



Western Power Distribution Local Investment Workshops

South West October 2019

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1 | INTRODUCTION

In October 2019, WPD's Distribution Managers hosted a series of three stakeholder workshops at depots in the South West. Stakeholders in attendance included councillors, council officers, developers and others involved in the growth agenda. The feedback from all three workshops has been collated and summarised in this report.

Each depot covered a different geographic area within the South West region, as follows:

Cornwall	Bodmin Depot	3 October 2019
Devon	Barnstable Depot	10 September 2019
Somerset, Mendip & Bristol	Weston Depot	10 September 2019

These workshops had a number of objectives: to provide local stakeholders with an update on the investment being made in their local network over the next 12 months; to collect feedback on where stakeholders see capacity challenges, particularly as a result of residential and commercial developments; to get feedback on how the local WPD teams can work more effectively with stakeholders; and to strengthen working relationships between the Distribution Managers and local stakeholders.

While the agenda at each workshop was bespoke, the following items were covered at all three workshops:

- Introduction to WPD;
- The role of Ofgem and the RIIO framework;
- The transition to Distribution System Operator;
- Investment on the network;
- Network constraints;
- Working with stakeholders (including the provision of information);
- The electric vehicle charging network.

The workshops comprised PowerPoint presentations from the Distribution Manager(s), followed by three round-table discussion sessions. These sessions gave stakeholders an opportunity to feed back on the following areas: working with WPD and stakeholder priorities for the electricity network; supporting the growth agenda; and the electric vehicle charging network. At the end of the first and third sessions, stakeholders were asked to complete written feedback forms to provide some quantitative feedback.

WPD instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate the workshops and to take notes of the comments made by stakeholders. Comments have not been attributed to individuals to ensure that all stakeholders were able to speak as candidly as possible.



2 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshops were aimed at gathering feedback from stakeholders on three main areas: stakeholder priorities; supporting the growth agenda; and the electric vehicle charging (EV) network. At each workshop, the relevant Distribution Manager gave a presentation on these topics, which was followed by a round-table discussion designed to collect stakeholder feedback. This report contains summaries of the findings from the round-table discussions, as well as verbatim comments and written feedback from stakeholders.

WORKSHOP ONE: STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIES

- Stakeholders in the South West reported positive experiences of working with WPD, singling out the dedication of WPD employees, collaboration on sustainability, and the connections process for particular praise. Where there was criticism, it mainly focused on network capacity and constraint, and the resulting hindrance and difficulty this caused for growth in their region.
- ‘Build a smart network’, ‘network resilience’ and ‘environment’ were nominated as the top three priorities in the South West, earning 8.63, 8.61 and 8.61 out of 10 respectively.
- Stakeholders felt some priorities were missing. By far the most common suggestion was a new priority to ensure that WPD is helping to address the climate emergency. Other suggestions included customer education (about what WPD does and energy efficiency), strategic forward planning and investment (including working with councils) and facilitating renewables. A range of other suggestions were also proposed.

WORKSHOP TWO: SUPPORTING THE GROWTH AGENDA

- Sustainability was central to growth plans in the South West: where large housing, commercial and infrastructure plans were cited, the clear onus was on how, and at what cost, they could be made more sustainable in the future.
- Many delegates felt that sustainable growth was only possible with changes to planning regulations, and urged WPD to lobby government for real change on this issue.
- Stakeholders wanted to see more early collaboration with WPD on their Local Plans.
- Technology was felt to be key in supporting the growth agenda, with heat pumps, EV charge points, PV, and battery storage seen as critical to creating truly sustainable housing and commercial development.
- All local authorities in the South West had declared climate emergencies, and wanted to see greater leadership from WPD in enabling collaboration between local and central government, developers and suppliers to enact meaningful change.
- Delegates were mostly happy with the applications process, with suggestions for improvements including greater information on restrictions, and slightly longer offer acceptance timescales.

WORKSHOP THREE: THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING NETWORK

- 55% of delegates at the South West workshops were at the early planning stages of rolling out an EV charging network, while 19% had not really started. Only 16% had implemented firm plans.
- Stakeholders reported a disjointed approach at different tiers of local and regional government, and cited the rurality of their regions as a hindrance to both the installation and uptake of EVs.
- It was felt that better capacity maps, better forecasting, more detailed technical information and clearer guidance from WPD would help local authorities' ability to implement an EV charging network. It was also felt that there ought to be more workshops and engagement on the issue.
- On-street charging was seen to be a critical issue, although there was some confusion as to how best to enact an effective approach. Some cited rapid charging hubs and electric car clubs as viable methods to tackle the problem.
- Over two thirds of stakeholders (67%) described the level of service they had experienced when applying for an EV connection with WPD as 'good', with the remaining voters opting for 'neutral'.
- 88% of delegates felt that the information from WPD on EV charging was 'very good' or 'good'.
- Cost and suitable locations for charge points were identified as the two biggest challenges faced in rolling out the EV charging network. A range of other challenges were also proposed.

EVENT FEEDBACK

After the event, stakeholders were asked to complete written feedback forms. In terms of the event, the feedback was as follows:

- The average stakeholder satisfaction score for the workshop was 9 out of 10, with 36% of stakeholders giving the highest possible score of 10 out of 10.
- All stakeholders reported that they found the event interesting, with 77% opting for 'very interesting' and 23% for 'interesting'.
- 100% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they had the opportunity to make their points and ask questions.
- 93% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that WPD covered the right topics on the day, and no stakeholders disagreed with this statement.
- 77% thought that their table facilitators were 'very good', with 20% opting for 'good'.



3 | ATTENDEES

65 stakeholders attended across the three workshops, representing 40 organisations. The organisations represented were as follows:

- 361 Energy CIC
- Aardvark EM Ltd
- All Wind UK Ltd
- Atlantic Energy
- Bath and North East Somerset Council
- Bideford Town Council
- BRE National Solar Centre
- British Solar Renewables
- Centrica (Cornwall Local Energy Market)
- Community Energy Plus
- Cornwall Business Partnership
- Cornwall Council
- Cornwall Energy Services
- Devon County Council
- Digital Engineering Ltd
- Dorset Council
- Green Nation
- Hoare Lea
- Mid Devon District Council
- Mr. Electric
- National Police Estates Group
- North Devon Coast AONB
- North Devon Council
- North Somerset Council
- Okehampton Town Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Sedgemoor District Council
- Somerset County Council
- Somerset West and Taunton Council
- South Gloucestershire Council
- South Somerset District Council
- South West Energy Hub
- SunGift Solar
- The Heat Project
- Torridge District Council
- Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network
- Wessex Water
- West Devon Borough Council
- West Somerset And Taunton District Council
- ZLC Energy Ltd



4 | WORKSHOP ONE: STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIES

The first presentation of the day outlined WPD's role as a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and its approach to working on a regional level. The presenters then explained that WPD is looking to understand its stakeholders' priorities as the company moves towards its next Business Plan (2023-2028).

During the discussion session, stakeholders were asked what their priorities were for the electricity network from 2023 onwards. They were then given a written feedback form and asked to rank WPD's 14 existing priorities, as well as identify any priorities they felt were missing.

SUMMARY:

Stakeholders in the South West attended the workshops with sustainability and the environment at the top of their agendas. Renewable technologies, connecting wind and solar, the climate emergency and the EV charging network all emerged as points of discussion. Many also wanted to talk about network capacity and constraint, expressing concern that it was hindering sustainable growth and capability in their region.

Stakeholders were broadly positive about their experiences of working with WPD. Some specified employees' dedication to finding solutions, despite being somewhat stretched, while others singled out the connections process, operator forums and consultations on planning works for praise. Others expressed feelings of reassurance that WPD were helping communities, councils and local energy groups to transition to a more sustainable world. Delegates also stated that WPD compared favourably with other DNOs and utilities on collaboration and responsiveness. For those stakeholders involved in vulnerability and fuel poverty issues, working with WPD on the referrals process was reported to have resulted in an uptick in PSR numbers and, crucially, real change in people's lives. Where there was criticism, it focused mainly on WPD's network capacity and constraints, which resulted in sustainable projects being stymied or held back. Others bemoaned the lack of incentives for connecting renewable power sources. Although many reported positively on WPD's communications, some sounded a note of dissent, citing a perceived decline in WPD's ability to respond in a timely manner to queries and concerns.

In keeping with the sustainable focus in the South West, delegates urged WPD to take a lead in lobbying government for real change and direction in creating realistic conditions to achieve Net Zero by 2050. It was felt that WPD needed to win the hearts and minds of businesses and customers in order to proactively engage with the ramifications of the climate emergency and the ways in which energy consumption was going to shift in the future.

When stakeholders were asked to vote on WPD's priorities, 'build a smart network' scored the highest, with 8.63 out of 10, followed by 'environment' and 'network resilience', which both scored 8.61 out of 10. Smart networks were seen as crucial to enabling a low carbon economy (with EVs highlighted as an example of this), although some felt that greater clarification and education was needed on what, precisely, a smart network would look like, and how it would function in reality. While some stakeholders emphasised the importance of moving to a smarter network, they expressed concern that any new system did not sacrifice the ability of everyone to participate, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances and in fuel poverty. Others emphasised that affordability needed to be prioritised for developers as well as for those paying as customers into the energy system, as building sustainable housing and infrastructure becomes more and more of a priority. Some delegates wanted to see WPD being able to invest in the network ahead of need, seen as critical in addressing smart networks, resilience and overall affordability.

Although environment was highlighted as a priority in the South West, some felt the category needed breaking down for greater definition. It was felt by some that this category was outdated, and that there was a missing priority around the issue of carbon, or carbon neutrality. In fact, when asked what priorities were missing, the most common suggestion raised by twelve stakeholders in the written feedback forms was a priority demonstrating that WPD was addressing the climate emergency. Other missing priorities included battery storage and heat pumps, and the concurrent ability of the grid's capacity to take on increased generation from renewables. Other missing priorities included customer education (particularly in relation to energy efficiency) and strategic forward planning and investment (including working with councils around their Local Plans).

1. WHAT, IF ANYTHING, HAS BEEN YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH US TO DATE?

"I'm from the planning policy team in the council and I have been working to develop policies for tackling climate change in Cornwall. I'm trying to get planning permission for wind turbines and other renewable technologies. Renewable energy forms a key part of my brief." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"I'm a councillor in Barnstaple and I'm also the chair of the climate-emergency working group, so I'm constantly looking at environmental initiatives, particularly in relation to EVs." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"I work with community energy projects and fuel poverty initiatives. I'm here today to see what WPD is doing to tackle grid constraints and gaps in the grid." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"I'm part of a regional energy hub and I help the local council with renewable initiatives. I think that my interactions with WPD have been great. The planning team is stretched and under-resourced, but is always fantastic. They always go out of their way for me." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"I have worked strategically with WPD and have collaborated with the company on rolling out EV chargers. The technology is quite new, so we're all on a joint learning curve, but the relationship has always been positive." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"Even when WPD tell us something we don't want to hear, at least the reasons for their decision are explained clearly." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"I have always found WPD receptive and challenged in meeting my needs, maybe because there wasn't enough capacity on the grid. They're always keen to help and always looking to get some more capacity to give you a bit more power. They make me hopeful for the future as we move towards a green world." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"We work with PSR referrals and get a 'per registration' fee for signing people up, which helps us to cover our core funding. As part of this process, we've also discovered new people who have needed these services and have got them signed up. This has helped them to get their lives changed around quickly." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Compared to other DNOs, we find that WPD are better and more responsive. The DNOs seem to get worse the further east you go." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"I'm part of a volunteer-run community energy company which is looking to install community generation projects. Unfortunately, some of these initiatives were stymied due to network constraints." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

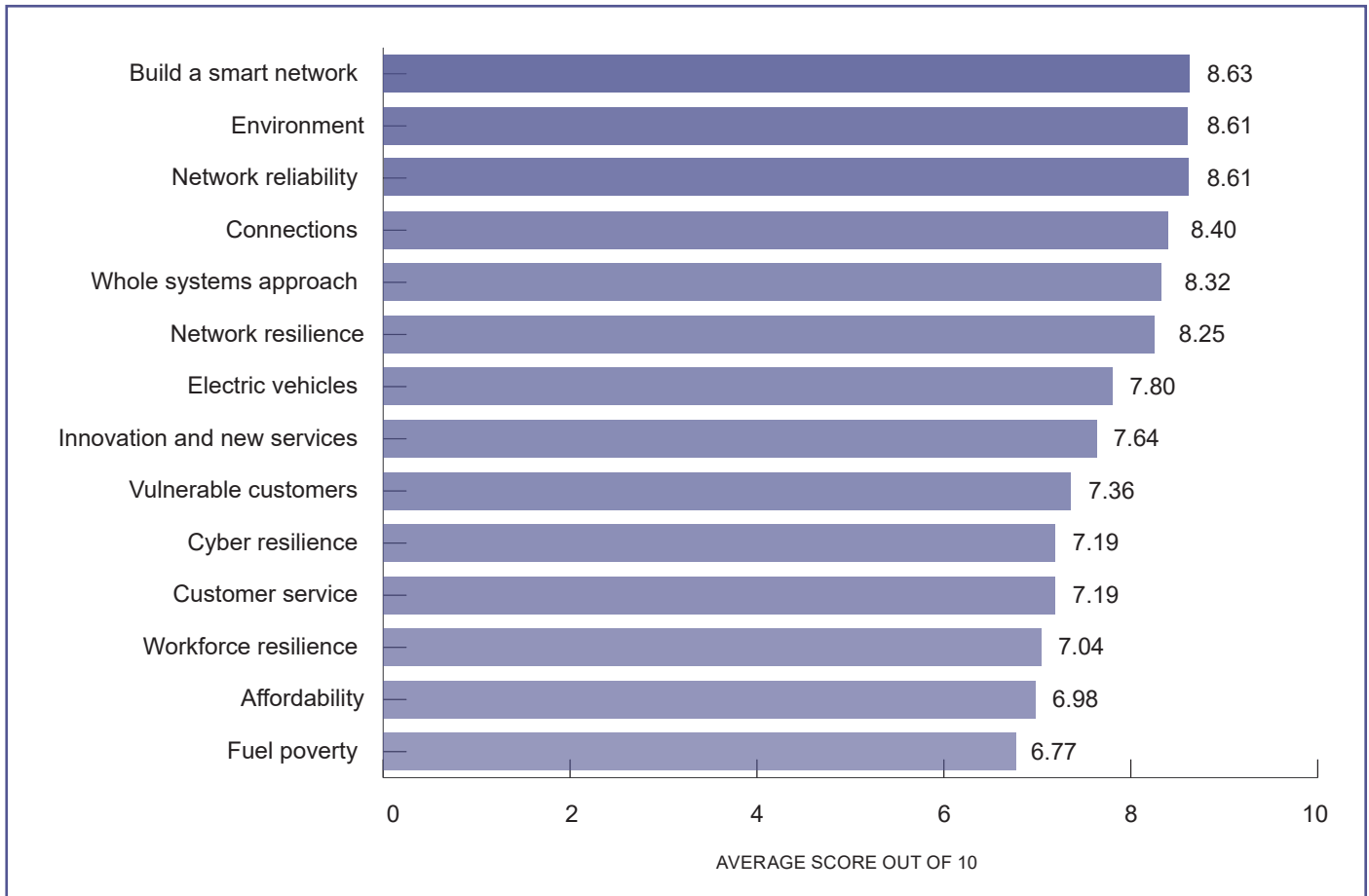
"We've experienced problems with grid capacity when developing our projects, which has hindered connections. We are finding it costly to put forward new projects because we have to contribute financially to upgrades. This need for future-proofing has made us reluctant to go forward in some areas." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"I was frustrated about the lack of incentives to connect renewable power sources." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"Communication and points of contact have fallen by the wayside. Statutory providers weren't getting anything back from you. We have real issues with constraint that are going to significantly affect our growth, development and local economy." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol**

"WPD needs to lobby the central government to get it to stop reneging on its green pledges and needs to make the public aware of what the challenges are. WPD needs to win over the hearts and minds of businesses and the public." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

2. WHAT ARE THE KEY PRIORITIES FOR YOU WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR ELECTRICITY NETWORK?



"I think that while it's socially responsible to bear fuel poverty in mind, I would focus on building a smart network and improve the efficiency of how you transport electricity and then reduce costs, as you are already doing something to help with fuel poverty."
Stakeholder, Cornwall

"WPD needs to ensure that it has a smart network to cope with electric vehicles. There's a village near to Bodmin that is not producing electricity to its full capacity and we can't place solar cells on our farm roof because there isn't the capacity for it either. It's very frustrating."
Stakeholder, Cornwall

"Affordability is crucial. For my developers, yes, they understand that sustainability is important, but can they afford to build it?"
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

"Smart' needs defining. There is a role for the DNO but this should perhaps be providing open access."
Stakeholder, Devon

"There's too much jargon. What does a smart network mean? Environment means different things to different people."
Stakeholder, Devon

"During storms, the network has been more resilient in recent times. You rarely hear about the power going out when they occur now."
Stakeholder, Devon

"There needs to be lobbying to get the prices of the new solar-cell tiles down, as they won't catch on widely at their current prices."
Stakeholder, Devon

"I think the DNOs should have a more prominent role in influencing Government policy and that this should be a priority."
Stakeholder, Devon

"I'm still concerned that not all the excess energy generated by solar-panel and wind-turbine owners is able to go back into the system, due to storage-capacity restrictions."
Stakeholder, Devon

"I do feel that there needs to be more work to increase storage capacities in order to tap further into the potential of solar and off-shore wind power. These energy sources have been held back due to technological restrictions." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"One thing not on this list is carbon and encouraging the move to the low-carbon economy. I want to see WPD play a greater role in responding to the climate emergency. They should be more proactive in this. It's good that you're looking at your own fleet of vehicles, for example, but you need to be encouraging more green sources of energy." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Investment in the network is important but WPD should be allowed to invest in advance. At present, they're not, which is a problem." **Stakeholder, Devon**

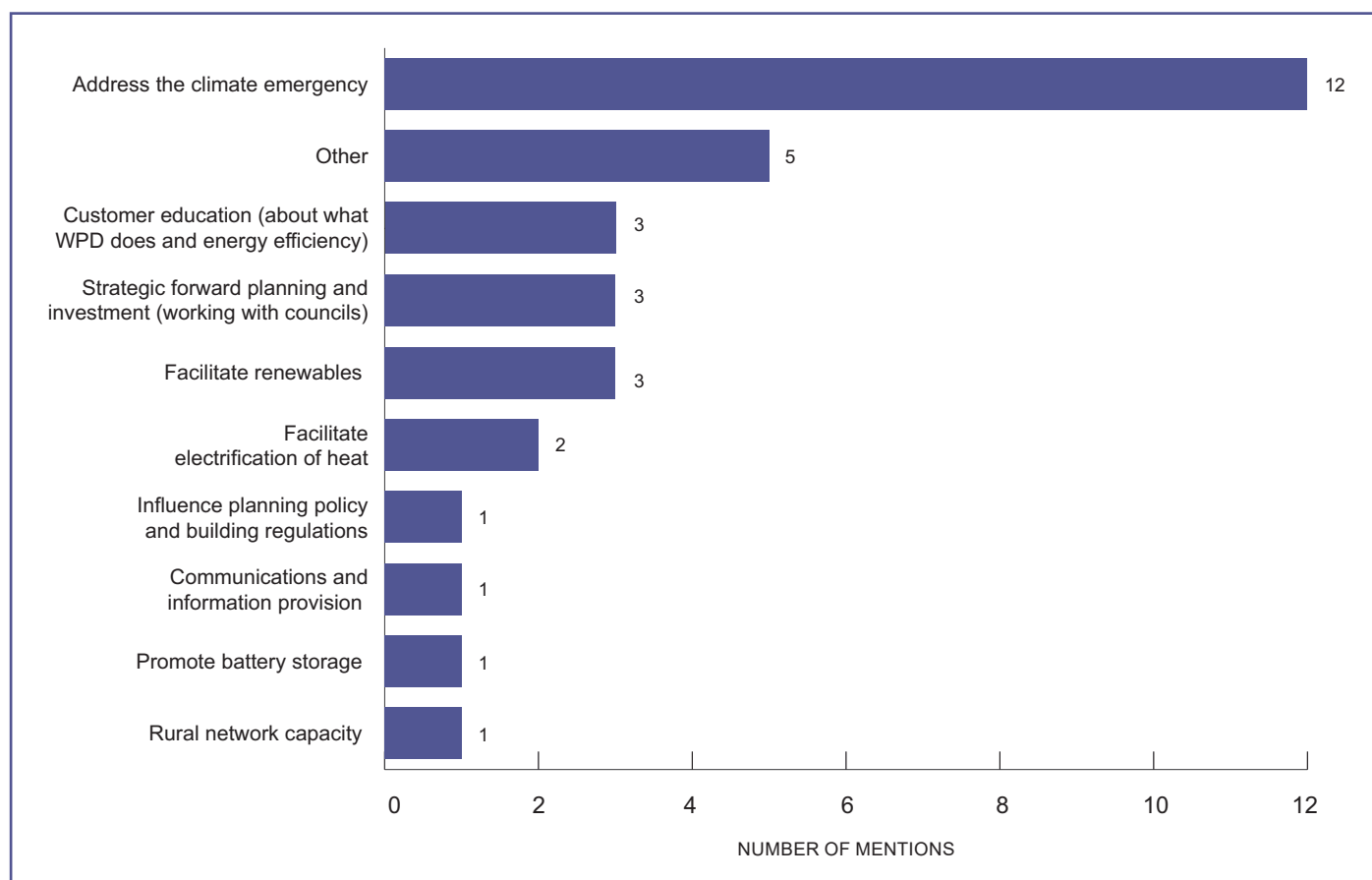
"I think it's important that WPD has a role in making sure people in fuel poverty aren't left behind by the move to a smarter network." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"I think the DNOs should have a more prominent role in influencing Government policy and that this should be a priority." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"At the moment, there isn't really a business case for battery storage but this is going to be a big thing when the figures add up. WPD needs to be aware of this and make it a priority." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Innovation is important for us; the change to all electric with heat pumps means that cost is a massive issue. We're looking to find ways to ease that with WPD." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol**

3. ARE THERE ANY PRIORITIES MISSING FROM THE LIST ABOVE?



NB. This graph has been produced based on the written answers to an open question in the feedback form. Where possible, the written responses have been analysed and grouped into themes. To do so, some assumptions have been made. This graph should therefore be treated as purely indicative of people's views.

Where new priorities were only mentioned once they have been included as 'other', unless they were suggested as new priorities at other workshops in which case they have been included as separate items in the graph.

'Other' suggestions were: 'managing end users' expectations; residential connections and reinforcements; using the smart network to deliver other benefits including reducing fuel poverty and enabling low carbon technologies; and flexibility.

“Building a smart network should enable low carbon technologies, and an electric vehicle supply for the vulnerable and the fuel poor.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“You could separate the what (keeping the lights on, providing for distribution generation) from the how.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“Engaging with customers, communications and local authorities on behavior change for carbon emissions reduction.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“Working with renewable energy generators, such as tidal and offshore wind, to create longer-term plans.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“Engage with local authorities to identify how grants may impact the network and also how new upgrades to the network can impact deliverability of sites to meet identified housing needs.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

“Identify the primary objective of WPD, and create one clear vision for others to align with.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“Education on what WPD’s infrastructure does for society, at the primary and secondary school level.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall



5 | WORKSHOP TWO: SUPPORTING THE GROWTH AGENDA

The presenters gave examples of WPD's investment programme, which included activities such as asset replacement, undergrounding and network reinforcement. The company's approach to capacity allocation was also explained. Stakeholders were then asked to give details of their own local growth plans, the technologies they were planning to include and how WPD should take these into consideration when investing in the network.

SUMMARY:

Stakeholders in the South West discussed their growth plans, the majority of which centered around a sustainable agenda. In many cases, plans involved retrofitting older homes with smart technology, as well as setting up wind and tidal projects. In order to help with these initiatives, some stakeholders wanted WPD to future-proof the network, while others felt that it would better for WPD to lead the way with sustainability and fuel-efficiency initiatives.

Specific growth plans cited include Bath and North East Somerset, where there are plans for 14,500 new houses, and there are plans for a large expansion of housing at West Somerset and Taunton. In Sedgemoor, there is a long-term plan for a commercial enterprise zone that will be dedicated to sustainable industry and run on its own micro-grid. In Somerset, there is a 5MW solar park with 10MW battery storage destined for an ex-landfill site, with other sites on farmland earmarked for future development. In North Devon, the council in Bideford have identified sites for 2,250 new homes, increasing to 4,000 by 2025, with further development planned around north Torridge, Tiverton and Okehampton. New Garden Villages planned around Cranbrook, Colne and Newton Abbott were anticipated to put a strain on resources, with delegates citing the need to plan for renewable energy to be a feature of these villages. Other stakeholders were largely at an early stage of planning and expressed frustration regarding short application timeframes.

Growth plans around the region were at different stages of implementation, but there was a clear sense of urgency when delegates discussed the ability of WPD to respond to Local Plans in a timely and responsible manner. Stakeholders also queried why WPD could not be a statutory consultee on planning applications, and suggested greater collaboration with local authorities to enable sustainable growth. Others mentioned speculative planning and connections applications as reasons why growth was stymied in their region.

The technology used in these growth plans included battery storage, EV chargers and heat pumps in new homes, as well as retrofitting older properties to enable the use of similar technologies. Delegates stated that, while there was a concerted effort to enable these new technologies, there was concern about whether retrofitting old properties in the region would be viable, and further expressed doubt about the capability of battery storage. Delegates also worried that local authorities were still behind where they should be with technological developments and that housing developers were not pulling their weight with implementing sustainable solutions, opting for lower costs over any long-term environmental benefits. A solution to this was again seen in lobbying government for changes to building regulations or for DNOs to become a statutory consultee in planning matters. It was also noted that incorporating newer technologies would increase housing prices in an already inflated market or result in less affordable housing being provided.

All local authorities in the South West had declared climate emergencies. Delegates expressed concern at what they perceived as a policy gap between the government target of Net Zero by 2050, and the more varied and ambitious targets of 2030 and 2040 set in their constituencies. They wanted to see WPD leading the way on collaboration across planning regulations or even declaring a climate emergency as a company, in addition to lobbying central government to enable meaningful change. Stakeholders described measures they had in place to reach zero carbon, such as major community consultations on climate change strategy across relevant partners, policy-making that enables sustainable development, and offsetting strategies. There was broad consensus that greater leadership from WPD on zero carbon was critical.

1. WHAT GROWTH PLANS DO YOU HAVE THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING THE INVESTMENT IN YOUR LOCAL NETWORK?

"There have been discussions about floating off-shore wind generators, but I'm not sure whether they are a good idea for Cornwall at a local level, purely because of the cost of the cabling and the small level of power demand in the local area." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"We have looked into wave parks with tidal-generation technology to try and support the grid." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"There's a move to place solar panels in the field behind the local business park here in Barnstaple in order to help to power it." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"There are plans to retrofit older housing in Barnstaple with solar panels and other environmentally friendly technology." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"There's an innovation centre which is looking to have a park and ride which would include electric-vehicle chargers and solar panels too. The energy generated would then be sold on." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"There was a storage heater project with Tesla being run by North Devon Homes where you would store energy during the Economy 7 periods of the day. Another part of the project would involve phasing out inefficient home assets, such as boilers." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"North Devon Council have identified sites in Bideford for 2,250 new homes. By 2025, that will be 4,000. Lots of development [has been] planned around north Torridge." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"New Garden Villages around Cranbrook, Colne and Newton Abbott will put a strain on resources. We need to plan for renewable energy to be a feature of these villages." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Redrow in Okehampton are building around 550 new homes, but only the first few have solar panels." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"There is a partnership with mid-Devon that includes Cullompton. This is around 5,000 homes." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Tiverton has hundreds planned." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"We anticipate between 8,000 and 9,000 new homes in Taunton." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol**

"Housing numbers are up in the air with us: we are currently planning for 14,500 new houses, with two large scale allocations in Whitchurch and a new and separate village near Keynsham. We're also currently looking for sites for 700 houses." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol**

"At Cotford St Luke and Oake, we have three developments: one has started, and the other two will come in the next few years. We have two planning applications in Oake, and a third in the offing. At West Monkton, we've built 2,000 already and have more going in. At Staplegrove, there's a new development coming in, and we're hoping for a new spine road. At Firepool in Taunton there's more housing, and we're planning more housing, with an aim for 35% to be social housing." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol**

"In Sedgemoor, we're planning an enterprise zone called Gravity on the site of an old Royal Ordnance Factory. It will be an energy park and we want it open in the next 10, 15, 20 years, exclusively devoted to sustainable industry, for example, EV car production. We want it to be a self-sustainable park operating on a micro-grid." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol**

"We've got a 5MW solar park with battery storage (10MW) going in at the Bridgwater Saltland ex-landfill site. It can't be connected for 3 – 4 years. It's relatively straightforward as it's on vacant land." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol**

2. WHAT STAGE ARE THESE PLANS AT – HOW LIKELY ARE THEY TO PROGRESS?

“The park and ride at the innovation centre is looking very likely to progress.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“There needs to be lobbying to ensure that there is a commitment to getting Net Zero homes being built a long time before 2030. WPD needs to be part of this lobbying.” **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

“We need to come together to come up with a plan. What we can do ourselves and also pushing government to do stuff. We need to agree what we are lobbying for with WPD.”
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“WPD need to get in with local plans earlier. We send consultation documents out but we don’t get much back from you.”
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“Should WPD be a consultee or a statutory consultee on our major estates? Is this something WPD could cope with?”
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“We’ve had some issue with the Joint Spatial Plan for the West of England. Similar areas will be looking for growth broadly. There are concerns about not having a five-year land supply as there are a lot of speculative applications. It would be good to address this so that we don’t have plan-led growth. Changes in processes in the economy make this a difficult situation.” **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol**

“We’re preparing our local plan, [and] looking to allow growth in small villages to some degree. We’ve liaised with WPD engineers in terms of where the capacity is. When we reach a stage where we have specific sites in mind, we’ll come to you.”
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“There’s been a recent change of administration and right now we’re taking stock. We were going to publish our plan by the end of the 2019, but there could be a delay. We are uncertain.”
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“We published ours for Sedgemoor in February 2019. All sites have planning applications on: Bridgwater, North Petherton, Highbridge, Cannington, Wedmore, and Woolavington.”
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

3. WHAT TECHNOLOGIES ARE YOU PLANNING TO USE?

"Storage will play a key role in finding a new balance between generation and demand."

Stakeholder, Cornwall

"For heating houses, our solution has shifted towards a hybrid model, which involves a combination of decarbonised gas and electricity."

Stakeholder, Cornwall

"For older homes, if we were to encourage using heat pumps in every home, it would be a nightmare. WPD's Freedom Project is something that interests us. By contrast, for new builds, we have opted for an electrification approach, as well as new smart models, such as EV chargers and heat pumps."

Stakeholder, Cornwall

"We're particularly focused on electrification and battery storage. We believe in being more flexible and adding more capacity back into the grid if it's not being used, taking a turn up / turn down approach. We should be using the assets better, rather than adding more." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"With these new technologies required for making homes more sustainable, I'm concerned about the fact that these costs will be passed on to buyers. This is worrying, as it is already difficult enough for young people to get on the property ladder. I'm not saying don't do it, but costs do need to be considered."

Stakeholder, Cornwall

"Localised embedded generation would be a good solution for helping to deal with potential future energy challenges in Cornwall. In light of this, WPD needs to think about strengthening the infrastructure in place."

Stakeholder, Cornwall

"WPD shouldn't rely on the idea of just adding more and more assets to the grid. With all the local projects working to improve fuel efficiency here, the demand will reduce. I feel that the focus needs to shift towards local low-carbon initiatives which are emerging. Trying to find the balance and making the network smarter will be key." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"There needs to be a whole systems approach. One idea that comes to mind is decarbonising gas. An easy solution would be using hydrogen rather than methane in cities. Using electricity to create hydrogen is something that WPD has never done before, I know, but it's a good potential option."

Stakeholder, Cornwall

"We're currently talking about retrofitting houses, but we're eventually going to have to retrofit housing that is currently being built. Central government is going to have to change the law for installing certain assets on homes and getting these technologies in place."

Stakeholder, Cornwall

"Developers are not producing PV or heat pumps because that's not government policy."

Stakeholder, Devon

"North Devon's wish list would be energy efficient properties with PVs and battery storage, but it's all led by government policy. We would like government lobbied to make it part of building regulations."

Stakeholder, Devon

"We're looking at underfloor heating involving heat pumps, which provide a low level of heat all day long and are more efficient than radiators."

Stakeholder, Devon

"The solar panels fitted on the park and ride at the innovation centre would use battery storage and the energy generated would later be sold on."

Stakeholder, Devon

"You need to get the developers on board with heat pumps. There's only so much influence we can have."

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

"We look at an energy development model, where you have some generation like PV, some response and how these interact with finances and the external world. How WPD and developers can interact with this is very crucial."

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

"We can either do heat pumps unit by unit, or run a centralised system running from a sewage treatment plant. This would be our preferred option."

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

4. ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY LOCAL AUTHORITIES THAT HAVE DECLARED CLIMATE EMERGENCIES – AND HOW SHOULD WPD RESPOND?

“Cornwall Council have declared a climate emergency but are still drawing up plans to tackle this. It will be important that any money the council spends will give us the ‘most bang for our buck.’”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“The whole of Devon has declared a climate emergency. East Devon hadn’t until recently but now they have.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“WPD should shout loudly that Ofgem are a block to solving many of the issues needed to confront the climate emergency.” **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

“WPD should declare its own climate emergency and look at what it means for the company.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“There needs to be greater focus on resilience rather than just zero carbon initiatives. This can provide key opportunities for collaboration in terms of planning and the work on WPD. We may need to hit a generation level that is five times higher than it currently is in order to hit carbon zero. We need to find ways to reassure WPD and reinforce it in this mission.” **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

“WPD needs to be flexible and be willing to change its plans if they stretch across 8 years. They will not likely stay the same across that entire period.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“361 Energy is working with other councillors in the North Devon districts to help to put together a combined approach for projects and get them talking to one another about their needs. Would WPD be interested in getting involved?” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“I’m concerned that we’re still a few years behind still. We’re talking a lot about our good intentions, but I don’t think that we’re doing enough to deliver. The houses being built in Barnstaple at the moment will not be carbon neutral.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“WPD needs to future-proof its networks to ensure that there is enough capacity for smarter-home usage and reach out to other local authorities to keep spreading the word. This support from their side will be invaluable.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“WPD needs to input into decision-making, for example, by participating on committees.” **Stakeholder, Devon**

“There is a policy gap between the government target of zero carbon by 2050, and our target, which is 2030. There needs to be joined-up thinking between planning regulations, DNOs, policy, developers, suppliers and government. Who leads that collaboration? We need to get in there now.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“We would welcome you coming to speak to councillors regarding your views on climate emergencies. To appraise councillors so they have a proper awareness of what is possible, including the training of councillors and officers.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“We have a joint climate change strategy with all local government in Somerset – energy, transport, housing, waste – and we are hoping for a final draft by September next year. [It’s] all community consultation. Who leads this kind of major, multi-faceted project?”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“We’re focusing on policy making, how we affect local plans to help the climate emergency, and sustainable construction.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“We’re introducing things like offsetting measures where developers contribute money if they can’t reach sustainability targets, but there’s no set timetable as yet.” **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol**

5. HAVE YOU GOT ANY FEEDBACK ABOUT THE APPLICATIONS PROCESS?

"It would help to get a better understanding of why restrictions are put in place." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"I'm happy with the application process for connections. A lot of my interaction with them takes place before we put the application in." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"The process is OK and reasonably familiar to us, but when an offer goes interactive, that process then becomes quite difficult." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Boards meet monthly and it's difficult to align everything in ten days. Twenty days would be optimal." **Stakeholder, Devon**



6 | WORKSHOP THREE: THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING NETWORK

The third presentation addressed the complex and wide-ranging issue of EV charging, touching upon capacity, connection cost and time and the application process.

During the discussions, stakeholders were asked about their plans for the roll out of the EV charging network and how WPD can support these plans. At the end, stakeholders were given a written feedback form to complete to give WPD a better understanding of the status of the rollout of EV charging at local councils across their network.

SUMMARY:

Over half of the delegates at the South West workshop (55%) were at the early planning stages of rolling out the EV charging network in their regions. 19% had not really started, although 16% were at the implementation phase. In Devon and Cornwall, plans cited included electric buses, super depots for charging and some charging points for private vehicles, with councils planning to move to electric fleets over the next five years. However, many expressed concern as to how it would actually function in reality due to the size of the rural area in Cornwall and the lack of infrastructure currently in place. Plans in Somerset, Mendip and Bristol were more established, with local authorities looking mainly at installing chargers at car parks and park-and-ride sites. Stakeholders reported a somewhat disjointed approach between different tiers of local and regional government, which would need improving if a successful roll out of EV charging was to be effected.

In terms of better support from WPD, many felt that forecasting was a critical issue, with others suggesting better heat maps, technical information and guidance for where there was capacity constraint, which was also seen as a significant roadblock on local plans. Others wanted better communication with WPD, with a dedicated point of contact mooted, and better outreach to parish councils and local energy groups as well as larger government bodies. Many felt this perceived communications gap could be closed with more engagement and workshops on capacity and connections issues. Some delegates urged WPD to do all they could to keep installation costs down, to prevent the creation of a two-tier EV availability system between wealthier and less-affluent regions.

Whilst most delegates did not have any firm plans for on-street charging, there was consensus that this was a hugely pressing issue. For some, it was about ensuring that those who did not have access to a driveway were not dissuaded from buying an EV, while for others the concern was that on-street charging would be more expensive than home charging, therefore negatively affecting certain sections of the population. Some local authorities had ideas for rapid on-street charging, electric car clubs with reserved charging and parking, charging hubs for apartment blocks, and working with supermarkets to enable parking and charging. Stakeholders were in broad consensus that the UK as a whole was behind on the roll out of on-street parking, with Paris' installation of chargers at all parking meters cited as a good example of innovation and implementation.

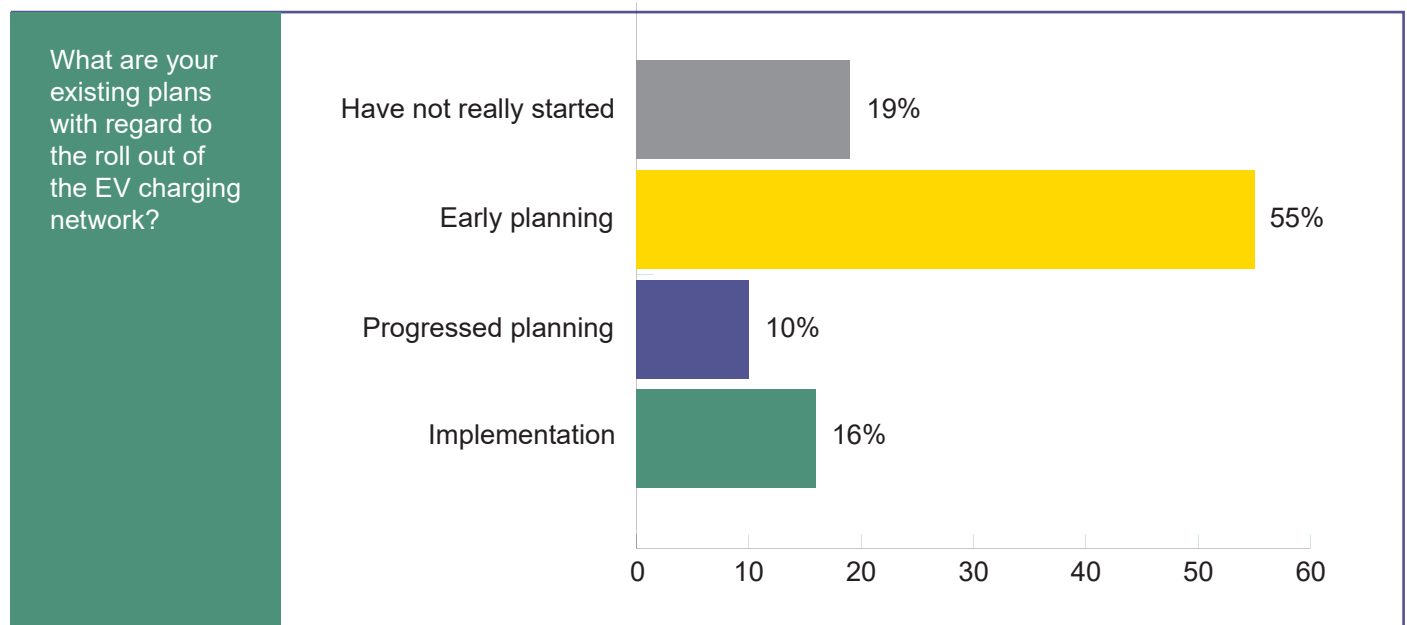
Most authorities in the South West were very keen to electrify their fleets, but stated that, pragmatically, it would likely happen over the next five to ten years. Some said that it was difficult to present the business case for a total transfer to EVs, while others stated that either technology or cost was preventing them from making a full switch. Other authorities reported research projects into self-charging electric street-cleaning equipment, while in Cornwall, council vehicles weighing up to 2.5 tonnes are now powered by electricity or biomethane.

When stakeholders were asked what the biggest challenges were that they were facing in rolling out the EV charging network, the two answers that came out top were cost and identifying suitable locations for charge points, which were identified by seven attendees each across the two workshops in the written feedback. Other common suggestions were a lack of information and knowledge of the connections process and low levels of public awareness or interest in electric vehicles.

/cont

When stakeholders were asked to rate the level of service they had experienced when applying for an EV connection with WPD, over two thirds of stakeholders (67%) described it as 'good', with the remaining voters opting for 'neutral'. Whilst the feedback would suggest still more work needed to be done in communications, transparency and accessibility with regard to EV charging provision, 88% felt that the information from WPD on EV charging was 'very good' or 'good'. Many felt the workshops had been extremely helpful in starting critical conversations and creating greater knowledge and reassurance around the issue, with a key comment being that the morning had 'opened my eyes to the EV operation and process'.

1. WHAT ARE YOUR EXISTING PLANS WITH REGARD TO THE ROLL OUT OF THE EV CHARGING NETWORK?



"There's a new tender for super depots which will require primary substations for our electric fleet."
Stakeholder, Cornwall

"We're also interested in electric buses and have three local EV charging sites in mind, which will require a lot more charge."
Stakeholder, Cornwall

"Stagecoach are delivering electric buses here, but there are nowhere near as many as I would like. There needs to be government legislation to force people to do something."
Stakeholder, Devon

"In Teignbridge we are looking at installing charging points in our car parks where power can come from solar panels on the building next to the car park."
Stakeholder, Devon

"We're replacing a new underground car park in Bath and putting in 320 spaces, and are wondering what level of EV provision to provide. We think 10%, with fast charging. We'll put extra capacity in the substation so more EV charging can come online if we need. The model we struggled with is where should we be providing EV capacity. Forecasting is challenging. This car park is a kind of trial."
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

"We have a potential project with the district: a park and ride by the motorway."
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

"In Torridge, we have chargers in the main public car parks and they're together right at the top. They are not part of the county council framework, so things are all a bit disjointed."
Stakeholder, Devon

"County and District are not talking about EV charging. There isn't that link up."
Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

"We plan to support EV at new employment sites and new homes through the planning process, plus a proposal to use our communal car park for daytime charging." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"We are very much at the starting point, but have aspirations to explore EV in our own street and car parks for staff and visitors. We want to implement this through the neighbourhood plans and supplementary planning documents." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"We currently have a competition out for parish councils to come forward with public charge point proposals, and through the climate emergency strategy will be starting a conversation about EV charging for the county." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol**

"We are waiting on news on Priority Axis 7 funding for 66+ new public charge points. We will then run a concession framework to enable installs of charging hubs and EV forecasts." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

2. WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM US TO HELP SUPPORT YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR LOCAL EV CHARGING NETWORK?

"I'm most interested in getting mapping about the charge points, as it's important to be working with the most accurate figures possible. I don't want people to get the wrong impression and be working towards something unrealistic or out-of-date." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"We need to know specific technical information to help us put together our plans, including compatibility and harmonics." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol**

"You should make more technical information available about your plans for the charging network. This will enable other stakeholders to roll out their developments in a way that pulls in the same direction as you." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"I'm concerned about a two-tiered society in terms of EV chargers. I'm bothered that three-phased chargers are not being taken up to the front doors and are going to have to be retrofitted in five years. That isn't fair." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"Better outreach to Parish Councils on how they could install chargers using power from the PV cells that many community halls in Cornwall now have." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"WPD need to keep publishing the outcomes of trials." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"WPD have to be involved in the strategizing of a national programme to help increase the uptake of electric vehicles." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"Not enough information is being shared. WPD needs to put in place a point of contact who can answer questions and provide information." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"When I drive to work, there are no charging points en route and it make things scary. The A371 has none, for example. We're a huge tourist destination and people won't come here in their electric vehicles if they don't feel that they can get around. You need to identify these charger black spots, map them and then oversee work to get them installed." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Engagement would help, with specific information. Connections workshops." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol**

"WPD must make sure it isn't too expensive to connect chargers." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

3. DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC PLANS WHICH WILL ASSIST EV CUSTOMERS WHO DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO DRIVEWAYS AND HOME CHARGING?

“Supermarkets must change their policy so that cars can park for charging.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“People only seem to charge their vehicles at home, which means that they need to have a drive really. Electrical vehicles currently create a sense of social engineering, which is a bit of a problem.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“I am in favour of having on-street charging. However, I understand pedestrian concerns about making pavements really crowded and the issue of technological developments making them obsolete in future, though.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“Electric car clubs are working well in London. You see a lot of allocated spaces for this.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

“EV charging points for apartment block parking spaces could be an efficient solution.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

“On-street parking is an issue. One solution is an electric car club with a reserved space with charging. We’re still looking at locations and are not yet at the consultation stage.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

“We’re looking at rapid chargers in Somerset. Anything to assist those residents will be explored.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

“This is a massive challenge. [There is] confusion as to whose responsibility that is. There is money to be made. On-street charging will be more expensive. There’s a gap in the market between the charging infrastructure and who then sells the energy.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

“In Bath, retrofitting streets and houses will be a problem. Think of the heritage groups and listed buildings...”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol

“In Paris, every parking meter is a charging point. They are way ahead.”

Stakeholder, Devon

4. WHEN DO YOU EXPECT YOUR ORGANISATION’S FLEET TO GO ELECTRIC?

“Our fleet will go electric as and when we replace it. We’re not doing it at the moment, but we will be in the next few years. We’d like to have electric bin lorries, but we won’t be doing it any time soon, as we’ve just replaced them.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“Another problem is the costs of these vehicles. Again, city councils will be able to afford EVs, but this just won’t work in the countryside. The cost of the batteries will need to go down rapidly if it is to do so.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“All of our vehicles weighing up to 2.5 tonnes are now powered by electricity or biomethane. Heavier vehicles will move over to hydrogen.”

Stakeholder, Cornwall

“North Devon have plans to electrify their fleet over the next 7 years.”

Stakeholder, Devon

“Teignbridge want to urgently, but don’t have a timescale.”

Stakeholder, Devon

“It’s difficult to demonstrate the business case for fleet replacement.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“At South Somerset District Council we are at the research stages, with exciting concepts for street cleaning equipment that charges as it works. Medium term, [we’re looking at] three years.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

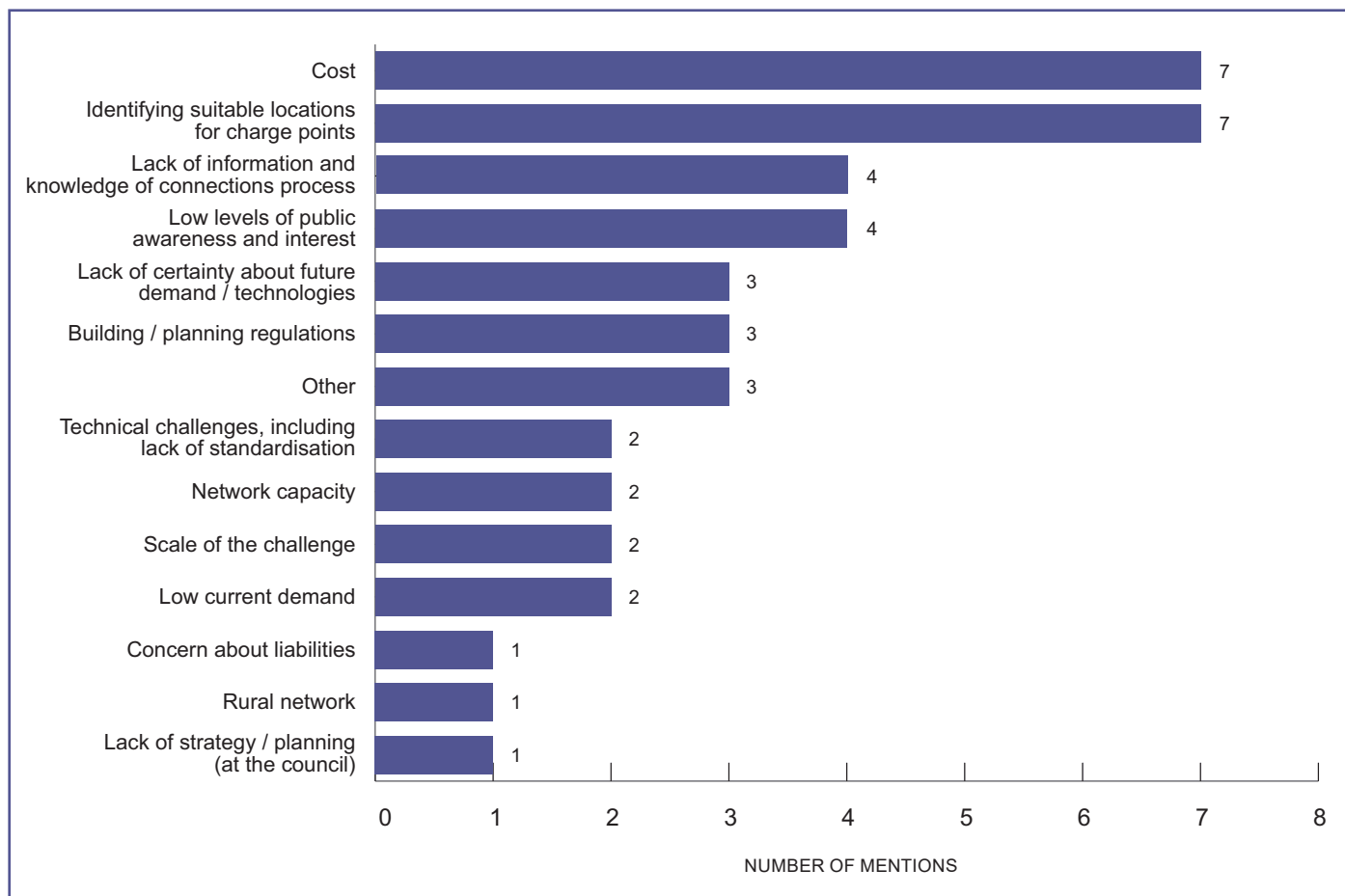
“We are offering incentives for EV cars, and removing parking permits for fossil fuel vehicles. It’s all part of our climate emergency plan.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

“In Somerset, we have movement towards EV, but the technology is not there for vans, and we need to run maintenance vans as well.”

Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip & Bristol

6. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN ROLLING OUT YOUR EV CHARGING NETWORK?



NB. This graph has been produced based on the written answers to an open question in the feedback form. Where possible, the written responses have been analysed and grouped into themes. To do so, some assumptions have been made. This graph should therefore be treated as purely indicative of people's views.

Where a certain challenge was only mentioned once it has been included as 'other', unless it was suggested as a challenge at other workshops in which case it has been included as a separate item in the graph.

'Other' suggestions included: enforcement of parking rules; insufficient remit at the council; and unknown battery back-up.

"Capital outlay and the increasingly difficult financial situation of local government." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Supply on the grid." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Planning policy formation." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Balancing supply and demand." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Rurality." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Capacity." **Stakeholder, Devon**

"Listed buildings." **Stakeholder, Somerset, Mendip and Bristol**

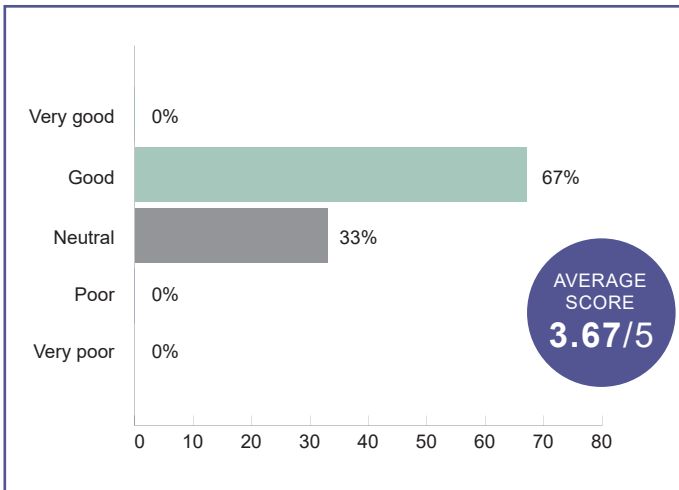
"Apathy." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"Providing appropriately sited infrastructure." **Stakeholder, Devon**

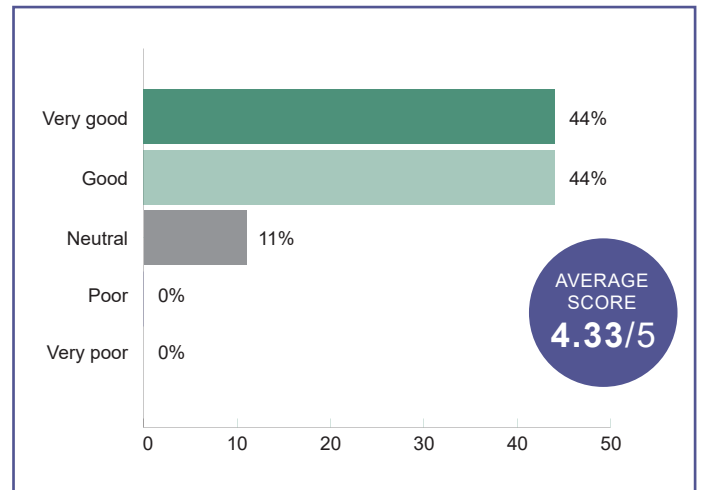
"Lack of knowledge." **Stakeholder, Cornwall**

"Risk." **Stakeholder, Devon**

7. IF YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR AN EV CONNECTION WITH WPD, WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE LEVEL OF SERVICE?

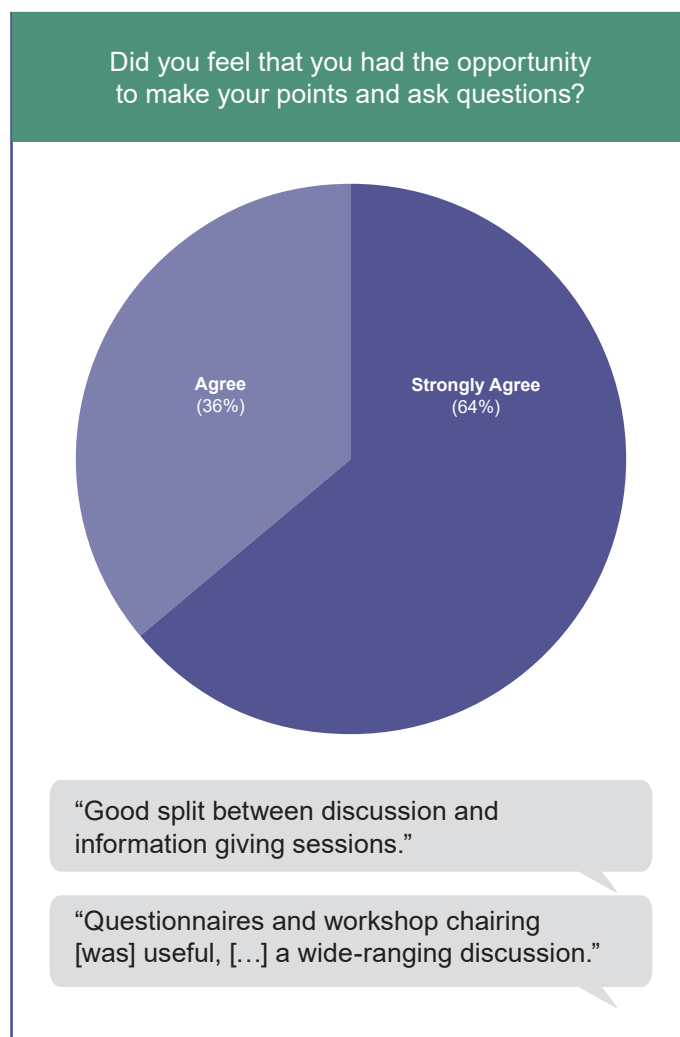
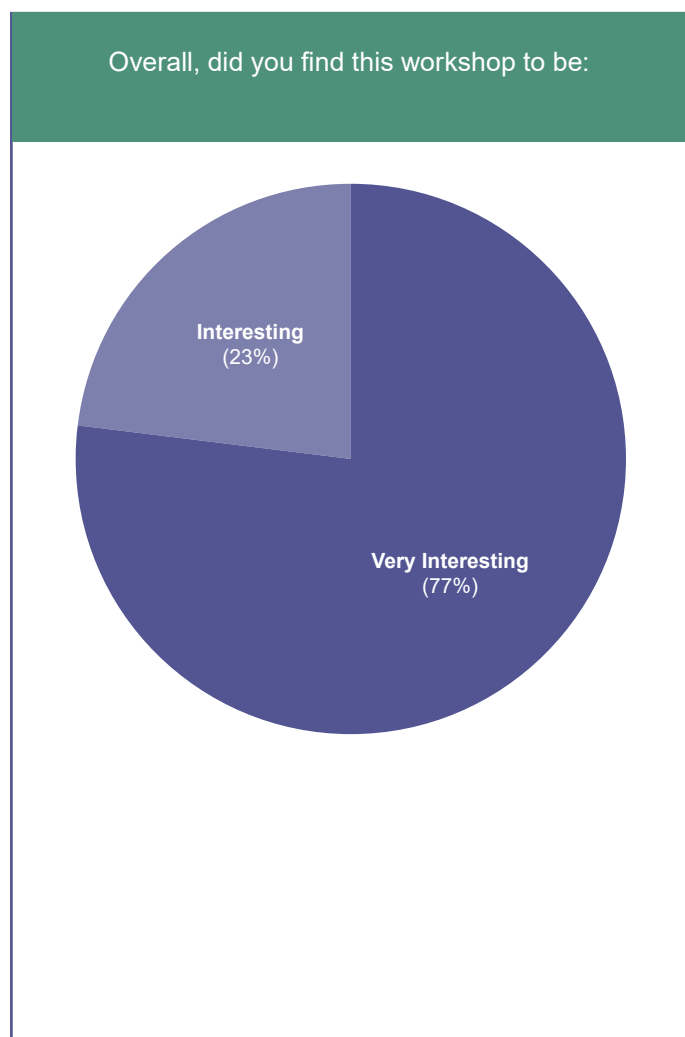
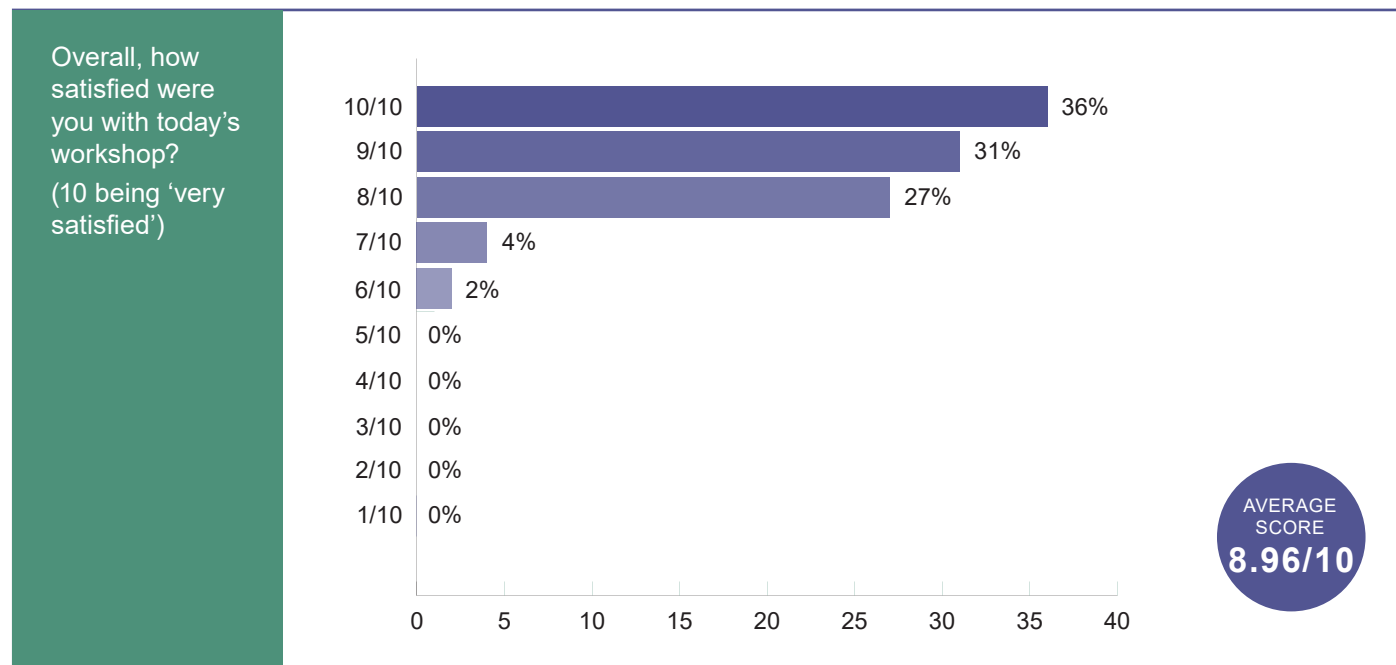


8. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE INFORMATION WPD HAS MADE AVAILABLE TO YOU ON EV CHARGING?

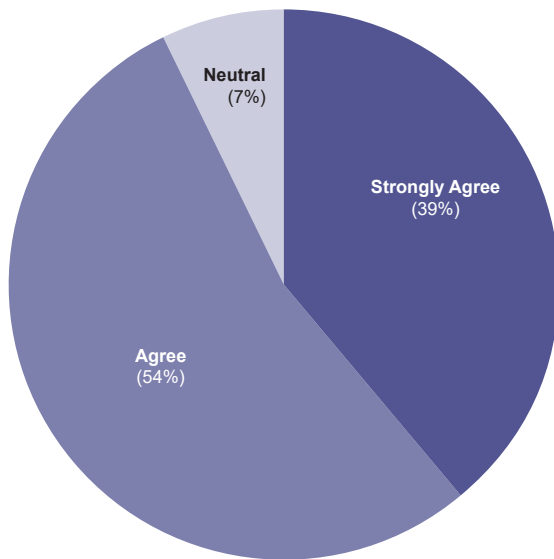


7 | APPENDIX: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

At the end of the workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a written feedback form to provide WPD with feedback on the event itself. The results are summarised below.

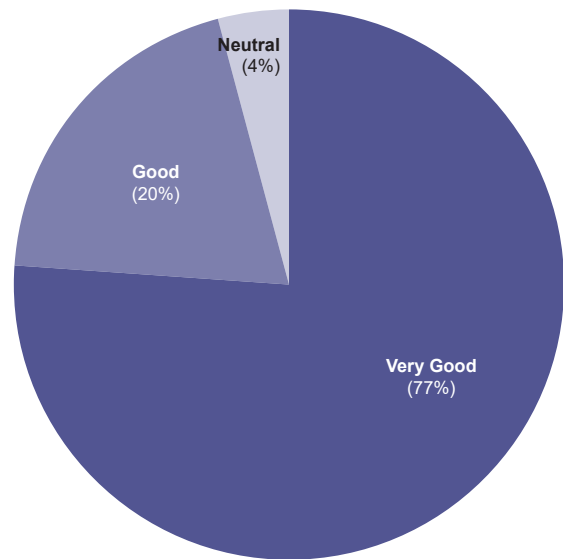


Did we cover the right topics on the day?



"Yes [...] would be best to hold more specialised workshops on certain areas (e.g. smart networks) for more niche discussions."

What did you think about the way that the workshop was chaired by your table facilitator?



"Good at drawing out questions from the group, as well as imparting information."

"Good, effective, well-handled."

"Tried to keep just one conversation going, fair to us all and brought us back to questions."

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

"[It was] good to be on a table with councillors from other authorities, [as there's] more to learn this way and is good for developing networks."

"Extremely worthwhile. Good to meet WPD as well as other delegates."

"Very informative and well-run event."

