SSEN DISTRIBUTION
STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

SUMMARY REPORT

AUTUMN 2018
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INTRODUCTION

In September and October 2018, SSEN hosted a series of five workshops in locations across its network. This report details outcomes from these workshops, which were hosted in Dunblane, Portsmouth, Bournemouth, Swindon and Reading.

The workshops sought to gather feedback from SSEN Distribution’s stakeholders on the following topics: stakeholders’ experience of working with SSEN; SSEN’s approach to keeping people safe; network investment; and the transition to Distribution System Operator (DSO) and the role of Social Constraint Managed Zones (S-CMZs).

The events consisted of four short presentations given by SSEN representatives, each followed by round table discussions and electronic voting.

SSEN instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate the workshops and to take notes of the feedback given by stakeholders. Every effort has been made to faithfully record the comments 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.
OVERVIEW

After a brief introduction to SSEN, the workshops were split into four discussion sessions. Each session began with an introductory presentation given by a senior SSEN representative. All presentations were followed by round table discussions and electronic voting, which gave stakeholders the opportunity to provide further quantitative feedback.

The presentation given to stakeholders in Dunblane can be found here; the presentation given in Portsmouth can be found here; the presentation given in Bournemouth can be found here; and the presentation given at the workshops in Swindon and Reading can be found here.

STAKEHOLDERS’ EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH US

The workshop began with a video and an introductory presentation given by Ian Crawley, Operational Safety Manager. Ian explained SSEN’s role in the energy network. He then talked through the outcomes of the stakeholder workshops, which had been held in the spring, and outlined the actions taken by SSEN as a direct result. After this presentation, stakeholders were asked to give their feedback based on their experience of working with SSEN.

OUR APPROACH TO KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

Ian also presented on SSEN’s approach to safety. He outlined the company’s performance in this area along with a number of campaigns, including the 105 phone number (to call in the event of a power cut); the Power Track app; and Look Out, Look Up, showing a video which had been shown in SSEN’s network area. He then talked stakeholders through SSEN initiatives involving DIY supply chains as well as manufacturers and suppliers of farm and construction machinery.

NETWORK INVESTMENT

In Dunblane, the presentation on network investment was given by Melanie Bryce, Lead Investment Engineer, while Mark O’Connor and Kate Markman, System Planning and Investment Engineers, led this presentation in the southern workshops. The presentation covered the pros and cons of proactive and reactive investment to ensure reliability and availability. They then explained their approach to rutter pole replacement and the proposed measures for reducing the visual impact of overhead lines in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and how funding for this could be used to improve reliability. The presentation also included an explanation of SSEN’s current approach to customer connections and connections-driven reinforcement and how it is, at present, informed by the Electricity Act legislation, which states that connections offers will be based on the ‘minimum scheme’.
THE TRANSITION TO DSO AND THE ROLE OF S-CMZs

This presentation was introduced by Frank Clifton, Innovation Strategy Manager, in Dunblane; by Steve Atkins, DSO Transition Manager, in Portsmouth; and by Stewart Reid, Head of DSO and Innovation, in Bournemouth, Swindon and Reading. The presentation covered SSEN’s transition to a DSO. The presentation began with a short video explaining what this would mean for the network and for customers. They then outlined SSEN’s recent innovative projects, including Thames Valley Vision; My Electric Avenue; ACCESS (Assisting Communities to Connect to Electric Sustainable Sources); SAVE (Solent Achieving Value from Efficiency) and NINES (Northern Isles New Energy Solutions). They then explained the concept of S-CMZs before asking stakeholders to give their feedback.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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

- 96% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop ‘interesting’ or ‘very interesting’.
- 61% of stakeholders strongly agreed that they had been given an opportunity to make points and ask questions, and 82% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed that the right topics were covered on the day.
- 74% thought EQ Communications’ facilitation was ‘very good’, and 90% thought the venue for the day was ‘good’ or ‘very good’.
- 92% wished to receive the post-event report and would be interested in attending similar events in the future.
## ATTENDEES

A total of 144 stakeholders attended this series of workshops, representing 109 organisations. The organisations represented by stakeholders are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affpuddle Parish Council</td>
<td>Developer Services Southern Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMT-SYBEX Ltd</td>
<td>DistGen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anesco Ltd</td>
<td>Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angus Council</td>
<td>Droxford Parish Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyll and Bute Council</td>
<td>Dummer Parish Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>B&amp;Q plc</td>
<td>Dundee City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balfour Beatty</td>
<td>Eastleigh Borough Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAM Nuttall</td>
<td>Eco Sustainable Solutions Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barratt Homes</td>
<td>Edge Power Ltd</td>
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<td>Bellrock Technology</td>
<td>Element Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birchmere Ltd</td>
<td>Elettromeccanica Tironi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blandford Forum Town Council</td>
<td>Energy Action Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bournemouth Borough Council</td>
<td>Energy Saving Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns &amp; McDonnell</td>
<td>Fareham Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadent</td>
<td>FES Support Services Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Sustainable Energy</td>
<td>Foundation Property &amp; Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrica</td>
<td>GMB Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chichester District Council</td>
<td>Green Frog Connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITA</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice (National)</td>
<td>Hart District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice Bournemouth &amp; Poole</td>
<td>Heriot-Watt University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice Scotland</td>
<td>Highview Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Historic Environment Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clancy Docwra</td>
<td>Innogy Renewables UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Council for Berkshire</td>
<td>INRG Solar Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Energy South</td>
<td>Invisible Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect Reading</td>
<td>iPower Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corfe Mullen Parish Council</td>
<td>JB Corrie &amp; Co LTD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranborne Parish Council</td>
<td>JCM Groundworks Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidson &amp; Robertson</td>
<td>Levelise</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Local Energy Scotland
Lucy Electric
Miller Engineering
National Energy Action
National Grid
Natural England
Natural Power
Nether Wallop Parish Council
NRSWA
Omexom
Outram Research Ltd
Oxfordshire County Council
P F Cusack
PE Systems Ltd
Peter Brett Associates
PLPC Ltd
Portsmouth City Council
Portsmouth Water
Powerline Technologies Ltd
Prysmian Cables & Systems Ltd
Public Power Solutions
Reading Borough Council
Rowlands Castle Parish Council
S&C Electric Company
Schneider Electric
Scotia Engineering
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Selborne Parish Council
SGN
Siemens
SP Energy Networks
Sturminster Marshall Parish Council
Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Swindon Borough Council
Tele-Fonika Kable
TH White Group
Thames Water
The Schools Energy Project
University of Bath
University of Reading
University of Southampton
Verwood Ladies Organisation
Verwood Town Council
Warmworks
West Sussex County Council
West Aberdeenshire Pylon Action
Wiltshire Council
Winchester City Council
Wood

What type of stakeholder are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy / utility company</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority officer / elected representative</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer / connections representative</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish / town / community councillor</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity / non-profit organisation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business customer / representative</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic customer / consumer interest body</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational representative</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing / development</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Below is a summary of the feedback given across all five events, based on stakeholders’ verbal comments and the outcomes of the electronic voting exercises.

WORKSHOP ONE: YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH SSEN

- A broad range of stakeholders attended the workshops. Given the topics discussed, the majority came from a technical background, representing energy and utility companies, infrastructure, and engineering, although those representing local government, either as elected members or officers, were also particularly well represented.
- Stakeholders were keen to discuss a wide spectrum of issues, from future-proofing, the transition to DSO, smart grids and electric vehicles to new connections, housing development and vulnerable customers.
- A considerable number of stakeholders were very positive about working with SSEN. Some praised the company’s dynamic leadership and innovative thinking on future-proofing. Others highlighted positive relationships and collaboration with engineers on a local level.
- In terms of negative experiences, there were reports across all the workshops that it was not obvious who to contact within SSEN, primarily because of the structure of the company. To fix this, many suggested a dedicated account manager, particularly for those customers with large, expensive connections projects.
- On the subject of communications, a number of stakeholders wanted more proactive engagement with local authorities on planning, transport and, thinking ahead, on electric vehicle charging points.
- Stakeholders had mixed views on SSEN’s connections process. Some found it relatively smooth, while others reported issues and wanted to see an improvement in the online system and procurement process. Most qualified this by pointing out that once an issue was raised, SSEN dealt with it effectively.
- Delegates discussed SSEN’s performance in comparison to other DNOs. Western Power Distribution received praise for their connections process, which was seen as cheaper and easier to run, as well as for their work with vulnerable customers. UK Power Networks were singled out for their Alfresco platform, and Electricity North West for their communications.
WORKSHOP TWO: HELPING TO IMPROVE OUR SAFETY PERFORMANCE

- Across all five events, less than half of the stakeholders (39%) had heard of the 105 number. Further analysis by stakeholder type showed that although most energy and utilities representatives had heard of it, those with less awareness were mainly from local authorities and parish councils, suggesting that more work needs to be done to target those delegate groups.

- Suggestions for promoting the number included putting stickers on customers' boilers; publicising the number on SSEN's fleet of vans; better use of social media; and making use of the Association of Local Councils (which represent all parish and town councils) and parish newsletters.

- 84% of stakeholders reported that they had not heard of the Power Track app, making it clear that more needs to be done to promote it.

- The majority were impressed by Power Track and said they would be likely to download and use it (51% said it was ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ that they would download it and use it). Those who did not intend to use it said that they would not want to clutter up the space on their phones by downloading it, and others warned that some sectors of society would not have access to the internet and would not be fluent with technology.

- There was consensus across all five events that the Look Out, Look Up campaign was moving and highly effective and should be more widely promoted. Many suggested using schools and universities to extend the reach of these messages, and others wanted to see the return of nationwide safety campaigns.

- Although there was support for all of SSEN’s safety campaigns, there was little appetite for increasing customers’ bills to fund them. Only 25% agreed or strongly agreed that they would be prepared to pay more on their bill to invest in safety campaigns. Delegates from energy companies and utilities tended to be more ‘generous’, while those from parish councils and charities, probably mindful of those least able to afford any rise in energy costs, were more likely to say that they could not support more money being added to customers’ bills.
ELECTRONIC VOTING

Q. Had you heard of the 105 phone number before?

Q. Did you know that the Power Track app was available for you to download for free?

Q. Please place the following campaigns in order according to which you think we should prioritise.
Q. How do you feel about the following statement: ‘I would be prepared to pay more on my bill to see more investment in safety campaigns.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

26% Strongly disagree, 22% Disagree, 27% Neutral, 19% Agree, 6% Strongly agree.
WORKSHOP THREE: NETWORK INVESTMENT

- Just over half of stakeholders (51%) felt that they would prefer to see one long interruption rather than lots of short interruptions. Many commented that long power cuts were potentially very serious, particularly for vulnerable customers. Others pointed out that if cuts were planned, adequate preparations could be made, and if apologies were made, stakeholders would be more forgiving.

- In the electronic voting, it was clear that delegates from the industry were in favour of one long interruption, with a majority of utilities, connections and business representatives voting for this option.

- Across the workshops, proactive, future-proofing solutions were the preferred approach to asset management on the network. Furthermore, it was felt that more investment now would result in lower demand for investment in the future.

- A close analysis of the electronic voting data around the question of proactive investment reveals that the seeds for collaboration in this area are already present, as a mix of local authorities, parish councillors, connections and energy representatives felt very strongly that reinforcement should be innovative and proactive.

- In the area of customer connections and connections-driven reinforcement, stakeholders again urged SSEN to adopt a proactive approach. Delegates were keen to state that a collaborative relationship with local authorities and housing developers in particular would ensure that investment is targeted to the most appropriate areas. In order to pay for this, it was widely felt that a system where the larger users pay more, similar to a tax, was the most appropriate way forward.

- There was consensus across the southern workshops that SSEN should lobby government to amend the Electricity Act (72% agreed when asked to vote electronically), with many feeling that investment in the future of the network – in new housing and nationwide EV charging – was contingent on a change in this legislation. Just under half of the stakeholders at the southern workshops felt that the most appropriate charging methodology would be a tax-equivalent approach where larger users pay a higher percentage. These questions were not asked in Dunblane.

- In Dunblane, delegates discussed questions about applications for undergrounding schemes in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). There was consensus in the discussions that schemes that also improve reliability should be prioritised for...
AONB funding – with 78% of stakeholders agreeing when asked to vote electronically. Stakeholders specifically felt those applications which would improve reliability for worst-served customers should be prioritised (with 41% of stakeholders choosing this when asked to vote electronically).

**ELECTRONIC VOTING**

Q. When it comes to power supply interruptions, what would your preference be?

![Bar chart showing preferences for power supply interruptions]

Q. Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10 what you think our approach to network investment should be.

![Bar chart showing ratings for network investment]

10 – The maximum cost option: proactive investment in our assets ahead of time.
1 – The minimum cost option: replacing an asset just before failure.
Q. How do you feel about the following statement: ‘SSEN should work to change the legislation in the Electricity Act which states that connection charges will always be based on a minimum scheme’?

NB. This question was only asked at the workshops in the southern region, so it was not asked in Dunblane.

Q. What is your view on which charging method is most appropriate?

NB. This question was only asked at the workshops in the southern region, so it was not asked in Dunblane.
Q. If all criteria between two AONB applications are considered equal, should we prioritise the scheme that would also positively impact the network?

NB. This question was only asked in Dunblane.

Q. Were we to use our AONB funding to also positively impact reliability on the network, which applications should we prioritise?

NB. This question was only asked in Dunblane.
Q. Do you think SSEN should deliver a resilient network by prioritising innovative solutions at the expense of more traditional reinforcement?

NB. This question was only asked in Dunblane.

10 – Strongly agree
1 – Strongly disagree
Knowledge of DSO differed from workshop to workshop. Where there were more technical, industry-wide representatives, as was the case for Swindon, Reading and Dunblane, awareness of DSO was high, but in Bournemouth and Portsmouth, where more parish councillors and local authorities were present, awareness was more limited. Overall, 61% of stakeholders said they had heard of Distribution System Operator.

Regardless of stakeholder type, knowledge of S-CMZs was low (only 11% had heard of them), which is perhaps unsurprising given that it is a relatively new initiative.

Once the principles of S-CMZs had been explained, stakeholders were broadly enthusiastic about the proposed benefits of the initiative, particularly its potential for reducing energy consumption and promoting community cohesion.

Delegates also pointed out that lack of awareness and a lack of interest on the part of communities were challenges that would need to be overcome. Lack of awareness was raised as an issue most frequently by energy and utility representatives and parish councillors, showing a shared concern across the spectrum of stakeholder types.

It was felt that leadership from central and local government and the use of community ‘champions’ were the best ways to address these challenges. In addition, many stated that communities would be unlikely to change their behaviour to take advantage of S-CMZs unless they could see a direct financial benefit for themselves. SSEN were urged to make any benefits as clear and tangible as possible to encourage uptake.

There was much discussion on whether stakeholders thought their own communities would be interested in participating in an S-CMZ. Some expressed enthusiasm and even offered to spearhead schemes in their communities, while others remained doubtful that it could be achieved. It was stressed that a financial benefit would outweigh a moral one in most communities. It was noted that communities which participated in a functioning S-CMZ would be an active draw for new residents, including house-hunters.
ELECTRONIC VOTING

Q. Have you heard of Distribution System Operator (DSO)?

- 61% Yes
- 36% No
- 3% Not sure

Q. Had you heard of Social Constraint Managed Zones (S-CMZs)?

- 86% Yes
- 11% No
- 3% Not sure

Q. What do you consider to be the biggest challenge for us in rolling out S-CMZs?

- Lack of awareness: 30%
- Lack of technical know-how: 19%
- Lack of community leadership: 12%
- Lack of interest: 10%
- Other: 5%
Q. How do you feel about the following statement: ‘My community would be interested to participate in a social CMZ’.

Q. How do you feel about the following statement: ‘Investing beyond the meter (in communities) is the right thing to do to help us manage the network more efficiently’.
WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

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

Q1: OVERALL, HOW INTERESTING DID YOU FIND THE WORKSHOP TO BE?

![Bar chart showing the distribution of responses to Q1.]

- Not interesting at all: 0%
- Not that interesting: 1%
- Neutral: 3%
- Interesting: 55%
- Very interesting: 41%

Q2: DID YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE YOUR POINTS AND ASK QUESTIONS?

![Bar chart showing the distribution of responses to Q2.]

- Strongly disagree: 0%
- Disagree: 0%
- Neutral: 1%
- Agree: 38%
- Strongly agree: 61%

Comments:
- “Fantastic facilitation and presentations.”
- “Well managed and controlled to remain on topic.”
- “Well-facilitated.”
Q3: DID WE COVER THE RIGHT TOPICS FOR YOU ON THE DAY?

Comments:
- “Good strategic discussion.”
- “Would like to have seen more focus on managing vulnerability.”

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

Comments:
- “Grid flexibility technologies.”
- “RIIO-2 [and] cyber security.”
- “Financial accountability.”
- “Connections & future network.”
Q5: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE VENUE?

Comments:

- “Good transport links.”
- “Easy to get to, easy to park and get into.”
Q6: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE WAY THE WORKSHOP WAS CHAIRED BY YOUR FACILITATOR?

Comments:
- “EQ Communications were very effective and knowledgeable.”
- “Disciplined and focused.”
- “EQ Communications [were] excellent.”

Q7: ANY OTHER COMMENTS?
- “Voting questions [were] quite binary.”
- “This workshop was very interesting and helpful as I've been able to gain insights and views from other stakeholders that we do not normally have a chance to engage with at other events […] aimed at ICPs and the distribution network.”
- “Interesting workshop. Good to have senior SSEN staff on our table plus a variety of other stakeholders.”
- “Lots of ideas for further engagements – good to see DNO outwardly facing.”