

Western Power Distribution Stakeholder Workshop: Summary of all workshops



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Overview of the workshop	4
3. Written feedback.....	8
4. Summary of feedback	13
5. Individual voting results of WPD’s priorities	17
6. Stakeholder suggested initiatives – Customer Awareness of WPD	20
7. Individual voting results - Customer Awareness of WPD.....	21
8. Stakeholder suggested initiatives – Affordability and Vulnerability	22
9. Individual voting results – Affordability and Vulnerability	23
10. Surgeries on specific topics.....	24
10.1 Environmental Reporting	24
10.2 Network Losses	24
10.3 Social Obligations (incl. vulnerability and fuel poverty)	25
10.4 Connections and Distributed Generation.....	28

1. Introduction

Western Power Distribution (WPD) submitted its draft Business Plan in 2013 as part of Ofgem's most recent price control, RII0-ED1. The plan was produced following sustained engagement with stakeholders and was fast-tracked by the regulator in 2014.

WPD is committed to continued engagement with its stakeholders over key decisions. The company identified two areas of focus for engagement going forward:-

1. The delivery of WPD's plans and improvements to their services
2. Key, long-term priorities that will change the way WPD operate in the future

In January 2015, WPD hosted six workshops across its network area in order to get feedback from stakeholders on the two areas identified above. This report details outcomes from the six workshops that took in Plymouth, Bristol, Newport, Birmingham, Milton Keynes, and Cheltenham in January 2015.



Westbourne (WB) was appointed, as a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate the stakeholder workshop on behalf of WPD and neutrally report back on the outputs.

Each of the workshops featured presentations by senior WPD representatives followed by roundtable discussions and electronic voting on set topics. The roundtable workshops were facilitated by trained WB facilitators and stakeholders' comments were captured by WB scribes.

This report is a recording of the outputs from all of the stakeholder workshops. A copy of the presentation given by WPD can be found [here](#).

2. Overview of the workshop

There were three discussion sessions within the overall workshop that provided an opportunity for stakeholders to review the Business Plan and provide WPD with feedback. The discussion sessions were as follows:

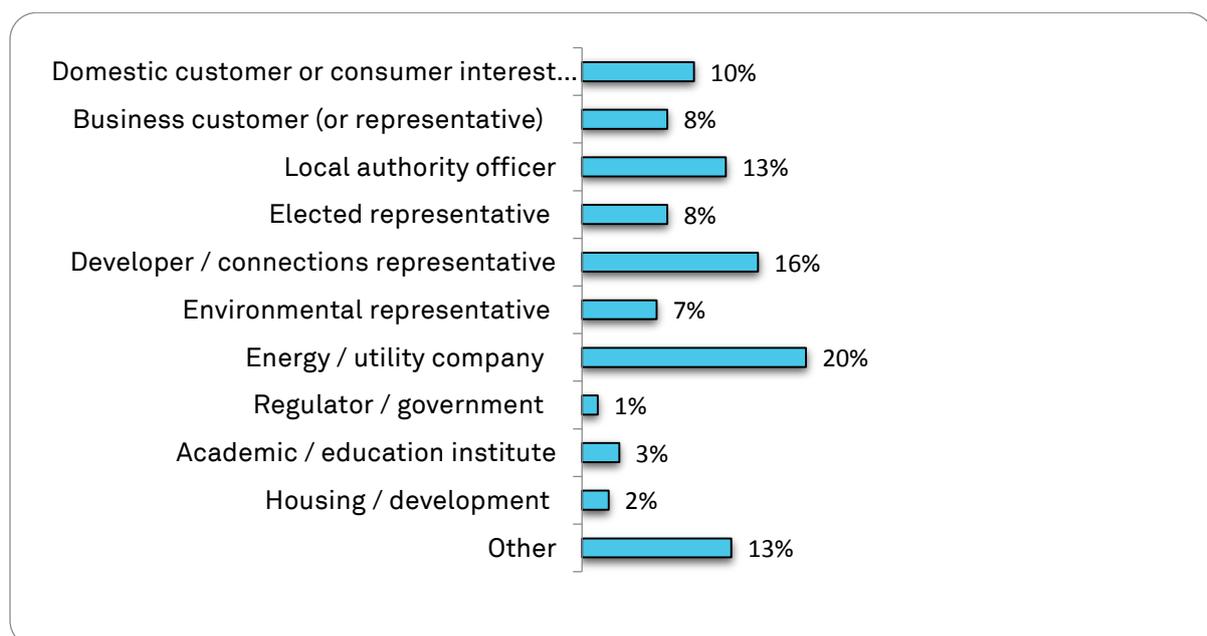
- **Workshop 1: Short – medium term – WPD’s Business Plan & reporting.** The first workshop involved a discussion on WPD’s Business Plan, specifically on which areas interested stakeholders most and how they would like to be kept informed.
- **Workshop 2: Long term – strategic priorities impacting the future of electricity networks.** The second workshop involved a discussion on the strategic priorities that impact the future of electricity networks. This included an interactive session where the group ranked the priorities as high, medium or low.
- **Workshop 3: Long term – starting to address these priorities.** The third workshop involved a more detailed look into two specific long term priorities: *Customer Awareness of WPD* and *Affordability and Vulnerability*. Stakeholders were able to vote individually on what they believed to be the best actions in these areas.

Attendees

A total of 232 stakeholders attended the workshops. There were a range of representatives from different backgrounds, including the domestic, business, local authority, developer/connections, environmental, energy/utility, regulatory/government, academic/education, housing/development, and voluntary sectors.

Stakeholders were asked to identify themselves as one of ten listed stakeholder types or select ‘other’ if none of the options matched. The results can be found below:

What type of stakeholder are you?



The organisations represented were as follows:

- ACRE
- ADAS UK
- Alstom Grid
- Amey
- Anglian Water
- Ashfield District Council
- Associated British Ports
- Babcock International
- Belectric
- Belectric Solar Ltd
- Birmingham City Council
- Boston Borough Council
- Bovis Homes
- Boyton Parish Council
- British Gas
- British Red Cross
- Business West
- Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)
- Cannock Chase District Council
- Caplor Energy
- Castle Bromwich Parish Council
- Cenin Ltd
- Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Cirencester Town Council
- Citizens Advice
- City & County of Swansea Council
- Cofely GDF Suez
- Consumer Futures
- Cornwall Business Partnership
- Cornwall Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Cornwall Council
- Cornwall Marine Network
- Country Land & Business Association
- Coventry & Solihull Waste Disposal Co Ltd
- Coventry CAB
- Coventry Consumer Network
- Coventry University
- Dartmoor Preservation Association
- Deerhurst Parish Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Destination Plymouth
- Diptford Parish Council
- Dodington Parish Council
- Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils
- Duchy of Cornwall Office
- Dulas
- E.ON Energy Solutions
- EA Technology Ltd
- ECO2
- EDF Energy PLC
- Electricity Solutions Ltd
- Electricity Storage Network
- Energy and Utilities
- Energy Networks Association
- Energy Saving Trust
- Energy Technologies Institute
- Exeter City Council
- Federation Of Small Businesses
- Festival Housing
- Geldards LLP
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Gorsley and Kilcot Parish Council
- GTC
- Harvington Parish Council
- Haven Power
- Health & Safety Executive
- Heart of the South West LEP
- Hermes Energy Services
- Inazin
- Industrial Securities
- Institute of Engineering & Technology
- JSM Construction
- Kempsey Parish Council
- Kettering Borough Council
- Kier
- Kinetica Energy

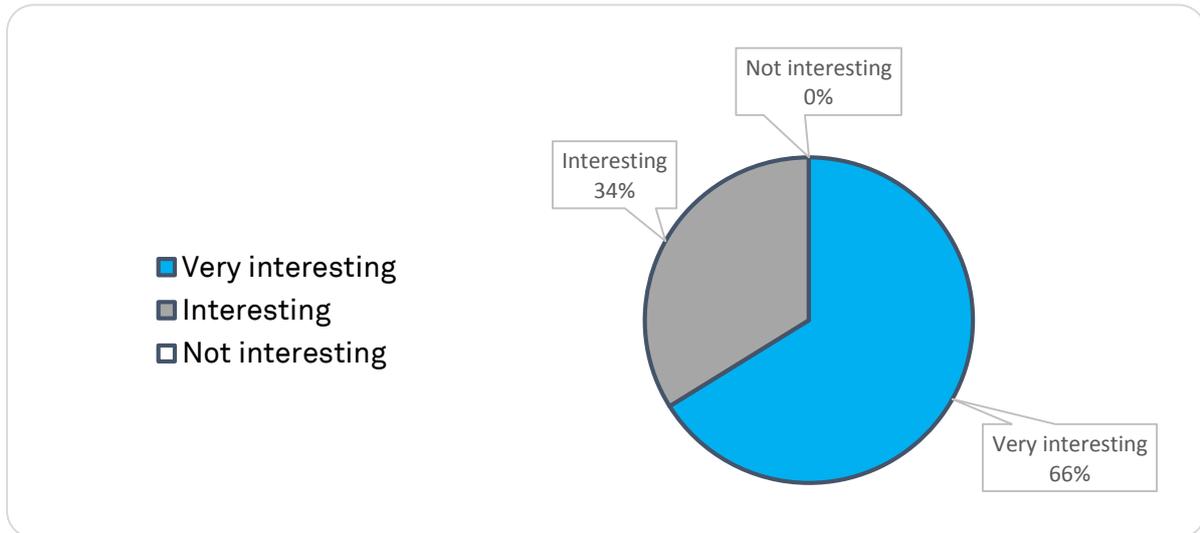
- Kiwi Power
- Landis+Gyr AG
- Lanteglos by Fowey Parish Council
- Lark Energy
- Lightsource Renewable Energy Limited
- Linbrooke
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Lucy Electric
- Major Energy Users Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Martifer Solar UK
- Mendip Hills AONB
- Midwest Energy Group
- Morrison Utility Services
- National Association for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- National Energy Action
- National Farmers Union
- National Farmers Union (NFU) SW Region
- Natural Power
- Newport City Council
- NF Management Services
- Nortech Management Ltd
- North Northamptonshire, Joint Planning Unit
- North Somerset CPRE
- Northampton Borough Council
- Northern Ireland Electricity
- Norvento Wind Energy Uk
- Npower
- Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
- Pitchcombe Parish Council
- Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau
- Plymouth City Council
- Plymouth Manufacturers Group
- Power On Connections
- Powersystems Uk Ltd
- Prestbury Parish Council
- Qila Energy
- RD Network Design
- RWE Innogy UK
- RWE npower
- S&C Electric Europe
- Sainsbury's
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Scottish and South Energy Power Distribution
- SE Wales Energy Agency
- Sentec Ltd
- Severn Trent Water
- Siemens Smart Grid
- Siemens Transmission and Distribution Ltd
- Sohn Associates
- Solar Century
- South Hill Parish Council
- South Wales Chamber of Commerce
- SSE
- Staffordshire Council
- Stephens Scown
- Sterling Power
- Stroud District Council
- Summerfield Developments
- Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Teignbridge District Council
- Tgc Renewables Ltd
- The Open University
- The Urbanists
- TNEI Services LTD
- Tusc Ltd
- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Exeter
- University Of Nottingham
- Utilities Connections Management Limited
- Utility Partnership Limited
- Utility Resource Services Ltd.
- Valleys To Coast Housing
- Wales & West Utilities Ltd
- Wardell Armstrong LLP

- Warm Wales
- Wave Hub Ltd
- Welsh Government
- Wessex Solar Energy
- Wessex Water
- West Country Renewables
- West Mercia Housing Group
- Whitchurch Parish Council
- Winscombe & Sandford Parish Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- Wye Valley AONB
- Wyre Forest District Council
- Yarlinton Homes
- Yate Town Council

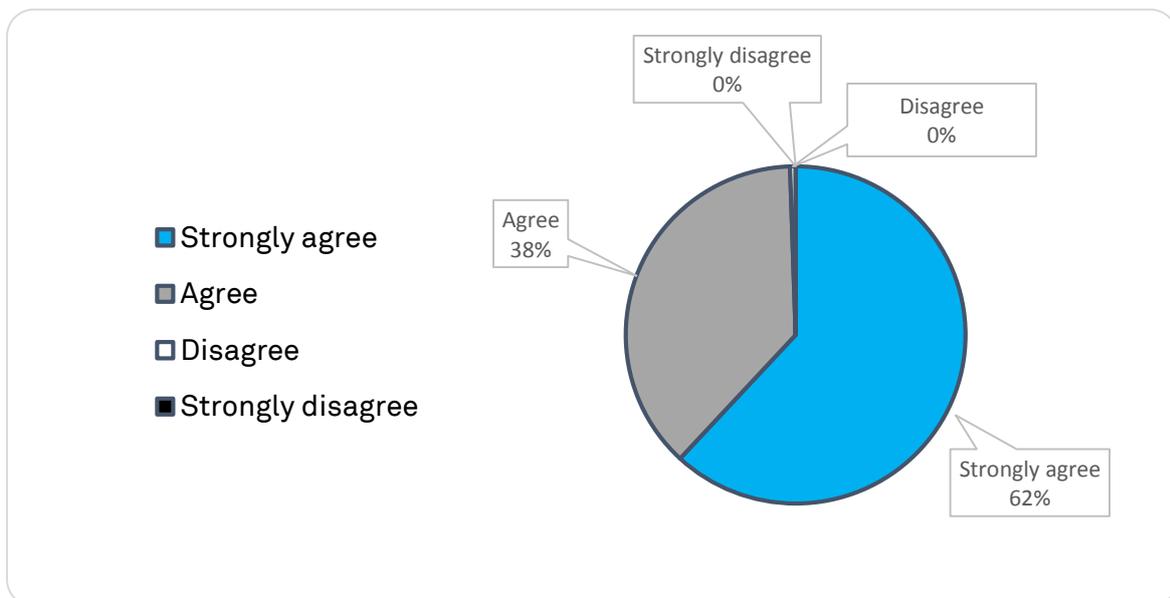
3. Written feedback

Of the 232 attendees who attended the workshops, 188 completed and returned feedback forms on the day's event. Stakeholders were asked a set of seven questions. The responses can be found below:

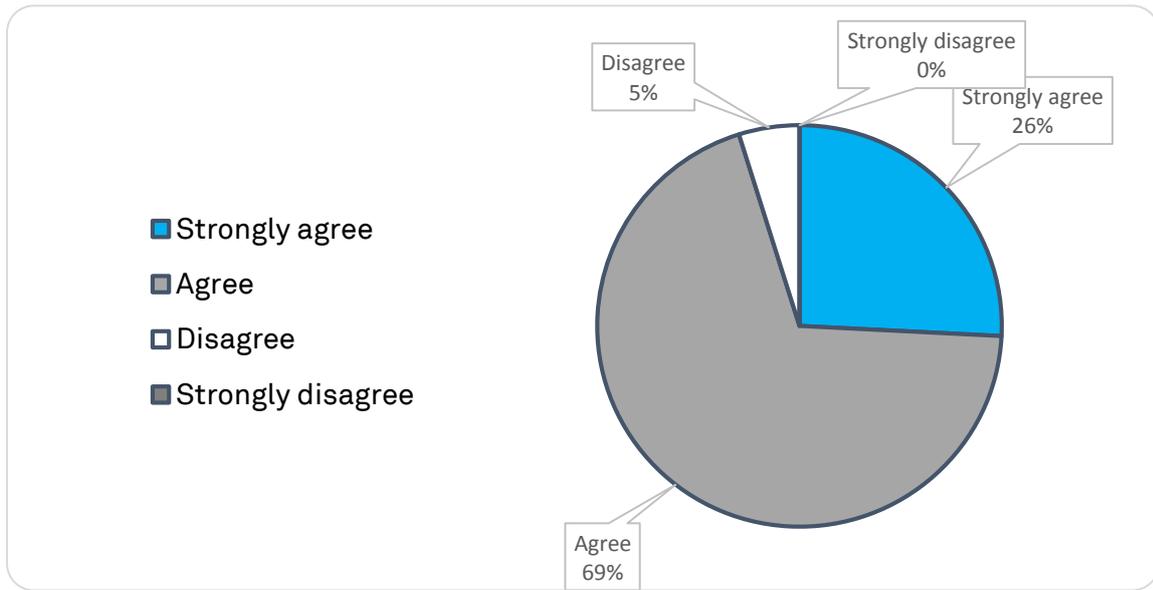
Q1. Overall, how did you find the workshop?



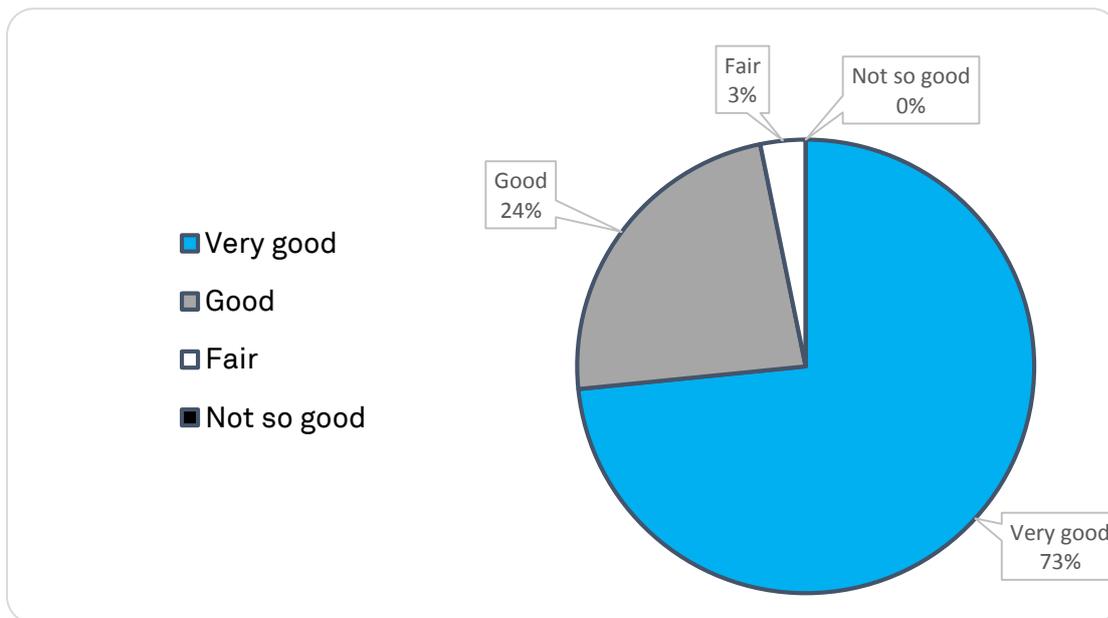
Q2. Did you feel that you had the opportunity to make your points and ask questions?



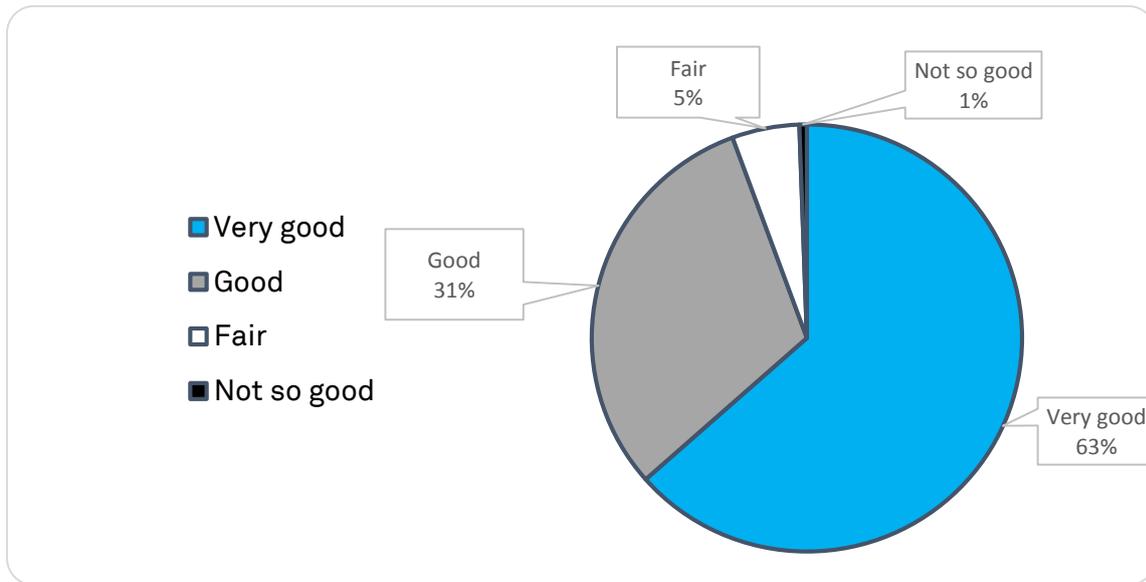
Q3. Did we cover the right topics for you on the day?



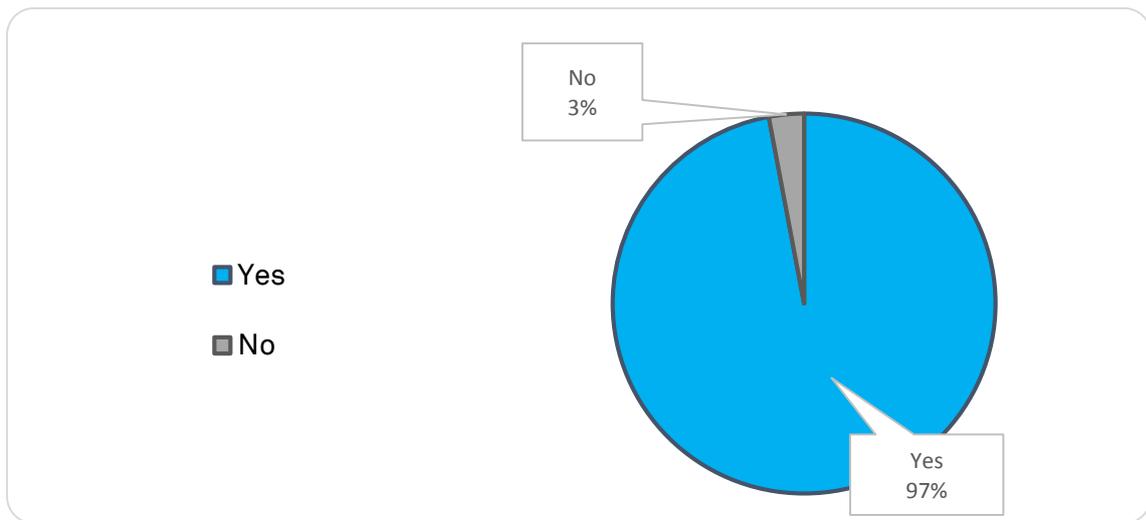
Q4. What did you think of the way the workshop had been facilitated?



Q5. What did you think of the venue?



Q6. Would you be interested in attending future workshops on this subject?



“ Particularly impressed by electronic voting. Capitalises thoughts and ideas, makes for a clear outcome. ”

“ Very well organised, useful day. Well facilitated. ”

“ Good mix of participants, good discussions, good facilitation. ”

“ Was looking for more ‘connection’ discussions. ”

“ Good facilitation by Westbourne Team on the day. Good interaction around the table. Diverse audience. ”

“ Excellent as always. Thanks. ”

“ Really well facilitated. ”

“ Well-constructed sessions led by Westbourne team today. ”

“ Table workshop format worked every well. ”

“ Liked the 3rd party, neutral facilitator and mix of verbal debate and voting actions. ”

“ WPD is doing a great job and genuinely seem to be doing the right thing. ”

“ Electronic voting was great! ”

“ Very well run and presented. Good opportunity to understand current activities and engage in future plans. ”

“ Provides a bigger picture, but not specific to my business interests so I will appreciate the DG forum event opportunity. ”

“ There was an emphasis on today’s business but not on connection to tomorrow’s. ”

“ Good timings, stuck to the schedule. Fun to have audience participation. ”

“ Excellent facilitation. Good to use expert facilitators and scribes rather than nominate people from the group. ”

“ A very well run, informative and interesting day, pitched at the right level. Greatly exceeded my expectations! ”

“ Well organised, good pre-event communication. effective facilitation. ”

“ Very interactive. WPD was open to listening to stakeholders. ”

“ Good mix of different attendees – making some very different points of view. ”

4. Summary of feedback

Workshop 1. Short-medium term – WPD’s Business Plan and reporting

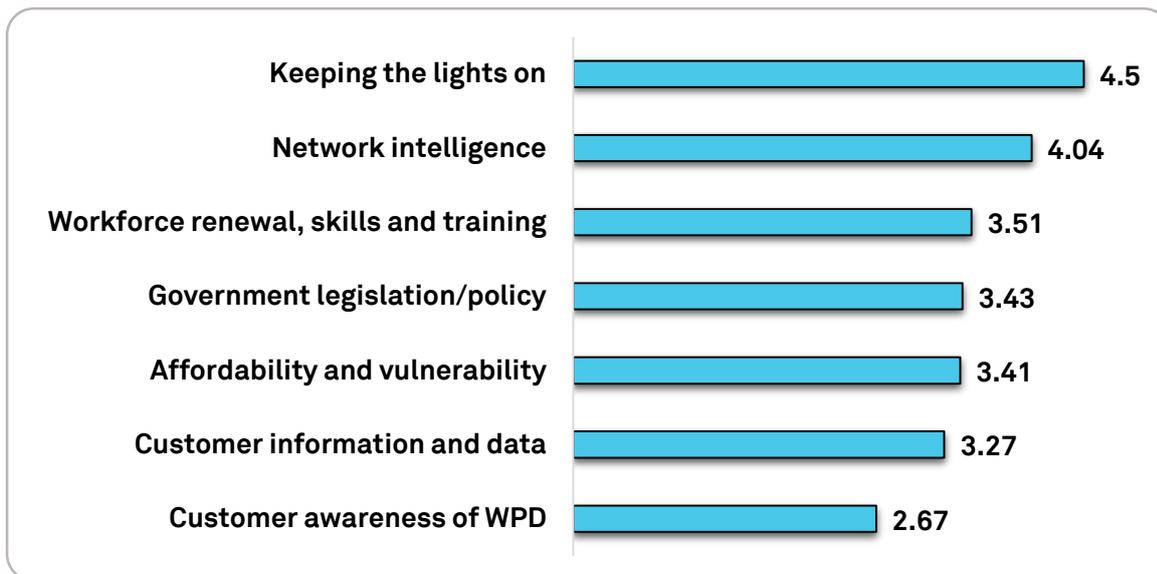
- The vast majority of stakeholders across workshops cited **reliability** and **connections** as areas of the Business Plan that prompted **most interest**.
- **Connections** was also often identified, but this was largely raised by those who work directly with connections.
- Additionally, **customer satisfaction** was cited frequently by **domestic customers** across regions.
- Although there was **no cross-regional consensus**, many stakeholders stated they preferred short and high level summaries with the ability to drill down for more information if interested.
- Stakeholders also cited a preference for being updated **online** or **via email** rather than direct mailing or leaflets.
- A majority of stakeholders believed that domestic customers would **not be interested** in the breakdown of their bills. However, the information about the breakdown of bills should be available **online** and **via the suppliers** for customers.

Workshop 2. Long term – strategic priorities impacting the future of electricity networks

Following the workshop session, stakeholders were asked to vote on the priorities, ranking them in order of importance.

- **Keeping the lights** was overwhelmingly the most important priority for stakeholders coming top nearly every table during every workshop discussion.
- Many stakeholders commented that the priorities were all **interconnected** and fed into each other rather than being seven distinct ones.
- **Customer awareness of WPD** was very often the **lowest priority** with stakeholders believing that the other priorities are more important.
- Stakeholders also felt that **affordability** and **vulnerability** should be split into two different topics and should be ranked differently.
- The importance of **network intelligence** closely trailed **keeping the lights on** in table discussions and individual electronic voting.
- **Workforce renewal, skills and training** was also frequently cited as important for the future of the network.





Workshop 3. Long term - Starting to address these priorities

Customer awareness of WPD

- A number of stakeholders in each workshop made suggestions for **alternative activities** that were not included as part of WPD's plan for raising customer awareness. The two most popular suggestions included **more targeted contact, based on projects/incidents** and **drop-in centres with proactive face-to-face engagement**.
- Each stakeholder suggested initiative can be found in Section 6, page 19 – Stakeholder Suggested Initiatives (Customer Awareness of WPD).
- Consistently across table discussions, **expanded schools educations activities** was cited as an important action to raise customer awareness of WPD. The importance of safety education as well as information in event of a power cut was highlighted for schools education.
- There was concern that **direct mailing might not be very effective** as a lot of leaflets and flyers get thrown out. However, direct mailing was heralded as being important for those who do not have access to the internet and the WPD website.
- The WPD **fridge magnets** with the phone number to ring during a power outage were frequently praised by stakeholders across all regions. They were seen as an effective customer awareness tool.
- Many stakeholders were **sceptical about television advertising** as they believed it was no longer the most relevant way to reach stakeholders.
- Finally, there was **no real consensus across** regions about the importance of social media.

Stakeholders were asked to cast a vote by placing a sticker next to their preferred initiative. The outcomes of this are shown below.

Initiative	Votes
Expanded schools education activities - safety plus wider information	154
Expanded website tools and leaflet information (distribution via targeted partners)	142
Expanded social media presence and smartphone apps	100
More direct mailings	99
More television advertising	30
More local media advertising (radio & newspaper)	27

Electronic Voting Results

Following the workshop discussions, stakeholders were asked to vote using their electronic keypads.

- The most popular actions identified were [expanded website tools and leaflet information](#) (distribution via targeted partners) and [expanded schools education activities](#) (safety plus wider information), both with 28% of the vote.
- The second most popular action identified was [more direct mailing](#) with 18% of the vote.
- In a separate question, stakeholders voted [more television advertising](#) as the least popular action identified with 48% of the vote.

Affordability and vulnerability

- A number of stakeholders in each workshop made suggestions for [alternative activities](#) that were not included as part of WPD's plan for affordability and vulnerability. The two most popular suggestions included [building partnerships \(including referral schemes\)](#) and [advice/support to small businesses \(particularly with vulnerable people\)](#).
- Each stakeholder suggested initiative can be found in Section 8, page 22 – Stakeholder Suggested Initiatives (Affordability and Vulnerability).
- During the table discussions across the regions, the most popular initiative proved to be [improving the data held on the Priority Service Register](#). The importance of data sharing between utilities companies was frequently highlighted by stakeholders.
- Investigate the [feasibility of network solutions](#) to tackle fuel poverty was also a popular initiative, receiving the most votes on the tables. This was seen as more long-term solution.
- Establishing a [hardship fund](#) was seen as a [short-term solution](#) that did not address the root of the problems surrounding fuel poverty. It was consistently voted the least important action at each workshop.

Stakeholders were asked to cast a vote by placing a sticker next to their preferred initiative. The outcomes of this are shown below.

Initiative	Votes
Investigate the feasibility of network solutions to tackle fuel poverty	174
Practical support to improve vulnerable customer resilience	128
Improve the data held on our Priority Service Register	119
Establish an 'affordable warmth innovation scheme' - for not-for-profit agencies	76
Fuel poverty referral schemes	64
Identify fuel poverty hotspots and existing initiatives/schemes	63
Establish a "hardship fund" for qualifying domestic customers	16

Electronic Voting Results

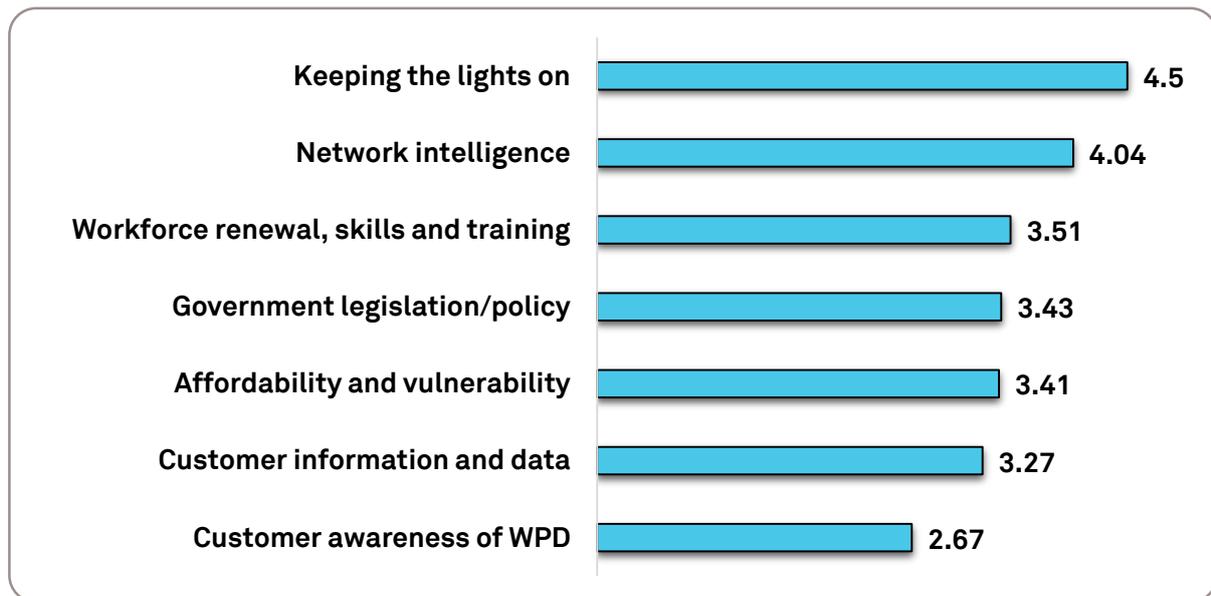
Following the workshop discussions, stakeholders were asked to vote using their electronic keypads.

- The **most popular action** identified was **investigate the feasibility of network solutions to tackle fuel poverty** with 26% of the vote.
- The **second most popular action** was **practical support to improve vulnerable customer resilience** with 24% of the vote.
- In a separate question, stakeholders overwhelmingly voted establishing a **"hardship fund"** as the **least popular action** with 65% of the vote.

5. Individual voting results of WPD's priorities

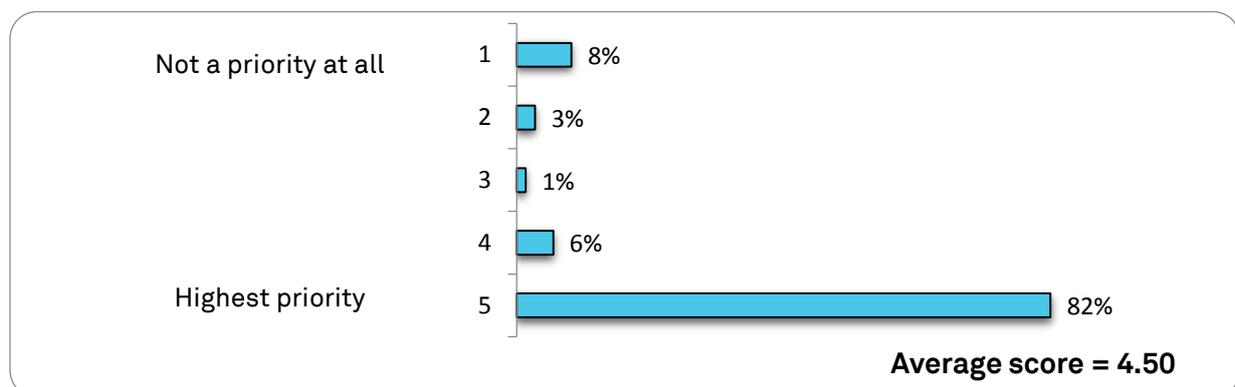
After group discussions, stakeholders were asked to vote individually on what they considered to be top priorities. Each person was able to cast a vote through an electronic voting system. The results are displayed below.

Overall results:

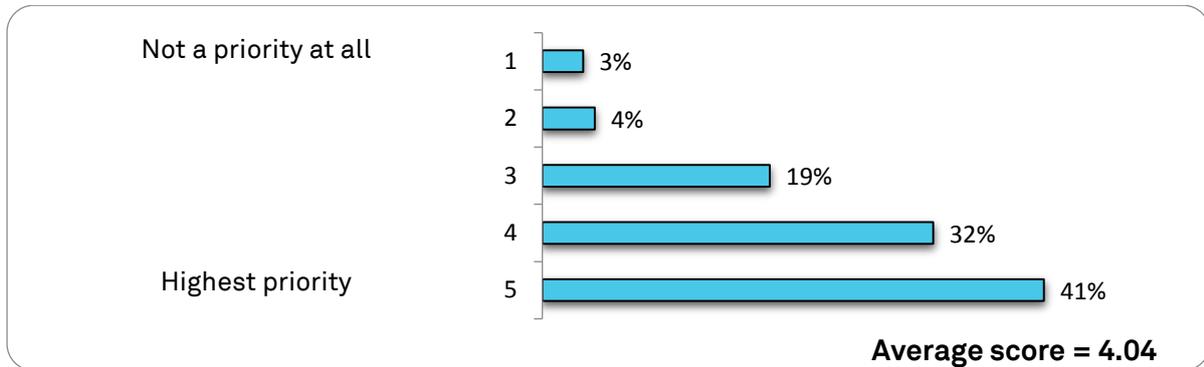


Priority-by-priority results:

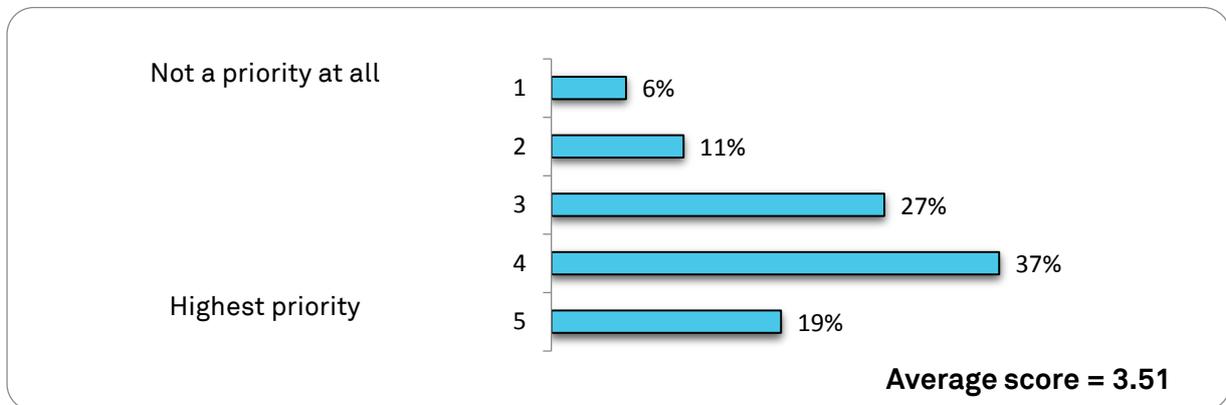
How do you rate **keeping the lights** on as a long-term priority?



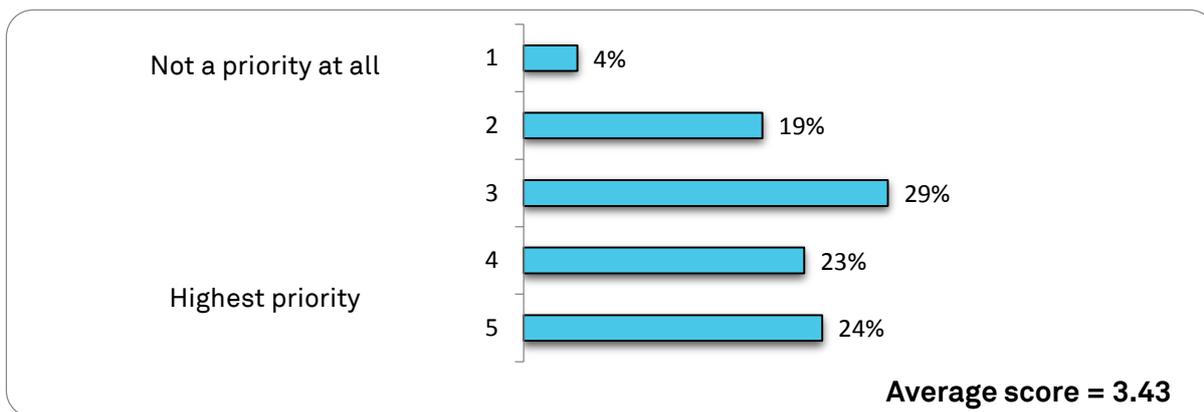
How do you rate **network intelligence** as a long-term priority?



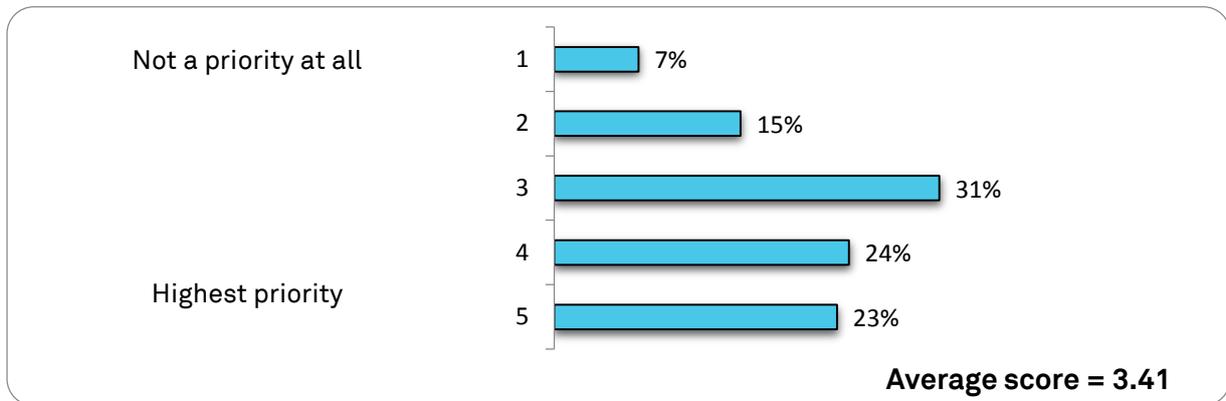
How do you rate **workforce renewal, skills and training** as a long-term priority?



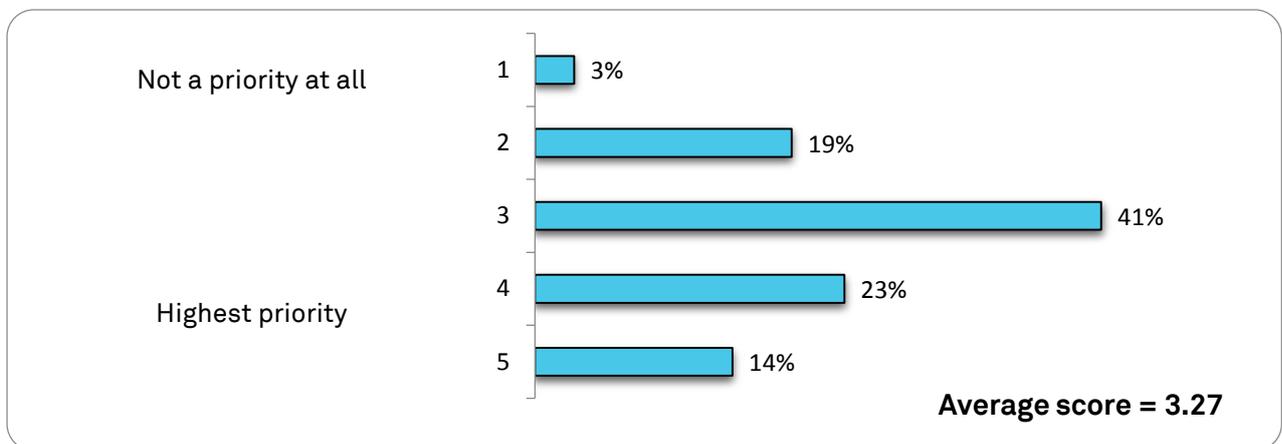
How do you rate **government legislation/policy** as a long-term priority?



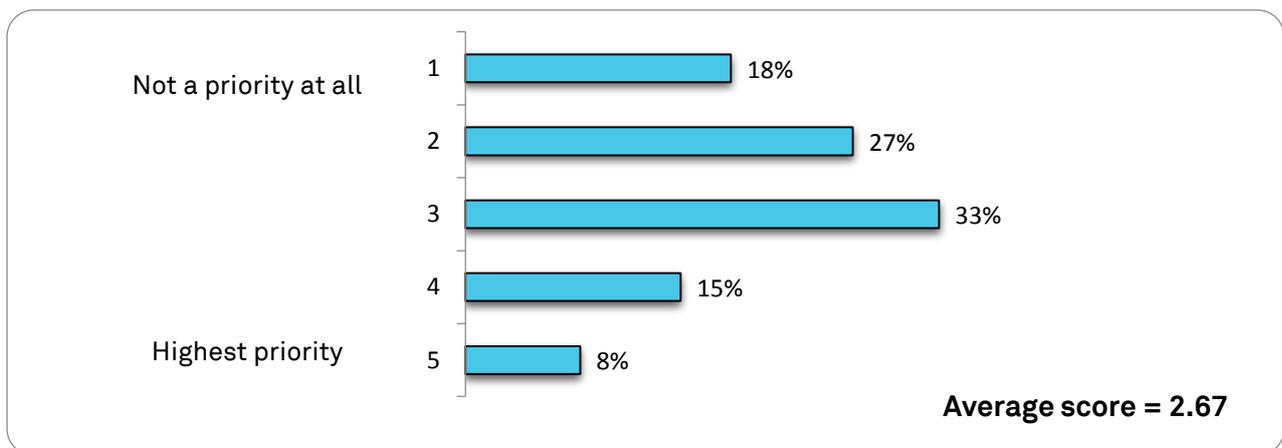
How do you rate **affordability and vulnerability** as a long-term priority?



How do you rate **customer information and data** as a long-term priority?

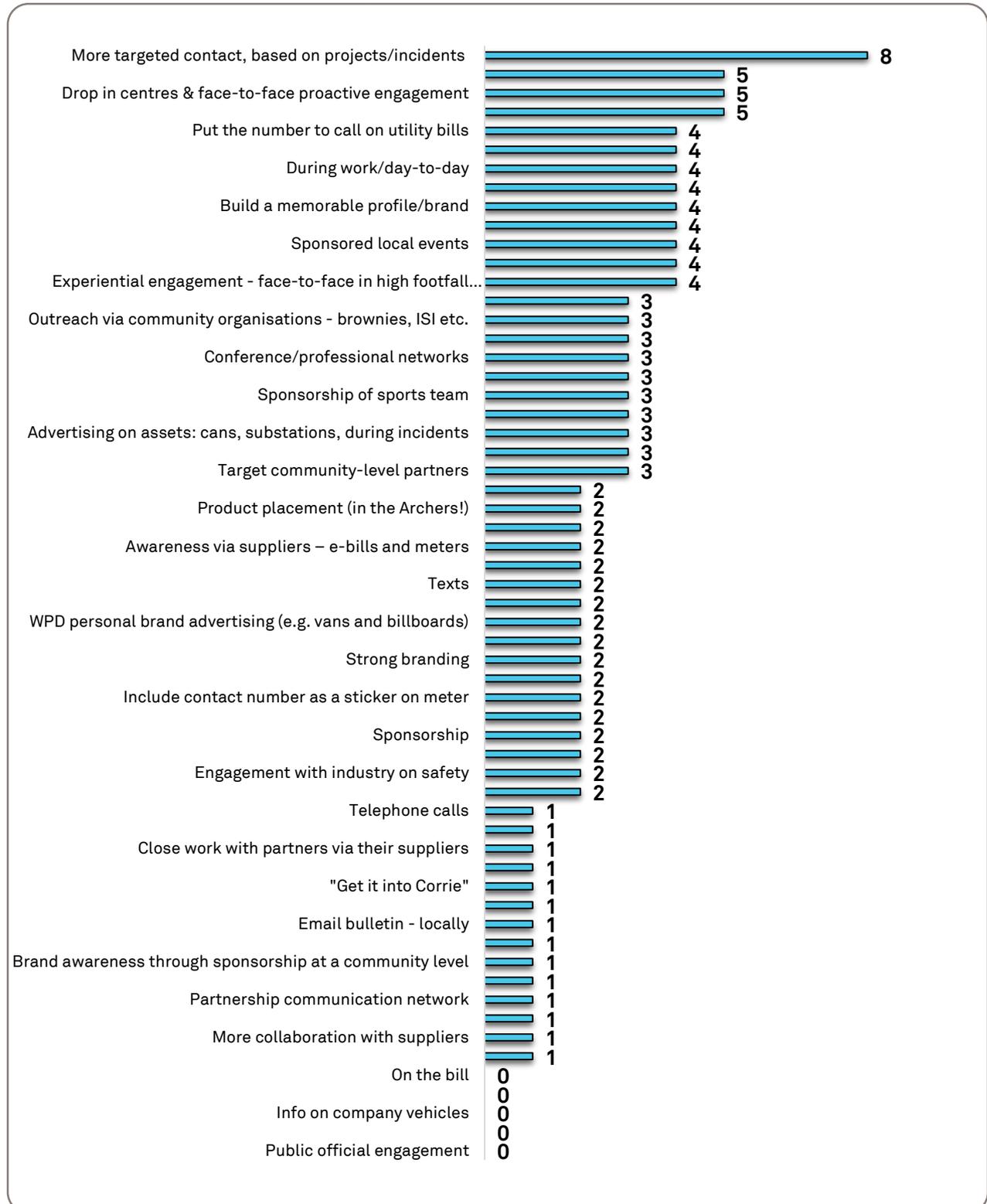


How do you rate **customer awareness of WPD** as a long-term priority?



6. Stakeholder suggested initiatives – Customer Awareness of WPD

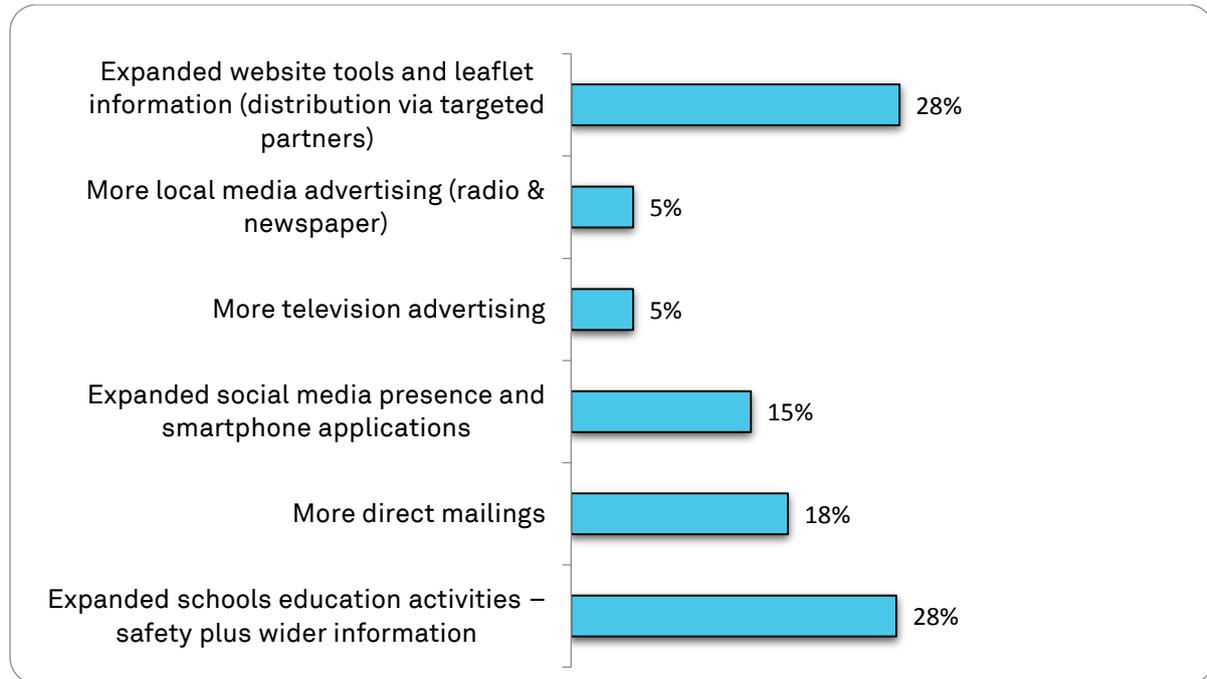
During the workshops, stakeholders suggested additional activities for **customer awareness of WPD** beyond those that WPD had already identified. The graph below presents a summary of those additional activities along with the number of votes they received across all of the workshops.



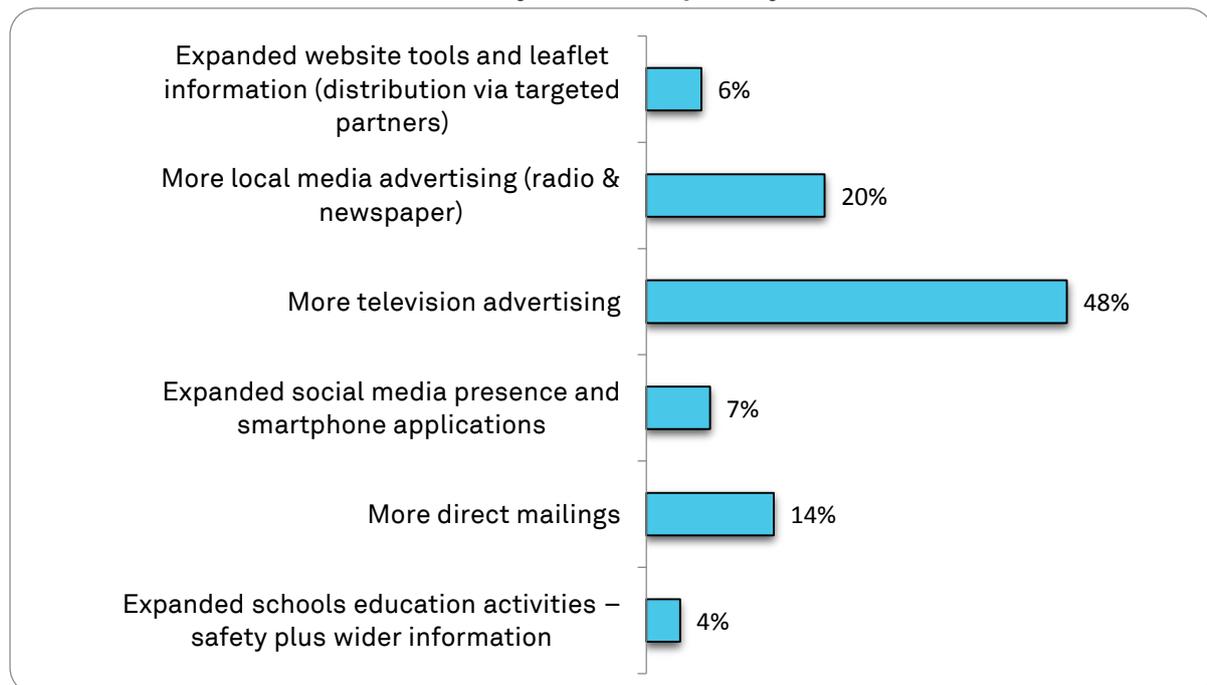
7. Individual voting results - Customer Awareness of WPD

After the group discussions during the workshop, stakeholders were asked to vote again. Each stakeholder, through electronic voting, ranked their highest and lowest priorities in both “Customer awareness of WPD” and “Affordability & Vulnerability”. The results are shown below.

Q1. Of the actions identified which are your top two priorities?

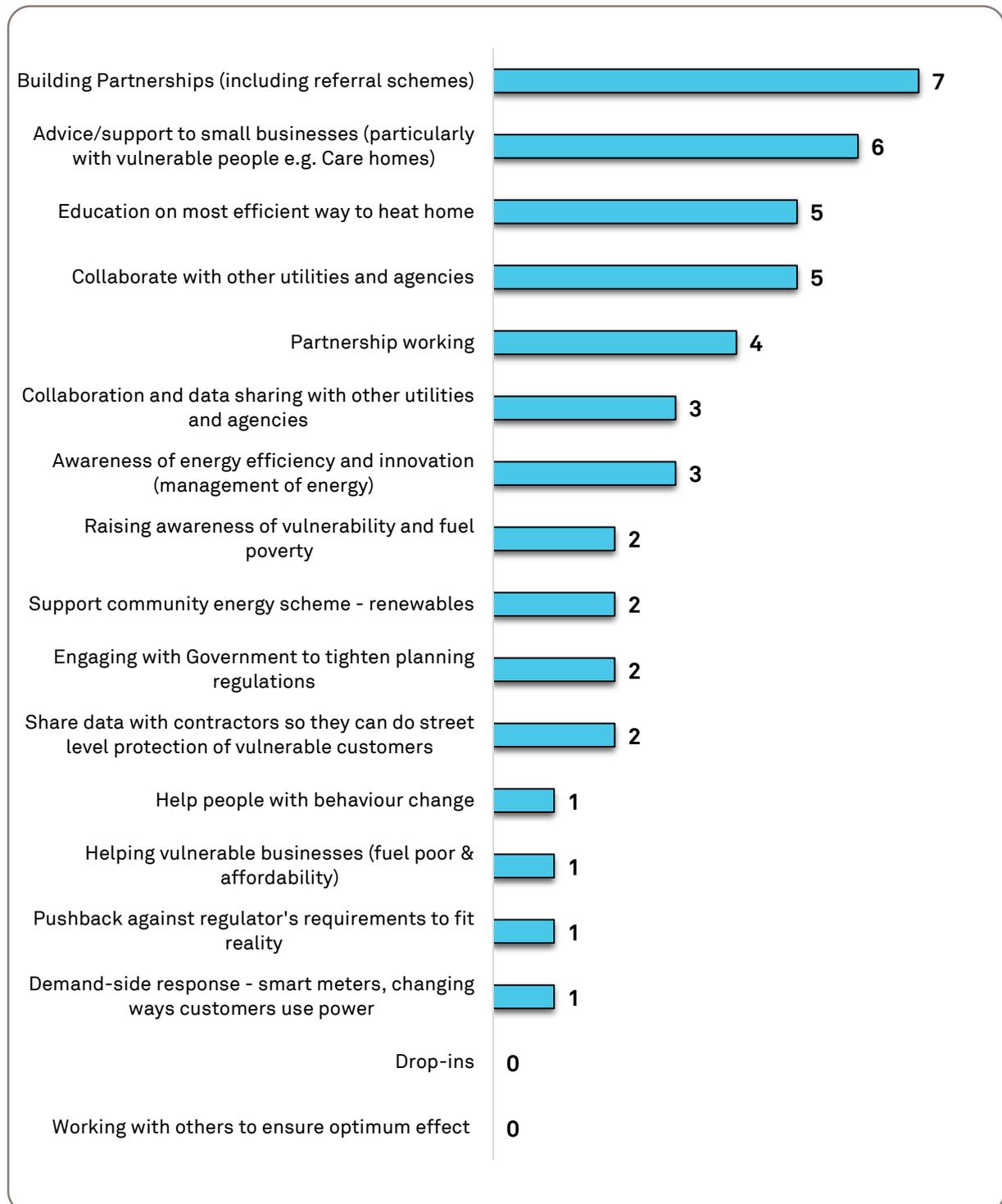


Q2. Of the actions identified which is your lowest priority?



8. Stakeholder suggested initiatives – Affordability and Vulnerability

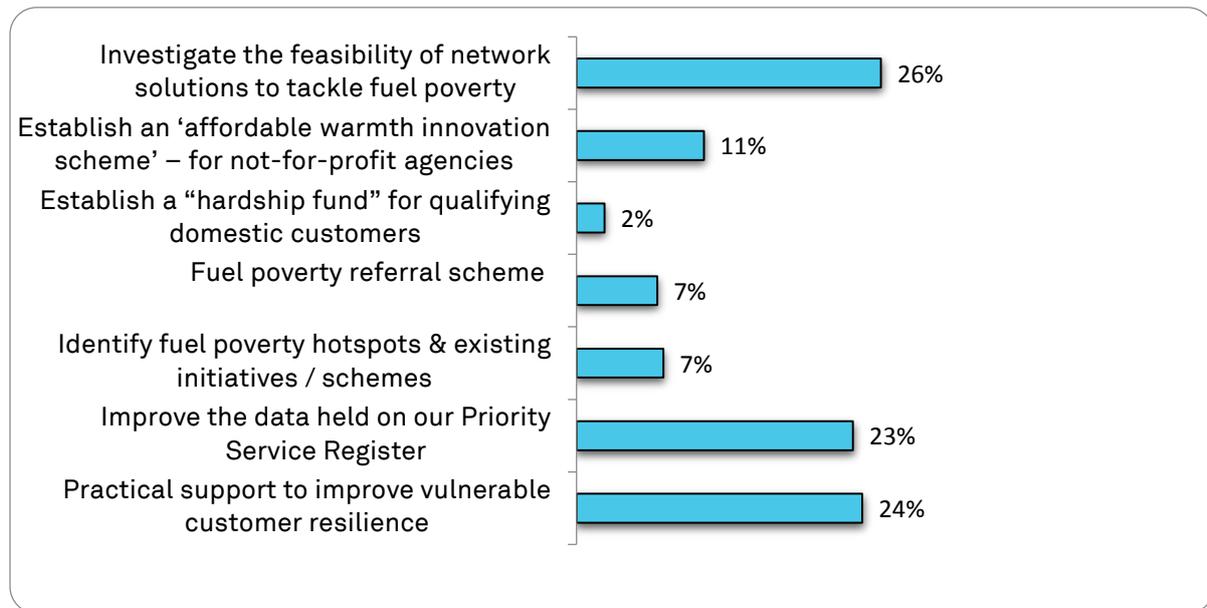
During the workshop, stakeholders suggested additional activities for **affordability and vulnerability** beyond those that WPD had already identified. The graph below presents a summary of those additional activities along with the number of votes they received across all of the workshop tables.



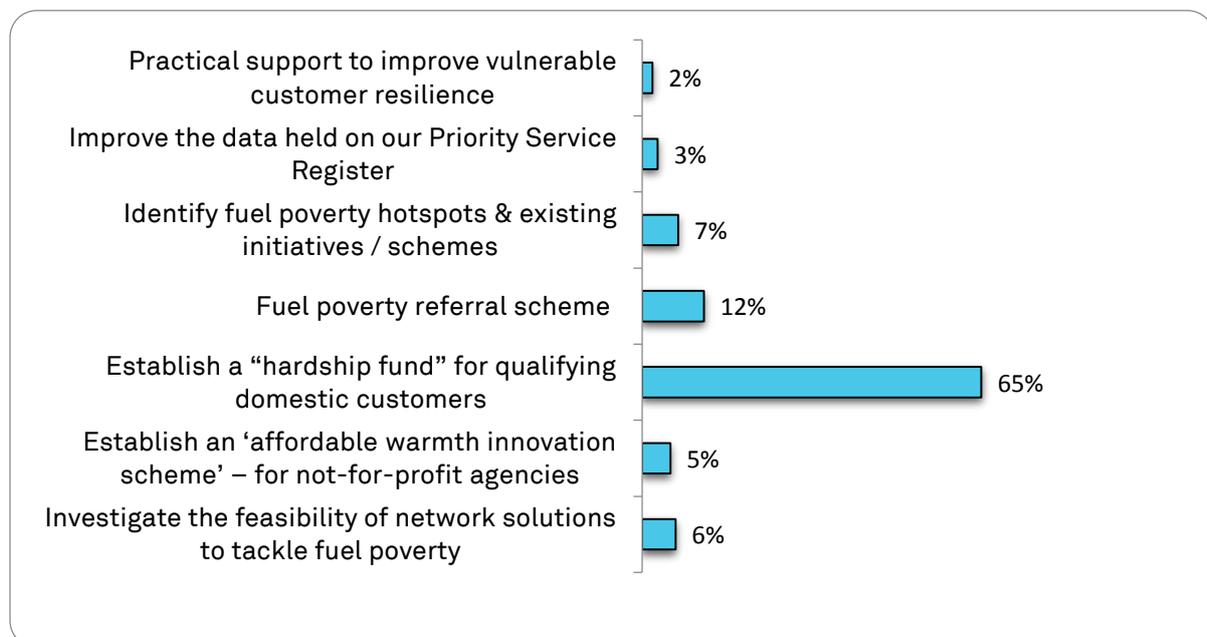
9. Individual voting results – Affordability and Vulnerability

After the group discussions during the workshop, stakeholders were asked to vote again. Each stakeholder, through electronic voting, ranked their highest and lowest activities. The results are shown below.

Q1. Of the actions identified which are your top two priorities?



Q2. Of the actions identified which is your lowest priority?



10. Surgeries on specific topics

In the afternoon, WPD held four surgeries on specific topics with stakeholders able to sign up to their preferred session throughout the day. The surgeries including a presentation from a WPD technical expert followed by an open Q&A session. Each surgery lasted roughly one hour.

8.1 Environmental Reporting

A WPD representative gave a presentation on what they were doing with regards to environmental reporting. The presentation covered the following areas:

- Ofgem's requirements for a sustainability report
- Visual amenity
- Oil leakage
- Carbon footprint
- Network energy losses
- Waste management
- Low carbon transition

The WPD representative then asked stakeholders for feedback both in terms of the environmental reporting activities WPD is undertaking, as well as how they would like to see these activities presented in a final report.

The key themes to come out of stakeholder discussions across all the workshops were:

- A breakdown of undergrounding by AONB areas, rather than WPD license areas, would be of much more interest to stakeholders.
 - Developing this as an interactive map would be especially helpful.
- WPD should develop case studies of their own low carbon transition.
- WPD should make clear that their oil does not contain PCB, arsenic or heavy metals.
- The final report should be short and punchy. It should be aimed at the 7.8 million customers and should be accessible to them.
 - This could even take the form of an online infographic, taking out 90% of the text and making the information and accessible as possible.
 - Other suggestions included a one-page summary with an appendix.

8.2 Network Losses

A WPD representative gave a presentation on WPD's losses strategy. The presentation outlined how WPD's losses strategy aims to ensure that losses from the Distribution System are as low as reasonably practicable and set out the objectives that the strategy would like to achieve by 2023.

The presentation covered what parts of the strategy had been revised as part of the final Business Plan. This included:

- Transformers
- Cables
- Design rules
- Power quality and voltage regulation
- Revenue protection

The key themes to come out of stakeholder discussions across all the workshops were:

- The difference between losses in rural and urban networks.
- The impact smart meters and smart appliances will have on the network both in terms of theft and lost energy.
- Why there is not a quantitative figure for technical losses or theft in conveyance.
- There should be a map on WPD's website showing areas of transformers.
- Old transistors should be proactively replaced, as this would save money.
- WPD's policy of 'next size up', which increases efficiency and capacity without causing a problem to the grid, was well received.

The full presentation delivered on the day can be downloaded [online here](#).

8.3 Social Obligations (incl. vulnerability and fuel poverty)

A WPD representative delivered a presentation on WPD's social obligations programme. This covered the following areas:

- Objectives, strategy and process
- The social obligations commitments in the RIIO-ED1 Business Plan
- Significant developments in 2014
- The Priority Service Register
- The 'Power Up' referral partnership
- The 'Affordable Warmth' scheme

The key themes to come out of stakeholder discussions across all the workshops were:

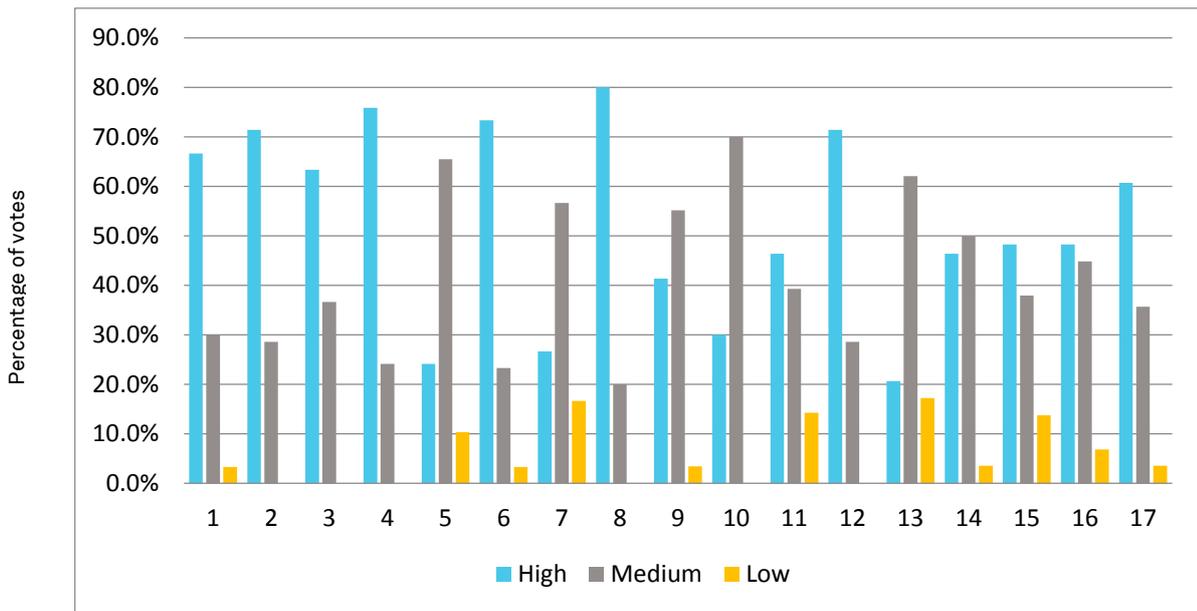
- The role of partnering with other organisations and how they are selected, particularly the Citizens Advice Bureau.
 - Other suggestions included referral schemes with food banks and proactive housing associations or helping large organisations fulfil their corporate social responsibility commitments.
- Concerns about how people get onto the Priority Service Register, what the criteria is and whether it is mapped geographically.
- Up-to-date information is of most importance when tackling vulnerability and fuel poverty.
- How the terms 'affordable' and 'vulnerable' are defined.
- Developing a clearer link between health and fuel poverty and by extension developing relationships with health organisations.
- The risk of fraud for example whereby people could feign medical dependency to get priority treatment.

Stakeholders were then provided with a table of objectives and asked for their individual views on what to prioritise and what approach they should take moving forward. The objectives were numbered as below and the results were as follows:

Objectives:

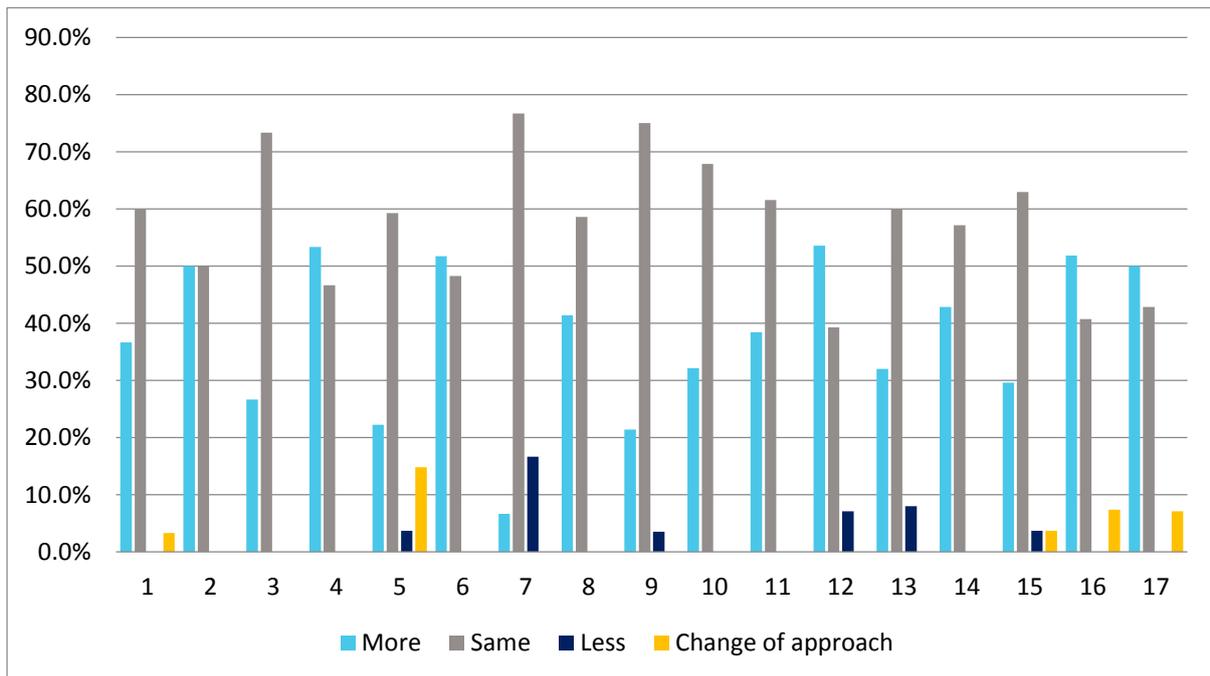
1. Work with expert partners to improve understanding of the needs of vulnerable customers
2. Train staff to recognise the signs of vulnerability
3. Proactively contact vulnerable customers at least once every two years to check the details on the Priority Services Register
4. Improve the quality of the Priority Services Register data by working with other agencies and sharing information
5. Coordinate meetings with suppliers to agree criteria for vulnerability
6. Raise awareness of the Priority Services Register
7. Make 10,000 crisis packs available
8. Contact all medically dependent customers every three hours during power cuts
9. Continue to provide practical support via the Royal Voluntary Service and British Red Cross
10. Seek feedback from vulnerable customers to improve service
11. Develop mechanisms for sharing information with local resilience forums
12. Build a database of regional agencies we can refer customers to for assistance
13. Work with partners to develop links to/from WPD's website
14. Develop joined information, awareness campaigns and coordinate assistance with partners
15. Engage Parish Councils to assist with their Emergency Resilience planning
16. Provide bespoke training to frontline staff
17. Use data analysis to help identify localities with a high concentration of vulnerable households

Q1. How would you prioritise each objective (high, medium or low)?



- The objective voted the highest priority across all six workshops was ‘Contact all medically dependent customers every three hours during power cuts’, which was voted a high priority 80 per cent of the time.
- The objective voted the lowest priority across all workshops was ‘work with partners to develop links to/from WPD’s website’, which was voted a low priority 17 per cent of the time.

Q2. What approach should WPD take towards each objective moving forward (more, same, less or change of approach)?



- Across all six workshops, the two objectives that stakeholders wanted to see more of in future were ‘build a database of regional agencies we can refer customers to for assistance’ and ‘improve the quality of Priority Services Register data by working with other agencies and sharing information.’
- While there were no objectives that the *majority* of stakeholders wanted to see less of in future, ‘make 10,000 crisis packs available’ was voted for by 17 per cent of attendees.
- While there were no objectives that the *majority* of stakeholders wanted to see a change of approach with, ‘coordinate meetings with suppliers to agree criteria for vulnerability’ was voted for by 15 per cent of attendees.

The full presentation delivered on the day can be downloaded [online here](#).

8.4 Connections and Distributed Generation

A WPD representative talked stakeholders through table summaries of the activities involved in each of the work streams that form WPD’s connections workplan. The workstreams are as follows:

- Information and Application
- Quotations and Agreements
- Construction and Connections

The key themes to come out of stakeholder discussions across all the workshops were:

- Network information is crucial and it should be available and accessible for everyone.
- Being able to track an enquiry online would be useful.
- Since multiple applications are often made by the same applicant. The appointment of account Managers, which has worked well at other DNOs, could be useful.
- How accepted quotes that fall by the wayside but still reserve capacity on the network are dealt with.
- How stakeholders can access the distributed generation capacity map.
- WPD should have clear initial regional contacts and not just a central number.
- There was generally support for a heat map, which shows constraints on the network, but there were concerns over its accuracy and a need for it to be as up-to-date as possible.
- Customers should be updated when an offer expires instead of just refunding the money.
- WPD should link with Major Growth Plans being undertaken by local bodies.
- Whether there is scope for WPD to purchase land from landowners when they are blocking an application.

The connections work plan tables can be found [online here](#) (pp.5-11).