



Western Power Distribution ED2 Workshops

South Wales

November 2020

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1 | OVERVIEW

On 4 November 2020, Western Power Distribution (WPD) hosted the second in a series of four virtual stakeholder workshops. The workshops sought to elicit feedback from stakeholders on WPD's draft outputs for its Business Plan for the next price control period, RIIO-ED2, which runs from 2023–2028.

There were four virtual workshops, one for each of WPD's licence areas. This report covers the workshop that was held for stakeholders in the company's South Wales licence area.

The event consisted of a series of presentations given by WPD representatives, with stakeholders giving their feedback during four breakout room discussions and online polls over the course of the day.

INTRODUCTION AND THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

- The workshop began with an introductory presentation from Alison Sleightholm, Resources and External Affairs Director. Alison explained WPD's role distributing power to nearly 8 million homes and businesses across its network area. She then explained WPD's business planning process and timetable, and how stakeholder engagement feeds into the company's Business Plan. The initial breakout discussion allowed stakeholders to introduce themselves and discuss the impact of Covid-19 on their expectations of WPD.

SESSIONS ONE, TWO AND THREE: DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

The subsequent sessions worked through WPD's draft outputs under the heading of Ofgem's three themes and stakeholders' priority areas for each theme.

SESSION ONE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER

- This session was introduced by Alex Wilkes, External Affairs Manager. Alex explained how feedback from stakeholders had informed a total of 20 outputs under the priority areas of: Customer Service; Customer Vulnerability; and Social Contract.

SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK

- This session was introduced by Andrzej Michalowski, Planning and Regulation Special Projects Manager. Andrzej explained how feedback from stakeholders had informed a total of 13 outputs under the priority areas of: Network Reliability; and Business IT and Cyber Security.

SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

- This session was introduced by Jill Russell, Environment Manager, and Nigel Turvey, DSO and Future Networks Manager. They explained how feedback from stakeholders had informed a total of 27 outputs under the priority areas of: Environment and Sustainability; Distribution System Operator; Innovation; and Community Energy.

AFTERNOON SURGERY SESSIONS: DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

- In the afternoon, there were four optional afternoon sessions on specific priority areas. They all followed a similar format to the morning workshops, focusing on gathering feedback on a series of draft outputs.

This meant that over the course of the workshop, all the priority areas under the three Ofgem themes had been discussed.

The session topics and presenters were as follows: Connections was hosted by Tim Hughes, Connection Policy Manager; Digitalisation was hosted by Jonathan Berry, DSO Digitalisation and Data Manager; and Workforce Resilience was hosted by Carl Ketley-Lowe, Engineering Policy Manager. The Safety session did not take place as no stakeholders signed up.

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

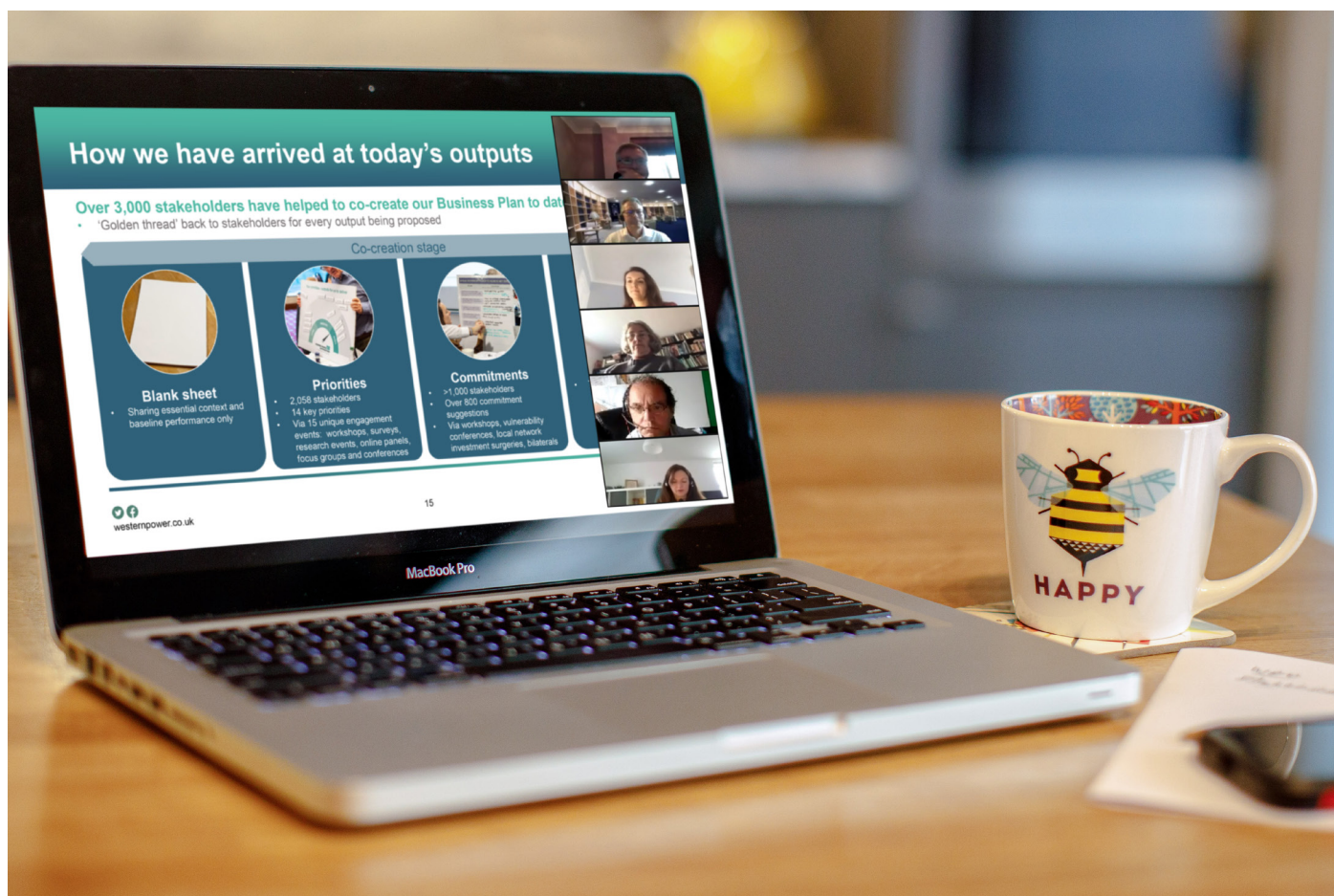
	SESSION ONE	SESSION TWO	SESSION THREE
OFGEM THEME	Meeting the Needs of the Consumer	Maintaining a Safe and Resilient Network	Delivering an Environmentally Sustainable Network
STAKEHOLDERS' PRIORITY AREAS	Customer Service Customer Vulnerability Social Contract	Network Reliability Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience	Environment and Sustainability Distribution System Operator Innovation Community Energy
SURGERY SESSIONS	Connections	Workforce Resilience Safety (*Did not take place)	Digitalisation

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

For the purposes of this report, we have recorded the feedback on the priority areas and associated draft outputs 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. They wanted to play back the feedback WPD 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 3.54 / 5 to give a better indication of which outputs stakeholders particularly prioritised.

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 Appendix 1 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.

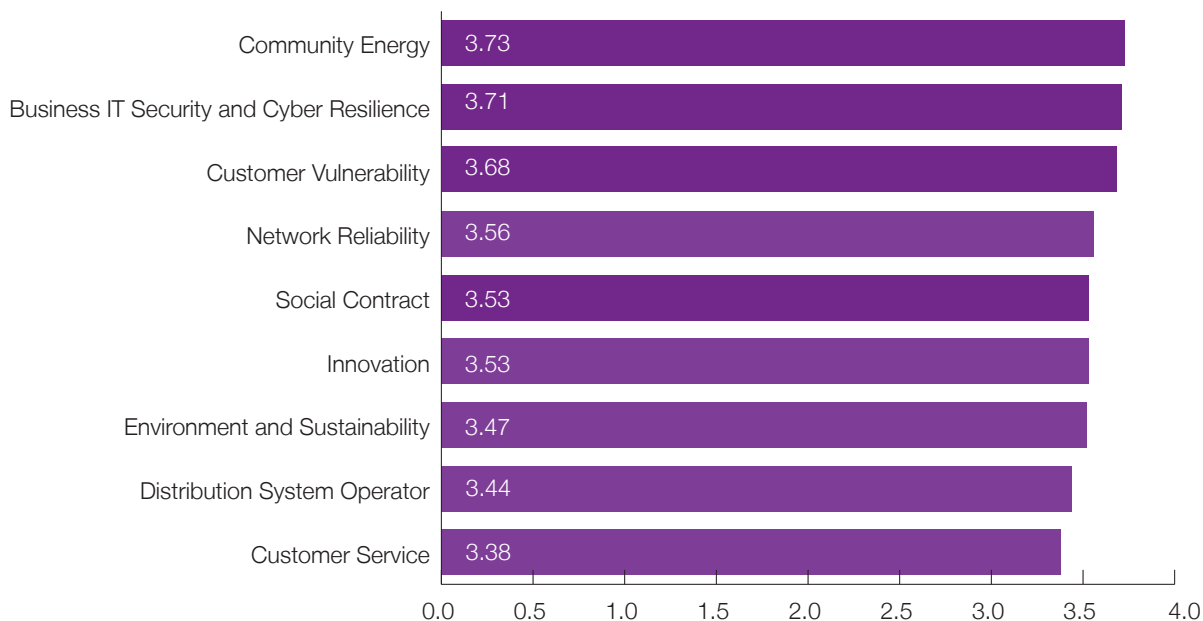
INTRODUCTION AND THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

- A number of stakeholders reported that they had attended the workshop to inform themselves on WPD’s work with a view to enhancing their collaboration with the company.
- Key areas of interest included electric vehicle charging, battery storage, new connections, the transition to DSO and support for vulnerable customers.
- It was felt that providing support to vulnerable customers had become a greater priority in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had also brought customer resilience and the green recovery to the fore.

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:** Whilst stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD performs highly in this area, there was some discussion as to whether this should be maintained as the room for improvement is now small and assumed to be increasingly costly. In addition, increased electrification and subsequent connection requests may put more pressure on customer service, making these targets increasingly hard to achieve. As a priority area, Customer Service outputs ranked lowest out of all priority areas. However, stakeholders did want WPD to do more around communicating planned power outages, ranking it higher than the baseline average at 3.78 / 5.
- **Customer Vulnerability:** Stakeholders felt Covid-19 would have a significant impact on this priority area, particularly by increasing the levels of customer vulnerability and fuel poverty. As a priority area, Customer Vulnerability ranked third highest in the online poll with an average score of 3.68 / 5 – demonstrating the importance assigned to this area and the fact that stakeholders wanted WPD to do more to support the vulnerable. In particular, stakeholders wanted to remove barriers to entry for vulnerable customers in a smart future and support those in fuel poverty.
- **Social Contract:** Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that a Social Contract is important for WPD, particularly given its 20 million customers. In the online polling, Social Contract came out middle among the priority areas with an average of 3.53 / 5. There were no particular themes raised during the discussions, with stakeholder making comments in relation to a whole range of different areas.
- **Connections:** Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that provision of information was key, as well as the need to engage with local authorities to understand local grid requirements. In terms of areas that were missing from the outputs, stakeholders commented on the need for accurate connections offers, particularly relating to cost. In addition to engaging with local authorities to understand network requirements, they also wanted WPD to collaborate closely with developers and with community energy groups as well.

SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK

- **Network Reliability:** Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that keeping the lights on and quick restoration is a high priority and that WPD should seek continual improvement, in part because of the increased reliance on the network due to electrification. This priority area scored 3.56 / 5, ranking fourth overall. To build on WPD's ambitions, stakeholders wanted to see more granularity under some of the outputs, including a focus on disparities in reliability on rural and urban networks, a focus on ash dieback as part of the tree maintenance programme and the use of data from the environmental regulator to help identify areas for flood defences.
- **Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience:** Stakeholders felt the unexpected nature of the Covid-19 pandemic had only served to reinforce the critical importance of contingency planning and hence the significance of the outputs in this area. They agreed with previous feedback that network security and disaster recovery is of increasing importance. This was demonstrated by the fact these outputs on average ranked second across all priority areas with 3.71 / 5. The consensus, however, was that they were lacking in measurable targets.
- **Workforce Resilience:** Stakeholders 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. 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. Stakeholders did not vote on these outputs after the session in the online poll, so there is no data to demonstrate whether they felt they expressed the right level of ambition.
- **Safety:** This priority area was not discussed as it was a surgery session to which no stakeholders signed up.

SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

- **Environment and Sustainability:** As a priority area, this ranked third from bottom with an average of 3.47 / 5 – just below the baseline average. Whilst the output on Business Carbon Footprint ranked highest across all Business Plan outputs (with 4 / 5) and brought the average up significantly, all other outputs ranked below the baseline average demonstrating that aside from the target date of 2043 for reducing WPD’s Business Carbon Footprint to Net Zero, overall stakeholders felt WPD had got the level of ambition right in this area. Stakeholders questioned the targets on the outputs for WPD’s operational impact and for undergrounding because they did not feel they had the context to make an appropriate judgement. One stakeholder felt energy saving measures were missing from this area.
- **Distribution System Operator:** The breakout discussions largely focused on whether WPD could prioritise the use of low carbon flexibility as well as the importance of delivering network capacity to facilitate the connection of low carbon technologies. All outputs relating to flexibility services scored below the baseline. The two outputs that scored above the baseline average related to whole systems and the connection of low carbon technologies – at 3.76 / 5 and 3.83 / 5 respectively. Overall, as a priority area, DSO ranked second lowest across all Business Plan priority areas – 3.44 / 5, which was below the average baseline.
- **Innovation:** Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD should help facilitate innovation among stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaboration with partners and projects informed by stakeholder feedback. In terms of what was missing from the outputs, several stakeholders did raise the importance of ensuring that any innovation makes sure the vulnerable and digitally excluded are not left behind. In general, most stakeholders felt the targets were stretching enough for each output, except for the output ‘develop new innovation projects with priorities informed by stakeholder engagement’, where 65% wanted WPD to be more ambitious.
- **Community Energy:** Stakeholders strongly felt that WPD should be looking to assist and support community energy projects, with a range of specific schemes mentioned, although they did not provide specific detail as to what this support would look like. One stakeholder also wanted WPD to work closely with housing associations and another wanted WPD to work more closely with farmers. Specific targets or performance measures were not raised by stakeholders during the discussions. However, significantly, in the online polling Community Energy ranked highest among all priority areas with the outputs scoring an average of 3.73 / 5 – well above the baseline average.
- **Digitalisation:** Stakeholders did not vote on these outputs after the session in the online poll so there is no data to demonstrate whether they felt they expressed the right level of ambition. However, during the discussion the focus was on the output ‘demonstrate leadership in publishing network data’, indicating that stakeholders felt that output was particularly important.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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

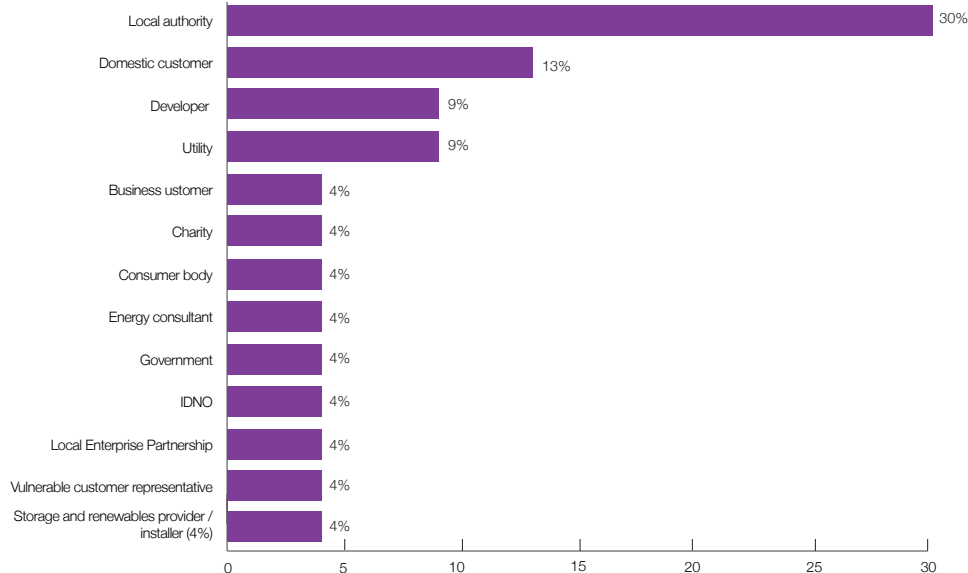
- 100% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop either ‘very interesting’ or ‘interesting’. Stakeholders also rated their satisfaction with the event as 8.67 / 10.
- 100% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they had had an opportunity to make points and ask questions.
- 83% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the right topics were discussed on the day.
- 83% thought EQ Communications’ facilitation was ‘very good’, with 17% opting for ‘good’.
- 83% felt the online format worked ‘well’ or ‘very well’.

4 | ATTENDEES

35 stakeholders representing 30 different organisations attended the online workshop. The organisations represented were as follows:

- Amberside Energy Ltd
- Bridgend County Borough Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal
- Cardiff Council
- Care and Repair Cardiff and the Vale
- Care and Repair Western Bay
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- CLA Cymru
- EDF Energy
- Electricity North West
- Energy Assets Networks
- Fundamentals Ltd
- Geldards LLP
- Gower AONB Partnership
- GS-Yuasa Battery Europe Ltd
- Hafod Housing Association
- Headway UK
- IBM
- Kier Integrated Services Ltd
- National Grid ESO
- Network Rail
- Ofgem
- Pobl Group
- RSK Environment
- S&C Electric
- St Modwen Developments
- Swansea Council
- Torfaen County Borough Council
- Welsh Government / Llywodraeth Cymru

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



5 | INTRODUCTION AND THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

When asked why they had attended the workshop, a large number of stakeholders expressed an interest in learning more about WPD's work, partly with a view to informing their own plans, which ranged from large infrastructure projects of national importance in Wales to community generation projects. Many expressed a desire to align their plans with those of WPD, and it was clear that a number of attendees saw the workshop as an opportunity to enhance their engagement and collaboration with the company. Others had attended the event to listen to other stakeholders' views and were keen to broaden their perspective by engaging with stakeholders from other industries.

There was widespread interest in sustainability and the drive to Net Zero, especially the role of technologies such as electric vehicles and battery storage. Sustainable new connections were also seen as important, along with developing a more flexible network. Some attendees saw the transition to DSO as a key topic, particularly with regard to innovation and data. Stakeholders from a range of backgrounds wished to discuss WPD's work on fuel poverty and its support of vulnerable customers, particularly in light of the circumstances surrounding the pandemic.

There seemed to be consensus that WPD should continue to focus on its core services, including electricity supply and the provision of datasets. Stakeholders expected the company to maintain consistent levels of communication, with some reporting that getting in touch with WPD staff had been difficult during the March lockdown. However, others praised the company for the way it had adapted to new and challenging circumstances.

There was strong agreement that supporting vulnerable groups had become a priority in the wake of the pandemic. Stakeholders pointed out that Covid-19 had exacerbated existing vulnerability and created new groups of vulnerable people, in addition to creating barriers that made it more challenging to support these groups, such as limits on home visits. In turn, this had made customer resilience even more important. It was also felt that the green recovery should be prioritised. A local authority reported that although lockdown had initially delayed developments, several plans were now going through at the same time, while a developer expected a boost in connection applications following the March lockdown.

WHY HAVE YOU ATTENDED TODAY?

"I'm keen to understand how flexibility and smart grids will be used to improve the ability to connect large and small-scale connection. We're looking at a local community scheme." **Environmental group**

"I'm here representing the Country Land and Business Association. It's good to keep in with all the movers and shakers in the industry and useful to have a broad view of what's going on outside the narrow agricultural and land industry. In my industry, diversification is big deal, so we need to know about grants and where to look at alternative income sources." **Business customer**

"We supply protection equipment for electricity lines. I want to learn about the transition to DSO and the innovation / technology you're looking at." **Storage and renewables provider / installer**

"I'm very interested in others' views on the future of energy. As a close follower of the energy industry, I find it a struggle to understand a lot of it so I'm very interested in how people who aren't involved in the industry are able to engage with the sector and understand all these techy and intangible things as part of the co-creation WPD are delivering." **Government**

"I'm from Electricity North West, which is the DNO for the North West. We are also going through the RIIO-ED2 process at the moment, so it would be great to get further insight into how other DNOs are approaching it." **Utility**

"I do consultation work with climate change bodies and charities to support disadvantaged groups and push forward thinking around the transition to DSO. I want to find out how we can help WPD to engage with vulnerable groups." **Local authority**

“I work in the decarbonisation and energy division for the Welsh Government. I’m the lead in marine and network policy. My role is working with stakeholders to support your plan and to ensure the grid is fit for purpose in Wales.” **Government**

“I’m an account manager for a few DNOs. We have frameworks with WPD for delivering voltage control works at primary substations in the main. I’m eager to learn about WPD’s plans for ED2 and for the future.” **Developer**

“I’m a councillor. My interest is to find out more about energy generation from an environmentally friendly point of view and community generation, in terms of how individuals can contribute.” **Local authority**

“I work with Kier Utilities, a large supplier for WPD. We want to get a view of the Business Plan. We want to align and be a key part of delivering shared ambitions. I’m interested in the new future around Covid and in keeping the home connected.” **Storage and renewables provider / installer**

“We’ve got a strategy for delivering low-emission vehicles, and numerous pieces of infrastructure that we want to put in throughout the region. This financial year, it includes taxi chargers, and next year it will involve around 140 public 7 kW chargers. We’re also looking at buses and HGVs. We need to work closely with WPD so that we can spend money within the timescales and deliver the infrastructure we need.” **Local authority**

“I work for EDF energy. I’m learning more about the industry and distribution. It’s important for me to know what the Business Plan is for the future, especially with Covid. It’s good to get an understanding of the DNO mentality.” **Utility**

“I’m in planning services. I’m dealing with Developments of National Significance, and we’ve got three. We’re at different stages of the process, so I’m here to see how things are progressing in terms of the network. We’ll need to feed in.” **Local authority**

“I work for a housing association, so I’m interested in new connections and sustainability. My role is in development and new schemes, so I’m interested in electric heating, the strain on the system, when it gets upgraded, and who pays for it. I’m also interested in fuel poverty and renewables.” **to Fuel poor / vulnerable customer**

“I’m keen to see generation opportunities and battery storage opportunities in South Wales. There have been some issues getting battery storage connected in South Wales.” **Developer**

“I’m an environmental consultant. I’m interested in consent and the planning regime for new connections and the drive towards Net Zero.” **Energy consultant**

“I work for an IDNO and want to discuss vulnerable customers and the importance of getting them back on supply.” **Developer**

“We want to build sustainable communities. We’re interested in developing a more flexible network. Also, we’re interested in the impact on the landscape.” **Local authority**

“I work in smart energy solutions and I’m interested in seeing how data is used to build smarter systems, so I’m interested in WPD’s transition to a DSO.” **Business customer**

“Electric vehicle charging and the sustainable sector.” **Local authority**

“Covid has shown how essential the electricity network is, so reliability and vulnerable customers are particularly important to me today.” **Local authority**

“In terms of car take-up and usage, but also giving back to the grid, it would be useful to get an update on how it’s worked and what the benefits are, and whether you’re still looking at those types of issues.” **Local authority**

HAS COVID CHANGED YOUR PRIORITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF WPD?

“I haven’t expected any change. The fact of working from home means my expectations of all utility providers has been in sharper focus. You should be applauded for the fact that there have been no glitches even though there has been a massive change with massive numbers of people now working home, as well as the difference in the way you yourselves are working, with many of your staff working from home too.” **Business customer**

“The lines of communication are suffering. We’ve always had good relationships with WPD, but lately it has been a nightmare to contact WPD and maintain contact.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“Applications for connections did go quiet post-2017 when subsidies stopped for new schemes, certainly for solar. There’s quite a lot in the news at the moment on developers and funds. After the first wave of Covid, interest has gone back up, so I’d say it is going to get busier.” **Developer**

“I remember how busy it used to be before A&D fees came in. There are fewer developers now, but the fees have caused a lot of focus. That’s why we really appreciate the datasets, for example, all the substation and network information, which allows us to make our own calculations and decide where to go next.” **Developer**

“I think that vulnerability is changing and increasing due to Covid. More people are becoming fuel poor, as there is greater job insecurity.” **Utility**

“I would say that we have an opportunity to make things smarter and strengthen partnerships to overcome wider issues. We must seize opportunities to build back greener in the wake of Covid.”

Local authority

“Covid has really made things difficult for isolated and vulnerable groups in my community. However, people are forming their own groups to overcome the challenges thrown up and are doing really well. That said, planning tends to miss these types of vulnerable people out, so work needs to pick them up.”

Local authority

“Initially our issue was not being able to visit clients. We can now do this and carry on as we were. We have a clear Covid assessment. We’re doing everything to stay safe and keep our clients safe.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“My role hasn’t changed much. We’ve started working from home. I’m more involved in resilience. If there’s an issue because of Covid, we’re in touch with the networks to understand whether going into circuit breakers is causing an issue. Keeping those lines open is a bigger part of my work than usual. Normally we just respond in the event of bad weather.”

Government

“As far as Covid, everything was delayed, so everything’s going through at the same time.”

Local authority



6 | SESSION ONE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER

CUSTOMER SERVICE

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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. One stakeholder commented that during the first Covid-19 lockdown, it was hard to get through to WPD representatives by telephone, although it was noted that this has now been resolved.

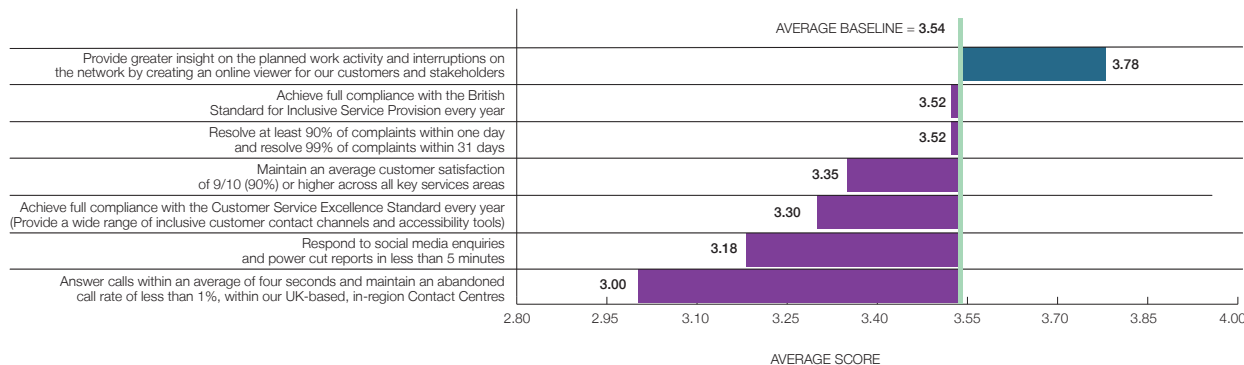
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with the previous feedback that WPD already performs highly in this area. There was, however, some discussion as to whether WPD should strive to maintain this given that the room for improvement is now small and therefore increasingly costly. In addition, increased electrification may lead to a surge in demand and therefore increase the pressure on achieving these high standards of customer service. Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD should prioritise improving information provided during planned power cuts.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing from the outputs, one stakeholder wanted to see the Customer Service outputs reference the provision of data. Another said that good customer service must also include clear communication with industrial customers about upcoming opportunities and challenges. Stakeholders wanted simple jargon-free targets that benchmark WPD against other DNOs. As a priority area, the outputs under Customer Service ranked on average lowest out of all priority areas – at 3.38 / 5 – and several outputs saw a proportion of stakeholders wanting WPD to 'do less'. However, the provision of greater insight on planned work activity and interruptions ranked higher than the baseline average (3.78 / 5), meaning stakeholders wanted to see WPD do more on planned power cuts. Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to some of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

Customer Service Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“It’s always useful to see where WPD stands in the league table. Have simple but meaningful targets free of jargon so people who aren’t in the industry can see what you’re doing.” **Business customer**

“I think from a customer and professional perspective that WPD are very good from a customer satisfaction point of view.” **Business customer**

“WPD should include the data they provide under Customer Service too.” **Developer**

“The pandemic has highlighted the need for the domestic supply to be reliable and high quality in terms of service.” **Business customer**

“On the business side I feel that all these DNOs are very similar in terms of communications and customer service.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“I think in terms of emerging issues, more people are working from home now so it’s important not to have power outages.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“During the first Covid lockdown there was definitely a period where it was difficult to get through on the phone, when a lot of your people started working from home. But it definitely feels like it’s back up and running now so that’s good.” **Developer**

OUTPUTS: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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

One stakeholder felt it was very important that WPD maintains its high level of customer satisfaction. However, another noted that at such a high level there is a law of diminishing returns, so to be able to make a judgement they wanted more information. This range of views was perhaps illustrated in the online voting where this output was ranked lower than the average baseline at 3.35 / 5. An industrial customer highlighted that, for them, good customer service is about open channels of communication on upcoming opportunities and challenges, which differs from domestic customers’ expectations of good customer service.

“It’s hard to argue with that, because WPD is one of the leaders in customer service if last year’s figures are anything to go by. It would be disastrous if it were lower.” **Energy consultant**

“There’s a law of diminishing returns once you get to the levels you’re talking about, so without knowing the figures involved it’s difficult to know if that should change or not.” **Business customer**

“As an industrial customer, good customer service also means maintaining open lines of communication about changes as well as opportunities that are coming up.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

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

Stakeholders had similar comments to the previous outputs where they recognised it was hard to go backwards, but also that the bar was now very high due to the strong current performance and that any further improvement must be balanced with increased cost to the customer. This output scored just under the average baseline with 3.52 / 5, with the majority (65%) feeling WPD had got the right level of ambition. One stakeholder stressed the importance of having complaint targets for ED2 that provide for the impact of increased electrification in future, rather than merely basing them on current performance metrics.

“How does this reflect the impact on customers you expect post 2023? For example, if you think you’ll have to increase the amount of connections due to everyone getting electric vehicles, have you considered the fact that complaints will increase or are you assuming they will stay the same?”
Business customer

“If you ask customers if they want us to respond to their complaints more slowly the answer will be no, but if you ask them if they are happy with this much money being spent on it they might say no. Having achieved those figures, it would be hard to go backwards.” **Business customer**

“You’ve got such a high bar that any improvement here will be small.” **Business customer**

WE WILL AIM TO MEET ALL GUARANTEED STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCES

One stakeholder requested that failures be presented as a percentage, so it is clearer what they mean. This output was not included in the online poll as it is a regulatory requirement.

“On the guaranteed standards for performance, there are 18 failures. What is that out of? How do you calibrate that? It might make sense to have a target as a percentage, which would be clearer than what you’ve got now.” **Government**

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)

Stakeholders did not raise any specific points in relation to this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll this output ranked slightly lower than the baseline average with 3.3 / 5 and the majority (74%) answering that WPD has the right level of ambition.

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

Stakeholders did not raise any specific points in relation to this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll, it received 3.52, just under the baseline average.

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

Although this output received some support during the breakout discussions, it scored lowest out of the outputs for Customer Service with an average score of 3 / 5 – meaning on average stakeholders thought it was the right level of ambition. In fact, 13% of stakeholders felt WPD should ‘do less’ or ‘do a lot less’ than the stated target.

“The one about answering calls in a few seconds is a good one. The targets are achievable but set a good standard to meet.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“With most connection queries we definitely use the social media side of things much less. We prefer to use the phone.” **Developer**

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

Stakeholders did not raise any specific points in relation to this output during the breakout sessions, except for the stakeholder above who commented they were more likely to communicate with WPD by telephone rather than by social media. This was reflected in the online poll, where this output was ranked second lowest out of those for Customer Service with 3.18 / 5. Views were split, however, with 18% wanting WPD to ‘do less’, 59% saying it was the right level and 23% wanting them to ‘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

This output ranked highest among those for Customer Service, and higher than the baseline average for all outputs with 3.78 / 5. In fact, 60% answered that they wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area. However, despite this, stakeholders did not provide comment on this output during the breakout discussions.

CUSTOMER VULNERABILITY

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders felt that the Covid-19 pandemic would lead to an increase in vulnerabilities and concern was expressed that existing agencies would be less able to support these customers during the pandemic, particularly for those that were self-isolating. 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. In that connection, it was noted that the full impact of the pandemic, particularly on fuel poverty, is yet to be seen.

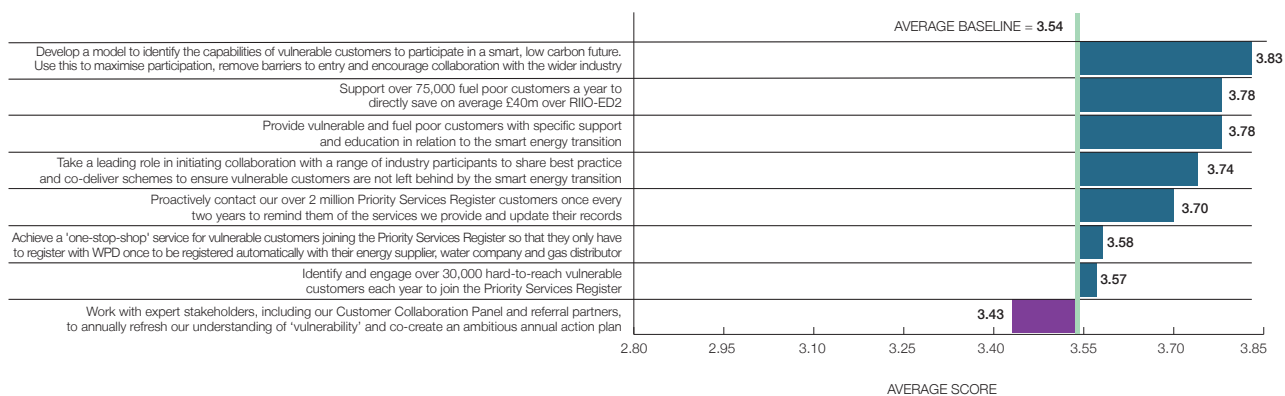
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous stakeholder feedback on power cut vulnerability, including that the PSR needs to be kept updated and that there is a need for a single register to avoid customers having to register multiple times with different utilities. They also agreed that WPD should address fuel poverty and that the importance of doing so has only increased in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, they urged WPD to protect vulnerable customers in the transition to a smart network by collaborating with industry partners and educating customers to ensure that they are not left behind.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders expressed support for the Customer Vulnerability outputs. In terms of what was missing, one asked about the role smart meters could play by providing data to help WPD support vulnerable customers. As a priority area, Customer Vulnerability ranked third in South Wales in the online poll with an average score across all outputs of 3.68 / 5 – demonstrating the level of importance stakeholders assigned to this area and that they wanted to see WPD do more to support those that are vulnerable. In fact, not one respondent answered 'do less' or 'do a lot less' for any of the outputs for Customer Vulnerability. All outputs were ranked above the baseline average except for one, which relates to WPD annually refreshing its understanding of 'vulnerability'.

Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“Does WPD have targets for smart metering? Perhaps this could be a vehicle for helping vulnerable people in society by using the data in an intelligent way.” **Government**

“With vulnerability, sadly this pandemic has affected people who were just about coping but are now losing jobs.” **Business customer**

“As a result of the current issues we’re all facing, some people may be pushed into the vulnerable category. I was pleased to see that WPD has risen to the challenge post Covid and made provisions for this.” **Business customer**

“Clients are less likely to have a good support network during Covid.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

OUTPUTS: POWER CUT VULNERABILITY

A couple of stakeholders commented on the power cut vulnerability outputs as a whole, with one commending them but another stating they were too macro and wanting to drill down into what this means on the ground.

“All of the power cut vulnerability measures are very commendable, but I worry that the focus is too much at a macro level. As a result, I don’t really know how WPD intends to help or engage at a local level.”

Local authority

“All four outputs are broadly right and seem to capture the important idea of a reliable supply.”

Developer

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 supported this output, but several wanted there to be more granularity to ensure WPD is prioritising contacting the most vulnerable as part of the data cleanse. Just under half (48%) felt WPD had got the right level of ambition, although just over half (52%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’.

“Is there a way of identifying the most vulnerable within those 2 million and ensuring that they are contacted first? In other words, are there subcategories of extremely vulnerable?”

Government

“I like this output, but there should be more granularity to it.”

Local authority

“The PSR is of great importance. Service interruption would be devastating for some vulnerable groups. The two-year follow-up is important to ensure registers passed to you are kept up-to-date.”

Vulnerable customer representative

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

Stakeholders very much supported the concept of a shared PSR so vulnerable customers can avoid having to sign up to multiple lists. That said, one stakeholder expressed concern that it would lead to multiple calls from different utilities in an emergency. Another wanted to ensure that data sharing was automated to improve efficiency. The largest proportion (58%) felt WPD had got the level of ambition right for this output.

“I think that this output is great and highly suitable. Everyone is asking for it.”

Local authority

“The one-stop-shop is really important, as people don’t instinctively sign up to a PSR for every single utility. Anything that is shared will be good.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“Even though streamlining data sharing is good, you don’t want four phone calls from separate utilities in an emergency so don’t go too far the other way.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“I’ve noticed that the data-sharing process is done manually. Can this be automated? A manual approach is time-consuming and can be prone to errors.”

Local authority

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

Stakeholders also liked this output, although it was noted Covid would make engaging with the hard-to-reach even harder, particularly those self-isolating. 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. This output was actually ranked second lowest for Customer Vulnerability by stakeholders during the online poll with an average score of 3.57 – just above the baseline. Most (57%) felt the level of ambition was right.

“I like this output. WPD assists us with the Power Up scheme in Cardiff and that helps us to reach more vulnerable customers. Anything to push further forward would be great.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“Covid has likely changed the scope of this output, as self-isolation caused by Covid is exacerbating the situation for many people in isolated communities. Extra work is required to reach them.” **Utility**

“Often people don’t realise they’re vulnerable. Can this be done automatically? For example, if someone gets Covid or another disease?” **Government**

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

This output ranked lowest for this priority area in the online poll, just below the average baseline with 3.43 / 5 and 65% of stakeholders confirming WPD had got the level of ambition right. This was reflected in the fact that most stakeholders did not discuss it in the breakout sessions, aside from one who wanted the annual action plan to include supporting vulnerable customers with their old appliances.

“If there’s a power cut and then the supply is restored, appliances often can’t be switched back on easily if they’re old. Could the action plan be expanded to provide support with this? That would be useful.” **Local authority**

OUTPUTS: FUEL POVERTY

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, which would throw many more people into fuel poverty. Stakeholders wanted to see a suitably ambitious target, although many commented they did not know what proportion of WPD's customers were fuel poor and therefore felt unable to assess whether these draft targets were reasonable. One stakeholder reminded WPD that the definition of fuel poverty was different in Wales than it was in England. The strength of support for this work was mirrored in the result of the online polling which ranked this output joint second highest under Customer Vulnerability with an average of 3.78 / 5. 60% of stakeholders wanted WPD to be more ambitious, and of these, 17% wanted WPD to 'do a lot more'.

"What proportion of WPD's population will benefit from this scheme? How many fuel poor customers are there?" **Local authority**

"It's good that the level of support is going up and this new target is challenging, which is laudable." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"Fuel poverty is defined differently between England and Wales, which doesn't help. WPD needs to bear this mind." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"People will be losing jobs and will be becoming more isolated. They will also be spending more time at home and using far more fuel." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"I agree that this is a sensible move in the right direction, and it is suitably ambitious. However, I'm not sure that the effects of Covid have been fully felt yet, as we are only at the beginning of winter and the economic repercussions have not fully kicked in." **Local authority**

"It's very challenging to put a sensible benchmark down for fuel poor initiatives, as we don't really know the true numbers." **Local authority**

"It's obscene that people in the worst circumstances pay the most for energy. You need to do whatever you can to reduce the burden of energy bills." **Local authority**

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

Only one stakeholder commented on this output, stating that they would not know what sort of target to recommend but that perhaps it should be a nationwide one. Despite the lack of discussion, this output ranked highest in the online poll for Customer Service, demonstrating that stakeholders recognised the scale of the challenge of getting the smart future right for vulnerable customers. It scored 3.83 / 5, with 65% wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

"It's hard to come up with the targets under this smart future category. I think there should be a nationwide target. As for specific targets, I'm not sure." **Developer**

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 agreed that industry collaboration was key here and that WPD was in a position to take a leading role. In the online poll, most stakeholders (56%) wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

"I like this output, as we really need more collaboration across industries and intermediaries. It would be great to be able to tap into funding together as part of partnerships. Then you can make a real difference and help to alleviate fuel poverty long term." **Local authority**

"What is it that people want to achieve and who are the service providers who could help them get there? WPD could help by bringing different parties together." **Developer**

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

Stakeholders expressed support for educating vulnerable and fuel poor customers on smart energy initiatives. This included educating customers on smart meters, as it was felt they had an important role to play, as well as on how to make the most of other new devices in the home. Prepayment meters were also singled out as a potential opportunity so long as customers were not charged more for their energy as they help them to budget. The strength of support for this output was mirrored in the result of the online polling, where it ranked joint second highest under Customer Vulnerability with an average of 3.78 / 5. Most (57%) wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

"This output is important, but the challenge lies with suppliers. Smart meters can assist behavioural change and smart energy use, but the whole system is a bit of a mess. There needs to be more collaboration at the supply level. WPD could help to coordinate this." **Local authority**

"There are all kinds of devices in people's homes now that people don't know how to deal with. There's an education job there that WPD can get involved with." **Local authority**

"I think that an educational piece could help here, as smart meters can act as a gateway to a smarter future." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"We come across a proportion of clients that prefer prepayment meters as it allows them to budget. They shouldn't be charged more for energy because of this." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"We need to reach out to customers more and educate them about smart energy initiatives." **Local authority**

"Those on meters also suffered during Covid. Work was done to ensure that people had access to the energy credit they required." **Government**

SOCIAL CONTRACT

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders did not comment on whether Covid-19 had impacted priorities in this area, although one suggested that local authority data on customers that are shielding be cross-referenced with the data on the Priority Services Register.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with the previous feedback received that the production of a Social Contract is important – particularly given the number of customers WPD has. However, it was noted by one stakeholder that WPD probably does many of these activities anyway. Another wanted to know how the Social Contract differs in England compared to Wales.

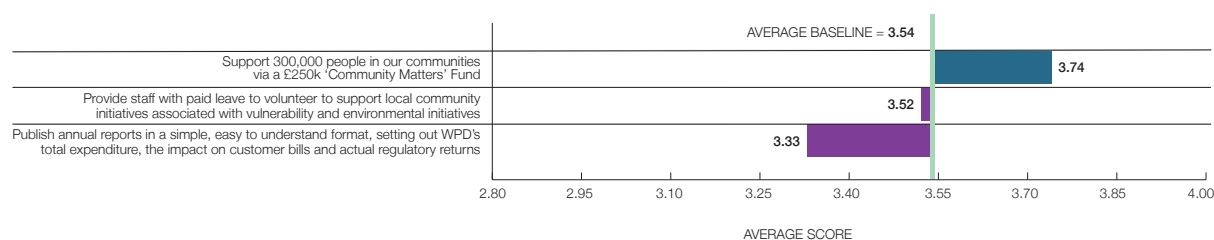
COMMITMENTS FOR THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

This session also included a question on what commitments should be included in the upcoming draft Social Contract. There did not appear to be any particular themes raised, with different stakeholders focusing on different areas. Local authorities were particularly interested in the role WPD could play regionally, urging them to get more involved in the development of local energy plans and planning policy. Other areas stakeholders were interested in included: transparent reporting; demonstrating WPD is a diverse, responsible employer; positive outcomes for customers in vulnerable situations; and community / environmental benefits. One stakeholder said that while the components appeared right, it was more a case of how they are implemented.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

The conversations then turned to the proposed outputs for the next Business Plan. Stakeholders did not think any areas were missing from the outputs. One stakeholder 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 polling, Social Contract came out middle among the priority areas with an average of 3.53 / 5. The output relating to the 'Community Matters' Fund scored highly in the online poll, with 3.74 / 5. However, the output relating to the publication of annual reports was ranked much lower at 3.33 / 5.

Social Contract Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“What’s there in the Social Contract makes sense but how does it link between different parts of the UK, for example between Wales and England?” **Government**

“I agree with the components, but it’s a question of how they’re implemented.” **Local authority**

“WPD should have a Social Contract. You serve over 20 million customers. You probably do a lot of this stuff anyway.” **Local authority**

COMMITMENTS FOR THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

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

TRANSPARENT REPORTING

Stakeholders urged WPD to ensure whatever is published is done so in simple language and whatever they decide to do is checked with the customer to ensure it meets their understanding of transparency. One stakeholder wanted to see connections customers notified about changing charges.

“Transparency means different things to different people. Whatever you decide to do, the key thing is to go back to customers and ask whether it is transparent.” **Local authority**

“It would be nice to have a set schedule where new connectees are notified about changing charges. To me, it’s not transparent.” **Utility**

“With the language, it shouldn’t be too technical so people can understand.” **Local authority**

DEMONSTRATING WPD IS A DIVERSE, RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER

Stakeholders wanted to see WPD commit to taking on graduates as part of activities to develop staff, such as mentoring schemes.

“We’ve got a scheme going on where we fit graduates into roles, and WPD could commit to taking on graduates.” **Local authority**

“We have a board in our office where we advertise communal activities, e.g., mentoring, more female mentors, etc.” **Utility**

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CUSTOMERS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

One stakeholder wanted WPD to support those agencies that help the vulnerable, particularly given the surge in demand post Covid. Another noted that the Social Contract should seek to support those customers who are vulnerable but may not be eligible for support, for example for replacing gas boilers.

“Anything WPD can do to help organisations helping the vulnerable is very welcome. The demand on Citizens Advice has been huge since Covid.” **Local authority**

“A lot of vulnerable customers have boilers over 20 years old. A lot of people are not eligible, so the Social Contract should encompass users in the grey area.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT / BENEFITS

One stakeholder commented that WPD should work with stakeholders to see whether there can be an alignment to drive community benefits.

“It is a case of working together to see if there are community benefits that can be aligned.” **Local authority**

PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE REGIONALLY

Stakeholders, particularly local authorities, supported WPD playing a more active role regionally. They wanted WPD to get more involved in the development of energy plans, as well as support local authorities with innovation funding. They also wanted more information on network capacity to help local authorities make decisions on which schemes to bring forward, while at the same time simplifying the connections process by aligning their network planning with local authority boundaries. One stakeholder wanted to see WPD get more involved in the planning process.

“We have got a new energy plan and WPD should be involved. Also, with your innovation fund, we need to collaborate when we are looking for R&D and innovation.” **Local authority**

“In terms of connections it would be good if your network aligned with local authority boundaries to make it simple for us. Most of the time we’re doing things quickly and we don’t have time to put a long process in place.” **Local authority**

“The information is probably there, but it’s having more engagement with the different regions in terms of where you think the capacity should be coming forward so when we’re looking at different schemes, we can see where it fits into the wider network.” **Local authority**

“WPD should tell government what it is that’s required to see whether the planning process needs changes.” **Local authority**

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the discussions. In the online polling, this output ranked lowest in this area with 3.33 / 5, which is also lower than the baseline average. Most stakeholders (63%) felt WPD had got the right level of ambition, but 8% of them actually wanted to see WPD ‘do less’ or ‘do a lot less’ in this area.

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

Stakeholders expressed support for this output, although one wanted to ensure the fund was reaching the right people. It was the output that received most support in this area in the online polling, with 3.74 / 5, and 56% wanting to see WPD ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’.

“I think it’s good. However, is the outreach going to the right people? How are you advertising the fund?” **Utility**

“I’m interested as I run a soup kitchen. I was interested in seeing who could apply. It’s one thing councillors are keen on; they want to make sure their communities aren’t missing out.” **Local authority**

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 during the discussion. Moreover, it was 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

One stakeholder commented on this output, stating that it was not specific enough. They suggested including a target of a certain amount of volunteering hours which would enable WPD to measure success. In the online poll, this output scored just below the baseline average at 3.52 / 5. The majority (48%) felt WPD had got the right level of ambition, although 9% did want to see WPD ‘do less’.

“That’s a good thing. Lots of organisations are doing it. But as an output, it’s not specific so we don’t know how many staff or how much leave the organisation would be willing to allocate. Volunteering hours might be a quantifiable way of measuring this.” **Local authority**

CONNECTIONS

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 Connections.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders strongly agreed with previous feedback that availability of information needed to be improved. They also agreed that WPD should engage closely with local authorities to understand capacity requirements at a local level. No comments were raised in terms of other areas of previous stakeholder feedback.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders identified several areas that they felt were missing from the draft outputs. The first was about the accuracy of the connections offer, particularly relating to cost. The other main area was in terms of engagement with local authorities; stakeholders felt that this should include engagement with developers and with community energy groups as well. In terms of developers, some felt it would be useful to be able to get an indication of capacity and estimated connection cost without having to go through a formal connections process to be able to properly value a piece of land.

Stakeholders did not suggest any targets or performance measures for these outputs. Only two stakeholders voted in the online poll for this priority area, therefore, given the small sample size, the results have not been included. However, the weight of the discussion was about engaging with local authorities and local enterprise partnerships to understand their requirements for strategic investment, so it could be assumed that the corresponding output was most important for stakeholders. Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

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 agreed with the need to improve the availability of information, although one did comment that WPD's capacity data is already more robust than that of some other DNOs. Stakeholders wanted to see curtailment information included as part of the available information recognising opportunities for Active Network Management. One stakeholder felt the Energy Data Hub would be useful here. Another requested capacity information at substation level.

"Energy Data Hub information could be useful as part of this process." **Developer**

"I would like to see more information around curtailment reports for Active Network Management. Simply having the most recent one to hand before the offer stage would be great." **Developer**

"If I had information about the curtailment amount throughout the year and peak months for it, that would be perfect." **Developer**

"Information needs to be far more readily available." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"The mapping doesn't show whether there is capacity on a given substation and then where the cost will be proportioned if upgrades are required." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"In terms of generation in general and the data we can get from WPD, WPD is quite helpful, because you can export the data from the capacity maps online. We run calculations using that data and WPD's data is more robust than some of the other DNOs." **Developer**

PROVIDE NEW CONNECTIONS QUOTATIONS AND ENERGISATION IN LINE WITH CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

One stakeholder requested that connections offers include accurate pricing information and that costs do not escalate once more detailed surveys are undertaken. Another wanted to see fibre optic connections made to microwave towers. If new applications and offer processes are put in place, another stakeholder wanted confirmation of what information would be available.

“An important element for me is to ensure that there could be fibre optic connections to microwave towers, so that there can be an option to switch off a connection if needs be.” **Developer**

“If there are new applications and offer processes it would be good to know what information is being made available.” **Developer**

“We don’t find the pricing data readily available, and when we ask for it, it takes a long time to come back, and then when someone actually goes and surveys the area, the price escalates a lot, and we haven’t budgeted for that. So, the pricing data needs to accurately represent the practical reality.” **Developer**

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

Whilst stakeholders supported this output and agreed that Local Development Plans should be the vehicle to identify areas for strategic network investment, it was clear that this output needed to be expanded to also include engagement with developers. Developers wanted to have the ability to get an indication of capacity and estimated connection cost without having to go through a formal connections process to be able to properly value allocated land in Local Plans. In fact, it was suggested Local Plans should also include potential capacity and upgrade requirements for development land. In addition, stakeholders felt if this information were available and there was a constrained network, it could facilitate discussions with community groups who could then look to deliver community energy projects.

“The Local Development Plan should be the avenue for local network planning. However, developers are very slow in realising their connections needs, or what upgrades they might need. They need more support from WPD here.” **Local authority**

“There should be stronger engagement to establish conversations earlier on so that both sides are clear about capacity needs.” **Local authority**

“The Local Development Plan doesn’t tell us how much capacity available and what costs are involved until later. If we had the information up front, it would affect the value of the land. You need to give us that kind of information upfront, as it is essential to us.” **Developer**

“I don’t think that a formal connections offer is always essential. Is there a way to get a simple and easy budget estimate on occasion?” **Developer**

“At the moment, Local Plans only show that there is physical space in an area for development, rather than the potential capacity or required upgrades.” **Developer**

“The deliverability of a development should be tested as part of the Local Development Plan. It could be a useful tool for further discussion about how communities could work together with the grid infrastructure. A more collaborative approach is possible.” **Local authority**

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 did not discuss this output during the discussions.

7 | SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK

NETWORK RELIABILITY

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 Network Reliability.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that keeping the lights on and quick restoration is a high priority and that WPD should seek continual improvement, in part because of the increased reliance on the network due to electrification. They agreed with tree management but wanted it to be done in a sensitive way. There was also recognition of the opportunity that digitalisation presents for improving network reliability.

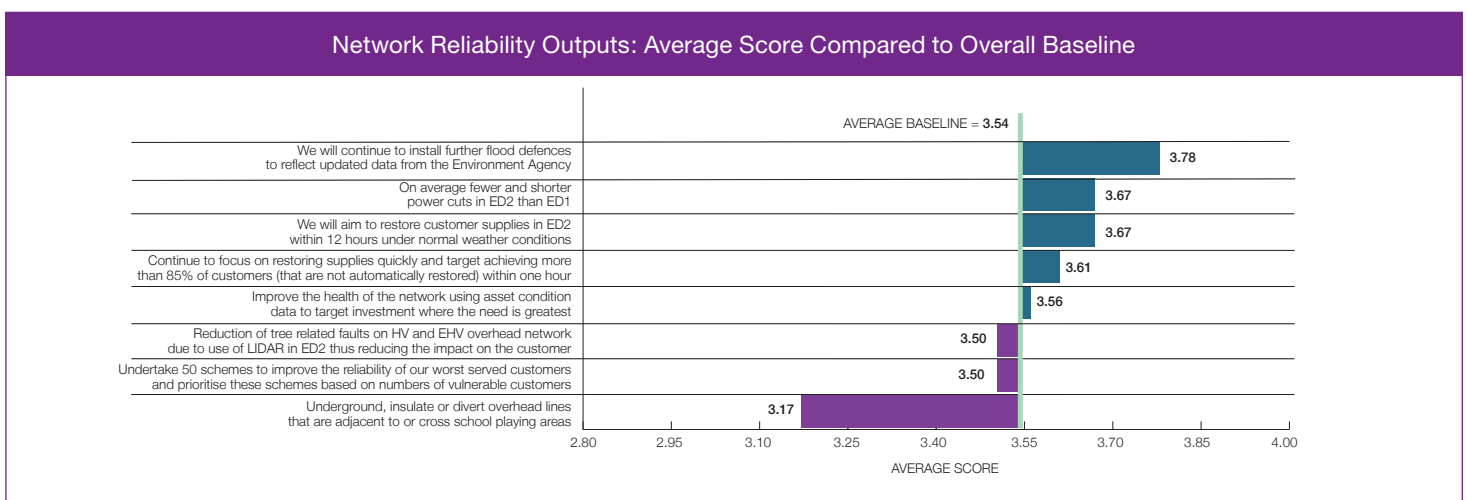
WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of performance measures and targets, in the online poll all three outputs relating to network performance were ranked above the baseline average, demonstrating that stakeholders wanted to see more ambition in this area. In addition, the installation of further flood defences scored highest in this area with an average of 3.78 / 5 and 61% of stakeholders wanting to see WPD go further in this area.

Several stakeholders pointed out the increasing importance of reliability as we move towards electrification as well as the reliance on broadband for all of our smart devices.

In terms of what was missing, there did not appear to be anything fundamental. However, several stakeholders wanted to see more granularity under some of the outputs, for example a focus on the difference in reliability between rural and urban networks, a focus on ash dieback as part of the tree maintenance programme and 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.

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



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

“The network is critical to all communities and the work to maintain it is clearly going well. It’s good that the goals are incrementally increasing and it’s great that things will be getting even better in the future.”

Local authority

“The link between DNOs and broadband providers will be even more critical now, as so many items are becoming smarter.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“Reliability needs to be thought of as more than just keeping the lights on now, as people are using more and more devices with homes becoming smarter. This means that the need for a reliable supply becomes even more critical.”

Vulnerable customer representative

OUTPUTS: NETWORK PERFORMANCE

ON AVERAGE FEWER AND SHORTER POWER CUTS IN ED2 THAN ED1

In the online poll, this output was joint second highest for this priority area (3.67 / 5), demonstrating that stakeholders felt it was very important and wanted WPD to display a high level of ambition. In fact, most stakeholders (55%) wanted to see WPD ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area. During the discussions, several stakeholders wanted to see more granularity in terms of urban versus rural areas as it was felt the latter currently suffers from a less reliable network. Another requested clarity on whether this output referred to planned or unplanned outages.

“The difference between rural and urban areas could do with some attention, as the latter will have greater numbers of power cuts.” **Utility**

“Are these planned or unplanned outages? Maybe some changing in the wording would help to clarify things here.” **Utility**

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

One stakeholder suggested having a tiered target for this output where WPD commits to restoring a proportion of the remaining 15% in a certain length of time. In the online poll, this output was ranked fourth for this priority area (3.61 / 5) – which is above the average baseline. Whilst 56% felt the level of ambition was right there was still a significant proportion (45%) that wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’.

“Is there a target for 95% of customers within two or three hours? A tiered approach? 85% is high, but it’s not very high, in that a lot of customers aren’t covered. You could have a second tier that captures more customers.” **Local authority**

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

In the online poll, this output was ranked joint second for this priority area with 3.67 / 5. Whilst most (56%) felt it was the right level of ambition, the remaining 44% wanted to see WPD ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’. This was reflected during the discussions where several stakeholders said they felt 12 hours was a long time. At the very least, it was felt there needs to be more back-up supply for these customers.

“There needs to be more back-up supply, so that customers feel more supported. Many of them are in very remote areas and 12 hours must be the absolute latest they have their power restored.” **Developer**

“12 hours seems like a long time. It made me wonder, if you have customers who are without power for a long time, what assistance is there for them?” **Local authority**

“Why would restoring supply take 12 hours under normal conditions?” **Developer**

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)

In general, there was support for this output including the use of LIDAR. However, several stakeholders wanted to ensure tree maintenance programmes would take place at the right time of year. They wanted the programme to be considerate, particularly when on agricultural land, and wanted a guarantee that works are cleared afterwards as one stakeholder had experienced flooding issues because of poor tree branch clearance. Others urged WPD to consider ash dieback, which was regarded as a national problem in Wales. Despite numerous comments, this output ranked third lowest in this area in the online polling – just under the baseline average. Half of stakeholders (50%) felt the level of ambition was right.

“It seems to me that there needs to be an ongoing programme. It doesn’t seem right to say you will complete the programme when trees keep growing.”
Energy consultant

“Ash dieback is a big issue here in Wales. This year has been really bad, with a lot of trees being infected. Once the trees die, they’re very brittle and will come down very quickly.” **Business customer**

“Please can you make sure you maintain your trees at a considerate time, for example, in summer not winter and not when the farmers need to be working on the land?” **Business customer**

“Once the trees have been cut, do the contractors take the branches away? We had some bad flooding in the valleys last year where people’s houses were flooded for the simple reason of branches being in the way.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“Tree management is important to me, so I like both of these outputs.” **Local authority**

“I’m assuming you’re taking ash dieback into account.” **Local authority**

“It’s good to hear you’re using LIDAR. It’s a quick way for you to get information.” **Local authority**

“Network Rail were guilty of cutting railway embankments at the wrong time of year a couple of years ago. I was looking for reassurance that you were doing things at the right time.” **Developer**

“Do you ever have difficulties with trees that are protected, particularly in urban areas?”
Vulnerable customer representative

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

This output was not discussed during the breakout sessions nor voted on during the online poll.

OUTPUTS: TARGETING INVESTMENT

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

Stakeholders supported this output, with recognition of the role that new technologies can play in improving the reliability of the network and reducing the number of power cuts. One stakeholder noted that whilst demand is increasing, there are also better tools to help DNOs better manage the network. One stakeholder thought it would be useful to see WPD benchmarked against other DNOs, particularly in terms of worst-served customers. This output ranked just slightly lower than the average benchmark with 3.56 / 5, and the majority (50%) felt it demonstrated the right level of ambition.

“I think there’s scope to improve the network. We have equipment to reduce short interruptions. With an automated fuse, when there’s a trip on the line, you can test the line to see if there’s an outstanding fault and if not, the fuse can be turned back on automatically.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“How is all this benchmarked against other energy distributors? I know you can’t compare network with network in a lot of areas, but it would be interesting to see if you can break down rankings per worst served areas, for example.” **Government**

“You’re getting more demand but you’re also getting more and better tools, so it should even out.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“If you have more data that means you could develop a digital twin that will give you greater visibility of the network performance and therefore respond to issues more quickly.” **Business customer**

“We’re working with UKPN and SSEN on an innovation project to detect faults on underground cables before they happen. Technologies out there are becoming useful; this may mitigate some outages for customers.” **Local authority**

“It’s hard to tell from these measures how much you are considering new technologies, working smartly and taking advantage of WPD becoming a DSO. It is important to leverage those capabilities.”

Business customer

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

Stakeholders commended WPD for their work and approach in this area but pointed out that there will always be worst served customers, so cautioned them on the language being used. One stakeholder urged WPD to engage with those worst served under consideration so they can collaborate. Several wanted to see rural vulnerability included under the definition of vulnerable customers as it was felt they are the ones with the worst resilience at the moment. This output ranked just slightly lower than the average benchmark and the same as the previous output under ‘targeted investment’, with 3.5 / 5. The majority (50%) felt it demonstrated the right level of ambition.

“Perhaps you should let people know that they are under consideration, especially if it is a hospital or care home. There should be an opportunity for feedback.” **Business customer**

“It’s commendable that WPD has reduced the number of worst served by 12,000, but you will always have worst served customers. Maybe there could be a rethink in the wording here? It currently is a bit misleading.” **Local authority**

“I agree that the schemes approach is definitely correct.” **Local authority**

“You referred to taking rural vulnerability into account. I don’t have any great concerns about your work in this area.” **Local authority**

“Most of our members are in the middle of nowhere or at the end of the line so any improvement to infrastructure is welcome.” **Business customer**

“People in rural areas need to have their resilience bolstered so they’re not disadvantaged.” **Local authority**

OUTPUTS: FLOOD DEFENCES

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

Stakeholders criticised this output for being too vague and not having measurable targets, although one felt flood defences should be installed on a case-by-case basis rather than WPD having to hit a specific number of assets. Another noted that the Environment Agency is in England, so this output needs to reflect the situation in Wales. Perhaps because of this feedback, this output ranked highest in this priority area, meaning that stakeholders wanted to see a greater level of ambition. On average it was ranked 3.78 / 5, with 61% wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

"It's worth pointing out that the Environment Agency is in England. You need to be considering a different organisation in Wales." **Energy consultant**

"It needs to be looked at on a case-by-case basis rather than a specific number of assets." **Energy consultant**

"This output seems vague and woolly compared to the previous output. This seems like an afterthought and not specific enough to be measurable." **Business customer**

"It's going to be difficult to measure the extent to which you've achieved it." **Business customer**

OUTPUTS: SAFE NETWORKS

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

Again, stakeholders felt this output was vague and would benefit from a measurable target. Several felt this needed to be agreed at the planning stage rather than having cables retrospectively undergrounded or diverted. This output ranked lowest for this priority area, coming significantly below the average baseline with 3.17 / 5. In fact, 17% wanted WPD to 'do less' in this area.

"It would be good to say whether this is going to benefit a certain number of customers. Again, it needs to be measurable." **Developer**

"The time to address this would be at planning stage. It would be great to liaise with local planning authorities more effectively to ensure that playing areas are not created under power lines." **Local authority**

"I agree. Even at the pre-planning phase, there should be a forward-looking focus and we should know what the developments will be. We should be considering having some input here." **Local authority**

BUSINESS IT SECURITY AND CYBER RESILIENCE

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders felt the Covid-19 pandemic had demonstrated the critical importance of contingency planning to address the unexpected, and therefore reinforced the importance of this priority area. One stakeholder noted that any disaster recovery plans would need to include a contingency for critical staff who fall ill or have to self-isolate as a result of the pandemic. Another noted WPD should have a disaster recovery plan for Covid itself.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

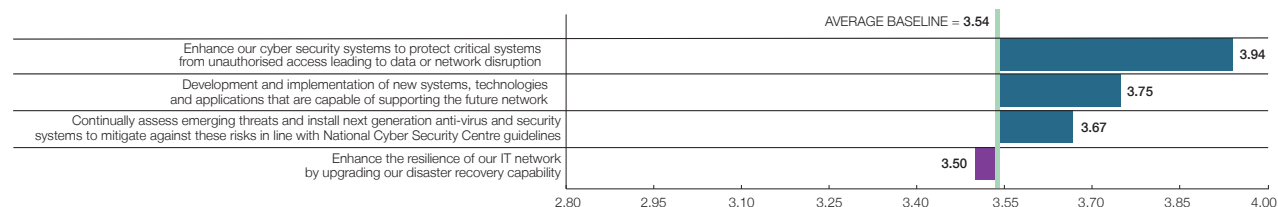
Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that network security and resilience are becoming more important as society increasingly relies on electricity. One agreed that the only target should be 100% resistance to cyber-attacks. They also agreed with the importance of disaster recovery, particularly having learnt the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

It was felt that the outputs in this area were lacking in targets, with various suggestions of how to measure performance, including achieving industry standards or getting appropriate accreditations. Overall, stakeholders felt these outputs were of critical importance and wanted to see WPD do more in this area – in fact, Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience ranked second highest of all the Business Plan priority areas with an average of 3.71 / 5. The output 'enhance our cyber security systems to protect critical systems from unauthorised access' was ranked second highest across all outputs. In terms of what was missing, several stakeholders stressed the importance of protecting customer data (including on the Priority Services Register) as well as the network itself. One stakeholder suggested a cyber security campaign educating customers on protecting their homes and smart meters.

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

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 3](#)

“WPD could run a campaign on this. People get worried about cyber security and their homes being hacked into, so your campaign could focus on cyber security for customers in the move to DSO.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

OUTPUTS: ENHANCING CYBER SECURITY

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

Stakeholders strongly supported 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. This was reflected in the online poll where this output ranked second highest among all draft Business Plan outputs with 3.94 / 5. 75% of stakeholders wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area. Stakeholders did feel, however, that this output needed to include some measurable targets. One suggested targeting different levels of security standards, although another said the only acceptable target would be zero cyber-attacks.

"Given the criticality of power distribution to wider society, work must definitely be put in to protect critical systems from cyber-attacks." **Local authority**

"The issue is that it is a bit of an unknown. How do you quantify this? What kind of target can you put down to measure it?" **Developer**

"Are there different grade levels of security and resilience that you could strive to achieve? I'm looking at these outputs under cyber security and disaster recovery and they look a bit vague. You've got 'continually assess x' and 'enhance y' but what are the benchmarks?" **Government**

"The current situation has shown that while we've all done our contingency planning, it's actually needed in practice now. That's particularly relevant to cyber security because an unforeseen event could bring everything down." **Business customer**

"The only acceptable target is that there is no unauthorised access leading to disruption." **Local authority**

"I worry about data fraud. Anything that can be done to protect customer information and staff data security is key." **Developer**

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 threats are on the increase. It was noted that WPD will need to continually review and adapt to the changing types of threats they face. Several expressed concern about the security of information held by WPD, with particular reference to the Priority Services Register. As with the previous output, stakeholders wanted more exacting targets, with one suggesting a target of meeting industry standards or achieving an accreditation. This output was ranked 3.67 / 5 – higher than the baseline average – with a fairly even split of 53% feeling the level of ambition was right and 47% wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

"Data security is particularly important with the PSR, as you have information about vulnerable people." **Vulnerable customer representative**

"As network providers, we sometimes forget how much information we hold, and these levels of data will only increase as systems get smarter." **Developer**

"It's a case of focusing on constantly responding to the next plan that these criminals are coming up with. It's difficult as this is a reactive process. However, it's necessary, as this type of crime is only on the increase." **Developer**

"As a products-based company, we're continually trying to keep up with trends on how much cyber security is correct. We look to adapt to different comms systems and things customers are using. It's a challenge to marry new technologies with older parts of the network." **Local authority**

"Do these outputs include ISO standards and essentials that you must meet? It's something that some of your supply chain has: accreditation of cyber essentials." **Storage and renewables provider / installer**

OUTPUTS: DISASTER RECOVERY AND FUTURE-PROOFING

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

Several stakeholders raised Covid-19 as an example of a disaster that requires contingency planning by businesses, including WPD, for example, disaster recovery plans to support the transition to working from home but also plans to maintain the network if staff members who are involved in disaster recovery fall ill or have to self-isolate. As with the other outputs in this area, stakeholders felt the output was vague and needed some measurable targets. One stakeholder asked whether WPD has a disaster recovery site as part of its disaster recovery capability. Despite the relative importance assigned to this output in the discussions, in the online poll it did rank slightly below the baseline average at 3.5 / 5. Most stakeholders (56%) felt the level of ambition was right, although the remaining 44% did want to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

"Disaster recovery is maybe one area where Covid would need to be a feature. Think of maintaining the IT network where staff might be ill or self-isolating."
Local authority

"It would be nice to see a target as it's a bit woolly."
Local authority

"In terms of KPIs, look at the number of people in the organisation versus the number of people using laptops or desktops. You can clearly see the gaps in terms of who can work from home."
Utility

"Do you have a disaster recovery site if the site you're using breaks down?"
Utility

"I think contingency planning has become heightened with Covid, and the pandemic has sensitised people to the reality of these kind of black swan situations."
Government

"Covid has highlighted how businesses need to get with the times. It's amazing that there's no set structure nationally on defining disaster recovery. It could be a definition by the industry. Energy is right as the top of the security list in terms of terrorism. More stringent guidelines are needed."
Utility

"We have a pandemic plan, so transitioning to working from home wasn't too difficult as we have laptops. My brother works in the civil service and there was no plan."
Utility

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. Despite this, it ranked second for the outputs in this priority area with 3.75 / 5 – with 57% wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

WORKFORCE RESILIENCE

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders 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.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed 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. They did not provide much comment on the previous feedback in terms of inclusivity and diversity.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders felt that the headline outputs covered everything required but wanted more granularity underneath. Rather than suggesting targets or performance measures, stakeholders proposed a series of activities under each output for what WPD can do to help achieve them. The only thing that was felt to be missing was more of an emphasis on digital methods. 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.

Stakeholders did not vote on these outputs after the session in the online poll so there is no data to demonstrate whether they felt the outputs expressed the right level of ambition. However, stakeholders spent most time discussing how to 'ensure that WPD is the employer of choice' and how to 'maintain a healthy, happy and motivated workforce' – indicating that those were the outputs deemed most important.

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

"I think as headlines the outputs cover everything. It's then about the objectives and measures underneath."
Business customer

"I would agree with that. They're pretty broad. Something more digitalised would be better, possibly."
Business customer

"I think they're about right."
Energy / utility

OUTPUTS

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

Stakeholders felt that the most effective way of achieving this would be to 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. Stakeholders did not vote in the online poll for the outputs in this session.

"Use the latest technologies, such as by creating an avatar so you can go into colleges and schools and try to attract young people on their level."
Business customer

"It probably relies now on word of mouth saying 'WPD are a good company and a protected industry'."
Business customer

"It's probably targeted and frequent exposure within the education system that needs to happen. Just letting people know that the option is there as early as possible."
Business customer

"Awareness and perception of the industry is important as WPD are very hidden. As a monopoly, it's not like WPD is a big brand that everybody knows."
Energy / utility

"For me, it's working in schools. Energy UK have said you need to engage with career advisors, teachers, etc., to influence children's career choices."
Energy / utility

IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OF OUR WORKFORCE

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the surgery session and did not vote in the online poll for the outputs in this session.

INCREASE THE STEM PIPELINE

Stakeholders 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. Stakeholders did not vote in the online poll for the outputs in this session.

“I think we covered it in respect to the school engagement. I think another source is universities too.” **Energy / utility**

“Parents have a big impact on career advice. They often push university over apprenticeships as well as particular courses.” **Business customer**

RETENTION AND UPSKILLING OF A SPECIALISED HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

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. Stakeholders did not vote in the online poll for the outputs in this session.

“The bit I want to know is around the future skills required as we become more digitalised. You may have an older workforce who aren’t as savvy – how do you ensure that they are up to date with everything?” **Business customer**

MAINTAIN A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

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. Stakeholders did not vote in the online poll for the outputs in this session.

“Obviously, surveys would give you an analysis of how the workforce is feeling. You could have well-being programmes and access to tools on the internet. With Covid and people being isolated at home without daily interactions, are there programmes in place for this?” **Business customer**

“We have roadshows with our executive leadership team that engage with performance and pay. We have a conference for our senior leaders which is almost mandatory to attend. Our internal comms team have been very busy during lockdown. We’ve just had regular communication with them in relation to Covid and that’s been very helpful.”
Energy / utility

“We have come across an app before where it asks how you are feeling today, and you can just touch a button every day and if someone is consistently pressing the sad face then it notifies the line manager, and they get involved.” **Energy / utility**

ATTRACT NEW TALENT

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. Stakeholders did not vote in the online poll for the outputs in this session.

“An employer whose main role is to work with Net Zero and climate change is one way of attracting new talent, especially new people because they are clued up and passionate.” **Energy / utility**

SAFETY

This priority area was not discussed or voted on in the online poll as it was a surgery session to which no stakeholders signed up.

8 | SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

IMPACT OF COVID-19

The only comment in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on this area was whether it would have an impact on how employees commute to work (and hence electric vehicle use and uptake). Beyond that, stakeholders did not think it would impact this area of Business Plan development.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

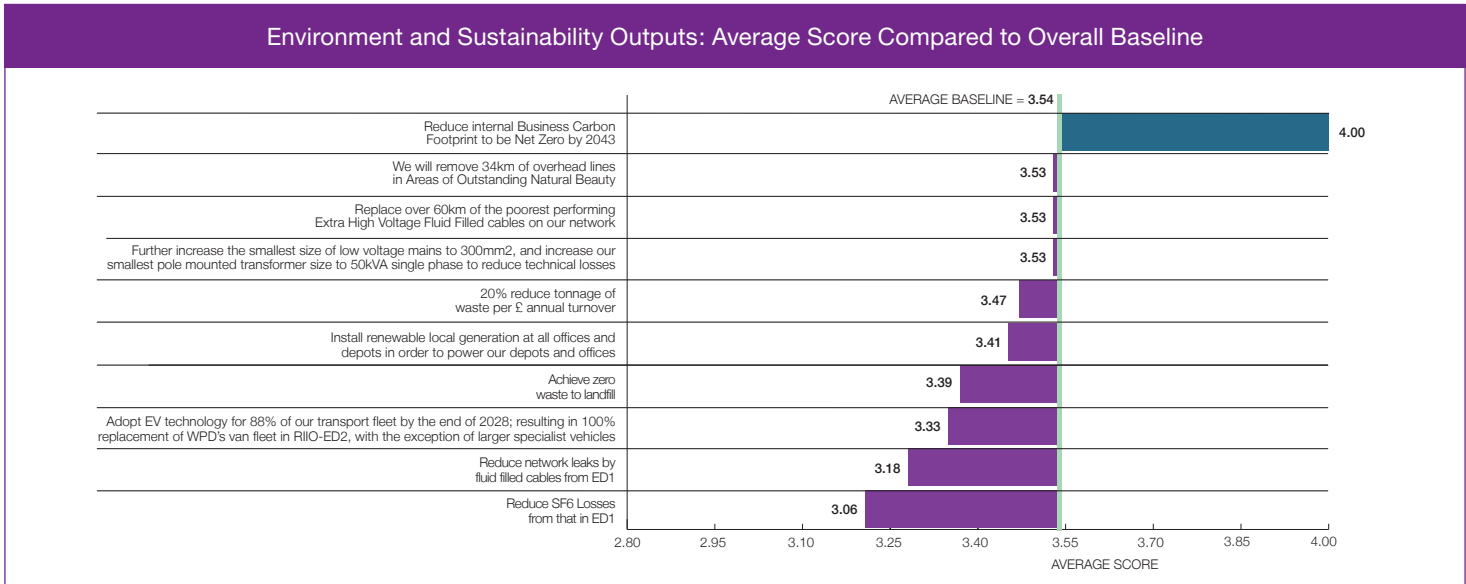
Stakeholders strongly agreed that WPD should aim for a more ambitious zero carbon target than the government – and what the exact target should be prompted a lot of discussion during the breakouts. Achieving this in part through adopting an EV fleet and installing renewable generation at properties was supported. Stakeholders also agreed with previous feedback that harmful leaks should be reduced. There was some disagreement about undergrounding, as not all agreed with previous feedback that it would in fact reduce the environmental impact of WPD’s operations. Stakeholders did not comment on whether they agreed with the previous feedback on reducing technical losses, nor did they say much on reducing waste either.

WPD’S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing from the outputs, one stakeholder highlighted the importance of energy saving measures, noting that this had not been covered. Various sub-topics were felt to be missing underneath some of the outputs, including reducing the carbon impact of WPD’s supply chain, exploring the scope to electrify plant machinery as well as the company’s vehicle fleet, and eliminating non-recyclables.

In terms of performance measures and targets, stakeholders discussed at length whether WPD’s Business Carbon Footprint target date of 2043 for Net Zero was ambitious enough. In the online poll it was the highest ranked across all areas with an average of 4 / 5, and 70% wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area. Stakeholders questioned the targets on a whole range of outputs – particularly those relating to WPD’s operational impact and the target for undergrounding – in large part because they did not feel they had the context to make an appropriate judgement. As a priority area, Environment and Sustainability ranked third from the bottom with an average of 3.47 / 5, just below the baseline average. Whilst the output on reducing WPD’s Business Carbon Footprint ranked highest across all outputs and brought the average up significantly, all other outputs ranked below the baseline average.

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



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

“Energy saving is really important and hasn’t been covered here. Apart from that, these outputs look good to me.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“These are all commendable targets and WPD should be leading the way as a distribution company.”
Local authority

“As far as Covid is concerned, how much of an impact has it had? It might have affected how people commute.” **Local authority**

OUTPUTS: OUR BUSINESS CARBON FOOTPRINT

REDUCE INTERNAL BUSINESS CARBON FOOTPRINT TO BE NET ZERO BY 2043

The main comments in relation to this output were regarding its level of ambition and whether 2043 was the right target or not. During the discussions, views were split, with some feeling it was unambitious given that other stakeholders (including other energy companies and local authorities) were going for an earlier target. On the other hand, others felt it was realistic particularly if the target included supply chain emissions. One stakeholder wanted to see interim targets to ensure there was a clear pathway with milestones, rather than leaving carbon reduction to the last minute. Another implied that carbon offsetting, though an effective temporary measure, was not a long-term solution. Whilst there was debate during the breakouts, the online poll was fairly decisive, with stakeholders clearly indicating they wanted WPD to be more ambitious. It was the highest ranked output in the online polling across all areas, with an average of 4 / 5, and 70% wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ here.

“The Welsh one is a bit lower because of the impact of agriculture.” **Business customer**

“Without all of the figures it is hard to tell whether this is a challenging target or not.” **Business customer**

“You should have interim targets that show the pathway towards being carbon neutral by 2043, rather than carrying on as usual until 2042 and then suddenly switching to carbon neutral at the last moment.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“If carbon offsetting is used for the first 5 or 6 years it would be valuable as a short-term tactic, but it is not a long-term solution.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“I think that every company should be thinking about this kind of thing, in particular an energy company.”
Vulnerable customer representative

“Local authorities are being far more ambitious with their Net Zero targets. Is this ambitious enough?”
Utility

“2043 is realistic, especially if you’re looking at supply too. Our target is 2030, but if it’s not achievable, then it’s meaningless.” **Local authority**

“I think 2043 isn’t that ambitious given that EDF’s target is 2030.” **Utility**

“Does Business Carbon Footprint include contracts delivered by suppliers? If it includes suppliers as well, that would be more ambitious.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

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 agreed with this output and its level of ambition. Whilst one stakeholder felt the target could be more stretching, others recognised that technological constraints – such as batteries not being powerful enough for large fleet vehicles or insufficient charging infrastructure for long distance journeys – meant that the target was realistic and achievable. One stakeholder pointed out the target would need to be reviewed in light of the government's white paper. A couple of other comments were raised, including: whether supply chain vehicles could be incorporated into the output; ensuring WPD has a green recycling initiative for old vehicles; and whether this output could extend to include plant machinery. In the online poll, this output was ranked third from the bottom for this priority area, with the majority (60%) saying it had the right level of ambition.

"This may depend on what the government decides in its upcoming white paper. It may be that it's not enough and you have to do it sooner, but at the moment it seems a good target."

Business customer

"I think that there needs to be recognition of the potential technological constraints faced by vehicles. At the moment, EV models are not possible for all fleets. Hydrogen will need to be in the mix too."

Utility

"The only thing that occurs to me is that you don't want to be throwing out perfectly good vehicles just to bring in electric ones. As long as it's genuinely a green initiative, that's good, but scrapping in itself has a cost." **Local authority**

"What about plant on-site? Any plans for going electric?"

Storage and renewables provider / installer

"It may be worth thinking about the obligations of your suppliers to be carbon neutral too, not just your own operations." **Business customer**

"If transit vans are going further afield, there needs to be assurance that the refill infrastructure is in place."

Utility

"It would be good for WPD to challenge itself and it's hard to see from these numbers if you are doing that." **Business customer**

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

Only one stakeholder commented on this output, noting that putting solar PV on substations would be a quick win. In the online poll, this output ranked slightly lower than the baseline average at 3.45 / 5, with most (55%) feeling it was the right level of ambition.

"I would have thought that would be a quick win if you were to put in solarised substations."

Local authority

OUTPUTS: OPERATIONAL IMPACT

REDUCE NETWORK LEAKS BY FLUID FILLED CABLES FROM ED1

One stakeholder who commented on this output felt unable to respond as they weren't aware of what the impact of these leaks were. Another felt the word 'stop' would be more ambitious than simply 'reduce' but recognised the need to ensure it was achievable. This perceived lack of context was perhaps reflected in the online poll where the output ranked second lowest for this priority area and well below the baseline average with 3.28 / 5. 17% even wanted WPD to 'do less' or 'do a lot less'.

"These are technical. I don't really know what the impact of a leak is. If it's hugely damaging to the environment or customers, it's very important."

Local authority

"Maybe change some of the wording to 'stop' rather than 'reduce', but you need to make sure that they are achievable."

Vulnerable customer representative

REDUCE SF6 LOSSES FROM THAT IN ED1

One stakeholder felt WPD should be looking to encourage manufacturers to stop using SF6 in their technology, as well as phasing it out themselves. This output ranked lowest among the Environment and Sustainability outputs with 3.21 / 5. Most (58%) felt the level of ambition was right and 10% even wanted WPD to 'do less' or 'do a lot less'.

"I'm assuming that WPD is looking at phasing out SF6 in new equipment. I appreciate that other gases aren't as good, but are you going to be driving manufacturers to make changes to the tech?"
Storage and renewables provider / installer

"I know they have been looking at replacement gas so it's an interesting time."
Storage and renewables provider / installer

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

One stakeholder sought to understand a bit more context to be able to comment on whether this output was appropriate. In the online poll, the output scored about average with 3.53 / 5. Sentiment was split, with 42% of stakeholders feeling it was about right and 48% wanting to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more'. The remainder wanted WPD to 'do less'. This inconsistency perhaps reflected the view that this output was too technical to comment on.

"What percentage of the fluid-filled cables is this? It might be good to show that figure, to show the extent of the challenge."
Business customer

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

Again, 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.

"I think that they're all commendable, but they all seem too techy for non-experts. I don't know whether I could say if they're suitable. The aspiration is good though."
Local authority



OUTPUTS: IMPACT OF OUR NETWORK

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

There was a fair amount of discussion on this output during the breakouts. Quite a few stakeholders wanted a bit more context, such as what percentage 34km represents, to enable them to be able to make a judgement on whether the target was stretching enough. Several wanted more detail on how the sections of line are chosen, such as whether WPD perhaps picked more 'emotive' AONBs or whether they also included National Parks. One noted that when undergrounding higher voltage lines WPD would have to do more to reduce the visual impact. Another said that looking at different pylon designs could be an alternative to reducing the visual impact. One stakeholder cautioned WPD to also consider the environmental impacts of undergrounding itself, and another noted the high impact on bills. Finally, one stakeholder noted that as well as having visual benefits, undergrounding can also provide reliability benefits. In the online poll, this output came joint second (with two others) but still came in 0.01 under the average baseline at 3.53 / 5.

"34km doesn't seem like a lot in a five-year period, so maybe it needs more context. Some AONBs are more important than others, so you should show that you've identified some key AONBs that are a bit more emotive." **Energy consultant**

"Undergrounding a cable can have a big environmental impact in itself, so the visual impact has to be worth the damage to the other environmental aspects." **Energy consultant**

"In terms of reducing visual impact I think undergrounding the higher voltage lines would have a bigger impact than lower voltage ones." **Developer**

"How much is 34km relative to all your lines?" **Government**

"Does the 34km of lines include those in National Parks?" **Business customer**

"I don't know whether the performance for ED1 is good. Maybe you should consider shifting to a percentage amount to make it clearer to people who are not experts?" **Vulnerable customer representative**

"With undergrounding, it's about improving reliability too. It's a balance between proactivity and reactivity (cost of undergrounding versus cost of dealing with a power cut). That needs to be considered here." **Utility**

"Different designs to pylons are another option to solve the issue of potentially spoiling Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty." **Local authority**

"With overhead cables, the cost is ten times less than underground ones. You can give people the options and a bill, but the considerations need to be weighed up." **Developer**

FURTHER INCREASE THE SMALLEST SIZE OF LOW VOLTAGE MAINS TO 300MM², AND INCREASE OUR SMALLEST POLE MOUNTED TRANSFORMER SIZE TO 50KVA SINGLE PHASE TO REDUCE TECHNICAL LOSSES

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll, this output came joint second (with two others) but still came in 0.01 under the average baseline at 3.53 / 5 and the majority of stakeholders (53%) felt it had the right level of ambition.

ACHIEVE ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll, this output scored less than the average baseline with 3.37 / 5.

20% REDUCE TONNAGE OF WASTE PER £ ANNUAL TURNOVER

One stakeholder felt this output required a target date. In the online poll, it ranked 3.5 / 5 – below the baseline average.

“I’m intrigued about the amount of waste. Is it really 500,000 tonnes per annum? Maybe the focus should shift to eliminating non-recyclables? A lot of what is described as waste is recyclable, such as wiring and poles.” **Local authority**

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

Several stakeholders questioned the validity of this output, given that it isn’t a choice to comply with legislation but more of an obligation. One highlighted that the lack of resource at the Environment Agency might make any meaningful collaboration difficult. It wasn’t included in the online poll because there was not scope to have varying levels of ambition for this output.

“It sounds like a generic statement. You could be more specific. Do you have a choice not to follow legislation?” **Energy consultant**

“The Environment Agency isn’t really resourced enough to work in partnership with anyone; it’s more of a consultation process.” **Energy consultant**

“This should be a given and should go on in the background. As a result, it should be an obligation for WPD.” **Local authority**



DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OPERATOR

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 Distribution System Operator.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that flexibility rules and information need to be standardised across the industry. However, several stakeholders also asked whether there was any opportunity for WPD to prioritise low carbon flexibility providers to ensure that this area aligns with the company’s decarbonisation ambitions. In terms of scenario planning and whole systems, stakeholders agreed that WPD needs to collaborate with interested parties to inform them of network capacity and ensure the capacity is available.

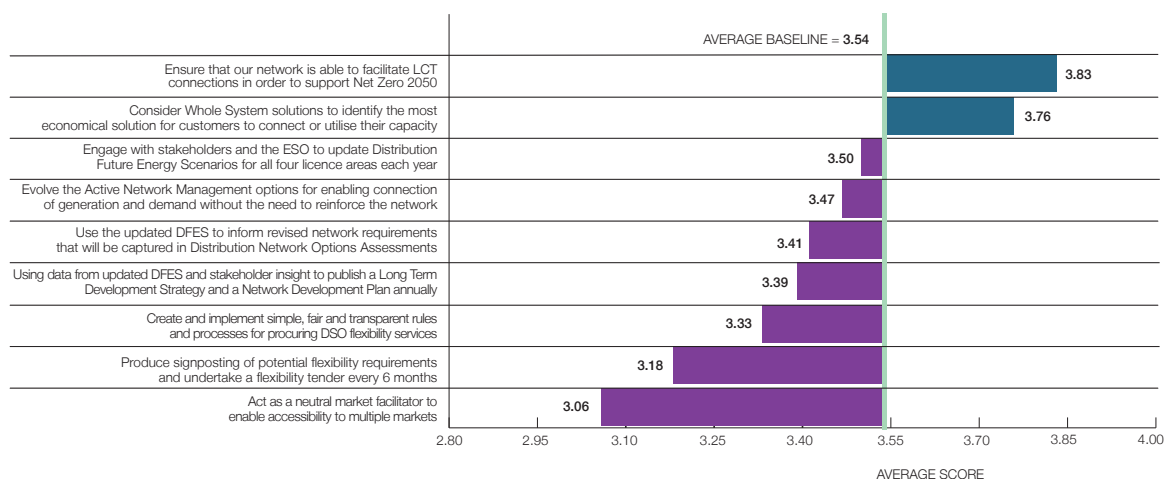
WPD’S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing, one stakeholder expressed concern about the ability of vulnerable customers to get involved in some of the new technologies associated with DSO, such as smart meters and electric vehicles. Another raised the issue of battery storage, specifically in relation to reducing the need for an electric vehicle charging network.

Stakeholders did not suggest any new targets or performance measures for the DSO outputs. In terms of ambition of the targets, all outputs under the subheading of flexibility services scored below the baseline average, demonstrating that stakeholders felt WPD had got the right level in those areas. One stakeholder felt it was hard to understand the detail under each output as it was boiled down to a single short sentence. The two outputs that scored above the baseline average for DSO related to whole systems and the connection of low carbon technologies, which scored 3.76 / 5 and 3.83 / 5 respectively. Overall, as a priority area, Distribution System Operator ranked second lowest across all Business Plan priority areas with 3.44 / 5, which was below the average baseline.

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

Distribution System Operator Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“These are all sensible targets. Some are more difficult to achieve than others.” **Local authority**

“It’s difficult to understand the detail within the one-liners under flexibility services.” **Business customer**

“The ideal with an electric car is to charge it using your own PV. If people had their own storage, this would diminish the issue of everyone plugging in at the same time.” **Developer**

“EV uptake amongst vulnerable users doesn’t seem viable. Very few vulnerable users would engage. Similarly, with smart meters, many of these users are afraid of what the technology does.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

OUTPUTS: FLEXIBILITY SERVICES

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll it ranked lower than the baseline average at 3.33 / 5, and the vast majority (78%) felt it demonstrated the right level of ambition.

PROVIDE ACCURATE, USER-FRIENDLY AND COMPREHENSIVE MARKET INFORMATION

Only one stakeholder commented on this output, which was to express concern that a lack of standardisation across the DNOs would make the market information complicated for the flexibility suppliers. The output was not voted on as part of the online poll.

“The fact that each of the DNOs has a different process will make it very difficult for flexibility suppliers to operate across the country.”

Business customer

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll it ranked lower than the baseline average at 3.18 / 5, and the vast majority (88%) felt it demonstrated the right level of ambition.

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

Stakeholders debated this output. On the one hand, some felt that the inability to favour the connection of low carbon technologies could contradict WPD’s ability to deliver on other Business Plan outputs (e.g., Business Carbon Footprint) and therefore they wondered whether there was scope to change this. On the other hand, some felt that as market neutrality was a legislative requirement the output was obligatory and not open to discussion. The voting perhaps reflected the latter point of view, with an average of 3.06 – well below the baseline, and 12% even thinking WPD should ‘do less’ or ‘do a lot less’ in this area.

“They have no choice because they have to provide non-discriminatory access so they have to choose the cheapest, so to choose low carbon over anything else would require a change in legislation.”

Business customer

“The important part is the rate at which the markets will develop.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“Is neutrality the best thing here if you’re striving towards Net Zero?” **Government**

“There could be a conflict if there are things that can stop you reaching your carbon neutral targets.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“From an outsider perspective, the only way you can encourage environmental credentials is with incentives. I appreciate the neutrality aspect but by being neutral it seems as if you’re compromising your environmental views. Perhaps you should encourage environmental avenues as opposed to encouraging people to use filthy generators.” **Business customer**

OUTPUTS: SCENARIO PLANNING AND WHOLE SYSTEMS

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

Several stakeholders felt that the biggest issue in relation to this output was the availability of capacity. It was noted developers have to go through a long and expensive planning process, so they need to know the capacity is there. One stakeholder felt it was a challenge for WPD to manage a lot of a similar types of generator coming online at the same time. Another noted that the ability to talk directly to a WPD representative to get informal advice was critical to be able to facilitate low carbon technologies to connect. This output ranked third among the outputs across all of the priority areas, scoring an average of 3.83 / 5. In fact, 56% wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

“One of the big ones would be when you have a lot of connections of the same type. We were considering a scheme in our area and there were already several solar panels connected, so it's how you manage all those generators coming on at the same time. There's a similar issue in places where there are lots of wind farms in the same place.” **Developer**

“Capacity is a problem as the network doesn't always have capacity where you want it.” **Local authority**

“There's a connections register which is helpful for an early view, but I feel like it's a lot more concise and up to date to get a view from someone at WPD directly. It's really helpful to have a surgery. I don't think I could do it solely using the connections register.” **Developer**

“The biggest limitation our members face are network capacity issues. We have a member who obtained permission for a solar farm connection but there's no capacity so it's dead in the water. These things aren't easy as you have to go through a tortuous and very expensive planning process.” **Business customer**

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll this output scored just below the baseline average with 3.39 / 5 – 67% felt that the level of ambition here was right.

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 during the breakout sessions. This output was ranked third highest under this priority area, demonstrating that stakeholders recognised its importance. Even so, it scored just below the baseline average (3.5 / 5), with 61% feeling it was the right level of ambition.

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

One stakeholder sought to understand who produces the DFES but beyond that this output was not discussed during the breakout sessions. 71% of stakeholders felt the level of ambition was right, with an average of 3.41 / 5.

“Who produces the DFES?” **Government**

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll, this output was ranked just below the baseline average with 3.47 / 5. 59% felt it was ambitious enough.

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. Despite this, this output was ranked second highest for this priority area with a score above the average baseline – 3.76 / 5. Most stakeholders (59%) in fact wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in the area of whole systems.

INNOVATION

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 Innovation.

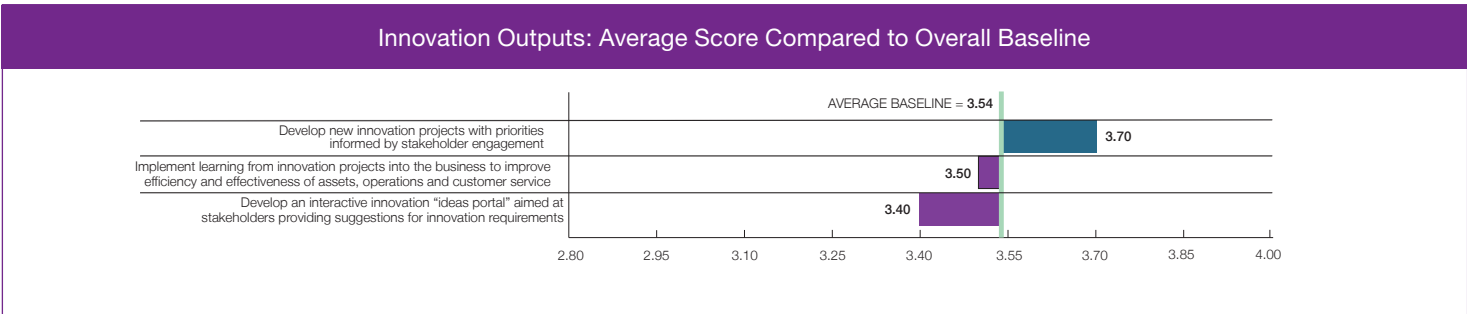
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD should help facilitate innovation among stakeholders helping identify opportunities for collaboration with partners and projects informed by stakeholder feedback.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing from the outputs, several stakeholders did raise the importance of ensuring that any innovation makes sure the vulnerable and digitally excluded are not left behind. They did not comment on specific targets or performance measures aside for the Innovation outputs. As a priority area, the Innovation outputs ranked sixth out of the nine priority areas with an average score 0.01 below the baseline at 3.53 / 5. In general, the highest proportion of stakeholders felt the targets were stretching enough, except for the output 'develop new innovation projects with priorities informed by stakeholder engagement' where 65% wanted WPD to be more ambitious.

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



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



OUTPUTS

DEVELOP NEW INNOVATION PROJECTS WITH PRIORITIES INFORMED BY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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 supported this output but 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 scored above the baseline average with 3.7 / 5, and 65% wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

"Would any of these innovation projects be ringfenced for Wales? I know the Welsh Government wants Wales to be the testbed for emerging low carbon technology, for example with tidal and offshore energy." **Government**

"These innovation projects involve smart technologies, which will be challenging to people who are not digital natives."
Vulnerable customer representative

"Innovation projects must bring everyone up to the same level, so we all move forward together. It's really important that vulnerable communities are not left behind." **Local authority**

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakout sessions. In the online poll, it scored 0.04 below the baseline average with 3.5 / 5 and most (60%) feeling the ambition was right.

DEVELOP A NEW INTERACTIVE INNOVATION "IDEAS PORTAL" AIMED AT STAKEHOLDERS PROVIDING SUGGESTIONS FOR INNOVATION REQUIREMENTS

During the breakout session, stakeholders supported the concept of an ideas portal as it was recognised as a usual tool for getting more people involved and helping encourage codesign and codeveloping of projects. That said, it ranked lowest out of the Innovation outputs with 3.4 / 5, reflecting that stakeholders felt it demonstrated the right level of ambition.

"With the ideas portal, I think it's a good idea. Each year WPD comes out with a call for ideas. Having a portal that you can go to at any time of the year is definitely beneficial."
Storage and renewables provider / installer

"The ideas portal is great, as it will create a forum where the right people can be brought together and get a steer from WPD. People are really grappling with how they can innovate, so forums for co-designing and co-developing projects could be the next step." **Business customer**

"I really like the ideas portal, as the more people that you get engaged with innovation, the better."
Local authority

COMMUNITY ENERGY

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 Community Energy.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders strongly agreed with the previous stakeholder feedback in this area that it should be a priority for WPD to support community energy schemes, particularly renewable energy development.

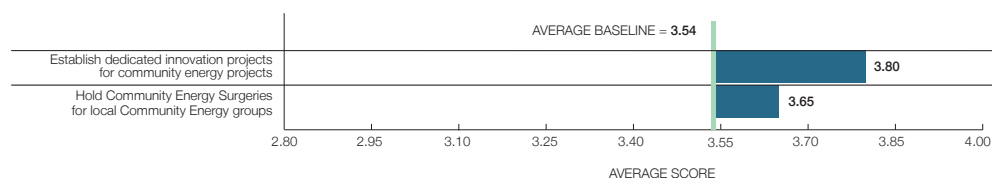
WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders strongly felt that WPD should be looking to assist and support community energy projects, with a range of specific schemes mentioned, although they did not provide specific detail as to what this support would look like. One stakeholder also wanted WPD to work closely with housing associations and another wanted WPD to work more closely with farmers.

Specific targets or performance measures were not raised by stakeholders during the discussions. However, significantly, in the online polling Community Energy ranked highest among all priority areas with the outputs scoring an average of 3.73 / 5 – well above the baseline average. In particular, stakeholders supported the output 'establish dedicated innovation projects for community energy projects' which ranked fifth highest among all Business Plan outputs.

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

Community Energy Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“Some housing associations have built low carbon homes using heat pumps and other LCTs. You could work to facilitate this and factor it into your own carbon neutrality.” **Developer**

“We have community centres that feed into the grid and provide an income stream to support the hall. On our borders we have a couple of community-supported agriculture schemes. This is important to us as it’s supporting sustainable communities. These community projects are important, and you should be contributing to this.” **Local authority**

“Establishing a turbine in an area or assisting community organisations with PV panels would be good.” **Developer**

“You have to realise that with people in agriculture, the land is their shop floor, so you have to realise that the landowner has to get some sort of benefit for having projects on their land. It’s seen as a good thing to generate community energy but obviously in Wales it’s a bit more limited because landowners don’t tend to own as large patches.” **Government**

“We have a community centre with PV. We’re trying to arrange battery storage so that we can make the most of this. The output not used by the centre could be used to assist local residents, which would require power links. Perhaps WPD could get involved with this.” **Developer**

OUTPUTS

ESTABLISH DEDICATED INNOVATION PROJECTS FOR COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS

Stakeholders supported the concept of dedicated innovation projects for community energy schemes, with one asking about the potential for battery storage. This output ranked first out of the two community energy outputs with 3.8 / 5 and fifth across all Business Plan outputs. Most stakeholders (65%) wanted WPD to stretch this target further.

“I was interested in battery storage for community energy. Does WPD have battery storage?”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

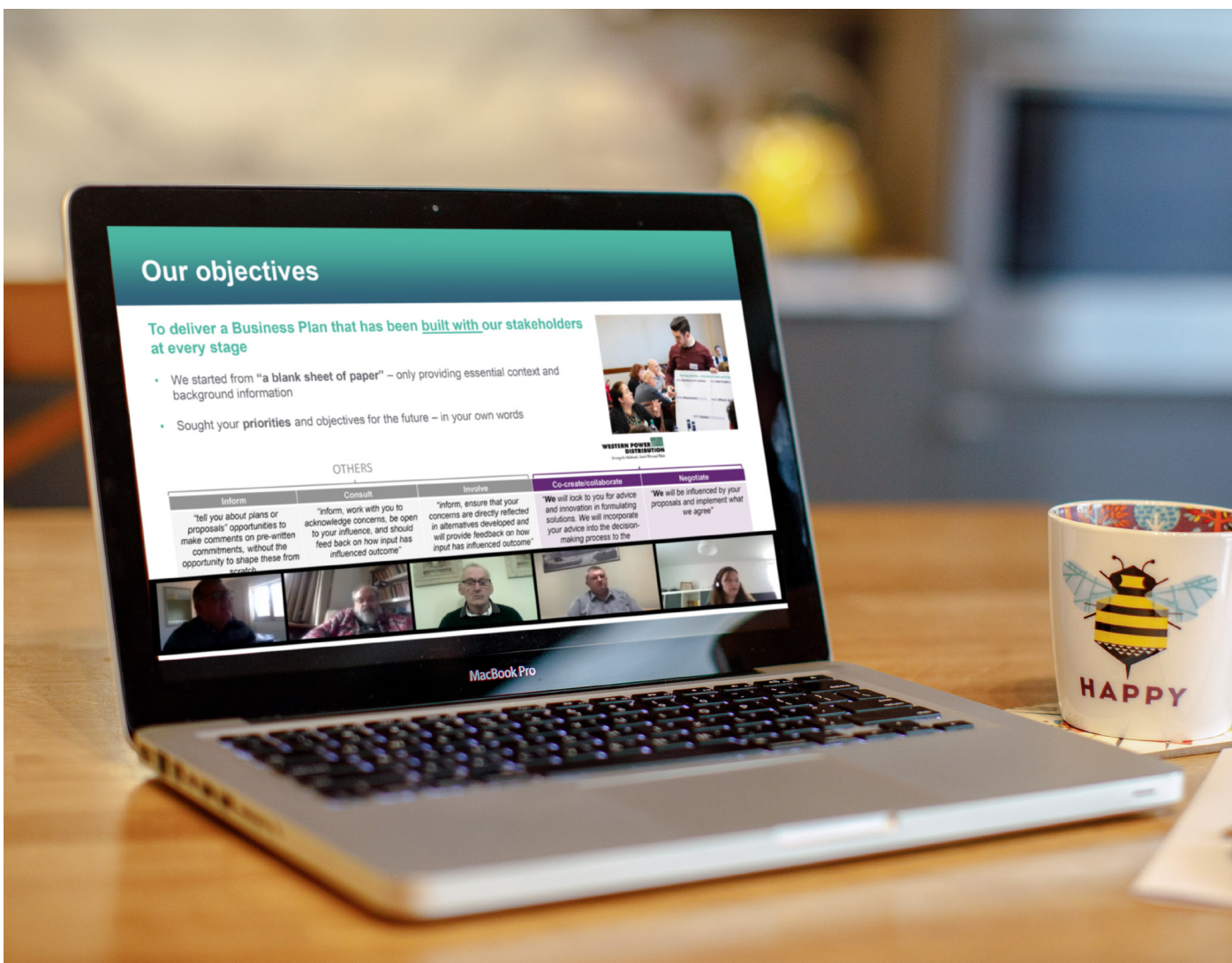
“Community energy projects are very important.

Having specific strands of innovation funding would help DNOs support innovative projects better.” **Utility**

HOLD COMMUNITY ENERGY SURGERIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ENERGY GROUPS

One stakeholder commented on this output to say WPD needs to carefully consider where these surgeries are held to ensure they are held in the locations that need them most. Whilst it was ranked second out of the two community energy outputs, it still received 3.65 / 5 on average, which is above the baseline average.

“I find that many surgeries are held in dense population centres, but the people who need a voice the most are often in rural patches and cannot come. This needs to change.” **Local authority**



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

Stakeholders strongly supported previous feedback that WPD should make as much data as possible open and easily available. Their requests for data demonstrated they agreed that sharing data can facilitate more efficient outcomes for customers.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders did not vote on these outputs after the session in the online poll so there is no data to demonstrate whether they felt they expressed the right level of ambition. However, during the discussion the focus was on the output 'demonstrate leadership in publishing network data', indicating that stakeholders felt that output was particularly important. Stakeholders raised several individual comments under that output, which have been summarised below.

OUTPUTS

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

Stakeholders supported this output, citing National Grid as an example of leadership in this area. Several stated that having plentiful data enabled them to establish better business cases for unlocking opportunities in the sector. One stakeholder requested forward guidance on future supply and demand to be able to establish where to locate batteries. Another requested granular data that goes down to substation or even switchgear level. Stakeholders did not vote in the online poll for the outputs in this session.

"The National Grid site is useful; it's a good example, even down to the point that they publish the financial data of bids. It's allowed us to convince a large potential customer that they ought to be using a battery."

Storage and renewables provider / installer

"Definitely. If there were voltage constraints in specific areas, it's useful to have the data to know what the key things for you are. If you can show what's happened in the last couple of years, it builds a picture and allows business cases to be built with more precision."

Storage and renewables provider / installer

"Could the data you provide go down as far as local switchgear or substation level?"

Storage and renewables provider / installer

"If you made it clearer what is important to you to operate the system, that would be helpful. If there's value to us to allow our customers to interact with the grid in a way that's beneficial to both of you. If the power supply is going to be more two-way, the information needs to be too."

Storage and renewables provider / installer

"Batteries tend to be in one spot, but over the next few years, lots will be changing in the network, e.g., with EVs or generation. We want as much visibility as possible in terms of the view ahead. That would be useful if you have any forward guidance on supply and demand."

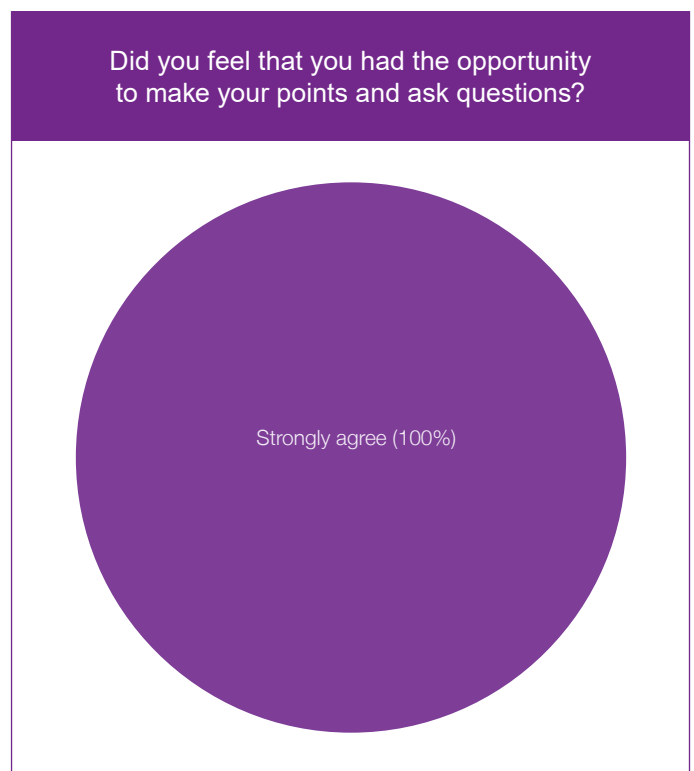
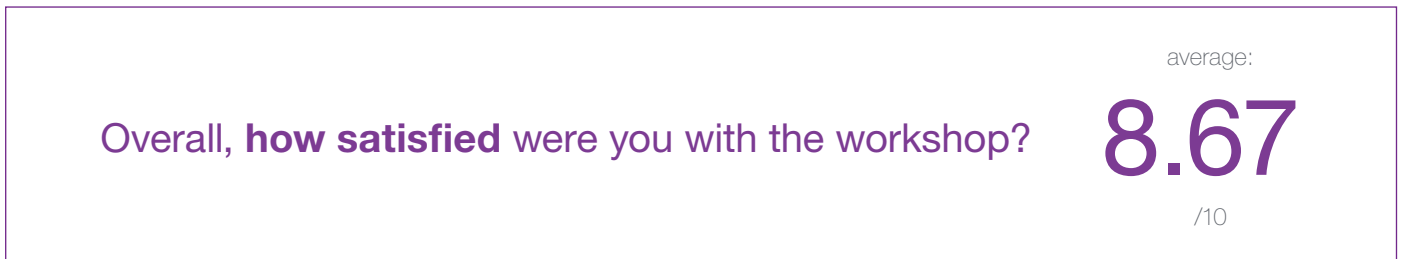
Storage and renewables provider / installer

DEVELOPING THE API INTERFACE AND DATA AVAILABILITY UNDER API

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the surgery session, and they did not vote in the online poll for the outputs in this session.

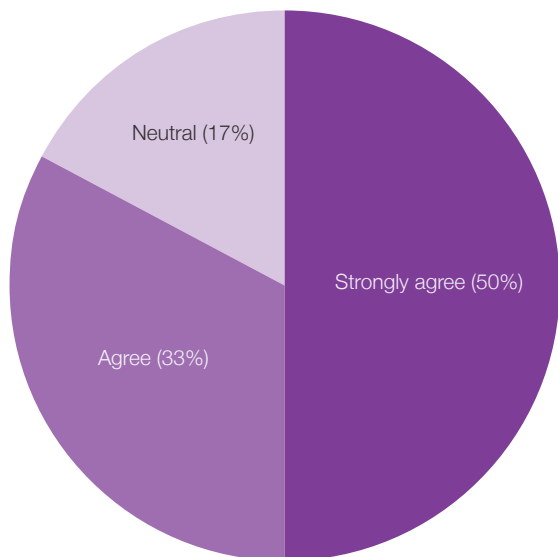
9 | APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

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

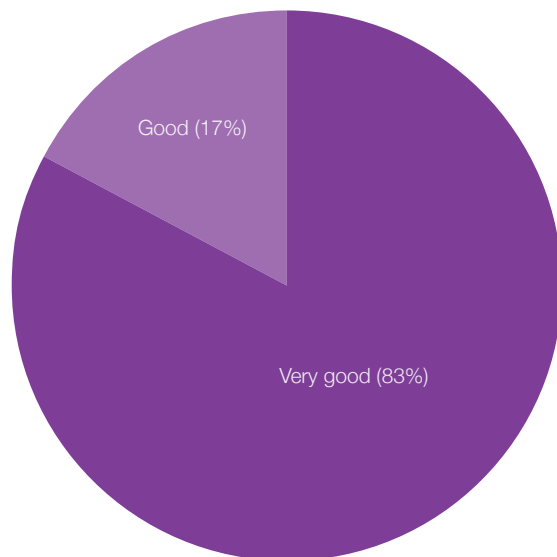


“Impressively well-run workshop – very smooth and easy to participate in.”

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



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

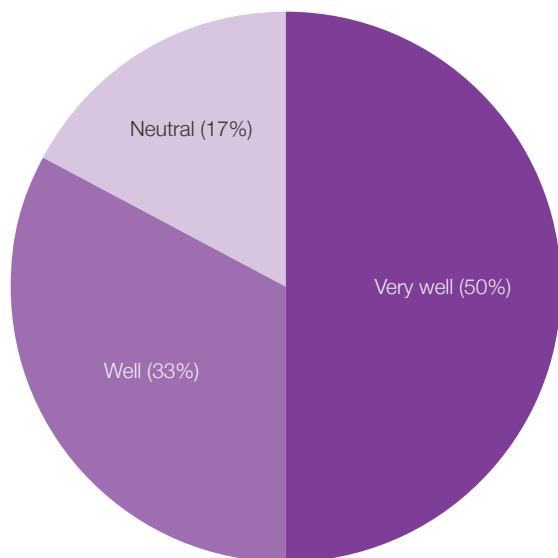


“Yes – clearly focussed on what WPD needed from the workshop, but with opportunities to ask questions and influence the outcomes.”

“Useful event. Thanks very much. Voting worked well and facilitator was great.”



How well do you think the online format worked?



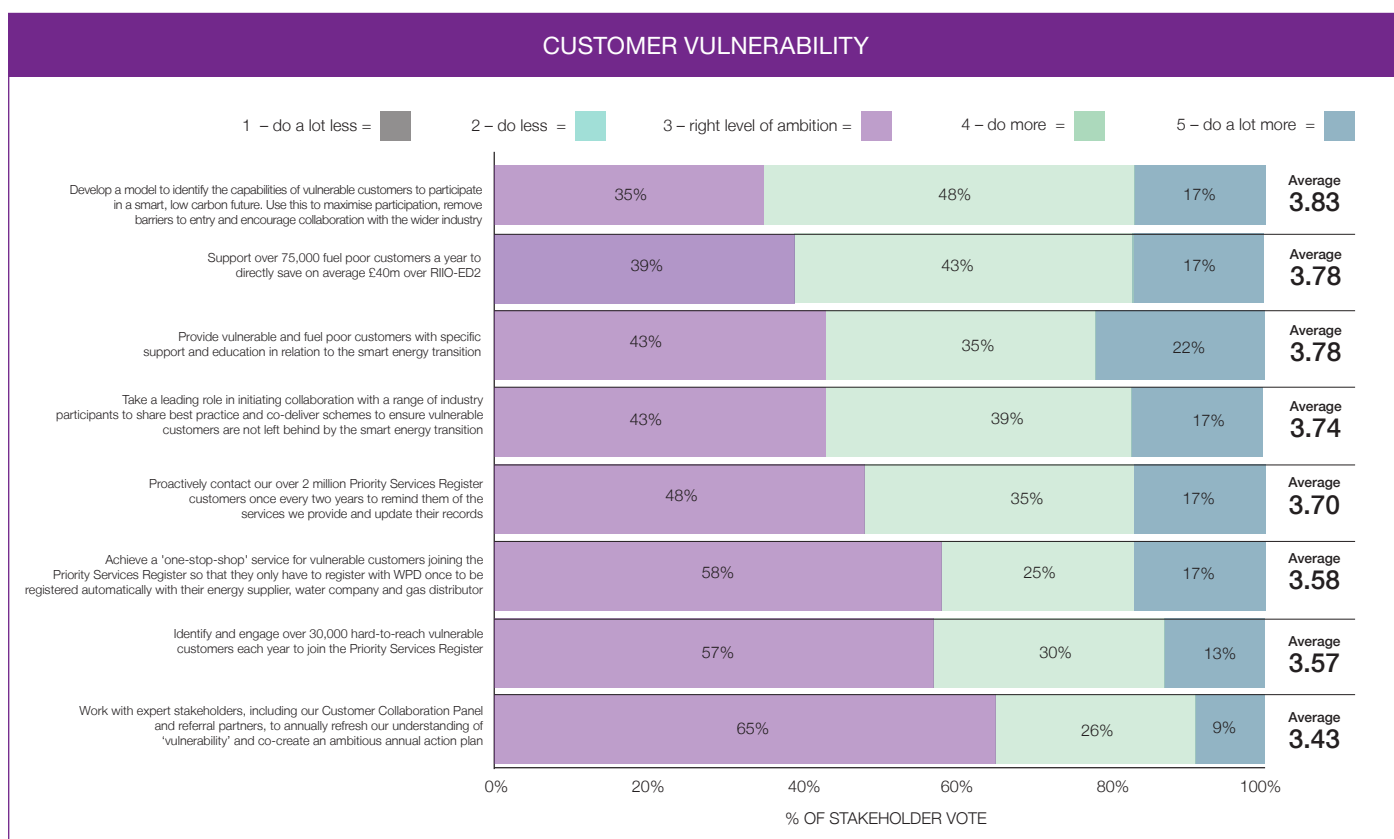
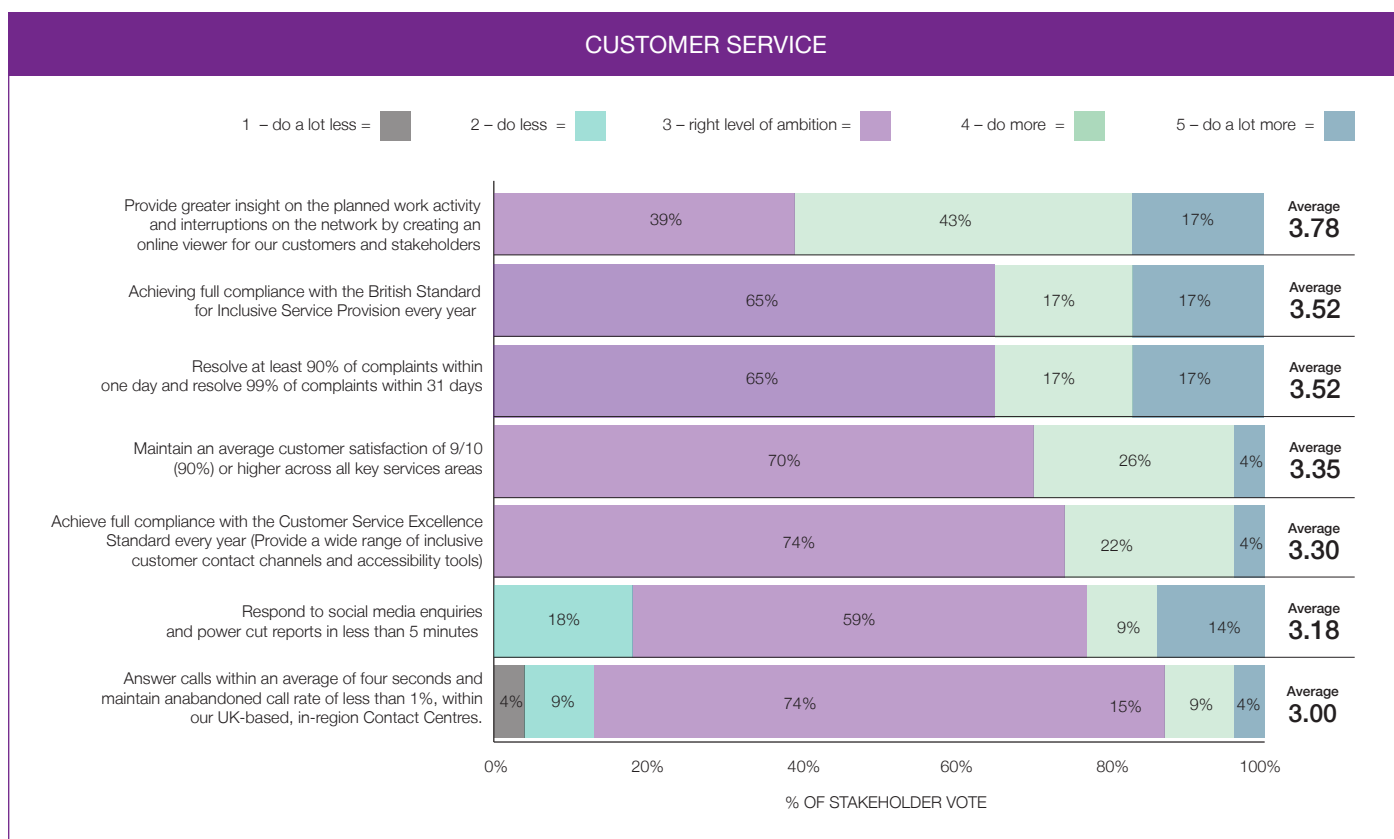
“The IT system was well managed – shifting between main presentations and breakout sessions was smooth, with voting very simple. Very impressive coordination and performance!”

“Generally very good, but it was too short.”

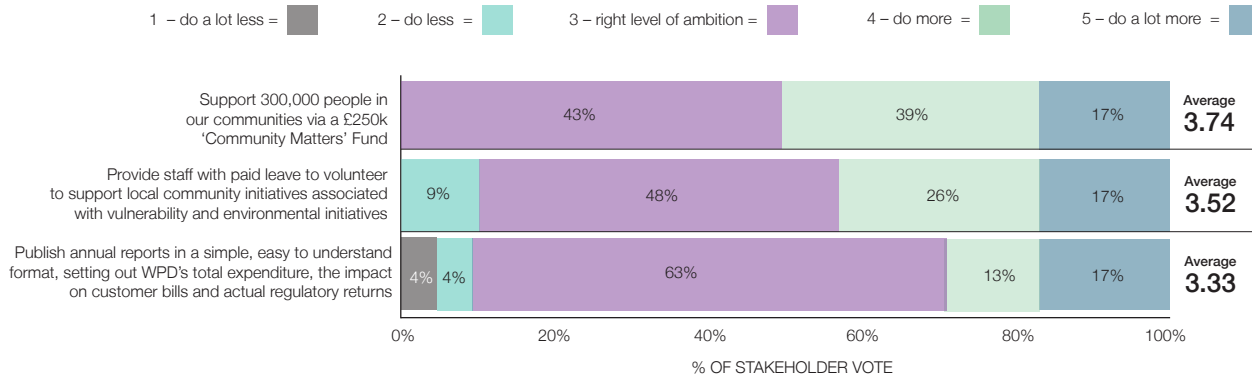
“Workshops ran to time which never happens in real life!”

10 | APPENDIX 2: BREAKDOWN OF VOTING RESULTS

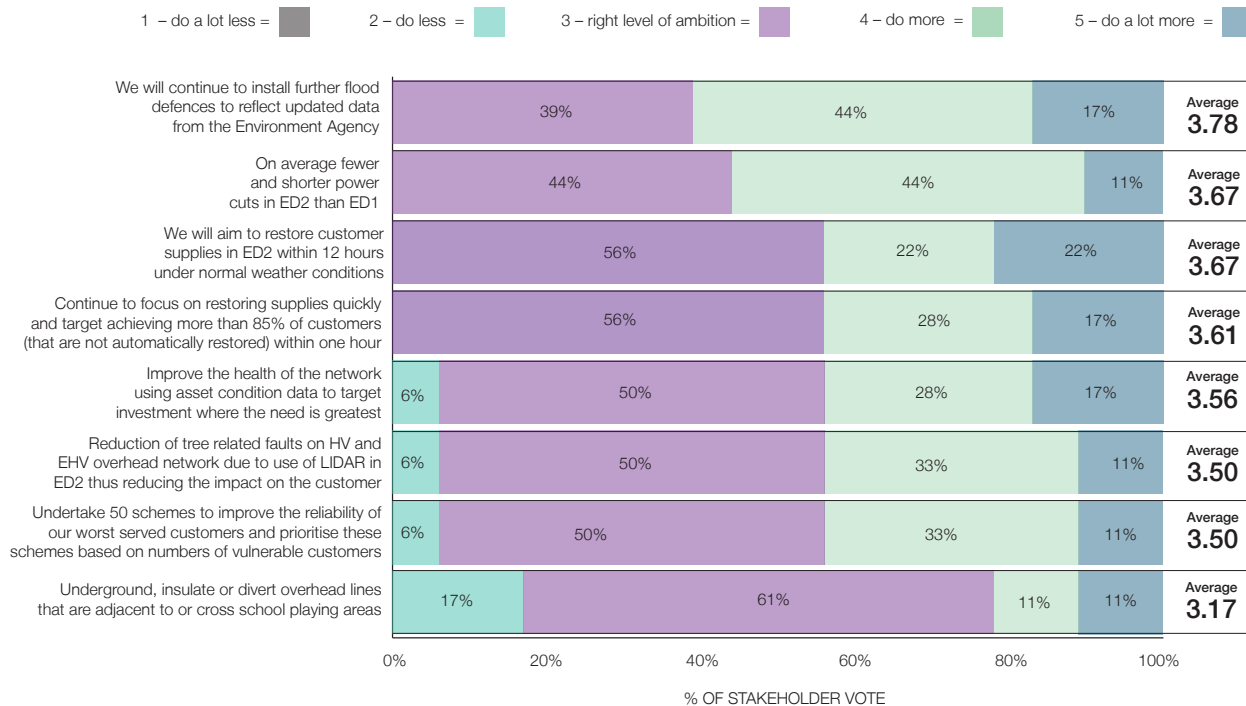
The tables below provide a breakdown of the raw voting data obtained for each priority area.

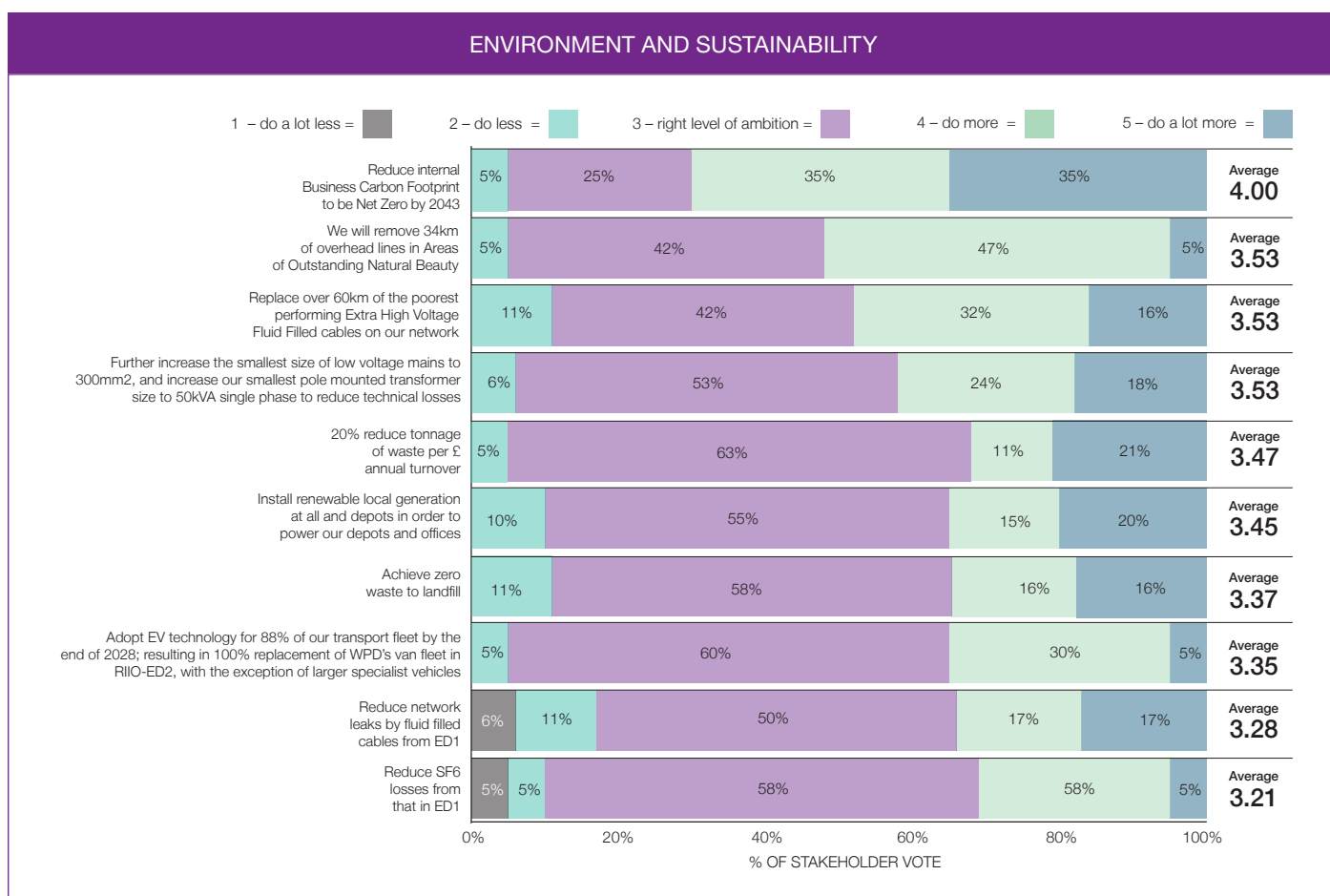
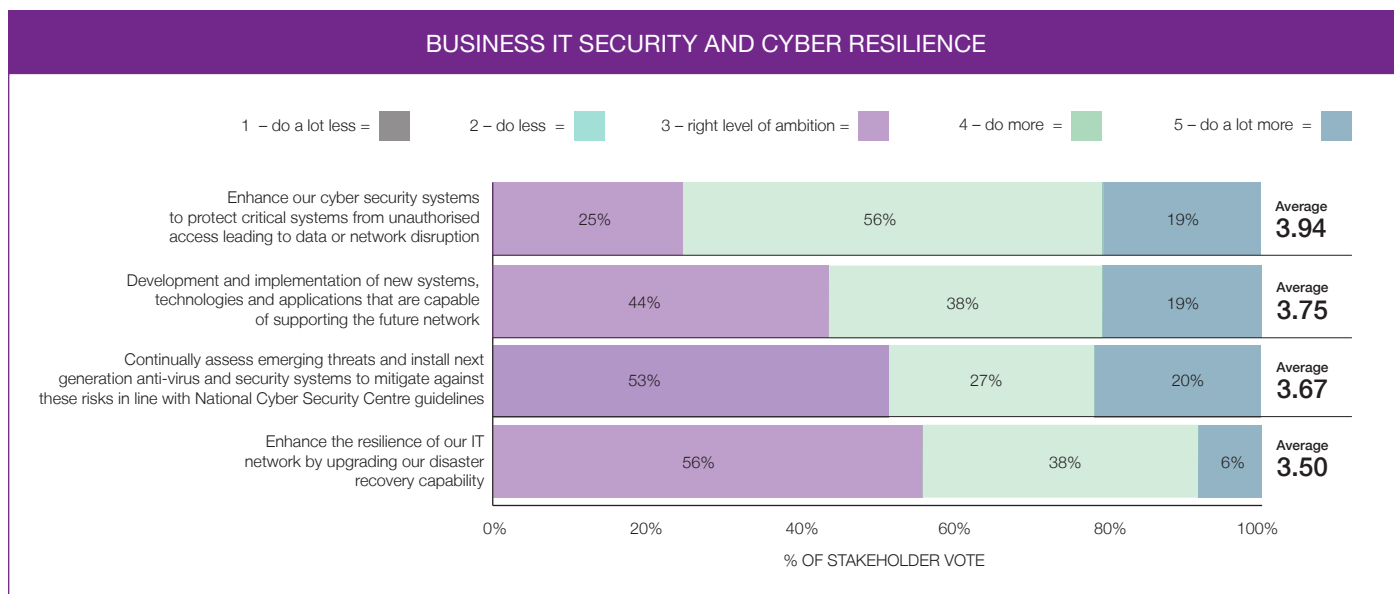


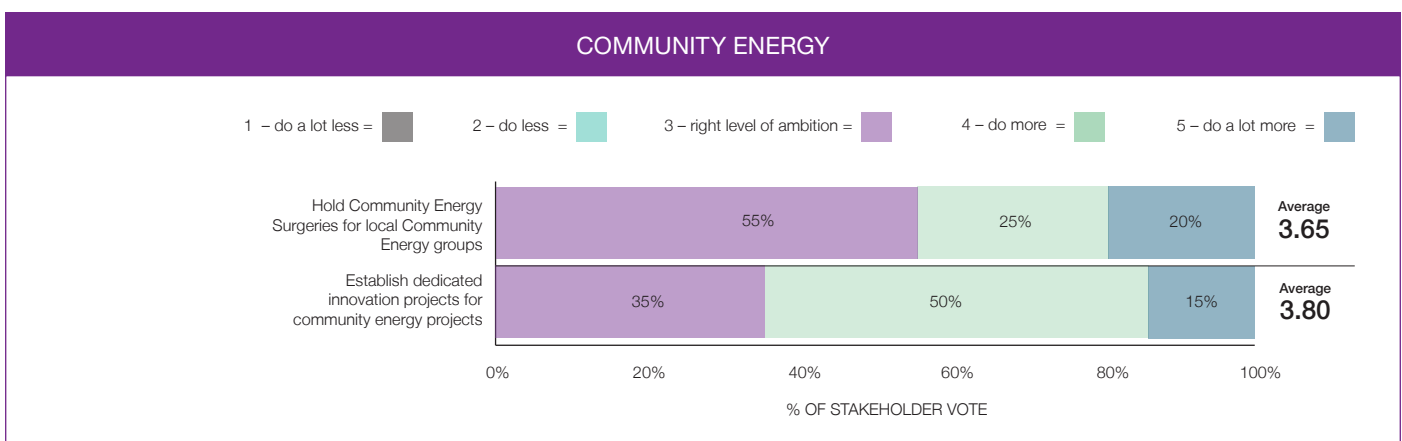
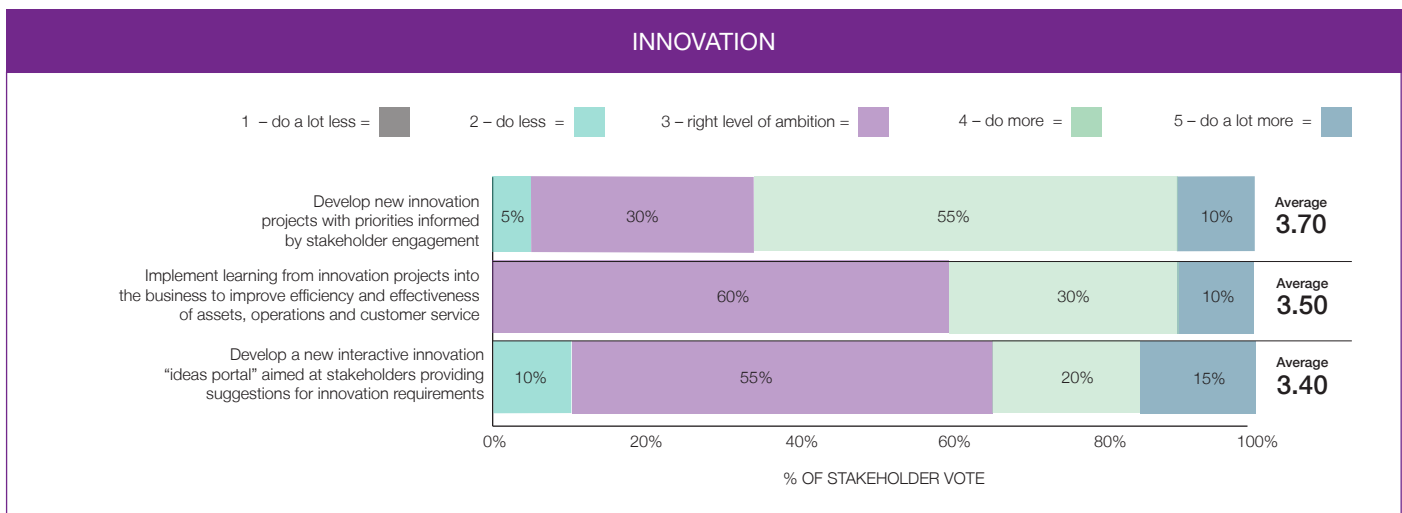
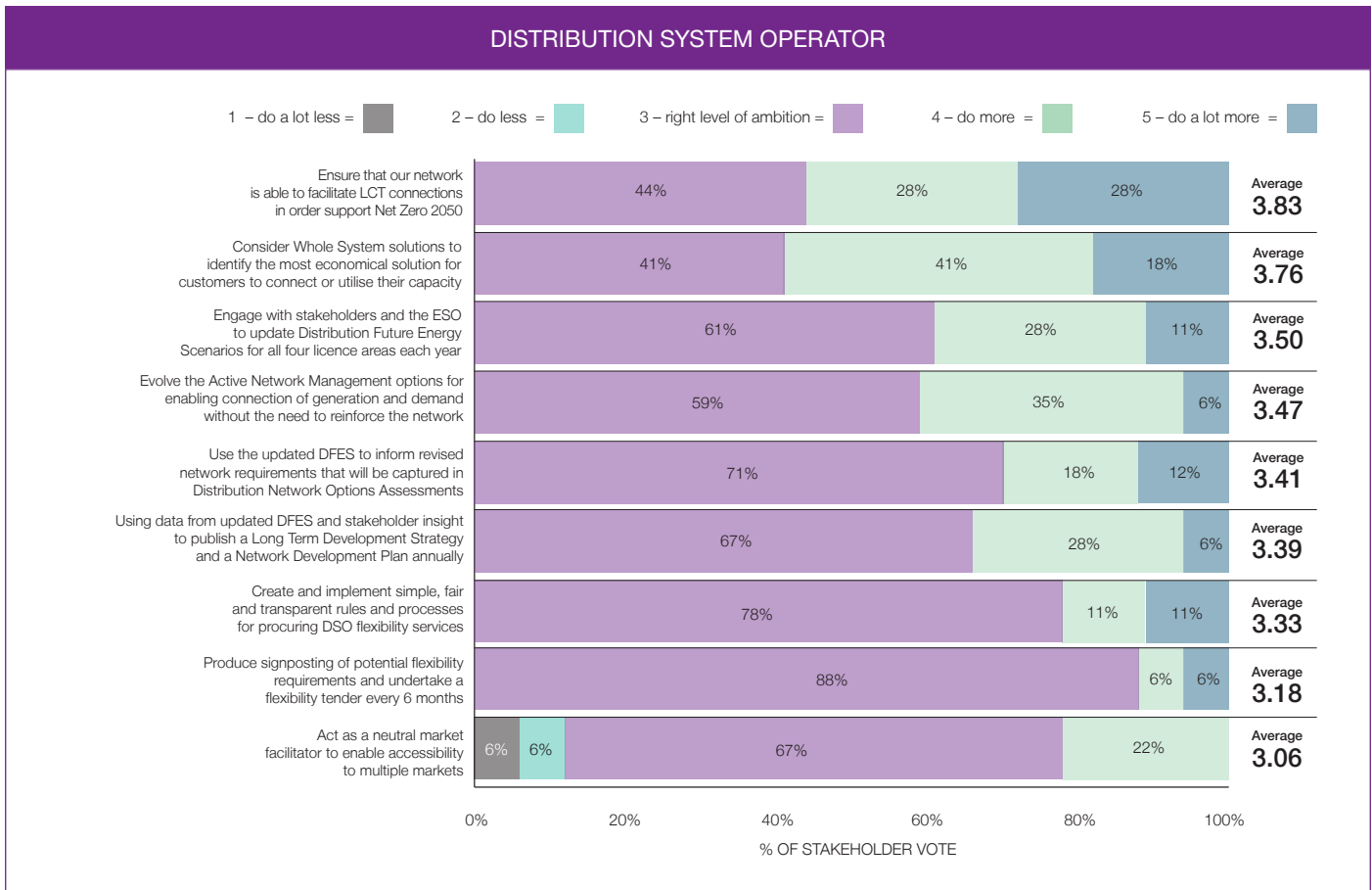
SOCIAL CONTRACT



NETWORK RELIABILITY

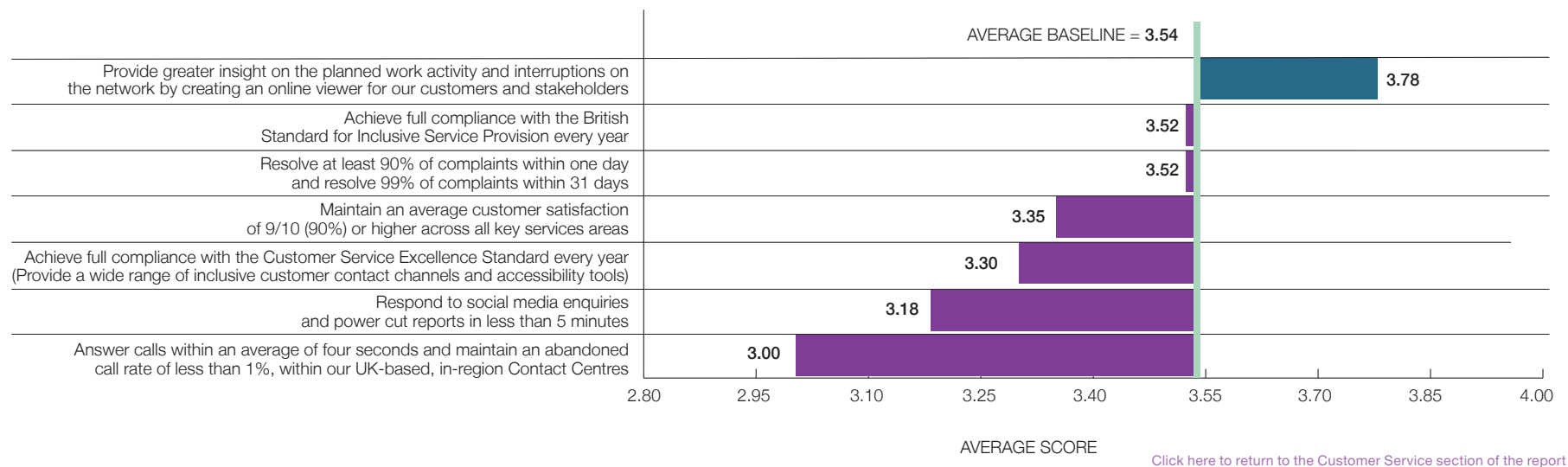




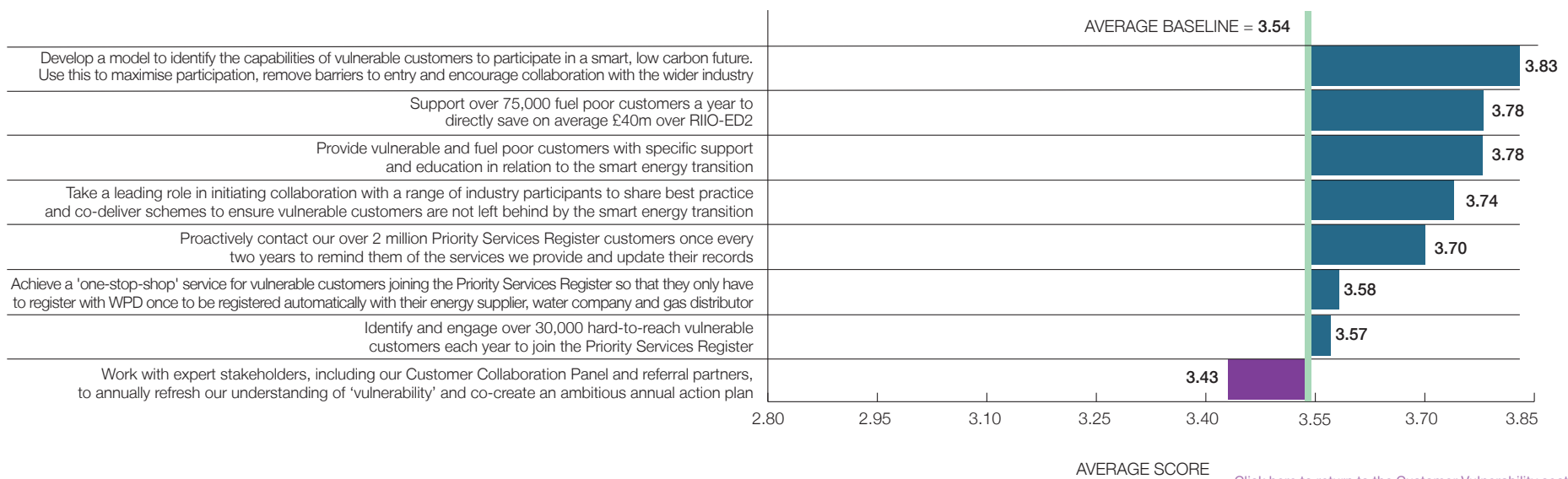


11 | APPENDIX 3: OUTPUTS AVERAGE SCORES COMPARED TO BASELINE

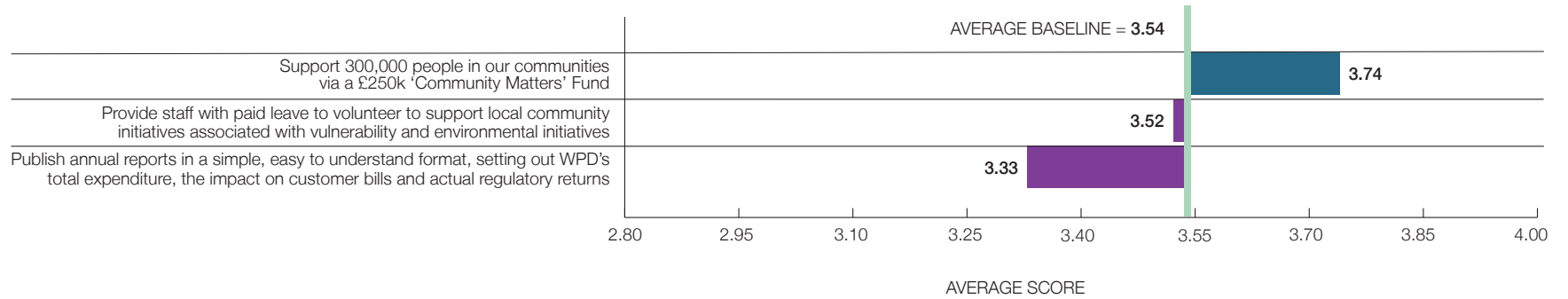
Customer Service Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline

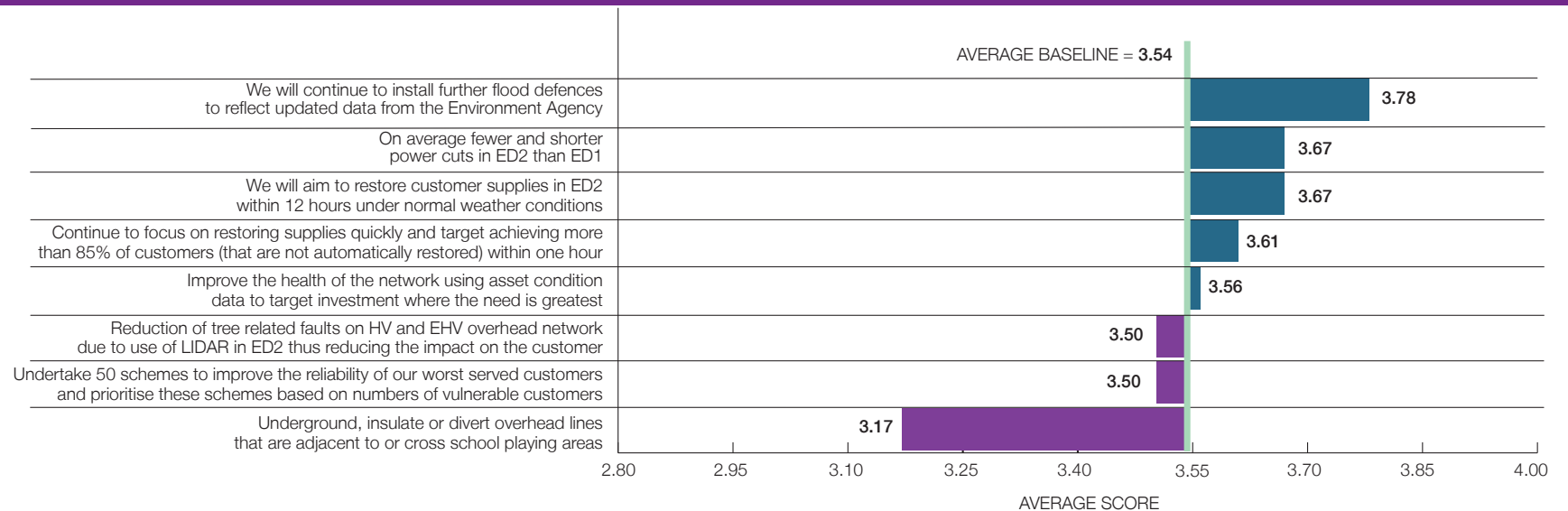


Social Contract Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



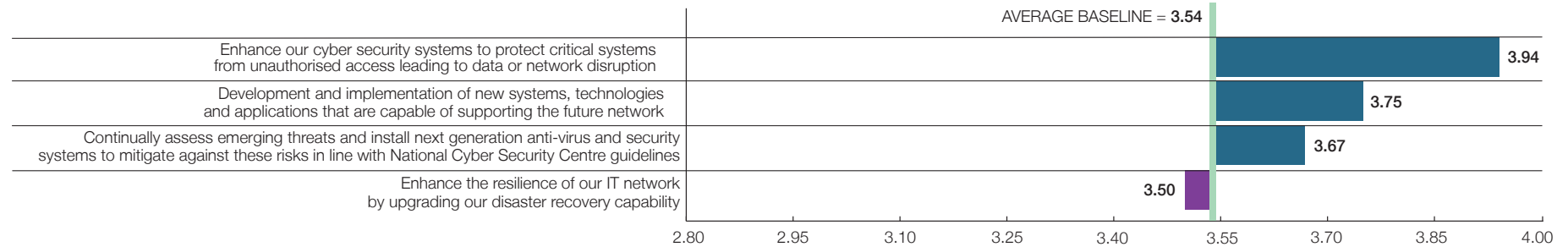
[Click here to return to the Social Contract section of the report](#)

Network Reliability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



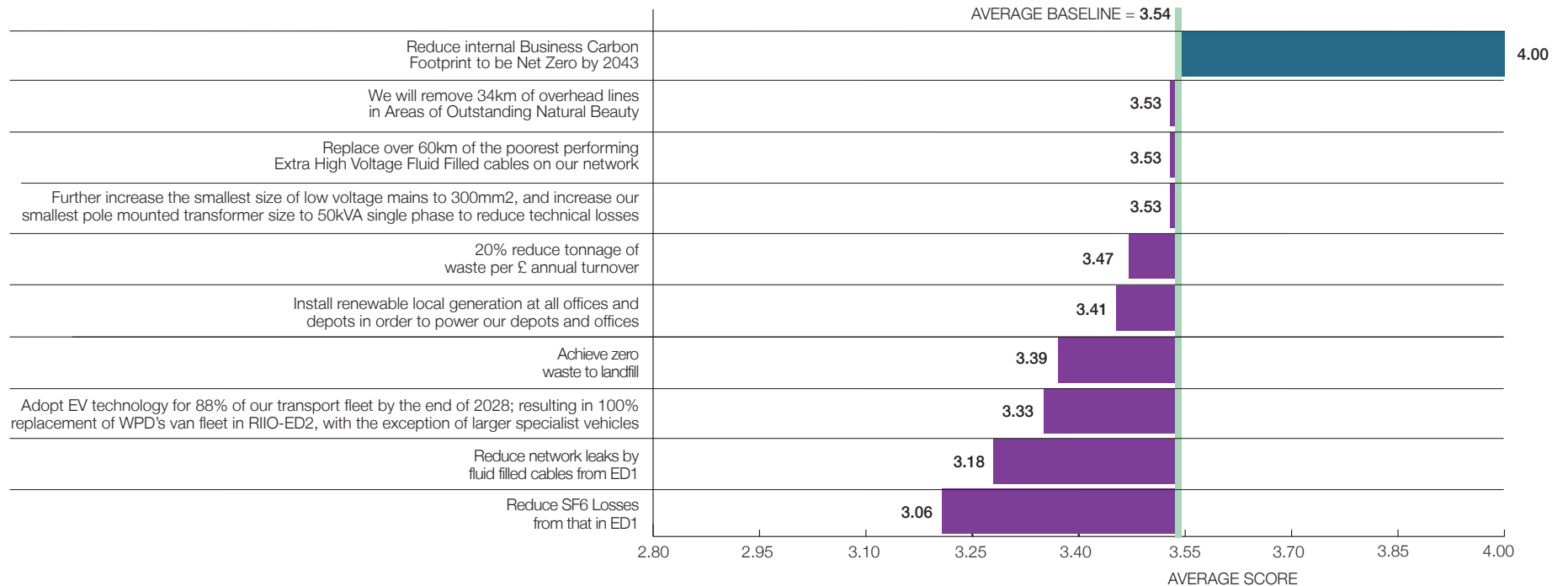
[Click here to return to the Network Reliability section of the report](#)

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



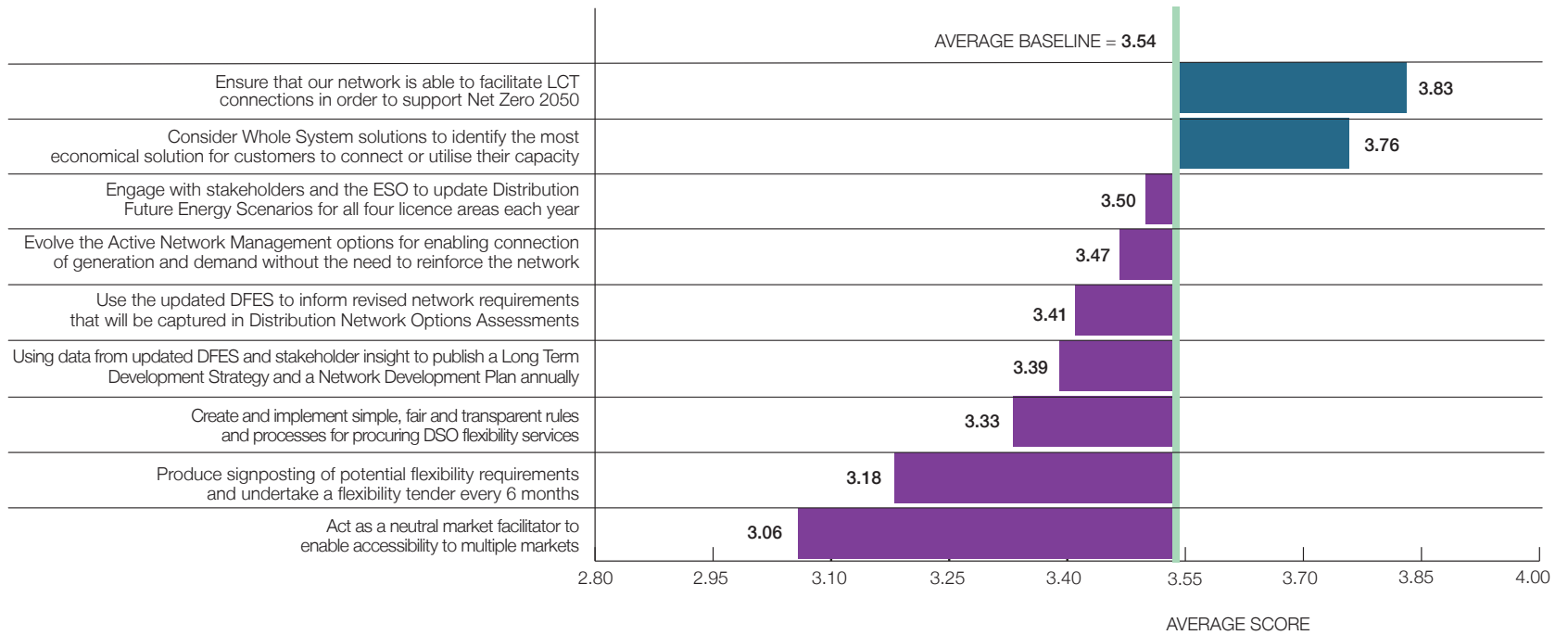
[Click here to return to the Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience section of the report](#)

Environment and Sustainability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



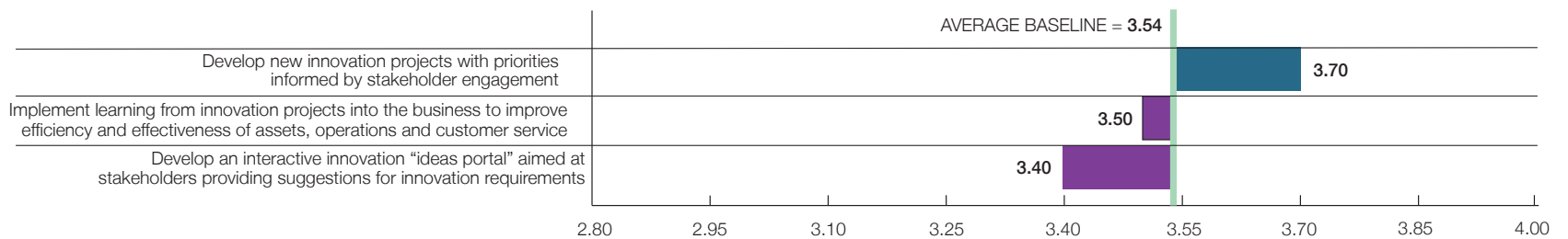
[Click here to return to the Environment and Sustainability section of the report](#)

Distribution System Operator Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



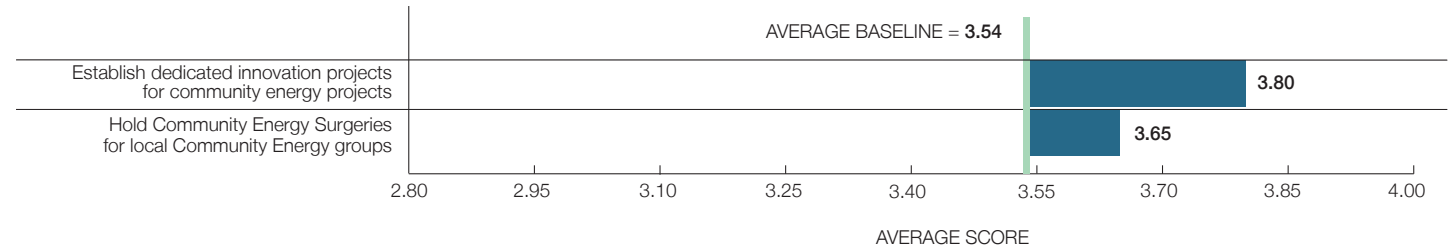
[Click here to return to the Distribution System Operator section of the report](#)

Innovation Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



[Click here to return to the Innovation Outputs 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](#) 

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