

Western Power Distribution Distributed Generation Stakeholder Engagement Workshop: Response to Stakeholder Proposals 26th November 2014

The following gives a response to the feedback received at the workshop and the actions WPD will take as part of our ICE Workplan

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1 Context – workshop outline

Overview

- 1.1 In November 2014, WPD held a workshop for Distributed Generation (DG) stakeholders to communicate the work that WPD has been doing to improve performance in providing DG connection services and to gain feedback on this and our improvement plans.
- 1.2 This response document sets out how WPD will address the suggested initiatives proposed by stakeholders at the event and detailed in the report written by Westbourne Communications. We will explain the additional initiatives that we will add to our ICE improvement workplan as a result of these recommendations.
- 1.3 The report by Westbourne Communications can be found [here](#) and includes the detail of the discussions and comments recorded at the workshop.

Event details

- 1.4 WPD hosted the DG stakeholder workshop at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens on 26th November 2014.
- 1.5 A total of 57 DG stakeholders attended from a wide range of sectors: utilities companies; connections companies; industry consultancies; developers; technology companies; membership organisations; and universities.
- 1.6 WPD appointed specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, Westbourne Communications (WBC), to facilitate the stakeholder workshop on our behalf.
- 1.7 The workshop consisted of a series of presentations by senior WPD representatives each followed by round table discussions facilitated by trained Westbourne facilitators with comments captured by scribes. To ensure openness, comments were not attributed to individuals.
- 1.8 On each of the tables, a member of WPD staff was on hand to answer technical questions
- 1.9 A copy of the presentation given by WPD can be found [here](#).

2 WPD's Response to suggested initiatives

In total there are 22 suggested initiatives for WPD to address in the report produced by Westbourne Communications of the feedback received at the workshop. These suggestions are detailed below with responses from WPD as to what actions we have already taken or will be taking as a result of the feedback:

- 2.1 There should be greater emphasis on communications throughout the connections process, especially post-acceptance.

WPD Response: we have included in our workplan an action to investigate service provided post acceptance. Further actions will be added where required to implement improvements identified along with staff training to ensure consistency.

- 2.2 A heat map may be appropriate to detail known load, load coming and load which may arrive in the future.

WPD Response: WPD have implemented a Capacity Register (available on our website [here](#)) which provides lists of generators that are connected to our network and those which have accepted connection offers and where they connect to our network. We also have an action to provide access to further network information which includes looking at how we can provide further capacity information.

- 2.3 WPD should consider offering customers with a number of applications the opportunity of an Account Manager to act as a single point of contact.

WPD Response: WPD are currently considering whether to provide account management or similar for customers with high volumes of applications. We are keen to avoid the creation of another layer of organisation which stakeholders have warned us against, so we need to ensure anything we implement would be effective in improving our service.

- 2.4 A further stage should be added to the plan, focussed solely on design.

WPD Response: Our workplan for 2015/16 will clearly identify which issues and actions relate to the design/quotation, acceptance and post-acceptance stages of the connections process.

- 2.5 Design specifications and standards should be widely publicised.

WPD Response: Our workplan for 2015/16 will include an action to review the information available to independent connection providers and developers on our technical information website to ensure it the appropriate information to facilitate the design process and also to review the communication of this information.

- 2.6 WPD should do more to standardise information and advice throughout the company.

WPD Response: Our current workplan includes actions to review website information and improve consistency of process. Our 2015/16 workplan will include actions to address consistency throughout WPD teams and to continue to review externally available information.

- 2.7 All process should be standardised and there should be a greater emphasis on consistency across WPD's network area.

WPD Response: As per 2.6, Our current workplan includes actions to improve consistency of process and also to refresh staff on making consistency offers. Our 2015/16 workplan will include actions to address consistency throughout WPD teams.

- 2.8 The CCSG should be more widely publicised and the membership broadened.

WPD Response: In our current workplan our action to improve accessibility of our website information, revising our connection webpages to improve navigation and level of information has brought the CCSG onto the front page for connections. Our CCSG panel will continue to develop and we will continue to publish outputs on our website. We will also publish the market sectors represented by the panel members to show breadth of coverage.

- 2.9 More information on how WPD performed in relation to its targets should be published.

WPD Response: in our current plan we have added measures against the actions to track performance. In our 2015/16 workplan and future Incentive on Connection Engagement (ICE) submissions we will establish a set of key performance indicators to allow us to further assess progress.

- 2.10 Greater transparency throughout the process would help developers ensure that deadlines are not missed.

WPD Response: in our current plan we have completed an action to implement new internal standards on customer contacts and briefed staff refreshing them on the importance of quality of information when contacting customer. These new standards ensure proactive communication through the application and quotation stage is provided consistently. Our 2015/16 workplan will include actions to address the post-acceptance service provided.

- 2.11 WPD should continue to engage on a regular basis with DG customers.

WPD Response: following the success and positive feedback on this workshop we will hold another such event in 2015.

- 2.12 There should be more emphasis on engagement with potential customers before the commencement of the application process.

WPD Response: in our 2015/16 workplan we will include actions to investigate pre-application service and availability of advice.

- 2.13 More information on capacity should be published.

WPD Response: See response in 2.2 above.

- 2.14 Quotes should be sent as early as possible and always be prior to the 90 day backstop.

WPD Response: Along with our ongoing commitment to always provide offers as soon as practicable, rather than using guaranteed standards as a performance level, we have a commitment in our RIIO-ED1 Business Plan and ICE objectives to monitor and reduce the time to quote and time to connect timescales for connections.

- 2.15 Stakeholders should have the option of signing up to an email update to keep them informed of any relevant changes.

WPD Response: we have completed the action in our current workplan which implemented a facility on our website to sign up for updates. Users can register for and receive regular updates on what new information has been added to our

connections pages and also what has been updated. Our Technical Information website for ICPs and developers also provides these email updates.

- 2.16 Regular email updates should be sent to keep DG customers informed of WPD's progress.

WPD Response: we will continue to provide updates on our progress against our workplan in 2015 on our website. These will be communicated through the email update facility described in 2.15 above.

- 2.17 A detailed timetable of actions should be given to connections customers on acceptance of a quote.

WPD Response: in our 2015/16 workplan we will include an action to investigate providing information of the schedule / timetable for connection following the acceptance of an offer. We will also be looking at the service provide post-acceptance as per 2.1 above.

- 2.18 A simple diagram detailing roles and responsibilities should be published.

WPD Response: we will include an action in our 2015/16 workplan to update and improve the process flowchart currently on our website.

- 2.19 More frequent updates should be given throughout the process.

WPD Response: see response in 2.10 above

- 2.20 There should be greater emphasis on removing speculative bidders from the queue for new connections.

WPD Response: in our current workplan we have implemented an action to include milestones in our connection offers to ensure customers progress with their scheme or risk WPD terminating their offer agreement. We have also published guidance on what changes are permitted to application without having to reapply, which also helps to filter out speculative developments.

- 2.21 There should be regular workshops hosted in various locations within the WPD network area.

WPD Response: in 2015 we are continuing our programme of connection surgeries as well as expanding these for specific competition in connections topics. We will also be hosting a further DG workshop similar to this event.

- 2.22 Workshops should be hosted in support of community energy schemes.

WPD Response: we have completed the actions in our current workplan regarding facilitating a series of workshops focused on Community Energy schemes and stakeholders, hosting two workshops in 2014 and three so far in 2015, with another planned for March and three more in the autumn. We have also published a helpful guide to getting a connection for Community Energy schemes.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 WPD will be providing ongoing information of our website regarding our connection improvement ICE workplans and our progress against them.
- 3.2 We will also publish details of further stakeholder events for DG connections on our website.
- 3.3 To keep up to date on all our connections activities please register for our email update service [here](#)
- 3.4 If you have any questions about this report:

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