WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION
Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales

WPD

Stakeholder workshop reports

February 2012

Gloucester stakeholder workshop

23rd February 2012

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3. Introduction

3.1. Date and location

The Gloucester stakeholder workshop took place on February 23rd 2012 at Gloucester Rugby, Kingsholm Stadium, Kingsholm Road, Kingsholm, Gloucester, GL1 3AX.

3.2. Attendees:

A total of 34 stakeholders attended the Gloucester workshop. Their details are shown below:

- Cllr Evans - Newland Parish Council
- Cllr Rob McCorkell - Mayor, Tetbury Town Council
- Cllr Peter Robinson - Deputy Leader, Lincolnshire County Council
- Andrew Evans - General Manager, Lucy Switchgear
- Hayden Scott-Dye - Project Development Engineer, Good Energy Ltd
- Joseph Hayden - Director, HAYSYS Ltd
- Peter James Gough - Chairman, Longford Parish Council
- Cllr Stephen Hemmings - Minchinhampton Parish Council
- Ashley Thomas - NAAONB
- Chris Wittal - Taynton Parish Council
- Beril Wittal - Taynton Parish Council
- Councillor Keith Sullivan - Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
- Adrian Grilli- Managing Directo r- JRC Ltd
- Robin Drake- Senior Planner- Gloucestershire County Council
- Danielle Royce - Stakeholder Engagement Officer- Wales and West Utilities
- Cllr Peter Lightfoot - Bishops Cleeve Council
- Cllr Bob Brookes - Droitwich Spa Council
- Cllr Jim Pollard - Deerhurst Parish Council
- Charles Carey - Head of R and D, SSE

- Jane Reeves- Senior Planner- Herefordshire Council
- Paul Beck – VP Advanced Projects – Finmeccanica Ltd
- Julian Brown – Managing Director – Nortech
- Gillian Ellis-King – Strategic Project Manager – South Gloucester Council
- M Highton – Clerk – Gorsley and Kilcot Council
- Jonathan Hopkins – Regional Manager – Lucy Switchgear
- Tony Parker – FLI Structures
- Cllr Judy Pearce – Deputy Leader – Wychavon District Council
- Cllr Fred Wood – Gretton Parish Council
- Mr C Pemberton James - Parish Clerk, Frocester Parish Council.
- Vince Pioli - Marketing Manager - Lucy Switchgear
- Stephen Mcdonnell - Environmental Co-ordinator, Gloucester City Council
- Trevor Burden - Fli Structure and Hadsley and Tresham Parish Council
- Chris Hill - Eastington Parish Council
- Graham Clark - Regional Surveyor - Country Land and Business Association

Western Power Distribution

- Alison Sleightholm - Regulation and Government Affairs Manager
- Nigel Turvey
- Bob Parker
- Natasha Richardson
- Alex Wilkes - Stakeholder Engagement Regulatory & Government Affairs
- Paul Jewell
- Phil Swift
- Lee Wallace
- Neil James
- Dave Park-Davies

Green Issues Communiqué

- James Garland - Director (workshop facilitator)
- Emma Webster - Associate Director (workshop facilitator)
- Harry Hudson - Associate Director (workshop facilitator)
- Ben Johnson - Account Manager (workshop facilitator)
- Ed Grieve – Senior Account Manager (scribe)
- Alice James - Account Executive (scribe)
- Laura Edwards - Account Executive (scribe)
- Farah Pasha - Account Executive (scribe)

4. Workshop 1: Customer Service and Networks of the Future

4.1. Issue 1. New / innovative methods of communication

Table 1

- Priority: High (top three)
- An elected representative suggested that it would be useful for WPD to send out real time information via smart phones
- An elected representative felt that this technology would not be useful if a mobile phone lacked battery power during a power outage
- An elected representative stated that, from their experience, power cuts had always been dealt with swiftly providing they had been reported quickly. S(he) added that due to the *'terrible mobile coverage'* in their locality, the landline phone is the only *'reliable'* form of contact for people in their area
- An energy company representative suggested that WPD should consider broadcasting updates via a local radio station during outages
- A major user felt that the most reliable medium of contact in rural areas is *'a copper wired telephone'*

Table 2

- Priority: Medium
- An elected representative stated that (s)he regards this Issue as a priority but not as the *'most important'* one and certainly not one that should *'take up a lot of WPD's time'*
- Another elected representative, however, stated that communication to the customer should *'always be a high priority'*. This stakeholder added that (s)he had never heard of WPD until (s)he had received the workshop invitation. WPD *'didn't register'* to him / her as the company to contact when (s)he experienced power cuts and this was *'not a good thing'*. This stakeholder suggested that WPD should have a blog and register highly on Google so when something goes wrong so customers can easily search for the necessary information
- An elected representative raised an issue with the Freephone number and how it doesn't provide customers with the specific information at the time. The stakeholder also complained that there isn't a website to go to, to find information on outages

- A representative of an environmental group stated that customers will be *'confused as to what WPD's role is'*. This stakeholder suggested that WPD and the relevant phone numbers could be advertised on electricity bills. There was consensus that this would be useful

- This stakeholder added that WPD needs to keep communication simple and not *'too dependent on new technology'*, adding *'the more complicated the method of contact, the more WPD will detach itself from the older customer'*

- An elected representative stated that a good part of the service is when WPD vans come out to *'old people to let them know about the outage'*

- Another elected representative queried why an electricity supplier couldn't pass WPD's number on to a customer

- Another stakeholder added that when (s)he had experienced a power cut their electricity supplier didn't inform them that (s)he should ring WPD

- An environmental group representative stated (s)he had a good experience of ringing WPD

- An elected representative queried whether WPD had the right resources to communicate with the *'migrant population in the area'*

Table 3

- Priority: High (top three)

- An elected representative stated that this should certainly be a priority and underlined that it was important to let anyone contacting WPD to report a power cut know that their communication has been received

- A parish council representative stated that current communications could be improved. (S)he stated that there was *'no information on the website about what WPD does'*

- An energy group representative commented that the first time they called WPD, they had found it difficult to track down the right number. Once this stakeholder had found the right number, however, (s)he found the service to be *'helpful'*

- A local authority officer stated that as a small business owner, (s)he had no clue of who to talk to at WPD and that there is probably an *'under-reporting of local problems at the moment because people don't know who to call'*

- An elected representative stated that WPD's phone number should be on the bills as people don't understand the difference between the supplier and the distributer

- An elected representative stated that he *'often calls the suppliers'* rather than WPD

- An energy group representative said that (s)he no longer gets hard copies of the bills

- An energy group representative said that despite the programme of profile raising WPD is currently doing people still don't understand what it is that WPD does

- An elected representative stated she comes from Worcestershire, so she's *'not used to seeing WPD around'*

Table 4

- Priority: Medium
- A local authority officer felt that new methods of communication are not a priority. (S)he stated that energy companies should be contactable by phone and email and that this should be a *'basic requirement'*
- An energy group representative, however, stated that new methods of communication should be a priority for customers. (S)he said information and innovative methods of contact should be *'available on the website'*
- Another energy group representative commented that (s)he viewed new and innovative methods of communication as *'business as usual'*
- An elected representative suggested WPD having an automatic phone message available to customers who call when they suffer a power outage. (S)he said they would like the message to tell the customer *'what the problem is and when it [their supply] can be expected to be on again'*
- A local authority officer stated (s)he would like to see a method of communication where information on power outages can be conveyed to everyone and not just to those who are phoning up
- An elected representative felt that the telephone is the best form of communication
- An energy group representative said WPD could use 3G on mobile phones for sending out information
- A business representative stated that (s)he agreed 3G reports / messages are a good idea. (S)he said the fact 3G is a new method for sending junk mail shows customers can be reached and that *'the technology is there'*
- An elected representative suggested that, in the future, the smart meter could show customers the power is down and when it will be returned
- An energy group representative stated that, as well as using 3G technology, customers should be able to ring up and choose a *'numbered option'* to see what the problem is in their area. (S)he said the call centre should automatically trace the customer's number and location and produce the *'relevant message'* which informs the customer what the problem is

4.2. Issue 2. Improving service for new connections

Table 1

- Priority: High (top three)

- An elected representative explained that it took a week to get through to the relevant person at WPD for a quote for a new connection and felt that this process *'should have been quicker'*

- A local authority officer felt that WPD needs to be more proactive about establishing partnerships with local authorities and developers and that this would improve the service

- An energy company representative asked the group about the importance given to establishing such partnerships within local authorities. (S)he also asked what infrastructure companies could do to help inform their local projects

- An elected representative stated that many initiatives that are being carried out locally are '*prohibited by the cost of new connections'*

- A local authority officer emphasised the 'increasing opportunities for partnerships' between local authorities, communities and WPD and stated that '*if WPD would engage better, this could reduce overall costs'*. S(he) continued by suggesting that it would be useful for WPD to get *'more involved in local development plans'* and should not *'wait to be approached'*

Table 2

- This Issue was considered as a low priority for the group. The stakeholder added that it is a priority and that is good enough

- An environmental group representative stated that this Issue doesn't have much effect on the *'ordinary customer'*

- An elected representative stated that the most important thing with new connections is that there has been the necessary communication between WPD and the local authority regarding new developments. This stakeholder added that *'It is not good when WPD comes after the development has happened and then digs up the road'*

Table 3

- Priority: High (top three)

- An energy group representative stated that (s)he was confused about who looks after the distribution assets in this area

- An elected representative mentioned that the council policy planners have difficulty engaging with WPD when they *'put their plans together'*

- A local authority officer stated that it was *'difficult to get involved with WPD at an early phase'*

Table 4

- Priority: Medium

- An energy group representative said (s)he had gone through the process of getting solar panels installed. (S)he commented that it was an easy to process and that (s)he was *'connected quickly'*

- An elected representative commented that the service for removing an existing connection needs to be improved. (S)he had experienced problems in the past

- A business representative stated that his / her members have had experiences of getting new connections. (S)he said that when new connections for renewable energy were installed on a large scale, members felt they were *'negotiating in the dark.'* (S)he felt this was because of the unknown cost to send power into the network, adding that '*members felt they were paying out lots of money up front but were slow in receiving their connection'*

- A local authority officer said that renewable energy connections have to be supported by the relevant local authority and that *'more could be done to work together'*

- A business representative stated that a move towards the *'decentralisation'* of networks and the development of new ones is needed. (S)he felt that this is because connecting a generator to a large development is a different case to installing a domestic connection. (S)he made the point that these *'different extreme cases both need to be looked at separately'*

4.3. Issue 3. Being prepared for major emergencies

Table 1

- Priority: High

- An elected representative felt that it was important for local people to develop a better understanding of the major emergencies including threats, capacity in their local area and it is important for them to know at what stage it is appropriate to contact WPD

- A WPD representative stated that differing connections in one locality is the nature of the network and that WPD's visibility of connections at a grassroots level is currently non-existent

- An elected representative mentioned that it is currently difficult to predict how long it takes to correct an outage and that they would find it useful to keep particularly their more vulnerable constituents more closely informed

- Another elected representative agreed that if people in rural communities were to be out of power for three days, they should be warned in advance so they can leave their homes and make arrangements to stay with a relatives or friends

- The group agreed that more needs to be done to keep local people informed during major emergencies

Table 2

- Priority: High / medium
- There was a group consensus that this Issue should be a high to medium priority. A representative of a parish council suggested that this Issue should actually be *'the most important priority'*
- An environmental group representative stated that customers shouldn't worry about *'being prepared for major emergencies'.* It should be a given that WPD, as a service provider, can deal with a major emergency
- Another environmental group representative wanted to know whether WPD is considering moving its assets to a different area to *'prevent flood emergencies'*

Table 3

- Priority: Medium / low
- An energy group representative asked if WPD was confident in its flood risk preparation and if it *'had enough money to be prepared'*
- A local authority officer stated that *'future proofing was important'*
- A parish council representative made the point that it's important to safeguard the network, but that it's also important to communicate with customers during emergencies. (S)he added that WPD should have better voicemail messages as a way of ensuring that people are kept informed
- A business representative asked how well prepared WPD is against *'cyber attacks'*
- A local authority officer asked WPD not to publicise information on this

Table 4

- Priority: High (top three)
- The overall consensus was that given the events of 2007 (when the City of Gloucester experienced severe unprecedented flooding) preparation for major emergencies should be a high priority

4.4. Issue 4. Improving reliability for worst-served customers

Table 1

- Stakeholders felt that this issue was a high priority
- An elected representative stated that the key issue in their local area which affected reliability related to a lack of *'tree lopping'*
- An elected representative asked whether WPD had done anything about *'spreading out staff'* so engineers are able to react more quickly to problems in rural areas

Table 2

- Priority: Medium / low
- An elected representative stated that it is unfortunate but people should realise that this is an issue *'when moving to the [rural] area'*
- Another elected representative disagreed. (S)he stated that if a customer is *'paying the same price they should experience the same service'*
- An elected representative stated that Issues 4, 5 and 6 as individual priorities should be ranked together as being medium priority
- An elected representative stated that in order to prioritise the Issue stakeholders need to know many worst-served customers there are and how often they experience power cuts
- An elected representative questioned whether the reason why (s)he experiences more outages is due to overhead cables as opposed to underground cables in cities
- An energy organisation representative stated that WPD has to *'take the good with the bad'*, and should *'supply'* all their customers wherever they are
- An elected representative stated that if (s)he were a worst-served customer (s)he wouldn't mind paying a reduced fee for the service (s)he receives, but *'they are paying the same price as everyone else'*
- A stakeholder stated that it is a *'no brainer'* and therefore a priority for WPD
- An elected representative stated that WPD does not have much visibility at a low voltage level. It was suggested that smart meters could tell WPD if the power has gone off
- An environmental group representative stated that that it would be a big improvement if WPD is able to tell customers *'where there is an issue'*

Table 3

- Priority: Medium
- An energy group representative mentioned that living rurally was a lifestyle choice, but that (s)he was annoyed by the amount of mini power cuts that occurred
- Another energy group representative stated that there was an increase in *'annoying short interruptions in power'*
- A business representative made the point that power cuts have a financial impact on small businesses
- An energy group representative stated that their business was looking to spend money on a generator to help improve reliability
- A parish council representative commented that their parish used to have a lot of power cuts due to trees on the line. This stakeholder had had problems getting

Central Networks to come and cut the trees and (s)he highlighted the importance of maintenance

- An elected representative stated that *'wires coming down are very dangerous and that multiple earthing would help'*
- An elected representative said this Issue should be a high priority and asked why rural people should put up with a worse service

Table 4

- Priority: Medium / low
- An elected representative said (s)he experiences regular power cuts
- An elected representative asked *'what is the definition of a power cut?'* A WPD representative explained a power cut is when there is a power outage which lasts longer than 3 minutes
- An elected representative said (s)he experiences power cuts regularly but that these are always less than 3 minutes. (S)he feels it is an *'inconvenience'* and added that short power outages are a real problem for employers and employees who work from home as they *'lose work'* as a result
- An elected representative said it is time to *'restart the solar power systems'*
- A business representative said the level of services from broadband companies is higher that that of electricity distributors. This stakeholder added that the *'electricity board'* needs to improve its service in rural areas to keep up with broadband service providers
- An elected representative asked *'what level of service should customers expect?'* (S)he also questioned whether a person who chose to live in a *'really rural area, which is very different to London, should expect the same service?'*
- A local authority officer stated that those who live in rural areas *'should expect more problems than those living in urban areas'*

4.5. Issue 5. Asset replacement to maintain business as usual

Table 1

- Priority: Medium
- An elected representative asked whether WPD knows how often its assets need to be replaced
- A WPD representative stated that there is no set timeframe but assets are subject to inspections which asses the key factors including condition, age and ability to cater for future load demand. (S)he continued by adding that all assets replaced tend to be in the *'worst health index'*

- An elected representative asked how independent the requirement to replace an asset was from *'the necessity to economise'*
- A WPD representative stated that in order to maintain the network, WPD decides on what urgent maintenance needs to be done; however this is subject to scrutiny from Ofgem

Table 2

- There was a group consensus that this Issue should be a high priority (top three) for WPD
- An elected representative added that *'like for like'* is a lower priority than improving the infrastructure

Table 3

- Priority: High (top three)
- A local authority officer stated that this topic and future proofing should be brought together under one topic. The rest of the group was in agreement on this

Table 4

- Priority: Medium
- A parish council representative said asset replacement to maintain business as usual should not be a priority for WPD as this should *'automatically be business as usual'*
- Another elected representative, however, felt strongly that this should be a high priority, and asked for this to be noted
- A local authority officer stated asset replacement *'cannot be business as usual'* as new developments mean there is always a need to innovate

4.6. Issue 6. Future proofing asset replacement

Table 1

- Priority: Medium
- A local authority officer suggested that WPD should consider a framework to *'help local people gain best value from a future proofing exercise'*

Table 2

- Priority: High / medium
- An environmental group representative stated that customers do not care what equipment WPD installs *'as long as the service is efficient'*

- An elected representative commented that if WPD is *'not future proofing then you [WPD] are not improving'*. The stakeholder added, however, that this would *'increase the long term cost'*

- An environmental group representative questioned whether there were any equipment manufacturers represented at the workshop

- An elected representative stated that Issues 5 and 6 are *'rolled into one'* but future proofing is of higher importance out of the two. An environmental group representative agreed

- An elected representative wanted to know if WPD aims to replace an asset *'when it breaks or just before it breaks'*

Table 3

- Priority: High (top 3)

- An energy group representative stated that every business should buy for the future

- An energy group representative said that WPD was a business and as such it would have to make a judgement call on this Issue based on evidence

- An energy group representative stated that, as a supplier, (s)he was keen on this Issue in particular. (S)he went on to say that any problems that may occur will relate to things like the introduction of photovoltaic cells

- An elected representative complemented this point and referred to concept of paying providers to shut down wind farms

- An energy group representative stated that he was confused about smart grids and described them as *'a minefield'*

- A local authority officer asked if WPD was looking at councils' Core Strategies to understand where new development may come forward. (S)he added *'if WPD is future proofing, it needs to look at land allocation'* and *'if WPD is looking at Core Strategies it would help to future proof'*

- An elected representative stated that councils are trying to engage with energy suppliers and distributors but that *'it's difficult to meet with them'*

- An energy group representative stated that this bothered him as he presumed *'talking to councils was business as usual for distribution companies'*

- An elected representative put forward that this Issue was a high priority

Table 4

- Priority: High (top three)

- An energy group representative made the point that WPD cannot *'future proof everything'* due to cost. (S)he added that, in the future, *'big cities should be prioritised for future proofing'* and 'assets in rural areas should be maintained'

- Another energy group representative said there needs to be a balance for commercial decisions on *'advancement vs. cost'*. (S)he cited the case of *'millions of pounds'* being invested on broadband cables which *'quickly became out of date and redundant'*

4.7. Issue 7. Real time data exchanges and control to enable scheduling of data and storage

Table 1

- Priority: High (top three)

- After an explanation of this issue from a WPD representative, the group agreed that this should be a high priority (top three) before moving onto the next topic for discussion

Table 2

- An elected representative stated that this should be a medium to high priority. The rest of the group agreed

- An elected representative stated that this Issue is a *'no brainer'*. (S)he added that *'people are able to look at the highways network and tell you which road is shut'*. This stakeholder added that the *'technology is there to sort the problem out'*

- The rest of the stakeholders were in agreement on this point

Table 3

- Priority: High

- An energy group representative stated that they had a vested interest in this Issue, but that it was important. (S)he stated that, as a customer, some of this gets a bit like *'science fiction'*. (S)he said that this would be useful on an industrial estate, but it is of limited use to gain information on the power consumption of one house

- An energy group representative put forward that this topic is about finding out where power losses are. (S)he stated that real time data exchange would do good by making *'estimated bills a thing of the past'*

- A local authority officer asked about the impact of nuclear power on the network. (S)he stated that nuclear power could have *'knock on implications on things like pylons'*. (S)he asked when councils will be made aware of the impact of nuclear and said she would like more specific information on this

- An energy group representative stated that the data could save WPD money when it *'consults with the supply chain'*

- An elected representative asked if WPD knew the percentage of micro generation that goes back into the supply
- An energy group representative stated that real time data flows will help the network but it is *'not needed on the micro level'*
- There was a consensus within the group that this Issue came under the heading of future proofing

Table 4

- Priority: Medium
- A local authority officer said WPD needs to support the real time innovation and thinks it '*links well with future proofing and smart meters.'* (S)he stated decisions need to be made in the near future as to what is happening with smart metres
- An elected representative highlighted the point that there will be a high cost in getting to the *'level of detail wanted from smart meters'*
- Another elected representative asked *'how much will it cost for the customer?'* , the implication being that issues of affordability for customers ought to be taken into consideration with regard to this issue
- An energy group representative asked if the *'recession had impacted the usage of electricity for domestic customers?'*
- A WPD representative explained there had been no change in the level of electricity used by domestic customers
- In a general discussion on costs, a parish council representative asked *'will bills be reduced?'*
- An energy group representative said (s)he thought smart meters would be good if they gave out more useful and relevant information

4.8. Issue 8. Metal theft prevention / response

Table 1

- Priority: Medium / low
- An elected representative asked about where the metal was stolen from
- A WPD representative stated that thefts stem from an opportunist business and has evolved into an organised business network which is expanding
- A local authority officer stated that if people are better informed about WPD's network it might help with theft prevention
- An elected representative stated that it should not be a priority as it is largely within the police and local authority's remit to deal with

Table 2

- Priority: High / medium
- A representative of a parish council stated that this Issue should be a high priority
- An environmental group representative stated that if metal theft is going to affect WPD's basic service it is a high priority already. It therefore doesn't need to be given a high priority status
- An energy organisation representative stated that metal theft *'may not be an issue in six months time'*
- An environmental group representative stated that WPD should *'lobby the Government to tighten the law'* on metal theft
- An elected representative added that the Government can prevent scrap yards from buying metal but it wont stop the *'bigger players'* in metal theft

Table 3

- Priority: Medium / low
- An energy group representative said that to decide how important this is, customers must know the potential of outages caused by metal theft
- An elected representative stated that this could be prevented by ensuring that there is a *'paper trail associated with copper'*
- An energy group representative said that the Government should lead on this, but that WPD should take responsible measures to protect its assets
- An energy group representative raised the issues Network Rail have with copper theft and the amount it is spending on security
- An elected representative stated that thieves were '*taking cores out of transformers'*
- An energy group representative made the point that *'customers pay for metal theft'*
- A parish council representative stated that lobbying the Government on this Issue should be a priority for WPD

Table 4

- Priority: Low
- A business representative said the level of priority given for metal theft today depends on how much of an issue or problem it is in 5 years time
- A local authority officer said (s)he acknowledged that the Government is making changes to current legislation and will be introducing a new bill. (S)he hoped that tighter regulations will remove the problem of metal theft

- A business representative said (s)he felt that WPD are unable to do a lot to prevent and stop cable thefts. (S)he felt it is not up to WPD to prevent thefts but instead thinks the responsibility lies with the police and the Government
- A local authority officer stated (s)he agreed with the above
- A business representative added that (s)he wants *'effective measures to be taken by the Government'*

4.9. Additional comments

Table 1

- An energy company representative asked why WPD does not leverage more information with suppliers and use completion among suppliers to help speed processes up and better serve customers

Table 2

- All the stakeholders felt that reducing the number power cuts should be included in the list of WPD's priorities
- An elected representative stated that (s)he does not agree with being prepared for major emergencies being considered as a high priority and asked that this be placed on record

Table 3

- The group also stated that reducing power cuts (and dips) and profile raising initiatives should be included as priorities for WPD
- An energy group representative commented that (s)he is much less concerned about spending money on future proofing and more concerned with making the network as reliable as is possible
- A parish council representative referred to a leaflet (s)he had received. In this leaflet, Gloucester was referred to as part of the Midlands which is confusing. (S)he asked for maps and contact details to be included on future leaflets
- An elected representative stated that WPD should tell people to *'save its number'*
- An energy group representative asked WPD to improve the current communications

Table 4

- A local authority officer stated money needs to be spent [by WPD] *'without cutting corners'*. (S)he said *'if corners are cut then there is a risk that the grid will go down' so balance needs to be found'*
- An elected representative said (s)he wants an outcome where, in the winter months, especially, power cuts are reduced significantly

5. Prioritisation

5.1. Improving customer service and the network

Stakeholders were first asked if they considered that each of the Issues should be a priority for WPD.

Priority	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
New/innovative methods of communication	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**N**
Improving service for new connections	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**
Being prepared for major emergencies	**Y**	**Y**	**Y/N**	**Y**
Improving reliability for worst served-customers	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**
Asset replacement to maintain business as usual	**N**	**Y**	**Y**	**N**
Future proofing asset replacement	**N**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**
Real time data exchanges and control to enable scheduling of data and storage	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**
Metal theft prevention / response	**N**	**Y**	**Y/N**	**N**
Reducing power cuts	**N/A**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**
Raising profile of WPD	**N/A**	**N/A**	**Y**	
Reducing “dips”	**N/A**	**N/A**	**Y**	**Y**
Manage network to reduce bills	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**Y**
Transparency – what do consumers get for money?	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**Y**

6. Workshop 2: Innovation and the Environment

6.1. Issue 1. Use innovation to support existing network and operate it more effectively

Table 1

- The group decided to group the first four questions together and there was then a discussion on WPD's approach rather than on prioritising the individual issues
- It was agreed that an *'evolutionary, as opposed to revolutionary'* approach to using innovation was appropriate
- A local authority officer asked whether intelligence gathered could be better connected with *'people on the ground'.* This stakeholder felt that WPD could become more efficient by doing this effectively
- An elected representative suggested that '*tapping into'* local plans would also help WPD deliver a more effective service
- A local authority officer stated that with the proposed formation of neighbourhood action groups under the Localism Bill it might make it easier for WPD *'to engage with grassroots stakeholders'*
- An energy company representative stated that local authorities need to *'get together and assist WPD'*
- A major user emphasised the importance of WPD collaborating with local bodies, education institutions and manufacturers
- A local authority officer agreed that it was important for WPD to try to incorporate this as an aspiration in its high level strategy

Table 2

- A representative of a parish council stated that WPD should always take advantage of improvements in technology
- An elected representative felt that this Issue is tied in with future proofing the network
- There was a group consensus that this should be a priority

6.2. Issue 2 Develop technologies to accommodate increases in electricity demand

Table 2

- It was felt that an *'incremental approach'* to introducing new technology was the most prudent way to go about this
- An energy organisation representative stated that WPD '*should not develop new technology but should implement it'*
- An elected representative questioned whether WPD faces more a challenge with generation than distribution
- It was widely agreed that Issues 1 – 4 should be grouped together and discussed as one

Table 3

- Issues 1 – 4 were amalgamated by the group and discussed as a single Issue
- An energy group representative endorsed an incremental approach as *'customers do not want to pay more'*
- An energy group representative stated that assets should be replaced gradually as there is *'no surplus of finance'*
- An energy group representative said that WPD should be encouraged to *'spend its money wisely'*
- A business representative stated that radically replacing assets would be a big risk as you can't read the future
- A local authority officer stated that an incremental approach made sense when looking at the existing network but future proofing and continual innovation were very important

6.3. Issue 3. Trial technology and innovation to facilitate low carbon networks

Table 4

- There was agreement that this Issue was *'vitally important'*. An elected representative made the point that if trials that go ahead go wrong there always needs to be alternatives available

6.4. Issue 4. Turn successful trials into business as usual techniques / products

Table 4

- The group were of the view that this Issue should be 'business as usual' for WPD

6.5. Issue 5. Making better use of the current system capacity – e.g. Substation monitoring and Dynamic asset rating (allow us to use existing lines and cables more efficiently)

Table 1

- Priority: High
- There was some explanation by the WPD representative of how this could be of benefit to the company in the future and the general consensus was that this should be a high priority

Table 2

- Priority: High (top three)
- An elected representative suggested that this would be WPD's *'easy win'* and therefore the best way for the company to save money
- The group felt that *'making better use of the current system capacity'* should therefore be the WPD's highest priority
- One stakeholder stated that it is quite a technical question and *'should be left to WPD to decide'*
- An elected representative stated that from a customer's point of view, using what you have already, more efficiently makes sense. There was a group consensus on this point

Table 3

- Priority: High (top three)
- An energy group representative stated that there have been many projects which work on this. (S)he referred to 132kv cables saying that these are extremely expensive assets to replace
- An energy group representative asked if this Issue tied in with the smart grid

Table 4

- Priority: High (top three)

- An elected representative said (s)he would support improving the use of the current system capacity. (S)he commented that the current equipment is *'old and running under capacity'* - making it unreliable

6.6. Issue 6. Smart technology and telecommunications – new installation of network that allows remote data monitoring and operation of assets

Table 1

- Priority: High
- An elected representative asked whether the network incurred losses when transferring from station to network
- A WPD represented explained that the network did incur losses
- An energy company representative stated that WPD needs to focus on improving its communications network in order to get things done faster rather than *'endlessly debating issues'.* This stakeholder added that WPD should *'cut the debate and demonstrate how you turn talk into action'*
- A local authority officer felt that better partnerships can result in *'action'*

Table 2

- Priority: High (top three)
- An elected representative suggested that *'WPD cannot do Issue 5 without 6 and vice versa'*
- Another elected representative stated that *'Issues 4, 5 and 6 were linked'*

Table 3

- Priority: High (top three)
- An energy group representative stated that Issue five was one specific example of Issue six and the group consensus was to amalgamate the topics in order to prioritise them

Table 4

- Priority: High (top three)
- An energy group representative said (s)he felt smart technology and telecommunications was a *'strong priority'*
- An elected representative commented that there needs to be a *'hands on approach'* for smart technology and telecommunications as it will give more information to the user than '*what pressing a button would give'*.

- A business representative said having access to the *'right facts is needed'*. (S)he said if there is no access to the facts, it means there needs to be investment for providing the facts. However, this stakeholder commented that *'then the problem of cost arises'*

- A local authority officer felt improved communication on the network is needed. (S)he said in *'areas of high demand, the structure needs to be improved'*

- An energy group representative stated that *'on the industrial side'* it is possible to see when the equipment will be needed to be replaced. (S)he said mechanics who maintain the systems need to look at the equipment closely and decide whether it is better *'cost wise'* to replace equipment at the right time rather than wait for its *'life to end'*

6.7. Issue 7. Facilitating the connection of local renewable energy – e.g. impact of solar panels and 2-way flows to network

Table 1

- Priority: High

- This was felt to be an important issue by the group

- An elected representative stated that it was important for WPD to do *'more research'* on local renewable energy

- A local authority officer reiterated his / her earlier point that this was *'another situation where partnerships will come in handy to establish better intelligence'*

- An elected representative commented that in rural areas there is a chance that many houses are already using solar panels. (S)he expressed concerns about the impact this might have on the local power supply

- A local authority officer stated that it was crucial for WPD to recognise that it cannot *'facilitate the connection of local renewable energy on its own'*

- An energy company representative suggested that WPD should invite local authorities to tender for this work

Table 2

- Priority: High (top three)

- An elected representative stated that this priority would *'depend on the future of Government grants'*

- An elected representative wanted to know how significant small scale renewable energy is in meeting energy demand

- An elected representative stated that reducing carbon dioxide emissions will increase in importance. This stakeholder felt that, from an electricity distributors

point of view it is a *'watching brief'* as it depends on external factors such as Government grants and emerging technologies

- An energy organisation representative stated that how electricity is generated is not as important for WPD compared to the amount generated and '*the direction'*. It was added that if *'the public can generate electricity at home then WPD are defunct'*

Table 3

- Priority: High (top three)
- An energy group representative stated that the need for this will rise and suggested that this topic be amalgamated with Issues five and six
- A local authority officer stated that there are huge concerns amongst the community about wind energy and that new connections for renewable energy would add to the *'community concerns'*. (S)he believes that this issue should be considered when renewable technology is brought forward as the impacts should be considered *'in tandem'*
- A local authority officer stated that, when sensitive landscapes are involved, measures to protect them *'must be taken'*
- An energy group representative called WPD a *'bottle-neck'* adding that *'WPD should not be a bottle-neck which prevents the use of renewable energy'*
- An energy group representative stated that, once the community has agreed on renewable energy, WPD should never *'cause connection issues'*
- A business representative stressed that the storage of renewable energy was key
- A local authority officer stated that WPD should promote solutions to issues such as battery and fuel cell development
- An elected representative stated that there was work in hand which related to battery development
- A local authority officer commented that that WPD needs to *'consider the impact'* of renewables

Table 4

- Priority: High (top three)
- A business representative said this issue is a real area of priority. (S)he commented *'drivers are used to influence others'*, e.g. climate change and renewable energy. (S)he said the links in the chain need to be complete to enable everybody to use renewable energy. The stakeholder then asked *'if everybody wants to use renewable energy they should but where should the money come from?'*
- A business representative said there will be a cost required to strengthen the grid. (S)he commented on the visible increase of use of renewable energy from customers *'mainly solar panels and wind'*. (S)he also stated that a *'feeder tariff needs to be more of an incentive'* as currently the upfront charge of having renewable energy systems installed is too high. This stakeholder feels there is an

'*unbalance of instantly saving money as this will only occur over a long period of time'*

6.8. Issue 8. Facilitating electric vehicle charging infrastructure

Table 1

- The group felt that this issue was a low priority for WPD
- A major user felt that Government subsidies for electrical vehicle charging were not being used properly
- An energy company representative felt that it was important for WPD to remain agile and implement the infrastructure quickly if demand takes off but should adopt a *'reactive'* role on this issue

Table 2

- An elected representative stated that this Issue is a low priority. It was added that it can always be raised at a later date and that *'WPD should be reactive rather than proactive'*
- An elected representative stated that commercial pressures will make electric vehicle technology progress quickly
- An environmental group representative stated that WPD is *'entering into the unknown with electric vehicles'*
- An elected representative stated that it is a big risk to make *'facilitating electric vehicle charging infrastructure a high priority at the moment'*
- Another elected representative added that if people want to buy an electric vehicle then they need the infrastructure, so it shouldn't be too low in the priority list
- An energy organisation representative felt that it is a chicken and egg problem. The stakeholder wondered if there was a role for the Government in electric vehicles
- An energy organisation representative stated there are smart solutions to electric vehicles such as a low, slow charging system
- An elected representative wanted to know if WPD has electric vans
- A representative of a parish council stated that electric cars are going to remain expensive during the Business Plan period
- An elected representative stated that this is something that people are going to want WPD to look at, but it is not going to be their number one priority

Table 3

- Priority: Low

- An energy group representative said that electric cars will improve over the next decade and that assets relating to electric cars present a business opportunity for WPD
- An energy group representative stated that electric cars *'cause a chicken and egg situation'*
- An elected representative said that there are not many well designed electric cars available at present which is *'preventing the take up'*
- An energy group representative stated that infrastructure should be in *'10,000 places but not 100,000,000 [100m] places'*
- A business representative stated that they wouldn't need to charge an electric car at home. (S)he also mentioned that more Bentleys were sold in the world in 2011 than electric cars in England
- An energy group representative questioned whether it was WPD's *'job to invest'* in this infrastructure
- A business representative put forward that this should be a *'reactive investment'* and that car manufacturers should help
- An energy group representative asked if *'the cars or if the infrastructure should come first'*
- An energy group representative related electric car uptake to mobile phone uptake, adding that *'the market will drive it'*
- A business representative stated that WPD *'needs to understand what electric car uptake will mean for its business'*

Table 4

- Priority: Medium
- All stakeholders were of the view that currently no investment is needed for the infrastructure of electric vehicles
- A parish council representative stated electric vehicle charging infrastructure needs to be a priority for '*car manufactures'* and not for individuals or WPD
- An energy group representative said the cost of running an electric car is too high and it would be better for environmentally minded individuals to get a smart car instead. (S)he was of the view that recharging or replacing batteries for electric will, however, be *'a future problem'*
- A parish council representative felt that 'we should prepare for the future'
- A local authority officer said that their council had trailed electric vehicles. (S)he said at present a few existing electric cars have charging points and therefore shouldn't be a strain/demand on the network. (S)he stated that superchargers in

the future will place a demand on the network but *'at present you can use a normal plug'*

- An energy group representative said *'high speed smart points'* will be needed in many locations and this may be a future problem but that this was not necessarily WPD's responsibility to address

6.9. Issue 9. Minimising leaks from fluid filled cables and gas filled switchgear

Table 1

- Priority: Medium
- An elected representative asked about the frequency of leaks
- A WPD representative stated that it was not necessarily the frequency but impact of leaks that was the problem and when leaks do occur they have a huge impact on the environment. (S)he continued that at present WPD has obligations to replace worst performing circuits judged on a case by case basis
- An elected representative praised WPD for tackling this issue in a sensible way

Table 2

- An elected representative stated that this Issue is a low priority. This stakeholder explained that a leak seems to be a rare occurrence and they would rather see the money going elsewhere
- The group agreed that this Issue should be a low priority for WPD
- An environmental group representative wanted to know how often leakage is happening
- An elected representative queried whether new technology is enabling WPD to *'improve leakage'* [occurrences when replacing assets
- An energy organisation representative stated that (s)he does not think it is efficient for WPD to replace a SF6 switch gear unless it is proven there is a leakage

Table 3

- Priority: Medium
- An energy group representative said that there has been a certain amount of *'scaremongering'* on this Issue as gasses such as FS6 can't leak from the products they sell
- A business representative asked if there is an alternative
- An energy group representative said there was, but that it's not *'market ready'* yet

- An energy group representative asked if it's feasible to monitor FS6 leakage
- Another energy group representative explained that manufacturers are doing everything possible to phase out FS6
- This stakeholder suggested that WPD should lead on this and help to *'phase out its FS6 assets'*
- A parish council representative said that it *'boils down to a risk assessment'*. WPD should be encouraging phasing FS6 out but that consumers should accept that these assets exist
- A local authority officer asked if WPD had an overall environmental policy and asked if this policy covers disposal of its harmful assets

Table 4

- Priority: Medium
- A local authority officer said (s)he felt the priorities that arise from this are linked to previous points identified in future proofing. (S)he believes leaks from fluid filled cables can create damage to the environment and the problem should be removed. (S)he also stated leaks should be considered as a '*high level risk'*
- An energy group representative felt there is no need to replace the cables unless an actual problem arises
- A business representative asked if a *'different type of oil could be used?'*
- An energy group representative commented that (s)he found the question challenging. (S)he stated the cost efficiency and performance of new cables will need to be heavily considered. (S)he commented the pressure for good quality cables needs to be put on the manufacturer instead of WPD
- A local authority officer commented that new cables will give *'worse performance'* than current ones and therefore it is not worth the investment
- An energy group representative stated the cables need to be *'kept working not replaced'*

6.10. Issue 10. Continuing undergrounding schemes in National Parks / AONBs

Table 1

- Priority: Low
- An elected representative suggested that WPD should consider village communities that are not recognised as AONBs that would benefit from undergrounding

- An elected representative stated that WPD should consider improving the appearance of pylons so that they *'fit in with the local area'*
- An elected representative praised WPD for being innovative about how sub-stations are housed

Table 2

- Priority: Medium
- The stakeholders were in agreement that this Issue should be a medium priority
- An elected representative felt that it is *'a positive thing but expensive'*. Therefore, WPD has to be *'balanced in its approach'*
- A stakeholder suggested that undergrounding has to happen in certain circumstances and locations
- A representative of a parish council added that *'customers will have to pay for undergrounding'*
- An environmental group representative stated that WPD is *'catching up in undergrounding compared to other distributors'*. This stakeholder stated that (s)he would like to see WPD carry on the funding commitment of Central Networks post 2015 and possibly increase funding. This stakeholder added that it makes a *'big difference to get rid of clutter and structures in AONB's'*
- This stakeholder stated that undergrounding is a low priority in comparison [with other Issues] *'but it is a duty for WPD'*. It was added that it is important that it remains a priority
- The stakeholders agreed that WPD should continue with the scheme

Table 3

- Priority: Medium
- A local authority officer stated that this is a huge issue for communities along the Hinckley connection. (S)he stated that it will also be a huge issue for future cabling
- A local authority officer stressed the need for stakeholder and public consultation relating to undergrounding
- An energy group representative stated that undergrounding was *'too expensive'*
- A local authority officer said that *'communities would rather pay more for undergrounding then have more pylons across the countryside'*
- An energy group representative stated that Issue is raised a lot during house surveying; adding *'people do not want to live under a pylon'*
- A business representative stated that (s)he *'doesn't want to pay for undergrounding'*

- A local authority officer stated that this *'depends on where it is taking place'*

Table 4

- Priority: Low
- A parish council representative said it was good for cables to be hidden underground. (S)he asked *'what about the wind farms?'* (S)he stated local people are not happy with the idea of wind farms and asked *'why money should be spent on underground cables in some areas when other areas have wind farms?'*
- A local authority officer stated that most people don't live near AONBs. (S)he said in cities such as *'Gloucester they have many pylons and therefore it can be argued the city is ugly'* and *'the resident are getting a raw deal'*
- An energy group representative said people want to visit areas of AONB so the cables should be hidden
- A local authority officer asked if '*people chose to live near AONB and use electricity why should they be protected from seeing the cables they use?'*
- An elected representative said (s)he leans towards underground cabling for new schemes but it has to be *'justified'*
- A business representative said national parks are not just for the benefit of local people but also for those tourists who visit. (S)he commented having visible electricity cables could deter people from visiting.
- A local authority officer asked if people *'don't object to roads and trains so why do they object to pylons?'*
- A local authority officer stated people in the UK get very *'worked up'* compared to countries like Spain, who have many wind farms all over their countryside and this does not cause problems
- A business representative said different pylons may be needed as well as different designs and sizes

6.11. Issue 11. Protecting habitats and species

Table 1

- Priority: Low
- The group agreed that this was a *'nice idea but not necessarily a priority'*

Table 2

- An elected representative stated that this Issue should be a 'low to medium priority', as there is 'already a legal requirement'. The group was in agreement that this 'doesn't require a large amount of investment to make an impact'

- It was added that this Issue should be on the priority list, but doesn't need to be any higher
- An elected representative stated that WPD must not *'lose site of education and social responsibility'* as a company
- An environmental group representative stated that there is a *'duty of care but it falls mainly on Ofgem'* rather than WPD

Table 3

- Priority: High / medium
- A business representative asked if it was *'really necessary'* that WPD should exceed the statutory requirements on this Issue
- A local authority officer stated that on this Issue, WPD *'shouldn't be a Rolls Royce or a broken Skoda'*

Table 4

- Priority: Low
- A local authority officer said the protection of habitats and species is not a major problem or concern
- An elected representative said we should plan around the land that is inhabited by certain species
- All were happy with current statutory obligations and did not think it worthwhile that WPD strives to exceed these

6.12. Issue 12. Flood and climate change mitigation

Table 1

- The group agreed that this was an important issue, especially in the light of the floods that had taken place in the City in 2007. However, when asked to prioritise this Issue against the others, it was felt that this was actually a low priority

Table 2

- Priority: High (top three)
- An elected representative stated that this is a high priority, especially in Gloucester
- An elected representative stated that this links in with Issue 5, adding that *'improved efficiency through monitoring will help this priority'*

Table 3

- Priority: High (top three)

- An energy group representative said that this Issue is important in terms of risk management
- A parish council representative stated that WPD has to '*react to flooding'*
- An energy group representative stated that no kit should be placed in flood risk areas as this would be *'short-sighted'*

Table 4

- Priority: High (top three)
- All stakeholders agreed mitigating against flooding is a high priority and the floods that affected Gloucester in 2007 were frequently cited
- An energy group representative said WPD should create plans for high risk areas. (S)he thinks early investment will result in savings long term

6.13. Additional comments

Table 1

- An energy company representative stated that *'there's a conundrum that exists where you have highly regulated businesses that can't catalyse innovation'.* This stakeholder felt that the best way for innovation to happen was *'via suppliers'*
- Everyone agreed that WPD need to be *'smart and more efficient'* about managing the distribution network
- The comment was made that WPD needs to be *'prepared for an increase in green technology'*
- An energy company representative suggested that WPD should explore opportunities to work with companies such as Virgin and Sky to *"profit out of the existing communications infrastructure'*

Table 2

- An elected representative stated that Issue 12 [flood and climate change mitigation] has more importance for this region compared to elsewhere
- A representative of a parish council wanted to know if there are any other risks to the power supply, *'such as terrorist attacks'* that WPD is considering
- An energy group representative added that being prepared for major emergencies is also about engagement with other agencies

Table 3

- A local authority officer suggested that 'Rationalisation of the network to reduce impact on the environment' should be added to WPD's list of priorities

- An elected representative made the point that rationalisation is scientific and that the Government provides no research grant for this
- The point was made by a number of stakeholders that investing in innovation is the most appropriate way of future proofing the network; so *'all of the topics are high profile'*
- The consensus was that innovation Issues were as one and *'talk to each other'*

7. Prioritisation and conclusions

7.1. Innovation and the Environment

Stakeholders were first asked if they considered that each of the Issues should be a priority for WPD.

Priority	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
Use innovation to support existing network and operate it more effectively	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Develop technologies to accommodate increases in electricity demand	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Trial technology and innovation to facilitate low carbon networks	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Turn successful trials into business as usual techniques / products	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Making better use of the current system capacity	Y	Y	Y	Y
Smart technology and telecommunications	Y	Y	Y	Y
Facilitating the connection of local renewable energy	Y	Y	Y/N	Y
Facilitating electric vehicle charging infrastructure	N	Y	Y/N	N
Minimising leaks from fluid filled cables and switchgear	N	Y	Y	N
Continuing undergrounding schemes in National Parks / AONBs	N	Y	Y/N	N
Protecting habitats and species	N	Y	Y	N
Flood and climate change mitigation	N	Y	Y	Y
Future network infrastructure	N/A	N/A	Y	

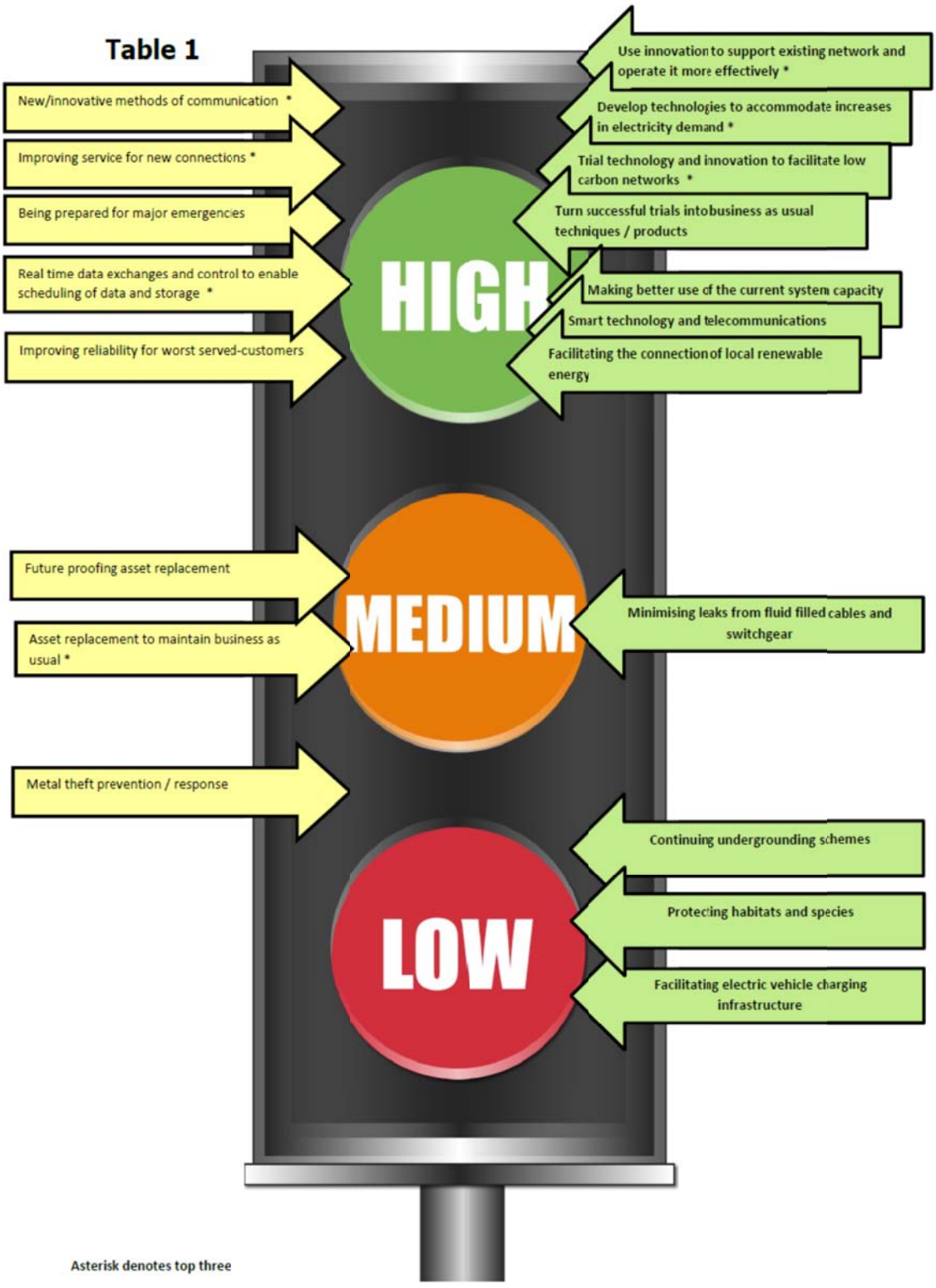
Table 1
New/innovative methods of communication *
Improving service for new connections *
Being prepared for major emergencies
Real time data exchanges and control to enable scheduling of data and storage *
Improving reliability for worst served-customers
HIGH
Use innovation to support existing network and operate it more effectively *
Develop technologies to accommodate increases in electricity demand *
Trial technology and innovation to facilitate low carbon networks *
Turn successful trials into business as usual techniques / products
Making better use of the current system capacity
Smart technology and telecommunications
Facilitating the connection of local renewable energy
Future proofing asset replacement
Asset replacement to maintain business as usual *
MEDIUM
Minimising leaks from fluid filled cables and switchgear
Metal theft prevention / response
LOW
Continuing undergrounding schemes
Protecting habitats and species
Facilitating electric vehicle charging infrastructure
Asterisk denotes top three

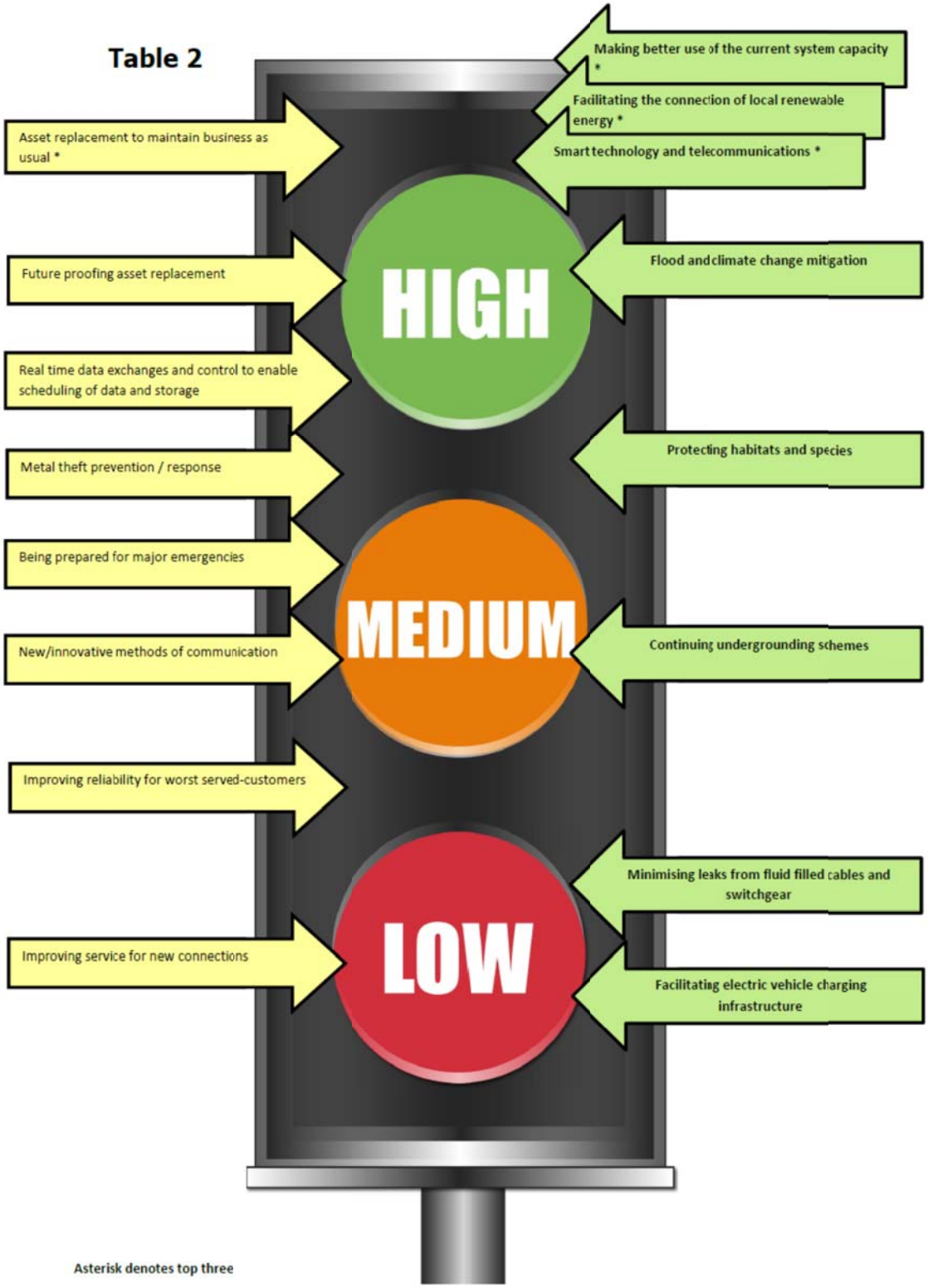
Table 2
Making better use of the current system capacity *
Facilitating the connection of local renewable energy *
Smart technology and telecommunications *
Asset replacement to maintain business as usual *
Future proofing asset replacement
Real time data exchanges and control to enable scheduling of data and storage
Metal theft prevention / response
Being prepared for major emergencies
New/innovative methods of communication
Improving reliability for worst served-customers
Improving service for new connections
HIGH
MEDIUM
LOW
Flood and climate change mitigation
Protecting habitats and species
Continuing undergrounding schemes
Minimising leaks from fluid filled cables and switchgear
Facilitating electric vehicle charging infrastructure
Asterisk denotes top three

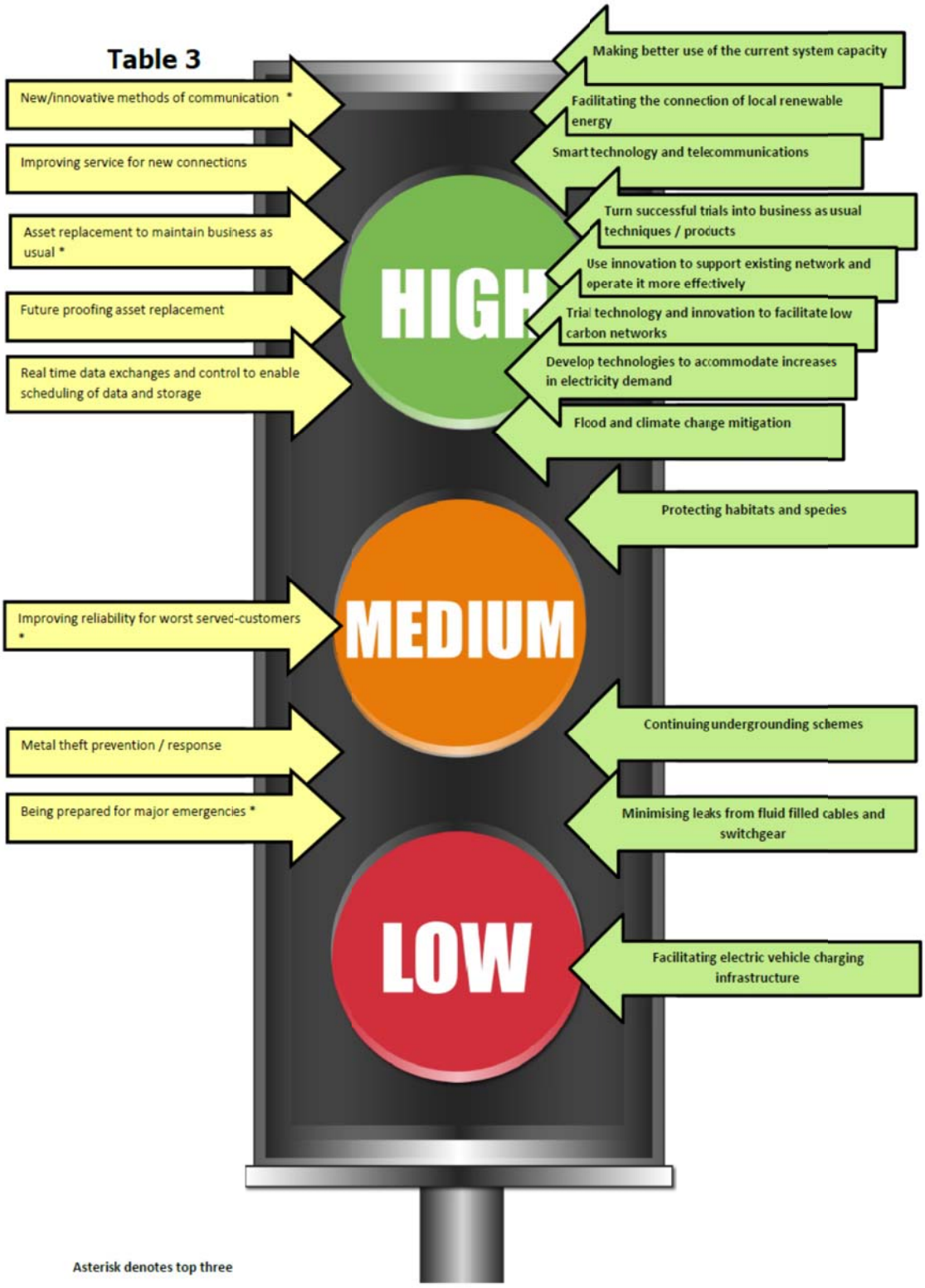
Table 3
New/innovative methods of communication *
Improving service for new connections
Asset replacement to maintain business as usual *
Future proofing asset replacement
Real time data exchanges and control to enable scheduling of data and storage
HIGH
Making better use of the current system capacity
Facilitating the connection of local renewable energy
Smart technology and telecommunications
Turn successful trials into business as usual techniques / products
Use innovation to support existing network and operate it more effectively
Trial technology and innovation to facilitate low carbon networks
Develop technologies to accommodate increases in electricity demand
Flood and climate change mitigation
Protecting habitats and species
MEDIUM
Improving reliability for worst served-customers *
Metal theft prevention / response
Being prepared for major emergencies *
Continuing undergrounding schemes
Minimising leaks from fluid filled cables and switchgear
LOW
Facilitating electric vehicle charging infrastructure
Asterisk denotes top three

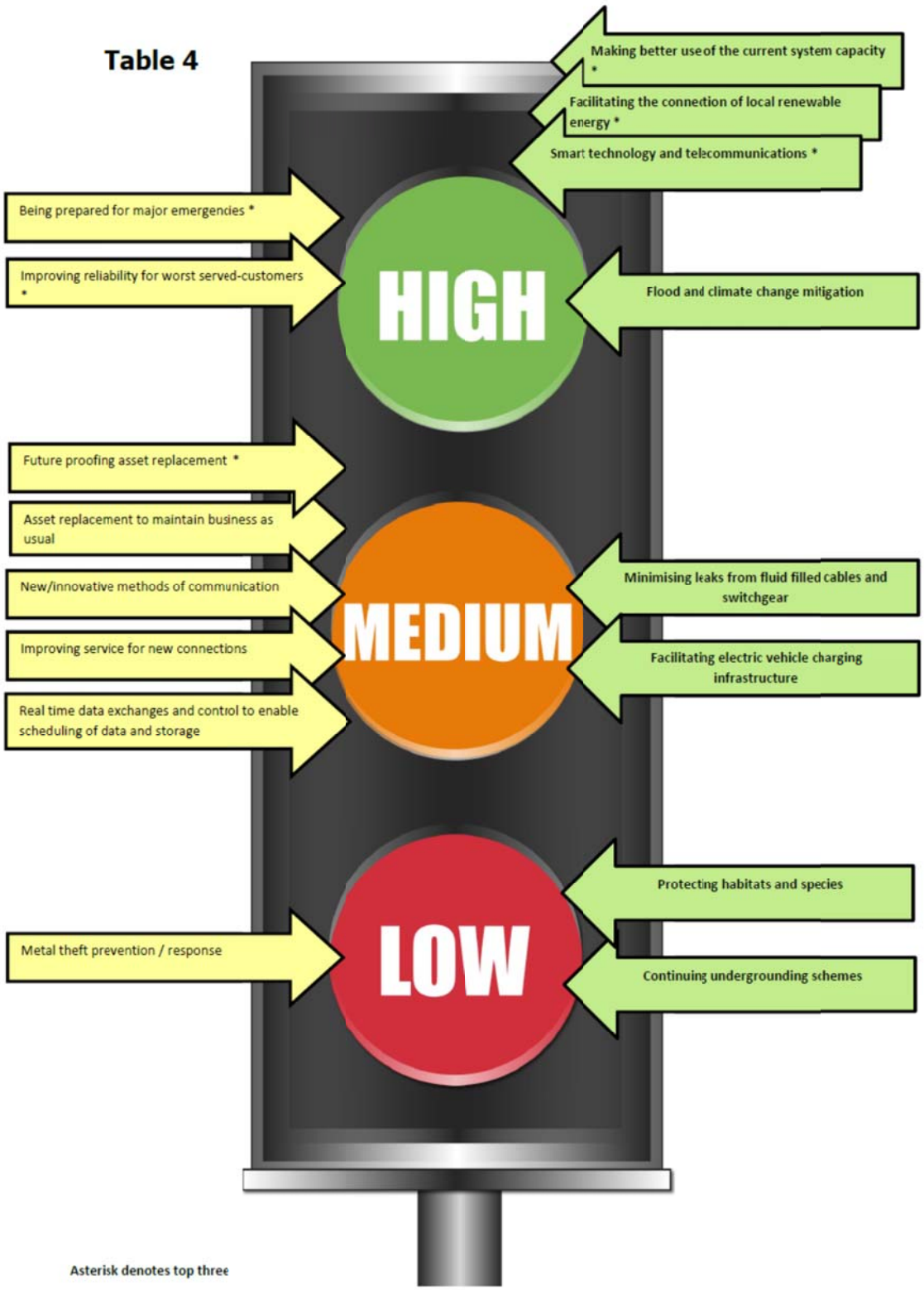
Table 4
Making better use of the current system capacity *
Facilitating the connection of local renewable energy *
Smart technology and telecommunications *
Being prepared for major emergencies *
Improving reliability for worst served-customers *
HIGH
Flood and climate change mitigation
Future proofing asset replacement *
Asset replacement to maintain business as usual
New/innovative methods of communication
Improving service for new connections
Real time data exchanges and control to enable scheduling of data and storage
MEDIUM
Minimising leaks from fluid filled cables and switchgear
Facilitating electric vehicle charging infrastructure
Protecting habitats and species
Metal theft prevention / response
LOW
Continuing undergrounding schemes
Asterisk denotes top three

7.2. Overall conclusions

- 34 stakeholders attended the workshop in Gloucester. Of the 28 who submitted a feedback form 14 stated that they found the event to be 'very useful' and 14 found it to be 'useful'. This is very encouraging

- When stakeholders were initially asked which Issues relating to Customer Service and Networks of the Future should be a priority, the vast majority of stakeholders agreed with all of them

- Reducing Power Cuts was the most frequently suggested priority that stakeholders felt should be included in this list

- The Issue of new / innovative methods of communication engendered a good deal of discussion. For two of the four tables, this was a 'top three' priority for WPD. Stakeholders' experience of contacting WPD was mixed. A number of respondents felt that WPD ought to do more to raise its profile so more people knew the number to call in the event of a power cut. Others commented that WPD call centre staff had been helpful

- It was felt that WPD ought to do more to update its methods of communication, taking advantage of 3G technology in order to give real time updates. It was also suggested that improvements could be made to WPD's website so people reporting a power cut could get the latest information and receive updates

- Two of the four tables felt that improving the service for new connections was a 'top three' priority for them. Comments on this Issue were very much based on personal experience which may explain why it was not a high priority for all stakeholders

- A number of stakeholders representing local authorities commented that WPD could do more to establish relationships with councils order to better facilitate new connections. Many felt that by working in partnership with local authorities and developers, this service could be improved

- The point was also made by a stakeholder representing businesses that greater transparency when it comes to the cost of new connections would be a step forward

- With regard to the Issue of being prepared for major emergencies, many cited the floods of 2007. Some stakeholders felt that this was actually the most important Issue for WPD and others felt that this should be part of WPDs *'business as usual'* planning. This was not, however, the consensus; one table saw this as being a medium to low priority

- Opinion was split on the subject of improving reliability for worst service customers. A number for stakeholders felt that customers who lived in rural areas should expect issues relating to reliability, although the point was made that these customers are paying the same amount as those living in urban areas and they should therefore expect the same levels of service

- Two groups felt that asset replacement to maintain business as usual should be a 'top three' priority for WPD. The point was made that actually, 'like for like' replacement may not always be the best option and that consideration should be given to upgrading assets where possible. One group felt that this issue should be considered alongside future proofing

- Opinion was split on the Issue of future proofing asset replacement. Some felt that WPD should constantly be striving to future proof its assets, whereas a significant proportion of stakeholders were of the view that it would be impractical and costly to do this and that it was more important to replace assets just before they fail. It was commented that this strategy may, however, lead to an increase in costs in the long term

- Although there was a certain amount of support for the Issue of real time data exchanges and control to enable scheduling of data and storage, a number of stakeholders felt that this was not necessary on a 'micro level', if it led to an increase in cost

- Most stakeholders were of the view that metal theft prevention / response was not a high priority for WPD. It was commented that the responsibility for dealing with this Issue should rest with the Government rather than with electricity distributors

- With regard to Issues relating to Innovation and The Environment, most stakeholders were of the view that Issues 1 – 4 should be amalgamated and discussed as one

- Most stakeholders felt that WPD should always do what it can to make the best use of new technology. However the vast majority felt that an 'incremental' approach was the best way for WPD to do this and that assets should be replaced gradually in order to keep on top of costs

- The point was made that radically replacing assets would be risky as it was impossible to predict the future

- The vast majority of stakeholders were of the view that making better use of the current system (e.g. Substation monitoring and dynamic asset rating to allow WPD to use existing lines and cables more efficiently) was the best approach for WPD to adopt. Most felt that this was a 'top three' priority

- There was also considerable support for the Issue of Smart technology and telecommunications (new installation of network that allows remote data monitoring and operation of assets) with three of the four groups raking this as a 'top three' priority

- For most stakeholders, facilitating the connection of local renewable energy was one of the most important priorities for WPD. It was felt that WPD should do all it can to make this as easy as possible for potential electricity suppliers and should certainly not be a 'bottle neck' in the process. The point was, however, made that this Issue may depend on future Government grants for renewables

- There was not a great deal of support for the Issue of facilitating electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Many felt that WPD should be led by the market on this issue, although the point was made that this led to a 'chicken and egg' situation which presented a quandary for electricity distributors

- Stakeholders generally felt that minimising leaks from fluid filled cables and gas filled switchgear was a medium to low priority for WPD. Some felt that, while this issue was serious, there was a certain amount of 'scaremongering'. It was also commented that the responsibility for this should lie with manufacturers, rather than with WPD

- Although several stakeholders felt that undergrounding cables in AONBs was a good thing, it was widely felt that the cost of this was prohibitive. The Issue was therefore deemed a medium to low priority for WPD

- It was also felt that protecting habitats and species was not a high priority for WPD and that it should strive to meet statutory obligations rather than invest to exceed these

- In the light of the floods that had so badly affected Gloucester in 2007, the Issue of flood and climate change mitigation was felt to be a high, 'top three' priority by the majority of stakeholders

- One theme that was raised on a number of occasions related to WPD working in partnership with other organisations. The importance of this was widely cited in discussions on a number of Issues and it was felt that WPD should strive to improve how it works alongside local authorities, especially

8. Stakeholder feedback

Stakeholders were asked to fill out a comment form following the Gloucester workshop. The comments we received are shown below:

8.1. Q1. Did you find the workshops useful?

None of the attendees were of the view that the workshop was *'not useful'* and half of the stakeholders found it *'very useful.'*

8.2. Q2. Was the venue conveniently located for you?

The venue was conveniently located for 92% of attendees. Those attendees who felt it was not convenient stated it was due to their personal circumstances.

8.3. Did we provide enough information at the workshop

96% of stakeholders who attended stated that WPD provided enough information.

8.4. Do you want to be kept informed of WPD's plans in the future?

All of the stakeholders who attended want to be kept informed of WPD's future plans.

8.5. Do you have any other comments on the workshop or the venue?

Seventeen stakeholders had additional comments.

A selection of the comments received is shown below:

- 'Very broad issues covered. Would be good to stay involved to cover issues affecting planning and development more specifically.'
- 'Workshop excellent, wide ranging and informative. Getting to venue 2 hours by public transport and 40 mins walk.'
- 'Excellent venue, enjoyable and found topics of real interest.'
- 'Very well run and an excellent venue.'
- 'Well organised and good balance of speakers and discussion.'
- 'Very useful and informative. Well facilitated. Good placement of WPD staff at each table, which gave technical know how to help facilitate the discussion. Please make presentation slides available either by email or on WPD website (send a link by email).'