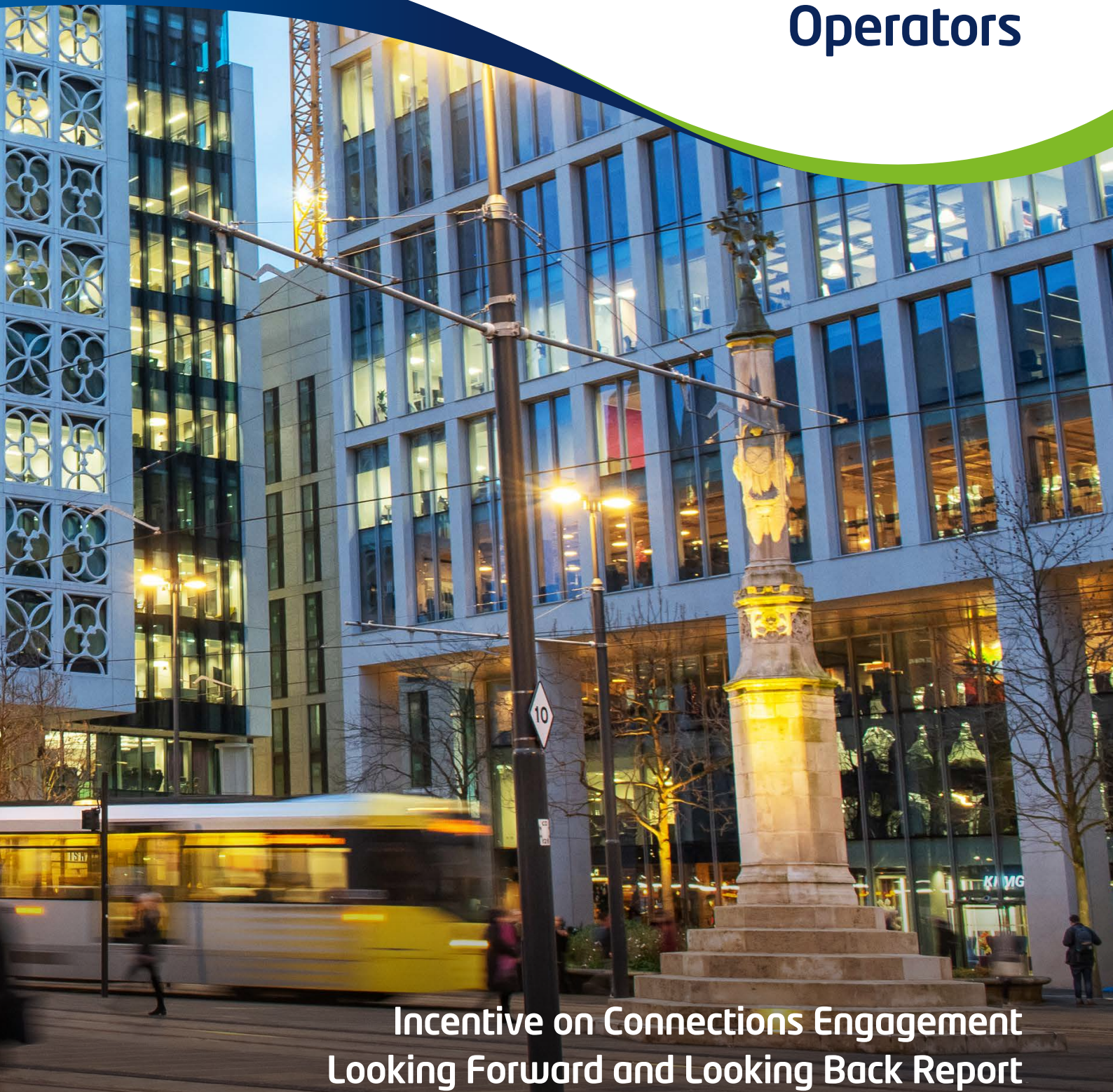


Independent Connection Providers & Independent Distribution Network Operators



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

May 2020

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Welcome

Welcome to our Incentive on Connections Engagement (ICE) Report for Independent Connection Providers (ICPs) and Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs).

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 competitive connections 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 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 Independent Connection Providers (ICPs) and Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs) ICE report for 2019-20.

My aim since joining Energy Solutions in 2018, was to continue to promote supporting customer choice, through facilitating competition in connections whilst providing customers with the highest standards of service at competitive prices. This report demonstrates the importance we place in engaging with and meeting the needs of our stakeholders within this market segment. My priority is to ensure that we work in a competitive market, giving customers choice when connecting to our network.

This year we have hosted two workshops for our ICPs and IDNOs, various interactive training sessions and webinars on topics of interest. Both workshops hosted were well attended and provided us with an opportunity to actively listen to our stakeholders and encourage discussions on various topics.

We have promoted the use of one-to-one surgery sessions, providing the opportunity to book time with our business experts on various topics. The feedback we have received has been extremely positive and we are continuing to enhance our good working relationships with ICPs and IDNOs.

We pride ourselves on the hard work we have put into our relationships with ICPs and IDNOs and we are committed to continuing our dedicated approach to our customers and stakeholders in 2020-21. Clearly COVID-19 will have some consequences on how we engage with stakeholders, 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

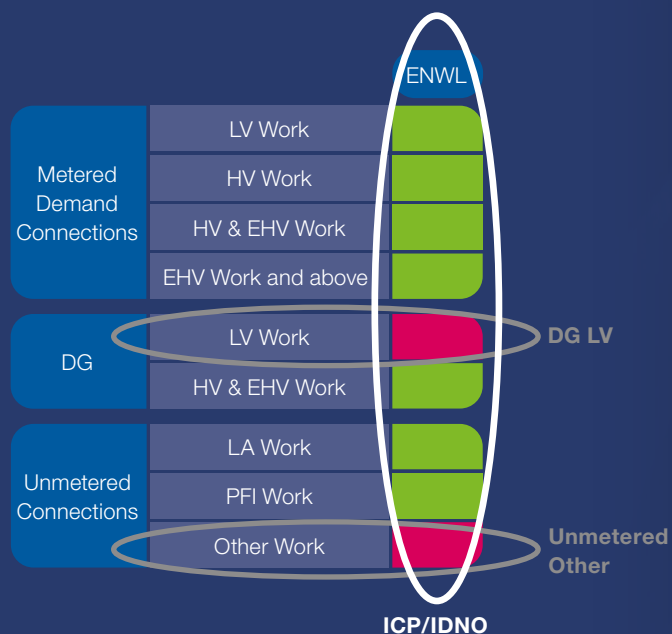
1.1 Background

Our Incentive on Connections Engagement (ICE) 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 (DG LV) 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 ICP and IDNO market segment.



1.2 The competitive market

Electricity North West is operating in a dynamic, rapidly changing environment which means that our role is evolving to meet the important challenges ahead. Our customers rely on us now more than ever before. We keep customers' lives running smoothly; we keep them connected with friends, family and the wider world; power their entertainment, their electric cars 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. Our transition from Distribution Network Operators (DNO) to enhanced Distribution System Operation (DSO) supports this changing network functionality.

As a DSO, we will need to play a more sophisticated role in how we accommodate all connections, whether to end users, businesses or ICPs and IDNOs. The competitive market in providing electrical connections remains strong and we continue to do our utmost to support this, knowing it provides greater choice for end customers.

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, supporting changes to our processes and activities that 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 ICP and IDNO 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.

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



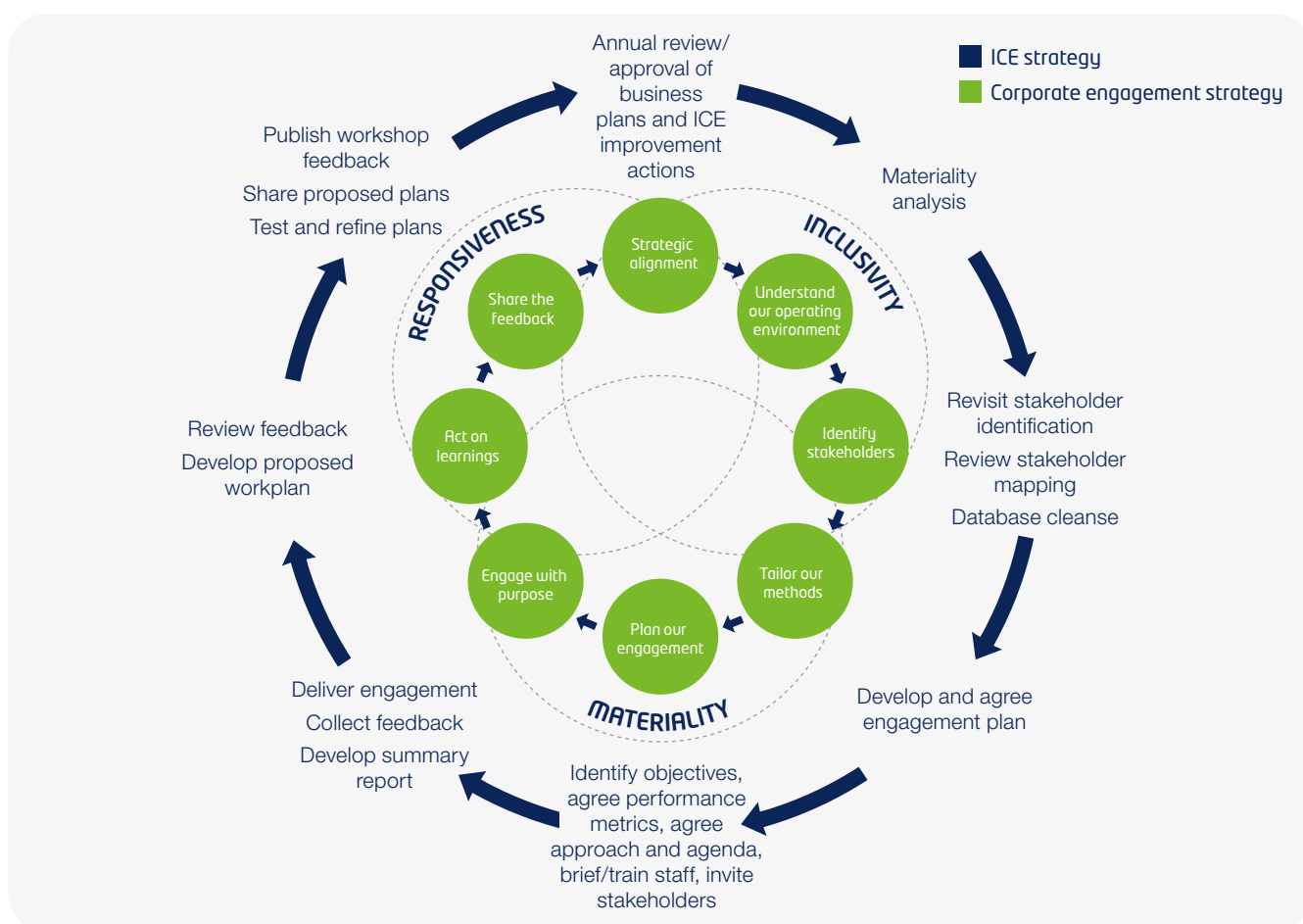
We take PRIDE

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 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 interaction and will continue to offer workshops tailored specifically for ICPs and IDNOs. 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 extended the number and range of webinars in addition to our face-to-face events, as well as extending 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.

As well as continuing our planned events in our engagement plans and extending the availability of our 'Ask the expert' surgery sessions, we have a well-established Expert Panel that provide a mutually beneficial forum where we are able to discuss topics openly, building trust and honesty in our discussions with this focussed group of highly engaged stakeholders.

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

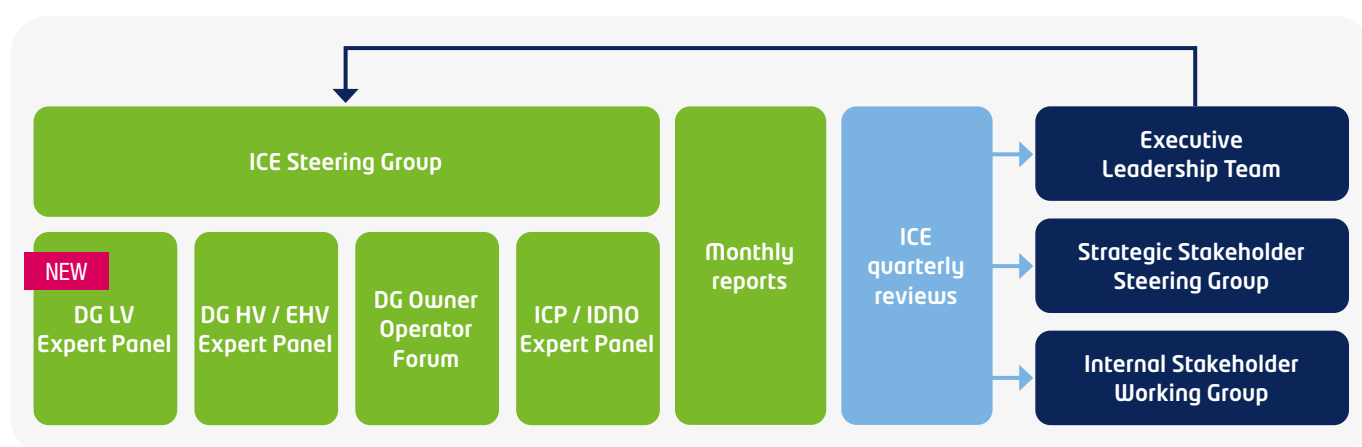
That's why we set clear objectives for improving engagement at all levels:



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 (SLT) and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) 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, this group discusses 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.

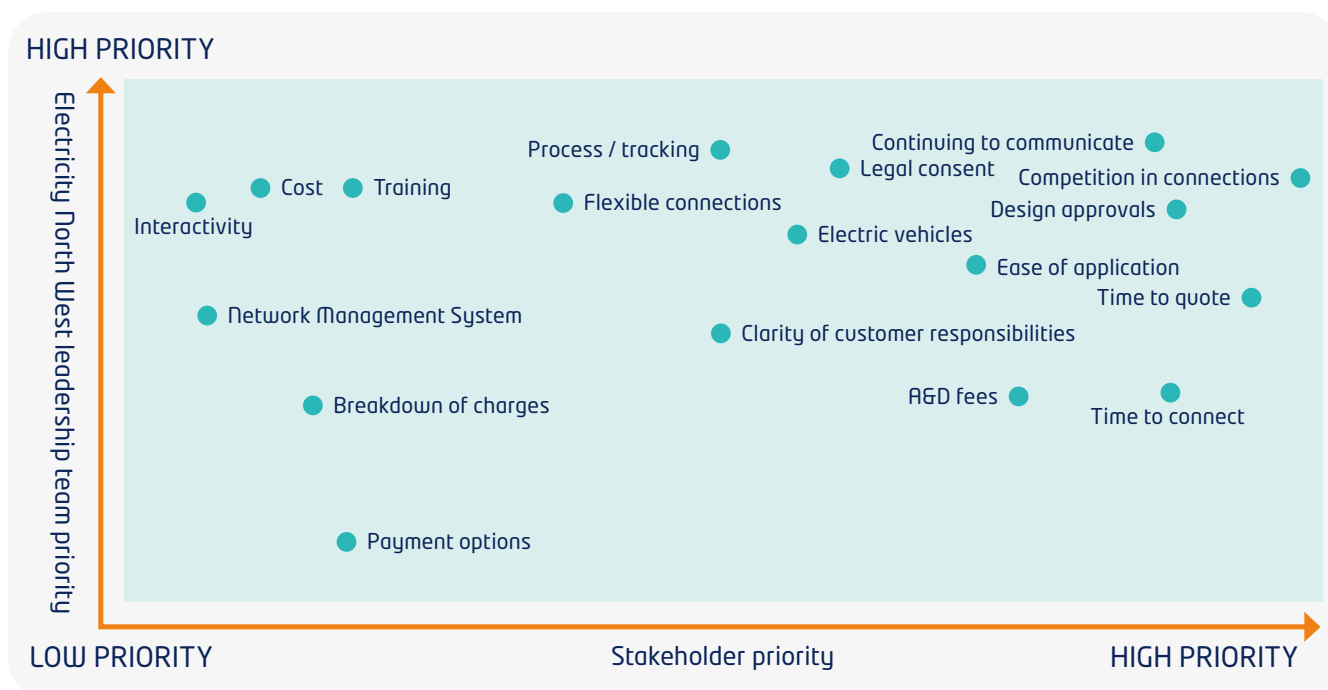
We continually review and re-assess our stakeholder profiles and mapping to ensure that our stakeholder engagement continues to be planned appropriately for our target customer groups. We review previous stakeholder feedback and engage with our expert stakeholder panel to identify key priorities and issues (materiality items), before mapping these in terms of importance to our connections' stakeholders.

We also 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.



Materiality Map – ICP and IDNO

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



2 Looking Back report

We work hard to encourage active engagement with as many stakeholders across our area as possible, making sure that our improvement plans are shaped and validated by stakeholder feedback. We continue to provide engagement opportunities with stakeholders, covering a number of specific topics, either as part of our ICP and IDNO workshops or in standalone sessions.

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 ICP and IDNO stakeholders. We are pleased with the success of this approach which can be seen in the high satisfaction scores we receive at our events.

However, we understand not all our stakeholders are able to attend these workshops. We have acted on 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 ICP and IDNO stakeholders.



2.1 Reviewing our 2019-20 engagement highlights

Workshops

Throughout the year we have received some fantastic feedback from our stakeholders that have attended our engagement events.

“ I will look forward to the next workshop & reviewing past webinars online which I have been unable to attend ”

“ Well-run sessions ”

“ Thank you for putting the event on. I found it informative and helped develop our outlook on establishing works as an ICP ”

“ It was the first attendance at these events, which I found very useful. From this first one there is nothing I felt needed improvement ”

“ We’ve always had positive support with projects we have engaged on and the opportunity to discuss after workshops. Please keep it up! ”

ICP/IDNO Stakeholder Engagement 2019-20...what we delivered

What	When	Number of attendees	Satisfaction %
Workshops	September 2019	24	100%
	February 2020	24	100%
Training sessions (Self-determination of PoC)	September 2019	7	100%
	March 2020	6	100%
Webinars			
Network Management System	July 2019	19	93%
G99 Introductory	April 2019	38	~
G99 Technical Compliance	April 2019	19	~
Electric Vehicle Policy	December 2019	22	92%
Ofgem Significant Code Review	November 2019	34	88%
	February 2020	7	100%

We have offered various opportunities for our stakeholders to engage with us in a variety of formats. We have hosted ICP and IDNO expert panels, where we were able to consult with members on a number of topics, receiving valuable feedback.

This year, we have extended the use of webinars for a number of events. This has been a highly effective way of focusing on a single topic and generating discussion, and as an option for our training events. These have gained a good uptake, as they provide greater time efficiency for our stakeholders, some of whom would otherwise be required to travel a significant distance. Where possible, we have recorded webinars and published these on our website to allow stakeholders to watch in their own time.

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.



2.2 Competition in connections

We are proud of the work we have done to actively facilitate competition in connections and believe we have established effective arrangements to enable competition across the North West. We recognise the importance in continually benchmarking our approach through regular engagement with ICPs and IDNOs in our area and will continue to host workshops and sessions specific to competition in connections topics throughout the year.

This year we've continued to provide support to ICPs wishing to use our self-determination of points of connection and to self-approve their own designs. We have provided opportunities for ICPs to attend practical training sessions to show them how to access our data and use it to determine their own Points of Connection (PoC). Feedback has been very positive with 100% of attendees finding these sessions "Useful" and "Very useful". We will continue to offer these training sessions with our design engineers to support ICPs.

We encourage an open-door policy and have made it easier for ICPs and IDNOs to request a surgery session with our engineers by providing an 'Ask the Expert' request form on our website and promoting this at our events and through our quarterly ICE newsletters.

This year we also held three ICP and IDNO expert panel sessions with our panel members, gaining valuable input from this key group of stakeholders.

We work hard to ensure that we are open and transparent in our engagement with stakeholders, which is why we've published feedback from all our events on our website.

2.3 Summary performance

Commitment	Action	Target/Output/KPI	Target	Achieved	Status
We will clarify our range of flexible connections	We will clearly communicate where flexible connection options are available.	We will publish the range of flexible connection options ENWL offer. Present our range of flexible connections options at a minimum of 2 workshops 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as "Useful" or "Very useful"	Q4	Q4 100%	✓
We will provide a greater level of information and support surrounding the uptake of Electric Vehicles (EV) within the ENWL network	We will improve the level of information available on our website and within stakeholder meetings	We will publish EV information including FAQ Present at 2 workshops 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as "Useful" or "Very useful"	Q4	Q4 92%	✓
We will continuously improve how we provide information and publish requirements for flexible services, such as Demand Side Response	We will continue the work we have started within 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.	We will 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%	✓
Target Time to Quote timescales for LV Quotations	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing quotes on average within 11 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 15 working days).	We will continue to work towards a 11 day average Time To Quote.	Q4	Q4 (9 days)	✓
Target Time to Quote timescales for HV Quotations	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing quotes on average in 15 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 20 working days).	We will continue to work towards a 15 day average Time To Quote.	Q4	Q4 (13 days)	✓
Target LV/HV Design approval responses	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing LV/HV design approval responses within 8 working days on average (compared to the guaranteed standard of 10 working days)	We will Issue LV / HV Design Approval responses within an average of 8 working days.	Q4	Q4 (8 days)	✓
Target Time to Connect timescales for LV schemes	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing an average 7 day time to connect (compared to the guaranteed standard of 10 working days).	We will continue to work to a 7 day average Time to Connect	Q4	Q4 (6 days)	✓

Commitment	Action	Target/Output/KPI	Target	Achieved	Status
Target Time to Connect timescales for HV schemes	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing an average 15 day time to connect (compared to the guaranteed standard of 20 working days).	We will continue to work a 15 day average Time to Connect	Q4	Q4 (14 days)	✓
We will improve visibility of network capacity	We will improve access and presentation of information on available thermal capacity and fault level on our network.	We will improve access and presentation of information on available thermal capacity and fault level on our network.	Q4	Q4	✓
We will improve access to Geographical Information Systems	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 events as "Useful" or "Very useful"	Q4	Q4 100%	✓
We will support the Self Determination of POCs	We will continue to provide Self Determination of Points of Connections training to ICPs	We will host 2 sessions 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 all of 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 a least one month notice of any changes to our approaches	Q4	Q4	✓
We will review and engage with our stakeholders, our communications processes with ICPs / IDNOs	We will engage with stakeholder and look to see if we can streamline the interfaces.	We will review communications processes with stakeholders to identify areas for improvements	Q2	Q2	✓
We will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to receive detailed briefings on policy changes.	We will continue to host webinars on policy topics relevant to the stakeholders.	Hold 3 webinars 85% of stakeholders surveyed rate the event as "Useful" or "Very useful"	Q4	Q4 90%	✓
We will provide more clarity on land consents process and progress	We will offer engagement opportunities for stakeholders in relation to consents to assist with this element of the process.	We will establish and publicise direct communication routes for land rights and consents enquiries Extend offering to provide regular legal updates to customers	Q2	Q2	✓

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 are detailed below.

Commitment	Action	Target/Output/KPI	Target	Achieved	Status
We will continue to offer opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us.	Offer various engagement events covering a range of topics.	Offer 2 opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us 85% of attendees surveyed rate the events as "Useful" or "Very useful"	Q4	Q4 95%	✓
We will continue to communicate with our stakeholders	Issue regular updates on ICE Commitments, Policy updates and Health and Safety via newsletters to registered stakeholders	We will Issue and publish quarterly newsletters	Q4	Q4	✓



2.4 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.

We will clarify our range of flexible connections

Our commitment this year to clarify our range of flexible connections has been an area of great interest for ICPs and IDNOs as these types of services enable a solution for a new connection without the need to reinforce our network.

In order to raise awareness and inform ICPs and IDNOs on the range of flexible connections available, we highlighted these at both our September and February workshops. Both events were well attended with all stakeholders suggesting they found this topic very useful. Details of the presentations and further explanations on our range of flexible connections that we currently offer, and those which we will look to offer in the near future can be found [here](#) on our website.

We will provide a greater level of information and support surrounding the uptake of Electric Vehicles

Electricity North West are leading the way in helping the North West to de-carbonise, paving the way for the growth of renewable energy. As highlighted in our plan, [Leading the North West to Zero Carbon](#), we are enabling our customers to connect low carbon technologies to our network and ensuring we facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy. To achieve the ambitious targets set out in this plan by 2038, we are supporting the connection of charging points for Electric Vehicles (EV) in our area.

We have focused on providing clarity on the processes surrounding the connection of electric vehicle charging points to our network. We discussed this topic in both our ICP and IDNO workshops this year. The first workshop focused on explaining our policy and hearing feedback from our stakeholders. Our second workshop covered this subject in depth, encouraging active discussions allowed us the opportunity to capture our stakeholder’s priorities, thoughts and concerns on this matter.

To support ICPs and IDNOs in delivering EV charging points for their customers, we committed to improve the visibility and clarity of information available. We have created a dedicated section on our website under the ‘[Get Connected](#)’ webpage to connecting low carbon technology, including EV charging points. This includes policy documents, processes to be followed, background information and frequently asked questions, available [here](#). We have also published details on the Zero Carbon area of our website allowing our stakeholders access to further information and outlining how we are going to achieve our [zero carbon](#) ambition. This has made accessing relevant and useful information much easier for all our stakeholders.

In order to help our stakeholders better understand and clarify our policy in connecting EV charging points we delivered a webinar in September. 100% of attendees rated this webinar as very useful.

We are committed towards carrying this action through to 2020-21 where we will provide updates as the industry evolves.

We will continue to target improvements in Time to Quote (LV & HV)

For high voltage connection quotes, we committed to achieving a target of 15 working days on average to provide our customers with quotes against the guaranteed standard of 20 days. We are delighted to have achieved this target, with an average time to quote of 13 working days.

We committed to achieving a target of 11 working days on average for low voltage quotes against a guaranteed standard of 15 days. We are delighted to have achieved an average time to quote of only 9 working days.

This is the result of continuous hard work and dedication from our teams. We have continued to focus our attention on our resourcing and management processes for quoting competition in connections applications. We have continued to engage with our customers to increase awareness, helping minimise the number of queries in the design process.

We will continue to aim to outperform our guaranteed standards in this area through 2020-21.

Time To Quote	Target	Achieved
HV	15	13
LV	11	9

We will continue to target improvements in Time to Connect (LV & HV)

We committed to achieving a target of 15 working days on average to connect our customers for HV projects, and 7 working days on average for LV projects. This is compared to the guaranteed standards of 20 working days for HV and 10 working days for LV. We are pleased to have achieved our targets, with an average time to connect of 14 days for HV, and 6 days for LV. This is as a result of continued focus on delivery and closer working with both our customers and our delivery partners. We will continue to aim to outperform our guaranteed standards in this area through 2020-21.

Time to Connect	Target	Achieved
HV	15	14
LV	7	6

We will continue to target faster LV & HV design approval responses

We committed to reducing the time taken to provide responses to design approvals for LV and HV applications for our customers. We targeted an average of 8 working days to provide a response, against the guaranteed standard of 10 working days. We are delighted to have achieved an average of 7.8 days. This demonstrates the continued focus by our teams in providing great customer service and improving our resource planning whilst providing a point of contact at the application stage. We will continue to aim to outperform our guaranteed standards in this area through 2020-21.

Time to Respond	Target	Achieved
Design Approvals	8	8

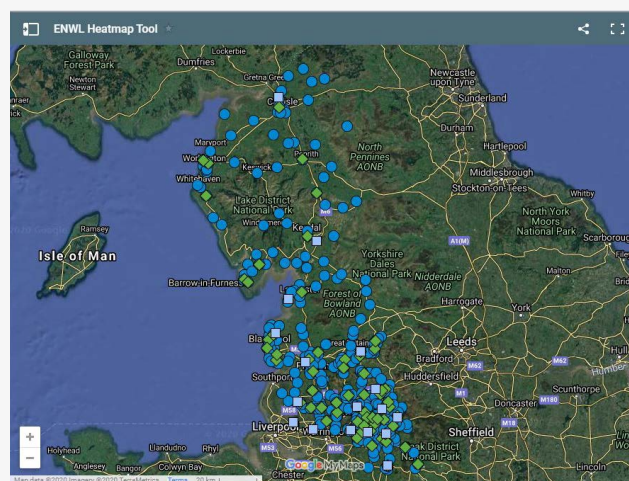
We will improve visibility of network capacity

Our focus was to improve access and visibility of network capacity. We launched our newly improved [heat map tool](#) in January 2020 which provides map-based information to supplement our existing spreadsheet-based heat map tool.

We presented at two of our ICP and IDNO workshops to showcase our improvements to the application, which allows our stakeholders to undertake more in depth offline analysis. The application is easily accessible through a map window on our heat map webpage and allows stakeholders to identify through geographical areas locations of our Grid Supply Points, Bulk Supply Points and Primary substations. ICPs and IDNOs can now see available capacity for new demand connections and the margin for generators based on our latest information.

Feedback at both this year's workshops has been extremely positive. All comments indicate the ease of use of the application and how valuable this information is for determining available capacity on our network, particularly with the improvements we have made over the last year.

For further information, our heat map tool can be found [here](#).



We will improve access to Geographical Information Systems

Access to our GIS system helps our customers to develop their plans prior to connecting to our network on behalf of their customers. To improve access, particularly for this group, we initiated a project to enhance access to our GIS system. This will allow open viewer access, removing the need to register interest, as well as providing 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.

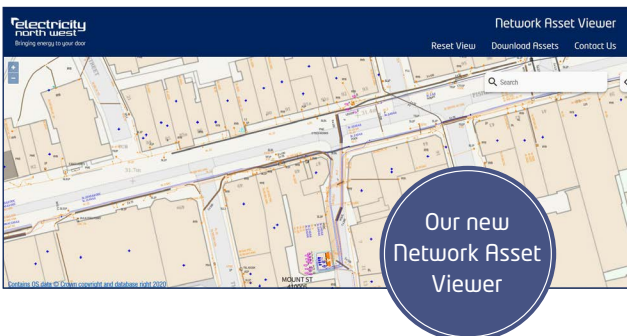
We have outlined the scope and benefits of our GIS solution and its functionality during the year with ICPs and IDNOs showing significant interest. Feedback on developing the newly improved system has been positive with many of our ICPs and IDNOs registering for an opportunity to test the system and have access once live. We have continued to communicate with all interested parties throughout the GIS development process.

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.

Engage on the impact of our Network Management System with our stakeholders

As part of our ongoing IT strategy, we are investing heavily to replace our network control systems with a new Network Management System. 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 reconfiguration, 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.

The impact of NMS was covered at our two ICP and IDNO workshops in September 2019 and February 2020 as well as a specific webinar in July 2019 where we provided an overview of the new system. As the NMS project developed, we were able to establish that ICPs and IDNOs would not be affected, and no additional information would be required. At the February workshop we were able to communicate this and explained that there would be no impact for this customer group. Updates were also included in two of our quarterly newsletters.



We will support the Self Determination of Points of Connection

The option to self-determine Points of Connection (POC) by ICPs and IDNOs continues to receive a high level of interest. To enable ICPs and IDNOs to determine a POC independently and to support competition in connections, we committed to delivering two training sessions centred around this subject.

We hosted the first session in September 2019 and repeated this in March 2020. Both sessions were delivered to educate ICPs and IDNOs on our network policies and provide clarity on the process. Over the last two years, we have trained 27 people over four sessions. To ensure the opportunity to capture all interested attendees, the sessions were hosted at two different locations across our valuable.

The sessions were successful and sparked a healthy level of interest in registrations. All attendees rated the training as very useful and feedback was that they found the sessions beneficial, enabling an opportunity to network and share best practice, whilst assisting them with determining points of connection independently.

Our stakeholders have told us that these sessions are invaluable in providing a real choice.

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. We initially introduced charges for extra high voltage applications and later extended this to high voltage distributed generation applications greater than 1MW.

We committed to keep our stakeholders updated, providing an update at our September workshop and to provide notice for any changes in the charging structure. No changes have been implemented in 2019-20.

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 provide stakeholders with the opportunity to receive detailed briefings on policy changes

We recognise the importance of ensuring our customers have access to all our policies and are able to comment on proposed policies before these are finalised and implemented. To satisfy this need, we have published proposed policies on our website which ICPs and IDNOs can review and submit comments directly to our Policy team prior to implementation.

We have continued to keep our stakeholders informed of policy changes by publishing a Policy newsletter every quarter. This summarises all policy changes within the period, with further details on each change available on our website.

To assist ICPs and IDNOs understand new policies, and to provide an opportunity to discuss them in more depth, we have hosted three webinars this year. We focused on current changes to policy, including an introduction to Engineering Recommendation (EREC) G98 & G99, a technical overview of EREC G99 and the connection of electric vehicle charging points and heat pumps to the network.

In addition, we also presented overviews on connecting electric vehicle charging points, earthing requirements and wider policy updates at our workshops. These were well received with many citing the presentations as most useful, with highly interactive question and answer sessions, with our policy experts.

We will continue to host webinars for specific policy changes that are useful and relevant to our stakeholders throughout 2020-21.



We will review communications processes with stakeholders to identify areas for improvements

During our engagement sessions, we asked ICPs and IDNOs to highlight their priorities and how we can improve our processes to achieve industry leading standards. Feedback identified that communication during the lifecycle of schemes, particularly during project delivery is paramount to our customers. One area highlighted as important was identifying who their Design Approver would be at the point of accepting a point of connection. This was implemented, as well as a streamlined management structure, providing greater clarity in terms of points of contact and escalation points.

In addition, we now provide contact details for the Construction Coordinator at an earlier stage of the process and communicate if this information changes during the project. This was embedded in 2019 and once the design has been approved, the construction team communicate any changes in a handover with ICPs and IDNOs. Sharing of best practice and knowledge amongst all involved whilst establishing key contacts for our customers and an escalation process has allowed for a clear sense of ownership in delivering these schemes.

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

To continue to allow for opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us, our focus has been to act on feedback received at engagement events and progress with delivering topics that we feel our stakeholders would gain the most benefit from. As detailed throughout this report, we have hosted two workshops specifically aimed at ICPs and IDNOs on a range of topics which were suggested at previous events or were considered relevant and useful to them, including an opportunity to feed into and prioritise our 2020-21 ICE workplan.

In addition, we have delivered a range of recorded webinars, including G99 Introductory and Technical Compliance, two overviews of Ofgem Significant Code Review, our new Network Management System and Electric Vehicle Connection Policy. We have also hosted three teleconference calls for our ICP and IDNO Expert Panel enabling a platform for engagement and active discussion opportunities.

100% of event attendees agreed that our events were “Useful” or “Very useful” – we are extremely proud of this and it clearly showcases that we are delivering opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us and delivering the right content.

In addition, we have worked hard to encourage an ‘open door’ policy and we have continued to promote this via our website. We have highlighted the opportunities available to ICP and IDNOs to have a detailed discussion, on various topics with technical experts in our business. Feedback received to date has highlighted that our stakeholders have benefitted from this more tailored approach.

We will provide more clarity on land consents process and progress

We understand that the land consents process can be a complex but vital part of any project for our customers. In 2019 we introduced and publicised key contacts and a Land Consents Enquiries mailbox. This is published in our Key Contacts for ICPs and IDNOs document on our website, as well as added to our standard acknowledgement letters. Active discussions in our workshops has evidenced that this process has been beneficial to ICPs and IDNOs and streamlined the communications of legal processes.

Following a trial, we extended a bespoke process for updates for concurrent projects requiring land consents. The process was documented and promoted with our stakeholders at our September workshop, and is highlighted on our standard project communications. The process gives the ICP and IDNO monthly updates on all their projects that require land consents. Our Land Rights & Consents team will continue through this year to promote this service and will review any feedback received as part of continuous improvement of the service we offer.

Continue to provide quarterly updates on progress of actions

We have continued to provide quarterly updates on our commitments and progress updates on individual actions via newsletters targeted for those registered to receive updates. We have also published all our updates on our website to provide access to all without the need to sign up.

To capture a wider audience and promote ICE updates and events, we have utilised social media to advertise our engagement events and share information with our stakeholders. Following all events, we have published the presentations on our website.

We have worked hard to extend the accessibility of our engagement, increasing the number of webinars offered and recording them. This enables stakeholders 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. We have therefore concluded that 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 journey in improving our services for ICP and IDNO connections stakeholders and ultimately, providing choice for all connections customers in the North West.

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

3.1.1 Competition in Connections

We are proud of the work we have done to actively facilitate competition in connections and believe we have established effective arrangements to enable competition across the North West. We recognise the importance in continually benchmarking our approach through regular engagement with ICPs and IDNOs in our area and will continue to host workshops and sessions specific to competition in connections topics throughout the year.

Based on positive stakeholder feedback we will continue to offer training sessions with our design engineers to support more ICPs take up of our contestable processes, as well as policy and industry updates. We also encourage an open-door policy and are happy to engage with customers outside of the advertised events.



3.2 Our Engagement Strategy 2020-21

This year we will continue to examine how we apply our engagement strategy and approach to ensure it continues to be beneficial for our connections stakeholders. One area highlighted in 2019-20 as extremely useful for ICPs and IDNOs was access to our subject experts and management. We have therefore committed to continue to increase the availability of staff at our events, as well as making it easier to arrange one-to-one meetings by utilising our ‘Request a Surgery’ link on our website.

For our events, we will continue to review feedback on content, format and location of our events, to ensure we provide the best events possible, tailored for our stakeholders. We have worked hard to extend the range and number of opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us, in both face to face and online events. In particular, we are increasing the range and availability of our webinars and will continue to explore ways to make these more interactive. We will also explore the use of video where applicable. To ensure stakeholders are aware of our events, we will focus on increasing the breadth of our promotional material and signpost our distribution list.

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 networking opportunities.

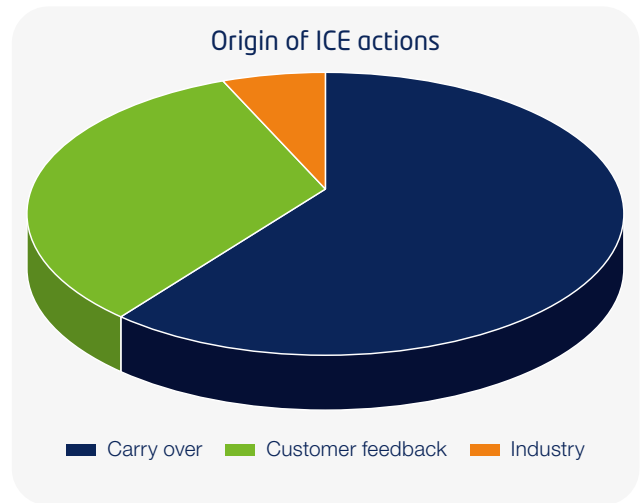


3.3 Developing our plans

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 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.

3.3.1 Tracing the roots of our actions



3.4 Looking Forward workplan

Commitment	KPI/Target	Delivery date
We will target our Time to Quote for HV demand.	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing quotes with an average of 15 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 20 working days)	Q4
We will target our Time to Quote for LV demand.	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing quotes with an average of 11 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 15 working days)	Q4
We will target our Time to Connect for HV demand.	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard to provide an average time to connect of 15 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 20 working days)	Q4
We will target our Time to Connect for LV demand.	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard to provide an average time to connect of 7 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 10 working days)	Q4
We will target our LV/HV design approval responses.	We aim to outperform the regulatory standard by providing LV/HV design approval responses within 8 working days (compared to the guaranteed standard of 10 working days)	Q4
We will improve visibility of network information / capacity for HV.	We will further improve the heat map tool by including information on the size of the largest feasible connection based on existing switchgear and a single circuit connection. This will supplement the values of total available capacity for further demand and generation, already listed for each substation.	Q4
We will provide a greater level of information and support surrounding the uptake of Electric Vehicles (EV) within the ENWL network	We will publish contact details for EV related connection queries for ICPs.	Q3
	We will provide regular updates to publications reflecting the latest national approach.	Q4
We will continue to monitor and review our connection charging approach to make charging fair for all our customers.	Any changes to our approach to A&D Fees will be communicated to stakeholders.	Q4
We will improve access to Network Information	We will produce and publish training material for use of our new GIS functionality.	Q3
	We will deliver a training session for new users in the ICP community.	
We will support the Self Determination of POCs	We will run 2 training sessions to support the Self Determination of Point of Connection for ICPs.	Q4
We will provide more clarity on land consents process and progress	We will continue to promote the bespoke tracking services introduced in 2019. We will continue to offer access to specialist experts via attendance at workshops and via surgery sessions on request.	Q4
We will review and engage with our stakeholders, our communications processes with ICPs/IDNOs	We will review the BCA process and keep our stakeholders informed of any changes.	Q3
	We will improve visibility of contact information on our website.	Q3
	We will implement internal refresher training to ensure consistency across all areas of the business.	Q4
We will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to receive detailed briefings on policy changes.	We will continue to host webinars on policy topics relevant to the stakeholders, including EREC G5/5.	Q4
	We will review & improve our policy website pages.	

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.	We will host 2 workshops and various webinars covering a range of topics. We will offer surgery sessions as required.	Q4
We will continue to communicate with our stakeholders.	We will issue regular updates on ICE and Health & 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 evolved and where our actions have come from. We review engagement feedback from the previous year to identify key issues and topics and plan 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 and each has been checked and endorsed by our stakeholders subsequently.



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 ICP and IDNO workshop in February, we asked our stakeholders to review our proposed workplans and provide any comments. 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 ICP and IDNO stakeholders signed up to our email distribution list to seek feedback on our workplans. 100% of ICP and IDNO responders rated our workplan as “Good” or “Very Good”.

“ Thanks for sight of your document following recent workshop which forms the basis of the ENW priorities from the discussions held ”

“ Your document reflects good progress going forwards and I have no further comments to make at this time ”

3.7 Other feedback

Each year since ICE was implemented, we have published open responses to suggested actions that were not submitted as part of our workplans. These responses have been published on our website, alongside our ICE workplans and the full reports. For each suggested action that was not included in the workplan, we provided a justification of our decision-making process and rationale for not doing so. These were published to ‘close the loop’ and respond to all feedback we have received as part of our engagement through the year.

We pride ourselves on following up on all feedback received. It is important that we continue to listen to our stakeholder’s thoughts on the connections services we provide and act accordingly. This year there were no suggested commitments not already included in our workplan.



4 Closing statement

We take pride in being transparent in our engagement with connections stakeholders. This report demonstrates how we are switched on to the needs of our ICP and IDNO stakeholders, detailing the actions we have taken in order to achieve the commitments we made for 2019-20.

Our workplan for 2020-21 is based on feedback and follows a robust review process, showing how we are adaptable before finalising our commitments, actions and outputs.

We are confident our workplan addresses the concerns and provides positive benefits to the sector. The growth in the North West is set to continue and we are proud to be leading the way in ensuring customers continue to benefit from greater competition and choice.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our report and if you have any comments we would be delighted to hear your feedback. We look forward to building upon the improvements we have made and working with you in the year ahead.

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





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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