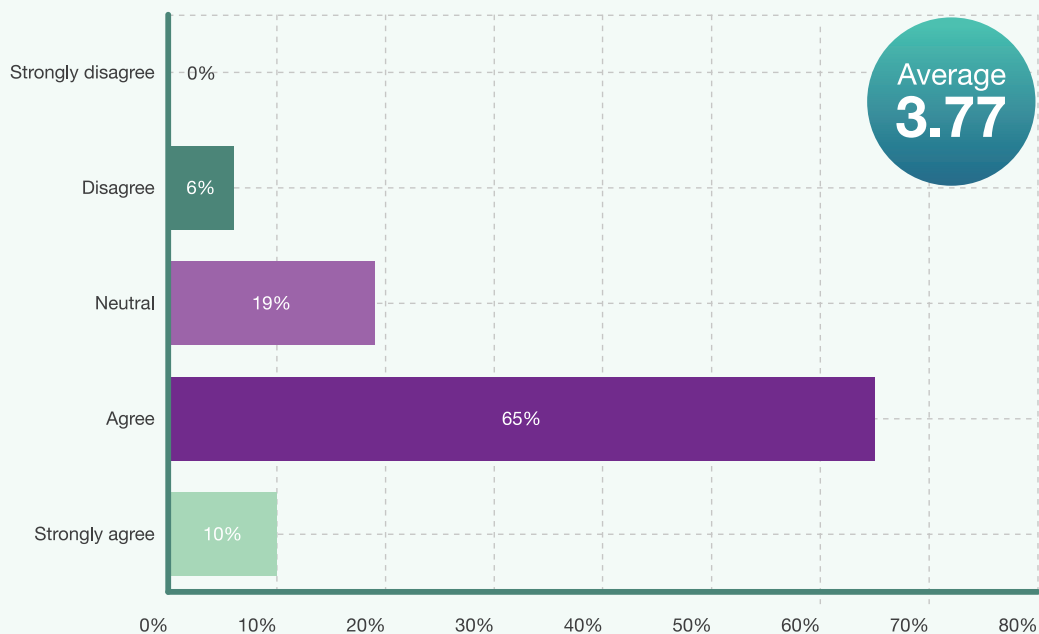
so as not to facilitate further demands for such plants in the future. We intend that a policy position will be progressed through our emerging Local Plan Review so that low / zero carbon technologies are prioritised. In the meantime, we would seek further influence from WPD in this matter by seeking alternative solutions to address capacity.” **Local authority**

- “We support the increased ambition to undertake 110 flood defence works to mitigate the risk of WPD sites vulnerable to flooding. We consider that increasing the scope of this commitment is a sensible course of action given the increase in extreme weather events and the move to ensure vulnerable infrastructure can be protected through necessary adaptations resulting from the effects of climate change.” **Local authority**

Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 16%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop



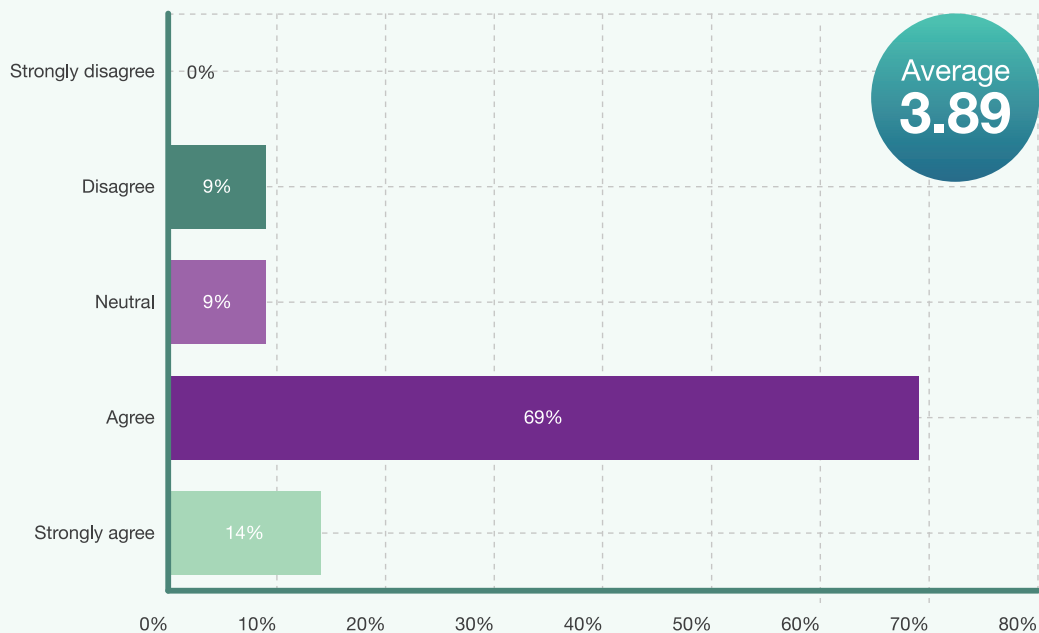
- “Investment for cyber security should be proportionate to the level of actual rather than perceived risk.” **Local authority**
- “The business IT security and cyber side is lacking a bit of detail in the commitment.” **IDNO**
- “I think you probably should have some independent review going on. It shouldn’t just be an internal review of what your IT security and cyber resilience is like. It should be going out to a third party at regular intervals to see whether they can hack you or not.” **Local authority**
- “For IT security, that is really going to be very, very, very important. I think the business is technically very dependent on it now, and very vulnerable. The whole region could be blacked out presumably.” **Local authority**
- “This is a tricky one because it’s what you don’t know you don’t know. It’s a severe threat and could have a severe business impact. I’m not sure how you would put your measurable in, but you need to be robust on it.” **Emergency services**
- “It’s important for you to back up the database offsite.” **Environmental group**
- “I’m not a specialist in this area, but I think it’s an extremely important area to work on. I am glad that it has gone higher up as priority because of these workshops. It’s an increasingly big concern to all of us in the future.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- “It strikes me that we will be increasingly reliant on the electricity network and it slightly worries me that there seems to be a little complacency here. Everything needs to be done to protect us from foreign powers and terrorists meddling with the grid. I want to see an increase in ambition and ensure things are as ahead of the game as possible.” **Consumer body**
- “I want to see the events being eliminated, rather than work being committed to combat them. There seems to be too much focus on the process and too little focus on the outcome.” **Domestic customer**
- “The ambition sounds good but I’m not sure that you understand that when you’ve got a lot of people feeding into the network, how you will control the possibility of them being attacked and that feeding into the network itself?” **Local authority**
- “I don’t think that these are particularly acceptable. We need a world-class protection system, and these measures don’t equate to that. Please go further.” **Community energy group**



Safety

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Safety is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 8%

Nb. this question was just asked at the online workshop

- “I support these initiatives, but I would like to see more robust commitments to undergrounding cables around schools.” **Domestic customer**
- “Is there any plan to underground any of the overhead network? Because that reduces risk of snow, wind, and people interfering, accidentally or on purpose, high voltage and low voltage. Put it underground where it’s inherently safer and arguably more resilient. I know that would be very expensive but are there any thoughts to do that where possible?” **Connections provider**
- “Is an information pack on safety provided to a school going to get the target audience better than, say, YouTube adverts done in the style of the old TV adverts? Is there any plan of using social media?” **Connections provider**
- “I think they should be concentrating more on social media than bits of paper, frankly.” **Local authority**
- “With regard to the 80,000 primary school kids, how much of a proportion of the entire WPD area is that? Without that information, it’s difficult to say whether it is reasonable or not.” **Local authority**

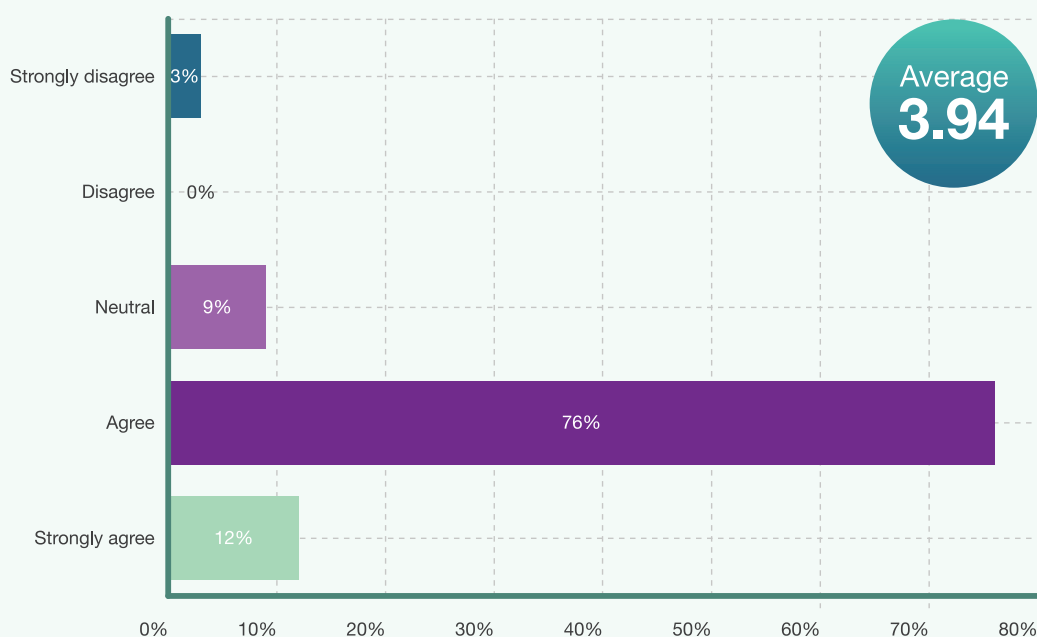


- “In sending out packs to schoolkids, are they actually going to get home and absorb what’s going on, or is it better to show them a video on how electrics actually work or have someone go into a school? You could get someone interested in electrics like that. I used to work with a primary school, and they loved hands-on stuff like that.” **Local authority**
- “On the back of the safety point, it ties into a wider project on inclusion. If you go into a school and educate them on the energy system then you’re inspiring a diverse cohort to be interested in energy. The energy industry right now is very male dominated. These kids are going to be the workforce of the future so it’s important to inspire them now.” **Utility**
- “I think this is one we really need to hammer. What I see is youngsters coming through having better information than we had but it’s not quite at an acceptable level yet.” **Local Enterprise Partnership**
- “The electricity board has been doing it for over 40 years, so a lot of schools already have a lot of information about safety. You should target those areas that you have never been before. You should target those by the education authority and that will save you time, money and effort.” **Parish / community council**

Workforce Resilience

How acceptable to you is this overall package of proposals?

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s overall package of proposals for Workforce Resilience is acceptable.”



Don't know / can't say: 11%



- “I was wondering about what diversity includes. I wondered if it includes neurodiversity, because employment rates are really quite low for people on the autistic spectrum. Also, it’s great that you’re getting people in at the bottom of the company, but it’s important to allow them to progress through the company to the top levels.” **Local authority**
- “It’s noticeable that on this particular discussion, I’m one of many old white men. I’m glad you all have jobs and have reached the positions you have, but there is a shortage of women and younger people in today’s workshop.” **Local authority**
- “I haven’t got too much to add to this. I think WPD appears to be an excellent employer. You are a very good company from that point of view.” **Parish / community council**
- “This is sending a really positive message for the future of the company and the industry as a whole.” **Local authority**

In RIIO-ED2 we propose to improve network reliability further, so that the average customer experiences service better than one power cut every two years, lasting 24 minutes.

- **How acceptable is this proposed level of service?**
- **What scale of improvement would you like to see achieved?**

Online responses:

- “I would expect WPD to provide details of the various causes of power cuts and thus the resolution for each type so that customers have a better understanding of what is being done.”
Domestic customer
- “Great.” **Environmental group**
- “More investment in the general handling of fault giving obsolete networks on the low voltage system for sure.” **Domestic customer**
- “Not at all ambitious.” **Domestic customer**
- “You can always try harder.” **Domestic customer**
- “That will come with the correct investment in infrastructure. Billions [are] needed.”
Domestic customer
- “Clearly we need a commitment to drive down power cuts to the absolute bare minimum.”
Domestic customer



- “Iterative improvement is genuine progress. Reliable energy is good.” **Domestic customer**
- “Our last long power cut was much more than 24 minutes; the previous and next cuts were weeks not years apart. We are getting more short power cuts than we had when WPD took over. Of all metrics that need more detail, this is one. It is a core commitment.” **Parish / community council**
- “I really don’t think this is too bad a level of service. What happens when this is driven down to every 5 years and lasts 10 minutes and yet there are still complaints? Are the funds in achieving this better spent on more important objectives?” **Domestic customer**
- “The investment needs to be proportionate to the value. At this point for some customers there is a point of diminishing returns and arguably the investment is better spent elsewhere. We would strongly suggest being more transparent with this data and having a focus on high-risk areas would be suggested. The focus needs to be on supporting residents’ shift to zero carbon fuel sourced power at the lowest cost where possible.” **Local authority**

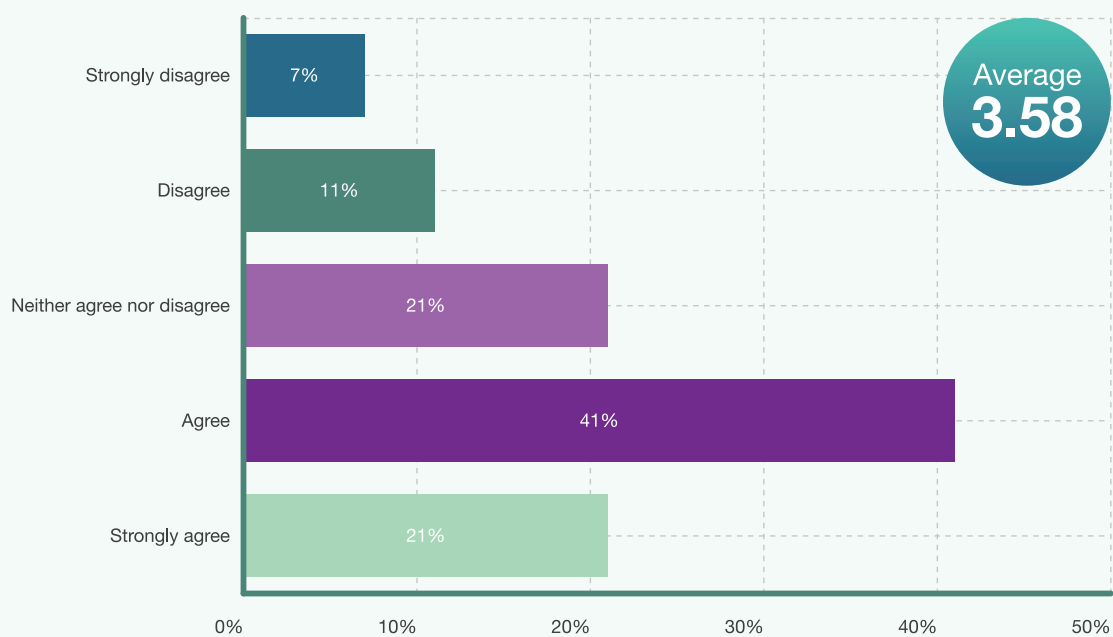
Workshop responses:

- “My concern is cost on incremental reliability improvements. This shouldn’t be a priority over other stuff.” **Local authority**
- “It would seem that you’re doing your best and we can live with this. We’ve been used to far worse quality of electricity supply!” **Local authority**
- “I thought that 24 minutes of power cuts per year sounded like a bargain to be honest. We can surely all cope with 2 minutes a month.” **Local authority**
- “It’s a difficult question because I know you’ll have some customers in more rural areas who are badly affected, and you’ll have customers in cities who are less affected. My point being, not everyone is affected the same way.” **Energy consultant**
- “It comes down to a law of diminishing returns with trying to improve network reliability.”
Community energy group
- “I have a business in a rural area. I mean this sounds great, doesn’t it? But what you’ve got to look at is what the worst served customers are getting and work from that.” **Local authority**
- “I would say you have to do things by increments. I mean, 5% sounds a dramatic step in the right direction.” **Local authority**
- “It depends on the cost. I want improvements, but you don’t want to heavily burden customers.”
Domestic customer
- “This is your core business, so reliability is everything. I’d like to see you do all that you can.”
Consumer body



- “I’m in a rural area and you respond to outages really well. We want to see as few outages as possible, but your service is good.” **Local authority**
- “Any improvement is great, but 24 minutes every 2 years doesn’t seem like a major hardship.” **Local authority**
- “The changes to the network might lead to more power cuts rather than less, so expecting better service might be pie in the sky. So just maintain service as it is.” **Environmental group**

How do you feel about the following statement? “I think WPD’s aim to improve on our current average performance of one power cut in two years lasting 24 minutes represents an acceptable level of service?”

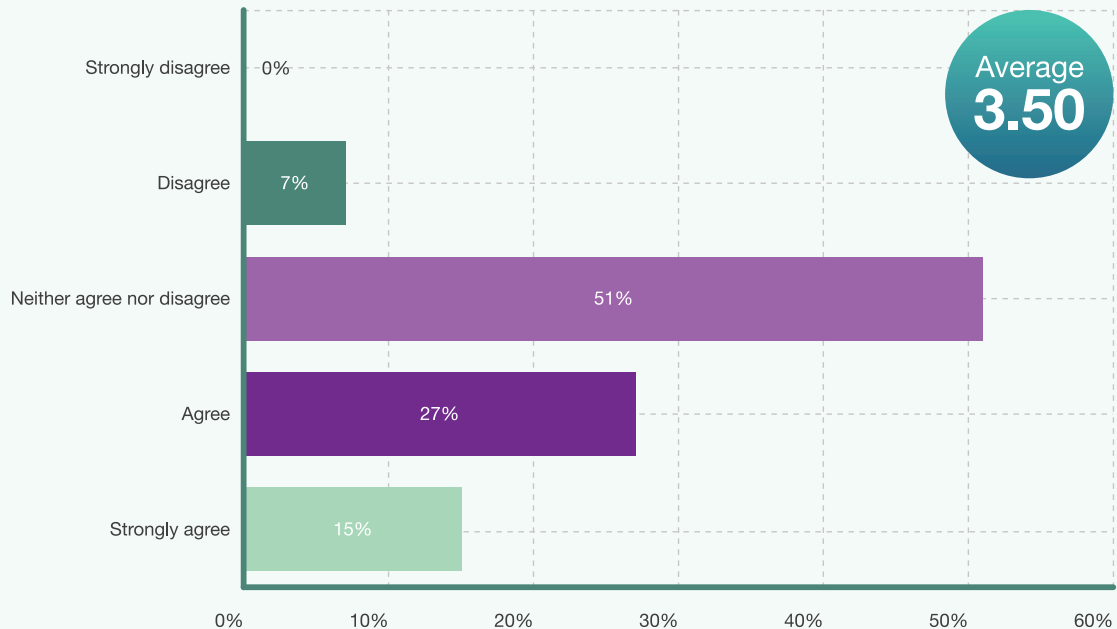


Don't know / can't say: 6%

This question was asked as one of the social media polls. However the question was simplified to tailor it to social media. It was expressed as “Do you think WPD’s aim to improve its power cut performance of one power cut every two years lasting 24 minutes represents an acceptable level of service?” In total, 72 customers responded to this poll. The majority of customers (74%) answered ‘yes’ to this question. The full results of the social media polls can be found in Appendix 3.



What do you think WPD should do with regard to improving their performance on reducing the length and frequency of power cuts?



Don't know / can't say: 11%

A related question was asked as one of the social media polls. It was expressed as “Which do you view as more acceptable? Choice 1: higher power cut risk for lower electricity bills; Choice 2: lower power cut risk for higher electricity bills?” In total, 135 customers responded to this poll. Just over half of customers (53%) answered ‘same service / bill as now’ although almost one third (29%) answered ‘higher bills.’ The full results of the social media polls can be found in Appendix 3.

Final comments

Overall, is there anything you feel we have missed? Please provide us with any further comments relating to our second draft Business Plan and our core commitments.

- “Enable home-produced electricity to be accepted by the grid for a reasonable payment or reduction in cost.” **Local authority**
- “Clarity of real investment in rural areas.” **Domestic customer**
- “Looking for ways to make electric home heating affordable.” **Local authority**
- “I was surprised to see no mention of customers in Exmouth suffering from not being allowed to use their full potential of battery storage.” **Domestic customer**



- “It doesn’t really address sustainability enough. It’s good to focus on vulnerable customers and do joined-up thinking with other utilities.” **Domestic customer**
- “Where is the solution coming from to enable those living in densely populated parts of towns to access charging for cars outside their homes or in their street?” **Domestic customer**
- “Serious investment in the low voltage system has been side-tracked.” **Domestic customer**
- “Infrastructure investment to save the planet, not to save shareholders.” **Domestic customer**
- “I wish we could remove the reminders of the ‘old world’ – coal power stations – soonest and take a lead in providing alternative, long-term, reliable capacity that this gives the economy and raises our faith in the UK’s ability to better compete in these troubled times.” **Domestic customer**
- “Work on R&D. Collaborate with research organisations like the Semiconductor Catapult to develop suitable technology solutions.” **Domestic customer**
- “This is 2021. Overhead power lines to domestic properties are reminiscent of a third world country and render the supply vulnerable to any passing storm. Supply lines to domestic properties should all be put underground.” **Domestic customer**
- “More ambitious pathways for getting to Net Zero.” **Government**
- “Focus on partnership working and forward planning for development of zero carbon infrastructure. Need for more detail as to the nature of the approach across the piece and specific targets to be more detailed, e.g., need to reference upgrading of existing network such as Coventry 6.6 kV. This is insufficient information on how this will be rectified and upgraded to support the locality and projects such as the Gigafactory, etc.” **Local authority**
- “More focus on commissioning third sector specialists to support community energy projects and energy efficiency advice, etc. More specific targets for environmental considerations, e.g., replacement of cables that are leaking pollutants, number of community energy projects developed, and amount of energy generated or infrastructure for renewables provided to this sector of community organisations.” **Local authority**
- “I’d like to see Western Power Distribution’s Business Plan for 2023–2028 include only renewable energy (100%). By this I mean solar, wind. No dirty energy from fossil fuels. Energy companies should be at the forefront of clean, green energy since we are in a climate emergency. I’d like reassurances that during this period WPD will achieve this.” **Community energy group**



Appendix 1 Participants

In total, 101 organisations participated in WPD's BP2 consultation. These have been set out in the list below. Of these, a total of 35 organisations participated via the webinar, 17 responded via the online consultation, and 49 organisations participated via the online workshop. Some organisations participated via two or more of the consultation methods.

4D Economics	Switchgear)
Avon Local Councils Association (North Somerset)	Herefordshire Council
Age UK Solihull	Hope 4U
Bassetlaw District Council	IBM
Blaby District Council	Island Green Power
Brycheins Ltd	Kelvatek
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Kirklington Parish Council
CAPULA	Land Compensation Agent Group
Care & Repair Cardiff and The Vale	Lichfield District Council
Chacewater Community Energy Group	Lucy Electric
Cheshire East Council	Major Energy Users' Council
Coventry City Council	Malvern Hills District Council
CLA Cymru	Meadows Ozone Energy Services (Mozes)
Climate Change Group set up by Woburn Sands Town Council	Member of Parliament
CoGen	Network Plus
Colwich Parish Council	Nolton & Roch Community Land Trust
Cotswold District Council	North Bristol NHS Trust
Coventry City Council	North Northamptonshire Council
D2N2 LEP	North Northamptonshire Joint Planning & Delivery Unit
Deerhurst Parish Council	North Somerset Council
Derby City Council	North Somerset Local Councils Association
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	Nottinghamshire Police Force
EA Technology	Partnerships for Good Ltd
EDF Energy	Planet A Solutions CIC
ElectraLink Limited	Pomona Solar Co-operative Ltd
Enzen	RPM
ESC Ltd	Sedgemoor District Council
Federation of Small Businesses	Sembcorp Energy UK
Forest of Dean District Council	SMS
Fundamentals Ltd	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Geldards LLP	South East Wales Energy Agency
Gloucestershire County Council	South Hams District Council
Gower AONB	South Somerset District Council
GTC	SP Energy Networks
Harborough District Council	SSE
Hawker Siddeley Switchgear Ltd (t/a BRUSH	SW TUC



Swansea Council
Thames Water Utilities Limited
The Reliance of Rural Networks Association
Transport for West Midlands
TUSC Ltd
University of Birmingham
University of Nottingham
University of Warwick
Wattify Limited

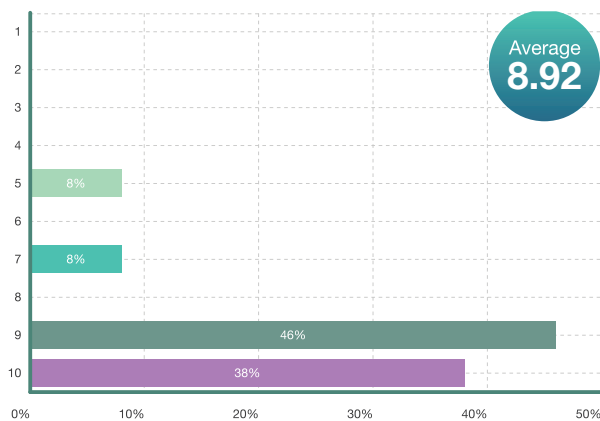
Welsh Government
Western Power Distribution Customer Engagement
Group
Weston-super-Mare Town Council
Wilson Properties
WSE Operational (Freedom)
Wychavon District Council
Zero Carbon Shropshire
ZPN Energy



Appendix 2 Workshop feedback

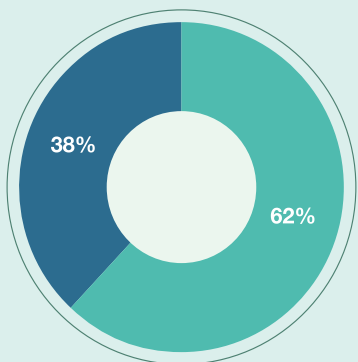
After the online workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. In total, 10 completed a feedback form. The feedback was as follows:

Overall, how satisfied were you with today's workshop?



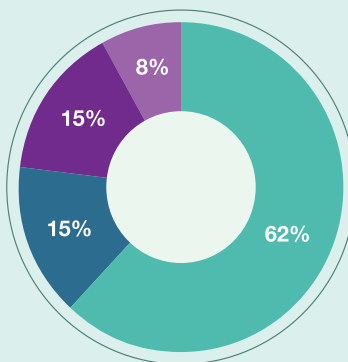
“ Ample opportunity to speak and facilitator encouraged all to participate.” ”

Overall, did you find this workshop to be:



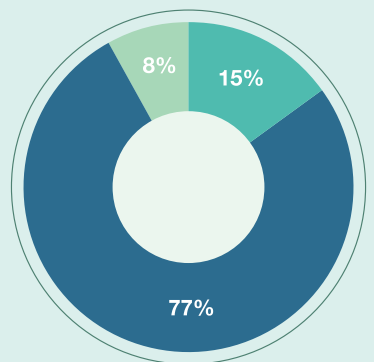
Very interesting
Interesting
Neutral
Not that interesting
Not interesting at all

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



Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

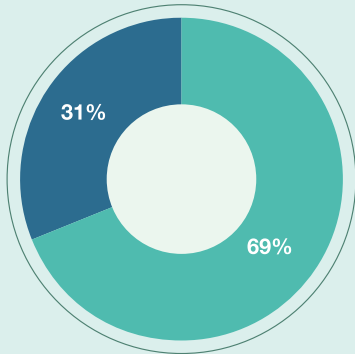
Did we cover the right topics for you on the day?



Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

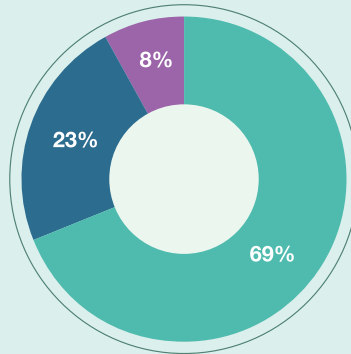


What did you think of the way the workshop was chaired by your facilitator?



Very good
Good
Neutral
Poor
Very poor

How well do you think the online format worked?



Very well
Well
Neutral
Not well
Not well at all

“The meeting was well worth the time. Well done by all involved.”

Comments

- “Good mix of presentations and interaction.”
- “Very good at keeping to time. Very well organised.”
- “Great pace and variability. Brilliant use of breakout rooms.”
- “I hope to attend face to face sessions when regulations permit for the next round of BP.”
- “An excellent consultation exercise. Well done.”



Appendix 3 Social media polls

Question	Options	Count	Results	Total votes
The cost of WPD's service represents £96 of an average electricity bill per year. Do you consider this to be an acceptable charge to maintain the local energy grid?	Yes – it's about right	58	59%	98
	I'd pay a little more for better service	17	17%	
	No – it's a bit too high	12	12%	
	No – it's far too high	11	11%	
Would you support an increase in your electricity bill for different levels of improvement in WPD's service (Currently £96 a year on average)	-£2 = maintain service	29	23%	128
	£0 = improved service	55	43%	
	+£2 = big improvement	44	34%	
We think that 1.5million more electric vehicles will be on the roads in our region between 2023-2028. Do you agree?	Less than 1.5m EVs	41	46%	90
	Around 1.5m EVs	18	20%	
	More than 1.5m EVs	31	34%	
We think that 600,000 heat pumps will be installed in our region between 2023-2028. Do you agree?	Fewer than 600k heat pumps	52	68%	76
	Around 600k heat pumps	12	16%	
	More than 600k heat pumps	12	16%	
Would you like to see us provide a same day new connections response by introducing online self-assessment tools for low carbon technology applications?	Yes	12	38%	32
	No	8	25%	
	Not interested	12	38%	
We aim to provide enough electricity to enable Net Zero to be achieved in some areas as early as 2030. Is this soon enough?	No, I want it sooner	36	43%	83
	Yes, that's just right	23	28%	
	This isn't a priority	24	29%	



Question	Options	Count	Results	Total votes
Do you think WPD's aim to improve its power cut performance of one power cut every two years lasting 24 minutes represents an acceptable level of service?	Yes	53	74%	72
	No	13	18%	
	Don't know	6	8%	
Which do you view as more acceptable? Choice 1: higher power cut risk for lower electricity bills Choice 2: lower power cut risk for higher electricity bills	Choice 1 - Lower bills	24	18%	135
	Choice 2 - Higher bills	39	29%	
	Same service/bill as now	72	53%	
We're planning to be a net zero business by 2028. Do you think we're going far enough?	Yes	43	64%	67
	No	24	36%	
We're aiming to connect up to 1.5m electric vehicles by 2028. Is that enough?	Yes	58	52%	111
	No	53	48%	



Appendix 4 Webinar questions

The following table includes a list of the questions asked by respondents during the webinar.

QUESTION
'Encouraging' Net Zero amongst consultants and contractors is different to mandating it... Can you clarify whether this is an absolute requirement or a nice to have?
Are there technical issues regarding the effect of heat pumps on the network? I have heard a lot about interference events, though the devices are within standard.
By 2028 what proportion of energy consumed within the regions will be generated within the DSO regions, and of that what percentage approximately would be from community owned energy?
Can you explain the measures you are planning take so that you have the network capacity available to enable the connections of DER, EVs, heat pumps, batteries, etc.?
Can you please summarise any significant changes made to REDUCE the number of commitments – especially anything on supporting decarbonisation?
Could you outline your anticipated levels of investment in ED2 in respect of data, digital and technology versus that of more traditional network reinforcement?
[What about] data sharing?
Do you have a view on supporting home thermal improvement via the tariff process?
Following on data, there's lots of progress on releasing information on remaining capacity at single points, but there's a way to go to support third parties like LAs who want to plan larger area decarbonisation. How will the plan invest in this kind of data?
Have you got a draft timeline with intermediate quantifiable targets for achieving your commitments?
As a follow-on question about EVs, I think a lot of people (me included!) don't realise that you need to talk to WPD if you want an EV charging point. Can you explain how you plan to make sure folk on your network know that they must inform you to check that the network can handle the additional load?
I saw that National Grid is in the process of buying WPD. Could a different owner of WPD change the plan in the future?
Is there a general approach to support/subsidise the provision of three-phase connections to new homes and to encourage existing single-phase homes to upgrade if EVs and ASHP connections require it?
It's clear that you need to invest significantly in digitalisation of physical assets and data to become more visible.
It's clear that there is a need to invest significantly in: 1. digitalisation of physical assets; 2. visibility of your data to unlock its value; and 3. technology to release the potential of interoperability. Can you describe your level of investment that is planned for these areas in OT (Operational Technologies) in ED2?
One of the big issues with the change to electric vehicles is the scrappage or conversion of existing vehicles. Although not strictly within your remit, do you have any views on how conversion might be encouraged?
Regarding DSO, how does the plan reflect more than one possible DSO role? (There was mention by Paul Jewell I think that Ofgem might be considering systems operations being shared by multiple actors – does the plan support this?)



QUESTION
Returning to 'headroom', can you change your investment funding from Ofgem before 2028? I thought this was fixed.
Thanks for squeezing in my EV question!
What core commitments have been dropped and why?
What headroom is there in the BP for significantly increased numbers of EV and heat pumps beyond your stated underlying assumptions? For instance, a factor of x5 or x10 for HPs or x5 for EV?
What is granularity of data?
Will being owned by National Grid make any difference to your proposed Business Plan?
Will the sub-contractors and consultants that WPD use in the future also need to operate as net zero businesses?
Would the proposed acquisition of WPD by National Grid affect your strategy and Business Plan?
WPD have included an increase for the cost of diversions for LV wood poles in RIIO ED2. What is the amount of that increase in percentage terms, and does it also cover HV wood poles in gardens? To whom, within WPD, should interested parties address their concerns in this area?



Western Power Distribution (East Midlands) plc, No2366923
Western Power Distribution (West Midlands) plc, No3600574
Western Power Distribution (South West) plc, No2366894
Western Power Distribution (South Wales) plc, No2366985

Registered in England and Wales
Registered Office: Avonbank, Feeder Road, Bristol BS2 0TB

www.westernpower.co.uk

