



**Report on the outcomes of Stakeholder Workshops:  
May 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> 2011**

**Prepared by**

**GreenIssuesCommuniqué**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Western Power Distribution (WPD) carried out a significant amount of stakeholder engagement in support of its Business Plan for DPCR5, running from 2010 – 2015.

The company is now looking ahead to DPCR6, which runs from 2015 – 2023. WPD is committed to further engagement in order to inform its Business Plan for DPCR6. The purpose of the workshops was to consult ahead of this process in order to get an early indication of its stakeholders' views on current and future issues.


It was the intention of WPD to engage with a broad cross-section of stakeholders from a range of backgrounds and interests in order to identify how they viewed the company's priorities over the next five years and the next twenty years.

Following the success of the three phases of workshops on DPCR5, it was decided that the workshop format was the best way to engage with WPDs' stakeholders, identify the issues that are important to them, and endeavour to prioritise these issues according to importance.

The aim of the workshops was to ask stakeholders for views on which of WPD's current investment priorities should continue after 2015, and what are the investment priorities for the longer term future. Stakeholders were asked to take part in two separate workshop sessions to discuss priorities under the themes of delivering a low carbon sustainable future, themed "environment", networks and customer issues of the future themed "networks and customers".

The Environment Session asked stakeholders whether WPD should continue with its current priorities of reducing leaks from fluid filled cables and gas insulated switchgear, undergrounding schemes in National Parks/AONB, monitoring and reducing its carbon footprint, protecting habitats and species, flood mitigation plans, sustainability projects e.g. the low carbon network fund and climate change risk assessment. Then they were then asked to consider how proactive or reactive WPD should be in responding to the future challenges of climate change mitigation, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, renewable energy, renewable heat incentive and innovation projects. They were also asked to identify any issues that had been missed.

The Network and Customers Session overlapped in a number of areas with the Environment Session. This looked at the continuum of asset replacement to maintain business as usual,



installing equipment to enable local scheduling of customer generation and storage, installing equipment and systems to enable data exchanges and power control, and future proof asset replacement. For customer service, stakeholders were asked to discuss whether WPD should allocate additional investment to reducing power cuts or short dips, improving service further for worst served customers, being prepared for major incidents, improving new connections service and new methods of communication. They were also asked to identify any issues that had been missed.


Stakeholders were asked to use a traffic light system of green for high priority, amber for medium and red for low priority to prioritise the issues and select the top three.

WPD instructed Green Issues Communiqué (GIC) to facilitate workshops at three locations within the company's network area. On each of the tables, a scribe was used to take note of all the comments raised as well as the outcomes of the prioritisation exercises. GIC has endeavoured to detail, faithfully, all of the comments made at these workshops. These comments and outcomes are shown in more detail in this document.

There was a good deal of debate around most of the issues at the workshops and it is clear that from reviewing the outcomes of each session, there are a number of areas where stakeholders' priorities differ. In this document, after each workshop report, there is a short conclusions section. Below is a broad summary of the comments received across all three workshops:

- In the initial discussions on Environmental Issues, the majority of stakeholders rated most of the Issues as being priorities for WPD both in the short and long-term. It was only when the workshop facilitators asked the stakeholders to rank each Issue, in the context of all the others, that stakeholders were able to state their preferences and the relative merits of each one
- Minimising Leaks from Fluid Filled Cables was widely seen as being a high priority for stakeholders, with many stating that it should be among WPDs' top three environmental priorities
- Continuing Undergrounding Schemes in National Parks AONBs was one Issue where there was no real consensus. Some stakeholders, particularly those with an interest in conservation and tourism, felt strongly that this should be a high priority whereas others ranked this as a low priority

- The Issue of WPD Reducing its Business Carbon Footprint was another Issue where there was little agreement across the workshops. Certain stakeholders felt that WPD should be leading the way on this Issue but not all were in agreement. This was generally seen as being a medium priority for the future
- Protecting Habitats and Species was also seen as being a medium priority for the future. A number of stakeholders cited WPDs' statutory obligations and felt that WPD did not need to go beyond these
- Stakeholders generally agreed that Flood Mitigation was a very important Issue. It was consistently among the highest ranked priorities and was, for some, the most important Environmental Issue facing WPD in the long-term
- Stakeholders were broadly in favour of Trialling Technology and Innovation to Facilitate Low Carbon Networks and this was consistently seen as being a high priority for stakeholders at all the workshops. Many linked this Issue with Innovation Projects and Facilitating the Connection of Local Renewable Energy Sources and ranked it as an important future priority for WPD
- In the discussions, stakeholders tended to link Climate Change Risk Assessment with Other Climate Change Mitigation, ranking both either medium to high priority for the future
- Most stakeholders did not consider Facilitating Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure as being a short-term priority for WPD. It was also the view of stakeholders that this should be a low priority for the future
- Most stakeholders felt that Facilitating the Connection of Local Renewable Energy Sources should be both a short and long-term priority for WPD. At two of the workshops, this was considered one of the most important Environmental Issues discussed and was ranked accordingly. However, stakeholders at one workshop did not agree, ranking it as low to medium priority for the future
- Facilitating the Renewable Heat Incentive was ranked highly by some, although across the three workshops, this Issue was broadly felt to be a medium priority for the future
- With regard to Issues relating to Improving the Network and Improving Customer Service, Asset Replacement to Maintain Business as Usual was widely viewed as being a high priority for WPD both now and in the future. For many, this was seen as one of WPDs' three most important priorities
- There was majority support for the view that Installing a 'Smart Network' should be a high priority for WPD in the future, although this was not unanimous

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- The vast majority of stakeholders were of the view that Installing Equipment to Enable Data Exchanges and Power Control should be a high priority for the future
  - Although this view was not unanimously held, the majority of stakeholders stated that Future Proofing Asset Replacement was a high priority for WPD in the short-term and should continue to be so in the future
  - There was no consensus on how highly Reducing Power Cuts should be ranked. Much discussion was based on personal experience so, for some, this was not an important Issue and for others this was deemed a high priority both in the short and long-term
  - The Issue of Improving Customer Service for New Connections was broadly seen as being a medium to low priority for the future
  - There was no consensus on the Issue of Reducing 'Dips'. Opinion was equally split between high medium and low priority for the future
  - The consensus across the three workshops was that Improving Reliability for Worst Served Customers was a medium priority for the future
  - Stakeholders were broadly of the view that Being Prepared for Major Emergencies should be a high priority for WPD both in the short and long-term
  - Although there was some debate on the Issue of New Methods of Communication, this was widely seen as being a medium to low priority for the future