

westernpower.co.uk



WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION

Digitalisation Strategy Workshop – Feedback Report

11 February 2021



Contents

Introduction	2
Executive summary	3
Workshop One: Our Digitalisation Strategy and action plan	6
Workshop Two: Our roadmap to RIIO-ED2	18
Appendix 1: Attendees	28
Appendix 2: Workshop feedback	29



Introduction

On 11 February 2021, Western Power Distribution (WPD) hosted a workshop to seek feedback from stakeholders on the following topics: WPD's Digitalisation Strategy and action plan and the roadmap to RIIO-ED2.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, the workshop was hosted online. It consisted of short presentations given by WPD representatives, each followed by round-table discussions. Stakeholders were also asked to indicate their views on a range of proposals for the Business Plan using Slido, an electronic voting system, which allowed WPD to obtain quantitative as well as qualitative feedback.

The session was split into two main workshops. These are shown below:

- **Workshop One: Our Digitalisation Strategy and action plan**
- **Workshop Two: Our roadmap to RIIO-ED2**

WPD had recently published the first draft of its Business Plan for 2023–2028, which contains 67 core commitments. As part of its Business Plan requirements, Ofgem has requested all DNOs develop a set of individual strategies and action plans for key topics – known as 'delivery strategies' – to ensure that they are delivering on stakeholders' expectations and to demonstrate they will meet the baseline requirements set by the regulator. This workshop focused on one of these delivery strategies, namely digitalisation.

WPD instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate the workshops and to take notes of the comments made by stakeholders. Every effort has been made to faithfully record the feedback given. In order to encourage candour and open debate, comments have not been ascribed to individuals. Instead, notes have been made of the type of organisation each stakeholder represents.

[The full presentation can be found here.](#)

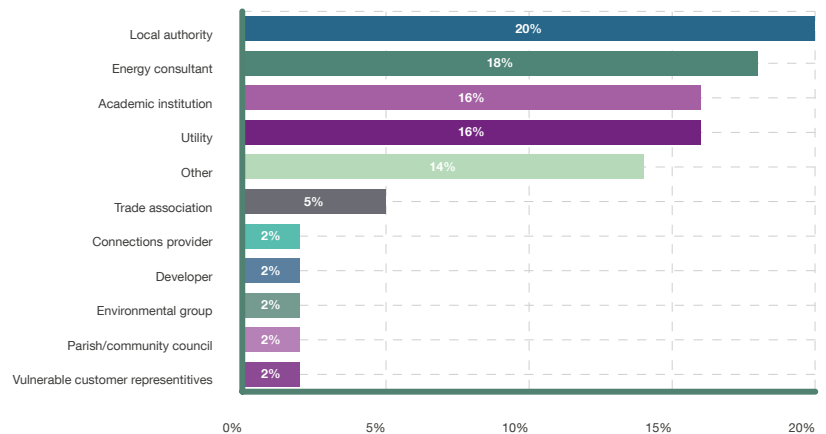


Executive Summary

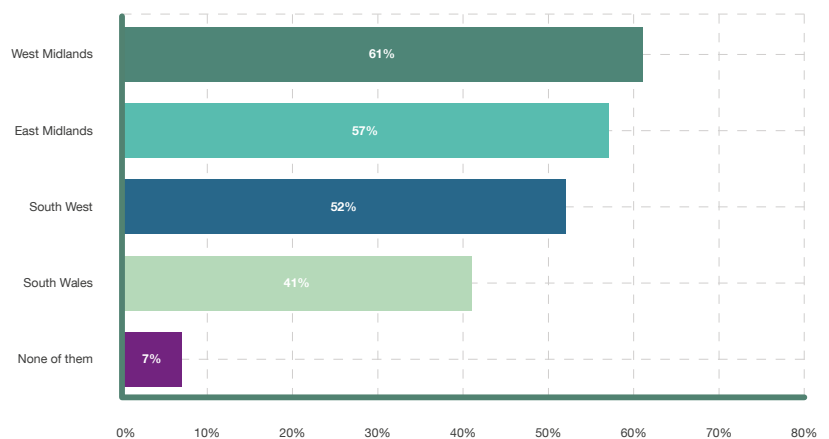
Participants

- A total of 54 stakeholders participated in the workshop, representing 45 organisations.
- 20% of participants represented local authorities and 18% described themselves as energy consultants. The utility sector and academia each accounted for 16% of stakeholders, and 14% of attendees identified as 'other'.
- 61% of delegates stated that the West Midlands region was relevant to them, with 57% reporting that the East Midlands was relevant.
- 56% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop to be 'very interesting', with 33% opting for 'interesting'.

What type of stakeholder are you?



Which WPD region is relevant to you?





Workshop One

Our Digitalisation Strategy and action plan

The first session began with an introduction from Richard Allcock, Stakeholder Engagement Manager at WPD. Richard gave an overview of WPD's stakeholder engagement programme and the business planning process for RIIO-ED2.

Following the introductory presentation, Jon Berry, DSO Digitalisation and Data Manager at WPD, then introduced the first workshop. During the discussion, stakeholders shared their views on the company's strategy and action plan. The key points are as follows:

- There was broad consensus that the three core principles of the Digitalisation Strategy were correct, although there were recommendations to improve scalability and the expansion of data.
- This view was supported in the electronic voting, where 82% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that WPD's three principles remain appropriate for RIIO-ED2.
- Delegates pointed to the importance of access to the most recent data, with a key point being "data goes out of date quite quickly".
- When participants were asked whether WPD should continue to focus on delivering against the EDTF recommendations in RIIO-ED2, 81% either agreed or strongly agreed with this approach, with 13% remaining neutral.
- Responding to the EDTF recommendations, stakeholders were keen to point out the critical importance of the customer in digitalisation and felt that increasing consumers' "energy IQ" and making data accessible and digestible were key to a smart, decarbonised future energy system.



Workshop Two

Our roadmap to RIIO-ED2

Jon Berry also introduced the second workshop, this time focusing on the Digitalisation Strategy for WPD's next Business Plan period (RIIO-ED2). The key feedback can be summarised as follows:

- Delegates were pleased with the focus on self-serve design but felt that focusing on a “common language of data” and consistency in the data published across the whole industry would enable more customers to make better decisions with their data.
- There was consensus that WPD should not focus on API at the expense of raw and high-level visual data and that stakeholders and consumers need different types of data for different projects; choice is key.
- This was reflected in the electronic voting, where on a scale of 1 (not useful at all) to 10 (very useful), high-level visual data received an average of 7.29, raw data an average of 8.37 and API an average of 8.02. This relatively even spread demonstrates that all types of data were felt to be useful.
- To make data more accessible and usable, delegates advised WPD to use examples of how to use its data, identify overlaps in different stakeholder needs and prioritise tailoring data to serve those demands.
- This was reflected in the electronic voting, where 70% either agreed or strongly agreed that WPD should focus on providing examples of how to use its data.



Workshop One

Our Digitalisation Strategy and action plan

Summary

Jon Berry, DSO Digitalisation and Data Manager at WPD, explained to stakeholders the three core principles of WPD's Digitalisation Strategy: improved data management, increased network oversight and presumed open data. He elaborated on what these core principles aim to deliver, focusing on areas such as providing open data to market participants, turning data into information that benefits customers and developing new connections and service propositions. He went on to outline the five key steps to support the transition to a modern, digitalised energy system from the Energy System Catapult's Energy Data Taskforce Report (EDTF), explaining that WPD was focusing on delivering against the recommendations of that report and seeking feedback from stakeholders as to whether this was the correct approach and whether the company could expand on these steps even further.

There was broad consensus that the three core principles of the Digitalisation Strategy – improved data management, presumed open data and increased network insight and operation – were correct, but stakeholders pointed to areas where they felt WPD could – and should – go further. Some felt that scalability, or the ability to increase data on demand, was not quite captured in the principles. In the same vein, stakeholders advocated the provision of real-time data, produced as a result of live updates, that

customers could access at the push of a button, in line with the way in which mobile technology has evolved. A key point here was that “data goes out of date quite quickly”, and delegates wondered how the energy industry in general was planning to address this. In a complementary point, stakeholders also stressed the importance of publishing historical data, which was seen to be as important as current data, with retention and timestamping of data therefore playing a critical role. Some stakeholders welcomed the idea of additional monitoring, which was seen as a benefit for community energy groups and those seeking access to more specific, localised data. However, others warned that this increased the risk of data breaches.

A key point raised during these discussions was that “data is knowledge; the use of this knowledge is power”. In terms of what was missing in the strategy, many delegates urged WPD to think about value creation from data beyond the use of energy. This would, in some cases, involve creating other services, empowering consumers in the transition to DSO and restructuring the industry as a result of new players, such as data management specialists, entering the market. Stakeholders mostly agreed that following the recommendations from the EDTF was the correct approach, but again highlighted the critical position of the customer, with some feeling that this element



of the strategy was too focused on the regulator. Stakeholders wanted to see a plan for increasing customers' "energy IQ", given that decarbonisation was going to be solved with data and that customers would be critical to this process. Making data workable and accessible was seen as crucial to solving this piece of the puzzle. Some delegates felt that the EDTF recommendations were too focused on the network and its assets and

urged WPD to place greater emphasis on a more holistic approach to data utilisation, such as translating data insights into action. However, others pointed out that the digitalisation journey was only in its nascent stages and that an operational focus was perhaps correct for now, as DNOs cannot currently open or facilitate new markets as they are regulated.

Stakeholder Feedback

Introductions

- "I'm interested in data discussions with DNOs, interested to hear your approach. And also keen to hear what Ofgem are expecting. You've stolen the lead in the marketplace, so well done." **Energy consultant**
- "I'm a project manager at Auriga services. I help vulnerable customers, so my interest here is in customer vulnerability." **Vulnerable customer representative**
- "I'm part of Capgemini's digital strategy team, so I'm coming more from a digitalisation angle. I have worked with a DSO and a few network operators before. I'm here to see what can be done with data, so how we can develop new business models and achieve greater efficiency in the network using data." **Energy consultant**
- "I work as a carbon reduction officer for a council in South Wales. I'm here to learn about your strategy. We have net zero carbon ambitions by 2030, so it's about how data can help us and what data is available." **Local authority**
- "I work for an engineering services consultancy. We work with clients to make applications, disconnections, etc., with DNOs and also ICPs. I'm here for knowledge. I need to keep up with how different DNOs are approaching digitalisation and Net Zero. It's about getting more information to assist our clients. WPD are in my opinion one of the best for turning round information to us, giving us quotes in a timely fashion, and so on. In my eyes, WPD set the standard really." **Energy consultant**



- “I work for UK Power Networks. I’m here to learn more about WPD’s strategy and look at how we might collaborate.” **Utility**
- “I’m a software engineer and I have worked on a couple of WPD projects recently to help facilitate data operations with community energy projects and renewable energy projects.” **Environmental group**
- “I work at a university as an infrastructure engineer and am helping to shape the process of making the campus greener. I’m interested in how WPD sees things going with the green agenda.” **Academic institution**
- “I work for a gas distribution network and am interested in how WPD is planning to put its digital data into action. How will information be shared with gas distribution networks and local authorities so that we can all move together towards a net zero future?” **Utility**
- “I’m an experimental officer involved in working renewables and integration of microgrids. I’m mostly here for the data management part.” **Academic institution**
- “I look to drive data governance and data improvement via data orchestration and digitalisation projects. I’m here to learn about WPD’s ambitions and to seek opportunities for collaboration.” **Utility**
- “I work with E.ON UK Limited and we do a lot of activities in and around the WPD network. My interest is in what the future holds, WPD’s alignment with Ofgem and how markets are changing. We are looking in particular at the lighting and grid opportunities throughout DNOs. I want to understand what strategic fit WPD has with others, and how we can support.” **Utility**
- “I am the DSO strategy lead for a consultant company. I am working on transformation projects and an innovation project with WPD at the moment. I want to understand how the Digitalisation Strategy is going to be translated into what WPD builds. This includes how it enables the use of data in the future, and whether there is anything my company can do to support that.” **Energy consultant**
- “My area of work is smart systems, being a part of large projects for the UK and European governments. I work on things like sharing technology within the community.



My interest is to see the strategy WPD has and how innovation and future technologies are being embedded into this. Also, I am interested in the role of research within this.”

Academic institution

- “My main interest is digitalisation and the data that WPD will present publicly. I write a lot of feasibility reports and want to see what level of information WPD will be bringing out. I also want to keep a general overview of how all the utilities are progressing with data.” **Energy aggregator**

The three core principles of WPD’s Digitalisation Strategy are: _____



Improved data management



Presumed open data



Increased network insight and operation

1. Are these three core principles appropriate?

- “At a high level I think it is quite adequate. The key things you want to capture are standardisation and making data openly available. Another one is the security and also the quality of the data, so that data cannot be encrypted in any way. The other key one is scalability. Can you increase the data on demand? Which I wouldn’t say is very obvious there. But I think overall, the principles are captured. The benefit of an eight-year period is that you can put in more investment and can give enough time to roll



things out.” **Academic institution**

- “I think it’s about expanding. And by expanding, you need the understanding. What we find is that you often need a translation service as to how a domestic customer or business can understand the data. The ability for it to be almost live, providing up-to-date data rather than data from three to six months ago. If we think about the way that mobile technology works, then people expect a button to be pressed and for things to happen simultaneously. How do we play catch up with data? We expect it from everything else, so how does the energy sector catch up?” **Local authority**
- “I think you’ve covered the key parts. I think it’s just more about updating the data. It’s very important, especially for us. So the process of updating data every month or year is very useful. Data goes out of date quite quickly.” **Energy consultant**
- “What were the alternatives to what you are presenting now? One question I would ask is: what other core principles have you not put here; what core principles were not put on this presentation? Has Covid-19 affected these principles, and after almost a year, has it altered these original principles?” **Local authority**
- “I just wanted to reiterate about the speed of data. It is really important. Customers go on your website to see there are loads of connection points, to be told later by planners or councils that they have to have reinforcements. The other thing is data retention. There seems to be the view that once it gets old, we should get rid of it. I think it’s quite important to look back at old data. The historic is just as important as the current. Make it really clear. What time point is being presented? A lot of the data is not date-stamped.” **Local authority**
- “I feel that trying to share as much data as possible and only finding small exceptions that would bar you from doing so is the right approach.” **Academic institution**
- “I really like these three core principles, particularly the additional data monitoring, which will make data far more accessible at a local level. This means that community energy groups will feel confident about the viability of their projects.” **Environmental group**
- “The principles are all appropriate, but there are three areas that I like in particular. Having a single source of truth is essential, as people need to know that they’re using the right information as part of decision-making processes. Standardised and usable



data is very good, as it will make the data seem more accessible to customers that might need them and creates a more comfortable user experience. Finally, increased internal access to data will help to drive forward innovation and help users to challenge decisions made by WPD if need be.” **Utility**

- “I agree that standardised data is important and would like to see this go further by saying that having standardised documents is really important for software engineers too.” **Environmental group**
- “I like the principles, but additional monitoring being added at local levels where substations are feeding into a number of houses would be a potential concern for me, as it could lead to potential data breaches through houses being specifically identified.” **Environmental group**
- “I think they’ll only achieve the outcomes if they’re measurable.” **Utility**
- “I think the network of the future is going to be all about data. It’s interesting that data management and open data are there as two of the three principles. It is going to be more complex for WPD to run the network, given the need to share data with more and more organisations with more flexibility. Data will be at the core of everything you do. The biggest organisations in the world at the moment are data businesses.” **Energy consultant**
- “Data is knowledge; the use of this knowledge is power. What is important is how it is used and the security aspects around that knowledge.” **Local authority**
- “Delivering these will be possible, but I feel like a framework should be developed around the ethics of data sharing, particularly if you are looking to share as much data as possible.” **Academic institution**
- “I believe WPD will be able to deliver this digitalisation of the sector.” **Academic institution**



2. Is anything missing?

- “In terms of missing things, the future of energy is not going to be just about energy itself but the additional values that can be created within services. How do we create more value beyond just the use of energy? In marketplaces, producing and sharing are important. The participants of the future won’t just be DSOs and DNOs; they will be consumers themselves who have to be considered within the value chain.”

Academic institution

- “It’s important to all businesses to understand their business model and the data value chain that supports it. Moving away from systems and focusing on data itself, where does it start and how does it flow? Understanding this, you can then address gaps and define principles. You can add cybersecurity layers around this. We all need to define data value chains for our businesses. You can then look at metadata and cybersecurity gaps.” **Utility**
- “We have the three underlying core principles. We’re trying to achieve a reality where the company can make agile decisions. Everything has to start with an understanding of what’s needed to drive the business and make it more agile.” **Local authority**
- “I’m trying to think in terms of the technology used. We’ve got a lot of distribution above ground and there’s a push for putting cabling underground along with, I presume, implementing fibre optics. Maybe it’s a level below all this, so looking at the technology you’d actually use. The question I thought about is how would 5G interface with this framework of recommendations and is it a level too low compared with what we’re talking about at the moment? There’s something missing around wider industry collaboration that can inform the type of data WPD uses, as well as the potential uses for it.” **Local authority**
- “The only thing that feels off for me is increased network insight. Is there anything on future planning here? You could consider that as implicit in insight, but planning and strategy should be informed by this data, and I don’t see it.” **Utility**
- “You’re talking about longer-term thinking, that also includes demand changes with



electric vehicles. But also, how the industry might restructure as new players come into the market. For example, data management specialists getting buy-in to the network. How does this blend into your thinking?” **Academic institution**

- “One of the things that may be implied is that we’re seeing other DNOs talking about data products and services. So, how do you translate this to something that is customer relevant? I know Ofgem are passionate in the use of personas and the like. So is that a missing principle, or will it be brought out, because I’d expect to see the word ‘customer’ here. I like the phrase ‘presumed open’, but it feels like you need something above that, the ‘why’, for example.” **Major connections customer**
- “The people element is missing for me. How do you ensure that your people remain data literate so they’re clear on the principles of what they’re doing?” **Utility**
- “One thing not explicitly mentioned is the security of data. The data needs to be secure and free from any kind of abuse or possible theft.” **Energy aggregator**

3. Our current focus is on delivering against the EDTF recommendations. Is this the approach we should follow in RIIO-ED2?

- “My first thought is that it all still seems to be aimed at the regulator. But looking at it from a customer point of view, it doesn’t seem to be coming out of here. There’s nothing here to say what the customer is going to get out of this. We should look at the value that it delivers for customers. The first couple of slides, the words ‘customer benefit’ cropped up loads, but then it all disappeared and seemed to recognise the regulator more. What is WPD going to provide for the customer?” **Business customer**
- “I think it’s going to be fine for the Business Plan. The people you’re going to be dealing with is us. Improving people’s energy IQ is something that DSOs should be doing. They’ve got economic assets to do so. And all of this means people will become more economically and energy efficient. I’ve mentioned the same thing to Northern Powergrid; when we’re working towards these things, we need to utilise customers.



And data is one of the things that will help with this. Decarbonisation will be solved mainly by data.” **Local authority**

- “I appreciate that at the moment it is identifying the key issues at a higher level, but knowing who needs the help and how we can help them. I used to work on cyber security, can confidentiality be linked to improving digitalisation?”
Vulnerable customer representative
- “How can we move potentially towards a whole energy system? We need to be conscious that for decarbonisation, it’s not enough to just look at electricity. We’ll be moving from gas fires to electric heating and from petrol to electric vehicles. There will be a bigger role for electricity, so is there a role for coordinating energy resources and getting to a more coordinated and optimal way of working? Obviously, we need to recognise that this currently falls outside of your licence obligations and wasn’t part of your original business, but if you were to branch out down this route, that would be good. It’s not just the mechanics of the data you provide, but coordinating to ensure data is as good as possible and opens up new ways of using it.” **Energy consultant**
- “The data is there, but it’s about taking a step forward in terms of how that data can help us achieve Net Zero. Businesses and local authorities have set themselves targets. In Carmarthenshire we have the data, but we can’t actually do any of the work owing to the limited grid capacity. It’s about how we take that data and turn it into something workable. The data is useful, but it’s about having that dialogue with WPD to say: this is the situation, what can we do moving forward?” **Local authority**
- “As a software engineer, I think that these recommendations definitely need to be implemented, but there needs to be a level of integration between them too. This would make it far easier for prospective community energy projects to gauge how viable their project would be.” **Environmental group**
- “It’s a good start, but there are lots of other different types of recommendations from data stored in ED2. I want to know how WPD is going to meet Ofgem data best practice guidance recommendations.” **Business customer**
- “I work on operational optimisation and exploring whether there are legitimate alternatives to operate energy across an area in a more optimal way than we do today.



Projects like ours often ask how we can evaluate on a level playing field and the value of our optimisation in relation to what the network or DSO is doing. This is a struggle because they don't know whether large battery investments or more heating put more value into the system. Operating the network smarter is important, and this area needs to be made more transparent.” **Energy consultant**

- “Although WPD are good at providing asset information geographically, it would be good to see load data on substations to help us determine insights for heat pumps and that sort of thing.” **Energy aggregator**

4. Should we go further or look to expand on these?

- “As a structure, it looks good. I wonder what might be missing is the generic nature of it. There's no clarity on prioritisation of timeframes, or anything that relates it you, and WPD's specific issues and terms. What it means to you.” **Major connections customer**
- “Is there any chance of illustrative cases? It would give an example of the kind of depth of strategy, and that might lead to the sparking of ideas both within and outside WPD. Particularly the innovation platform, how you would reach across themes. How does the digitalisation part fit in?” **Academic institution**
- “I'm not sure how suitable the approach really is if it is so hugely focused on network and assets, particularly when you think about the idea of translating insight into action around data. Data needs to act as a cornerstone to decision-making as part of a holistic approach to move the entire business forward.” **Utility**
- “Where are the people? Data is about people.” **Utility**
- “Some principles could become part of contracts and commercial agreements. You can then add KPIs and start a feedback loop based on this. It's about building trust.” **Utility**
- “Managing the interactions that you've enabled through this data is important. That's



the feedback loop with the customer.” **Academic institution**

- “There needs to be an alignment with real-world need and the timelines need to be useful.” **Utility**

- “I would be inclined to suggest that the digitalisation journey is still very early and the industry needs to find its way through that. Optimisation is immediately at the core of agile regulation. I question what ‘open markets’ means in this context. I’m not sure how a DNO can enable or facilitate open markets in the sense that it’s a business-to-business provider at the moment. Operation focus is important at the moment.”

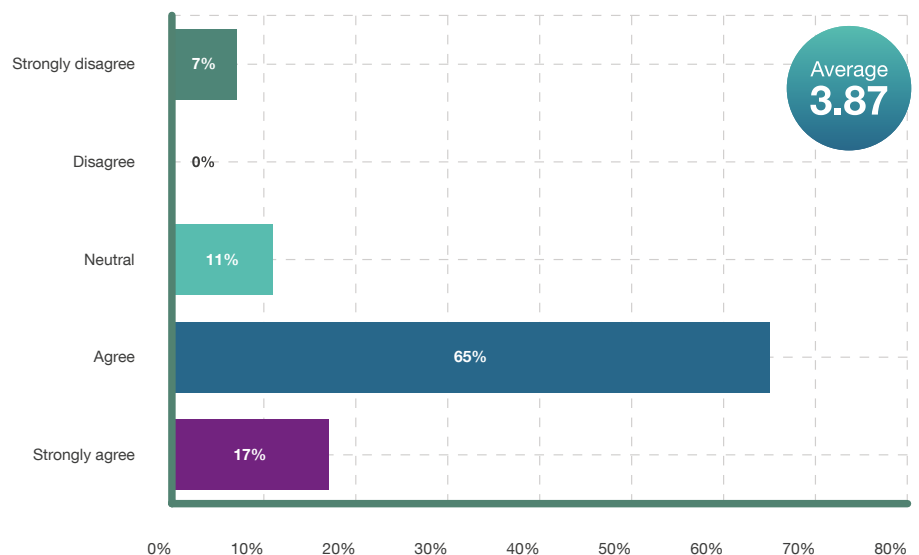
Trade association

- “I want to emphasise the importance of developing operational capability and in particular the need to develop the resource capability to enable the implementation and optimisation of the digitalisation agenda.” **Trade association**
- “There seems to be a lack of focus on how people in local communities will be affected with everything being digitalised. In addition, there seems to be no thought on the fuel poverty element and efforts to ensure that nobody is left behind. This data needs to be harnessed to help to tackle issues related to fuel poverty.” **Utility**

Electronic voting results

What is your view on the following statement:

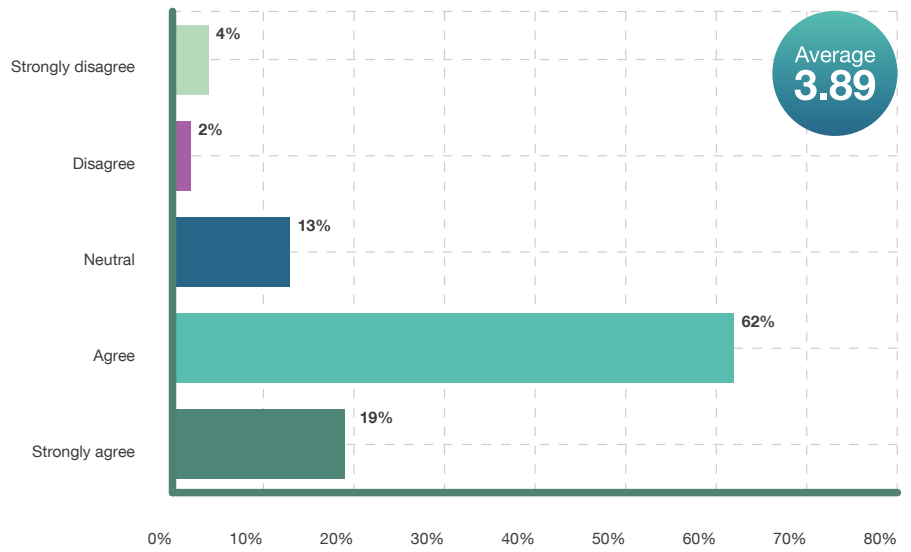
“WPD’s three principles remain appropriate for ED2”





What is your view on the following statement:

“WPD should continue to focus on delivering against the EDTF recommendations in ED2”





Workshop Two

Our roadmap to RIIO-ED2

Summary

Jon Berry explained that the company aims to deliver data in real time, provide solutions to support self-serve design and connection functionality, and increase its capacity and capability to automate processes and activity. He outlined the work that WPD had already done to identify the types of stakeholder that would seek to use the company's data, ranging from academics and innovators to consumers, highlighting the differing data needs of the different groups. With this in mind, he went on to demonstrate the three levels of data access proposed by WPD: high-level visual; raw data for download and interrogation; and API, which enables the automated pulling of data to inform wider decisions.

There was broad consensus that WPD had covered the main stakeholder types that would seek to use the company's data. Some felt that the split between external and internal user types was helpful, but others, particularly in local government, wanted to see the two types considered more holistically, with a clear line between, for example, "local authorities and regulators" in the external camp and "design and planning" on the internal side. Others felt that the non-electrical sectors were missing from the groups, and that greater interplay with different sectors would become more necessary and commonplace as we move towards Net Zero. Some delegates asked whether the types were restricted to the UK and urged WPD to include

international approaches and best practice when considering how to ensure best use and distribution of data. An interesting idea was put forward about visualising how the stakeholder types might overlap and interact, perhaps through the use of a Venn diagram, with the aim of identifying and prioritising overlapping stakeholder needs.

Delegates made it clear that focusing on delivering three levels of data, namely high-level visual, raw data and API, was the right approach, as different users had very different data needs, with one pertinent example being the different levels of data needed even within one local authority, applied to a range of different projects. It was agreed that API was useful in certain contexts but shouldn't be made the focus at the expense of other kinds of data. Stakeholders suggested that WPD had a role to play in tailoring the types of available data to different stakeholder needs, which could in turn increase accessibility, but for the most part, the prevailing feeling was that people should be free to decide which types of data their project demands, and that the relevant data should be available to them. Stakeholders were keen to see WPD focus on providing external users with examples of how to use the company's data. The example of raw data was raised for community energy groups, with the point made that seeing what others had done with that data could make a huge difference, particularly if expertise or experience in harnessing that data wasn't



yet at a high level. This led to an important observation about education and training around best data use, with an example given of new schools being built with in-depth energy systems that, despite having the potential to be incredibly energy efficient, are currently performing badly because those using the system do not understand how it works. This

conversation around operability extended to vulnerable and fuel-poor customers, with delegates feeling that in order to achieve the best, most efficient use of data overall, more education was needed. Examples of how to use data were therefore an important piece of this work.

Stakeholder Feedback

WPD's roadmap to RIIO-ED2 is focused on the following:



Delivering data in real time



Providing solutions to support self-service design and connection functionality



Increasing our capability to automate processes and activity

1. What else should we focus on to support you?

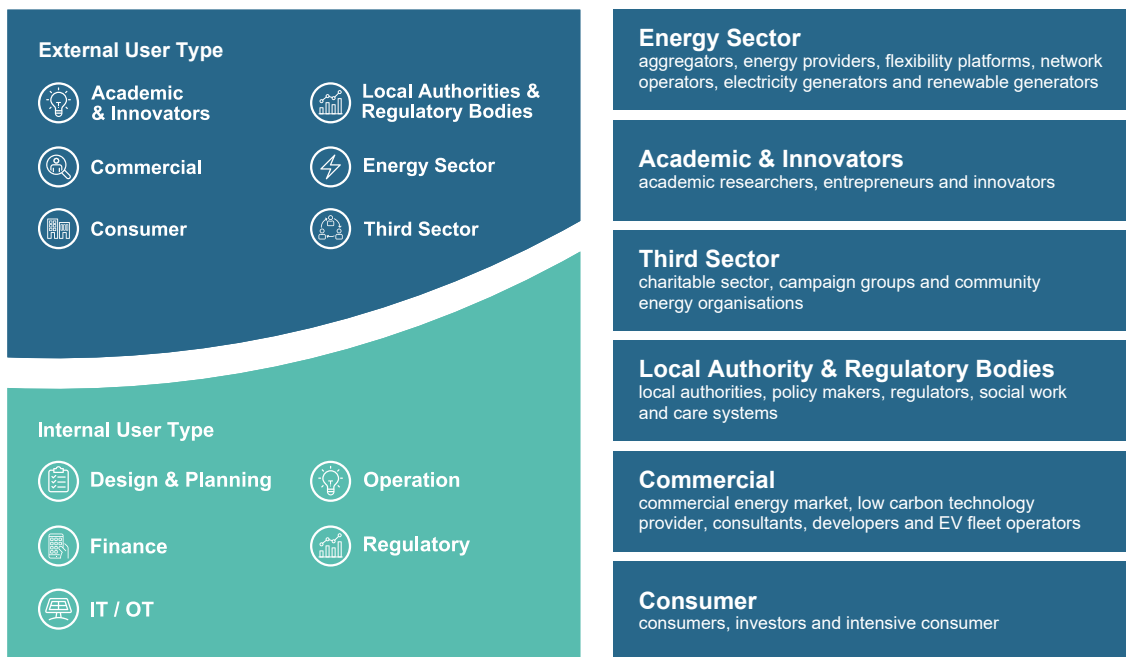
- “I think from a consumer vulnerability perspective, it actually works well, which is great. In terms of improvement, I think it works well, so there's not much. Maybe about how accessible data is and about defining data for specific stakeholders. I think it can always improve, obviously, but I think it does this naturally, as we continue to work with them.” **Vulnerable customer representative**



- “From a self-service point of view, I imagine it’s useful. From the real-time and planning points of view, I think there’s real value. Focus on real time in ED2 is the long-term data and whether that’s available from ED1?” **Utility**
- “I believe in self-serve design, but for the majority of my customers, they might just move on without looking. The information has to be presented in a timely manner. We need to use our data and present information in a way that vulnerable customers feel they could use it.” **Local authority**
- “The key integration should be planning, making sure our sector isn’t left out.” **Local authority**
- “If there were a way of creating a common language of data that relates to planning and internal design, in a way that is consumable for that audience. At the moment, local authorities and regulators don’t find the data easy to read in order to make judgements for their areas. They are difficult planning decisions to make in isolation.” **Energy consultant**
- “In terms of how you make that available, and pre-configured reports, I think there are a few obvious considerations. One is that WPD leading the way is great, but you ought to keep in sync with your peers. It would be nice to have some consistency, not just in data, but also in its accessibility. In terms of those additional points, I’d question whether it’s the best use of time or whether your ecosystem stakeholders are better placed. Having more of a shared community space might be useful, and you can say: here’s a lens that you might find useful. Rather than just reviewing what you publish.” **Utility**
- “I agree that greater clarifications around data sets would really help. I would like to see adequate descriptions for the data (such as the centre used to collect them and where that centre is located), as it would give users a degree of understanding around them. In addition, it would then mean that WPD could deploy suitable experts for each query, meaning that WPD staff can use their time more efficiently.” **Environmental group**
- “You could add providing historical data. Seeing the variation over time is sometimes more important than simply using real-time data.” **Academic institution**



Detailed below are WPD’s current data users



2. Does this list cover all of the types of stakeholder who would seek to use our data?

- “I like the way you have identified that split. I think if you try and impose the data type, it doesn’t always work with the external user type. I think it’s about the data use and how we put it to greater use. What are we doing in terms of mobility and electric vehicles, decarbonisation, etc.? I think the final one is that if community energy people find it hard to find the information, we should be using that as a warning to say, well, how does that affect people who don’t have any knowledge? I think there should be a lot of emphasis on local planning data. We know that demands are different along your patch. We need to make sure that the data differs, as it is beneficial to both you and us.” **Local authority**
- “The people we help in local government are increasingly saying it would be great if the internal and external user types were thought of as one. This includes internal design and planning.” **Energy consultant**



- “From our perspective, one thing that is missing is non-electric sectors. But as we transition, there is going to be a lot of interplay between different sectors. The energy sector is the right user, but how do you share that with Cadent and other gas network providers? It’s an integrated energy solution that we’re moving towards, but it doesn’t seem to be like that currently.” **Local authority**
- “The other angle is whether we’re just talking about the UK, or abroad? In the USA, there are lots of interesting approaches.” **Academic institution**
- “To the point about bringing global experience in, you have the solution, and you’re all in the same standard. But it does tend to take a long time, and I’m sure that on balance, you might not go down that route. Taking lessons and learning from it abroad. We can’t copy because the standards are different.” **Utility**
- “It would be good to have a Venn diagram to see how everyone interacts in this sector. That would be really good visually. More detail to break things down would help. Given how academia affects DNOs, that would be really useful.” **Academic institution**
- “I think that there is more work to be done in identifying the specific needs of these different stakeholder groups and then working out a way to prioritise needs that overlap these different groups. If you can identify areas where you can provide the most comprehensive services for your stakeholders, that means that they will be getting the most bang for their buck.” **Utility**
- “I want data to make me a better engineer and help me make better decisions. There are several data users, including National Grid, end users and people like me, engineers. Driving them up into user groups and focusing on their needs.” **Energy aggregator**
- “From a supplier’s perspective, there is not a specific user here for them. Current suppliers will use this data a lot, but information is limited as to the market and scope. Some of the information held here would be really useful for assessing for cost purposes if it were made available specifically to suppliers. This could help reduce pricing.” **Major connections customer**



3. Should we focus more on solutions (API) or does simply providing data deliver more value for a wider number of external users?

- “All three levels of data access are highly essential. Visualisation, raw data and API are exceptionally useful.” **Local authority**
- “Different projects require different information. As a whole, it’s more high-level data that we require, and then there’s more of a need for more detailed data as the project progresses. Mainly, we just want to know what’s available and what our options are.” **Energy consultant**
- “I completely agree that data should be presented in different forms depending on stakeholder capability and knowledge. From my point of view, I maybe wouldn’t be delving too much into the technical information, but I would definitely want some interpretation of the data to get decisions made and to get things across to other people. That said, I know there are people within our local authority who would want the same data but a more technical version, and that’s just within our one local authority. You need to look at these outcomes maybe and what level of data people need. A greater focus on examples of how to use the data would be useful.” **Local authority**
- “I would be more interested in raw data for download. In addition, it would be great if it were made possible for users to access certain restricted data under specific conditions, such as signing an NDA.” **Academic institution**
- “The API approach is very useful when you are trying to put together different data rendering for different community groups. However, others want the history of the data over recent years so that they can see energy trends, so the other approach could help there.” **Environmental group**
- “You need to look at your different audiences and decide what is the best approach for them. Data history and trends are very important to some people, whereas others are not so interested.” **Utility**
- “I would encourage you to use a mixture of the three approaches and tailor them to different customers, as everyone has different access needs. You don’t want to be



giving raw data to some stakeholders, for example.” **Utility**

- “I agree that all three approaches have their merits, but there are different levels of granularity required for different projects. I feel that having greater understanding of how data will be presented and what benefits they will be able to bring us in terms of pricing will be important.” **Academic institution**
- “What many people need is graphics and visualisation. On the academic side, raw data is essential. Visualisations work really well. Third parties can invest in presenting raw data in innovative ways. Raw data availability is fundamental.” **Academic institution**
- “All three levels of data access should be available. People can then make their own decisions.” **Major connections customer**

4. Should we focus more on providing external users with examples of how to use our data?

- “Yes, I use data for community use. What I found very useful was to get the raw data and see what other people have done with it. Raw data plus some examples would be ideal.” **Business customer**
- “As an academic, data are very useful for PhD activity, but you need to qualify the terms on which you share them more clearly. Sometimes you need to make it clear that the data is for general use, but sometimes it would be good to have some specialist guidance around the data and how I should use them. That kind of insight would be invaluable.” **Academic institution**
- “Are consumers ready for detailed data? We are having this conversation at the moment at the council. We’ve had some new schools being built which have in-depth energy systems but ultimately, unless there’s training or understanding, you’re just looking at numbers. These schools are really energy efficient, but they are performing badly because people don’t understand how they work. Maybe an app for certain users



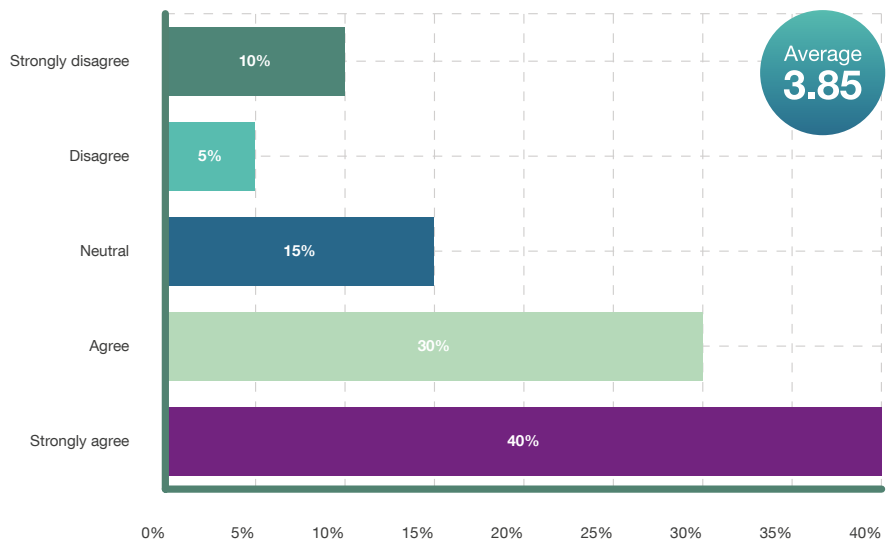
would be useful. Also, it's an issue of time – how can I get what I need really quickly, as I have a meeting tomorrow about x, y and z? Data needs to be easily available and digestible. Perhaps you could have data available as overlays and provide extra support with this.” **Local authority**

- “I think examples of data and the ways that data can be put to use would help people. If you put examples out of its uses and where it can integrate, that would be good. There’s a big issue around inoperability. For instance, if you have people who are fuel poor and struggling to pay their bills, how do we get information to those people that helps them to manage the problems they face?” **Local authority**

Electronic voting results

What is your view on the following statement:

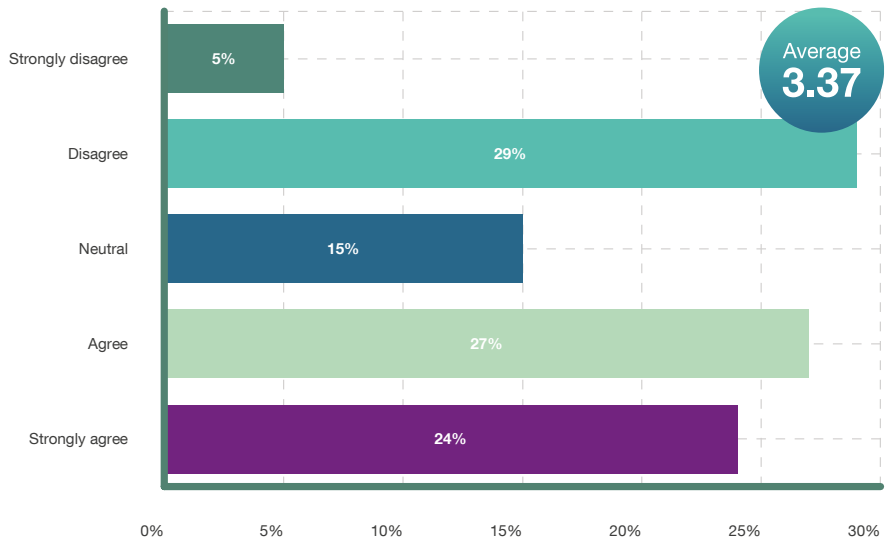
“WPD should focus on providing examples of how to use its data”





What is your view on the following statement:

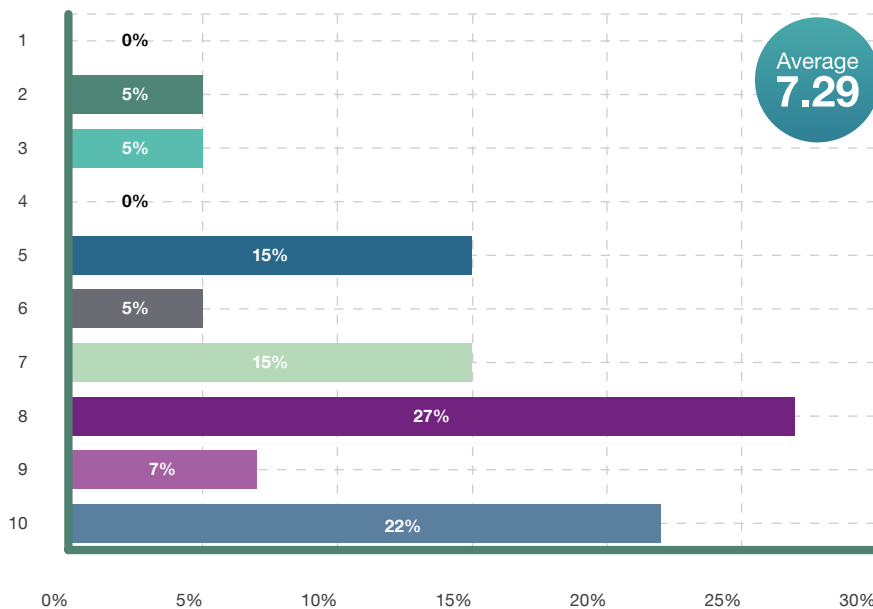
“WPD should focus on providing solutions rather than just delivering raw data”



On a scale, how useful is the following data type?

“High level visual”

1 - Not useful at all 5 - Neutral 10 - Very useful

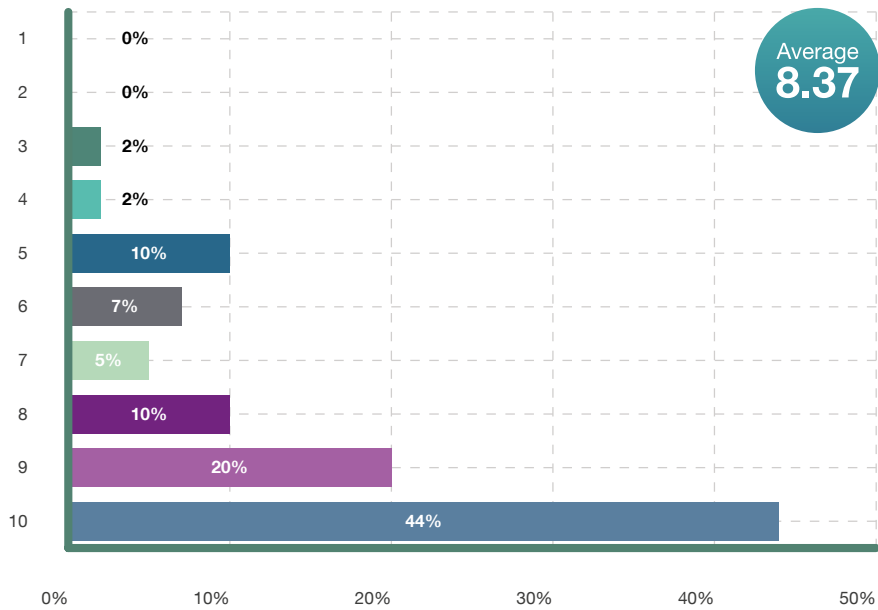




On a scale, how useful is the following data type?

“Raw data for download and interrogation”

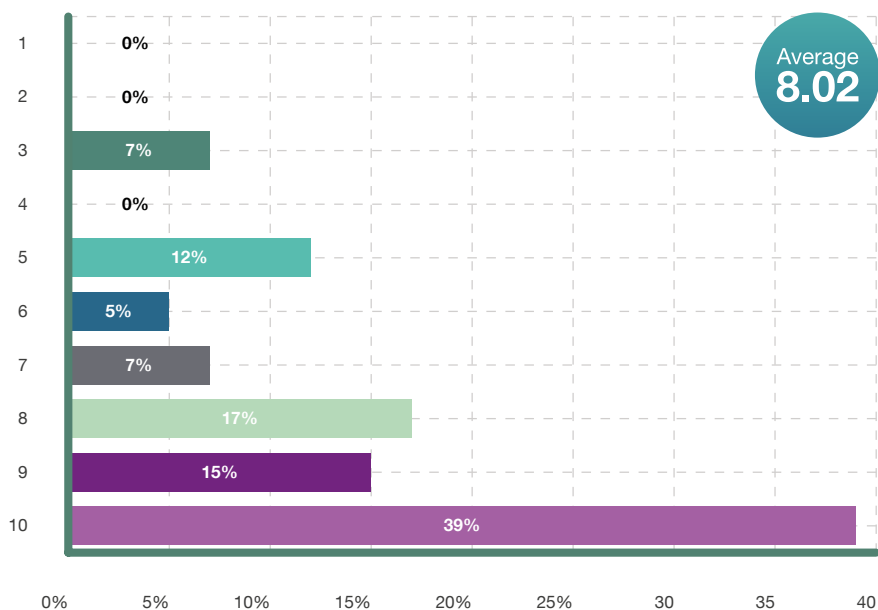
1 - Not useful at all 5 - Neutral 10 - Very useful



On a scale, how useful is the following data type?

“API, pulling data to inform wider decisions”

1 - Not useful at all 5 - Neutral 10 - Very useful





Appendix 1 Attendees

A total of 54 stakeholders attended the workshop, representing 45 organisations. The organisations represented on the day are shown below:

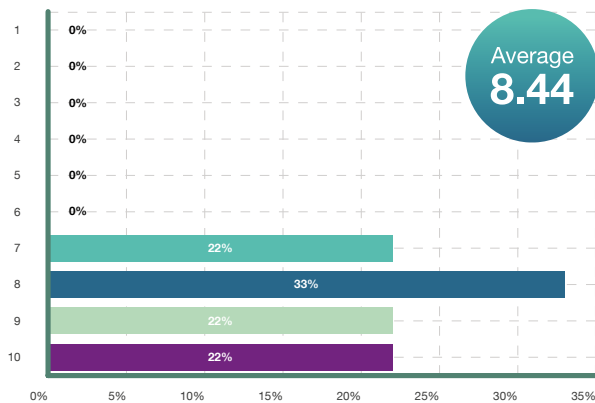
Anglian Water	Malvern Hills District Council
Auriga Services	Manchester Metropolitan University
Bacchus Hotel Ltd	National Grid
Brunel University London	Newent Town Council
Cadent	Rutland County Council
Capgemini	South Holland District Council
Carmarthenshire County Council	Smart Grid Consultancy Ltd
Centre for Sustainable Energy	SMS Energy Services Ltd
Coventry City Council	Somerset County Council
Customer Engagement Group	SSE plc
EA Technology	Stratford District Council
ElectraLink	Swansea Council
Engie	The Schumacher Institute
E.ON UK Ltd	Torrige District Council
ESB Networks	University of Warwick
ESC UK	University of Manchester
EUTC	Wattify Limited
Freedom	Westbury-on-Severn Parish Council
Fundamentals Ltd	Wiltshire Council
Hitachi Europe Ltd	
INFRAMAN	
IVHM Centre	
JRC	
Kier Utilities and Rail	
Lincolnshire County Council	
Loughborough University	



Appendix 2 Workshop feedback

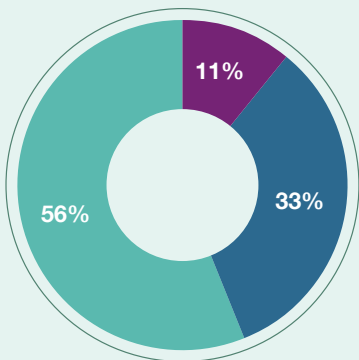
After the workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. The feedback was as follows:

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



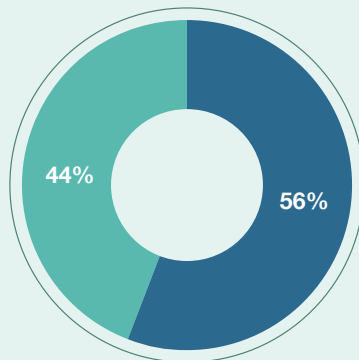
“ This was a learning curve for me. ”

Overall, did you find this workshop to be:



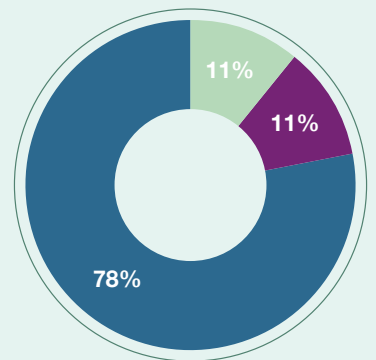
Very interesting
Interesting
Neutral
Not that interesting
Not interesting at all

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?

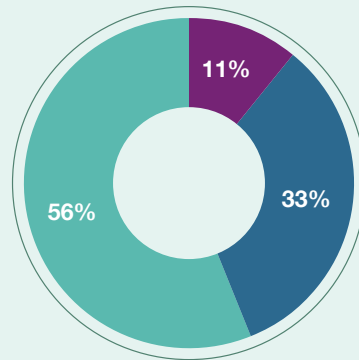


Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree



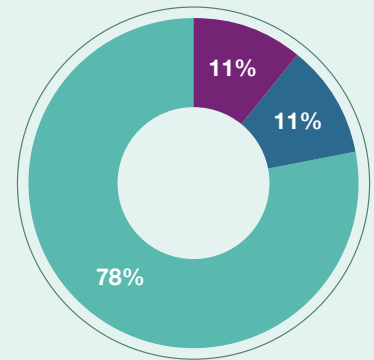
“ Good, see above. There was a considerable knowledge gap between the various attendees. ”

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

Comments

- “Keeping to time, involving all, covering all questions.”
- “Very smooth facilitation. Gave people a chance to attend without having to travel.”
- “Good speed, good group size in breakouts, material quite clear.”
- “Technology was good and some great presentations.”



Any other comments?

- “During lockdown, I’ve attended far too many Zoom and Teams meetings for my liking, but I was pleasantly surprised how well WPD had planned and executed this event. Well done!”
- “Very stimulating. Nice to see other members of WPD’s stakeholder “ecosystem” – love that phrase.”
- “Good engagement with users, so thanks.”



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

