

**Meeting** Independent Stakeholder Group

**Date** 11 November 2025

**Location** Microsoft Teams

**Attendees – Panel Members**

Sharon Darcy (SD) <b>(Chair)</b>	Fayza Benlamkaden (FB)
Chris Watts (CW)	Tamar Bourne (TB) (Partial Attendee)
Andrew McMunnigall (AM)	Claire Whyley (CWh) <b>(Vice Chair)</b>
Barry Coughlan (BC)	

**Attendees – SSEN, Distribution**

Hollie Wilson (HW), Stakeholder Engagement Manager, SSEN Distribution	Shirley Robertson (SRo), Head of Strategic Planning and Sustainability, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Lyndsey Stainton (LS), Head of Stakeholder Engagement, SSEN Distribution	Ewan Baillie (EB) Asset Strategy Engineer, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Clothilde Cantegreil (CC), Head of Strategy, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Graeme Keddie (GK), Director of Corporate Affairs, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Sam Roberts (SR), ED3 Project Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Patrick Erwin (PE), Director of Commercial, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Gwen McNaughton (GM), Senior Strategy Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Danielle Royce (DR), Head of Programme, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Carys Periam (CP) Lead ED3 Project Manager. SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Shelley Tanner (ST), Head of Operations HR, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Rory Brown (RB), DSO Programme Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Michael Ricketts (MR), Head of Data and Analytics, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Rodger Yuile (RY), Asset Strategy Engineer, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Kylie Jones (KJ), Carbon and Nature Strategy Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
James Flanagan (JF), Director of Procurement, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Chris Bratt (CBr), Director of Asset Management, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)

**Minutes**

Item No.	Agenda Item
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions – Sharon Darcy and Lyndsey Stainton</b></p> <p>The Group welcomed Claire Whyley (CWh) as the new ISG Vice Chair, and noted relevant declarations of interest, which SSEN confirmed can be appropriately managed.</p> <p><b>Challenge Log</b></p> <p>The Group received an update on ongoing research, with findings to be shared once publishable. ENA-led collaboration across DNOs continues, particularly on consumer research and data sharing.</p>

	<p><b>Action Log</b></p> <p>Outstanding actions were reviewed.</p> <p><b>Business Plan Development</b></p> <p>SSEN outlined early ED3 business plan work and confirmed cost assumptions will be shared following discussions with Ofgem.</p> <p><b>Energy Efficiency</b></p> <p>The Group noted that further Ofgem guidance is expected in early 2026 and agreed to revisit the topic once the consultation is available.</p>
2.	<p><b>ED3 Strategy and Regulation Update – Clothilde Cantegreil and Gwen McIntyre</b></p> <p>SSEN outlined its draft ED3 priorities, highlighting their ambitious scope in response to net zero and evolving regulatory expectations.</p> <p><b>Strategic Development Plans &amp; tRESP</b></p> <p>The Group discussed Ofgem’s timelines for Strategic Development Plans and noted the need for clearer, consolidated tRESP outputs to support effective network planning.</p> <p><b>Regulatory Model</b></p> <p>Members considered Ofgem’s developing ED3 model, which will place greater emphasis on measurable outcomes and transparency. SSEN confirmed it will engage with Ofgem on concerns such as potential “double penalties”.</p> <p><b>Affordability &amp; Investment</b></p> <p>The Group discussed long-term affordability, intergenerational equity and options for smoothing bill impacts. SSEN confirmed various spend profiles are being modelled and resilience will feature more clearly in the business plan.</p> <p><b>Innovation &amp; Energy Efficiency</b></p> <p>SSEN outlined steps to embed innovation into ED3 development and noted that further guidance on energy efficiency is expected in early 2026.</p> <p><b>Consumer Research &amp; Early Proposals</b></p> <p>SSEN updated the Group on its consumer research approach and early ED3 proposals, including work to enhance DNO collaboration on strategic spares.</p>
3.	<p><b>ED3 Programme Update – Carys Periam and Sam Roberts</b></p> <p>SSEN provided an overview of the updated ED3 programme plan, key milestones and major workstream deliverables. ISG meeting dates will continue to align with programme milestones, with an updated timeline to be shared.</p> <p>The Group noted the need for flexibility as Ofgem’s timelines evolve. SSEN confirmed that any changes in Ofgem milestones will be reflected in programme updates.</p> <p>The Group discussed resourcing, with SSEN confirming workload distribution has been reviewed and additional director level support is in place to ensure capacity as the programme intensifies.</p>

	<p>SSEN outlined its governance approach, including tiered reporting and a new risk dashboard covering key dependencies such as consumer research, regulatory guidance and tRESP inputs. ISG feedback will continue to inform programme decision making.</p>
4.	<p><b>ED3 Workstream 6: Reliability, Climate Resilience and Environment – Shirley Robertson and Ewan Baillie</b></p> <p>The Workstream provided an overview of its structure, investment areas and key interdependencies. The Group discussed recent stakeholder engagement activity, noting signs of fatigue and the need to prioritise high value, well timed engagement. SSEN confirmed that stakeholder insight is being incorporated into asset risk modelling, including NARMS.</p> <p><b>Circular Economy &amp; Asset Management</b></p> <p>SSEN outlined its plans to embed a circular approach in ED3, focusing on extending asset life, reuse and waste reduction. The Group discussed supply chain readiness, regulatory incentives and the need for clear performance measures.</p> <p><b>Asset Reuse</b></p> <p>Members explored opportunities to increase use of abandoned or decommissioned assets, with SSEN confirming this is being considered alongside wider infrastructure collaboration.</p> <p><b>Reliability Performance</b></p> <p>The Group reviewed SSEN's reliability trends and noted areas where improvements have slowed. SSEN committed to providing more granular data and benchmarking in future sessions.</p> <p><b>Investment Approach</b></p> <p>The Workstream outlined its non-load investment planning approach, supported by Ofgem's CBA model and internal social value metrics. Members emphasised the importance of innovation, consistent decision frameworks and community level insights.</p> <p><b>Environmental Priorities</b></p> <p>SSEN presented its Environmental Action Plan for ED3. The Group discussed opportunities for place-based collaboration and how consumer attitudes to environmental investment shift under affordability pressures.</p> <p><b>Climate Resilience</b></p> <p>The Group reviewed SSEN's ongoing resilience work, including flood and storm protection. Members highlighted the importance of community resilience and encouraged continued development of modelling tools to assess long term risks and investment tipping points.</p> <p><b>Nature Based Solutions</b></p> <p>SSEN noted Ofgem's limited acceptance of NBS to date, though interest is growing.</p>
5.	<p><b>ED3 Workstream 7: Deliverability, Supply Chain and Workforce – Shelley Tanner and Danielle Royce</b></p>

	<p>The Workstream provided an overview of SSEN's Deliverability Strategy and key ED3 drivers, with discussion focused on workforce capability, supply chain readiness and future skills.</p> <p><b>Workforce Strategy</b></p> <p>SSEN outlined its shift towards a more skills-based workforce model as digital tools, automation and robotics evolve core roles. Workforce planning is being expanded to meet the scale of ED3, supported by national collaboration through the DESNZ Workforce Planning Programme and Sector Growth Plan. Training pathways are being modernised, with accelerated upskilling and increased use of digital learning tools.</p> <p><b>Digital and Innovation Readiness</b></p> <p>SSEN highlighted productivity improvements achieved through digital asset tools and automation, while noting that full cultural adoption of "digital-first" ways of working will continue to develop through ED3.</p> <p><b>Inclusive Recruitment</b></p> <p>The Group discussed broadening entry routes into the sector. SSEN outlined partnerships including Barnardo's and forestry schools, and agreed to explore further engagement with non-mainstream education networks while considering safeguarding and funding constraints.</p> <p><b>Local Employment &amp; Supply Chain Development</b></p> <p>SSEN confirmed its commitment to local recruitment within its licence areas and outlined ongoing work with supply chain partners, including increased engagement through supplier platforms, industry events and "Meet the Buyer" sessions. Subcontractors are now included in engagement and local economic value is being monitored.</p> <p><b>Future Workforce &amp; Innovation</b></p> <p>The Workstream described emerging roles in robotics, drones and digital monitoring. SSEN continues to assess innovations from across the sector and is exploring opportunities for international knowledge exchange.</p> <p><b>Policy Alignment &amp; Forecasting</b></p> <p>SSEN outlined how its workforce and supply chain planning aligns with wider policy objectives and is designed to adapt as government targets evolve.</p> <p><b>Supply Chain Visibility</b></p> <p>SSEN has expanded visibility for suppliers by publishing a project pipeline to 2029, reserving delivery capacity in advance, and developing a Common Data Environment to improve data sharing.</p> <p><b>Regional Policy Differences</b></p> <p>The Group noted differing skills and apprenticeship frameworks across the UK and Scotland, with SSEN engaging with relevant national agencies to align delivery approaches.</p>
6.	<p><b>ISG Chair Conversations – Sharon Darcy</b></p> <p><b>Cross-Group Collaboration</b></p>

	<p>The ISG discussed strengthening alignment with the ISP and DSOAB, including opportunities for cross-attendance where relevant. Members supported adding visibility of both groups' agendas to future ISG materials to improve coordination.</p> <p><b>Future Structure</b></p> <p>The group endorsed proposals for closer joint agenda planning and noted plans to introduce ISG Sub Committees from March 2026 to enable deeper exploration of specialist topics. SSEN's Distribution Board will increase its involvement with ISG activity from 2026 to support more joined up governance.</p> <p><b>Standardisation of Presentations</b></p> <p>Members agreed that a more consistent format for workstream presentations would support clearer comparison of progress and dependencies.</p> <p><b>Joint ISG Responses</b></p> <p>The ISG noted emerging discussions between Chairs about potential joint responses to Ofgem consultations. Members welcomed a more coordinated approach, particularly on areas such as consumer research.</p> <p><b>tRESP and NESO Engagement</b></p> <p>The ISG received an update on ongoing engagement with NESO regarding tRESP. Further clarity is expected on how Ofgem may request ISG input on specific topics.</p>
7.	<p><b>AOB, Reflections and look forward - All</b></p> <p><b>Innovation Funding</b></p> <p>The ISG discussed the use of BAU funded innovation within ED3. Members agreed to log this as a recurring issue for ongoing monitoring.</p> <p><b>Education and Inclusion</b></p> <p>The group noted previous discussions on engagement with home school networks and GCSE-related initiatives had not been followed up. SSEN confirmed a tracking log will be developed to monitor progress on past CEG workstream actions.</p> <p><b>Reliability Performance</b></p> <p>Members highlighted limited improvement in reliability despite ongoing focus. SSEN will ensure future updates demonstrate measurable progress and address ISG feedback.</p> <p><b>tRESP and Modelling</b></p> <p>Progress and risks associated with tRESP were noted, with monitoring to continue and alignment confirmed with load planning and risk evaluation.</p> <p><b>Customer Feedback</b></p> <p>The group discussed collection of customer feedback following outages. SSEN confirmed ongoing qualitative engagement with Local Resilience Forums and community groups.</p>