

Meeting	Independent Stakeholder Group
Location	Online
Date	9 September 2026

Attendees – Panel Members

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

Apologies

Fayza Benlamkaden (FB)

Attendees – SSEN, Distribution

Hollie Wilson (HW), Stakeholder Engagement Manager, SSEN Distribution	Chris Burchell (CB), Managing Director, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Lyndsey Stainton (LS), Head of Stakeholder Engagement, SSEN Distribution	Sara McGonigle (SM), ED3 Project Director, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Christoph Grafe (CG), Head of ED3 Strategy, SSEN Distribution	Graeme Keddle (GK), Director of Corporate Affairs, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Daniel Mellis (DM), Senior Connections Strategy Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Andrew Scott (AS), Director of Customer Service, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Vanessa Head (VH), Connections Strategy Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Monisha Gower (MG), Director of Large Capital Delivery, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Michael Downey (MD), Connections Stakeholder Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Bryan O'Neill (BO), Head of regulatory Investment, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)
Mark Askew (MA), Head of Connections Policy and Performance, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Nikki Nicol (NN), Engagement Delivery Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Observer)

Minutes

Item No.	Agenda Item
1.	Welcome and Introductions – Sharon Darcy The previous minutes were approved and no conflicts of interest were declared. The ISG reviewed the action and challenge logs and asked that updates clearly record progress and supporting evidence. Members discussed the importance of publishing customer and stakeholder research where possible and ensuring new outputs are easy to find. The Group reiterated that innovation should be visible consistently across the strategies.

2.	ED3 Strategy, Regulation, and Programme Update – Christoph Graph and Sara McGonigle SSEN provided an update on the development of the ED3 business plan and the evolving regulatory context. The programme is focused on aligning investment, financing, affordability and customer outcomes within a coherent overall plan. The ISG discussed the scale of future network investment, the need to support reliability and resilience, and the importance of preparing for electrification and network growth. Members stressed that investment proposals should be supported by clear evidence and transparent engineering justification. The discussion also covered uncertainty mechanisms and their potential implications for delivery, supply chain confidence and future stakeholder scrutiny. The Group noted that continued regulatory uncertainty reinforces the need for a clear, evidence-based narrative.
3.	Quarterly Business Update – Chris Burchell SSEN provided an update on safety, operational delivery, reliability, customer service, connections and transformation activity. Improvements in safety performance were noted, alongside continued focus on environmental performance and network reliability. The ISG discussed the transition from ED2 to ED3, including delivery capability, workforce readiness, customer experience and the skills required to support increased activity. Members also considered the importance of maintaining accessible customer contact routes as digital services develop. Winter preparedness and resilience were discussed, including the cumulative impact of severe weather events. The Group reinforced the importance of learning from previous events, maintaining robust response arrangements and continuing to improve network performance.
4.	Stakeholder Engagement Update – Lyndsey Stainton, Graeme Keddle and Hollie Wilson An update was provided on the stakeholder engagement programme, including planned testing of draft ED3 commitments and ongoing consumer research. The ISG welcomed the intention to explore differing stakeholder views, priorities and potential trade-offs. Members stressed that strategy documents must show a clearer line of sight from stakeholder insight to decisions, actions and commitments. The importance of triangulation evidence and transparent reporting was reinforced, particularly in support of the ISG assurance process. Research with large energy users and the Fair Future Panel continued to highlight reliability and resilience as important priorities, alongside capacity, flexibility, vulnerability and future network needs. The Group also noted recent improvements to the ISG website to strengthen transparency and visibility of the Group's role.
5.	ED3 Workstream 3: Connections – Vanessa Head, Michael Downey and Andrew Scott SSEN presented the developing Connections Strategy, drawing on feedback from customers, the ISG, the Connections Expert Panel and wider engagement. Key themes included simpler journeys, clearer communication, accurate information, transparency of network data and access to appropriate technical support. The ISG supported the use of digital tools where these improve efficiency but stressed the need to retain human support for customers who require it. Members also asked for connection costs, place-based planning and regional needs to be more visible within the strategy. The Group reviewed proposed commitments covering pre-application support, service standards, communications, accuracy of offers, queue management and low-carbon

	technology delivery. Members requested clearer links between commitments, operational change, measurable customer benefits and wider business transformation. The importance of alignment between the Connections, DSO and Low Carbon Technology strategies was emphasised to provide a joined-up customer experience and support local decarbonisation plans.
6.	Strategy Review Updates – All The ISG reviewed progress across the ED3 strategy suite. Members recognised improvements but identified recurring areas requiring further development, including strategic clarity, measurable commitments, milestones, investment phasing, trade-offs and evidence of decision-making. Members noted that the depth of evidence presented during meetings and deep dives was not always reflected in the written strategies. They called for a stronger golden thread between stakeholder evidence, strategic choices, commitments, investment and customer outcomes. The Group also asked for innovation and collaboration to be treated consistently as cross-cutting themes, for regional differences between the North and South licence areas to be better reflected, and for technical language to be made more accessible. SSEN acknowledged the feedback and confirmed that revisions would focus on strengthening the strategic narrative, visibility of trade-offs, use of stakeholder evidence and explanation of regional differences.
7.	Evolution of the Draft Business Plan - Sara McGonigle, Christoph Grafe, Ryan McKay, Graeme Keddie and Rachael Robertson SSEN outlined how the draft ED3 business plan is evolving ahead of submission. Work is continuing to simplify the overarching narrative and strengthen the links between customer priorities, strategies, commitments, investments and supporting evidence. The ISG requested clearer mapping between individual strategies, the overall business plan structure and the supporting investment case. Members also asked for better visibility of investment phasing, delivery milestones and expected outcomes across ED3 and beyond. The discussion covered investment choices, reliability, resilience, climate risks, operational costs and efficiency. The Group emphasised the need to explain the consequences of not investing, demonstrate value for customers and show how cost, risk and performance have been balanced.
8.	A.O.B – All The Group reviewed the actions arising from the meeting and agreed that no additional formal challenges were required at this stage, as the recurring strategy feedback had been acknowledged and was being addressed. An update was provided on wider discussions between Independent Stakeholder Group Chairs and Ofgem, including the future role of stakeholder groups and the importance of robust evidence in supporting environmental, resilience and vulnerability proposals. Members also discussed the need for transparency on comparative information, the potential role of the ISG following business plan submission and the importance of clearly presenting options and trade-offs within investment proposals.

