



# Western Power Distribution ED2 Workshops

## Summary Report

November 2020

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# 1 | OVERVIEW

In November 2020, Western Power Distribution (WPD) hosted a series of four online stakeholder workshops aimed at stakeholders in the company's South West, South Wales, West Midlands, and East Midlands licence areas.

The purpose of these workshops was to round off the co-creation stage of WPD's programme of engagement in support of its RIIO-ED2 Business Plan. Stakeholders were asked to comment on feedback that had been given in the previous round of workshops and to give their feedback on the draft outputs WPD has produced as a result. In addition, they were asked to comment on whether they thought WPD's priorities had changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The events consisted of a series of presentations given by WPD representatives, followed by discussions in breakout rooms and electronic voting aimed at eliciting quantitative feedback. WPD instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to facilitate the discussions and take note of the feedback given.

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

## OUR BUSINESS PLAN TIMETABLE AND PROCESS

The South West workshop began with an introductory presentation from Richard Allcock, Stakeholder Engagement Manager. At the South Wales, West Midlands and East Midlands workshops, this presentation was given by Alison Sleightholm, Resources & External Affairs Director.

It was explained that WPD's RIIO-ED2 Business Plan has been built with stakeholders at every stage, starting with a blank sheet of paper and building from scratch through five stages. Stakeholders were told that the purpose of these workshops was to round off the co-creation stage ahead of the negotiation phase in January 2021, at which point there would also be an opportunity for stakeholders to co-create strategies to set out how WPD will deliver these outputs. From March 2021 onwards there would then be an opportunity to refine and agree specific performance targets and expenditure, including specific bill impact.

## SESSION ONE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER

The first workshop discussion session was introduced by Alex Wilkes, External Affairs Manager. The presentation introduced Ofgem's theme, Meeting the Needs of the Consumer, which comprises the priority areas of: Customer Service; Customer Vulnerability; and Social Contract. It should be noted that Connections also sits under this theme but was discussed in a dedicated surgery after the main workshop, hosted by Tim Hughes, Connections Policy Manager, in week one and Vanessa Buxton, Connections Policy Engineer, in week two. In the case of each of these priority areas, the presentations outlined the feedback that had been given by stakeholders at previous workshops and the draft outputs WPD is proposing as a result.

## SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK

The second workshop discussion session was introduced by Andrzej Michalowski, Planning & Regulation Special Projects Manager. The presentation introduced Ofgem's theme, Maintaining a Safe and Resilient Network, which comprises the priority areas of: Network Reliability; and Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience. It should be noted that Workforce Resilience and Safety also sit under this priority area, both of which were discussed at their own dedicated afternoon surgeries. The Safety surgeries were hosted by Paul Woodward and the Workforce Resilience surgeries were hosted by Carl Ketley-Lowe. In the case of all of these priority areas, the presentations outlined previous stakeholder feedback and the draft outputs WPD is proposing as a result.

## SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

The final workshop discussion session covered the theme: Delivering an Environmentally Sustainable Network. In the East Midlands, this session was introduced by Andy Martyr-Icke, Environment Advisor, and Nigel Turvey, DSO and Future Networks Manager. At all other workshops, this session was introduced by Jill Russell, Environment Manager, and Nigel Turvey. This covered the priority areas of: Environment and Sustainability; Distribution System Operator; Innovation; and Community Energy. The priority of Digitalisation was discussed in its own dedicated surgery, hosted by Jonathan Berry. In each case, the presentation outlined the feedback that had been given by stakeholders at previous workshops and the draft outputs WPD is proposing as a result.

The structure of the day has been summarised in the following table:

	SESSION ONE	SESSION TWO	SESSION THREE
OFGEM THEME	Meeting the Needs of the Consumer	Maintaining a Safe and Resilient Network	Delivering an Environmentally Sustainable Network
STAKEHOLDERS' PRIORITY AREAS	Customer Service Customer Vulnerability Social Contract	Network Reliability Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience	Environment and Sustainability Distribution System Operator Innovation Community Energy
SURGERY SESSIONS	Connections	Workforce Resilience Safety	Digitalisation

The full presentation can be found online at <http://westernpower.co.uk/downloads/317284>.

For the purposes of this report, feedback on the priority areas and associated draft outputs have been recorded according to Ofgem’s themes rather than the structure of the day itself.

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

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

## 2 | METHODOLOGY

This section summarises the methodology adopted for gathering feedback from a wide range of stakeholders at these workshops.

Over 7,500 stakeholders are held on WPD’s database, all of whom were invited to attend the workshops via email. 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.

Despite being held online rather than in person, WPD adopted their standard format for stakeholder engagement which was a series of presentations followed by discussions in smaller breakout groups. These breakout groups were facilitated by independent facilitators with feedback notes being taken by independent scribes. Every attempt was made to ensure that an equal number of stakeholders participated in each breakout room. However, due to varying attendance levels, this varied between 4 and 8 stakeholders. Each breakout room was attended by at least one WPD representative who was on hand to answer any technical questions.

The purpose of these stakeholder workshops was to round off WPD’s stage of co-creation with stakeholders around their next Business Plan. WPD wanted to play back the feedback they had heard and interpreted to date, ensure it was correct, and present to stakeholders the first draft outputs for the next Business Plan. Given that the previous feedback had been heard prior to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, WPD also wanted to ensure it was still correct.

To these ends, sessions one, two and three, as well as the surgery sessions, all centred around the facilitators asking the same three questions.

1. Covid-19: Has there been any change in priorities or emerging issues which will need to be addressed?
2. Have we interpreted stakeholder feedback correctly?
3. Is anything missing from the outputs proposed?  
What specific targets, measures and performance levels do you want to see for each output?

As the Social Contract – which is a separate document to the Business Plan – is at an earlier stage of development, a fourth question was also asked during the discussions on that priority area:

4. In relation to the 15 components stakeholders have identified, what specific commitments would you like WPD to make?

To support stakeholders to be able to answer these questions in the breakout rooms, in relation to questions 1 and 2 stakeholders were asked to refer back to the presentation they had just received, with a verbal recap of the key points provided by the facilitator. For question 3, due to the detailed nature of the draft Business Plan outputs, stakeholders were provided with on-screen prompts to work through, including a view on WPD's current baseline performance to provide important context.

Following each breakout session, including after the surgery sessions, stakeholders were asked to give their views using an online poll. After the sessions reviewing the draft outputs, stakeholders were asked to give their view on whether the outputs demonstrated the right level of ambition. For each, stakeholders were asked whether WPD had got the right level of ambition, answering on a scale of 1 to 5 whether they should 'do a lot less' (1) through to 'do a lot more' (5).

As most outputs were ranked between 3 and 4, this report has displayed the online polling results both as an average out of 5, as well as in comparison to the baseline average for the outputs which was 3.65 / 5 to give a better indication of which outputs stakeholders particularly prioritised. When reporting the results, the report often groups together the proportion of those that answered 1 and 2, indicating that stakeholders wanted the level of ambition reduced, and those that answered 4 and 5, indicating that stakeholders wanted the level of ambition stretched.

The surgery sessions were attended by fewer participants and the voting data is therefore based on a smaller sample size. Whilst polling data for the outputs covered in these sessions is summarised under those priority areas, it has not been compared against data for the outputs covered in the main sessions. The baseline average therefore does not include the outputs from the surgery sessions. The comparative average score for the priority areas is therefore also limited to the nine priority areas covered in the main sessions, rather than the total of 13 priority areas in the Business Plan.

The stakeholder feedback and polling results are set out in this report.

At the end of the morning session, stakeholders were asked to complete an online survey giving their feedback on the online workshop itself. The results of this have been summarised in the final section of this report.



### 3 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The feedback summarised in this Executive Summary has been set out under Ofgem’s three themes and the corresponding priority areas, rather than according to the structure of the workshop itself – except for the introductory session, which has been summarised first.

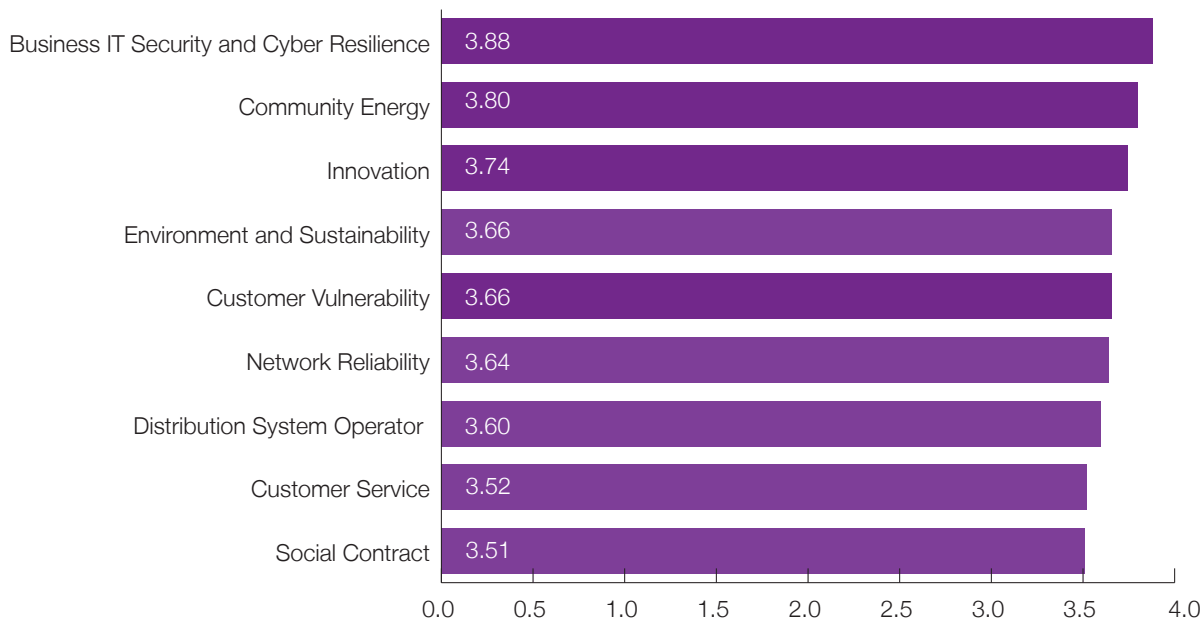
#### INTRODUCTION AND THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

- Many of the stakeholders who participated in the workshop were interested in the growth agenda and were keen to learn about WPD’s plans to accommodate new homes and commercial developments.
- Around a third of those who participated represented local authorities, many of which had declared a climate emergency. They were particularly interested in plans to facilitate the connection of low carbon technologies (LCTs) to the electricity network. The topic of electric vehicles (EVs) was of particular interest to many stakeholders who were concerned that the likely take-up of EVs would put considerable strain on the electricity network.
- Stakeholders were particularly concerned about the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic would have on customers in vulnerable circumstances and those in fuel poverty. They were interested to hear more about the support that WPD was giving to these people. In addition, they were keen to ensure that these customers were not disadvantaged as a result of the transition to Net Zero.
- Stakeholders broadly welcomed the opportunity to engage with WPD. Many of them could see how the outputs had been derived from previous engagement and were keen to further refine the outputs WPD was proposing as part of its RIIO-ED2 Business Plan.

#### BUSINESS PLAN DRAFT OUTPUTS

##### SUMMARY GRAPH: AVERAGE LEVEL OF AMBITION BY PRIORITY AREA

The graph below displays the average score for the outputs under each priority area. This provides an indication of whether stakeholders felt WPD had got the right level of ambition by priority area. The priority areas covered in the surgery sessions have not been included because the number of respondents was far lower and therefore comparing the data would be incorrect.





## SESSION ONE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER

- **Customer Service:** Stakeholders felt Covid-19 would lead to customers expecting a higher degree of network reliability for their domestic supply given the increase in homeworking. In terms of the proposed customer satisfaction outputs, stakeholders generally agreed WPD should maintain its high level of customer satisfaction and complaints response rates, whilst balancing it against the cost of doing so. In terms of their customer communication, on the whole stakeholders felt the level of ambition in some of the outputs (answering calls within 5 seconds and responding to social media enquiries within 5 minutes) was slightly unnecessary and was not worth the cost to customers. The output stakeholders felt needed to stretch the furthest was their communication with customers and stakeholders around planned work activity and interruptions – as well as an online viewer, stakeholders wanted to see a proactive strategy such as push notifications. In the online polling, as an average across all outputs and all events, Customer Service ranked second from bottom of the nine priority areas – below the average baseline – which was consistent among all the events.
- **Customer Vulnerability:** Stakeholders felt Covid-19 would have a significant impact on this priority area, including by creating a host of new vulnerabilities as well as leading to a substantial rise in fuel poverty. In part due to this, there was some disagreement over whether supporting 75,000 customers to save £40m over the next Business Plan was significant enough. However, in general, stakeholders felt the level of ambition on Customer Vulnerability was right. The exception to this was, perhaps, WPD's work to ensure no one is left behind in the transition to a smart network – stakeholders wanted WPD to take a leading role in collaborating with industry participants and educating vulnerable and fuel poor customers on the smart energy transition. In the online poll, as an average across all events, Customer Vulnerability ranked joint fourth – 0.01 above the average baseline. This varied by event, with the priority area receiving a particularly low score in the South West – although stakeholders explicitly stated that this was because they felt the work WPD was doing in this area is already at a high standard.
- **Social Contract:** In terms of commitments for the Social Contract, stakeholders in the South West in particular focused on those relating to delivering environmental benefits and meeting Net Zero targets. At all workshops, stakeholders suggested commitments relating to customer vulnerability and fuel poverty. It was commonly felt the commitments need to have a local or regional focus, despite the scale of WPD's network area. Stakeholder emphasised the importance of clearly articulating what the Social Contract is so customers understand its purpose. In terms of the proposed outputs for the next Business Plan, discussions particularly focused on WPD's 'Community Matters' Fund which was well supported, although some felt the level of funding was too low and others said more needs to be done to promote it. In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, the priority area of Social Contract ranked bottom with an average of 3.51 / 5 – well below the overall baseline – although there was some divergence across the events.
- **Connections:** The highest ranked output for this priority area was 'provide new connections quotations and energisation in line with customer expectations.' Stakeholders wanted to see accurate information and guaranteed timeframes, as well as innovative connections offers that make best use of capacity via flexibility or hybrid connections. The second highest ranked output was 'engage with local authorities and local enterprise partnerships to understand their requirements for strategic investment', with stakeholders adding developers to this list. The output to develop the connections process and improve availability of information was also supported, with stakeholders noting that different customer types have varied levels of knowledge and need information bespoke to their needs.

## SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK

- **Network Reliability:** Stakeholders felt the pandemic had highlighted the importance of electricity supply as an essential service – particularly for those that are shielding or self-isolating. There was a lot of debate as to whether the level of ambition was right for the outputs relating to network performance. It was noted increased electrification will lead to additional challenges for the network, but at the same time the transition to a smart network provides opportunities to address these. Stakeholders felt some of these outputs were vague and needed more specific performance measures. With regard to tree management, the primary concern for stakeholders was the impact WPD's tree clearance programme would have on the wider environment rather than its impact on the network itself. Stakeholders supported the use of asset condition data to target where the need for investment is greatest, with this output ranking highest overall for this priority area. The lowest ranking output at all events related to undergrounding, insulating or diverting lines near school playing areas – the feeling being that the benefit was outweighed by the cost. Overall, in the online poll as an average across all outputs and events, Network Reliability ranked sixth – demonstrating that relative to other priority areas stakeholders seemed to think the level of ambition was right.
- **Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience:** Stakeholders felt the Covid-19 pandemic had underlined the critical importance of contingency planning, reinforcing the importance of this priority area. It was frequently commented that the outputs under this priority area were too vague and needed to include specific targets to measure performance. In terms of the outputs themselves, support was expressed for all of them in the discussions, with genuine concern about the threat of sophisticated state actors bringing down the electricity network. Stakeholders made some suggestions, although on the whole the outputs were not discussed at length. The highest ranked output in the online poll was 'development and implementation of new systems, technologies and applications that are capable of supporting the future network'. This was, in fact, the second highest scoring output across outputs in all nine priority areas. As an average across all outputs and all events, the priority area of Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience came top. This was despite the fact that the discussions on the outputs were often quite brief demonstrating, perhaps, that while stakeholders were very concerned about cyber resilience and disaster recovery and wanted WPD to do more to address them, they did not necessarily have the knowledge or understanding with which to advise.
- **Workforce Resilience:** Stakeholders felt WPD would need to consider this priority area in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in ensuring that any ongoing changes to working practices are reflected in the strategy. Stakeholders generally felt the priorities captured everything required but wanted to see more granularity beneath them. The only thing they felt was missing was an emphasis on digital tools for employee engagement. During the discussions, stakeholders particularly discussed the output 'ensure that WPD is the employer of choice and attracts the top talent for advertised roles', urging them to target the education system to engage with pupils and students from an early stage as well as to raise the profile of the industry as a whole.
- **Safety:** Stakeholders suggested a range of other topics they felt were missing from the outputs. Several also felt the targets were unambitious and wanted WPD to demonstrate more leadership in this area. The highest ranked output for this priority area was 'educate 300,000 children about avoiding danger from electricity' with 3.55 / 5 – this was reflected in the discussions too, where stakeholders thought the total number of children was very low compared to the size of WPD's network area. The second highest ranked output was 'reduce the staff accident frequency rate by 10% from the ED1 average' with 3.4 / 5. Again, this was reflected in the discussion where stakeholders wanted WPD to demonstrate leadership and ambition in this area, feeling a 10% reduction was insufficient.



## SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

- **Environment and Sustainability:** Stakeholders expressed strong concern that WPD's ambition to reduce the company's Business Carbon Footprint by 2043 was not ambitious enough. It was felt, as the electricity network, that WPD should be leading the way and that if WPD's own target is later than that of the local authorities in their network area it would impede the ability of these councils to achieve their own decarbonisation targets. This was the highest ranked output under this priority – and the highest across all nine priority areas – demonstrating the strength of feeling. The outputs relating to WPD's operational impact – reducing dangerous leaks from cables – whilst not discussed at length all ranked on average above the baseline, also demonstrating that stakeholders wanted WPD to do more in this area. Stakeholders questioned the targets relating to the reduction in waste, with some feeling 'achieving zero waste' was not achievable and others asking what the reduction in tonnage of waste had to do with WPD's annual turnover. The lowest scoring output by a considerable margin was 'we will remove 34km of overhead lines in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' because stakeholders were in fact concerned about the impact this would have on the wider environment, particularly biodiversity. In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, Environment and Sustainability ranked joint fourth with an average 0.01 above the baseline.
- **Distribution System Operator:** The three outputs that ranked above the average baseline in the online poll all related to the topic of scenario planning and whole systems. The highest ranking of these was 'ensure that our network is able to facilitate low carbon connections in order to support Net Zero 2050', which was in fact the third highest output across all nine priority areas. Stakeholders were particularly concerned that there was currently not enough capacity to connect LCTs in many parts of WPD's network area and wanted to ensure this was rectified as part of the next Business Plan. The outputs on considering whole system solutions and evolving Active Network Management options came second and third in the online poll respectively. These were also regarded as important priorities for the future smart network by stakeholders, although neither of them were discussed at length during the breakout sessions. The rest of the outputs ranked below the baseline average. These outputs all related to the development of the Distribution Future Energy Scenarios to help plan network investment or the rollout of flexibility services. In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, Distribution System Operator ranked third from bottom. Therefore, while it scored above 3, relative to other priority areas it seemed that stakeholders felt the level of ambition was right.
- **Innovation:** As an overarching principle, one stakeholder felt all Innovation outputs should seek to support achieving a lower carbon energy system – and that this should be explicitly referenced in the wording. The highest-ranking output in the online poll was 'develop new innovation projects with priorities informed by stakeholder engagement'. As well as the comment about supporting decarbonisation (above), stakeholders here also wanted projects that ensure the vulnerable and digitally excluded are not left behind. There was a good deal of endorsement for ensuring the learnings from innovation projects are integrated into business as usual, with several feeling this currently was not the case. Stakeholders also supported the development of a new "ideas portal", although they suggested a range of ways to build on and enhance this portal. In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, the priority area of Innovation ranked third. Interestingly, this priority, much like Cyber Resilience, received a high score despite the fact stakeholders did not discuss the outputs as much as they did others in other priority areas.
- **Community Energy:** More so than many of the other priority areas, stakeholders felt there was a fair amount missing from the outputs and proposed a range of suggestions for inclusion. This included providing more information and support to community energy groups, ensuring the infrastructure and capacity is there to facilitate connections, and greater collaboration with stakeholder groups including housing associations and farmers. In the online poll, both outputs ranked well above the baseline average. Despite this, neither output was discussed at length. In terms of 'establish dedicated innovation projects for community energy projects', stakeholders started suggesting a range of innovation projects that could be included. In terms of 'hold Community Energy Surgeries for local Community Energy groups', various recommendations were made as to how to expand the help provided. In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, Community Energy ranked second with an average of 3.8 / 5 – well above the baseline. In fact, it had the highest average score at all events except for in the East Midlands where it came fifth – significantly bringing down the overall score.

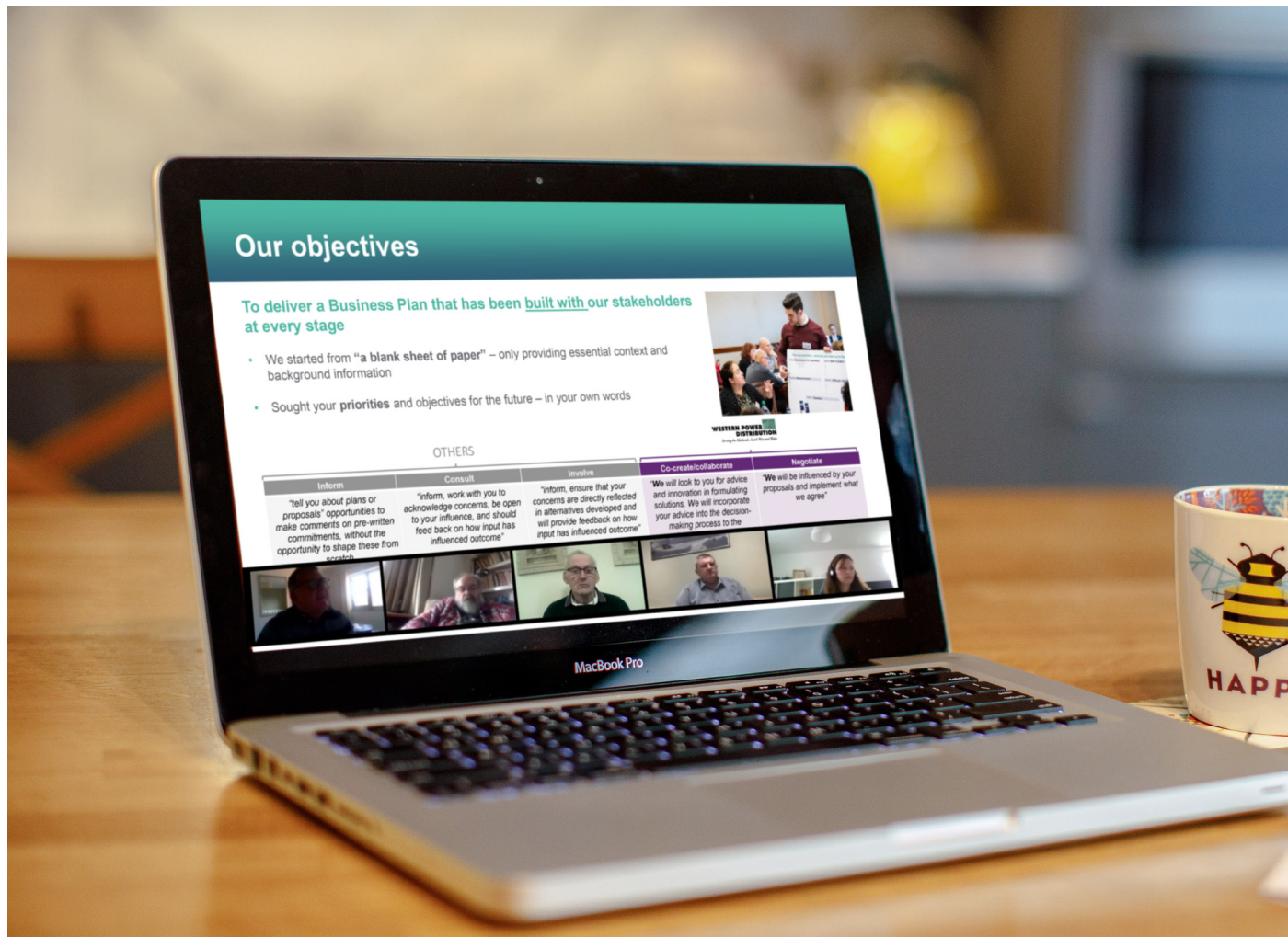
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- **Digitalisation:** Stakeholders did not think anything was missing from the draft outputs, or suggest any specific targets or performance levels, although in the West Midlands clarity on timeframes was sought. In terms of the outputs themselves, the highest ranked of the two related to WPD demonstrating leadership in publishing network data. In the discussions, stakeholders supported having plentiful data as it unlocks opportunities for their own organisations and businesses. One stakeholder, however, urged WPD to ensure it carefully considers the security risk of the data it publishes. The other output in this area, 'developing the API interface and data availability under API', was also strongly supported in the discussions and still ranked quite highly in the online poll. In the discussions for both outputs, National Grid was cited as an example of best practice when it comes to data sharing.

## WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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

- 97% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop either 'very interesting' or 'interesting'. Stakeholders also rated their satisfaction with the event as 7.93 / 10.
- 92% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they had had an opportunity to make points and ask questions.
- 78% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the right topics were discussed on the day.
- 95% thought EQ Communications' facilitation was either 'very good' or 'good'.
- 78% felt the online format worked 'well' or 'very well'.



## 4 | ATTENDEES

In total, 222 stakeholders representing 167 different organisations attended the online workshops. The organisations represented were as follows:

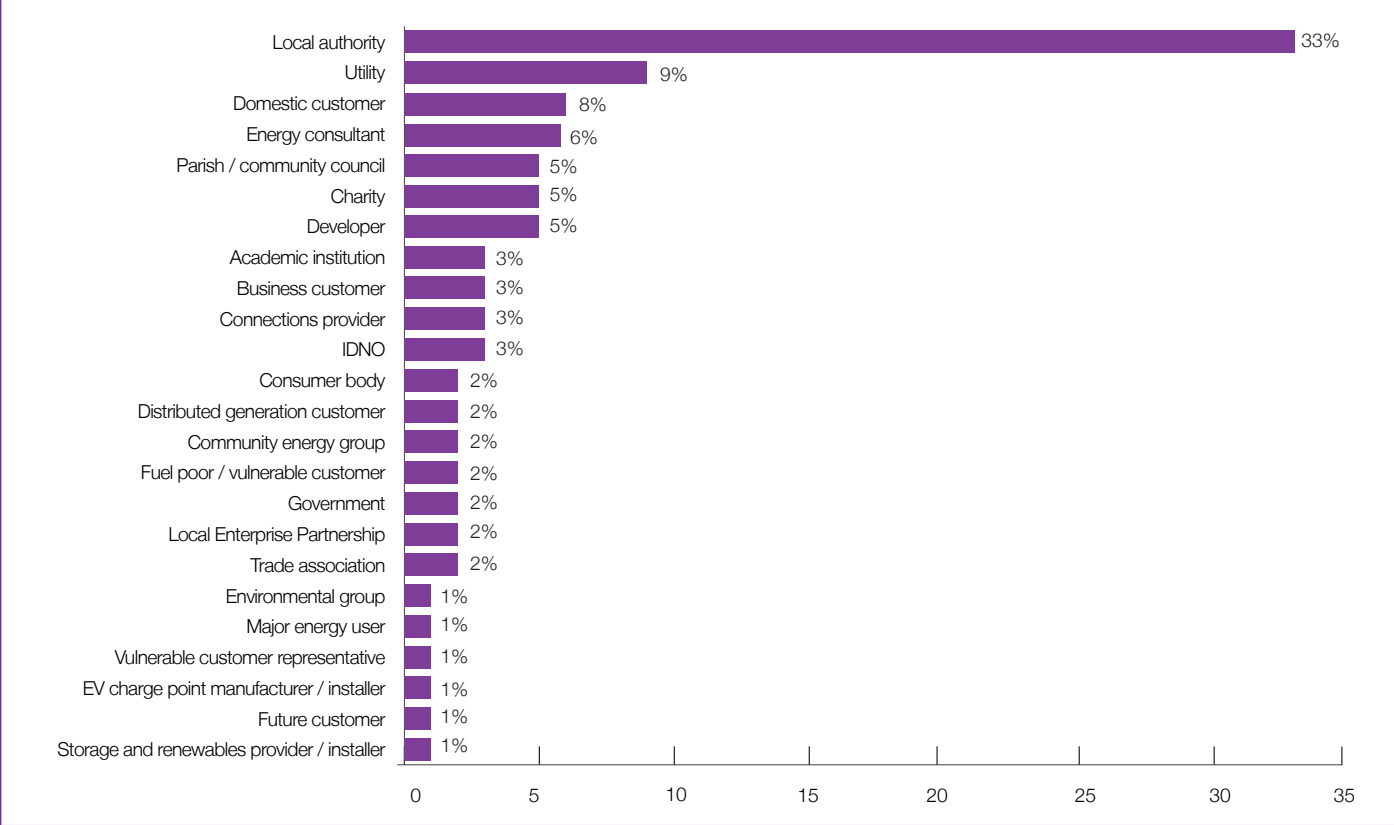
- Accent
- ACL Planning and Development
- Amberside Energy Ltd
- Amey
- Ashfield District Council
- Auriga Services
- Babcock
- Bacchus Hotel
- Bath & North East Somerset Council
- Bath & West Community Energy
- BG Renewables
- Birmingham City Council
- Borough Council of Wellingborough
- Bowden Farm Management Ltd
- Bratton Fleming Parish Council
- Bridgend County Borough Council
- Bristol Energy Cooperative
- BUUK Infrastructure
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Cannock Chase Council
- Capula
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal
- Cardiff Council
- Care and Repair
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- CEG
- Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Centrica
- Cherwell District Council
- Citizens Advice Derbyshire District
- CLA Cymru
- CoGen Ltd
- Colwich Parish Council
- Cornwall Council
- Cornwall Rural Housing Association
- Cotgrave Town Council
- Country Land & Business Association
- Coventry Citizens Advice
- Coventry City Council
- Cranfield University
- Deerhurst Parish Council
- Derby City Council
- Derby Homes
- Derbyshire County Council
- Devon County Council
- Dorstone Parish Council
- EA Technology
- East Lindsey District Council
- East Staffordshire Borough Council
- Eaton Electrical Products Ltd
- EDF Energy
- Electricity North West
- Energy Assets Networks
- Energy Capital
- Energy Saving Trust
- Energy Systems Catapult
- EonUK
- Epperstone Parish Council
- Erewash Borough Council
- ESB International
- Extinction Rebellion
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Flax Bourton Parish Council
- Fleet Parish Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Fremington Parish Council
- Frontier Economics
- Fundamentals Ltd
- Geldards LLP
- GMP Contracting Services Ltd
- Good Neighbour Scheme Spalding
- Gower AONB Partnership
- Granby cum Sutton Parish Council
- GS-Yuasa Battery Europe Ltd
- GTC
- Hafod Housing Association
- Harborough District Council
- Hayle Climate Action Group
- Headway UK
- Health and Security Executive
- Heart of England Community Energy
- Herefordshire Council

- Highways England
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
- Hitachi ABB Power Grids
- IBECGS Ltd
- IBM
- Interesting Stuff Ltd
- Joint Radio Company
- Kelvatek
- Kensa Contracting
- Kier
- Kirklington Parish Council
- Land Agent Group
- Landmark Associates Ltd
- Lanner Parish Council
- Leighton and Eaton Constantine Parish Council
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Lucy Electric UK Ltd
- Major Energy Users' Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Melton Borough Council
- Mid Devon District Council
- Midlands Energy Hub
- Milton Keynes Council
- Mr Electric
- National Grid ESO
- Network Rail
- NIE Networks
- North Cornwall Food Hub
- North Devon Council
- North Kesteven District Council
- North Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Delivery Unit
- North Warwickshire Citizens Advice
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
- Ofgem
- Open University
- Piparia Consulting Ltd
- Planet A Solutions CIC
- Pobl Group
- RSK Environment
- Rutland County Council
- S&C Electric
- Sedgemoor District Council
- Sembcorp Energy UK
- Shropshire Council
- Siemens
- Solihull Council
- Somerset West and Taunton Council
- South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
- South Gloucestershire Council
- South Hams District Council
- South Kesteven District Council
- South Somerset District Council
- South West Water
- Southam Town Council
- SP Energy Networks
- St Modwen
- Stadium MK
- Stafford Borough Council
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- Sustainable Direction Ltd
- Swansea Council
- Teignbridge District Council
- Telford & Wrekin Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
- The Green Party of England and Wales
- The Schumacher Institute
- Torfaen County Borough Council
- Torridge District Council
- Transport for West Midlands
- TUSC Ltd
- University of Birmingham
- University of Nottingham
- Warwickshire County Council
- Wattify Ltd
- Welsh Government / Llywodraeth Cymru
- Wessex Solar Energy
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- Westbury on Severn Parish Council
- Whitwick Parish Council
- Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy
- Woburn Sands Town Council
- Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership
- WPD Customer Engagement Group
- Wychavon District Council
- YES Energy Solutions CIC

The number of attendees that participated by event can be found in the table below:

Attendees			
South West	South Wales	West Midlands	East Midlands
59	35	62	66

During the online poll, attendees were asked what type of stakeholder they were. The results have been summarised in the bar chart below.





## 5 | INTRODUCTION AND THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

The most well-represented stakeholder type at the workshops was local authority officers and elected members. They had a number of areas of interest. Many were concerned about the impact that their planned growth in terms of new homes and commercial developments would have on the electricity network and were interested to hear about WPD's plans to accommodate this. They were also mindful of the fact that the increase in LCTs including EVs and heat pumps would put the network under increased pressure so were keen to engage with WPD to ensure that this challenge can be addressed through collaborative working. This was a common theme at all of the workshops.

Many local authority representatives raised the issue of emissions targets. Almost all represented councils which had declared climate emergencies including some, such as Cornwall Council in the South West, whose Net Zero target is 2030. These stakeholders were keen that WPD's plans align with their own.

A large proportion of participants including domestic customers, parish / community councillors, local authority representatives and those representing the charity sector were interested to learn more about WPD's proposals to support customers in vulnerable circumstances and those living in fuel poverty. It was noted at all of the workshops that Covid-19 and its subsequent impact would put even greater pressure on these customers, so they were keen to state the need for WPD to offer additional support. In addition, it was commented by many stakeholders in these sectors that the transition to Net Zero had the potential to disproportionately impact customers in vulnerable circumstances who were less likely to be early adopters of certain technologies such as EVs and heat pumps and were less likely to be in a position to take advantage of flexibility services which would reduce their bills. These stakeholders were keen to assert that no customer should be left behind in the transition to Net Zero.

Stakeholders from more technical backgrounds such as those describing themselves as utilities, energy consultants and connections providers participated to learn more about WPD's proposals to transition to the role of DSO and what this means for them. In addition, they were keen to discuss ways to simplify the process to connect renewables to the electricity network and to gain greater clarity on how costs will be apportioned. It was added that data and digitalisation had an increasingly important role to play in making this happen. This point was also made at a number of the workshops by those interested in community energy, many of whom were not from technical backgrounds. Many participants were of the view that community energy has a vital role to play in the decarbonisation agenda and it was felt that more should be done by WPD to make this process easier and less costly.

Many stakeholders, from a range of backgrounds, were concerned about the security of the network, including its resilience to cyber-attacks. This was seen as something that had the potential to do immense damage, so they were interested to learn more about the provisions WPD is making to address this. The topic of network resilience, more generally, was also raised by many of the participants as a reason for attending. It was felt that Covid-19 had had a number of impacts on customers' behaviour with the result that people are more reliant than ever on a reliable service, especially those in rural areas.

Many stakeholders said they were keen to keep engaging with WPD as it produces its Business Plan. It was accepted that Covid-19 had forced people to change how they engage but that engagement was more important than ever. Participants generally thought that the online format worked well and was a good way of deriving feedback and giving stakeholders an opportunity to engage.



## 6 | SESSION ONE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

#### IMPACT OF COVID-19

In both South Wales and the East Midlands, stakeholders felt that Covid-19 had led to a greater reliance on the domestic electricity supply due to homeworking, with customers expecting a higher quality of supply at home and more proactive customer contact in advance of planned works or interruptions. In the West Midlands, stakeholders felt Covid-19 would make the most vulnerable of WPD's customers even more so, especially those who are shielding or isolating, meaning it is more important than ever that WPD delivers high standards of customer support, particularly when dealing with incoming calls from those who are vulnerable. Stakeholders in the South West indicated that they considered WPD's priorities under Customer Service to be unchanged.

#### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

There was agreement from attendees across all four events that the previous stakeholder feedback that WPD is already very good at customer service was correct and, for the most part, that they should continue to strive for high levels of service in this area. There was, however, discussion at all events (except the East Midlands) that continual improvement should be balanced against cost to the customer. It was noted in South Wales that increased electrification will lead to a surge in demand and will therefore increase the pressure on achieving these high standards of customer service.

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD should adopt a range of methods to communicate with customers, although there was some discussion as to whether the emphasis should be on telephone or online communications, with varied views. Stakeholders at all events agreed with the previous feedback that WPD should prioritise improving its customer service in advance of and during planned interruptions, particularly for those in vulnerable circumstances.

#### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

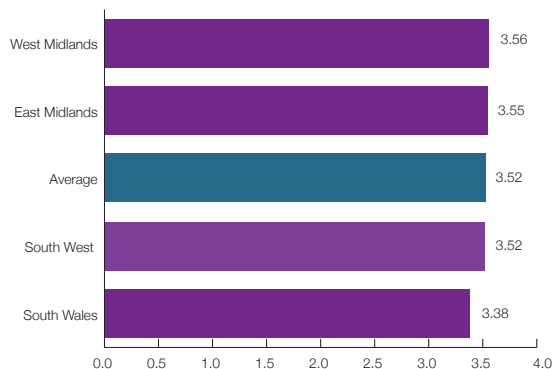
In general, stakeholders across all workshops agreed that WPD was focusing on the right activities with the outputs they had developed. However, at all but the East Midlands, there were some things stakeholders felt were missing. These have been summarised below:

- More information and consistency in communicating with stakeholders in relation to installing electric vehicle charging points – particularly on who to speak to (South West);
- A clearer route in to speak to the relevant WPD representative, with a published list on who to contact in different departments (South West);
- Greater focus on the individual customer journey (South West);
- Improved customer service for those who experience repeat power cuts, particularly in terms of the time it takes to get through to customer support (South West);
- Referencing of the provision of data (South Wales);
- Clear communication with industrial customers about upcoming opportunities and challenges (South Wales);
- Increased consideration for customers in rural areas who may not receive the same level of service as those in urban areas (West Midlands); and
- Customer service requirements for major users who would expect a higher level of service, including dedicated account managers (West Midlands).

In terms of performance measures and targets, stakeholders in South Wales wanted simple jargon-free targets that benchmark WPD against other DNOs. However, they did not necessarily put forward any specific suggestions as to what those might be.

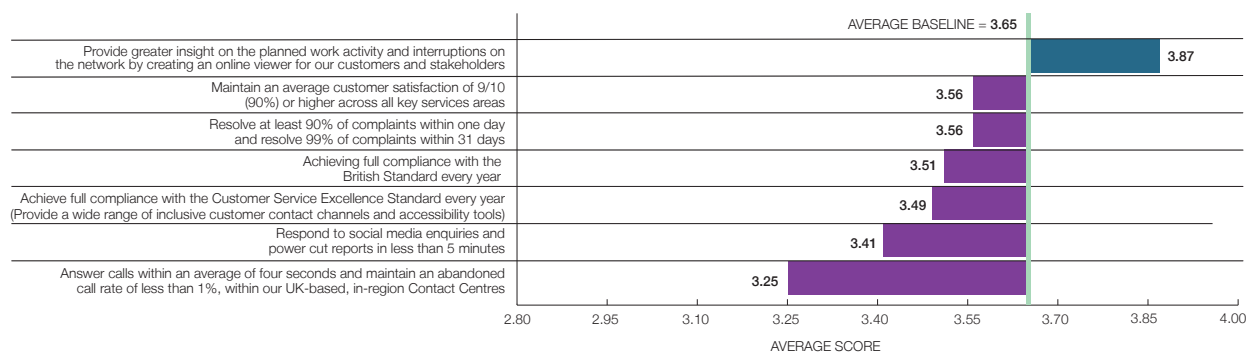
In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, the priority area of Customer Service ranked second from bottom with an overall average of 3.52 / 5 – which is below the average baseline. Therefore, while it scored above 3, relative to other priority areas stakeholders did not want WPD to be as ambitious. This average ranking was consistent among the different regions, with Customer Service coming third from bottom in the South West, second from bottom at both the East and West Midlands workshops, and bottom in South Wales.

### Customer Service Outputs: Average Score by Region



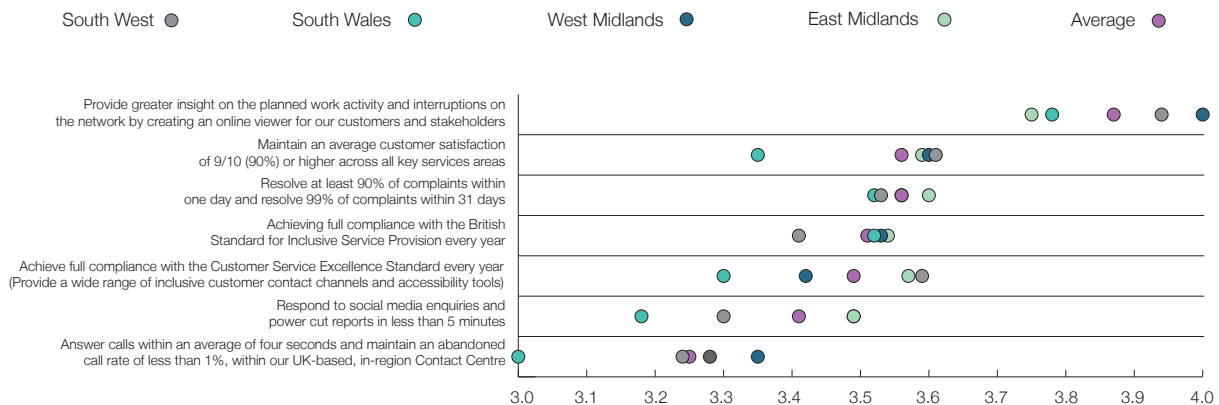
In terms of the outputs themselves, as an average across all events, all but one output ranked below the average baseline of 3.65 / 5. The only one that ranked higher than the baseline (by some margin, in fact) was ‘provide greater insight on the planned work activity and interruptions on the network by creating an online viewer for our customers and stakeholders’. This received a score of 3.87 / 5 and 64% wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area. This was mirrored exactly at the individual events where this output was always the highest ranked and the only one to score consistently above the average baseline for this priority area. The two lowest scoring outputs were also consistent at all individual events. The second lowest output, with an average score overall of 3.41 / 5, was always ‘respond to social media enquiries and power cut reports in less than 5 minutes.’ The lowest output, with an average score of 3.25 / 5, was always ‘answer calls within an average of four seconds and maintain an abandoned all rate of less than 1% within our UK-based, in-region Contact Centres’. The latter output was, in fact, the lowest ranked output of any across all priority areas. In both instances, stakeholders felt that the speed of response time was unnecessarily ambitious.

### Customer Service Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3a](#)

### Customer Service Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## OUTPUTS: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

### MAINTAIN AN AVERAGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF 9 / 10 (90%) OR HIGHER ACROSS ALL KEY SERVICES AREAS

In general, stakeholders felt it was very important that WPD maintains its high level of customer satisfaction, with some noting that as the target was similar to what was currently being achieved in ED1, this should be stretched a bit further. In the West Midlands one stakeholder pointed out Ofgem values customer satisfaction highly, so WPD should too; another agreed, noting that as WPD is a monopoly, customers cannot ‘vote with their feet’. However, in both the South West and South Wales, stakeholders noted that the level of ambition needs to be balanced against the cost of achieving it – given the already high satisfaction rate, there is a law of diminishing returns for further increasing it.

In both South Wales and the West Midlands, it was noted WPD has very different customer types with different service requirements and expectations, the example being domestic customers versus major / industrial users. It was felt the satisfaction scores could be split to differentiate between these two customer bases.

In the East Midlands and South Wales, it ranked below the average baseline in the online polling whereas in the South West and West Midlands it was the second highest ranked output overall, demonstrating that stakeholders wished to see a greater level of ambition with regard to customer satisfaction. When the voting data was aggregated across all workshops, this output came joint second for Customer Service with a score of 3.56 / 5. However, interestingly, this was still below the average baseline across all events. Most stakeholders (53%) felt that WPD had got the right level of ambition with this output.

### RESOLVE AT LEAST 90% OF COMPLAINTS WITHIN ONE DAY AND RESOLVE 99% OF COMPLAINTS WITHIN 31 DAYS

There was some discussion among stakeholders on the level of ambition for this output. Some felt the target was right on the basis that WPD should not go backwards and reduce the level of service, but others felt responding to 90% of complaints within one day is too ambitious and needs to be balanced against the cost of achieving it. In both the South West and the East Midlands, stakeholders urged WPD to improve the complaints and compensation process for landowners. In the South West, one stakeholder suggested having different targets for different types of customers – for example, large connections customers would not expect their complaints to be dealt with so quickly. In South Wales, one stakeholder stressed the need to consider the targets in the context of a potential rise in complaints because of increased electrification.

Overall, stakeholders ranked this output joint-second for Customer Service, scoring an average of 3.56 / 5. Whilst most stakeholders (50%) believed WPD had the right level of ambition on the output, 46% wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or a ‘do a lot more’. This output did, however, rank slightly below the baseline average across all Business Plan outputs. There was general regional consensus, as the output was voted as being below-baseline at all four events.

## WE WILL AIM TO MEET ALL GUARANTEED STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCES

Stakeholders did not discuss this output at length during any of the workshops. In South Wales and the East Midlands, stakeholders asked for more context about the current performance rate with one suggesting the failures be presented as a percentage to make it easier to understand the scale. In the West Midlands, it was felt this output was merely aspirational compared to other Customer Service outputs. This output was not included in the online poll as it is a regulatory requirement.

### OUTPUTS: COMMUNICATION

#### ACHIEVE FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE STANDARD EVERY YEAR (PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF INCLUSIVE CUSTOMER CONTACT CHANNELS AND ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS)

At all but one of the workshops, stakeholders said they felt unable to comment on this output as they needed more context and understanding of what it involved. In the South West, stakeholders did agree that a range of channels and tools should be adopted to improve accessibility.

This output scored below the baseline at all four events. This view was strongest in the South Wales and West Midlands, where it scored notably below average. Overall, this was ranked fifth for Customer Service, scoring an average of 3.49 / 5. A significant majority (60%) felt WPD had the right level of ambition, whilst 37% felt they ought to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

#### ACHIEVING FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE BRITISH STANDARD FOR INCLUSIVE SERVICE PROVISION EVERY YEAR

In general stakeholders did not comment on this output, except to say it needed more context and explanation. This output scored below baseline at all four events, and there was little regional variation in opinion. Overall, the output ranked fourth for Customer Service, with an average score of 3.51 / 5. A large majority of stakeholders (60%) felt WPD had their ambitions set at the 'right level', whereas 38% felt they ought to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

#### ANSWER CALLS WITHIN AN AVERAGE OF FOUR SECONDS AND MAINTAIN AN ABANDONED CALL RATE OF LESS THAN 1%, WITHIN OUR UK-BASED, IN-REGION CONTACT CENTRES

In the West Midlands, stakeholders were complimentary about WPD's response rate, saying that the increase in use of social media should not deter WPD from maintaining their telephone service. In the South West, it was noted the ED2 target was considerably lower than the current response rate of 1.91 seconds. However, stakeholders generally felt that having such an ambitious target was slightly unnecessary, particularly compared to other companies whose response rate is far slower and when a more ambitious target would cost more money. Overall, then, stakeholders across the workshops generally supported the targets in this output.

This was reflected in the online poll where this output received the lowest ranking of all outputs under Customer Service with 3.25 / 5 – with most (63%) saying the level of ambition was right and 11% actually saying WPD should 'do less' or 'do a lot less' in this area. Only 25% wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more'. It was the lowest ranked output consistently at all the individual events.

#### RESPOND TO SOCIAL MEDIA ENQUIRIES AND POWER CUT REPORTS IN LESS THAN 5 MINUTES

Stakeholders in the South West noted that, unlike responding to telephone calls, responding to customers on social media had a far wider reach and therefore a greater potential impact and there was a discussion about which platform is most effective. However, at the other three workshops, at least one stakeholder stressed that any improvements to social media performance should not be at the expense of other methods of communication – namely telephone calls – particularly during power cuts.

This output scored below the average baseline at all events, although in South Wales it ranked considerably lower than the average baseline. Likewise, in all regions but West Midlands, it was ranked second from bottom for Customer Service. It received 3.41 / 5 on average, and most stakeholders (58%) believed WPD had the right level of ambition, although it should not be overlooked that a significant proportion (34%) still wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.



## PROVIDE GREATER INSIGHT ON THE PLANNED WORK ACTIVITY AND INTERRUPTIONS ON THE NETWORK BY CREATING AN ONLINE VIEWER FOR OUR CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

During the discussions it was clear stakeholders felt the current customer service around planned work activity and interruptions could be improved, with East Midlands stakeholders noting this was particularly the case in light of the increase in homeworking due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was stressed how important this is for businesses, although stakeholders in the West Midlands noted there are already good channels of communication with major users already. It was felt more could be done to engage with domestic customers, particularly the most vulnerable. Whilst the online viewer (and the Power Cut Reporter app) was supported, stakeholders in the East Midlands and South West noted this needs to be accompanied by proactive communication as WPD cannot rely on customers to source the information themselves. This could include activities like push notifications sent to customers via text message ahead of planned works.

This output ranked highest for Customer Service and was the only output for this priority area to score above average baseline – demonstrating that relatively stakeholders want WPD to prioritise improving their customer service in relation to planned work activity and interruptions. This was true at all four events, with stakeholders in the West Midlands ranking it the highest. It received an average score of 3.87 / 5, with the largest proportion (64%) indicating WPD should ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’, whilst 34% felt they had the ‘right level’ of ambition.



## CUSTOMER VULNERABILITY

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

When asked if Covid-19 had led to any change in priorities or issues relating to customer vulnerability, stakeholders across all workshops strongly felt it would have a significant impact, with similar themes being raised across the sessions.

Firstly, stakeholders noted that it had shone a light on a range of new vulnerabilities which would need to be addressed by WPD. As a result, efforts to contact eligible customers to promote the Priority Services Register and ensure that they are signed up should remain a priority as this is hugely important for those who are shielding and isolating.

Secondly, it was also felt the economic fallout of the pandemic would lead to a significant rise in fuel poverty with the full impact yet to be seen. As with supporting customers in vulnerable situations, it was felt initiatives to support those in fuel poverty will become increasingly important in the coming months and years.

In terms of the delivery model for these services, concern was expressed that existing agencies would be less able to support these customers during the pandemic, particularly those that were shielding or self-isolating. Several partner agencies noted the pandemic had impacted their ability to actively engage with these customers face to face, limiting their ability to deliver these key services.

At several workshops, stakeholders noted there was an immediate opportunity for WPD to identify more customers in vulnerable situations by tapping into Covid support groups and local networks that had been set up in response to the pandemic and had built up a strong on-the-ground understanding of vulnerable people in their areas.

Support was expressed for the work WPD had already done and stakeholders urged them to do more to reach the most vulnerable during this pandemic and beyond.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders in the South West and West Midlands in particular agreed that, for some, vulnerability is transient and that the causes of vulnerability are complex and changing. Across all workshops, stakeholders confirmed the previous feedback that the Priority Services Register should be kept updated and there should be a single register, so customers do not have to register multiple times with multiple companies. In the West Midlands, it was also noted that many customers do not know about the PSR so may not seek out support. In the East Midlands, stakeholders particularly supported previous feedback stating there should be an increased focus on collaboration and data sharing.

Across all workshops, stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD should address fuel poverty – with many noting that the importance of doing so has only increased in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the South West, one stakeholder did, however, feel that addressing fuel poverty was more relevant for suppliers. In the Midlands events in particular, stakeholders acknowledged the need to treat the causes rather than the symptoms of fuel poverty. In the West Midlands it was felt that WPD should continue to educate customers on fuel efficiency and, in due course, on initiatives such as flexibility services. In the East Midlands, the emphasis was more about working with partners to install insulation in energy inefficient homes.

In terms of the smart future, it was only really stakeholders in South Wales and the East Midlands who commented on the previous feedback. In both cases, they agreed WPD should protect vulnerable customers in the transition to a smart network, particularly through programmes of education.



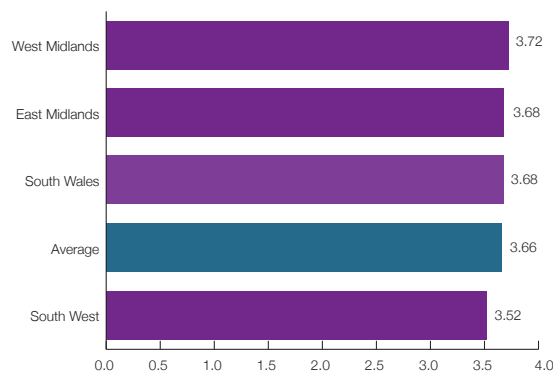
## WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders expressed support for the proposed Customer Vulnerability outputs. Perhaps more so than other priority areas, stakeholders did suggest a whole range of specific suggestions for areas and initiatives they felt were missing. These included:

- Increasing the speed with which vulnerable customers are contacted in a power cut (South West);
- Updating the definition of vulnerability to include worst served customers in rural areas (South West);
- Increasing on-the-ground communications channels in rural areas (South West);
- Addressing the impact of moving phone lines from copper to fibre (South West);
- The role of smart meters in supporting vulnerable customers (South Wales and East Midlands);
- More partnership working with grass-roots organisations, local authorities, and parish councils – including PSR data sharing (South West, West Midlands and East Midlands);
- Making use of the data held by local authorities, within the limitations of GDPR (West Midlands);
- Greater collaboration with local authorities, social housing providers and developers to support vulnerable tenants and improve the energy efficiency of housing stock (East Midlands); and
- A winter newsletter from WPD when people particularly start suffering from failing boilers (East Midlands).

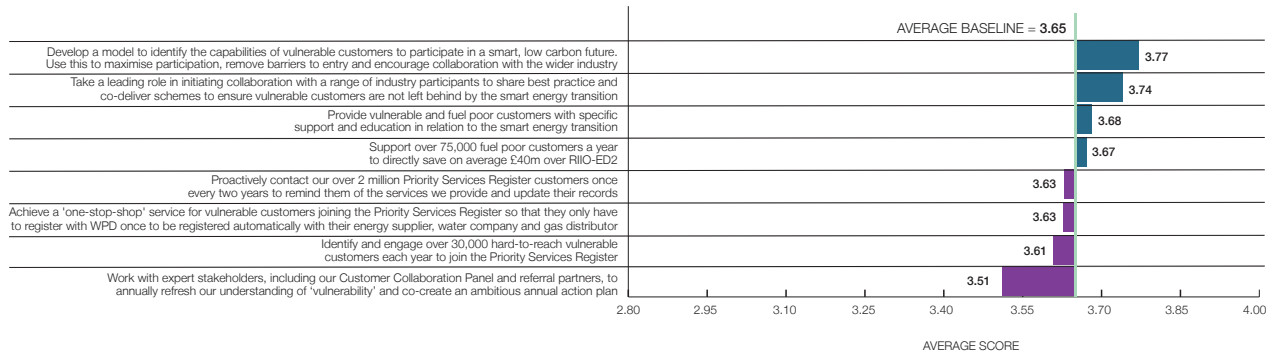
Stakeholders did not suggest any specific targets or performance measures for the Customer Vulnerability outputs. In the online poll, as an average across all events, the priority area of Customer Vulnerability ranked joint fourth with an average of 3.66 / 5 – 0.01 above the average baseline. The average score for Customer Vulnerability varied at these events, from being third in South Wales and the East Midlands, to coming second from bottom in the South West. However, in the South West, stakeholders explicitly stated that this was because they felt the work WPD was doing in this area was already at a high standard and, as a result, it was more a case of maintaining the high level of ambition that was already there.

Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Score by Region



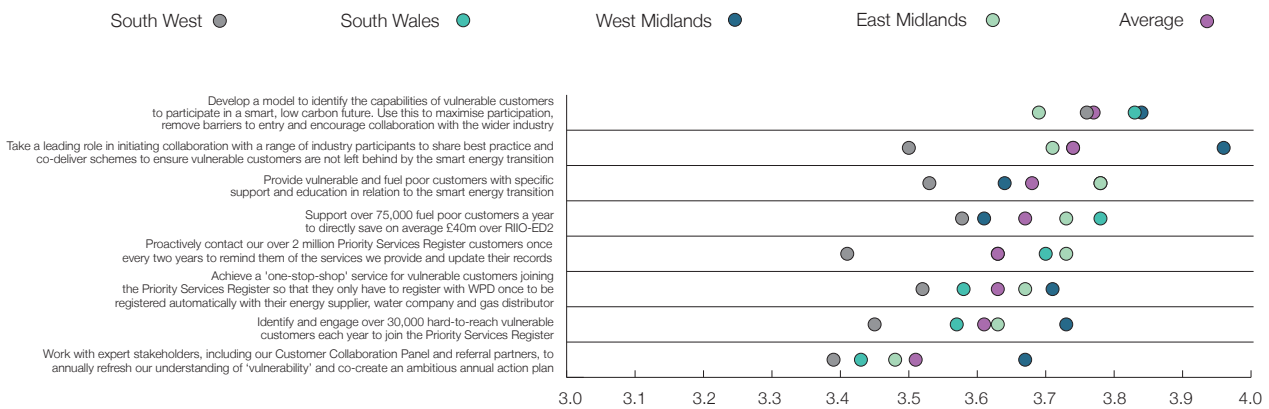
In terms of the outputs themselves, as an average across all events, half ranked above the average baseline of 3.65 / 5 and half ranked below it. The order of these outputs varied slightly event by event, although ‘work with expert stakeholders... to annually refresh our understanding of ‘vulnerability’ and co-create an ambitious annual action plan’ tended to rank bottom – with an average score of 3.51 / 5 and most stakeholders (60%) thinking it demonstrated the right level of ambition. However, in all cases, the top ranked output at each event was one of the three outputs that related to the topic of ‘smart future’ – ensuring that no customers are left behind in the transition to a smart network. In each case, over half of respondents (between 53% and 58%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area.

### Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3a](#)

### Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## OUTPUTS: POWER CUT VULNERABILITY

### PROACTIVELY CONTACT OUR OVER 2 MILLION PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER CUSTOMERS ONCE EVERY TWO YEARS TO REMIND THEM OF THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE AND UPDATE THEIR RECORDS

Stakeholders sought some clarity on this output, with a stakeholder in the East Midlands seeking to understand 2 million as a proportion of WPD's customers and stakeholders in the West Midlands asking whether it referred to actual contact or attempted contact. In general, however, stakeholders supported the level of ambition in the output. In both the South West and South Wales, stakeholders suggested a tiered approach to frequency of contact depending on the customer's level of vulnerability to ensure that the most vulnerable were prioritised. In the South West, stakeholders also wanted a tiered approach depending on whether the customer lives in a rural or urban area. WPD were also urged, in the South West, to carefully consider the type of vulnerability prior to contacting a customer to ensure that the contact is made sensitively.

Although this output scored marginally below baseline, views differed across WPD's regions. In East Midlands and South Wales, the output ranked above baseline, and ranked below in the South West and West Midlands. On average, this output was sixth highest among Customer Vulnerability and received an average vote of 3.63 / 5. 51% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, compared to 48% that felt the company ought to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### ACHIEVE A 'ONE-STOP-SHOP' SERVICE FOR VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS JOINING THE PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER SO THAT THEY ONLY HAVE TO REGISTER WITH WPD ONCE TO BE REGISTERED AUTOMATICALLY WITH THEIR ENERGY SUPPLIER, WATER COMPANY AND GAS DISTRIBUTOR

There was unanimous support across all workshops for the concept of a single register, reducing the requirement for customers to sign up to multiple different lists. Beneath this, however, there were a range of other comments. In the South West, one stakeholder cautioned that a national register is outside of WPD's remit, with stakeholders in the East Midlands in a similar vein saying the register should be independent of WPD and based more closely on those of the Local Resilience Forums. Stakeholders in South Wales and the West Midlands wanted to ensure that data sharing was done easily and efficiently, which perhaps requires Ofgem's involvement. Stakeholders in the East Midlands wanted to ensure WPD were collaborating with the energy supplier as they are often the first point of contact. A stakeholder in the South West urged WPD to ensure that the data is stored securely by all the companies involved.

This output ranked slightly below baseline, although stakeholders in the East and West Midlands ranked it above. On average, this output was fifth highest among Customer Vulnerability and received an average vote of 3.63 / 5. 51% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, compared to the 47% that wanted them to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE OVER 30,000 HARD-TO-REACH VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS EACH YEAR TO JOIN THE PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER

Stakeholders generally supported this output, noting that Covid-19 not only made it more important but more challenging as it becomes even harder to engage with the hard-to-reach, particularly those self-isolating. Stakeholders particularly liked the fact it seeks to proactively reach vulnerable customers as it was noted these customers are less likely to approach WPD themselves or know the support is available. It was noted at the two Midlands events that the best way to reach these customers is via third party organisations, such as hospitals, charities, parish councils and schools.

Stakeholders raised a range of other comments in relation to this output. In the South West, it was felt WPD should be looking to identify and engage with new vulnerable customers each year, not necessarily only those that are hard to reach. In South Wales, one stakeholder enquired as to whether there was the potential for automated sign-up, for example if someone was diagnosed with Covid-19 or another disease. In the East Midlands, one stakeholder expressed concern about the rural 'forgotten' hard to reach communities.

This output ranked slightly below baseline, although stakeholders in the West Midlands ranked it above. On average, this output ranked second from bottom among Customer Vulnerability and received an average vote of 3.61 / 5. 51% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, compared to 49% that wanted the company to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## WORK WITH EXPERT STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING OUR CUSTOMER COLLABORATION PANEL AND REFERRAL PARTNERS, TO ANNUALLY REFRESH OUR UNDERSTANDING OF 'VULNERABILITY' AND CO-CREATE AN AMBITIOUS ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

At the South West and East Midlands events, stakeholders reiterated that this was particularly important in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had highlighted the presence of a range of new vulnerabilities. In the West Midlands, there was support for WPD to work with a range of expert stakeholders with suggestions including local authority representatives and local champions at a grassroots level. There was not much discussion beyond these comments, and very little discussion on this output at the South Wales event.

This output ranked below baseline in all workshops except the West Midlands. On average, this output was the lowest ranked in Customer Vulnerability and received an average vote of 3.51 / 5. 60% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, compared to 40% wanting the company to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'. Interestingly, despite ranking lowest among Customer Vulnerability, no stakeholders thought WPD should 'do less' or 'do a lot less'

### OUTPUTS: FUEL POVERTY

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## SUPPORT OVER 75,000 FUEL POOR CUSTOMERS A YEAR TO DIRECTLY SAVE ON AVERAGE £40M OVER RIIO-ED2

There was overwhelming support for this output, particularly in the context of the economic repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it elicited plenty of discussion in the breakouts particularly around the level of ambition identified in the targets. Some felt this output represented the right level of ambition, particularly given that it represented an increase on current delivery. Others, however, felt that as a proportion of WPD's customers, and given the rise in fuel poverty, the target needed to be stretched further in terms of the quantum of money saved. Stakeholders in the South West and South Wales did, however, comment that they needed more context and a better understanding to be able to establish whether these draft targets were reasonable.

A range of other comments were made in relation to this output. In the South West, one stakeholder was keen to see the output expanded to include customer savings for those with energy inefficient homes as well as those in fuel poverty. Another stressed the importance of batteries and microgeneration for improving the energy efficiency of people's homes. In the East Midlands, concerns were raised about customers on electric heating or pre-payment meters with the suggestion that WPD work more closely with private landlords, developers and local authorities. One stakeholder in South Wales reminded WPD that the definition of fuel poverty was different in Wales than it was in England.

On average, this output ranked slightly above baseline, although stakeholders in South West and West Midlands ranked it marginally below. On average, this output was fourth highest among Customer Vulnerability and received an average vote of 3.67 / 5. Whilst 44% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, a larger proportion (52%) wanted the company to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## OUTPUTS: SMART FUTURE

### DEVELOP A MODEL TO IDENTIFY THE CAPABILITIES OF VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS TO PARTICIPATE IN A SMART, LOW CARBON FUTURE. USE THIS TO MAXIMISE PARTICIPATION, REMOVE BARRIERS TO ENTRY AND ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION WITH THE WIDER INDUSTRY

Stakeholders supported the principle of this output, primarily because of the strong sentiment that customers should not be left behind by the transition to a smart future, with stakeholders at the two Midlands events specifically referencing less affluent customers or those without access to the internet. It was felt that developing a model to identify these capabilities to participate in a smart, low carbon future would help WPD to identify areas to target. The role of technology was discussed, including the challenges presented by smart meters, as well as the opportunities presented by in-house monitoring systems to support vulnerable customers. In the South West and East Midlands, there were discussions about social equity, with concern expressed that publicly funded EV charge points only benefited those able to avoid electric vehicles. There was also a suggestion to provide customers with loans to support them with the upfront capital costs of some of these emerging technologies.

This output ranked significantly above baseline at all four events, and on average ranked first among Customer Vulnerability. It received an average vote of 3.77 / 5. Although 41% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, well over half (58%) wanted the company to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN INITIATING COLLABORATION WITH A RANGE OF INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE BEST PRACTICE AND CO-DELIVER SCHEMES TO ENSURE VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND BY THE SMART ENERGY TRANSITION

Stakeholders in the South West and West Midlands explicitly agreed that industry collaboration was key here and that WPD was in a position to take a leading role, with some adding that the company should look beyond the industry for companies and community groups to collaborate with. However, beyond this there was not much discussion on this output during the breakouts.

This output ranked above baseline, although stakeholders in South West ranked it slightly below. On average, this output was second highest among Customer Vulnerability and received an average vote of 3.74 / 5. Whilst 43% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, a majority (55%) wished the company would 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### PROVIDE VULNERABLE AND FUEL POOR CUSTOMERS WITH SPECIFIC SUPPORT AND EDUCATION IN RELATION TO THE SMART ENERGY TRANSITION

In South Wales and the East Midlands, stakeholders expressed support for educating vulnerable and fuel poor customers on smart energy initiatives. In the West Midlands, opinion was split as some were not sure whether this fell within WPD's remit, whereas others felt it was exactly what they should be doing as an independent network rather than an energy supplier.

In the two Midlands workshops, it was felt a collaborative, bottom-up approach is often best, with WPD working through organisations such as care homes and social housing providers. In South Wales, stakeholders wanted the output to include educating customers on smart meters and pre-payment meters, as well as on how to make the most of other new devices in the home. The output was not discussed by stakeholders in the South West.

On average, this output ranked slightly above baseline, although stakeholders in the South West and West Midlands ranked it below. Despite being, on average, stakeholders' third highest output among Customer Vulnerability, the East Midlands ranked it first. The output received an average vote of 3.68 / 5. Whilst 43% felt WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, 53% wished they would 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## SOCIAL CONTRACT

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders did not comment on whether Covid-19 had impacted WPD's Social Contract priorities. However, it was acknowledged that initiatives relating to staff volunteering and those relating to supporting communities will become increasingly important in the coming months.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders broadly agreed with previous feedback received that the production of a Social Contract is important. It was commented that customers increasingly expect large companies to deliver societal benefits. The point was made by a stakeholder at the West Midlands workshop that many of the outputs discussed at the workshop are centred on savings, efficiencies and tangible actions and it is positive that WPD is looking at creating a Social Contract which goes beyond this. It was added at the East Midlands workshop that there should be a clear link between the Business Plan and the Social Contract, to explain WPD's wider purpose.

### COMMITMENTS FOR THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Stakeholders in the South West focused on commitments relating to delivering environmental benefits, helping the UK to meet its Net Zero targets. It was added, in South Wales, that this could include engagement with local authorities on their local energy plans. At all of the workshops, stakeholders suggested commitments relating to supporting customers in vulnerable situations and those in fuel poverty. One common theme that came up at the workshops was the need for commitments to have a local or regional focus. Whilst WPD is a large company covering a huge area, it was felt that it does have a local feel and should continue to do so. With this in mind, anything that demonstrated how WPD operates in communities was supported.

In terms of how WPD operates, there were a number of suggestions relating to its workforce, including commitments relating to diversity, fair pay and being a responsible employer.

Stakeholders were keen for the Social Contract to be articulated well, calling for it to be concise and written in clear language so people can easily understand its purpose. It was commented by a stakeholder in the East Midlands that the Social Contract should reflect or reference the UN Sustainable Development Goals to demonstrate that its purpose is to improve people's quality of life.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

The conversations then turned to the proposed outputs for the next Business Plan. In terms of what was missing from the outputs, stakeholders had very few additional suggestions. Nonetheless, those raised included:

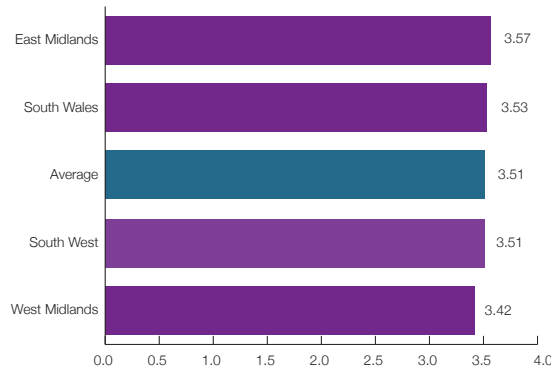
- Publishing regular updates and reports of relevance rather than just annual reports (South Wales and East Midlands);
- Doing more to promote the 'Community Matters' Fund as a way of ensuring that those who need the support most are able to benefit from it (East Midlands);
- Producing a more measurable target for staff volunteering based on hours given or projects supported (East Midlands);
- Ensuring that the projects volunteered on are relevant for the skillsets of WPD staff and are, perhaps, energy-related (West Midlands);
- Explaining the 'why' (the mission and vision) behind the Social Contract (East Midlands); and
- Explaining the link between the Business Plan and the Social Contract (East Midlands).

In terms of performance measures or targets, one stakeholder in South Wales did point out that the output dedicated to providing employees with paid leave to volunteer did not have any specific targets and suggested including a performance measure of number of volunteer hours across the company.



In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, the priority area of Social Contract ranked bottom with an average of 3.51 / 5 – well below the overall baseline. In the South West and West Midlands, Social Contract as a whole also ranked bottom, although it was third from bottom in the East Midlands and mid-table in South Wales so there was certainly some divergence of views.

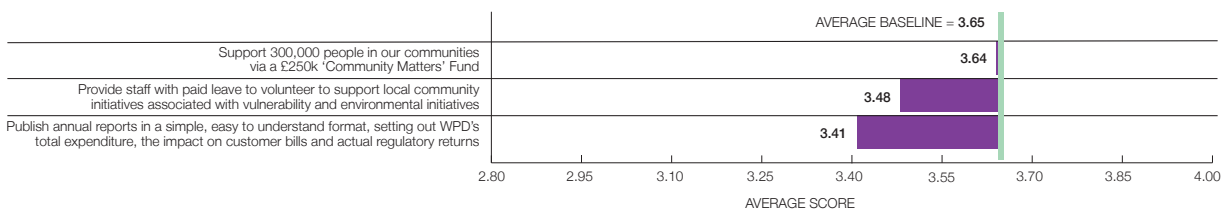
Social Contract Outputs: Average Score by Region



In terms of the outputs themselves, of the three outputs that were voted on in the online poll for Social Contract, all of them on average ranked below the baseline. In all cases, the highest ranked output was ‘support 300,000 people in our communities via a £250k ‘Community Matters’ Fund’ with an average score of 3.64 / 5 – only 0.01 below the baseline average. In fact, this output ranked above the average baseline at each individual event except the West Midlands, where the low score pulled the average down.

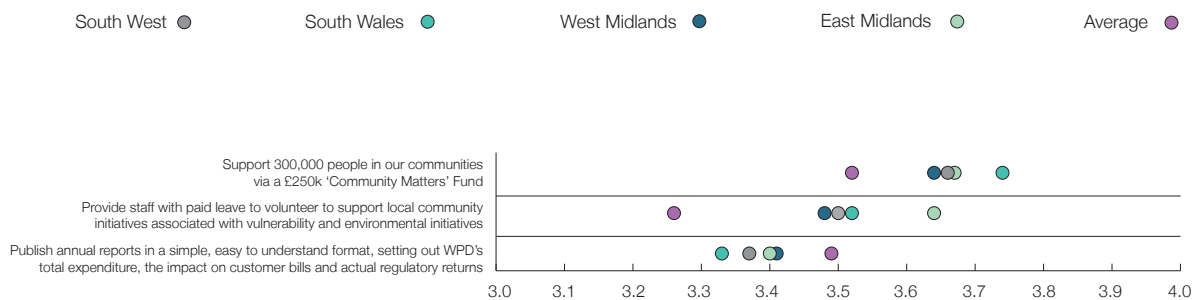
At all events except the West Midlands, the output that came bottom was ‘publish annual reports in a simple, easy to understand format...’ with an average score of 3.41 / 5.

Social Contract Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3a](#)

Social Contract Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## COMMITMENTS FOR THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

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Out of the 15 components, only those that received stakeholder comments have been included below. There was no online polling on the components.

### INDUSTRY LEADING PERFORMANCE

This commitment was discussed at the East Midlands workshops where the point was made that WPD should benchmark itself against other DNOs in order to demonstrate its industry leading performance.

### TRANSPARENT REPORTING

Stakeholders in South Wales and the East Midlands who discussed this commitment broadly supported it, suggesting that WPD should provide regular updates on its progress in this area and should also work to ensure that all reporting is accessible for all, written in clear, concise language. It was added at the South Wales workshop that WPD should also provide transparent updates on changes to connections charges.

### DEMONSTRATING WPD IS A DIVERSE, RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER

It was suggested at both the South West and East Midlands workshops that WPD reports on any potential gender pay gap and commits to showing leadership in this area. Those in South Wales also suggested a commitment to take on graduates and use mentoring schemes as a way to develop staff.

### POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CUSTOMERS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

There was acknowledgement that this commitment has risen in importance in the light of Covid-19. It was suggested WPD works closely with local authorities and other relevant agencies to make use of their data on customers in vulnerable situations and that this commitment should have more explanation of what activities WPD proposes to do to meet achieve this commitment.

### METHODS FOR MEASURING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES

This commitment was only discussed at the East Midlands workshop where it was suggested that WPD seeks to engage with the New Economics Foundation, which may be able to help lend rigour to a methodology to measure the social impact of these activities.

### TRANSPARENT MECHANISMS SO STAKEHOLDERS CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS

It was commented at the East Midlands workshop that these mechanisms need to be accessible for all customers, so everyone is able to view and understand them. At the South West workshop it was highlighted that transparency of costs of new connections is particularly important.

### COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT / BENEFITS

Although, at the South West workshop, it was questioned why community and environmental benefits were grouped together, discussions centred on the delivery of community energy projects. This was seen as a priority for stakeholders in the South West and the East Midlands, where stakeholders were of the view that WPD should provide greater support to those communities wishing to participate in these projects.

### PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE REGIONALLY

Stakeholders in the South West were of the view that this commitment should centre on engaging with local authorities and parish councils on their Net Zero initiatives. It was added in South Wales that this engagement should include sharing information on network capacity to help councils think strategically about new developments and the facilitation of LCTs. It was added at this workshops that WPD should play a more active role in the planning process. This point was endorsed in the East Midlands, where a stakeholder suggested earlier engagement with housing developers.

## INNOVATION TO MEET SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

It was suggested, in the East Midlands, that WPD should set aside a specific fund for innovation projects.

## EXCELLENT ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Stakeholders in the South West were particularly interested in this commitment. It was felt that this should be an area of focus and that WPD should commit to leading the way in terms of how quickly it achieves Net Zero as many councils have more exacting targets. It was, however, noted that the transition to Net Zero should not disproportionately impact fuel poor customers, as this is a risk. In the East Midlands, it was suggested that WPD works with Disclosure Insight Action (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project) to ensure that reporting is accurate and transparent.

## OUTPUTS FOR THE BUSINESS PLAN

### PUBLISH ANNUAL REPORTS IN A SIMPLE, EASY TO UNDERSTAND FORMAT, SETTING OUT WPD'S TOTAL EXPENDITURE, THE IMPACT ON CUSTOMER BILLS AND ACTUAL REGULATORY RETURNS

It was commented that this output is appropriate but that there should be an emphasis on ensuring that information is accessible for all. It was added at the East Midlands workshop that this should apply to all reports published and that it shouldn't be the case that WPD waits until the publication of its annual report before sharing relevant information with customers. It ranked significantly below baseline at all four workshops in the online poll. On average, it was ranked lowest among the Social Contract outputs, receiving an average score of 3.41 / 5. A large majority (60%) believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition for this output, although 36% were of the view that the company could 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### SUPPORT 300,000 PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES VIA A £250K 'COMMUNITY MATTERS' FUND

There was a good deal of support for this output in the discussions, although stakeholders stated that it was vital that this support is targeted at those most in need, especially as it was seen by some as not representing a significant amount of money given how many people are in need. It was added at the East Midlands workshop that more should be done to promote this fund as it may be the case that those who need the support the most are the least likely to know about its existence.

On average, this scored 0.01 below the baseline of all other outputs. In the West Midlands, it scored below baseline, and at all other events fractionally above. On average, this output was the highest scoring of the Social Contract outputs and received an average vote of 3.64 / 5. Just over half (52%) believed that WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more', compared to 44% that felt WPD had their priorities set at the right level.

### WE WILL AS A MINIMUM MAINTAIN OUR PRIME ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) RATING FROM A RECOGNISED AGENCY

Stakeholders did not comment on this output at any of the workshops. It was also not included in the online poll because there was not scope for varying levels of ambition for this output.

### PROVIDE STAFF WITH PAID LEAVE TO VOLUNTEER TO SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVES ASSOCIATED WITH VULNERABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

It was noted that WPD staff have useful skills that can be put to use in local communities, particularly on energy related projects, so volunteering should make use of this. It was commented in East Midlands that this output is not specific enough and that it would benefit from having some measurables put against it, for example number of hours volunteered or projects supported. It was, however, noted that people shouldn't be put under pressure to volunteer and that this should be rolled out in a way that is sensitive to staff members.

This output scored below baseline in all regions in the online poll, though in the East Midlands it ranked just 0.01 points below the baseline average. This output was, on average, second highest among the Social Contract outputs and received an average vote of 3.48 / 5. Whilst just over half (52%) believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, 41% wished they would 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## CONNECTIONS

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

Only one stakeholder in the East Midlands commented that Covid-19 would have an impact on this priority area. They felt the pandemic had meant developments (and hence connections requests) had stalled but that this was now picking back up, particularly given the government's Build Back Better focus.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders in the West Midlands supported proposals to address the complexity of the connection application process. It was acknowledged that more companies and organisations would be looking to connect to the grid in the future, including those who are not necessarily as tech savvy as those currently looking to connect. Therefore, anything that could be done to help customers navigate the process would be welcomed. Stakeholders in South Wales, the South West and the East Midlands strongly agreed with the previous feedback that WPD needs to improve the availability of information and should help those customers who may not have a full understanding of the connections process.

Stakeholders across the events did not particularly comment on previous feedback around quotations and energisation. In South Wales and the East Midlands stakeholders did, however, agree with previous feedback that WPD should engage closely with local authorities to understand capacity requirements at a local level. Only in the East Midlands did stakeholders comment on previous feedback in terms of competition in connections. Although they did not comment on the previous feedback about improving the processes with IDNOs, they did emphasise the need to do more to promote this area. Stakeholders in the South West agreed that capacity allocation is a priority.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing from the outputs, stakeholders raised a range of additional suggestions including:

- Considering more innovative approaches to connections offers, for example joint offers with generators who require capacity at different times (South West);
- Honing the accuracy of the connections offer, particularly relating to cost (South Wales);
- Engagement with developers and community energy groups, in addition to local authorities (South Wales);
- Giving developers an indication of capacity and estimated connection cost without having to go through a formal connections process (South Wales);
- Videos to help connections customers navigate the connections process, as well as other initiatives to make it more intuitive and navigable (West Midlands);
- Demonstrating how feedback from engagement with local authorities is acted upon (West Midlands); and
- Outputs that go beyond the connections process itself, such as a commitment to fast-tracking the connection of low carbon technologies (East Midlands).

Stakeholders did not suggest any specific targets or performance measures, but in the East Midlands several stakeholders felt one or more of the outputs were vague and needed specific targets to enable WPD to benchmark performance.

As this priority area was run as an afternoon surgery session, far fewer participants voted on the outputs in the online polling, so the data is less robust. As such, as a priority area it hasn't been compared to the nine priority areas that were voted on in the morning sessions. The outputs themselves were also not included in the baseline average and will therefore not be compared to outputs in other priority areas during this report.

However, in terms of the outputs themselves, the output that ranked highest for Connections was 'provide new connections quotations and energisation in line with customer expectations' which scored 4.12 / 5. Most stakeholders (70%) wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area. The second highest ranked was 'engage with local authorities and enterprise partnerships to understand their requirements for strategic investment in terms of changes in demand or network use', which scored 3.95 / 5 – and just over half (53%) wanted WPD to stretch this target.

Connections: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline						
OUTPUT	1	2	3	4	5	AVERAGE
<b>Provide new connections quotations and energisation in line with customer expectations</b>	0	0	5	5	7	<b>4.12</b>
	0%	0%	29%	29%	41%	
<b>Engage with local authorities and local enterprise partnerships to understand their requirements for strategic investment in terms of changes in demand or network use.</b>	0	0	9	2	8	<b>3.95</b>
	0%	0%	47%	11%	42%	
<b>Improve DNO/IDNO/NGET/ESO cross border working practices and promote competition in connections (to ensure that the consumer is best served under the process)</b>	1	0	9	3	4	<b>3.53</b>
	6%	0%	53%	18%	24%	
<b>We will develop our connections process and improve availability of information so that customers wishing to connect can easily comprehend the process and follow a simple set of rules to apply for a connection</b>	1	0	8	5	3	<b>3.53</b>
	6%	0%	47%	29%	18%	

Please note:

- The surgery sessions were attended by fewer participants and the voting data is therefore based on a smaller sample size. The data has therefore not been compared against data for the outputs covered in the main sessions. It has been summarised in the table above (including the number of responses) to ensure transparency.
- This data is based on the voting results at all four events. While the voting in South Wales was not included in the South Wales report as there was only two participants, these votes have been aggregated and included in the overall data set.

## OUTPUTS

### WE WILL DEVELOP OUR CONNECTIONS PROCESS AND IMPROVE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION SO THAT CUSTOMERS WISHING TO CONNECT CAN EASILY COMPREHEND THE PROCESS AND FOLLOW A SIMPLE SET OF RULES TO APPLY FOR A CONNECTION

Stakeholders at all events strongly supported this output, with several implying that the information was not accessible enough at the moment – although one stakeholder in South Wales did comment that WPD’s capacity data is already more robust than that of some other DNOs. In the East Midlands, several noted that different customers have different levels of knowledge, so they urged WPD to create bespoke information guides for a range of customer types. This was reflected in the South West where community energy groups, which had less experience of the process and / or were only applying for a single connection, particularly struggled with the current information. Stakeholders then requested that this output include a range of different information types and formats. This included: curtailment information; capacity information at substation level; the use of videos to share information; and better mapping to help connections customers plan.

This output received an average score of 3.53 / 5, which placed it joint-last compared to other Connections outputs. Nonetheless, just under half (47%) thought WPD’s level of ambition on the output was right, and the same proportion felt they should ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’.

## PROVIDE NEW CONNECTIONS QUOTATIONS AND ENERGISATION IN LINE WITH CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Whilst it was felt to be important to stakeholders in the West Midlands that the connections process is facilitated in a timely fashion, it was felt more important that information is accurate and that timeframes are guaranteed – an opinion shared in South Wales where one stakeholder requested accurate pricing information that does not escalate at a later stage. In the South West, stakeholders focused on the need to develop more innovative connections offers that make better use of capacity, for example flexible connection offers, hybrid connection offers or those that use batteries. A stakeholder in the East Midlands was also interested in the opportunity for flexible connection offers for large connection customers. Despite these discussions, one stakeholder in the East Midlands felt this output required more refinement as it was unclear what it meant.

This output received an average score of 4.12 / 5, which placed it top among Connections. A significant majority, 70%, thought WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more', and all others felt the company's level of ambition was at the 'right level'.

## ENGAGE WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR REQUIREMENTS FOR STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN TERMS OF CHANGES IN DEMAND OR NETWORK USE

This output was supported, with stakeholders in the South West emphasising the importance of LEPs and in those in the West Midlands stressing the importance of all tiers of local and regional government. In South Wales, however, stakeholders urged it to be expanded to include engagement with developers. Building on this, developers in South Wales wanted to be able to get informal indications of capacity and connection costs without having to go through the formal connections process to help them value land. In fact, it was suggested Local Plans should also include potential capacity and upgrade requirements for development land – which may facilitate discussions with community groups about opportunities for community energy projects.

This output received an average score of 3.95 / 5, which was second-highest among Connections. Although just under half (47%) of stakeholders felt the company's level of ambition was at the 'right level', a greater number (53%) thought WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## IMPROVE DNO/IDNO/NGET/ESO CROSS BORDER WORKING PRACTICES AND PROMOTE COMPETITION IN CONNECTIONS (TO ENSURE THAT THE CONSUMER IS BEST SERVED UNDER THE PROCESS)

Stakeholders in the Midlands supported this output, particularly the need to promote competition in connections. However, at both Midlands events, stakeholders commented that it was vague and needed more measurable targets. Stakeholders in the South West and South Wales did not discuss this output.

This output received an average score of 3.53 / 5, meaning it ranked joint-last for this priority area. Just over half (53%) of stakeholders felt the company's level of ambition was at the 'right level', compared to 42% who thought WPD's should 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.



## 7 | SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK

### NETWORK RELIABILITY

#### IMPACT OF COVID-19

In terms of the impact of Covid-19 on WPD's approach to network reliability, stakeholders felt it had highlighted the importance of electricity supply as an essential service – particularly for those in vulnerable circumstances, including those shielding or self-isolating, as the impact of a power cut is hugely exacerbated. At all events but South Wales, stakeholders emphasised that the shift to homeworking had made reliability more important than ever, putting pressure on WPD to improve performance by reducing the frequency and duration of power cuts. It was noted by one stakeholder in the South West that social distancing and other pandemic restrictions must have led to a slowdown of network maintenance and upgrade programmes.

#### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In terms of whether WPD had interpreted stakeholder feedback correctly, stakeholders agreed that keeping the lights on should remain a high priority for WPD and that they should focus on continual improvement on their current performances. Stakeholders did not want to see a reduction in levels of service in ED2, even though factors such as the increase in new connections will make it challenging to meet targets. While there was not confirmation during the discussions on whether reducing duration was more important than reducing frequency, stakeholders in the East Midlands did stress the inconvenience of even the shortest of power cuts. Stakeholders did, however, confirm the previous feedback that power cuts were particularly challenging for businesses (local businesses as well as major users) and vulnerable customers.

With regard to the previous feedback on tree management, at some events stakeholders agreed tree management is a priority in network resilience and there was support – or at least recognition – by some for the usage of LIDAR to make this as efficient a process as possible. However, unlike previous comments, stakeholders in fact expressed most concern for the environmental impacts rather than the capital cost of the programme, wishing to see a commitment to environmental policy, such as replacement planting or biodiversity net gain.

Stakeholders agreed with previous comments that targeting worst served customers should be a priority for WPD, as customers should expect the same level of service irrespective of where they live. They also agreed – implicitly at some events through the online poll, but explicitly at others – that high-quality asset health data is important in recognition of the opportunity that digitalisation presents for improving network reliability.

Stakeholders were concerned about flood defences, but there was some challenge of the previous feedback that called for coordination and collaboration with the Environment Agency, with stakeholders also urging them to engage with other organisations in this field including Natural Resources Wales. That said, stakeholders did want greater two-way data sharing on flooding (historical and real-time) between the Environment Agency and a whole range of other companies and local organisations. Stakeholders did not pass specific comment on the previous feedback around safe networks – instead, this was covered during the Safety surgery session.

#### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing, for the most part, stakeholders focused on amendments and additions to existing outputs rather than major initiatives that were missing. These included:

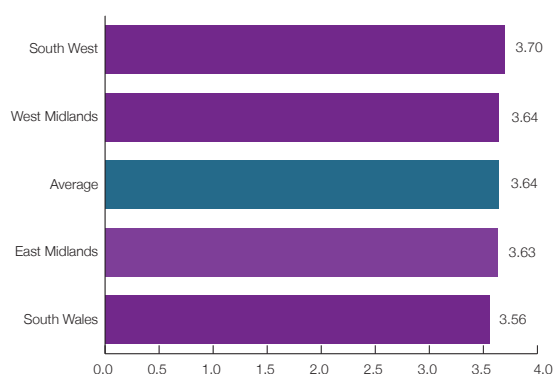
- A focus on the difference in reliability between rural and urban networks (South Wales);
- Research to respond to the issue of ash dieback as part of the tree maintenance programme (South Wales and West Midlands);
- The use of data from the environmental regulator for Wales (Natural Resources Wales) as well as the Environment Agency to help identify areas for flood defences (South Wales);
- Investigating battery storage to help reliability (West Midlands and East Midlands);
- Including other recreational areas beyond just school playing fields as part of plans to underground cables to improve safety (South West);

- More information on when outages are likely to occur (East Midlands);
- More communication with customers about what to do in a power cut (East Midlands); and
- Working collaboratively with local councillors to alert them about power cuts (East Midlands).

In terms of targets and performance measures, stakeholders made the point that a number of these outputs should have more measurable targets put against them and it was commented that they would benefit from more context as they could be construed as being somewhat vague. It was also felt by one stakeholder in the East Midlands that WPD should have more specific targets within each output to reflect the different levels of performance across the network.

In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, the priority area of Network Reliability ranked second sixth – with an average score only 0.01 below the baseline at 3.64 / 5. Therefore, while it scored above 3, relative to other priority areas stakeholders seemed to think the level of ambition was right. The average score varied across the regions with no discernible pattern – with this output ranking between fourth and seventh across the different events.

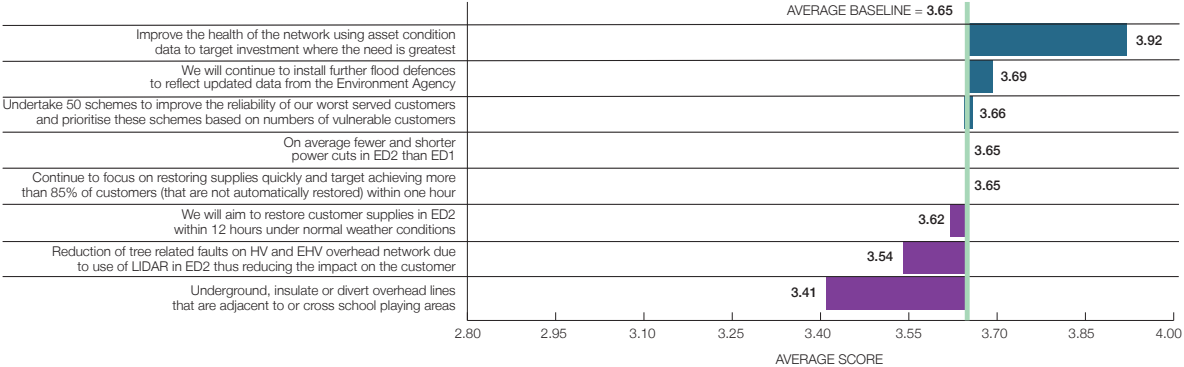
Network Reliability Outputs: Average Score by Region



In terms of the outputs themselves, as an average across all events, three ranked above the average baseline, two ranked exactly the same as the average baseline, and the remaining three came in below it – demonstrating that there was a real spread of views entirely dependent on the output itself. The ones that, on average, scored highest related to targeting investment and flood defenses respectively. In fact, ‘improve the health of the network using asset condition data to target investment where the need is greatest’ scored an average of 3.92 / 5 – the joint-fourth highest output across the nine priority areas, with 64% of stakeholders wanting to see WPD stretch this target. This was the top output at all events where it ranked above 3.9 / 5, except for in South Wales where the average vote was much lower. Likewise, ‘we will continue to install further flood defenses to reflect updated data from the Environment Agency’ averaged at 3.69 / 5, with 54% wanting to see WPD ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’. At all events, except the West Midlands, stakeholders ranked this output above 3.7 / 5, and it was the highest ranked of the Network Reliability outputs in South Wales.

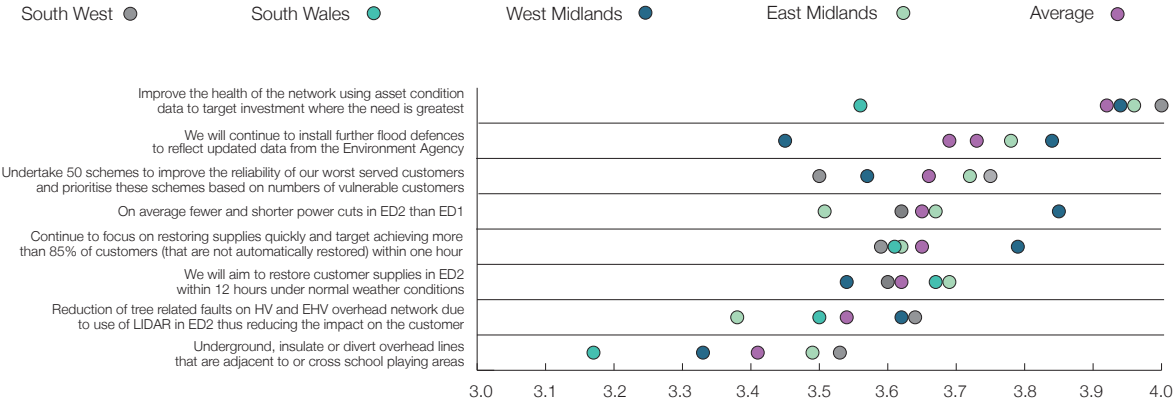
The lowest scoring output was ‘underground, insulate or divert overhead lines that are adjacent to or cross school playing areas’ with an average of 3.41 / 5. Most stakeholders (44%) felt the ambition was right, although 43% still wanted to see WPD ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ – and 13% even wanted to see them ‘do less’ or ‘do a lot less’. This was the lowest scoring output for Network Reliability for all events, except for the East Midlands.

Network Reliability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3a](#)

Network Reliability Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.



## OUTPUTS: NETWORK PERFORMANCE

### ON AVERAGE FEWER AND SHORTER POWER CUTS IN ED2 THAN ED1

Stakeholders agreed with the broad ambition of this output, feeling that network reliability is the bedrock of what WPD does with the increased reliance on homeworking putting further demand on network performance. However, at three of the events stakeholders sought clarity to further understand the context behind the output to be able to properly comment. Stakeholders across the events also noted that as it stood the output was too vague and needed more specific targets. Stakeholders at all events noted disparity in the reliability of the network, urging WPD to focus on those worst served regions or rural areas of the network rather than those that already receive a relatively good service – including more granular targets to reflect this point.

In the West Midlands, stakeholders commented that it may become more difficult to achieve this target as more renewables connect to the grid. Conversely, in the East Midlands, stakeholders felt that network performance would be likely to improve because of the transition to Distribution System Operator. It was noted in both the West and East Midlands that an increasing number of customers, with specific reference to local businesses and major users, are dependent on a reliable service so it was important that WPD continues to make progress in this area. It was felt in the East Midlands that even short power cuts cause considerable inconvenience.

Although this output on average scored precisely on the baseline, there was notable regional variance. It was voted above baseline in South Wales and the West Midlands, and below in the South West and East Midlands. On average, the output was joint fourth highest among Network Reliability and received an average vote of 3.65 / 5. Whilst 44% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, most stakeholders (54%) wanted them to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON RESTORING SUPPLIES QUICKLY AND TARGET ACHIEVING MORE THAN 85% OF CUSTOMERS (THAT ARE NOT AUTOMATICALLY RESTORED) WITHIN ONE HOUR

In terms of the level of ambition of this target, views were split in the discussions. Some felt an hour's restoration time was good, particularly as it will become increasingly difficult to meet due to extreme weather events increasing in frequency and severity. Others felt it represented a reduction in the level of service compared to ED1, which was problematic. One stakeholder cautioned that the target needs to be carefully considered against the ambitions of other targets, as ultimately everything costs customers money. As with the previous output, stakeholders wanted to see a bit more granularity. In the South West they wanted to see the output include some regional specificity. In South Wales and the East Midlands, stakeholders wanted a secondary target where WPD commits to restoring a proportion of the remaining 15% in a certain length of time. Several stakeholders in the East Midlands felt this output should not just focus on restoration time but should also seek to commit to improved communication with customers during an outage.

On average, this output scored precisely on the baseline, although the West Midlands placed it notably above baseline, compared to all other areas voting slightly below. On average, the output was joint fourth highest among Network Reliability and received an average vote of 3.65 / 5. Although 43% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, over half of stakeholders (53%) wanted them to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## WE WILL AIM TO RESTORE CUSTOMER SUPPLIES IN ED2 WITHIN 12 HOURS UNDER NORMAL WEATHER CONDITIONS

Stakeholder views were split on whether the ambition of this output was right. In the East Midlands one stakeholder emphasised the efforts WPD goes to restore supply and saw the company as industry leading in this area, however stakeholders in South Wales and the East Midlands felt 12 hours was not ambitious enough, particularly as a power outage for that duration is very inconvenient.

There was concern that the output does not refer to what would happen under abnormal weather conditions, as it was felt these are becoming increasingly likely due to the impact of climate change. One stakeholder in the East Midlands wanted to shift the output to focus on what WPD's delivery would be under severe weather conditions.

Stakeholders wanted the output to also include a mitigation plan for those off power, with particular focus in South Wales and the East Midlands on using battery storage to provide back-up supplies. There was also an emphasis on the need to prioritise the restoration of vulnerable customers and the consideration of what support they would receive during these incidents.

Although on average, this output scored slightly below baseline, the East Midlands and South Wales placed it above baseline, compared to all other areas voting below. On average, the output was sixth highest among Network Reliability and received an average vote of 3.62 / 5. Whilst 41% believed that WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, a majority (52%) felt they should 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### OUTPUTS: TREE MANAGEMENT

## REDUCTION OF TREE RELATED FAULTS ON HV AND EHV OVERHEAD NETWORK DUE TO USE OF LIDAR\* IN ED2 REDUCING THE IMPACT ON THE CUSTOMER (\*LIGHT DETECTION AND RANGING)

There was broad agreement that tree related faults should be reduced, particularly given our increasing reliance on electricity. Stakeholders in the West Midlands and South Wales were impressed with LIDAR and the efficiencies this technology can bring, and in the South West stakeholders discussed its effectiveness in comparison to the use of helicopters. It was felt by some in the West Midlands that this output should be more measurable and have a target attributed to it, for example by including a target related to a reduction in tree related faults.

However, the focus of the discussions at most of the workshops was on the impact on the trees themselves. Stakeholders wanted any tree clearance programme to be undertaken in a way that is considerate and sensitive to the local environment. They supported the use of undergrounding to minimise the impact on existing trees and wanted to see WPD commit to replacement planting and even a policy of biodiversity net gain to offset the impact of their tree management operations. They also wanted programmes to take place at the right time of year and branches to be cleared up considerately afterwards. The impact of ash dieback was also mentioned – in Wales it was felt to be a significant national issue.

This output scored below baseline in all regions but was most strongly below in the East Midlands and South Wales. On average, the output was second lowest among Network Reliability and received an average vote of 3.54 / 5. Whilst 47% felt WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more', a fraction higher (48%) felt they had the 'right level' of ambition.

## WE WILL COMPLETE OUR TREE RESILIENCE CLEARANCE PROGRAMME ON THE EHV NETWORK

Stakeholders expressed strong views on this output during the discussion sessions. Building on the views on the previous output, stakeholders at all events were very concerned that WPD is not fully considering the environmental impact of this programme. They urged WPD to consider more undergrounding and coppice rather than cutting down trees. Stakeholders at all events wanted a commitment to a tree replacement programme to match what others are doing in this area – working with parish councils and other local organisations. It was felt this was a very emotive area and WPD was failing to recognise this with the output as currently drafted. In the East Midlands, there was concern that WPD work hard to protect mature trees. As with the previous output, stakeholders also expressed concern about the impact of ash dieback. Stakeholders did not vote on this output in the online polling, as the output is as ambitious as it can be already.



## OUTPUTS: TARGETING INVESTMENT

### IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THE NETWORK USING ASSET CONDITION DATA TO TARGET INVESTMENT WHERE THE NEED IS GREATEST

Stakeholders in South Wales and the East Midlands agreed with the use of asset condition data to help plan and target investment in the network and recognised the opportunities presented by new technology to improve network performance. In the East Midlands, several stakeholders worked on or had experience of this data and the benefits it brings. While stakeholders in the South West also supported this output, support appeared to be more implicit than explicit.

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments, including: whether WPD would be targeting spending on network assets or on digitalisation; that targeting investment is about more than the condition of the current asset and is also about ensuring sufficient capacity to enable the country to meet its decarbonisation ambitions; that as well as the existing network they also need to future-proof new assets; and that those parts of the network that support water supply should be prioritised. In South Wales, one stakeholder summarised the importance of this output by concluding that whilst demand is increasing, there are also better tools to help DNOs better manage the network.

Despite the relatively limited level of discussion, this output scored significantly above baseline in all regions but South Wales. On average, the output was highest among Network Reliability, and received an average vote of 3.92 / 5. Almost two thirds (64%) felt WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more', compared to just 35% that felt the company had the 'right level' of ambition.

### UNDERTAKE 50 SCHEMES TO IMPROVE THE RELIABILITY OF OUR WORST SERVED CUSTOMERS AND PRIORITISE THESE SCHEMES BASED ON NUMBERS OF VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS

Stakeholders sought to understand the definition of 'worst served customer' as well as wanting to better understand whether 50 schemes was a lot or a little. In the South West, stakeholders questioned the rationale of focusing on the number of schemes rather than the outcome of those schemes and in the East Midlands stakeholders wanted this output to include KPIs to make it more measurable.

Across the workshops, a couple of stakeholders recognised the opportunities that low carbon technologies, particularly battery storage, present to improve network performance for worst-served customers. In the South West and South Wales, stakeholders wanted to see rural vulnerability included as it was felt rural customers are the ones with the worst resilience. One stakeholder in the South West urged WPD to assess those parts of the network most at risk of failure, particularly when they are supporting critical infrastructure such as hospitals.

This output scored slightly above baseline on average, although there were slight regional differences. In the East Midlands and South West, the vote fell above baseline, compared to other regions' averages falling slightly below. On average, the output was third among Network Reliability and received an average vote of 3.66 / 5. Over half (54%) felt WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more', compared to 43% that felt they had the 'right level' of ambition.

## OUTPUTS: FLOOD DEFENCES

### WE WILL CONTINUE TO INSTALL FURTHER FLOOD DEFENCES TO REFLECT UPDATED DATA FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Stakeholders were clearly concerned about the impact of flooding on the reliability of the network. However, stakeholders across the events felt the wording of this output was too vague and wanted it to include measurable targets, such as number of substations protected or flood defences installed. That said, one stakeholder felt flood defences should be installed on a case-by-case basis and another felt the output should focus on the outcomes rather than the input.

Stakeholders at both Midlands events felt this output was increasing in importance given that developers are building on flood plains and urged WPD to get more involved with local authorities to help identify appropriate development sites. In the South West, concern was expressed as to the validity of data held by the Environment Agency, which was said to underestimate the situation. In South Wales, stakeholders noted that the Environment Agency is an English regulator, and that the output needs to also include reference to the Welsh regulator – Natural Resources Wales. Following on from these comments, stakeholders wanted more collaboration and data sharing on flooding (historic and real-time) with other agencies, utilities and local organisations like Local Resilience Forums. The theme of regional network disparities was raised again, as some stakeholders sought to understand whether this is more of an issue in the East Midlands distribution area, or for the rural rather than urban network.

This output scored above baseline, in all regions except the West Midlands. On average, the output was second among Network Reliability, although stakeholders in South Wales placed it first. It received an average vote of 3.69 / 5. Over half (54%) thought WPD ought to 'do more' or 'do a lot more', compared to 43% that felt the company had the 'right level' of ambition.

## OUTPUTS: SAFE NETWORKS

### UNDERGROUND, INSULATE OR DIVERT OVERHEAD LINES THAT ARE ADJACENT TO OR CROSS SCHOOL PLAYING AREAS

Stakeholders did not discuss this output at length at most of the workshops. However, the few comments that were made indicated that stakeholders did not particularly support this output. It was felt by some stakeholders that school playing areas might not necessarily be the most appropriate places to underground to deliver the greatest safety benefits and that other recreation areas should be included. Others felt this needed to be agreed at the planning stage rather than having cables retrospectively undergrounded or diverted, and that whatever undergrounding takes place in school playing areas needs to be well documented to ensure there is a record of where the power lines are.

In both the East and West Midlands, stakeholders commented that this output may be costly and may not deliver real benefits for customers, so more detail on the number of accidents this would prevent should be provided. Stakeholders in South Wales felt this output was vague and would benefit from a measurable target.

This output scored strongly below baseline in all regions, though most strongly in South Wales. On average, the output placed last among Network Reliability, and it received an average vote of 3.41 / 5. Although 43% thought WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more', compared to 44% that thought the company had the 'right level' of ambition, 12% felt WPD should do 'less' or a 'lot less'.

## BUSINESS IT SECURITY AND CYBER RESILIENCE

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

In the South West and East Midlands, stakeholders did not feel that the Covid-19 pandemic had led to any change in priorities or emerging issues in this area. However, in the West Midlands stakeholders felt the increase in homeworking and dependency on domestic supplies had increased the need for a network resilient to cyber-attacks. In South Wales, stakeholders felt the pandemic had underlined the critical importance of contingency planning to address the unexpected, reinforcing the importance of this priority area.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders generally agreed with the previous feedback received in this area. They were very much in agreement with the previous view that network security is becoming more important and that cyber resilience should be an area of focus for WPD as we increasingly rely on electricity. Most stakeholders agreed that WPD should be completely resistant to attacks, although some challenged the achievability of 100% given how difficult it is and the fact that these attacks may come from incredibly sophisticated state actors. It was acknowledged in most of the events that this is an incredibly fast-moving area so collaboration between companies should be encouraged, as should learning from other sectors.

In terms of the previous feedback on disaster recovery, stakeholders agreed it is very important, with one stakeholder noting it was particularly so in light of the large-scale power cut experienced in the South of England in 2019 and others saying so having learnt the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic. While disaster recovery was not discussed at all workshops, the online polling also served to reconfirm previous feedback that it should be a high priority. There was also agreement with previous feedback that the increasing complexities of the network and increasing reliance on electricity had made resilience even more important.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

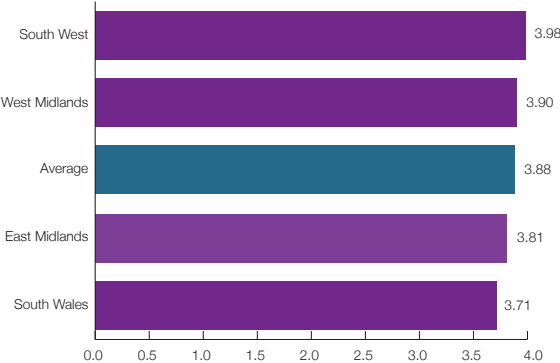
In terms of what was missing from the outputs, stakeholders suggested much less than for other priority areas but there were still some initiatives put forward. These included:

- Protecting customer data, including on the Priority Services Register (South West);
- A cyber security campaign educating customers on protecting their homes and smart meters (South West);
- Staff training, as breaches are often down to individuals rather than systems (West Midlands); and
- Data sharing and collaboration between WPD and different organisations (East Midlands).

In terms of specific targets and performance measures, stakeholders frequently commented that the outputs needed to be more ambitious and more focused on measurable performance improvement targets, as the current wording of many of these outputs was too vague. Various suggestions of how to measure performance were made including achieving industry standards or getting appropriate accreditations.

In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, the priority area of Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience came top with an average of 3.8 / 5. This high ranking was consistent among the different regions, with this priority area coming top in the East Midlands and second at all other events. Interestingly, despite this high ranking, stakeholders did not have as many comments as in other, lower ranked areas. However, the online polling shows how much more stakeholders want WPD to do in this area.

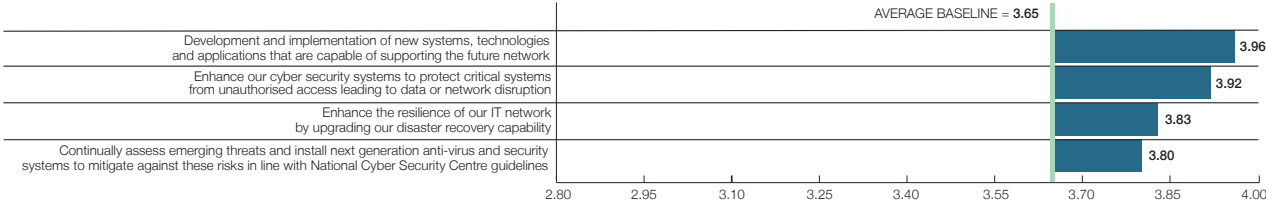
Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience Outputs: Average Score by Region



In terms of the outputs themselves, as an average across all events, they all ranked above the baseline average of 3.65 / 5. This was the case for all the outputs across all of the events – except for one output in South Wales. The top two outputs in this priority area were voted as the top two outputs across all events (except in East Midlands where one output was joint-second with another), so there are clearly particular areas that all stakeholders want WPD to go further on.

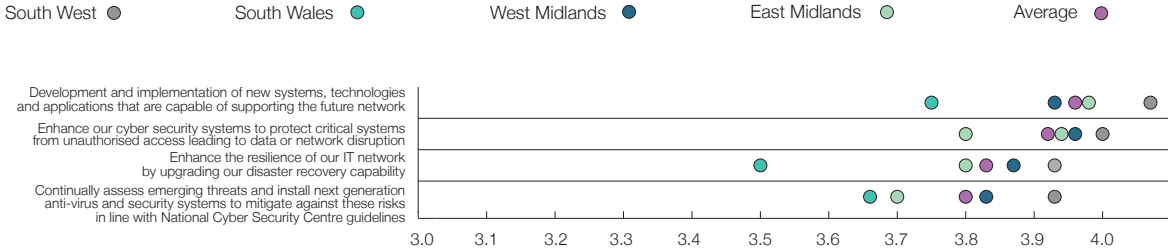
The highest ranked was ‘development and implementation of new systems, technologies and applications that are capable of supporting the future network’, with an average score of 3.96 / 5 and most (67%) wanting WPD to stretch this target. This was, in fact, the second highest scoring output across outputs in all nine priority areas. The second highest was ‘enhance our cyber security systems to protect critical systems from unauthorised access leading to data or network disruption’ with an average of 3.92 / 5 – and 66% wanting WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’.

Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3a](#)

Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## OUTPUTS: ENHANCING CYBER SECURITY

### ENHANCE OUR CYBER SECURITY SYSTEMS TO PROTECT CRITICAL SYSTEMS FROM UNAUTHORISED ACCESS LEADING TO DATA OR NETWORK DISRUPTION

There was unanimous support from stakeholders at all four workshops for this output, recognising that serious cyber-attacks have the potential to bring down the electricity network as well as lead to data security issues for customers and staff. There was genuine concern about the threat of incredibly sophisticated state actors, as well as technology companies who may be affiliated to them. In the South West, some concern was expressed about the current level of security, for example that aspects of the network currently remain unencrypted. This was reflected in a comment about the use of the word 'enhance' in the output, as it was felt sufficient systems should already be in place.

Stakeholders wanted the output to include tangible performance measures and there was a discussion as to what these should be. One suggestion was to target different levels of security standards, although another said the only acceptable target would be zero cyber-attacks. In the West Midlands, it was suggested that WPD should also seek external accreditation such as ISO27001.

In the West Midlands, a series of other comments were raised. This included that WPD should look to other industries such as the financial sector for examples of best practice to replicate, thus ensuring that they are forward-looking and less 'conservative'. It was also commented that, often, breaches occur because of personnel rather than systems and that this is something WPD should be mindful of and should therefore include training and initiate appropriate protocols.

This output scored significantly above baseline in all regions, most strongly in the South West. On average, the output placed second highest among Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience, and it received an average vote of 3.92 / 5. Although 33% thought WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, almost two thirds of stakeholders (66%) felt they should 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### CONTINUALLY ASSESS EMERGING THREATS AND INSTALL NEXT GENERATION ANTI-VIRUS AND SECURITY SYSTEMS TO MITIGATE AGAINST THESE RISKS IN LINE WITH NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY CENTRE GUIDELINES

Stakeholders also strongly agreed with this output, recognising that emerging threats are on the increase and are therefore of growing concern. It was noted that WPD will need to continually review and adapt to the changing types of threats they face. A couple of stakeholders critiqued its wording, saying the output was basic in its ambition and was what WPD should be doing anyway. Several sought more exacting targets, such as meeting industry standards or achieving accreditations.

In the South West and East Midlands, stakeholders said there should be greater collaboration in this area – with customers to help protect them from cyber threats, and with external agencies and national bodies on anti-virus and security systems. In South Wales, several expressed concern about the security of information held by WPD, particularly that on the Priority Services Register. In the West Midlands it was commented that, whilst anti-virus and security systems are important, WPD should not lose sight of the human element and should provide training to its staff to ensure that the company is adequately protected. In the South West, one stakeholder demanded greater transparency from WPD when a cyber-attack does occur.

This output scored above baseline in all regions, although less strongly in South Wales. Despite on average having placed last among Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience, and it received an average vote of 3.8 / 5, and over half (58%) felt WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more' on this output.



## OUTPUTS: DISASTER RECOVERY AND FUTURE-PROOFING

### ENHANCE THE RESILIENCE OF OUR IT NETWORK BY UPGRADING OUR DISASTER RECOVERY CAPABILITY

Stakeholders felt that recent events, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the major power cut in the South of England in 2019, had reiterated the importance of disaster recovery plans. In addition to this, the point was made that threats to the electricity network could come from national actors with huge resources at their disposal. As such, at all workshops except the East Midlands (where it was not discussed) there was strong support during the discussions for WPD to have a robust disaster recovery capability, given how vital it is, should a cyber-attack occur. However, as with the other outputs in this priority area, stakeholders felt it was vague and needed some measurable targets. One stakeholder in the South West felt the output needed reworking so it focuses on performance improvement rather than the process which WPD needs to undertake. One stakeholder wanted the output to include the production of a disaster recovery plan. Another asked whether WPD has a disaster recovery site as part of its disaster recovery capability.

This output scored well above baseline in all regions but South Wales, where it was placed significantly below. On average, the output placed third among Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience and received an average vote of 3.83 / 5. A majority, 63%, thought WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more' on this output, compared to 37% that felt they had their ambitions set at the 'right level'.

### DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SYSTEMS, TECHNOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS THAT ARE CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING THE FUTURE NETWORK

While there was not a huge amount of discussion during the breakouts on this output (and it was not discussed in South Wales), support for it was implicitly expressed. For example, in the South West and the West Midlands, stakeholders expressed concern that the more complex the future network, the more vulnerable the network would become – and that the transition to becoming a DSO would mean more data being generated which is vulnerable to being hacked.

However, again the sentiment was expressed for this output – as for previous outputs under this priority area – that it needed to be a bit more ambitious in its intent as stakeholders expected the development and implementation of new systems, technologies and applications to be happening already. In the East Midlands, one stakeholder wanted to ensure that WPD were effectively trialling new systems before deciding on the best approach and another encouraged WPD to review academic papers which will help inform them about what is going on.

This output scored significantly above baseline in all regions. On average, the output placed first among Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience, and it received an average vote of 3.96 / 5. Whilst 32% thought WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, two thirds of stakeholders (67%) thought the company should 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.



## WORKFORCE RESILIENCE

NB. This priority area was only discussed in South Wales and the East Midlands.

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders in South Wales felt that WPD would need to consider workforce resilience in the context of pandemics like Covid-19, such as by ensuring there is a high level of communication with employees during any periods of required homeworking. In the East Midlands, they did not feel that Covid-19 would change emerging issues or priorities in relation to this priority area.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders in South Wales agreed with the previous feedback that a happy, healthy and motivated workforce is a high priority. They also felt it was important WPD stays ahead of the game in terms of upskilling the workforce as the industry moves towards a smart future. While they did not provide much comment on the previous feedback in terms of inclusivity and diversity, stakeholders in the East Midlands did agree that WPD should reach a demographic outside of the traditional, white British male population. East Midlands stakeholders also acknowledged the importance of offering apprenticeship schemes to improve diversity but, beyond that, did not comment on the previous feedback during this discussion.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In South Wales and the East Midlands, stakeholders felt that the headline outputs covered everything required but wanted more granularity underneath. The only thing that was felt to be missing was more of an emphasis on digital methods for employee engagement. Stakeholders in South Wales and the East Midlands did not suggest specific targets or performance measures, instead proposing a series of activities under each output for what WPD can do to help achieve them. One stakeholder noted that WPD needs to be careful not to discuss what is currently happening and instead discuss what is required for the next Business Plan.

As this priority area was run as an afternoon surgery session, far fewer participants voted on the outputs in the online polling, so the data is less robust. As such, as a priority area it hasn't been compared to the nine priority areas that were voted on in the morning sessions. The outputs themselves were also not included in the baseline average and will therefore not be compared to outputs in other priority areas during this report.

Stakeholders in South Wales did not vote on these outputs in the online poll so there is no data to demonstrate whether they felt the outputs expressed the right level of ambition. However, they spent most time discussing how to 'ensure that WPD is the employer of choice' and how to 'maintain a healthy, happy and motivated workforce' – perhaps indicating that those outputs were deemed particularly important. In the East Midlands they only voted on two of the outputs (and as there were very few votes, the data should not be treated as robust). However, the output that received the highest average vote was 'improve the diversity and inclusion of our workforce' with 2 out of the 3 votes cast and stakeholders wanting WPD to 'do a lot more' in this area.

Workforce Resilience: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline						
OUTPUT	1	2	3	4	5	AVERAGE
Improve the diversity and inclusion of our workforce	0	0	1	0	3	4.50
	0%	0%	25%	0%	75%	
Ensure that WPD is the employer of choice and attracts the top talent for advertised roles	0	0	2	0	1	3.67
	0%	0%	67%	0%	33%	

Please note:

- The surgery sessions were attended by fewer participants and the voting data is therefore based on a smaller sample size. The data has therefore not been compared against data for the outputs covered in the main sessions. It has been summarised in the table above (including the number of responses) to ensure transparency.

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## OUTPUTS

### ENSURE THAT WPD IS THE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE AND ATTRACTS THE TOP TALENT FOR ADVERTISED ROLES

Stakeholders in South Wales agreed with this output, suggesting a range of initiatives that should be considered to help deliver it. They felt WPD should target the education system by going into schools and colleges and working with careers advisors and teachers so that the career option is mooted as early on as possible. In addition, it was felt the profile of the industry needs raising as it is relatively hidden. One stakeholder emphasised the importance for WPD of having a good reputation as word of mouth was also felt to be important in attracting the top talent. In the East Midlands, no stakeholders commented on this output. Only three stakeholders in the East Midlands voted on this output. However, despite the lack of discussion in the East Midlands, 67% felt it was the right level of ambition and 33% wanted to see WPD 'do a lot more'.

### IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OF OUR WORKFORCE

One stakeholder in the East Midlands noted that WPD's workforce feels overwhelmingly male and white. Despite the relative lack of discussion, in the online poll this ranked highest of the two that were voted on (4.5 / 5 on average) – with 75% wanting WPD to 'do a lot more' in this area – although this percentage is only based on four votes.

### INCREASE THE STEM PIPELINE

Stakeholders in South Wales recognised the importance of universities as well as schools in creating a resilient workforce. It was also noted that parents play a significant role in encouraging young people to take specific courses at university. In the East Midlands, only one stakeholder commented on this output, expressing concern at the scope WPD has to engage children in an inspiring way as they felt they couldn't take them to a power station. This output wasn't voted on in the online polling.

### RETENTION AND UPSKILLING OF A SPECIALISED HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

In South Wales, one stakeholder sought to understand how WPD planned to upskill the older generation of employees to become more digitally savvy. It was also noted that it was easy to fall into the trap of what is already happening rather than considering what is required for the next Business Plan. In the East Midlands, no stakeholders commented on this output and it was not voted on in the online polling.

### MAINTAIN A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

In South Wales, stakeholders suggested a range of initiatives to help deliver this output, implying they agreed with the output itself. This included staff surveys, well-being programmes, online tools, staff roadshows and a lot of internal communication. Covid-19 was mentioned in this context, with stakeholders emphasising the importance of regular communication in light of the pandemic. In the East Midlands, one stakeholder sought further information in terms of staff turnover rate. This output was not voted on in the online polling.

### ATTRACT NEW TALENT

In South Wales, one stakeholder highlighted that one way to attract new talent is to emphasise the importance of the industry – and a particular role – in the move towards decarbonisation and achieving Net Zero, as it is something many feel passionate about. In the East Midlands, one stakeholder noted that they felt as an industry, the electricity networks were absent from offering apprenticeships to local colleges and, as a result, were quite hidden. This output was not voted on in the online polling.

## SAFETY

NB. This priority area was only discussed in the South West and the East Midlands.

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders did not feel that the Covid-19 pandemic had led to any change in priorities or emerging issues in this area.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In terms of whether WPD had interpreted previous feedback correctly, in the East Midlands, stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that greater collaboration is needed in this area and that maintaining a safe workforce is a critical priority. Stakeholders in the South West did not comment on these areas. No stakeholders commented on the previous feedback on incident management or health monitoring programmes. Stakeholders at both events, however, strongly supported previous feedback that WPD should use its influence to raise awareness of the dangers of electricity to members of the public – notably the need to start to educate children on electrical safety from an early age. This was also demonstrated by the relative importance of that output in the online polling.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders suggested a range of other topics that they felt were missing from the outputs. This included:

- Public safety and how to report safety issues to WPD (South West);
- Engagement with farmers on the dangers of overhead lines (South West);
- How to educate contractors on safety issues, particularly younger people operating machinery (South West);
- Having future-facing ambitions, using horizon scanning to identify best practice (East Midlands); and
- An output focusing on ongoing improvement (East Midlands).

In terms of performance measures and targets, several felt the current targets were unambitious and wanted to see WPD do more to demonstrate leadership in the area of safety – particularly when it comes to reducing staff incident rates.

As this priority area was run as an afternoon surgery session, far fewer participants voted on the outputs in the online polling, so the data is less robust. As such, as a priority area it hasn't been compared to the nine priority areas that were voted on in the morning sessions. The outputs themselves were also not included in the baseline average and will therefore not be compared to outputs in other priority areas during this report.

In terms of the outputs themselves, the highest ranked was 'educate 300,000 children about avoiding danger from electricity' with 3.55 / 5 – this was reflected in the discussions too where stakeholders thought the total number of children was very low compared to the size of WPD's network area. The second highest ranked output was 'reduce the staff accident frequency rate by 10% from the ED1 average' with 3.4 / 5. Again, this was reflected in the discussion where stakeholders wanted WPD to demonstrate leadership and ambition in this area, feeling a 10% reduction was insufficient.

Safety: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline						
OUTPUT	1	2	3	4	5	AVERAGE
Educate 300,000 children about avoiding danger from electricity (ED1 - 400,000)	0	0	8	0	3	3.55
	0%	0%	73%	0%	27%	
Reduce the staff accident frequency rate by 10% from the ED1 average	0	1	5	3	1	3.40
	0%	10%	50%	30%	10%	
Distribute 1,000,000 safety advice notices (ED1 - 500,000)	0	1	8	1	1	3.18
	0%	9%	73%	9%	9%	
Undertake a second Staff Safety Climate Survey during ED2	1	1	6	1	1	3.00
	10%	10%	60%	10%	10%	

Please note:

- The surgery sessions were attended by fewer participants and the voting data is therefore based on a smaller sample size. The data has therefore not been compared against data for the outputs covered in the main sessions. It has been summarised in the table above (including the number of responses) to ensure transparency.

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## OUTPUTS

### REDUCE THE STAFF ACCIDENT FREQUENCY RATE BY 10% FROM THE ED1 AVERAGE

This output generated some discussion among stakeholders. At both events, stakeholders wanted the accident frequency rate to be reduced, with several thinking the target was not stretching enough. This was reflected in the online poll, where this output ranked second for this priority area with an average of 3.4 / 5. In the East Midlands, a range of individual comments were made, including that culture is important here as employees need to feel they can stop a job because it is unsafe. One stakeholder urged greater collaboration on the reporting of incidents. Another noted the importance of having a risk register.

### UNDERTAKE A SECOND STAFF SAFETY CLIMATE SURVEY DURING ED2

In the South West, no stakeholders commented on this output. In the East Midlands, two stakeholders commented on the staff survey, to point out that its format and the way the questions are written are very important and should be carefully considered. This lack of commentary was perhaps reflected in the online poll where this output ranked bottom for this priority area, with an average of 3 / 5.

### ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH H&S LEGISLATION AND WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE HSE AND OTHER SAFETY-ORIENTED ORGANISATIONS TO IMPLEMENT SAFETY LEARNING AND BEST PRACTICE

No stakeholders at either session commented on this output. It was not included in the online poll as there wasn't scope to have varying levels of ambition for this output.



## ENSURE THAT SAFETY MEASURES ARE CONSIDERED PRIOR TO THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

No stakeholders commented on this output and it was not included in the online poll.

## DISTRIBUTE 1,000,000 SAFETY ADVICE NOTICES (ED1 - 500,000)

No stakeholders at either session commented on this output. In the online poll, 73% of respondents felt the level of ambition was right with an average score of 3.18 / 5.

## EDUCATE 300,000 CHILDREN ABOUT AVOIDING DANGER FROM ELECTRICITY (ED1 - 400,000)

Stakeholders in the South West sought to understand the justification for the target of 300,000 children identified in this output. One stakeholder implied that this number was low compared to the school population in WPD's network area. These comments were reflected in the online poll, where this output received the highest average score with 3.55 / 5.

## 8 | SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

### ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

#### IMPACT OF COVID-19

For the most part, stakeholders did not think Covid-19 had to led to any major changes in priorities or emerging issues in this area. The only real comment in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on this area was whether it may reduce the amount of commuting and encourage more homeworking, which may impact the amount of electric vehicle use and uptake and would need to be reflected in WPD's environment and sustainability policies. One stakeholder in the East Midlands saw it as an example of the challenge of setting targets, as external factors can cause unanticipated disruption to plans. Another stakeholder in the East Midlands felt the pandemic demonstrated the need to speed up these environmental measures, as they felt the relationship between humans and the environment was the fundamental root cause of the outbreak.

#### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In terms of Business Carbon Footprint, while stakeholders at all events agreed with the previous feedback that WPD should be leading in this area and that they should electrify their fleet and install low carbon generation at their offices and depots, there was significant criticism of their target date for achieving Net Zero being unambitious in all four regions. In particular, the point was made that many of the local authorities in WPD's licence areas have more exacting Net Zero carbon targets so WPD should aim to have a more ambitious target than 2050.

In terms of operational impact, stakeholders at all events generally agreed with previous stakeholder feedback that reducing harmful leaks was important, although there was often not significant discussion, so this support was largely demonstrated through the online polling. In the discussions, SF6 was recognised as being particularly potent and bad for the environment, so stakeholders agreed improvements should be made in this area against current standards.

Finally, with regard to the impact of WPD's network, while there was support for previous feedback that cables in AONBs should be undergrounded, this was also challenged as stakeholders were concerned that the works need to be done in a way that is sensitive to the wider environment, particularly biodiversity. There were not too many comments on previous feedback relating to losses, although a couple did agree that WPD should invest in equipment to reduce them on the basis of both the economic as well as environmental benefits. It is clear that waste reduction, particularly of single use plastics, is one area that has risen in importance for stakeholders in recent years. There was agreement with previous feedback that WPD should reduce the amount of waste that is sent to landfill in ED2, although some stakeholders were of the view that the target of zero waste to landfill will be very challenging to meet.

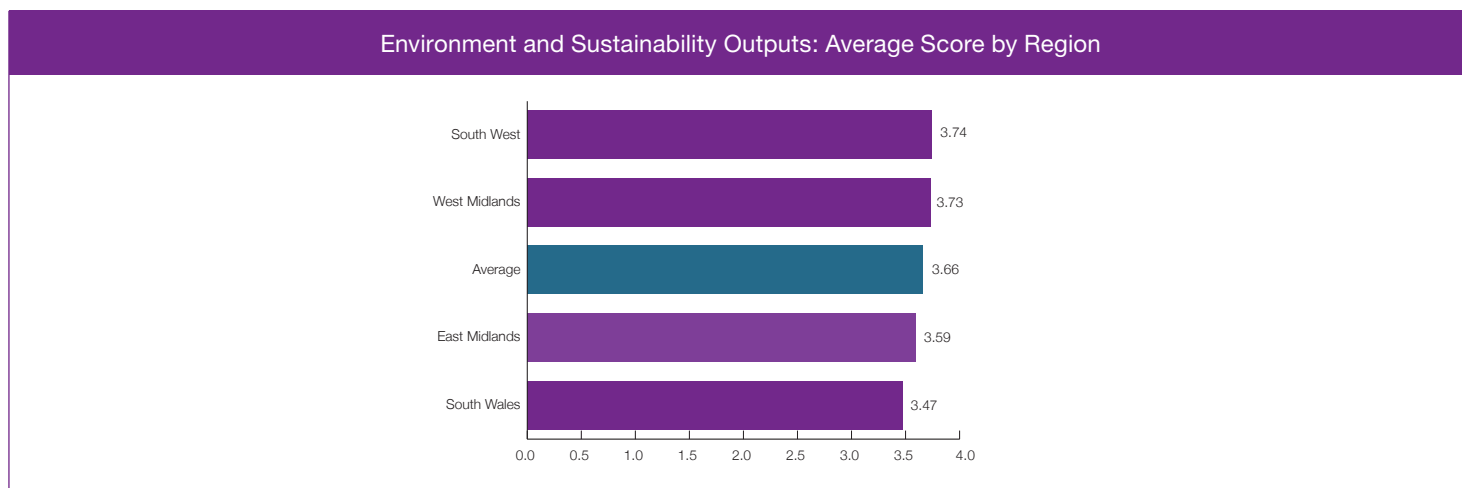
#### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders suggested specific topics they thought were missing for some of the outputs, which are summarised under the relevant outputs below.

- WPD's stewardship of the land it owns or leases, particularly in terms of biodiversity (South West and West Midlands);
- The importance of energy saving measures to reduce WPD's environmental impact (South Wales);
- Reducing the carbon impact of WPD's supply chain (South Wales);
- Exploring the scope to electrify plant machinery as well as the company's vehicle fleet (South Wales);
- Eliminating non-recyclables (South Wales);
- Water usage (East Midlands);
- Providing more information to local authorities on what needs to be done to help them decarbonise (East Midlands); and
- External accreditation, such as obtaining IEMA membership and using it to drive an improvement in environmental standards within the business and becoming ISO 14001 compliant (East Midlands).

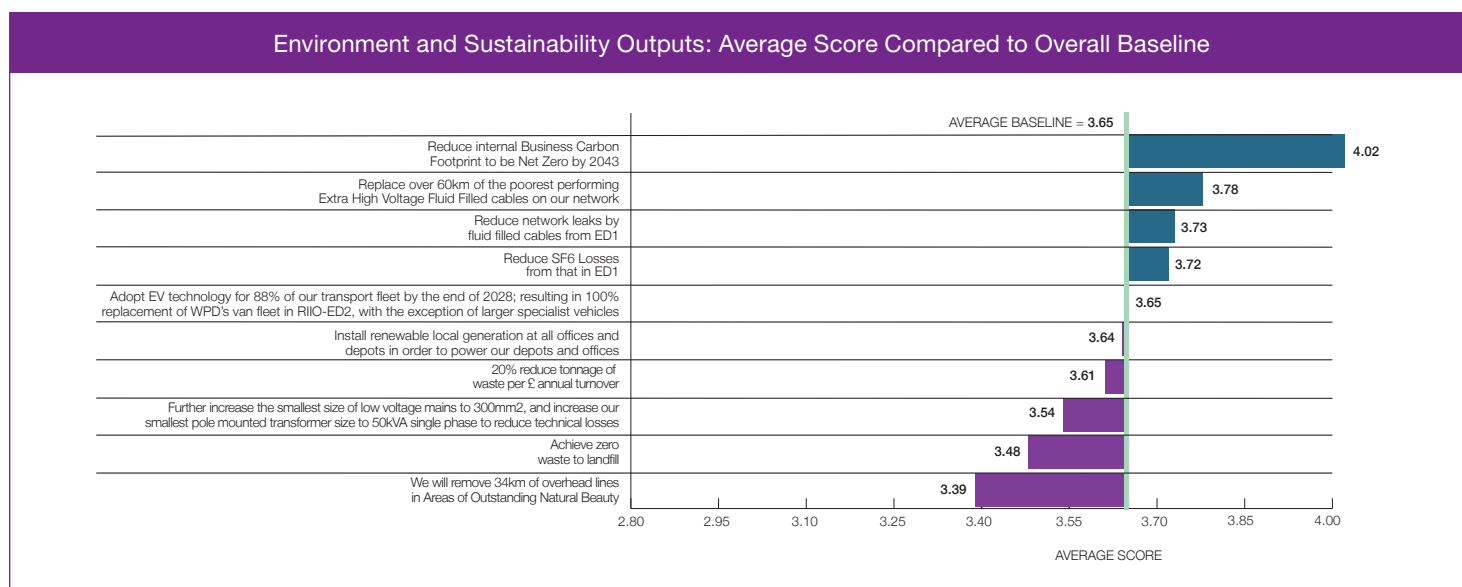
In terms of performance measures, stakeholders challenged WPD to be far more specific in terms of targets for many of the Environment and Sustainability outputs, particularly with regard to timeframe targets and having intermediary steps on a yearly basis. Several stakeholders also felt there was insufficient context to be able to determine whether the targets were stretching enough or not. One stakeholder wanted the outputs to include regional targets to reflect the differences across WPD’s different network areas.

In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, Environment and Sustainability ranked joint fourth with an average 0.01 above the baseline at 3.66 / 5. Therefore, while it scored above 3, relative to other priority areas it seemed that stakeholders felt the level of ambition was right. This average ranking was not consistent among the different regions, with an average rating between fourth and seventh depending on the event.

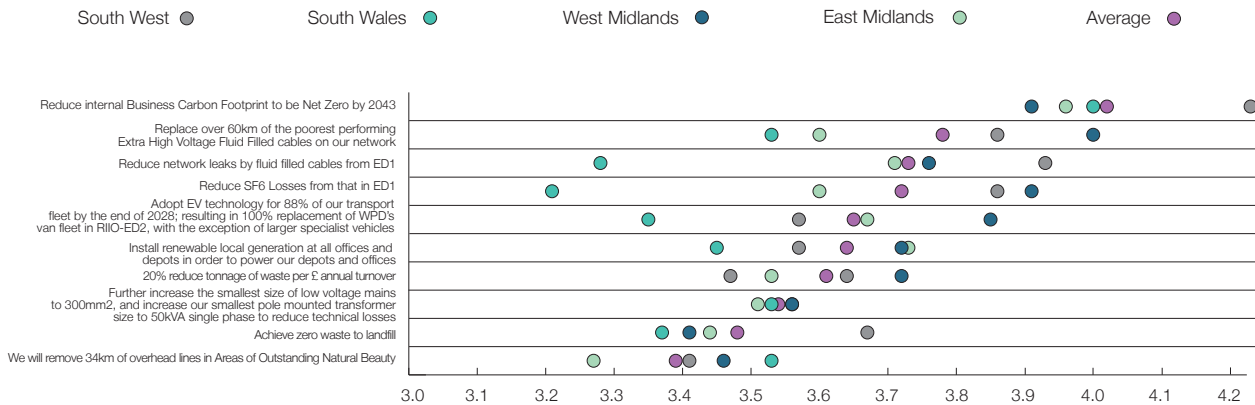


In terms of the outputs themselves, as an average across all events, half of them ranked on or above the average baseline of 3.65 / 5 and half of them came in below it. The highest ranked output by a considerable margin was ‘reduce internal Business Carbon Footprint to be Net Zero by 2043’ with an average of 4.02 / 5 – with most (69%) wanting WPD to do more or a lot more. This was the highest scoring output across all outputs under the nine priority areas and the only one to score above four. It was the highest scoring at all events except the West Midlands, with a particularly high score of 4.23 / 5 in the South West. This was because stakeholders almost unanimously felt their target date of 2043 for Net Zero was not ambitious enough. The other three outputs that scored on or above the average baseline for this priority area all related to WPD’s operational impact – the reduction of network leaks, losses and the replacement of fluid filled cables.

The lowest scoring output, again by a considerable margin, was ‘we will remove 34km of overhead lines in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ which scored on average 3.39 / 5. While 45% wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’, 43% felt the level of ambition was right and 12% wanted WPD to ‘do less’ or ‘do a lot less’. It was the lowest scoring in the East Midlands and the South West. A reason for this was concern about the wider environmental impacts of these activities – particularly on biodiversity.



Environment and Sustainability Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## OUTPUTS: OUR BUSINESS CARBON FOOTPRINT

### REDUCE INTERNAL BUSINESS CARBON FOOTPRINT TO BE NET ZERO BY 2043

Most stakeholders across the workshops strongly felt this output was not ambitious enough. It was pointed out that many local authorities and organisations in WPD's network area have far more exacting Net Zero targets. It was felt, as the electricity network, that WPD should be leading the way and that if the DNO's target is later than local authorities' it would impact their ability to achieve their own targets. One stakeholder felt an ambitious target was an opportunity to unite and motivate the workforce to help deliver it. A couple of stakeholders in the South West did commend WPD for having a Net Zero target date that is ahead of the UK's 2050 target, and a stakeholder in South Wales did feel it was realistic, particularly if the target included supply chain emissions. However, these views were in the minority.

Stakeholders at several events suggested a tiered target as it was noted the target is 15 years after the end of the next plan period of 2023–2028. It was felt a clear pathway with milestones would also ensure WPD did not leave decarbonisation to the last minute. Stakeholders at several of the events sought to understand more about what WPD would do to deliver this output. One wanted to know whether supply chain emissions would be included. Another implied that carbon offsetting, though an effective temporary measure, was not a long-term solution. One felt WPD should research the impact of certain technologies which may be perceived as environmentally friendly, like batteries. Finally, it was commented that stretching the ambition of this output should not come at a significant cost to customers given that there are some who struggle to pay their bills.

This output scored substantially above baseline in all regions, most strongly in the South West, where it was the highest ranked out of all the draft Business Plan outputs. The output placed first among Environment and Sustainability by a significant margin, and it received an average vote of 4.02 / 5. Although 26% thought WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, over two thirds of stakeholders (69%) felt the company ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## ADOPT EV TECHNOLOGY FOR 88% OF OUR TRANSPORT FLEET BY THE END OF 2028; RESULTING IN 100% REPLACEMENT OF WPD'S VAN FLEET IN RIIO-ED2, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LARGER SPECIALIST VEHICLES

For the most part, stakeholders in the discussion agreed that a target of electrifying 88% of the transport fleet was realistic and ambitious enough. It was noted, for example, that they were slightly at the behest of technological constraints such as charging infrastructure or the development of powerful batteries. Stakeholders at all events felt WPD should consider alternative technologies and fuels for larger fleet vehicles though, particularly green gas like biomethane or hydrogen.

In both the West Midlands and South Wales, the point was made that WPD should ensure that the EVs it procures are responsibly sourced to minimise the environmental impact and that there is a green recycling initiative for old vehicles. At both Midlands events, it felt that WPD could lead the way in this area by sourcing the energy for EV charging from renewable sources and that the company should demonstrate that it is doing so by publicising the fact on the side of its fleet. Finally, in South Wales, one stakeholder asked whether WPD could also look to incorporate supply chain vehicles in this output.

This output scored, on average, exactly on the baseline, although there was some regional disagreement. Stakeholders in South Wales and the South West placed it below baseline, whereas other regions placed it slightly above. The output placed fifth among Environment and Sustainability, and it received an average vote of 3.65 / 5. Just over half (51%) felt WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, compared to 47% that thought they ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## INSTALL RENEWABLE LOCAL GENERATION AT ALL OFFICES AND DEPOTS IN ORDER TO POWER OUR DEPOTS AND OFFICES

Stakeholders generally supported the proposal to install renewable local generation at all offices and depots, with many thinking it was common sense and would be a quick win. Several stakeholders in fact wanted to see WPD deliver this as quickly as possible, with a floated target date of 2030. One stakeholder in the East Midlands reiterated that the output needs to include a target date to make sure it is measurable. Several did express concern at the expense and wanted to make sure it worked from a cost-benefit perspective – although one stakeholder did note that solar PV is relatively cheap. One stakeholder said they felt WPD should establish total energy use and only seek to put in the equivalent level of generation. The same stakeholder also wanted to see heat included. Stakeholders in the West Midlands suggested WPD should work to encourage other businesses to do the same.

This output scored fractionally below the baseline, although there were some geographical differences. Stakeholders in the East and West Midlands placed it slightly above baseline, whilst others placed it slightly below. The output placed sixth among Environment and Sustainability, and it received an average vote of 3.64 / 5. Although 47% thought WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, 49% that thought they ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

### OUTPUTS: OPERATIONAL IMPACT

## REDUCE NETWORK LEAKS BY FLUID FILLED CABLES FROM ED1

Most stakeholders did not discuss this output in any detail. A couple of stakeholders in South Wales and the West Midlands said they needed more context, for example on the impact of the leaks and the extent of the problem. One stakeholder said that the output needed specific targets and was interested in what WPD felt they would achieve by the end of the Business Plan period. Another felt the word 'stop' would be more ambitious than simply 'reduce' but recognised the need to ensure it was achievable. In the East Midlands, one stakeholder felt the output was so important that its delivery should be overseen at board level. Another stakeholder commented that they would like to see a greater linkage between these operational impact outputs and WPD's innovation strategy.

This output scored above baseline in all regions but South Wales. The output placed third among Environment and Sustainability, and it received an average vote of 3.73 / 5. Over half (55%) thought that WPD ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more', compared to 42% that believed they had the 'right level' of ambition.



## REDUCE SF6 LOSSES FROM THAT IN ED1

Although, again, this output was not discussed at length, those stakeholders that commented agreed SF6 is a highly potent greenhouse gas. However, several felt it is not sufficient to just reduce it, with one even telling WPD they should even aim to get rid of it completely in the plan period. Whilst this particular stakeholder noted this could be unachievable, they certainly wanted to see more ambition here. Stakeholders in the South West and South Wales wanted WPD to work with manufacturers and suppliers of switchgear to encourage them to stop using SF6, even making it a requirement of WPD's procurement process. One stakeholder in the East Midlands asked what measures would be taken to reduce SF6 losses. One stakeholder in the South West wanted WPD to start to report SF6 losses so that local authorities can quantify greenhouse gas emissions in their county.

On average, this output was voted above baseline, although stakeholders in the East Midlands and South Wales placed it below. It ranked fourth among Environment and Sustainability and received an average vote of 3.72 / 5. Over half (52%) believed that WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more', compared to 47% that believed the company had the 'right level' of ambition.

## REPLACE OVER 60KM OF THE POOREST PERFORMING EXTRA HIGH VOLTAGE FLUID FILLED CABLES ON OUR NETWORK

This output did not elicit much discussion. In fact, the only thing stakeholders said was that they needed more context and understanding to be able to properly comment. Stakeholders at all events said this – except for the West Midlands, where no comment was made at all.

On average, this output scored above baseline, most strongly by stakeholders in the West Midlands. It ranked second among Environment and Sustainability and received an average vote of 3.78 / 5. Although 40% believed WPD had the 'right level' of ambition, over half (58%) thought the company should 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

## ALL PCB CONTAMINATED EQUIPMENT WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE WPD NETWORK BY 2025

Again, stakeholders did not have too many comments on this output. In the South West it was asked what WPD does with the removed equipment and that they should avoid using technical jargon as people outside the industry do not understand what it means. In South Wales, whilst the aspiration was commended, the only stakeholder who commented on this output felt it was too technical to take a view on. This output was not included in the online polling as it is a legislative requirement.

## OUTPUTS: IMPACT OF OUR NETWORK

### WE WILL REMOVE 34KM OF OVERHEAD LINES IN AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Stakeholders at most of the events felt unable to comment on whether the target was ambitious enough as they felt they needed more background and context, such as what proportion of AONB overhead lines 34km represents. Stakeholders at most of the events also urged WPD to consider the wider environmental impacts of undergrounding to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on biodiversity. In fact, one stakeholder in the East Midlands felt so strongly about this point they said the way it is done is more important than the amount removed. One stakeholder in the South West agreed, wanting WPD to commit to undertaking Environmental Impact Assessments before and after the works take place.

Stakeholders at most events also wanted to understand the selection process used to identify which overhead lines to underground, with several recommending WPD should perhaps pick more 'emotive' AONBs, such as the ones that are tourist hubs. In South Wales, one noted that when undergrounding higher voltage lines WPD could do more to reduce the visual impact. Another said that looking at different pylon designs could be an alternative to reducing the visual impact. Finally, still in South Wales, stakeholders did note the expense and the impact on customer bills, although undergrounding would also have a positive impact on reliability.

This output scored below baseline in all regions, most strongly in the East Midlands. The output placed last among Environment and Sustainability, although stakeholders in South Wales ranked it joint-third. It received an average vote of 3.39 / 5. 43% thought WPD had the 'right level' of ambition and 45% felt the company ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more', although 12% wished they would do 'less' or a 'lot less'.

## FURTHER INCREASE THE SMALLEST SIZE OF LOW VOLTAGE MAINS TO 300MM<sup>2</sup>, AND INCREASE OUR SMALLEST POLE MOUNTED TRANSFORMER SIZE TO 50KVA SINGLE PHASE TO REDUCE TECHNICAL LOSSES

Stakeholders did not pass much comment on this output, except for a couple at the two Midlands events. It was commented that this output has additional benefits: firstly, economic benefits as it would reduce future operational costs; and, secondly, environmental benefits as it would help reduce WPD's carbon footprint. It was also noted that this increase in the size of low voltage mains would be needed to accommodate the projected increase in the take-up of EVs.

This output scored below baseline in all regions, with very little regional differences in voting. The output placed eighth among Environment and Sustainability and received an average vote of 3.54 / 5. Although 40% felt WPD ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more', 58% felt the company had the 'right level' of ambition.

## ACHIEVE ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL

Stakeholders in the South West and East Midlands requested more information relating to this output, including current performance and the initiatives that would be required. There were also some specific examples, such as what would be done with the copper waste from wires and how some of the more dangerous materials will be disposed of. Whilst this output was fully supported during the discussions – with some reiterating that this should already be happening and that WPD should not wait until the start of the next Business Plan – the appropriateness of the target was debated, with several stakeholders in the South West and East Midlands thinking 'zero' was unrealistic and would set WPD up to fail.

This output scored below baseline in all areas but the South West. The output placed ninth among Environment and Sustainability and received an average vote of 3.48 / 5. Although 34% felt WPD ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more', a large majority (63%) felt they had the 'right level' of ambition.

## 20% REDUCE TONNAGE OF WASTE PER £ ANNUAL TURNOVER

In the South West and West Midlands, stakeholders commented that this output does require some more context as it is difficult to fully understand the scope of this ambition, and there was some confusion as to the link between waste and annual turnover with one questioning whether this link was appropriate. Stakeholders in the South West reflected that a 20% reduction in tonnage of waste compared to zero waste to landfill seemed unambitious and pushed WPD to go a bit further in this area. One East Midlands stakeholder felt this output required a target date.

In the West Midlands, there was a discussion about the waste hierarchy, and it was felt WPD should work to move certain types of waste up the hierarchy and endeavour to design them out of processes where possible with a view to meeting this target. There was a similar discussion in South Wales, where it was suggested the strategy should be to focus on reducing non-recyclables rather than reducing tonnage of waste.

This output scored below baseline in all areas but the West Midlands. It came seventh for the outputs under Environment and Sustainability and received an average vote of 3.61 / 5. Although 45% felt WPD ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more', over half (53%) felt they had the 'right level' of ambition.

## ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AND WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

During the discussions at three of the events, stakeholders questioned the validity of this output given that it is not a choice but an obligation to comply with legislation. Stakeholders therefore sought to build on the output and make it relevant. In the South West, stakeholders did so by encouraging WPD to go further, for example by committing to improve the land the company owns by bringing in the biodiversity net gain principle. In the East Midlands, they suggested changing the wording to make it about demonstrating best practice instead. One stakeholder cautioned WPD not to confuse the standards of England and Wales. Another highlighted that the lack of resource at the Environment Agency might make any meaningful collaboration difficult. This wasn't included in the online poll because there was not scope to have varying levels of ambition for this output.

## DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OPERATOR

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

Whilst stakeholders didn't talk in detail about the impact of Covid-19 on initiatives in this priority area, it was noted that the pandemic had led to delays in new developments moving through the planning process, which is something WPD should be mindful of. It was also commented that Covid-19 had influenced the government's Build Back Better and Green Recovery initiatives which would clearly place greater strain on the electricity network in the coming years.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The priority area of Distribution System Operator was divided into two areas: flexibility services; and scenario planning and whole systems.

With regard to flexibility services, there was agreement with previous feedback that educational resources are limited and that more should be done by WPD to promote them as many people are unaware of their existence so are unable to take advantage of them. There was also some endorsement for the aspiration given in previous feedback for WPD to work with manufacturers to facilitate flexibility and to educate customers on the benefits that this can bring. It was added that more should be done to incentivise customers to encourage the take-up of flexibility services.

It was widely felt that rules and tariffs are currently complex and that more should be done to simplify them. A common comment at the workshops was that there needs to be greater standardisation across all DNOs as this is not the case at present.

In terms of whole systems and scenario planning, stakeholders wanted to see more collaboration with local authorities on their development plans to enable WPD to plan accordingly. It was also felt that collaboration with other relevant actors and other energy vectors was vitally important in order to ensure that a truly whole systems approach is adopted to deliver benefits to customers.

It was widely felt that the availability of Active Network Management should be improved and that it should be rolled out for smaller commercial customers and domestic customers.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

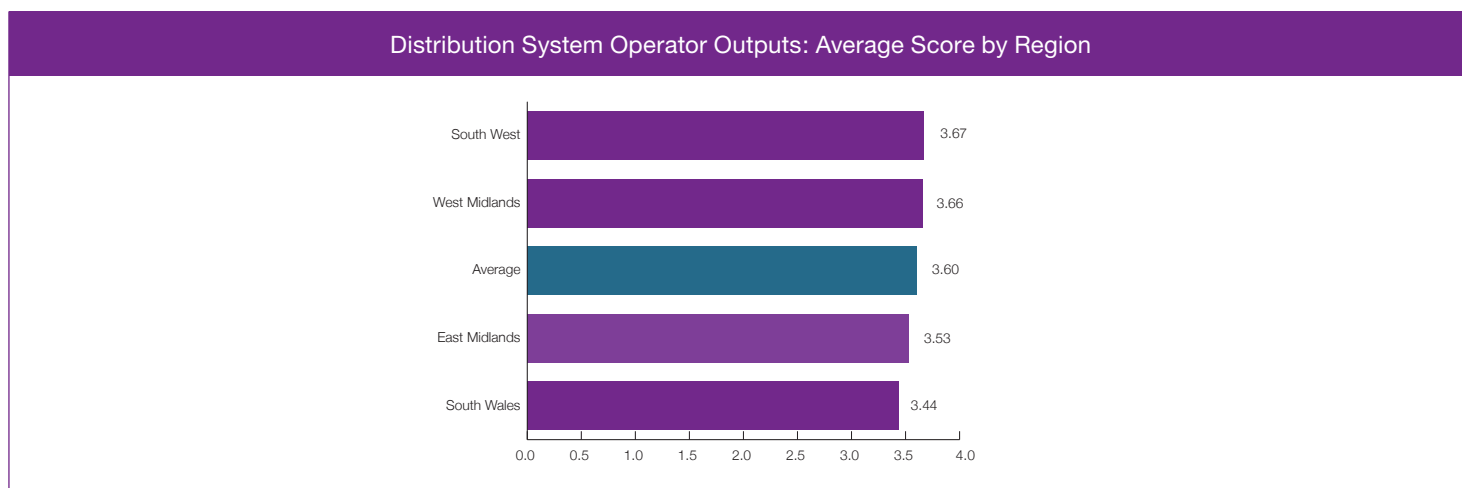
Stakeholders suggested a significant number of specific topics they thought were missing for some of the outputs, which are summarised under the relevant outputs below.

- Placing a greater emphasis on ensuring that customers in vulnerable situations and those who are not early adopters of new technology are not left behind as the network transitions to the role of DSO (South Wales);
- Doing more to communicate the benefits of flexibility services in terms of cost savings to customers in fuel poverty (East Midlands);
- Undertaking research into the role of battery storage as a means of helping to accommodate LCTs without the need for network reinforcement (South West);
- Collaborating with the gas industry to adopt a truly whole systems approach to ensure best value for all customers (West Midlands);
- Working with TOs and the ESO to create an information hub to inform developers of the most appropriate places to locate LCTs (West Midlands);
- Rolling out Active Network Management to smaller businesses and to community energy groups (West Midlands);
- Producing case studies and clear information to demonstrate the benefits of flexibility services to customers (West Midlands);
- Investigating the use of incentives to encourage greater take-up of flexibility services (South West);
- Working with other DNOs to address issues relating to a lack of standardisation in the procurement of flexibility services (South Wales and East Midlands);
- Seeking to streamline onerous legal processes which delay the connection of new LCTs to the network (South West);

- Introducing short and medium milestones to your outputs which cite achieving Net Zero by 2050, so you can ensure targets are being met (East Midlands);
- Lobbying government to remove the solar PV limit on domestic customers (South West);
- Ensuring that connections quotations costs are accurate at the time they are given (East Midlands);
- Being more robust about milestones in connections queues to stop customers holding capacity (East Midlands);
- Lobbying to change legislation so renewable generators can use batteries (East Midlands);
- Encouraging access for three phase supplies where possible (East Midlands); and
- Involving a wide range of relevant parties in your DFES engagement, including housing developers, renewables developers, EV charging providers and community energy groups (West Midlands).

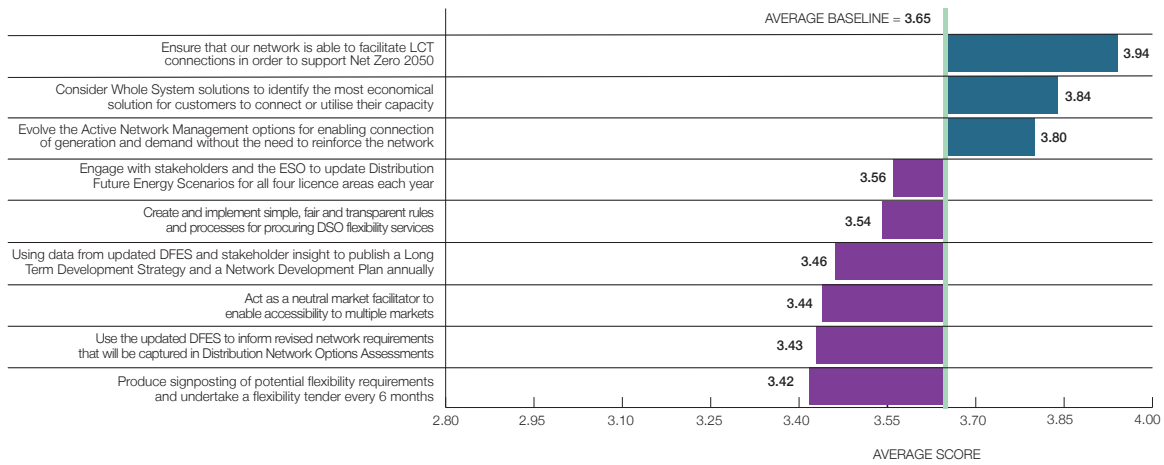
In terms of performance measures and targets, stakeholders did not have any specific suggestions with one feeling that, as it is such a new area, they did not have the expertise to be able to propose what they should be.

In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, Distribution System Operator ranked third from bottom with an average of 3.6 / 5 – just below the average baseline. This varied by event, with DSO coming sixth in the South West and West Midlands, eighth in South Wales and bottom in the East Midlands. Therefore, while it scored above 3, relative to other priority areas it seemed that stakeholders felt the level of ambition was right.



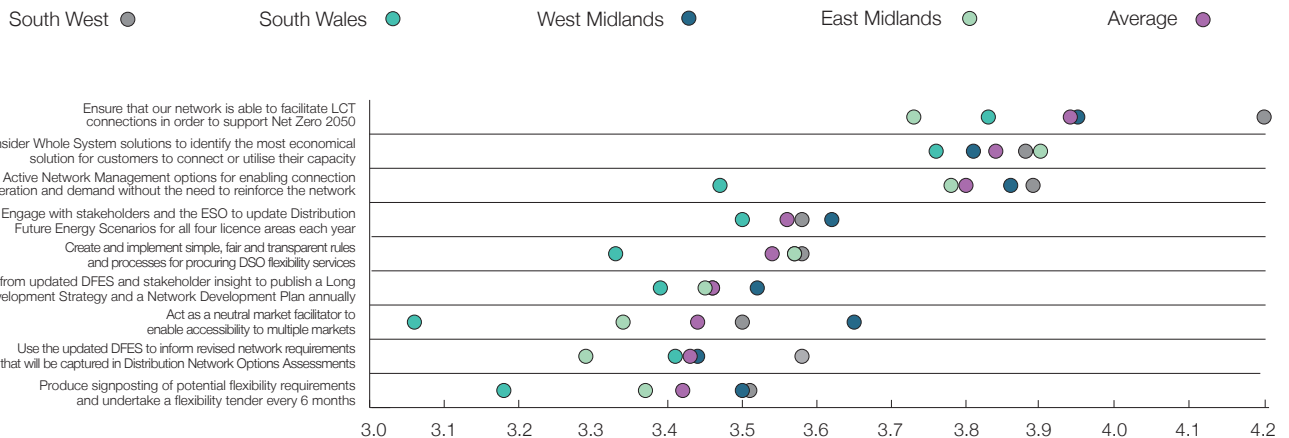
In terms of the outputs themselves, as an average across all events, only three scored above the baseline average with the remaining six all scoring below it. The three outputs that scored highest did so consistently across all events, except for South Wales where one of them ranked fourth. These outputs all related to the topic of scenario planning and whole systems: facilitating low carbon connections (3.94 / 5); considering whole system solutions (3.84 / 5); and evolving the Active Network Management options (3.8 / 5). The top-ranking output, 'ensure that our network is able to facilitate LCT connections in order to support Net Zero 2050' came third across the outputs for all nine priority areas with 64% wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'. It ranked highest at all events, except in the East Midlands. In fact, in the South West it received a very high score of 4.2 / 5. The outputs that scored below the average baseline all related to Distribution Future Energy Scenarios or flexibility services demonstrating, perhaps, that generally stakeholders felt WPD had got the right level of ambition for these outputs in relation to the others.

### Distribution System Operator Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3a](#)

### Distribution System Operator Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## OUTPUTS: FLEXIBILITY SERVICES

### CREATE AND IMPLEMENT SIMPLE, FAIR AND TRANSPARENT RULES AND PROCESSES FOR PROCURING DSO FLEXIBILITY SERVICES

It was acknowledged that, at present, the rules and processes for procuring DSO flexibility services are complex and that there is currently a lack of standardisation, which should be addressed. It was commented in the West Midlands that this output should have some measurable targets put against it as it is somewhat vague. These stakeholders also suggested that WPD produces clear case studies to encourage the take-up of flexibility services and that it should work to incentivise customers, including small businesses, wherever possible.

This output scored below baseline in all regions, especially South Wales. The output was ranked fifth for this priority area, with an average vote of 3.54 / 5. Although 43% felt that WPD ought 'do more' or 'do a lot more', over half (55%) that believed they had the 'right level' of ambition.



## PROVIDE ACCURATE, USER-FRIENDLY AND COMPREHENSIVE MARKET INFORMATION

Whilst this output was not voted on in the online poll, it is fair to say it was supported as many stakeholders find the market information that exists complicated and lacking in standardisation across the DNOs. Some developers, however, made the point that certain market information was sensitive and that WPD should not publish information that unfairly benefits one company at the expense of its competitors. It was commented in the South West that this output would benefit from having a KPI put against it to ensure that it is met.

## PRODUCE SIGNPOSTING OF POTENTIAL FLEXIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND UNDERTAKE A FLEXIBILITY TENDER EVERY 6 MONTHS

This output did not engender much discussion at the workshops. Stakeholders in the West Midlands suggested including dates and locations of flexibility tenders for customers to plan ahead. It was also suggested, in the East Midlands, that WPD engages with housebuilders and large commercial customers to encourage them to take up opportunities to deliver flexibility services where they are needed.

This output scored well below the baseline average in all regions, especially South Wales. The output was the bottom scoring for this priority area, receiving an average vote of 3.42 / 5. Almost two thirds (62%) believed WPD had identified the 'right level' of ambition.

## ACT AS A NEUTRAL MARKET FACILITATOR TO ENABLE ACCESSIBILITY TO MULTIPLE MARKETS

Opinion was split on WPD's role as neutral market facilitator as it was felt by some, including stakeholders in the East Midlands, that the company should favour LCTs. There was acceptance, however, that WPD does have to be neutral given the company's regulatory requirements.

Stakeholders in the West Midlands commented that this output would benefit from having a measurable target put against it. They also made the point that access to flexibility services is likely to benefit the more affluent, early adopters of new technology, so consideration should be given to those who do not have these technologies at their disposal.

This output scored moderately below the baseline average in all regions except the West Midlands. The output ranked seventh for this priority area, receiving an average vote of 3.44 / 5. Although 38% thought WPD ought to 'do more' or 'do a lot more', 57% felt the company had the 'right level' of ambition.

## OUTPUTS: SCENARIO PLANNING AND WHOLE SYSTEMS

### ENSURE THAT OUR NETWORK IS ABLE TO FACILITATE LCT CONNECTIONS IN ORDER TO SUPPORT NET ZERO 2050

This output elicited significant discussion in all the workshops and received a high ranking in the online poll with an average of 3.94 / 5 – far above the average baseline – demonstrating the level of importance stakeholders give to the facilitation of low carbon connections. In the online poll, it was actually the third highest output across all nine priority areas, with 64% wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'. It was the highest scoring DSO output at all events, except the East Midlands. In the South West it scored very highly at 4.2 / 5.

At the workshops in the South West, stakeholders were especially concerned that there is not enough network capacity available to support the connection of low carbon technologies and help the region (in particular Cornwall) to meet its Net Zero targets. These stakeholders suggested various financial incentives to encourage the take-up of low carbon technologies.

At all of the workshops, stakeholders tended to focus on EV charging as this is clearly an issue for many, especially those working at local authorities.

Stakeholders in South Wales were also concerned about network capacity and cited the importance of having a dedicated contact at WPD to help make the process of connecting to the grid easier.

It was commented in the West Midlands that data transparency should be an area of focus for WPD under this output, with the suggestion made that WPD should help to facilitate a data hub involving all the DNOs as well as [TOs and] the ESO to help connections customers to plan where to roll out LCTs.

## USING DATA FROM UPDATED DFES AND STAKEHOLDER INSIGHT TO PUBLISH A LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND A NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PLAN ANNUALLY

Stakeholders endorsed this output in the discussions, even though it was not ranked highly in the online poll. It was acknowledged that stakeholder insight should inform WPD's long-term plans and it was thought that the company should use data derived from local authorities Local Plans to help them to plan more effectively. Stakeholders were of the view that it is hard to plan with any degree of certainty given the fast pace of change and the myriad factors that can influence the take-up of LCTs. In the online poll it ranked fourth from bottom for this priority area, with an average score of 3.46 / 5 and 62% of stakeholders feeling the level of ambition was right. That said, in the South West and West Midlands it did not rank quite so low.

## ENGAGE WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND THE ESO TO UPDATE DISTRIBUTION FUTURE ENERGY SCENARIOS FOR ALL FOUR LICENCE AREAS EACH YEAR

Stakeholders did not discuss this output at all of the workshops. However, it was commented in the West Midlands that engagement and collaboration with relevant actors is vitally important to help WPD to plan and produce their DFES. Suggestions of stakeholders to engage with included local authorities as well as community energy groups. Despite this lack of discussion, in the online poll it ranked fourth for this priority area, demonstrating stakeholders still felt it was important to be ambitious here relative to some of the others under DSO. It scored, on average, 3.56 / 5.

## USE THE UPDATED DFES TO INFORM REVISED NETWORK REQUIREMENTS THAT WILL BE CAPTURED IN DISTRIBUTION NETWORK OPTIONS ASSESSMENTS

Although this output was not discussed at length at most of the workshops, it was acknowledged that regular updates to DFES are needed to continually inform and help refine network requirements. In the online poll, it ranked second from bottom for this priority with a score of 3.43 / 5, which was well below the average baseline. As with the other DFES output above, stakeholders in the South West and West Midlands did not rank it quite as low.

## EVOLVE THE ACTIVE NETWORK MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR ENABLING CONNECTION OF GENERATION AND DEMAND WITHOUT THE NEED TO REINFORCE THE NETWORK

This output was widely supported by stakeholders, with an average score above the baseline in all regions but South Wales. This output was ranked third for this priority area, receiving an average score of 3.8 / 5. Most stakeholders (61%) believed WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

During the discussions, stakeholders were of the view that Active Network Management should be prioritised as an output and that this should go beyond larger commercial users to community energy groups, smaller businesses and domestic customers, in due course. It was added in the West Midlands that this would bring real benefits in terms of freeing up the network.

## CONSIDER WHOLE SYSTEM SOLUTIONS TO IDENTIFY THE MOST ECONOMICAL SOLUTION FOR CUSTOMERS TO CONNECT OR UTILISE THEIR CAPACITY

Stakeholders recognised the importance of adopting a whole systems approach in order to help identify and provide the most economical solution for customers. The point was made in the West Midlands that electrification of heat may not be the most cost-effective solution for some customers, so WPD should look to engage with other energy vectors to adopt a holistic approach. The example of green gas and, in the future potentially hydrogen, were given. It was added in the South West that community energy schemes should be included as part of this approach.

In the online poll, this output was in the top three at all events, in fact coming top in the East Midlands. Overall, it ranked second for the Distribution System Operator outputs, receiving an average vote of 3.84 / 5. In total, almost two thirds (66%) thought WPD should 'do more' or 'do a lot more', compared to 31% that felt they had the 'right level' of ambition.

## INNOVATION

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders did not feel that Covid-19 would change emerging issues or priorities in relation to the priority area of Innovation.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In terms of whether WPD had interpreted previous stakeholder feedback correctly, there was support for WPD leading the way in terms of innovation. In all four locations, stakeholders agreed that WPD should help facilitate innovation across the industry as well as communicate opportunities for collaboration with partners. However, in the West Midlands this was cautioned as it was felt that the company should not seek to innovate for the sake of it and that the benefits of innovation in terms of cost savings for customers should be demonstrated. Stakeholders did not pass comment on whether to lobby for change to avoid issues with previous national projects, such as smart meters.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

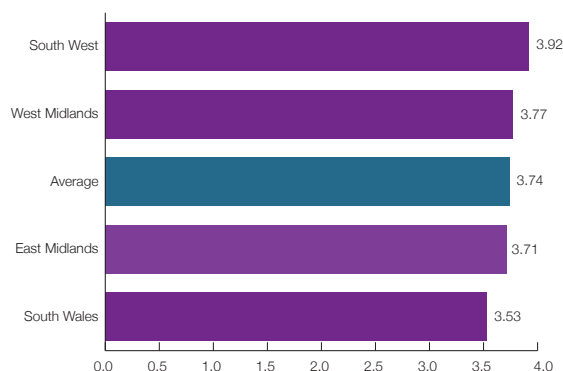
Unlike for other priority areas, stakeholders did not think too much was missing from the draft outputs. As an overarching principle, one stakeholder felt all innovation outputs should be underpinned by the need to get to a lower carbon energy system – and wanted this explicitly referenced. The only other suggestions made were in South Wales and the East Midlands. These included:

- Ensuring that any innovation guarantees that the vulnerable and digitally excluded are not left behind (South Wales);
- The opportunities (and environmental challenges) presented by battery storage (East Midlands); and
- The large-scale roll-out of solar PV on the roofs of properties, such as those owned by housing associations (East Midlands).

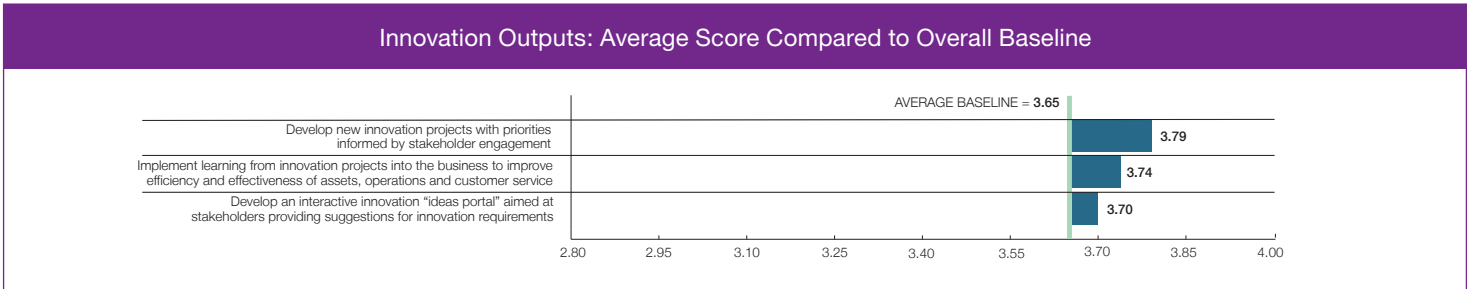
For the most part, stakeholders did not suggest any specific targets or performance measures. However, in the West Midlands, while it was acknowledged that some these outputs are hard to quantify, it was suggested that there could be some targets placed against them in terms of the size or scale of projects, or indeed the amount of money that has been saved as a result of their initiation. It was commented that innovative projects need to become part of WPD's business as usual activities, delivering benefits for customers. Therefore, measurables based on the value delivered for customers should be looked at.

In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, the priority area of Innovation ranked third with 3.74 / 5. Therefore, scoring well above 3 and closer to 4, relative to other priority areas, stakeholders clearly wanted WPD to be more ambitious. For the East Midlands, West Midlands and South West, this high ranking was consistent (second, third and third respectively). However, in South Wales it came out much lower – joint fifth and 0.12 below the average baseline of 3.65 / 5. Interestingly, this priority, much like Cyber Resilience, received a very high score despite the fact that stakeholders did not discuss the outputs as much as they did others in other priority areas.

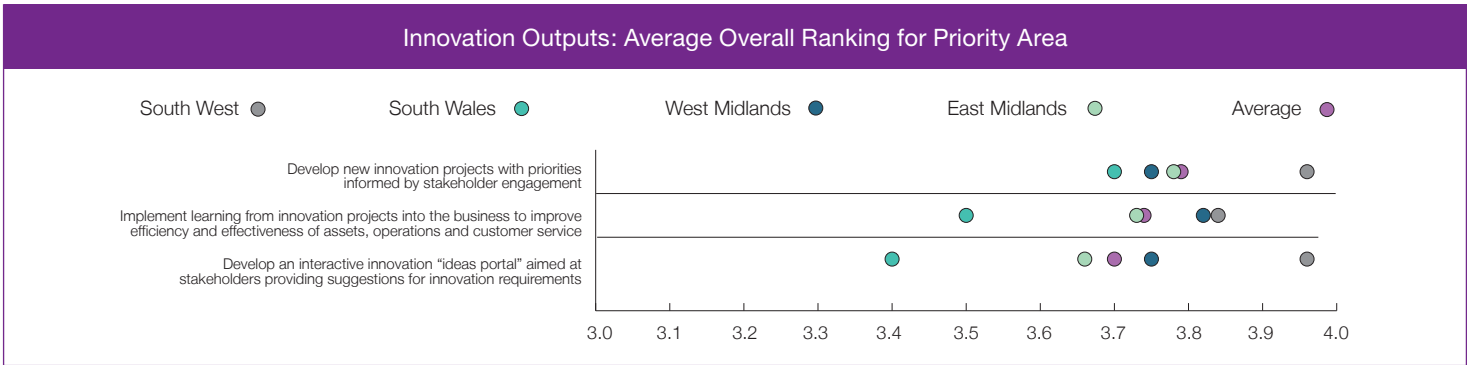
Innovation Outputs: Average Score by Region



In terms of the outputs themselves, on average across all events, all outputs scored well above the average baseline. This was the case for all outputs under Innovation across all four events, except for two of the three outputs in South Wales which were ranked a lot lower. The output that scored highest on average was ‘develop new innovation projects with priorities informed by stakeholder engagement’, which ranked 3.79 / 5 – most (60%) wanted to see WPD ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ on this output. This output scored highest (or joint highest) at all events, except for in the West Midlands where it came joint second. The lowest ranking of the three outputs was ‘develop an interactive innovation “ideas portal” aimed at stakeholders providing suggestions for innovation requirements’, but this was still above the average baseline with 3.7 / 5 – and most (56%) still wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’. This was the lowest scoring output (or joint lowest) at all four events, except for in the South West.



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3a](#)



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.





## OUTPUTS

### DEVELOP NEW INNOVATION PROJECTS WITH PRIORITIES INFORMED BY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This output was only discussed in South Wales and the West Midlands where it was broadly supported, although it was noted by one that innovation should not be done for its own sake or simply to attract funding from the regulator. In the West Midlands, it was commented that this output would benefit from having a measurable target put against it, perhaps relating to the number or size of specific projects. It was also noted that this is something that certain stakeholders would be expecting WPD to do, anyway. In South Wales, one stakeholder asked whether any of the innovation funding would be ringfenced for Wales, as the Welsh Government wants the country to lead the way with emerging low carbon technologies. Others wanted to ensure that projects were used in a way that does not leave the vulnerable or digitally excluded behind.

In the online poll, this output ranked highest for this priority area with a score of 3.79 / 5 – well above the average baseline. It was the highest or joint highest ranked for all events, except the West Midlands. On average, most stakeholders (60%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area.

### IMPLEMENT LEARNING FROM INNOVATION PROJECTS INTO THE BUSINESS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSETS, OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Although this output was not discussed in South Wales, at all other events there was a good deal of endorsement for it. Several stakeholders felt it was a process that can be overlooked and had experience where it had not happened with some innovation projects, which it was felt damages confidence in the process. WPD’s own Electric Nation project was cited as an example of one innovation project which would inform the company’s approach to EV charging in the future given the insight it derived on human behaviour. One stakeholder in the South West suggested having a nominated senior sponsor for each project to ensure the learnings are integrated into the business.

In addition to these points, in the West Midlands there was recognition that innovation did not necessarily just refer to technology or assets and in the East Midlands one stakeholder wanted to stretch the target further by suggesting that learnings should also be shared, where possible, with other DNOs in the UK and abroad.

This endorsement was reflected in the online poll, where this output ranked second for this priority area with a score of 3.74 / 5 – again, above the average baseline. On average, most stakeholders (56%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area.

### DEVELOP A NEW INTERACTIVE INNOVATION “IDEAS PORTAL” AIMED AT STAKEHOLDERS PROVIDING SUGGESTIONS FOR INNOVATION REQUIREMENTS

Stakeholders at all four events expressed support for an “ideas portal” during the breakout discussions as it was recognised as a useful tool for getting more people involved and helping encourage project co-design and co-development. However, stakeholders felt there needed to be more detail against it and discussions always turned to how to stretch this target by developing the “ideas portal” further. In the South West and West Midlands, stakeholders suggested it should be used to facilitate collaboration between a whole range of different stakeholders (including other DNOs and IDNOs) rather than just with WPD – both in terms of idea generation as well as disseminating the learnings from innovation projects. One stakeholder even referred to it as an “ideas forum”. In the East Midlands, several stakeholders suggested the portal should be able to capture challenges as well as solutions – with one stakeholder suggesting WPD should set out some areas in which they were facing challenges to help generate ideas.

In the online poll, this output ranked on average bottom for this priority area but it still came out above the baseline at 3.7 / 5. Therefore, relative to other outputs, stakeholders wanted WPD to be more ambitious on this output. It ranked bottom, or joint bottom, at all events except the South West. Most (56%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area.



## COMMUNITY ENERGY

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

For the most part, stakeholders did not feel that Covid-19 would change emerging issues or priorities in relation to the priority area of Community Energy. The only comment made was in the West Midlands, where it was noted the output to host surgeries in communities would be impacted by Covid-19 as the current restrictions would prevent WPD staff from holding these in person.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In terms of whether WPD had correctly interpreted previous feedback, stakeholders strongly agreed at all four workshops that it should be a priority for WPD to help community energy schemes, but tended not to go into much more detail. In terms of the support provided, stakeholders particularly felt they should provide more information and that they should prioritise renewable energy development, although they did not comment further on the previous feedback about what else WPD should do to incentivise these schemes.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

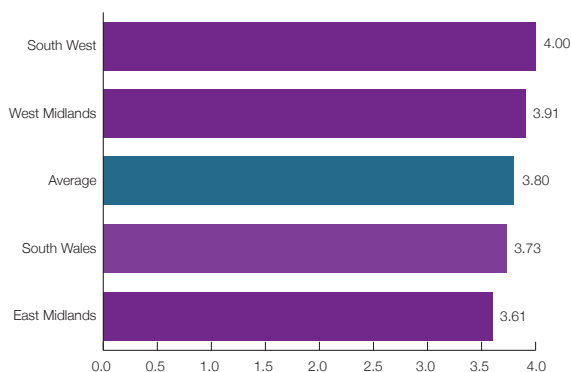
Perhaps more so than for some other priority areas, stakeholders felt that there was a fair amount missing from the outputs and identified a range of suggestions for inclusion. This included:

- An engineer dedicated to community energy projects (South West);
- Attending community energy networking meetings (South West);
- The development of a package where community groups can get access to skillsets that they are missing (South West);
- Ensuring the infrastructure and capacity is available to facilitate community energy projects (South West);
- Providing access to an online mapping portal to help streamline the application process for community energy projects (South West);
- Working closely with housing associations (South Wales);
- Working more closely with farmers (South Wales);
- Ensuring community energy schemes are not limited to wind and solar (East Midlands); and
- Fostering collaboration between completed community energy schemes and those looking to start developing a project (East Midlands).

Stakeholders at most events did not suggest any performance measures or targets, except at the West Midlands session, where there was a full discussion on this. In the West Midlands, it was felt that both of these outputs would benefit from having some measurable targets attributed to them, such as targets relating to the number of surgeries WPD should hold or the number of innovation projects facilitated. It was commented that these outputs are somewhat vague and would benefit from more detail on timing with milestones and deadlines included.

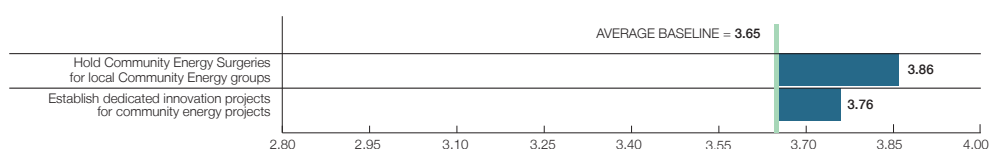
In the online poll, as an average across all outputs and all events, Community Energy ranked second with an average of 3.8 / 5 – well above the baseline. In fact, it had the highest average score at all events except for the East Midlands where it came fifth – significantly bringing down the overall score. These high scores demonstrate that, relative to outputs in other priority areas, stakeholders in the South West, South Wales and West Midlands wanted WPD to be much more ambitious in relation to Community Energy.

### Community Energy Outputs: Average Score by Region



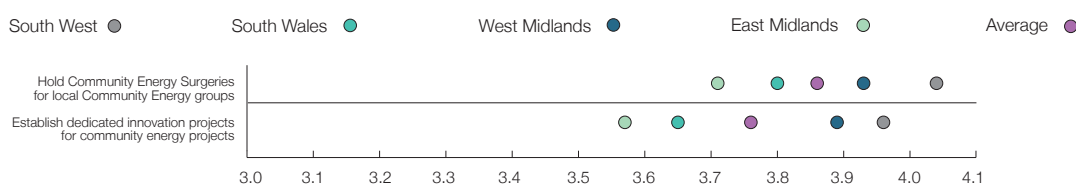
In terms of the outputs themselves, as an average across all events, both of them ranked well above the average baseline of 3.65 / 5. Both outputs scored on or above the average baseline (in some instances well above it) at all events except for one of the outputs in the East Midlands. The higher ranked output was ‘establish dedicated innovation projects for community energy projects’ with an average of 3.86 / 5 – the seventh highest output among the nine priority areas. In the South West and the West Midlands this scored particularly highly, with 4.04 / 5 and 3.93 / 5 respectively. Almost two thirds of stakeholders (65%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’. The lower ranked of the two outputs was ‘hold community energy surgeries for local community energy groups’ with an average of 3.76 / 5. However, it still scored above the baseline at all events except the East Midlands and over half (56%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’.

### Community Energy Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3a](#)

### Community Energy Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to view a larger version of this graph in Appendix 3b](#)

Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

## OUTPUTS

### ESTABLISH DEDICATED INNOVATION PROJECTS FOR COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS

Although stakeholders strongly supported this output, it was often not discussed at length or, in the case of the East Midlands, was not discussed at all. When it was, whilst support was expressed, there were also some caveats and additional suggestions. In the South West, one stakeholder cautioned that this output must not sound like WPD is taking the lead but that they should facilitate innovation projects for community groups. In the West Midlands, it was felt this output needs to have more context including a clear definition of what constitutes an innovation project. Stakeholders then started suggesting innovation projects that could be included, such as the potential use of battery storage, setting up micro-grids, and connecting wind turbines to storage heaters to support those in fuel poverty. In the West Midlands, a number of stakeholders at the workshop had experience of community energy projects and cited specific examples of challenges they had faced, which could potentially be addressed by meeting this output.

Despite the lack of discussion at most of the events, this output was strongly supported in the online poll, receiving an average score of 3.86 / 5 – far higher than the average baseline. It was the top output for this priority area at all events – in the South West in particular it received a very high score (4.04 / 5). On average, 65% of stakeholders wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area.

### HOLD COMMUNITY ENERGY SURGERIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ENERGY GROUPS

Again, whilst stakeholders supported this output for the most part it received minimal discussion – and was not discussed at all in the East Midlands. Stakeholders supported the output, noting that there is currently a lack of knowledge of the subject even though there is a good deal of enthusiasm. It was felt the output could be broadened as there could be a role for WPD in promoting community energy and ‘selling’ the benefits. It was commented by one stakeholder in the West Midlands that this output would benefit from having some measurable targets, such as the number of surgeries held, or communities helped. In the South West, one stakeholder wanted to see dedicated contacts assigned to community energy groups. Another requested that the outcomes from these surgeries are reported to ensure that they are continually refined and improved.

As with the previous output, despite this relative lack of discussion the online polling demonstrated the widespread support for it – and for WPD doing more. It received an average score of 3.76 / 5 and just over half (57%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or do a lot more’. It did come bottom for this priority area at all events, but this is only based on two outputs.



## DIGITALISATION

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders did not think that Covid-19 would have an impact on the priorities or emerging issues regarding the priority area of Digitalisation.

### PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In the West Midlands and South West, stakeholders broadly agreed with previous feedback that access to clear, accessible data is vital to help customers plan. The example was given of another utility that had published financial data which had helped to unlock a project by demonstrating its viability to a client. In the South West, stakeholders also agreed that WPD should make as much data available as possible, with the caveat that it must not present a security risk. In the West Midlands, there was also a feeling that sharing data can encourage collaboration to deliver benefits to customers. One stakeholder in South Wales seemed to agree with previous feedback on increased granularity of data, including down to substation or even switchgear level. Support was also expressed for existing data, some of which is quite granular in nature, including the online capacity maps and the new data hub, and requests were made for other forms of data, including WPD's switching status.

### WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders did not think anything was missing from the draft outputs, or suggest any specific targets or performance levels, although in the East Midlands clarity on timeframes was sought.

As this priority area was run as an afternoon surgery session, far fewer participants voted on the outputs in the online polling, so the data is less robust. In fact, despite the surgery session running in South Wales, no stakeholders voted in the online poll afterwards. As such, as a priority area it hasn't been compared to the nine priority areas that were voted on in the morning sessions. The outputs themselves were also not included in the baseline average and will therefore not be compared to outputs in other priority areas during this report.

In terms of the outputs themselves, the highest ranked of the two was 'demonstrate leadership in publishing network data...' with 3.93 / 5 and 60% wanting WPD to stretch this output further. However, the other output – 'developing the API interface' – still ranked quite highly with 3.73 / 5, with just under half (47%) wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

Digitalisation: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline						
OUTPUT	1	2	3	4	5	AVERAGE
<b>Demonstrate leadership in publishing network data, with relevant data presumed open, and promote its availability to customers</b>	0	0	6	4	5	<b>3.93</b>
	0%	0%	40%	27%	33%	
<b>Developing the API interface and data availability under API</b>	0	0	8	3	4	<b>3.73</b>
	0%	0%	53%	20%	27%	

Please note:

- The surgery sessions were attended by fewer participants and the voting data is therefore based on a smaller sample size. The data has therefore not been compared against data for the outputs covered in the main sessions. It has been summarised in the table above (including the number of responses) to ensure transparency.

Stakeholders raised some comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised below.

## OUTPUTS

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### DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP IN PUBLISHING NETWORK DATA, WITH RELEVANT DATA PRESUMED OPEN, AND PROMOTE ITS AVAILABILITY TO CUSTOMERS

Stakeholders supported this output, stating that having plentiful data enabled them to establish better business cases for unlocking opportunities in the sector. One stakeholder supported the inclusion of the term 'relevant data' in this output as it was felt WPD needs to ensure it does not publish all data, given that some of it would present a serious security risk.

Stakeholders at two of the events specifically cited National Grid's publication of data as an example of leadership in this area, with one saying their financial data had helped facilitate a battery storage project. Conversations then turned to the data that would be helpful. Two stakeholders requested demand and generation data, both future and historic, to help inform stakeholder plans. Another requested granular data that goes down to substation or even switchgear level.

In the online poll, this was the highest ranked output of the two with an average of 3.93 / 5 and 60% wanting WPD to stretch this output further.

### DEVELOPING THE API INTERFACE AND DATA AVAILABILITY UNDER API

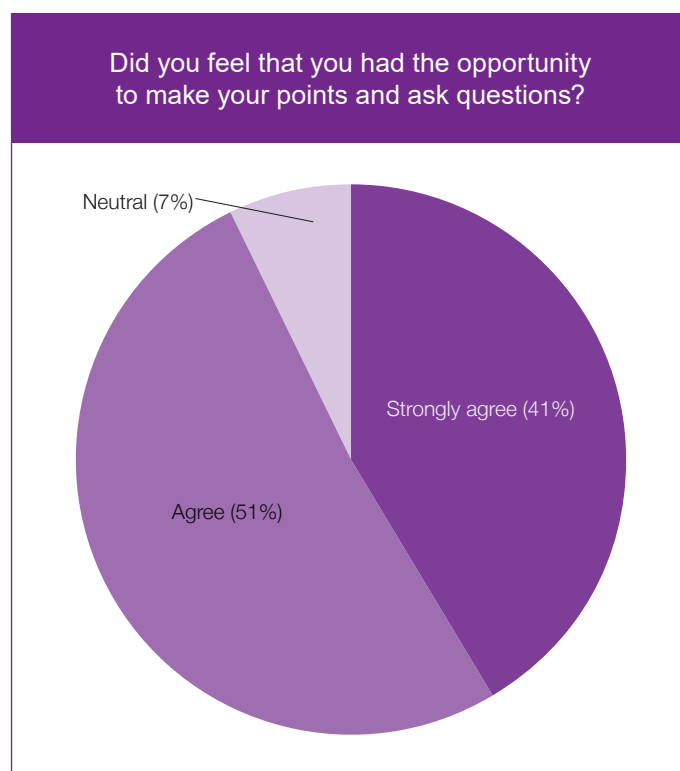
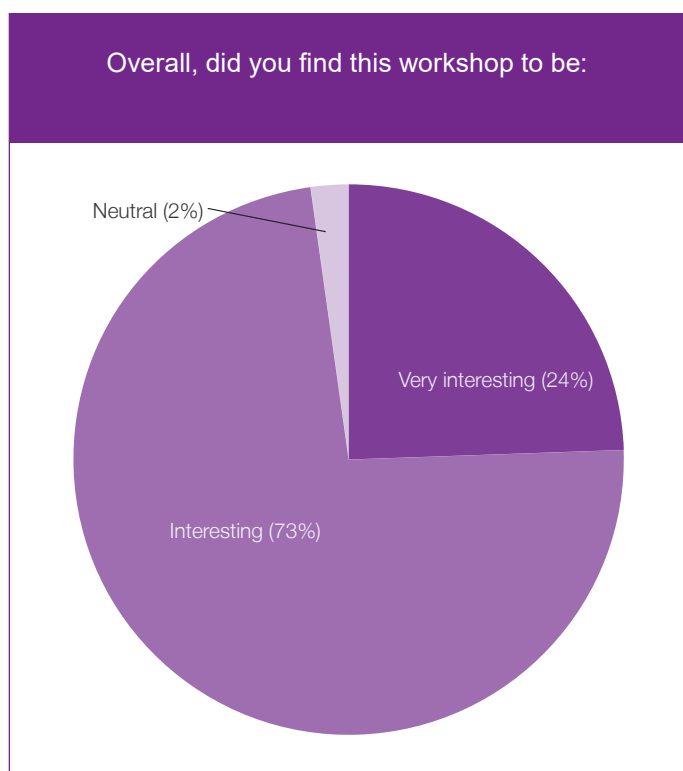
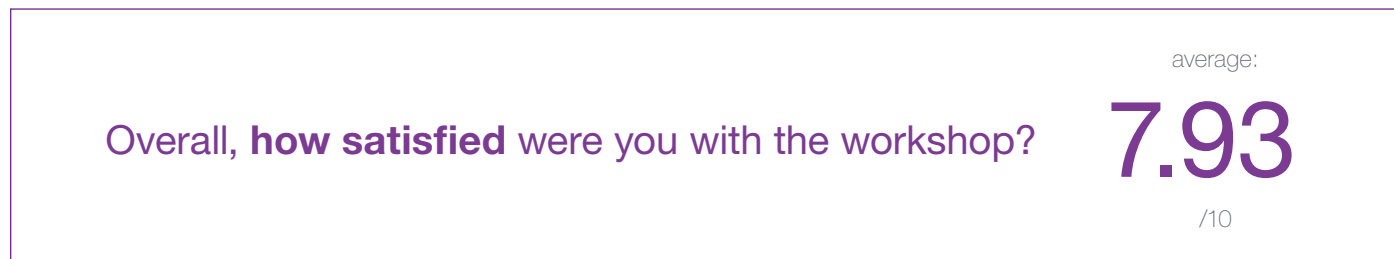
Stakeholders at all events, except South Wales where it was not discussed, expressed support for this output during the discussions. It was felt the development of the API interface would be helpful to distributed generators as it would enable them to share data swiftly and efficiently. It was also commented that rolling this out would result in more timely information, which was particularly useful for one stakeholder who was looking to develop a battery storage project. One stakeholder expressed support for this output during the discussion, having used National Grid's API.

In the online poll, this output scored the lowest of the two, but it still ranked quite highly with 3.73 / 5 and just under half (47%) wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.



## 9 | APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

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



“There’s always opportunity for more engagement!”

“Well moderated.”

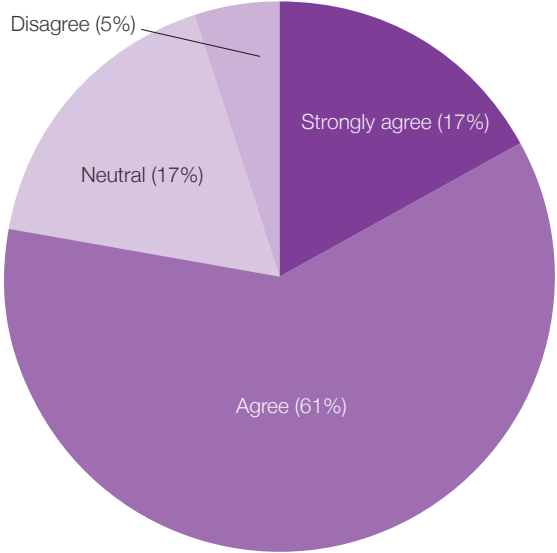
“WPD and all they do was a massive eye opener for me. The staff came across really professional and informative. I do think you are being asked to do so much and probably are a victim of your own success. That said, ‘keep it up’.”

“Host in break out group encouraged participation from everyone.”

“Impressively well-run workshop – very smooth and easy to participate in.”

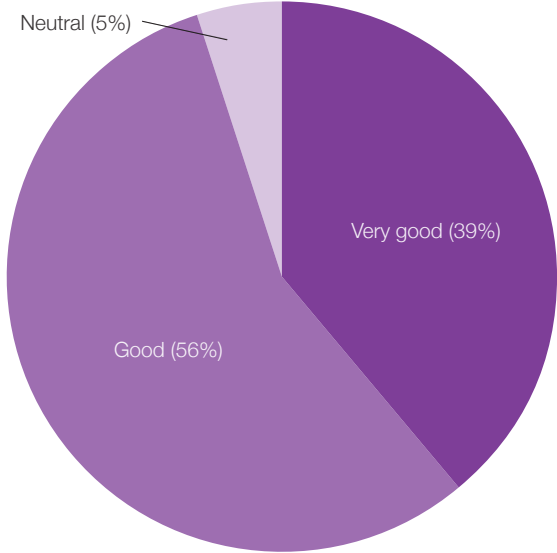
“There were opportunities for involvement, with responses from WPD.”

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



“Yes – clearly focussed on what WPD needed from the workshop, but with opportunities to ask questions and influence the outcomes.”

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

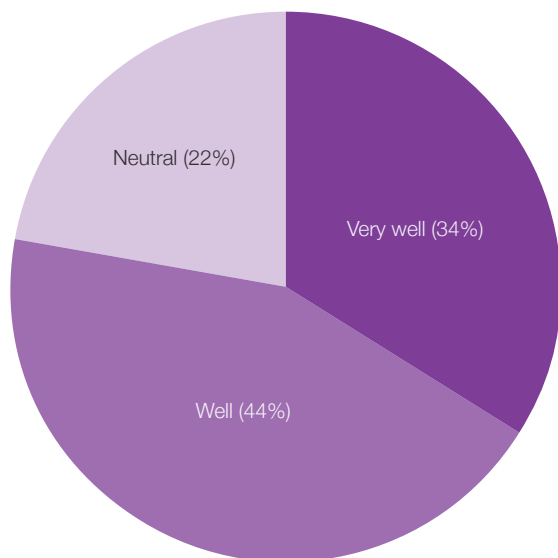


“Very impressed with the way it was presented.”

“The level of interaction and the efforts made by the co-ordinator to involve all present [were good].”

“Everyone was very professional (and patient!) and very articulate.”

### How well do you think the online format worked?



“The IT system was well managed – shifting between main presentations and breakout sessions was smooth, with voting very simple. Very impressive coordination and performance!”

“Workshops ran to time which never happens in real life!”

“I found it fairly streamlined, clear and precise and good visuals.”

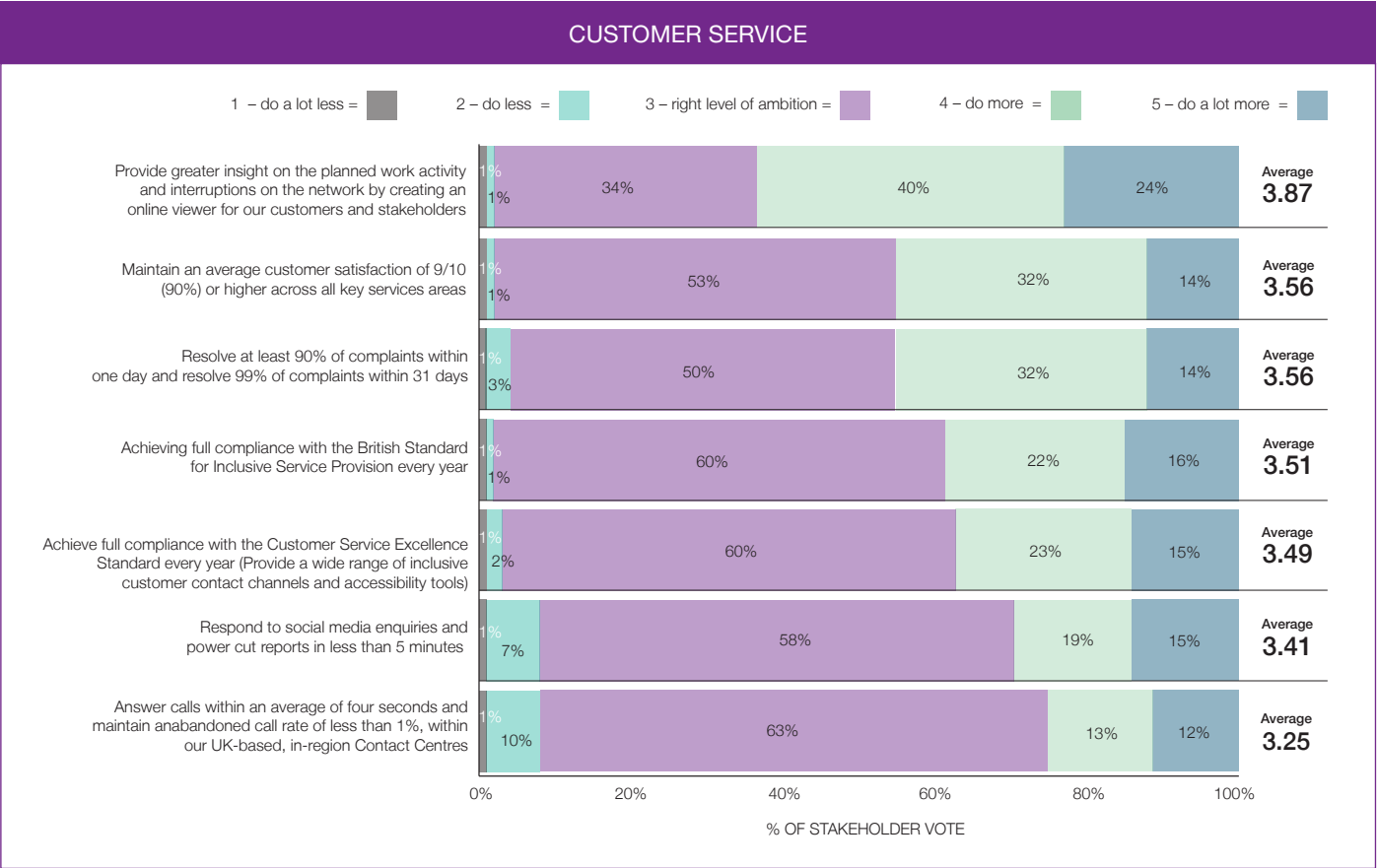
“I thought that the conclusions and actions that you drew from the workshops earlier in the year were very clear and an accurate representation and extremely impressive. I like your company’s social and green ambitions and it really cheers me up.”

“Online voting and consensus building is the way forward.”

“Really informative, interesting and engaging workshop. Well done to all involved.”

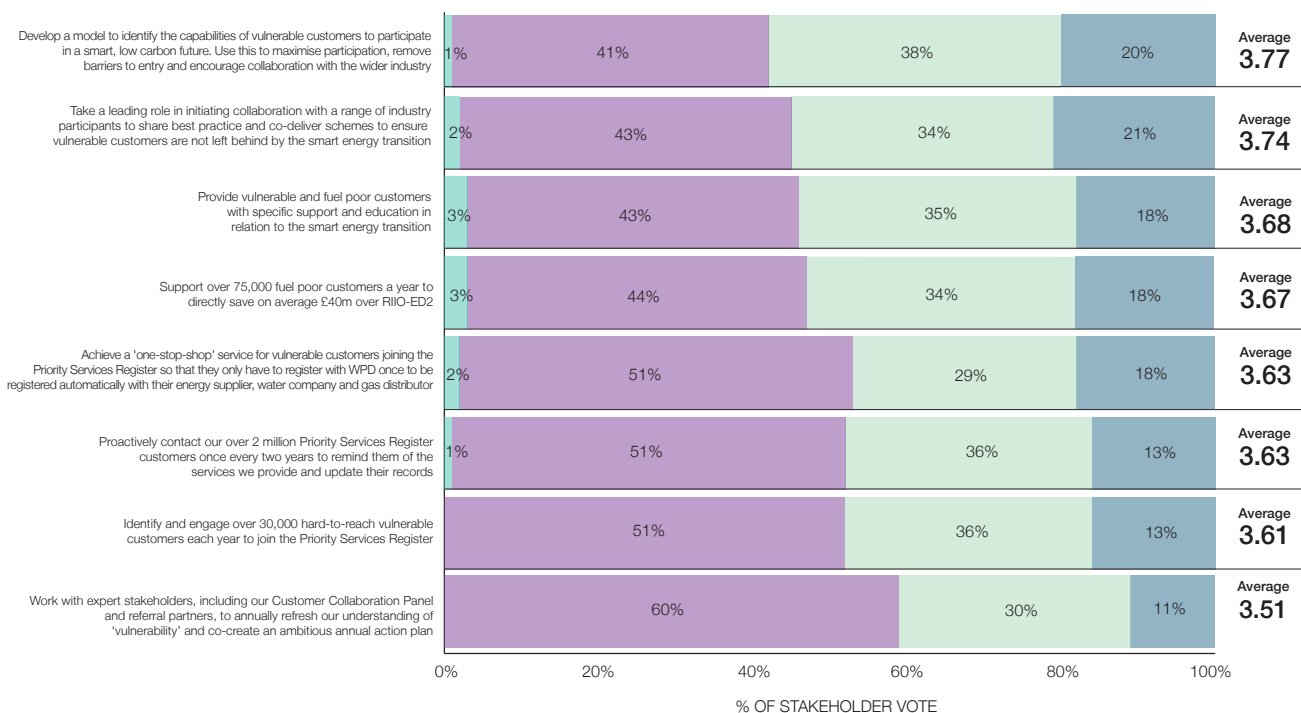
# 10 | APPENDIX 2: BREAKDOWN OF VOTING RESULTS

The tables below provide a breakdown of the raw voting data obtained for each priority area. Please note that for Connections, Workforce Resilience, Safety and Digitalisation, data was provided by a lower total of respondents following the surgery sessions, which were attended by fewer stakeholders. Therefore, while the data for these priority areas gives an indication of stakeholder views, it is less robust and should not be compared with the data for the other nine priority areas.



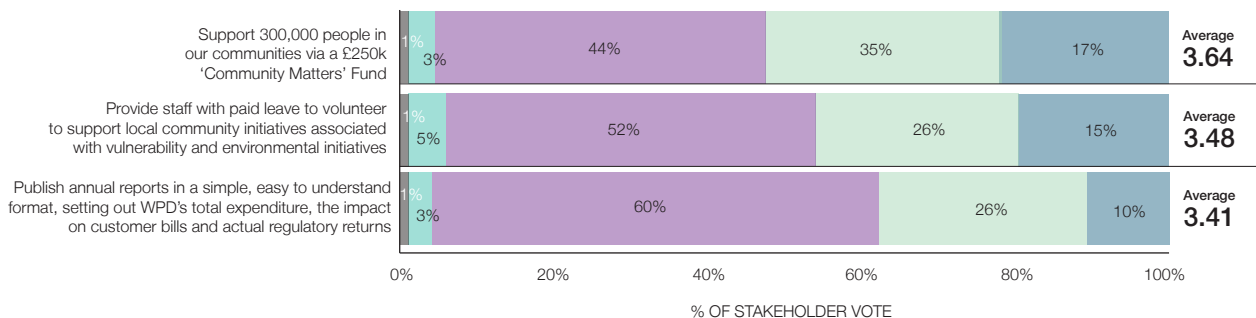
### CUSTOMER VULNERABILITY

1 – do a lot less =     2 – do less =     3 – right level of ambition =     4 – do more =     5 – do a lot more =

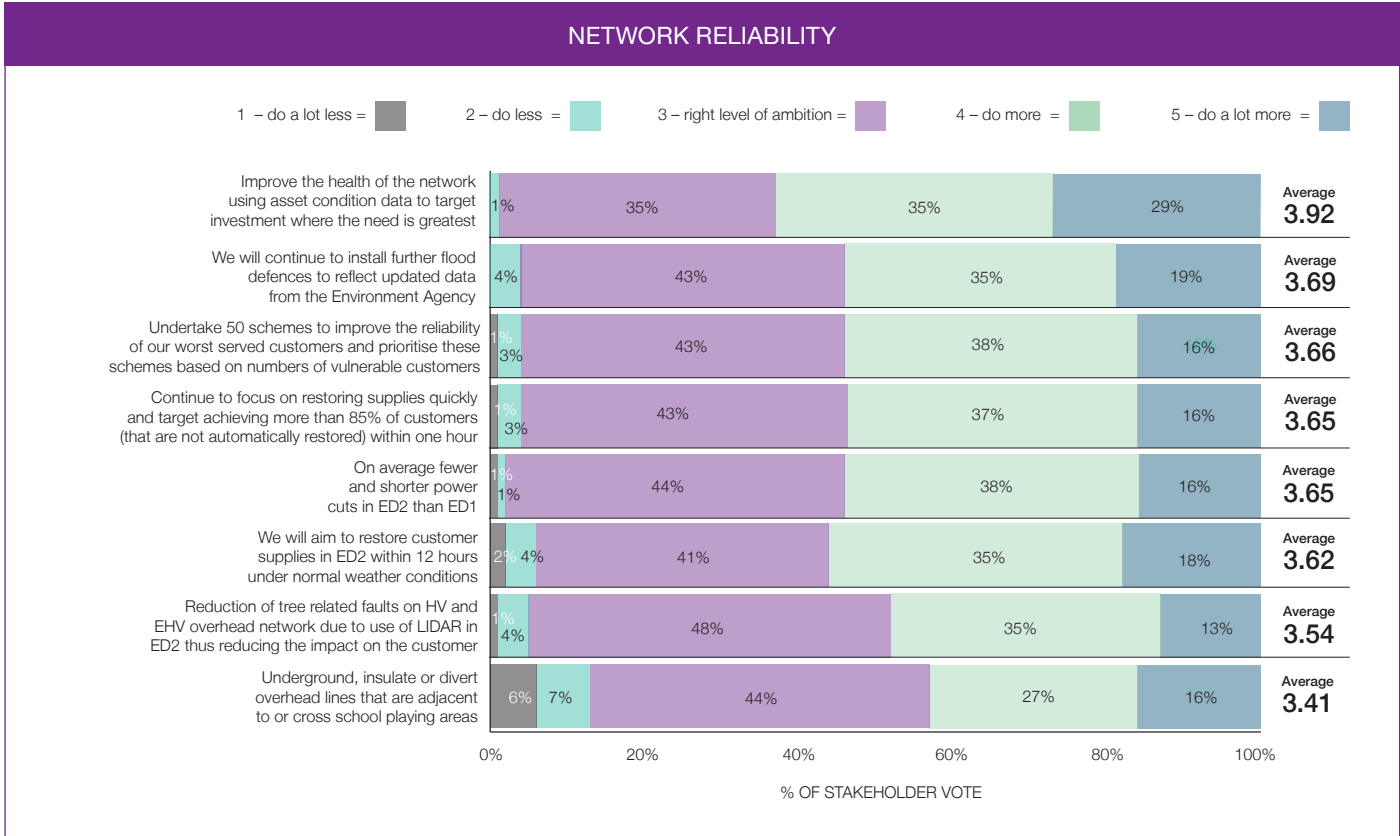
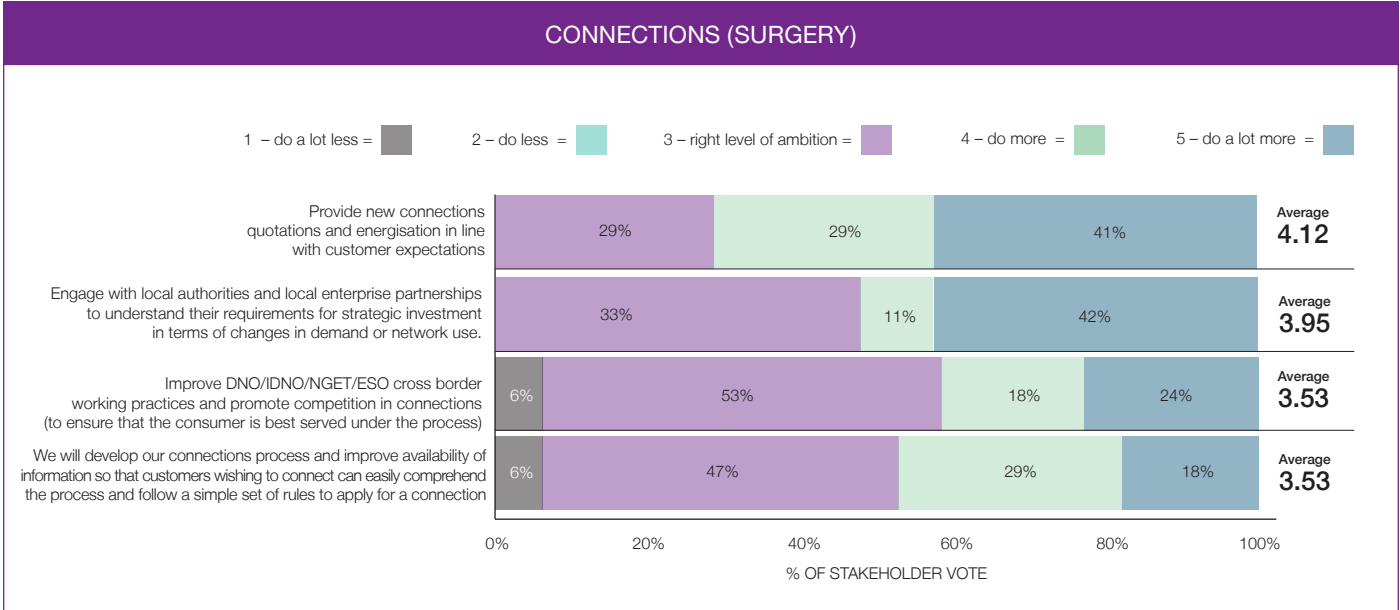


### SOCIAL CONTRACT

1 – do a lot less =     2 – do less =     3 – right level of ambition =     4 – do more =     5 – do a lot more =

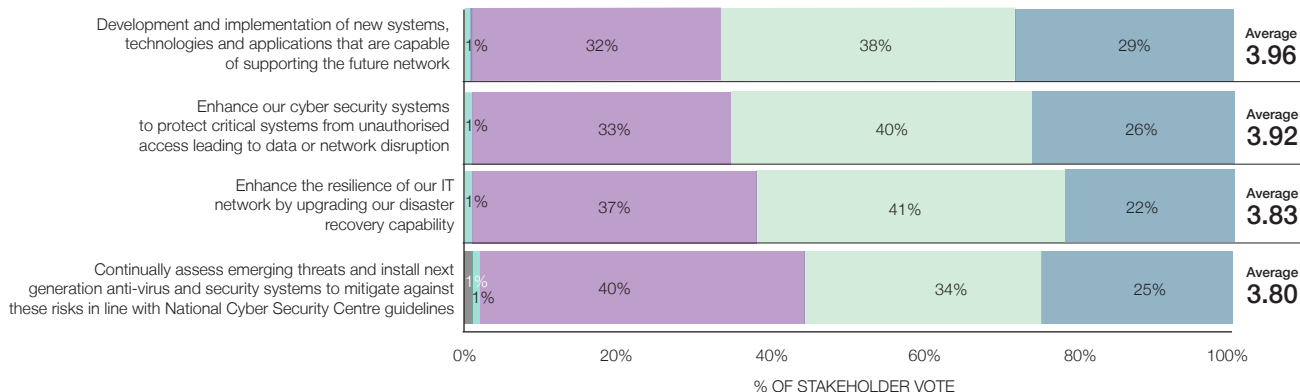






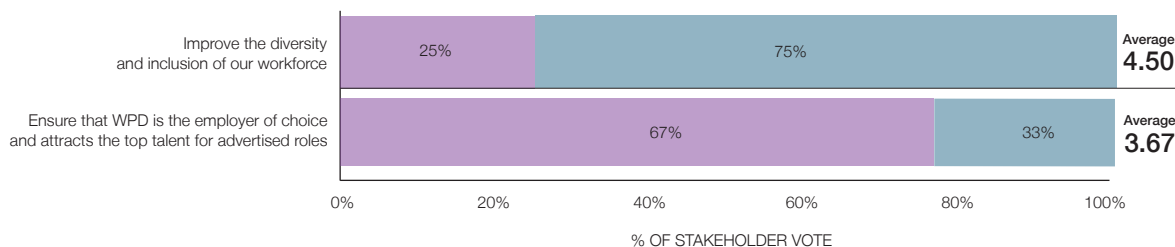
### BUSINESS IT SECURITY AND CYBER RESILIENCE

1 – do a lot less =     2 – do less =     3 – right level of ambition =     4 – do more =     5 – do a lot more =



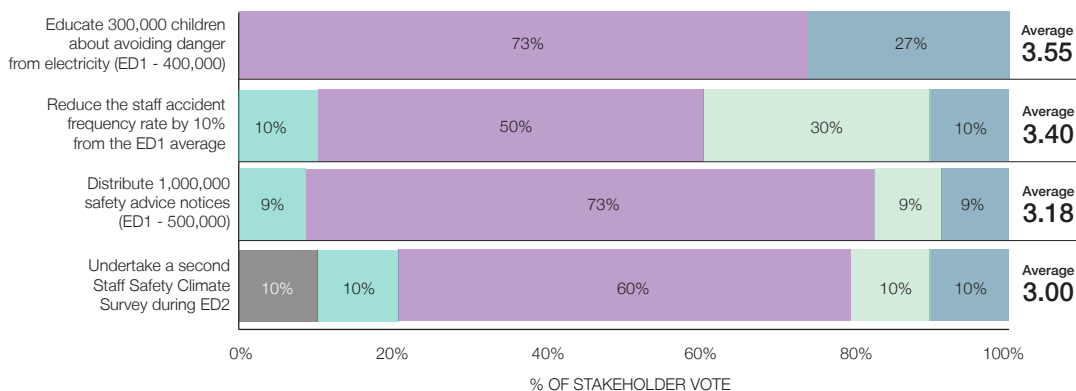
### WORKFORCE RESILIENCE (SURGERY)

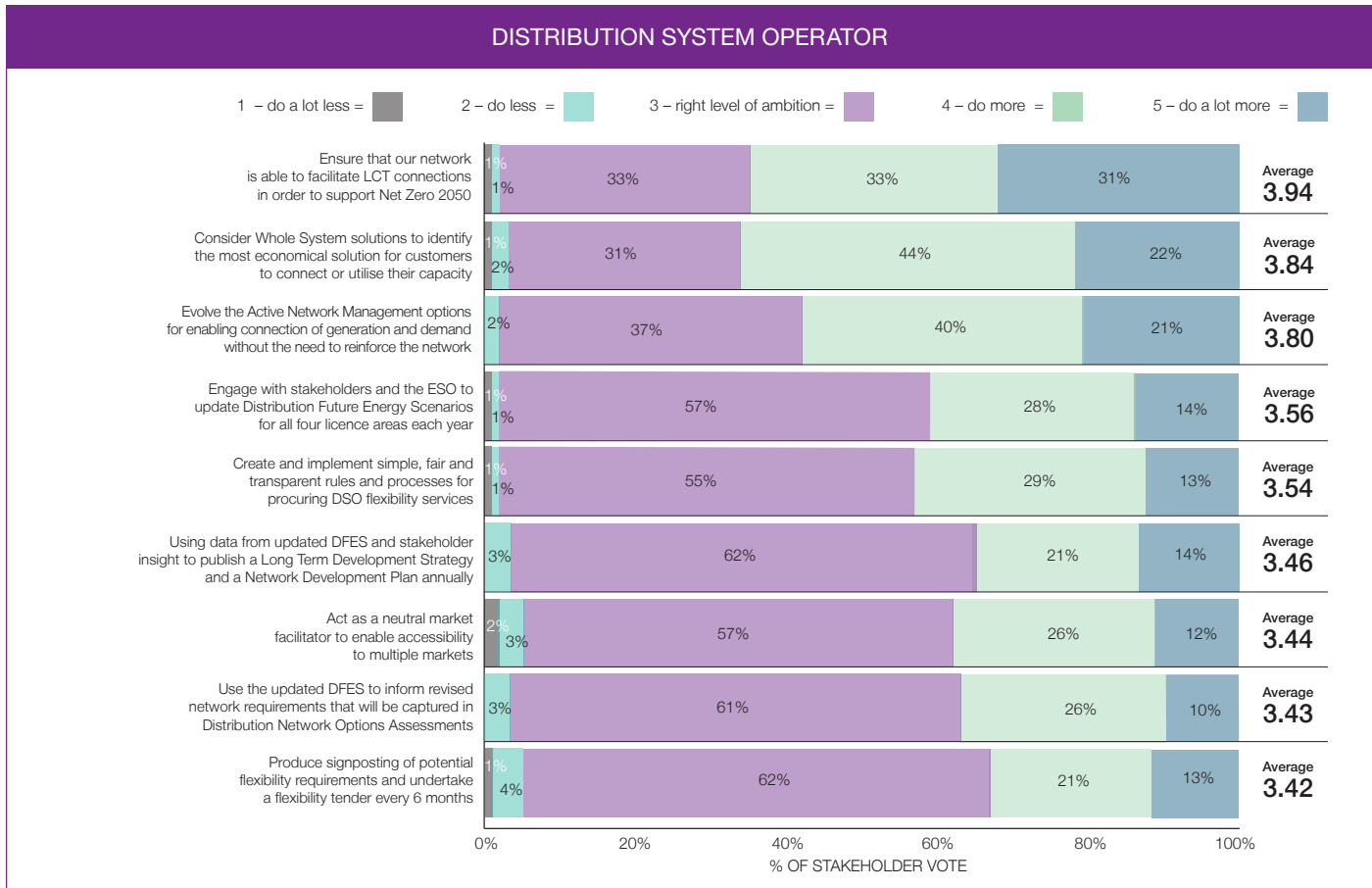
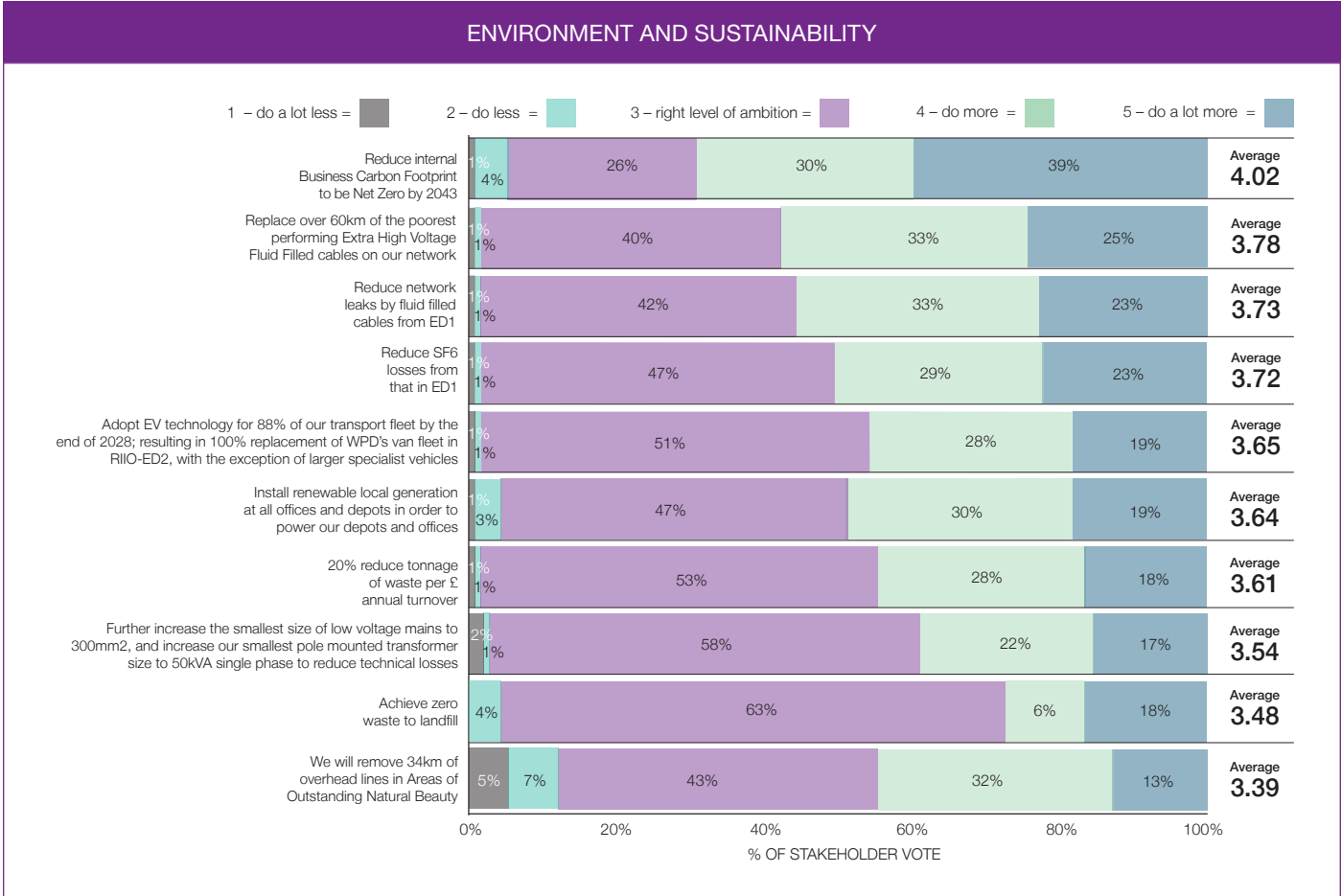
1 – do a lot less =     2 – do less =     3 – right level of ambition =     4 – do more =     5 – do a lot more =

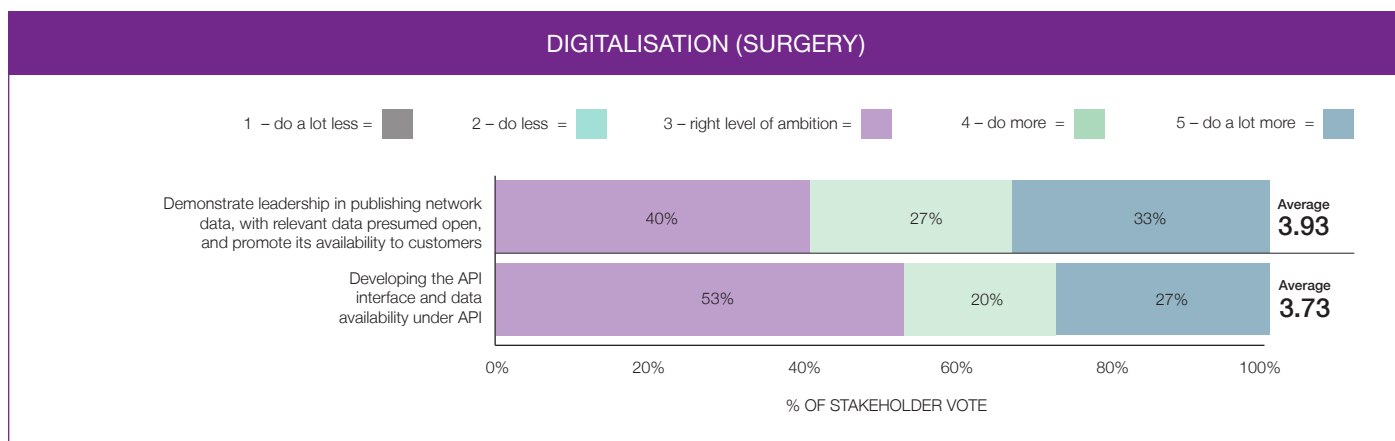
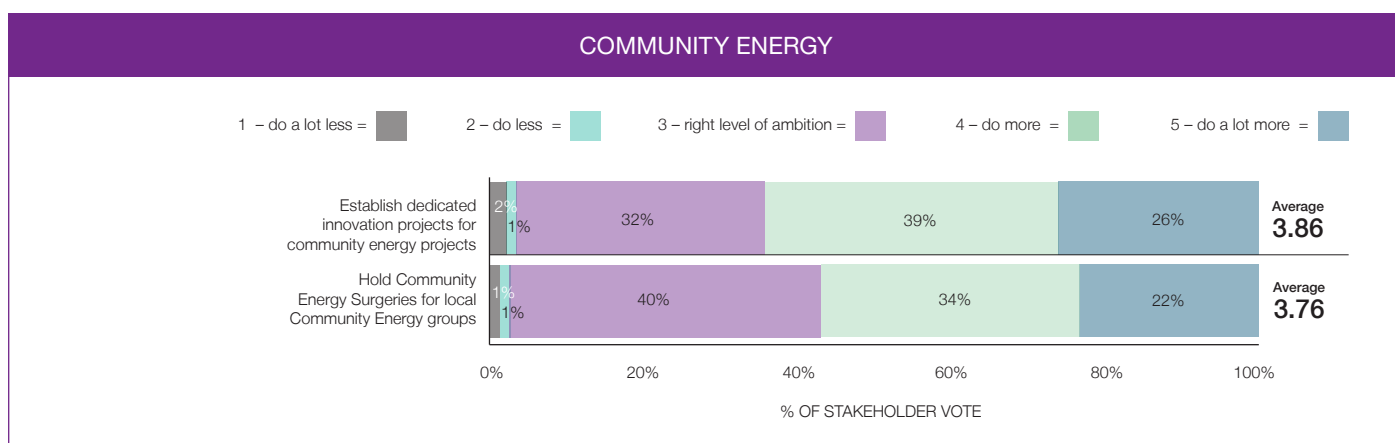
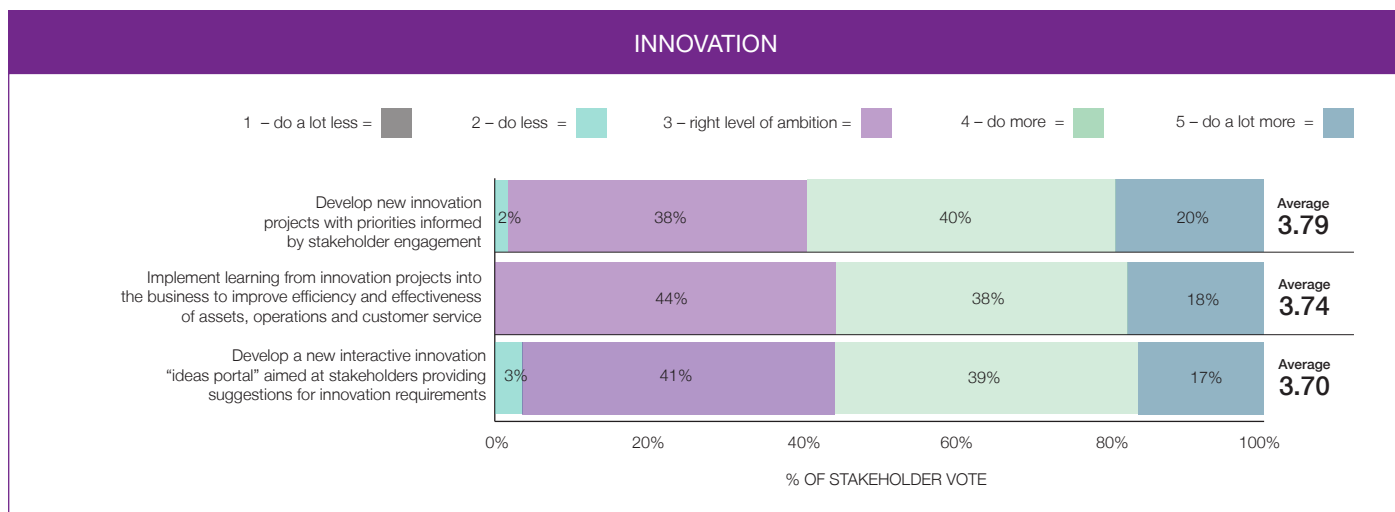


### SAFETY (SURGERY)

1 – do a lot less =     2 – do less =     3 – right level of ambition =     4 – do more =     5 – do a lot more =

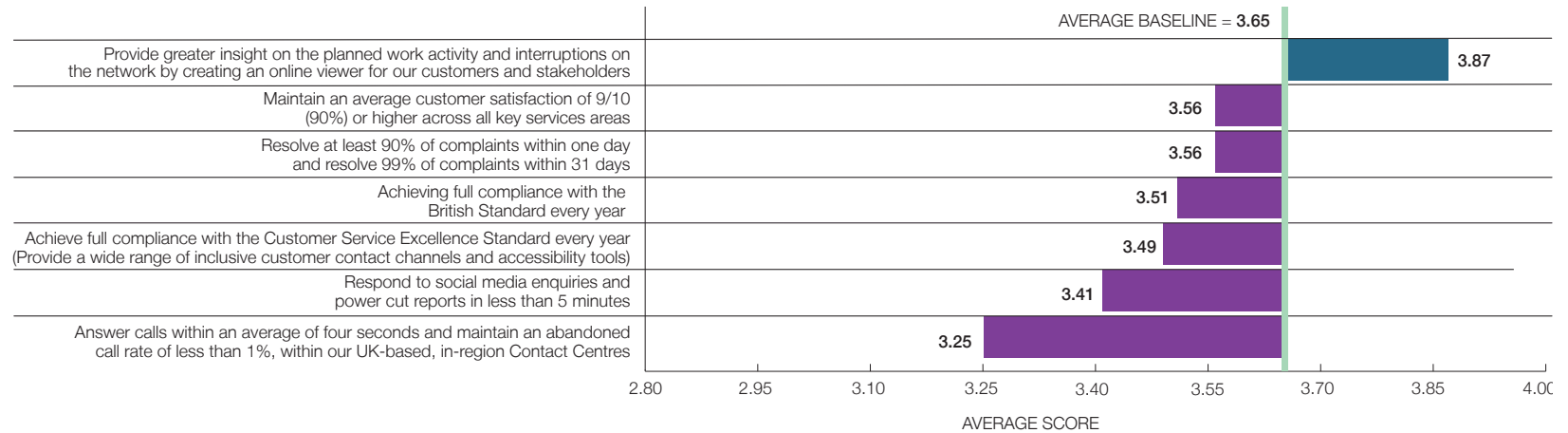






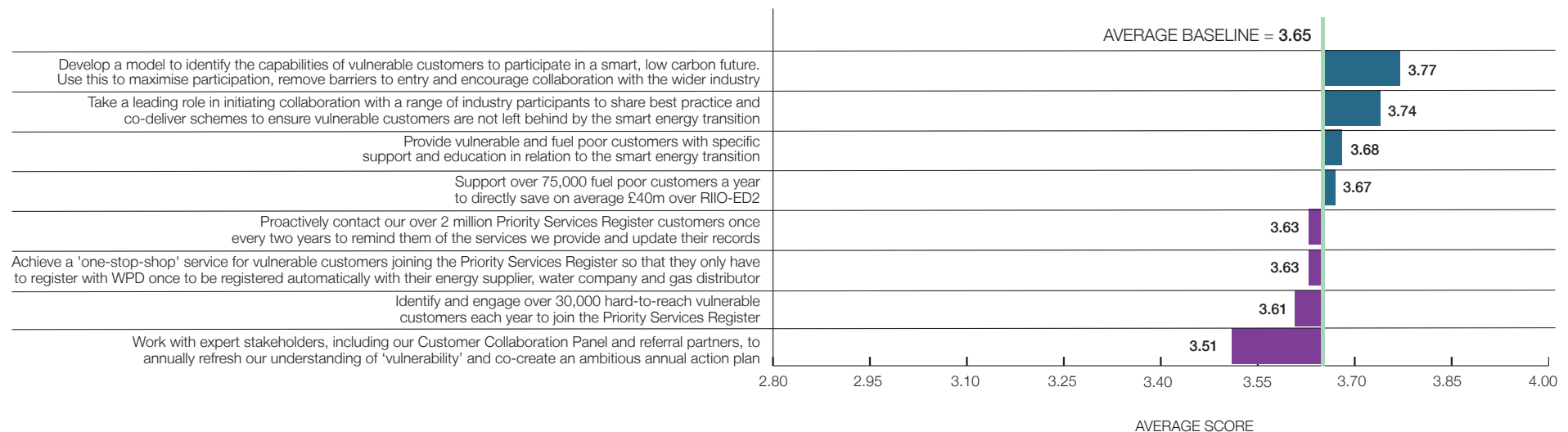
# 11 | APPENDIX 3A: OUTPUTS AVERAGE SCORE COMPARED TO BASELINE

## Customer Service Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



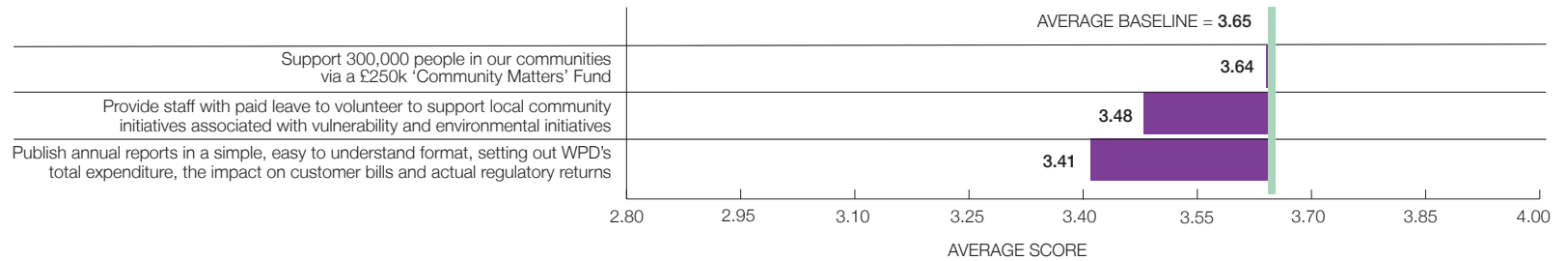
[Click here to return to the Customer Service section of the report](#)

## Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



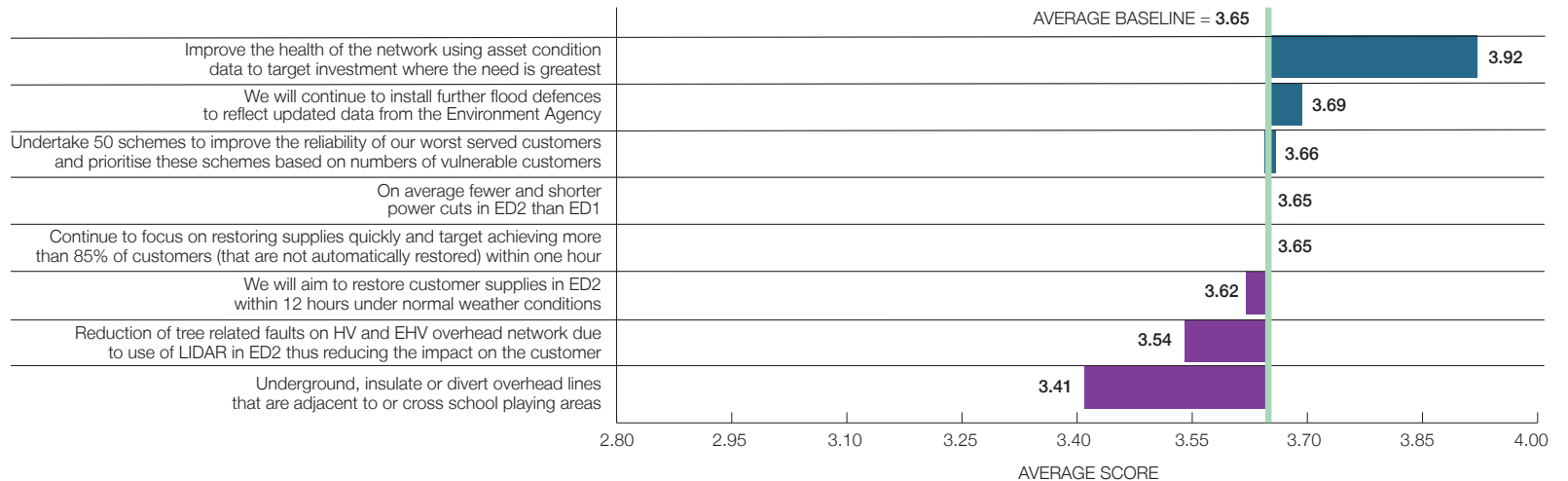
[Click here to return to the Customer Vulnerability section of the report](#)

## Social Contract Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to return to the Social Contract section of the report](#)

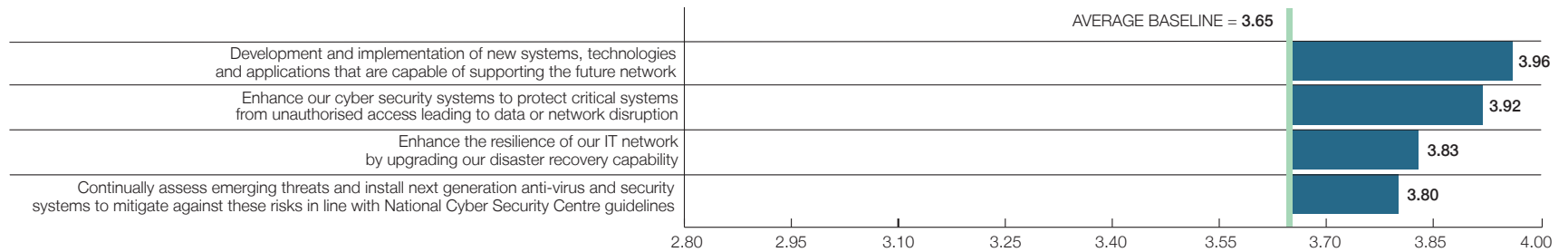
## Network Reliability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to return to the Network Reliability section of the report](#)

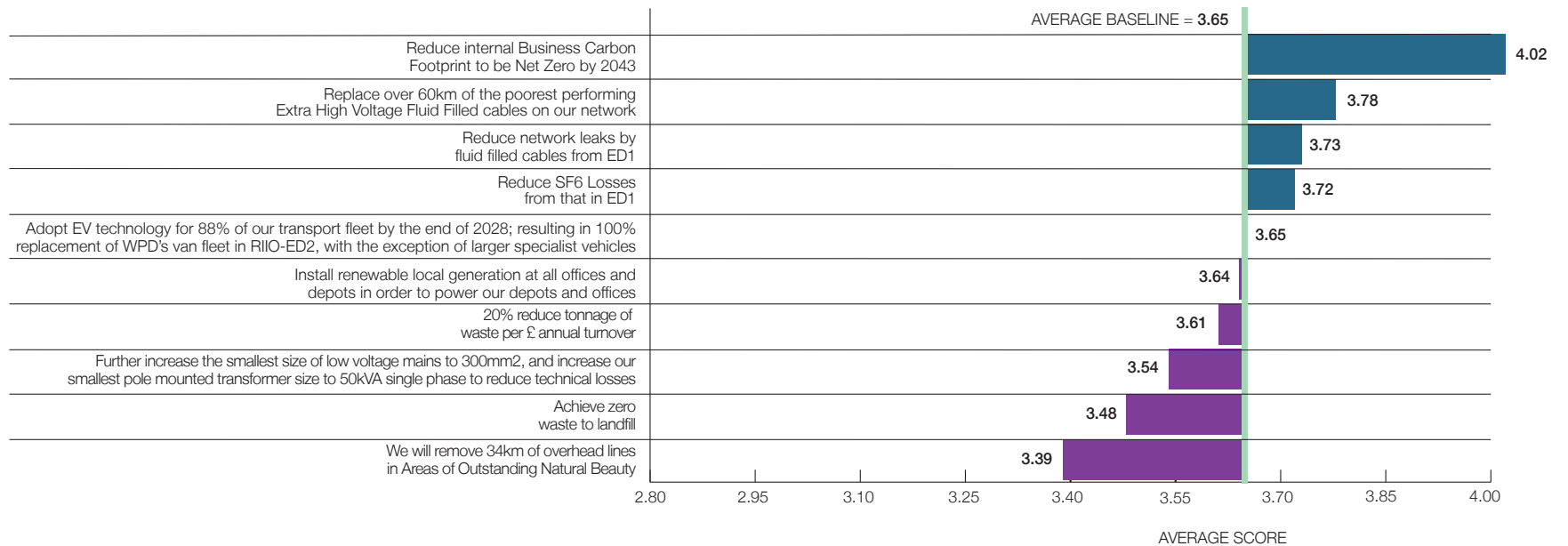


## Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



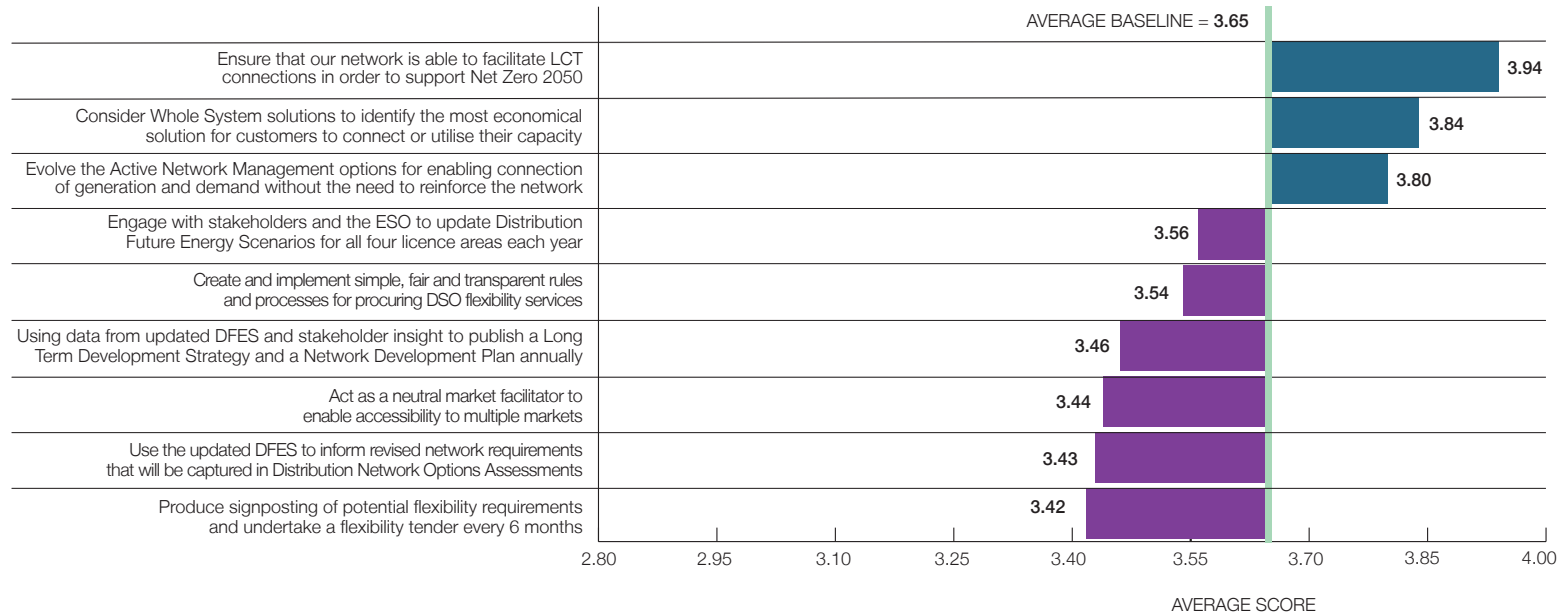
[Click here to return to the Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience section of the report](#)

## Environment and Sustainability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



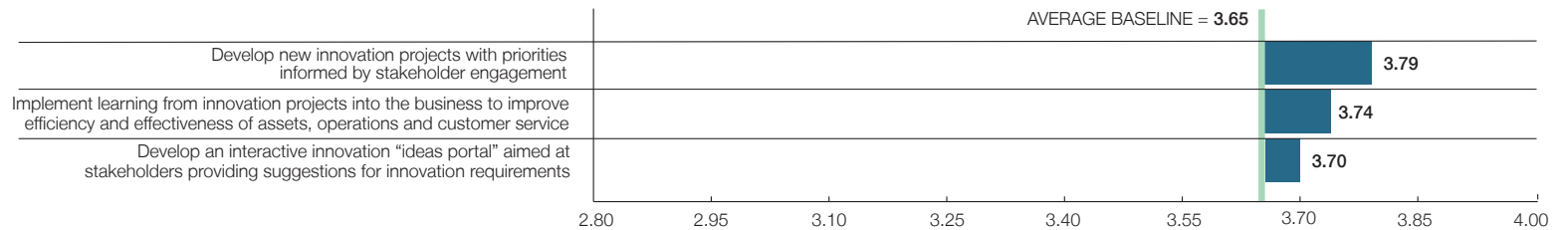
[Click here to return to the Environment and Sustainability section of the report](#)

## Distribution System Operator Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



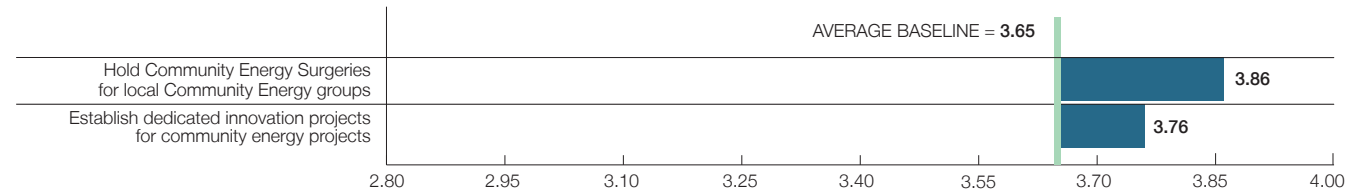
[Click here to return to the Distribution System Operator section of the report](#)

## Innovation Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to return to the Innovation section of the report](#)

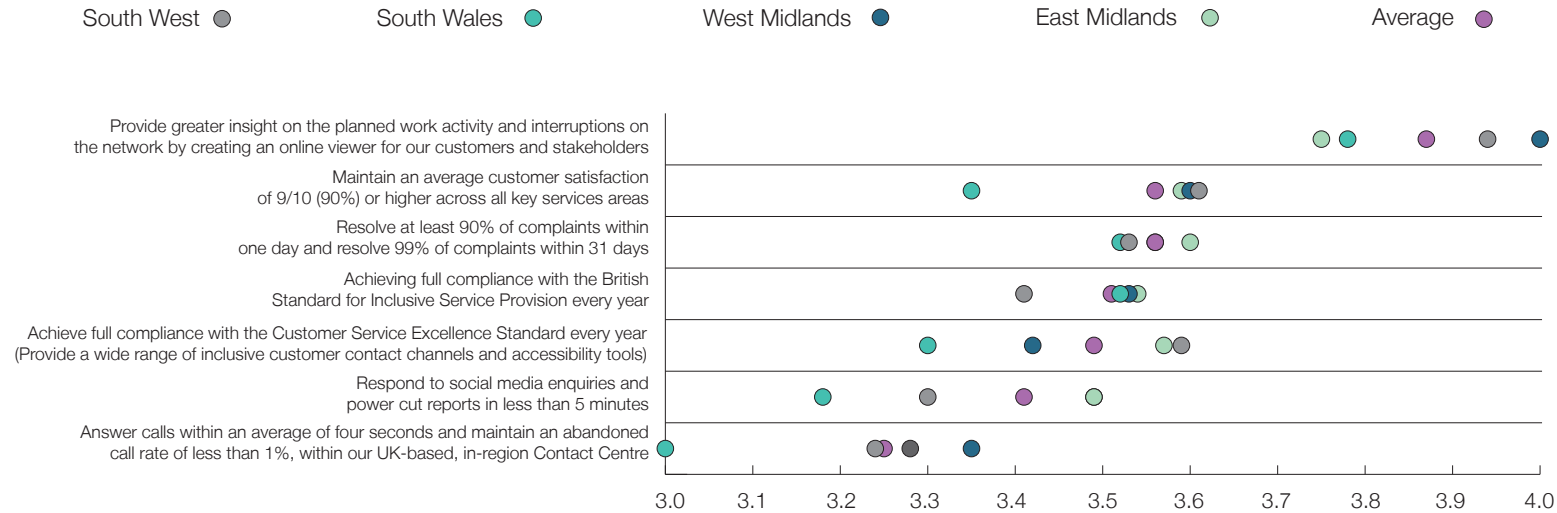
## Community Energy Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to return to the Community Energy section of the report](#)

# 12 | APPENDIX 3B: AVERAGE OVERALL RANKING FOR PRIORITY AREA

## Customer Service Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to return to the Customer Service section of the report](#)

## Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area

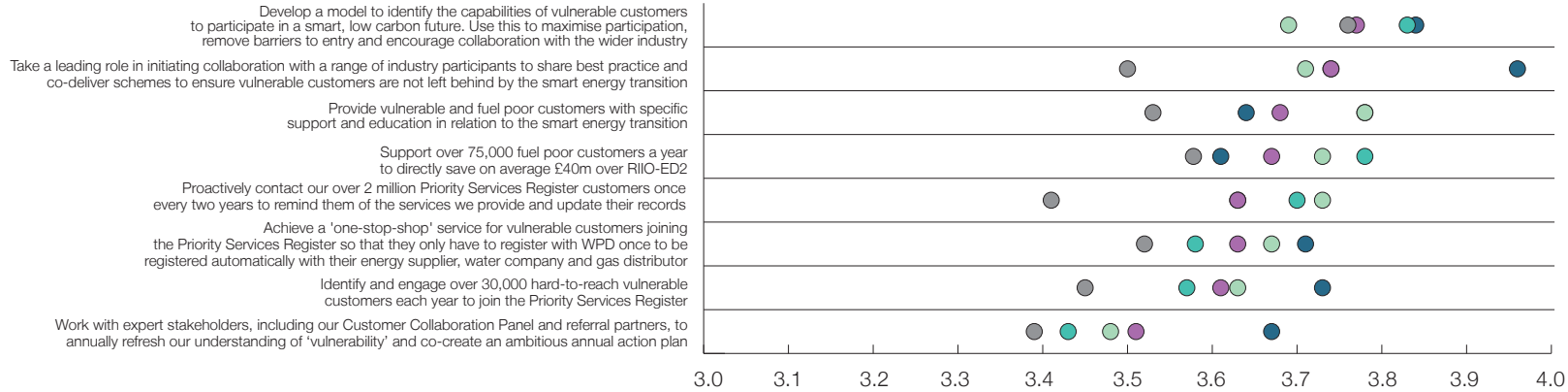
South West ●

South Wales ●

West Midlands ●

East Midlands ●

Average ●



[Click here to return to the Customer Vulnerability section of the report](#)

## Social Contract Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area

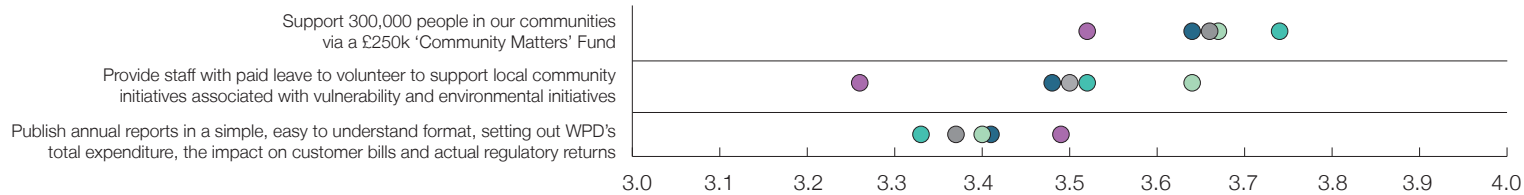
South West ●

South Wales ●

West Midlands ●

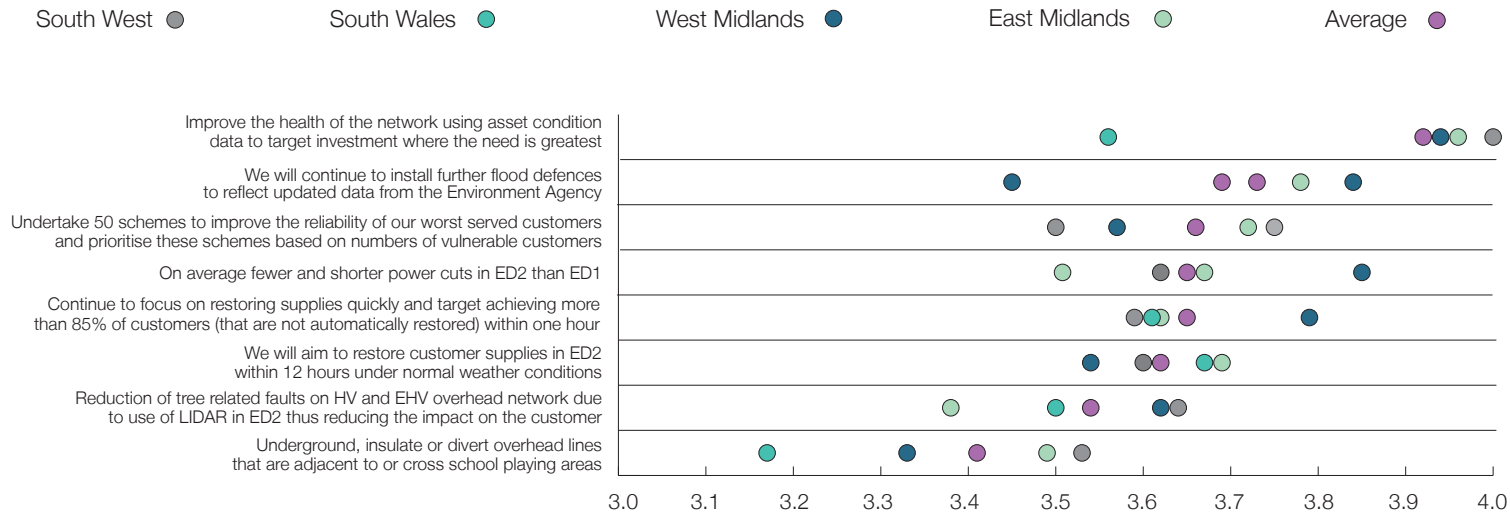
East Midlands ●

Average ●



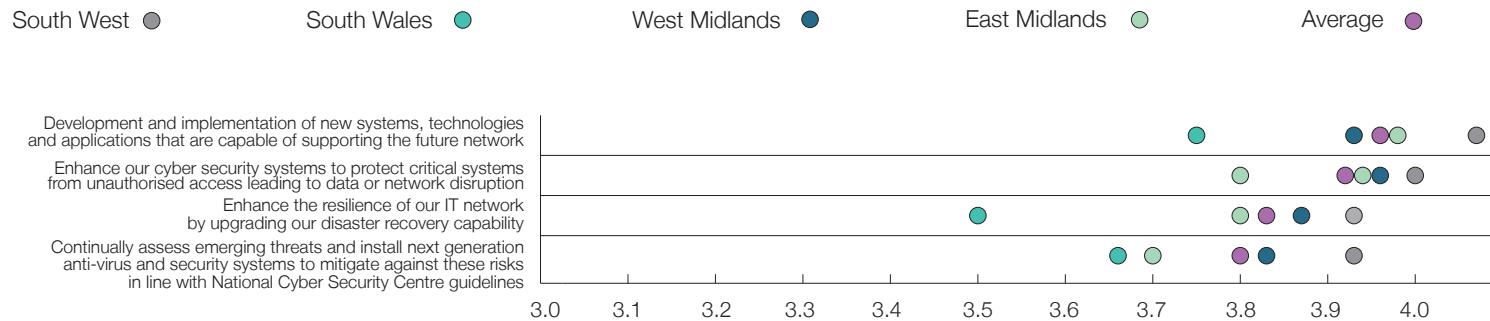
[Click here to return to the Social Contract section of the report](#)

## Network Reliability Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to return to the Network Reliability section of the report](#)

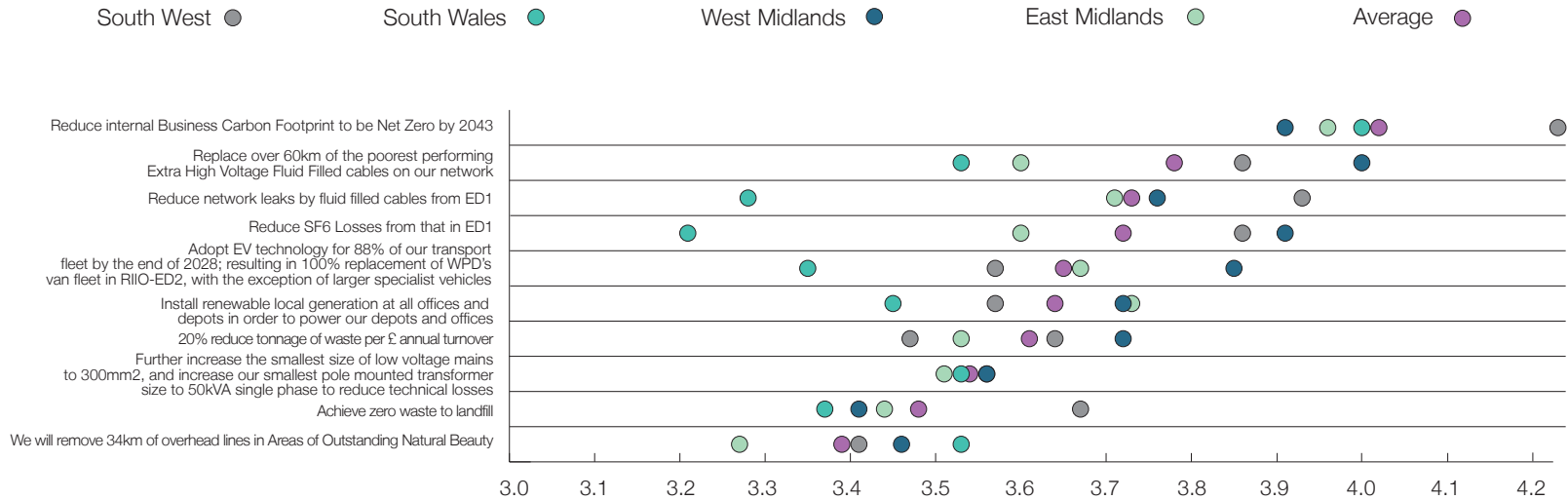
## Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to return to the Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience section of the report](#)



## Environment and Sustainability Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



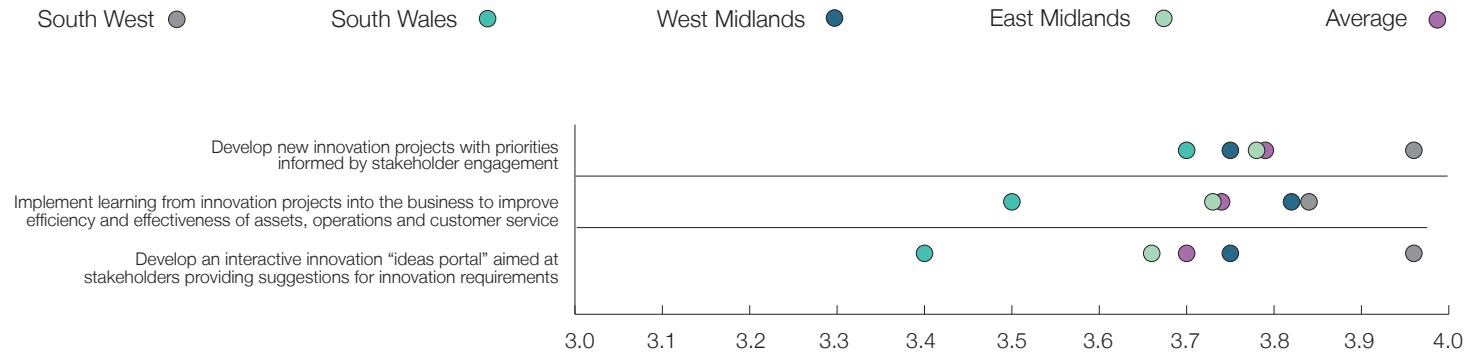
[Click here to return to the Environment and Sustainability section of the report](#)

## Distribution System Operator Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



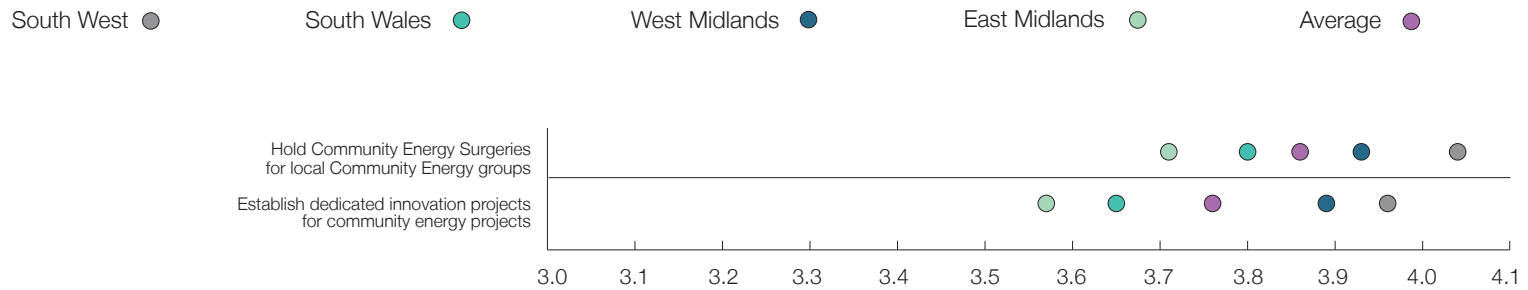
[Click here to return to the Distribution System Operator section of the report](#)

## Innovation Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to return to the Innovation section of the report](#)

## Community Energy Outputs: Average Overall Ranking for Priority Area



[Click here to return to the Community Energy section of the report](#)

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