

Engaging for a better business: changing for good

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Stuart Hogarth

Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution (SSEPD) aims to run its business in a way that supports growth in our communities, and, most importantly, makes sure the lights stay on.

Our interaction with stakeholders this year has been delivered in a variety of ways to suit their needs, and has ranged from identifying their areas of concern to delivering programmes of change that make big differences for the customers and communities we serve.

I am confident that we have made good progress in consulting our stakeholders and involving them more actively in improving our business. After our First Consultation under RIIO-ED1, I was pleased to find 96% of stakeholders consulted said that SSEPD's approach to consultation was either very useful or useful. Reviewing the feedback from our final event of the year, I was delighted to see that 100% of stakeholders rated our effectiveness in engaging as effective or very effective.

I believe that enhancing the direct interaction between stakeholders and our teams is key to incorporating positive improvements into our business. To support that, our Stakeholder Engagement Team works in collaboration with my Heads of Business to improve our relationships with stakeholders, keep them informed of our plans and to ensure that we gather their views.

I am conscious that effective engagement takes many forms and we will continue to use a range of methods to complement our existing strong direct relationships with our stakeholders. As we progress, I want our business to take an increasingly collaborative approach and to empower our stakeholders so that our business evolves in a way that increasingly focuses on *their* needs and *their* expectations. I look forward to leading my team as we deliver tangible and meaningful improvements for our business and the people we serve.

Stuart Hogarth
Director of Distribution

A robust methodology

In 2012/13 we have:

- Installed a rigorous, business-wide and verifiable process for recording our engagement with stakeholders, and the journey of their input. This process, together with our Policy (**Appendix 1**), Strategy and Implementation Plan (**Appendix 5**), has been covered in detail in Part 1 of our submission.
- Monitored and evaluated our methodology to ensure it sustains constructive engagement
- Planned every activity meticulously, allocating individual responsibilities, activities and target dates. This helped us to identify potential risks which were captured in our Stakeholder Engagement Risk Register.
- Commissioned an independent audit (**Appendix 2**) the conclusion of which was that our systems are 'effective'.
- Secured senior management buy-in

evidenced by the introduction of specific targets on stakeholder engagement and the approval of our Board for key elements of our engagement strategy including our policy, strategy, implementation plan, and our Audit and Accreditation approach.

- Established an experienced and skilled Stakeholder Engagement Team and Head of Stakeholder Engagement who work in collaboration with Business Heads to ensure that our stakeholders are kept informed and that their views are listened to and considered in our business operations and our future plans.



About this document

In this document we summarise our 2012/13 stakeholder engagement activity, demonstrating:

- Activity that has led to changes in the way we work
- How those changes fit with our strategy
- How our policies, procedures, business plans and culture have changed

- How stakeholders have been affected by our changes
- How we monitor and report on our activity
- Outcomes that are innovative and regarded as 'best in class'

Engaging with our RIIO-ED1 stakeholders

We are determined to place the needs of our customers and stakeholders at the centre of our planning. For the RIIO-ED1 process, we have captured the views of our stakeholders in a series of focus groups, one to one interviews, formal events and street and telephone surveys. We scheduled our RIIO-ED1 activities carefully over the course of the year, giving consideration to our business-as-usual engagement to minimise ‘consultation fatigue’, and published consultation papers explaining how we balanced our stakeholders’ views against the things we need to do to ensure our network operates effectively and efficiently.

We made our engagement materials available on our website, which also allowed us to share the learning from our engagement activities with our stakeholders, other DNOs and communities.

To encourage participation, we promoted our Programme of Listening for RIIO-ED1 by:

- Posting video footage describing the consultation process, what had been achieved and what had been planned
- Launching press releases to all media contacts and displayed them on our website
- Using social media

With each engagement activity we carried out, we closed the loop by checking with our stakeholders to ensure that we had interpreted their views correctly. Additionally, we wanted stakeholders to see that their views were crucial to influencing both our day-to-day activities and our business plan. Therefore, we issued a business response to each engagement activity to show how we changed our process, plans or approach

as a result of their views and suggestions. Importantly, where we couldn’t take their views into consideration we explained why.

Our stakeholders actively informed our Business Plan for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2023 – it was a truly collaborative approach.

On-site connection quotations: an outcome from the RIIO-ED1 events

During our stakeholder events for RIIO-ED1, we found that our Minor Connections customers were keen for us to visit the site prior to sending out a quotation. They put a particularly high importance on being able to discuss the work in person, and to receive an idea of cost, at this stage of the process.

Benefit: We have been carrying out a trial in two of our depots to offer an early site visit for our Minor Connections customers.

Plans for 2013/14: We expect to implement our early site visit option more widely.

Connections guides: an outcome from our business as usual activities

The feedback we have received from stakeholders during our extensive RIIO-ED1 consultation period has clearly informed our Business Plan, however, this is only one specific area where stakeholders have helped shape our business. Over the last year we have taken numerous, small steps to respond to the requests and requirements of our stakeholders and customers and to make our business fit for their needs.

When we asked about the Minor Connections process in our customer surveys, our stakeholders said:

“Make it easier to find out how to get it done”

“The whole process is very complicated”

Our response

We created New Connections advice booklets, available on-line and in hard copy, so that our customers have specific information they require in a clear and simple format.



New Connections guides

Benefit: We have delivered what customers told us they want. They are better informed on how to progress their connections with minimal delay, and are fully aware of the roles and responsibilities in the process. Staff also have a clearer understanding of the process and can confidently explain it to our customers.

Plans for 2013/14: To review the feedback we receive from our stakeholders in response to this new suite of information, revising the content where it is appropriate to do so. Customer feedback in 2013/14 will help us to ascertain how useful this information has been, or if more needs to be done to keep our customers informed.

Figure 1 –Our Programme of Listening for RIIO-ED1

June – July 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone and Street Survey • Used to inform Our First Consultation 	1212 stakeholders
Sept – Nov 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our First Consultation • Used to inform Our Second Consultation 	116 stakeholders
Nov – Dec 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups and 1 to 1 interviews • Used to inform Our Second Consultation and day-to-day activities 	117 stakeholders
Dec 2012 – March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Used to inform Our Business Plan and day-to-day activities 	106 stakeholders
Feb – March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Second Consultation Paper • Used to inform Our Business Plan 	67 stakeholders
March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary Events • Used to inform Our Business Plan and day-to-day activities 	21 stakeholders
March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Events • Used to inform Our Business Plan 	52 stakeholders

Meeting the changing needs of our customers: engaging with our customers on a day to day basis

We relish every opportunity to talk to our customers – it's how we do our business. That's why, over the last year, we have expanded and enhanced the way in which we communicate with stakeholders to make sure that we are as inclusive as possible.

We have learned that some customers 'just want to talk to a human being', with their call answered quickly and to receive personal reassurance about power cuts. Conversely, we now know that there are times when some customers simply want us to provide them with frequent, accurate and meaningful information, without having to enter into a conversation with us.

Benefit: We have been developing our range of communication methods to ensure that we accommodate the needs of as many stakeholders as possible.

For customers who choose to contact us by telephone, we have invested in an Integrated Communications Platform (ICP). The system has been designed to handle high call volumes, route calls effectively and proactively notify customers of outages and restoration times.

Plans for 2013/14: Working towards offering customers the option to receive voice alerts, text updates or to request a call back from a Customer Service Representative.

On-line Communication

We provide website updates and frequent information to our followers on Twitter channels, addressing individual issues using private messaging. We also try to reach as many of our non-followers as possible by using hashtags to identify geographical areas affected by our activities. Twitter users can click on these hashtags to bring up all tweets relating to the power outage in their area in real-time.

Power Track – the first industry 'app'

"Teenagers communicate differently and will be your future customers... you need to embrace different types of media in addition to the traditional methods."

Distribution stakeholder

In response to specific requests from customers, we became the first DNO to offer an 'app' to provide customers with relevant and timely information during a supply interruption without needing to make a call to our Emergency Service Centre, saving them both time and money when using a mobile phone.

Power Track has been designed to provide the 39%¹ of people who use mobile phones for internet access with information on where power cuts are and assure them that we are aware of them; to provide an estimate of when an engineer will be on site; the time of the next update; and the

anticipated restoration time. It also provides a link to our website, our Twitter channels and our 24 hour Emergency Service Centre numbers. The website version has an additional facility which allows customers to report a power cut.

Several reviewers have rated Power Track very highly, saying:

★★★★★ Excellent

by Electrical Association – 05-Mar-2013
First app for the electricity distribution industry. Looks great, user friendly and does what it says. Really useful. Keep the updates coming great info well done SSEPD.

★★★★★ Handy if you're a sparky

by matt30020 – 11-Jan-2013
Great app. I'm forever getting called out to no power in a property. Now I will be able to see if its (sic) an area problem or not.

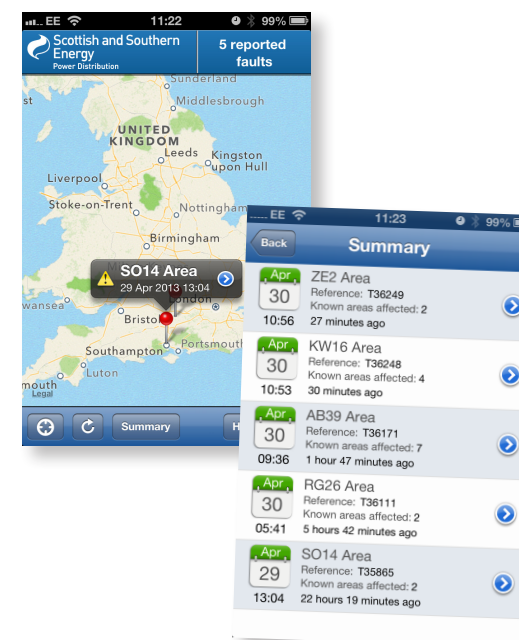
★★★★★ The right info when you need it

by 8woodcj – 19-Dec-2012
Great App. Shows exactly what I need to know when the power is out. Will keep on my iPhone to use when we next get a power cut.

We have also considered the comments made in lower starred reviews to inform future updates.

Benefit: By offering a suite of communication methods, each individual customer will receive a service that has been tailored to their individual needs and preferences.

Plans for 2013/14: We will closely monitor the feedback we receive from our customers through our engagement programme and enhance our offering as technology, and customer needs, change.



¹ Source: <http://media.ofcom.org.uk/facts/>

Opening our doors: a structured approach to stakeholder engagement

Along with everyday interaction with stakeholders, we have carried out specific engagement activities. These engagement activities have been developed to interact with stakeholders on specific issues, or to develop better relationships with stakeholders in the communities we serve.



Informing and engaging

This year we opened the doors to our depots, Control Rooms and Emergency Service Centres to give a broad range of stakeholders the opportunity to see our business as a 'whole' and to shape our thinking and future priorities by voicing their opinions, concerns and ideas in a structured, but informal manner.

The 15 events across the UK attracted a wide range of delegates including representatives from Berkeley Homes, Action England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, and Electrical Contractors Association. The events were also attended by County and Local Councils, Police, Developers, Generators and Suppliers. Stakeholders were invited to come along and

find out more about what we do to keep the local electricity network safe and reliable, and how we provide new connections. The Open Doors Days included a behind-the-scenes tour and allowed the participants to meet with and engage with our senior management team and front line staff.

An example outcome of these events is that our stakeholders told us that we need to better inform them on the process, regulation and limitations involved in new connections and chargeable jobs. In addition to introducing new connections guides, we have also planned four exhibitions to address these specific requests, in direct response to their feedback.

"It's great to see a large company making the effort to address the concerns of such a mix of stakeholders – really impressive"

Charlene Hogan, Livos Energy

"It's been such a useful day... I know so much more about Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution now and I hope we can attend again"

Daniel East, Amberon

We are committed to keeping our doors open and will continue to hold events of this nature in 2013/14 which will play an important part in allowing our stakeholders' views and opinions to continue to inform our business plans at a strategic, and local level.

Our culture of engagement

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Our engagement culture is not only reflected in the way we do business, but in everything we do. We invite our stakeholder community to come to us through our 'Open Doors' days, and we also take opportunities to give something back to the community.

Through **Community at Heart**, our employee volunteering programme, we support initiatives within the communities in which our employees live and work. We provide real, practical support which we hope will bring lasting benefit to those communities.

Every year, our staff have the opportunity to take a day out of their typical working life to support local community projects. In 2013/14, over 1,300 days were used by our staff to help many different organisations including charities, schools, parish councils and hospitals. We also offer talks and materials to schools and are part of the STEM network, which creates opportunities to inspire young people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.



"May I take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for contributing your time and effort to spend a day volunteering with Food Train. As you know, Food Train provide a vital grocery and shopping delivery service to older people unable to shop for themselves because of age-related frailty, disability or health... SSEPD have helped to maintain this essential service... and Food Train cannot thank you enough!"

Fran Thow, Regional Manager, Food Train

Engaging with stakeholders in 2012/13

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Supply chain stakeholders

We recognise that we have a significant role to play in contributing to the economic well-being and sustainable development of the communities we operate within. We want to become the best at engaging with the local and SME communities and be the most 'open for business' company in the region.

We are, therefore, committed to achieving the highest levels of engagement with local suppliers so we have launched 'open4business', a procurement portal intended to provide access for smaller local firms to business opportunities. The first portal, focused on the Highlands and Islands, facilitates trade and engagement between our organisation and local suppliers and service providers. It provides a platform for us to promote opportunities originating in the region, and will allow local suppliers to view those opportunities, register as a supplier and respond to notices free of charge. Users of the site can also use the portal to advertise their own opportunities, such as sub-contracting work for our projects, to the local supplier base.

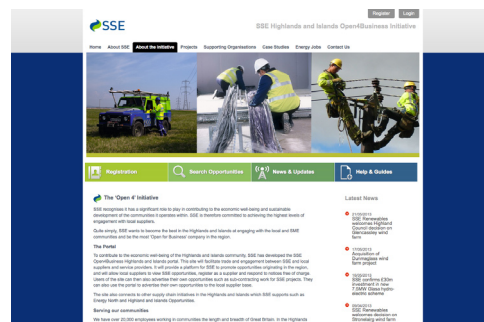
The site also connects to other supply chain initiatives in the Highlands and Islands which we support, such as Energy North and Highland and Islands Opportunities.

So far over £2m of contract opportunities have been made accessible through the open4business portal, and around £50,000 of business has been awarded to local firms.

"The most significant aspect of the whole of this open4business project for me is SSE's specific intent to increase the amount of business delivered by local Highland and Island based businesses... I am very impressed by the commitment SSE has put into the development of the portal."

Stewart Nicol, Chief Executive of Inverness Chamber of Commerce

Plans for 2013/14: A key aim for open4business in 2013/14 is to maximise the number of contract opportunities made available via the portal.



Distributed generation customers

Improving the connections process for our distributed generation (DG) customers has been a focus of intense activity for us in 2012/13. We have engaged with our DG stakeholders in many ways this year, including:

- DG fora events
- 'Portfolio review' meetings
- Industry conferences and seminars

Last year, our Director of Distribution and senior colleagues participated in all three Ofgem-led DG fora in London, Cardiff and Glasgow. The fora were designed to allow DG developers to hear what Ofgem and the DNOs are doing to improve processes, and engagement, within the DG community.

At these events, all DNOs made a commitment to produce a DG Work Plan to provide visibility of what is being done to improve performance in seven key areas, chosen by the DG community and representative organisations such as Renewables UK, Scottish Renewables and Regen SW.

In response to customer suggestions made at these fora, we have introduced additional, less formal events in the form of **regular portfolio review meetings** with our commercial and technical staff to discuss potential pipeline projects with developers of multiple schemes. This also provides a platform to review existing schemes, to ensure that developments are meeting contractual obligations.

These meetings provide stakeholders with early access to our planners, prior to the submission of a formal application, allowing any potential issues to be highlighted at an early stage so that we can identify resolutions.

Portfolio meetings are already taking place with RWE Npower, RES and SSE Renewables. We are actively seeking to increase the number of stakeholders we engage with in this way and have contacted other developers to create awareness of the potential benefits of holding such meetings.

Feedback from developers has been very positive and these meetings have proven to be essential in developing long-term working business relationships with our stakeholders.

"I hope you found the meeting as useful and enjoyable as I did!"

Dr Graham Pannell, RES

Our participation at industry conferences and seminars has also been very well received by our stakeholders:

"You did an excellent job, spoke very clearly and came across as a team who have taken on board a lot of feedback from stakeholders over the last couple of years to make significant progress in the way you engage with customers, consultants and stakeholders. I left with the distinct impression that you and your team have an open door policy and wish to engage with your customers."

Charlie Connell, SHREC 4

Engaging with stakeholders in 2012/13

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Engaging with our alternative connections providers

In 2012/13, we engaged independent consultants to carry out in-depth interviews with all of our Independent Connection Providers (ICPs) and Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs).

We did this to find out how we can help our customers benefit from an open, competitive market in aspects of connections which are contestable. The results of this survey (available on our web site) prompted a number of changes to our processes.

A key outcome was a complete redesign of our quotation letter to make it clear that customers have the option for us to carry out all, or just part, of their works. This highlights to customers that they have choices in who delivers the work required for their connection and supports an open competitive market.

“SSEPD is showcasing best practice amongst the DNOs in terms of easing access to competitive quotes by issuing two in every case, an ‘all works quotation’ together with a ‘non-contestable works only’ quotation. This means that developers are given a real choice to accept a non-contestable only quotation and then appoint the alternative provider themselves, without having to reapply for an offer.”

Fruzsina Kemenes, RWE npower

Engaging with our demand customers

Improving the connections process for our demand customers, who remain the largest and most varied of our connections customers, has also been important to us during 2012/13.

We identified a need to improve the services we provide to demand connection customers via our website. We engaged both internal and external consultants to carry out a root-and-branch review of our website. They have engaged with our customers to understand not only how they use this valuable information source now, but what they would like to see in the future. The results of this work are now being used to redesign our site during 2013/14.

One of the quick wins from this has been a simplified application form and quotation letter, with a clear indication of costs on the first page and simpler to read explanation of the next steps. We have already delivered substantial improvements from the changes made, evident from our Google Analytics statistics.

Benefit: We have listened to our stakeholders and incorporated their views into our business plans, making real changes to our communication and engagement methods according to their needs. The positive impact this has had is evident from the feedback we have received, and from the increased use of our website.

Plans for 2013/14:

- Roll out the DG Workplan approach to all of our customer groups
- Continue the process of ensuring all of our customers have the advantage of an open

The Power of Communities: Our Community Energy Coaching Programme

We believe that with support, communities have the power to work together to reduce their energy consumption, helping to reduce their carbon footprint and to address fuel poverty. To empower communities to do this, we are introducing a UK first Community Energy Coaching Programme.

We commissioned Neighbourhood Economics Ltd to work in partnership with our organisation and the Energy Innovation Centre to carry out a feasibility study involving 38 organisations. These organisations include Energy Saving Trust, National Energy Action, Homes & Communities Agency and the Environmental Change Institute.

The project employs and embeds a ‘Community Energy Coach’ in identified areas who, working closely with the partnership organisations, will inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower communities to reduce consumption.

- competitive market. If they plan to use an alternative provider for their connections work, we will assist them in appointing one
- Continue to develop our website to incorporate stakeholder requirements

The project was outlined at engagement events in March and received widespread approval from our stakeholders.

By offering information, education and support to the fuel poor now, you’re proving an approach which will be required on a large scale... ”

Hilary Briggs, Livos Energy

“We’ve got a massive base of customers and this scheme could have huge effects on how we assist those customers and manage energy consumption overall. We’d be really interested to get involved with the pilots... ”

Southampton City Council

“Anything that better uses existing technology to reduce costs and improve efficiency is great and should be firmly supported. I’m impressed!”

Paul Britton,

Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce



Preparing for emergencies

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Community resilience

We help communities weather the effects of storms on our networks by taking a multi-level approach to developing resilience, particularly for rural areas.

Engagement at strategic level

We have for many years worked closely with local authorities, particularly through local Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs) to develop strategies to manage the effects of severe weather on communities. Our engagement activities in 2012/13 included:

- Attending quarterly SCG events with Highland, Western Isles, Shetland, Orkney and Perth and Kinross Councils where we are seen as a lead partner within these groups.
- SCG Forum held at our Perth offices. The Coordinators for all the Regional SCGs in Scotland meet regularly with Scottish Government. We hosted a meeting, which included a tour of the Control Room for the 20 attendees.
- Regular meetings with the Tayside SCG Coordinator in the Control Room, discussing vulnerable customer issues and winter preparedness and attendance at the Tayside, Highland and Grampian SCG meetings.
- Participation in SCG and Scottish Resilience Development Service exercises.
- Attendance at various public events with our emergency partners – Police, NHS, social work, fire service, local government officials, HM Coastguard, mountain rescue,

voluntary and charitable bodies, SEPA, and the Met Office.

“Many thanks for all your help and support on the community resilience project”

Morag Brown, Argyll and Bute Council

Engagement at local level

- Public ‘community resilience’ meetings in Dunoon, Rothesay, Oban and Fort William.
- An event in Fort William, which was highlighted on national news and the Highland Council website, to highlight the importance of having an emergency resilience plan in place – a Scottish Government Initiative for the 472 Community Councils in our area of Scotland.
- A programme of Community Council (in Scotland) and Parish Council (in England) engagement to help compile local emergency plans and demonstrate the value of simple devices such as wind up torches and radios, self-heating food packs and non-digital telephones which will work during power cuts.

“SSEPD have carried out a considerable amount of work in community resilience planning, and the ‘drop in days’ for community reps to meet with all the agencies and partners who support them in times of crisis has been very helpful”

Dot Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Highland Council

- Emergency Service Centre (ESC) and Control Room resilience days, attended by 312 key resilience team members, and over 280 of our own field staff, to identify improvements in the way that we respond to emergency situations.

“[The Control Room resilience day] was a very interesting and useful day and certainly provided a lot of food for thought and discussion”

Clare Bullen, British Red Cross

- Developing relationships with resilience teams and emergency planning officers in central southern England through visits to our sites and brainstorming sessions on how to work together more effectively.
- Commitment to an annual forum with representatives from all local authority resilience groups in central southern England, and to more frequent local fora.
- Planning accurate coordination of resources.
- Working with communities to identify the best refuge sites.

Benefits: Keeping our assets in good condition and investing in our network minimises the risk of unplanned interruptions and strengthens our poles and wires so they are less vulnerable to extreme weather. We work with our stakeholders to prepare for faults and, when they occur, we respond quickly, keeping our customers informed



and supporting them in a variety of ways to ensure minimal disruption at what can be a time of great stress.

Plans for 2013/14: Community Roadshows have been arranged to explain what happened during the March 2013 storms, how we responded to this particular event and to get feedback on our emergency planning, thus allowing us to evolve our processes further.

Feedback from stakeholders questioned after the storms of March 2013 shows that 91% thought the service we provided during the severe weather was Excellent or Good.

Preparing for emergencies

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It is in times of our communities' greatest need that the real value of our engagement with customers is revealed.

The effects of the once in a lifetime snowstorms of March 2013 on the west coast of Scotland – in particular Kintyre and Arran – whilst still very disruptive for customers, were mitigated by months, and in some cases years of engagement with communities to plan for such happenings. The fact that on leaving the area our colleagues were presented with luxury hampers and praised via roadside 'thank you' notices can be attributed both to their heroic efforts in restoring supplies and to the outcome of a programme of effective engagement undertaken earlier in the year.

Here, we describe the engagement that contributed to this outcome.

Network resilience

Our engagement with stakeholders over many years has left us in no doubt that 'keeping the lights on' is the most important aspect of our work for communities.

Whilst we believe it is not possible to totally eradicate power cuts, we are committed to minimising supply interruptions. A large part of our work in this area is preventative action to safeguard our network, including:

- Cutting trees which may fall onto power lines

- Using insulated wires – if they touch, they don't short out (eg in high winds)
- Installing extra automatic switches to restore supply more quickly
- Inspecting our networks regularly and fixing problems
- Reinforcing our existing network equipment
- Replacing older equipment



Our Head of Operations, Craig Gilroy, explains our reinforcement plans to a group of interested customers

Managing risks from falling trees

We have engaged and collaborated with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) to undertake a resilience programme, in which we undertake extensive tree felling, using new techniques, to remove trees likely to fall on power lines during storms. Despite the potentially adverse commercial effect on FCS, we have worked with them to develop their understanding of the importance of this work in ensuring a continuity of supply to our customers. FCS are fully supporting us in this venture.

Arran and Kintyre: A case study



Exceptionally violent snowstorms hit the west coast of Scotland in March 2013, resulting in as many as 20,000 customers being without power. Building on months of engagement in preparation for such an event, we supported communities in implementing their emergency plans while our field staff battled the elements to restore supplies.

In collaboration with Strathclyde Police, Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs) were established. Our Network Services Director, together with experienced members of our operations team, attended update meetings four times a day with representatives from the emergency services, local authorities, mountain rescue, the British Red Cross, NHS, HM Coastguard and CalMac Ferries. Face-to-face meetings were held in Lochgilphead and on Arran.

Once all supplies had been restored, we constructed two permanent power stations (one the largest mobile diesel generator in the UK). These were installed in just two weeks and offer an alternative source of supply in the event of any major damage to the network.

"This week I have visited some of our members adversely affected by the storms. Those I have been talking and working with in both Arran and Kintyre have been extraordinarily grateful for the work carried out by your engineers... their professionalism and commitment to solving the multiple faults... in very difficult conditions and their willingness to work with and assist the community and individual farms."

**Nigel Miller,
President, NFU Scotland**

"The degree of dedication shown by all your employees is admirable and I am very appreciative of the level of partnership working and cooperation with the Council and our other key partners"

**Sally Loudon,
Chief Executive of
Argyll and Bute Council**

Changing for good: innovation

We have a strong track record in adopting and converting practical and innovative ideas to improve our business. Our approach is driven by our desire to translate learning and innovation into business as usual as quickly as possible, allowing the benefits to be realised swiftly.

We aim to make it as easy as possible for people to approach us with new ideas and to find out more about the ways in which we are innovating to improve our networks and the service we provide. In line with this, in 2012/13 we have:

- Introduced a 24-hour helpline for members of the public to call if they wish to enquire about any of our innovation projects
- Created a dedicated email address for related enquiries
- Founded the Strategic Technology Partnership and Energy Storage Operators Forum
- Delivered keynote speeches and information sessions at leading industry events including All Energy, the UK's largest renewable energy exhibition and conference
- Engaged colleagues through the opportunity to hire a 5-seater Nissan Leaf, at a reduced rate for 18 months, to trial a new technology that monitors and controls the electricity used when the car is being charged

- Participated with Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Power and other industry partners (Cisco, GE and University of Strathclyde) to develop the Scottish Smart Grid Sector Strategy
- Shared experience and knowledge with Aberdeen University to develop course for HVDC Transmission

Stakeholder engagement is also key to the success of our flagship innovation projects and we work to make the most of the funding made available for such work through the Low Carbon Networks Fund and the Networks Innovation Competition and Allowance. In addition, we seek out opportunities to engage with stakeholders beyond the confines of the LCNF, NIC and NIA projects themselves. Examples of how we have shared learning and extended our engagement in this way include:

- Committing to share our learning from Northern Isles New Energy Solutions (NINES) with National Energy Action and the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum
- Engaging with supply chain participants and innovation stakeholders in Asia, America and China to share learning from the Automated Demand Response system, the first in Europe, which we installed as part of the Thames Valley Vision (TVV) project

Zero Carbon Homes

Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution has played a central role in the development of the ground-breaking research project named 'Greenwatt Way' in Slough, Berkshire. We have worked with a team of partners to build 10 'Zero Carbon Homes' which are being occupied by a combination of SSE employees, Slough Borough Council staff and local families. We regularly host visits by stakeholders to the development, demonstrating how smart grid technology translates to everyday life for householders.

We will continue to use the Greenwatt Way site as a test bed for innovation and already have identified additional projects, including electric heating/energy storage and electric vehicle automatic charging technology projects.



In addition, the learning from TVV will be used in the European FP7 project called DISCERN. The DISCERN project is a first project of its kind to utilise six existing demonstration projects from across Europe and use the learning and experiences on monitoring to inform the European Commission's Smart Grid Forum.

Partners in this project include: RWE (Deutschland), Iberdrola (Spain), Vattenfall (Sweden) and Union Fenosa (Spain).

Engaging for safety

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We took our safety message to our customers of the future in Ashford

Safety remains our top priority and much of our engagement with stakeholders aims to help people stay safe around our equipment.

In addition to engaging with safety organisations at a strategic level, we are very active on the matter within the communities we serve. An important part of our community safety strategy is to secure coverage of safety matters in the media, targeting both traditional channels and social media, to maximise the number of stakeholders who are exposed to our safety messages.

Key safety engagement in 2012/13 included: Participation in Safe Taysiders and Safe Highlanders, collaborative events which educate Primary Seven children on a range of safety matters including those related to electricity, transport and the internet.

A 'bonfire night' safety campaign using media coverage to warn of the dangers of lighting bonfires close to overhead electricity lines and encourage people to attend professionally organised fireworks events.

Minimising inconvenience while keeping our staff safe

On occasion, to allow our staff to work safely while undertaking work on our assets, we must switch off part of our network; sometimes this will interrupt supplies to customers. Whilst we notify our customers in advance of these interruptions, feedback from customers told us that they want more notice of interruptions and that our communications were often ignored as they were perceived to be junk mail.

In direct response to this, we have started issuing notifications in a bold, colourful format, by hand, at least seven days before the interruption – the current industry standard is two days.

We are also trialling providing on-site support during planned interruptions to interact with local residents, addressing any individual concerns they may have had and to offer general support to the local community.

Using a specially designed SSEPD community vehicle makes us highly visible in the area and allows us to provide hot drinks and bottle-warming facilities, and offer charging facilities for mobile phones and other devices.

"It's good to know what is actually going on when the power goes down – I've always wondered what your guys are up to. Thanks for all the information, and the hot coffee!"

Grahame Cowlshaw, General Manager, Farnham Golf Club

Harvest Safety



SSEPD's Norman McIver engaged with farmers and the Scottish Rural College to produce his safety stickers

We implemented a campaign to raise awareness amongst agricultural workers of the importance of maintaining safe clearance between farm machinery and electrical equipment; the campaign also provided advice on what to do if machinery does make contact with overhead lines and on how to access additional safety information and resources.

The initiative was supported by the provision of stickers for placement in the cabs of farm vehicles, reminding operators to check their working height and providing advice on what to do in an emergency. The stickers were developed as a result of an idea submitted through our Licence to Innovate scheme which encourages colleagues to come up with new ways of working which fit with our company values – in this case, safety.

The stickers have been very well received, with rural business cooperative Ringlink pledging to supply "unlimited numbers of stickers" and the NFU Scotland praising the initiative as "a simple, yet effective, reminder of the danger of working with overhead electric power lines."