



EMOTIONALLY
INTELLIGENT
COMMUNICATIONS

SSEN DISTRIBUTION STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

SUMMARY

FEB / MARCH 2018



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INTRODUCTION

On 21st February and 20th March 2018, SSEN Distribution hosted two stakeholder workshops in Glasgow and Reading, respectively.

The format for the workshops comprised of four short presentations given by SSEN representatives, followed by roundtable discussions and a Q&A. The broad topics for discussion were: SSEN's current performance, its business plan commitments, its social obligations and the transition to Distribution System Operator (DSO).

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 types of organisations each stakeholder represents.

To view the presentation given at the Glasgow workshop, please click [here](#). To view the presentation given at the Reading workshop, please click [here](#). The agenda can be found on slides seven and eight.

In total, 78 stakeholders attended the workshops. The most prevalent sector represented at the workshops was the energy / utilities sector (38% of total attendees) followed by those representing charities / not-for-profit organisations (15%). The companies represented across both workshops are shown in Appendix 2 of this report.



WORKSHOP ONE: YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH SSEN

After a brief introduction from Colin Nicol, Managing Director, there was an initial discussion session where stakeholders were asked to comment on their experience of working with SSEN Distribution.

- Stakeholders at both events were broadly complimentary of SSEN, especially when they had worked closely with the company in areas including connections and in social obligations initiatives.
- It was commented that SSEN's staff are approachable, knowledgeable and responsive to stakeholder feedback. It was also commented that SSEN is one of the more progressive DNOs in terms of innovation.
- When asked to identify areas for improvement, stakeholders pointed out that it is sometimes difficult to get in touch with the right person, especially at busy times; for example, in bad weather.
- It was noted that other DNOs have key account managers, and also quarterly meetings - something stakeholders thought SSEN should look to emulate.
- It was also commented that SSEN should look to address a perceived lack of clarity or standardisation in their policies. It was added that there should be greater transparency, especially in terms of pricing.
- It was also thought that the SSEN website could be more accessible and could provide more information relevant for those wishing to connect to the grid.

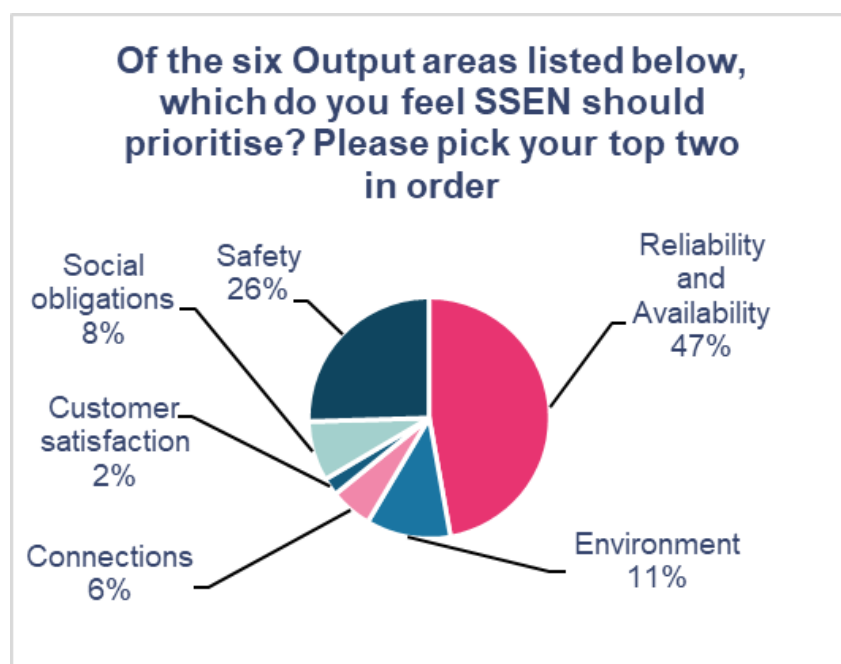
WORKSHOP TWO: BUSINESS PLAN COMMITMENTS

The next session was introduced by Maureen Barrie, Head of Networks Customer Assurance, and Emma Merritt, Customer Assurance Auditor. They explained SSEN's Business Plan Commitments and how the views of customers and stakeholders have led to the creation of 110 commitments under six output areas: Reliability and Availability, Environment, Connections, Customer Satisfaction, Social Obligations and Safety.

PART ONE: OUTPUT AREAS

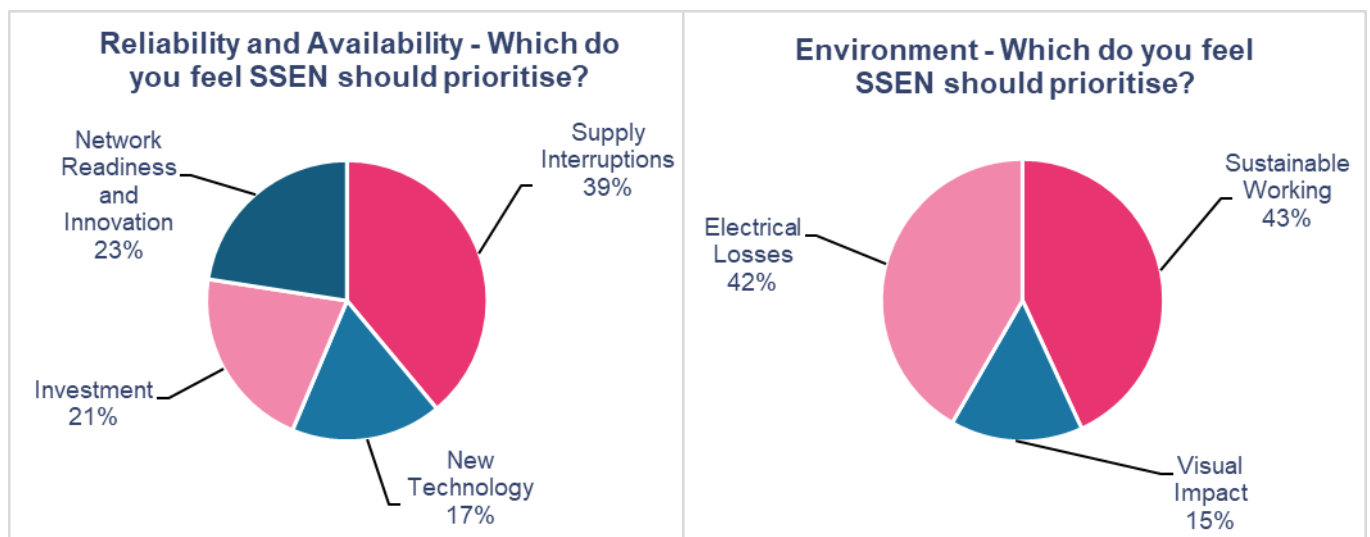
- Across the two workshops, stakeholders overwhelmingly cited Reliability and Availability as the most important of all SSEN's Business Plan Commitments. 47% of stakeholders voted this as one of the top two most important areas, followed by Safety with 26%.

- It was commented that issues relating to Reliability would only be exacerbated by the introduction of new technologies and the impacts of climate change. Because of this, it was felt that this should remain an area of focus for the company.
- Some stakeholders felt that, whilst Safety was of paramount importance, it should be part of SSEN's 'business as usual' activities, therefore didn't necessarily warrant a renewed focus.
- It was generally commented that many of the categories are interconnected so do not operate in isolation. For example, improvements in Reliability would clearly improve Customer Satisfaction scores.
- Stakeholders ranked Connections as the second least important output category for SSEN with a score of only 6% overall. However, this may be largely down to the backgrounds of the group as a whole. Interestingly, though, over 67% of those people representing the business community voted for this as one of their top two output categories.
- Although Social Obligations was seen by stakeholders as the second least important output category (8% when they were asked to vote electronically), it was noted that cuts to council funding and the impact of other Government policies would mean that certain customers would, in the future, be more reliant on some of the initiatives that SSEN undertakes in this area.
- Categories such as Social Obligations and Customer Satisfaction were not deemed as important as Reliability and Availability and Safety as they are not seen as SSEN's 'core' function. However, it was thought that the company should not lose sight of their obligations and the need to ensure that current high level of service do not decline.

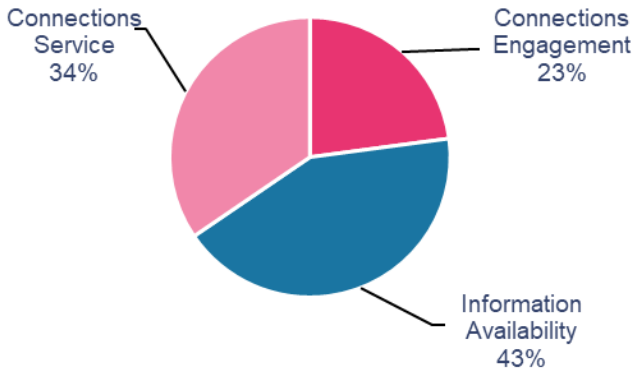


PART TWO: BUSINESS PLAN OUTPUTS

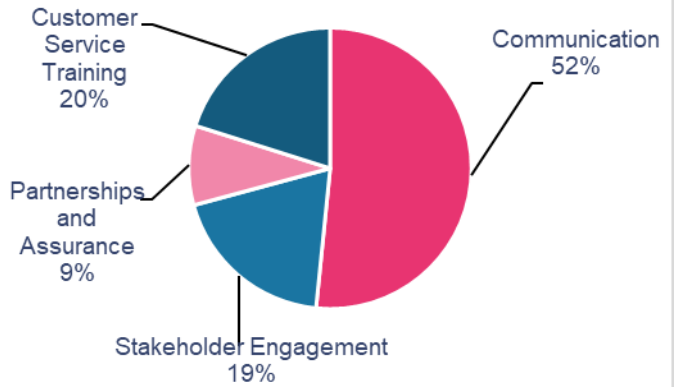
- In the Reliability and Availability category, Supply Interruptions (39%) was seen as the most important output, followed by Network Readiness and Innovation (23%) when stakeholders were asked to vote electronically.
- Under Environment, Sustainable Working was seen as the most important output (43%), followed closely by Electrical Losses with 42%. Visual impact was the lowest ranked output in this area. It was commented by some that undergrounding of cables to improve reliability would be more supported than simply for aesthetic reasons.
- The most important Connections output voted by stakeholders was Information Availability with 43%. Stakeholders, especially those working in the industry made the point that accurate and easily accessible information was vitally important in order to help them plan and cost for new connections.
- Stakeholders valued Communication as the most important output in the Customer Satisfaction category, by some margin. Over half (52%) voted for this as one of the top two most important outputs in this category.
- In the Social Obligations output category, Focus on Vulnerability and PSR were both valued equally as highly by stakeholders with 35% of votes cast.
- Network Safety (45%) was seen as being the most important output in the safety category, closely followed by Safety Training with 39%.



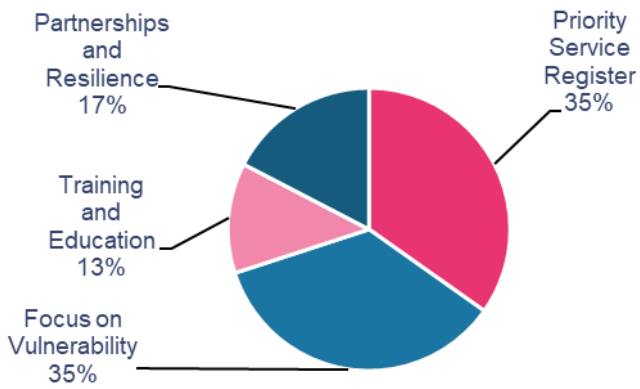
Connections - Which do you feel SSEN should prioritise?



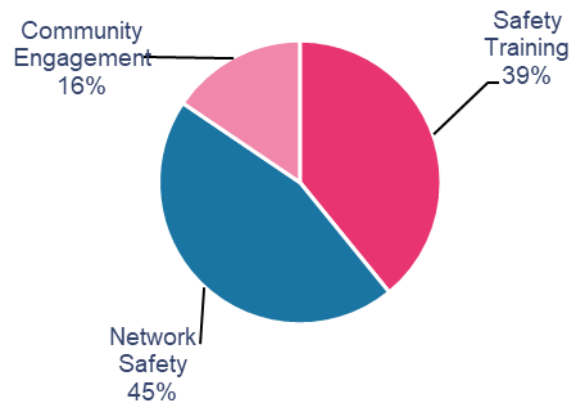
Customer satisfaction - Which do you feel SSEN should prioritise?



Social obligations - Which do you feel SSEN should prioritise?



Safety - Which do you feel SSEN should prioritise?

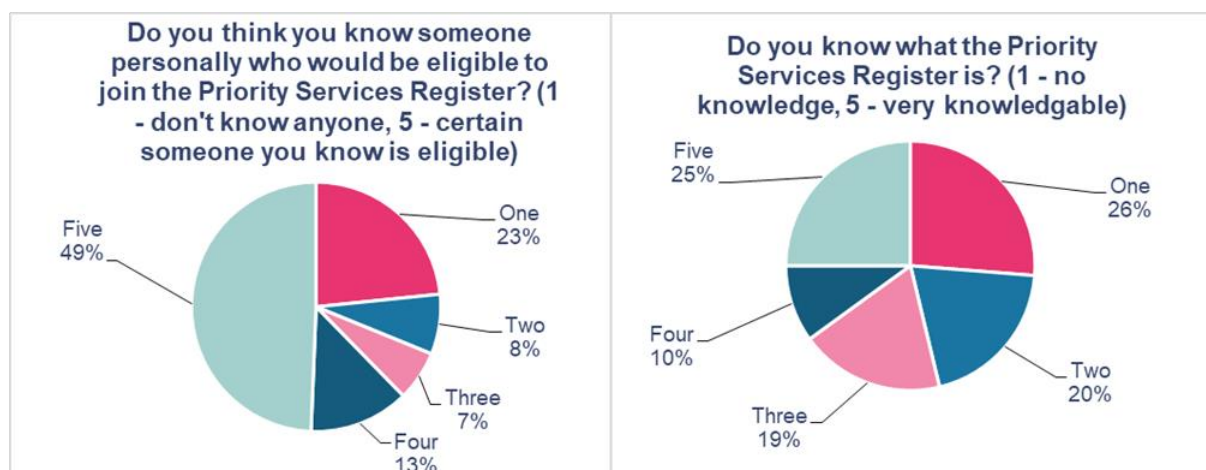


WORKSHOP THREE: SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

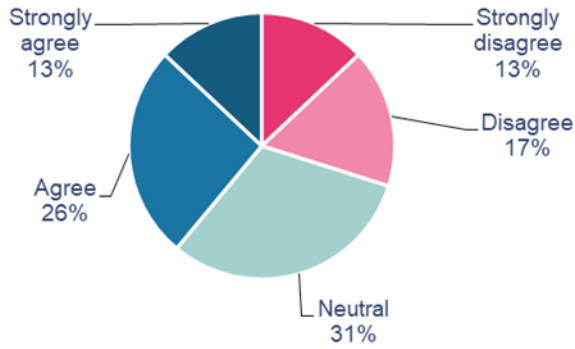
The Social Obligations session was introduced by Lisa Doogan, Director of Customer Relationship Management, and Simon O'Loughlin, Social Obligations Engagement Manager. The first part of the presentation focused on the Priority Services Register. This was followed by an explanation of the work SSEN has undertaken to help to improve resilience across its communities as part of the Resilient Communities Fund.

PART ONE: THE PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER (PSR)

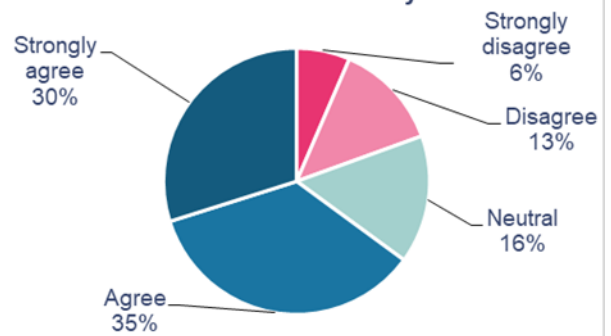
- It is clear that more should be done to promote the PSR. Many of those who attended the workshops said that they had little knowledge of it and almost a quarter (24%) said they did not know of anyone who would be eligible, which is highly unlikely, given the demographic of those who attended.
- There was no consensus on promoting the PSR to areas where SSEN knows most eligible customers live. In discussion, it was commented that if this data exists, it would make sense for SSEN to utilise it. However, when asked to vote on this issue, exactly the same proportion were in favour as against.
- When asked to vote on the initiative to create a new PSR1+ category for people most at risk without electricity, three quarters of stakeholder were in agreement. However, there was not the same level of agreement for using this category for customers with more than one PSR1 eligibility. 39% of stakeholders were in agreement with this idea, although 61% were either neutral or against.



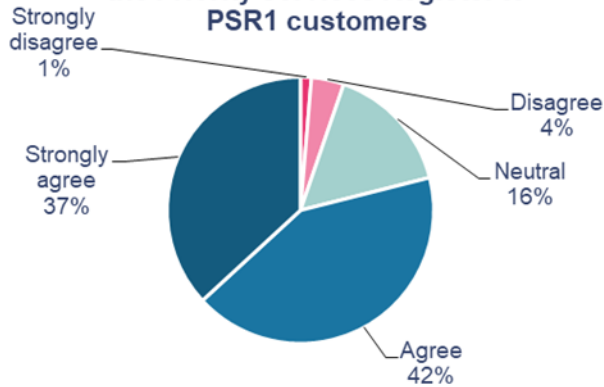
We should create an additional PSR category of PSR1+ for customers with more than one PSR1 eligibility



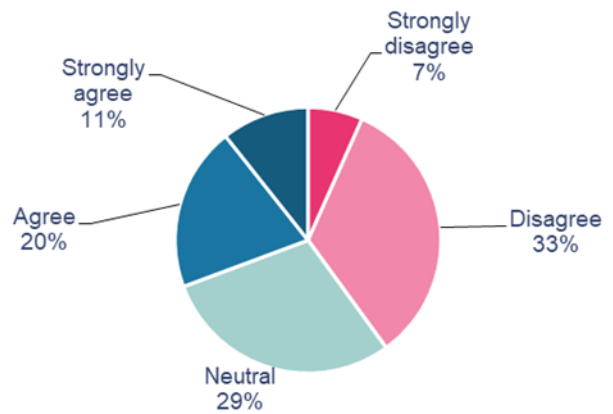
We should create an additional PSR category of PSR1+ for customers thought to be at highest risk when without electricity



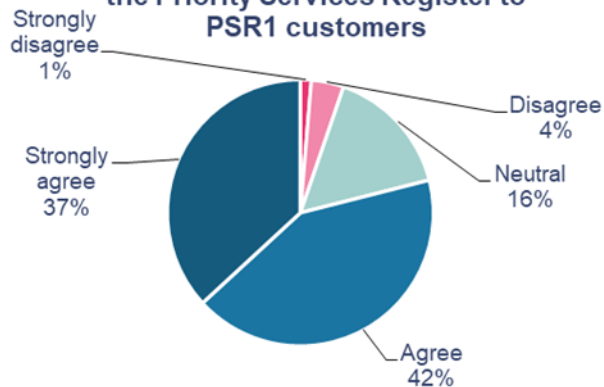
We should focus more on promoting the Priority Services Register to PSR1 customers



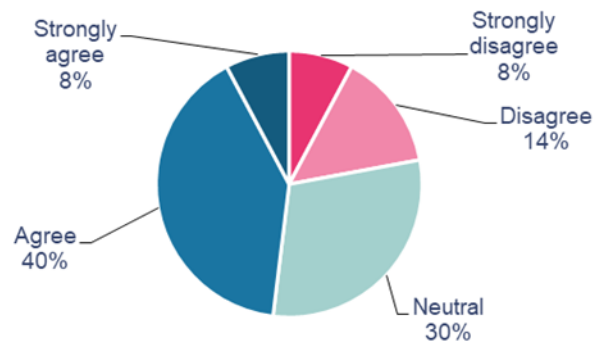
We should continue with the current three categories



We should focus more on promoting the Priority Services Register to PSR1 customers

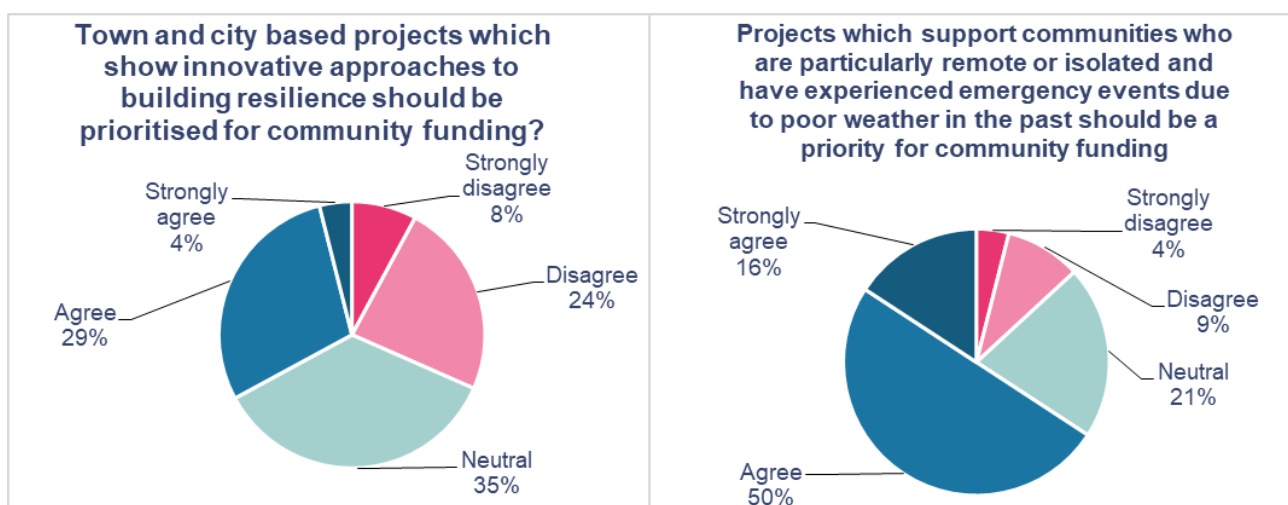


We should promote the PSR to areas we know most eligible customers live, even if they aren't PSR1

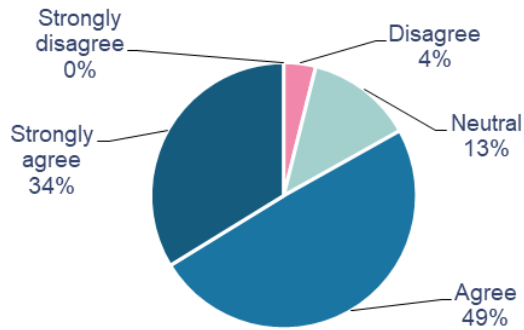


PART TWO: COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUNDING

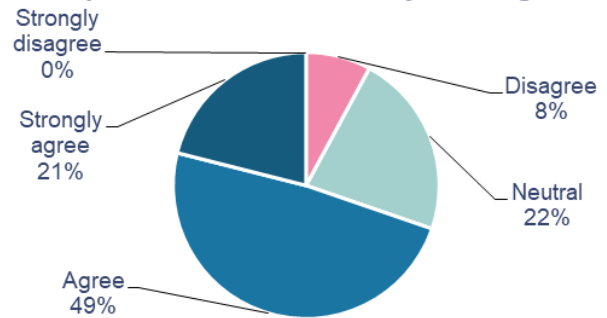
- Two thirds of stakeholders were of the view that communities in remote and isolated areas should be prioritised for Community Resilience Funding. A higher proportion (70%) were in favour of prioritising projects which demonstrate innovative approaches to improving the resilience of vulnerable community members. However, there was not the same support for prioritising town and city-based projects.
- Very few stakeholders supported the idea that communities local to transmission developments should be prioritised for funding (only 11% either agreed or strongly agreed with this initiative) and it was noted that this could be perceived as being a PR exercise rather than an initiative that benefits those most in need.
- There was a good deal of support (71%) for prioritising projects from areas which have been identified as having especially low resilience which had not applied for funding before. The comment was made that it is unfair that these communities miss out on funding simply because, for reasons beyond their control, they had not heard of this funding.
- When asked whether SSEN should prioritise those living in urban areas, stakeholders noted that people living in urban areas, as well as less affluent communities, should be prioritised for Community Resilience Funding. It was commented that often these people do not have well established community networks and may not even know of the funding that is available. Stakeholders felt that these people should not be left out.
- Stakeholders were asked to vote electronically on which areas or types of projects should be prioritised for Community Resilience Funding. The outcomes are shown in the charts below.



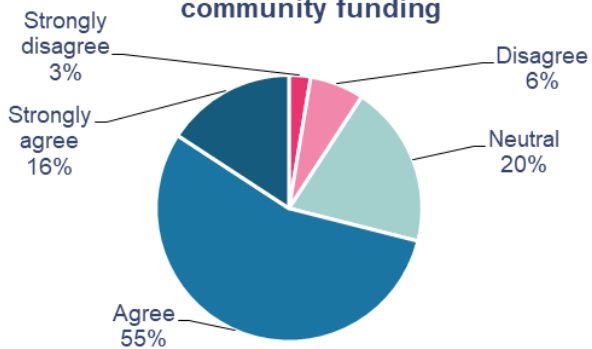
Projects which support areas where it can be difficult for emergency services to respond to should be prioritised for community funding



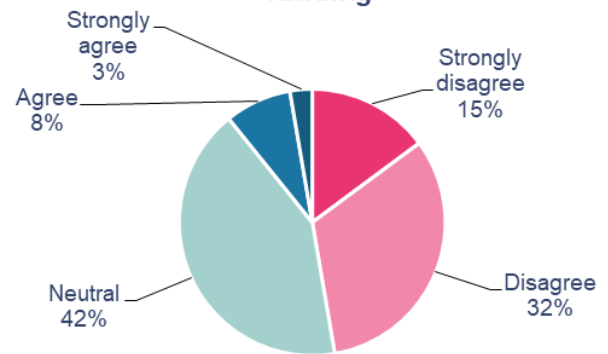
Projects which demonstrate innovative approaches to improving the resilience of vulnerable community members should be prioritised for community funding



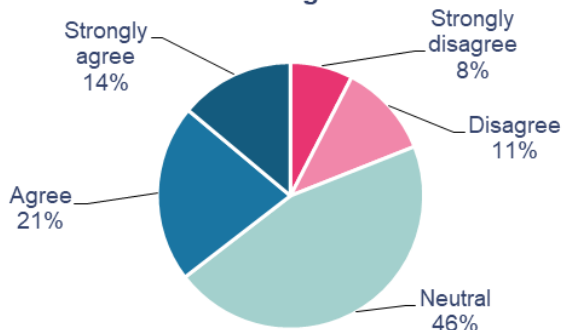
Projects from areas which have not applied before and have been identified as having especially low resilience should be prioritised for community funding



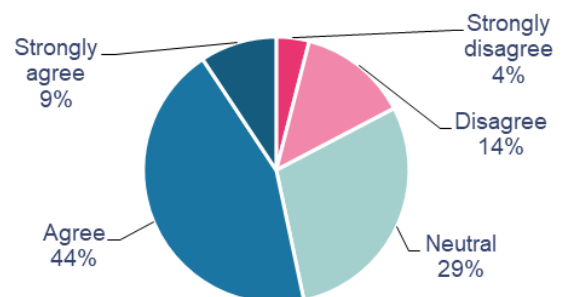
Communities which are local to our transmission development works should be prioritised for community funding



Projects which require seed funding for community energy projects should be prioritised for community funding.



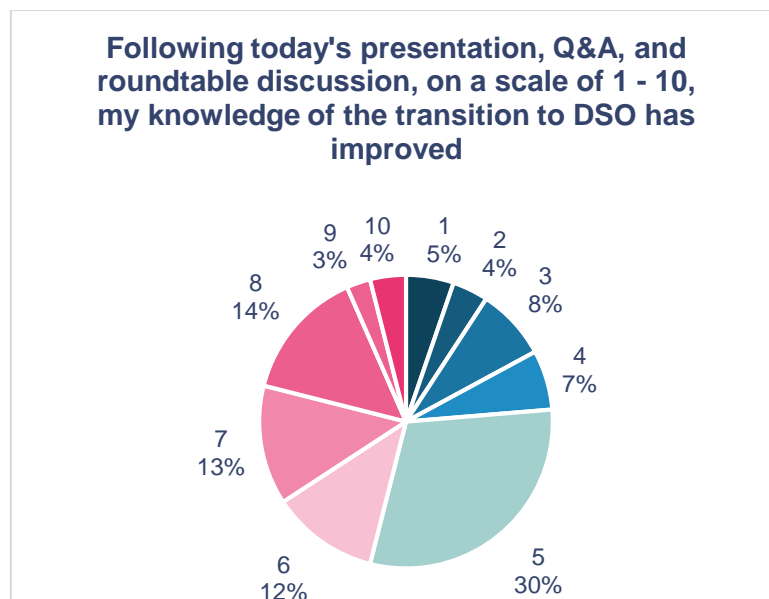
Projects which improve resilience across the whole distribution area should be prioritised for community funding?



WORKSHOP FOUR: THE TRANSITION TO DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OPERATOR

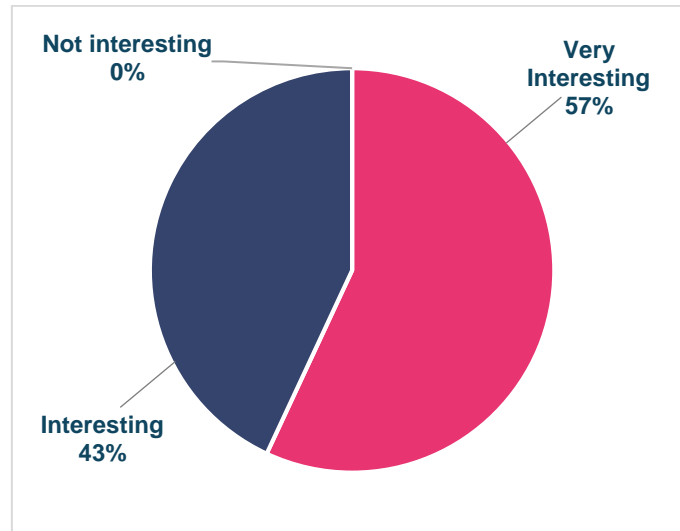
The final session of the day was presented by Stewart Reid, Head of DSO and Innovation. Stewart explained how the role of SSEN Distribution will change from that of a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to Distribution System Operator (DSO). He talked stakeholders through the key functions of a DSO and the impact that the growth in low carbon technologies has had on the network.

- Although some stakeholders felt that their knowledge of the transition to DSO had improved further to the workshops, it is clear that more should be done to educate customers on this initiative. Over half stated that their level of knowledge was five or less out of ten.
- Stakeholders felt strongly that, whilst the transition to DSO presented a number of opportunities for certain customers (including the more affluent 'early adopters'), more should be done to ensure that the vulnerable and less affluent are not left behind.
- It was felt that Government and regulatory intervention would be needed to ensure that this is the case.
- Stakeholders felt that SSEN should work with all tiers of government as well as relevant organisations including charities, NGOs and housing associations to educate people, including those customers in vulnerable situations, of the benefits that this transition could present.
- It was also noted that there should be more engagement with planner and developers to ensure that provision is made for new technologies in new housing and commercial developments.

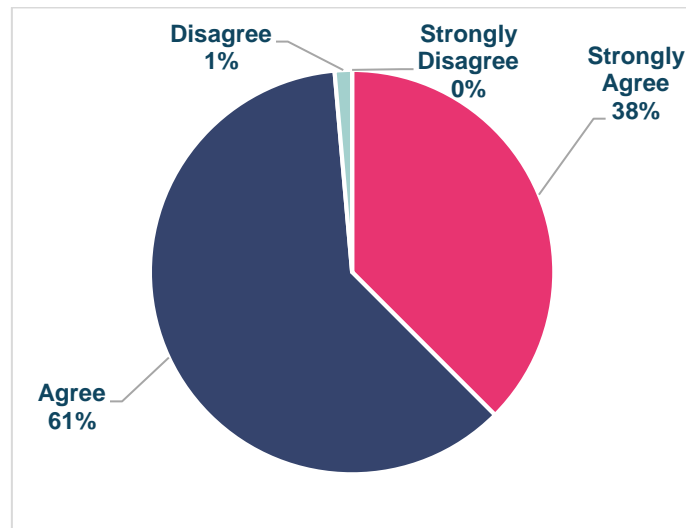


APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

1: OVERALL, DID YOU FIND THE WORKSHOP TO BE?



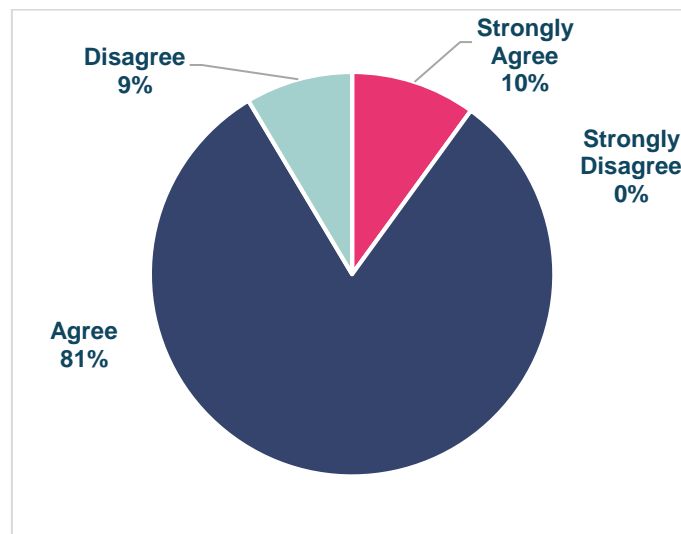
2: DID YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE YOUR POINTS AND ASK QUESTIONS?



Comments:

- “A very well-structured morning. Liked the mix of information giving and short round table (chaired) discussions. Use of technology excellent to give instant feedback results.”
- “Perhaps a little broad for all stakeholders present although appreciate difficult without multiple events.”
- “Great facilitation, lots of opportunities for discussion.”
- “The session was really well structured. Great discussion.”

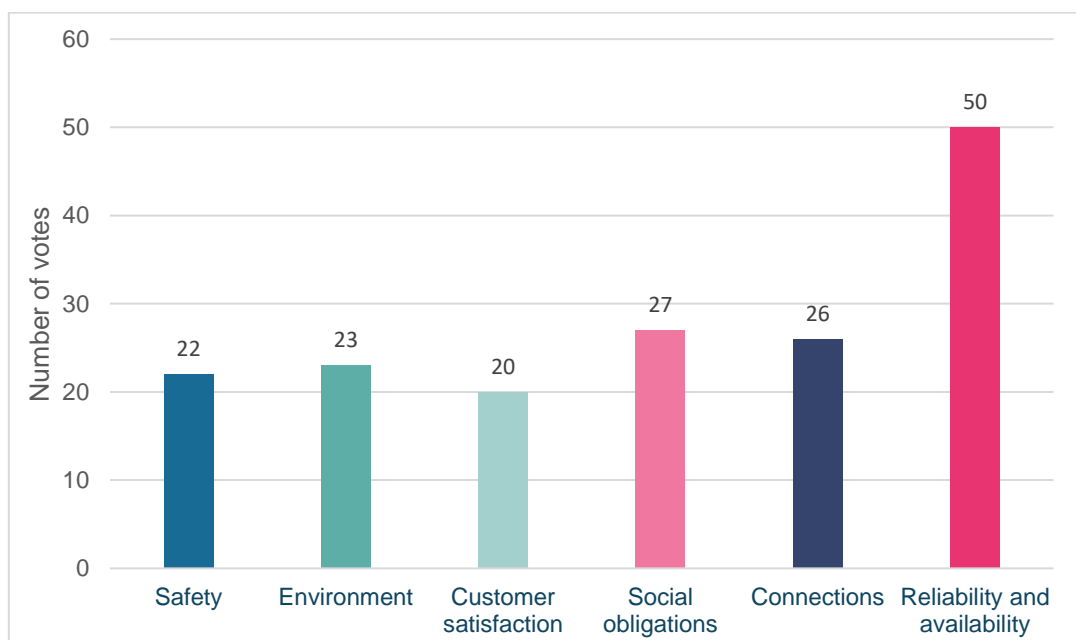
Q3: DID WE COVER THE RIGHT TOPICS FOR YOU ON THE DAY?



Comments:

- “Extremely useful and interesting from a 'user' perspective. In particular DSO transition and the vision and challenges for the future.”
- “Topics too focussed on social obligations, and SSE behind other DNOs on transition to DSO and stakeholder engagement.”
- “Content very good, and more on DSO would be useful.”
- “Social obligations was really interesting and [...] most informative.”

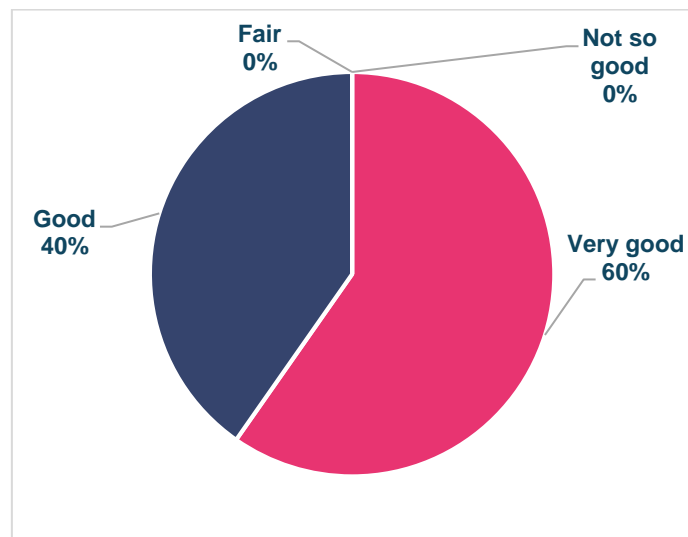
Q4: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD BE ENGAGING ON IN THE FUTURE?



Comments:

- “Climate change resilience.”
- “DSO transition, future developments and markets.”
- “DSO/DNO.”
- “Fuel poverty.”

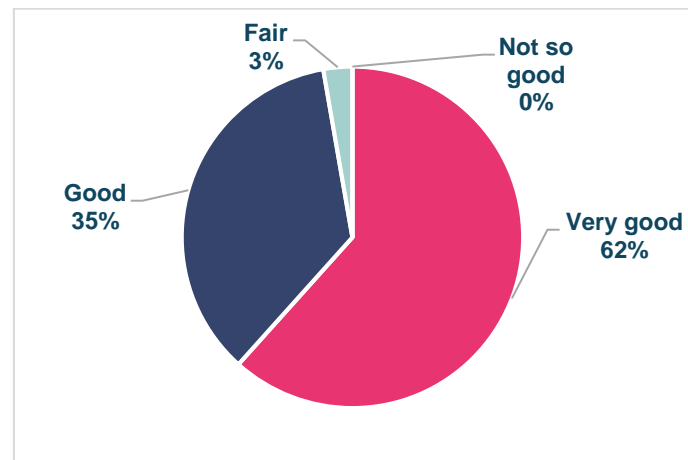
Q5: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE VENUE?



Comments:

- “Central & good transport links.”
- “Convenient and comfortable.”
- “Easy to get to.”

Q6: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE WAY THE WORKSHOP WAS CHAIRED BY YOUR FACILITATOR?



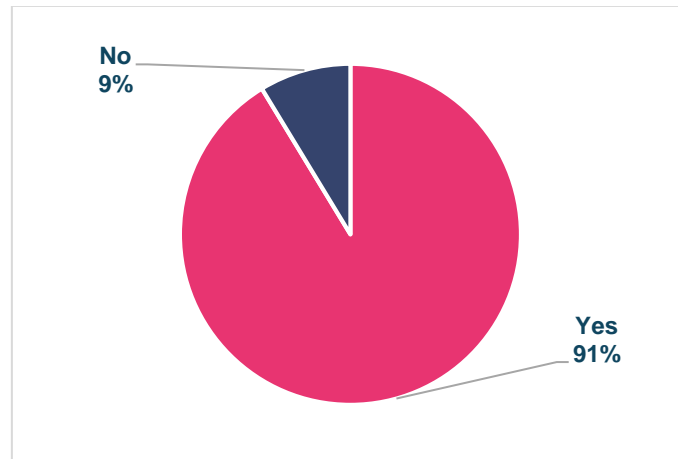
Comments:

- “Engaging and relaxed. No 'pressure' on those of us who are customers and not industry experts.”
- “Excellent facilitation, interactive feedback was great.”
- “Steered this well, kept things flowing.”
- “Well managed and efficient.”
- “Very good facilitation.”

Q7: ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

- “First class and informative event. My output will be to share key points from the presentation with parish councillors/community - in particular priority services register.”
- “Very well organised event. Interesting topics & discussion.”
- “Valued meeting people from other areas of the energy industry.”
- “Enjoyable and worthwhile.”

Q8: WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE OUR POST-EVENT REPORT AND INVITES TO SIMILAR EVENTS IN THE FUTURE?



APPENDIX 2: ATTENDEES

A total of 78 stakeholders attended the workshops, representing 62 companies. The companies represented on the days are shown below:

ABB Ltd	Mercure Hotels
AES Solar	Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Europe Ltd
Aggreko	Morrison Utility Services
AMCO	National Energy Action
Arun District Council	Natural Power
Briggs Marine Contractors	NRSWA Ltd
Cadent Ltd	Ofgem
Citizens Advice	PA Consulting
Community Council for Berkshire (CCB)	PE Systems Ltd
DistGen	Reading County Council
Distributed Generation Ltd	Ricardo Energy & Environment
Dummer Parish Council	RJ McLeod (Contractors) Ltd.
EDF Energy	Schneider Electric
EFACEC Energia	Scottish Government
Energy Action Scotland	Scottish Renewables
Energy Saving Trust	SGN
Engage Consulting	Skanska
Engie	Southern Water
Foresee Associates	SP Energy Networks
Forestry Commission Scotland	SSE plc
Forsa Energy	TE Connectivity
Fossoway Community Council	TH White Installation Ltd
Gloucestershire County Council	Thames Valley Police
Grayshott Parish Council	Thames Water
Groundwork South	The Schools Energy Project
Holme Infrastructure Projects Ltd	Upton Grey Parish Council
Intelligent Land Investments Group Plc	Warm Works
IQA Operations Group Ltd	Warm Zones
J B Corrie & Co Ltd	Welsh Power
Lucy Electric	Wood
Mactaggart & Mickel Homes Ltd	WSP



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