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INTRODUCTION

On 25 September 2019, SSEN hosted the last in a series of six workshops aimed at gathering feedback from its stakeholders on the following topics: stakeholders’ expectations of the local network; shaping the future of SSEN and the next price control, RIIO-ED2 (2023–2028); supporting consumers in vulnerable situations; and operating in a sustainable world.

The workshop took place at the Hilton Hotel in Bournemouth. The event 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 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.

Click here for a link to the stakeholder engagement publications page of our website. Here, you can find a link to the slides presented at each workshop. NB. The percentages in the graphs have been rounded to one decimal place, and therefore may not add up to exactly 100%.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Craig Gilroy, Head of Project Delivery, welcomed stakeholders to the workshop, giving an overview of the distribution network in the Connections South region and outlining SSEN’s approach to stakeholder engagement. After the presentation, stakeholders were invited to give feedback about their expectations of the local network and inform the company of any growth or energy plans in their area.

- Over a third of attendees (39%) saw the roll out of EV charging as the most pressing issue for the local electricity network, with many reporting ambitious local plans for the anticipated growth in the EV market.
- Delegates expected their local network to be transparent, sustainable and reliable, with many citing positive experiences of working with SSEN on renewables, vulnerability and education.
- Many stakeholders from councils, local authorities and businesses reported sustainability plans, such as the roll out of EV charge points and the transferring of farmland for solar panels, which would need greater capacity and grid flexibility going forward.

SHAPING OUR FUTURE AND THE NEXT PRICE CONTROL – RIIO-ED2 (2023–2028)

Trung Tran, RIIO ED2 Technical Lead, presented the second session of the day, which outlined the next price control, RIIO-ED2. Trung touched upon the new stakeholder priorities that were emerging for this price control, explaining that SSEN were interested in exploring the three facets of the energy trilemma that stakeholders would most like the company to prioritise.

- Stakeholders discussed every facet of the energy trilemma at length, but ultimately ‘sustainability’ was named as the top priority by stakeholders during the electronic
voting.

- Stakeholders in Bournemouth nominated the support and development of renewable generation as a preferred additional priority area, and argued that additional categories, such as grid flexibility, education, and the incentivising of green technologies, would also need to be prioritised in support of this goal.
- The most popular method for engaging with SSEN during the RIIO-ED2 business plan process were stakeholder workshops and online surveys, with 36% of attendees supporting each of these options.

SUPPORTING CONSUMERS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

Simon O’Loughlin, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, gave a presentation on the company’s approach to consumer vulnerability, which centres around four core themes: PSR provision and promotion; expanding activities around fuel poverty and energy efficiency; widening partnerships and collaboration; and ensuring that services are inclusive and accessible.

- A majority of stakeholders in Bournemouth (74%) had either not heard of the PSR or were unsure of what it was.
- Stakeholders felt that the most important Ofgem themes were theme 1 (improving identification of vulnerability and smart use of data), theme 2 (supporting those who are struggling with their bills), and theme 5 (working with partners to tackle issues that cut across multiple sectors). Delegates discussed the problems inherent in GDPR legislation and increasing the identification of vulnerability.
- Many ideas were proposed for collaboration, with delegates wanting to see SSEN playing a more prominent role in partnering with housing associations and bodies to improve energy efficiency in homes and working with councils, social services and local authorities to create wider, deeper referral networks.

OPERATING IN A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Andy Huthwaite, Director of Connections, and Richard Arnold, Head of External Relations (South), explained that businesses were operating against a backdrop of a climate emergency, a poverty crisis and a lack of trust towards large organisations. They explained
that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals can be used by businesses as a framework to manage environmental, social and governance issues, asking stakeholders which of the 17 goals are most relevant to SSEN’s work and what actions the company can take to meet them.

- Stakeholders were positive about SSEN incorporating some of the sustainable development goals into their business plan. Attentive to the plausible scope of SSEN’s role in this field, ‘Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure’ was voted the goal that SSEN should focus most on, with ‘Affordable and Clean Energy’ and ‘Sustainable Cities and Communities’ also appearing in the top five goals.

- Delegates advocated a broad range of approaches that SSEN should take to achieve the goals, including lobbying government to make changes to building regulations and fossil fuel extraction and generation, simplifying the connections process for renewable generation, increasing capacity and strengthening the network to prepare for the large-scale uptake of EVs.

- 100% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed that SSEN should take a leading role in achieving Net Zero, demonstrating overwhelming approval for this approach in Bournemouth.
WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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

- 100% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop either ‘interesting’ or ‘very interesting’.
- 69% of stakeholders strongly agreed that they had had an opportunity to make points and ask questions, while 31% agreed.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the right topics were discussed on the day.
- 94% thought EQ Communications’ facilitation was ‘very good’, with 6% opting for ‘good’.
- 100% of stakeholders wished to receive the post-event report and would be interested in attending similar events in the future.
ATTENDEES

A total of 17 stakeholders attended the workshop, representing 16 organisations. The organisations represented on the day are shown below:

- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
- Citizens Advice Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole
- Citizens Advice Hampshire
- Corfe Mullen Parish Council
- Dorset CLA
- Dorset County Council
- Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership
- Efacec Energia
- Energy Network Services
- Kinson Power Ltd
- Millerfirst Global
- Schneider Electric
- Test Valley Borough Council
- The Schools Energy Project
- Verwood Town Council
- Winchester City Council
What type of stakeholder are you?

- Local authority officer / elected representative: 26.7%
- Charity / non-profit organisation: 20.0%
- Parish / town / community councillor: 20.0%
- Business customer (or representative): 13.3%
- Energy / utility company: 13.3%
- Other: 6.7%
- Domestic customer / consumer interest body: 0.0%
- Developer / connections representative: 0.0%
- Environmental representative: 0.0%
- Housing / development: 0.0%
WORKSHOP ONE: INTRODUCTION

Summary

Local authorities were the most well-represented stakeholder group at the Bournemouth workshop, with just over a quarter of attendees (27%) representing this stakeholder type. A further 20% of delegates identified as parish / town / community councillors, and another 20% as charity / non-profit organisations. Stakeholders were most concerned about the roll out of EV charging in their region, with 39% identifying this as the most pressing issue for their local network.

Stakeholders arrived at the workshop in Bournemouth keen to hear about SSEN’s plans for the future, particularly in regard to the transition to DSO, expanding network capacity for EV charge points, and enabling sustainable generation. As witnessed in the electronic voting, many stakeholders, particularly from local authorities, were interested in the capability of using existing street furniture, such as lamp posts, as EV charging points. The roll out of ambitious environmental projects was seen as paramount in the move towards creating sustainable cities and communities and reducing carbon emissions. Stakeholders from the business and connections sectors expressed some frustration at the pace of change with regard to clean growth in Dorset: some wanted to see a simpler, more rapid connections process to encourage more renewables onto the grid, while others were concerned about the maximisation of fossil fuel extraction before the 2050 Net Zero goal.

Delegates in Bournemouth emphasised the importance of their local network being open, transparent and communicative, and many reported very positive experiences of working with SSEN on projects from community resilience to connections to promoting the PSR to customers in vulnerable situations. Some urged SSEN to take a role in educating current and future customers on the shift to renewables, demonstrating a need for their local network to also be informative and responsive to the goal of zero carbon by 2050. Others sounded a
note of caution in the drive towards sustainability, citing the overarching imperative for DNOs to distribute electricity, and noting with concern that increased demand alongside the correlative decrease in the use of fossil fuels and nuclear power could cause reliability issues in the future.

Stakeholders discussed growth, energy and other plans in their region. Some representing business reported that they were currently compiling a clean growth strategy, so would need new connections and information about capacity in the future. Most local authorities had plans for EV charge points and were keen to discuss these. Stakeholders from the charity sector reported on projects to go into schools in areas with high levels of fuel poverty to educate children on safety and energy efficiency, expressing the hope that they could both partner with SSEN and access resource support.

1. What is your role and why have you attended today’s workshop?

- “I’m the UK and Ireland marketing manager of a company which manufactures infrastructure for SSEN’s network. SSEN is one of our main customers. I’m here because I’m most interested to hear about its plans for the transition to DSO.” Infrastructure representative
- “I’m interested to see what the plan is for the uptake in EVs. The cables in the ground are the weak link, and it’s the investment that would be required to upgrade. Even if 15% of the population charged overnight, it is huge. I wonder whether it will go the same way as phone and internet, where you pay a fixed amount a month. That will affect people on a low budget; it may be restricted at certain times. I’m not sure otherwise how you’d manage peaks and troughs.” Developer / connections representative
- “All of our street lights are directly connected onto the mains in SSEN’s systems. I’m here today because I’m interested in new connections, schemes, signage and lighting.” Local authority
- “I’m a parish councillor. I used to be a county councillor and a member of the fire authority. I’ve been involved with the landfill site in my area, which produces electricity from methane that goes straight into the grid. I’m interested in carbon-reduction.” Parish / community council
• “I’m a street lighting engineer. I’m interested in cable networks and future energy production via renewables. EV charging point installation is being discussed but I think now is a bit early.” Local authority

• “I’ve been in the oil industry for 30 years and cover all types of extraction. I got involved in renewables a long time ago. Disappointingly, it’s a legal requirement to maximise extraction ahead of 2050. We’re trying to get to renewables.” Infrastructure representative

• “I’m a councillor for a local borough. I deal with the environment, so my remit is from bins to climate change. I’m a founding member of a dementia awareness festival. One side is my ward is a collection of rural communities. I’m also interested in the environment, in capacity planning and if we do move to an electric fleet, how that will be planned for.” Local authority

• “I’m a regional manager for a company that provides software, hardware and services for energy management. We have framework contracts with SSEN. We do asset replacement, refurbishment and construction on the network, for example, transformer and switchgear replacement. I’m here to get an insight into SSEN’s investment and upgrade strategy over the next few years.” Developer / connections representative

2. What are your expectations of your local network?

• “I have been working with SSEN as part of a panel for awarding grants for local community resilience initiatives. I felt part of a team and it was great.” Domestic customer representative

• “There’s nothing negative in our interaction with SSEN. It’s the same as with most DNOs. It’s a positive thing. We deal with IDNOs and we always get better, more reliable systems from the larger groups. It would be good to know too that our projects are not creating issues for your networks.” Developer / connections representative

• “I have also been collaborating with SSEN on a local hospital scheme, which has involved case workers engaging with people who have been recently discharged from hospital. They have been giving them advice and getting them signed up to the PSR.” Domestic customer representative

• “We want to continue building up our relationship with SSEN to make this work even better.” Domestic customer representative
“Local generation has tremendous potential in the future and makes us aware of energy use. Education is key.” Business representative

“The aim of a distribution company should be to make sure that it distributes. My concern is that we are going to find ourselves in a situation where the security of supply is coming under pressure as the amount of fossil fuels and nuclear used is decreasing while demand is increasing. You now have – far more than ever before – a society that cannot continue without the links that electricity provides. Nowadays, something that happens in one town can bring half the country to a halt.” Local authority

3. What local growth / energy plans are in place in your area that we should know about?

“‘We’re putting together a local industrial strategy at the moment, so we want to find out about the future for grid connections. It’s about clean growth for Dorset.” Business representative

“I’m the sustainability officer at a local council. I’m working to combat fuel poverty, seek out potential sites for solar panel farms and identify sites for new connections. I’m looking to create collaborative partnerships that can help us to move forward effectively in the future.” Local authority

“Street light charging for EVs: that seems to be the next key phase at the moment. It’s not happening now because the network can’t take it, but let’s see what happens.” Local authority

“Even though we have done the LED roll out, we’re not ready to use street furniture as charging points yet.” Local authority

“I am here to hear what SSEN’s projects are in the local area that we might be able to support, as well as let you know about our projects we’re undertaking. We have connections agreements there but want to know how to make the process easier.” Developer / connections representative

“We go into schools and talk about electricity safety and energy efficiency. Our target this year is to target those schools that have degrees of fuel poverty, around the south-western side of Southampton in the Waterside area. Social deprivation and poverty are issues, and we are keen to get some resource support from SSEN on this.” Charity representative
What do you think is the most pressing issue for the electricity network in your area?

- The roll out of EV charging: 38.9%
- Connecting renewables: 33.3%
- The growth in housing: 16.7%
- The growth in commercial development: 11.1%
WORKSHOP TWO: SHAPING OUR FUTURE AND THE NEXT PRICE CONTROL – RIIO-ED2 (2023–2028)

Summary

Following the presentation by Trung Tran, RIIO ED2 Technical Lead, stakeholders were asked to discuss which of the three facets of the energy trilemma SSE should prioritise: affordability, sustainability or reliability. After this discussion, each table was asked to name the priorities that they felt were most important for SSE to address. Stakeholders were then invited to rank their table’s priorities by placing five stickers against one or more of the priorities to reflect their importance. The results of the table exercises can be found below, along with verbatim comments from the discussions.

In Bournemouth, sustainability was the facet of the energy trilemma that delegates felt SSE should prioritise during RIIO-ED2. This was reflected in the electronic voting, where sustainability came out on top, with 50% of delegates nominating it as ‘hugely important’, with a score of 8 out of 10. Reliability was awarded 7.6 out of 10, and affordability came out lowest, with 6 out of 10. These results were mostly backed up by the table discussions: although some stakeholders argued convincingly in favour of reliability and affordability, the overarching, dominant issue was felt to be sustainability.

Although priorities were generally unique for each attendee due to their various backgrounds, most agreed that greater support for domestic, renewable generation ought to be prioritised. Other stakeholders felt that greater support for customers and more clarity on connections costs could increase the levels of household PV generation, all indications that sustainability was high on the agenda.

Delegates from local authorities confirmed that choosing between the points of the trilemma
was indeed challenging, as the exercise intended. Affordability was seen as key, given that there was a need to keep costs down for their constituents and to keep their budgets in reasonable shape, but declarations of climate emergencies had seen an emerging, competing need to promote energy from renewable sources. Others spoke of the conflict between the use of sustainable energy and the ability of the most vulnerable to be able to afford any concomitant price increases. As a result, many of these stakeholder types placed themselves between sustainability and affordability.

Others were more concerned with reliability as it intersected with sustainability. Reliability was seen to be non-negotiable and it was commented that this might suffer as a result of a greater focus on sustainability. Those representing infrastructure expressed a vested interest in reliability, as a huge part of their work was supplying equipment that would enable a reliable network. Parish councillors representing more rural areas confirmed that for them, reliability was also key.

There was little consensus as to whether energy from sustainable sources might actually improve either affordability or reliability. Some stakeholders urged a move away from the concept of the trilemma, suggesting that the Action Centred Leadership model developed by John Adair might be a better framework. The model takes the form of three concentric circles that change size depending on which is most important and relevant to the situation at hand. It was argued that this template might allow for greater flexibility and responsiveness to each facet as their significance changes over time.

When each table was asked to submit and vote on their own priorities in a blank piece of paper exercise, by far the most nominated issue was ‘Supporting and Developing Renewable Generation’, with 21 votes. This focus speaks to the emphasis that stakeholders in Bournemouth placed on sustainability, and the ability of the grid to support the increase in renewables that would inevitably come with a commitment to Net Zero by 2050. Another
related priority nominated by delegates was ‘Incentivising Green Technologies’, with 11 votes. This went hand in hand with another highly-favoured priority, ‘Network Flexibility’, which gained 9 votes. In all of these cases, there was evidence that delegates placed a high importance on SSEN preparing the ground for a network capable of sustaining and supporting more renewable energy. ‘Education’ and ‘Visibility’ also scored highly, with 7 votes each. In these fields, delegates wanted to see SSEN take a leadership role in educating consumers and potential contributors about the changes in energy generation and sustainability, with a clearly defined, highly visible role in spearheading initiatives that would help, rather than hinder, the country’s 2050 Net Zero target.

In terms of engaging over the RIIO-ED2 business plan process, stakeholder workshops and online surveys were the preferred methods for most stakeholders, with both scoring 36%, demonstrating that delegates in Bournemouth wanted to see a combination of in-person and remote engagement. Most stakeholders were in favour of six-monthly (36%) or quarterly (36%) engagement.

1. Which do you think is the most important of the three facets of the energy trilemma – (for SSEN to address) – and why?

During the session, stakeholders were asked to place a sticker on the energy trilemma, indicating which of the facets they considered most important for SSEN to address. The blue squares display the average position of these stickers on each of the 4 tables, while the green square displays the average position across all tables. This indicated a slight preference for sustainability over the other facets, a view supported by the electronic voting after the session, where it received the highest average vote (8 / 10).
• “Given the state of the world, sustainability has to be the absolute priority.” Infrastructure representative
• “The argument for sustainability is obvious. Reliability, too, as it makes life easier.” Local authority
• “I’m bang in the middle of the three facets. With my street lighting hat on, reliability is superb, as 99.5% of our street lights are working at any one time. As a result, I would go with affordability, because our budget is a concern. However, sustainability is also a key component, because we have just declared a climate emergency at the council and I’m already being told off for not having 100% green energy powering the street lights. I would say that the priority should lie halfway between affordability and sustainability.” Local authority
• “I somewhat agree that sustainability and affordability are joint most important. We have declared a climate emergency at the council, but fuel poverty is a huge problem too.” Local authority
• “Sustainability is not a great concern to us. We have huge orders with SSEN. The
secret to our success is that we can manufacture transformers that are reliable and not very expensive. Reliability is our absolute main concern, but we need to be able to build them cheaply.” Infrastructure representative

- “For our village, reliability is key. Affordability wouldn’t be a concern for many residents.” Business representative
- “I’m between sustainability and reliability. I’m looking at providing a service, as well as my rural communities.” Local authority
- “There’s an appetite for sustainable projects in Dorset. We can get the funding, and we need it to be reliable.” Business representative
- “I’d go slightly off-centre, towards reliability. Mine is for technical reasons. Reliability is not something we can negotiate around: it has to be a constant. For sustainability, we’ve got a lot of issues with WPD, not so much SSEN, and so I would like to support that more. In the future, we must move further. The WPD issue is EV chargers. We’re potentially putting in 1,000 of them. WPD have done an investigation into their network and it is far below what our client wants, but they haven’t given the technical backing to help us. Nothing can be set in stone, so it is all preliminary.” Developer / connections representative
- “To me, it’s important that the supply is reliable, but it’s also got to be affordable, because there’s no point in having reliable electricity if you have people who can’t afford it. The government is phasing out the cheapest form of energy, natural gas, which means that the price will go up. Funding for sustainability will come from taxes or consumers, which will impact affordability. So I’m not interested in sustainability, although it does factor in a bit in that fossil fuels will run out.” Local authority
- “From a business point of view, we’re looking to supply a reliable service. So we’re probably focused on reliability, but we have to take affordability into account too.” Developer / connections representative
- “I’m between affordability and sustainability as, from my client’s point of view, sustainability is becoming more of an issue, and while that’s vital, we must recognise that it must not come at the detriment of those more vulnerable. These people would love to be carbon neutral, but it isn’t yet affordable for them.” Domestic customer representative
- “I would come at this from a different angle and would use the John Adair leadership analysis model as a template. Rather than having a trilemma triangle, you need three circles which vary in size depending on their importance to the situation.” Domestic

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
customer representative

• “The crucial thing is that they change size over time. My feeling is that these three facets are all interlinked and their significance will vary over time. By adopting this thinking, you can be flexible in relation to these three facets.” Domestic customer representative

How important is the following to you?
Average response (10 being 'hugely important')
2. What are the most important priorities for you (for SSEN) and why?

There then followed a ‘blank piece of paper’ exercise where each table was asked, unprompted, to name their own priorities and rank them in terms of importance. The collated results from this table exercise are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIOITY</th>
<th>VOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting and Developing Renewable Generation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentivising Green Technologies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Area Networks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimising Human Resources</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queue Management</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean Growth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Customers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- “There needs to be incentives for installing sustainable technologies in new homes.”
  Local authority
- “Local businesses need to receive more financial support to incentivise them to set
up sustainable connections to the grid, such as solar cells and EV chargers. The costs on these businesses currently make them financially unfeasible.” Local authority

- “Can SSEN free up blocked capacity going into the grid? Many developers are holding onto capacity for a long time and people are not able to move their projects forward.” Local authority

- “My dream is that anybody is allowed to install their own generation and it not cause the network to have issues. If I move, I want to be able to install PVs again, which causes issues. [We need] limitless local generation. So you’d remove all the connections issues and just say ‘yes’. In terms of access, we get it without constraints. That’s our dream.” Charity representative

- “Queue management would be a great solution.” Local authority

- “In my opinion, SSEN should prioritise capacity, followed by clean generation and incentivising green technology.” Infrastructure representative

- “In the electricity industry, using renewables should be emphasised as a priority.” Parish / community council

- “I think there are sustainable projects from a growth perspective that are ready to go. The reason they can’t get off the ground is the grid connection or storage. Clean growth is a key aspect of our local industrial strategy. Affordability is important for businesses, so it needs all three aspects of the trilemma.” Business representative

- “I think there’s huge momentum behind the climate change agenda, which has generated huge expectation. My priority would be to be transparent. There’s a gap in understanding and expectations, and we need help managing expectations.” Local authority

- “From a business point of view, we want to get full visibility. Then, when our resources are called upon by SSEN, we would have continuity. We’ve had peaks and troughs over the last couple of years. It’s knowing what the strategy is going to be so we know what skills you require.” Developer / connections representative

- “I think skills as well is a good point. You have to make sure that you have the right people available in Dorset.” Business representative

- “It’s skills resources as well as equipment.” Developer / connections representative

- “I think that optimising human resources is important. The big problem with electricity is that there are limitations on storing it. We may well get to a point where there is no problem in generation, it’s in storage. That will take a lot of brain power and resources.” Local authority
• “How do you make it easier for people to become carbon neutral? If you had a wind turbine, the process of then getting connected is obscure for me. That should be made clearer and simpler, as I do not understand what I’d need to do. [You should be] supporting domestic generation. Carbon neutral is coming up more and more, and so people will have an interest in this. For SSEN to work on this and get it connected, it will require education.” Domestic customer representative

• “I think the constant issue is about communication from the public to the provider, and back and forth, being as comprehensive as possible. It’s improved, sure, but that speed needs to improve further.” Charity representative

3. How would you like to be involved in the RIIO ED2 business plan process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder workshops</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online surveys</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public exhibitions</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face meetings</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written consultations</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online conference (webinars)</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. How often would you like to be engaged in the RIIO ED2 business planning cycle?

![Graph showing frequency of RIIO ED2 engagement]

5. Would you be interested in attending an online conference in the future?

![Graph showing interest in online conferences]
WORKSHOP THREE: SUPPORTING CONSUMERS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

Summary
Simon O'Loughlin, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, gave a presentation outlining SSEN’s work to support consumers in vulnerable situations. He gave stakeholders an overview of the Priority Services Register (PSR), which allows the company to provide extra support to customers who need it, for example, in the event of a power cut. He explained that Ofgem have developed five themes as part of their consumer vulnerability strategy. During the table discussions, stakeholders were asked to suggest activities that SSEN could carry out under each of the five Ofgem themes.

When stakeholders were asked to rank the five Ofgem themes, the clear favourite was theme 1 (improving identification of vulnerability and smart use of data), which received 89% of votes. In joint-second place were theme 2 (supporting those struggling with their bills) and theme 5 (working with partners to tackle issues that cut across multiple sectors), both with 61%. When asked to vote for the Ofgem priority that they felt SSEN needed to do most work to address, again the clear favourite was theme 1, with 37% of delegates choosing this theme. Knowledge of the PSR was low, with 26% affirming that they had heard of the register, 27% saying that they had not, and 47% declaring themselves unsure.

Discussing Ofgem theme 1 (improving identification of vulnerability and smart use of data), stakeholders were in broad agreement that GDPR protections in place that restrict data
sharing between companies and utilities could prevent the necessary work being done to ensure the reliable identification of vulnerable people. Delegates representing local authorities confirmed the difficulties they had had in sharing information across different utilities, and urged SSEN to do more to make this process easier. Stakeholders suggested target groups that could be susceptible to vulnerabilities, such as retired farmers and those dependent on mobility scooters.

Delegates shared their ideas and best practice for helping customers struggling with their bills. One particularly successful scheme was a partnership with Southern Water where people accruing debts were put on better tariffs and given advice on saving money by being more energy efficient. It was pointed out that if a customer is struggling with their energy bill, the problem is unlikely to be solely contained in this area, and that perhaps a more systemic, holistic approach to the issue of fuel poverty was needed. Other suggestions involved a more radical, wholesale change to the way energy is billed, whereby rather than being charged for individual energy use, the system moves to a simplified subscription service.

In terms of driving significant improvements in customer service for vulnerable groups, the main obstacle was felt to be a resistance on the part of some customers in vulnerable situations to be referred to as vulnerable. Targeting areas where network reliability was low was seen as important, as well as targeting those who might not be aware of their eligibility, such as parents with children under five. It was also stressed that traditional methods of customer service, such as telephone and email, were simply not going to work for every type of vulnerable customer. Delegates representing the charity sector urged a person-to-person approach, with home visits, collaboration with welfare officers, better funding packages, and family referral networks suggested as potential ways to improve outreach.

Theme 5 (working with partners to tackle issues that cut across multiple sectors) was important to stakeholders in Bournemouth. Ideas for partnerships included working with the
fire service, having a greater role in working with housing associations and bodies to improve energy efficiency in homes and working with councils, social services and local authorities to create better signposting networks. Those from the non-profit and charity sectors singled out SSE as worthy of praise, citing the company’s support and partnership in working with vulnerable customers. It was felt that more work could be done to highlight the projects and services already in place, such as the partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Energy.

1. What can we do to support vulnerable customers now, and in the future, (under each of these categories)?

Improving identification of vulnerability and smart use of data

- “SSE should work with local councils more. If someone fails to pay their council tax repeatedly, it should be flagged up with SSE.” Local authority
- “With the PSR, we found the biggest problem was data sharing. We wanted to get the gas and electricity so that you only need one PSR, but we couldn’t do it. In the WPD area, we did manage to ensure that people on oxygen were given a referral form for the PSR. I can’t stress enough that people don’t know what’s available.” Local authority
- “People who are totally dependent on mobility scooters could be especially vulnerable, particularly if they are unable to contact organisations via mobile phone.” Infrastructure representative
- “You need to be smart in order to almost remotely sense who is vulnerable in different areas.” Business representative
- “Retired farm workers may be less able to sustain themselves in isolated farm cottages, so they could be an important group to consider.” Parish / community council

Supporting those struggling with their bills

- “We’ve already rolled out some support initiatives with Southern Water. If someone approaches us with a debt problem, it won’t just manifest itself in one specific bill. It will affect all the bills.” Domestic customer representative
- “As part of our partnership with Southern Water, vulnerable people are placed on the PSR, put on one of the better tariffs and given energy efficiency advice. The idea is to
help them to become better engaged and support themselves.” Domestic customer representative

• “We have also helped vulnerable customers coming out of hospital, by providing them with similar assistance to that provided to customers as part of our Southern Water partnership.” Domestic customer representative

• “We see a huge chunk of people each year and these problems aren’t contained to specific areas. If you look wider, you can help to support them with the deeper problems that they’re facing in their lives.” Domestic customer representative

• “SSEN are offering to help make it happen with us. It’s a great support. We don’t charge and people come to us as a result. It can help change their lives.” Domestic customer representative

• “It might be that you have a subscription service rather than being charged for usage. With vulnerable people – for example, people on benefits – it might be open to abuse, but the fact that you wouldn’t have to administer the mechanisms and having a fixed fee would mean you can save money on insulation grants, etc. Simplify the system.” Developer / connections representative

• “Maybe that moves back to distribution and captures innovation. Technology needs to come back into it.” Local authority

Driving significant improvements in customer service for vulnerable groups

• “Some people will be very resistant to being on the PSR.” Parish / community council

• “People living in worst-served areas in terms of the network may be difficult to reach because they have already adapted. It could be worth checking if these people are PSR-eligible.” Business representative

• “Is this for phoning up and communicating to PSR registers? They won’t all be on a smartphone, will they? There are people who cannot type or work a machine, and so we mustn’t be hamstrung [by these issues]. Some are independent enough to live on their own, but not others.” Charity representative

• “I signed up to the PSR, and it was very easy. I have a young child. I did not realise you could join if you had a child under five, so more information to young mums sounds like a good idea.” Domestic customer representative

• “We do get to a point where some referrals will come from going door to door. And we have to check on them. Those people need support, not just from us, but from
SSEN, and would benefit greatly. There’s a gap between what we do when we realise people need support. We have trained welfare officers in our organisation. These officers often refer their own family also. To reach them, it’s either our association that we can pass on, or it’s a dropping through the door operation. It’s about dealing with the finances, getting funding packages together, and if it’s the case of getting them into a nursing home, our officers will help.” Charity representative

Encouraging positive and inclusive innovation

- “At my organisation, we have a Macmillan service for people who have cancer and have become vulnerable as a result. This service helps them with their life administration, as they unexpectedly no longer have an income coming in. We hope that this service helps them to continue living as normally as they can.” Domestic customer representative
- “The innovation gap will get larger. People with the means [will be able to reap the benefits of solar power], for example, those who have a detached house where solar panels can be fitted. But if you live in rented accommodation or an apartment, they can’t fit solar panels.” Developer / connections representative

Working with partners to tackle issues that cut across multiple sectors

- “I’m interested in changing the fabric of the homes of vulnerable customers and making them a better environment to live in. Could SSEN not work with housing bodies to get homes improved, by installing insulation, for example? That could help to make it a more active partner.” Local authority
- “SSEN should work more closely with local councils in a signposting role. We have a large housing stock and SSEN could help us to find the people who are experiencing the greatest levels of fuel poverty.” Local authority
- “Social services should really have much better idea of who needs to be on the PSR and refer them themselves. Greater communications between them and SSEN would be great.” Local authority
- “Older people struggling to pay their bills switch things off and can get cold, which is a worry. The fire service can be helpful in this way as they can give electrical advice.” Parish / community council
- “It’s so great that SSEN engages with the non-profit sector so much, as it provides us
with so much support.” Domestic customer representative

- “There’s also the council and their electoral role: where does all this information reside and what can SSEN do to get this information in the first place? Access it, so you can then say where the gaps are appearing. Know what you do not yet know. Allow those like us who want to help, [and] join up these services.” Charity representative

- “There were multiple PSR registers, so it is good that it’s finally combined. The Centre for Sustainable Energy operates in Dorset, and we didn’t know this immediately, so now we work with them. It’s about knowing that these groups exist and raising awareness of projects they’re running, too. That should be out and for us, we spoke to 25,000 [people] last year, with thousands of different issues. So, directing and utilising the projects and services is vital.” Domestic customer representative

- “We give briefings to our volunteers where we explain these issues. I don’t necessarily think that post is a good thing if it’s not personalised. Something we’ve talked about locally is using social media more, adverts: those can be targeted. Organisations like us can link in and share information.” Domestic customer representative

2. Which of Ofgem’s themes is most important to you (for SSEN to address)?

Please identify the Ofgem theme that you think SSEN needs to do most work on to address

- Improving identification of vulnerability and smart use of data: 36.4%
- Working with partners to tackle issues that cut across multiple sectors: 18.2%
- Driving significant improvements in customer service for vulnerable groups: 18.2%
- Supporting those struggling with their bills: 18.2%
- Encouraging positive and inclusive innovation: 9.1%
3. Do you think that SSEN’s four priority areas are still fit for purpose?

How do you feel about the following statement?
“SSEN’s four priority areas are still fit for purpose”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avg. 4.21 / 5 (5 being 'strongly agree')

4. How can we best support and reach under-represented customers?

- “I work with a whole network under Action Hampshire and these under-represented customers can be represented there. I can put SSEN in touch with these people.” Domestic customer representative
- “Data sharing is fine as long as you get people’s consent for using their details for providing help.” Domestic customer representative
- “As long as you have databases set up correctly and there is consent, there shouldn’t be a problem.” Local authority
- “People don’t necessarily want to answer the phone to SSEN itself, as they will feel nervous that they’re being sold something or being chased up for a potential debt.” Local authority
- “Warm handovers for vulnerable people will help to get them engaged. Citizens Advice Bureau would be a more trusted body for getting these referrals to happen.” Domestic customer representative
WORKSHOP FOUR: OPERATING IN A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Summary

Andy Huthwaite, Director of Connections, and Richard Arnold, Head of External Relations (South), introduced stakeholders to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), a collection of 17 goals designed to enable countries to achieve peace and prosperity. Stakeholders were asked to identify the top five goals that SSEN should focus on and outline the activities that SSEN should undertake to help achieve them. The results of this table activity can be found below, along with comments made by stakeholders during the discussion.

As evidenced throughout the workshop, sustainability was high on the agenda in Bournemouth, and delegates were enthusiastic about SSEN’s commitment to implementing the relevant UN SDGs into their future business plans. During the electronic voting, ‘Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure’ was the most widely nominated SDG, with 15 votes, followed closely by ‘Affordable and Clean Energy’ with 13 votes and ‘Sustainable Cities and Communities’ with 10 votes.

Stakeholders saw the huge role that SSEN could play in ensuring that new industry and infrastructure was sustainable, reliable and fit for purpose. Those representing business saw the importance of innovation in this field, citing the innovative work some companies were doing to create protective cables that supply offshore wind farms while enhancing marine ecosystems. Others emphasised the critical importance of strengthening and smartening the network in preparation for EVs so that consumers could feel a level of confidence in investing in an electric vehicle. Others wanted to see SSEN working now to build and maintain resilient partnerships to cope with the changes coming to the network and focusing on increasing capacity to maintain reliability in a post fossil-fuel world.
Discussing concrete actions to ensure ‘Affordable and Clean Energy’, delegates saw that prioritising renewable connections in the form of free advice and faster response times would have a huge impact on the viability of this goal. Others wanted SSEN to take a leadership role in developing regional specific strategies, engaging in consultancy with active local partners on where best to generate and connect renewable energy sources. An educational element was felt to be critical here as well, with many citing the complexity of the connections process as a disincentive to participation. There was considerable disquiet over the Government’s policy of retaining fossil-fuel production ahead of 2050, with delegates wanting to see SSEN do more to take on this issue.

‘Sustainable Cities and Communities’ was the third most popular goal. Stakeholders urged SSEN to take a collaborative approach to realising local sustainability goals, working with councils, developers, and other utilities to make these goals a reality. On a national level, delegates advocated changes to building regulations so that all new developments are built on smart grids and are as carbon neutral as possible. They also wanted to see SSEN lobby to change the Infrastructure Act 2015 concerning fracking and maximising economic recovery from UK petroleum. It was felt that with this act in place, there was very little hope of achieving ‘Sustainable Cities and Communities’ in reality.

‘Life on Land’ and ‘Climate Action’ were discussed in tandem, with delegates feeling that any meaningful commitment to sustainability would need to take both as overarching goals. Stakeholders wanted to see ambitious targets on replacing SF6 in cables, and on disincentivising fossil fuel generation ahead of 2050. They also wanted to see SSEN offset the environmentally negative impacts of the business and reduce tree cutting and oil leakage. Delegates from business urged SSEN to be part of the shifting of the narrative around renewable energy, and to make it a point of pride for communities.

Discussing ‘Responsible Production and Consumption’, delegates again advocated SSEN
taking an educational role by fostering *informed* production and consumption. They also saw that mandating sustainable working practices throughout the supply chain would have a huge effect on driving change. Stakeholders were quick to point out that many of the goals intersected, and that by ensuring production and consumption were responsible, the quality of life on land and the ability to take climate action would inevitably be improved. Similarly, the goal of ‘Decent Work and Economic Growth’ was seen to have an impact on the other goals, with delegates arguing that there was a crucial difference between sustainable and economic growth, and that SSEN needed to decide what form of growth it would favour with a view to achieving the UN SDGs.

In the electronic vote, an overwhelming 100% of stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that DNOs should take a leading role in achieving Net Zero. As with earlier discussions, it was felt that lobbying government was going to be critical in regard to SSEN’s ability to enact meaningful change by 2050. Those who were more cautious emphasised that SSEN must not lose sight of their core purpose (electricity distribution) and that going too far by increasing expenditure might agitate shareholders.
1. Which of these goals are relevant to a Distribution business and what activities/initiatives can SSEN practically do in this area to help meet the UN’s goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (15 votes) | • Lobby central government  
• Accommodate community energy projects  
• Make project management sustainable  
• Reinforce your network and make it smart  
• Make smart charging a reality  
• Encourage buy-in on EVs  
• Increase workforce resilience  
• Increase capacity  
• Provide quality electricity from renewable sources |

| Affordable and Clean Energy (13 votes) | • Free advice on renewable connections  
• Promote the PSR  
• Create regional-specific strategies  
• Make smart networks a reality  
• Maximise network access and flexibility  
• Educate your customers |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Area</th>
<th>Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Responsible Consumption and Production | • Mandate sustainable working practices all the way down your supply chain  
• Provide education: move your customers and partners towards *informed* consumption and production |
| Sustainable Cities and Communities     | • Mandate that all new developments are built on smart grids  
• Foster a joined-up approach by working with councils, developers, planners, utilities and communities  
• Lobby government to change the Infrastructure Act 2015 |
| Climate Action                         | • Implement ambitious targets to replace all cables with SF6  
• Abolish the connection of fossil-fuel generators onto the grid  
• Meet your carbon targets  
• Encourage others to become carbon neutral |
| Partnerships for the Goals (5 votes) | • Work with partners to tackle fuel poverty  
• Treat charities as businesses  
• Collaborate on a national level with government, National Grid, and other industries |
| Life on Land (8 votes) | • Offset the negative impacts of running your business  
• Ensure sustainable best practice on new estates and developments  
• Reduce tree cutting  
• Enhance biodiversity as business as usual  
• Reduce oil leakage |
| Decent Work and Economic Growth (4 votes) | • Find the balance between economic growth and clean growth  
• Implement the living wage across your supply chain  
• Create more apprenticeships and trainee programmes  
• Provide workforce continuity in your supply chain |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean Water and Sanitation</td>
<td>No suggestions (2 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Below Water</td>
<td>No suggestions (3 votes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Health and Well-Being</td>
<td>No suggestions (1 vote)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please identify the top 5 SDGs that you think SSEN should focus on.

- “For ‘Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure’, we need to make sure that new infrastructure is fit for purpose and sustainable. It would be great if developments could just run by themselves in future. SSEN should facilitate this.” Local authority
- “SSEN should identify sites where generation could be a possibility and keep stakeholders in the loop. This means that I will know whether or not I’ll get a grid connection for my solar farm without having to potentially fork out £2,000 for the application process for nothing.” Local authority
- “There are companies that supply protective cables to offshore wind turbines that

![SDG bar chart]

(Percentage of stakeholders who chose this SDG as one of their ‘top 5’)
are using innovative blocks to protect the cables and encourage marine ecosystems. Protecting the power line side, that comes into it.” Business representative

- “The weak point is the cables in the ground. If everyone starts charging EVs, it’s all over! The first thing will be making the smart network. You’ve got to manage it. It’s like the iPhone: it knows when you’re going to work, so your car knows when you’re going to work and will charge overnight. Then it’s about feeding back into the network.” Developer / connections representative

- “That innovation won’t happen unless people buy into EVs. We need to make the network better to see that change.” Business representative

- “The tax rate on electric vehicles changes to 0% next year, so it will be a tipping point. They’ve had to close the books on certain hybrids.” Developer / connections representative

- “We need to make sure that EV is carried into the commercial side of things.” Local authority

- “With infrastructure, build and maintain resilient organisations to cope with future step changes in the network. Big changes.” Charity representative

- “SSEN needs to be more accommodating towards community energy projects, such as banks of solar panels being placed on roofs.” Domestic customer representative

- “For ‘Affordable and Clean Energy’, SSEN needs to start being more accessible to stakeholders about grid connections. A good idea would be giving free advice about where connections could be. This would be great for local community energy projects.” Local authority

- “You may need to know whether clean energy has potential by identifying where clean energy should happen. Regional strategies would be interesting to see.” Business representative

- “Increase capacity, also, and [implement] measures to ensure that the quality of electricity remains. [Focus on] harmonics and frequency mediation.” Developer / connections representative

- “Make smart networks work, starting with smart meters.” Developer / connections representative

- “Maximising your network flexibility should be a first step towards ‘Affordable and Clean Energy’. [Promote] awareness-raising, so the company is able to work efficiency through people.” Charity representative

- “All of the goals are important, but one of the most important has been missed. Our
government has the legal priority of maximising the revenue from petroleum in the UK. If you don’t define the line that gets you to 2050, you’re not going to get there. Diesel production has gone up in this country.” Infrastructure representative

- “They can make sure that people can afford electricity by keeping connection costs low. They’ve got to be innovative to ensure it’s done in a viable way.” Business representative
- “SSEN should encourage the government to have simple things changed, such as planning regulations.” Domestic customer representative
- “For sustainable cities, there needs to be a more joined-up approach in which everyone is aware of the developments taking place.” Infrastructure representative
- “If you responsibly consume, though, you can start to protect this ‘Life on Land’.” Domestic customer representative
- “‘Climate Action’ ties in with sustainable cities and communities.” Business representative
- “‘Life on Land’ is important, as SSEN should look to offset the impact of its operations on the environment.” Local authority
- “For ‘Life on Land’, SSEN should think about offsetting the negative effects of its operations. Replanting trees is an easy example of this.” Local authority
- “We were talking about storage at the beginning. If you say there are issues with the continuity of supply, it’s linked to climate. It will be more difficult for us to generate as climate change goes on.” Developer / connections representative
- “Maybe it’s a communications thing about making the connections seem like a good thing, so there is less backlash against renewable projects. You need to make the narrative exciting.” Business representative
- “In that area, I support we are ruling out anything that does not produce clean energy, so renewable-only schemes. Carbon neutral.” Parish / community council
- “Support other groups in your region to be carbon neutral.” Domestic customer representative
- “Education should be one of your objectives. You should encourage responsible consumption.” Local authority
- “Are there any debates taking place around SF6s in the company? I’ve seen it in the news. I think that is the single biggest priority for a business like yourself. That swamps everything else, for me.” Charity representative
- “For ‘Partnerships for the Goals’, I would suggest treating charities as businesses. This
mean proper targets, processes and monitoring.” Domestic customer representative

• “Another critical suggestion for ‘Partnerships for the Goals’ would be working with partners to address fuel poverty. We can achieve a lot together.” Domestic customer representative

• “Asking about the sustainability of company practices is a useful exercise.” Parish / community council

• “At Bournemouth University, we’ve launched a sustainable management course. It’s helpful but the problem is that it doesn’t address company structure. We need to look at the way company structures are formed.” Infrastructure representative

• “‘Decent Work and Economic Growth’ being decoupled from environmental degradation is an important value. It’s also to do with improving efficiency.” Parish / community council

• “If there’s better grid connections, that will create more economic growth. And I think that’s good for local people and businesses, especially if we go into the EV world. Economic growth is my organisation’s main objective.” Business representative

• “Economic growth is important, but should the focus be on GDP or on clean growth and sustainability? They can go hand in hand, but we need to find the balance. There are benefits for business as well as the environment. Are we more interested in economic growth or sustainability?” Business representative

• “Living hours comes into it. It provides continuity if we’re providing a workforce as part of the supply chain.” Developer / connections representative
2. Do you think a DNO should take a leading role in achieving Net Zero by proactively enabling the sustainability agenda?

How do you feel about the following statement?
“DNOs should take a leading role in achieving Net Zero by proactively enabling the sustainability agenda”

- “This should link back to the government and local authorities. SSEN does have a responsibility to lobby to shape energy policy.” Local authority
- “Not necessarily. You are a distribution network; your responsibility largely involves carrying out that duty to distribute. You’re doing pretty well at that.” Infrastructure representative
- “There is a risk of going too far and shareholders getting agitated about expenditure.” Business representative
WORKSHOP 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?

   - Very Interesting: 69%
   - Interesting: 31%

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

   - Strongly agree: 69%
   - Agree: 31%
3. Did we cover the right topics for you on the day?

Comments:
- “Very useful to hear about the PSR and your work.”

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

Comments:
- “Excellent [...] timekeeping; very knowledgeable.”
5. Any other comments?
   - “Brilliant opportunity to input ideas.”
   - “Very well run; facilitator was extremely good.”

6. Would you like to receive our post-event report and invites to similar events in future?
   - Yes, 100%