

Distributed Generation (Low Voltage)



**Incentive on Connections Engagement
Looking Forward and Looking Back Report**

May 2020

Contents

Welcome	3
Foreword	4
1 Our Engagement Strategy	5
1.1 Background	5
1.2 The Distributed Generation Low Voltage market	6
1.3 Engagement strategy and approach	7
1.4 Engagement governance	10
1.5 Stakeholder identification and positioning	11
2 Looking Back report	13
2.1 Reviewing our 2019-20 engagement highlights	13
2.2 Summary performance	16
2.3 Detailed performance	18
3 Looking Forward report	24
3.1 Introduction	24
3.2 Our Engagement Strategy 2020-21	25
3.3 Developing our plans	25
3.4 Looking Forward workplan	26
3.5 You said, we will do	27
3.6 Are we on the right track?	28
3.7 Other feedback	28
4 Closing statement	29

Welcome

Welcome to our Incentive on Connections Engagement (ICE) Report for Distributed Generation (DG) at Low Voltage.

Electricity North West, as one of 14 Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) in Great Britain, provides an essential service to all our customers. We cover a region of diverse communities and landscape, from dense urban populations like Manchester, to remote rural locations across Cumbria.

Our connections business is delighted to be supporting growth and sustainability in the North West of England by enabling connection of generation to the electricity network. Stakeholder engagement is vital in how we run our business and ensures we can provide the best service possible. We are committed to building strong relationships with stakeholders across the region and delivering a service they expect, and we are proud that this is one of our priorities.

This report contains three sections:

- **Our Engagement Strategy**
- **Looking Back**
- **Looking Forward**

The **Our Engagement Strategy** section describes how our engagement is applied with our stakeholders. In the **Looking Back** section, we provide a detailed report on our engagement activities in 2019-20, and the **Looking Forward** section sets out our commitments for 2020-21.



Foreword

I am delighted to introduce our Distributed Generation Low Voltage (DG LV) ICE report for 2019-20. This report reflects our approach towards supporting this market segment and I am proud we are assisting the North West of England in leading the way in terms of achieving net zero carbon.

Our workplans drive continuous improvement within our business and my priority remains to provide a first-class service for our connections stakeholders and customers. We work hard to understand the nuances of each market segment and this is reflected in the way we tailor our workplans for each stakeholder group.

Our [Leading the North West to Zero Carbon](#) plan sets out how we are investing £63.5 million between 2019 and 2023 to drive down carbon emissions. As part of this plan we are investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure for our office sites, as well as installing low carbon technology at two of our depots to achieve net zero carbon at these sites. We are looking forward to sharing our experience and any learning with our stakeholders. This demonstrates how we are not only supporting the installation of low carbon technology by stakeholders in our area but are embracing this change ourselves.

Our Community and Local Energy engagement activity continues to grow, and we were pleased to commit £75,320 to six more projects in this years '[Empowering our Communities](#)' annual fund. Community and Local Energy groups have unique requirements when seeking DG connections, and we will continue to work closely with this group, focusing on ensuring the connection process is as simple and easy to navigate as possible for this passionate group.

Clearly COVID-19 will have some consequences on how we engage with our stakeholders in 2020-21, but we will endeavour to adopt new ways of working to ensure that the richness of engagement is not diminished.

I hope you enjoy reading this report, as always if you have any comments or feedback I'd love to hear them. Please contact me via the ICE team at ICE@enwl.co.uk.



Mark Williamson
Energy Solutions Director

Photo: Mark Williamson, Energy Solutions Director (centre).

1 Our Engagement Strategy

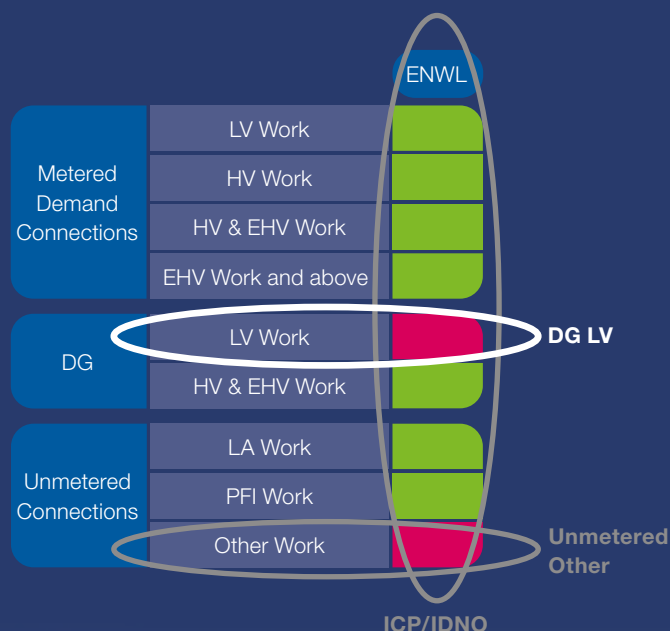
1.1 Background

Our Incentive on Connections Engagement reports focus on specific connections market segments, in line with Ofgem's 'competition tests' held between 2011 and 2013.

We were delighted to pass all but two of these competition tests, demonstrating our commitment to promoting competition in the North West and increasing choice for our customers. All Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) are required to develop and report on ICE workplans for all market segments that did not pass the competition tests.

In 2019, we published three workplans relating to different market segments. The Distributed Generation Low Voltage and Unmetered Other workplans consider the market segments where the competition test was not passed. The third considers improvements to our processes and assistance for third parties offering contestable work. This is different to the other two workplans as it applies to services for all market segments, including those where we passed the competition test.

This document is the Incentive on Connections Engagement report for the DG LV market segment.



1.2 The Distributed Generation Low Voltage market

Electricity North West is operating in a dynamic, rapidly changing environment which means that our role is evolving, and we need to ensure that we're best placed to keep pace with change and meet that important challenge. We keep customers' lives running smoothly; we keep them connected with friends, family and the wider world; power their entertainment and enable them to work smarter and more flexibly. Our customers rely on us now more than ever.

Electricity used to be a centralised model that changed little technically over many years – we kept the lights on. However, this is becoming far more complex and multi-directional, particularly with the growth in distributed generation. Our transition from Distribution Network Operators (DNO) to enhanced Distribution System Operation (DSO) supports this changing network functionality.

As we move to a world where DSO activities preside, we will need to play a more sophisticated role in how we accommodate generation connections. This report covers DG LV activities which are defined as new or modified connection of generation and storage equipment involving only low voltage (<1kV) work.

In the North West, we have seen a gradual increase in the number of generation applications and connections in the DG LV market segment over the last three years. Although these numbers continued to increase in the last year, the overall number of customers remains low. The majority of the connection offers (94%) and acceptances (96%) are zero cost, requiring no site works from Electricity North West, thus limiting the opportunity to engage with our customers. Of those where there is some work the majority are relatively small in value. The tables below demonstrates the level of applications and accepted jobs in the DG LV market in the North West of England.

Quotes Issued / Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Nil cost	168	225	265
Up to £5k	17	26	11
Over £5k	13	6	7
Total:	198	257	283

Acceptances / Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Nil Cost	76	135	157
Up to £5k	9	12	5
Over £5k	6	2	1
Total:	91	149	163



The DG LV market segment is closely aligned to Community and Local Energy stakeholders, a growing sector across the UK.

For us community energy relates to community-led projects or initiatives to reduce, manage, generate or purchase energy. Community energy projects focus on engagement and benefits to the local area and communities.

Local energy encompasses community energy projects and also includes activities by a wider set of local partners such as local authorities, housing associations, intermediary or advisory organisations and local businesses. Local energy projects may have a commercial aspect to their delivery but are also likely to benefit their local area and community. In many cases the projects that both these groups will be considering result in connections that fall into the DG LV market segment and we coordinate our engagement efforts accordingly.

1.3 Engagement strategy and approach

1.3.1 Putting stakeholders at the heart of what we do

Our corporate Engagement Strategy is well embedded, enabling our internal teams to develop plans informed by input from our stakeholders and from external benchmarking. We have effectively managed changes to our processes and activities to drive successful outcomes. It is aligned to the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard, a best practice framework and informs the structure for the engagement activity we deliver. We also align to the updated AA1000 Assurance Standard which covers adherence to these Engagement Standards.

Our connections stakeholders are an important stakeholder group within Electricity North West and we apply the principles in our Engagement Strategy when engaging with our DG LV connections stakeholders. This engagement helps us develop our business strategy, as well as enhancing our day to day activities. We continue to place stakeholders at the heart of what we do, enabling us to develop and implement plans to further enhance the services we provide. We engage with purpose, asking our stakeholders what they would like to talk about, and how this engagement should take place. We are guided by our stakeholder's feedback.

We changed our approach a couple of years ago to engage separately with the DG LV stakeholders. This enables us to tailor our engagement to the particular nuances of their situation and ensure these stakeholders are not overshadowed by the needs of the larger HV and EHV stakeholder groups. Maintaining separation of these groups also provides greater clarity for the purposes of ICE, allowing Ofgem to consult specifically on the aspects of our engagement plan and commitments and for stakeholders to comment on activities that fall into the DG LV market segment.

The stakeholder engagement principles, shown below provide our stakeholders and customers with a clear statement of what they can expect from us as they engage with us.



We're **SWITCHED ON**

Stakeholder engagement informs our business decision-making

We engage with connections stakeholders to capture the views of the customers and communities we serve



We're **ADAPTABLE**

We understand our stakeholders' preferences and engage with them in line with their preferred channel

We continually grow our understanding and adapt our business as a result of listening to the experiences of our stakeholders



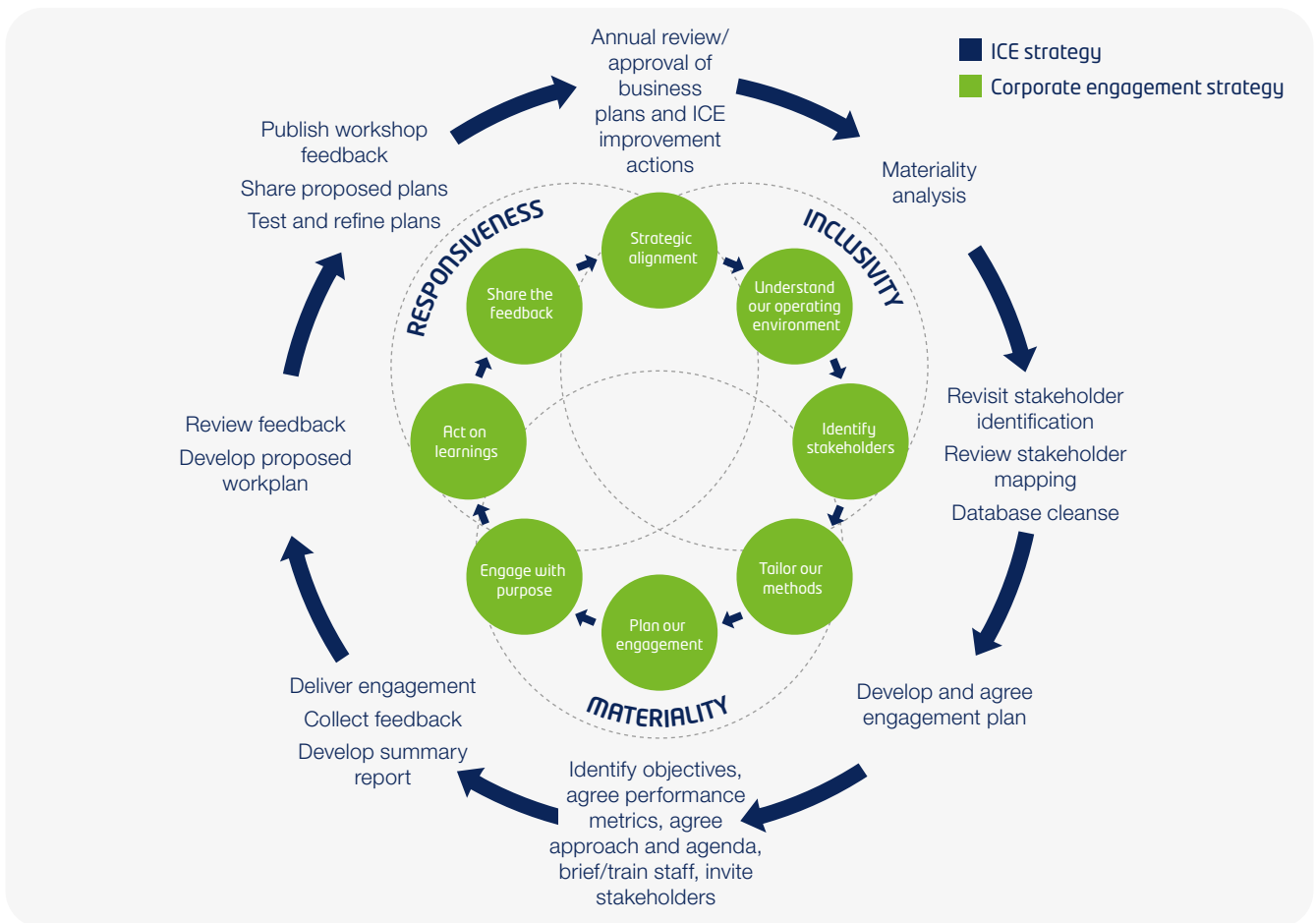
We take **PRIDE**

Our feedback to stakeholders is transparent on concerns raised, and they hold us to account

We act on our stakeholder feedback

1.3.2 Implementing our strategy in connections

Our Connections Engagement Strategy aligns with our corporate Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. We have integrated our stakeholder identification and analysis tools, engagement planning and feedback assessment across departments to ensure consistency and a robust approach.



We work hard to understand how industry-wide changes affect our stakeholders and how we can better tailor our services to adapt to changing needs. We have seen significant changes in the market over the past year and recognise the value in regularly identifying stakeholders within the connections market. Our ambition is to engage with the widest possible range of stakeholders, however, we recognise that not all their needs are equal, and we use a stakeholder materiality methodology to inform and prioritise our engagement and our activity.

Our programme is topic led, driven by both our annual materiality assessment and the feedback arising out of our engagement activity. We know that nothing beats regular, face to face meetings, and will continue to offer workshops tailored specifically for the DG LV and our Community and Local Energy groups. However, we also recognise our stakeholders' time is precious, and we need to ensure that they have opportunities to engage at their convenience. That's why in 2019-20 we have doubled the number of webinars in addition to our face-to-face events. Furthermore, we extended the availability and options for talking directly to our engineers in one-to-one surgery sessions. For the coming year, we will continue to explore further options for engagement to improve our services, particularly if restrictions on travel and face to face meetings continue.

As well as continuing our specific DG LV events in our engagement plans and extending the availability of our 'Ask the Expert' surgery sessions, we have also established an Expert Panel specifically for our DG LV stakeholders.

We recognise that engagement needs to be continuous and tailored according to short-term, medium and long-term stakeholder needs.

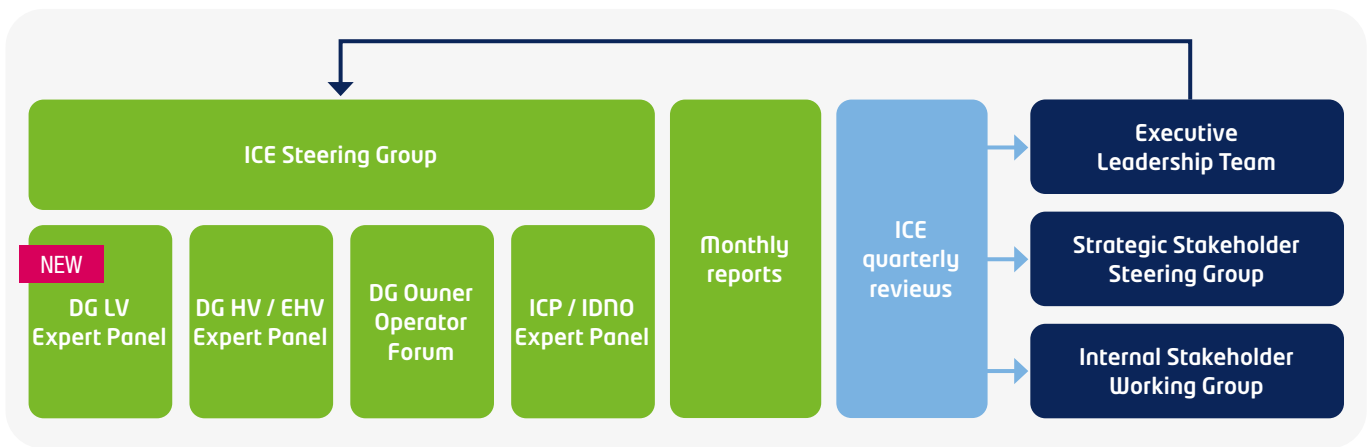
That's why we set clear objectives for improving engagement at all levels:



1.4 Engagement governance

We understand that to be truly effective, engagement needs to be fully aligned with and visible to the wider business. Feedback from across the whole business is evaluated and reviewed by a series of internal and external panels and is overseen by steering groups that ensure strategic direction and alignment with our business plan.

In connections, progress against plans, operational feedback and risk is captured as part of business-as-usual monthly reporting to the Senior Leadership Team, the Executive Leadership Team and our board and is therefore visible at all levels throughout the business. Our stakeholder engagement structure is shown below.



As part of our wider company engagement governance, we have a centralised register for our engagement with stakeholders, including those within the connections business. Engagement risks are reviewed by the strategic Stakeholder Steering Group where the group can discuss strategic mitigation techniques for implementation at a tactical level, amongst the working groups and operational teams.



1.5 Stakeholder identification and positioning

Our stakeholder profiling and mapping processes are robust and well-established and helps us to understand the basis of stakeholders' level of interest and influence across key topics. Our approach fully aligns with that of the overarching company stakeholder mapping methodology and allows us to understand the context of our connections stakeholders against the wider community.

We continually review and re-assess our stakeholder profiles and mapping to ensure that our stakeholder engagement continues to be planned appropriately for our target stakeholder groups.

We identify and position our stakeholders by using our corporate Venn diagram as shown below. Stakeholders are positioned according to where we have an obligation to them, whether they are affected by our operations and their likelihood to influence our performance as an organisation.



People we have
legal, financial
or operation
responsibilities to

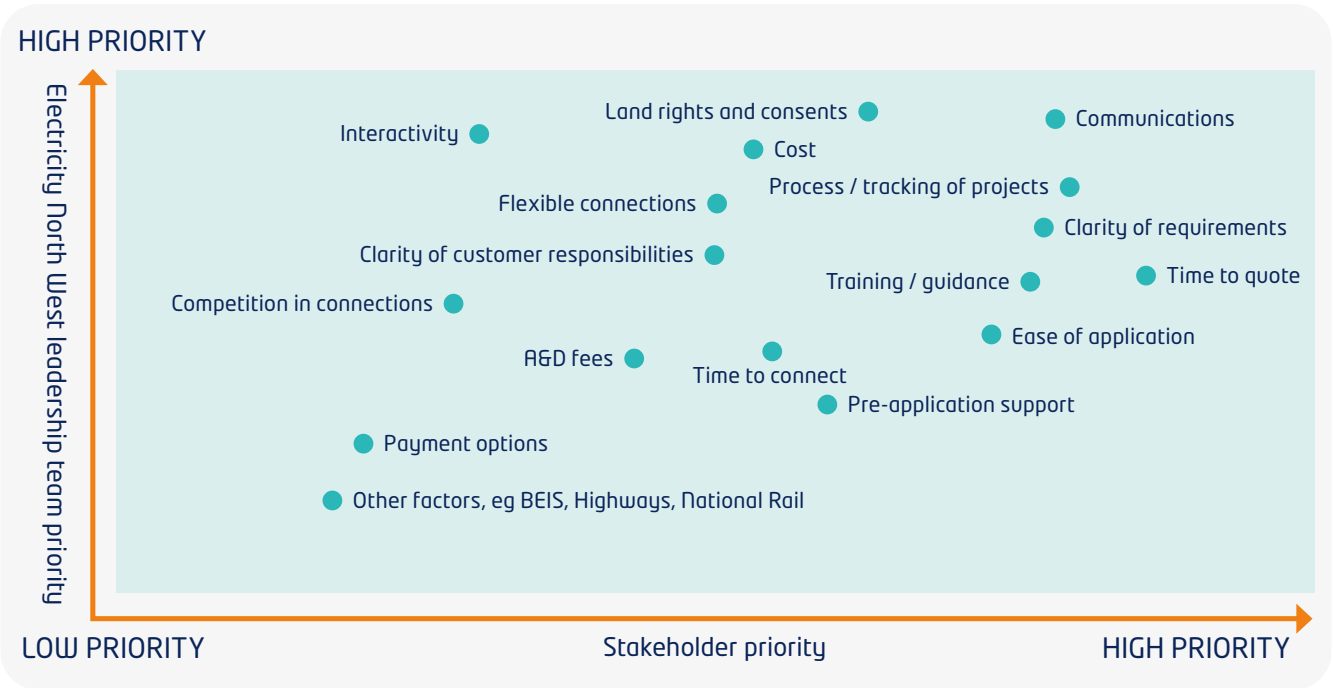
People who are
affected by our
organisation's
operations

People who are
likely to influence
our organisation's
performance

We also review previous stakeholder feedback and engage with our expert stakeholder panel to identify key priorities and issues (materiality items), before mapping these in terms of importance to our connections' stakeholders.

Materiality Map – DG LV

Below is the stakeholder map for the DG LV market segment which utilises the same principles applied across the wider business engagement strategy, ensuring consistency.



2 Looking Back report

We work hard to engage with as many stakeholders across our area as possible, ensuring our workplans are grounded in stakeholder feedback, and are shaped and validated by our stakeholders too.

Our stakeholders tell us they find our face to face events hugely beneficial. We take special care to ensure the topics covered, as well as the staff available at our events are targeted specifically for our DG LV stakeholders. We are pleased with the success of this approach which can be seen in the high satisfaction scores we receive at our events.

We understand not all our DG LV stakeholders are able to attend these workshops, therefore we have acted on this feedback and have extended the range and breadth of opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us. We have increased our range of webinars, which are all recorded and made available on our website for anyone to watch at any time.

We have also introduced greater flexibility in our surgery ('Ask the Expert') offerings. These are available as face-to-face, or

via teleconference. We have also introduced video conference facilities. Our stakeholders can select a format they are comfortable with and at a mutually convenient time and location. These surgery sessions can easily be requested using our new online request form which appears in multiple locations on our website.

We have continued to expand the breadth and quality of information we make available to our stakeholders, either in direct communications or on our website. We work hard to gain insights on how we can further improve the service we provide, by actively seeking feedback for all aspects of our interaction with DG LV stakeholders.

We are pleased to have introduced a new Expert Panel for DG LV stakeholders, highlighting the importance of our interaction for this group, and providing a valuable forum for mutually beneficial dialogue. We work hard to continually review and adapt the opportunities for engaging with our DG LV stakeholders, and all our various engagement routes will continue to inform our actions through 2020-21 and beyond.

2.1 Reviewing our 2019-20 engagement highlights

We are delighted to receive some great feedback from all our events

Workshops

“ It’s a fantastic event made all the better by such knowledgeable ENWL engineers/staff etc ”

“ All very good, great day, thank you ”

Surgery sessions

“ I found the surgery session to be very helpful and very informative and both the staff were pleasant and very happy to discuss any questions I had. I’m very grateful to all the ENWL staff who took the time to talk to me ”

“ Excellent service and prompt - keep doing good work ”



A summary of our DG LV Stakeholder Engagement in 2019-20

DG LV Stakeholder engagement 2019-20			
What	When	Attended	Satisfaction Scores
Workshops	July 2019 Blackburn	5	100%
	January 2020 Preston	8	100%
Community & Local Energy Workshops	July 2019	20	100%
	September 2019	60	100%
	November 2019	19	100%
Surgery sessions	May 2019	1	~
	September 2019	3	~
	January 2020	1	~
Webinar			
G99 Introductory	April 2019	38	~
G99 Technical Compliance	April 2019	19	~
Network Management System	July 2019	19	93%
Ofgem Significant Code Review (Autumn Paper)	November 2019	34	88%
EV Policy	December 2019	22	93%
Ofgem Significant Code Review (Winter Paper)	February 2020	7	93%

We have continued to invite all customers registered on our DG LV distribution list to all of our DG LV events, although the numbers registering remain low, we have seen an increase on last year's attendance. We are delighted that our use of webinars has been positively received by our stakeholders.

In our workshops, we have introduced the use of mobile technology as an interactive method of obtaining real time feedback. This was well received, encouraging active participation by all attendees.

We will continue to explore ways to make our events easy to attend and to engage with us.

Community energy

Our community and local energy stakeholders, when connecting to our network, will often require a low voltage distributed generation connection. Therefore, these important stakeholder groups are a subset of our wider DG LV connection stakeholder group.

Our Community Energy Manager, Helen Seagrave, facilitates our engagement with the community and local energy sector and acts as a single point of contact for projects looking to connect. Helen has seen an increase in low voltage stakeholders requesting more information during her sessions and we have responded to this by improving both the routes to and the quality of the information we have available. This will continue into 2020-21, as outlined in our Looking Forward section.



Helen Seagrave
Community Energy Manager

“We are developing an excellent working relationship with the community and local energy stakeholders in our region and through that relationship they are helping us to develop our service.”



Our Community and Local Energy Strategy sets out our vision for forging links with the community and local energy sector so we can better understand and address their issues.

The objectives of our strategy are to respond directly to the issues stakeholders have told us they are facing and include a focus on improving customers' understanding of and access to our services.

Other objectives of the strategy include playing our role in supporting community and local energy projects with finance and business plan development by making sure the connection costs are appropriate and available at the correct stage of the project. We also support projects to develop new business models through our seed fund; “Empowering our Communities.” Our third objective is to support stakeholders to understand the regulatory environment of the energy sector, how it is changing and what effects it could have on projects.

Enquiries to our Community Energy Manager were up 16% in 2019-20 with enquiries relevant to our connections service being the most common form of enquiry. Our Community Energy Manager acts as point of contact for enquiries and also helps our connections business tailor its services for the sector.

To further support and engage the sector we have run an annual seed fund call “Empowering our Communities.” In its second year the aim of the fund is to support projects that put community and local energy at the heart of their communities and can demonstrate how they can contribute to the delivery of one of the following priorities:

1. Investigating or delivering new ways of working, fit for a smart, flexible low carbon grid;
2. Engaging customers and communities in energy issues, particularly energy efficiency;
3. Engaging communities to ensure “no-one gets left behind” in the energy system transition.

In 2019-20 we were pleased to be able to commit a total of £75,320 across six local projects, which will all provide benefit to their communities. Three of these projects are specifically related to the DG LV market, with one delivering the final steps of a low carbon retrofit of a local community hub in Dalton-in-Furness, one establishing a North West community energy hub to support the increase of this sector in our region, and one supporting the Zero Carbon Electric Homes in providing 100% community-owned renewable energy in the Lune Valley area. Further details can be found on our website [here](#).

2.2 Summary performance

Commitment	Action	Target/Output/KPI	Target	Achieved	Status
Target improved customer satisfaction	Our aim is to target high levels of overall satisfaction	Customers surveyed rate their overall satisfaction at 85% (subject to statistically significant sample sizes)	Q4	~	~
Target improved customer engagement	We will seek to establish a DG LV Expert Panel to improve customer engagement, and obtain customer insights to drive overall satisfaction	Establish a DG LV Expert Panel Host at least 2 calls / sessions	Q4	Q4	✓
We will communicate with our stakeholders on Engineering Recommendation G98 and G99 requirements for the connection of Generation Equipment	We will communicate new requirements to our stakeholders We will clarify the process on how stakeholders can raise issues and / or queries related to G98 and G99	Hold 3 webinars / workshops 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as “Useful” or “Very Useful”	Q4	Q2 100%	✓
We will share our vision for the transition of Distribution Network Operators (DNO) to Distribution System Operators (DSO)	We will provide updates, through stakeholder engagement sessions and meetings on the transition to DSO and to gain stakeholder input	Present at 2 workshops 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as “Useful” or “Very Useful”	Q4	Q4 100%	✓
We will continuously improve how we provide information and publish requirements for flexible services, such as Community Demand Side Response	We will continue the work we have started in 2018 to publish our requirements for flexible services on our website and undertake accessible, fair, transparent processes to enable stakeholders to tender for the provision of flexible services We will consult with our stakeholders to inform our continuous improvement actions	Issue a consultation on our approach to flexible services Incorporate any changes from the feedback Present flexible services opportunities at 2 workshops 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as “Useful” or “Very Useful”	Q4	Q4 100%	✓
We will brief stakeholders on the development of changes to charges being made by Ofgem	We will provide briefings for stakeholders on the proposed changes to charges through Ofgem’s significant code review	Present at 2 workshops 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as “Useful” or “Very Useful”	Q4	Q4 100%	✓
We will continue to monitor and review our connection charging approach to make charging fair for our customers	We will engage with stakeholders and communicate any changes in our approach to A&D Fees	We will lead the national engagement with stakeholders on more consistent DNO approaches We will give stakeholders at least one month’s notice of any changes to our approaches	Q4	Q4	✓

Commitment	Action	Target/Output/KPI	Target	Achieved	Status
Target improved Time to Quote timescales for DG LV	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing quotes on average in 28 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 45 working days)	We will continue to work to a 28 day average Time to Quote	Q4	Q4 (22 days)	✓
We will clarify the process followed after acceptance of a quote	We will engage with stakeholders to review and improve the post acceptance process	Publish revised process as agreed with stakeholders	Q4	Q4	✓
We will improve access to Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	We will improve 3rd party access to Network Information on GIS	We will deliver improvements to 3rd party access to Network Information on GIS	Q4	May 2020	✓
We will engage with our stakeholders on the impact of our Network Management System	We will review the new process for pre-construction drawings (pre-builts) and communicate changes	Present at 2 workshops 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as "Useful" or "Very Useful"	Q4	Q4 100%	✓

Business as usual commitments

Following stakeholder feedback, we have continued to include commitments that we consider to be business as usual engagement activities. This provides reassurance that these activities will continue to be at the forefront of our engagement strategy. Our performance against these commitments is detailed below.

Commitment	Action	Target/Output/KPI	Target	Achieved	Status
We will continue to offer opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us	Offer surgery sessions, webinars and workshops covering a range of topics	Hold 5 engagement sessions 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as "Useful" or "Very Useful"	Q4	Q4 95%	✓
We will continue to offer opportunities for community and local energy sector stakeholders to engage with us	We will continue to engage the community and local energy sector to understand their requirements through an engagement programme	Hold 4 workshops / webinars 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as "Useful" or "Very Useful"	Q4	Q4 100%	✓
We will continue to communicate with our stakeholders	Issue regular updates on our ICE Commitments, Health & Safety and Community Energy via newsletters to registered stakeholders	Issue and publish quarterly newsletters	Q4	Q4	✓

2.3 Detailed performance

In this section we set out the detail of how we have delivered on our commitments this year and where stakeholders can find the outputs from our actions.

Target improved customer satisfaction

Our aim is to target high levels of satisfaction in all areas. We have continued to expand our engagement opportunities to improve satisfaction levels. We take the feedback we receive from our stakeholders to inform and shape our actions.

To help us identify where we can improve our overall service, we seek feedback from all our DG LV customers on overall satisfaction, and to request any specific feedback and shape our workplans. This is done through electronic surveys issued to all our customers applying for a DG LV connection or completing a DG LV connection in the year. As with last year, our response rate to the electronic surveys has remained low with only five responses received and therefore becoming statistically insignificant for measuring from a quantitative perspective.

During the last quarter, we took a different approach by contacting customers via the telephone in order to gain some qualitative feedback. This resulted in a greater number of responses and provided our stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss their recent projects and interaction with us and allowed opportunity for an in-depth conversation regarding any other queries. The majority of customers gave us very positive feedback and we received some helpful pointers which we have incorporated into our workplan for next year.

We will continue to explore different communication channels to refine how we gain feedback through surveys and measure accordingly.

Target improved customer engagement

Our DG LV stakeholders are by nature often a 'hard to reach' group in terms of achieving regular and constructive feedback on their needs and experience, for the reasons set out in the engagement strategy section of this report. To encourage greater engagement, we committed to establish a new forum for our DG LV stakeholders, continuing our focus on this market segment. This was to follow a similar format as already in place for other market segments, in the form of an Expert Panel, where a small group of engaged stakeholders can provide valuable feedback. The commitment was to establish this group and to host two calls during the year.

We are pleased to have four individuals registering an interest following promotions at workshops, via our newsletters and via social media. We hosted our first Expert Panel in September where we introduced the members and discussed the terms of reference for the panel. We also discussed progress on our DG LV workplan, and reviewed our commitments at the half year stage. In addition, we discussed communication methods with this group, with special reference to our satisfaction surveys. Lastly, we took feedback on our proposed agenda for our next workshop. We were pleased to be able to assist one of the panellists with a specific query in follow up discussions with experts in the wider business.

Our second call was held in January, where we discussed the Ofgem consultation responses, as well as progress on our workplan and the forthcoming workshop and the process for developing our ICE workplans at year end.

Our aim is to improve the level of engagement with this group and to further grow the number of members on our Expert Panel next year. The relationships built within these expert panels provide a valuable resource, helping us to understand and shape the experience of the wider DG LV community.



We will communicate on Engineering Recommendation G98 and G99 for the connection of generation equipment

The introduction of Engineering Recommendation (EREC) G98 and G99 has been a significant change for our generation customers. This is a national change and affects all our generation customers including DG LV customers. As a Distribution Network Operator, we are involved in the national forums discussing EREC G98 and G99. We are therefore in a position to be able to provide guidance to our stakeholders, explaining the new process and forms required. We committed to hold three webinars and / or workshops on this topic.

We held our first introductory webinar in April 2019, with 30 people joining the webinar, and covering a number of questions in the Q&A section. Our second webinar was also held in April and provided an in-depth explanation of the process for Type A and Type B applications. This was focused on the areas relevant for our DG LV stakeholders, with 21 people attending the webinar. Both of these webinars were recorded and are available on our [website](#), enabling us to extend the reach of this source of information for stakeholders to refer to at their convenience.

In addition to the above webinars, we presented at both our DG LV workshops, in July 2019 and in January 2020. Both events were highly interactive, and received excellent satisfaction scores, with 100% rating the presentation as "Useful" or "Very useful".

We will share our vision for the transition of Distribution Network Operators (DNO) to Distribution System Operators (DSO)

Many of the 2019-20 DG LV ICE workplan commitments have a direct link to the work relating to enhancing Electricity North West's DSO functionality. The transition to DSO has also featured heavily in the Leading the North West to Zero Carbon messaging. For our DG LV stakeholders, we have presented regular updates on our transition to enhanced DSO functionality through ICE workshops in July 2019, January 2020, as well as at a Flexibility workshop in November 2019 where DG LV stakeholders were in attendance. These workshops gave us the opportunity to discuss DSO functionality such as: Flexible services, heat mapping tools, interactivity processes, development of active network management technology, changes to our network management system to facilitate DSO functionality, as well as what we are doing to work with our stakeholders to reduce harmful emissions through our Leading the North West to Zero Carbon Strategy. DSO also had its own dedicated section within the December 2019 Electricity North West ICE newsletter to provide updates on the years progress and to highlight links to some of the other DSO functions covered in other publications.

Through our work within the Open Network Project we have this year updated the definition of a DSO from Distribution System Operator to Distribution System Operation. This reflects the change in thinking nationally that Distribution System Operation is made up of a range of functions which currently will be delivered by a number of stakeholders including DNOs, Independent Distribution Network Operators, aggregators, the Electricity System Operator, community and local energy groups, and Distributed Energy Resource providers. A change which was reflected within our updated messaging in the January DG LV ICE workshop.



We will improve how we provide information and publish requirements for flexible services

We have continued to improve the [information available](#) on our flexible service opportunities through increased publication of documents and the creation of a new '[flexibility map](#)' detailing current and forecasted requirements. To raise awareness and share updates on flexible services we have covered this subject at two of our engagement workshops for our DG LV stakeholders to explain our requirements and gather feedback on our overall approach.

Feedback from both workshops indicated these were hugely successful. All attendees rated the events as 'very useful' with 100% satisfaction achieved. This is an area that our DG LV customers are interested in hence the need to improve the information available. A summary of this work can be found on our [engagement](#) webpage along with a copy of the presentations delivered at both of our workshops. In addition, we will look to continue with updates and progress on our range of flexible connections into next year and we will be sure to share with our stakeholders accordingly.



We will brief stakeholders on the development of changes to charges being made by Ofgem

We committed to provide two briefings on the developments of a national review of charges being undertaken by Ofgem. A Significant Code Review allows Ofgem to initiate wide ranging and holistic change and to implement reform of a code-based issue. Ofgem's Access Significant Code Review focuses on ensuring electricity networks are used efficiently and flexibly, reflecting users' needs and allowing consumers to benefit from new technologies and services whilst avoiding unnecessary costs on energy bills in general. This review has the potential to radically change the way customers pay for electricity and the costs of connection to the network.

We hosted two webinars, the first in November 2019 following publication of Ofgem's first working paper. This webinar provided an overview of Access arrangements (e.g. when users can import/export electricity and how much they can) and Forward-Looking Charges (they type of cost signal to users on how their actions can increase or decrease charges). The webinar described the potential impact for DG LV stakeholders and signposted where further information could be obtained. We were pleased to have 34 stakeholders attend this webinar, with 88% rating the event as "Useful" or "Very useful".

Our second webinar, following the publication of Ofgem's second working paper was held in February 2020. This focused on potential changes to the connections boundary which relates to the proportion of the assets connecting customers pay for when they connect to our network. This can have a direct impact on our stakeholders and the projects that they undertake. Again, we explained the potential impact for our stakeholders. 7 stakeholders attended this webinar with 93% rating the event as "Useful" or "Very useful".

Improve connection charging approach to make charging fair for our customers

From April 2018, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) introduced new regulations that allow DNOs to charge customers for their connection offer whether it is accepted or not. This allows a fairer approach to recovering costs incurred in providing customers with connections offers.

We developed our initial approach to what are generally known as 'Assessment and Design fees' and engaged with stakeholders through workshops and webinars. Our initial approach was to introduce charges for extra high voltage applications followed by extending this to high voltage distributed generation applications greater than 1MW.

In our workshop for DG LV customers we explained our approach and rationale and sought their feedback. They explained that they would prefer no charges for connection offers and that anything other than charges of about £100 would have a detrimental impact, particularly on community energy projects. We used this feedback as part of our impact assessment and have not introduced any charges for connection offers for DG LV.

We have also been active nationally as different stakeholders have called for more consistent approaches across DNOs. Brian Hoy, in his role as chair of the Distributed Energy Resources Connections Steering Group has led discussions with DNOs and other stakeholders to see if a consensus can be reached. This has led to all DNOs publishing details of how they calculate their charges to provide greater transparency.

We will clarify the process followed after acceptance of a quote

Following stakeholder feedback, we have undertaken a review of the process customers follow after accepting a DG LV quote. We consulted with our stakeholders to understand where improvements could be made, hosting an interactive session at our July workshop and via individual discussions with our customers. The key points highlighted in the feedback were to provide a clear step by step roadmap for our customers, as well as greater clarity on the contact details of those involved in the process.

We listened to our stakeholder's feedback and developed a new guidance document that is provided to our customers when they accept a quote. It is now also available on our [website](#). This guidance document covers all aspects of project delivery, providing a step by step guide from quotation stage, through acceptance of the quote, any land consents required and final project delivery. All the points highlighted in the feedback we received is covered including guidance on timescales and what to expect from us. We will continue to monitor the impact of this document to ensure we support the needs of our DG LV stakeholders.

Target improved time to quote for DG LV quotations

We committed to aim for a target of 28 working days on average to provide our customers with quotes against the guaranteed standard of 45 days. We are delighted to have achieved an average time to quote of 22 days. This is the result of continued hard work and dedication from our teams. We have continued to focus our attention on our resourcing and management processes, allowing our teams to further improve our performance and service. In addition, we have engaged with our customers to increase awareness of the information required to provide a quote. This increased awareness helped reduce the number of queries in the design process, thus streamlining the process.

Time to Quote	Target	Achieved
DG LV	28	22



We will improve access to Geographical Information Systems

Access to our Geographical Information System (GIS) system helps our customers to develop their plans prior to making an application for a new connection. For our DG LV stakeholders, this may involve undertaking a cost benefit analysis, and potentially producing a business case to procure funding. Access to both system information and our experts via surgery sessions helps our stakeholders follow options with confidence. To improve access, we initiated a project to make our GIS system even more available. This will allow viewer access for anyone and will not require the user to register in line with best practice. A further option will be a downloadable file of our asset information for use within a stakeholder's own GIS system. This will make accessing our information much easier for all stakeholders, as well as enhancing the viewer capabilities.

We had hoped to deliver this project by the end of March but some delays and then the onset of COVID-19 have had a knock-on effect with our developers having to overcome technical issues with home working. The delivery of the solution was therefore delayed slightly to May 2020. We have kept stakeholders updated at our workshops as the project developed and were delighted to be able to involve some stakeholders in testing the new application. As the project has now been delivered we have marked this commitment as having been met but late. We will be promoting the new functionality and providing training and guidance as part of our workplan in 2020-21.

We will engage with our stakeholders on the impact of our Network Management System

As part of our ongoing IT strategy, we are investing heavily to replace our network control systems with a new Network Management System (NMS). This is a major project running over a number of years and supports our transition to Distribution System Operation. This new system enables much greater control and provides real time network configuration, allowing improved restoration times and enabling a wider range of flexible options on our network. The design of NMS requires the addition of new network and any network changes in advance to facilitate the real time configuration. This had the potential to impact our connection customers and was included in our ICE workplans to ensure any changes required were implemented sympathetically for our stakeholders.

At our July workshop we were able to explain that as the detail had been developed there would not be any additional information needed prior to connection for our DG LV stakeholders and therefore the perceived impact would not materialise. A more in-depth description of our new system was available as a webinar in July, and a further update was provided in the ICE section of our January workshop, confirming no impact to this customer group.

We will continue to offer opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us

This year, we made a commitment to hold five engagement sessions for our DG LV stakeholders. Over the course of this year we have planned and offered workshops, surgery sessions, and webinars.

The first workshop was hosted in Blackburn in July 2019. We had 6 stakeholders register for the event, with 5 being able to attend on the day. The topics were tailored for our DG LV stakeholders, and included updates, interactive sessions, and informative presentations. We were very pleased to achieve a satisfaction score of 100%.

Our second workshop was hosted in Preston in January 2020. This had 16 stakeholders registered, with 8 attending on the day. The topics focused on areas highly relevant for our stakeholders and included an interactive session to discuss our ICE workplans for 2020-21, as well as informative and useful presentations on topics such as EREC G98 / G99, and our transition to DSO.

All our events have been carefully planned to ensure we discuss topics our stakeholders tell us are important to them, and each is an opportunity to check our events continue to be useful and relevant to them. This is demonstrated by an increase in the number of people interested in attending these events and the consistently high satisfaction scores.

Before and after both our workshops we offered surgery appointments, enabling stakeholders to discuss specific topics with our experts. Access to our expertise, in both networking at our events or at our surgery appointments, is highly regarded and valued by our stakeholders as indicated in feedback received. We have increased the availability of our surgery sessions by enabling stakeholders to request a surgery appointment at any time. We have opened up alternative options in terms of location and time, as well as providing the option for teleconference surgery sessions. This is available via an online request form, or via a direct email to our [ICE mailbox](#).

We have also increased the number of webinars open to our stakeholders, where we are able to provide more in-depth presentations on particular topics, including policy, regulatory and general updates. The webinars offered to our DG LV stakeholders include two G98 & G99 webinars, two Ofgem Significant Code Review update webinars, and an NMS update. All our webinars are now recorded and available on our website, further increasing the reach of these events.

“ This was a good and well-prepared workshop. Thank you for hosting and great presentations ”
Ersin Danaci (Capula Ltd)

We will continue to offer opportunities for community & local energy stakeholders to engage with us

A portion of the DG LV market is formed by community and local energy groups and we have continued to support community and local energy in our area.

This group has grown throughout the year, with just under 100 stakeholders attending our community energy workshops, with 100% recording the events as “Useful” or “Very useful”.

We committed to hosting four workshops or webinars for our community and local energy stakeholders. The first event hosted in July 2019 provided an overview of “Community Energy Potential” and was held in partnership with Quantum Strategy and Technology. The event was an opportunity to share the challenges faced and how we are planning for the future. All attendees suggested that they would recommend the event to other stakeholders and found the shared platform with Quantum extremely useful with interesting discussions.

Our second event delivered in September 2019 was a “Powering our Communities” and was held in partnership with Burnley Boys and Girls Club – an organisation that we are continuing to support through funding from Electricity North West. This event generated huge support from the local community with over 60 attendees, all of whom provided a 100% satisfaction rating for the event. The event was celebratory by nature and we will be continuing to work in partnership with organisations such as Burnley Boys and Girls Club into next year.

Our third delivered event In November 2019 was “Introducing the GB Energy Market” and was held in partnership with Carbon Coop and Cornwall Insights. This event also received 100% satisfaction results from the attendees with comments such as “Quality and knowledge of the course tutors/ likeminded audience with lots in common” and “Really comprehensive, well-paced and thorough overview - excellent event”

Our last event planned for March 2020 was disappointingly cancelled. We had organised a venue and shared an agenda with our Community and Local Energy stakeholders, invites were issued, and lunch arranged. Due to COVID-19 restrictions being announced at this time, we engaged with our confirmed attendees to advise that the event had to be postponed in the interest of all parties. We are considering this commitment as complete due to factors outside of our control preventing delivery of this session. All our community and local energy stakeholders agreed that we had taken the right course of action and we will look to reschedule this event in the near future.

We consider the community and local energy sector an important stakeholder group and will continue, led by our Community Energy Manager, Helen Seagrave, to actively engage with this passionate group.



We will continue to communicate with our stakeholders

We have continued to provide quarterly updates on our commitments and progress updates on individual actions via newsletters and through our website. To capture a wider audience and promote ICE updates, we have utilised social media to advertise engagement events and share information with our stakeholders.

In addition to publishing all presentations and updates on our website, we have increased the number of webinars offered to enable the stakeholders that are unable to attend an event to catch up on what was missed in their own time.

To ensure that our ICE plans and updates are reaching our connections audience, we have promoted our reports and workplans on our corporate website front page.

We are delighted that 81% of the newsletters issued this year were read by our stakeholders, therefore we consider this demonstrates our newsletters are reaching our stakeholders. We will continue to explore innovative ways of communicating with our stakeholders through to next year.



3 Looking Forward report

3.1 Introduction

In this 2020-21 Looking Forward report we set out our commitments and activities for the coming year, to continue the objective of improving our services for our DG LV connections stakeholders.

Our commitments are based on feedback from a range of connections stakeholders, interested in our connections services. Our engagement continues on a rolling basis; we encourage stakeholders to engage with us throughout the year to help us continually update and adapt our workplans to support the needs of our stakeholders.

In 2020-21 we will continue to offer organised engagement sessions and encourage an 'open door policy' whereby we make sure our stakeholders know that they are welcome to meet and engage with us outside of the more formal events. We are making this easier by promoting our online surgery request form, as well as introducing more proactive methods to gain qualitative feedback from our customers to inform our decisions.



3.2 Our Engagement Strategy 2020-21

This year we will continue to examine our how we apply our engagement strategy and approach as outlined in the Engagement Strategy section of this report to ensure it continues to be beneficial for our connection's stakeholders.

We will seek ways to make it easier for our stakeholders to attend our DG LV events, reviewing our locations, timing and methods of engagement, and further extend where we offer Skype as an option.

We will endeavour to further extend the range and number of opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us, in both face to face and online events. Where it isn't possible for stakeholders to attend an event, we will publish all presentations and recorded webinars on our website to extend the reach of our events. Furthermore, we will continue to advertise our events via leaflets included with connection offers and encourage opening the invitation up to customers not registered on our distribution list. We will continue to highlight our distribution list to ensure that we are engaging with a wide spectrum of DG LV stakeholders.

We will expand our engagement with related groups to ensure that we continue to be relevant as the market shifts and the interests of our stakeholders change. Connecting and hosting a wide range of specific DG LV events, as well as those focused on community and local energy will guarantee that the stakeholders and customers of this market segment receive the necessary focus.

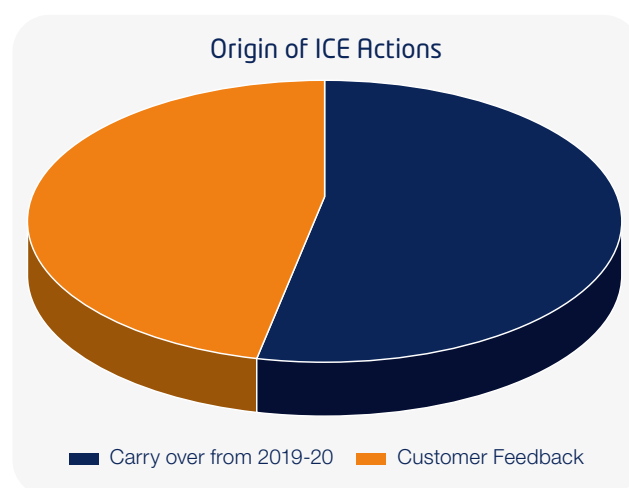
To ensure that we remain aligned to social distancing guidelines, we are considering alternative methods for delivering our engagement workshops as opposed to our usual face to face events. We are adapting our delivery style to reflect the current situation, and will only reinstate face to face events as soon as it is safe to do so as we know our stakeholders value these networking opportunities.

3.3 Developing our plans

We know it's crucial to involve our stakeholders in everything we do, not just in developing our annual workplans, but throughout the year. Our workplan development is a gradual and continual process aligned with and informed by our engagement. In each workshop we identify material issues and topics to engage on to ensure that both our events, and our workplans are addressing the main issues affecting our stakeholders.

Our ICE workplan development is a well embedded iterative process. Feedback from all sources is collated to produce our initial draft, which is discussed in detail with our stakeholders. Our workplans are then updated accordingly, before going back to the wider stakeholder group to review and refine before final submission.

3.2.1 Tracing the roots of our actions



3.4 Looking Forward workplan

Commitment	KPI/Target	Delivery date
We will target our LV Time to Quote	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing quotes on average in 22 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 35 working days)	Q4
We will provide guidance on the application process.	We will actively engage with stakeholders to identify and improve pre-application guidance on our website.	Q3
	We will publish a glossary and review pre-application guidance against plain English standards.	Q4
We will communicate with our stakeholders on Engineering Recommendation G98 & G99 requirements for the connection of generation equipment.	We shall share best practice and information on the latest national developments to support customers through a dedicated G98/G99 workshop and communicate updates throughout the year.	Q4
We will continue to target improved customer satisfaction.	We will continue to target high customer satisfaction, whilst focusing on qualitative measures.	Q4
We will strive to improve our Time to Connect	We will strive to improve our Time to Connect for DG LV connections where on-site works are required.	Q4
We will provide updates on activity to support the transition to green energy and the wider green economy	Provide regular updates, via presentations at workshops and/or newsletters on our Leading the North West to Zero Carbon Plan.	Q4
	We will share learning from our case studies, e.g. our zero carbon buildings.	
We will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to receive detailed briefings on industry level changes	We will continue to host a minimum of 2 webinars on changes relevant to our stakeholders for regulatory or policy changes.	Q4
	This will include a webinar on Ofgem SCR and EREC G5/5.	
We will improve access to Network Information	We will produce and publish training material for use of our new GIS functionality.	Q3
We will clarify the process followed when connecting LV generation.	We will seek feedback on new DG Post Acceptance pack to identify if any further improvements required.	Q2
We will improve information available on battery storage.	We will review and improve the information available on our website.	Q2
	We will highlight and signpost improvements via newsletters and / or direct communications for relevant stakeholders.	
We will keep stakeholders informed on the transition of Distribution Network Operators (DNO) to carrying out enhanced Distribution System Operation (DSO) functionality	We will provide a minimum of 2 progress updates on our transition to DSO.	Q4
We will endeavour to offer alternative flexible connections solutions to customers where it is appropriate to do so.	Improve visibility of options available.	Q4

Business as usual commitments

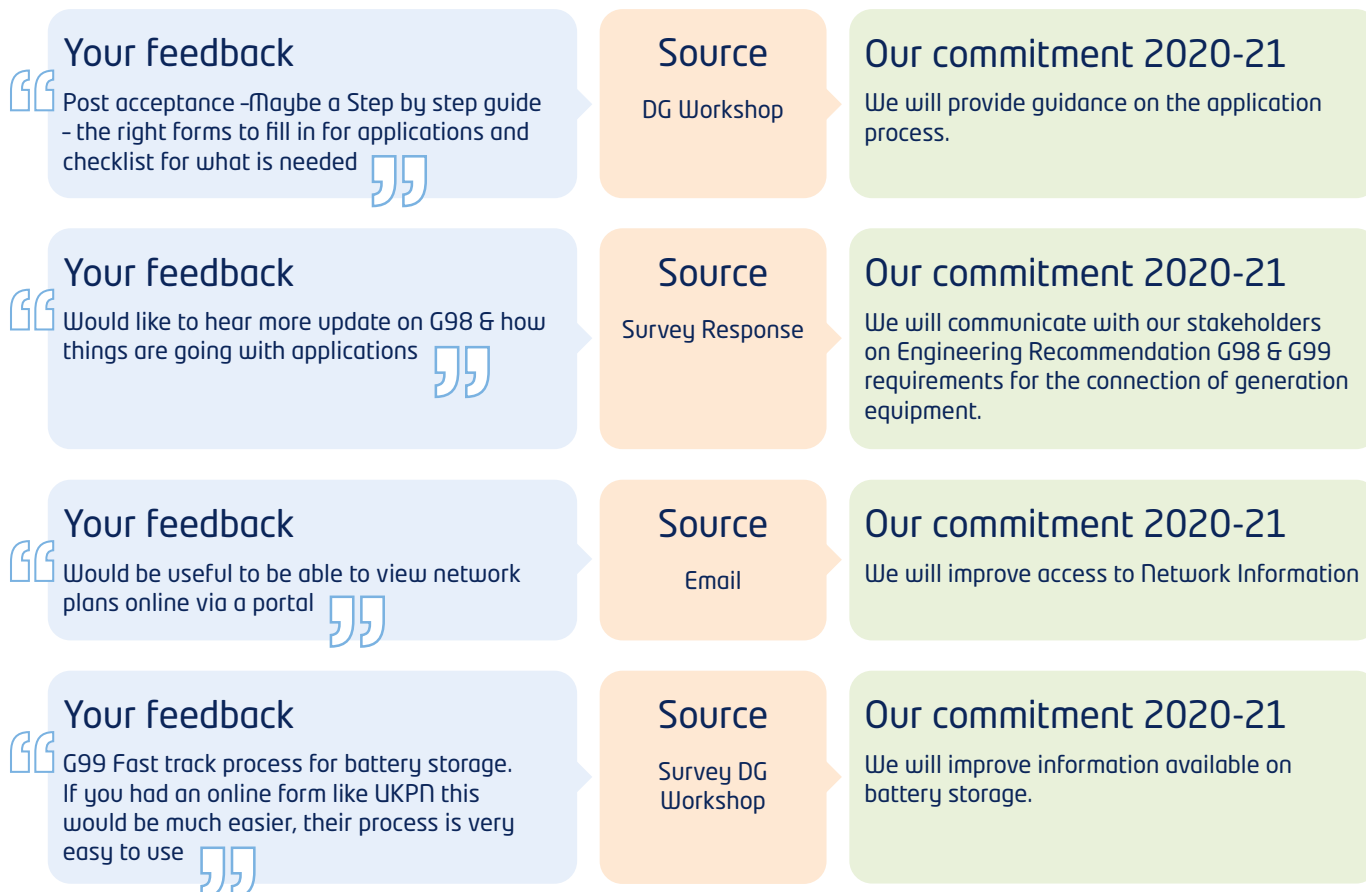
Following stakeholder feedback, we have continued to include commitments we consider as business as usual engagement activities.

This provides reassurance that these activities will continue to be at the forefront of our engagement strategy.

Commitment	KPI/Target	Delivery date
We will continue to offer opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us.	Offer surgery sessions, webinars and 2 workshops covering a range of topics.	Q4
We will engage with community & local energy stakeholders.	We will host 3 Workshops for our community and local energy stakeholders, along with quarterly newsletters.	Q4
We will continue to communicate with our stakeholders.	Issue regular updates on ICE Commitments and Health and Safety via newsletters to registered stakeholders	Q4

3.5 You said, we will do

It is important that we can show how our thinking has developed and where our actions have come from. We review engagement feedback from the previous year to identify key issues and topics, planning our engagement appropriately. Therefore, development of our actions begins well ahead of our engagement. Each of our actions can be traced back to stakeholder feedback or were indicated as a priority to continue with into 2020-21. All commitments have been reviewed and endorsed by our stakeholders.



3.6 Are we on the right track?

Before our workplans are confirmed, we seek feedback on our proposed actions at every opportunity. During our January DG LV workshop, we asked for comments and guidance from our stakeholders on our proposed workplans. Attendees participated in a prioritisation exercise to rank the level of importance each potential action was to them, and to prioritise the list of potential actions. This was used to inform our final workplan.

We also surveyed all our DG LV stakeholders signed up to our email distribution list to seek feedback on our workplans. The comments we received indicated that we are heading in the right direction and capturing what our DG LV customers would like us to achieve in 2020-21.

“Happy with all proposals”

DG LV stakeholder

3.7 Other feedback

We listen carefully to all feedback received, and work hard to be transparent in the commitments we make, as well as those we omit from our plans. Although we aim to address each item of feedback, either immediately, or as part of our ongoing workplan development, we are not always able to satisfy all requests.

After careful consideration, we are unable to include the following item requested by our stakeholders this year. To ensure transparency, we have explained our reasoning, below.

Commitment: We will improve visibility of [LV] Network Capacity.

Justification: Our review of the possibility of showing LV capacity at this time, to complement the current information provided in our Long Term Development Statement (LTDS), has concluded that any solution would need to be holistic. To develop this, it would be necessary to initiate a project, requiring significant investment which would provide limited value overall to the majority of our stakeholders. We currently operate an open-door policy for any project discussions on available options, including available capacity, to all our customers and would recommend this bespoke method as a better, more customer focused approach.



4 Closing statement

We take pride in being transparent in our engagement with connections stakeholders. This report details our commitments based on feedback received across several platforms. We have been able to prioritise this feedback and shape our commitments for 2020-21 as a result.

Based on the feedback we have received for our 2020-21 ICE workplan, our DG LV stakeholders are satisfied that we are working in the right manner in order to provide them with the service they expect from us.

We look forward to continuing to increase our engagement activity with this group and to further build on our improvements, providing an outstanding service for our connections customers over the next year.

If you would like to
get in touch with our
Incentive on Connections
Engagement team,
please email
ICE@enwl.co.uk





Bringing energy to your door

Electricity North West Limited

Registered Office:
Borron Street
Stockport
Cheshire SK1 2JD

Registered no: 2366949 (England)

www.enwl.co.uk