



Western Power Distribution ED2 Workshops

East Midlands

November 2020

SECTION	PAGE
1 OVERVIEW	3
2 METHODOLOGY	5
3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
4 ATTENDEES	10
5 INTRODUCTION AND THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS	12
6 SESSION ONE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER	15
7 SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK	33
8 SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK	48
9 APPENDIX 1: EVENT FEEDBACK	63
10 APPENDIX 2: BREAKDOWN OF VOTING RESULTS	66
11 APPENDIX 3: OUTPUTS AVERAGE SCORES COMPARED TO BASELINE	72

1 | OVERVIEW

On 11 November 2020, Western Power Distribution (WPD) hosted the last 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 East Midlands 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 discussed 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 Security and Cyber Resilience.

SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

- This session was introduced by Andy Martyr-Icke, Environment Advisor, 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 surgery 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 Vanessa Buxton, Connection Policy Engineer; Workforce Resilience was hosted by Karl Ketley-Lowe, Engineering Policy Manager; Safety was hosted by Paul Woodward, Safety and Environment Manager; and Digitalisation was hosted by Jonathan Berry, DSO Digitalisation and Data Manager.

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

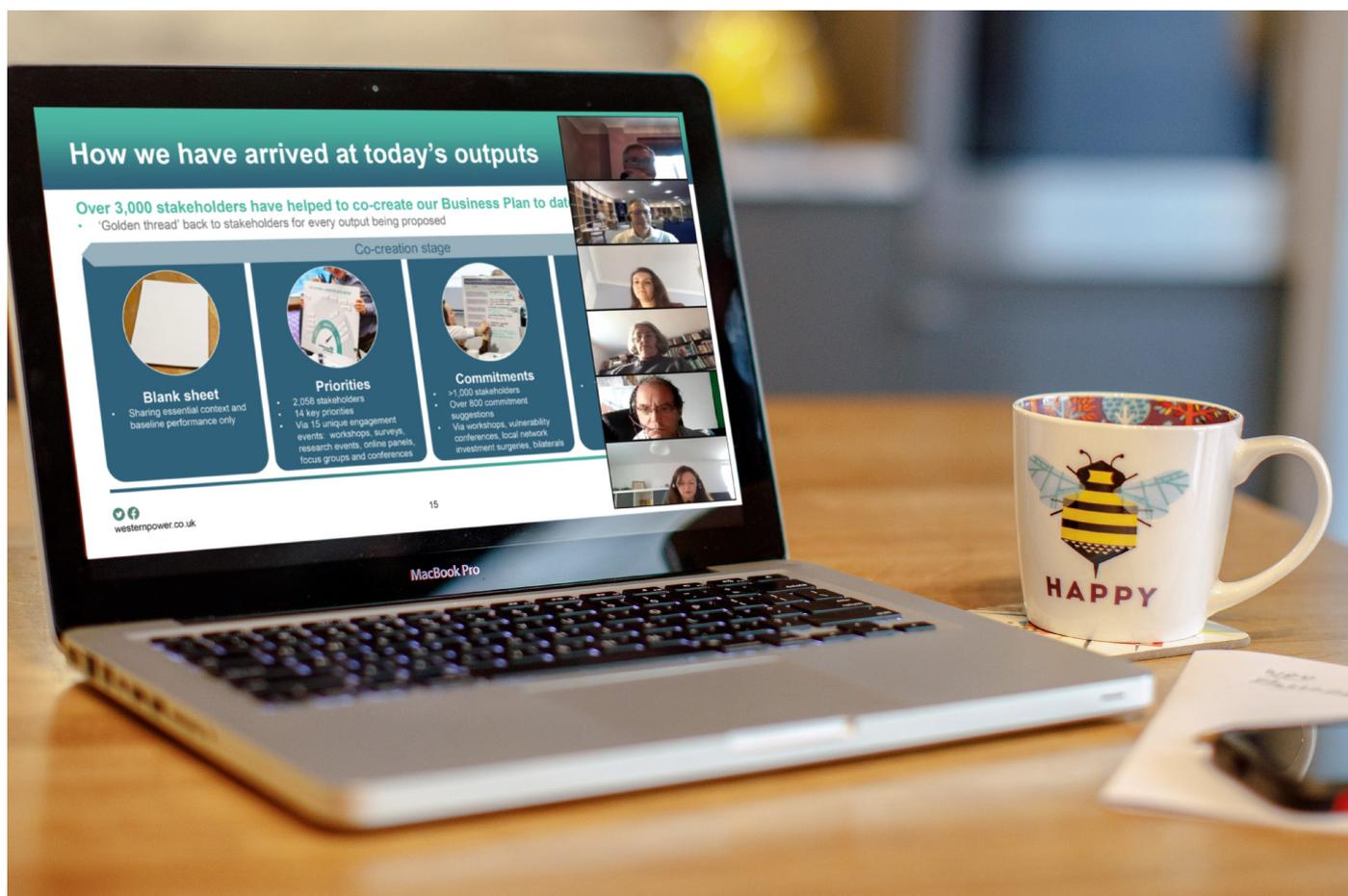
	SESSION ONE	SESSION TWO	SESSION THREE
OFGEM THEME	Meeting the Needs of the Consumer	Maintaining a Safe and Resilient Network	Delivering an Environmentally Sustainable Network
STAKEHOLDERS' PRIORITY AREAS	Customer Service Customer Vulnerability Social Contract	Network Reliability Business IT Security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

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

For the purposes of this report, 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 3.62 / 5, to give a better indication of which outputs stakeholders particularly prioritised.

Please note that the surgery sessions were attended by fewer participants and the voting data is therefore based on a smaller sample size. Whilst polling data for the outputs covered in these sessions is summarised in the relevant sections, it has not been compared against data for the outputs covered in the main sessions.

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

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

3 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

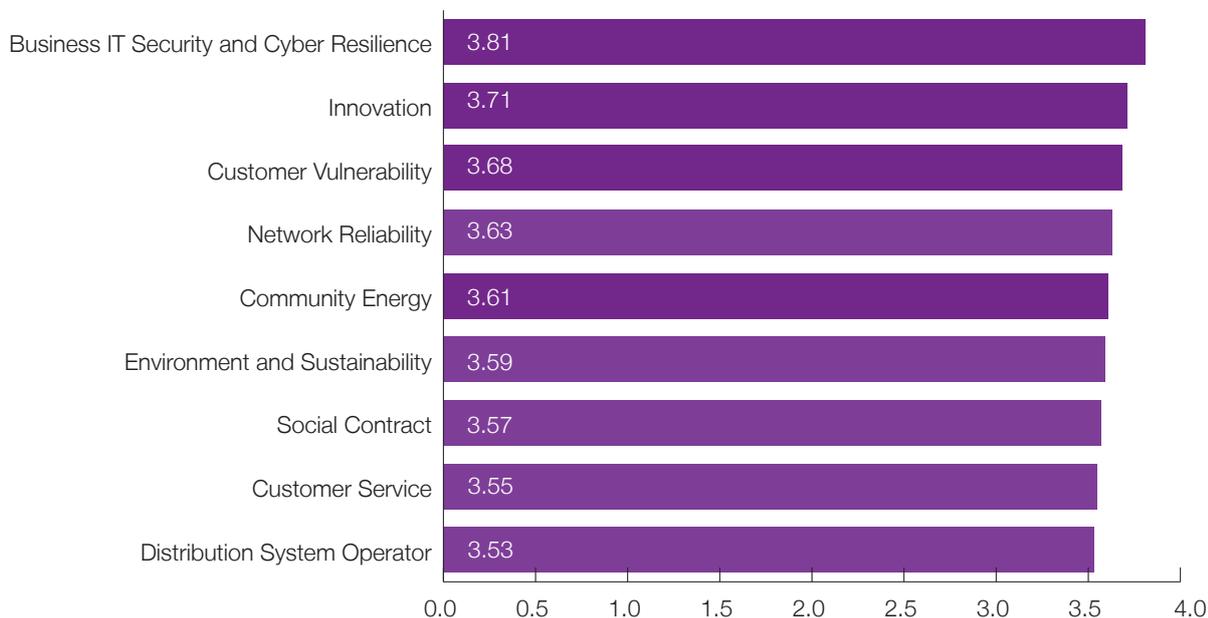
INTRODUCTION AND THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

- Stakeholders were keen to discuss sustainable energy solutions, such as EVs and battery storage, and the importance of grid capacity for new connections, with representatives of private and public sector organisations referring to their emissions targets.
- Other key areas of interest included fuel poverty, customer vulnerability, community energy and digitalisation.
- There was widespread agreement that the shift to homeworking and rise in customer vulnerability in the wake of the pandemic had made network reliability an even greater priority.

BUSINESS PLAN DRAFT OUTPUTS

SUMMARY GRAPH: AVERAGE LEVEL OF AMBITION BY PRIORITY AREA

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



SESSION ONE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER

- **Customer Service:** Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD performs highly in this area but indicated in the online poll that they did not want WPD to be more ambitious than they currently were being. That was reflected in the fact that all but one output was ranked below the average baseline and, as an average across all outputs, Customer Service ranked second from bottom. Stakeholders felt the recent increase in homeworking due to Covid-19 had increased the urgency of WPD improving their communications ahead of planned network interruptions. This was reflected in their desire to see WPD be more ambitious with regard to providing greater insight on planned work activity and interruptions (3.75 / 5) by taking a proactive approach to communicating with customers on this topic.
- **Customer Vulnerability:** Stakeholders felt Covid-19 would strongly impact WPD's work in this area, primarily because of the increase the country would see in vulnerabilities such as fuel poverty. Unlike other priority areas, stakeholders raised a range of initiatives they felt were missing from the outputs including: more data sharing and partnership working on the PSR; more collaboration with local authorities, social housing providers and developers to support vulnerable tenants; and smart meters. In a mirror image of customer service, all consumer vulnerability outputs ranked above the average baseline except for one, demonstrating that stakeholders wanted WPD to be ambitious in this area. The highest ranked output was in relation to providing support and education for vulnerable and fuel poor customers about the future smart network.
- **Social Contract:** In terms of the Social Contract commitments, stakeholders wanted to see some tangible figures and targets for the components of 'positive outcomes for customers in vulnerable situations' and 'excellent environmental performance'. One stakeholder suggested using the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework from which to develop the Contract. The discussion then moved onto the Social Contract outputs included within the upcoming draft Business Plan. Stakeholders did not suggest anything they felt was fundamentally missing from the Business Plan outputs. However, many did feel that the 'why' (the mission and vision) behind the Social Contract was missing, as well as the link between the Business Plan and the Social Contract. In the online polling, stakeholders ranked the outputs relating to the 'Community Matters' Fund and staff volunteering above the baseline average (3.67 and 3.64 / 5 respectively). As a priority area, Social Contract ranked third from bottom with an average of 3.57 / 5.
- **Connections:** One stakeholder wanted WPD to include commitments beyond just those relating to the connections process itself – specifically wanting one committing to fast-track the connection of low carbon technologies. In terms of performance measures, several stakeholders felt one or more of the outputs were vague and needed specific targets to enable WPD to benchmark performance. There was variance in terms of whether the outputs were ambitious enough, or not, with the votes in the online polling often quite split. However, the output that ranked highest under connections was 'engage with local authorities and LEPs to understand their requirements for strategic investment', which scored an average of 4.33 / 5.

SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK

- **Network Reliability:** Stakeholders raised a range of topics that were missing from the draft outputs, including improved customer communications about power outages and the role of distributed generation and battery storage in improving network reliability. Stakeholders discussed the tree clearance programme at length, expressing significant concern about its environmental impact. Several outputs were singled out for being too vague and requiring better KPIs to measure performance. One output, 'improve the health of the network using asset condition data to target investment where the need is greatest', actually ranked joint second across all outputs in the priority areas (excluding those covered in the surgery sessions). Overall, this priority area ranked fourth with an average of 3.63 / 5.
- **Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience:** Stakeholders expressed concern about the threat of foreign governments hacking into the electricity network and felt it was an important area. However, not many comments were raised in relation to this priority area – with one stakeholder explicitly stating their lack of knowledge and deferring to WPD's expertise. Despite this, this priority area ranked highest on average across all priority areas and the output 'development and implementation of new systems, technologies and applications that are capable of supporting the future network' was the highest ranking of all draft Business Plan outputs with 3.96 / 5. In terms of what was missing from the outputs, one stakeholder wanted to see an emphasis on collaboration with other organisations.

- **Workforce Resilience:** Stakeholders did not raise any additional topics they felt were missing from the draft outputs. They also did not comment on specific targets, measures or performance levels. One stakeholder supported the need to increase diversity, noting that the workforce is overwhelmingly male and white. Another stakeholder supported the use of apprenticeships to attract new talent.
- **Safety:** Several felt the current targets were unambitious and wanted to see WPD do more to demonstrate leadership in the area of safety. In terms of what was missing, stakeholders wanted to see future-facing ambitions, using horizon scanning to identify best practice. One stakeholder also wanted to see an output focusing on ongoing improvement. In the online polling, half of respondents wanted to see WPD 'do a lot more' with regard to the outputs on educating school children about the dangers of electricity and distributing safety advice notices. Therefore, despite not commenting on these outputs during the discussions, stakeholders clearly felt WPD's role in ensuring the safety of members of the public is paramount.

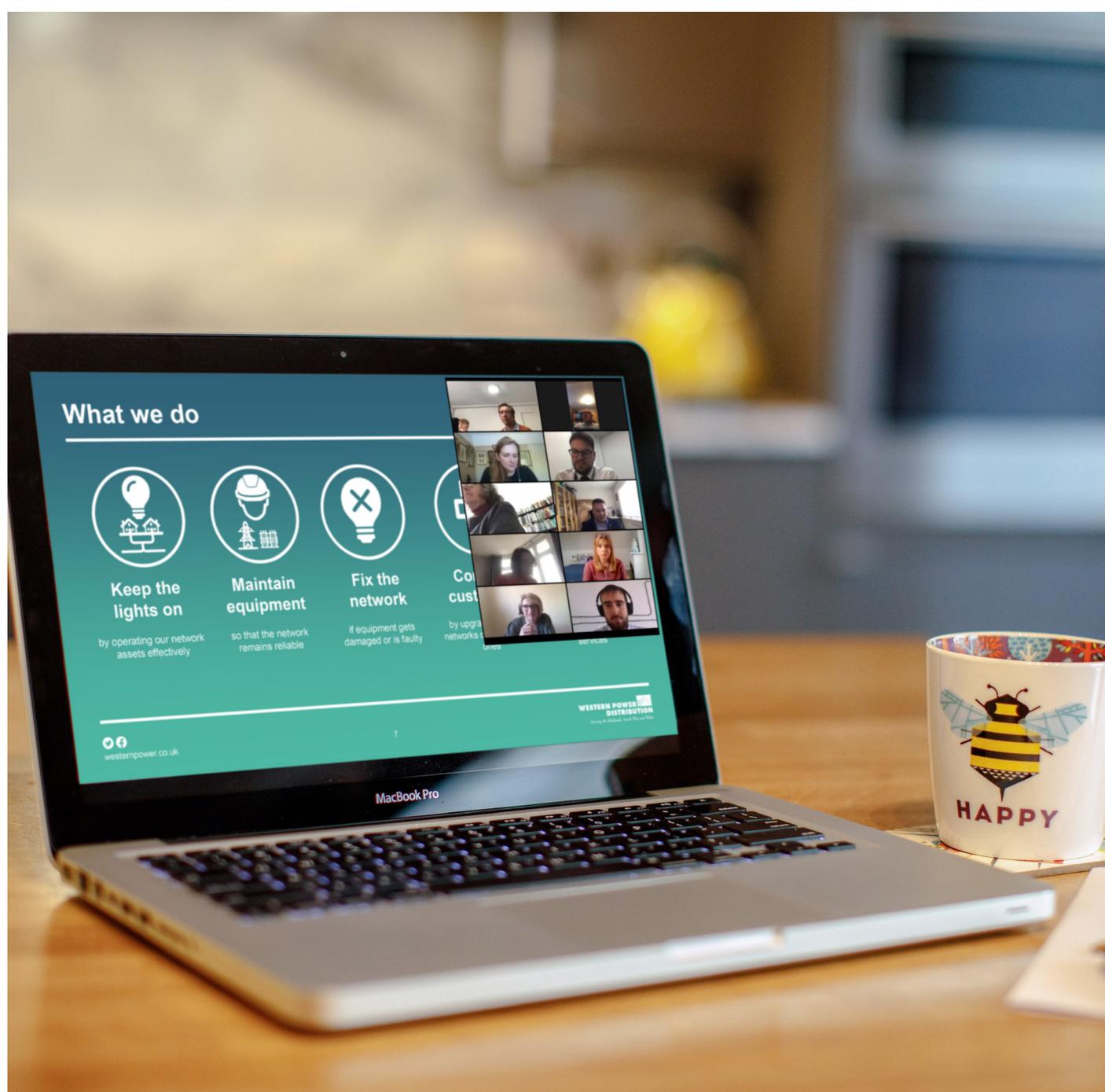
SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

- **Environment and Sustainability:** Stakeholders raised various topics they felt were missing from the draft outputs. This included reducing water usage, as well as supporting local authorities to develop their own low carbon local energy plans. Several stakeholders suggested measures that would provide external assurance, namely IEMA membership and ISO 14001 compliance. In the online poll, 'reduce internal Business Carbon Footprint to be Net Zero by 2043' ranked joint second out of all the draft Business Plan outputs with an average of 3.94 / 5, demonstrating that stakeholders wanted WPD to be much more ambitious, with over a third of them (35%) wanting WPD to 'do a lot more'. However, as a priority area Environment and Sustainability ranked in the bottom half with 3.59 / 5 – just below the baseline average.
- **Distribution System Operator:** In terms of the outputs, stakeholders emphasised the need for clear communication and market information for customers around flexibility services. They strongly supported the need to facilitate the connection of low carbon technology, suggesting initiatives they felt would help. In terms of scenario planning, they wanted to see medium- and long-term projections to help local authorities and other organisations to plan. In the online poll, Distribution System Operator ranked lowest overall out of all the priority areas (not including those covered in the surgery sessions) with 3.53 / 5. Only three outputs ranked above the baseline average, suggesting that the ones stakeholders wanted to see WPD go further on related to whole systems, Active Network Management and the connection of low carbon technologies.
- **Innovation:** Stakeholders expressed strong support for the innovation "ideas portal", although several suggested it should include opportunities to suggest challenges as well as ideas. In terms of what was missing, several discussed the opportunities presented by battery storage. One stakeholder felt that all innovation outputs should be underpinned by the need to get to a lower carbon energy system – and wanted this explicitly referenced. In the online polling, all three outputs ranked higher than the baseline average and, as a priority area, Innovation ranked second with an average of 3.71. This demonstrates that stakeholders wanted WPD to be particularly ambitious in this area.
- **Community Energy:** Stakeholders agreed that the importance of community energy was growing as we move towards a more decentralised energy system. While stakeholders did not comment on the specific outputs themselves, they did discuss the importance of ensuring that community energy projects were not limited to wind and solar as well as opportunities to bring together the expertise of those who had completed community energy schemes with those still at the planning stage. In the online poll, one output ranked above the baseline average and the other ranked below. As a priority area, Community Energy ranked fifth (not including those covered during the surgery sessions) with 3.61 / 5.
- **Digitalisation:** It should be noted that there was a small sample size of just three stakeholders in the Digitalisation surgery, so the outcomes of the voting on this priority area should be viewed in this context. In the case of the output to 'demonstrate leadership in publishing network data, with relevant data presumed open, and promote its availability to customers'; two stakeholders felt that WPD should go a lot further than planned ED2, scoring this 5 / 5, with the one other stakeholder voting 4 / 5, giving an average of 4.67 / 5. The voting was exactly the same for the output to develop the API interface and data availability under API, with one stakeholder adding that this would be helpful for distributed generation customers as it would enable WPD to quickly and efficiently share data with its stakeholders.

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 7.94 / 10.
- 88% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they had had an opportunity to make points and ask questions.
- 88% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the right topics were discussed on the day.
- 94% thought EQ Communications' facilitation was either 'very good' or 'good'.
- 63% felt the online format worked 'well' or 'very well'.

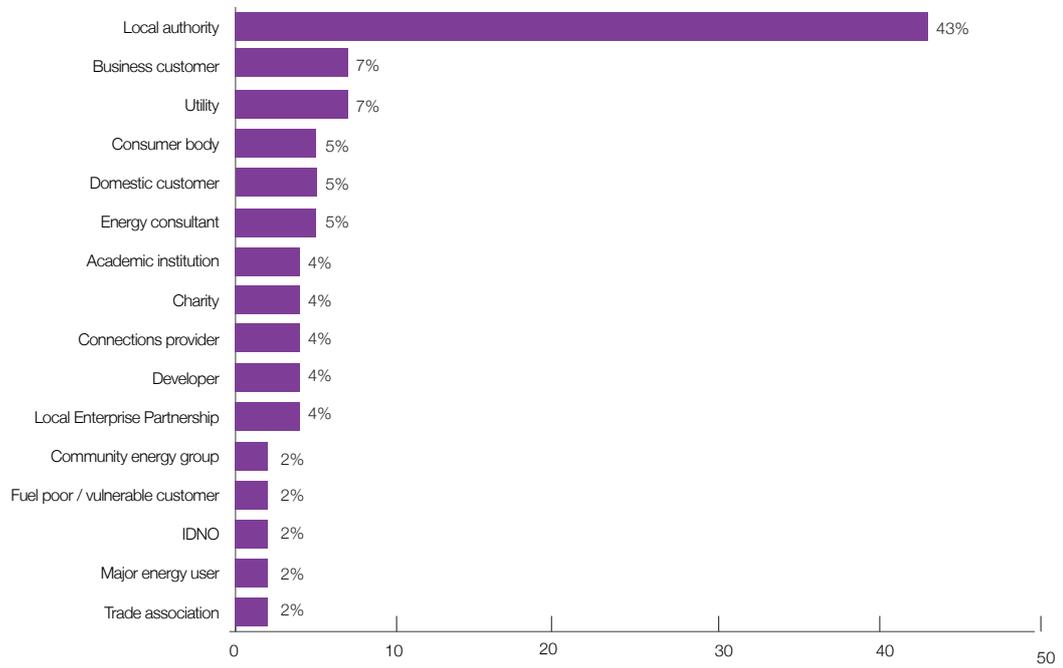


4 | ATTENDEES

66 stakeholders representing 57 different organisations attended the online workshop. The organisations represented were as follows:

- Accent
- ACL Planning and Development
- Amey
- Ashfield District Council
- Bacchus Hotel
- Borough Council of Wellingborough
- BUUK Infrastructure
- CEG
- Cherwell District Council
- Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts
- Country Land & Business Association
- Coventry City Council
- Cranfield University
- Derby City Council
- Derby Homes
- Derbyshire County Council
- EA Technology
- East Lindsey District Council
- East Staffordshire Borough Council
- EDF Energy
- Electricity North West
- Eon UK
- Erewash Borough Council
- Extinction Rebellion
- Fleet Parish Council
- Geldards LLP
- Good Neighbour Scheme Spalding
- Granby cum Sutton Parish Council
- Harborough District Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
- IBECOS Ltd
- Kelvatek
- Kier
- Kirklington Parish Council
- Land Agent Group
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Melton Borough Council
- Midlands Energy Hub
- Milton Keynes Council
- Network Rail
- North Kesteven District Council
- North Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Delivery Unit
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
- Open University
- Piparia Consulting Ltd
- Rutland County Council
- South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
- South Kesteven District Council
- Stadium MK
- Sustainable Direction Ltd
- University of Nottingham
- Wattify Limited
- Whitwick Parish Council
- Woburn Sands Town Council
- Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership
- WPD Customer Engagement Group

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



5 | INTRODUCTION AND THE RIIO-ED2 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

A large proportion of stakeholders reported that they had attended the workshop to learn about WPD's plans and how they would affect their work and projects. Local authorities were particularly interested in WPD's approach to the climate emergency and fuel poverty and were keen to ensure that their priorities for planning and transport were reflective of WPD's plans. A number of stakeholders explained that they were interested in finding out how WPD's approach had changed since previous engagement events. Businesses, meanwhile, wanted to inform themselves of the company's plans and find out how they could support the company's efforts, expressing an interest in EV charging infrastructure, sustainable energy and flexible services. Others, such as consumer body representatives and parish councillors, had attended the event to learn how WPD's plans would impact the groups they represent.

There were high levels of interest in sustainable energy solutions, including solar, battery storage, hydrogen, heat pumps and EVs. Stakeholders from the private and public sectors were keen to work with the company to achieve their emissions targets. Several stakeholders noted that the grid in their local area would need to be strengthened to cope with new connections, and there was widespread interest in discussing WPD's role in ensuring continuity of supply following the roll-out of these technologies. A number of attendees wished to discuss the role of community energy and microgeneration. Other areas of interest included digitalisation, customer vulnerability and consent for connections.

Several stakeholders stated that Covid had not changed their expectations with regard to WPD's services. However, a number of attendees pointed out that WPD should consider the shift to homeworking, advising the company to gather information with a view to building an accurate picture and informing its plans for the network. It was felt that the move away from office working and the rise in vulnerable customers had made reliability of supply a greater priority. While local authorities reported that planned developments were going ahead, it was noted that the pressure for green homes would also have a knock-on effect for WPD's plans.

The importance of communications was highlighted multiple times, with a number of stakeholders praising their experience of the company's communication during the pandemic. However, one stakeholder suggested that given people's increasing reliance on electricity at home, WPD should engage more closely with customers around power cuts. Finding effective ways to communicate had also become a priority for local authorities and consumer bodies, which were having to adapt to the limitations on face-to-face interaction.

WHY HAVE YOU ATTENDED TODAY?

"I'm here because we had a stakeholder session with WPD a couple of months ago and there's more that we can do in terms with collaborating, with us on the ground and you in the system." **Local authority**

"Like many other local authorities, we have declared a climate change emergency, so we're trying to keep abreast of WPD's plans for our area and making sure that we can use these plans to continue the growth of the district." **Local authority**

"I'm the sustainability and fuel poverty manager for North Kesteven council and I'm interested to know what you're doing from a sustainability and fuel poverty point of view, which have some crossover but not entirely." **Local authority**

"I represent a parish council in the east side of Nottingham. I attended the November meeting last year and wanted to see what progress had been made from a customer point of view."
Parish / community council

"We are in what I believe is the most challenging time for a DNO, given the change from fossil fuels to sustainable energy. I am interested to see how WPD plans to do this and how we can help provide this."
Business customer

"I am an energy manager and look after our property estate. We are looking at the land we own for larger scale solar farm development, coupled with battery storage. We have a sustainable travel team too, largely responsible for the roll-out of electric vehicles. We are working with district and borough councils on charging facilities." **Local authority**

"I work for Network Rail and we have recently signed up to targets to align our emissions with the 1.5-degree temperature rise globally. We are looking at our fleet and discovered that some areas don't have the electrical capacity for increasing the charging infrastructure. I have come here to see what WPD are doing to help us overcome this. We want to know what WPD's green commitments are."
Business customer

“I’m from Citizens Advice Derbyshire. I’m here to learn what all this means for our clients.”

Consumer body

“I run the solar projects function, including batteries, and I’m here to discuss the infrastructure to support our 2028 aims.” **Local authority**

“I’m an economic analyst for South East Midlands LEP. I’m interested to see where the ED2 plan has got to and how WPD’s plan can join up with our area’s strategy in terms of ensuring economic growth and using the network in a flexible way, for example, with smart network management and flexible services.”

Business customer

“We’ve got a hospital going out for tender in Cardiff and I’m involved in aspects of the planning process to get it on site. The hospital has the ambition to be the greenest one in the UK, so we’re looking at battery technology, for example. I would like to follow this up with you.” **Developer**

“I’m the Chair for the Customer Collaboration Panel and I have helped to roll out the Power Up project in the area, so I have a major interest in vulnerability in all of its guises. I want to hear what everyone else has to say.” **Energy consultant**

“I’m from EDF, so I’m looking at the DNOs from a supplier perspective. I’m here to learn about what DNOs are doing and to find out more about the agenda for the future for our pricing purposes.”

Utility

“I’m here to understand more about WPD and how its plans impact on our planning decisions.”

Local authority

“I work with vulnerable tenants, so I’m here to see how we can support them.” **Developer**

“I’m the technology and strategic sales manager in my company, and I deal with DNOs across the country, so I’m here to find out your plans on digitalisation and innovation.” **Business customer**

“My company supplies WPD. We are interested in your innovation so we can support the work you do.”

Business customer

“I’m from Wellingborough Council and I work in planning policy. We are about to start a review of our strategic plan, and obviously two key areas are climate change and energy and sustainable transport. I am joining today to get some ideas of how we can work that into our priorities going forward.” **Local authority**

“I’m interested in how WPD will be working with business in our area for microgeneration, not just in towns and cities.” **Business customer**

“I’m from the county council. We’re interested in new connections, as we’ve got a lot of solar and are looking at battery storage, etc.” **Local authority**

“I’m interested in finding out how we will keep continuity of supply as demand increases. Electricity is the backbone of our technology.” **Local authority**

“East Lindsey has put in EV in all our car parks. I want to see that power is there in future developments along the coast.” **Local authority**

“I’m interested in vulnerability on the one hand and sustainability on the other.” **Developer**

“I’m interested in knowing more about what we can do to reduce our carbon footprint, whether that’s reducing traffic or encouraging cycling and tree planting, etc., with a view to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.” **Parish / community council**

“I’m attending today predominantly to see how WPD’s sustainability plans, in terms of the power supply, might fit with our local authority’s climate change strategy.” **Local authority**

“I work for a wildlife trust. I’m here to understand about your environment initiatives and strategy. I’m also interested in community engagement.” **Environmental group**

“I’m interested in how WPD intends to manage the network on the basis of new energy projects and how these projects will affect the business and your customers.” **Academic institution**

“There’s also been some questions around more generation from various community groups, and the district as well. So, I’m interested in the community energy side of things.” **Local authority**

“I am here today to find out more about the grid and how it will cope in the future with the increase in the amount of air source heat pumps, solar PV and EVs.”
Developer

“With digitalisation, what are we going to do with the information we gather, how will it be used and how are the public going to have access to that information?”
Energy consultant

“Like any other city we’re interested in the future of fuels, especially hydrogen.”
Local authority

“My particular interest is in WPD’s assets, so how they go about securing consent for the connections.”
Business customer

“I’m a stadium project developer. We’re focused on network reliability. We are interested in giving back to the grid with advance notice.”
Business customer

“From a community perspective, it’s the right to sell energy to each other, so generating our own energy and supplying it amongst ourselves. In terms of the Nottingham 2028 target, it’s about getting the grid, which is quite weak in Nottingham, up to scratch as soon as possible.”
Vulnerable customer representative

“WPD’s digitalisation and innovation and how your suppliers can support that.”
Business customer

HAS COVID CHANGED YOUR PRIORITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF WPD?

“We’ve noticed that WPD have sent out effective communications around Covid. As far as risk assessment statements are concerned, the interface point with WPD seems to be good, so everyone is working safely and securely.”
Utility

“I don’t think my expectations have changed, but it has reinforced the importance of reliability of supply, particularly for vulnerable customers.”
Local authority

“Everyone is at home now, so whether they’re self-isolating or working from home, it’s making people more vulnerable because they can’t get the support they need. Our services are working hard to reach out to communities. Normally we’d be out and about and speaking to people. We’re working with schools, doing social media campaigns, but it’s how do we reach our most vulnerable who really need that information about saving.”
Consumer body

“One positive is that communities have looked more to local authorities to organise things, so we’ve improved our connection with communities. I’ve had more time to engage more fully with your consultations, rather than having to travel somewhere. It’s easier to set aside an hour or two on Zoom.”
Local authority

“It’s great that systems haven’t all collapsed and that WPD have been out there working. It’s appreciated. In a word: resilience.”
Parish / community council

“WPD’s response to the pandemic has given me a great deal more respect for them. The company has really stayed on top of everything and has dealt with problems very quickly. The communications have been great too.”
Parish / community council

“There has been a shift away from city centre working to people working from home, so there will be an impact on energy distribution and the design of the network. You will need to have enough information to know what’s going on and manage that. You can never have enough information.”
Business customer

“I think we still expect the same service and same level of attitude from any other DNO. I think building green homes will be a part of that, so we will be expecting WPD to provide a good service.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“There have been a lot of delays in actual policy documents because of Covid but the planning application side of the council have been busier than ever, and large developments have continued to keep going throughout this time.”
Local authority

“I don’t think my expectations have changed. I’m a lot more reliant now on the connections as I’m working from home. I need consistency and reliability within the home. It was a rare situation to have a power cut, but the app gave me all this information that I hadn’t quite realised was there. There’s now more pressure on WPD to make sure people are aware of things like this.”
Business customer

6 | SESSION ONE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER

CUSTOMER SERVICE

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders felt the increase in homeworking because of the pandemic would impact what needs to happen under the priority area of Customer Service. This was particularly in relation to the need to proactively contact customers in advance of planned works or interruptions.

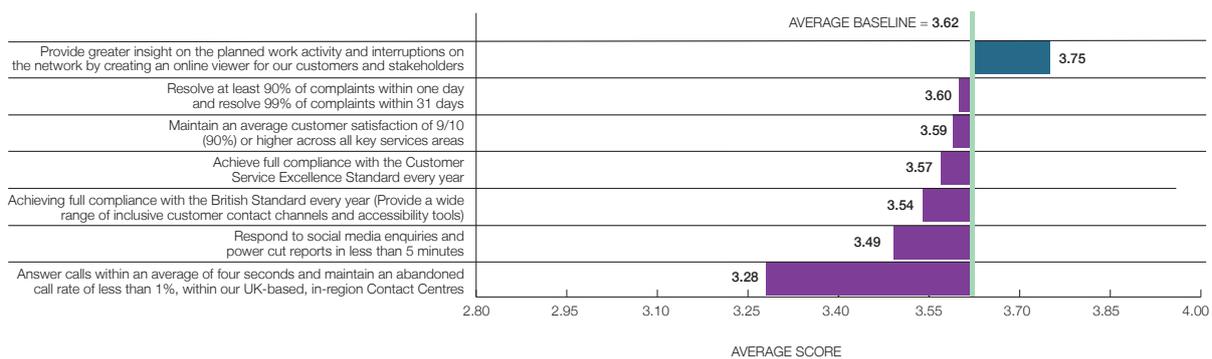
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD already performs highly in this area. During the discussions they did not particularly indicate whether WPD should continue to aspire to such high standards, although the fact the outputs consistently scored below the baseline average suggested they perhaps thought WPD had got their level of ambition right. They also agreed that a range of communications tools and methods were required, including telephone, social media and online tools. They strongly agreed with previous feedback that WPD needs to do more to communicate with customers in anticipation of planned works and network interruptions.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In general, stakeholders appeared to be relatively happy with the customer service outputs and did not think anything significant was missing. In terms of performance measures and targets, all Customer Service outputs except for one scored below the average baseline. This was reinforced by the fact that for every output, the majority of stakeholders felt that the level of ambition was right for the Customer Service outputs (by voting 3 / 5). The output that ranked the highest and above the average baseline was 'provide greater insight on the planned work activity and interruptions on the network by creating an online viewer for our customers and stakeholders'. Whilst the largest single vote (38%) was that the level of ambition was right for this output, 59% of stakeholders wanted WPD to either 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area. The discussions during the breakout reflected this. Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the output below.

Customer Service Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“Yes, I’m happy with these outputs. Thank you.”
Local authority

“I’m not quite sure if anything is missing.”
Business customer

OUTPUTS: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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

One stakeholder noted they felt WPD had an excellent record in this area and sought to further understand the financial reason why, as a business, they excelled in this regard. In the online poll, this output ranked third highest for this priority area, but it was still just below the baseline average for all outputs at 3.59 / 5.

“I just wanted to congratulate WPD on the excellent record on customer service particularly in contrast with many large organisations. Is it a result of the way you are regulated and the incentives you receive?”

Local authority

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

Stakeholders did not comment on the specifics of this output. However, one stakeholder noted that homeowner / landowner complaints were not included in these reporting figures as they were dealt with via a different procedure, in contrast to other DNOs. It was implied more should be done to respond to homeowner / landowner complaints. In the online poll, this output ranked second for this priority area, although it only ranked 0.01% higher than the previous output so there was a very small margin between them. However, it was still just below the baseline average for all outputs at 3.6 / 5.

“Those complaint stats are very impressive. But historically, WPD hasn't been prepared to accept homeowner / landowner complaints. It seems to us that wherever landowners have a complaint about the service they receive, those complaints should be recorded and reported. WPD don't deal with them in the normal procedure. It's completely different to other DNOs.” **Business customer**

WE WILL AIM TO MEET ALL GUARANTEED STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCES

Several stakeholders commented on the 18 failures to date, with one asking for more context and another feeling that, given the volume of work WPD does in this area, this figure is fairly small – although the target should always be to have none. It was not included in the online poll, as this output is a regulatory requirement.

“That's very helpful. I think given the sheer volume of work you do, 18 is quite small, but I think it's always good to have the target of 0.” **Local authority**

“Sounds good to me. Those 18 failures, are you able to put them into more context?” **Local authority**

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)

One stakeholder felt this output was too vague and felt it was difficult to pass comment. Another felt they needed more background to fully understand the context. In the online poll, the output ranked lower than the baseline average at 3.57 / 5, with most (55%) feeling it was the right level of ambition.

“These outputs [this one and the one below] are really quite abstract and without experience of what they mean in reality coming back up from the ground, it's difficult to know.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“Understanding the background of where these outputs are coming from would be helpful.”

Vulnerable customer representative

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

In the online poll, the output ranked lower than the baseline average at 3.54 / 5, with most (54%) feeling it was the right level of ambition. No comments were made, aside from the comment above that also related to this output stating that it was too vague.

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

Only one stakeholder commented on this output to say they felt the target of four seconds to answer calls was a good target. This was perhaps reflected in the online poll where this output was ranked lowest for this priority area with 3.28 / 5. Most stakeholders (60%) felt it was ambitious enough, with 13% even feeling the target could be less ambitious.

“I think the call answer rate is very impressive and a good standard to set.”

Storage and renewables installer / provider

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

One stakeholder commented on this output to ask whether WPD felt this was an ambitious target or not. They questioned whether social media would be the chosen method of contact during a power cut, concluding it was less important than the response rate for phone calls as a consequence. In the online poll this ranked second lowest (and below the average baseline) at 3.49 / 5.

“What would be achievable? Could you do things much faster? With social media, you wouldn't report a power cut on social media in the middle of the night, you would ring someone, so I think this is less important.” **Academic institution**

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

Stakeholders agreed that WPD needs to provide greater insight on their upcoming planned work activity, particularly in light of the increase in homeworking due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was agreed, however, that the emphasis needs to be on WPD proactively informing customers as it was felt customers are unlikely to check themselves. Whilst the online portal was therefore supported, as was the Power Track App, stakeholders wanted to see activities like push notifications sent to customers via text message ahead of planned works. This was the only Customer Service output to be ranked higher than the average baseline in the online poll, at 3.75 / 5, demonstrating that it was the output that stakeholders wanted to see WPD be most ambitious on in this area.

“You need to provide greater insight on the planned work activity now people are working from home. That is going to be a large amount of work. That proactive communication with customers about the network and when work is done will be very important indeed.”

Distributed generation customer

“I wasn't aware of the power cut app but when I downloaded it, it gave me all the information I needed. It's pretty good to have an estimation of the time it'll be fixed. I think when you're working from home, as so many are during the pandemic, it becomes more critical.” **Business customer**

“As far as I understand they already inform customers of planned network activities. If that is on an online portal that customers can gain access to then that can only be a good thing.”

Distributed generation customer

“On the last point about greater insight, is there any opportunity to push that out to people via text, etc.? I think putting the onus on people to actively check something will not be very effective. I think they'll have to come to the customer.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“We should be pushing text notifications.”

Business customer

CUSTOMER VULNERABILITY

IMPACT OF COVID-19

It was felt Covid-19 would have a significant impact on WPD’s work in this area, primarily due to the anticipated rise in vulnerabilities – and fuel poverty – in light of the pandemic. Several partner agencies that work on the ground supporting those with vulnerabilities noted the pandemic had impacted their ability to go out and engage with these customers. One such stakeholder said they had experienced a greater level of abuse and advised WPD they should prepare their own staff in this regard. Another stakeholder noted that the pandemic had revealed whole networks of community support groups that WPD should seek to work with going forward.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

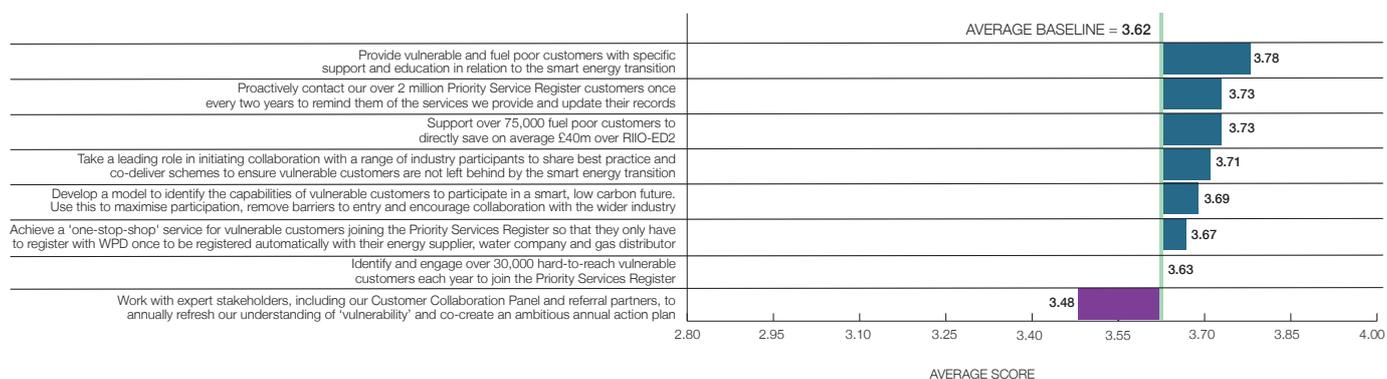
Stakeholders strongly agreed with previous feedback that the PSR is an important tool and should be kept up to date. They also agreed that customers should not have to register multiple times and that there should be a move towards adopting a national register. They particularly supported previous feedback stating there should be an increased focus on collaboration and data sharing. In terms of fuel poverty, stakeholders certainly agreed there would be a rise as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. There was support for working with fuel poverty partners looking to treat the symptoms, such as installing insulation in energy inefficient homes. In terms of the smart future, stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD must ensure no one is left behind. They particularly felt that programmes of education would be important in this regard.

WPD’S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Unlike for other priority areas, stakeholders raised a range of activities that they felt were missing from the draft outputs. Several stakeholders wanted to see more partnership working with local authorities, for example sharing data on the PSR as well as identifying those groups who most deserve funding. Others urged WPD to do more in partnership with local authorities, social housing providers and developers to support vulnerable tenants and improve the energy efficiency of housing stock. One stakeholder felt a winter newsletter from WPD would be useful as this is the time when people particularly start suffering from failing boilers. As at other events, stakeholders raised the issue of smart meters and discussed whether they were a challenge or an opportunity when it comes to supporting the most vulnerable.

In a mirror image of the outputs under Customer Service, all Customer Vulnerability outputs scored above the average baseline except for one and, as an average across all outputs, Customer Vulnerability ranked third out of the priority areas. This indicates that stakeholders wanted to see WPD be particularly ambitious in the area of Customer Vulnerability. The only output that ranked below the baseline related to WPD annually refreshing its understanding of vulnerability and co-creating an ambitious action plan, which scored 3.48 / 5 with most (64%) thinking the level of ambition was right. Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the output below.

Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“Covid will impact heavily across all these areas; is it being considered?” **Utility**

“This time of year, I’m usually running events in small areas with a mobile library. They’re small events, but so important at this time of year.” **Consumer body**

“A lot of people often have no alternative fuel. They are off the gas grid and rely on electric heating, so now, with Covid, if they have a power cut, they can’t go anywhere else. They have to stay in all day in a cold house.” **Local authority**

“Are you able to use the information you have to help local authorities and health services? Especially with Covid, I think that would be a game changer. I know partnership working is never easy but WPD could add a lot of value by signposting highly vulnerable households.” **Developer**

“Also, you say you have funds available for communities but very often the ones that get the money are simply the best bid writers. Have you thought about tying in with local authorities, because they will know where the money is really needed?” **Local authority**

“Sadly, I think communities have changed. Personally, I have experienced a great deal more abuse. This is the first time that I’ve needed to wear a bodycam because of the abuse I’m getting when I try to help people. There are going to be a lot more people becoming vulnerable due to Covid. WPD’s staff need to brace themselves and prepare for that.” **Local authority**

“The vulnerability register has worked very well with our welfare team. They find it very good.” **Local authority**

“Proactively responding and linking with planners and house builders. From a planning policy point of view, we would like to do more, but we are constrained. I know there are some things being done with social housing but is there more that can be done?” **Local authority**

“With winter coming people find that their heating is starting to break down and they’re having issues, so any standard newsletters we can send out with information about this would perhaps be wise.” **Local authority**

“I don’t understand how smart meters save poor customers money. I’ve had one for a few years and I haven’t saved any money. I think insulation is far more important for saving energy.” **Parish / community council**

“To me smart meters allow people to identify where they are using excess energy. But the future is allowing the devices themselves to use that information and respond to it. For example, if your fridge can recognise that fuel is cheaper overnight, it could store up energy over night to use during the day.” **Business customer**

“We also need to enhance the collaboration between WPD and the electricity suppliers. The suppliers are the ones who decide of what sort of meters they will install, so this bit of collaboration needs to be enhanced.” **Business customer**

“I have been very hands-on in the community during the Covid period. Having set up a food bank and doing delivery in our area, I have been really shocked by what is out there. We need to work with churches and community organisations because they already work with a lot of the people who are vulnerable and in poverty.” **Local authority**

OUTPUTS: POWER CUT VULNERABILITY

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

Stakeholders supported the principle of this output. In terms of its ambition, one stakeholder sought to understand what proportion of WPD's customers are vulnerable. In the online poll, the output ranked second highest with 3.73 / 5 and a majority (53%) wanting to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more' – indicating they could do more than contacting 2 million customers every two years.

"In terms of the total number of customers, how many are highly vulnerable? What percentage? If you have 10 million households, how many of them are vulnerable?" **Developer**

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 supported the concept of creating a one-stop shop, feeling that it would be a benefit for customers to only have to sign up to one register. Several wanted to ensure WPD were collaborating with the energy supplier, particularly as they are often a first point of contact. Another asked whether WPD were collaborating with Christians Against Poverty. This output ranked third lowest in this area with a score of 3.67 / 5 which is just above the average baseline. 47% felt it demonstrated the right level of ambition, yet a slightly higher proportion (49%) wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more'. During the discussions, a couple of stakeholders seemed to want to see this output go even further, with one suggesting the register should in fact be independent of WPD and another suggesting it should be a national register based closely on those of the Local Resilience Forums.

"I would completely agree with the comments that have been made. The one-stop-shop sounds like a proactive way forward – anything we can do to break down those barriers and promote that joint working will be beneficial for people." **Local authority**

"It's a good idea. People don't like putting in their details three or four times. The energy supplier might have first contact, so do you have that communication with them?" **Local authority**

"I work with Christians Against Poverty. Is that an area where you could get that register known?" **Local authority**

"I agree. Two-way traffic is important, including the suppliers." **Local authority**

"Maybe the register needs to be independent from WPD just to make sure it's manageable." **Local authority**

"The local resilience forums (LRFs) have a list of all the local vulnerable people and every organisation seems to want to have their own version of that. I'd like to see a national database checked and ratified by medical professionals. We could all work together and have one reference point." **Local authority**

"I am particularly keen on the one stop approach and the chance to be able to touch base with those people more easily." **Local authority**

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

Stakeholders supported this output, particularly the fact that it seeks to proactively reach vulnerable customers as it was noted these customers are less likely to approach WPD themselves or know the support is available. It was noted that the best way to reach these customers is via third party organisations, such as hospitals, charities, parish councils and schools. One stakeholder felt WPD would have to increase their engagement with these networks if they are to reach the 30,000 per year target. One stakeholder expressed concern about the ‘forgotten’ hard-to-reach rural communities. In the online poll, this output ranked 0.01% above the baseline average at 3.63 / 5. It was second lowest in this priority area, with most (53%) feeling the level of ambition was right.

“It sounds about right. The more people who know about the Priority Services Register, the better. I think it’s important that people know about the Priority Services Register. I think the average person doesn’t know that.” **Consumer body**

“I was going to mention the figure of 30,000. This will be incredibly difficult unless they improve their engagement with charity and social services. Hard-to-reach vulnerable customers sometimes they don’t see themselves as vulnerable. WPD will need a lot of collaboration to get the communication just right.” **Local authority**

“You can work with primary schools, as often grandparents pick up children from school. I agree that parish councils are great too.” **Consumer body**

“My biggest concern is the ones who aren’t on the register, and how we get to them. We’re out and about in communities, but Derbyshire has a lot of rural, forgotten communities.” **Consumer body**

“The most vulnerable customers may not have the competence to contact you, so this output is very important because with the most vulnerable, you need to reach them, not vice versa.” **Parish / community council**

“The usual route we find people are vulnerable in is via health. For example, where hospitals have to discharge people and their homes are then not suitable for their conditions.” **Local authority**

“I found parish council forums particularly useful in getting to the hard-to-reach.” **Local authority**

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

Whilst stakeholders clearly indicated they thought there would be an increase in vulnerabilities because of Covid-19, they did not mention that they thought there would be ‘new’ vulnerabilities. This is perhaps why this output received no comments during the breakout discussions and ranked lowest in the online poll for this area with 3.48 / 5.

OUTPUTS: FUEL POVERTY

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

There was consensus among stakeholders that we are seeing a significant rise in the numbers of people falling into fuel poverty because of the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. Particularly in light of this, there was discussion in the breakouts as to whether the output targets were ambitious enough. One felt that as it represents a significant increase on current delivery it is ambitious enough. Others, however, felt that as a proportion of WPD's customers and given the rise in fuel poverty, the target, whilst admissible, needs to be stretched. Several stakeholders suggested that, instead, WPD should pool resources with other organisations and take an integrated approach aimed at supporting higher numbers. Several stakeholders raised concerns about particular vulnerabilities, including those customers that have electric heating and those on pre-payment meters. Several stakeholders urged WPD to help reduce fuel poverty by working more with landlords to ensure tenants were not paying too much for their energy, as well as developers and local authorities to deliver more energy efficient housing. In the online poll, this output ranked joint second with 3.73 / 4. Most (51%) wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

"Obviously, you are going to have a lot more people going into fuel poverty now so that is something that needs to be looked at." **Local authority**

"We are seeing increased vulnerability because of issues around people being evicted and becoming homeless, and fuel poverty is linked to this." **Local authority**

"It seems to be ambitious enough, as it's a significant increase." **Local authority**

"It's something you should be focusing on, but it's difficult as you don't have the direct link or the same obligation as energy suppliers. So, it will involve collaborative working." **Local authority**

"It would be helpful to target people on electric heating who can't access help." **Local authority**

"Covid is bound to have made fuel poverty worse. There's roughly 20% fuel poverty depending on where you are in the country. While your target is very laudable, relative to the number of people who are fuel poor it isn't a lot. If you could target local resilience forums with your mapping systems, you're more likely to help more people because you can garner the resources of other organisations. Have a proper integrated approach at a strategic level." **Developer**

"I agree that you need a strategic approach. You would be better targeting that money at something that is targeting larger numbers." **Energy consultant**

"How would you target the 75,000? I know the devil is in the detail, but it just looks as if you've picked a number which is a little higher than last time but isn't actually targeted." **Energy consultant**

"The financial impacts of Covid have meant many more people are struggling. In homes with pre-pay electricity meters, we've had incidents where we go in to do the annual gas inspection and there's no electricity in the property to do it." **Developer**

"It's important to make sure people have equipment that uses less power, such as low energy kettles. If people are using a lot of power and they're fuel poor, you need to look at reducing the amount of electricity they use rather than simply sticking in a smart meter." **Local authority**

"My concern is that a lot of the customers who are in real poverty are on stolen meters and are on a much higher rate. The landlords won't let them change it. There needs to be more work with landlords." **Local authority**

"We are talking about vulnerable customers, but most people rent so the people WPD need to talk to are developers in new builds and landlords. Local authorities and social landlords are the easier targets. Private landlords are more difficult, timely and costly." **Local authority**

"For me it links back to signals. The sorts of people who put 50p in the meter are the people more at risk of fuel poverty. It will be more challenging for rural communities, but it's how we work with WPD to target those people and work out how we can help them." **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

In general, there was support from stakeholders for this output. They raised several ‘capabilities’ that they were concerned would present barriers to participation, including low levels of income and limited access to the internet. One stakeholder was also concerned about those living in future housing stock. One stakeholder felt, in future, that in-house monitoring could help support those customers in vulnerable situations. Another expressed surprise that WPD were not doing more to remove these barriers, such as by providing loans to customers to help with the upfront cost of new technologies. In the online poll, this output ranked just above the average baseline with 3.69 / 5.

“I need a bit more detail. I thought that WPD were going to look at these customers and provide them with solar panels on roofs or air source heat pumps or insulation, so as to provide some capital that will be repayable over time. That will provide a better energy solution and improve bills in the longer term.”
Utility

“We need to make sure everyone can benefit and not just those who are financially able. We need to make sure the poorest aren’t left behind.” **Local authority**

“I’d support this one. There’s still more work to be done at a practical level in terms of overcoming barriers. For example, if you’re from an electricity company people might not want to deal with you. It’s about trust.” **Energy consultant**

“For us, in planning terms, our primary concern is about new houses going forward.” **Local authority**

“Clearly the recognition that smart technologies need to be accessible to everyone is welcomed.”
Local authority

“It goes without saying that if you consider those with internet or those without it, there’s a much bigger divide there.” **Local authority**

“The smart future should be about understanding how households work, such as by using the household sensing model. You could offer up in-house e-monitoring for highly vulnerable households. It won’t be easy but that could be a game changer.”
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 did not pass much comment on this output, except to reiterate the importance of collaborating with the energy suppliers in this transition to a smart network. In the online poll this ranked fourth (3.71 / 5) for Customer Vulnerability, demonstrating that, despite the lack of discussion, this was still an output that stakeholders wanted to see more ambition on. In fact, 53% wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area.

“The more you integrate the suppliers and distributors, the better outcome for the consumers.”
Utility

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

Stakeholders supported the need for education in this area. It was felt a bottom-up approach is often best, with WPD working through organisations such as care homes and social housing providers. Several pointed out that WPD's fuel poverty work could also link in with educating the consumer on the smart energy system. Interestingly, despite receiving less comments than other outputs, the relative importance stakeholders gave to education was demonstrated in the online poll, where it ranked top of the Customer Vulnerability outputs with 3.78 / 5. Most (60%) wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

"You could focus on collaborating with care organisations to get messages into care homes. The most vulnerable will have carers and you could be looking at ways to support this." **Developer**

"We need to improve people's energy IQ so they can empower themselves within that energy market."
Local authority

"WPD were talking about work in Wales with a social housing provider, where they're providing more information on smart metering. There are pilot projects going on. Are there ways that you can tie in your fuel poverty work with engaging with people on smarter systems they can use easily?"
Local authority

"It needs a bottom-up approach. A lot of people have mentioned that the first point of contact will be energy providers. It's that education of the most vulnerable, so they understand how to move towards a new way of using energy. Whether they can use the energy via apps or smart metering, it's important for them to have that education." **Local authority**

"I would add that fuel poverty and smart future are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It's how to use the latter as a way of saving money for the fuel poor and communicating that as effectively as possible."
Business customer



SOCIAL CONTRACT

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders broadly agreed with the previous feedback received that the production of a Social Contract is important, as well as the need for a clear link between the Business Plan and the Social Contract, explaining its purpose and value.

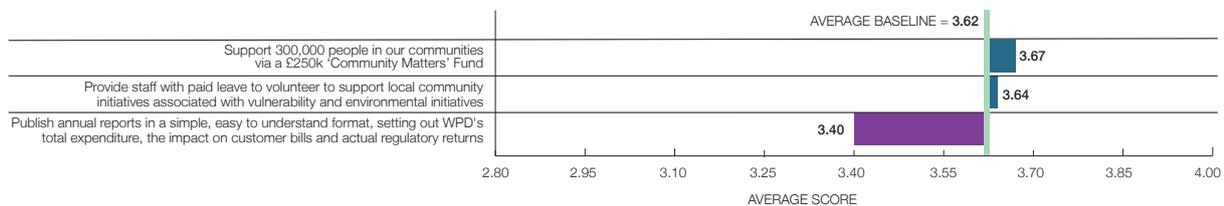
COMMITMENTS FOR THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Stakeholders raised a number of comments in relation to commitments that should be in the Social Contract. This included a desire to see some tangible figures and targets for the components of 'positive outcomes for customers in vulnerable situations' and 'excellent environmental performance'. One stakeholder suggested using the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework from which to develop the Contract, and another felt WPD would be best to focus on how the Social Contract would improve quality of life.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders did not suggest anything they felt was fundamentally missing from the Business Plan outputs. However, many did feel that the 'why' (the mission and vision) behind the Social Contract was missing, as well as the link between the Business Plan and the Social Contract. Stakeholders did not suggest any specific targets or performance measures. In the online polling, stakeholders ranked the outputs relating to the 'Community Matters' Fund and staff volunteering above the baseline average (3.67 and 3.64 / 5 respectively). The output relating to annual reporting scored below the baseline average with 3.4 / 5.

Social Contract Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

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. Stakeholders raised a couple of general comments, including the need to focus on how the Social Contract would improve someone's quality of life, and that WPD should use the UN SDGs as a framework from which to build the Contract.

"Would it be better to focus on how the Social Contract would improve someone's quality of life and on the value delivered and the social return?"

Local authority

"I would recommend using the UN Sustainable Goals as a framework for building your efforts. Lots of big companies use them for their CSR efforts and they are easy to understand, so they will resonate with people." **Local authority**

"They seem to fall into two kinds of groups, each of which is interconnected. One is about WPD's transparency, profits and all that kind of stuff; the other one is about dealing with climate change within the communities."

Vulnerable customer representative

INDUSTRY LEADING PERFORMANCE

One stakeholder commented on this component to say that WPD should compare with other DNOs in terms of service levels and quality.

“It should compare with other DNOs in my opinion, in terms of service levels and quality.” **Local authority**

DEMONSTRATING WPD IS A DIVERSE, RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER

One stakeholder commented to say that WPD should strive to go further than what is required in terms of gender equality reporting.

“Wherever possible WPD should go further in terms of reporting than the gender equality figures that already have to be reported.” **Local authority**

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CUSTOMERS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

Stakeholders supported this component of the Social Contract but wanted to see more tangible figures and explanations as to what it means in practice. One stakeholder wanted WPD to get more involved in retrofitting insulation to help those in fuel poverty.

“I think it should be more tangible. It should be actual numbers of customers engaged and level of engagement. Sending a text message is very different to practical assistance, so it should be made very clear.” **Local authority**

“There’s 1% of customers that aren’t on anyone’s radar. You wouldn’t want them to go through awful things on their own.” **Local authority**

“The thing that’s really concerning us is improving the grid to allow vehicle-to-grid and electric heating, but the latter can’t be done without improving the environmental performance of the houses. If WPD are serious about this, they’re going to have to get involved in the whole insulation retrofit.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

METHODS FOR MEASURING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES

One stakeholder suggested contacting the New Economics Foundation, as they understood that this think tank runs social impact assessments and may be able to provide support.

“I would say that approaching the New Economics Foundation would be a good path forward here. They are good at assessing impacts and wider development, so they could be of assistance.” **Local authority**

TRANSPARENT MECHANISMS SO STAKEHOLDERS CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS

One stakeholder suggested that, as well as being transparent, these mechanisms will have to be diverse, so all levels of stakeholders are able to get involved.

“I think we need a blend of different ways to get involved. For example, more senior people may respond to a questionnaire or something that would allow them to engage more easily rather than attending a workshop.” **Local authority**

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT / BENEFITS

One stakeholder raised the upcoming Community Energy Bill, saying it would be important to include policy supporting community energy groups with upfront capital costs which are currently prohibitive to some.

“I understand that there’s a lobbying of government for a community energy bill. For us, the cost is prohibitive and a barrier to the market. Unless all authorities banded together to become an energy provider, it wouldn’t happen.” **Local authority**

PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE REGIONALLY

One local authority stakeholder urged WPD to include liaising with developers and councils early in the planning process to ensure that developments take place effectively and cost-efficiently, so other benefits can be maximised.

“This is key for me. There is scope for liaising earlier to work together to roll out developments more effectively. You don’t want to inadvertently cause extra costs for developers, meaning councils have to make compromises on their green technology ambitions and / or social housing plans.”
Local authority

INNOVATION TO MEET SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

One stakeholder supported having a specific fund for innovation projects.

“A specific fund for innovation would be good.”
Local authority

EXCELLENT ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

One stakeholder wanted the commitments under this component to have specific targets demonstrating excellent environmental performance. One stakeholder requested for WPD to get involved with the Carbon Disclosure Programme to ensure that reporting is accurate and transparent.

“This seems a bit vague and meaningless, as no company is trying to deliver a shoddy performance. Who decides what an excellent performance is? What are the targets for that?” **Local authority**

“We are part of the Carbon Disclosure Programme and that involves having the mechanisms in place to ensure that you are sharing data and ensuring that it is accurate. It would be useful for WPD to have an affiliation with that as part of its environmental initiatives.” **Local authority**

“Can we have at least one concrete example in terms of your environmental credentials? Can you name one thing you might do differently that could have a big impact on your footprint? How do you imagine that you might achieve something different over the next five years?” **Local authority**

OUTPUTS FOR THE BUSINESS PLAN

“I think the priorities proposed are good. The only thing is: is the Social Contract going to have a mission statement to say what the vision is? Some of the identified priorities are jargon and they need just a few sentences to explain what the Social Contract is. This will help when trying to engage with other stakeholders and the communities.” **Local authority**

“There is no detail as to why the outputs are being put in place in the Business Plan. What is WPD trying to tackle for each of them? That needs spelling out.” **Energy consultant**

“I feel the draft outputs are more corporate social responsibilities. This is WPD’s contribution to the Social Contract as a company, but what else is WPD’s Social Contract actually delivering given the capabilities and engagement of the partners you already have on board?” **Local authority**

“I think that the answer to the ‘why’ question needs to be more explicit in the Business Plan. The social contract is an integral part of the Business Plan, but a Social Contract is a meaningless thing to many people on the street. You need to spell out what one is and why it is being put in place.” **Local authority**

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

In general, stakeholders supported the publication of annual reports. However, several noted that if there were any time-sensitive information then publishing annual information should not preclude publishing updates as and when required. One stakeholder felt that, in fact, the annual report would be more useful for stakeholders than for customers. In the online poll, this was the lowest ranked output in this priority area – coming out below the average baseline at 3.4 / 5.

“I think updating that annually would be good, in terms of just reporting on time-sensitive elements. If you want to set some ambitious targets then you need to ensure that people won’t forget about them, so annual reporting is the minimum.” **Local authority**

“Annual updates are good, as well as promoting good news stories.” **Local authority**

“I think the ‘publish annual reports’ would be more useful for stakeholders rather than the customers on the ground.” **Parish / community council**

“If there’s anything that needs to be reported at a particular time, then there’s no time like the present. You shouldn’t necessarily wait a full year to report something that needs to be conveyed across straight away.” **Developer**

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

Some stakeholders were unaware of this fund and urged WPD to do more to promote it and raise awareness. One stakeholder wanted to understand where the figure of '300,000' had come from. Another felt that the funding pot was too small given the amount of work it needs to cover. In the online polling, this output ranked highest under this priority area with 3.67 / 5 – above the baseline average. Just over half of stakeholders (51%) wanted to see WPD 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

"Local community organisations could be a good channel for raising awareness of the good work of WPD and opportunities for help with fuel poverty. In Milton Keynes, we have Community Action and Transition MK as well as Milton Keynes Council, of course." **Local authority**

"A long time ago you did a massive exercise stating who you were and how to contact you. You should put the focus on community events again so people know who you are, as people can forget. With the community fund, the figures seem to differ between slides." **Local authority**

"I wonder where the figure of 300,000 comes from." **Parish / community council**

"I'm not aware of this fund so I need to look into it." **Developer**

"I wasn't really aware of the fund and how it's administered. I think there's a task around communication with customers to actually raise awareness a bit more." **Local authority**

"I think the Community Matters Fund is much too small at £250,000; it's tiny. We've just won £1.5 million from the lottery for our community of 49,000 people. It just seems minute for what you need to do." **Vulnerable customer representative**

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. 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

Several stakeholders commented on this output. One only spoke to support the principle of it. One wanted to understand the types of initiatives referred to so as to be able to judge whether it is appropriate. Another noted that it needed to be handled sensitively, as employees should not feel pressured. In the online poll, this output ranked just above the baseline average at 3.64 / 5.

"There needs to more specific information provided about the types of initiatives that the staff would be involved in for us to get an idea of whether they are appropriate." **Local authority**

"I think it's great that people can take paid leave and get involved in their communities." **Environmental group**

"With voluntary work, it's important that people are going into things of their own will rather than feeling pressured. Volunteering can have a detrimental effect if not handled properly." **Local authority**

CONNECTIONS

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

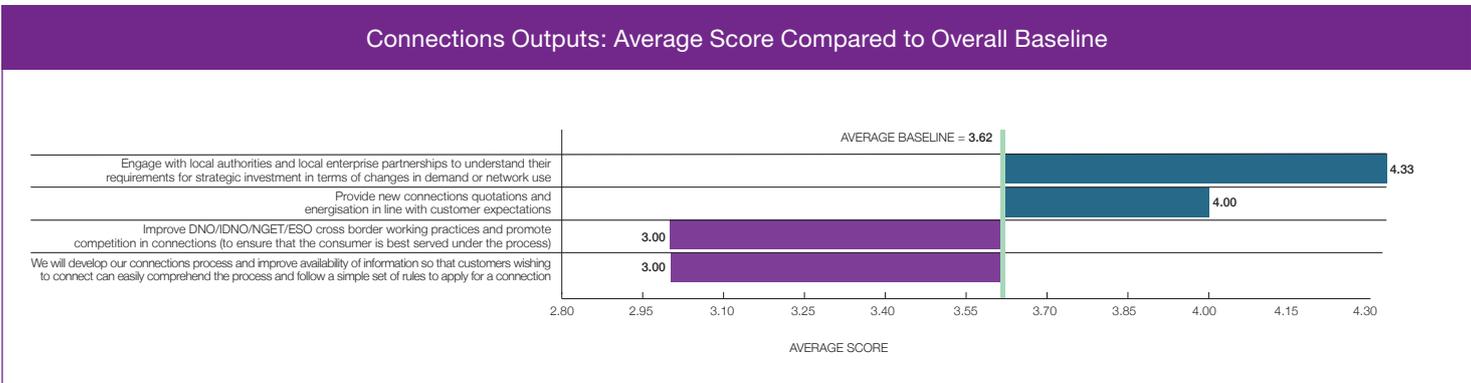
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD should improve the availability of information as well as improve the clarity of information for those with less knowledge of the energy industry. They did not particularly comment on previous feedback around quotations and energisation, or engagement with local authorities. In terms of competition in connections, they didn’t comment on the previous feedback about improving the processes with IDNOs but did emphasise the need to do more to promote this area.

WPD’S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing, one stakeholder explicitly stated they wanted to see outputs that go beyond simply the connections process itself, in particular wanting to see WPD include a commitment to fast-tracking the connection of low carbon technologies. In terms of performance measures, several stakeholders felt one or more of the outputs were vague and needed specific targets to enable WPD to benchmark performance. There was variance in terms of whether the outputs were ambitious enough, or not, with the votes in the online polling often quite split. However, the output that ranked highest under connections was ‘engage with local authorities and local enterprise partnerships to understand their requirements for strategic investment’, which scored an average of 4.33 / 5.

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



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

Please note that as Connections was held as an optional afternoon surgery session, and was therefore attended by fewer participants, the voting data for these outputs is less robust. While the Connections voting data has been summarised in this section, it has therefore not been compared against data from the other main sessions. However, for the purpose of this report, comparisons have been drawn between the Connections outputs themselves to give an indication of stakeholder views on this area.

“I think that they will drive up standards and are a useful tool in general, acting as a baseline for WPD to move above and beyond. We are interested in how much further WPD could go, but this is a good starting point.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“They all look like broadly sensible principles. However, you need to distinguish your thinking to assist different kinds of customers.”
Business customer

“Would it not be an idea to have these types of targets up front and publicise how you are doing against them? It would help to inspire more confidence.” **Developer**

“I would like to see WPD look into more than the contract and into the component relating to the technical ability to connect. For example, if there is a wind turbine, where in the connections strategy is there provision for it to be highlighted and fast-tracked? It would be great to have something super clear for the different tiers of customers.” **Developer**

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 that accessibility of information is absolutely vital. However, several noted that different customers have different needs and levels of knowledge, so they urged WPD to create bespoke information guides for a range of customer types. One stakeholder requested WPD to do more to publicise how long a connections application takes. In the online poll, stakeholders felt on average that WPD had got the level of ambition here right with a score of 3 / 5.

“Not all customers are the same and their needs vary. I would say that there should be different guides for larger business customers and for smaller domestic customers who will likely need connections for EV chargers and heat pumps.” **Business customer**

“Accessibility of information is absolutely vital, as some people enter the connections process with very little knowledge. Electricity distribution is often fraught with acronyms, so people need to feel comfortable and confident.” **Business customer**

“There will definitely be a variation in knowledge between customers and that needs to be reflected in the guides provided.” **Business customer**

“Most organisations normally have response times embedded in the business plans. Does WPD have any guaranteed response times for offers?” **Developer**

“Would it be possible to publicise how quickly your organisation responds to connections applications?” **Developer**

PROVIDE NEW CONNECTIONS QUOTATIONS AND ENERGISATION IN LINE WITH CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

One stakeholder felt this output required more refinement as it was unclear what it meant. Another sought clarity on whether large connections customers had any choice if they were offered a flexible connection or a quotation based on Active Network Management. In the online poll, on average stakeholders wanted to see WPD be more ambitious, ranking it 4 / 5.

“I don’t follow what this is meant to mean, and it could do with some more refinement. I understand that you are in a challenging position, as you are trying to strike a balance between all of your customers’ needs, but I think this comes across as meaningless, sadly.” **Business customer**

“How negotiable is the choice with ANM and flexibility services? Do larger customers have a choice as to whether they get flexible services rather than network reinforcement?” **Business customer**

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

Stakeholders did not comment on this output, except for one who noted that developments (and, by inference, connection requests) had slowed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but that they expected these to now pick up as part of the government’s Build Back Better policy. Despite the lack of discussion, it ranked highest out of the connection outputs with an average score of 4.33 / 5.

“There were lots of developments that didn’t go ahead due to the lockdown, but there will be likely a pick-up due to the Prime Minister’s desire to see more building.”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

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 supported the inclusion of this output, in particular promoting competition in connections. However, one felt the output needed to be more specific and include measurable targets so WPD can ensure it is delivered. In the online poll, stakeholders felt on average that WPD had got the level of ambition here right with a score of 3 / 5.

“I think that there is merit in this idea, but how will it be translated into something specific? Will it be done in collaboration other DNOs? What will the target be here? How will you feel that you have hit it?”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“As an IDNO, we would like to see something relating to facilitating delivery and pushing competition in new connections added to the Business Plan.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“I would like to see WPD add it to its Business Plan.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer



7 | SESSION TWO: MAINTAINING A SAFE AND RESILIENT NETWORK

NETWORK RELIABILITY

IMPACT OF COVID-19

One stakeholder felt that Covid-19 had highlighted the importance of electricity supply, particularly in terms of improving restoration times. Another noted that the increase in homeworking as a result of the pandemic meant domestic power outages were much more inconvenient.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

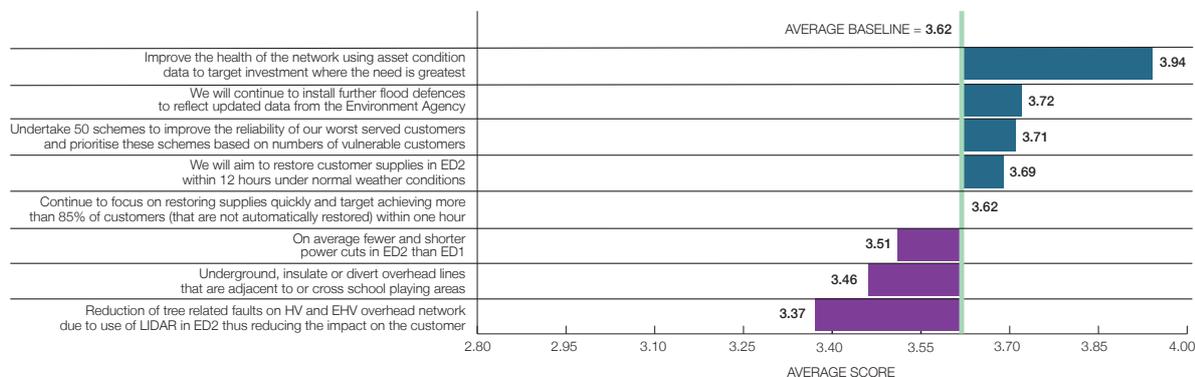
Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that keeping the lights on is important, as well as the speed of restoration. Whilst they wanted to see further improvement, including reducing power cut duration, many did stress the inconvenience of even short power cuts. Tree management was discussed at length, but unlike previous feedback stakeholders were increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of the clearance programme. They agreed with previous feedback that high quality asset health data is important and that WPD should seek to reduce the number of worst served customers. They also agreed with previous feedback that WPD should collaborate with the Environment Agency – in fact urging both WPD and the environmental regulator to do more in terms of data sharing around flooding.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders discussed a range of topics that were missing from the outputs. This included: more information on when outages are likely to occur; more communication with customers about what to do in a power cut; working collaboratively with local councillors to alert them about power cuts; and the role of distributed generation and battery storage in improving network reliability.

In terms of targets, stakeholders identified several outputs they felt were too vague and required clearer KPIs to be able to measure performance. One stakeholder felt WPD should have more specific targets within each output to reflect the different levels of performance across the network. In the online poll, half of the outputs ranked higher than the baseline average. One output, 'improve the health of the network using asset condition data to target investment where the need is greatest', actually ranked joint second across all outputs in the priority areas (excluding those covered in the surgery sessions). Overall, this priority area ranked fourth with an average of 3.63 / 5. Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to each of the outputs, which have been summarised under the outputs below.

Network Reliability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“It would be interesting to have some information on when outages are likely to occur. I think that I have to switch off the PC during a thunderstorm, but maybe it’s more likely to cut out during a big football match.”

Parish / community council

“I’m wondering about whether there’s a role for distributed generation and battery storage in network resilience. I’m aware that in our area we have large battery storage.”

Business customer

“Electrification puts more pressure on the network. By and large there’s a greater issue with increasing demand and its impact on network resilience which needs addressing.”

Energy consultant

“There are technical reasons in terms of maintaining frequency. Just because you have local generation doesn’t mean you can actually use that during an outage.”

Energy consultant

“Do you work with developers on Welcome Packs for residents, which could include information about what to do in power cuts? There are big opportunities to disseminate information through these packs, such as fridge magnets. These outputs don’t quite reflect how important communications about power outages are.”

Local authority

“Have plans to target more specifically, as there will be differences across the network.”

Utility

“There needs to be active texts or phone calls if there is an outage. You can’t rely just on the app, as the Wi-Fi signal is bad here in Lincolnshire. If I lose my power, I lose my internet, so there has to be another way.”

Local authority

“Could you maybe work more closely with local councilors to alert them about power cuts? Lots of people ring me when they happen, and I occasionally don’t know what to say.”

Local authority

“Substations should be multi-purpose; they should be resilient, and they should incorporate battery storage. Change the regulations on WPD installing battery storage to make them more sensible.”

Local authority

“WPD should obviously have a network of substations with battery storage. I agree that the regulations aren’t our friend. Ofgem have made a commitment to move forward swiftly in 18 months so they should update the regulation.”

Local authority

“With customer reliability, if you live in a little cottage, you’ll never have proper supply as you live too far away from everything.”

Parish / community council

OUTPUTS: NETWORK PERFORMANCE

ON AVERAGE FEWER AND SHORTER POWER CUTS IN ED2 THAN ED1

Quite a few stakeholders said that they experienced power cuts in this region, particularly those in rural areas. One noted that many customers in small holdings experience regular outages but do not inform WPD – which needs to be rectified. Stakeholders emphasised that power cuts remain problematic. One local authority said the power cuts cause major problems for local businesses, with those on industrial sites working together to manage power flow. Several stakeholders commented that shorter power cuts are still inconvenient at a time when we use so much modern technology that relies on electricity and requires resetting even after a short outage. In terms of specific targets, one stakeholder sought more clarity on the level of improvement WPD was aiming for. Another felt unable to comment on specific targets as they did not feel they had sufficient experience. Several linked this output to the move towards a smarter network, with one checking that this ambition would not undermine the roll out of Active Network Management. Another stakeholder pointed out that network performance will likely improve as a result of the transition to Distribution System Operator. In the online poll, on average most stakeholders (48%) felt WPD had got the level of ambition right.

“Smaller outages can have a larger detrimental effect on modern technology than was the case in the past.” **Local authority**

“There are many people on small holdings that are not telling you that they’re getting small power cuts and that means that they’re not being reflected in your figures. This needs to be explored.”
Parish / community council

“I think the network performance in comparison to previous years is still higher than other DNOs’ around the country.” **Local authority**

“Network performance is key, and we all know how disruptive it is if network performance is not good enough, but it’s hard to know what’s deliverable and achievable. The targets sound sensible, but I don’t feel equipped to know if they are sensible enough.”
Local authority

“We have power challenges across our district that creates major issues for local business, so they have to collaborate on industrial sites to make sure that they are not causing power issues for others.”
Local authority

“From my point of view, my district is quite rural, and there are areas where people have multiple power cuts.” **Local authority**

“What’s the overall strategy for achieving this? For instance, there is a lot of work on predictive faults and acting before they trip up.”
Distributed generation customer

“How much improvement are you aiming for in terms of fewer and shorter power cuts?”
Storage and renewables provider / installer

“I’d like to know comparative figures between 2013 and 2020.” **Parish / community council**

“In terms of these targets, I’m guessing they’re not going to impact on your plans for rolling out ANM.”
Local authority

“I live in a village where we get regular power cuts for seconds. It doesn’t really impact you using the power, but it does impact you in terms of having to reset everything.” **Business customer**

“In terms of conditioning of assets, predict where faults might be happening. Network performance will by definition improve as a result. You will probably see a lot more improvement through ED2 just because of the way the industry is moving.”
Distributed generation customer

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

Quite a few stakeholders said that they experienced power cuts in this region, particularly those in rural areas. One noted that many customers in small holdings experience regular outages but do not inform WPD – which needs to be rectified. Stakeholders emphasised that power cuts remain problematic. One local authority said the power cuts cause major problems for local businesses, with those on industrial sites working together to manage power flow. Several stakeholders commented that shorter power cuts are still inconvenient at a time when we use so much modern technology that relies on electricity and requires resetting even after a short outage. In terms of specific targets, one stakeholder sought more clarity on the level of improvement WPD was aiming for. Another felt unable to comment on specific targets as they did not feel they had sufficient experience. Several linked this output to the move towards a smarter network, with one checking that this ambition would not undermine the roll out of Active Network Management. Another stakeholder pointed out that network performance will likely improve as a result of the transition to Distribution System Operator. In the online poll, on average most stakeholders (48%) felt WPD had got the level of ambition right.

“If you have 88% now, 85% is not a stretching target. Covid has changed the dynamic and highlighted the importance of supply. So maybe you should have a second target to maintain pressure, such as 95% within two hours.” **Local authority**

“I think that there needs to be a slight shift in focus on this output, as, for me, communications during a power outage is the most important thing. People want to know when they will be reconnected. You should work to get the information out quickly so that they feel more reassured.” **Local authority**

“Communications during crisis periods and responsiveness would be useful. At the moment, responses are slow and WPD doesn’t have much of a visible presence.” **Local authority**

“This doesn’t seem to be a very stretched target. I would move it up to beyond 90%.”
Energy consultant

“Being in a rural district is it a bit of a postcode lottery about how quickly your power is restored. I’ve lived in areas where a lightning bolt can knock off the entire supply, and these extreme events are becoming more frequent.” **Local authority**

“That will become even more important in terms of length of time as we move away from gas and towards electricity. If the heating goes, it impacts the vulnerable more significantly.” **Local authority**

“To come back within an hour is amazing.”
Local authority

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

Stakeholders wanted to know that this target was achievable despite the unpredictability of severe weather incidents – and the increasing frequency with which they are happening due to climate change. One stakeholder challenged the term ‘normal weather conditions’, wanting to understand what it meant. Whilst one stakeholder emphasised the efforts WPD goes to restore supply and saw the company as industry leading in this area, several stakeholders felt 12 hours was not ambitious enough, particularly as a power outage for that duration is very inconvenient. One stakeholder wanted to shift the output to focus on what WPD’s delivery would be under severe weather conditions. Another wanted to understand the impact of rising sea levels on network performance. A couple of stakeholders wanted the output to also include a mitigation plan for those off power, with particular focus on providing battery back-ups. One stakeholder emphasised the need to consider what support would be delivered to vulnerable customers during these incidents. On average, in the online poll stakeholders ranked this output at 3.69 – above the baseline average. Most (49%) wanted WPD to ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area, although a fair proportion (47%) thought the target was right.

“Climate change is going to make the predictability to be able to deal with extreme weather incidents much harder. We need to understand WPD’s ability to achieve the target even with adverse weather conditions changing.” **Local authority**

“Perhaps there needs to be a golden thread linking back to your vulnerable customers, to ensure the support of them whilst this change happens.” **Local authority**

“Is there thought given to providing battery back-ups for the domestic customer? During Covid, we are working from home and if the computer system goes down, it is a real pain.” **Parish / community council**

“As a customer it would give me assurance to know there was a battery mitigation plan in place.” **Parish / community council**

“I know the urgency that is applied to every fault by WPD. Our teams working with WPD are committed to attending every site within an hour. I doubt that people here have lost power for over 12 hours. I believe WPD is industry leading in this sector.” **Business customer**

“Picking up on what was said before, maybe in adverse conditions it would be good to add what WPD would provide. With weather as it is and how dramatic it can be, we will have to deal with this more and more.” **Local authority**

“What does ‘normal weather conditions’ mean? I think that that needs to be spelled out.” **Local authority**

“The ED1 levels presented are good, but you don’t want to set something that’s absolutely unachievable. Are the figures presented established under a specific set of weather circumstances?” **Local authority**

“Could there be a shift of focus to look at how WPD responds during severe weather? These weather-related faults are not normally a problem, but in winter could be fatal.” **Local authority**

“This doesn’t seem very ambitious. I would shift the target downwards to 6 hours.” **Energy consultant**

“Recently I had a power cut in the middle of the night, and it was restored at midday the following day. That’s quite a long wait. For example, the phone and internet didn’t work. Everything was down. So perhaps it should be less than 12 hours.” **Local authority**

“What affect will rising temperatures have? Will it affect the kit?” **Vulnerable customer representative**

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)

Stakeholders did not discuss the role of LIDAR in relation to tree management, instead focusing on the tree resilience programme itself (see below). This emphasis was perhaps reinforced in the online poll, where this output ranked lowest out of the Network Reliability outputs, scoring on average 3.37 / 5.

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

Stakeholders were overwhelmingly concerned about the wider environmental implications of WPD's tree clearance programme. It was felt to be a very emotive subject, particularly with the increased concern about climate change. If trees needed to be removed, stakeholders wanted WPD to replace the trees and improve biodiversity in other ways – working with parish councils and other organisations. There was concern as to whether WPD works hard enough to protect mature trees. Despite this concern, one stakeholder did reiterate how important it is that tree clearance takes place to protect power lines. Stakeholders did not vote on this output in the online polling, as the output is as ambitious as it can be already.

“Tree management is very emotive; often, customers will not let you touch their trees. I live in a conservation village and you can't knock a branch down without a debate.”

Parish / community council

“With clearance programmes, what is the replanting approach?” **Environmental group**

“Do you work with other utilities to understand how best to tackle tree management collaboratively?”

Environmental group

“Perhaps you have had to take out trees. What you need to do is replace them in areas where they can help prevent flooding.” **Local authority**

“Going back to climate change, people are increasingly concerned about clearance of trees.”

Local authority

“I take it that WPD is environmentally friendly in the way they go about this?” **Local authority**

“I'm concerned about tree management. If a tree's going to bring down a power line, it should be removed.” **Local authority**

“There are opportunities for other types of biodiversity to be included if trees have to be felled, such as wildflower meadows.” **Local authority**

“I have concerns about the environmental impact. This output needs to reflect the huge role mature trees play as an ecological habitat for birds and bats.” **Local authority**

“Clearance suggests that you are looking to fell them and not put mitigation schemes in place. This is concerning in relation to the ecological effects and visual impact.” **Local authority**

“Could there not be some longer-term target established whereby you protect trees near to power lines? Simply replanting trees discounts the important role mature trees play.” **Local authority**

“One thing that worries me is do you treat a silver birch the same as a 100-year-old oak?” **Local authority**

“You should work with parish councils and other organisations to replace trees that you remove.” **Local authority**

OUTPUTS: TARGETING INVESTMENT

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

Stakeholders agreed with the use of asset condition data to help plan and target investment in the network, with several working on or having experience of this data and seeing the benefits it brings. One stakeholder felt, in terms of need, that those parts of the network that support water supply should be prioritised. Despite the relatively limited level of discussion on these outputs, it ranked highest overall under this priority area at 3.94 / 5, with 64% wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'. In fact, it ranked joint second highest across all priority area outputs (not including those covered in the surgery sessions).

"I don't know whether there are pumps that are electrically operated to keep our water supply going on. Is essential infrastructure being prioritised during a power outage?" **Business customer**

"We're working on technology to allow you to see the condition of your assets and project when it's going fail so you can plan your works and plan your budget accordingly, and also let your customers know." **Business customer**

"Certain other DNOs are already using technology that monitors the temperature of their assets. It is cheap technology, but it can predict when an asset is moving into failure mode. You could exploit the work others have already done and use it to help manage your assets." **Business customer**

"Is WPD making use of <https://dafni.ac.uk> to predict future usage scenarios, and other types of simulation?" **Academic institution**

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

Several stakeholders sought to understand the definition of 'worst served customer', feeling it was hard to comment on the output without that knowledge. Others felt they needed to better understand whether the ambition of 50 schemes was stretching or not, again feeling unable to pass much comment without understanding the context. Stakeholders wanted this output to include KPIs to make it more measurable. One stakeholder recognised the opportunities that low carbon technologies and battery storage present to improve network performance for worst served customers. In the online poll, this output ranked third for this priority area with an average score of 3.71 / 5 – above the baseline average.

"We've talked about opportunities for battery storage. There are a lot of technologies going on to the grid that will allow for better service in worst served areas." **Local authority**

"It seems to me that you need KPIs. So, if you have 50 customers that are worst served, the KPI is that they have three outages a year, or whatever. Then you can say that has been improved." **Local authority**

"It comes back to the definition. Presumably, worst served customers have a certain number of power cuts per year." **Energy consultant**

"How do we know who the worst served customers are and how does WPD identify them? I feel that it's difficult to comment without any context. It's obviously a good ambition." **Local authority**

"The target is hugely generalised, so it's very difficult to comment on. I don't know whether 50 schemes is good or bad without any context. You could need to provide 150, but I'd never know." **Local authority**

"It seems to be a common theme that they're not particularly measurable. Can anyone give me any context about the 50 schemes?" **Local authority**

"It's important to identify those areas that suffer the most power cuts and link it in with the vulnerable communities. It's areas with more vulnerable people, either by age or deprivation." **Local authority**

OUTPUTS: FLOOD DEFENCES

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

Some stakeholders sought to understand the scale of this challenge from a local network perspective, for example whether this is more of an issue in the East Midlands distribution area, or for the rural rather than urban network. Stakeholders felt that there needs to be more data sharing between the Environment Agency and other organisations on flooding (historic and real-time) to help better target responses. One stakeholder also wanted WPD to liaise with local agencies on flooding data, who it was felt have a better understanding of local flood risks than the environmental regulator. One stakeholder expressed concern that any future flood defences are built to the Environment Agency's future standards. Several stakeholders were concerned about developers building on flood plains and urged WPD to get more involved with local authorities to help identify appropriate development sites. Stakeholders wanted to see greater collaboration on flooding, with other utilities (including water companies) and local resilience forums. One stakeholder wanted to see another output with specific targets included on flood defences to reflect the scale of the issue. On average this output ranked second for this priority area on the online poll with 3.72 / 5. 56% of stakeholders wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

"You should add another output on this depending on the scale of the problem of flood defences and different approaches." **Environmental group**

"It goes back to the discussion around urban versus rural networks as there will be a difference between them in terms of performance." **Local authority**

"We're seeing in our borough that surface flooding is more of an issue that river flooding due to freak weather and storms. Local agencies will know exactly where drains become overwhelmed, rather than environmental agencies that will have more general data." **Local authority**

"Once the remaining three defences are completed, is there any thought that future sites are built away from areas liable to flooding or any other disaster?" **Parish / community council**

"Where is the golden thread back to Net Zero?" **Local authority**

"Builders are not always shy about building on flood plains if they can get away with it. Does WPD collaborate with water authorities on flood risks and where or where not is sensible to build?" **Parish / community council**

"I'm wondering whether local resilience forums are aware of the vulnerability in your network. It's not just about emergencies but preventing them." **Developer**

"How does the East Midlands compare with the other three WPD regions? We've all seen the flooding near a major distribution area in Gloucester." **Energy consultant**

"Having worked with the Environment Agency myself, I'd like to see more sharing of data between companies, local authorities and agencies. Not just historic data, but the real-time level of floods so you can be more targeted in your response and reduce your response time. The data sharing should go both ways." **Business customer**

"The real-time data on flooding should be available to everyone involved, but the link must be secure." **Business customer**

"We have two sites being built with around 1,500 houses each. I wonder about the potential for increased flooding, and what impact it has on existing power supplies when you increase the built environment. I am interested in how you advise local authorities regarding new sites and power supplies. There needs to be a dialogue." **Local authority**

"There's a question about the Environment Agency's future plans and what the future standard will be for building flood defences." **Environmental group**

"This is an opportunity to work with other utilities, such as Severn Trent Water." **Local authority**

OUTPUTS: SAFE NETWORKS

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

Only one stakeholder commented on this output to say they felt it was common sense but also to seek an understanding about the cost of undergrounding. In the online poll, this output ranked second lowest for this priority area with 3.46 / 5.

“I think it is common sense across playing areas. Is there data about the cost of undergrounding, including maintenance?” **Local authority**



BUSINESS IT SECURITY AND CYBER RESILIENCE

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

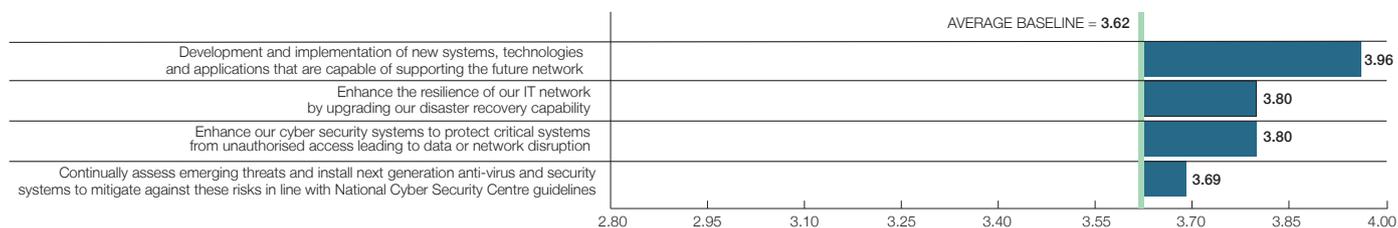
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that network security is becoming increasingly important as it concerns critical infrastructure, although one challenged the feedback that WPD should be 100% resistant as they felt that was not possible. Stakeholders agreed that there should be greater collaboration between organisations on cyber security. They did not discuss disaster recovery, although the online polling demonstrated that stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that it should be a high priority.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

One stakeholder raised a topic that was missing from the draft outputs: an emphasis on data sharing and collaboration between WPD and different organisations. Stakeholders did not raise any specific targets or performance measures – in fact, one noted that whilst this area is very important, they didn't have the expertise to comment. Despite the relative lack of discussion during the breakouts on this priority area, as an overall average it ranked highest of all priority areas with an average score of 3.81 / 5. The output 'development and implementation of new systems, technologies and applications that are capable of supporting the future network' was the highest ranking of all draft Business Plan outputs with 3.96 / 5. Stakeholders raised a range of individual comments relating to most 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](#)

“You’ll have your own internal GDPR and cyber security training but I’m not sure that’s really relevant for the Business Plan. As a partner it’s more to do with information sharing, so are we working together against cyber threats. If something I’m doing which is sharing data leads someone into your system, then we need to be careful about that.”

Parish / community council

“I think we have to delegate this to WPD, as it’s a bit over my head. WPD has the expertise, or if it hasn’t it should be buying it in to make sure this job is done properly. But certainly, keep us informed.”

Local authority

OUTPUTS: ENHANCING CYBER SECURITY

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

Stakeholders supported this output, with one expressing concern about other countries hacking into and bringing down the UK's electrical system, and another asking whether Huawei equipment was going to be removed from WPD's network. One stakeholder recognised that it is impossible to be 100% effective but that WPD must take cyber security very seriously. This output ranked joint second under this priority area with 3.8 / 5 – higher than the baseline average. Most (61%) wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

"I think for me when you see the way it's alleged that different countries are interfering in elections and such, if we're not careful other countries could shut down all of our IT systems. Power and water all rely heavily on IT systems and we're reliant on that."

Local authority

"Are you under any pressure to remove Huawei equipment from your network and will that cause you any problems? I suppose it's more the hardware I'm getting at, which doesn't seem to be considered in the cyber security outputs."

Energy consultant

"It's impossible to be 100% effective. Saying you're serious is one thing but being serious is the action that you actually take."

Academic institution

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

Only one stakeholder commented on this output, saying they wanted to ensure that WPD were collaborating with external agencies and national bodies on anti-virus and security systems. This output ranked lowest under cyber security, but still scored 3.69 / 5 – higher than the baseline average.

"It would be good to have external agencies which can ensure that this connection has been made and that you're on it. Connect with the key national bodies and experts."

Developer

OUTPUTS: DISASTER RECOVERY AND FUTURE-PROOFING

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

Stakeholders did not comment on this output during the discussions. In the online poll, the output ranked joint second for this priority area with 3.8 / 5 – 62% wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

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

One stakeholder wanted to ensure that WPD were effectively trialling new systems before deciding on the best approach. One academic encouraged WPD to review academic papers which will help inform them about what is going on. This output ranked top for this priority area in the online poll with an average score of 3.96 / 5. In fact, despite the relative lack of discussion, this output ranked highest among all Business Plan outputs (excluding those voted on in the surgery sessions).

"With all these new systems it's really important that we trial them and have pilots up and running to review them before deciding on one approach. That kind of development work needs to be moving quickly."

Vulnerable customer representative

"Academic papers will be useful to read and assimilate what's actually happening."

Academic institution

WORKFORCE RESILIENCE

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

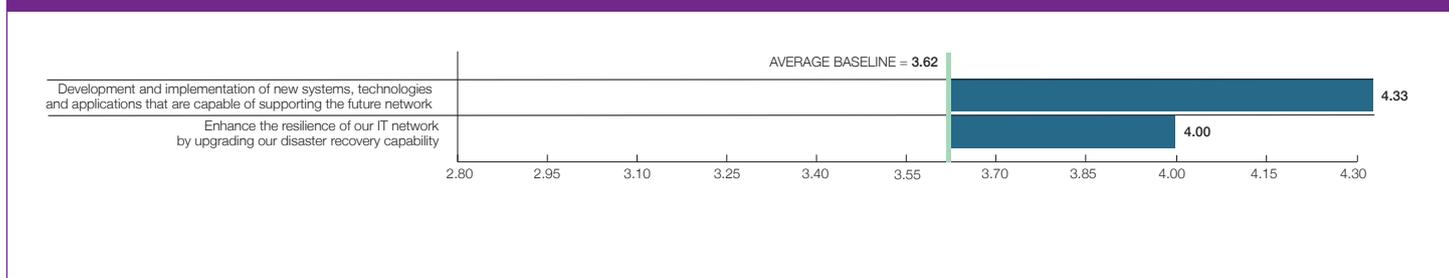
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that WPD should reach a demographic outside of the traditional, white British male population. There was also support for offering apprenticeship schemes. Beyond that, stakeholders did not comment on the previous feedback during this discussion.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders did not raise any additional topics they felt were missing from the draft outputs. They also didn't comment on specific targets or performance measures. Stakeholders raised a number of comments in relation to some of the outputs, which have been summarised below.

Workforce Resilience Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

Please note that as Workforce Resilience was held as an optional afternoon surgery session, and was therefore attended by fewer participants, the voting data for these outputs is less robust. While the Workforce Resilience voting data has been summarised in this section, it has therefore not been compared against data from the other main sessions. While several draft outputs were discussed, only two of them were voted on in the online poll.

OUTPUTS

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

No stakeholders commented on this output during the discussions. In the online poll, 50% of respondents felt it was the right level of ambition and 50% wanted to see WPD 'do a lot more'.

IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OF OUR WORKFORCE

One stakeholder noted that WPD's workforce seems to be overwhelmingly male and white. In the online poll, this output ranked very highly at 4.33 / 5 – with 67% wanting WPD to 'do a lot more' in this area.

“One thing that jumps out to me is the fact that everybody I've met is male, white and Anglo-Saxon.”
Parish councillor

INCREASING THE STEM PIPELINE

One stakeholder commented on this output, expressing concern at the limited scope WPD has to engage children in an inspiring way, as they felt they couldn't take them to a power station. This output wasn't voted on in the online polling.

“Unfortunately, other than at the office you can't do much. You can't take children to a power station. I mean, I am concerned about how much you can engage.” **Parish councillor**

RETENTION AND UPSKILLING OF A SPECIALISED HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

No stakeholders commented on this output and it was not voted on in the online polling.

MAINTAIN A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

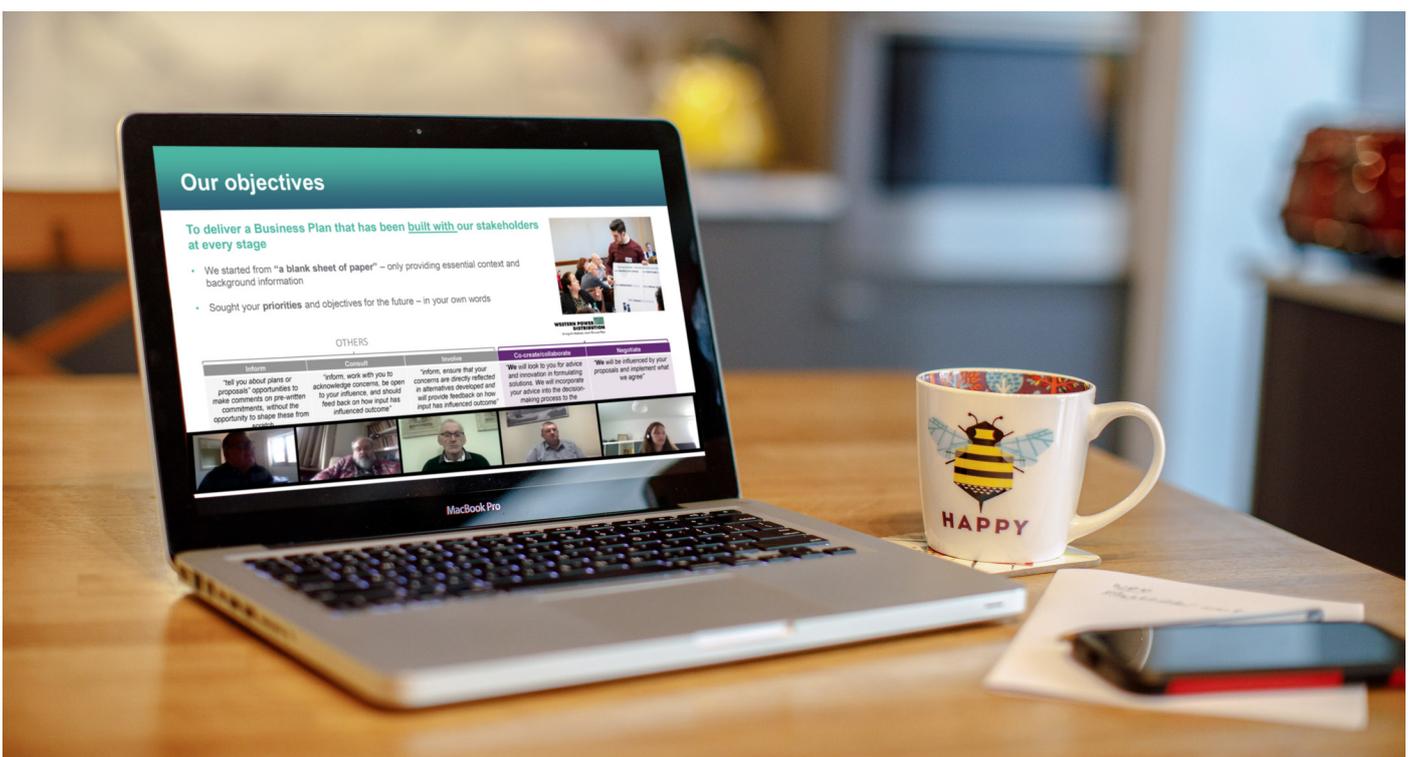
One stakeholder sought further information in terms of the staff turnover rate. This output was not voted on in the online polling.

“I don't know about how long your employees stay now. Is it jobs for life? That's good to know, because you've got the main principles.” **Parish councillor**

ATTRACT NEW TALENT

One stakeholder noted that they felt as an industry, the electricity networks were absent from offering apprenticeships to local colleges and, as a result, were quite hidden. This output was not voted on in the online polling.

“The colleges around here all have apprenticeships for the building industry, etc., but I haven't seen any from your industry. I think you're quite a hidden industry.” **Parish councillor**



SAFETY

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

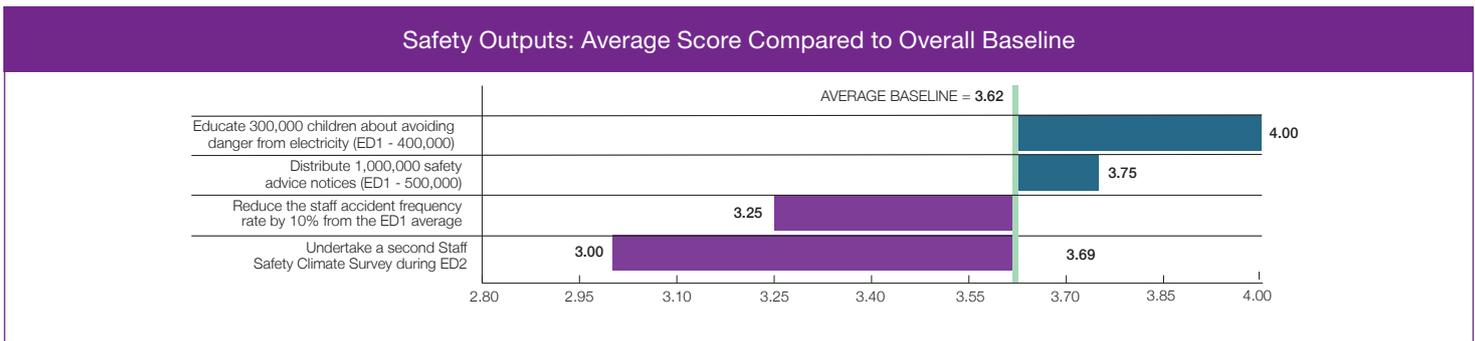
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders agreed with previous feedback that greater collaboration is needed in this area and that maintaining a safe workforce is a critical priority. They also agreed that WPD use their influence to raise awareness of the dangers of electricity, as demonstrated by the relative importance of that output in the online polling. They did not comment on the previous feedback on incident management or health monitoring programmes.

WPD’S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing, stakeholders wanted to see future facing ambitions, using horizon scanning to identify best practice. One stakeholder also wanted to see an output focusing on ongoing improvement.

In terms of performance measures and targets, several felt the current targets were unambitious and wanted to see WPD do more to demonstrate leadership in the area of safety. In the online polling, half of the respondents wanted to see WPD ‘do more’ or do a lot more’ as regards the outputs on educating school children about the dangers of electricity and distributing safety advice notices. Despite not commenting on these outputs during the discussions, the polling demonstrated the relative importance stakeholders placed on the safety of members of the public. Stakeholders raised a number of comments in relation to two of the outputs, which have been summarised below.



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

Please note that as Safety was held as an optional afternoon surgery session, and was therefore attended by fewer participants, the voting data for these outputs is less robust. While the Safety voting data has been summarised in this section, it has therefore not been compared against data from the other main sessions. However, for the purpose of this report, comparisons have been drawn between the Safety outputs themselves to give an indication of stakeholder views on this area.

“I don’t see how these outputs relate to your own risks.”

“I think some of the outputs are a bit tame.”

“I’m not getting the impression of any leading indicators in there.”

“Smart objectives are great, but ideally with safety you’ll have very few events. You need a reflective process as part of ongoing improvement.”

“Ensuring compliance is a bit sterile. Horizon-scanning and future-facing ambitions should be built into this. You should look to become a model for best practice.”

OUTPUTS

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

Stakeholders did not comment on this output. In the online poll, however, stakeholders in this surgery session wanted to see WPD go further, giving the output an average score of 4 / 5. 50% wanted WPD to 'do a lot more'.

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

Stakeholders did not comment on this output. In the online poll, however, stakeholders in this surgery session wanted to see WPD go further, giving the output an average score of 3.75 / 5. While 50% wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more', 50% thought that WPD had the right level of ambition on this output.

UNDERTAKE A SECOND STAFF SAFETY CLIMATE SURVEY DURING ED2

Two stakeholders commented on the staff survey, noting that its format and the way the questions are written are very important. In the online poll, this output ranked on average 3 / 5 – although views were split, with 25% saying 'do a lot less', 50% saying the level of ambition was about right, and 25% wanting WPD to 'do a lot more'.

"The format of safety surveys is an important consideration. It's about how you group things to establish what safety in the workplace is."

"The way you've written the questions may be different to how they are read by staff."

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

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

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

This output generated some discussion among stakeholders. They wanted the accident frequency rate to be reduced, although one felt this target was not stretching enough. It was noted that the culture and language used here is very important, as employees need to feel they can stop a job and prioritise safety if they need to without punishment. One stakeholder urged greater collaboration on the reporting of incidents. Another noted the importance of having a risk register. In the online poll, this output ranked lowest for this priority area with 3.25 / 5.

"Working with others on accident reporting is important."

"Having a risk register is more important than risk numbers."

"Targets are always good for establishing where you are. The fewer incidents, the better."

"Is the 10% a stretched target? That could potentially go further."

"You may want to adopt language around 'just culture'. People aren't going to be punished for making mistakes, only for actual malice."

"Workers need to know that they can stop and prioritise their own safety."

8 | SESSION THREE: DELIVERING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Stakeholders noted that one impact of the pandemic may be to reduce the amount of commuting and encourage more homeworking, which would need to be reflected in WPD’s environment and sustainability policies. Covid-19 was also used as an example, by one stakeholder, of the challenge of setting targets, as external factors can cause unanticipated disruption to plans. One stakeholder felt the pandemic demonstrated the need to speed up these environmental measures, as they felt the relationship between humans and the environment was the fundamental root cause of the outbreak.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholders strongly agreed with previous feedback that WPD should lead by example in this area and strive for a much more ambitious Net Zero target than 2050, as well as agreeing that WPD should adopt electric vehicles and ensure they reduce the carbon impact of their buildings. In terms of operational impact, stakeholders supported previous feedback that WPD should reduce harmful leaks. As regards the impact of their network, there was support for previous feedback that cables in AONBs should be undergrounded – although stakeholders wanted the works done in a way that is sensitive to biodiversity. One stakeholder agreed with the importance of reducing technical losses, and there was consensus that WPD should address the amount of waste generated – although one questioned whether a zero-waste target was deliverable.

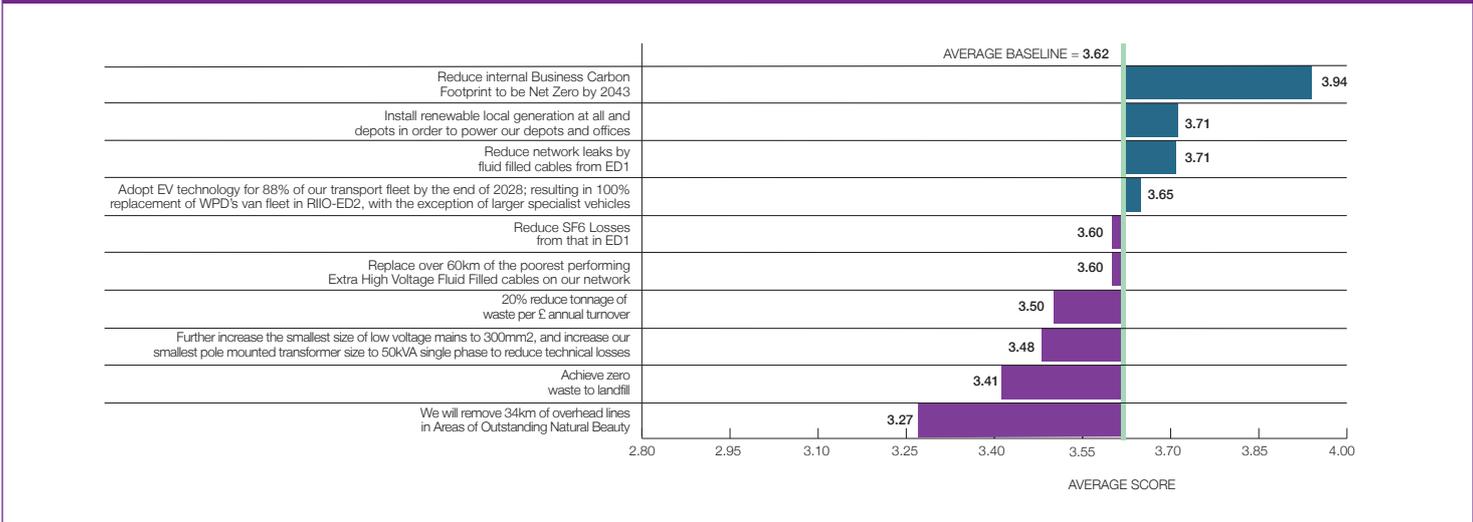
WPD’S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what is missing from the draft outputs, one stakeholder noted the omission of WPD’s water usage. A local authority stakeholder felt there needed to be an output in relation to supporting the development of local energy plans by providing more information on what needs to be done to local authorities. Two stakeholders suggested measures that might provide assurance in this area: obtaining IEMA membership and using it to drive an improvement in environmental standards within the business; and becoming ISO 14001 compliant.

In terms of performance measures, several stakeholders felt there was insufficient context to be able to determine whether the targets were stretching enough or not. One stakeholder wanted the outputs to include regional targets to reflect the differences across WPD’s network areas. In the online poll, ‘reduce internal Business Carbon Footprint to be Net Zero by 2043’ ranked joint second out of all the draft Business Plan outputs with an average of 3.94 / 5, demonstrating that stakeholders wanted WPD to be much more ambitious – over a third (35%) wanted them to do a lot more. However, as a priority area Environment and Sustainability ranked in the bottom half with 3.59 / 5 – an average just below the baseline average.

Stakeholders raised a range of comments in relation to the draft outputs, which have been summarised below.

Environment and Sustainability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



“Have plans to target more specifically, as there will be differences across the network.” **Utility**

“One thing that jumps out to me is that the nature of work has changed. A lot of us won’t be travelling into offices in cities. Has that been factored into plans in relation to the environment and sustainability?” **Energy consultant**

“I agree that the change in the scope of work will have an impact on sustainability goals, as supplies will be being shifted from major business hubs to individual homes of workers.” **Parish / community council**

“Water use has been missed from the output and that has a huge environmental impact. That needs to be captured.” **Energy consultant**

“The question here is not about whether these outputs are sensible or suitable; it is how to promote them to encourage wider local energy plans. This will help drive understanding of where the pinch points are from a Net Zero perspective. We know there are significant constraints around working with electricity but need more information on what these are.” **Local authority**

“As a result of lockdown, there are far fewer cars on the road. Has WPD also factored that into its business plans?” **Energy consultant**

“All of the outputs relating to the impact of your network seem laudable, but I don’t find that there is enough context to comment on whether they are good or bad.” **Local authority**

“Gaining IEMA membership would provide assurance. Your staff could be trained to its standards. I know that many utilities and government use it and it will help you to achieve higher standards.” **Local authority**

“I think that ISO 14001 compliance would be a good goal here too.” **Local authority**

“In light of Covid and possible future pandemics, all of these environmental measures should be sped up as fast as possible, because our relationship with the environment and animals is the ultimate root cause of the pandemic.” **Parish / community council**

OUTPUTS: OUR BUSINESS CARBON FOOTPRINT

REDUCE INTERNAL BUSINESS CARBON FOOTPRINT TO BE NET ZERO BY 2043

Stakeholders all felt that the target date of 2043 was not ambitious enough. Local authorities and organisations in the region had committed to more stretching targets, and it was felt, as part of the electricity network, that WPD should be leading the way in this regard and enabling others to decarbonise. Several sought to understand what sorts of measures WPD would be adopting to reduce carbon usage. One stakeholder felt an ambitious target was an opportunity to unite and motivate the workforce to help deliver it. Another stakeholder pointed out that WPD should be mindful that while targets are important, Covid has demonstrated that unforeseen events can inhibit the ability to achieve them. In the online poll, this output ranked joint second out of all the draft Business Plan outputs with an average of 3.94 / 5, demonstrating that stakeholders wanted WPD to be much more ambitious – over a third (35%) wanted them to do a lot more.

“2043 will be too late, as many local authorities and other organisations are currently decarbonising their fleets. Being an electrical distributor, WPD needs to be enabling such a transition and sending out positive messages to the public and private companies that this is the future.” **Local authority**

“It’s really not as ambitious as it could be unfortunately.” **Energy consultant**

“2043 is far too late sadly. WPD needs to look to hit at least the regional target of 2041, but also try to go earlier than that.” **Local authority**

“It would be good to know what sort of measures you are doing to reduce your carbon usage.” **Local authority**

“What sort of activities come under reducing internal Business Carbon Footprint? Will you involve your employees as well?” **Environmental group**

“With campaigns to reach Net Zero by 2030, these are quite prominent. When you engage employees so they understand the scale of what is required, you can get more buy-in.” **Environmental group**

“With ED2 planning, Covid would not have featured but here we are. Setting targets is great, but disaster can strike and has knock-on effects. Covid shows that no matter how much planning you do, everything can get ripped up in a moment.” **Local authority**

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

Only two stakeholders commented on this output: one to tell WPD that they will need to consider hydrogen for larger fleet vehicles; the other to say that the electricity used to power these vehicles must be generated from renewable sources to make it worthwhile. Despite the lack of discussion, this output ranked fourth for this priority area with 3.65 / 5 – just above the baseline average.

“Hydrogen will need to play a role with larger vehicles in company fleets. WPD has been quite slow to take this up compared to Severn Trent Water, for example. I think that the need for an alternative to electricity should be acknowledged in the outputs.”

Local authority

“Electric vehicles are only as environmentally friendly as the power that goes into them, so there's no point having them if they are powered by fossil fuel energy.”

Local authority

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

One stakeholder commented on this output to say that it needs to include a target date to make sure it is measurable. Despite the lack of discussion, this output ranked joint second for this priority area with 3.71 / 5, and over half (52%) wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more'.

“A date needs to be put on the local renewable generation at your offices and depots, and it needs to be more specific to make it a specific, measurable deliverable.”

Local authority

OUTPUTS: OPERATIONAL IMPACT

REDUCE NETWORK LEAKS BY FLUID FILLED CABLES FROM ED1

One stakeholder supported this target, requesting that someone at board level oversee its delivery. Another stakeholder commented that they would like to see a greater linkage between these operational impact outputs and WPD's innovation strategy. It was popular in the online poll, ranking joint second for this priority area with an average of 3.71 / 5 – higher than the baseline average.

“I would like to see more linking of your operational impact to your innovation strategy. This includes working with higher education, colleges and universities and more research into mitigating your carbon footprint. I don't think there are any problems with what WPD are putting forward. I just don't think we are in the position of having the knowledge to say what they need to do.”

Local authority

“The targets on network leaks are laudable. Is there someone at board level who has responsibility for driving this forward and is accountable for hitting these targets? I'd like to see a key person driving these initiatives.”

Local authority

REDUCE SF6 LOSSES FROM THAT IN ED1

Only one stakeholder commented on this output, to ask what measures would be taken to reduce the SF6 losses. In the online poll, this output ranked 0.02% lower than the baseline average at 3.6 / 5 – and 62% felt the level of ambition was right.

“With SF6 losses, what are you going to do to reduce these levels?”

Parish / community council

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

Only one stakeholder commented on this output to ask for some more context to be able to make a judgement. In the online poll, this output ranked 0.02% lower than the baseline average at 3.6 / 5, and half (51%) felt the level of ambition was right.

“I’ve got nothing to compare that figure to, so I don’t know. 60km doesn’t sound like a lot to me but maybe in the industry it’s a massive amount. How complicated is it and what would you normally be able to expect to replace each year?” **Developer**

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

Stakeholders did not comment on this output during the discussions and this output was not included in the online polling as it is a legislative requirement.

OUTPUTS: IMPACT OF OUR NETWORK

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

Stakeholders generally supported this output, although several wanted to ensure that it is done in a way that is sensitive to the environment – with one noting the way it is done is more important than the amount removed. One wanted to understand how much 34km was as a proportion of the overall total to be able to make a judgement on whether the target was stretching enough. Another thought WPD should prioritise those AONBs that are tourist hubs that people are particularly passionate about. In the online poll, this output ranked lowest in this priority area with 3.27 / 5 – well under the baseline average. Compared with other outputs, views were quite split, with 8% wanting WPD to ‘do less’ or ‘do a lot less’, 58% feeling it was about right, 25% wanting WPD to ‘do more’, and 8% wanting WPD to ‘do a lot more’.

“How will WPD get around this in the most sensitive way so that it does not disrupt service level vegetation? I assume that undergrounding will play a role.” **Local authority**

“Removing overhead lines from AONBs is for opposite reasons to removing them from near schools. In the case of schools, it’s health and wellbeing concerns.” **Local authority**

“There is a pipeline project to Heathrow Airport and the digging involved pioneering mole technology. I would hope that WPD uses something similar.” **Local authority**

“The sites people are most passionate about, AONBs with higher visitor numbers, make the most sense to focus on.” **Local authority**

“For me, how this is achieved is more important than the amount of cabling removed. Publicising this information would be reassuring.” **Local authority**

“It would be interesting to know how much that is out of the overall total, because that figure doesn’t really mean much without the context.” **Local authority**

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

One stakeholder expressed strong support for this output, recognising the impact that losses have on WPD's carbon footprint. In the online poll, however, this output ranked third bottom for this priority area with an average of 3.48 / 5 – below the baseline average.

“I think all this stuff around decreasing transmission loss is brilliant. From a carbon point of view, not all companies have to report these elements, but they do have an impact on the UK's carbon footprint in general. I think increasing the efficiency of the network is a great way to reduce the carbon footprint.” **Local authority**

ACHIEVE ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL

One stakeholder requested more detail here, for example, on what would be done with the copper waste from wires and how some of the more dangerous materials will be disposed of. Another said they thought this target was unrealistic, as there is always going to be some waste. In the online poll, this output ranked 3.41 / 5 – second lowest of the outputs in this priority area and below the baseline average. Most (67%) felt the level of ambition was right, although 6% wanted to see WPD 'do less' – perhaps reflecting the view that the scope of this output was unrealistic.

“Considering that a lot of the waste will be wiring, there will be a lot of copper. On that basis, I think that there are opportunities for salvaging here. It would be good to know more information about how WPD intends to dispose of some of the more dangerous materials.” **Local authority**

“Zero waste to landfill seems unrealistic. Even if you could achieve this, there is always going to be the lowest common denominator of waste. We all aspire to discarded products becoming new ones.” **Local authority**

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.

“It's important to see what the timescale is for the reduction of waste.” **Local authority**

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

One stakeholder felt this should not be an output as compliance with legislation should be a given. Following on from that, another suggested changing the wording to make it about demonstrating best practice instead. This wasn't included in the online poll because there was not scope to have varying levels of ambition for this output.

“I'm not sure why this is in here. It should be a given.” **Local authority**

“You should maybe modify the wording to reflect best practices instead.” **Local authority**

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OPERATOR

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Only one stakeholder commented on the impact of Covid on this priority area to note that the government’s policy of Build Back Better and the Green Recovery would lead to major infrastructure investment, placing requirements on the grid.

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

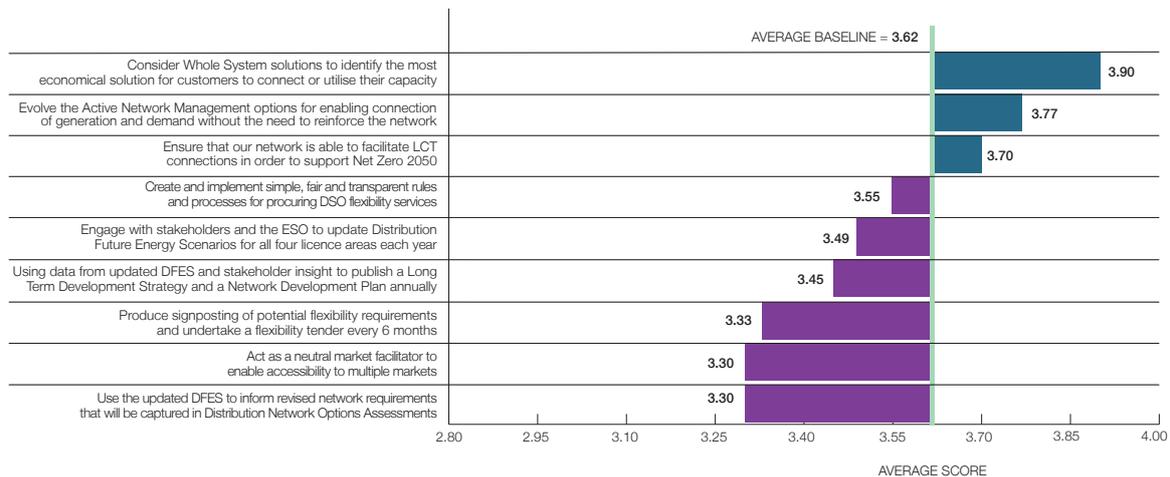
In terms of previous stakeholder feedback on the priority area of Distribution System Operator, there was certainly agreement that more communication is required around the opportunities for flexibility services, as well as the need for standardisation across DNOs. In terms of scenario planning, stakeholders at this workshop agreed with previous feedback that collaboration with local authorities is required to provide clarity about future network capacity – with several stressing the importance of medium- and longer-term projections to support planning. Stakeholders did not comment on Active Network Management or whole systems during the discussions, but the results of the online polling indicated the importance they attached to them.

WPD’S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders did not seem to think there was much missing from the DSO outputs, except for one who wanted to see a cross-cutting theme of social equity to ensure no customers are left behind in the transition.

In terms of performance measures, stakeholders did not have any specific suggestions, with one feeling that, as it is such a new area, they did not have the expertise to be able to propose what they should be. In the online poll, however, DSO ranked lowest overall out of all the priority areas (not including those covered in the surgery sessions) with 3.53 / 5. Only three outputs ranked above the baseline average, suggesting that the ones stakeholders wanted to see WPD go further on related to whole systems, Active Network Management and the connection of low carbon technologies. Stakeholders raised a range of comments in relation to the draft outputs, which have been summarised below.

Distribution System Operator Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“On the anticipatory investment, it’s really exciting because any government will be keen to see new growth and development being fully integrated, and with that comes increased employment which is especially vital at the moment. The garden village concept keeps looming and that would perhaps be an area for you to focus on.” **Energy consultant**

“In terms of Covid and the green recovery, it’s about major infrastructure investment, with local authorities and statutory authorities coming together and focusing on sustainable economic development.” **Energy consultant**

“I think there’s an equity issue missing from those flexibility services. If you’re a latecomer to electric vehicles, then you’ll be left behind. There needs to be a cross-cutting theme of social equity.”

Local authority

“I don’t have a problem with the components outlined but would like to see the detail behind them.”

Local authority

“These sound about right. It’s a new area, so it’s difficult to come up with targets and things.”

Local authority

OUTPUTS: FLEXIBILITY SERVICES

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

Initially, stakeholders had some questions as to which customers could deliver flexibility services. There was support for these to include small generators, like solar, as well as those who own batteries – including those who aggregate smaller batteries together. One local authority stakeholder stressed the importance of having simple, fair and transparent rules to support local businesses with their forward planning. In the online poll, this output ranked 3.55 / 5 – just below the baseline average.

“I think it comes back to the common theme in making sure the outputs are smart and measurable. It’s impossible to measure performance.”

Local authority

“I’d agree with that. I think they are 4 outputs that are hard to disagree with but measuring them is hard to quantify.” **Business customer**

“I’m very aware that it’s common for those who have generators to have an agreement to supply energy back to the grid when there’s high demand.”

Academic institution

“Does this also cover arbitrage and the use of larger batteries to buy and sell electricity and peak and low demands times to make money for the owners of the batteries?” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“I was interested in the comment about aggregating smaller batteries. We’ve installed small batteries as part of an initiative with Nottingham Trent University and we’d be very interested in getting involved with something like that.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“I do think that the simple fair and transparent rules are going to be very important. For businesses around here that is very important to know they can change their business plan but know that the supply will always be there for them. There is the need to adapt to the new normal, especially in more rural areas if this is how we’ll be working from now on.”

Local authority

“That sounds promising and also has implications for smaller generation initiatives such as solar panels.”

Academic institution

PROVIDE ACCURATE, USER-FRIENDLY AND COMPREHENSIVE MARKET INFORMATION

In relation to this output, there was a discussion about the positive impact it could have for vulnerable customers, but it was noted that this requires better communication so customers can understand the potential benefits of flexibility services, particularly in terms of cost savings. One local authority stakeholder wanted closer working with their planners to ensure they understand the opportunities that flexibility could open up in terms of network capacity. One stakeholder wanted the market information on flexibility to also include a medium-term view of the opportunities that might become available. One stakeholder wanted to understand what information is currently being provided to be able to make an informed decision on the appropriateness of this output. This output was not included in the online poll.

“I guess it’s an understanding of what you are doing now. I don’t disagree with this output, but what are you now doing in terms of user-friendly market information? It’s good to see how things can be improved going forward. For example, looking at alternatives, etc.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“It can have a positive impact for vulnerable customers.” **Local authority**

“You want it to motivate behaviour change.”

Local authority

“I think the trouble is trying to find the right level of understanding for people. People don’t understand what’s involved and it’s difficult to explain. We want them to understand we want more LCTs and for them to benefit, but they don’t understand what they’re paying for.” **Local authority**

“If you were an outside person, you wouldn’t understand what it was about.” **Local authority**

“It should say something about demand. Balancing supply and demand. Give them a clue! Flexibility is a lovely word, but it could be about yoga. It’s not clear what it means!” **Local authority**

“I think that’s right. It’s about how you get the message across. For your everyday person, energy is very complicated.” **Consumer body**

“It’s highlighted the need for flexibility, so the energy system continues to supply what we need to continue with the more positive things that we’ve been doing in this new way of working. We need to work to help local authority planners because a lot of local planning is driven by what is available and we need to think about the future and what we can do with new technology.” **Local authority**

“I think generally these outputs are right. A medium-term view would be useful as well. WPD is very good at giving current demand for flexibility but with the uptake of EV and additional demands on the network, as well as the government ambition to replace gas boilers by 2030, there could be some quite significant differences by the end of the current timeframe.” **Energy consultant**

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

Stakeholders were keen that WPD engage with housebuilders and large commercial and industrial customers to encourage them to take up opportunities to deliver flexibility services where they are needed. In the online poll, it ranked 3.33 / 5 – below the baseline average. Most (67%) felt the level of ambition was right.

“Are there opportunities to engage with people who want to link to the network and make it more flexible? It’s difficult because WPD have to provide the connections for housebuilders, but is there a conversation to be had with those people?”

Local authority

“One of the things that is missing for me is the commercial and industrial aspects. The larger organisations that sit on the network – have they been engaged to encourage them to push energy back on to the grid system and allow local communities to benefit from that?” **Utility**

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

One stakeholder, who lives in a county covered by two different DNOs, questioned whether there is a consistent industry approach to flexibility services. In the online poll, this output ranked joint lowest for this priority area with an average of 3.3 / 5 – far below the baseline average.

“We are covered by two DNOs at the moment in Lincolnshire and we wouldn’t like to see the postcode lottery coming into the next price plan. We don’t want one diametrically opposed to the other, because I sit on the boundary and it becomes difficult. We need a coherent approach when you have a large geographic, administrative boundary.”

Local authority

“Local area energy planning might be the one that creates the equality of delivery. It is local delivery working its way up.” **Local authority**

OUTPUTS: SCENARIO PLANNING AND WHOLE SYSTEMS

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

Stakeholders again challenged WPD on the Net Zero target date, urging them to aim to facilitate LCT connections to support local authorities’ more ambitious target date of 2030. Several wanted to see KPIs included within this output to enable WPD to measure their performance – including a phased approach with timings through the ED2 Business Plan period. Stakeholders discussed a range of initiatives they felt were required to facilitate low carbon connections. This included: connections quotations with accurate costs; more robust milestones to stop customers holding capacity; lobbying to change legislation so renewable generators can use batteries, minimising their grid requirements; and encouraging access for three phase supplies. One stakeholder urged WPD to make sure that rural networks have sufficient capacity to cope with the increase in low carbon connections. In the online poll, this output ranked third for this priority area with 3.7 / 5 – just above the baseline average.

“This period will be critical. Large numbers of local authorities have pledged to get to zero carbon by 2030. We don’t want local authorities having ambitious schemes that then can’t be fitted in. We do need challenging targets.” **Local authority**

“I’m really concerned with this continued focus on 2050. It’s not fast enough and it doesn’t consider the fact that we’re going to come up against lots of bumps along the way.”

Vulnerable customer representative

“It’s very important but it needs some form of KPI to measure your performance.” **Local authority**

“I’d want a timeline with a set of targets along the way to 2050 with some feedback loops and points at which you could slow down or speed up to meet targets.” **Vulnerable customer representative**

“We find your connections quotations can be quite volatile, which is a block to us connecting low carbon technologies. A lot of time we find capacity is taken up by potential projects that don’t happen. There needs to be more stringent milestones.”

Local authority

“As part of that process do you define what capacity your network has for customers?”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“Are you saying that you are going to do whatever it takes to allow everyone access to smart charging for EVs?” **Storage and renewables provider / installer**

“I think the output does stand strong. I think we would like to see a little bit more evidence of putting those assets in the ground, seeing how those with a three-phase supply have access to the network in the future.”

Storage and renewables provider / installer

“Will there be some targets? These are all quite wordy. For example, that you will facilitate X gigawatts of renewable capacity across your area. You’ve got to look at the big picture and how you can enable renewables to be connected and facilitate the use of batteries.” **Local authority**

“My primary interest is in rural customers / businesses. With the move towards heat pumps and charging, there is a debate about rural networks being able to cope. To what extent has rural capacity been thought about?” **Business customer**

“I suppose in rural business situations, there might also be clusters required of EV charging points. Tourist attractions, big farm shops, etc. I’m just flagging that as an area or spike where things may need to be factored in.” **Business customer**

“Another thing is legislation: for a large solar PV system, the demand is measured on the total output if it’s ever exporting back to the grid. But it’s never going to export if there are batteries. So, we need to look at the legislation and look at each case realistically. Remove some areas that are blocking LCTs to achieve 2050.” **Local authority**

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

One stakeholder sought to understand the granularity of the data that would be published in the development strategy and annual network plan. Another expressed some concern that WPD has to rely on the provision of data from other organisations. Several stakeholders supported this output on the basis that local authorities and other organisations need longer-term projections to be able to help them plan. In the online poll, this output ranked below the baseline average at 3.45 / 5, with 60% confirming that WPD had the right level of ambition.

“I suppose there is a risk that you are slightly dependant on other organisation’s predictions. It could leave you a bit short and there is a risk associated with that.” **Local authority**

“In terms of long-term development strategy, the EV uptake is already 20% of new car sales – how granular can that information go and is that reflected on the DFES?” **Local authority**

“We need to know ahead of time if the system is going to be adding a load of electric vehicles or heat pumps so we can plan ahead for that. We don’t want to also start setting up a load of environmental investments if the DNO is going to turn around and say that we can’t do that, so there needs to be more joined up thinking in that regard.” **Local authority**

“Look at projections for technology take-up to give a longer-term view of needs in regions. Some of the organisations I work with, like town councils, are working to 2030 and although they can find out whether the network is constrained at the moment, they have no real steer on where the constraints will be in 5 years’ time.” **Energy consultant**

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

Stakeholders did not comment on this output, except to talk about the rate of losses at the transmission network level. In the online poll, this ranked below the baseline average with 3.49 / 5.

“The efficiency of the transmission lines – what are we investing to try to increase the efficiency of the lines themselves and how much of the generated energy actually gets to the end users?” **Local authority**

“Percentage losses is presumably for WPD. National Grid losses are much greater, surely?” **Local authority**

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

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakouts. In the online poll, this output ranked joint lowest for this priority area with 3.3 / 5 – well below the baseline average.

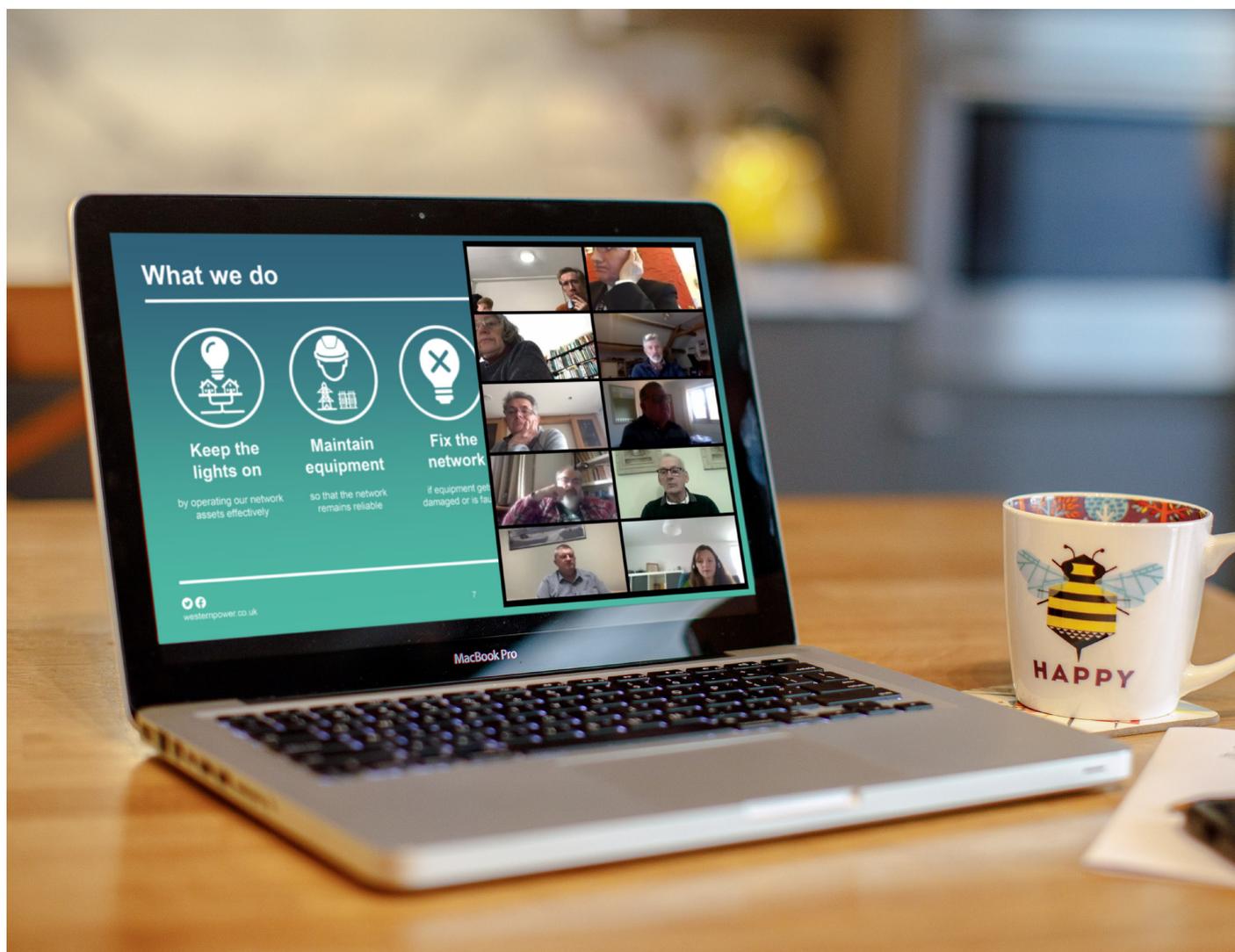
EVOLVE THE ACTIVE NETWORK MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR ENABLING CONNECTION OF GENERATION AND DEMAND WITHOUT THE NEED TO REINFORCE THE NETWORK

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakouts. Despite this, in the online poll, this output ranked second highest with an average of 3.77 / 5, with 57% wanting WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' on ANM.

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

One stakeholder commented on this output to express concern about the cost of installing an electric vehicle charge point and to make the point that WPD needs to consider the bigger picture as part of an integrated approach to network planning. Despite only one stakeholder commenting, in the online poll this output ranked highest for this priority area with 3.9 / 5. 70% wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' on whole systems.

“When electric vehicles are being put in, the load on the system is going to be crazy. It’s going to be nearly half a million pounds to install a substation just to charge an electric vehicle. I’m looking at installing a 1MW battery for those high-power charging vehicles. I don’t want to just put a provision in and then another and then another. I want to look at the bigger picture. At the end of the day, who is going to pick up the tab for it?” **Business customer**



INNOVATION

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

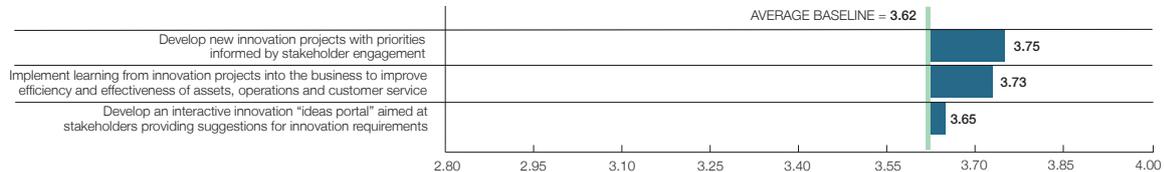
In terms of commenting on previous stakeholder feedback, they strongly supported the need for stakeholders to collaborate with organisations to develop innovation projects together. Although they didn't comment during the breakout, the online poll demonstrated their support for previous feedback that WPD should act on stakeholder feedback to develop innovation projects.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

In terms of what was missing from the outputs, one stakeholder felt the outputs were quite general, with other stakeholders raising some more specific suggestions. This included the opportunities (and environmental challenges) presented by battery storage, as well as the large-scale roll out of solar PV on the roofs of properties, such as those owned by housing associations. One stakeholder felt that all Innovation outputs should be underpinned by the need to get to a lower carbon energy system – and wanted this explicitly referenced.

Stakeholders did not suggest any specific targets or performance measures for the Innovation outputs. However, in the online polling, all three outputs ranked higher than the baseline average and, as a priority area, Innovation ranked second with an average of 3.71. This demonstrated that stakeholders wanted WPD to be particularly ambitious in this area. Stakeholders raised some comments in relation to the draft outputs, which have been summarised below.

Innovation Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“Looking at these, they are general statements of intent but there are real opportunities for social community organisations (SCOs) to produce long term capital investment. There are a lot of roofs that could be connected to the grid. Housing associations, for example, have so much roof area, but they are often limited in their ability to connect to your network.” **Developer**

“This is an area I don't know enough about but an important dimension for future supply fluctuations is storage. However, generators can't legally store. What's your situation as a DNO? Can you own storage to even out supply and demand? If not, can you connect storage from green energy suppliers?” **Parish / community council**

“I've heard that with this race for battery storage, they are not as green as people are making out. Is battery development keeping up with expectations and are tests being run on the challenges posed?”

Local authority

“I think underpinning it all is the need to get to a lower carbon system which doesn't appear in these three innovation outputs. It might be taken as a given but it needs to be underlined.” **Energy consultant**

“Why aren't DNOs allowed to own storage? Is that the same with TOs?” **Energy consultant**

“There is a trial [of energy trading between individual domestic customers] actually going on at the moment.” **Academic institution**

OUTPUTS

DEVELOP NEW INNOVATION PROJECTS WITH PRIORITIES INFORMED BY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders did not discuss this output during the breakouts. However, support was implicit as, in the online poll, it ranked highest for this priority area with 3.75 / 5. 58% wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

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

One stakeholder strongly supported this output on the basis that taking stock and implementing learnings can be overlooked. They therefore proposed stretching the target further by ensuring that learnings are also shared, where possible, with other DNOs in the UK and abroad. In the online poll, this output ranked 3.73 / 5, and 56% wanted WPD to 'do more' or 'do a lot more' in this area.

"Ofgem has always pushed DNOs to do innovation projects but you can't keep doing something new all the time. Sometimes you have to take stock of what you've already done. The ability to share innovation with other DNOs, including those abroad (subject to intellectual property), is an important point. It's about implementing what has been learnt."

Energy consultant

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

Stakeholders liked the idea of an "ideas portal". However, several stakeholders suggested the portal should be able to capture challenges as well as solutions – with one stakeholder suggesting WPD should set out some areas in which they were facing challenges to help generate ideas. In the online poll, stakeholders ranked this output 3.65 / 5 – above the baseline average.

"The ideas portal is something that will be really really useful for us as councils in order to benefit from that expertise on offer there." **Local authority**

"As we start to go carbon neutral, the worrying thing for me is that it will be very different and I'm not sure how we would manage it without innovation, so I like the idea of portals. There are lots of conversations we need to be having with you before applying for funding, and if we are successful." **Local authority**

"UKPN have a similar ideas portal, but it's about stakeholders suggesting technology that already exists. Perhaps WPD could amend this to include existing technology. Also, it would be good for WPD to capture problems as well as solutions."

Business customer

"We're asking for ideas for innovation. We're trying to continue the good work that happened through ED1 so we can solve some issues and be on the front foot. Without innovation we won't be able to meet the carbon reduction targets." **Business customer**

"It would be useful to have some context on the kind of things that might be useful to put into an ideas portal. The areas where there really are issues, so it comes from both directions in terms of ideas." **Vulnerable customer representative**

COMMUNITY ENERGY

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

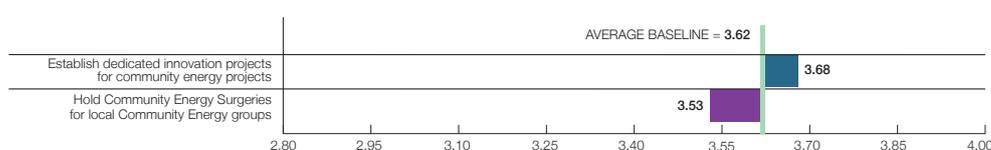
During the discussions, stakeholders supported previous feedback that WPD should prioritise helping community energy schemes. They did not comment, however, on whether WPD should incentivise renewable energy development through increased support for community energy projects.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

Stakeholders discussed the importance of ensuring that community energy projects were not limited to wind and solar, but it was unclear as to whether they wanted any of the outputs amended to reflect this. One stakeholder, who supports a rural community energy hub, said it would be useful to be able to bring in representatives from completed community energy schemes – implying, perhaps, that WPD could help foster this collaboration.

Stakeholders did not comment on specific targets or performance measures for the two outputs under Community Energy. In the online poll, one output ranked above the baseline average and the other ranked below. As a priority area, Community Energy ranked fifth (not including those covered during the surgery sessions) with 3.61 / 5.

Community Energy Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

“As we are moving to a more decentralised approach to energy generation, we need to be able to help the DNOs. The Midlands Energy Hub have a rural community energy hub supporting communities to do some feasible work and put things forward to stage two. It would be interesting to bring in people from other community energy projects with experience of implementation and with crowdfunding ideas.”

Local authority

“I agree that community energy is going to be essential as part of the energy mix.”

Business customer

“I agree that community energy is important. However, I think that sometimes the focus is quite narrow. The focus is often all on solar and wind turbines, while water barrage and tidal power doesn't get the press of the funding it should.”

Business customer

“The challenge of tidal is the high cost of the initial project, which makes people shy away from it. Wind turbines and solar panels are low cost, albeit relatively low return too, whereas tidal power is a multi-million-pound upfront cost, but it offers more return.”

Business customer

OUTPUTS

ESTABLISH DEDICATED INNOVATION PROJECTS FOR COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS

Stakeholders did not discuss this specific output during the breakouts. In the online polling, it ranked above the baseline average with 3.68 / 5, and 59% thought WPD should ‘do more’ or ‘do a lot more’ in this area.

HOLD COMMUNITY ENERGY SURGERIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ENERGY GROUPS

Stakeholders did not discuss this specific output during the breakouts. In the online polling, it ranked below the baseline average with 3.53 / 5.

DIGITALISATION

IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

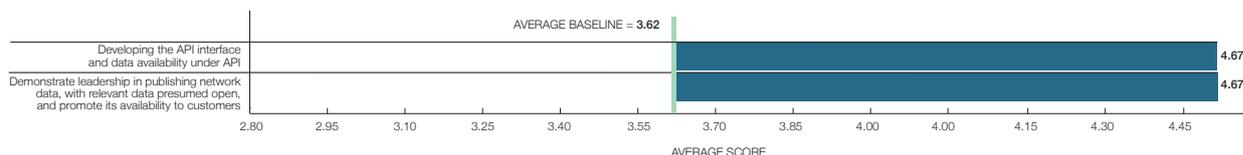
PLAYBACK OF PREVIOUS STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

During the discussions, stakeholders broadly agreed with the outputs and voted that WPD should go further against these. However, they were not forthcoming when asked whether these reflected the previous stakeholder feedback.

WPD'S PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

It should be noted that there was a very small sample size of just three stakeholders in the Digitalisation surgery. In the case of both outputs voted on in the surgery, stakeholders were of the view that WPD should go further than proposed in ED2. None of the stakeholders voted 3 / 5 or lower in the online vote, resulting in the average score for both outputs being 4.67 / 5 (with one stakeholder voting 4 / 5 and two voting 5 / 5). In both cases, no specific measures were suggested.

Digitalisation Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

Please note that as Digitalisation was held as an optional afternoon surgery session, and was therefore attended by fewer participants, the voting data for these outputs is less robust. While the Digitalisation voting data has been summarised in this section, it has therefore not been compared against data from the other main sessions. However, for the purpose of this report, comparisons have been drawn between the Digitalisation outputs themselves to give an indication of stakeholder views on this area.

OUTPUTS

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

Stakeholders felt that WPD should increase their level of ambition in demonstrating leadership. When asked to vote on this, two of the three stakeholders voted 5 / 5 and one voted 4 / 5. It was commented that collaborating with other energy networks, including through the Energy Networks Association (ENA), and with distributed generators were ways in which this leadership could be demonstrated.

“So, you wouldn’t hold yourself back from delivering benefits to your customers in the short term, but you’d have an eye on your longer-term plans?”
Distributed generation customer

“As for the work that’s being done with ENA, in a sense you have freedom to do your own thing, but how much will it be done as a cross-industry initiative?” **Energy consultant**

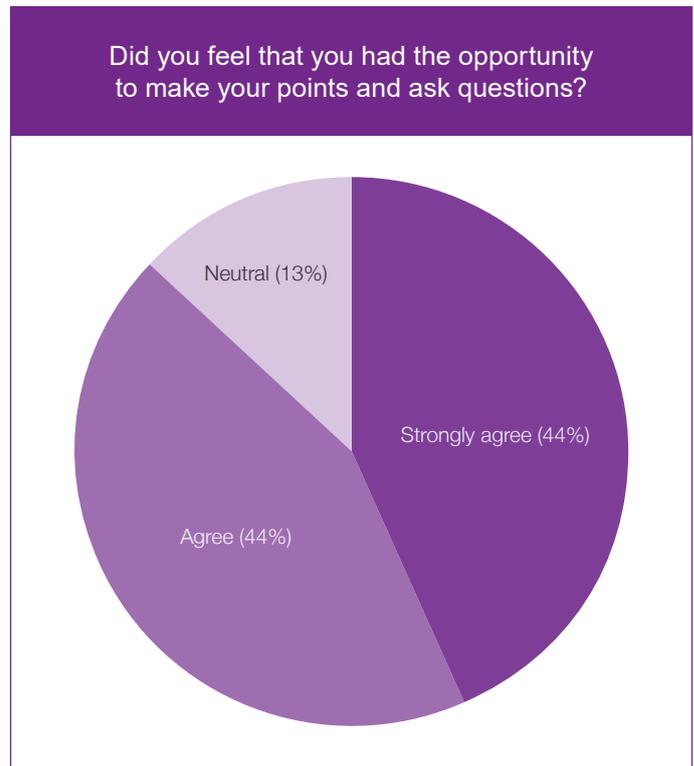
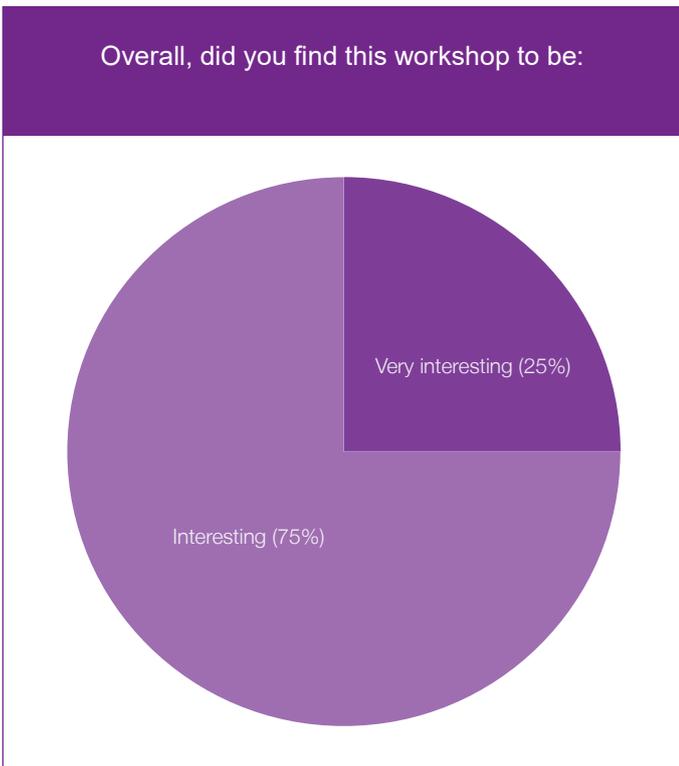
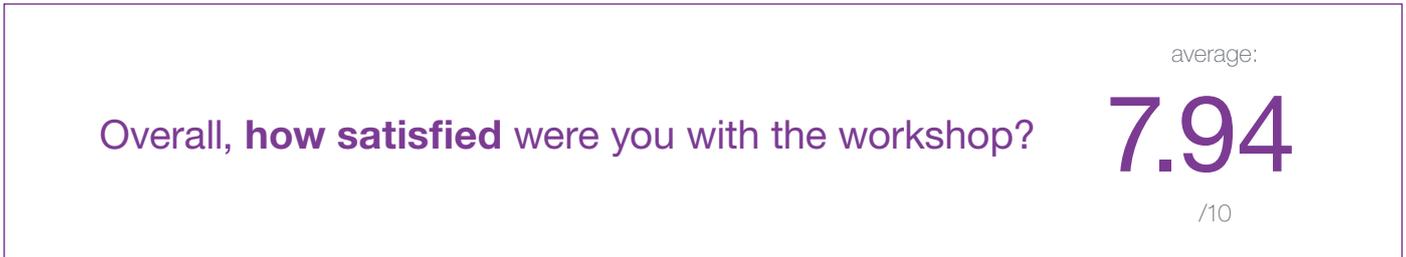
DEVELOPING THE API INTERFACE AND DATA AVAILABILITY UNDER API

It was commented that the development of the API interface would be helpful for distributed generation stakeholders as it would enable them to share data swiftly and efficiently. In the online poll, two of the three stakeholders voted 5 / 5 in terms of what they thought WPD’s level of ambition against this output should be in ED2, with the one other stakeholder in the surgery opting for 4 / 5.

“We want to align ourselves with WPD and make sure we can pass over data that they need and want.”
Distributed generation customer

9 | APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

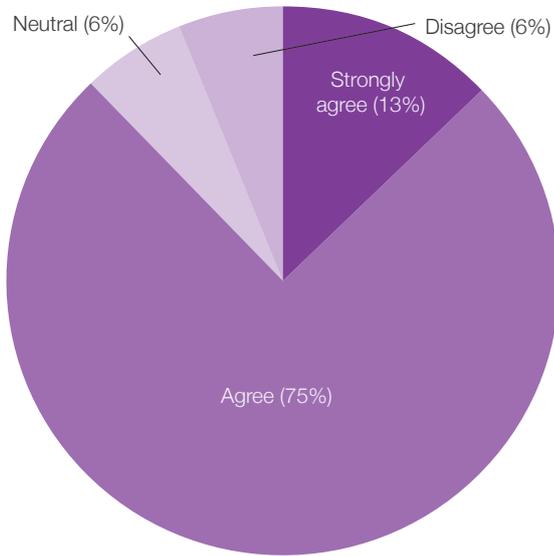
After the workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. The feedback was as follows:



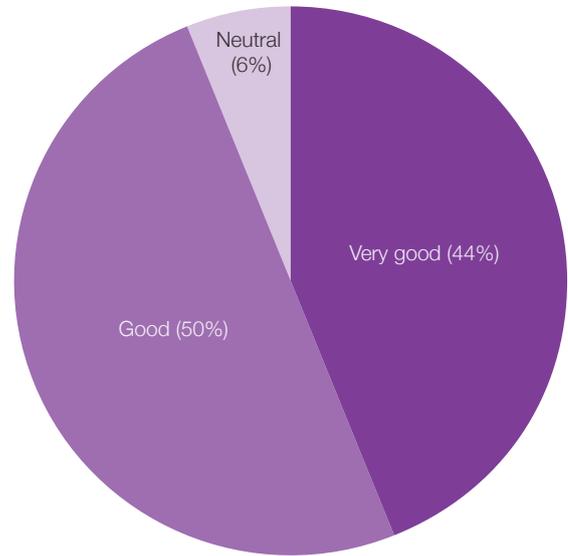
“The individual and commercial customers were listened to equally.”

“Host in breakout group encouraged participation from everyone.”

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?

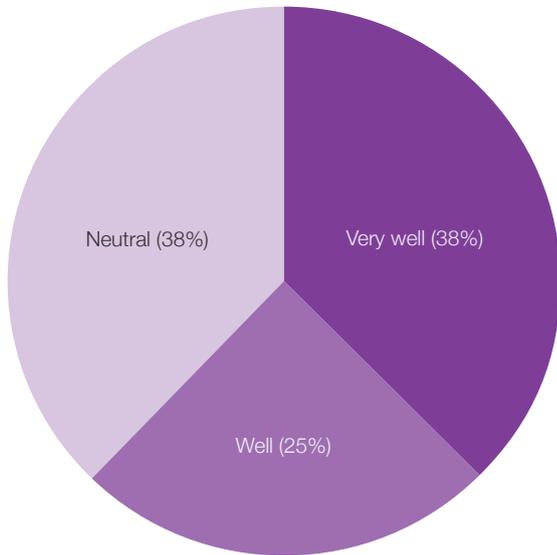


“Everyone was very professional (and patient!) and very articulate.”

“Clear presentations.”

“A lot of information covered in a relatively short time.”

How well do you think the online format worked?



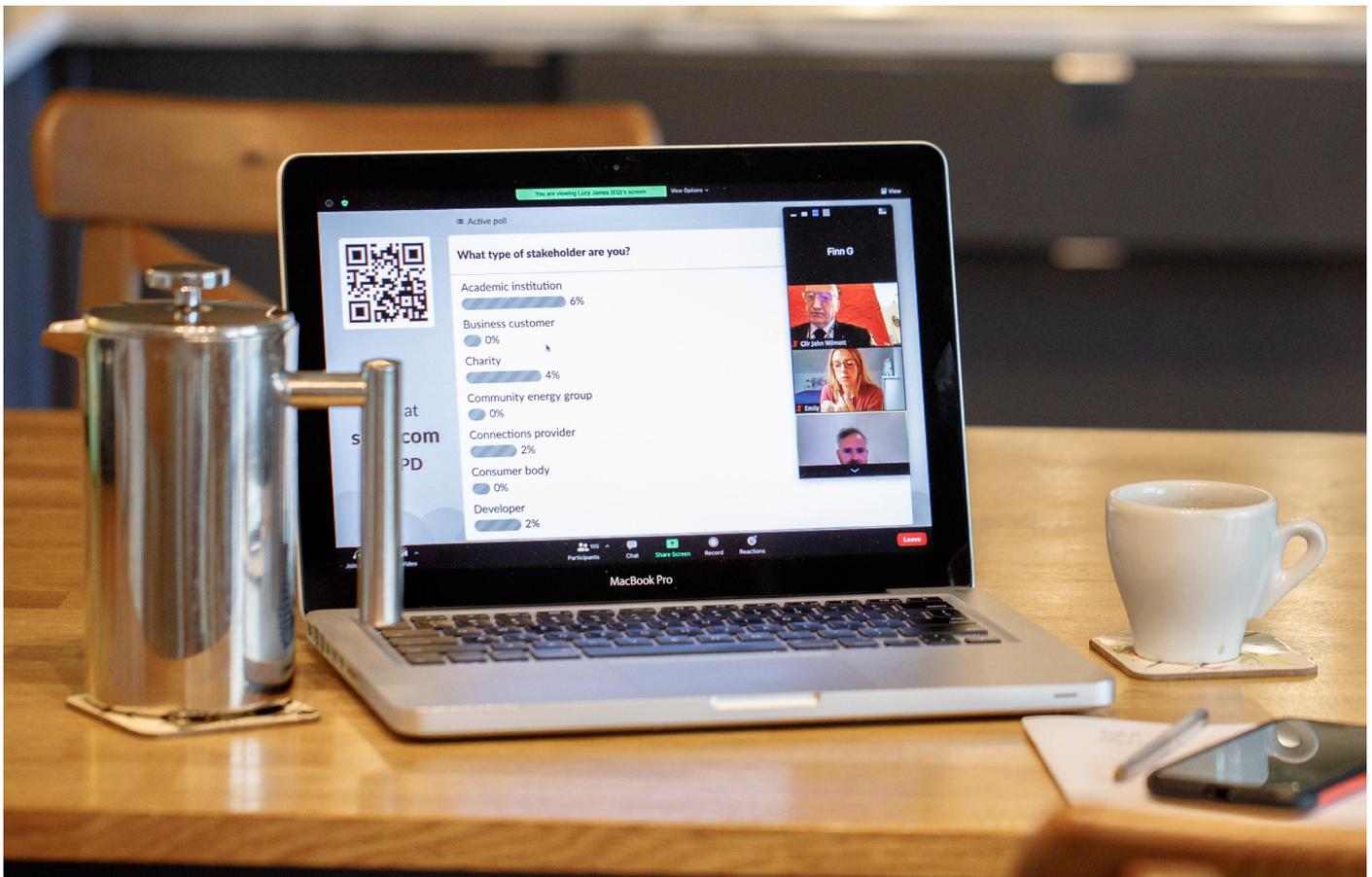
Any other comments?

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

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

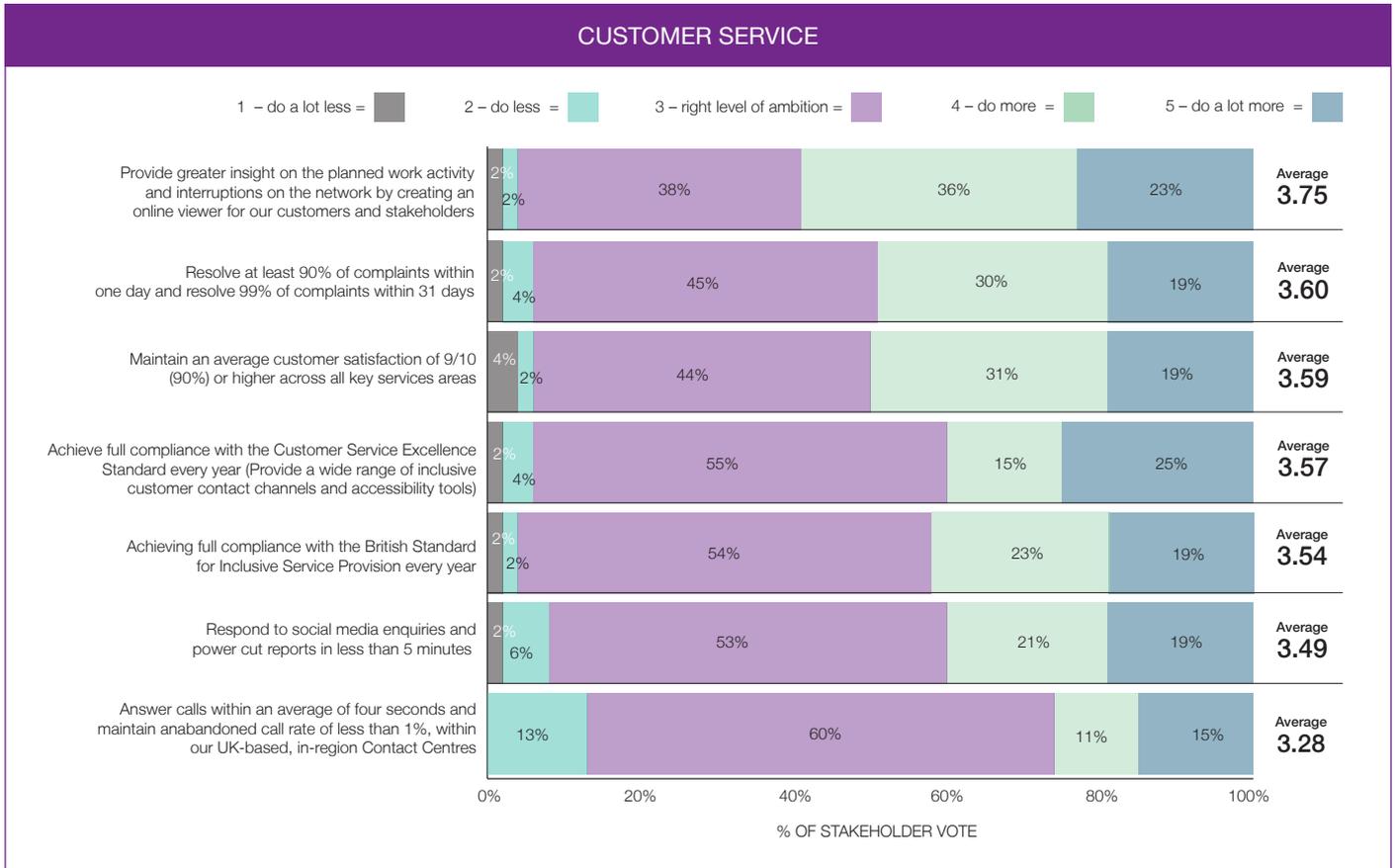
“Inclusivity and ability to ask questions.”

“Well organised, good chance to speak.”



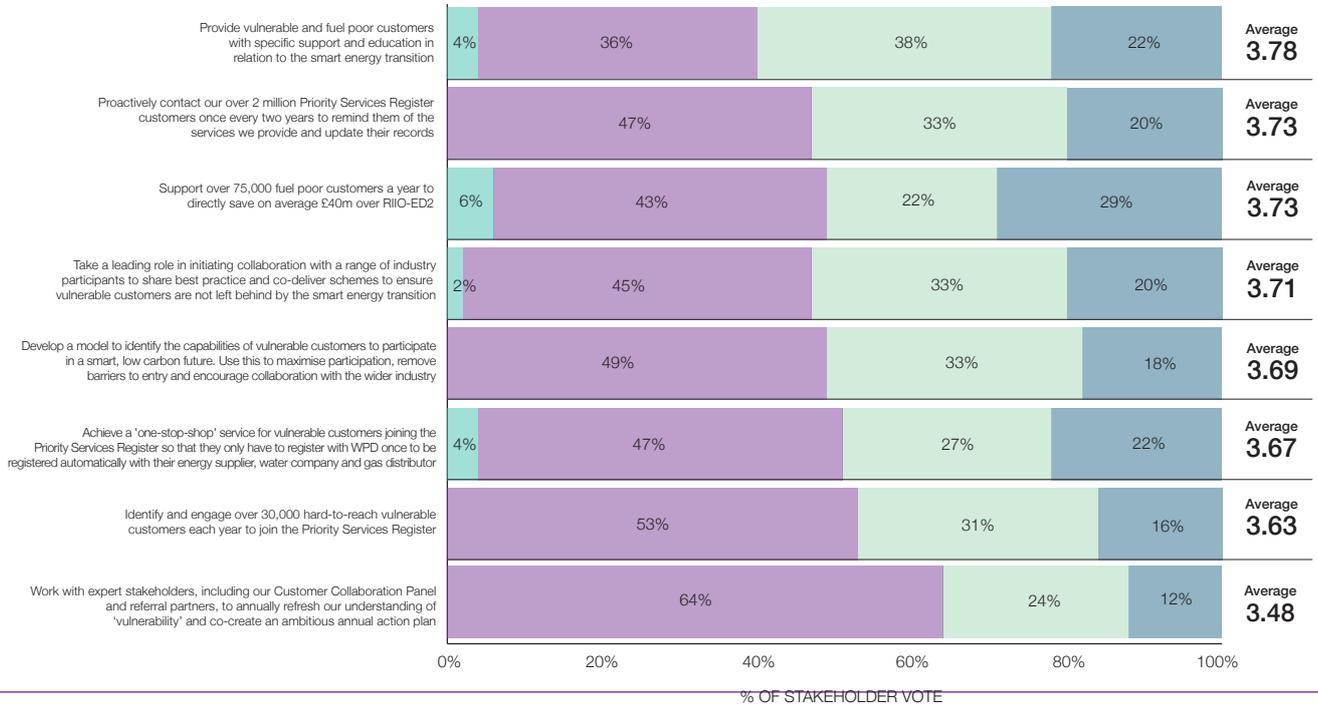
10 | APPENDIX 2: BREAKDOWN OF VOTING RESULTS

The tables below provide a breakdown of the raw voting data obtained for each priority area. Please note that for Connections, Workforce Resilience, Safety and Digitalisation, data was provided by a lower total of respondents following the surgery sessions, which were attended by fewer stakeholders. Therefore, while the data for these priority areas gives an indication of stakeholder views, it is less robust.



CUSTOMER VULNERABILITY

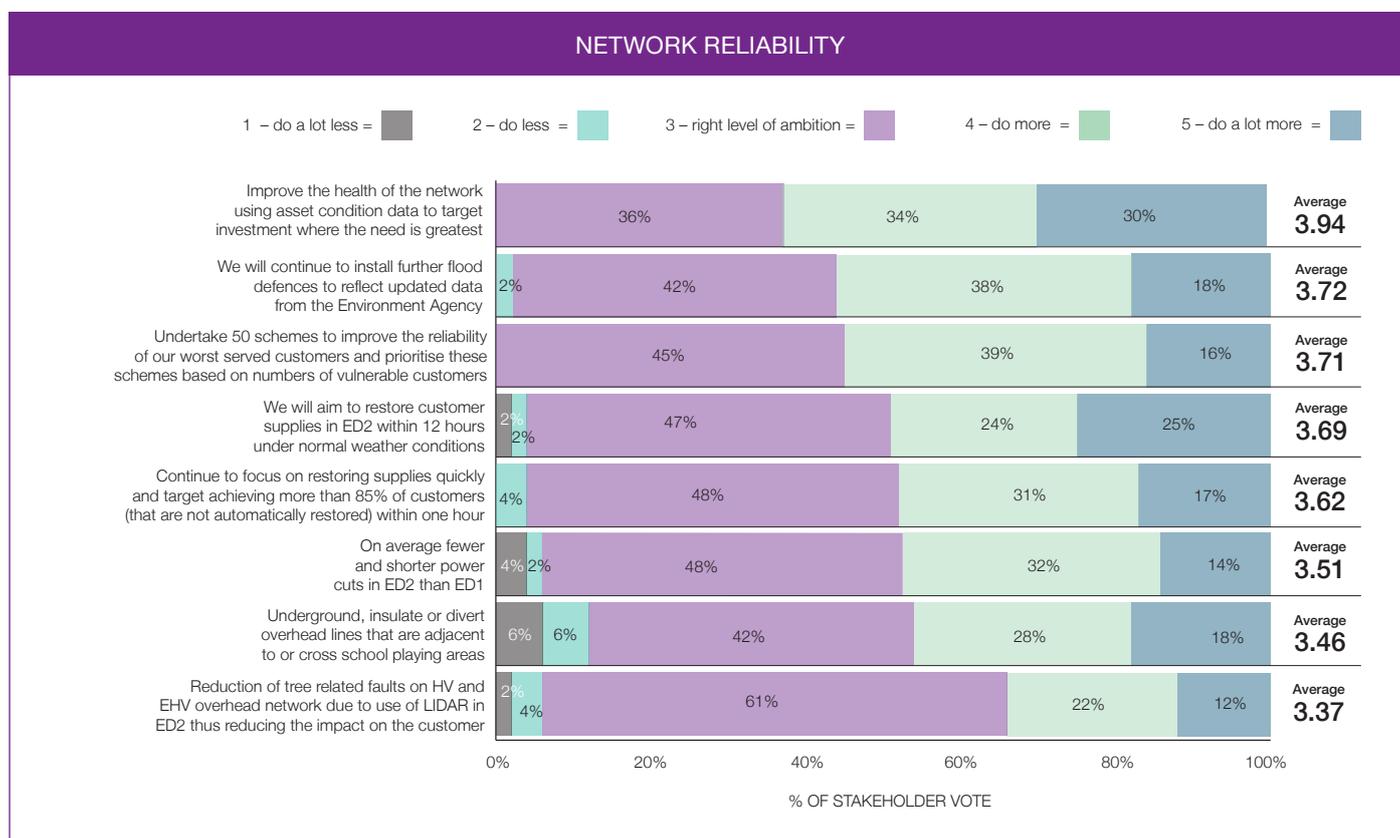
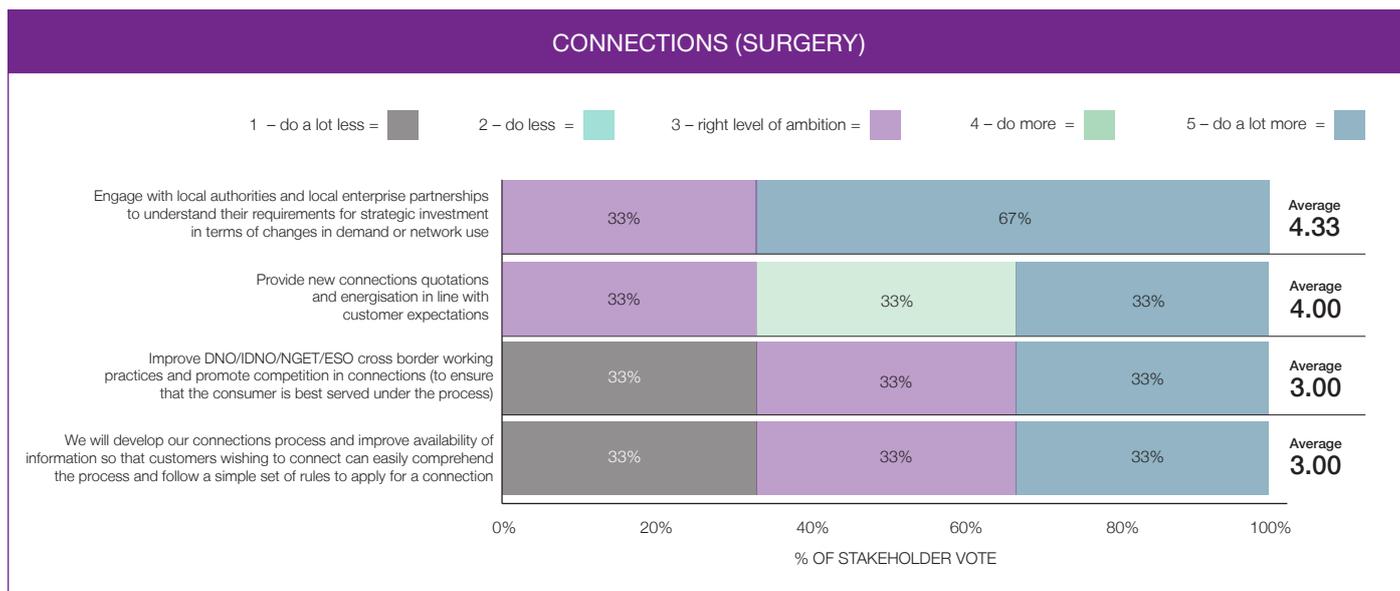
1 – do a lot less = 2 – do less = 3 – right level of ambition = 4 – do more = 5 – do a lot more =



SOCIAL CONTRACT

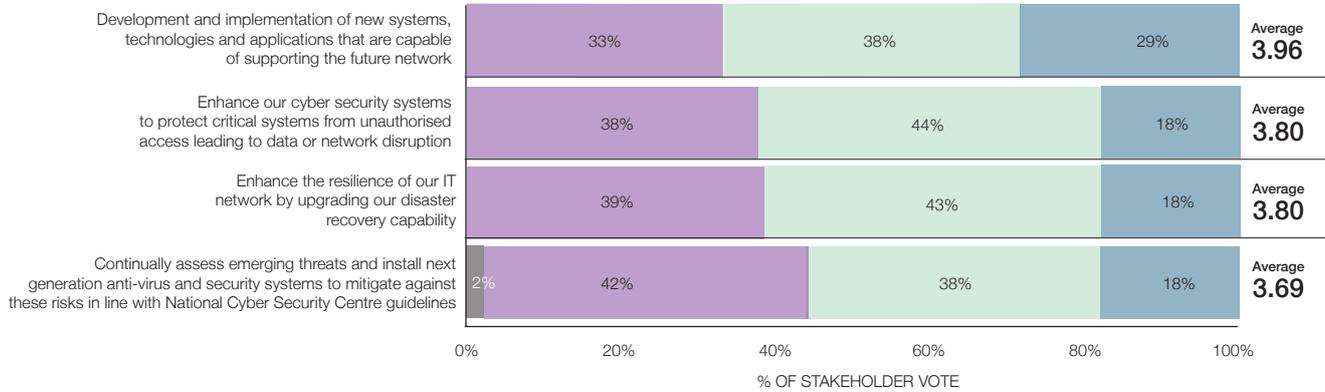
1 – do a lot less = 2 – do less = 3 – right level of ambition = 4 – do more = 5 – do a lot more =





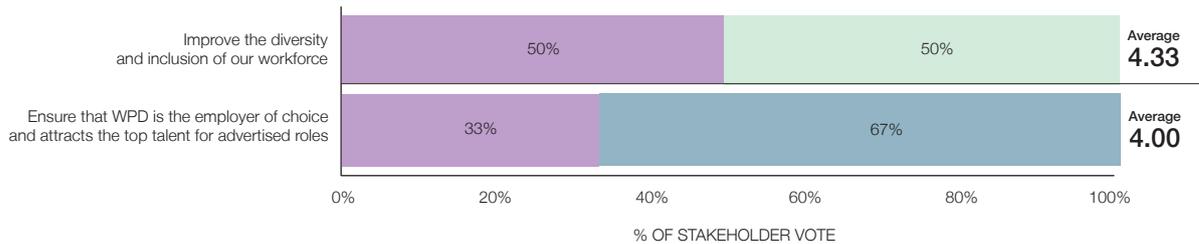
BUSINESS IT SECURITY AND CYBER RESILIENCE

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



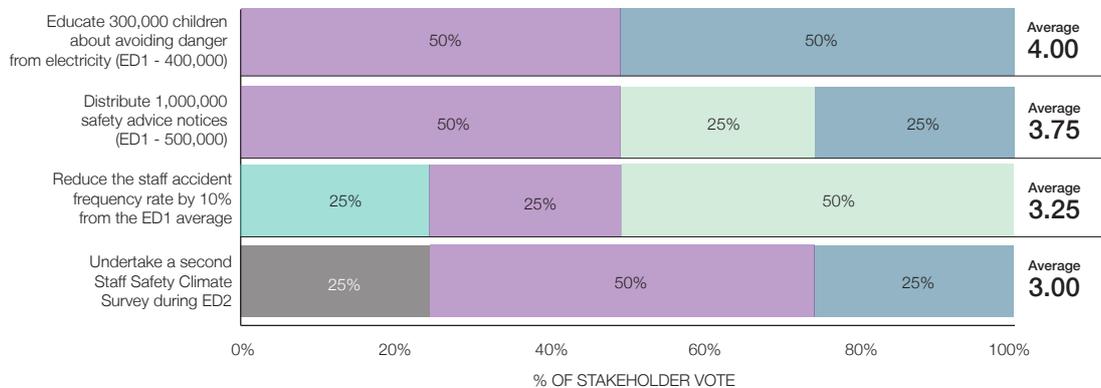
WORKFORCE RESILIENCE (SURGERY)

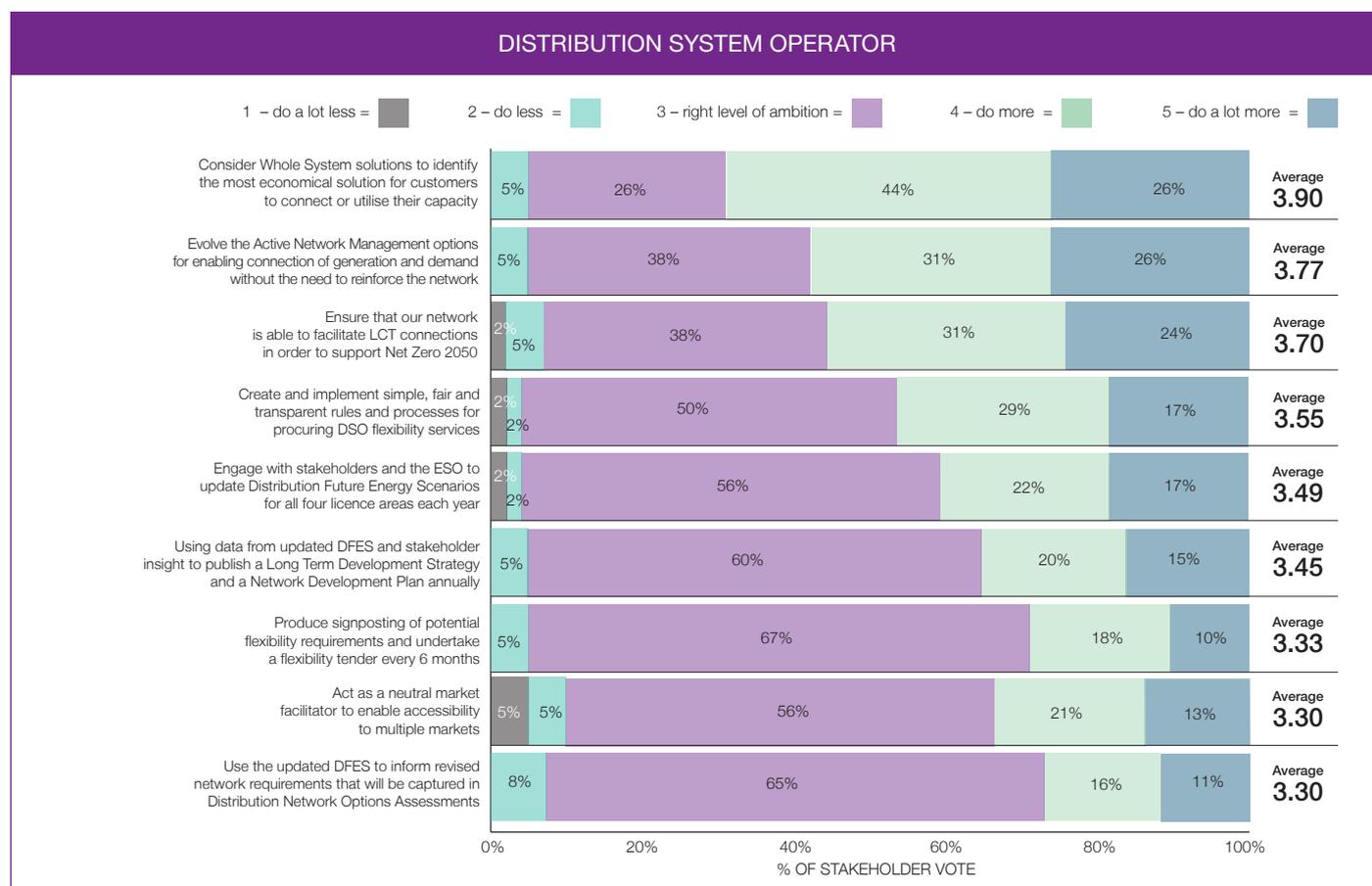
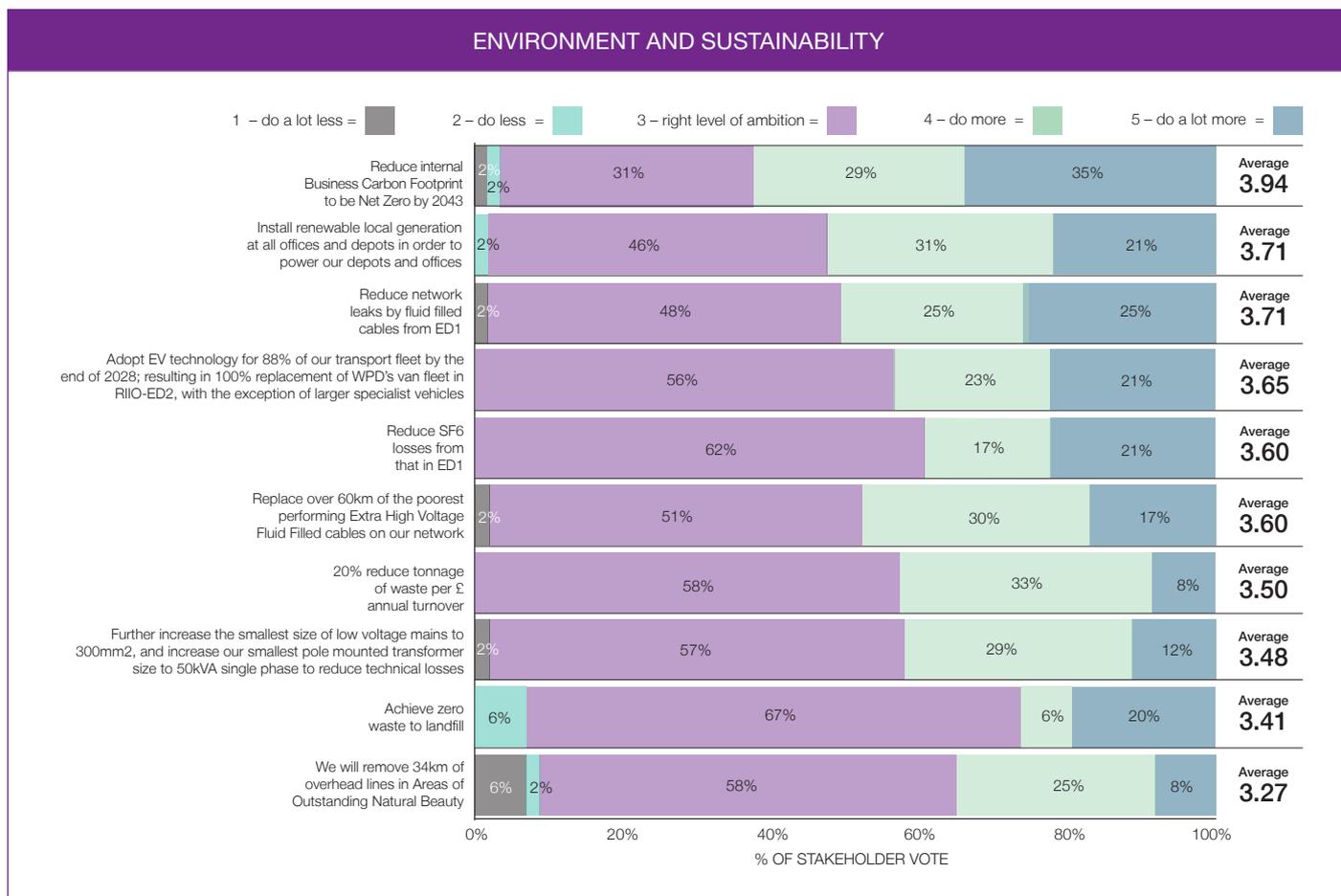
1 – do a lot less = 2 – do less = 3 – right level of ambition = 4 – do more = 5 – do a lot more =

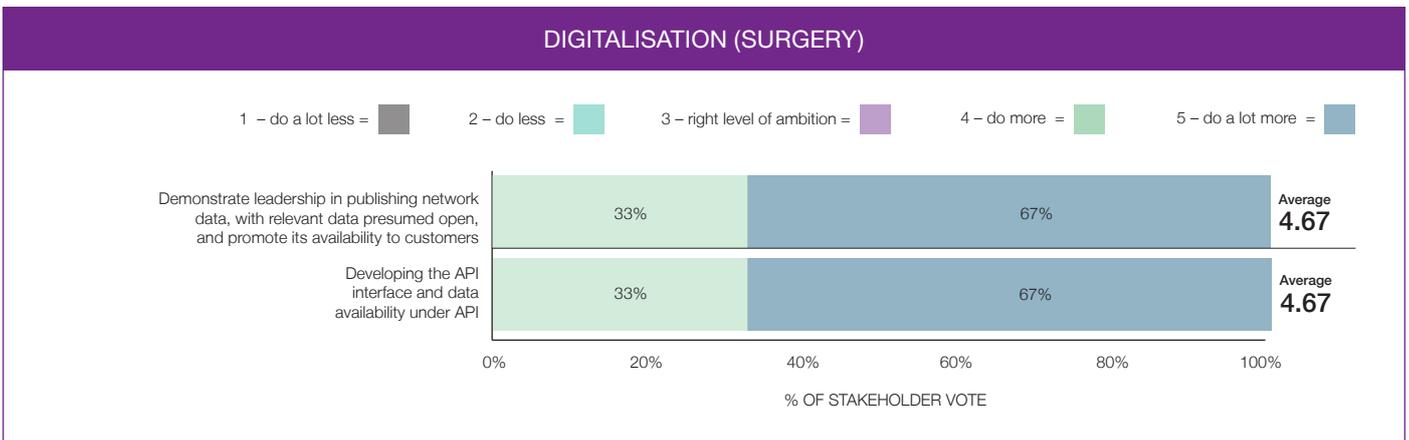
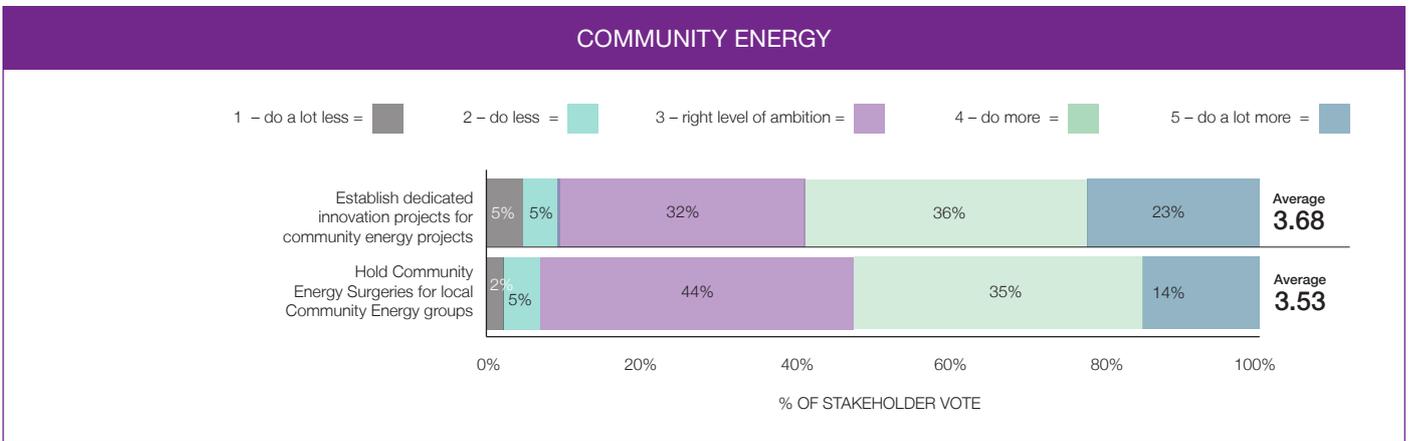
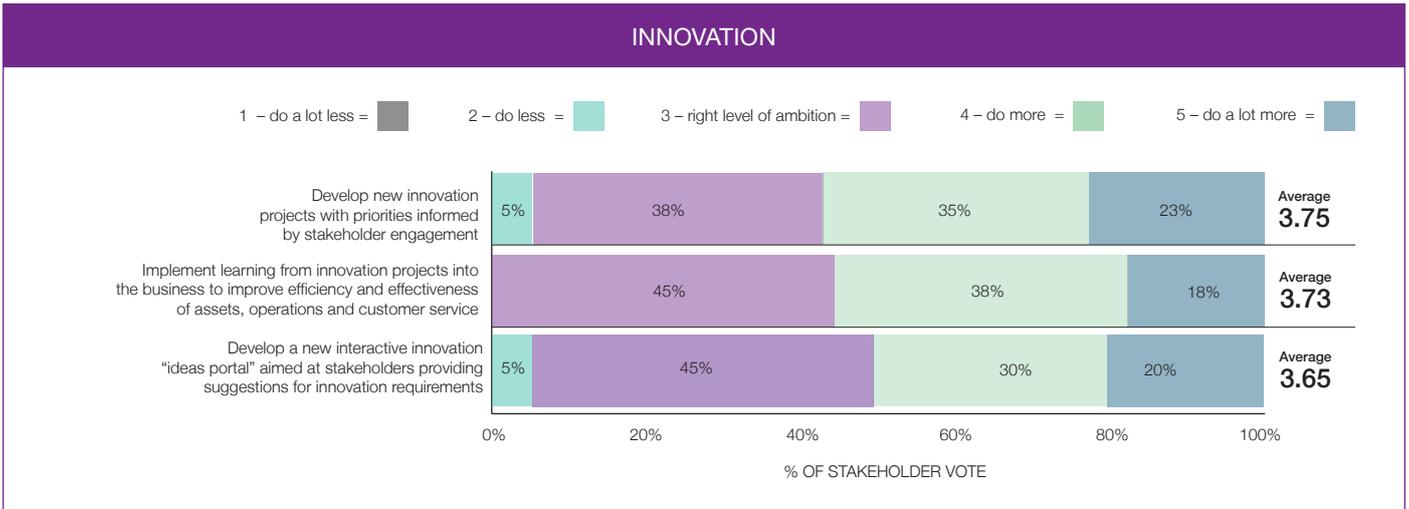


SAFETY (SURGERY)

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

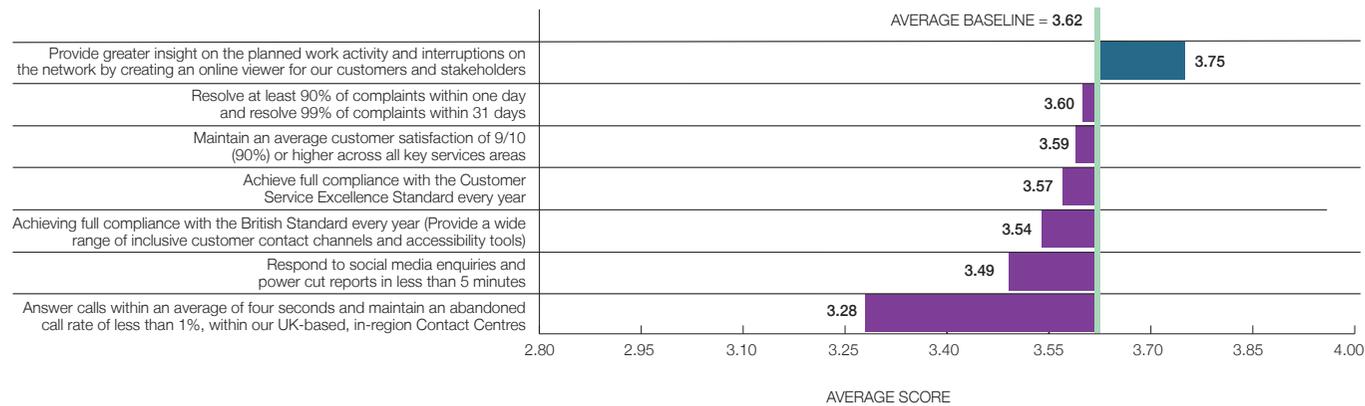






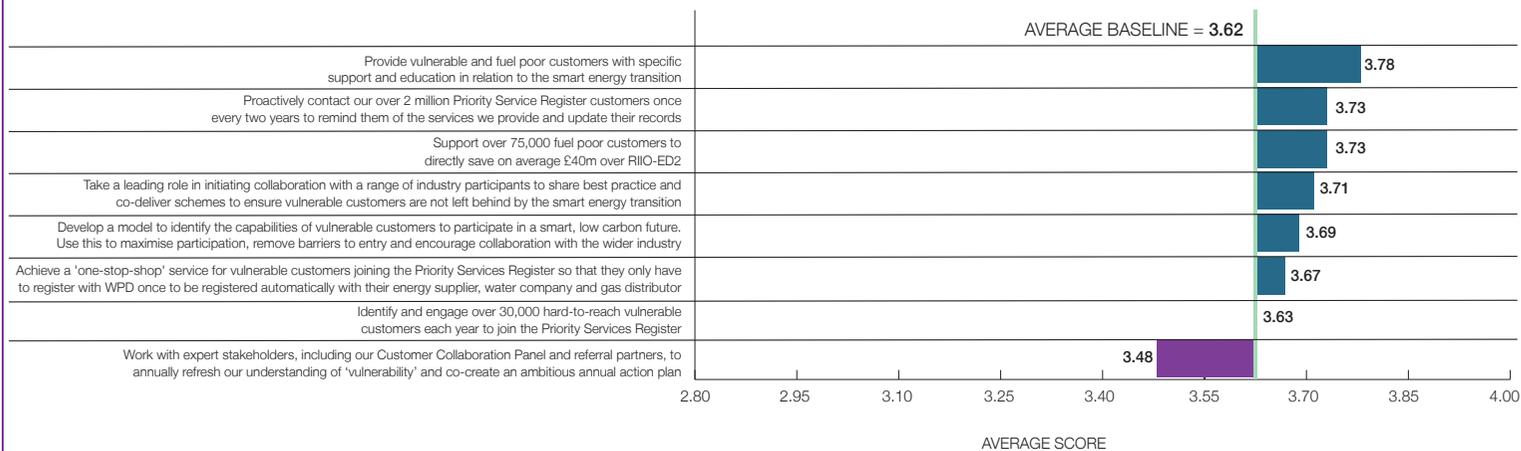
11 | APPENDIX 3: OUTPUTS AVERAGE SCORES COMPARED TO BASELINE

Customer Service Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



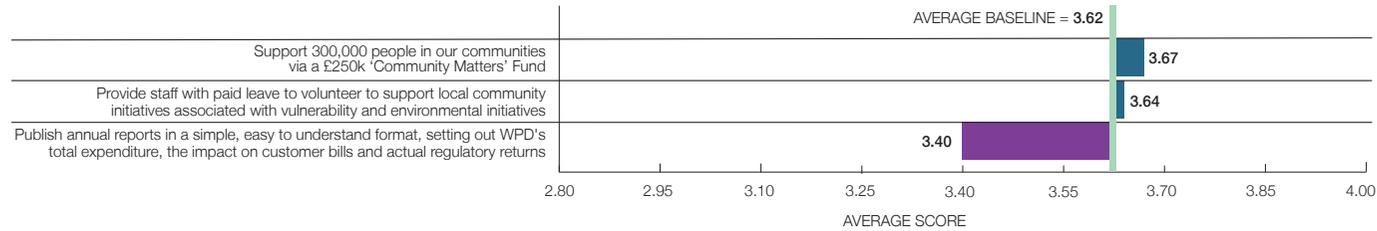
[Click here to return to the Customer Service section of the report](#)

Customer Vulnerability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



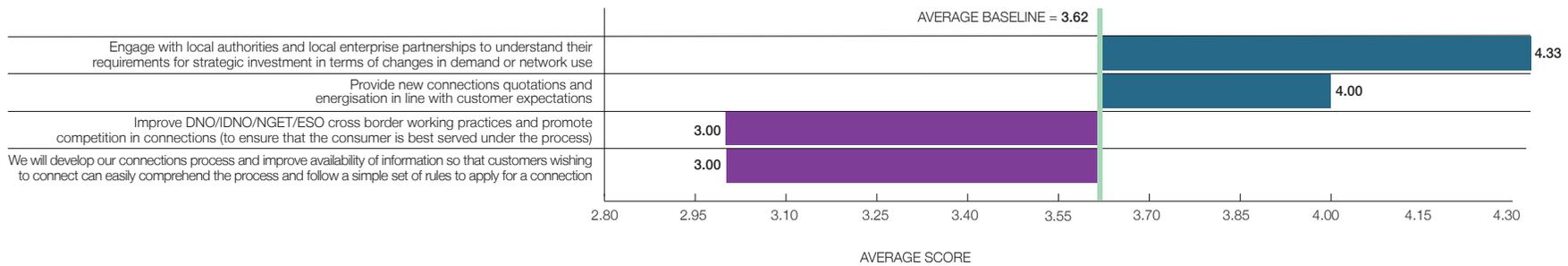
[Click here to return to the Customer Vulnerability section of the report](#)

Social Contract Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



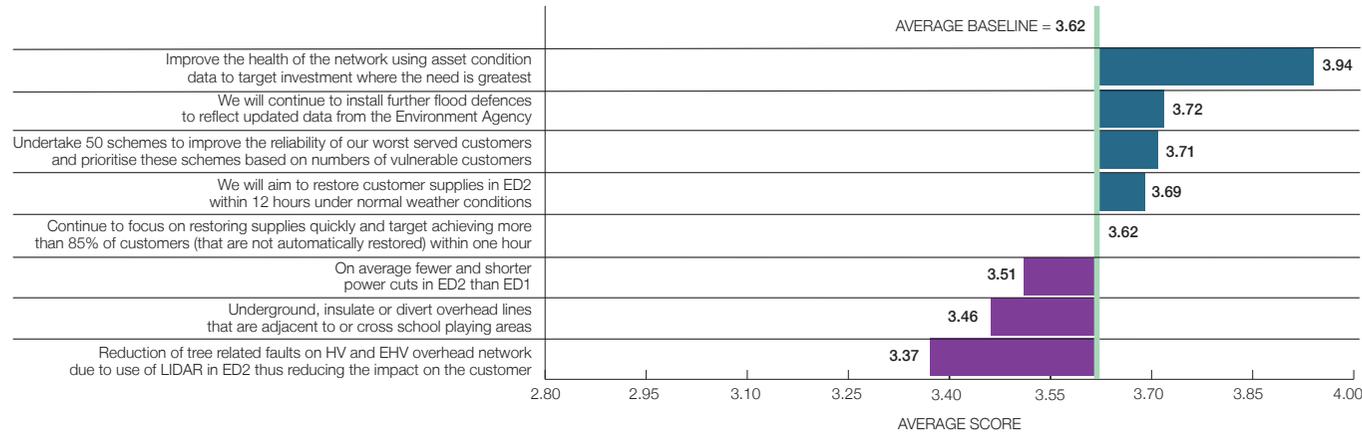
[Click here to return to the Social Contract section of the report](#)

Connections Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



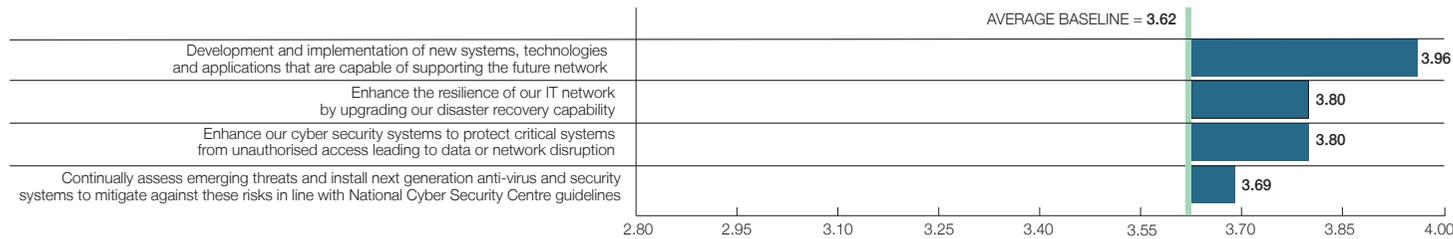
[Click here to return to the Connections section of the report](#)

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



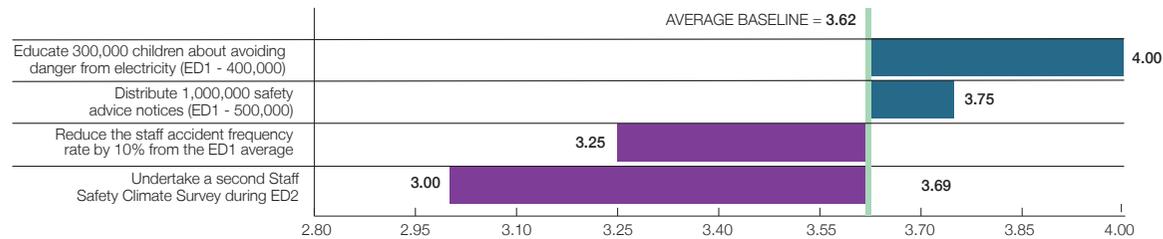
[Click here to return to the Business IT Security and Cyber Resilience section of the report](#)

Workforce Resilience Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



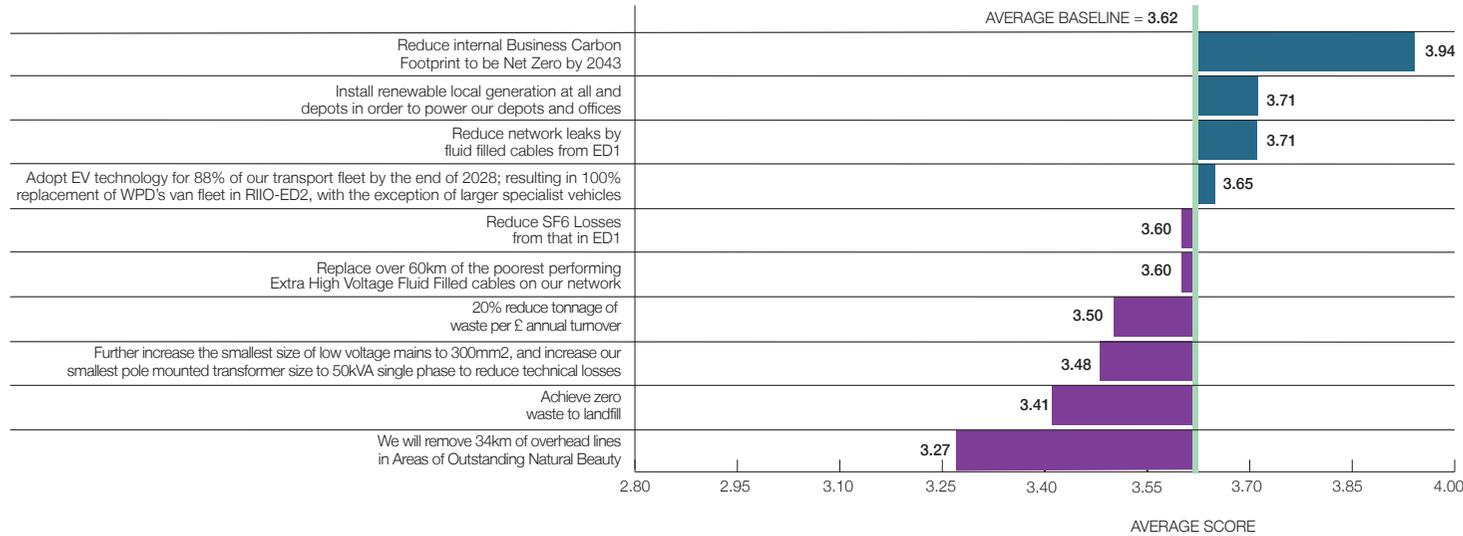
[Click here to return to the Workforce Resilience section of the report](#)

Safety Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



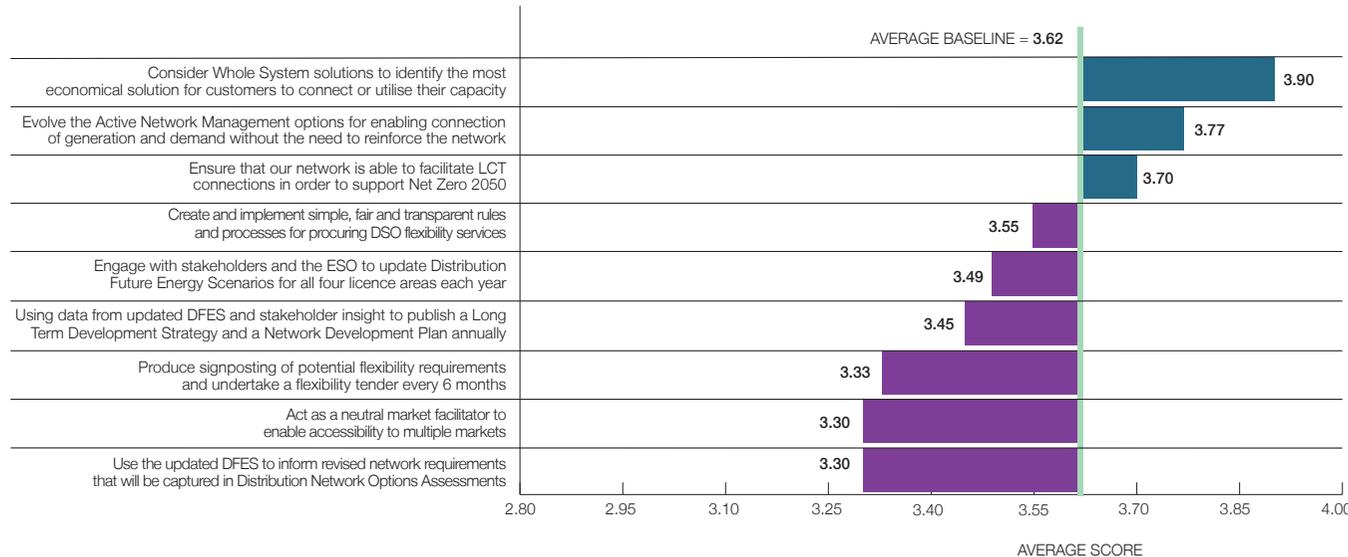
[Click here to return to the Safety Outputs section of the report](#)

Environment and Sustainability Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



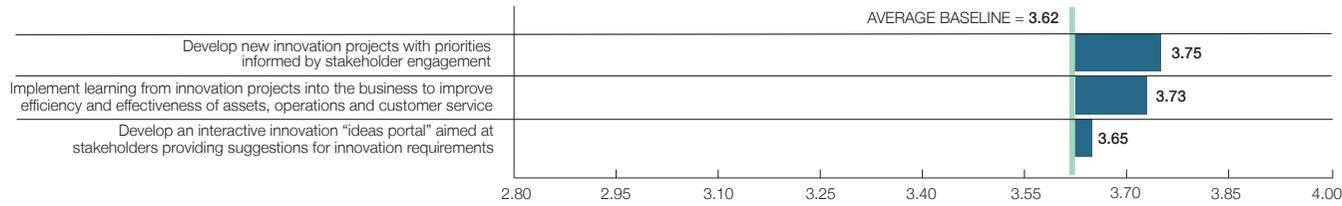
[Click here to return to the Environment and Sustainability section of the report](#)

Distribution System Operator Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



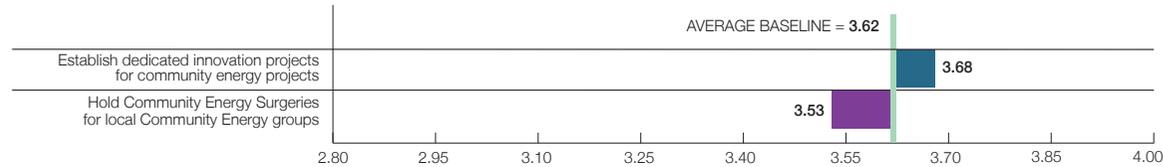
[Click here to return to the Distribution System Operator section of the report](#)

Innovation Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



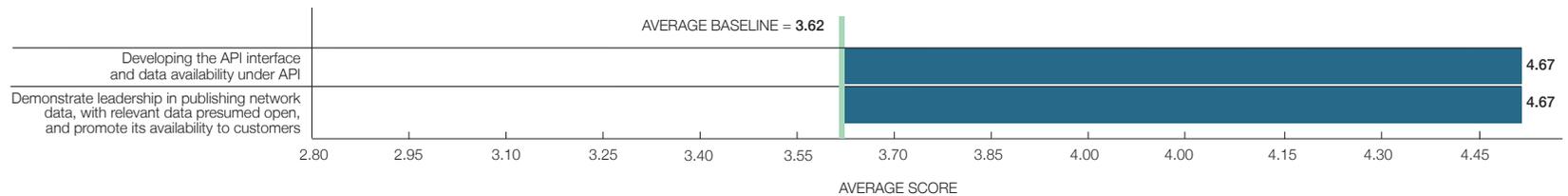
[Click here to return to the Innovation section of the report](#)

Community Energy Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

Digitalisation Outputs: Average Score Compared to Overall Baseline



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

WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION

Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales

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

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

www.westernpower.co.uk

