

Meeting	Independent Stakeholder Group
Location	Online
Date	7 October 2026

Attendees – Panel Members

Sharon Darcy (SD) (Chair)	Tamar Bourne (TB) (Partial Attendee)
Claire Whyley (CWh) (Vice Chair)	Keith Gardner (KG)
Chris Watts (CW)	Andrew McMunnigall (AM)
Barbara Whiting (BW)	Barry Coughlan (BC)
Fayza Benlamkaden (FB) (Partial Attendee)	

Attendees – SSEN, Distribution

Hollie Wilson (HW), Stakeholder Engagement Manager, SSEN Distribution	Maz Alkirwi (MA), ED3 Finance Director, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Lyndsey Stainton (LS), Head of Stakeholder Engagement, SSEN Distribution	Ryan McKay (RM), Senior Strategy Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Christoph Grafe (CG), Head of ED3 Strategy, SSEN Distribution	Sara McGonigle (SM), ED3 Programme Director, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Danielle Royce (DR), Head of Programme, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Charlie Thompson (CT), Stakeholder Engagement Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Shelley Tanner (ST), Head of Operations HR, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Ainsley Mitchell (AMi), Business Change Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
James Flannagan (JF), Director of Procurement, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Bryan O'Neill (BO), Head of regulatory Investment, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Hollie Escott (HE), Procurement and Commercial Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Emily Wilson-Gavin (EWG), Head of Corporate Affairs, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Nick Forrest (NF), Baringa (Partial Attendee)	Dawn Mulvey (DM), Create Clarity (Partial Attendee)
Michael Viveash-Brainch (MVB), Create Clarity (Partial Attendee)	

Apologies

Graeme Keddie (GK)

Minutes

Item No.	Agenda Item
1.	Welcome and Introductions – Sharon Darcy The Chair welcomed members and outlined the timetable for completing the ISG's assurance statement. The Group agreed arrangements for reviewing the remaining material and providing final feedback before the statement was completed.

	The ISG reviewed the action log. Members were encouraged to continue providing robust and constructive challenge as the business plan was finalised
2.	Stakeholder Engagement Update – Create Clarity An update was provided on customer and stakeholder research, including customer priorities, the Fair Future Panel and engagement with large business energy users. Reliability, resilience and value for money remained prominent priorities. Members noted that acceptance of future investment depended on clear explanations, fairness and appropriate support for customers in vulnerable circumstances. The ISG discussed planned engagement with digitally excluded customers and asked how findings would inform the final business plan. Members also requested clearer comparison of customer and wider stakeholder views, greater visibility of regional and rural/urban differences, and transparent explanation of how evidence had influenced decisions. The Group welcomed the ongoing triangulation and independent assurance work, while reinforcing the importance of a clear golden thread from engagement evidence through to strategies, commitments and customer outcomes.
3.	ED3 Programme, Regulation and Strategy Update – Christoph Grafe SSEN provided an update on revised regulatory guidance and the resulting work required across the ED3 business plan. The ISG discussed the need to respond to changing assumptions while maintaining a credible, transparent and evidence-based investment case. Members considered how uncertainty should be reflected in the plan and stressed the importance of explaining how investment could adapt as future demand develops. An update was also provided on future engagement with Ofgem, wider industry activity and Ofgem’s longer-term review of price-control arrangements.
4.	Strategy Review Updates – Bryan O’Neill The ISG shared headline feedback from reviews of the ED3 strategy suite. Members recognised that the quality of documents had improved, but identified recurring issues including limited baseline information, insufficient benchmarking, gaps in detail across the trade-offs made by SSEN when proposing investments and investment approach, and a lack of evidence supporting SSEN’s claims on ambition for ED3. Members asked for stronger links between strategies and a clearer golden thread connecting stakeholder evidence, strategic choices, commitments, investment and customer outcomes. They also called for simpler language, clearer regional differentiation and better explanation of how innovation and collaboration would support delivery across ED3.
5.	ED3 Workstream 7: Deliverability – Danielle Royce, Shelley Tanner, Ainsley Mitchell, James Flannagan and Hollie Escott SSEN presented its approach to delivering the ED3 programme, covering workforce, supply chain, delivery capability, governance, mobilisation and risk management. Members considered the strategy comprehensive and well structured, with a strong foundation in existing delivery arrangements. The ISG asked for innovation, collaboration and cross-workstream working to be more visible. Discussion also covered workforce capacity, supply-chain confidence, long lead-time

	equipment and how delivery risks would be managed. The team agreed to strengthen the links between risks identified in supporting investment documents and the overarching Deliverability Strategy.
6.	Bill Impact – Maz Alkirwi SSEN outlined its approach to considering affordability and the longer-term effects of network investment and electrification on customers. The ISG welcomed the attempt to bring affordability, customer impacts and investment requirements together within a single coherent approach. Members discussed short-term affordability pressures, the unequal ability of different customer groups to benefit from low-carbon technologies, and the importance of considering distributional impacts. The Group also explored the assumptions and uncertainties within long-term modelling and emphasised the need for transparent evidence and clear communication of customer impacts. The ISG noted the particular challenges faced by customers in high-cost regions and discussed the importance of fair charging arrangements.
7.	Overview of the Business Plan Narrative – Sara McGonigle and Christoph Graph SSEN presented the developing ED3 business plan narrative, focused on electrification, resilience and affordability. Members welcomed the clarity of the overall structure and asked that the narrative balance the needs of current customers with long-term sustainability, future consumers and energy security. The ISG requested clearer explanation of the evidence behind headline claims and future demand assumptions. Members also stressed that partnerships and collaboration should be more visible, reflecting the role of local authorities, industry partners and wider energy-system organisations in delivering the plan.
8.	Commitments – Ryan McKay SSEN presented the proposed commitments and supporting performance measures intended to explain what customers would receive from ED3 investment. The ISG supported the aim of making these commitments accessible but stressed that additional evidence was needed for the Group to assess whether they were sufficiently ambitious. Members asked for current baselines, comparisons with ED2, appropriate industry benchmarking and clearer rationale to accompany each commitment. They also requested clearer distinctions between related commitments, stronger explanation of regional differences and a more customer-centred ordering that leads with outcomes before delivery enablers.
9.	Overview of value analysis and economic modelling – Emily Wilson-Gavin and Nick Forrest An overview was provided of work to assess the wider economic and societal benefits of the ED3 business plan, including supply chain activity, energy system benefits, emissions reduction and economic growth enabled by network capacity. The ISG asked for the analysis to remain grounded in outcomes for customers and communities. Members encouraged clearer use of customer personas and case studies, and

	stronger links between the analysis, business plan choices and the role of connections, flexibility and the Distribution System Operator in enabling local growth.
10.	A.O.B – All The ISG reviewed the action and challenge logs. Challenges relating to vulnerability, bill impacts and future proofing were closed. Challenges concerning supporting evidence and public acceptance remained open pending further information. The transparency challenge would close once the relevant customer research reports were published on the website. The Chair and Vice Chair also noted recent discussions with other stakeholder group Chairs and Ofgem, with key points having been shared with members.