

# Our plans and commitments for connections customers



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## This report sets out

- How we will engage with you to ensure we hear the views and needs of a wide range of our connections customers
- What you can expect from us, in the form of a comprehensive work plan explaining the key commitments we are making and a targeted time for completion
- What the outputs will be and how we will measure what we are doing (clear targets and 'key performance indicators')
- Evidence that these plans and commitments are based on input from, and are endorsed by, a broad and inclusive range of customers.

# Welcome



I am pleased to share with you our commitments and plans for improvement for the coming year on behalf of Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution (SHEPD) and Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD).

It's important that we listen to people with an interest in our business (stakeholders), in particular you as our connections customers. This is why we continue to develop our approach to ensure that we truly hear and act on what you tell us. This includes demonstrating how your views and ideas are built into our plans.

We recognise that there is always more we can do – these plans and commitments are part of an ongoing journey. You can view them on pages 10 to 31. Together, they form part of our overall strategy for our licensed areas in the north of Scotland and central southern England.

Ultimately, this is about continuing to improve the service you receive from us. With that in mind, this 'Looking Forward Report' sets out:

- How we will engage with you to ensure we hear the views and needs of a wide range of our connections customers
- What you can expect from us, in the form of a comprehensive work plan explaining the key commitments we are making and a targeted time for completion
- What the outputs will be and how we will measure what we are doing (clear targets and 'key performance indicators')
- Evidence that these plans and commitments are based on input from, and are endorsed by, a broad and inclusive range of customers

I trust you will find our program for the year useful and reassuring, and we welcome your views on how we can improve your experience with us.

Colin Nicol  
Managing Director of Distribution

You can reach us by emailing [connectionsfeedback@sse.com](mailto:connectionsfeedback@sse.com) with any thoughts and ideas or if you are simply interested in keeping up to date with our progress throughout the year.

## SHEPD



## SEPD

As Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), we own and operate two electricity distribution license areas. These areas are in the north of Scotland and central southern England.

Our electricity distribution networks are the systems of overhead lines and underground cables that deliver electricity to your homes and businesses.

### SHEPD (the north of Scotland)

safely delivers electricity to around 740,000 customers across a quarter of the UK landmass. This attracts unique challenges in terms of both distance and terrain. As well as serving the major population centres of Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Perth, we use more than 100 subsea cable links to connect to most Scottish islands including the Inner and Outer Hebrides, Arran and the Orkney islands.

### SEPD (central southern England)

is the larger of our two distribution networks and safely delivers electricity supplies to more than 2.8 million customers. It covers an area ranging from rural communities in Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, to towns and cities including Bournemouth, Oxford, Portsmouth, Reading, Southampton, Slough, Swindon and parts of west London. We also distribute electricity to and across the Isle of Wight.

# Our approach to engaging with you

## Put simply, our stakeholder engagement activity is intended to ensure that you are at the heart of our business.

Underpinning all our initiatives is a solid engagement approach. It is driven by a clear focus on our values of safety, service, efficiency, sustainability, excellence and teamwork.

To get this right, it's essential that we hear directly from you – what you expect of us, what we do well and what we could do better. We appreciate that your priorities can change over time, which is why this work plan contains initiatives and commitments to help us engage even better with you.

### Checking our progress: Our feedback loop

Our stakeholder engagement feedback loop shows how we consider direct and indirect feedback from within and outside our business, how we act on it, check we've got it right and seek input on further improvements.

The feedback loop helps as we implement our initiatives - also to meet the direction set by the Board. It helps ensure that individual initiatives, and our overall approach, are relevant to your needs and that we keep your views at the forefront of our thinking.



*It is critical that we continuously improve our service to our connections customers. Listening to your views and needs is central to this effort, which is why we're investing in an ever more robust engagement approach."*

**Mark Rough**  
Director of Commercial and Connections

## Our customers

### As a customer, you may require an individual connection to one house, a number of connections to a housing estate, a major factory connection or a mix.

#### Demand connections

Demand connections customers want to utilise electricity in homes, schools, shops and factories. You will fall into one of four groups:

- Your projects are entirely connected and metered at low voltage
- There are also some works at high voltage
- You have works at extra high voltage
- Your projects are entirely connected and metered at extra high voltage

#### Generation connections

If you are a generation connections customer, then rather than consuming electricity, you will require a connection to the grid to supply it to others. You will fall into one of two groups:

- Your projects are entirely connected and metered at low voltage
- Your projects are works at higher voltage

#### Unmetered connections

We provide connections so small and predictable that no meter is required, such as for a street lights. Our unmetered connections customers here fall into three groups:

- Local authorities
- Private Finance Initiative
- Any other customer requiring an unmetered connection

#### Our Engagement Values

Our policy contains the clear requirement to undertake stakeholder engagement in line with the values of our business:

**Safety:** We will undertake our engagement with stakeholders safely and responsibly.

**Service:** We will engage with our stakeholders in a way that we are proud of and make commitments we can deliver.

**Efficiency:** We will keep our engagement activities simple, do the work that adds value and avoids wasting money, materials, energy or time.

**Sustainability:** We will undertake our engagement activities ethically and transparently and in changing our business in response to stakeholder views, we will take the long term view to achieve growth while safeguarding the environment.

**Excellence:** We will strive to ensure that our engagement gets better, smarter and more innovative.

**Teamwork:** We support and value our stakeholders and will work with them in an open and honest way; this will include actively involving our stakeholders in designing the engagement process.

# More ways for you to engage with us

**Whether you are a demand, generation or unmetered connections customer, the following pages will be of interest to you as they set out the commitments we have made for the coming year.**

As you will see, some improvements will benefit all of our connections customers while others are aimed at particular groups. We explain which customers suggested the improvement and at whom the improvement is aimed.

Our work plan for 2015/16 provides an extensive list of challenging but achievable commitments that will help us engage even more closely with you and further improve the service you receive from us.

### A dedicated connections engagement team

To produce positive change and to continuously enhance your experience, we recognise that we need a team that is focused solely on connections engagement. We have therefore set up a dedicated team this year.

The role of this team is to ensure we put you as our connection stakeholders at the centre of our business planning and improvement processes, that key internal stakeholders agree with our approach and that we apply improvements to our 'business as usual'. It will also make sure that we take on genuinely ambitious commitments that represent stretching targets for our business.

The team will help to gather feedback from you, checking that we are proactively capturing the views of a broad range of connections customers across our business areas in Scotland and England. Ultimately, helping us identify specific areas where we can improve our service to you.

In this, we recognise that no two customers are the same. You have your own, unique needs. This is why we tailor our approach to be flexible to suit customers' needs – whether this means going to see you where you are, inviting you to a workshop event, surgery or portfolio meeting or engaging with you online.

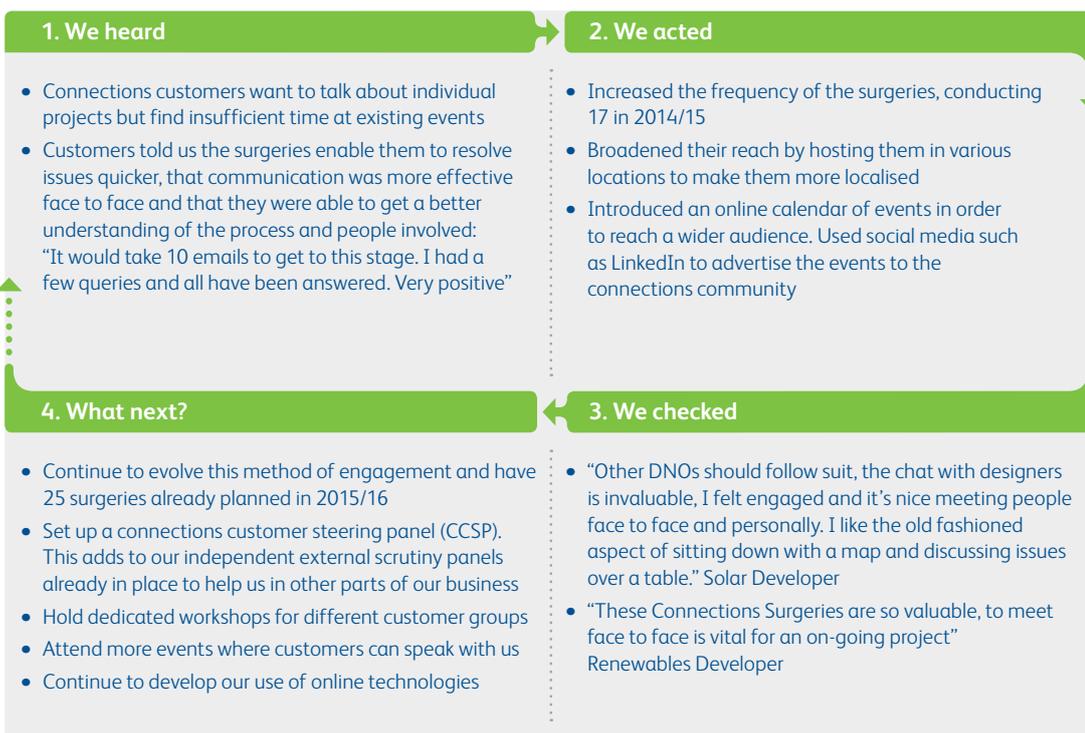
### Increasing one-to-one time with you through Connections Surgeries

We heard, for instance, that many of you wanted more one-to-one time with us to talk about individual projects. We will therefore continue to offer connections surgeries in various locations over the coming year.



*We set ourselves challenging goals. Our customers expect nothing less. But we must ensure that we have the right resources in place to deliver on these goals and that we put in place a range of tools to help customers share their feedback."*

**Donald MacKinnon,**  
Head of Commercial



# More ways for you to engage with us

Continued

## Dedicated workshops for customers

To ensure we engage with as many stakeholders as possible, we will run dedicated workshops that focus on issues that are relevant to each of three customer groups: generation, demand and unmetered customers. These workshops will run over the course of a day and will be open to everyone without exception. They will cover compliance and legal aspects and the connection process. A large proportion of the day will be spent in break-out sessions where you can raise questions and issues for discussion in groups.

## Develop our use of online technologies

We will continue to expand our use of social media channels including LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to engage and communicate key messages to you to gain real-time feedback.

## Online survey for you to share your views

We recognise that your time is precious and that it may be easier for you to give your feedback through an online survey. This is why we will run surveys throughout the year where you can comment on the issues that matter to you.

## Attend more events where we can speak with you

We commit to attending national energy events. So you know where we will be and when, we have launched an online calendar where you can find the events we will attend. You will have the opportunity to email the organiser of the event to arrange a one-to-one meeting to discuss any particular issues you may have. Events, monthly surgeries and open days are just a few of the ways we look to engage with you.



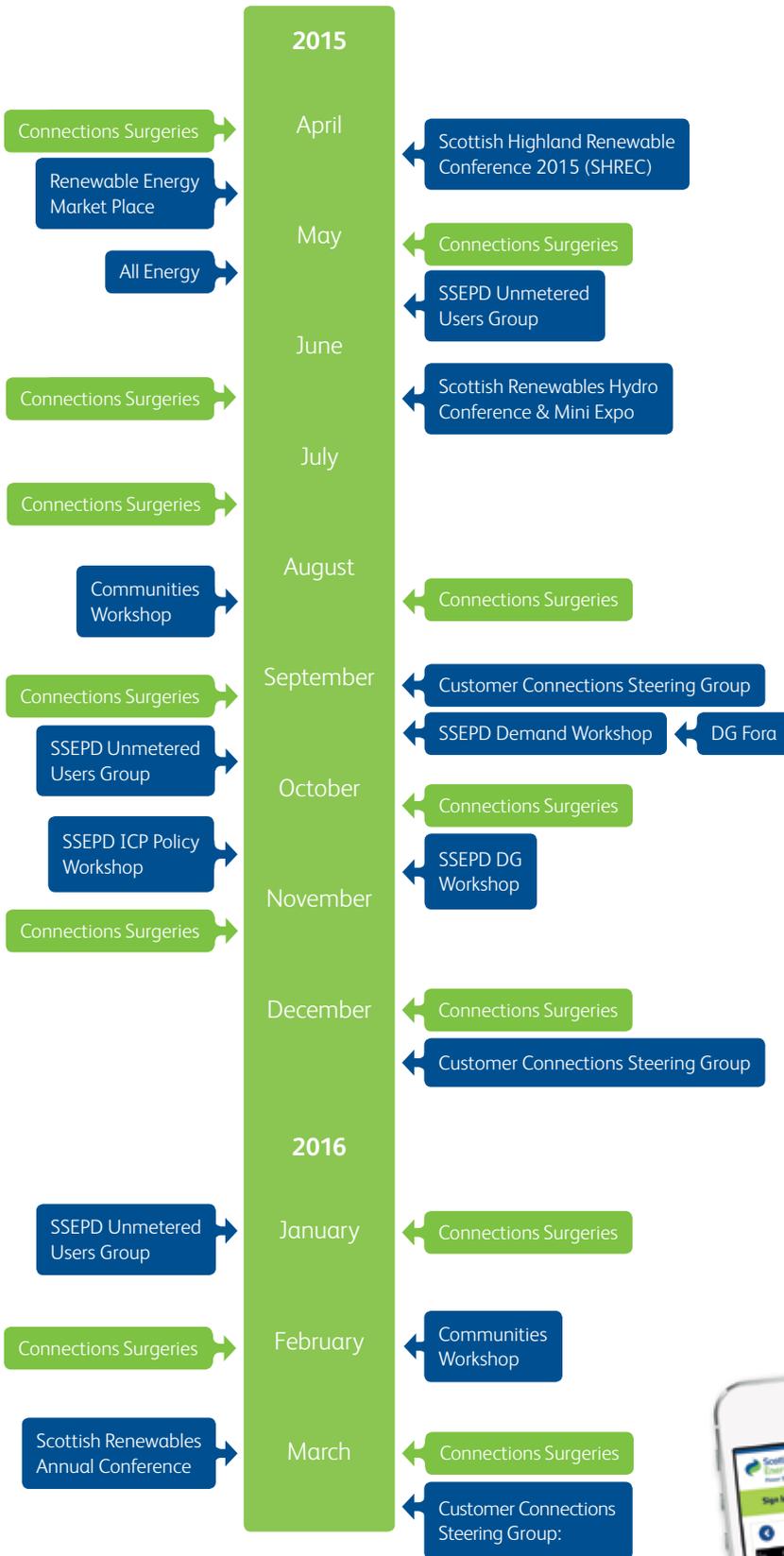
## Set up a connections customer steering panel (CCSP)

We will set up a panel with representation from all our connections customer groups. The panel will:

- Influence our overall connections strategy
- Provide feedback on the effectiveness of our connections service and plans for future service improvements
- Draw attention to, and advise on, key customer concerns



# Events timeline



**more**  
 You can view the full events calendar online at [www.ssepd.co.uk/stakeholderevent](http://www.ssepd.co.uk/stakeholderevent)



# Delivering on the commitments we made last year

## Last year we ran a trial of our new connections engagement strategy, which focused on improving the overall experience for generation connection customers.

Based on their feedback, we developed our 2014/15 work plan, which proved to be a great success with twelve commitments identified and implemented.

We kept customers informed throughout the process to make sure we were on the right track. Here are just three examples of the changes we put in place:

- **Increasing our contact** with you: As a direct result of the commitments we made, we extended our contract managers to central southern England. This move allowed us to build more, and closer, customer relationships
- **Improving your visibility** of generation constraints: We made available on our website a Generation Availability Heat Map tool to help you see more easily which network areas are generation constrained and when any corresponding reinforcement works will be completed

- **Giving you a better overview** of upcoming activities and events: We launched an online events calendar to show more clearly at which activities and events we will be presenting, hosting or attending. This will help us to meet and get to know each other



“Have we got our interaction with customers right? We’re always mindful of this. We made a commitment in our 2015-2023 business plan that customers could contact us in more ways that suit them. We’ve made huge progress on that front.”

**Stuart Hogarth**  
Director of Distribution



SEPD Contract Managers

“Having a point of contact within a DNO that understands how our business works is key. The commercial team within SSEPD have always been very helpful, not just passing you on to another department. We work within a fast paced industry where we need the same level of service from DNOs.”  
**Consultant**

“Having a single point of contact throughout the lifecycle of a project as well as across project portfolios is useful. We would encourage that regular meetings are included for all projects – especially those that are not being actively progressed.”  
**Infrastructure, Maintenance and Management Organisation**

“In the early days of developments, it is critical that the developer has comfort on infrastructure and there is no hidden infrastructure costs. Having headroom information will help in providing the developer with some comfort.”  
**Large Housing Developer**



Generation Availability Heat Map

# Using technology and innovation to benefit you

**Innovation is a prominent feature in many of our commitments this year. Our innovation portfolio includes a diverse range of projects designed to make our network safer and more efficient while offering good value to you.**

A priority for us is to develop innovative solutions which help you connect more quickly and easily to our network. Examples of these projects include:

- Trialling the principle of enabling community-led Demand-Side Management through the provision of **real-time information**. This could enable communities to have better control over their electricity demand
- Exploring the potential introduction of Distribution-connected **Energy Storage Systems** (such as batteries or boilers)
- Presently trialling the use of **electric vehicles** to increase local demand
- Trialling the use of a **Hydrogen Electrolyser**
- Adopting learning points from a completed Research & Development project regarding the **deployment of batteries at Low Voltage** to reduce potential issues caused by LV generation and Low Carbon Technology (such as voltage issues and power quality)

All these initiatives could potentially be used to relieve constrained networks for your benefit.

To continue this focus, one of our key commitments this year is to develop commercial innovation when structuring and managing connection offers to minimise 'queued up' capacity and allow access to networks for generators that are ready to connect.

This commitment is complemented by our other innovation commitments around gathering consortia of developers together to aid connections.



Innovation website



*In providing energy for all customers, we need to be sure that our innovation projects deliver the right value, in the right places with real benefit for customers now and in the future"*

**Alan Broadbent**  
Director of Engineering

## Active Network Management (ANM): An innovative solution in response to stakeholder input

An example of an innovative working practice developed as a result of stakeholder feedback is our use of Active Network Management (ANM), which connects components of a smart grid such as smaller energy generators or storage devices through software to monitor and control their operation. ANM also takes continuous measurements to control demand and generation, while minimising network losses, stabilising the system and detecting faults. We ensure these technologies are integrated into the energy system for efficient use, reducing the need for costly network reinforcement. An example of where we are putting this into practice is on the Isle of Wight:



**more**

You can find further information on our innovation projects at [www.ssepd.co.uk/innovation](http://www.ssepd.co.uk/innovation)

# Working with community groups

**It became clear to us that a main barrier to developing new projects was being able to access detailed information on network capacity and have options for different connection scenarios.**

As a result, we developed Generation Availability Heat Maps last year to give you much **more transparent information upfront**, shortening the lead time and reducing the time and cost required. Because community projects can often not change sites, it is critical that they know early on the likely capacity available to inform the design process.

In our SEPD area we have worked closely for a number of years with community groups to help understand the **future of renewables**, including with groups that produce a renewable energy forecasting study and regular market insight reports. We have also run regular events, providing opportunities to interact with developers and other key stakeholders.

The recently launched **Renewable Energy Grid Collaboration Service** was set up in collaboration between us and another local DNO through a community group. The purpose of the service is to broker collaborations that could reduce grid reinforcement costs and enable projects in areas where grid costs are prohibitive. Developers have shown a lot of interest in this initiative. To date, 14 have signed up and another 6 are in the process of doing so. Our commitment to a consortia register will also help promote opportunities for collaboration between interested parties.

We have also committed to provide dedicated **community projects account managers** this year. We are confident that having an account manager who understands the additional challenges that community energy faces will be beneficial to these groups.

Our proposed **guide to connections** will be a useful resource for community energy groups, many of which may have no previous experience of the connection process and may be unfamiliar with our role. Non-experts will find the language and style of the guide accessible. We will collaborate with a community group to create this guide, drawing on the combined feedback from community representatives to produce an introduction and links to appropriate further information.

Working with **various community bodies** will provide clear benefits for all parties concerned as it allows us to interact with a wide range of stakeholders to test out ideas before formal adoption. In particular, we are seeking to collaborate further on the development of customer-centric products and services, gaining as much input as possible from customers and their representatives.

For example, recognising the geographic spread of our communities we are now using a 'virtual meeting' approach with Community Energy Scotland to gain feedback from their community members on our plans for community engagement.



“*Many of our commitments are framed by our partnership working with community stakeholders, which helps deliver benefits beyond community groups to others such as farmers, small businesses, schools, hospitals and local developers.*”

**Donald MacKinnon**  
Head of Commercial

“It has taken a lot of time and effort to build the relationship between two very different types of organisation to make this way of working viable, and I am personally very pleased with the progress made in the last 18 months in particular.

**Community Body Representative**

“While there is a long way to go to overcome the barriers facing some community generators in SSEPD's area, we have already delivered a number of successful outcomes, and are confident that the new commitments on community energy and innovation will deliver on-the-ground benefits in the near term.”

**Community Body Representative**

“We are pleased to see that SSEPD is working to support community energy and is providing resources to overcome some of the barriers that are often faced by community projects. Their work on exploring novel connection agreements is particularly helpful along with appointing one point of contact who really understands the needs of groups undertaking community projects.”

**Community Body Representative**

# Collaborating with others

**Wherever you are in Great Britain, you may face particular challenges in connecting to the network. When seeking to address these challenges, we recognise that while there are areas in which we lead our industry, there are areas where we can learn from others.**

We actively collaborate with other DNOs and industry stakeholders to resolve these challenges. This includes being active in industry working groups, sharing best practice with other DNOs and working closely with trade associations and community bodies.

We now meet regularly with other DNOs and industry stakeholders to share best practice and work together. An ongoing example of this is our work with Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN), all 32 Scottish local authorities and the Scottish Future Trust, rolling out their programme to reduce the carbon footprint of unmetered street lighting. This complements our DNO-wide work to modify our charging mechanisms to encourage the early take-up of low carbon technology such as electric car charging points and heat pumps in domestic homes.

This approach has yielded particular benefits when tackling issues affecting a wide range of you as connections customers, for example the issues highlighted with the 'Transmission & Distribution interface' in generation connections. SHEPD now hosts monthly meetings with SHE Transmission to ensure that the current position with network

constraints and reinforcement is visible and transparent on the online Generation Availability Heat Map tool and is updated on a monthly basis. This is an example of where we will solicit your views to help us continually improve the tool so it's as helpful as possible for you.

We have also agreed to work closely with SPEN to explore ways in which DNOs can engage in a more consistent manner with you. This commitment is a direct result of listening to what you have told us – that it can be frustrating to be approached in different ways by different DNOs.

A further example of our collaborative work over the coming months is our plan to work with National Grid and SPEN to organise customer workshops in order to:

- Make the Statement of Works process more efficient
- Make the pass through of Transmission Liabilities more transparent
- Explore other opportunities available for pursuing options for better 'Queue Management' on the Transmission network



Disseminating learnings with industry stakeholders

The following pages summarise the broad range of plans and commitments we are putting in place to enhance the service we offer you and the experience you can expect from us.



# Community Projects

## Dedicated account manager for community projects

We will provide a dedicated Account Manager for community projects, to allow all community projects to benefit from one point of contact for any queries they may have with their connection.

They will be responsible for looking after all community connection projects and:

- attending industry meetings and liaising with community bodies to help develop relationships with all parties involved in a community connection
- having regular catch up meetings to discuss current and potential projects making things easier for all parties
- taking the opportunity to speak with you to fully understand the details of your request
- ensuring you know what to expect from start to finish through the connection process

"This would be incredibly useful to have one point of contact rather than having to ring round trying to catch up with applications and get answers to queries."

**Consultant**

"Feedback from commercial developers about the introduction of account managers has been very positive. Having an account manager that understands the additional challenges that community energy faces will be extremely helpful. The challenge will be letting community energy groups know that they are there."

**Community Body Representative**

### KPI measure

Account manager assigned to each licence area

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment	✓			

## Run training workshops

We plan to host customer training workshops on our systems with a particular focus on community projects. We presently provide access to much of the systems and information we use but we are aware that not everyone has the same level of experience to be able to make use of these. We understand that it is one thing to allow access to these systems but customers may need help with how to use them and interpret the information that they contain. To improve the experience we will offer training courses and workshops to help their knowledge in the use of our materials such as GIS (maps), LTDS (long term development statement), online heat maps and our Electricity Network Diagrams. We will consult with both our community connections customers and the appropriate community bodies to facilitate the best use of these sessions.

"Yes, these could be of use, especially to Junior Members of our team who do not have the experience in dealing with DNOs such as yourselves"

**Consultant**

"Definitely, workshops would provide a hands on experience and allow any questions to be raised."

**Renewables Developer**

### KPI measure

Number of events held

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment		2	4	6

Our work plan in detail continued

# Community Projects

## Community connections guide

We recognise that people involved in community projects aren't always aware of how to go about applying for a community connection. Our community customers have told us that quite often they are new to working with this industry and they are often volunteers who have limited background in what connecting a community generator or community heat or power project involves. Building on our current suite of various connection guides and process maps we developed last year, we plan to work with community groups and relevant community bodies to develop a 'Community Connection Guide' to assist community groups in the various stages of connecting their project.

"A guide to connections is a very useful resource for community energy groups, many of which will have no previous experience of the connection process and may not even know what the role of the DNO is."

**Community Body Representative**

"We welcome the commitment to develop a dedicated guide for community connections, as well as the focus on community energy in the overall RIIO-ED1 strategy."

**Community Body Representative**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Community connection guide published		✓		
Commitment				

## Commercial and contractual innovation

Last year we were involved in a number of community projects where we explored novel connection agreements to allow these to progress early. We will continue this development so that in areas that are contractually, but not physically, constrained we will work with local communities and developers to explore options available to allow their connection to be brought forward ahead of the reinforcement on which they depend.

"This will provide the opportunity to pilot new commercial arrangements with a range of stakeholders throughout the supply chain. This collaborative approach is vital to ensuring that the solutions work for both communities and the DNO."

**Community Body Representative**

"Network innovation is essential for communities that are in areas where the grid is already constrained or likely to be in the near future. Community schemes take longer to develop than commercial ones, which has meant that many groups have missed the opportunity to connect to the network at an affordable cost. They also cannot move to areas where there is capacity as they are geographically constrained, unlike commercial developers. So connection solutions need to be found that are affordable for community schemes."

**Community Body Representative**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of commercial innovation opportunities created			3	5
Commitment				

# Customer Service

## Account Managers extended

Last year we extended our account managers across all of our large generation customers. Feedback received has been very positive and supportive of this approach. We now plan to extend these to our large demand connection customers as we recognise having a single point of contact to liaise with you throughout your project is beneficial to you too. We will provide dedicated key account managers located locally at each of our regional offices to manage your connection from enquiry through to completion. These dedicated key account managers will:

- be responsible for looking after all works associated with your project
- have regular catch-up meetings to discuss current and potential future projects making things easier for you to connect
- take the opportunity to speak with you to fully understand the details of your request
- ensure you know what to expect from start to finish through the connection process

"Having a point of contact within a DNO that understands how our business works is key. The commercial team within SSEPD have always been very helpful, not just passing you on to another department. Having a dedicated key account manager would be an advantage for us. It would allow our good relationship with SSEPD to develop. We work within a fast paced industry where we need the same level of service from DNOs."

**Housing and Commercial Developers**

"Ideally this would not only be for new connections but for the whole suite of services required for a single site i.e. disconnections/diversions/alterations and new connections."

**Consultant**

### KPI measure

Percentage of regions covered by account managers

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment			70	100

## Improved selection of process maps and guidance booklets

Over the last few years we have introduced a series of commitments to help improve our customers experience through tailored first contact. To help connections customers identify our processes for connection or other services, we will continue to develop our suites of easy to understand information booklets and process maps to guide customers through what to expect. Throughout the year we have asked customers for feedback on which of our processes they would like to see explained. The large generation connection process, clarity around our disconnections process and help with our wayleaves and legals process are the three areas which customers told us needed attention to help improve the service we offer. These guides will help explain what customers can expect when applying for a connection.

Therefore this year we commit to providing improved literature around:

- **Wayleaves/Legal process:** A guide on the key features and considerations of the wayleaves and legal process involved when delivering a connection
- **Large Generation Process:** The processes followed by larger distributed generation projects can vary and this guide will explain the main differences that developers should be aware of.
- **Disconnection process:** This guide will detail the various stages involved in arranging a disconnection

"Particularly for first time customers, it is important to provide clear and accessible advice that is relevant to their immediate needs and can be taken away for consideration."

**Community Body Representative**

"Very positive initiative, helping to make a complex process easier for parties not used to the subject matter."

**Micro Hydro Developer**

"Expansion of your suite of process maps and guidance booklets will be very beneficial."

**Consultant**

### KPI measure

Guides published (one per quarter)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment		✓	✓	✓

Our work plan in detail continued

# Customer Service

## Improved methods of engagement activities

Last year we introduced a rolling programme of monthly connection surgeries. This provides a local regular opportunity for customers to engage with the key staff involved in their project. Feedback from our surgeries has been very positive. Building on this, we are reviewing how we engage with all our different customer types and propose to have a full program of different engagement methods including;

- Phase 2 of our events calendar providing an at a glance view of all upcoming events and activities with the ability to register timeslots at surgeries and other events where applicable
- Independent connection provider (ICP) workshop including a section on policy with a view to clarifying any grey areas
- Introducing a connections steering panel to give customers the opportunity to influence our high level connection strategy for major connections customers

"I am keen to progress the ICP/Policy Team meetings (infrequent) as discussed as I think it will lead to better results for SSEPD and the 33kv generation community."  
**Independent Connection Provider**

"Helps resolve problems and provides an opportunity to inform SHEPD of details that should have been readily/easily available to those preparing the quote."  
**Renewable Energy Developer**

"Face to face is great, would really recommend."  
**Response from Connection Surgery**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Website updated, workshops held, steering panel set up and successfully attended	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Staff contact maps available on our website

Customers have told us they would like to have contact information for our connection staff available so they can better understand our structure to know who is responsible for their project. We commit to providing a comprehensive list of key SSEPD staff for you to contact for any queries you may have regarding your connection. This will include the geographic area they cover and a brief description of their role and responsibilities. This will be made available on our website and will be regularly updated

"This is exactly what I had had in mind when we discussed this idea at the conference – good to know that SSE are listening. From our side, and that of our clients, I think the availability of such information would really help to improve communication with SSE (no doubt enabling increased efficiency at your end)."  
**Consultant**

"A directory list of contact with responsibilities would be useful."  
**Renewable Developer**

"They could make the website more accessible, by putting more specific options to make it easier to contact the right person."  
**Response from Customer Satisfaction Survey**

"Yes, invaluable. We struggle with multiple contacts and could do with one contact for our business."  
**Housing Developer**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Contact maps available on website	✓			

# Customer Service

## Extend support for application to evenings and weekends

Our customer service centre staff - who are the first point of contact for all connections applications - are presently available only during normal office hours (8am to 5pm). We would like to consider extending those opening hours if it would be beneficial to you to include evenings and Saturdays. We have had a varied response to this from our stakeholders and so we plan to consult further on this with an intention to extend our working hours if supported by you later in the year.



KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Extended opening hours	Commitment			✓	

## Implement a 'load calculator' on our website

For our smaller projects, to help you identify what capacity you should be applying for we will provide a 'load calculator' on our website to assist our customers to calculate additional and total load. This will be available along side our online application forms.



KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Online facility available	Commitment				✓

## Early feedback on the progress with your application

For larger projects with longer timescales and where appropriate, we will provide updates on the progress of your application at an early stage. This will take the form, following initial assessment, of a call or email from your Contract Manager to update you on progress of the design and any high level findings.



KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of projects where early feedback has been provided	Commitment			25	50

Our work plan in detail continued

# Information Provision

## Access to network diagrams

We understand providing you with as much information in relation to visibility of our existing network can help you make decisions about your project. We will provide access to our systems starting with our extra high voltage and high voltage network diagrams (in PDF format) on our website. This would give you the ability to understand how our network is connected, and allow you to predict if you could easily connect your project to our existing infrastructure. This facility would help give you a better overview of our network in the area of your proposed connection.

"I would find this extremely useful and could prevent a lot of unnecessary time/cost for all concerned."  
**Utility Consultant**

"Any easily accessible information for developers can only make the whole connection process and planning of schemes more simplified. It will take workload away from SSE employees who are stretched to provide each customer with specific information."  
**Renewable Energy Consultant**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Publish maps on website	Commitment	✓		

## Extension to heat maps

We have recently produced online maps with information to show how much capacity is available for large generation connections. This has been well received by our customers. We will continue to improve this with the ability to download the information from the heat map tool into different formats. We want to extend this to customers who are looking to connect large loads, for example data centres, commercial units, retail parks or large housing estates. This information will show you where the headroom is available on our networks to give you better up-front information around likely reinforcement costs and timescales for your projects.

"In the early days of developments, it is critical that the developer has comfort on infrastructure and there is no hidden infrastructure costs. Having headroom information will help in providing the developer with some comfort."  
**Consulting Engineers**

"We have seen DNOs under large amount of pressure due to volumes of connection applications that just don't go ahead. Proving valuable upfront information of capacity not only assists in our early project information, but should help us in the future by reducing the amount of connection offers being submitted and speeding up offer timescales."  
**Renewable Energy Consultant**

"Providing the maps in various download formats would be helpful."  
**Independent Connection Provider**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Percentage increase on website hits up to end March 2015	Commitment			25

# Information Provision

## Consolidated MPAN process

The MPAN is your unique connection point number and you need this to appoint your supplier and meter operator. We issue this number, usually close to your energisation date for you to provide to your supplier. We will review our MPAN process with a view to improving the clarity of information we provide. This will involve consolidating our Meter Point Administration Number (MPAN) process and supporting this with a customer-friendly guide to help customers understand the process and what to expect from start to finish.

"A clearer understanding of the MPAN process would help greatly."

**Consulting Engineers**

"Something has to be done in relation to getting an MPAN. Clients require MPAN numbers to appoint shippers. MPAN needs to be released quicker or earlier in the process."

**Large Independent Building Services Provider**

"The current MPAN system is very unhelpful and getting an MPAN is unnecessarily painful."

**Independent Connection Provider**

### KPI measure

Process updated and communicated

Commitment

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4



## Understanding wayleaves and legals process

We understand it can be frustrating to experience a delay in the progress of your connection due to the wayleaves and legals process. We will review and improve our wayleaves and legals providing clarity in the information we provide. We will:

- look internally to consolidate our process and question our overall approach with the commitment to redesign areas where identified
- following this review we will tell you about the process and what you need to do at any particular time (including warning you of how long certain items can take and advising up front at what stage you need to be completing certain aspects of your job)

"This is very important. At present we sometimes go elsewhere for quotations because you will not start work on site without the easements in place whereas your competitors will. The process takes far too long and therefore holds up work on site."

**Housing Developer**

"This is a very difficult area for developer clients who may or may not have control over their land. Any streamlining would benefit all."

**Consulting Engineers**

"Excellent as this process often causes delays on site."

**Global Consultancy**

### KPI measure

Review process and communicate findings

Commitment

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4



Our work plan in detail continued

# Information Provision

## Register for information updates

We will provide a service to enable you to register on our website for updates and then keep you informed of our progress throughout the year, upcoming events and changes. We will even issue a “draft for consultation” when we plan to change something to give you the chance to help inform our plans and make sure they are fit for purpose for the future.

“It would be very useful if SSEPD allowed us to join a mailing list that provides relevant updates for DG customers.”  
**Renewable Energy Development Company**

“Tech-info website and when documents are added to or changed, registered users get an email informing them of the change.”  
**Development Company**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Registration available on website			✓	
Commitment				

## Standards of Performance

included in our terms and conditions and explained in our quote letter

Our guaranteed standards of performance provide you with the parameters which guarantee that we will cost, schedule and deliver your connections to our networks. These standards vary depending on the size of the connection you require and the works involved. To make sure you know what we always commit to, we will make these transparent in our Terms and Conditions and also include information on the standards relevant to your quotation in the offer letter. This simply means we will let you know what standards apply when we are dealing with your projects.

“Including a plain English GSoP summary in with each quote is definitely the right thing to do.”  
**Commercial Developer**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quote letter updated		✓		
Commitment				

# Information Provision



## Improved communal metering policy (building network operators)

Some of our stakeholders have asked us to review our policy in relation to communal metering in multi-occupancy buildings. We commit to work with our developers to update our approach with alternative solutions for communal metering policy. We will make transparent the facility for developers to become ‘building network operators’ which will allow them to install communal metering where they wish. We will provide information on this as part of our application process.

## Unmetered supplies

Where a connection could be provided as unmetered we will facilitate the process, explaining the opportunities of an unmetered supply and the limitations where applicable.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>KPI measure</b> Policy published			✓	
Commitment			✓	

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>KPI measure</b> Policy adopted as business as usual		✓		
Commitment		✓		

Our work plan in detail continued

# The Application Process

## Breakdown of costs

Our customers have told us they want to see more information and further detail provided in our breakdown of costs. We will provide more transparency in how these costs break down. We will produce a revised quote letter with the aim of making the information that is important to you even more visible. This cost breakdown will be consistent across the different types of quotes we provide.

“Clients are increasingly requesting detailed breakdowns so the more info you can provide the better!”  
**Consulting Engineers**

“We find ourselves guessing at how the quotation is made up. Our QS will regularly challenge us on whether quotes are justifiable. This leads to extra work for both ourselves and SSE to ensure that we understand what we are paying for.”  
**Large Housing Developer**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of market segments with improved standardised quote packs	Commitment	7	9	

## Review of generation connection offer

We will review our existing DOCO (generation connection offer letter) for simplicity and accessibility. Our plan is to revamp this contract in a similar way to that carried out for our 'demand' quote letter. This should deliver improvements by promoting the key information to the front and improving it by using plain English, in comparison to the existing offer.

“There is an assumption that the people reading these things understand the ins and outs of every process and most of us dealing with community connections are volunteers therefore not experts. Also anything that can summarise that and bring the key information to the forefront would be much appreciated.”  
**Community Group Representative**

“We understand that a generation offer letter needs to hold a lot of technical information and also provide the legal comfort for SSEPD and the customer. The benefit of making the letter 'customer friendly' will assist other parts of our business who are non technical.”  
**Large scale Renewable Energy Development Company**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Improved generation connection offer letter	Commitment			✓

# The Application Process

## Improved quote pack

We know that we currently have a range of different standard quotation packs containing different levels of information and breakdown. We will review what we currently provide with our stakeholders, and improve the information we provide in our connection quotation. For example we would like to deliver a standardised geographic plan illustrating proposed works with every quotation making it easier for you to see what we have quoted for.

“If a plan could be included showing where they have carried out a disconnection that would be very helpful.”  
**Housing Developer**

“Reinforcement is often slightly hidden away and needs to be made more prominent. In addition, the likelihood of reinforcement being required is sometimes not clear enough.”  
**Independent Connection Provider**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of market segments with standardised quote packs			7	9
Commitment				

## Standard design approval letter

Upon approval of a design submission from an Alternative Provider we will issue a standard letter to confirm approval, also detailing what the next steps and timescales will be. This will enable you as a customer to have a clear picture of what will happen next and give you an indication on what to expect moving forward.

“This would be a useful additional service. For large projects it would be better if covered by a single letter rather than a letter per connection.”  
**Consulting Engineer**

“Clear, detailed guidance of the process for engaging with and for delivering contestable works through an ICP is essential.”  
**Global Renewable Energy Development Company**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Communication published	✓			
Commitment				

Our work plan in detail continued

# The Application Process

## Streamlined design approval

We aim to speed up the approval of Alternative Provider designs through the use of standard approved designs and staged solutions. Where these agreed standard designs for simple and standard connection arrangements are used, project specific design approval will not be required.

“Include in the design stage testing and approval – parameters so that site know exactly what is required.”  
**Independent Distribution Network Operator**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of market segments with standardised quote packs			7	9
Commitment				

## Customer-focused acceptance process for interactivity

When a quote becomes interactive, we commit to changing the acceptance process to allow the customer to accept the quote by providing just the signed acceptance within the moratorium period. Those successful in the interactivity process will be required to forward payment within 10 working days of being advised that their acceptance has been processed. Our smaller connection customers have said that this could avoid the possible negative cash flow effect that upfront payment can have on an acceptance that may need to be cancelled if they have been unsuccessful.

“With interactivity being as prevalent as it is now – and the typical number of offers in any given interactive queue being high – having to pay large grid deposits on offer acceptance has a significant impact on cash flow. As a relatively small business this issue was threatening our ability to secure DG connections.”  
**Renewable Consultants**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Review process and implement as business as usual				
Commitment	✓			

## A connection optioneering process for load

We will offer an improved estimating service to developers with long lead projects, for example 5-15 year build outs of new housing. Currently, long lead projects are not suitable for formal quotations, and budget estimates don't provide enough detail. We will consult with the relevant stakeholders to agree the level of detail required and what information is key to their project.

“Issue one quote with 3 different levels of capacity.”  
**Large Developer**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of occasions used			5	15
Commitment				

# The Application Process

## Extending our online application facility

Currently you can apply for the majority of our connections projects online, pay for and track them through to completion. We will extend our online application facility to unmetered customers to provide a greater choice in how you apply for your connection. This will include acceptance, payment and project tracking.



KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Online facility available for all	Commitment	✓			

## Consortia register

In certain circumstances, it may be beneficial for two (or more) developers to come together as a consortia – as sharing a connection and/or reinforcement cost may be in both parties’ interest. This is currently difficult for developers to do, but we will assist by helping facilitate this and propose to add a ‘consortia register’ on our website for developers to register their interests in being made aware of consortia opportunities in a given area. Once active it will then be publicised via the appropriate community bodies to ensure potential parties are aware of the facility.



KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of parties registered	Commitment			3	10

Our work plan in detail continued

# The Application Process

## Improved quote acceptance page

Customers have told us the layout of our quote acceptance page is not fit for purpose. We will amend the layout of this document taking into account customer feedback. We'll also look to include a stamped address envelope as standard where a customer chooses to have a quotation sent out by post.

"Your Quote Acceptances don't fit into standard envelopes so you have to write out the address to accept."  
**Energy Consultant**

KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of market segments with improved acceptance page	Commitment			7	9

"The more guidance the better."  
**Consultant**

"Good flow of information. Good to hear about online service."  
**Consulting Engineers**

## Online statement of works tracker

We will add a Statement of Works (SoW) tracker to our website. SoW is the process with National Grid, where a larger generation or demand customer is required to go through the process to see whether their connection has an impact on the transmission network. Feedback from our customers is that it would be useful to be able to track the process and see what the current status is. We propose to have this function available via our website.

## Independent Connection Provider (ICP) staff to become an approved designer

We will put in place a designer validation process to enable Alternative Providers to control designs via a self-certification process, recognising the competencies and capacities of the organisations making the design submission.

KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SoW tracker available on website	Commitment	✓			

KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Process implemented and communicated	Commitment		✓		

# Getting Connected

## Online project tracking facility

We intend to make it easier for our customers to track the progress of their project online on our website. This will provide you with an overview of the following: What stage your project is at, the next milestone, important dates; and, the contact details for the member of staff responsible at each stage of your connection.

“This is very beneficial to us in terms of programming and reporting to Coordination meetings.”  
**Large Housing Developer**

“This is a good idea as we are continuously asked what stage applications are and all we can tell them is they’re in the queue.”  
**Renewable Consultants**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Facility available to all customers	Commitment	✓		

## Staged payments

We understand that for some, paying upfront in full can sometimes be challenging. Customers have told us they would like us to offer the ability to pay in stages in more instances. We currently offer staged payments, if requested, for quotations greater than £100,000. We will expand this offering by reducing the threshold, and/or offering staged payments as standard.

“Staged payments for fees over 100k would be something our clients would be interested in.”  
**Renewables Developer**

“This would be good as with some smaller sites the upfront payment can be very large with no revenue coming in until properties are sold.”  
**Consultant**

“This is a key measure for ensuring smaller scale connecting customers are able to secure the network access they require while managing their own finances and cashflow. We would however like to see SHEPD go further and consider post-connection payments for costs relating to shared network assets arising from reinforcement.”  
**Community Body Representative**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Process updated and communicated	Commitment	✓		

Our work plan in detail continued

# Getting Connected

## Construction, adoption and connection agreements

We will ensure we have in place a fair and equitable framework and model agreements available to our Alternative Providers, to help reduce administration and touch points throughout the process.

“Adoption agreements and connection agreements to be included in job closure packs.”  
**Solar Farm Developer**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Agreements in place and communicated to alternative providers		✓		
Commitment				

## Improve methods of payment online

We recognise that it is important for our customers to have a range of methods of payment to enable choice. Further to customer request, we will include Swift code and IBAN details on our payment details page of the SSEPD website and all other appropriate literature making it easier for customers to make payment to us.

“Suggest we include Swift codes and Iban in the bank details payment section.”  
**Feedback from Connections Surgery**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Improved payment method options available	✓			
Commitment				

“Tick list of what is required for adoption agreements.”  
**Independent Distribution Network Operator**

## The adoption process

It can be confusing to know exactly what documentation needs to be in place and completed as we work with your Alternative Provider through the adoption process. We will review this process to provide a list, timeline and flowchart to track the process through the adoption process for Alternative Providers.

## Review the restrictions on capacity of an unmetered connection

We will review the current restriction on the capacity that an unmetered connection may be (currently 25A.) with the intention of increasing this to 100A.

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Process reviewed and updates published			✓	
Commitment				

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Review process and communicate outcome		✓		
Commitment				

# Getting Connected

“We are fully supportive of the proposal for a common self-determination regime to allow ICP and IDNO’s to identify their own point of connection.”

**Independent Connection Provider**

## Visit and inspect retro charges

Our current practice is to include costs for any likely planned commissioning and witness tasks we may have to carry out in our initial quotation. Going forward, where requested by the Alternative Provider, rather than up-front we will reserve asking for this until just prior to energisation.

## Alternative provider to identify own POC

We will put in place a process to allow Alternative Providers to access the necessary information required to enable the identification of their points of connection to our network for the majority of straightforward new connections and diversions. This will give all access to information to the same level of detail and in the same manner as we have ourselves.

Number of occasions applied

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment			5	10

**KPI measure**

Implement process and communicate to alternative providers

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment		✓		

## Commissioning assistance

The final step for all networks to be energised is the final commissioning. We recognise that this is often when particular issues emerge. To mitigate this we commit to provide, at the stage when a network design has been approved, an explanation of our requirements clearly and unambiguously presented to ensure wherever possible a successful first commissioning of a site.

“Clear, detailed guidance of the process for engaging with and for delivering contestable works through an ICP is essential.”

**Global Renewable Energy Development Company**

**KPI measure**

Assistance provided business as usual

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment			✓	

Our work plan in detail continued

# Getting Connected

## Alternative provider visibility to inspection and monitoring

We will provide full access to all inspection and monitoring results carried out at an Alternative Provider's site. We will demonstrate that Alternative Providers are not subject to any increased level of quality assurance audits that we carry out on our own staff sites.

**KPI measure**  
Number of audit events visible

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment			10	30

"Good idea. The second point on making it clear who does what and when within a project is a fundamental to this idea. Dates for when work must be done by and also when SSE work will be done by is often an issue."

**Renewable Energy Consultants**

## Increased witness testing resource

We recognise that during particularly busy periods for renewable generation connections there may be occasions when we struggle to have enough engineers ready to witness the commissioning of your renewable generation project. We commit to increase the number of our trained Witness Testing resource to help facilitate connections during these peak connection points.

**KPI measure**  
Number of additional staff trained to witness test

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment				20

## Link Box requirements

At the interface of an IDNO and DNO network there has historically been the need to have an interface point of isolation which separates the two networks. This has been required on both safety and customer service grounds and where DNOs have required it to be a part of the connections design the cost of its installation has been met by the ICP/ IDNOs customer. There has been much debate about the efficiency of the link box and the fact that it adds an unnecessary cost to the IDNO which is construed as a barrier to entry in the competitive market. To resolve this issue we will no longer insist on these as standard and where deemed necessary by ourselves, we will fund these.

**KPI measure**  
Process updated and communicated

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Commitment		✓		

# Choice in connections

## Assistance with alternative options

We plan to continue to make all our customers aware that they have a choice when applying for a connection and assist with alternative options. If you want to investigate using an alternative provider to deliver your connection, on acceptance of your quotation we will contact you to:

- explain what happens next
- provide you with guidance to ensure that you are clear on who does which and anything you have to do to progress your project

*“As an industry professional I am aware of my alternatives, but more opportunities to explore these options are welcome.”*  
**Renewable Energy Consultant**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Guidance provided as standard		✓		
Commitment				

## Enhancing the alternative providers register

We propose to improve the database on our website where alternative providers, and others who can help you with this process such as consultants, can register as ‘active in our area’. This will:

- be broken down into the geographical areas and electrical works that they are active in;
- provide you with the facility to search for an alternative provider by what area they work in and what services they offer
- make it much easier for you to choose and contact an alternative provider.
- include contact details to enable you to contact them directly
- allow for alternative providers to register for updates

*“I will use in the future, it will be very helpful – it will be useful to know who is working in a particular area.”*  
**Feedback from Connection Surgery**

KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of alternative providers registered on database				
Commitment	10	20	30	40

## Quote to include alternative provider costs

Currently our quotations give you the option for us to do all works involved in your connection, or only those tasks that we require to do giving you the option to appoint an Alternative Provider. However additionally, should you appoint an Alternative Provider there may be additional design and assessment fees for your Alternative Provider should they carry out the project. Feedback from some of our customers is that they would like to see all costs in our quotations, so that they can understand the additional costs for their Alternative Provider. Going forward we propose to include these costs in our quotations so that you can make a more informed decision.

*“Choice is a key consideration so, yes, anything that is cost competitive is an enormous benefit for developers.”*  
**Large Renewable Developer**

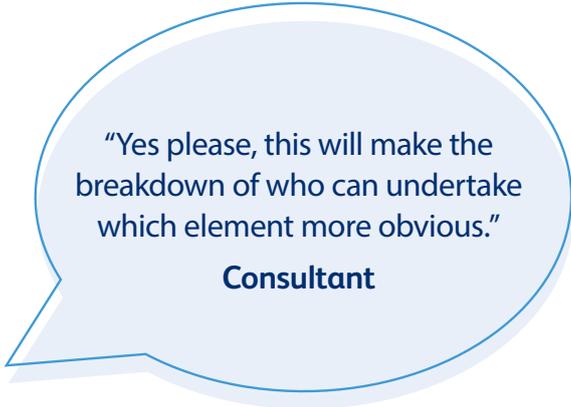
KPI measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of market segments with included costs				
Commitment		9		

Our work plan in detail continued

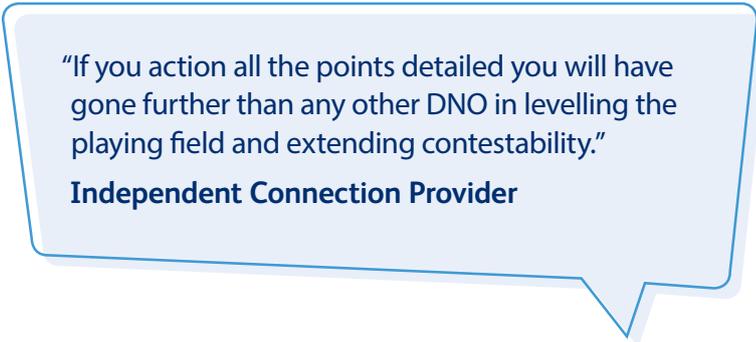
# Choice in connections

## Quote with choice for all

We currently provide a quotation with a choice of acceptance options for the majority of our customers. We commit to improve this option by extending it to all quotations automatically and simplifying the process. Going forward this will remain a single project from application to delivery, with no requirement for your alternative provider to make any additional application. This will ensure a single project number, single contract and single point of contact whether we or an alternative provider delivers your project.



KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of market segments who receive quote with choice	Commitment		9		



## Alternative Provider delivering reinforcement

Where a customer wishes their Alternative Provider to carry out works required to reinforce our existing network associated with their project (and this is electrically and physically separate from our network so that their Alternative Provider can complete them), we will ensure their Alternative Provider has the opportunity to complete these reinforcement works.

## Extension of Contestable Works

We will extend the range of tasks that Alternative Providers can carry out. During this year we commit to reviewing our processes to allow competitors to undertake disconnections, service alterations and diversions for all voltage levels where they wish to.

KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Policy published and communicated	Commitment			✓	

KPI measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Review of process and changes communicated	Commitment			✓	



## more

If you have any questions, would like to be kept updated with our progress or are simply interested in finding out more please contact [connectionsfeedback@sse.com](mailto:connectionsfeedback@sse.com)