

Meeting	Independent Stakeholder Group	
Date	11 June 2026	
Location	Online	
Attendees – Panel Members		
Sharon Darcy (SD) (Chair)	Tamar Bourne (TB)	
Claire Whyley (CWh) (Vice Chair)	Barry Coughlan (BC)	
Chris Watts (CW) (Partial Attendee)	Andrew McMunnigall (AM)	
Barbara Whiting (BW)	Keith Gardner (KG) (Partial Attendee)	
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	Kasia Brown (KB), Regulation Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	
Patrick Erwin (PE), Director of Commercial, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Jenni Stephen (JS), Director of HR, SSEN Distribution, (Partial Attendee)	
Christoph Grafe (CG), Head of ED3 Strategy, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Emma Merritt (EM), Vulnerability Lead, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	
Olivia Worthington (OW), Vulnerability Strategy & Welfare Implementation Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Shirley Robertson (SR), Head of Strategic Planning and Sustainability, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	
Simon O’Loughlan (SO), Innovation Project Manager, SSEN Distribution, (Partial Attendee)	Charlie Thompson (CT), Stakeholder Engagement Manager, SSEN Distribution	
David Yule (DY), Head of Customer Service, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Monisha Gower (MG), Director of Large Capital Delivery (Partial Attendee)	
Maxine Frek (MF), Non-Executive Director, SSEN Distribution Board (Partial Attendee)	Emily Gavin-Wilson (EGW), Head of Corporate Affairs, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	
Carolyn Delahanty (CD), Chair of the Inclusive Service Panel, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Troy Fisher (TF), Customer Service Senior Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	
Ryan Mckay (RM), Senior Strategy Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	Kylie Jones (KJ), Sustainability Strategy Manager, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)	
Elianne Algaard (EA), Director of Customer Service, SSEN Distribution (Partial Attendee)		

Minutes

Item No.	Agenda Item
1.	<p data-bbox="300 208 914 241">Welcome and Introductions – Sharon Darcy</p> <p data-bbox="300 264 1458 331">SD introduced the session and a round of introductions was conducted for CG to his first session at the ISG.</p> <p data-bbox="300 353 547 387">Previous Minutes</p> <p data-bbox="300 421 1377 454">Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved without objection.</p> <p data-bbox="300 477 507 510">Challenge Log</p> <p data-bbox="300 544 1458 645">SD mentioned that SSEN can add more evidence to the challenge log against the relevant challenges. She also noted that the Vulnerability slides need to include more on partnerships and asked for this to be voiced over in the presentation.</p> <p data-bbox="300 667 459 701">Action Log</p> <p data-bbox="300 723 1458 824">SD noted positive progress on the actions log, highlighting that several actions had been closed in recent weeks and that the quality of responses had improved, with more substantive evidence being provided.</p> <p data-bbox="300 846 579 880">Conflicts of Interest</p> <p data-bbox="300 913 970 947">No conflicts of interest were declared by the group.</p> <p data-bbox="300 969 611 1003">Business Plan Update</p> <p data-bbox="300 1025 1458 1440">PE mentioned that Ofgem may bring the forward the final business plan submission date by up to 2 weeks towards late November to allow for more time for licence drafting later in the process. PE explained that this is currently a live issue under consideration by Ofgem, with the rationale being to allow more time for licence drafting following submission. It was noted that there is uncertainty as to whether this change will be formally consulted upon or implemented directly. Concerns have been raised across the sector regarding the potential impact on preparation timelines, particularly given the already compressed programme. SD asked if PE could keep the group updated on this. The ISG noted good progress against recent actions, with improvements in the quality of evidence provided. Members emphasised the importance of continuing to strengthen the link between stakeholder engagement, challenge and decision-making, including clearer articulation of trade-offs.</p> <p data-bbox="300 1462 794 1496">No conflicts of interest were declared.</p>
2.	<p data-bbox="300 1529 930 1563">Quarterly Business Update – Chris Burchell</p> <p data-bbox="300 1597 1329 1664">SSEN provided an update on performance and priorities, including investment, operational performance and customer outcomes.</p> <p data-bbox="300 1697 1458 1854">The ISG discussed the importance of clearly explaining the need for investment in the context of affordability and ensuring that customer benefits are well evidenced and communicated. Members highlighted the need to demonstrate how investment decisions support long-term value, resilience and the energy transition.</p> <p data-bbox="300 1888 1409 2000">Challenges relating to customer performance and regional variation were noted, alongside the importance of improving customer experience and satisfaction through both operational improvements and longer-term system transformation</p>
3.	<p data-bbox="300 2033 1010 2067">A view from the Distribution Board – Maxine Frerk</p>

	<p>An overview was provided of the Distribution Board’s role and priorities, including its focus on deliverability, regulatory uncertainty and strategic alignment.</p> <p>The ISG noted the importance of maintaining a clear “golden thread” between stakeholder insight, decision-making and delivery outcomes. Members highlighted the need to balance ambition with affordability, while ensuring that commitments remain deliverable and aligned with regulatory expectations.</p> <p>The role of incentives, performance frameworks and environmental considerations was also discussed, alongside the importance of maintaining strong accountability through structured commitments.</p>
4.	<p>ED3 Programme, Regulation and Strategy Update – Patrick Erwin and Christoph Grafe</p> <p>SSEN provided an update on the evolving regulatory landscape, including the publication of the SSMD and the increasing uncertainty associated with a “build and flex” approach.</p> <p>The ISG emphasised the importance of presenting a clear, evidence-based narrative that sets out investment needs, trade-offs and customer outcomes. Members noted the importance of ensuring that stakeholder engagement, including ISG input, is clearly reflected in strategic decision-making.</p> <p>Affordability and long-term value were highlighted as key cross-cutting considerations, alongside the need to provide clear and consistent signals to support supply chain confidence and deliverability.</p>
5.	<p>Stakeholder Engagement Update – Lyndsey Stainton and Charlie Thompson</p> <p>An update was provided on stakeholder engagement activity and implications of the SSMD, including updates to the ISG Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The ISG supported proposed refinements to ensure alignment with regulatory guidance and noted the importance of maintaining transparency in how stakeholder insights inform decision-making.</p> <p>Members highlighted the need for continued development of engagement with connections customers and alignment with wider research activity. The importance of ensuring a clear link between evidence, stakeholder insight and the business plan was reinforced</p>
6.	<p>ED3 Workstream 6: Environment – Shirley Robertson and Kylie Jones</p> <p>SSEN presented an update on its Environmental Action Plan, including the outcomes of the double materiality assessment and how these inform priorities.</p> <p>The ISG emphasised the importance of demonstrating a clear “golden thread” between stakeholder engagement, analysis and final decisions. Members also highlighted the need for greater transparency in prioritisation, trade-offs and benchmarking against best practice.</p> <p>The discussion covered environmental investment, including nature-based solutions and asset risks, with members stressing the importance of clearly articulating the wider benefits, including resilience and long-term customer value.</p>

7.	<p>ED3 Workstream 4: Vulnerability – Emma Merritt and Olivia Worthington</p> <p>SSEN provided an update on its vulnerability strategy, including performance, partnerships and future direction.</p> <p>The ISG welcomed progress but highlighted the need for greater transparency on decision-making, clearer articulation of outcomes and stronger evidence linking stakeholder engagement to commitments.</p> <p>Members also emphasised the importance of benchmarking ambition, demonstrating how support is targeted using data, and ensuring an appropriate balance between the breadth and depth of support provided to customers in vulnerable situations</p>
8.	<p>ED3 Options Paper – Patrick Erwin, Ryan McKay and Christoph Grafe</p> <p>SSEN introduced its developing ED3 options paper, designed to support discussion of trade-offs between affordability, investment and long-term outcomes. It was noted that the paper will be published in August.</p> <p>The ISG welcomed the approach but emphasised the need for clarity, accessibility and a more comprehensive articulation of trade-offs across the plan. Members highlighted the importance of transparency in underlying assumptions, including bill impacts, and ensuring that engaging stakeholder on the options paper is structured to generate meaningful insight.</p> <p>The need to clearly demonstrate how investment choices impact customer outcomes, including reliability and resilience, was also reinforced</p>
8.9.	<p>A.O.B – All</p> <p>The ISG reflected on key themes from the session, including the importance of improving clarity of materials, strengthening the articulation of trade-offs and ensuring that ambition is clearly evidenced. Workstream sessions were recapped for those who were not in the dedicated subgroups.</p> <p>Members highlighted the need for further development of both the Environmental Action Plan and the options paper to support effective scrutiny. The importance of benchmarking, transparency and demonstrating how decisions are made across the plan was reinforced.</p>