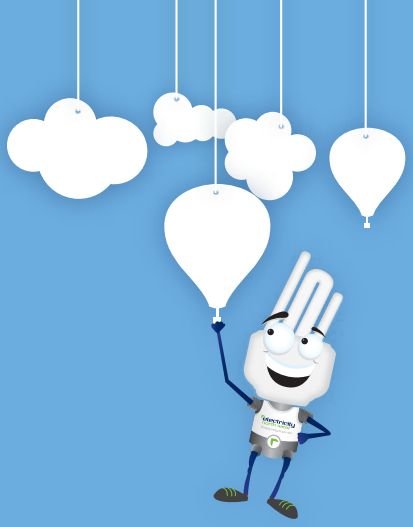
electricity north west

Bringing energy to your door



Stakeholder Engagement Incentive Scheme 2011/12

Part 2: Annual Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Activities

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Foreword from CEO Steve Johnson

Electricity North West is a dynamic and innovative company, constantly looking ahead and planning for the future.

We know from ongoing engagement with our customers and other stakeholders that their key priority is for us to provide a safe, reliable and constant source of electricity – and this is exactly what we do, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Ensuring this reliability is only one part of our business; we have responsibility to ensure we have a robust, fit-for-purpose network ready to meet our customers' changing demands and the challenges of the future. There is therefore a need to educate and inform customers of the challenges our network will face in the future so that we can seek informed views and opinions from our stakeholders.

Engaging with our key stakeholders – understanding their views and concerns, listening to their ideas and opinions and truly getting to know what is important to them – is incredibly important to Electricity North West. Equally important is our ability to react to this feedback and directly integrate stakeholder views in the way we run our business and how and where we invest their money. In some instances it is not always possible to directly implement stakeholder views. When this is the case, we always explain and feedback decisions, and why we have had to follow a particular course of action. Fundamentally we want to deliver great value for our customers and give them what they want.

This section of our two part submission covers case studies which illustrate how stakeholder engagement has changed business processes, investment planning and our operations – and the back page shows an overview of how we engaged with some of our stakeholders over the past year.

We want our stakeholders to play an integral role in the decisions we make and how and where we invest in the future. Therefore stakeholder engagement is playing a more important role than ever before. It is essential that we educate and inform our diverse stakeholder groups so they understand the many challenges that we face in the future, not least the move to a low carbon future and a growing reliance on electricity.

Steve Johnson, CEO, *Electricity North West*

2011/12 has been a successful and challenging year for the company. I am proud of the progress we have made, but am also aware that this is just the start of our journey. Engaging with stakeholders and responding to their feedback is an inherent part of how we do business, however there is more that can be done. I look forward to keeping you informed of our ongoing progress in this important area.

Steve Johnson, CEO

Looking Ahead

‘Switched on: North West’

As we plan for the future, and decide where to invest our customers‘ money, it is vital that we incorporate all our stakeholders’ views and ideas.

Should we spend more money on fixing power cuts more quickly? Or invest money to protect our network against flooding . . . or thieves?

‘It’s your network and your view that counts.’

The ‘Switched On: North West’ campaign is all about allowing our stakeholders to have their say in future plans for the network. We want all our stakeholders to get involved and have developed detailed strategies to target all our key stakeholders ranging from our domestic and business customers, through to MPs, councillors and regional action groups.

We have a range of roadshows scheduled to visit schools, shopping centres and business parks right across our region to proactively talk to as many stakeholders as possible and collate their views and feedback as we prepare and plan for the future.

We recognise that children and young people are an important stakeholder group and, as the bill payers of the future, need to understand and play a key role in this debate. Our school roadshows and workshops and introduction of our new company mascot is aimed at engaging children in a fun way but at the same time educating them in the challenges of the future.

Our dedicated ‘switched on’ website encourages all stakeholders to get informed about the challenges of the future, and share their views and opinions via our online stakeholder surveys. We have developed a selection of short videos which aim to educate stakeholders on the key issues we face. Social media, such as Twitter, FaceBook and YouTube are being used to stimulate debate and as channels to raise our profile and direct stakeholders to our website and online survey.

Visit our website at www.enwl.co.uk\switchedon

Recent roadshow at Stockport Shopping Centre, Merseyway

Case Study 1

Case Study 1: Meeting the needs of children and teachers

Stakeholder: Teachers; school children
Engagement: Questionnaire; direct feedback
Outcome 1: Introduction of school workshop scheme to educate children
Outcome 2: Development of new character to engage children/development of website

Electricity North West is very aware of its commitment to educate children and young people. We focus on two key areas:

(1) How to stay safe around electricity (and our network)
(2) Understand how electricity works and 'sparking' an interest in science

We reported last year about the launch of our designated children's website, 'The Learning Zone' and particularly around the Flash Over game which teaches children about the dangers of electricity and how to stay safe. Since the launch of the website and online game we have been engaging with students and teachers to find out their views and opinions in order to make improvements to both channels. Engagement has taken the form of direct conversation, interviews and questionnaires.

Many teachers were complimentary around the online game, explaining it was an interactive and dynamic way for children to learn about the dangers of electricity. In addition to these comments, a number of teachers commented that they personally found the topic of 'electricity' a complex subject to explain to children. We engaged with a number of teachers about this and there was universal agreement that the electricity module – a key part of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum – is difficult for teachers to 'bring to life' as there is limited understanding about how electricity works.

Electricity North West could see that they could play an important role here. Through ongoing engagement activity with regional STEM Centres in the North West, Electricity North West has identified an existing initiative called 'Bright Sparks'.

Bright Sparks is a one day hands-on workshop, aligned to the National Curriculum, which aims to teach young people all about electricity. STEM Centres are educational charities which promote the development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths [STEM] skills among young people. There are two STEM Centres in our region – one based in Cumbria which serves the North of our region, and a Greater Manchester office which serves Greater Manchester and Lancashire.

We attended a number of Bright Sparks workshop days to determine if the STEM Centres were suitable organisations to partner with. We were impressed with the workshops, and also the feedback forms from teachers which praised the work of Bright Sparks.

Due to funding cuts, the STEM Centres were struggling to continue providing Bright Sparks workshops. Electricity North West has stepped in and now funds the delivery of the Bright Sparks programme so that the STEM Centres are able to continue providing subsidised workshops to schools across the entire North West region.

Our involvement goes further than the provision of funding. We also provide engineers and graduates to visit schools to help deliver the workshops and to promote maths and science and the stimulating career opportunities these subjects can lead to. The Bright Sparks programme delivers workshops to over 3,000 children each year.

Benefits to schools and teachers

The Bright Sparks day can:

- Enhance National Curriculum electricity studies
- Raise awareness of engineering and science as a career choice
- Help teachers gain confidence in teaching electricity topics

Benefits to pupils

Through our hands-on approach to teaching electricity awareness the workshop will help pupils:

- Increase their knowledge and understanding of electrical components and circuits
- Increase awareness of electricity health and safety
- Make judgements based on knowledge and observation
- Improve their approach to co-operative teamwork
- Learn that science is enjoyable and fun

Further engagement and outcomes

We have used the Bright Sparks workshop to engage directly with children, and asked them what they think of our dedicated website and Flash Over game. They liked the concept of the game and the format, but felt it could be designed in a more engaging and 'modern' way. We are therefore working on re-launching this mini-site and are engaging with children as part of this process.

In response to this engagement activity with young people, we have also recently launched 'Edison' a new corporate character that fronts our Bright Sparks programme. Edison is an energy efficient lightbulb with a fun 'larger than life' character who will appear on our website and even in person! He will be used to spear-head campaigns and his presence will ensure children are engaged with us in a variety of areas, namely safety, how electricity works, and promoting an interest in science and engineering. Edison has been well received and is a useful tool to engage young people.

Working with the regional STEM centres, we have also started an initiative to encourage our graduate trainees to mentor older students in Key Stage 3 Electronics After School Clubs. Our graduates help the school students to design and build circuit boards. These circuit boards are then used in the Bright Sparks workshop to teach key stage 1 children about electricity.

Case Study 2

Case Study 2: Meeting the needs of installers

Stakeholder: PV Installers
Engagement: Stakeholder engagement with Envirolink/ general forums
Outcome: Partnership with Envirolink and introduction of training sessions to inform installers

The recent growth in renewable energy projects across the North West will continue as the UK government strives to meet challenging targets for renewable energy generation. Electricity North West is keen to do anything it can to facilitate the move toward renewable energy options. This growth has created a brand new 'mini industry' of companies and DG (Distributed Generation) customers providing and needing a variety of services to connect and fit PV panels, wind turbines to individual households and business premises. However, through direct engagement and via discussion forums set up by the regional development agency and others, it is clear that there is much confusion about the role DNOs play in the sector and exactly how units like PV panels are connected to the existing network. For example:

- The application and connection process is long winded and complicated
- Customers do not feel there is enough information available to them to understand how best to go about applying for a connection, and the ways in which they could minimise the cost of their connection

Electricity North West wanted to educate installers and PV organisations on the role DNOs play, and also how to connect effectively and efficiently to our network. Working with Envirolink a range of CPD (Continuing Personal or Professional Development) accredited training courses were designed and run to build knowledge of network connection. The training courses ensure installers possess a thorough yet practical understanding of the connection process and offer advice on providing the best possible service to customers. This range of educational training sessions have proved popular, and have been extremely effective in facilitating a move to a low carbon future. A delegate's comment from a previous grid connection course:

Envirolink Northwest

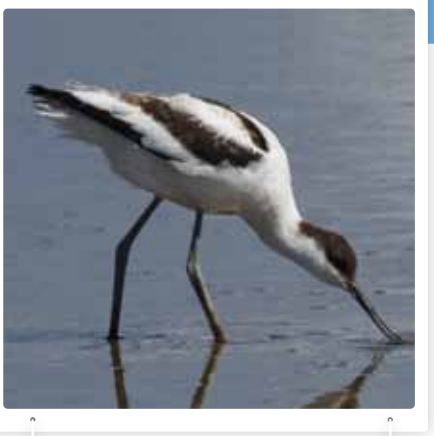
'Absolutely first rate for me, well balanced, well presented, and gave me the insight I was looking for. Could not have been better.'

Electricity North West has built a solid relationship with Envirolink and has joined forces to provide the following courses:

- Practical training on installing small wind farms
- Practical training on grid connection for Solar PV
- Grid connection for renewable technologies
- Workshops on Anaerobic Digestion (AD) connections.

This work will continue to ensure that our stakeholders understand our role in the connection process, receive a reliable and efficient service and understand the complete connection process.

Case Study 3



Case Study 3: Meeting the needs of customers and the natural environment

Stakeholder: Customers in Ormskirk area; local wildlife
Engagement: Direct engagement with customers and MPs; engagement with Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)
Outcome: Working on improved 'bird deflectors'

Regular analysis of customer interruptions highlighted a high number of problems in the Ormskirk area with an unusual seasonal pattern. Our engagement activities with local MPs, particularly Rosie Cooper MP, confirmed that the significant power interruption problems in this area were a major concern for local residents. Further investigation revealed that the interruptions were due to bird strikes on the overhead cables from birds living in nearby Martin Mere, Burscough, Lancashire. This 214 hectare reserve is managed by the Wildfowl and Wetland's Trust and over half of the site (119.3 hectares) is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Ramsar site (wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention).

The reserve is important because of the thousands of wintering pink footed geese, hundreds of whooper swans and Bewick's swans which winter there in internationally important numbers. Martin Mere is very important to the local economy as a major visitor attraction and therefore also important to local stakeholders.

We established a project team to evaluate the options for addressing a unique set of circumstances. The environmentally rich local terrain that creates the meres, marshes and grasslands that attract the wildfowl also means that undergrounding lines is not possible.

Discussions began with key representatives from the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust who own and operate Martin Mere. Bird deflectors have been fitted to lines identified to be in the 'regular' flight paths of feeding geese. Talks are ongoing to develop new and innovative solutions to protect the wildlife living in the nature reserve, stop birds injuring themselves by flying into overhead power lines and improve the quality of supply for the local residents. The WWT is designing a project to research the effectiveness of different bird deflector technologies that can be trialled on the overhead lines around the reserve. Electricity North West is looking at ways to support some of this internationally important conservation work.

Case Study 4

Case Study 4: Meeting the needs of local councils and customers - connect and manage

Stakeholder: Stockport CC; customers
Engagement: Connections engagement with local councils
Outcome: Changed entire process for instillation of PV panels

Through our ongoing engagement with Stockport Council, we entered discussions regarding the Council's desire to install 800 Photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roofs of community housing stock as part of a trial to support fuel poor households.

Stockport Council had not anticipated any costs usually associated with protecting the network when connecting large numbers of PV panels. Electricity North West liaised with Stockport Council and assessed the suitability and associated costs of over 1,500 possible households in the borough and identified and prioritised the most suitable and cost efficient locations. Normally, much work would go into assessing and protecting the network prior to installation of PV panels, including scenario planning due to the volume of cells in such a small area. The costs of this work put the entire trial at risk and Stockport Council asked us to consider whether there were any alternative courses of action open to us. We established a working group to assess this problem and came up with an innovative, yet simple, idea for a new approach. To meet the desire to keep costs to an absolute minimum – it was decided that all 800 PV panels would be connected immediately without expensive network modelling and Electricity North West would, instead, actively monitor and manage the network and deal with voltage problems and network condition only if and when needed.

This 'connect and manage' approach has proved extremely successful and has now been adopted entirely by the company. We no longer reinforce prior to PV installation but only make changes and address problems as they arise. This is a complete change in policy and is due entirely from stakeholder engagement.

Who are we talking to?

National Trust

Solar Aid

Envirolink Northwest

RSPB

Save the Children

age UK

Shelter

WWT Saving wetlands for wildlife & people

friends OF THE LAKE DISTRICT

Electricity North West believes it is important to engage with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. Some engagement occurs naturally as part of dealing with projects and challenges. For example much liaison has happened between the National Trust in recent months in order to re-route a faulty cable in Wastwater in the remote and beautiful Lake District. Working closely with the National Trust and reacting to their experience and knowledge has helped us to limit our impact on the natural landscape.

Other engagement is more proactive. We have held discussions with Save the Children over the past year to debate fuel poverty in the UK and agree ways we can support campaigns to help reduce the increasing numbers currently experiencing fuel poverty. We have held talks with the RSPB in order to understand and limit the impact of our operation on the natural landscape and wildlife. We have also begun discussions with SolarAid, a charity that aims to bring clean, renewable power to the poorest people in the world. SolarAid works in rural areas across East and Southern Africa, installing solar panels on schools, community centres and clinics. Solar Aid works with remote and disadvantaged communities, helping them to tap into an abundant source of free, clean and renewable energy. We want to ensure that access to reliable power is not a privilege of those in the UK, but all over the world.

We appreciate that some of our customers have additional requirements and a priority service may be needed due to being disabled, elderly or having a chronic illness. If you register as a priority services customer, we will inform you in advance of any planned interruptions and contact you proactively when we have an unplanned interruption.

Having worked with key charities across the UK and in the North West, we recognise that there are many customers who do not fall into the above category but still need our assistance during supply interruptions depending on their particular circumstances. Our priority customer service is open to anyone who feels they need extra support.

The grid below presents a summary of some of the stakeholder engagement activities and outcomes that have taken place over the past year 2011/12

Stakeholder Group	Method of Engagement	Business change/result
Domestic customers/wildlife	Direct engagement/customer queries	We are working on improved bird deflectors with the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.
Domestic customers	Engaged Consumer Panel (Populus)/Survey	Demonstrates we are willing to invest in social and environmental issues.
Domestic customers (affected by interruption)	Impact Research work	Introduction of employee training to enhance customer service.
Domestic customers	Populus Survey feedback	Significant work on the development of Code of Practice 998 (substation security).
Domestic customers	Populus Survey feedback	Extensive flood alleviations (27 sites).
General	Populus Survey	SF_6 management project.
Lake District residents/visitors etc	Regional Steering Group/engagement	Investment into undergrounding of overhead lines to improve visual amenity in designated areas (National Parks and AONBs), co-ordinated through a regional steering group.
Customers – environmental issues	Populus Survey	Recycling of waste/spoil waste etc.
Customers – environmental issues	Environmental issues	Oil reprocessing improvements/CORD.
Domestic customers	Populus Survey	Demonstrates our customers support our investment in social initiatives: introduction of Vulnerable Customer Initiative.
Connections customers	Direct engagement with connections customers	Connections online facility for quoting/ complaints/enquiries.
ICPs (independent connection providers)	Work with ICPs (Independent Connection Providers) on a number of initiatives	We were the first company in the country to allow live jointing to our low voltage network by an ICP. Trials have now been extended to cover 13 local authorities with 7 independent connections providers being authorised to complete connections.
Employees	EOS (Employee Opinion Survey)	We introduced transformational leadership training for senior managers and a departmental action planning process.
Employees	EOS (Employee Opinion Survey)	Our employees wanted more visibility of our executive leadership team (ELT). We therefore introduced ELT roadshows.
Future/potential employees	Career fairs/website	We have developed a designated careers portal and a structured career fair strategy.
DECC/government/local councils/ENA	Awareness of climate change/CO_2 reduction targets and increase in energy usage	LCNF bid – Capacity to Customers Project.
Teachers/school children/students	Ongoing engagement/questionnaires/ direct feedback forms	We have introduced Bright Sparks school workshops and developed a new company mascot character to engage children. A new educational website is planned.
DG (Distributed Generation) installers	Ongoing engagement (via Envirolink)	We partnered with EnviroLink to introduce training sessions to help DG installers better understand the role of the DNO and correct procedures.
Stockport Council/customers	Connections engaging with local councils	We have changed our entire default connection process for PV panels/wind turbines etc.
TfGM (Transport for Greater Manchester)	General working relationship	The extensive expansion plans for Greater Manchester's tram network has required diversion and relocation of a significant number of assets. We have developed an excellent working relationship with TfGM and their principal contractor MPT (MPact Thales) through regular liaison which will stand us in good stead for future Metrolink expansion and other major transport projects.
Connections customers	DG forums (Distributed Generation)	It is our intention to work more closely with customers in this area to facilitate the need to connect further green technology such as combined heat and power installations, electric vehicles and ground source heat pumps; all have differing impacts on our network.

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