

Bringing energy to your door

Digitalisation Strategy Action Plan

Driving digital transformation, delivering value for customers and enhancing cyber security

June 2024

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1. Executive summary

At Electricity North West we are committed to being the most digital distribution network operator (DNO) and delivering a modern, digitally-enabled electricity system that meets the evolving needs of our customers.

Our <u>digitalisation strategy</u> aligns with our broader business plan vision to deliver a reliable, resilient and decarbonised electricity network for the North West.

It demonstrates our commitment to protect our critical infrastructure and keep customers and stakeholders at the heart of our digital transformation journey.

This 'digitalisation strategy action plan' provides an update on the progress we have made against our objectives.

We have completed several sector-leading innovative projects to ensure robustness of supply for our customers and help us achieve net zero.

These include projects like LV PRESense and <u>LineSIGHT</u> which are essentially 'fault radar' systems. Sensors installed on our overhead lines enable us to detect and repair broken or damaged equipment more quickly – and importantly action these before they interrupt customers.

Through our digitalisation strategy we are sharing our data with our stakeholders in new ways through our <u>open data</u> portal. We are continuing to make more data available to a wider set of customers and partners to allow better forecasting, opening new possibilities to collaborate on challenges like climate change and capacity which affect us all.

As a business we have a comprehensive stakeholder engagement model which ensures that customers are informed and involved throughout the digital transformation process. As part of this approach, we have set up a new <u>digital futures advisory panel</u>, to bring together regional and national stakeholders to shape our delivery, give advice and guidance and co-create our future.

We are starting to harness the power of AI, guided by our 'embrace with caution' philosophy, for example using drone image analysis to determine the condition of transmission towers or to process data to help us model future demand.

While there is progress to celebrate, there are many challenges to face, including the cyber challenges that digital technology brings. We are making further investment in our cyber defences to ensure that we deliver safe and secure digital services.

As the pace of digital technology change accelerates, we will step up to match that pace. We will continue to put customers first as we deliver our ambitious digitalisation strategy and pave the way for a more efficient, reliable and sustainable energy future.

Dave Roberts Digital & Technology Director

2 Cyber security

As an operator of critical national infrastructure, we have an obligation to our colleagues and the communities we serve to keep our people, places, data and assets safe. Our cyber security plan is a foundational element of our digitalisation strategy and aims to transform our security culture.

Our customers will become increasingly reliant on electricity as they move away from fossil fuels and adopt low carbon technologies. With this increased dependence on the electricity network, and the digital systems which support it, cyber security has become even more important to the resilience of our business and the essential services we provide to our customers.

The cyber threat landscape is constantly changing, with cyber criminals using ever-more complex techniques. We have seen threats to our physical/cyber security increase with 33,500 malicious emails received every month. In March 2024 alone there were 1,357 malicious login attempts to our systems.

In the RIIO-ED2 period, we are focusing on enhancing our cyber security capability. Our cyber resilience strategy sets out how we will protect our customers' data and safeguard our network against unauthorised access, as we move to more actively managed systems, to keep costs low for customers and to ensure the safety of our customers, colleagues and contractors.

To co-ordinate our cyber security strategy we have set up a 'protect committee' which will help deliver the right level of investment to keep our network and data safe and to ensure compliance with the <u>Cyber</u> <u>Assessment Framework</u>.

Be sure Be secure

Protecting our people, places, data and assets.

Be sure. Be secure.

We have launched an internal campaign to cement our commitment to drive and embed a security-conscious culture across our business.

It's designed to educate our colleagues to help keep our business digitally and physically safe and focuses on four key areas of security: people, places, data and assets.

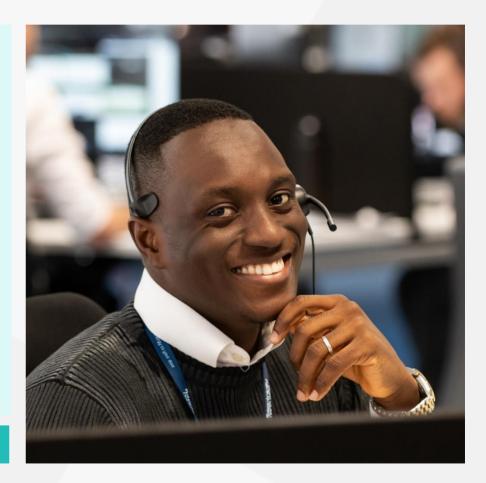
As part of the campaign colleagues will complete our annual cybersecurity e-learning to help keep them and our systems cyber-safe.

3. Customer service

At Electricity North West, we believe that exceptional customer service is the foundation of a successful digitalisation journey. By prioritising customer engagement and feedback, we are committed to deliver at least a 9/10 customer service experience that meets the evolving needs of our customers.

- Our customer-centric approach is embedded in our business planning process, ensuring that customer perspectives are at the forefront of every decision.
- We seek customer input via focus groups and targeted customer segmentation research.
- Our understanding of customer needs and priorities enables us to tailor our digitalisation initiatives to deliver a seamless and positive customer experience.

See our customer service action update



3.2 Case study: Digital futures advisory panel

The digital futures advisory panel ensures customer and stakeholder engagement is helping to shape the delivery of our digitalisation and data strategies and commitments.

For several years, we have operated a number of stakeholder advisory panels and forums which provided input into the development of our RIIO-ED2 business plan.

Our business plan was also scrutinised throughout its development by our independent customer engagement group (CEG) which was established to ensure that the final plan reflected the needs and preferences of our customers and stakeholders.

To make sure that customer and stakeholder voices continue to be heard during RIIO-ED2 we have refreshed and expanded our stakeholder advisory panel structure to focus on key areas of our business plan.

This approach included setting up our digital futures advisory panel. The panel is made up of independent experts who represent a range of stakeholders.

The aim of the panel is to aid our understanding of our stakeholders' needs and the digital products and services required to meet those needs, with the ultimate goal of creating benefits for customers and stakeholders.

The panel's role is to advise us and explore how we can improve and keep delivering the best service to customers and to fulfil our 'licence-tooperate' with the communities we serve.

Role of digital futures advisory panel

- To ensure customer and stakeholder engagement is helping to shape the delivery of our digitalisation and data products, services, strategies and commitments.
- To provide advice and input, helping us balance the need for open and transparent data versus the need to be security aware and be protective of critical national infrastructure.
- To act as a critical friend, understand challenges from an external perspective, express views on key issues and priorities, advise and co-create policies and implementation approaches.
- To identify opportunities for regional and national collaboration and the sharing of best practice.
- To act as an advocate for our business, our customers and stakeholders.



4. Customers in vulnerable circumstances

We are committed to ensuring that all electricity users in the North West have access to the services and support they need. Our strategy was developed to address the challenges faced by customers in vulnerable circumstances, including those who are in fuel poverty, have disabilities or from ethnic minority communities.

The strategy outlines four key priorities:

- Simplify the registration process for our Extra Care register.
- Improve the reliability of the local network for customers in vulnerable circumstances.
- Develop and refresh our network of partners to provide additional support to customers in vulnerable circumstances.
- Minimise the risk of creating barriers to services, such as the move towards net zero.

See our customers in vulnerable circumstances action update

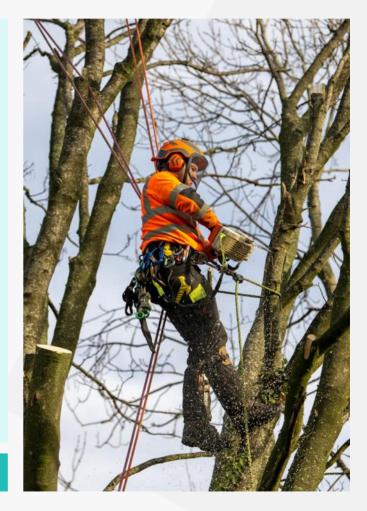


5. Network management & resilience

We recognise the strategic value of digitising the management of our network as this enhances its operational efficiency and enables us to better manage its reliability and resilience in the face of increasing demand and changing climatic conditions.

- During RIIO-ED1 we digitised our entire network at all voltages into a connected network model.
- We have installed enhanced monitoring and remote switching devices which allows us to respond to faults as they develop.
- We fuse information about our assets to target investment in areas where power cuts are most likely and have the greatest impact on customers.
- We are taking measures to enhance the resilience of our infrastructure, investing in flood defences, vegetation management and cybersecurity.
- As part of our submission for the Storm Arwen re-opener, we have proposed a resilience modelling framework to better target investment to improve the resilience of our network.
- Digital tools are being used in our safety initiatives and to enhance training and awareness.

See our network management & resilience action update



5.2 Case study: LineSIGHT

LineSIGHT is a groundbreaking overhead network safety management system, unique to Electricity North West and based on proven innovation developed in RIIO-ED1.

Improving automation on our network is key to delivering our reliability targets and will deliver a step-change in performance.

Some of the new technologies we need to embed to help us deliver our targets include our active monitoring systems – LV PRESense and LineSIGHT.

LineSIGHT, the high voltage equivalent of LV PRESense, is a groundbreaking overhead network safety management system.

It's essentially a 'fault radar' system where sensors installed on our overhead lines enable us to detect and repair broken or damaged equipment more quickly. The system can help identify faults before they happen, improve safety and our ability to restore supplies during storm events.

Faults on rural networks can sometimes cause overhead power lines to hang low while remaining live, which also creates a public safety hazard. This can be a particular issue during storm events with multiple faults.

The LineSIGHT sensors communicate with a central server using standard mobile phone technology. To improve its robustness, we use roaming SIM cards so we can switch between networks which is beneficial when we are working in more remote locations.

We are working to install LineSIGHT sensors at 900 sites on 3,500 circuits by the end of RIIO-ED2. This will benefit customers from the Scottish borders to the Peak District.

Benefits

- Reduced customer interruptions
- Faster removal of safety hazards
- Faster response times during storm events
- Allows more pre-emptive maintenance on the network
- Empowers our teams to use the latest diagnostic equipment
- Non-intrusive, non-disruptive technology

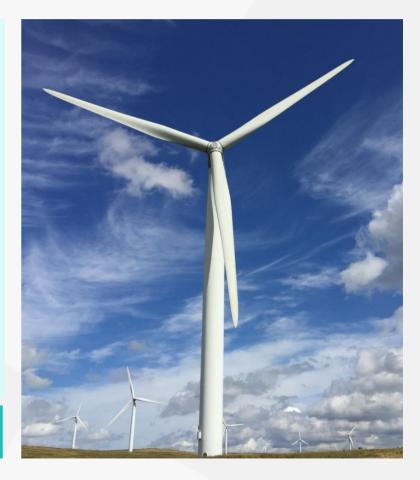


6. Distribution system operation

Distribution system operation (DSO) represents a transformation in network management, propelling the North West towards a future defined by customer-centric benefits, cost-efficient operations and enhanced network accessibility.

- As the North West's network operator, we are uniquely positioned to drive the transition to net zero.
- Our goal is to provide customers with reliable and affordable access to network capacity, ensuring the seamless integration of renewable energy sources and distributed energy resources while enabling the transition to net zero.
- Through our commitment to digitalisation, we will empower our customers to begin their decarbonisation journeys.
- We will increase optimised network performance and accelerate the transition to net zero.

See our distribution system operation action update



6.2 Case study: Flexibility market platform

Electricity North West has become one of the first distribution network operators to bring together two flexibility platforms which will enable flexibility service providers (FSPs) to maximise routes to participate in flexibility markets.

Flexible services offer a dynamic approach to managing electricity supply and demand. During periods of peak demand, when the local network nears capacity, flexible services can incentivise customers to reduce their consumption or providers to increase generation. This helps to maintain grid stability and ensure a reliable electricity supply for everyone.

Flexibility services can offer a smarter, more efficient alternative to traditional network reinforcement and are set to play a crucial role in managing energy demand and supply effectively across the North West.

In summer 2023 we launched a competitive tender for a flexible services platform with end-to-end capabilities, to deploy a technology platform that makes it easier for flexibility providers to access our markets.

As part of this pioneering approach, we set out to look for platforms that can be seamlessly integrated with our network management system (NMS) and active network management (ANM) systems, harnessing their full capabilities to provide benefits to customers now and in the future.

We invited innovators to propose modular, consortium or complete endto-end solutions. The aim of the tender was to foster market competition and to guarantee cost-effectiveness for our customers.

After a comprehensive technical interview process we appointed ElectronConnect and Piclo Max.

ElectronConnect is our chosen platform to streamline the tendering and trading of flexibility services. This user-friendly interface empowers providers with a single access point to participate in diverse electricity markets.

Piclo Max enables a collaborative approach that simplifies access for providers and expands our market reach. This platform acts as a valuable additional channel, allowing providers to view opportunities and complete registration information across all participating markets.

Embracing innovative technologies like ElectronConnect and Piclo Max is crucial to unlocking the full potential of flexibility and delivering real benefits to our customers. This collaboration represents a significant step forward in our journey to create a more efficient, secure and customer-centric electricity network for the North West.



7. Open data

After the launch of our data portal we enhanced the portal with additional data sets. A valuable resource for our stakeholders, the portal now offers 41 datasets which can be accessed in various formats such as tables, maps and through an application programming interface (API). Users can also export data for convenience.

Part of our data strategy involves maximising the value of our data for community benefit. This includes promptly handling requests for data. We triage these requests swiftly, aiming for transparency, fairness and consistency. All requests are triaged promptly so we can understand the individual's requirements and manage their expectations about what can be provided and in what timescales. Whenever feasible, we use commonly available data to ensure consistency in our responses.

In September 2023, we hosted a DSO discussion forum on data sharing, responding to feedback from stakeholders. Half the session was used to present the current open data portal sets and use cases. The response to this approach was positive with requests to develop more use cases. We have since started to develop digital customer 'personas' and customer journeys to demonstrate how different types of customers might utilise our data sets. These will be available on our website in the next 12 months.

We have taken part in Open Network Project technical groups to enhance whole system data-sharing. We have also joined a new electricity system operator (ESO) and Capgemini group focusing on future data needs for informed decision-making and collaboration.

The <u>data portal</u> is shared across UK DNOs and third parties and offers stakeholders common access. We have made strides on a whole system perspective at the data and digitalisation steering group (DDSG) on items such as standardising metadata.



Our industry-wide data sharing efforts aim to provide the ESO with visibility of distribution network assets, processes and activities. This visibility enhances operational decisions, as seen with flexible services utilising distribution network resources. Ensuring ESO and TO data access on contracts, boundary flow, forecasting, outage planning and operational restrictions allows for informed network operating decisions, critical system support and efficient network management.

Collaborating with the ENA, DNOs and Ofgem, we have contributed to improving the reporting of flexible services SLC31A data. Identifying and implementing changes in reporting templates and guidance aims to standardise reporting across DNOs for better comparison and insights from this data. We are committed to adopting these changes in annual and bi-annual reporting on our data portal.

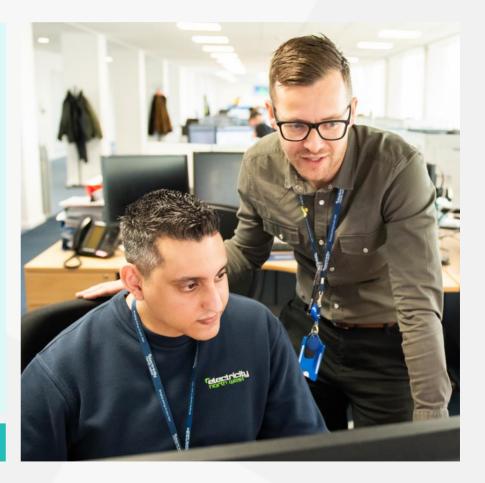
8. Internal operations

We continue to transform our internal operations, covering procurement, safety, fleet management, digital workplace, management information (MI) reporting, workforce skills development, work and asset management, authorisation processes, digital training capability, integration hub and strategic data platform.

Creating more streamlined and efficient internal operations is key to our digital transformation and we continue to progress initiatives in line with our digitalisation strategy to support this. This includes:

- Removal of inefficient legacy applications and modernising our key business applications
- Investment in operational systems
- Continued transformation of data and information management
- Continuous improvement of processes.

See our internal operations action update



8.2 Case study: Fleet telematics

Following a successful trial with 130 fleet vehicles we are planning to roll out telematics to over a thousand vehicles to improve safety and reduce operational costs by improving driver behaviour. Our next step is to begin a procurement process to establish costs for a company-wide rollout.

Driving is one of the most dangerous activities we carry out as part of our day-to-day work, with an average of over 200 road traffic incidents in our business each year.

Following a successful trial with a 130 drivers in a variety of different vehicles, we are planning to roll out an integrated camera and telematic driver monitoring system to our entire operational fleet.

During the trial we found that the use of telematics improved driver safety in the trial population and reduced the incident rate from 1/5 to 1/50.

Telematics systems monitor and collect data on vehicles, but they are also a great way to gain insight into driving practices. During the initial trial we were able to identify practices such as harsh braking, speeding and tailgating. We also identified excellent and courteous driving practices that we were able to share with the driver.

Working with individual drivers we will be able to develop coaching tools that support the driver to change practices they may be unaware of.

The data gathered from a telematics system will also help us to define our future fleet investment strategies.

Telematics provide a wide variety of benefits across maintenance, fuel consumption, safety, insurance, compliance, operations, sustainability, EV transition and improved customer perception.

Benefits

- Reduced costs for maintenance, fuel and insurance premiums
- Incident rate and incident cost reduction
- Data to support strategic fleet investment decisions and EV transition
- Reduced CO₂ emissions
- Improved compliance for fleet accreditation standards
- Improved customer perception as company vehicles driving safely fosters trust and confidence in our company
- Reduced driver training costs due to personalised, data-driven training methods that address specific driver needs



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9. Action update

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9.1 Customer service action update

Service improvement objective	Actions	Target completion date	Status	Measure	Notes
Make our customer website easier to use	 Enhance webpages for easier self- service Improve internal customer relationship management system and power apps to support customer- facing processes 	June 2024	Complete	• Improved customer satisfaction (CSAT) score	 Improvements made to main website and power apps Major new project for website improvement planned for 2025
Make our claiming processes for compensation payments easier	 Improve claim process for guaranteed standards payments 	FY2025/26	New	Improved CSAT score	 Project in discovery phase
Increase customer insight to feed into improvements	 Hold regional events to gain feedback Hold specific sustainability panels and meetings with key stakeholders Gather feedback on connections process and website access 	June 2024	Complete	 Number of regional events Sustainability panels with key stakeholders 	
Move to half hourly settlement to enable more granular charging and better value	 Design, develop, test and deploy new systems to support half hourly settlement 	December 2024	Design and testing complete, further phases to follow	 Half hourly settlement process live Improved granular billing 	 Project is on track with industry timelines
Provide more tailored communications to customers	 Create digital customer journeys based on persona mapping Launch a focused improvement project (FIP) to action specific recommendations 	July 2025	FIP launched May 2024	Improved CSAT score	

9.1 Customer service action update

Service improvement objective	Actions	Target completion date	Status	Measure	Notes
Gain insight and critique from external, independent experts to ensure balance and challenge	 Set up digital futures advisory panel Ensure panel output is being fed into strategic plans 	March 2024	Complete	 Panel set up and meeting regularly Feedback incorporated into strategic planning 	• We held our first panel meeting in March 2024 and our second in June
Enhance communications to customers so they can	Add more detail to website on PSIs	August 2024	Ongoing	 Improved CSAT score Better feedback from 	• We have held focus
prepare for planned supply	Add start/finish times to comms	August 2024	Ongoing	stakeholder panels and	groups with customers to review the design of
interruptions (PSIs)	Update cards with reason for PSI		Ongoing	customers affected by PSIs	the PSI cards
	Update customer comms to include link to electronic PSI	September 2024	Ongoing		
Provide proactive notifications of high voltage (HV) faults to customers	 Launch trial of SMS/email notification with data from our operational systems 	September 2024	New	 Percentage of SMS messages delivered for HV faults 	
	• Launch phone auto-dialler system to contact Extra Care register customers during a power cut	May 2024	Complete		
Review communication channels to ensure they are accessible to all customers	• Establish focus group to collect feedback on our communications channels (fault channels and general communications)	November 2024	Ongoing	Focus groups held	 We have held six groups We will present recommended actions in August
Provide on-site quotes for first time service alterations to customers	 Hold feedback sessions to focus on improvements Assess feasibility and affordability Develop engagement and trial plan 	Feedback – November 2024	Ongoing	• Percentage of first- time service alternations with on- site quote	

9.2 Customers in vulnerable circumstances action update

Service improvement objective	Actions	Target completion date	Status	Measure	Notes
Make it easier for customers to register for priority services	 Develop <u>www.thepsr.co.uk</u> – cross-industry PSR 'finder' 	February 2023	Complete	 Improved CSAT score Feedback from customers using the service 	 Findings will feed into possible national PSR
Develop process to collect and improve data held on our Extra Care customers	 Contact customers on an annual basis via phone and door-knocking for the digitally excluded Develop app to help with data capture 	December 2023	Complete	 Improved CSAT score Number of customers contacted 	 Over 30,000 customers have been contacted since our last update
Provide financial advice and support for customers	• Launch 'Take charge' <u>service</u> to provide energy-saving and financial advice	October 2023	Complete	• Over 25,000 customers supported to date	 Ongoing improvements
Provide low carbon advice service to customers	• Launch 'Go low today' microsite to help customers shape their energy future	December 2024	In development	 Improved CSAT score Number of customers accessing microsite 	

9.3 Network management & resilience action update

Service improvement objective	Actions	Target completion date	Status	Measure	Notes
Enable remote diagnosis of supply	• Implement power interruption notification gateway (PING) for contact centre use	October 2023	Complete	Reduction in abortive site visits	 Contact centre agents can 'ping' customers to identify the cause of a fault
disruption to improve customer service	• Implement PING to log faults on website	July 2024	Ongoing	Reduction in phone calls to contact centre	
Provide information on network damage for customers during incidents	• Deliver functionality to allow website to display information on damage to our network	February 2024	Complete	Customers able to see damage information during incident	Live on website
Detect and repair network damage more	• Roll-out LV Presence 'fault radar' to 95% of our customers by end of RIIO-ED2	March 2028	Ongoing	Improved CSATReduction in customer	
quickly to improve customer service and safety	 Install LineSIGHT sensors at 900 sites on 3,500 circuits by the end of RIIO-ED2 	March 2028	Ongoing	interruptions and customer minutes lost	
	• Automate raising of incidents detected by LineSIGHT into our control room	March 2024	Complete		
Regulate voltage on low voltage networks	• Roll-out 'Smart Street' low voltage regulation system	Spring 2023	Complete	Equipment installedImproved CSAT	• 180 OLTCs installed by May 2024
to reduce costs to customers	• Install 1,180 on-load tapchangers (OLTCs)	December 2028	Ongoing		We will continue to improve the solution
Upgrade geographical information system (GIS) to improve customer service and safety	 Replace legacy applications with one GIS to reduce our application footprint and provide more accurate data capture 	July 2027	Ongoing	 GIS implementation Data flows available to other key systems 	
	Develop proof-of-concept		Ongoing	using geospatial information	

9.4 Distribution system operation action update

Service improvement objective	Actions	Target completion date	Status	Measure	Notes
Improve accessibility to long-term development statement (LTDS) for customers	• Adopt Microsoft Sway 'digital storytelling application' as an alternative to PDF to provide a richer experience and better accessibility	January 2024	Complete	Improved CSAT score	• We will continue to expand the use of Sway to other areas as appropriate
Simplify the process for capturing local authority development plans	 Share templates via our dedicated local area energy planning (LAEP) webpage Hold bilateral meetings with every council in our license area Gather data for the facilitation of LAEPs and other developments 	March 2025	Ongoing	• Number of councils who have shared data through our exchange framework	 28 of 40 councils have shared data on 233 projects with us We will continue to meet to gather data – three times a year with local authorities and every six months with county councils
Engage with stakeholders to show how our data can be of benefit	 Publish user guide and educational short-form <u>video</u> on data portal Publish data journeys for stakeholder groups 	December 2023	Complete	• Videos live and available on website	• We will continue to build on case studies, as requested
Support small businesses to take practical action to decarbonise	 Collaborate with external stakeholders to develop a comprehensive national digital advice service for small businesses Update our <u>website</u> to promote a variety of net zero resources 	November 2023	Complete	• Number of hits on our website pages	• We will continue to promote a variety of net zero tools and guidance to our customers and other stakeholders
Enable stakeholders to view our asset data	 Launch open data portal and embedded capacity register Add further elements to the portal 	December 2022	Complete	• Website analytics measures number of users and datasets accessed	 35 further elements have been added to the data portal We will consult on additional datasets to be included

9.4 Distribution system operation action update

Service improvement objective	Actions	Target completion date	Status	Measure	Notes
Grow the market for BiTrader, our	Complete end-to-end system testing	July 2024	On track	 Trading activity on the platform 	• The project is also working with stakeholders to shape the platform and refine its functionality
curtailment trading platform	• Complete the build of the BiTrader system to allow live trading	August 2025	On track	the platformIncrease in overall capacity	
Establish common application programming interface (API) to share license documents and information	• Complete a public consultation to feed requirements into our projects in this area	February 2024	Complete	 Requirements available to feed into linked projects 	• We will continue to integrate feedback into related projects and monitor feedback
Allow better sharing of asset information to other systems, especially external systems	 Create common information model (CIM) format models across all voltage levels Trial exchange of asset information with external party (SPEN) 	June 2024 (single supply point) October 2024 (entire licence area)	On track On track	 Ofgem confirm compliance with license conditions Successful transfer of CIM compliant models 	
Deliver flexibility service platforms to maximise routes into our flexibility market	• Tender and appoint flexibility providers	March 2024	Complete	Flexibility platforms available for use	 Now using the Piclo Max and Electron-Connect flexibility platforms

9.5 Internal operations action update

Service improvement objective	Actions	Target completion date	Status	Measure	Notes
Increase operational efficiency for customers and improve driver safety	Roll-out telematics to our fleet vehicles to improve driver behaviour	March 2025	New	Telematics rolled out across fleet	Contract award planned for October 2024
Digitise our work and asset management systems to	 Digitise process for management of tooling 	September 2024	On track	 Improved management of assets leading to better reliability and efficiency of investment Faster reinstatement 	• We have made improvements to data collection for
improve customer service	Improve information capture for key assets	May 2024	On track		substations and link boxesData and MI improvements are ongoing
	 Integrate overhead line inspections into asset management systems 	August 2024	On track		
	Digitise process for requesting streetworks permits	July 2024 (pilot)	On track		
Create a modern integration hub for providing open data and for sharing data between different business systems	• Move integrations from our current integration platform to a new cloud-based platform	March 2025	On track	 Legacy integration platform decommissioned Workloads running via new cloud platform 	 We are producing clear templates and operation instructions We will provide a catalogue for APIs and data to allow more effective integration
Create a new strategic platform for critical data to manage performance and optimise customer service for use with Power BI	• Build initial data 'lakehouse' to cover customer service and fault analysis	September 2024	Ongoing	• Performance management metrics available to customer service teams	 We will continue to expand our data 'lakehouse' We will implement advanced toolsets and training

10. Have your say

Stakeholder feedback is crucial to ensure informed decision-making. We welcome your views on our action plan and our digital progress. Please send your thoughts to <u>StakeholderEngagement@enwl.co.uk</u>.

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