SSEN DISTRIBUTION

Annual Stakeholder Virtual Workshops

Virtual Events SUMMARY REPORT

September / October 2020

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INTRODUCTION

In September and October 2020, SSEN hosted four online workshops aimed at gathering feedback from its stakeholders in its northern Scotland and central southern England licence areas. The online workshops were organised as follows:

- Central southern England: 23 September 2020
- Northern Scotland: 24 September 2020
- Central southern England: 30 September 2020
- Northern Scotland: 1 October 2020

In total, 193 stakeholders attended the four online workshops. Of these, 109 attended the workshops relating to the central southern England licence area and 84 attended the events dedicated to the northern Scotland licence area.

The workshops covered the following five topics: delivering stakeholder-led projects; adapting services to meet changing consumer needs; helping the UK meet its net zero carbon emissions targets; maintaining a reliable and resilient network; and building a smart, flexible future network.

The workshops took place online and were hosted on the event platform Speakeasy. Each workshop consisted of five presentations given by SSEN representatives, each followed by discussion sessions in virtual breakout rooms. Stakeholders were also invited to participate in electronic votes throughout the workshops to provide their views on the issues at stake.

SSEN instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate the workshops and to take notes of the comments made by stakeholders. Every effort has been made to faithfully record the feedback given. In order to encourage candour and open debate, comments have not been ascribed to individuals. Instead, notes have been made of the type of organisation each stakeholder represents.

The full presentation can be found here, with the agenda for the events on slide 7.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SESSION ONE: DELIVERING STAKEHOLDER-LED PROJECTS

The first presentation at each workshop was given by Graeme Keddie, Director of Corporate Affairs, Regulation and Stakeholder Engagement. He outlined SSEN's five core themes, as informed by stakeholders: driving improvements in core services; delivering in the public interest; enabling the net zero transition; supporting safe and resilient communities; and collaborative action on consumer vulnerability. Under each theme, he outlined specific examples of innovations and initiatives that SSEN had introduced, such as the launch of customer support via WhatsApp under the 'core services' theme, championing Fair Tax and the living wage under 'delivering in the public interest' and supporting local authorities to have greater influence on network development through data sharing and Local Plans under 'enabling the net zero transition'. He then went on share SSEN's thoughts on how further improvements could be written into RIIO-ED2, and asked for stakeholders' perspectives and ideas on ways to drive this change.

- Stakeholders' primary reason for attending the workshops was to discuss issues such as the road to net zero, decarbonisation, connecting low carbon technologies and the transition to DSO.
- This was reflected in the electronic voting, where 'enabling the net zero transition' was the clear favourite of SSEN's five core themes among stakeholders, with an average score of 4.04 out of 5.
- Affordability and communication were repeatedly raised as issues to address in discussions on how to drive improvements across all the core themes.

SESSION TWO: ADAPTING OUR SERVICES TO MEET CHANGING CONSUMER NEEDS

Lisa Doogan, Head of Customer Service and Stakeholder Strategy at SSEN, presented the second session at each workshop, which focused on customer service. She introduced the six guiding principles of customer service strategy at SSEN: consistency; clear communications; making it easy; behaving responsibly; ensuring best practice; and enabling choice for customers. She went on to detail some of the ways in which SSEN had adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring the workforce was kept safe and resilient while attending to the changing customer needs precipitated by lockdown.

- In the electronic vote, no stakeholder ranked SSEN's current levels of customer service below 4 (where 1 indicated very poor and 10 indicated excellent), with the largest proportion opting

for a score of 8. In England, 15% voted 10, whereas in Scotland, only 6% rated it 10, which may relate to regional variations in faults.

- There was consensus that improving customer service should remain a priority, and this was reflected in the electronic voting, where 76% of delegates ranked their agreement with this statement between 8 and 10 (with 10 indicating strong agreement).

- In both licence areas, stakeholders advised SSEN to ensure more proactive communications on the drive to net zero and to provide more assistance and support with connecting renewables, as this would enhance the service that customers currently receive.

SESSION THREE: SUSTAINABILITY – HELPING THE UK MEET ITS NET ZERO EMISSIONS TARGETS

Shirley Robinson, Head of Sustainability Strategy, presented the third session at each workshop, which focused on the ways in which SSEN is enabling net zero in line with government targets. She introduced the five proposed sustainability core themes, developed with stakeholders over the course of 2019: the net zero transition; enhancing local environments; inclusive service provision; investing in people; and serving the public interest. She went on to explain the use of science-based targets and the development of SSEN's Environmental Action Plan, devised to eradicate carbon emissions across all areas of its business. In all cases, she sought stakeholder feedback on how ambitious the zero carbon targets should be and asked for their view on Ofgem's minimum requirements.

- Under the five core themes, delegates urged SSEN to enable their customers to reach net zero at the same rate as it has been achieved within the business, placing an emphasis on making the uptake of renewables easy and accessible for customers.

- Stakeholders wanted SSEN to be most ambitious with regard to 'business carbon footprint', which ranked highest at both the northern Scotland and central southern England workshops, with 4.49 out of 5.

- Similarly, stakeholders wanted SSEN to be as ambitious as possible with their sustainability strategy and net zero targets. This was reflected in the electronic voting, where 93% opted for either 'accelerating net zero' or 'achieving net zero'.

SESSION FOUR: MAINTAINING A RELIABLE AND RESILIENT NETWORK FOR THE FUTURE

Mark Kelly, Head of Asset Data at SSEN, introduced the fourth segment. Mark revealed the ranking of resilience and reliability priorities according to feedback from business and domestic customers, which had placed 'restoring supply as quickly as possible in the event of a power cut' as the top priority. He

went on to explain how SSEN were focusing on ensuring reliability and resilience for the future, reinforcing the network to cater for greater electrification and distributed generation. It was explained that this approach informs the company's work on investment options, with four different paths which measure increased costs against greater reliability and a network that supports net zero and is fit for the future.

- Stakeholders in both licence areas agreed with the top priorities under reliability and resilience, where 'restoring electricity supply as quickly as possible in the event of a power cut' had been placed as number one. This was reflected in the electronic voting, where delegates from both licence areas ranked this as the top priority.
- In Scotland, the second priority was 'keeping your power on with minimal power cuts', reflecting factors of geography and reliability, whereas in England, the second priority was 'maintain continuous supply as electricity demand increases', illustrating stakeholders' interest in greater electrification and their concerns in this regard.
- With regard to current reliability performance, 87% of delegates voted between 8 and 10 (where 10 indicated excellent), demonstrating high levels of satisfaction in general.

SESSION FIVE: BUILDING A SMART, FLEXIBLE NETWORK FOR THE FUTURE

Stewart Reid, Head of Future Networks at SSEN, presented the final session at the workshops. He outlined SSEN's participation in the Open Networks Project, explaining how collaboration between DNOs and other expert bodies, such as the Centre for Sustainable Energy, was driving the creation of smart networks that would enable net zero through technology and innovative services such as flexibility, smart grids, superfast electricity and storage. He stressed that any transition had to be smart and fair, leaving no customers behind, and highlighted areas of the UK where uptake of these services was predicted to be slow. To mitigate this, SSEN intended to propose a market stimulation fund to Ofgem, which would enable investment to create markets for innovative services in specified, targeted areas.

- There was consensus that following the recommendations of the Open Networks Project was the correct approach, with many recognising the value of adopting a collaborative, evidence-based approach to create a smart, flexible network.
- Delegates suggested that SSEN should engage with a wider field of stakeholders on the Open Networks Project, including fuel-poor customers, Citizens Advice, local authorities, small businesses, business associations, parish councils and international partners and experts.
- Delegates approved of SSEN's proposal to Ofgem for a market stimulation fund, and hoped it would encourage innovation and greater uptake of flexibility on the domestic side.

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WRITTEN FEEDBACK

After each workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. Some of the key findings are shown below:

- 93% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop either 'very interesting' or 'interesting'.

- 90% of stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that they had had an opportunity to make points and ask questions, and 87% strongly agreed or agreed that the right topics were covered on the day.

- 97% thought EQ Communications' facilitation was either 'very good' or 'good'.

- 73% of stakeholders either agreed or strongly agreed that the online workshop format was accessible and easy to use, while 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

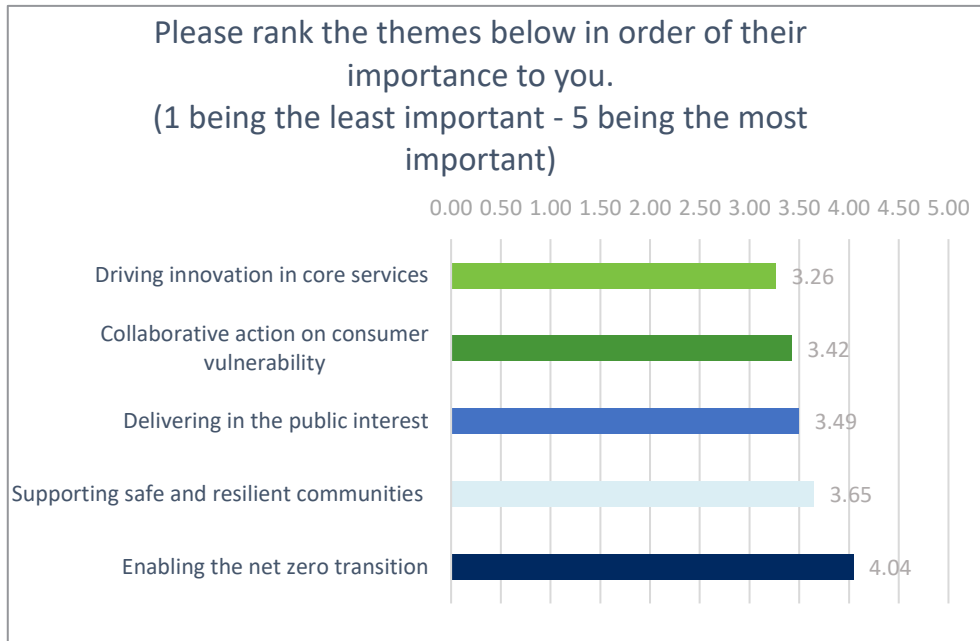# SESSION ONE: DELIVERING STAKEHOLDER-LED PROJECTS

WHY STAKEHOLDERS ATTENDED THE WORKSHOP

Across all four workshops, from stakeholders representing the Shetlands to those speaking for the Isle of Wight, the most common reason for attending, speaking and participating was to discuss net zero, the transition to DSO and the implementation of low carbon technologies. Following on from this, issues that attracted similar levels of concern and interest included capacity on the grid for connecting renewables, the resilience of the network to withstand greater electrification and the effects of climate change on reliability of supply.

DELIVERING STAKEHOLDER-LED PROJECTS

The first session discussed SSEN's five core themes, as informed by stakeholders: driving improvements in core services; delivering in the public interest; enabling the net zero transition; supporting safe and resilient communities; and collaborative action on consumer vulnerability. Under each theme, SSEN outlined specific examples of innovations and initiatives that had been introduced. Stakeholders were asked what SSEN's focus should be over the next 12 months and which initiatives and partners the company should work with to help deliver in those areas. The feedback has been summarised under the five core themes below.

When asked to vote electronically on which theme was most important, stakeholders overwhelmingly rated 'enabling the net zero transition' the highest, with an average score of 4.04 out of 5. This was consistent across both the central southern England and northern Scotland licence areas, although stakeholders in the northern Scotland region gave it a higher average score (4.26 out of 5 compared with 3.92 out of 5). Across both licence areas, stakeholders also ranked the themes in the same order of preference, with 'driving innovation in core services' scoring lowest each time. The amalgamated results can be seen in the graph below.

Please rank the themes below in order of their importance to you. (1 being the least important - 5 being the most important)

Theme	Score
Driving innovation in core services	3.26
Collaborative action on consumer vulnerability	3.42
Delivering in the public interest	3.49
Supporting safe and resilient communities	3.65
Enabling the net zero transition	4.04

DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS IN CORE SERVICES

Communication was the key point raised in relation to driving improvements in core services. Stakeholders representing Scotland had particularly strong opinions regarding the reporting of faults to customers, although delegates from both licence areas also stressed that they had had good experiences post-power cut and felt they had been treated fairly. There was consensus across the workshops that SSEN needed to take an active leadership role in educating, preparing and training their customers for the shift to DSO and net zero. It was highlighted that SSEN could no longer simply be a neutral facilitating party, but needed to adopt an advocacy role that provides a focal point for customers as the energy industry undergoes significant change.

DELIVERING IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Affordability was a key issue during the discussions around delivering in the public interest, as delegates expressed real concern about the costs involved in investing in the network and upgrading assets in preparation for net zero and wondered who was likely to bear the brunt of the increased financial outlay. Nevertheless, stakeholders also urged a balanced approach to spending, as it was felt that unlocking capacity, particularly in more remote parts of Scotland, would enable cheaper access to renewable energy in the long run.

ENABLING THE NET ZERO TRANSITION

Again, delegates stressed the importance of communication and engagement in this core area, urging greater partnership working with local authorities, LEPs, developers and other DNOs to drive planning changes and develop new structures governing how energy is generated and stored in green, resilient

communities. Delegates also advocated a more localised generation picture, calling on the company to commit to increasing capacity so that energy does not have to travel huge distances from the place it was generated. In this vein, some stakeholders wanted to see a KPI that prioritises unlocking capacity for renewable connections.

SUPPORTING SAFE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Planning and relationship building were viewed as critical in terms of supporting safe and resilient communities, with suggestions ranging from providing a dedicated contact for community energy groups looking to install or connect a renewable project that will build resilience to working closely with local authorities on flood defences or business planning. Delegates also expressed concern that Ofgem was more concerned with driving down costs than enabling a holistic investment programme, and felt that upgrading old assets with the best possible products was key to ensuring resilience into the future.

COLLABORATIVE ACTION ON CONSUMER VULNERABILITY

The issue of affordability resurfaced in the conversations around vulnerability, with rising energy costs, the possibility of a deep post-Covid recession and the financial implications of the DSO transition all raised as points of concern. As a result, it was felt that more support for frontline organisations and fuel poverty charities was needed, as well as more contact and support for those on the PSR who may have been affected by the pandemic. Similarly, stakeholders also stressed the need for more education and advice on energy efficiency and the changes coming down the line with net zero.

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SESSION TWO: ADAPTING OUR SERVICES TO MEET CHANGING CONSUMER NEEDS

This session focused on the service that SSEN delivers for its customers. The six guiding principles of customer service strategy at SSEN were introduced: consistency; clear communications; making it easy; behaving responsibly; ensuring best practice; and enabling choice for customers. Delegates began by discussing SSEN's customer service in general, before moving on to discuss two of the guiding principles in more depth (clear communications and behaving responsibly). Finally, stakeholders were asked to consider the company's customer service in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

SSEN'S OVERALL CUSTOMER SERVICE

When stakeholders voted electronically on SSEN's current levels of customer service, the results were broadly similar across northern Scotland and central southern England. No stakeholder ranked it below 4 out of 10 (where 1 was very poor and 10 was excellent), with the largest proportion opting for a score of 8. In England, 15% of delegates gave customer service a score of 10, compared with just 6% in Scotland, which is perhaps reflective of regional variations in power outages.
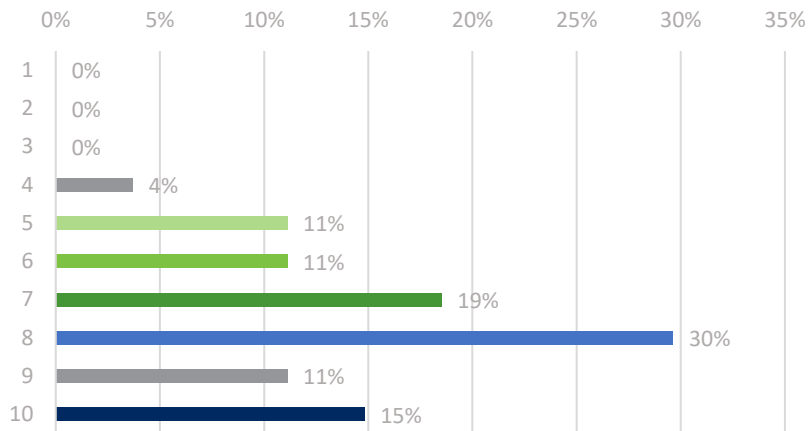
Most stakeholders agreed that the six guiding principles of customer service were correct, although in central southern England an additional 'speed of response' principle was suggested, and in northern Scotland, delegates cautioned against the use of generic categories in customer service that do not cater to the specific needs of different types of customer.

A clear majority of stakeholders felt that improving customer service should remain a priority, and this was reflected in the electronic voting, where 76% of delegates ranked their agreement with this statement between 8 and 10 (where 10 indicated strong agreement). In Scotland, the results were more emphatic, with 50% of delegates giving this statement a 10, compared with 36% of attendees in England. In both areas, delegates were keen to stress the positives: in central southern England, stakeholders singled out SSEN's communications with engineers on the planning side for praise, while in Scotland, many recounted positive experiences of SSEN during outages, and felt that their current level of contact with the company was about right. Across all the workshops, stakeholders felt that more proactive communications regarding the drive to net zero and more assistance and support with connecting renewables would further enhance customer service.

The provision of a customer service training programme was also seen as critically important, with 83% scoring this priority between 8 and 10 (where 10 indicates very important).

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On a scale of 1 – 10, how would you currently rate SSEN's customer service? (1 = Very poor, 10 = Excellent)

Average: 7.64 / 10

Rating	Percentage
1	0%
2	0%
3	0%
4	4%
5	11%
6	11%
7	19%
8	30%
9	11%
10	15%

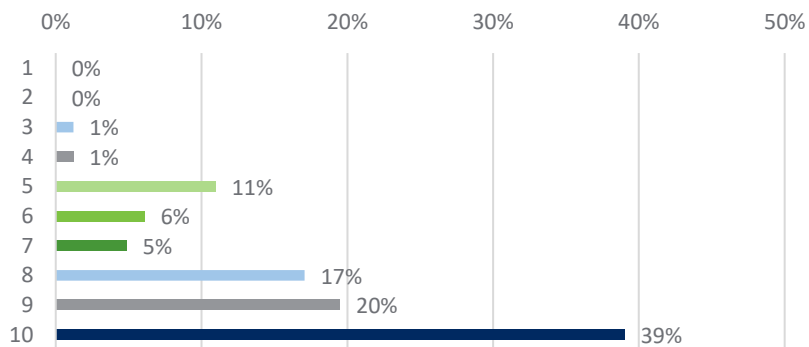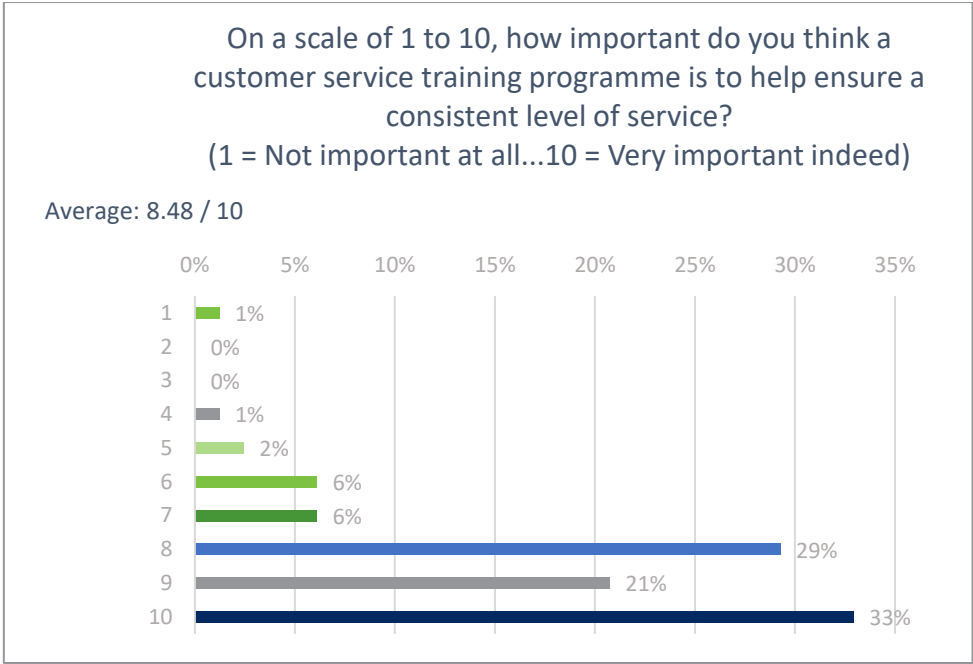## How do you feel about the following statement: "Improving customer service should be a priority for SSEN at this current time." (1 = Strongly disagree...5 = Neutral...10 = Strongly agree)
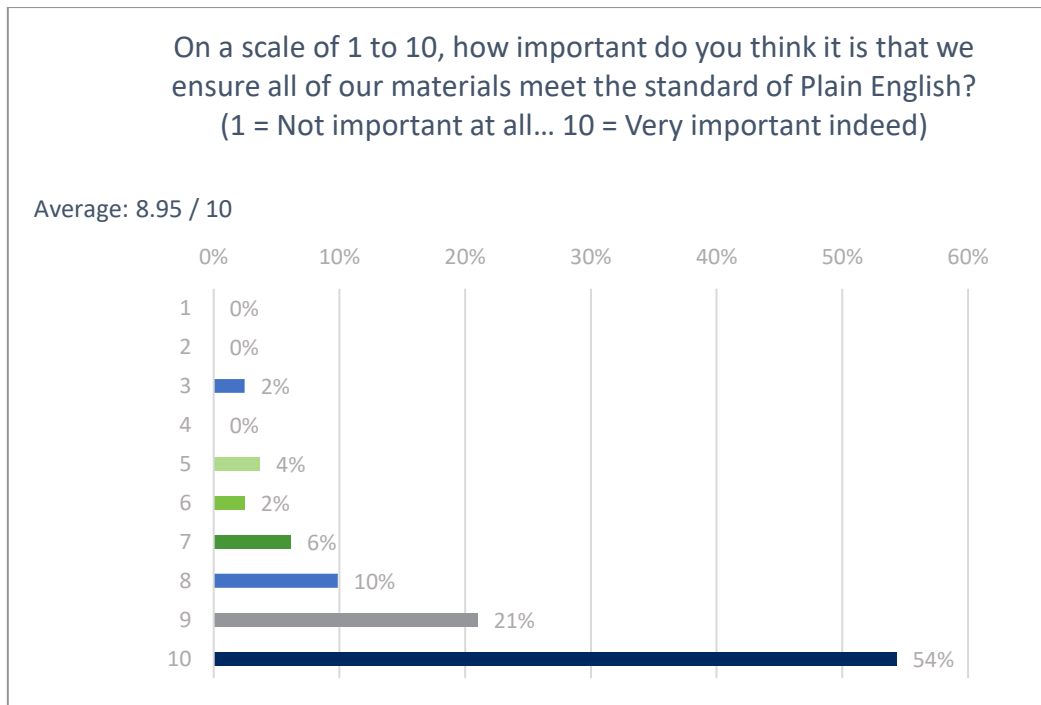
Average: 8.37 / 10

Rating	Percentage
1	0%
2	0%
3	1%
4	1%
5	11%
6	6%
7	5%
8	17%
9	20%
10	39%

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On a scale of 1 to 10, how important do you think a customer service training programme is to help ensure a consistent level of service?
(1 = Not important at all...10 = Very important indeed)

Average: 8.48 / 10

Rating	Percentage
1	1%
2	0%
3	0%
4	1%
5	2%
6	6%
7	6%
8	29%
9	21%
10	33%

CLEAR COMMUNICATIONS: WHAT MORE CAN SSEN DO TO ENSURE THAT COMMUNICATIONS ARE CLEAR AND ACCCESSIBLE

In Scotland, delegates were more relaxed about the implications of greater digitalisation in communications, feeling that SSEN were the best in their class at ensuring accessibility and being attentive to the generational differences in mobile technology use and capability, singling out the website and the Power Track app for praise. In the south of England, there was slightly more caution around greater use of technology, with some delegates reporting that they often found the website confusing to navigate. Delegates suggested looking at the communications strategy of a number of different companies to improve in this area: WPD were praised for their dedicated support team on planning and connections applications, and Wessex Water, Octopus Energy and First Direct for their proactive customer service and responsiveness. It was apparent that delegates in both licence areas felt it was imperative that all of SSEN's materials meet the standards of Plain English, with 54% opting for 10 (very important indeed) when voting electronically on this question.

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On a scale of 1 to 10, how important do you think it is that we ensure all of our materials meet the standard of Plain English?
(1 = Not important at all… 10 = Very important indeed)

Average: 8.95 / 10

Scale	Percentage
1	0%
2	0%
3	2%
4	0%
5	4%
6	2%
7	6%
8	10%
9	21%
10	54%

BEHAVING RESPONSIBLY: GAINING CUSTOMERS' TRUST

Stakeholders in both licence areas felt that SSEN could do more to celebrate and promote the good work they were already doing around fuel poverty, the enhanced support provided during the lockdown, and their success in maintaining a critically reliable level of network service. Attendees felt that this would function as a trust-building exercise in itself. In Scotland, delegates also pointed out that SSEN could build trust by being the best in their class at supporting customers in the move towards net zero, driving innovation and implementing green technologies and supporting renewable connections.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

There was consensus that Covid-19 had indelibly changed the working patterns of the nation and that SSEN would have to respond to changing levels and areas of demand to support a huge shift in favour of working from home. This meant that SSEN would need to reinforce the network in places that may not have seemed to be a priority even a year ago, and ensure that planned service interruptions were minimised. Stakeholders in both Scotland and England also emphasised the need for SSEN to support a domestic green recovery, with a key point being that increasingly, customers are now their own 'office managers' and would be looking at energy savings and implementing green technologies in their own homes, and SSEN should do all they could to support and educate them on how best to effect this.

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SESSION THREE: SUSTAINABILITY – HELPING THE UK MEET ITS NET ZERO EMISSIONS TARGETS

This session sought feedback on SSEN's sustainability strategy, with a particular focus on its Environmental Action Plan. Stakeholders were asked whether SSEN should adopt science-based targets, how ambitious these targets should be and whether Ofgem's minimum requirements for net zero were adequate.

SSEN'S PROPOSED SUSTAINABILITY CORE THEMES

Stakeholders in both licence areas felt that there was a little more work to do under the proposed core themes. In Scotland, it was felt that a stronger commitment to climate resilience was needed, and stakeholders urged SSEN to close what they viewed as a 'policy gap' between driving towards net zero within the business and enabling SSEN's customers to do the same. This was echoed in England, where delegates wanted to see an enabling factor baked into the sustainability plan, with an emphasis on making the uptake of renewables easy and accessible for customers.
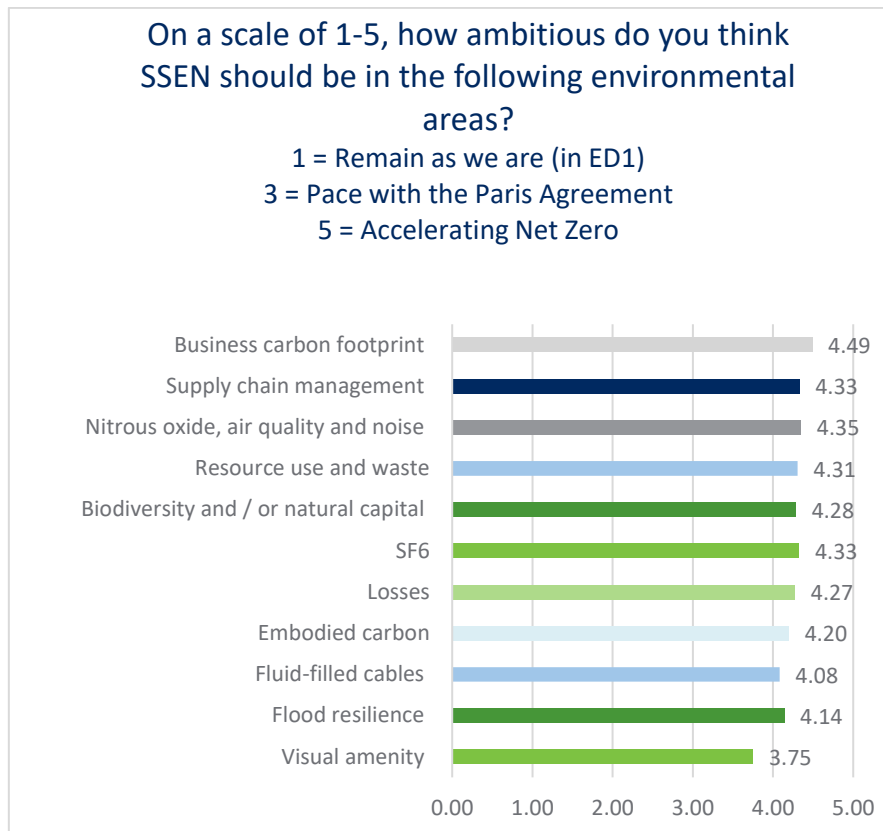
SCIENCE-BASED TARGETS

There was consensus that science-based targets were the correct approach as SSEN shapes its sustainability strategy, and delegates across all four workshops confirmed their confidence in following the science. Of more importance to stakeholders than a range of different targets, however, was a unified strategy across utilities and all levels of government that would inform a coherent plan towards a shared goal or target. In this sense, stakeholders from all the workshops urged a 'step change' in leadership over sustainability strategy across the next price control period.

SSEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN

Stakeholders were asked how far SSEN should go in each of the areas of its Environmental Action Plan. For the areas where discussions took place, the feedback has been summarised under the relevant heading. During the electronic voting, stakeholders were asked how ambitious SSEN should be with regard to each area of its Environmental Action Plan. Stakeholders wanted the company to be more ambitious across all environmental areas, with even the lowest-ranking area receiving a score of 3.75 out of 5. The lowest-ranking area was 'visual amenity', and it was the lowest for both the central southern England and northern Scotland workshops. Stakeholders wanted SSEN to be most ambitious

with regard to 'business carbon footprint', which was ranked highest at both the northern Scotland and central southern England workshops.

On a scale of 1-5, how ambitious do you think SSEN should be in the following environmental areas?
1 = Remain as we are (in ED1)
3 = Pace with the Paris Agreement
5 = Accelerating Net Zero

Area	Score
Business carbon footprint	4.49
Supply chain management	4.33
Nitrous oxide, air quality and noise	4.35
Resource use and waste	4.31
Biodiversity and / or natural capital	4.28
SF6	4.33
Losses	4.27
Embodied carbon	4.20
Fluid-filled cables	4.08
Flood resilience	4.14
Visual amenity	3.75

Business carbon footprint

Delegates proposed more cross-industry collaborative working to bring down business carbon footprints across the board, as well as more practical projects such as electric tipper trucks and semiconductors in the creation of smart grids, and felt that a strong level of ambition in this area would set an example for best practice up and down the supply chain.

Fluid-filled cables

When discussing fluid-filled cables, delegates in Scotland didn't feel that a general replacement of these cables was currently justifiable, as it would produce too much disruption. They urged the company to take a balanced approach when setting this target.

Supply chain management

Delegates urged SSEN to take a stand against any suppliers with damaging or questionable environmental ethics or practices, and proposed mandating a lifecycle assessment of assets as a prerequisite for procurement down the supply chain. Many pointed out that SSEN had a responsibility to use its position of influence, as it sits between the supplier, end user and supply chain, to ensure sustainable practices and lead by example.

SF6

There was some regional variation here: stakeholders in Scotland wanted to see SSEN be as ambitious as possible with regard to removing SF6, calling for this to be treated as a very high priority; however, in England it was felt that SF6 leakages were not frequent enough to warrant such a high level of ambition.

Flood resilience

Flood resilience was seen as a hugely important priority across both licence areas. In Scotland, delegates highlighted the issue of coastal erosion, and in England, the issue was discussed as an impact of climate change. There was clear consensus that SSEN should go beyond the Ofgem minimum requirements in this area.

Biodiversity and / or natural capital

Delegates in Scotland wanted this area to be prioritised, although they agreed it would be a challenge to provide tangible data and evidence to build a case for Ofgem. In both licence areas, it was felt that new infrastructure such as substations and wind turbines affect biodiversity and a balance needed to be carefully struck when planning new assets.

Visual amenity

This area was not discussed at the workshops.

Embodied carbon

This area was not discussed at the workshops.

Losses

Delegates felt that there was no excuse for losses, and that the UK performed poorly in this area in comparison to other countries. They wanted to see more done to reduce losses, and suggested making heat losses reportable and recoverable for the future.

Resource use and waste
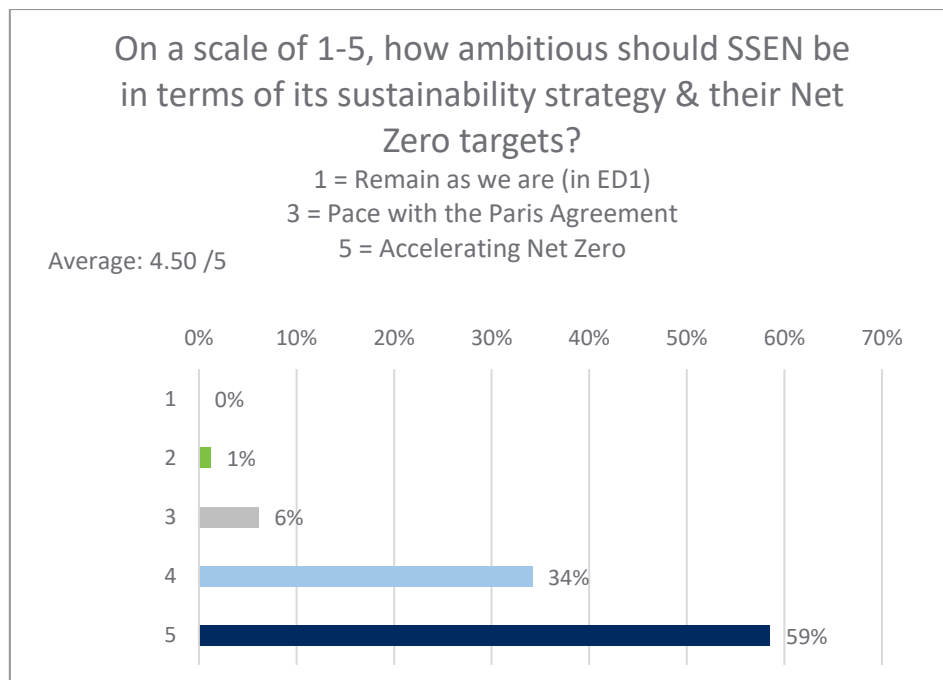
This area was not discussed at the workshops.

Nitrous oxide, air quality and noise

This area was not discussed at the workshops.

SSEN'S SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY AND NET ZERO TARGETS

In both Scotland and England, stakeholders wanted SSEN to be as ambitious as possible with its sustainability strategy and net zero targets. This was reflected in the electronic voting, where 93% opted for either 'accelerating net zero' or 'achieving net zero'. In both licence areas, during the

discussions option 4 (accelerate net zero) was advocated as the stretch, or ideal, target, and option 3 (achieve net zero) was seen as potentially the more realistic goal. Delegates felt that strong leadership was lacking from central government in this area and urged SSEN to step up, work together with other DNOs and LEPs, and forge the way. Affordability was raised as an issue, however, with many calling for transparency in terms of how this level of ambition would affect consumer bills.
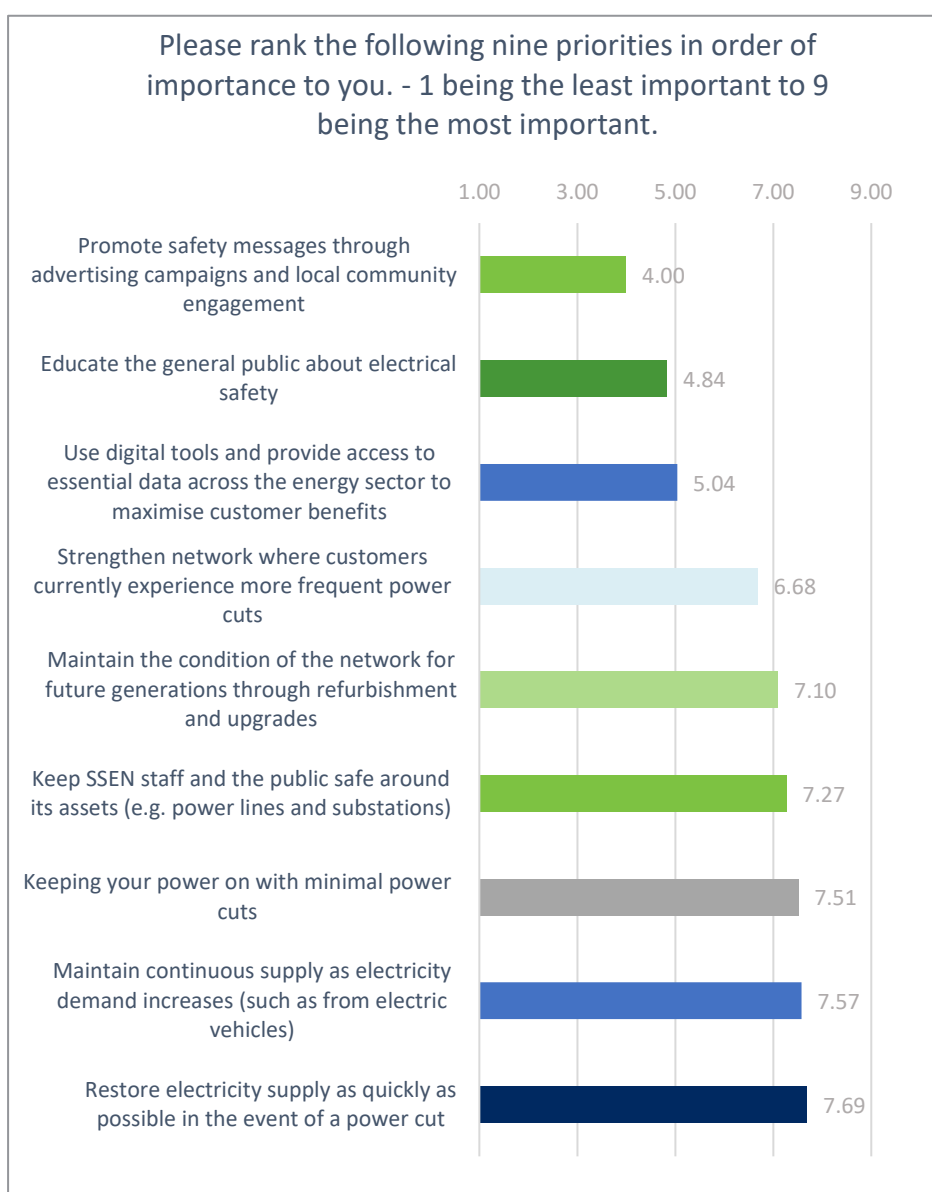

On a scale of 1-5, how ambitious should SSEN be in terms of its sustainability strategy & their Net Zero targets?
1 = Remain as we are (in ED1)
3 = Pace with the Paris Agreement
5 = Accelerating Net Zero

Average: 4.50 /5

Scale	Percentage
1	0%
2	1%
3	6%
4	34%
5	59%

OFGEM'S MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

There was broad agreement across the licence areas that Ofgem's minimum requirements were not ambitious enough to reach net zero by 2045 in Scotland or 2050 in England. Stakeholders advised SSEN to use its influence to make changes to Ofgem's statutory targets. However, in Scotland, some pointed out that keeping the targets at 2045/2050 might enable more flexibility in terms of reaching the goals without the pressure of a legal deadline.

SESSION FOUR: MAINTAINING A RELIABLE AND RESILIENT NETWORK FOR THE FUTURE

This session was opened by asking stakeholders to review a series of safety and reliability measures as ranked by domestic and business customers. The discussion then focused on SSEN's current reliability performance, and delegates were asked for their views on investing to maintain reliability now and in future. Feedback was also sought from stakeholders as to which external factors would have the most significant effect on the reliability of the network.

RELIABILITY AND RESILIENCE PRIORITIES

Please rank the following nine priorities in order of importance to you. - 1 being the least important to 9 being the most important.

Priority	Score
Promote safety messages through advertising campaigns and local community engagement	4.00
Educate the general public about electrical safety	4.84
Use digital tools and provide access to essential data across the energy sector to maximise customer benefits	5.04
Strengthen network where customers currently experience more frequent power cuts	6.68
Maintain the condition of the network for future generations through refurbishment and upgrades	7.10
Keep SSEN staff and the public safe around its assets (e.g. power lines and substations)	7.27
Keeping your power on with minimal power cuts	7.51
Maintain continuous supply as electricity demand increases (such as from electric vehicles)	7.57
Restore electricity supply as quickly as possible in the event of a power cut	7.69

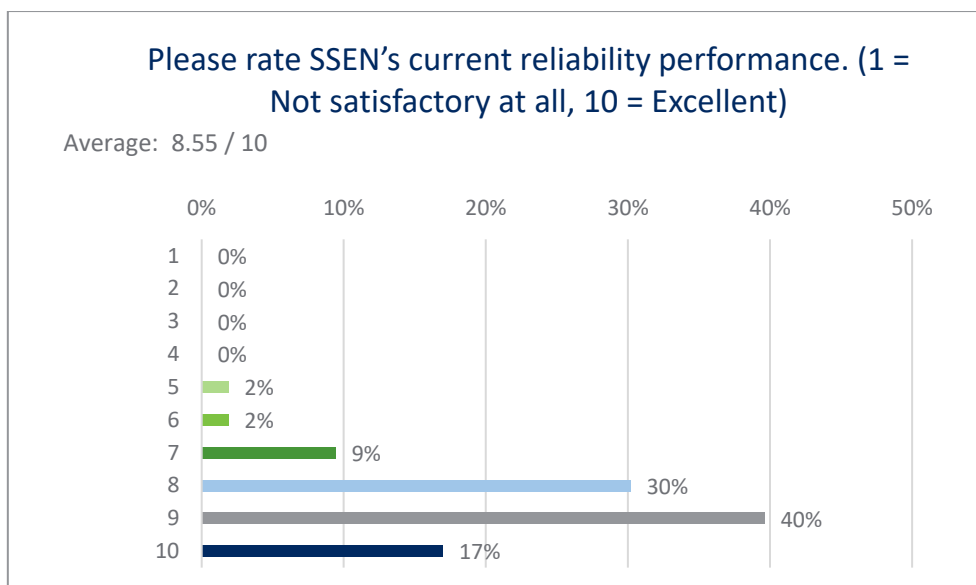Scottish & Southern
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Stakeholders in both licence areas broadly agreed with the top priorities under reliability and resilience as identified by customers, arguing that restoring supply following a power cut was critically important to DNOs and their customers. This was reflected in the electronic voting, where delegates from both licence areas ranked this as the top priority. In northern Scotland, the second priority for stakeholders was 'keeping your power on with minimal power cuts', which perhaps reflects the assumed reliability challenges of a more rural network, particularly for the more remote highlands and islands. In central southern England, the second priority was 'maintain continuous supply as electricity demand increases', reflecting the extensive discussions on net zero and the future reliability of the network and the level of interest in this area. In all the workshops, stakeholders noted the relatively low position of 'keep SSEN staff and the public safe around its assets' in the existing ranking, with many feeling that this should be a higher priority.

Delegates in both licence areas were relatively unsurprised that 'strengthen network where customers currently experience more frequent power cuts' was ranked as a relatively low priority by customers, as location and competing needs would always factor into these broad categorisation exercises. Interestingly, those in England, where the number of faults is generally lower, considered this to be an equity issue and wanted SSEN to work on amplifying underrepresented, rural voices as a point of fairness in service. In Scotland, the response was more sanguine, with some pointing out that the issue lay in whether those in urban areas should pay more to support a more reliable service in rural areas, as is currently the case.

SSEN'S CURRENT RELIABILITY PERFORMANCE

Given the variations in geography and reliability across SSEN's patch, the divergence of opinion on the company's current reliability performance is perhaps unsurprising. In England, it was noted that reliability was 'too good', meaning that customers often fail to recognise the importance of investing in future reliability, particularly with the growth of electrification. Stakeholders in Scotland were concerned about this too, referring to the strain on the network caused by current levels of electrification. Although some delegates in Scotland were more critical of network reliability, there was praise for SSEN's support of communities with more fragile supply. Overall, 87% of delegates rated SSEN's current reliability performance between 8 and 10 (with 10 being excellent), demonstrating high levels of general satisfaction and suggesting a positive outlook on this issue.

Please rate SSEN's current reliability performance. (1 = Not satisfactory at all, 10 = Excellent)

Average: 8.55 / 10

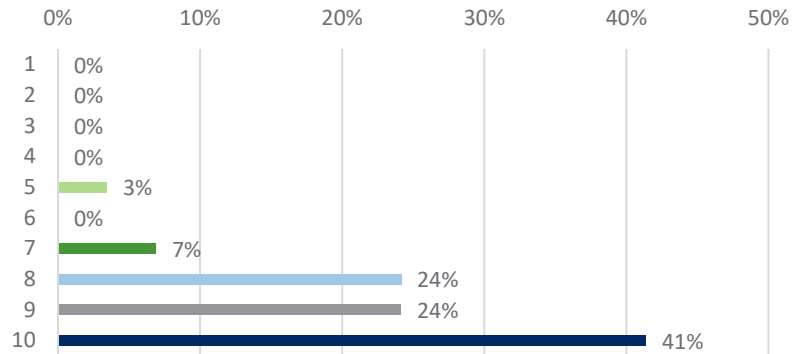| Rating	Percentage
1	0%
2	0%
3	0%
4	0%
5	2%
6	2%
7	9%
8	30%
9	40%
10	17%

INVESTING IN RELIABILITY – NOW AND IN FUTURE

There was widespread consensus that it was critical for SSEN to invest in reliability now to guarantee future service, particularly in the light of the decarbonisation of heat and transport and the rise of renewables on the grid. Stakeholders wanted SSEN to lobby Ofgem for a comprehensive education programme to prepare stakeholders for net zero and to advise customers on the implementation of technologies that could enable greater reliability moving forward, such as battery storage and EVs. They also felt that SSEN should be totally transparent in terms of whether this investment would increase costs for consumers, stressing the need to make an evidence-based case. Given the strength of feeling around this, it is unsurprising that delegates pushed for SSEN to adopt option C or D, which involve investing for future reliability and supporting net zero, on the options-based approach to investment in reliability. Some felt that option D was too 'pie in the sky' and there was general agreement that a hybrid of options C and D was sensible, with stakeholders pointing out that if SSEN aim for option D, the most ambitious option, and end up following the less ambitious approach specified by option C, it would still be a positive outcome. In the electronic voting, on average stakeholders felt it was very important to invest in reliability both now and in future, with stakeholders giving 'now' an average of 8.77 out of 10 and 'future' an average of 9.07 out of 10.
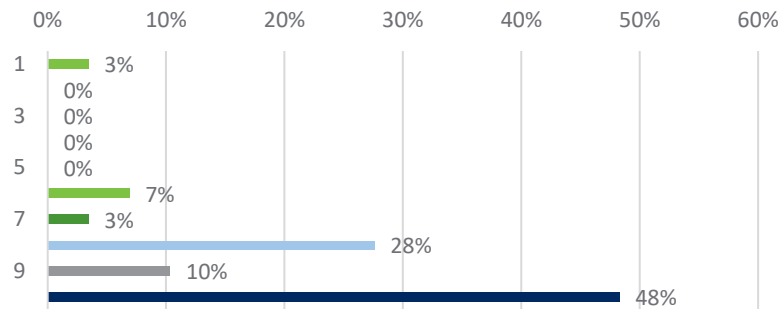
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How important to you is it that we invest in reliability now? (1 = Not important at all, 10 = Very important)

Average: 8.77 / 10

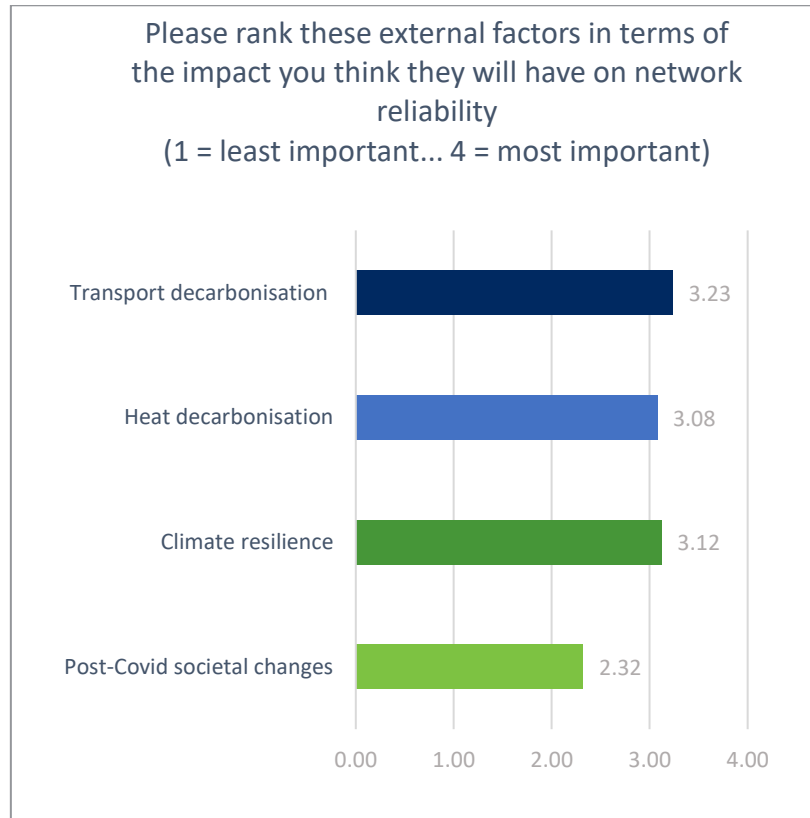| Rating	Percentage
1	0%
2	0%
3	0%
4	0%
5	3%
6	0%
7	7%
8	24%
9	24%
10	41%

How important is it to you that we invest in reliability in the future? (1 = Not important at all, 10 = Very important)

Average: 9.07 / 10

Rating	Percentage
1	3%
2	0%
3	0%
4	0%
5	0%
6	7%
7	3%
8	28%
9	10%
10	48%

OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING RELIABILITY

Stakeholders voted on external factors affecting reliability. In Scotland the most important factor was climate resilience, whereas in England, transport decarbonisation was seen as the most important factor. In both licence areas, it was felt that post-Covid societal changes would have the lowest impact.

Please rank these external factors in terms of the impact you think they will have on network reliability
(1 = least important... 4 = most important)

Factor	Value
Transport decarbonisation	3.23
Heat decarbonisation	3.08
Climate resilience	3.12
Post-Covid societal changes	2.32

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SESSION FIVE: BUILDING A SMART, FLEXIBLE NETWORK FOR THE FUTURE

The final session focused on the Open Networks Project. Attendees were asked to suggest other stakeholders that should be involved in the development of the future network. The discussion then moved on to whether SSEN should ask Ofgem for a market stimulation allowance to encourage the adoption of flexibility services.

OPEN NETWORKS PROJECT

Stakeholders agreed with following the recommendations of the Open Networks Project, with many highlighting the critical value of an evidence-based approach in terms of creating a smart, flexible network. The project's approach to collaboration was also praised, with greater unification, cross-sector working and the open, transparent sharing of best practice and research and development all seen as huge positives. In all cases, stakeholders approved following the advice of experts.

Delegates felt that a greater range of stakeholders should be engaged with and consulted on the project, with suggestions ranging from those in fuel poverty and organisations that represent them, such as Citizens Advice, to local authorities, small businesses, business associations and parish councils. Additionally, many pointed to the need for greater international engagement, particularly with partners in Norway. In both licence areas, it was felt that any barriers to participation and accessibility should be addressed, whether that was by ensuring clear language and terminology are used or by making participation in the consulting process easy and intuitive.

MARKET STIMULATION FOR FLEXIBILITY SERVICES

Most delegates agreed with SSEN's proposal of a market stimulation fund, particularly if it encouraged innovation and greater uptake of flexibility on the domestic side. In Scotland, stakeholders flagged the potential paradox of being a neutral market facilitator while seeking to influence the market, and wondered how this would be squared with Ofgem. In both licence areas, stakeholders highlighted the potential benefit for community energy groups and felt that working more closely with local energy groups and communities to break down barriers to participation and reduce complexity in energy services would not only broker these projects and markets and get them off the ground, but also help to build vital trust and take the nation towards net zero.

APPENDIX 1: ATTENDEES

A total of 193 stakeholders attended the workshops, representing 156 organisations. The organisations represented at the events are shown below:

Aberdeenshire Council	Chichester District Council
Abington Town Council	Citizens Advice
Achilles	Citizens Advice Scotland
Aggreko	Clackmannanshire Council
ALIenergy	CNE Siar
AMT-Sybex	Connected Response
Argyll and Bute Council	Convenimarket & Federation of Small Business
Babcock	Crawley Parish Council
Balfour Beatty Power T&D	Crown Estate Scotland
BAM Nuttall	CSA Catapult
Barra & Vatersay Wind Energy Ltd	Dalcour Maclaren
Barratt David Wilson Homes	DC Energy Consulting Ltd
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	deafscotland
Bellrock Technology	Dorset LEP
Berkshire Healthcare NHS FT	Dummer Parish Council
Blackbird Leys Parish Council	EDF
BNRG	EDF Energy
Caithness Renewables Ltd	EDF Renewables
Capgemini	EMEC
Centre for Sustainable Energy	Eneida.IO
Cherwell District Council	Energetics

Energy Assets Networks

Energy Saving Trust

Energy Systems Catapult

Energyline Ltd

Engas UK Ltd

Engenius Limited

Ennoviga Solar Ltd

European Marine Energy Centre

EV Express

EV HUB LTD

Flotation Energy

Fred. Olsen Renewables

Freedom Group

Fundamentals Ltd

Galbraith

Gleeds

Gosport Borough Council

Granite Engineering Ltd

Groundwork South

Hampshire County Council

Haste Ltd

Highland Senior Citizens Network

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Hilson Moran Partnership

Hilti GB Limited

Hoare Lea

Humphrey Clarke Consultants Ltd

Infinis Energy

iPower UK

Isle of Wight Council

ITPEnergised

JBM Solar

Lachmann Consultants Ltd

Longcape Ltd

Low Carbon Hub

LSTC

LUC

Miller First

MOD

Moray Council

Morgan Sindall Construction and Infrastructure

Mott MacDonald

National Energy Action

Network Rail

Nortech Management Limited

Northern Lighthouse Board

Omexom

Origami

Orkney Islands Council

Oxford City Council	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Oxfordshire County Council	Scottish Government
Partnerships for Good	Scottish Natural Heritage
PE Systems Ltd	Scottish Power
Persimmon Homes	Scottish Renewables
Piclo	Scottish Water
Point and Sandwick Trust	SHE Transmission
Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils	Siemens
Power On Connections	SIMEC GHR
Power System Partners Limited	Skye Climate Action
Powerline Technologies Ltd	Solar Trade Assoc
Prysmian Cables & Systems	Solesco
Prysmian Group	South Somerset District Council
PSC	Southern Water
Reading Borough Council	Spark Assessment Services ltd
RJ McLeod Contractors	Stone Energy-Engineering
Robert Gordon University	SWARCO UK Ltd
Rowlands Castle Parish Council	Swindon Borough Council
RS Components	SWLEP
Rural Oxfordshire Network	SWLEP- Wiltshire Council
Rushmoor Borough Council	The Highland Council
S&C Electric	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Savills	Thames Water
Schneider Electric	TLI Group
Scottish Enterprise	UHI

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University of Reading

Vento Ludens Limited

Voltalia UK Ltd

WAPA

Welsh Government

Wessex Solar Energy

West Solent Solar Cooperative

Wiltshire Council

Winchester Action on Climate Change

Winchester City Council
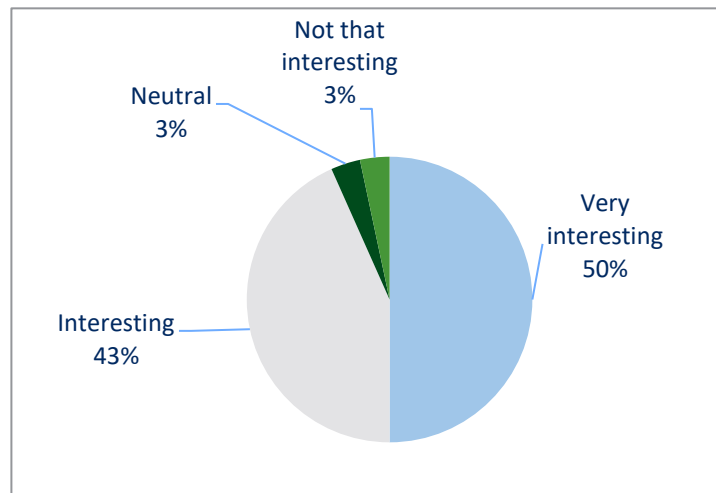
Wokingham Borough Council
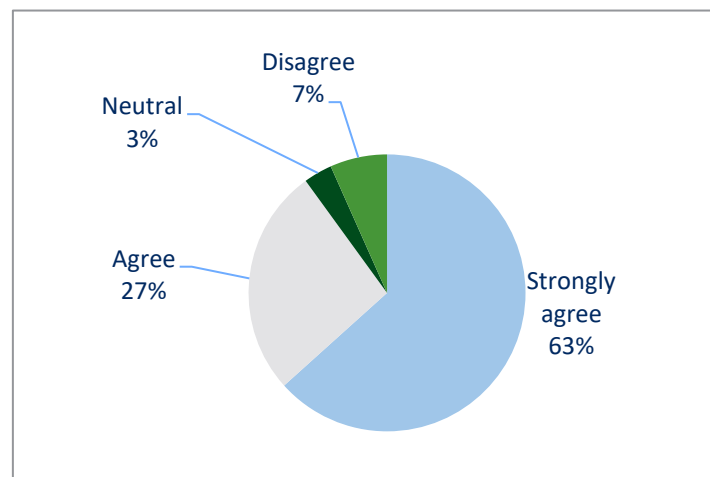
Wood

WSCC

WSP

ZIV Automation

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APPENDIX 2: WRITTEN FEEDBACK

After the workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. The feedback was as follows:

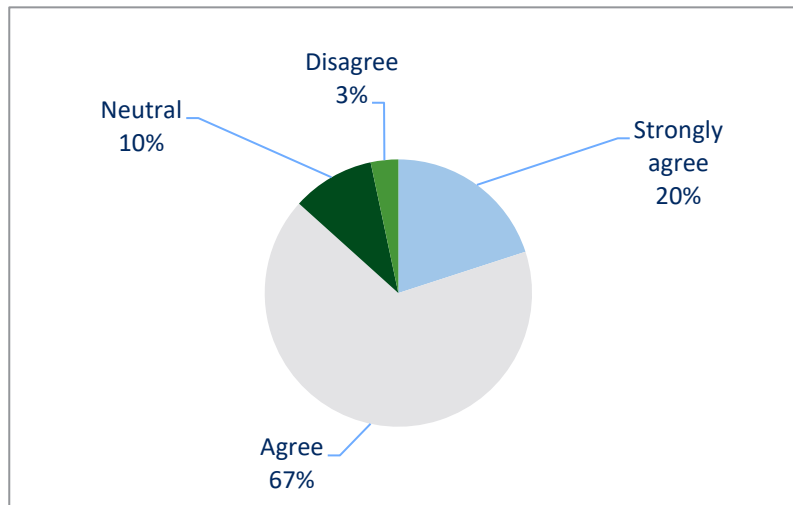**1.   Overall, how interesting did you find the workshop to be?**

Not that interesting 3%
Neutral 3%
Very interesting 50%
Interesting 43%

2.   Did you feel that you had the opportunity to make your points and ask questions?

Disagree 7%
Neutral 3%
Agree 27%
Strongly agree 63%

Comments:

- "Best event I have attended for organisation, IT and participation during lockdown."
- "My group was well managed, and the participants listened and worked well together."
- "Very well managed, asking for all opinions."
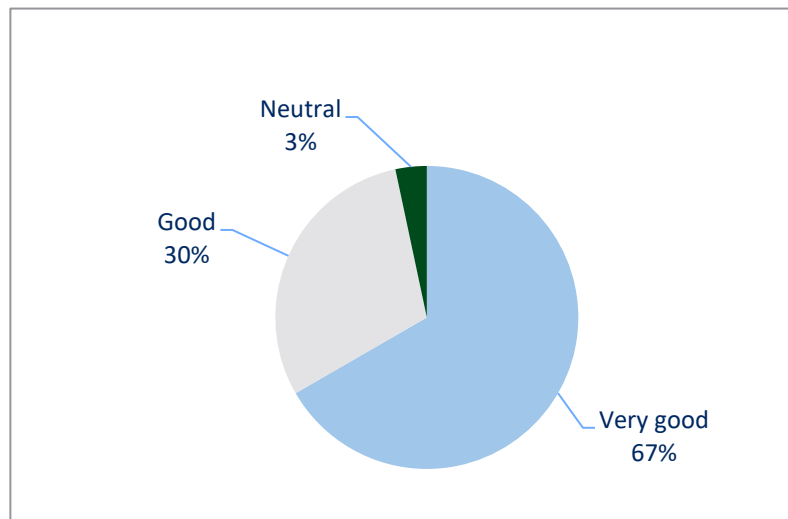- "Plenty of opportunities to discuss in the breakout sessions."

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3.   Did we cover the right topics for you on the day?

Comments:

- "Topics [were] clearly set out through the agenda."
- "Wide range of topics covered, which was helpful."
- "Large mixture of topics, so I only joined those that were relevant."

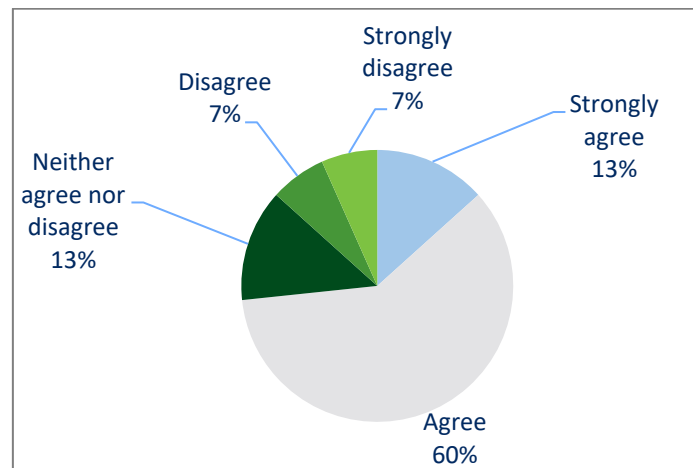### 4.   What did you think of the way the workshop was chaired by your facilitator?

Comments:

- "The facilitator was good, welcoming, encouraging and keeping to time. [They] gave a fair hearing to people."

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- "The facilitator did well at getting good outcomes from the sessions."
- "Very professional, creating a debate where necessary."
- "Allowed everyone who wanted to to contribute."

5.   Did you find the online format accessible and easy to use?

If it went well, what did you like about it?

- "I liked going into the breakout rooms with people from all sectors as it brought a rounded perspective."
- "Fantastic to have a Scottish islander in the same room as a southerner, really great UK coverage."
- "Good use of presentations and meeting rooms to discuss issues raised."
- "Easy to follow progress and join appropriate areas."
- "A lot of preparatory work had been done by SSEN to make it straightforward."

If it went poorly, what challenges did you experience?

- "The links between sessions were a bit clunky. Three hours was a long session. I was mentally tired at the end."
- "Any application that depends on a specific browser is suspect in my view."
- "Attendance list only had first name and first letter of surname, so difficult to network effectively."
- "Could not access it. I did not have time to prepare properly."

If you have used any other platforms for this type of event, are there any you would recommend?

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- "Zoom is the only one that I am relatively comfortable with."
- "This was the best platform I have encountered."
- "Microsoft Teams."
- "Webex."

Any other comments?

- "You are doing a good job [and] moving in the right directions."
- "Good session. I find it more difficult to recall the sequence of events and areas covered compared with a physical meeting, where coffee breaks and the layout of the room provide landmarks to anchor one's memory."
- "Thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to participating in more of these stakeholder workshops."
- "Table discussions were really good, but a little short in terms of time to allow all views to be heard."