

Synthesis report v1.2
Stage 1 – Preliminary Engagement
Delivered by Sia Partners
3rd of February 2020

Summary of ‘Preliminary Engagement’

WPD is currently completing the first stage of the RIIO-2 engagement programme. This stage is focused on establishing customer priorities to inform the next stages of the plan, which will include detailed Willingness To Pay (WTP) research. This document collates all the feedback collected to date, drawn from 15 sources covering 2,058 stakeholders. A total of 305 pieces of feedback are summarised and detailed in the pages below.

This report is the result of the initial synthesis work which analysed the feedback collected and broke it down into the appropriate high-level topics. Each topic is discussed separately and includes a breakdown of the number of stakeholders who contributed to WPD’s understanding, the number of feedback pieces collected, as well as details on the events and stakeholder segments involved. The full detail on each source of feedback can be found in the table in the appendix.

Each high-level topic has been divided into sub-topics where the detailed content will be discussed and summarised. These summaries will ultimately form the basis of the triangulation process – informing WPD’s decision-makers of the key customer and stakeholder concerns.

The figures below provide a picture of the preliminary engagement stage in terms of the regions covered, the methods used, the stakeholders engaged and their knowledge levels. While the questions and presentations at this stage focused on central issues, the events were evenly spread across the four regions of WPDs network. Customers and customer interest groups made up around 74.4% of the stakeholders engaged thus far, demonstrating WPD’s intent to understand customer priorities at this early stage, to feed in at the top of the business plan development process.

Regional breakdown



Figure 1: The Regional breakdown of the preliminary engagement

Methods breakdown

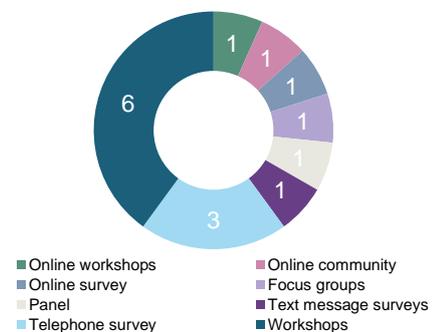


Figure 2: The methods breakdown of the preliminary engagement

Knowledge level

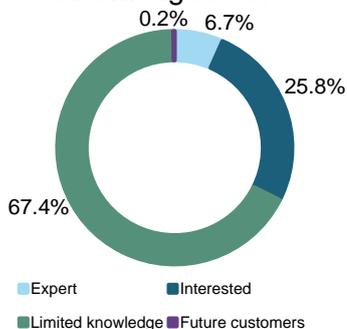


Figure 3: Breakdown of stakeholder knowledge level from preliminary engagement

Stakeholder Groups

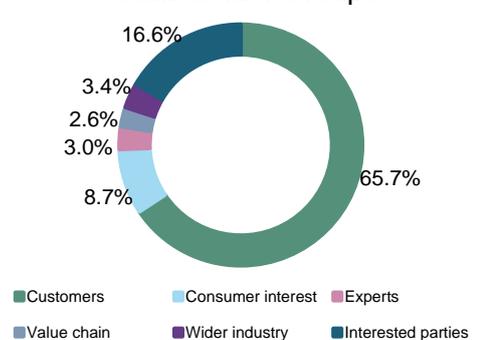


Figure 4: The proportions of stakeholder groups engaged during preliminary engagement

The table below details the number of stakeholders that attended the preliminary engagement events from each segment.

Stakeholder group	Segment	Number attended
Customers	Domestic customers	761
	Major connections customers	291
	Fuel poor/vulnerable customers	164
	Distributed generation customers	69
	Business customers	58
	Major energy users	5
	Future customers	4
Interested parties	Local authorities	243
	Other	74
	Local Enterprise Partnerships	9
	Non-governmental organisations	9
	Healthcare	4
	Emergency services	2
	Trade associations	0
Consumer interest	Charities	69
	Consumer interest bodies	58
	Parish councils	34
	Vulnerable customer representatives	19
Wider industry	Utilities	64
	Community energy groups	5
Experts	Environmental groups	25
	Academic institutions	22
	Energy consultant	11
	Government	4
	Electric vehicle manufacturers	0
Value chain	Developers	25
	Storage providers	11
	Connections providers	7
	Electric vehicle charge point manufacturers and installers	5
	Energy aggregators	4
	IDNO	2
Total		2,058

Figure 5: The number of stakeholders from each segment that attended the preliminary engagement events.

Feedback from these stakeholders was initially recorded by the organisations running the events (WPD, Accent, or EQ communications), and has now been recorded in WPD’s newly created feedback database. Each specific point of view has been recorded as a separate statement, and grouped into high-level topics and sub-topics by Sia Partners who are managing the process.

Sia Partners developed these topics by starting with Ofgem’s three output categories, before creating additional, logical groupings for feedback that didn’t naturally fall into one of the three. This independent approach will lead to greater consistency in the recording of data, and feedback that is easy to filter, and extract insight from.

The graph and table on the following page breaks down the feedback collected and how it has been categorised. These volumes will form an important part of how customer priorities will be determined for the next stage of engagement.

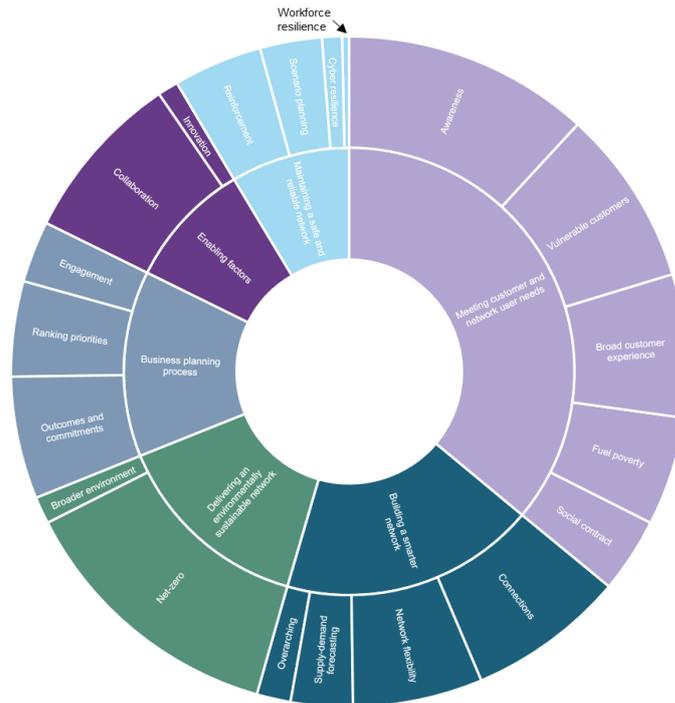


Figure 6: The volume of feedback collected for each high-level and topic and sub-topics.

High-level topic	Sub-topic	# of feedback
Meeting customer and network user needs (36%)	Awareness	36
	Vulnerable customers	26
	Broad customer experience	21
	Fuel poor customers	16
	Social contract	11
Building a smarter network (18%)	Connections	23
	Network flexibility	19
	Supply-demand forecasting	9
	Overarching	5
Delivering an environmentally sustainable network (14%)	Net-zero	40
	Broader environment	4
Business planning process (13%)	Outcomes and commitments	18
	Ranking priorities	14
	Engagement	9
Maintaining a safe and reliable network (9%)	Reinforcement	13
	Scenario planning	9
	Cyber resilience	3
	Workforce resilience	1
Enabling factors (9%)	Collaboration	25
	Innovation	3
Total		305

Figure 7: The breakdown of feedback volume collected for each high-level and sub-topic.

The figures highlight the feedback, organised by high-level and sub-topics, that was collected throughout the preliminary engagement events. The rest of this report will drill down into the detail, laying out the specific comments in each area.

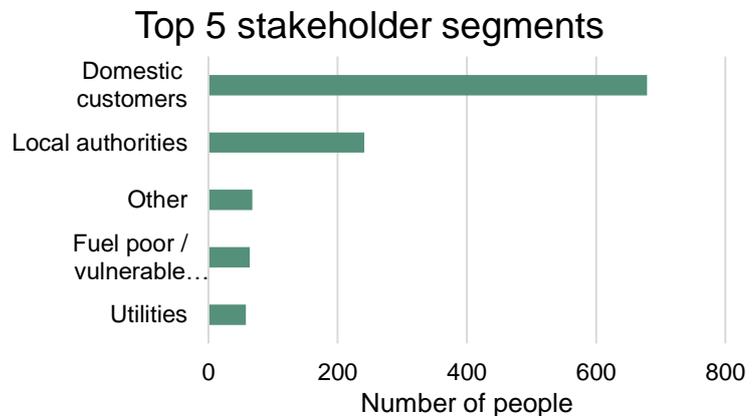
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High-level topic: 'Meeting customer and network user needs'

This chapter will focus on the feedback collected on the topic of meeting customer and network user needs. As one of Ofgem's output categories, network companies are expected to deliver high quality and reliable service to all their users and customers, including those in vulnerable situations. WPD must reflect and consider the network's services and requirements of existing and future customers, especially considering the regional and local level implications of the business plan. Crucially, the plan must deliver clear consumer value, in the areas that consumers value.

The feedback on this topic includes 110 of the 305 data points collected during the preliminary engagement stage (36.1%). The feedback was collected across 10 engagements, from 1,569 stakeholders, the details of which are below.



Stage	Number of Events	Engagement Methods	Dates	Delivery partners	Attendees
Preliminary Engagement	10 of 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Online workshops • Telephone surveys • Text message surveys • Focus groups • Panel 	Feb-19 to Dec-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accent • EQ Communications • Traverse 	1,569 of 2,060

'Meeting customer and network user needs' consists of five sub-topic areas:

- 1) Awareness
- 2) Broad customer experience
- 3) Fuel poor customers
- 4) Social contract
- 5) Vulnerable customers

Summary of each sub-topic:

1) Awareness:

Stakeholders were broadly unaware of WPD, its role in the electricity sector and its social responsibilities, such as to vulnerable customers. This lack of understanding causes difficulties when stakeholders attempt to assess and engage on WPD's performance. It was noted in multiple events that stakeholders would welcome increased information regarding new connections, services, innovation as well as the implications of the transition to DSO could affect customers. This information would be required to effectively comment on the future WPD Business Plan.

Furthermore, several of the more informed stakeholders requested increased information provision of project application processes particularly regarding new renewable applications, Electric Nation project and deploying new EV charging infrastructure in general.

2) Broad customer experience:

Business Plan affordability is the second-highest priority for some stakeholders. While most stakeholders agreed that the current situation reflected good value for money, the priorities regarding future investment or bill reduction differed between events.

Customer service was another key element from the feedback with the majority of stakeholders reflecting positively on their interaction with WPD. Clarity and good communication were highlighted in multiple events as a critical area of improvement, both in providing speedy and informative updates to customers during power cuts, but also providing a single point of contact for connection customers.

3) Fuel poor:

Despite a low priority score for addressing fuel poverty and many stakeholders stating that WPD had limited power to help this group as it only attributed ~20% of the bill, stakeholders were pleased to see action in this area and had several suggestions for future work; educating fuel poor customers about the services available to them as well as staff training were noted as potential future improvements. There were some suggestions regarding improving current services such as the Affordable Warmth Scheme and tender process for charities as well as the allocation of connection costs for customers. Overall, customers were relatively pleased with WPD's work in this area and would like to see it continue.

4) Social contract:

While over 75% of stakeholders in one event agreed that a social contract was an important requirement of the business plan, stakeholders in different events disagreed whether it should take the form of a separate section in the business plan or integrated throughout. Workforce efforts, diversity and pay were all seen as initiatives that should be included as part of the contract. Stakeholders also stated that increasing the transparency of WPD's finances and social partners would improve customer trust in the company, which currently sits at 7.7/10. Feedback suggests that annual audits of progress on each commitment could be completed as a means of tracking delivery.

5) Vulnerable customers:

This was one of the highest priorities noted by stakeholders, especially surrounding the protection of vulnerable customers during power cuts and the transition to a smarter network. There were a number of strategies and initiatives mentioned during the engagement events such as education of vulnerable customers (of services, the transition to a DSO and PSR), training staff to communicate effectively with vulnerable customers, and appropriate deployment of new technology to help vulnerable customers.

Awareness - detailed feedback

WPD's role

- It was generally noted that stakeholders had very limited or no knowledge of WPD or their role within the electricity system ([E002](#), [E011](#), [E011](#)) with several attendees believing the distribution network was National Grid's responsibility ([E011](#)).¹
- Some members of the Citizen Panel recognised the WPD logo from vans and signs but could not articulate their role ([E011](#)).
- Stakeholders registered a low level of knowledge of the Power Cut Line (105), as an example, which implied that WPD should complete further marketing campaigns to improve understanding of these services ([E011](#)). However, others suggested in the same event that this may not be WPD's role as they were not trying to sell you anything different to Suppliers ([E011](#)). Members at another event ([E010](#)) suggested that raising awareness of WPD projects and network improvements was more useful than conducting an expensive marketing campaign.
- The confusion regarding the role of WPD within the electricity system supply chain resulted in negative perceptions of suppliers being projected onto WPD ([E011](#)).
- It was noted that a thorough understanding of WPD's role would be crucial in order to fairly assess the Business Plan's value for money, with stakeholders concerned about customer overcharging ([E011](#)). Also, stakeholders requested increased clarity regarding the company structure and performance to ensure consistency throughout the company and consider its efficacy in its role ([E014](#)).
- After customers were educated regarding WPD's social responsibilities, some suggestions included protecting vulnerable customers as well as educating people about their electricity consumption ([E010](#)). Furthermore, once stakeholders completed a 'deprivation exercise', customers began to understand the "24/7" reliance of WPD in every aspect of their lives ([E010](#), [E010](#)), and 17% stated the proportion of the DNO service on their bill was disproportionately low ([E010](#)). When this was also placed in the context of future electricity usage, customers noted a feeling of increased reliance on WPD's services ([E010](#)).

¹ In the detailed feedback section of each topic, we have included links to each event where the point was made (i.e. "(E001)". If similar points were made in one or more events, to avoid repetition we have grouped the information, noting the point once, then included multiple links (i.e. "(E001, E002, E003)"). Each event reference corresponds to a specific piece of feedback (so "(E001, E001)" corresponds to two similar points at the same event).

The links take the reader to a table in the appendix, providing further detail on the event and the stakeholders who attended.

Education about services

- To counteract the lack of knowledge of WPD's role mentioned above, education and information clarity was mentioned as an important factor in several different events ([E002](#), [E011](#), [E013](#), [E014](#), [E015](#)), particularly through WPD's website ([E002](#)). Communication and Marketing were also mentioned in 3 of 8 groups as a key WPD priority ([E011](#)). An IDNO noted the importance of educating local authorities about the role of DNO's because the lack of understanding can create a challenge ([E014](#)). Stakeholders also suggested an education programme on WPD's role in secondary schools ([E011](#)).
- Numerous events stated the need for education and clarity regarding certain network changes such as: the shift to a digital network, particularly with vulnerable customers ([E015](#)); the process for deploying new infrastructure like EV charging infrastructure alongside the cost and timelines; the effect of this new infrastructure like EVs, heat pumps and battery storage and benefits to customers ([E002](#), [E002](#)); new connections ([E002](#)) and innovative connections ([E002](#)); and the changes to the future network capacity ([E014](#)).
- Improved understanding of planning phases for major projects such as new renewable developments and the Electric Nation project was mentioned as a requirement ([E013](#), [E013](#)) and could be improved with increased activity in local meetings and discussions ([E014](#)).
- The future expectations of awareness included a combination of improved brand awareness, using multiple communication channels for informing about power cuts, improve understanding of the 105-number service and clear communication on project progress as well as prioritising communication with PSR members. ([E011](#), [E011](#))

Broad customer experience - detailed feedback

Affordability

- 'Providing an affordable service' was the second most important priority at one event, with a score of 9.39 out of 10 ([E008](#)). Affordability and business plan cost was mentioned as a key priority by 4/10 groups at another event ([E011](#)).
- Making the business plan affordable was prioritised ahead of fuel poverty, customer service and customer vulnerability respectively ([E009](#)).
- In general, stakeholders with previous engagement with WPD felt that it provided good value for money ([E010](#)), with a mean score of 7/10 for value for money ([E002](#)). 90% of customers thought that the 27p charge per day was good value for money ([E003](#)).
- It was mentioned that costs and services should be made clearer to customers ([E002](#)), as customers noted a score of 5.8/10 for their awareness of WPD's cost and services ([E003](#)).
- It was noted that network charging costs should be subject to the customer owning an EV or not ([E002](#)).
- Stakeholders in one event wanted to keep costs down including reducing the operating costs of the business, reducing business investment which affects the customer bill and establish efficient infrastructure updates ([E011](#)). However, stakeholders in another event had no appetite for lower investment or bill reduction and only wanted WPD to try and limit the increasing cost of energy ([E010](#)).

Customer service

- In general, stakeholders had a positive experience of working with WPD, including being responsive and 'joined-up' (E015).
- It was noted that the longer the power cut the more customer emotions tended to escalate (E010). Customers highlighted that speedy, proactive reassurance of anticipated length of outage, the severity of disruption and advice on what to do were all important to providing good customer service (E010).
- Stakeholders at one event noted that lessons should be learnt from the lack of communication and clarity displayed during the smart meter roll-out in order to maximise customer trust in WPD (E015).
- A key issue raised in multiple events was the lack of clarity regarding who to contact, with many noting the preference to have a single point of contact within the company (E013). One suggestion was to provide a communal communication platform to provide the clarity required around certain topics (E014). It was also suggested that several different channels should be used to communicate effectively with everyone as well as being proactive in updating customers of developments (for example, every 20 minutes in a power cut) (E010).
- Connections customers mostly noted a positive experience of WPD (E013), stating that they were open and easy to work with (E014). The best experiences resulted from early engagement and communication regarding the application process, while the negative experiences resulted from a lack of transparency regarding costs (E014).

Fuel poor customers - detailed feedback

- Addressing fuel poverty was noted as the lowest priority of stakeholders with a score of 5.79 out of 10 (E002).
- While stakeholders were pleased that WPD took responsibility for fuel poverty rather than purely focus on infrastructure (E015), helping fuel poor customers was not felt to be the responsibility of the DNOs (E002) as WPD only attributed to ~20% of the bill (E002). Stakeholder felt that governments and suppliers had more responsibility.
- The cost of energy tends to be low on the list of fuel poor customer expenditures which therefore increases the difficulty for effective engagement (E015).

Current Grants and services

- Fuel poor customers need to be better educated about the availability of grants (E002) as well as the services available to them, but stakeholders also felt WPD should increase their outreach services (E002). Fuel poor customers may be more inclined to hand over control to DSOs for active network management which may be an opportunity for bill reduction in future (E015).
- Flexible tariffs could provide another potential future opportunity for fuel poor customers to reduce their energy bills (E015)
- It was noted that both the extensive administrative process involved in the Affordable Warmth Scheme and the fee for charities to tender for the project would be barriers for improvements in this area (E015, E015).

Addressing the issue

- Stakeholders discussed the overlap between fuel poor customers and vulnerable customers and identified that staff training and outreach projects should therefore be coordinated between these two customer groups (E002). Also coordinating a database of regional agencies that could provide fuel poverty support which can be shared with partners will be key.
- Similarly, other stakeholders mentioned the provision of education and information on fuel poverty and the location of support services is a key future step, as well as aid customers with energy efficiencies, particularly in rural areas (E015).
- Stakeholders stated that as many fuel poor customers are at the mercy of private landlords, there is an issue that cost savings are not passed onto the tenants, and there may also be a lack of understanding of newly installed technology (such as heat pumps) (E015).
- It was also noted that fuel poor customers may pay disproportionately for reinforcement and new connections to the network if the costs are socialised across all customers, while wealthier customers can afford new technologies and should, therefore, pay a different subsidy rate (E015).

Social contract - detailed feedback

- 76% of respondents felt that WPD needed a social contract (E003).

Format of the social contract

- 49% of stakeholders believed that the social contract should be a separate section in WPD's business plan to ensure it would be taken seriously (E002). However, 29% believed that the business plan as a whole should be a social contract (E002). This was further supported with 48% of respondents in another event stating that the business plan itself should serve as the social contract, with 23% also desiring annual reporting of delivery against the commitments (E003).
- Some felt that the social contract should contain financial penalties to ensure the commitments are adhered to by WPD (E002).

Transparency, governance and trust

- Stakeholders scored their trust in WPD as 7.7 out of 10 (E002).
- It was made clear that stakeholders had limited knowledge of WPD's costs and services (E002) and that the social contract should provide transparency over finances and presented in clear concise language to aide customers' understanding (E002)
- Many stakeholders were keen for an independent scrutiny, potentially by a third party. However, it wasn't clear who or how (CEG - 21%, reporting - 20%, external audits - 15%) (E002).
- The lack of transparency of WPD's projects and social partners restricted the flow of information to its stakeholders and referral partners and should, therefore, be published (E015).

Diversity and inclusivity

- The social contract should contain information on workforce welfare, diversity and equal pay, and should also cover the use of local contractors according to stakeholders at one event (E002).

Vulnerable customers - detailed feedback

- 'Protecting vulnerable customers during power cuts' was the joint third highest priority at 9.35 out of 10 ([E009](#)).
- Stakeholders broadly agreed that WPD's vulnerability strategic goals for 2019 were appropriate ([E002](#)) and stakeholders praised WPD for their work in this area ([E002](#)).
- Vulnerable customers were discussed as a priority on 3 of 4 tables at this event ([E011](#)).

Data Analysis

- Data analysis of vulnerable customer concentrations were noted as an important step for WPD ([E002](#)), with some stakeholders suggesting information of vulnerable customers should be displayed on an interactive map which can, therefore, be overlaid with other useful information ([E002](#)).
- Data sharing between other services providers should be encouraged wherever possible, especially with health services as they can also help feedback into the system and improve overall service provision ([E015](#)).
- Development of a priority business customer register by Electricity North West was seen as a positive example of new initiatives in this space ([E016](#)).

Smarter network

- It was noted that there are opportunities and challenges to vulnerable customers in the transition to a smarter network ([E015](#)), but stakeholders noted the importance of ensuring that vulnerable customers are not left behind as the network becomes smarter ([E002](#), [E013](#), [E015](#), [E015](#)).
- However, vulnerable customers are not a homogenous group and therefore smart future planning must consider this range ([E015](#)).
- Opportunities in this sphere included that younger vulnerable customers may be able to interact more intuitively with the smarter network and that placing solar panels on the roofs of vulnerable customers could increase their resilience to power cuts ([E015](#)).

Strategies and initiatives

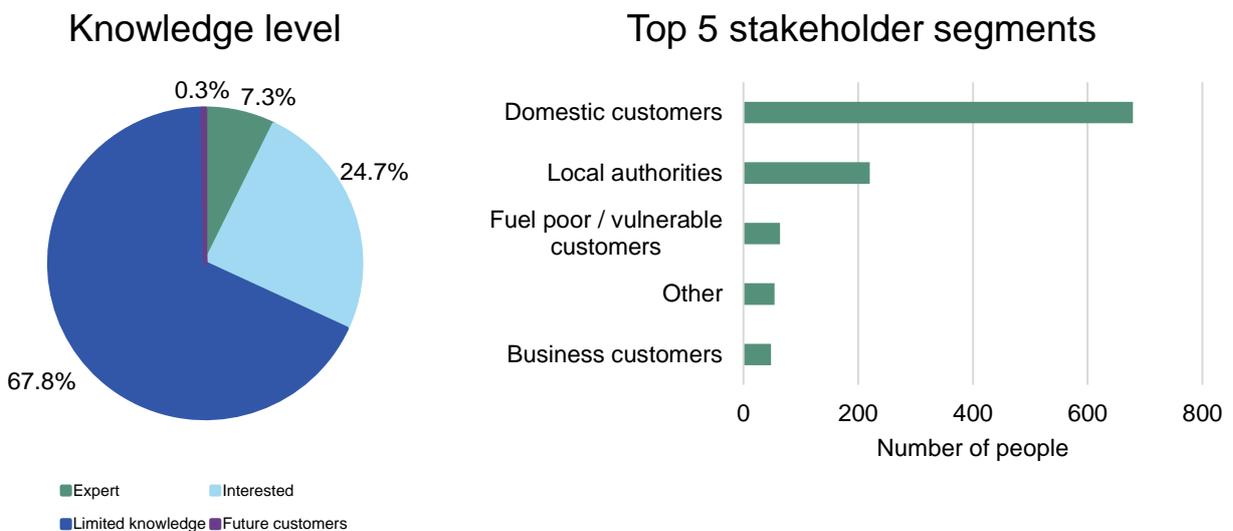
- Deploying new technologies, such as smart meters can help vulnerable customers reduce energy consumption and not be left behind ([E002](#)).
- It was noted that the rollout of certain initiatives varies according to location, as some health authorities, especially, are more likely to participate than others ([E002](#)).
- Improving understanding of vulnerability can be accomplished through running online courses at Citizen Advice branches ([E015](#)).
- Education was noted as the highest priority for vulnerable customers in RIIO-2, particularly with the low carbon transition, energy efficiency, PSR and the DSO transition ([E015](#)). Awareness of WPD services was also the highest priority for vulnerable customers in another event ([E011](#)). Raising awareness around the PSR may increase signups, which could also be combined with the promotion of PSR energy saving and efficiency advice ([E015](#)). Increasing awareness of the services available to vulnerable customers during a power cut was important to stakeholders ([E015](#)).
- The top 5 languages used on ReciteMe were a surprise to stakeholders ([E016](#)).
- Stakeholders mentioned the importance of providing adequate support for blind and deaf customers ([E016](#)). Furthermore, adequate staff training is important when dealing with vulnerable customers as it can be a delicate process ([E016](#)). It was also mentioned that increased staff awareness of vulnerabilities and the services could be accomplished by

sending WPD executives to accompany frontline staff in the field when dealing with vulnerable customers ([E011](#)).

High-level topic: ‘Maintaining a safe and reliable network’

This chapter will focus on the feedback collected on the topic of maintaining a safe and reliable network. This Ofgem output category focuses on a number of different aspects such as: the company’s asset health, criticality and replacement priorities; workforce planning to develop a modern, high-quality, well-trained workforce fit for the future; and ensure appropriate and proportionate technical and organisational cyber-security strategy in order to prevent and minimise effects of such events on essential services.

The feedback on this topic includes 26 of the 305 data points collected during the preliminary engagement stage (8.5%). This feedback was collected across 6 engagement events, from 1,387 stakeholders, the details of which are below.



Stage	Number of Events	Engagement Methods	Dates	Delivery partners	Attendees
Preliminary Engagement	6 of 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops Text message surveys Focus groups Panel Online surveys 	Feb-19 to Dec-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accent EQ Communications Traverse 	1,322 of 2,060

‘Maintaining a safe and reliable network’ consists of four sub-topic areas which are:

- 1) Cyber resilience
- 2) Reinforcement
- 3) Scenario planning
- 4) Workforce resilience

Summary of each sub-topic:

1) Cyber resilience

Stakeholders were conscious of the potential implications of a cyber-attack on the network and therefore viewed building resiliency towards this threat a priority, ranking at an average of 4th across all sub-topics. Considering that the threat in this area may grow in the future, stakeholders expect WPD to collaborate with government bodies and identify best practice from other industries to improve in this area.

2) Reinforcement

Reinforcement was widely noted as the most important priority for a wide range of stakeholder segments across several events. This was viewed as the fundamental role of WPD which was reflected in the very high priority scoring. Infrastructure upgrades, implementation of new technologies, as well as the ability to respond quickly to unforeseen events were the focal points that stakeholders pointed out to WPD to ensure the reliability of their network. The safety of WPD staff and the general public was also highlighted as of critical importance.

3) Scenario planning

The ability to predict the network's demands during extreme weather and flooding was viewed as an increasingly important future concern. The consensus was that being proactive was better, and potentially cheaper than being reactive, especially considering the increasing demands in certain areas of the network with local development plans. Contingency plans and enhanced network monitoring were mentioned alongside scenario planning around flooding and heatwaves as potential actions for WPD in this area.

4) Workforce resilience

Despite the limited preliminary engagement on workforce planning, domestic customers answering a social media poll ranked it as the second-highest priority with a score of 8.87 out of 10.

Cyber resilience - detailed feedback

- Cyber resilience was discussed at length at all the workshops and emerged 4th in terms of importance (with a score of 7.41 out of 10) ([E002](#)).
- It was commented by stakeholders that the consequences of a cyberattack on the electricity network could be huge and should therefore be a strong focus for WPD ([E002](#)).
- Future activities in this area should focus on greater collaboration with government, learning best practice in other industries as well as completing a review of existing systems ([E002](#)).

Reinforcement - detailed feedback

- It was noted in multiple events that this was one of, if not the, highest priority for all stakeholders:
 - Network reliability was identified as the most important priority (scoring 8.46 out of 10) within the higher-level topic ([E002](#)) and scored 3rd most important overall (scoring 7.87/10) ([E002](#)).
 - The local investment workshop noted network reliability and network resilience as the 1st and 3rd highest priorities, respectively ([E013](#))
 - The local authority members and officers which noted network reliability and resilience as their highest priority ([E013](#), [E013](#)).
 - The panel discussion also stated that an efficient reliable supply was the priority mentioned most often in the event ([E011](#)).
 - 'A safe and reliable network' was the most important priority for customers with scores of 9.57 out of 10 and 9.29 out of 10 ([E008](#), [E009](#) respectively).
 - Resilience to power cuts was ranked the highest priority within the resiliency topic itself, followed by cyber-attacks in 2nd place and bad weather in 3rd place ([E009](#)).
- Safety is seen as critical, not only for WPD employees but also for the general public ([E010](#)). Ensuring a 24/7 service with no disruptions is integral to stakeholders ([E010](#)).
- In order to ensure a reliable service, stakeholders expected WPD to conduct regular maintenance and infrastructure upgrades wherever possible, invest in new technologies when appropriate and respond promptly to unforeseen events ([E011](#)). Network upgrades were also suggested at another event to ensure network reliability ([E002](#)).

Scenario planning - detailed feedback

- This sub-topic focused on WPD's ability to predict future demand for extreme weather and flooding on the network and the current infrastructure's ability to handle these demands. 'A network that is resilient to extreme weather' was ranked as the third-highest priority by stakeholders with a score of 8.82 out of 10 ([E009](#)). It was noted several times that severe weather events are likely to increase in future, therefore protection against floods and storms should be a focus of the company ([E002](#)).
- It was noted that while long term future planning can be costly, it is better to be proactive as reactionary measures feel expensive ([E010](#)).
- Delegates emphasised the importance of considering the local development plans when planning network reinforcement in order to ensure the current network can handle this load ([E013](#)). Despite its extensive resource requirement, a review of local authority plans was advised by delegates ([E013](#)).
- Stakeholders were also generally concerned about the possible impact of changes to network charging in the future considering changing network stresses ([E002](#)). The lack of clarity around future network charging, such as for future generators, limits the ability of stakeholders to accurately plan ([E002](#), [E002](#)).
- Activities suggested for WPD's network resilience efforts included: scenario planning around flooding and heatwaves; contingency planning; and enhanced monitoring of the network ([E002](#)).

Workforce resilience - detailed feedback

- There was a very limited engagement on this sub-topic, however, stakeholders ranked 'Having enough staff with the right skills' as the second-highest priority with a score of 8.87 out of 10 ([E009](#)).

High-level topic: 'Delivering an environmentally sustainable network'

This chapter will focus on the feedback collected on the topic of delivering an environmentally sustainable network. This Ofgem output category focuses on three impact areas which are:

- decarbonising the energy networks, with a focus on business carbon footprint and embedded carbon in networks,
- reducing the network's other environmental impacts such as pollution to the local environment, resource waste, biodiversity loss and other adverse local effects that are specific to each sector, and
- supporting the transition to an environmentally sustainable low-carbon energy system.

The feedback on this topic includes 44 of the 305 data points collected during the preliminary engagement stage (14.4%). This feedback was collected across 10 engagement events, from 1,532 stakeholders, the details of which are below.



Stage	Number of Events	Engagement Methods	Dates	Delivery partners	Attendees
Preliminary Engagement	10 of 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Online workshops • Telephone surveys • Text message surveys • Focus groups • Panel 	Feb-19 to Dec-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accent • EQ Communications • Traverse 	1,532 of 2,060

'Delivering an environmentally sustainable network' consists of two sub-topic areas:

- 1) Net-zero
- 2) Broader environment

Summary of each sub-topic:

1) Net-zero

Stakeholders want WPD to be more responsive on the environmental issue, particularly focusing on reducing emissions nationwide. It was evident that stakeholders were keen to see WPD set out a strategy to meet the government's net-zero target. Feedback focused on a few main topics; reducing WPD's carbon footprint; the policies and incentives that WPD could implement to encourage consumers to reduce their emissions; and the discussion of the technologies surrounding EVs and electrifying heat.

For internal emission reductions, stakeholders suggested converting company vehicles to electric vehicles, increase low-carbon electricity in buildings as well as making all company buildings carbon neutral before the governmental targets. Regarding the wider incentives programme, suggestions varied from increasing incentives for low carbon technology deployment (e.g. EV chargers) to educating consumers about ways to reduce their emissions and lobbying Ofgem to change emission rules and regulations.

There was also a mix of responses between stakeholders regarding the uptake of new flexible technologies with EVs being much more popular than renewable heating devices. Domestic customers were more likely to buy these technologies compared to businesses. There was also a substantial amount of feedback on WPD's role in the EV charging infrastructure particularly in terms of the network capacity and locations of charging hubs.

2) Broader environment

Despite most of the feedback in the 'Delivering an environmentally sustainable network' topic focussing on the reduction of carbon emissions, the broader environment was mentioned several times. Feedback here centred around biodiversity and waste, with the desire to see environment and sustainability as focal parts of the RIIO-2 business plan. This was also voted as a higher priority overall than workforce resilience, industry collaboration and connecting new customers.

Net-zero - detailed feedback

- Reducing emissions nationwide is seen as urgent and customers want WPD to be more responsive on this issue ([E010](#)). For community energy groups, enabling electric vehicle uptake and the environment were the top two priorities ([E013](#)).
- "Addressing the climate emergency" was the highest-rated priority outside of the pre-determined categories at one event ([E013](#)). A number of the organisations present at this event had already declared 'climate emergencies' with net-zero targets in place which are in-line with the government's 2050 target, although some were aiming for 2040 or even 2030 ([E013](#)).
- Stakeholders explicitly mention that WPD's environmental priority should be expanded to include commitments such as "Reduce company carbon footprint" and "Achieving zero-carbon" ([E013](#)).

Improving WPD's carbon footprint

- It was suggested that the first initiative in the environmental topic should be for WPD to improve the environmental impact of its operations (E004).
- Electrifying WPD's fleet seemed to be a popular idea among stakeholders, alongside encouraging staff to carshare. Those whose organisations already have an electric fleet saw the benefits of workplace charging and communal charging points, with one stakeholder referring to research that indicates that destination charging is more popular than home charging (E014).
- As well as electrifying the company fleet, stakeholders wanted WPD to commit to increase the low-carbon energy utilised at their properties and to transform all buildings to be carbon neutral before the governmental targets (E010).

Policies and incentives to help others reduce their emissions

- The uncertainties surrounding low carbon technology (e.g. EV chargers) require the incentives to be right (E001).
- Delivering more quick-charging EV points was the most popular recommended initiative in this space (E011). Customers noted that access to charge points was the best way to encourage the uptake of EVs, with 24% of stakeholders stating this as the most important criterion (E002). However, enabling electric vehicle charging' was the least important priority for power cut customers, only scoring an average of 6.96 out of 10, compared to 9.57 for a reliable network (E008).
- Stakeholders expected WPD to incentivise renewable energy development wherever possible – for example, through providing subsidies for suppliers – and make efficiency and infrastructure improvements – such as greening WPD buildings and develop an action plan to prevent losses (E011). Another suggestion would be increased support for community energy projects, for example in the form of grants (E004).
- Stakeholders felt that housing developers should take more responsibility for integrating sustainable solutions into houses, but also noted that DNOs should lobby the government in order to change the planning regulations (E013, E014).
- It was also suggested by delegates that DNOs should lobby Ofgem to be able to prioritise connections for lower-carbon projects in support of the sustainability agenda (E013).
- Heat pumps did not feature in most stakeholders' future plans despite the merits for decarbonising heat. It was noted that the installation cost and lack of benefits understanding was prohibiting this change. WPD could incentivise uptake if they focused on these two barriers (E014).
- Local authorities felt that encouraging alternative power sources was beyond their remit (E013). They also stated their aspiration to become 'carbon-free' and would appreciate advice or ideas from WPD to achieve this (E013).
- There was overwhelming consensus that all concrete actions to ensure sustainable growth needed to be supported by central government (E013).

Uptake of EVs

- 25% stated they would buy an EV in the next 5 years (E002). Domestic customers were the most enthusiastic about buying EVs with 42% stating they'd likely buy one in the next 5 years (E002).
- 30% of attendees' organisations had already purchased an EV or were in the process of switching to EVs. This figure rose to 75% among academics and 50% among local authority representatives (E002). However, stakeholders in another event were more

pessimistic about the likelihood of their organisations buying an EV, with almost a half (48%) saying it would be highly unlikely that their organisation would ever purchase one (E003).

- Many, especially those from rural areas, were concerned about the range of EVs at present, which would explain why 39% of parish councillors would never consider buying one (E002).
- Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) told us that they would never, or would be highly unlikely to, buy an electric vehicle. 31% said that this was only likely in over ten years' time, with the same proportion saying it would only be likely in five to ten years' time (E003).

Uptake of flexible renewable heating technologies

- There was little appetite for buying renewable heating with ~60% saying they may buy one in the 10 years' time, if ever (E002).
- Stakeholders were equally doubtful, with almost a third (32%) considering it highly unlikely they would replace their boiler with one (E003).
- Whilst there was some discussion on heat pumps, it was clear that most councils had no plans to include this technology in their existing housing stock and many had recently approved developments which would still be reliant on gas (E014).

EV charging infrastructure

- More engagement with EV charge point manufactures was called for as it was acknowledged that the potential take-up of EVs (projected to be 3 million on WPD's network by 2030) would result in a huge amount of strain being placed on the network (E014).
- Stakeholders are concerned about the need for more capacity on the network in order to accommodate EV charging (E002) with the network capacity being in the top three challenges for EV deployment (E013). The consensus was that a smarter network with increased data analysis could better deal with EV deployment (E013). The location of EV charging points in busy town centres was also mentioned as a consideration for this topic (E002).
- The network-related factors that would most encourage stakeholders to buy an electric vehicle was easy access to charge points when away from home, with 22% of responses (E003), and the speed of charging when away from home, with 21%.
- Delegates discussed how WPD could support their plans for the EV charging network. Aids such as plainly written guidance documents, better forecasting, heat maps, technical information and guidance for where there was capacity constraint were all seen as key (E013).
- It was noted that providing EV chargers to existing housing stock also presented a huge challenge, particularly as 40% of car owners only have access to on-street parking. It was suggested that using street furniture such as lamp posts could provide a solution in these cases, but it was acknowledged that there were a number of drawbacks to this, not least the amount of disruption it would cause to provide the additional capacity required (E014).
- There seemed to be a feeling that WPD should carefully consider how charge points will be used and when people will need to charge. Work done to understand consumer charging behaviours such as WPD's own Electric Nation project was praised as this was

seen as vital to inform the company's strategy ([E014](#)). WPD is focused on three locations for charging – home, en route and destination – and stakeholders agreed with this approach and noted the value in providing charge points in a range of locations ([E014](#)).

- Stakeholders commented that most people will not fully charge their vehicles at home every night and many would wish to charge their vehicles at work, so more charging hubs (including those with their own sources of renewable generation) will need to be planned ([E002](#)).
- Charging hubs in locations such as supermarkets, schools, council car parks and places of work were thought by most to be the best way of rolling out EV charging infrastructure, not least as on-street charging would require a significant amount of disruption and would be problematic due to parking restrictions ([E014](#)).

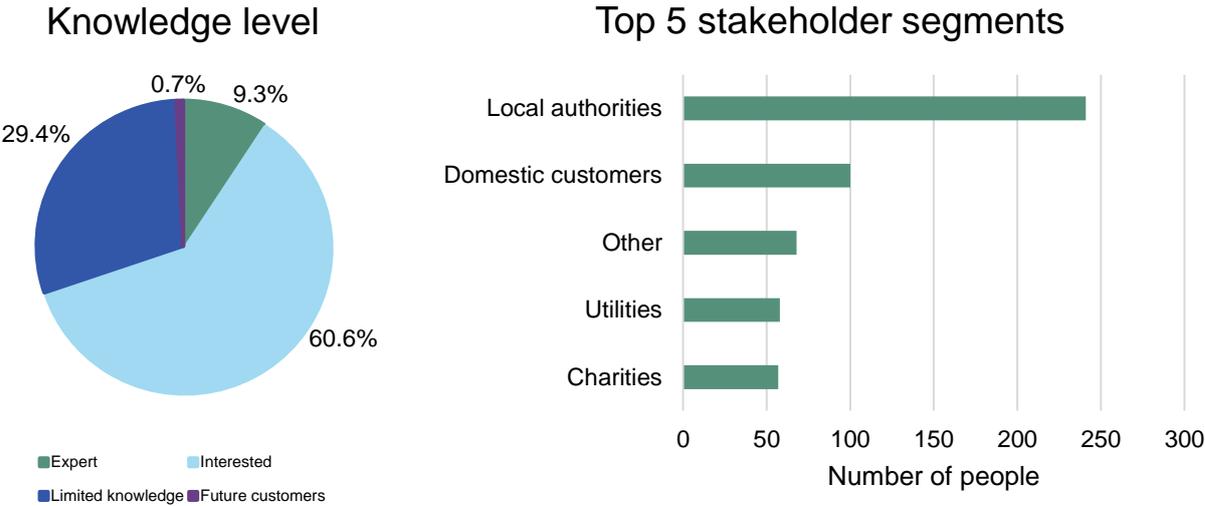
Broader environment - detailed feedback

- The environment and sustainability were widely mentioned across the panels as a core priority ([E011](#)) with some participants in Bristol commenting that the environment should be prioritised over keeping costs down ([E011](#)). Another customer based in the South-West identified the environment as the most important priority of the RIO-2 business plan ([E004](#)).
- Of a mix of priorities, limiting WPD's environmental impact was ranked highest (58%), beating workforce resilience (18%), industry collaboration (16%) and connecting new customers (7%) ([E009](#)). Stakeholders noted that an environmental priority could be to have "Zero plastic waste from our depots". It was mentioned in another event that protecting the countryside and ensuring there is no damage to biodiversity should be part of WPD's environmental pledge.

High-level topic: 'Building a smarter network'

This chapter will focus on the feedback collected on the topic of building a smarter network. Despite not being one of Ofgem’s three core output categories, the modernisation of energy data and electricity networks is discussed in the *RIO-2 Business Plan Guidance* document. This high-level topic covers the extension and digitalisation of the network, both with new energy system digital architecture, new demand and supply challenges, and connections to expand the network to new customers.

The feedback on this topic includes 56 of the 305 data points collected during the preliminary engagement stage (18.3%). This feedback was collected across 8 engagement events, from 872 stakeholders, the details of which are below.



Stage	Number of Events	Engagement Methods	Dates	Delivery partners	Attendees
Preliminary Engagement	8 of 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops Online workshops Online community Focus groups 	Feb-19 to Dec-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accent EQ Communications 	872 of 2,060

'Building a smarter network' has three sub-topic areas:

- 1) Connections
- 2) Network flexibility
- 3) Supply-demand forecasting

Summary of each sub-topic:

1) Connections

While stakeholders felt that WPD's proposed actions under connections were appropriate, there were several concerns and proposed changes to the application process and charging methodologies. The main issues with the application process were the lack of clarity of the process and its cost, the lack of consistency in the process between geographical areas as well as the lack of communication between WPD and the prospective connections customer. Suggestions such as digitalisation, providing a single point of contact and simplification of the process were suggested as improvements. The lack of clarity with changes in the charging methodology and the embedded benefits review process were the key areas of issue in this sub-topic.

2) Network flexibility

There was a range of appetite for participating in flexibility services between events and stakeholders, with domestic customers more likely to participate than businesses. The proportion of the average bill saving required to increase participation varied from 10% to 40% between events. The key barrier to participation was the trust of WPD and the loss of control of their devices (e.g. EVs and heating).

3) Supply-demand forecasting

The increasing penetration of variable renewable generators leads to a network with more variable demand and generation curves. Stakeholders highlight the need to accurately predict these fluctuations as WPD transitions into a DSO. Future network capacity was mentioned in multiple events as a concern in light of new renewable generation as well as new housing developments. It was also suggested that pressure should be placed on Ofgem to change the rules in order to allow DSOs to reinforce the network ahead of need in order to better integrate more renewable generation and achieve the net-zero target by 2050.

Overarching - detailed feedback

- Stakeholders' second-highest priority was building a smart network (scoring on average 7.94/10, although academics scored this the highest at 9.33/10) ([E002](#)). The same trend was echoed at the local investment workshop (8.27 out of 10) ([E013](#)) while local enterprise partnership groups voted it as the highest priority ([E013](#)).
- Despite the fact that the transition to a DSO and its' smarter network would reduce costs for those living in fuel poverty, most customers would not be interested in information on the progress of the transition ([E002](#), [E002](#)).

Connections - detailed feedback

- Unsurprisingly, connections were the highest priority of connection customers and developers ([E013](#)).

- Stakeholders were mostly agreed that the actions proposed under connections were appropriate (E002). There was some concern though that urban connections would be prioritised thus leaving rural communities left behind (E001).
- A domestic customer wanted to see WPD support small businesses with installing electric charging stations as well as connect community defibrillators within residential areas at an affordable cost (E004, E004).

Application process

- Delegates who had applied for new connections discussed the process, with the majority feeling it was expensive but workable (E013). The main issues raised by applicants were the cost, differing processes between regions, mixed communication and a long wait time between the application and decision (E014).
- Cost transparency was flagged as an area that needed to improve, particularly in rural areas where there is a higher reliance on governmental funding (E014). There was strong support for process simplification and that this would ultimately save companies time and money (E014).
- However, others noted that a flexible approach was needed in order to deal-with high-density projects or large developments, particularly where developers may ask for more capacity than is required (E014). It was also noted that the system must ensure that developers are not encouraged to sit on capacity or 'landbank' just to make a return on their investment – something that could potentially become more prevalent if less information is required at the outset (E014).
- Improved communication was mentioned as an area of improvement with prospective connection customers, particularly with community energy groups, and it was suggested that liaison officers should be appointed to ensure information consistency alongside formalised connection surgeries as it was felt that they are somewhat ad-hoc currently (E002, E002). Communication was also mentioned at another event as an area needing improvement, with the suggestion of establishing one point of contact (E013)
- Application process consistency across the business was flagged by a number of stakeholders across multiple events as an area of improvement for WPD (E013, E014). Moreover, stakeholders acknowledged that a level playing field is needed to ensure that the connections process is fair and transparent and that connections customers are not 'playing the system' by submitting spurious requests for capacity (E014).
- Digitalisation of the process may give a more accurate picture of the development's requirements and feasibility (E014).

Charging methodology

- It was felt that changes to the charging methodology could affect larger generators, as it would require them to submit a detailed plan, impacting those who already have embedded generation (E002). It was added that the embedded benefits review would disadvantage companies that install equipment with a long asset life (E002). Some requested a reduction in costs in the first year, increasing at later stages, to help smaller generators (E002).
- The idea of cooperatives working together to reduce their individual financial burden was supported (E002) and there was praise for the concept of small cooperatives, where communities buy shares and get a return. Stakeholders were keen that changes to charging don't prevent initiatives like this (E002).

Network flexibility - detailed feedback

- It was noted that a smarter, more flexible network would reduce the need for traditional reinforcement (E002). Customers felt that investment in technology would benefit WPD in the long term, finding smart ways to do things, smarter protection against cyber threats (E010).

Appetite for participating in flexibility services

- Flexibility services were seen as crucial – and more important than battery storage - but it was acknowledged that this would require customers giving some control, for example over EV charging, to the DNO / DSO, which would require a change in mindset on their part. Making consumers aware of the benefits that making use of these flexibility services could bring for them was seen as vitally important (E014).
- When asked how likely they were as customers (domestic and business) to participate in flexible services, stakeholders voted an average of 8.1 and 7.8/10 respectively (E002). At another event, stakeholders felt they were likely to participate in flexible services, with 58% rating themselves at 8 out of 10 or above (E003).
- Many stakeholders said that they would be interested in participating in flexibility services because it was the right thing to do, and most felt that financial incentives were the best way to encourage participation (E002).
- When asked what proportion of the average bill (£98) would need to be saved, the most common answer was £20-30 (with 23% of votes cast) (E002). At another event, 35% felt that £10–£20 was the appropriate amount, although more than a quarter (28%) opted for a saving of £30–£40 (E003).
- It was noted that efforts should be made to ensure less affluent customers are not dissuaded from using their appliances at certain times of the day and that the more affluent aren't able to save a disproportionate amount (E002).
- Many supported WPD having some support in order to negate the need for traditional reinforcement (E002). However, others stated that giving WPD the ability to control their EV charging would make them uncomfortable as it was too intrusive (E002). Others also expressed concern regarding the need to ensure that EVs are sufficiently charged in the event of an emergency (E002). The key barrier was trusting WPD with the 'Big Brother-type' fear associated with smarter networks and demand-side response (E015). Customer education was noted as a key action to counteract this lack of trust (E002).
- Stakeholders were not generally confident that their organisations would participate in flexibility services with the most common vote being 5 out of 10 (E003).
- There was support for the concept of microgrids, including those owned by communities, as these would enable residents to opt-out of the energy supply and ease pressure on the network (E002). Also, storage was viewed as a potential solution between demand and supply and stakeholders would support WPD's involvement in trials or initiatives with battery storage (E013).

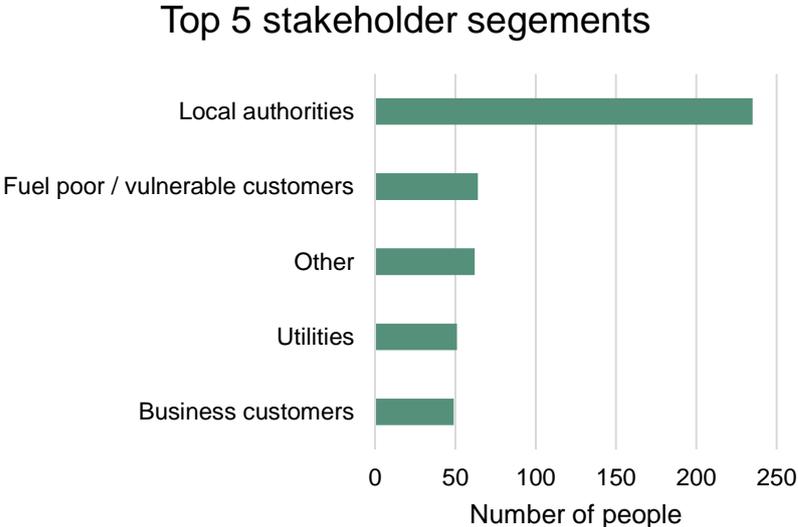
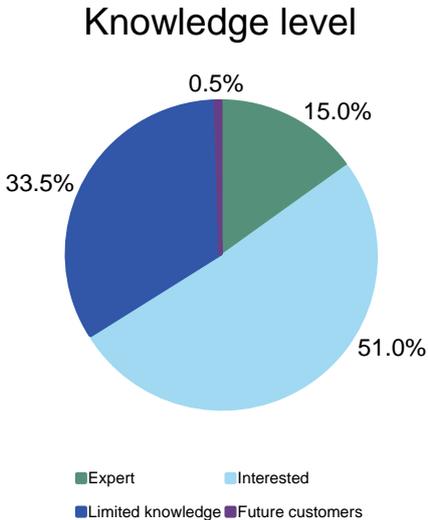
Supply-demand forecasting - detailed feedback

- It was noted that building of a smarter network increases in importance as more renewable energy is connected ([E002](#)) especially when the DSO needs to predict solar and wind generation and the integration of storage devices ([E002](#)).
- Managing supply/demand was seen as a critical challenge to be address, and stakeholders suggested that WPD should: invest in the network and explore storage technologies; work collaboratively with suppliers to offer flexible tariffs; offer career paths to attract qualified staff; gain accurate projections of changes in supply/ demand (governmental trends); and encourage and support communities to invest in microgeneration ([E010](#)).
- Stakeholders saw limited network capacity and a lack of investment in the network as barriers to growth, with many citing the current regulatory structure as unfit for purpose ([E013](#)).
- In multiple events, the future required capacity of the network was mentioned as a concern, particularly in light of new renewable sources of energy and new housing developments ([E002](#), [E013](#)). One stakeholder mentioned the uncertainty regarding the role of gas in the future and therefore stated that WPD should plan for a worst-case scenario where the network can cope with all the new demands ([E014](#)).
- Stakeholders were of the view that the current approach, which restricts DNOs from reinforcing the network ahead of need, could hinder growth and was not necessarily conducive to meeting Ofgem's aspirations of achieving net-zero carbon by 2050 ([E014](#)).

High-level topic: 'Enabling factors'

This chapter will focus on the feedback collected on what we see as enabling factors that impact all aspects of a network's operations and will boost the overall impact of these initiatives.

The feedback on this topic includes 28 of the 305 data points collected during the preliminary engagement stage (9.2%). This feedback was collected across 6 engagement events, from 800 stakeholders, the details of which are below.



Stage	Number of Events	Engagement Methods	Dates	Delivery partners	Attendees
Preliminary Engagement	6 of 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops Focus groups Panel 	Feb-19 to Nov-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accent EQ Communications Traverse 	800 of 2,060

'Enabling factors' consists of two sub-topic areas:

- 1) Collaboration
- 2) Innovation

Summary of each sub-topic:

1) Collaboration

Stakeholders in several events mentioned the importance of both intra- and inter-sectoral collaboration in a whole range of services from vulnerable customers to EV charging points. Stakeholders desired WPD to become a facilitator between the multitude of parties involved in a certain sector or service, possibly through establishing local hubs (as they have in Fuel Poverty), in order to improve the ease and cost of final delivery to the customer.

2) Innovation

Stakeholders were keen to see WPD integrate both technical and non-technical innovation into their services in order to improve their offering. Several good examples were mentioned from other industries and stakeholders were keen for WPD to learn from best practice at other companies, irrelevant of the sector.

Collaboration - detailed feedback

- Across a number of events and topics, there was frustration that DNOs worked in isolation, both from other DNOs but also wider stakeholders. There was a perceived lack of collaboration with local authorities, ENA, battery storage or EV manufacturers, charities, universities, NHS, connection customers and service providers ([E002](#), [E002](#), [E010](#), [E011](#), [E014](#), [E014](#), [E014](#)) with the DNO-local authority relationship seen as particularly important, being mentioned in multiple events including with two-thirds of groups in the IDNO conference ([E014](#)).
- Building partnerships was seen as a priority in order to share best practice ([E002](#)), minimise disruption, enhance technological knowledge and shared care responsibility ([E010](#)). A particular example was given in the consumer vulnerability sphere where one point of contact would be so much simpler for the individual rather than the multitude that occurs currently, and sharing of this responsibility and information would ultimately provide a better all-round service ([E015](#)), such as Power Up partnership meetings ([E015](#)). Similar benefits were mentioned in the EV deployment sector as well as ensuring consistency and standardisation ([E014](#)).
- An exercise in one event demonstrated that greater cross-sector collaboration is a goal shared by many stakeholder groups, with some tables naming up to five other sectors that they would like to engage with more regularly and others simply putting 'all' ([E014](#)).
- Collaboration and alignment were also seen as important with WPD and partners on climate targets ([E013](#)) and the planning process, both with the highway's authority and urban planners ([E013](#), [E013](#)), especially considering the electrification of heat and transport ([E014](#)). Stakeholders suggested that community projects would also benefit from cross-sector collaboration ([E014](#)).
- Some stakeholders recommended that WPD could be a facilitator for conversations between stakeholders – maybe by setting up local hubs – such as housebuilders, EV charge point manufacturers, suppliers and local authorities to provide a more strategic approach to connections ([E014](#), [E014](#), [E014](#), [E014](#), [E014](#), [E014](#)).

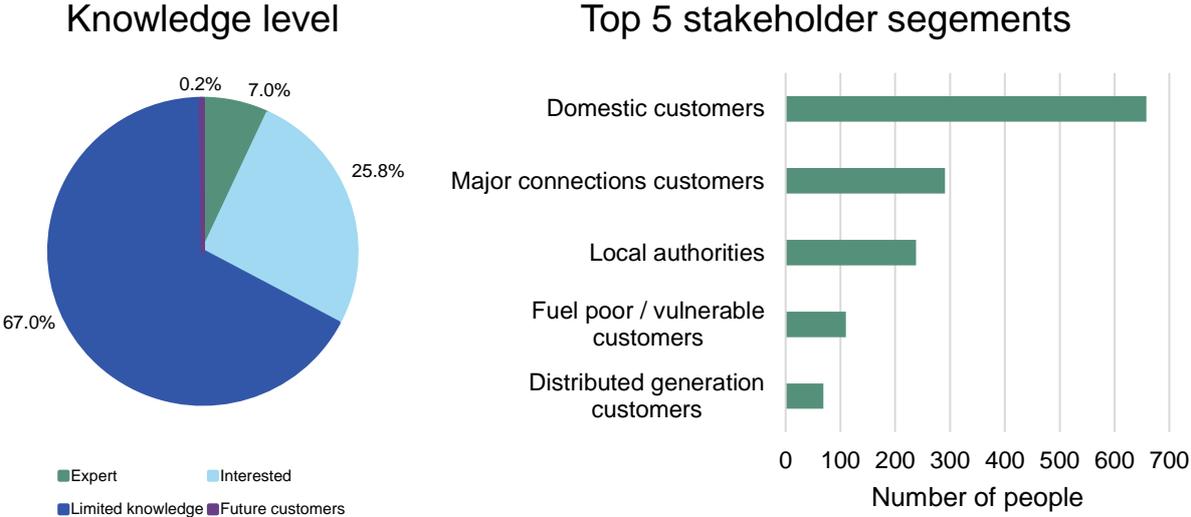
Innovation - detailed feedback

- Customers were keen to see WPD innovate, leverage new tech and create partnerships to benefit from new technology. Some suggestions include: invest in new self-healing infrastructure, hire talented staff, work with universities to explore new technologies, share knowledge with other networks and work with key partners to better leverage tech ([E010](#)).
- Stakeholders at the social obligations workshops noted that innovation does not have to be technological, and provided some examples of non-technical innovation such as: debt assistant scheme, learning from Wessex Water; new pre-warning system to advise customers of power cuts; innovation to ensure that vulnerable customers do not find themselves excluded from a particular project or development based on digitisation, knowledge or cost ([E015](#)).
- Another example of an innovation project was a broadband provider making its assets available in the roll-out of EV charging points, and stakeholders mentioned that WPD could do something similar ([E014](#)).

High-level topic: 'Business planning process'

This chapter will focus on the feedback collected on the mechanisms of business planning process, including the type of engagement methods utilised and stakeholders engaged, the potential division of outcomes and commitments, alongside the high-level ranking of priorities data.

The feedback on this topic includes 41 of the 305 data points collected during the preliminary engagement stage (13.4%). This feedback was collected across 11 engagement events, from 1,814 stakeholders, the details of which are below.



Stage	Number of Events	Engagement Methods	Dates	Delivery partners	Attendees
Preliminary Engagement	11 of 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Online workshops • Telephone surveys • Text message surveys • Online surveys • Focus groups 	Feb-19 to Dec-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accent • EQ Communications 	1,814 of 2,060

'Business planning process' consists of three sub-topic areas:

- 1) Engagement
- 2) Outcomes and commitments
- 3) Ranking priorities

Summary of each sub-topic:

1) Engagement

Stakeholders commented on the timetable of engagement, the methods used as well as some key stakeholders to involve in future events. Stakeholders generally preferred face-to-face engagement, sighting workshops as the preferred event type. Furthermore, stakeholders were keen to be engaged at the start and at stage 3 of plan development (directly before the first submission to Ofgem).

2) Outcomes and commitments

Stakeholders were generally happy with the 6 strategic outcomes that WPD discussed in early workshops, and all felt that the three Ofgem outcomes were too vague and did not contain all the topics they felt were important.

3) Ranking priorities

During 6 events, stakeholders provided explicit priority scores for each topic thus ranking them from the most important to least. In general, maintaining a safe and reliable network was the highest priority area, specifically reinforcement. Due to the range of events, it has been possible to analyse the differences between different stakeholder segment opinions on the different topics; while distributed generation customers placed more emphasis on new connections and building a smarter network, vulnerable customers valued meeting the needs of customers higher.

Engagement - detailed feedback

- Most stakeholders (77%) were keen to be involved in WPD's RIIO-ED2 consultation programme. They highlighted Stage 1 (the first draft of the plan) and Stage 3 (the first submission to Ofgem) as key points ([E002](#)).
- Stakeholders were of the view that there is no substitute for face-to-face engagement, with limitations seen when engaging through online consultation alone ([E002](#), [E014](#)). Moreover, 30% of stakeholders named workshops as the best engagement method ([E002](#)).
- A number of key stakeholders to engage were mentioned in a range of events such as LEPs ([E013](#)), social housing providers, trade bodies ([E014](#)), community energy groups ([E002](#)), battery storage companies, EV and EV charge point manufacturers, the NHS, ([E002](#)) local authorities ([E013](#)) and Home Builders Federation (HBF).

Outcomes and commitments - detailed feedback

- Most stakeholders felt that the headings of Ofgem's three output categories were too vague - making it difficult for stakeholders to find the sections relevant to them ([E002](#)). There was very little support for WPD limiting its outputs to only ones that fell within the three output categories (3% thought this was the right approach) ([E002](#)).
- The preferred approach (63% of workshop attendees) involved the company developing a pool of outputs stakeholders want it to deliver, structuring these within Ofgem's framework, and delivering any that don't fit as 'wider commitments'. This approach was

particularly strong among workers in the charity sector, receiving 88% of their votes (E002). At a different event, the same option was preferred by 65% of stakeholders (E003).

- Most stakeholders were of the opinion (69%) that WPD had identified the right priority areas (E003). In another event, there was some support for WPD's 6 current strategic outcomes, however, some felt that they are not forward-looking enough placing a greater emphasis on innovation (E002). It was commented that stakeholder engagement, the transition to DSO, EVs, reducing emissions and facilitating the growth agenda should have their own categories, given their importance (E002). It was also suggested by local authority stakeholders that facilitating growth should be added as a priority (E002) while stakeholders also put forward carbon reduction as an additional commitment (E003).
- There was a feeling that certain outputs, especially social obligations, are vitally important and should not be omitted because they do not fit into Ofgem's categories (E002).
- Stakeholders were also concerned that priorities were reactive, not proactive in nature which should be rectified (E002).
- In the multi-phase deliberative focus group event, 6 core priorities were raised during the 'blank sheet' session including safety, no power cuts, being green, value for money, technology and future changes to the network (E010). Customers were nervous about bill reduction with the perception that it may negatively impact the network (E010).
- It was noted that wider commitments should still have measurable targets against them and that these targets should be regional in nature, reflecting the differences between the areas they are delivered (E002).
- When given the choice, two-thirds opted for a steady plan while one-third opted for an ambitious plan (E010, E010).
- Stakeholders also noted that collaboration in the communities, as well as activities outside its statutory duties (e.g. Community Energy projects) and Licence Conditions, should be considered and encapsulated in an outcome (E013, E016).

Ranking priorities - detailed feedback

Priority scoring was tested at 6 of the 15 events (covering 1,087 stakeholders in total). Stakeholders scored the importance of each sub-topic out of 10. These scores have been combined and averaged in the graphs below, including aggregated results for the high-level topics. A breakdown of each priority by segment can be found in the table on page 35.

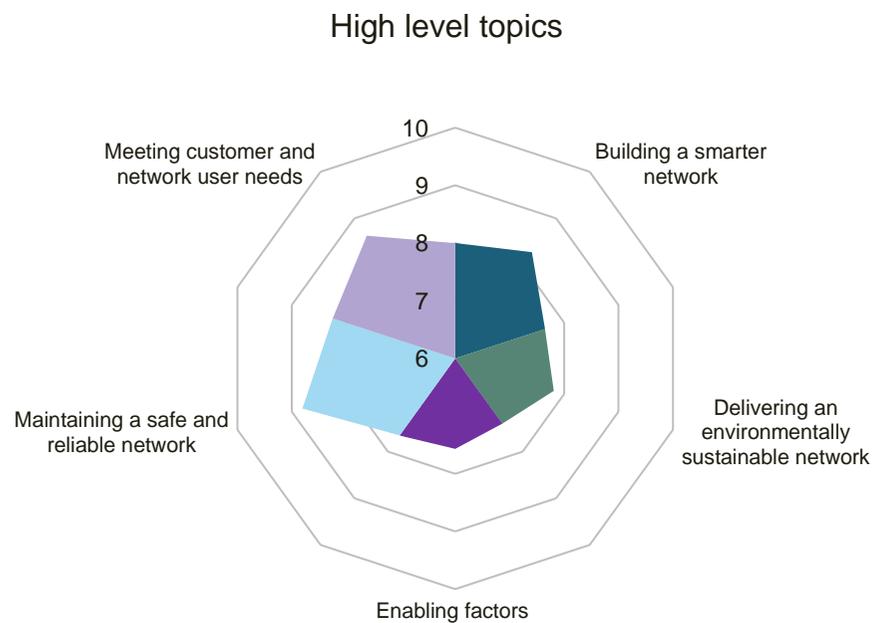


Figure 8: Stakeholder priority scoring of the high-level topics

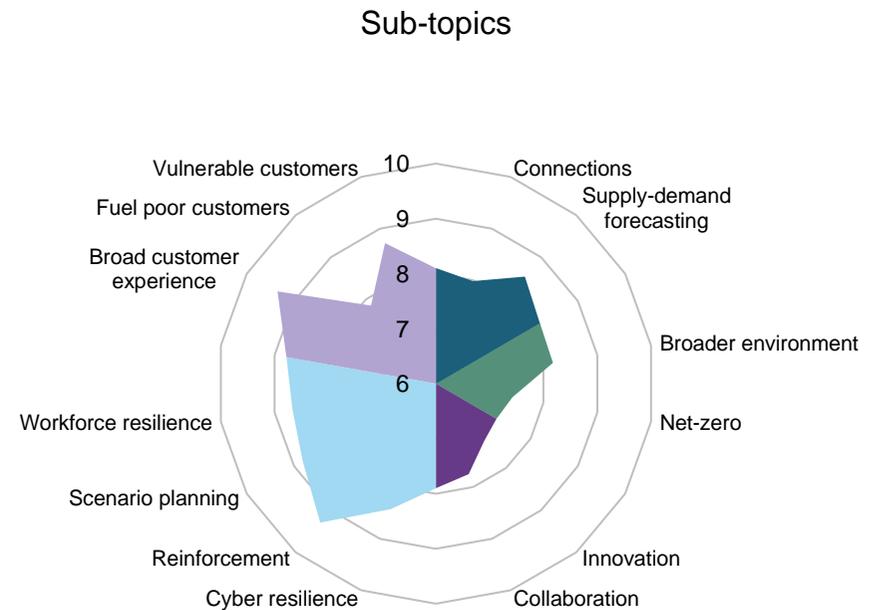


Figure 9: Stakeholder priority scoring of the sub-topics

During 4 of the 6 events, members were selected from a single stakeholder segment which provides a comparison of different segment priority scoring, as shown in the graphs below.

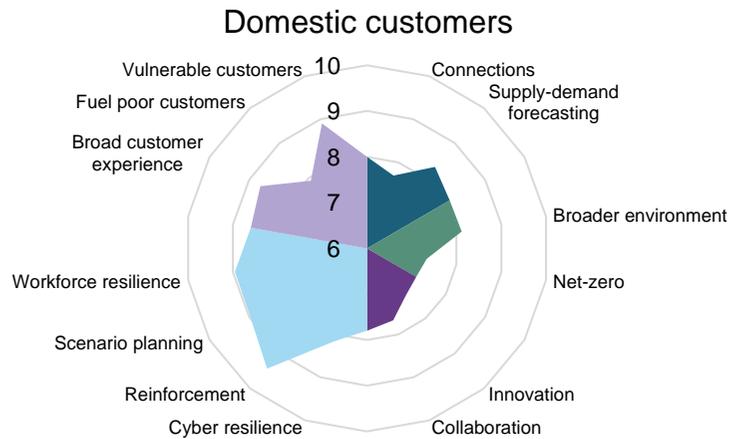


Figure 10: Domestic customers' priority scoring of the sub-topics

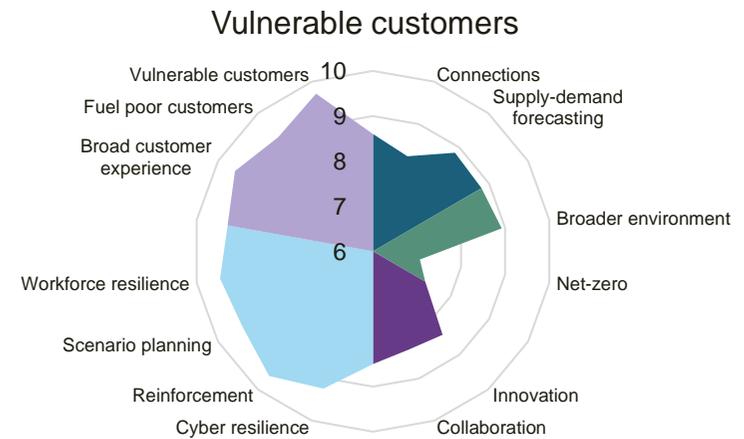


Figure 11: Vulnerable customers' priority scoring of the sub-topics

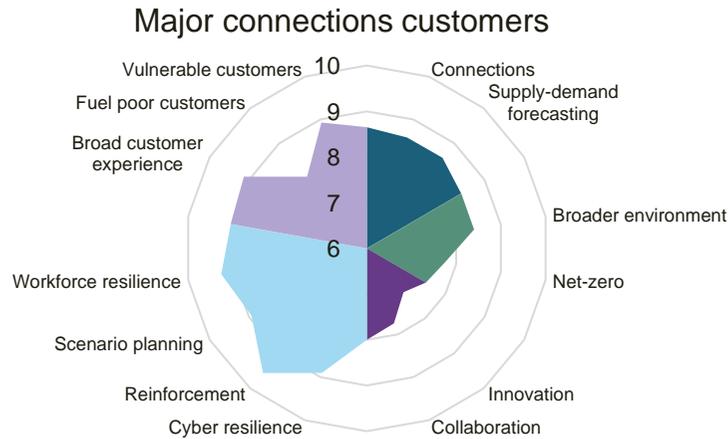


Figure 12: Major connection customers' priority scoring of the sub-topics

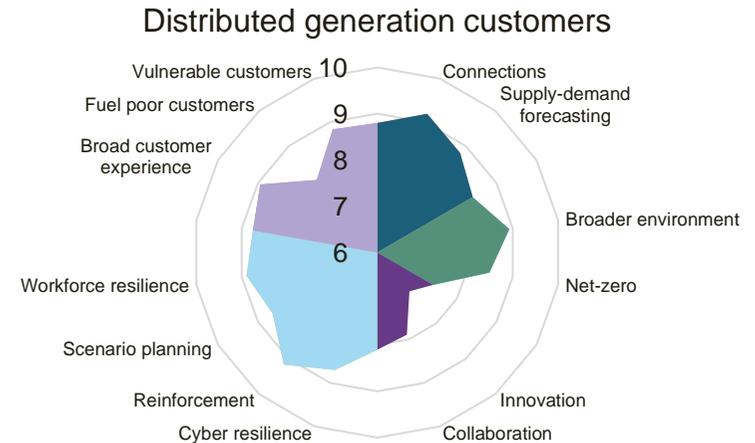


Figure 13: Distribution generation customers' priority scoring of the sub-topics

Sub-topic	Engagement event					
	E002	E005	E006	E007	E008	E009
	Broad stakeholders	Fuel poor / vulnerable customers	Major connection customers	Distributed generation customers	Domestic customers	Domestic customers
Awareness	-	9.35	-	-	-	-
Broad customer experience	6.7	9.56	9.13	8.94	9.39	8.04
Broader environment	6.65	8.92	8.4	8.92	8.48	7.75
Collaboration	6.82	8.42	7.25	7.09	7.7	6.97
Connections	6.77	8.24	8.58	9.19	8.2	7.19
Cyber resilience	7.41	9.24	8.9	8.7	-	8.17
Fuel poor customers	5.79	9.3	8.05	8.05	8.49	7.36
Innovation	7.26	8.32	7.75	7.89	7.7	7.65
Net-zero	6.66	7.06	7.75	8.48	6.96	7.7
Reinforcement	8.46	9.61	9.56	9.16	9.57	9.29
Scenario planning	7.87	9.36	8.94	8.63	9.12	8.82
Supply-demand forecasting	-	8.85	8.59	8.81	8.41	8.24
Vulnerable customers	6.83	9.72	8.93	8.83	9.35	8.46
Workforce resilience	6.21	9.47	9.26	8.89	9.04	8.87

Figure 13: Table of results from all events where stakeholders prioritised sub-topics, including the stakeholder segments involved

Other priority feedback (not scored in a consistent manner)

- Future networks priorities were ranked by stakeholders as follows: Building a smart network (42%); Electric vehicle charging (40%); Innovative working (18%) (E009).
- Of all the identified priorities, they were ranked as follows: Resilient to power cuts (35%); Affordability of service (28%); Limit environmental impact (24%); Building a smart network (13%) (E009).

Appendix – All engagement sources

Date	Stage	Event	Event code	Description	Delivery partner	Top 5 segments engaged (% of event total)	Attendees
Sep-19	Preliminary engagement	Customer collaboration panel (09/2019)	E001	Workshops with WPD's permanent panel of 38 expert stakeholders, with representatives spanning all WPD's key stakeholder segments	WPD	1) Charities (33%) 2) Utilities (17%) 3) Others (17%) 4) Business customers (11%) 5) Local authorities (5%)	36
Feb-19	Preliminary engagement	Annual workshops	E002	Six qualitative workshops with 330 stakeholders in a roundtable format, with reasonable levels of knowledge/interest in WPD's operations. Wide cross-section of stakeholder segments, including Parish Council representatives to bring a domestic customer and local communities' perspective	EQ Communications	1) Local authorities (21%) 2) Other (16%) 3) Utilities (13%) 4) Charities (11%) 5) Business customers (9%)	330
Mar-19	Preliminary engagement	Online engagement portal	E003	Replicated WPD's face-to-face workshops online, with the presentations filmed, followed by a range of multiple-choice and free-format questions. Promoted via Twitter, LinkedIn and invites sent to 6,000 registered stakeholders.	WPD	1) Consumer interest bodies (76%) 2) Local authorities (15%) 3) Charities (3%) 4) Utilities (3%) 5) Business customers (3%)	29
Dec-19	Preliminary engagement	Online panel	E004	Permanent online community with representatives spanning a range of customer demographics, age, gender and location. Focus on current and future end-user customers and small businesses. Promoted prominently to all customers via WPD's homepage	WPD	1) Domestic customers (100%)	82
Nov-19	Preliminary engagement	Quantitative research surveys - CIVS	E005	Telephony surveys with randomly selected customers as part of well-establish satisfaction surveys following day-to-day contact with WPD regarding the Priority Service Register. Questions	Accent	1) Fuel poor/ vulnerable customers (100%)	100

				independently designed with Accent to ensure neutral and non-leading.			
Nov-19	Preliminary engagement	Quantitative research surveys - major connections customers	E006	Telephony surveys with randomly selected customers as part of well-establish satisfaction surveys following day-to-day contact with WPD regarding the major connections' applications (+4 homes and above). Questions independently designed with Accent to ensure neutral and non-leading.	Accent	1) Major connection customers (100%)	273
Nov-19	Preliminary engagement	Quantitative research surveys - distributed generation customers	E007	Telephony surveys with randomly selected customers as part of well-establish satisfaction surveys following day-to-day contact with WPD regarding the distributed generation connections. Questions independently designed with Accent to ensure neutral and non-leading.	Accent	1) Distributed generation customers (100%)	64
Dec-19	Preliminary engagement	Power cut follow-up surveys	E008	Text message sent to every WPD customer as part of the power cut follow-up service, containing an invitation and link to participate in a series of survey questions on WPD's website	WPD	1) Domestic customers (100%)	131
Dec-19	Preliminary engagement	Social media	E009	A series of surveys and consultation questions posed via Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, also containing an invitation and link to participate in a series of survey questions on WPD's website	WPD	1) Domestic customers (100%)	509
Oct-19	Preliminary engagement	Multi-phase deliberative, qualitative focus groups exercise	E010	This initial piece of foundation research will focus on both short- and long-term customer requirements, from a wide cross-section of representative end-users, including future. It will scope out customers' current priorities (uninformed and, thus, uninfluenced by any specific WPD plans) as well as checking these against previously established priorities. It will feature a comprehension session, extended priorities sessions, app-based tasks, and deliberative tasks.	Accent	1) Domestic customers (38%) 2) Business customers (33%) 3) Fuel poor/ vulnerable customers (21%) 4) Future customers (8%)	50
Nov-19	Preliminary engagement	Citizen panels	E011	A permanent panel(s) or representative end-user customers that will undertake deliberative	Traverse	1) Fuel poor/ vulnerable customers (72%)	75

				exercises on a wide range of topics throughout the entire business planning process. See Appendix III for full proposal		2) Domestic customers (28%)	
Nov-19	Preliminary engagement	Local network investment workshops	E013	11 sessions hosted at local depots for key stakeholders with a regional planning focus	EQ Communications	1) Local authorities (66%) 2) Developers (7%) 3) Vulnerable customer representatives (5%) 4) Local enterprise partnership (3%) 5) Storage / renewables providers and installers (3%)	229
Nov-19	Preliminary engagement	ICP / IDNOs conference	E014	The workshop was aimed at connection's customers, to discuss in particular RIIO-ED2 priorities, electric vehicles and local infrastructure plans	EQ Communications	1) Local authorities (19%) 2) Developers (14%) 3) Other (10%) 4) Energy aggregators (6%) 5) Storage/ renewables providers and installers (6%)	63
Oct-19	Preliminary engagement	Social obligations workshops	E015	Two conferences held in different locations aimed at vulnerable customer representatives to discuss WPD's social obligations strategy and programme delivery.	EQ Communications	1) Consumer interest bodies (25%) 2) Charities (13%) 3) Vulnerable customer representatives (11%) 4) Healthcare (8%) 5) Utilities (6%)	53
Dec-19	Preliminary engagement	Customer collaboration panel (12/2019)	E016	Workshops with WPD's permanent panel of 38 expert stakeholders, with representatives spanning all WPD's key stakeholder segments	WPD	1) Charities (33%) 2) Utilities (17%) 3) Other (17%) 4) Business customers (11%) 5) Local authorities (6%)	36