

WPD CUSTOMER PANEL		 WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION <i>Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales</i>
Last revised: 29.12.21	Meeting Minutes	Notes by: Nicki Johnson

Date/time	16 December 2021 - 10.00-12.30	
Venue	Zoom meeting	
Attendees	WB - William Baker, Energy Catapult JC - Jonathan Cosson, Warm Wales JG - Jo Giles, Cadent RH - Richard Hellen, The Schumaker Institute RL - Prof. Ron Loveland, Welsh Assembly Government GM - Gabby Mallett (Chair) GP - Gemma Parker, South West Water KR - Kate Robbins, Wessex Water JS - Jacob Shell, Coventry Citizens Advice ASp - Alex Spreadbury, B&Q	WPD: AS – Alison Sleightholm NJ - Nicki Johnson YM – Yiango M (part)
		CEG: DM: Duncan McCombie, Chair (part)

Nicki Johnson introduced the morning and welcomed attendees.

RIIO ED2 Business Plan – an update

Discussion	AS updated the group on WPD’s final Business Plan submission.
	<p>WB noted customers with smart appliances, Electric Vehicles and heat pumps are more affluent and those on low incomes may struggle to access flexibility services. AS explained WPD was the first DNO to offer flexibility to domestic customers. Our Community Energy (CE) projects reach social housing and we are focusing CE surgeries in relevant areas. We know there’s more to do but we have the foundations to build on. In addition, we are contracting landlords and offering flexibility services which, in turn, will benefit their residents.</p> <p>RH asked if an independent trusted group will compare DNO Business Plans. AS explained Ofgem has an independent challenge group and we will attend an open hearing with independent interested parties, Ofgem and the challenge group. RH asked if the panel could have a session on the connections business process re-engineering mentioned by AS.</p> <p>RH asked if WPD had taken videos of staff working which could raise WPD’s profile and whether lessons were learned from storm Arwen. AS confirmed a post-storm review. Most customers were restored within 48 hours. There are two wider reviews by Ofgem and BEIS around resilience, investment, compensation and communication. The group discussed the balance between efficiency and resilience. RL noted demand may exceed supply over next few years (by 2025) and that Monday 20th December 2021 was expected to be the lowest excess grid margin. He offered to share data on that after the meeting (done).</p> <p>GM asked about sending staff to other DNOs and AS mentioned the NUSAC agreement which allows parties to share staff. We last used other resources in 1990 but we did send staff to other DNOs during Arwen.</p>

Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GM to add connections business process re-engineering to the 12 month plan. 2. NJ agreed to utilise the Panel when work commenced on smart energy plans. 3. WB offered to check whether Citizen’s Advice were comparing DNO Business Plans and share any outcomes, if so, with the Panel.
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Customer Panel Chair update

Discussion	The group discussed the ER surgery and agreed surgeries would be held separately, (and still remotely) for now.
Decisions	<p>WPD agreed more detail would be published advance of topic-specific surgeries so people could decide whether to attend. Members discussed sharing information on mental health and suicide which WPD would be happy to receive.</p> <p>WB noted a project for SSEN on disabled drivers of EVs. Projects are intended to benefit all DNOS and WB said he would share details.</p> <p>ASp suggested next September anything we will be doing differently for the following winter should be covered at the meeting.</p>
Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Members to email questions for the topic lead on EV for February surgery and the presenter of Resilience in March to NJ 5. GM to draft an agenda for the EV surgery 6. GM to update the 12 month plan 7. WB to send NJ information about the EV/disability project

Innovation update

Discussion	YM presented to the group on WPD’s innovation strategy and ambition – explaining we will be strengthening the business-wide culture of innovation
Decisions	GM suggested WPD encourages staff to share any barriers/issues they have so the innovation Team can think of a solution. YM agreed – noting WPD plans to have an innovation contact in every business area who has a buddy in the innovation team. The group discussed Ofgem’s CIF (Innovation Fund) which will replace the NIA and projects (partnering with other networks) that have been. YM detailed projects we were working on – e.g. 1) partnering with National Grid on superconducting cables on the transmission network and 2) Digital twin project also with NG focussing on data challenges and 3) domestic flexibility and the challenges around it.
Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. YM agreed the Panel could help WPD innovate and a meeting at the start of ED2 would be beneficial. 9. RH offered help in reviewing the project portfolio and has since emailed specific offers of support.

CEG

Discussion	DM thanked WPD for the vast amount of info on the Business Plan which the CEG have reviewed. ASp enquired about the CEG time this has taken and DM confirmed the CEG team spent 750 days in total, including preparation time on CEG meetings and sub groups, to scrutinise in greater detail WPD’s innovations, connection, research, future customer impact, etc. The CEG will publish its findings on 17 January 2022.
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	GM asked what value the CEG has added. DM confirmed efficiency has gone from 0.3% to 0.5% and BPs submitted are better quality than ever before. In the longer term, it has moved the dial and the expectation of the business and fundamentally improved engagement and benefitted customers. WB would be keen to understand how the CEG and panel will work together.
Actions	10. NJ to circulate the CEG report.

Proposed 2022 meeting dates:

- Thursday 24 March 2022
- Thursday 23 June 2022
- Thursday 29 September 2022
- Thursday 15 December 2022