



Western Power Distribution Stakeholder Engagement Workshops January 2016

*Actions to be taken in response to the key findings
reports*

1 Context – workshops overview

Dates & locations

WPD hosted six stakeholder workshops as follows:

- Plymouth (St Mellion International Resort), Tuesday 19th January 2016
- Bristol (Bristol Pavilion), Wednesday 20th January 2016
- Newport (Celtic Manor Resort), Thursday 21st January 2016
- Birmingham (Aston Villa Football Club), Tuesday 26th January 2016
- Derby (Breadsall Priory), Wednesday 27th January 2016
- Lincoln (Lincolnshire Showground), Thursday 28th January 2016

Attendees

258 stakeholders attended, representing a broad cross-section of customer groups:

Domestic customer or consumer interest body	7%	Energy / utility company	20%
Business customer (or representative)	11%	Academic / education institute	5%
Energy / utility company	20%	Housing / development	4%
Developer / connections representative	16%	Other	14%
Environmental representative	6%		

Format of the workshops

Each event included four sessions:

- **Workshop One:** **Review of WPD’s long-term priorities**
- **Workshop Two:** **WPD’s Business Plan and performance so far**
- **Workshop Three:** **Spotlight on two long-term strategic priorities:**
 - **Smart Networks**
 - **Affordability (fuel poverty)**
- **Workshop Four:** **Choice of specific surgeries:**
 1. Connections Improvement Plan
 2. Social obligations (including vulnerability and fuel poverty)
 3. The role of a distribution system operator (“smart networks”).

Each session began with a presentation from a WPD senior manager. Stakeholders then participated in facilitated, qualitative round-table discussions followed by quantitative electronic voting.

Key objectives

The workshops were designed to achieve 9 key objectives:

Workshop One:

1. Review WPD’s existing long-term priorities and rank their importance to check if any have shifted in the last 12 months
2. Identify any new priorities for WPD to address, or emerging factors to consider (that contribute to achieving the existing priorities)
3. Identify actions WPD can take today to begin to address these priorities

Workshop Two:

4. Report to stakeholders WPD’s top-line performance against the Business Plan output categories (following the first 9 months of delivery)
5. Seek feedback on WPD’s proposed approach to reporting annual performance against the WPD’s Business Plan commitments

6. Identify the key outputs that should be included in a summary performance report intended for all stakeholders

Workshop Three:

7. Seek stakeholder views to help improve WPD's understanding of the strategic priorities of 'smart networks' and 'affordability'
8. Identify any new actions WPD should take to address these priorities and review specific actions proposed by WPD and rank their importance

Workshop Four:

9. Seek feedback on WPD's connections Improvement Plan, social obligations programme, and actions to develop smart networks and better understand the role of a distribution system operator

Summary of actions

The following should be read alongside the “Final Summary Report”, which summarises the feedback received from stakeholders at these workshops.

In total there were 30 suggested actions for WPD.

WPD will take 26 actions as a result of the feedback received at the recent stakeholder engagement workshops. These are set out below.

Four suggestions will not be taken forward in the manner initially proposed by stakeholders. The reasons for this are also set out below, including an alternative way forward proposed by WPD to ensure stakeholder concerns are still addressed.

WPD’s long-term strategic priorities

The full list of long term priorities for WPD (in order of importance to stakeholders) is:

Rank	Category	Importance (out of 10)	Plymouth	Bristol	Newport	B’ham	Derby	Lincoln
1	Keeping the lights on	9.20	9.74	9.53	9.18	8.78	8.71	9.44
2	Smart networks	7.46	7.85	7.58	7.58	6.85	7.45	7.96
3	Environment and sustainability	6.85	7.06	7.64	6.47	6.49	5.97	7.52
4	Workforce renewal, skills and training	6.65	7.03	6.75	6.60	6.06	6.77	7.32
5	Vulnerability	6.64	6.51	6.47	7.14	6.64	6.10	6.92
6	Government legislation/policy	6.21	6.09	6.11	6.08	6.14	6.97	6.08
7	Affordability	6.00	6.03	5.83	6.18	5.90	6.69	5.30
8	Customer information and data	5.90	5.58	5.96	6.07	5.87	5.80	6.12
9	Customer awareness	4.08	4.11	4.19	4.40	3.74	4.36	3.81

Stakeholders were asked to vote based on the following scale:



Action 1. WPD will provide advanced notice of the two topics to be focussed on in detail at WPD’s workshops in 2017, 2018, 2019.

Stakeholders placed significant importance on ‘environment & sustainability’ (3rd highest priority overall). In response WPD will:

Action 2. Consult with stakeholders about WPD’s annual environment performance report.

Action 3. Publish an environment improvement plan.

Stakeholders are increasingly interested/concerned about the role of energy in the future and the provision of smart networks. Concern ranged from technical issues such as long-term storage, grid capacity and future forecasting, through to more political issues such as the impact of renewables, climate change and the impact of EU legislation. In response WPD will:

Action 4. Include a smart networks/Distribution System Operator strategy in our published Innovation strategy.

Action 5. Host another parliamentary reception in 2016 (in follow-up to an event held in 2015 focussed on vulnerable customers) but will shift the focus of this event to the future of energy, including smart networks and facilitating low carbon technologies.

Stakeholders reiterated the importance of considering ‘vulnerability’ and ‘affordability’ as separate strategic priorities. They stated that addressing vulnerability to power cuts should remain WPD’s highest priority in this area. In response WPD will:

Action 6. Develop a number of referral partnerships where agencies gain informed consent to sign-up customers to WPD’s Priority Service Register directly via their front-line services, with particular focus on partners with links to housing and/or health.

WPD’s efforts in relation to ‘customer awareness’ should be focussed on increasing awareness amongst domestic and small businesses, and should keep the message specific to power loss and WPD’s contact number. In response:

Action 7. WPD’s annual customer awareness newsletter will focus explicitly on the new national ‘105’ power loss number and power cut resilience advice. It will be delayed to coincide with the national launch of ‘105’.

Reporting on WPD’s RIIO-ED1 performance

Stakeholders strongly supported WPD’s proposal for a “three levels” model of reporting on performance. In response:

Action 8. WPD’s Business Plan performance reporting will be multi-layered:

- **One page summary (including high-level traffic lights indicators),**
- **Short summary report (detailing WPD’s performance in six output areas) made widely available,**
- **More detailed report available online (detailing WPD’s performance in all 76 output areas).**

Action 9. WPD’s summary-level report (c.20pg) will include the following key topics under each output category (fourteen in total):

Output category	Performance topic	% of stakeholders voted for
Safety	Accident frequency rates	64.6%
	Public safety education	53.1%
Reliability	Power cut frequency and duration	80.4%
	Percentage of customers restored within 1 hour	36.4%
Environment	Facilitating increased volumes of Low Carbon Technologies	73.3%
	Reducing technical network losses	38.8%
	Reducing the carbon footprint of the business	36.8%
Connections	Time taken to provide quotations and completed connections	59.5%
	Customer satisfaction with the connections process	44.4%
Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction results	56.5%
	Improved communication with customers (e.g. social media, online etc.)	39.2%
	Consultations and engagement with stakeholders	39.2%
Social obligations	Improving the support services for customers during power cuts	56.0%
	Data analysis to identify vulnerable customers and to better target services	50.4%

In addition, stakeholders suggested a number of additional methods to present short summaries of performance, to maximise the reach, interest and accessibility for average customers (without an in-depth prior knowledge of WPD). In response, WPD will:

- Action 10. WPD will develop an interactive website for stakeholders to access performance information and drill-down into greater detail as required (in addition to the stand-alone documents).**
- Action 11. WPD will produce short YouTube videos to accompany each Business Plan section (six in total), each hosted by a relevant, senior WPD Manager, to explain the headline performance in 2 minutes.**
- Action 12. Produce summary infographics for each of the six output categories, and promoted these to customers via WPD's annual customer awareness newsletter ('Power for life') and links to videos promoted via twitter.**

Smart networks/the role of a Distribution System Operator (DSO)

Stakeholders had limited overall prior knowledge of this topic, but recognised it as extremely important to the future of networks. They would like to see increased engagement and education on smart networks, including explaining the impacts and benefits for consumers. In response, WPD will:

- Action 13. WPD will publish a smart networks & innovation engagement plan (including a focus the role of a DSO).**
- Action 14. WPD will review and update our guidance and rules relating to connections offers where the customer requests to a change in generation technology type of mix, post acceptance of a connections offer.**

Related to this topic, the afternoon surgery session on WPD's Connections Improvement Plan, led to the following requests for action. In response, WPD will:

- Action 15. Update our network capacity register monthly and publish it online.**
- Action 16. Carry out a best practice review of heat maps/ capacity registers and Long Term Development Statements (LTDS) within our industry to identify potential improvements.**

Affordability (& wider social obligations)

The majority of stakeholders felt WPD were right to be taking action to address affordability, but that we must be mindful not to overstep our remit as a network operator. WPD must therefore undertake initiatives where we can demonstrate that we are the best-placed party to do so and that our actions will bring a clear benefit to consumers.

Stakeholders reviewed a comprehensive list of possible WPD actions, of which a number gained very strong endorsement. In response, WPD will:

- Action 17. Develop a new 'Power Up' fuel poverty referral scheme in the East Midlands (to receive referrals from WPD for customers we encounter that may be struggling with issues relating to fuel poverty), to replicate the existing pilot schemes operating in West Midlands, South Wales and South West.**
- Action 18. Introduce monthly satisfaction research with customers supported by our fuel poverty schemes to identify improvements and better measure the benefits to customers.**
- Action 19. Renew and expand the existing 'Affordable Warmth' outreach project in West Midlands (where WPD support existing local fuel poverty schemes, and receive details back to WPD for PSR customers).**

- Action 20. Develop three new 'Affordable Warmth' projects in the East Midlands, South Wales and South West.*
- Action 21. Develop a competition for existing community fuel poverty schemes (e.g. charities and local authorities) to bid for partnership funding.*
- Action 22. Develop partnerships with Gas Distributors in relation to fuel poverty, including sharing data on vulnerable customers (where the customer gives their informed consent) such as off-gas grid customers who have received a Gas Connection Voucher*
- Action 23. Refresh our social indicator mapping (to identify the areas with the highest levels of fuel poverty) every two years.*
- Action 24. Continue WPD's 'Community Chest' fund to support communities with energy efficiency measures, and ensure this is targeted to communities impacted by fuel poverty and includes advice to individual customers on lowering their energy consumption and promote the Priority Service Register.*

Related to this topic, the afternoon surgery session on WPD's Social Obligations, led to the following additional requests for action. In response, WPD will:

- Action 25. Record the number of customers we have informed consent from to share data with other support agencies (e.g. with emergency responders during severe weather).*
- Action 26. Introduce a target for zero Priority Service Register customers to have a power cut lasting over 12 hours.*

Actions we have rejected

All of the actions proposed by stakeholders at WPD's workshops are thoroughly reviewed to consider the options to deliver them, including the viability and potential benefits of any potential action. We then consult further with stakeholders, including at WPD's expert Customer Panel. There are four actions that WPD rejected in the terms they were originally proposed by stakeholders. We have instead proposed an alternative way to address the feedback received.

Action requested by stakeholders	Rationale for rejection	Alternative proposed
1. To use traffic lights to summarise Business Plan performance	They are too ambiguous and difficult to set consistent definitions. For example for 'Environment', if WPD has improved in all measures (e.g. emissions, losses, waste to landfill) but overall business carbon footprint is increased (e.g. due to changes in reporting rules and increased overall work activity), is it green, amber or red? Also, can safety ever be considered 'green'?	<i>Stakeholders have instead suggested summary infographics per category and short YouTube explanations as an alternative.</i>
2. Run workshops specifically on 'becoming a Distribution System Operator' (DSO)	It is too early in our development of this area to host bespoke workshops. The topic is linked to other key engagement areas – e.g. innovation, Distributed Generation and community energy.	<i>We will make 'DSO' an explicit part of WPD's innovation strategy and publish an overall 'smart networks & innovation' engagement plan.</i>
3. Introduce 'key account managers' for connections	Doesn't fit with WPD's geographic, team-based model, where managers have overall responsibility for all aspects of network in their area.	<i>We will offer larger customers a single, senior management point of contact within WPD. After successful trials with Severn Trent Water, B&Q, Welsh Water and Sainsbury's we will use local Distribution Managers to be the prime point of contact for national companies.</i>
4. Fuel poverty programmes in food banks	This oversteps our responsibilities as a DNO and encroaches on the role of others. Expert stakeholders working in this area have suggested this outreach method will have limited value as food bank users are not keen on prolonged discussion/engagement.	<i>We will instead ask our existing fuel poverty partners to consider using food banks as part of their outreach methods, if appropriate.</i>