

ENWL DSO Stakeholder Panel

Meeting notes – 10 December 2024

Present:	Andrew McIntosh (AMc), Matt Fawcett (MF), Kate Gilmartin (KG), James Johnson (JJ), Meriel Lakin (ML), Craig Morley (CM), James Shaw-Stewart (JSS)
In attendance:	Paul Auckland (PA), Helen Daly (HD), Stuart Deardon (SD), Paul George (PG), Steffan Jones (SJ), Christos Kaloudas (CK), Charlotte Pirie
Apologies:	Gareth Candlin (GC), Greg Dodd (GD), Jonathan Edwards (JE)

Welcome, safety moment and conflicts declaration

AMc welcomed all attendees.

HD shared details of ENWL's monthly safety theme of winter driving and tyre safety.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Review of actions

The action log was reviewed, and updates given on the outstanding actions. Updated log to be circulated alongside meeting notes. **Action: HD**

Relevant industry issues raised by Panel members

No new issues raised

Session theme 1 – Connections reform and CP30

SJ outlined the background to the ongoing Connections Reform process, highlighting the scale of both the national and regional connections pipelines (c739GW and 10.5GW respectively) and the consequential impact on Transmission Consent dates. The scale of the generation pipeline is far greater than what is required for 2050. He outlined the Connections Reform timeline noting that a decision from Ofgem was expected in Q1 2025, with implementation in Q2 2025. Alongside this the Government is expected to respond to NESO's CP2030 report during December 2024, and the outputs from this report will need to be reflected in the Connections Reform process. Of note was the change in emphasis from "first ready, first connected" towards "first ready and needed, first connected".

The panel asked whether stakeholder input would be sought as part of the process. SJ confirmed that wider stakeholder consultations had been held throughout the process and that ENWL would be engaging further with stakeholders through the stages of the process expected during Q1/2 2025.

AMc confirmed that the Panel would like to be kept informed. He also requested that the panel would like more detail about the connections review process – how decisions are taken and the consequent impact on economic development. **Action: ENWL**

Session theme 2 – Load related expenditure re-opener

SD gave a recap of ENWL’s approach to the load related expenditure re-opener, setting out the key cost drivers and the process for identifying which projects should be included in the submission. The anticipated impact on domestic customer bills is an additional £2.37 per annum. For business customers the impact was expected to be £3.77 per annum. Customer acceptability testing had demonstrated 81% (domestic) and 94% (business) acceptability of these amounts. ENWL had also explored the wider impact on the region of not undertaking the works outlined in the re-opener application noting the impacts on economic growth, net zero carbon target and wider health and employment benefits.

The panel was supportive of ENWL’s proactive approach and reassured that all projects in the re-opener had been through sufficient optioneering to ensure that network reinforcement provided the most efficient and economic solution. It was agreed that the panel would provide a letter of support for the submission. **Action: Panel**

Session theme 3 – ED3 Framework Consultation

PA gave an overview of Ofgem’s consultation on the next DNO price control framework (ED3). He highlighted Ofgem’s headline objective to “ensure that current and future consumers’ interests are met by DNOs providing necessary network capacity, to enable decarbonisation goals at least cost, based on whole system value” and set out the four key consumer outcomes and the associated drivers for change set out in the consultation.

PA highlighted some areas of relevance to the panel, noting the emphasis in the consultation on the evolution of the DSO role, particularly the role of flexibility, and the focus on responsible businesses.

The consultation closes on 15 January and the panel was invited to let PA know if there was anything they wanted to highlight to ENWL to inform its consideration of the company’s response.

Session theme 4 – RESP

PA discussed with the panel the RESP briefing paper that had previously been circulated.

PA confirmed that ENWL was participating the RESP working groups being run by Ofgem, and that Ofgem’s decision on the RESP consultation was now expected in March. ENWL also recently engaged with the NESO’s RESP team. It was agreed that ENWL would keep the panel updated. **Action: ENWL**

Standing items – IOG update

The last IOG meeting was on 2 December 2024. Agenda items included:

- Half-yearly triangulation report
- Load-related re-opener update
- Business plan commitments and half-yearly scorecards
- Stakeholder engagement update
- Panel & IOG review

AMc had been unable to attend the meeting but would give a fuller update at the next DSO panel session.

Standing items – DSO strategy and incentive

PA thanked the panel for their feedback at the previous meeting. He confirmed that ENWL was continuing to refine its DSO strategy alongside planning and developing the 24/25 DSO incentive submission. This would involve significant engagement with the panel at the next meeting in February 2025.

Standing items – Flexibility services

Following the discussions at the previous session PG set out in more detail ENWL's bespoke approach for procuring flexibility local and regional authority levels with a focus on the term objectives and immediate actions.

PG also outlined a new collaboration under consideration between ENWL and NPg to develop a tool designed to improve visibility and predictability of the supply of flexibility at a local level with the intention that this visualisation and forecasting can be integrated into flexibility procurement.

Standing items – Stakeholder engagement

CP gave a short update on ENWL's current DSO marketing campaigns and engagement tools. The forthcoming events were noted, and the panel was invited to hold the date for ENWL's next DSO conference, scheduled for 3 April 2025. **Action: Panel to note**

The panel was also reminded of the proposal for LAEP engagement that had been circulated previously.

Standing items – Panel forward plan

The forward plan in the meeting pack was noted.

Standing items – Publications

CK gave an update on ENWL's 2024 DFES, noting the changes made in response to the publication of NESO's new Future Energy Pathways (FEPs). The draft DFES report would be made available to the panel on 13 December and the panel was asked to review and provide any comments/feedback by 15 January 2025. **Action: Panel**

It was also noted that the panel had been asked for comments on ENWL's updated Operational Decision Making Framework (ODMF). **Action: Panel**

AOB and close

HD confirmed that the next session was scheduled for 5 February 2025.

AM thanked panel members and ENWL for their time and contribution to the meeting.