ED3 CONNECTIONS STRATEGY

ED3-S16

Contents page

Overview of this Document 2
Purpose of this document 2
1.Executive Summary 3
2. Overview of the connections business 7
3.Changing policy and regulatory environment 9
4.Our investments in ED2 are setting us up for success in ED3 10
5.Customers have led the creation of our strategy 12
6.Strategic vision for ED3 connections 15
6.1 Theme 1: Improving visibility and accuracy of connections data 17
6.2 Theme 2: Improved Standards of service across the customer journey 18
6.3 Theme 3: Meeting connection dates 20
6.4 Theme 4: Quality of connection offers 22
6.5 Theme 5: Ambition of connection offers 24
6.6 Theme 6: Smaller connections (Upgrades & Access) 25
6.7 Monitoring our performance 27
7.Summary of investment 28
Annex 1: List of Customer Standards of Service 30

OVERVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Part of our role as a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) is to provide connection services to existing and future customers. This Connection Strategy describes our approach to meeting the needs of connection customers in ED3. It is a key enabler against our wider strategic outcomes for ED3:

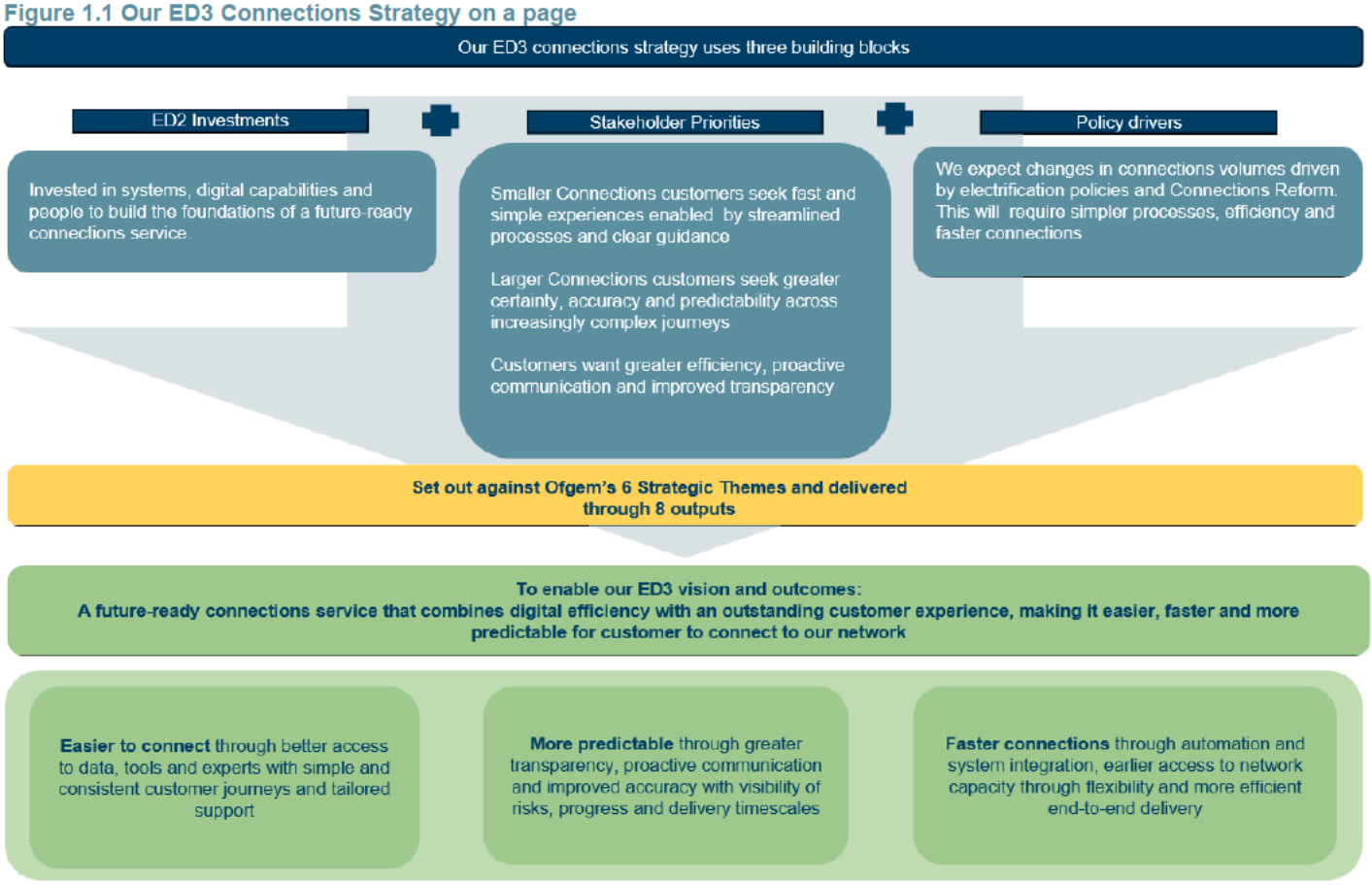
- **A safe, smart, resilient business and system in a changing world** by embedding efficiency and automation into our connections service to drive faster connections with enhanced customer experiences.
- **Great value, great experience customer services for all** by ensuring we are meeting the expectations of our customers through tailored customer journeys.
- **Sustainable, electrified communities and vibrant local economies** by connecting customers through simple and efficient processes.
- **Investment in our people and partners** through strengthened collaboration with delivery partners and a workforce equipped to support the delivery of connections.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We propose £9.87m of ED3 connections-service investment across our SHEPD and SEPD licence areas: £3.61m for pre-application tools, £4.81m for further automation and digital integration, and £1.45m for baseline service integration. Our objective is to handle rising commercial low-voltage (LV) and high-voltage (HV) applications without increasing quoting and design headcount, while significantly improving the customer experience, including by giving customers clearer costs and greater confidence around delivery dates. For the avoidance of doubt, the activities described in this strategy constitute a service and digital programme, these do not reflect the total cost of network reinforcement or physical connections delivery.

Our ED3 connections strategy brings together current investments and improvements in ED2 with policy drivers and stakeholder priorities identified for ED3.

Figure 1.1 Our ED3 Connections Strategy on a page



Why investment is needed—and what customers gain

Across 23 ED3-focused connections engagement events in 2025/26, we identified four recurring needs: (1) usable capacity information before applying; (2) simpler applications; (3) reliable offers; and (4) credible dates with proactive updates.

Our current processes are evolving from being reliant on manual processing and fragmented systems which risk delays at a time when connection volumes are expected to grow, particularly across commercial LV and HV demand in the final two ED3 years and into ED4. On top, we see specific pressures across our regions: our SEPD region faces concentrated demand, including West London transmission constraints; in contrast, SHEPD faces distributed-generation queues and remote/island logistics.

Our proposed response combines location-specific optioneering and access to technical experts with automated processing via a single portal. A key benefit of us acting will be that households and installers will face less administrative effort; developers and community groups will be able to make better-informed investment decisions with fewer avoidable offer changes. In addition, we will provide additional assisted channels for digitally excluded customers.

Investment components and supporting evidence

Under this strategy, SSEN are proposing the following investment activities:

Table 1.1 ED3 connections-service investment and justification

Component / investment	What it buys / customer value	Justification
Pre-application tools £3.61m	Location-specific capacity, constraints, options, indicative costs and timescales; reuse scenarios in applications. Fewer speculative applications and less rework (Output 1).	DIGI-01-01
Further automation and digital integration £4.81m	Integrate ED2 systems, automate HV quoting and provide real-time portal updates; absorb rising commercial LV/HV applications with flat quoting/design headcount.	DIGI-01-01
Baseline service integration £1.45m	Integrate ED2 capabilities to bring programme, queue milestones and dependent works into the customer portal so customers can see status of their requests.	DIGI-01-01.

Our ED3 offer: eight outputs with visible accountability

Our delivery is underpinned by eight measurable customer outputs which, collectively, will improve customers' satisfaction with our connections service. In line with Ofgem's business plan guidance, our metrics focus on alternative ways of validating delivery to enable Ofgem and stakeholders to assess progress in delivering our strategy across ED3. Outputs 2, 3, 5 and 6 contribute towards a metric which is linked to our ED3 commitment related to connections: Achieve 90% compliance against new and enhanced service standards for large and major connections customers by 2030.

Table 1.2: Output alignment to baseline expectations

Output and metric	Baseline expectations being met	Customer outcomes and benefits
Output 1: Across ED3 we will enhance our integrated pre-application service stage by increasing accessible network and commercial data and early access to technical experts. This will provide new tools to explore locations and indicative costs, early access products, network information and tailored connection surgeries. This will enable customers, developers and community groups to obtain bespoke advice and engage with us early, enabling informed decisions before submitting an application.	Provide customers with timely, accurate and accessible information to support effective decision-making, including clear visibility of network data.	Customers can make informed connection decisions before applying. This will result in increased customer satisfaction and better connection applications.
Output 2: From April 2028, we will increase the transparency and granularity of our Customer Standards of Service via a customer portal. By 2030 we will achieve at least 90% compliance against these standards and publish our performance annually in the Connections Annual Report, demonstrating how we are delivering improved customer journeys.	Demonstrate a coherent end-to-end service for all connections, covering preapplication, application, offer, delivery and energisation. Processes should be clearly owned, integrated and managed to minimise avoidable delays, with clear accountability for outcomes across the full customer journey.	Customers will receive a more consistent, predictable and transparent service across the end-to-end journey. This will give customers increased confidence in the

	Meet agreed timescales and outputs across the connections process, including the timely issue of offers and delivery against agreed connection dates. Where delays occur, DNOs should proactively explain the cause, impact and revised milestones.	process, our delivery and a more consistent customer experience.
Output 3: From April 2028, for projects longer than 24 months, we will improve how we proactively communicate progress of projects to our customers. As a minimum, following acceptance of an offer, we will ensure that project risks and progress updates are assessed, shared and discussed with customers on a quarterly basis. This will form part of our Customer Service Milestones. From 2030 we will achieve 90% compliance with this output, with performance against this measure published annually in the Connections Annual Report to demonstrate our commitment to improving communication and experience.	Engage constructively with customers and stakeholders throughout the connections process, providing regular, meaningful updates and responding effectively to customer needs.	Customers have greater visibility of project progress, risks and dependencies. This will give customers greater certainty over delivery timescales and improved project planning.
Output 4: We will enhance the accuracy and quality of our connection offers while maintaining a strong focus on the timely delivery of connections. From April 2028, we will track the key drivers that result in changes to the Scope of works following issue of an offer and then identify opportunities to improve our accuracy. We will be transparent about the causes of these changes and will publish these annually in the Connections Annual Report, together with the actions we are taking to address factors within our control to drive continuous improvement. This will help to further reduce changes to offers.	Ensure that connection offers are clear, accurate and stable, with assumptions, scope, costs risks and dependencies clearly explained. Change to offers should be minimised and, where unavoidable, clearly justified and communicated.	Customers receive more accurate, consistent and reliable connection offers. This will give customers greater certainty in costs and requirements, allowing more informed decisions during the project's development.
Output 5: From April 2028, we will help customers understand project risks by providing customers connecting over 1MVA/MW with a one-page risk summary as part of their offer. We will achieve 90% compliance with this output, with our performance published annually in the Connections Annual Report to demonstrate how we are supporting successful project delivery and improving the customer experience. From the start of ED3, EHV customers will have access to a viability service, enabling the early identification and exploration of risks before detailed design, reducing rework and improving project certainty. We will look to see how this can be expanded to other market segments throughout ED3.	Ensure that connection offers are clear, accurate and stable, with assumptions, scope, costs risks and dependencies clearly explained. Change to offers should be minimised and, where unavoidable, clearly justified and communicated.	Customers understand project risks, assumptions and dependencies before accepting an offer or progressing to detailed design. This improves a customer's ability to plan for projects with fewer unforeseen issues during delivery.
Output 6: Across ED3 all EHV connection customers will be offered post detailed design an energisation window (subject to agreed caveats), providing a clear ambitious date for connection if all aspects proceed well, with a backstop date providing greater certainty and confidence in delivery timelines. We will report on the percentage of projects delivered within an agreed energisation window and aim to improve this year on year across ED3. This will ensure we apply ambition and that it is baked into connection delivery plans.	Ensure that ambition has been applied in setting offers, and opportunities to advance dates are identified, communicated and monitored over time. Meet agreed timescales and outputs across the connections process, including the timely issue of offers and delivery against agreed connection dates. Where delays occur, DNOs should proactively explain the cause, impact and revised milestones.	Customers have clearer visibility of likely energisation timeframes and delivery dependencies. This will give greater certainty for project planning and improved confidence in delivery timescales.

Output 7: From 2028, we will provide connections readiness and/or confirmation to connect / quote for works for LCT connections within 24hrs for 80% of standard heat pump applications and 2 days for 90% of all requests[1].	Demonstrate a coherent end-to-end service for all connections, covering preapplication, application, offer, delivery and energisation. Processes should be clearly owned, integrated and managed to minimise avoidable delays, with clear accountability for outcomes across the full customer journey. Meet agreed timescales and outputs across the connections process, including the timely issue of offers and delivery against agreed connection dates. Where delays occur, DNOs should proactively explain the cause, impact and revised milestones.	Customers can receive approvals, quotes and readiness assessments faster with less manual intervention. This means reduced customer effort and faster uptakes of LCTs.
Output 8: We will continue using formal feedback loops using customer and system insights data to identify and deliver performance improvements across our connections journeys. From April 2028 we will present the outcomes to our Connections Expert Panel at least once a year to transparently demonstrate performance and progress. We publish our engagement annually via the Connections Annual Report.	Use performance data and customer feedback to identify weaknesses, drive improvements and demonstrate learning over time. This should include systematic use of customer satisfaction evidence linked to specific stages of the end-to-end journey.	Customer feedback is used to continuously improve connections services. This means services remain aligned to customer needs and expectations throughout ED3.

ED2 delivery credibility and ED3 delivery risk mitigation

We continue to build credibility in delivery of connections, laying the foundations in ED2 for a step change in customer experience across ED3. In 2025/26 we issued more than 40,000 quotations across SHEPD and SEPD, an increase of 62% on our ED1 average. Our Business Relationship Managers, LENZA local-authority planning and established customer-feedback forums provide our operational foundations in ED2 to ensure we can access and learn from customer feedback and needs. We are also making improvements to our connections experience in ED2: our customer portal and core-system replacements, and smaller-connections self-service/automatic quotations service are scheduled for completion by end of ED2.

[redacted]

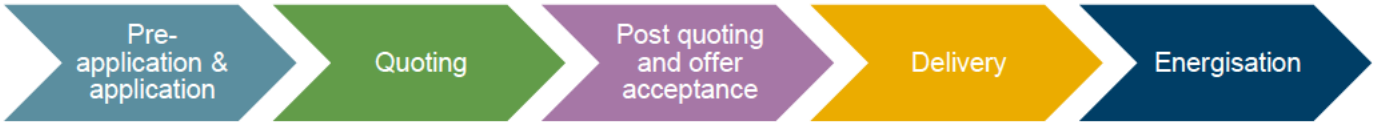
Our ED3 commitments supported by this strategy

	ED3 Commitment	Metric
Investing for growth and the energy transition		
We will be ready for growing customer demand	**We will expand network capacity by 24%, relative to ED2, to meet local electrification needs and provide strategic headroom through to 2050, alongside proactive upgrades to 40,000 looped supplies, a four-fold increase, targeting areas of greatest need.**	Achieve 90% compliance against new and enhanced service standards for large and major connections customers by 2030

2. OVERVIEW OF THE CONNECTIONS BUSINESS

Our connection customers are split into different market segments subject to size and customer type[2] with many different customer journeys. A typical connections journey follows these distinct stages:

Figure 2.1 Connections customer journey



In 2025/26 our connections business provided more than 40,000 quotations to our customers across our North (SHEPD) and South (SEPD) licence areas. The types of quotations we issue vary significantly; from applications to install electric vehicle (EV) chargers in street furniture to large data centres. Connection designs are determined by variables such as the number of connections required, the level of demand or generation capacity being connected, location, and the capability and configuration of the existing network infrastructure.

The geography and population differences of our two licence areas have a significant influence on connection design, costs and our delivery considerations. SHEPD is significantly less populated with fewer landowners and very remote and rural areas, including islands; whereas SEPD is significantly more densely populated and urbanised. These differing characteristics drive distinct connection volumes, customer requirements and connection types. We have responded accordingly in our strategy:

Table 2.1: Regional challenges and our strategic responses

Regional challenge	Why it matters	How the strategy responds
Remote and island communities in SHEPD	Delivery can be more complex (longer delivery routes, fewer contractors, more challenging logistics including need to move people and equipment on ferries and find accommodation for contractors).	Through ED2 investments we are upgrading systems that will drive consolidation of processes between the two areas. However, there will remain some differences such as proposed consideration of contractors versus in housing our delivery workforce. This split is due to volumes of work and resourcing availability and is likely to result in different timescales and balance between the two licence areas. Outputs 2, 3 and 5 provide clear milestones, proactive communication and energisation windows.
Large volumes of distributed generation in SHEPD	Customers need greater visibility of network capacity and queue progression.	Output 1 provides enhanced pre-application support including network information. We will provide bespoke expert-led support in both regions who will be able to provide tailored advice addressing the differences in network (e.g. voltage differences and subsequent engagement with transmission operators and NESO (National Energy System Operator)).
High volumes of large demand connections in SEPD (including data centres)	Customers need greater visibility of available capacity and connection options early. Hot spots of large demand (West	Output 1 strengthens pre-application support and technical engagement. We continue to work with Government, Ofgem and NESO on policy reform for strategic demand and, using lessons from Connections

[2] Confirmation of how we define the connection types is awaiting an Ofgem decision. This would either be by voltage of work or by customer type.

	London) which has saturated capacity, particularly at the transmission level. This leads to managing connections in a constrained area with a highly interdependent queue.	Reform, we will consider how this impacts our processes.
Rising LCT volumes in both areas but especially in SEPD.	We're already seeing the transition in SEPD, growing volumes must be managed without degrading service standards.	Output 7 introduces greater automation and faster approvals, this, alongside our plans for 'flex and build' will better enable LCTs to connect. As noted above, we are also focused on developing a scalable delivery model with a workforce tailored to each area to ensure volumes can be delivered at pace without compromising customer satisfaction.
Regional variation in customer type, sectors and connection requirements for example, a higher proportion of wind-developers are Scotland based whereas most demand is in SEPD	Customer needs vary by geography and connection type, also compounded by network differences and technical standards between the two licence areas.	As part of Output 1, we will ensure the expert-led support, digital services and customer engagement approaches are tailored to the specific areas.

Our strategy focuses on the service we provide across the connections journey. It is one component of an integrated ED3 approach to enable electrification and economic growth. The Long-term Integrated Network Plan (LINP) (ED3-S02) and LRE Strategy (ED3-S01) identify and deliver the long-term network capacity and reinforcement required to support future demand growth and LCT adoption, while the DSO Strategy maximises the utilisation of existing network capacity through flexibility, forecasting, visibility and operational solutions that can accelerate access ahead of reinforcement.

Building on these foundations, this Connection Strategy ensures customers can readily access that capacity through transparent data, informed optioneering, streamlined processes and high-quality customer journeys. The ED3 Delivery Strategy (ED3-S05) underpins all these ambitions by ensuring we have the workforce, supply chain, governance and delivery capability required to deliver network investment safely, efficiently and at the scale needed throughout ED3 and beyond. Together, these strategies provide a coherent end-to-end framework that plans for future demand, unlocks capacity efficiently, delivers the infrastructure required, enabling households, businesses and strategic demand customers to connect and electrify with greater speed, certainty and confidence.

Table 2.2: Alignment with supporting strategies and annexes

Strategy / annex	Relevance to connections
Long-term Integrated Network Plan (ED3-S02) provides a 2050 vision of our network investment plans.	Sets out our programmatic approach over multiple price controls for the release of capacity across our network.
DSO Strategy (ED3-S10) sets out how embedding smarter management of voltage, losses, flexibility and network visibility into how the distribution system is planned and operated. Sets out how we will embed local engagement and planning into our long-term network planning.	Outlines the network data available to customers to assess connection options. It also describes how flexibility services and products can be used to unlock capacity, enabling customers to connect more quickly without network reinforcement.

Delivery Strategy (ED3-S05) sets out our ten-year delivery strategy and how the scale, pace and sequencing of network investment will be delivered in practice.	Provides the detail behind our delivery framework on how it will be planned, resourced, phased and governed to help deliver works to enable connections.
DNO role in low carbon technologies and energy efficiency rollout sets out our pilots and programmes of work to ready the LV network for LCTs.	Activities planned to support the uptake of LCTs.
Supply Chain (ED3-S19) and Workforce (ED3-S18) Annexes set out how our supply chain management and workforce capability will deliver efficiencies and capabilities required to deliver in ED3.	How we will ensure mitigation of supply chain bottlenecks and that we have a capable and trained workforce available to deliver connections efficiently.
The Innovation Strategy (ED3-S09) illustrates how we will use innovation to solve current and emerging challenges.	Our forecasting tells us that the pace of change and speed of low carbon transition is likely to accelerate further in the mid-2030s, early 2040s. Therefore, we need to continue to search for innovative ways to improve our service, speed up connections and search for new ways to achieve better value for customers. Learning from these can then be rolled out in future price controls.

3. CHANGING POLICY AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

We are moving to a more strategically planned electricity system with Government taking greater control of what connects to the networks, based on what is needed to deliver **Clean Power 2030/35** and aligned to the emerging industrial strategy. Connections Reform has shifted the industry to become more centralised with a "first ready, first connected" approach to prioritise viable generation projects for access to the Transmission system. It gives us greater certainty about future requirements and creates a clearer pipeline of work for ED3. As a result, our focus is increasingly on efficient delivery while continuing to meet customer expectations and rapid reallocation of capacity from projects which can't progress, to those that can. Government is also considering potential changes to the demand queue, especially data centres. We will continue to work with Government, Ofgem and NESO on these changes and ensure we update and engage our customers on the emerging changes.

Alongside this, Ofgem is looking to have a tighter regulatory regime which governs connections and provides more consistent standards of customer service. Through its 'Connections end-to-end review of the regulatory framework' (the end-to-end review)[3], Ofgem sets out seven themes covering the full customer journey and identifies changes to improve service standards and deliver connections more quickly. These will deliver a step-change in requirements and regulatory reporting. At the time of drafting the review is not complete and we are working with Ofgem on the policy decisions and implementation considerations.

Looking ahead, electrification is expected to accelerate during ED3, driven by government policy, including the Warm Homes Plan, plus growing adoption of low-carbon technologies such as heat pumps and electric vehicle chargers. Our challenge is not only to manage increasing demand, but to deliver connections at greater scale, pace and certainty while maintaining an excellent end-to-end customer experience. This environment is driving different forecasts across different market segments for connections, as illustrated below.

[3] Now referred to as 'Transforming the Connections Experience.'

4. OUR INVESTMENTS IN ED2 ARE SETTING US UP FOR SUCCESS IN ED3

In RIIO-ED2, our business plan focused on developing system and people capabilities required to support a rapidly evolving sector. We recognised that accelerating electrification, growing demand for network access and rising customer expectations would require a more digital, transparent and scalable connections service. We built a process to deliver at speed to meet customer expectations for a prompt service. A major part of this investment is a multi-year project to replace manual and non-integrated systems into modern technology that simplifies the way we work and standardises processes to ensure work is completed easily and efficiently. By the end of ED2 the project will have delivered:

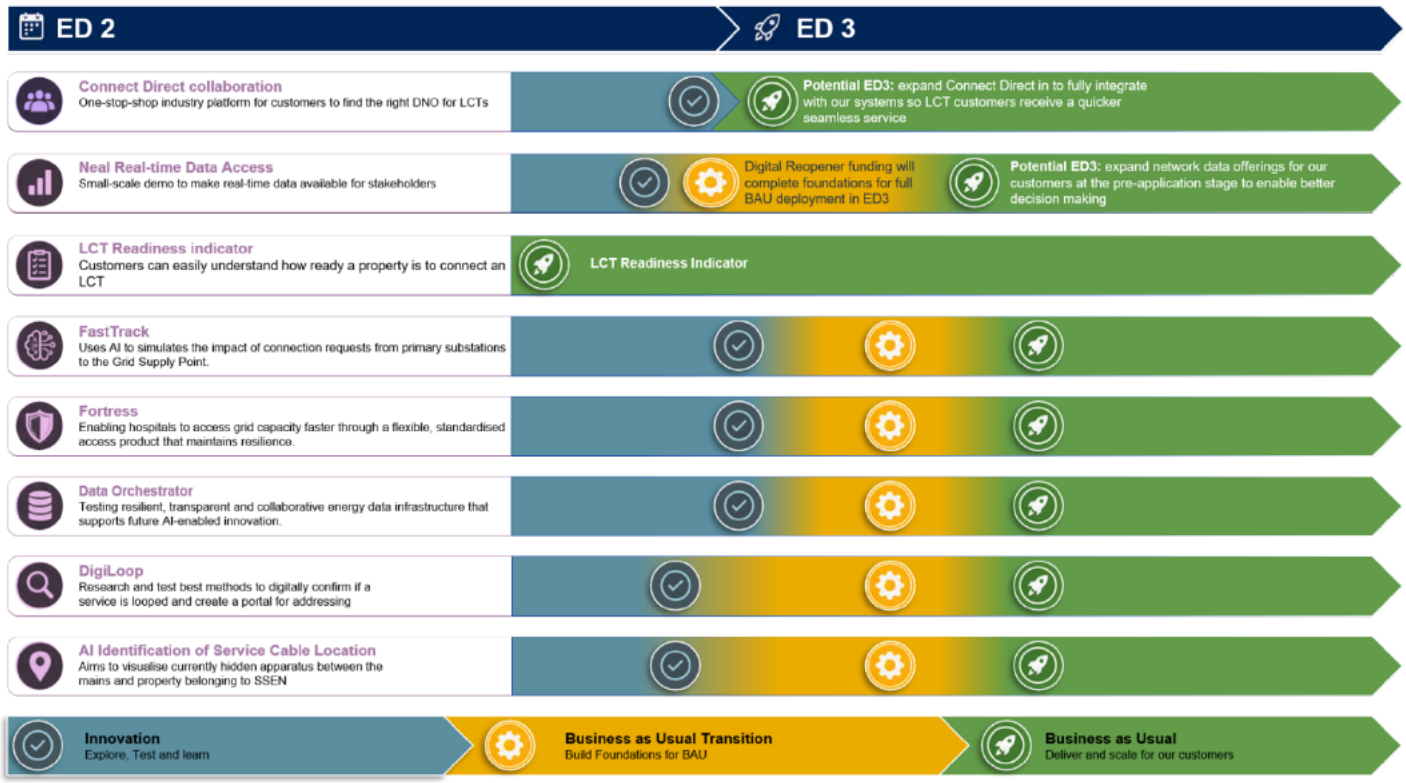
- An improved customer portal that all customers will be able to access for increased visibility of their connection applications providing transparency on process status and upcoming milestones, contract and finance information and contact details for SSEN staff.
- Complete system replacements to enable:
    - enhanced customer interactions through multiple channels
    - collect, manage and share information both internally and with the supply chain
    - better data management to help track jobs, finances, assets and plan more efficiently
    - managing projects, workflow, schedule and governance for field teams
- A new connections tool to enable Smaller New Connections customers to self-serve and generate automatic quotations.

We are investing in network reinforcement as well as building the foundations of a modern, credible DSO including how network capacity is managed and communicated. Through increased transparency of network information, enhanced forecasting and stronger stakeholder engagement, we are improving customers' ability to make informed investment decisions while supporting more efficient use of available network capacity. We have also expanded our connection-customer engagement capabilities, we have a team of Business Relationship Managers who partner with different customer types to guide them through the connection application process. We also have bespoke engagement with local authorities using the Local Energy Net Zero Accelerator (LENZA) tool for shaping local decarbonisation plans, to give us visibility to feed into our Distributed Future Energy Scenarios[4] and long-term planning.

Innovation projects across ED1 and ED2 continue to inform our future ways of working. These include market-driven initiatives such as the Local Energy Market Alliance and Community Smart Access, which explored new approaches to accelerating housing development connections. We have also worked with technology company Advanced Infrastructure[5] to develop and productionise LENZA, supporting Local Authorities in future energy planning. Through innovation projects such as the FORTRESS we are exploring new approaches to network access and customer flexibility, helping inform how future connections services and access products could evolve to better meet customer needs.

[4] Forecasting future needs of the network - SSEN
[5] SSEN partners with Advanced Infrastructure to deliver a Net Zero Accelerator Tool

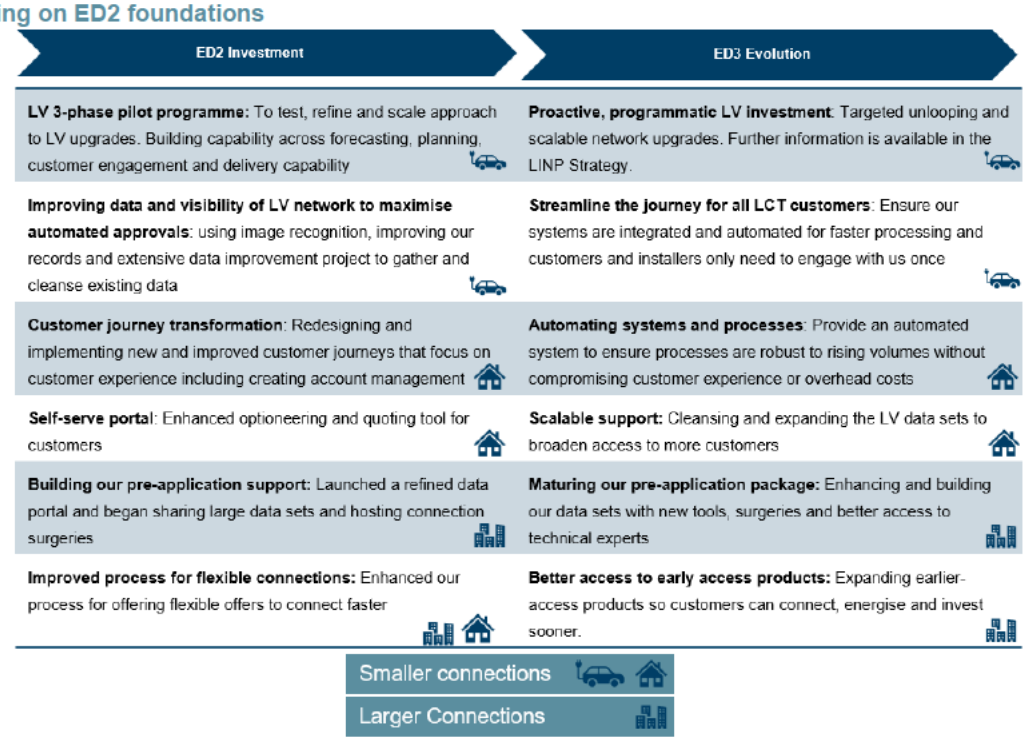
Figure 4.1 Innovation pipeline building on ED2 into ED3



Equal LCT is helping us understand the benefits of an optimised approach to low-carbon technology rollout and supports the development of our Connections Readiness Indicator, which informs customers whether their property is LCT-ready and enables upgrade requests where required. In addition, projects such as FastTrack and DigiLoop are helping us explore the application of artificial intelligence, advanced analytics and digital techniques to improve connection assessments, streamline processes and deliver more efficient outcomes for customers and network operations. Innovative solutions such as NeRDA also support our output to improving network transparency by expanding the data available to customers at the pre-application stage and enabling more informed investment decisions. We will continue to develop and deploy new approaches that improve network readiness, automate decision-making, enhance access to network data and streamline customer journeys. Innovation will be particularly important in supporting the uptake of low-carbon technologies, enabling faster and more efficient connections while reducing process friction and improving customer experience.

Our ED2 investments provide a strong foundation for ED3; delivering an increased volume of quotes and connections at pace, improving our ability to anticipate future network needs, coordinate investment ahead of demand and supporting a more proactive approach to network development. In ED3 we will further integrate the capabilities these investments provide. This will create a future-ready service that combines digital efficiency with an outstanding customer experience, making it easier, faster and more predictable for customers to connect. Innovation will continue to support the development of improved customer journeys, digital services, connection readiness tools and new access products, aligned to SSEN's ED3 innovation priorities.

Figure 4.2 Building on ED2 foundations



5. CUSTOMERS HAVE LED THE CREATION OF OUR STRATEGY

Our strategy has used a structured, evidence-based approach that combines insights from our regular business-as-usual (BAU) customer engagement[6] layered with our targeted ED3 engagement, which has covered our connection customers and wider stakeholders[7]. Throughout 2025/26, ED3 events included conferences, webinars, bilateral discussions, round-table discussions and market segment forums. In total, we held 23 ED3-focused connection engagement events involving a broad range of stakeholders, from domestic consumers and LCT adopters to large scale generator developers and large business energy users.[8] This engagement enabled us to understand current customer experiences, regional differences, identify emerging challenges and priorities, and explore what improvements customers want to see delivered in ED3.

We also considered lessons learned from ED2, including ongoing customer feedback, complaints, performance data and operational experience, to understand where further improvements are required. Combining these insights enabled us to identify the customer outcomes that matter most, test them with customers and develop a targeted set of ED3 outputs designed to deliver meaningful improvements to the end-to-end connections experience. The following sections summarise the key issues raised by customers and stakeholders, how they have informed our ED3 outputs and the outcomes and benefits we intend to deliver.

[6] Gathered via satisfaction surveys, data, comments and insights, complaints, market forums, customer panels and focus groups.

[7] Daily engagement with connection customers, data and insights collected regularly (weekly, monthly, annual reviews), face-to-face senior management engagement every six months, regular meetings with ENA, other DNOs, Ofgem, Connections Customer Conferences, Market Segment Focus Groups, Market Segment Forums, Connections Expert Panels, bespoke webinars e.g. on Connections Reform.

[8] We have engaged with academia, Community Energy Groups, consultants, consumer advocates, consumer groups, DER customers, domestic customers, housing associations and developers, ICPs/IDNOs, industrial & commercial customers, industry bodies, installers, internal staff, LCT adopters, local authorities, major customers, renewable generators, storage providers, supply chain partners, technology partners and vulnerable customers.

Table 5.1: Smaller connections customers and ED3 responses

Stakeholder priority & underlying driver	ED3 intervention (and why)	Outcome	Customer benefit
Consistency in service, clear ownership and communication caused by some inconsistency in processes, communication and service standards.	Introduce enhanced Standards of Service, proactive communications and customer feedback loops. **(Outputs 2 & 8)** This creates a consistent experience across customer types and licence areas while retaining access to expert support for customers who need it.	More consistent, transparent and accountable customer journeys.	Greater confidence, less need to chase updates and improved customer experience.
Quicker processing, greater automation and simpler journeys caused by manual processes and multiple application routes creating delays as volumes increase and frustrating customers.	Invest in intelligent application processing to enable one-touch application journeys, automated assessments, enhanced network data and increased auto-approvals. **(Outputs 2 & 7)** Automation provides the most scalable solution for managing rising LCT volumes while reducing processing times and unnecessary customer interactions.	Automatic processing and increased straight-through approvals.	Reduced delays, lower customer effort and faster uptake of LCTs as volumes increase.
Unlooping and targeted reinforcement are critical enablers for LCTs as existing LV network constraints can delay or prevent customers from adopting low-carbon technologies.	Deliver programmatic unlooping and targeted LV reinforcement through our network readiness approach. **(Output 7)** Addressing constraints ahead of customer demand increases available capacity and reduces the need for reactive customer-funded interventions.	Increased network capacity available ahead of need.	Faster connections, reduced waiting times and greater access to low-carbon technologies.
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

Table 5.2: Larger connections customers and ED3 responses

Stakeholder issues & underlying driver	ED3 intervention (and why)	Outcome	Customer benefit
Limited visibility of network capacity, constraints, reinforcement requirements and future investment plans caused by customers having	Provide a GIS-enabled self-service and assisted-service capability that allows customers to assess location-specific feasibility, capacity, constraints, connection options, indicative costs and timescales before applying with selected scenarios preserved for direct reuse in an application. **(Output 1)** This was chosen	Customers can assess capacity, risks, costs and connection options with greater	Better-informed investment decisions, higher-quality applications and reduced

limited access to high-quality, granular and easy-to-use network information at the pre-application stage.	because better information and earlier engagement help customers develop viable projects before entering the formal process, reducing avoidable applications and improving decision-making.	confidence before applying.	speculative applications.
Need for faster, simpler and more transparent connection journeys caused by fragmented systems, manual processes, with limited visibility of project status and multiple hand-offs across the end-to-end process.	Utilise a single customer portal, workflow automation, digital self-service, project tracking and integrated customer journeys. **(Outputs 2, 4, 6 & 7)**. This provides a scalable solution that improves transparency and efficiency while supporting increasing connection volumes.	Customers can easily track progress, understand responsibilities and access information through a single experience.	Simpler customer journeys, fewer delays arising from fragmented processes and improved customer satisfaction.
Need for clearer communication, ownership and proactive updates, caused by inconsistent communication practices and limited visibility of project progress, risks and dependencies.	Introduce enhanced Standards of Service, named contacts, milestone reporting, quarterly risk reviews and proactive communication requirements. **(Outputs 2, 3 & 5)** This directly addresses stakeholder concerns around communication, accountability and trust.	Customers receive consistent updates, understand project risks earlier and have greater visibility of progress throughout delivery.	Greater confidence, reduced need to chase for information and improved trust in the connections process.
Customers experience uncertainty from changing costs, project risks and quotation amendments, caused by limitations in data quality, risk identification and visibility of dependencies during the quotation process.	Improve quotation quality through better data integration, enhanced planning tools, risk summaries, viability services and dependency tracking. **(Outputs 4 & 5)**	More accurate, stable and transparent connection offers with earlier identification of risks and constraints.	Reduced uncertainty, fewer quote changes, lower risk of abortive costs and greater project certainty.
Customers want greater confidence in connection dates and project delivery, caused by dependency risks, queue interactions, outage constraints and insufficient visibility of project progression.	Introduce dynamic queue management, energisation windows, dependency tracking, outage visibility tools and proactive delay communications. **(Outputs 3 & 6)** This was selected to improve transparency and provide customers with more realistic and credible delivery expectations.	More credible connection dates, greater visibility of dependencies and improved management of delivery risks.	Greater certainty for investment planning, reduced delays and improved confidence in delivery timelines.
Customers want lower connection costs and increase value, by improving processes,	Invest in the continued end-to-end automation, streamline workflows, improve data quality and mature framework delivery arrangements. This was chosen because operational efficiencies	More efficient delivery and reduced administrative	Lower costs, improved value for money and more efficient

reducing manual activities and removing avoidable overheads across the end-to-end journey.	offer the most sustainable route to applying downward pressure on connection costs while maintaining service quality. Our Delivery Strategy (ED3-S05) (Supply Chain Annex) provides an overview of how we will strengthen supply chain resilience and accelerate connections delivery through early procurement, manufacturing capacity reservations, long-term strategic supplier partnerships, standardised designs, diversified sourcing, programme-based delivery models and earlier market engagement that provide suppliers with the confidence and visibility to invest in capacity ahead of need.	effort across the connection lifecycle.	use of customer and company resources.

Feedback we received during our strategy creation has resulted in changes

We presented our outputs to customers, wider stakeholders, our Independent Stakeholder Group (ISG), connection conferences and our Connections Expert Panel and then used their feedback to refine them. Feedback highlighted the importance of retaining access to experts alongside digital tools, providing customers with clearer mechanisms to hold us to account, and improving confidence in project delivery.

In response, our outputs were strengthened through the introduction of measurable performance reporting, expanded transparency around queue management and offer quality, and the addition of new outputs focused on offer accuracy and proactive release of network capacity. We also broadened support for customers by extending risk summaries beyond EHV customers to all projects above 1MVA/MW, while refining outputs to focus on delivering greater certainty, consistency and confidence across the connections journey. These changes were supported by customers, SEPD customers supported the outputs in ensuring processes are improved noting performance differences between our north and south licence areas. We presented the draft strategy to both the ISG and our Connections Expert Panel. Both provided feedback and we have used this to strengthen references to customer benefits, unmetered connections, ensuring we retain competition, consider vulnerable customers and consider connection costs.

Chapter 6 discusses our ED3 interventions and includes a description of the stakeholder considerations ultimately leading us to these outcomes and outputs.

6. STRATEGIC VISION FOR ED3 CONNECTIONS

Connection volumes are forecast to increase with a 2–3-fold increase in high voltage connections by the end of ED3 and tRESP forecasts showing that we need to be planning for increases of over 50% in low voltage connections. Our strategic vision is to build a future-ready connections business that combines digital efficiency with an outstanding customer experience, enabling us to deliver connections that are easy, fast and meet the evolving needs of our customers. Our objective is to deliver a step change in the experience and efficiency of our processes aligned to Ofgem's three core principles:

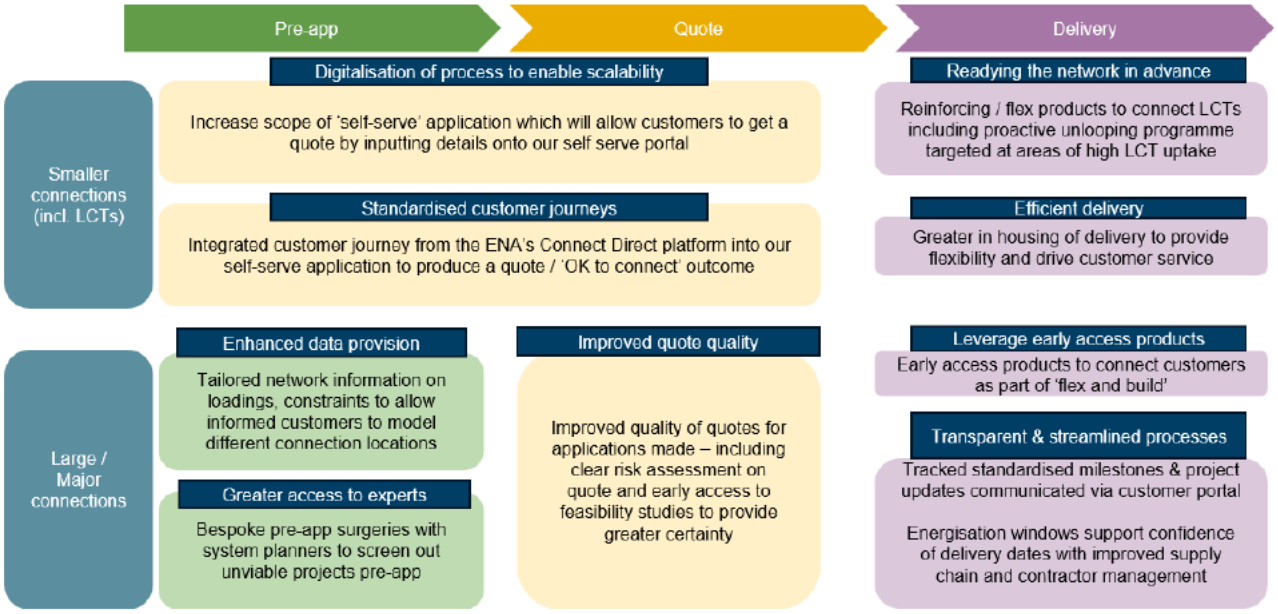
- Support stakeholders with accurate, comprehensive, and user-friendly information
- Deliver value through simplicity and transparency
- Facilitate timely and economical connections that meet customer needs.

The key pillars of the strategy are to:

- Improve access to network data, tools and expert support, enabling customers to make better-informed decisions before applying.

- Deliver integrated digital customer journeys that simplify the connections process and increase automation.
- Provide transparent standards of service, milestones and communications so customers understand what to expect throughout their project.
- Improve the quality, accuracy and transparency of connection offers, including earlier visibility of risks and constraints.
- Increase confidence in connection dates through proactive project management, transparent queue management and energisation windows.
- Expand the use of flexibility and innovative connection solutions to provide earlier and more efficient access to the network.

Figure 6.1 Customer journey enhancements



Today, customers can face uncertainty over available capacity, connection options, delivery timescales and project risks. In ED3, customers will experience a more transparent, predictable and digitally enabled connections journey. Better access to network information and expert support will help customers make informed decisions before applying. Once in the process, automated workflows, clearer standards of service and improved communications will provide greater visibility of costs, risks, dependencies and project progress. Customers will receive more accurate offers, more credible connection dates and earlier identification of delivery risks, enabling better project planning and increased confidence throughout the journey. Customer feedback and performance insights will be used to continuously improve the service over time.

In line with Ofgem's guidance the following sections take the structure of Ofgem's end-to-end review themes to set out the details of our plan along with the outputs and performance metrics for how we will demonstrate our success in improving our service to connection customers.

6.1 THEME 1: IMPROVING VISIBILITY AND ACCURACY OF CONNECTIONS DATA

Table 6.1: Connections data visibility and accuracy

Type of connections in scope	All existing and new connections
Principle	Support all connection stakeholders prior to application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information
Baseline expectation	Provide customers with timely, accurate and accessible information to support effective decision-making, including clear visibility of network data.
Exceeds baseline?	Meets baseline expectation
Additional funding required?	Partial – explored further in chapter 7

Strategic outcome

At SSEN, we want all connection customers to have easy and timely access to high quality, standardised, usable network data. At the pre-application stage we want customers to be able to identify optimal grid entry points by understanding network conditions in different locations with potential risks and costs identified. We want customers empowered to optioneer with access to an advisory function to provide tailored expert-led pre-application optioneering support. We build on our lessons learned in developing our self-serve tool for smaller connection (new connection) customers. Our stakeholders have told us that:

- Larger connection customers want granular accurate data with clearer visibility of capacity, reinforcements and curtailment.
- Preapplication support should play a stronger role in shaping viable connection plans.
- Customers seeking flexibility and early access products want clearer onboarding and more transparency.
- Smaller connections customers seek clarity on requirements and processes.

Our Output and metric:

Output 1: Across ED3 we will enhance our integrated pre-application service stage by increasing accessible network and commercial data and early access to technical experts. This will provide new tools to explore locations and indicative costs, early access products, network information and tailored connection surgeries. This will enable customers, developers and community groups to obtain bespoke advice and engage with us early, enabling informed decisions before submitting an application.

Table 6.2: ED3 intervention logic

ED3 deliverables	Customer outcomes	Benefits
Provide a GIS-enabled self-service and assisted-service capability that allows customers to assess location-specific feasibility, capacity, constraints, connection options, indicative costs and timescales before applying with selected scenarios preserved for direct reuse in an application.	Customers can independently understand network and commercial options prior to entering the application process.	Better-informed investment decisions, reduced uncertainty and better-quality applications.
Enhanced expert support through new dedicated connection optioneering specialists (see DSO Strategy (ED3-S10)), plus our business relationship managers, tailored connection surgeries, webinars and guidance tailored to customer needs and regional challenges. Inclusive support is clearly available for vulnerable and	Customers can access information about connection options in the format that best meets their needs.	Higher-quality applications, reduced rework and increased confidence in project viability. In-person support for customers who want it.

digitally excluded customers seeking to access the connections service.		
Dedicated smaller connections information on the process, network readiness, building on our self-serve tool for automated optioneering and costs, and optimisation opportunities. This would include support materials for customers as they receive LCTs; how can they best use them and how can they access flexibility markets.	Customers can independently access the information needed to make informed smaller connections investment decisions.	Simpler customer journeys, improved accessibility and increased confidence in adopting low-carbon technologies.

Why these interventions?

Stakeholder feedback from multiple engagement activities, together with insights from ED2, consistently highlight a need for greater visibility of network capacity, constraints, reinforcement requirements and connection opportunities before customers apply. Customers told us they support better access to information but in our engagement have strongly emphasised the importance of retaining access to technical expertise, particularly for more complex projects and those who may be digitally excluded. In response, we will enhance both the availability of network information and the support available. Together, these interventions will help customers make more informed decisions, improve application quality and reduce rework.

6.2 THEME 2: IMPROVED STANDARDS OF SERVICE ACROSS THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Overview

Table 6.3: Improved standards of service across the customer journey

Type of connections in scope	Applies to all connections, but the specific measures are primarily targeted at new and larger connections
Principle	Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the connections process
Baseline expectations	Demonstrate a coherent end-to-end service for all connections covering preapplication, application, offer, delivery and energisation. Processes should be clearly owned, integrated and managed to minimise avoidable delays, with clear accountability for outcomes across the full connections journey. Engage constructively with customers and stakeholders throughout the connections process, providing regular, meaningful updates and responding effectively to customers' needs.
Exceeds baseline?	Meets baseline expectation
Additional funding required?	Partial – explored further in chapter 7

Strategic outcome

We want all customers, whether generation or demand, wherever and however they connect, to receive a consistent, transparent and accountable customer service. To support this, we will define and publish standards of service across the customer journey, including roles and responsibilities, ownership and

escalation routes. Stakeholders have told us they would like greater clarity on processes and roles; some have received excellent service, but experiences can vary so seeking more consistency particularly around feedback requests, contestable activities, reinforcement works, and land rights responsibilities between DNOs, IDNOs, and ICPs. We will ensure that ICPs and IDNOs receive a consistent, transparent and efficient service and ensure we continue to promote competition.

Our Outputs and metrics:

Output 2: From April 2028, we will increase the transparency and granularity of our Customer Standards of Service via a customer portal. By 2030 we will achieve at least 90% compliance against these standards and publish our performance annually in the Connections Annual Report, demonstrating how we are delivering improved customer journeys.

Output 8: We will continue using formal feedback loops using customer and system insights data to identify and deliver performance improvements across our connections journeys. From April 2028 we will present the outcomes to our Connections Expert Panel at least once a year to transparently demonstrate performance and progress. We publish our engagement annually via the Connections Annual Report.

Table 6.4: ED3 intervention logic

ED3 deliverables	Which will result in these outcomes:	This will benefit our customers by:
Implement enhanced Customer Standards of Service throughout the connections journey including front-line delivery, covering communications, timelines, project ownership, roles and responsibilities, escalation arrangements, hand-offs between teams.	Customers receive a more consistent and predictable service regardless of location, project type or customer segment.	Increased confidence in the connections process and a more consistent customer experience.
Offer every customer access to a customer portal providing visibility of project status, milestones, actions, dependencies and key project information.	Customers can easily track progress and understand what happens next throughout their project.	Simpler customer journeys, fewer requests for updates and greater transparency.
Implement proactive customer communications, milestone notifications to provide regular visibility of progress, project risks, dependencies and delays.	Customers receive timely updates and understand emerging issues earlier.	Reduced uncertainty, better project planning and fewer avoidable delays.
Defined ownership and accountability throughout the customer journey that is visible to the customer via the portal (with an up-to-date escalation guide always available). This would include clear interfaces for ICP and IDNO customers undertaking contestable works.	Customers know who is responsible for progressing their project and where to seek assistance.	Improved trust, faster issue resolution and increased confidence in delivery.
Feedback mechanisms and continuous improvement processes.	Customer feedback is systematically used to improve services and address recurring issues.	Services remain aligned to customer needs and expectations throughout ED3.
Accessible and inclusive communication channels supporting different customer needs, including customers requiring additional support.	Customers can engage with SSEN through channels appropriate to their circumstances and preferences.	Improved accessibility, reduced barriers to engagement and a better experience for all customer groups.

Why these interventions?

Customers and wider stakeholders consistently highlighted need for more streamlining processes. Our Connections Expert Panel noted that digitisation needs to be systemic and needs to move beyond standalone digital solutions towards integrated, system-wide transformation. 50% of customers during feedback sessions thought improving customer-facing apps and portals should be the top priority for digital investment at SSEN, to improve consistency of journeys. Customers want clearer responsibilities, improved communication, greater visibility of project progress and a more streamlined end-to-end journey. 70% of our customers during engagement sessions supported 'Customer journey' as their preferred incentivisation metric.

In response, we will strengthen our customer Standards of Service and formalise this through an output. This will provide customers with greater visibility through enhanced communications and digital tools, define clear ownership throughout the customer journey, and embed continuous improvement through customer feedback. Together, these interventions will reduce uncertainty and customer effort, improve transparency and consistency, and increase confidence in the connections process. Improving the customer experience is critical for ensuring we can achieve the broader benefits of an easy, fast connection service in delivering electrification expectations.

6.3 THEME 3: MEETING CONNECTION DATES

Overview

Table 6.5: Meeting connection dates overview

Type of connections in scope	Applies to all connections, but the specific measures are primarily targeted at new and larger connections.
Principle	Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.
Baseline expectation	Meet agreed timescales and outputs across the connections process, including the timely issue of offers and delivery against agreed connection dates. Where delays occur, DNOs should proactively explain the cause, impact and revised milestones.
Exceeds baseline?	Meets baseline expectation
Additional funding required?	Yes – explored further in chapter 14

Strategic outcome

We want to improve our credibility and delivery of connection dates. Where delays do occur, we will communicate proactively with our customers. Stakeholders have told us that customers want certainty for their connection dates and when delays do occur. Customers want stronger communication. Customers want to be able to see the status of their project with milestones and ownership. Wider stakeholders have told us they want us to demonstrate delivery credibility. This is linked to theme 5 and how we'll be ambitious with connection dates.

Our output and metric

Output 3: From April 2028, for projects longer than 24 months, we will improve how we proactively communicate progress of projects to our customers. As a minimum, following acceptance of an offer, we will ensure that project risks and progress updates are assessed, shared and discussed with customers on a quarterly basis. This will form part of our Customer Service Milestones. From 2030 we will achieve 90% compliance with this output, with performance against this measure published annually in the Connections Annual Report to demonstrate our resolve to improving communication and experience.

Table 6.6: ED3 intervention logic

ED3 deliverables	Which will result in these outcomes:	This will benefit our customers by:
Build our capability and capacity to deliver increasing volumes. In our Delivery Strategy (ED3-S05) we set out the choices we are making to demonstrate how we will deliver growing volumes of work with confidence and control, building on the delivery foundations and the system and digital investments established in ED2 and evolving them to meet future system needs. These choices are: • Our delivery model: adopting programme-based and standardised delivery tailored to each region where appropriate to enable repeatable execution, clearer accountability and efficient sequencing across LV, HV and EHV networks, while retaining flexibility for higher-risk or bespoke activities. • Our workforce approach: a quantified, demand-led approach to workforce planning that aligns recruitment, training, authorisation and deployment with credible delivery profiles, and defines the balance between in-house capability, strategic partners and automation in the context of our regional challenges (e.g. remote and island communities in SHEPD and high demand/populated growth areas in SEPD. • Our supply chain approach: early market engagement, standardisation and long-lead procurement through multi-year frameworks to secure resilient, competitive supply chains capable of supporting sustained delivery.	More consistent delivery of projects with improved governance, undertaken by a workforce able to manage increasing volumes and complexity of projects. Improved customer satisfaction through use of in-house staff for smaller connections. Improved availability of materials, equipment and delivery partners through a more resilient and proactive supply chain, enabled by early procurement, strategic supplier partnerships, manufacturing capacity reservations, standardised designs, diversified sourcing and programme-based delivery approaches that accelerate project delivery and provide suppliers with the confidence to invest ahead of demand.	Better customer satisfaction experience and streamlined delivery resulting in overall efficiency and greater confidence in delivery dates through a more predictable experience. Reduced delivery risk, fewer delays caused by supply chain constraints and greater confidence in project completion.
Increased use of early access products and innovative connection solutions for both demand and generation customers (linked to DSO Strategy (ED3-S10) and alternative technical solutions where appropriate). For example, this will include ramped connections, transmission-	Customers can access connection opportunities earlier and have greater choice in how they connect.	Earlier network access, reduced waiting times and lower overall system costs.

distribution active network management schemes, community smart access and scheduled capacity.		
Invest in tools required to better manage and integrate project dependencies such as outage management and connection queue changes to provide real-time visibility of projects and dependencies. Enabled with automated monitoring of project progression and subsequent notifications for dependency changes.	Connection teams and customers have greater visibility of project progress, queue status and delivery dependencies, enabling more effective planning and earlier identification of potential delays.	Customers have greater certainty and transparency of project dependencies, delivery timescales and outage impacts, supported by clear communication of changes throughout the connections journey.

Why these interventions?

Stakeholders consistently told us that meeting connection dates and improving delivery credibility are critical priorities. Customers want greater certainty over delivery timescales, stronger communication when delays occur, and better visibility of project status, milestones and dependencies.

In response, we will strengthen our delivery capability through targeted workforce, delivery model and supply chain improvements, increase the use of innovative and flexible connection solutions, and invest in tools that provide greater visibility and management of project dependencies. Together, these interventions will improve delivery confidence, reduce avoidable delays, increase transparency when issues arise, and provide customers with greater confidence that projects will progress and be delivered as planned. Meeting connection dates is critical to enabling customer investment and supporting electrification.

6.4 THEME 4: QUALITY OF CONNECTION OFFERS

Overview

Table 6.7: Quality of connection offers

Type of connections in scope	Primarily targeted at new and larger connections
Principle	Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the connections process
Baseline expectation	Ensure that connection offers are clear, accurate and stable, with assumptions, scope, costs, risks and dependencies clearly explained. Changes to offers should be minimised and, where unavoidable, clearly justified and communicated.
Exceeds baseline?	Exceeds baseline expectation by introducing proactive measures to identify, communicate and mitigate risks before they result in offer changes.
Additional funding required?	No

Strategic outcome

We will improve the quality and clarity of connection offers and supporting information so that customers have a clear, consistent understanding of what is being proposed and what it means for them. Stakeholders have told us that certainty and clarity in quote information is fundamental and they value quote accuracy over increasing speed, and that they want something which they can trust.

Our outputs and metric

Output 4: We will enhance the accuracy and quality of our connection offers while maintaining a strong focus on the timely delivery of connections. From April 2028, we will track the key drivers that result in changes to the Scope of works following issue of an offer and then identify opportunities to improve our accuracy. We will be transparent about the causes of these changes and will publish these annually in the Connections Annual Report, together with the actions we are taking to address factors within our control to drive continuous improvement. This will help to further reduce changes to offers.

Output 5: From April 2028, we will help customers understand project risks by providing customers connecting over 1MVA/MW with a one-page risk summary as part of their offer. From the start of ED3, EHV customers will have access to a viability service, enabling the early identification and exploration of risks before detailed design, reducing rework and improving project certainty. We will look to see how this can be expanded to other market segments throughout ED3. We will achieve 90% compliance with this output, with our performance published annually in the Connections Annual Report to demonstrate how we are supporting successful project delivery and improving the customer experience.

Table 6.8: ED3 interventions

ED3 deliverables	Which will result in these outcomes:	This will benefit our customers by:
Improved visibility and breakdowns of costs, assumptions, network constraints, reinforcement requirements (including any interfaces with transmission or NESO), connection pathways and access products within the application and quotation process.	Customers have a clearer understanding of the factors influencing their connection solution and connection date.	Reduced uncertainty and increased confidence in connection decisions.
Quotation processes are supported by improved data quality, integrated systems and strengthened governance of connections data.	Customers receive more accurate, consistent and reliable connection offers.	Greater certainty in quoted costs and connection requirements, with fewer unexpected changes.
Enhanced identification and communication of project risks, cost breakdowns, assumptions, dependencies and delivery constraints during the offer stage.	Customers understand significant project risks and dependencies before accepting a connection offer.	Improved project planning and fewer unforeseen issues during delivery.
Improved communication of offer changes, design changes and material updates throughout the customer journey. This includes opportunities for earlier connections dates where appropriate.	Customers receive earlier visibility of changes affecting project costs, scope or delivery timescales.	Reduced disruption, improved transparency and increased trust in the connections process.

Why these interventions?

Stakeholder feedback and our experience in ED2 consistently highlighted that customers value the accuracy, clarity and reliability of connection offers. Customers told us they want greater certainty over costs, timescales, risks and delivery requirements, with fewer unexpected changes after an offer has been issued. Quotation is predominantly a desktop exercise and for larger connections, our stakeholders acknowledge that it will evolve post-detailed design. However, we will strengthen the quality of information available before and during the quotation process through clearer communication of risks, assumptions and dependencies. Together, these interventions will improve offer transparency and give customers greater confidence to make informed investment decisions and progress projects successfully.

6.5 THEME 5: AMBITION OF CONNECTION OFFERS

Overview

Table 6.9: Ambition of connection offers

Type of connections in scope	Applies to all connections, but the specific measures are primarily targeted at new and larger connections.
Principle	Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.
Baseline expectation	Ensure that ambition has been applied in setting offers, and opportunities to advance dates are identified, communicated and monitored over time.
Exceeds baseline?	Exceeds baseline expectation through a new explicit mechanism to set and deliver within an ambitious date.
Additional funding required?	No

Strategic outcome

While Theme 3 focuses on delivering agreed connection dates, this theme focuses on identifying opportunities to connect customers earlier where this can be achieved safely and efficiently. We will ensure we offer our customers ambitious connection dates through innovative offers and an energisation window. Stakeholders have been clear that they support flexibility but want clearer onboarding and more transparency. This is linked to theme 6.3 in how we are meeting connection dates.

Our Output and metric

Output 6: Across ED3 all EHV connection customers will be offered post detailed design an energisation window (subject to agreed caveats), providing a clear ambitious date for connection if all aspects proceed well, with a backstop date providing greater certainty and confidence in delivery timelines. We will report on the percentage of projects delivered within an agreed energisation window and aim to improve this year on year across ED3. This will ensure we apply ambition and that it is baked into connection delivery plans.

Table 6.10: ED3 intervention logic

ED3 deliverables	Which will result in these outcomes:	This will benefit our customers by:
Early access and flexible connection products integrated into standard connections processes, including opt-in arrangements, flexible connections and alternative connection solutions where a firm connection date is not immediately available. Where possible, we will seek to offer this throughout the connections journey i.e. while a customer is waiting in the queue, if an earlier opportunity becomes available.	Customers can access connection opportunities sooner through a broader range of connection options and access arrangements.	Faster access to the network, reduced waiting times and earlier project delivery without waiting for full reinforcement.
Expanded use of flexibility services to release network capacity, including procuring and dispatching flexibility to manage constraints and support customer connections.	Greater use of existing network capacity and reduced reliance on immediate network reinforcement.	Earlier access to capacity, faster connections and lower overall system costs.

Energisation window approach for High Voltage and Extra High Voltage customers, providing an ambitious earliest energisation date and a realistic back-stop date following detailed design.	Customers have clearer visibility of likely energisation timeframes and can better understand delivery dependencies and risks.	Greater certainty for project planning, improved transparency and increased confidence in delivery timescales.
Enhanced communication and project management around energisation windows, encouraging both SSEN and customers to work towards the earliest achievable energisation date while maintaining visibility of realistic delivery scenarios.	Customers receive clearer information on project progression, changing dependencies and expected delivery dates.	Better planning, reduced uncertainty and improved confidence in achieving connection dates.

Why these interventions?

Stakeholders support greater flexibility and ambition in connection offers but have been clear that they want improved transparency, clearer onboarding and greater confidence in delivery timescales. To address this, we will embed new flexible and innovative connection products (see chapter 6.3 for examples) into standard processes, make better use of flexibility services to unlock capacity, and introduce energisation windows that provide customers with both an ambitious delivery date and a realistic backstop date. Together, these interventions will enable earlier access to the network, provide greater transparency over delivery scenarios and dependencies, and give customers increased confidence to plan and invest with certainty. Applying ambition and innovative solutions will help accelerate electrification and improve access to the network.

6.6 THEME 6: SMALLER CONNECTIONS (UPGRADES & ACCESS)

Overview

Table 6.11: Smaller connections upgrade and access

Type of connections in scope	All existing smaller connections that require Upgrades and Access
Principle	Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the connections process
Baseline expectation	Demonstrate a coherent end-to-end service for all connections, covering preapplication, application, offer, delivery and energisation. Processes should be clearly owned, integrated and managed to minimise avoidable delays, with clear accountability for outcomes across the full customer journey.
Exceeds baseline?	Meets baseline expectation
Additional funding required?	Partial – explored further in chapter 7

Strategic outcome

Deliver a high-quality, automated and timely service for small connections that delivers for our customers regardless of rising volumes. have told us that process friction is a visible barrier to trust and LCT uptake and a top ranked priority for our LCT installer stakeholders was to ensure a streamlined holistic process with as much self-serve digital automation and assistance that is safe, helpful and feasible. A close second priority was to speed-up applications and auto-approvals.

Our Output and metric

Output 7: Within the ED3 period we will provide connections readiness and/or confirmation to connect / quote for works for LCT connections within 24hrs for 80% of standard heat pump applications and 2 days for 90% of all requests[9].

Table 6.12: ED3 intervention logic

ED3 deliverables	Which will result in these outcomes:	This will benefit our customers by:
One-touch application journeys supported by enhanced data quality and automated decision-making Regardless of how customers apply, we will ensure they only need to enter details once and then the details will be integrated into our systems.	Customers can apply for and receive approval or quotes for standard connections faster and with less manual intervention.	Faster connection approvals, reduced customer effort and accelerated adoption of low-carbon technologies.
End-to-end digital customer journeys whereby customers can track status from application to delivery, including scheduling of works and when/if payments are due.	Customers experience a streamlined and transparent connection process, with clear visibility of required upgrade works and delivery timescales.	Reduced administrative burden, improved customer experience and higher customer satisfaction.
Programmatic unlooping delivery model informed by ED2 learning and strengthened stakeholder partnerships. Proactively enable 463,000 homes to connect LCTs through a multi-price control period ambition to 2048 with an estimated 176,000 homes in ED3. Learn from ED2 pilots to build relationships with stakeholders to deliver programmatic unlooping throughout our licence areas. This is set out in the LRE Annex (ED3-S01) and LINP (ED3-S02).	Increased low-voltage network capacity is available ahead of customer demand, enabling more customers to connect low-carbon technologies.	Faster uptake of smaller connections, reduced waiting times and improved access to low-carbon technologies.
Linked to our DSO Strategy (ED3-S10), which sets out how we will facilitate consumers having greater opportunity to both provide flexibility and utilise flexible energy resource to avoid LV network upgrades	Customers have more options for connecting and managing their electricity usage.	Increased customer choice and greater opportunity to benefit from flexible energy solutions.
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

[9] Refers to connections up to 100amps/phase.

Why these interventions?

The LRE Annex (ED3-S01) and LINP (ED3-S02) provide the physical network foundation through proactive LV upgrades, reinforcement and long-term network planning. The DSO Strategy (ED3-S10) then unlocks additional capacity through flexibility, forecasting, voltage optimisation and place-based planning, helping customers access capacity sooner and enabling more LCTs to connect without immediate reinforcement. This Connection Strategy translates this capacity into a faster, simpler customer experience through automated approvals, enhanced network visibility, streamlined LCT connection journeys and accelerated heat pump and EV connections. Finally, the DNO LCT and Energy Efficiency rollout Annex sets out our enhanced LCT coordination role, working with local authorities, communities, installers and delivery partners to provide targeted support, data and planning tools that remove barriers to adoption. Together, these strategies create an end-to-end LCT framework.

Stakeholder feedback consistently identified process friction and administrative effort as barriers to customer satisfaction and the uptake of low-carbon technologies. Installers and customers prioritised faster application processing, greater automation and simpler self-service journeys, while growing connection volumes require a model that can scale without compromising customer experience. In response, we will automate standard connection processes, enhance digital self-service capabilities, improve data quality and proactively increase network readiness through targeted capacity investments and flexible solutions. Alongside this, we will strengthen our delivery capability through a skilled in-house workforce, which we will build overtime, driven by increasing volumes and resource availability between SHEPD/SEPD. ED2 experience has shown that for high-volume, repeatable smaller connections activities, an in-house delivery model can provide greater consistency, stronger quality control and improved customer experience. During ED3, we will continue to assess the most effective balance of in-house and contractor resources, ensuring customers benefit from both operational flexibility and efficient delivery. Together, these interventions will reduce customer effort, accelerate connection times, improve transparency and support the efficient adoption of low-carbon technologies.

6.7 MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE

During RIIO-ED2 we have worked to ensure that stakeholders have a clear insight into our priorities and can see how their feedback has shaped our priorities, for example via our Major Connections Annual Report, Customer Connections Conferences, customer satisfaction surveys, market segment forums and Connections Expert Panel. We embedded a clear process and structure around stakeholder engagement which enables customer and stakeholder feedback to shape our priorities, outputs and service improvements over time. We will also continue the formal feedback loops in place that combine customer satisfaction evidence with performance data, and our Customer Service and Experience Design team will systematically collect and review customer feedback across each stage of the journey. Stakeholders have told us that they value being able to influence our priorities and then see evidence of the progress we are making against them. We will continue this approach throughout ED3 and continually evolve this process to ensure it remains effective and inclusive.

The ultimate metric for the success of this strategy is customer satisfaction scores. In line with Ofgem's guidance and to ensure we can track deliverability, each of our outputs contain a metric to enable stakeholders and Ofgem to assess delivery and hold us accountable. Throughout ED3 we will report progress against these outputs via the Connections Annual Report. This transparent reporting framework will demonstrate how performance data and customer feedback are being used to drive improvements, deliver learning and evolve our connections service over time (baseline expectation 7).

7. SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT

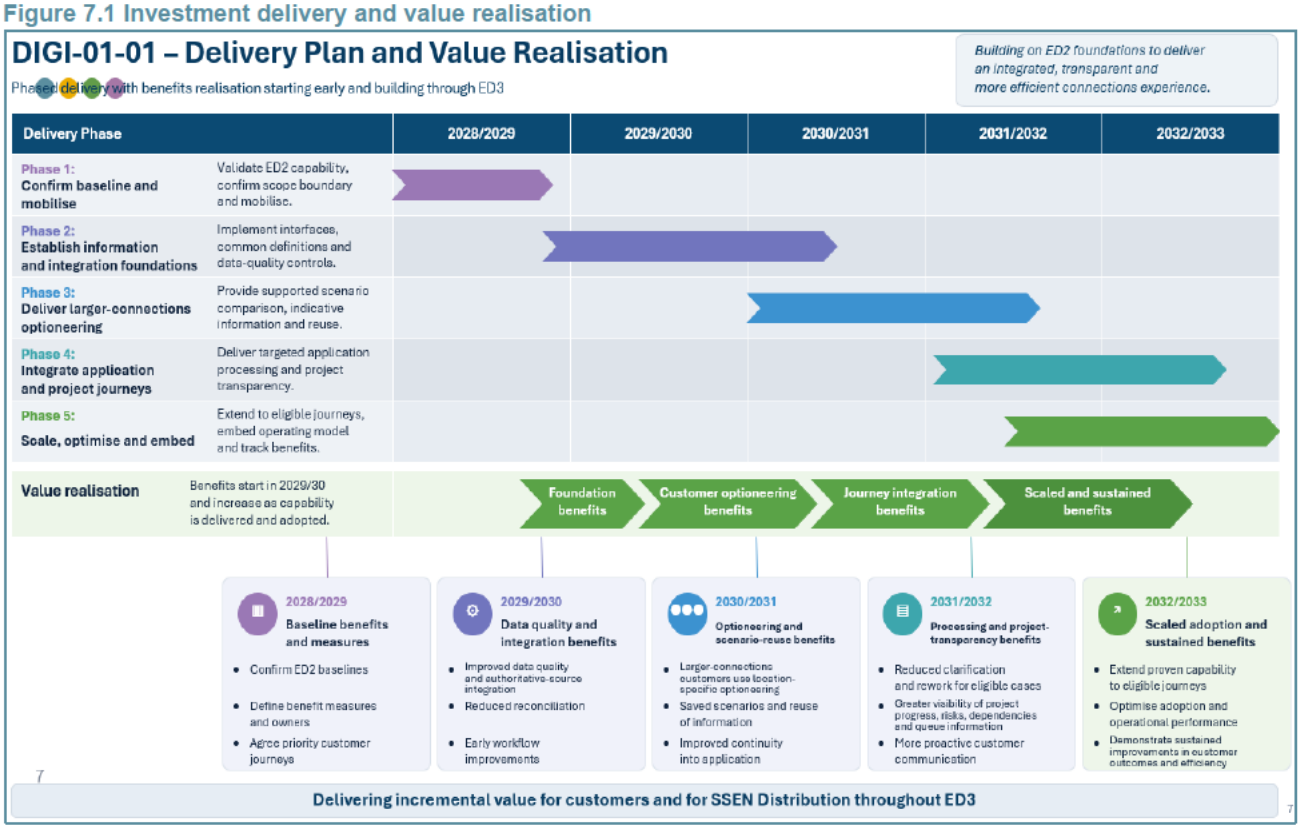
We are proposing a total investment of £9.87m to deliver our Connections Strategy in ED3. This includes two key investments which deliver outcomes which go beyond baseline requirements:

- **Pre-application tools**: We are investing to provide customers with enhanced pre-application tools in ED3. This will build on existing data sets available through our data portal and will allow larger customers to assess location-specific feasibility, capacity, constraints, connection options, indicative costs and timescales before applying with selected scenarios preserved for direct reuse in an application. Scope includes integration points to flexibility, DER planning, and LV coordination platforms that are required by the customer-facing application. These will enable accurate, scenario-based decision support and greater visibility of connection risk constraints and trade-offs. This is a key enabler of Output 1. This comprises £3.61m of our total investment. This investment will avoid the need to recruit more quoting staff during ED3 to meet rising volumes through reducing the volume of speculative applications.
- **Increased automation through fuller digital integration of processes**: Our investments in ED2 are delivering full automation of minor connections and LCT applications, as well as baseline digital functionality across the end-to-end connections process for all customers. This will ensure we can meet rising volumes of LCT requests and deliver a more joined up and efficient connections journey for small customers. In ED3, we can extract more value from these investments through embedding further automation of processes, through linking these systems and refining the digital architecture. This will allow us to meet the forecast increase in connection applications from commercial LV customers and HV demand. Forecast show these volumes in these market segments increasing considerably in the last two years of ED3 and into ED4. The proposed investment of an additional £4.81m will fund further integration and digitalisation of systems to get maximum value from our ED2 investments. This will include linking more internal information into our customer facing portal, for customer to view real time updates and further automation of HV quoting activities.

The remaining £1.45m of our investment is to fund further integration of capabilities in ED2 to ensure that we can deliver on baseline requirements through integrating information like programme, queue management milestones and dependent works can flow through into our customer portal to allow customers to view these and see progress and updates.

The Digital Justification Paper (Evolution of Customer Facing Applications DIGI-01-01) sets out the full details of this investment. The investment builds on the capabilities established during ED2 to deliver a fully integrated, end-to-end connections service, the capabilities of which were already established during ED2. The investment directly supports delivery of our eight customer outputs and is designed to address the issues consistently raised through stakeholder engagement, including limited access to network information, lack of visibility of project progress, inconsistent service experiences, uncertainty around costs and dates, and increasing process friction as connection volumes grow. This investment paper is accompanied by cost benefit analysis, which demonstrates a strong case for the full suite of our investments, largely on the basis of avoided overheads in ED3. Effectively, the investments will allow us to meet the rising volumes of commercial LV and HV applications while maintaining a flat headcount in quote and design teams. Diagram 6 below shows the profile of benefit realisation from this investment.

Figure 7.1 Investment delivery and value realisation



ANNEX 1: LIST OF CUSTOMER STANDARDS OF SERVICE

These standards of service are a minimum. We expect these evolve and will publish any changes on our website.

Table 0.1: Customer standards of service

	Standard and timing
Smaller connections (new connections):	**Customer is contacted within 1 working day of applying.** Quoter speaks to customer to confirm their quote is being designed.
	Customers receive a call within 1 working day of being sent their quote. Quoter speaks to customers to answer any immediate questions regarding the quote.
	Customer is contacted within 1 working day of payment/acceptance to confirm delivery and next steps.
All customers:	**Customers kept up to date via customer portal on project status and any upcoming payments.** Project progress and all associated documents are viewable on the customer portal.
Large connection customers:	**Post acceptance call from Contract Managers within 1 week of offer acceptance.** Customers will be informed of projects progressing to our DSO team for final technical development. Customers will be informed that the next milestone will be the design payment for project to move into delivery.
	Recurring call with Contract Manager. Contract Manger to contact customer regularly until design progression agreed.
	Introductory call with Project Manager within 8 weeks of acceptance. Applicable when design payment has been made.
	Meeting with Project Manager to discuss outline programme of works within 12 weeks of acceptance. Customer to be offered a face-to-face meeting to discuss outline schedule of works and agree to these works. Applicable when design payment has been made.
	We will publish guidance on our website to ensure that capacity on our network is allocated to projects that can best utilise it; we will ensure enforcement of Ofgem's queue management milestones. We will be transparent in our reporting and publish this annually in the Connections Annual Report to demonstrate effective project progression and our promise to transparent queue management.