Meeting	Independent Stakeholder Group
Location	Online
Date	13 October 2026

Attendees – Panel Members	
Sharon Darcy (SD) **(Chair)**	Tamar Bourne (TB)
Claire Whyley (CWh) **(Vice Chair)**	Barry Coughlan (BC)
Chris Watts (CW)	Andrew McMunnigall (AM)
Barbara Whiting (BW)	
Apologies	
Fayza Benlamkaden (FB)	Keith Gardner (KG)
Attendees – SSEN, Distribution	
Hollie Wilson (HW), Stakeholder Engagement Manager, SSEN Distribution	Emma Merritt (EM), Customer Vulnerability and Communities Lead, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Lyndsey Stainton (LS), Head of Stakeholder Engagement, SSEN Distribution	Rodger Yuile (RY), Asset Strategy Engineer, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Christoph Grafe (CG), Head of ED3 Strategy, SSEN Distribution	Graeme Keddie (GK), Director of Corporate Affairs, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Chris Bratt (CB), Director of Asset Management, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Andrew Roper (AR), Director of DSO, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Alan Brown (AB), Senior Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Monisha Gower (MG), Director of Large Capital Delivery, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Rachael Robertson (RR), Head of Regulatory Finance, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Bryan O'Neill (BO), Head of Regulatory Investment, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Ewan Baillie (EB), Asset Strategy Engineer, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	

Minutes

Item No.	Agenda Item
1.	**Welcome and Introductions – Sharon Darcy and Bryan O'Neill** The ISG welcomed the additional information provided ahead of the meeting, particularly the material explaining how options and trade-offs had been considered across the business plan. Members noted that this helped improve their understanding of the approach taken and provided greater confidence in the supporting process. The Group noted that its review had been based on headline information and asked for further material on deliverability and how the needs of customers in vulnerable circumstances were reflected across the plan.

2.	**Totex Update – Rachael Robertson** SSEN provided an overview of the final ED3 expenditure plan and the changes made since the draft submission. The discussion covered how uncertainty would be managed, the timing of future investment and the importance of maintaining flexibility as customer and network requirements developed. The ISG asked about affordability, benchmarking, demand assumptions and the potential effect of investment timing on customers. Members stressed the importance of transparent explanations and appropriate comparisons when the final plan was assessed.
3.	**Load – Monisha Gower, Andrew Roper and Alan Brown** SSEN outlined its approach to forecasting future electricity demand and explained how engagement with local authorities and other stakeholders informed long-term network planning. The final load plan had been refined through further assessment of flexibility and alternative delivery options, with the aim of balancing affordability and future network need. The ISG asked for clearer links between forecasts, business plan commitments and assumptions about the uptake of low-carbon technologies. Members also discussed how flexibility opportunities would be communicated and how load-related investment would be considered alongside asset health, resilience and environmental requirements. The Group welcomed the intention to retain flexibility as future demand became clearer, while emphasising the need for strong governance, transparency and accountability for customer outcomes.
4.	**Non-Load – Monisha Gower, Chris Bratt, Ewan Baillie and Rodger Yullie** SSEN presented its approach to maintaining and improving network assets, including the use of asset condition and risk information to prioritise investment. The ISG discussed cable replacement, resilience, future intervention requirements and how the business would demonstrate progress in intelligent and sustainable asset stewardship. Members emphasised that headline reliability measures should be supported by clearer information about customers experiencing repeated or prolonged interruptions. The discussion also covered worst-served customers, network automation, environmental resilience, innovation and the benefits of recovering, reusing and refurbishing network assets. The ISG asked for clearer evidence of how the needs of customers in vulnerable circumstances were incorporated across the non-load strategies. The team agreed to provide a summary addressing this point.
5.	**Challenge Log Update – Challenge Owners and Responsible Directors** The ISG reviewed the open challenge log. The Future Consumers challenge was closed, with members satisfied that engagement with younger people and future consumers had influenced development of the ED3 plan. The challenges relating to Vulnerability and Partnerships were also closed following review of the updated Vulnerability Strategy. The Transparency challenge remained open pending publication of supporting customer research. Challenges relating to Public Acceptance, Evidence and Commitments, the Golden Thread and Trade-Offs also remained open while members completed their review of the final business plan and supporting material. Members recognised the progress made in embedding innovation across the plan but asked for this to be consistently demonstrated in the final written strategies. The revised Connections

	Strategy was considered significantly stronger, and the relevant strategy links would be reissued to support the ISG's remaining review.