

A PLAIN GUIDE

OUR LOOKING BACK REPORT ON WHAT WE DELIVERED
FOR GENERATION CONNECTION CUSTOMERS
DURING 2013/14



What is this document

This plain guide is our Incentive on Connections Engagement (ICE) **'Looking Back**

Report', on behalf of Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution (SHEPD) and Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD), which sets out our how we got on with our plans and commitments to our generation connections customers in both of our licensed areas over the last year.

It is part of our overall strategy of continuous improvement to listen to all our stakeholders, take and develop their ideas and so continually improve their customer service experience.

Our plans were built on a comprehensive and robust engagement with our stakeholders. This is how we ensured that our plans provided what our stakeholders were asking of us.

This "Looking Back Report" sets out :

- How we engaged with our generation connection customers;
- the work plan we delivered explaining the key initiatives that our stakeholders had asked us to complete; and
- how and when we delivered these; and
- evidence that all of these activities and commitments were endorsed by our customers.

Alongside this report we also published a **'Looking Forward Report'** in April 2014 laying out our future plans and commitments following on from the work detailed in this document.

About us

SEPD and SHEPD are distribution network operators (DNOs) which mean they each have a licence to own and operate electricity distribution networks. Electricity distribution networks are the system of overhead lines and underground cables that distribute electricity to homes and businesses.

SEPD is the largest of our two distribution networks and safely delivers electricity supplies to over 2.8 million customers across central southern England. Our operational region ranges from rural communities in Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire to towns and cities including Bournemouth, Oxford, Portsmouth, Reading, Southampton, Slough, Swindon and in parts of west London. We also distribute electricity to and across the Isle of Wight.

SHEPD safely delivers electricity to some 740,000 customers in the north of Scotland. Our SHEPD operating region covers a quarter of the UK landmass which attracts unique challenges both in terms of distance and location. As well as the major towns and cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Perth, we connect to most Scottish islands with over 100 subsea cable links, including the Inner and Outer Hebrides, Arran and the Orkney islands.



Looking back at our 2013/14 Engagement

Engagement with our customers is the primary way that we use to identify what is important to them. It is how we ensure that our initiatives and commitments are the correct ones to meet their needs. The initial step in our engagement plan was to identify the issues that are key to our customers and ensure that we fully understood them. Following this we developed a set of initiatives and commitments and discussed these with our customers to check that they would address the issues raised. We then delivered these, reporting back to customers on our performance against these commitments and received feedback. This feedback has informed our next set of targets. This process is illustrated in Figure 01.



Figure 01 Summary of process for improving our service to major customers

During 2013/14 we delivered a detailed and comprehensive plan of engagement with our generation connections customers applying this approach. Our work plan and how we delivered it is set out at the back of this document while how we identified these is laid out below:

DG-DNO Steering Group

The primary source for the initiatives we delivered in 2013/14 for our generation connections customers was the DG-DNO Steering Group: a national group including all DNOs and a wide range of generation connections customers and trade bodies. This identified the key issues that our stakeholders wished us to focus on during 2013/14.

Individual customer engagement

All of our connections staff are trained to deliver excellent customer service, including feeding back any suggestions for improvements and initiatives we may receive during their day-to-day customer engagement. These actions and outcomes are all recorded in our Stakeholder Engagement database.

Regular Workshops

During 2013/14, as part of our engagement plan, we hosted eleven work shops focussing on specific connections matters. For our generation connections customers these include three learning and sharing groups on micro generation connections, two larger generation connections and one on the use of alternative providers for connections. They were well received and again provide valuable feedback from our customers on what is important and so fed into our initiatives for 2014/15.

Customer Surgeries

During 2013/14, we trialled two specific, location based customer surgeries. Here individuals booked short slots with a local electrical designer and contract manager to discuss an existing or proposed new project. These were well received and we now plan to run quarterly rolling surgeries out of each of our eight major depots during 2014/15.

Contract managers with Portfolio management

During 2013/14 we increased the number of dedicated Contract Managers, developing the process of portfolio management. We now offer as routine this service to all our SHEPD generation customers holding a basket of projects and have regular quarterly customer meetings a number we expect to grow. These have allowed us to identify initiatives included in our future plans.

Consortia meetings

Again during 2013/14 we held three consortia meetings, bringing together a group of developers who shared common requirements for early reinforcement. We will continue this as part of our engagement plan, proactively identifying likely large reinforcements on our network and assisting groups of developers to enter into consortia to minimise their time to connect and potentially reduce their costs.

National and Local Event Attendance

Part of our stakeholder plan during 2013/14 was to be actively involved in numerous National and Local Events, presenting at trade body and associating meetings. These included DG Fora, DG Technical working group and various trade, government and community groups including the Scottish Renewable DG Workgroup, Hydro Summit, SHREC, various National Farmers Union meetings and ReGen South West.

Looking back report 2013/14



Customer service

Initiative 1

Monitor Customer Satisfaction

During 2013/14, as a result of this engagement programme, we identified and delivered a wide range of initiatives and improvements across a number of key areas: customer service, the application process, information provision, technical, charging, choice and feedback. We identified a number of initiatives to address each of these in our work plan for 2013/14.

Throughout 2013, we have held a wide range of stakeholder events, workshops and customer surgeries. Information on past events and registration for future ones are on our website: <http://www.ssepd.co.uk/HaveYourSay/Events/>

We have attended all of the DNO/Stakeholder meetings and contributed towards the collaborative approach in developing the DG workplans. We have engaged with other DNOs on key issues.

An original proposed joint survey did not progress, so we carried out own survey on all Generation quotations issued through Sept-Oct 2013: focused on level of information, choice and alternative provider information provided in our quotations. 76% felt quotation offered enough information to make an informed choice.

In our future plans “**Plain Guide to our Plans and Commitments for Generation Connections customers for 2014/15**” (**Generation ICE Plan 2014/15**) we have committed to continue this approach with information on regular events available on our web-site. We have also committed to continue to take an active role at industry working groups – such as, DG-DNO Steering Group, ECSG, Scottish Renewables DG Workgroup and Vision group

Commitment

We committed to facilitate ongoing customer engagement: allow stakeholders the opportunity to meet and speak to our staff.

We also promised to participate in the national events where appropriate.

We agreed to carry out a joint DNO-wide survey of Generation customers to give a benchmarked position, gauge satisfaction and areas of improvement.

"Overall, we have been very pleased with the approach that SSEPD has taken to engaging with the DG community, and broadly supportive of the ICE work plan proposals put forward. We can see that you have listened to many of our concerns raised in meetings and individually. Thank you very much for your ongoing engagement." – a National Renewables trade body

"I WOULD CONFIRM THAT WE OFTEN CITE SSE IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH OFGEM AND OTHER DNOS AS BEING THE BENCHMARK TO ILLUSTRATE BEST PRACTICE AND TO ENCOURAGE OTHER DN'S TO IMPROVE THEIR SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS IN ALL ASPECTS OF CONNECTIONS WORK." – COMPETITION NOTICE Testimonial



Initiative 2

Account Manager

Stage 1 of Account Managers is now complete – we now offer regular Portfolio Meetings to our repeat developers. We have committed to extending this service as detailed in **Initiative 1** of our **Generation ICE Plan 2014/15**.

Commitment

In order to provide a more tailored approach to customers with multiple schemes, who may have various enquiries, we committed during 2013/14 to introduce a process specifically for these groups of customers. We proposed to review developer portfolios where we could discuss potential new applications and provide technical information regarding networks.

"... THE COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS TEAM ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS THE QUOTE EITHER ON THE PHONE OR VIA A FACE TO FACE MEETING IF REQUIRED AND THEY ARE ABLE TO EXPLAIN THE QUOTE AND THE DIFFERENT SEGMENTS THAT COMPRISE IT IN LAYMAN TERMS." – COMPETITION NOTICE TESTIMONIAL

Initiative 3

Recruitment of non-technical support

A dedicated team has now been implemented. Ongoing review as part of **Initiative 1 of our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15** to gauge effectiveness and workloads

Commitment

We committed to implementing a dedicated Generation application hotline to ensure that Generation applicants will contact a specialist team who can advise on queries

'WE HAVE ALWAYS FOUND THE SSE MICROGENERATION TEAM TO BE EXTREMELY KNOWLEDGEABLE AND HELPFUL, AS WELL AS BEING CLEAR ABOUT OUR CHOICES.' – COMPETITION NOTICE TESTIMONIAL

Initiative 4

Application process

Our connection offer terms were reviewed during 2013 and are now reviewed on at least an annual basis by our Connections Policy Manager. This is now Business as Usual and we are open to stakeholder feedback on how our connection offer could be improved further.

All offers are now being issued from our dedicated Commercial Contracts team.

Commitment

We committed to complete a review of the Generation Connection Offer, and subsequently committed to an annual review of the document. This process was also to stream offers (for SHEPD and SEPD) by issuing them from the same office.

"THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDELINES ARE STRAIGHTFORWARD AND THERE IS ALWAYS A NAME AND NUMBER TO CALLS AND WHEN QUERIES ARISE. AGAIN FROM OUR DEALINGS WITH YOUR COMPANY, WE INEVITABLY FIND THAT YOU HIT YOUR STANDARDS OF SERVICE, WHICH IS SOMETHING THAT WE CANNOT SAY FOR EVERY DNO" –

Initiative 5**Database of turbine specs**

The database was completed in July 2013. This includes G83 and G59 type tested equipment and is now live on the ENA website. We will continue to engage in the DG-DNO Steering Group and ENA to develop this going forward. The extension of the use of this is now also included as an element of **Initiative 6 of our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15**

Commitment

We were very interested in developing a national database of all turbine specifications for all customers within the UK in a collaborative approach with the other DNO's

We also committed to promote awareness and use of database of turbines with customers and manufacturers.

Initiative 6**Option for extension of validity**

We improved this in September 2012 by introducing our extension and re-validation process. We continued to receive requests from stakeholders to extend our quotation validity period. As of 01/12/13, we agreed to and implemented a 90 day quote acceptance period for all quotes. We now offer a standard 90 day acceptance period, with the option of a 10 day extension and a further 90 day revalidation – as long as the offer does not become interactive with another offer. This is a 1 year trial that has currently been in place for 6 months. Feedback to date is that it has been broadly well received.

Commitment

We previously had a 30 day quote acceptance period to reduce occasions of quote interactivity. We committed to review and improve this.

"[WE] ARE VERY PLEASED TO HEAR IN THE CHANGE IN POLICY. THANK YOU FOR TAKING ON BOARD OUR CONCERNS REGARDING THE PREVIOUS 30 DAY VALIDITY PERIOD." – COMPETITION NOTICE TESTIMONIAL

Initiative 7

Contestable works part of same application

Complete

We now issue all SSEPD Generation quotations with the non-contestable only or all works options.

Commitment

We committed to make it easier to convert a quotation by identifying the contestable and non-contestable elements of it.

*"SSEPD IS SHOWCASING BEST PRACTICE AMONGST THE DNOS IN TERMS OF ENABLING ACCESS TO COMPETITIVE QUOTES BY ISSUING TWO OFFERS 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." –
COMPETITION NOTICE TESTIMONIAL*



INFORMATION PROVISION

Initiative 8

Information on LV network, voltage issues, and plans

To date, we have improved our application forms online and provided more information on the website. <http://www.ssepd.co.uk/Connections/Generation/ConnectingGenerationToOurNetwork/>

We commit to complete the second part of our improvement by summer 2014 with continuous improvement thereafter.

As detailed under **Initiative 3 of our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15**, we have committed to deliver 'Heatmaps' on our website and/or through a mobile App.

Under **Initiatives 6, 7, 8 and 9 of our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15** we have also promised to significantly improve the functionality of our web-site. This includes online applications, payments and project tracking.

Commitment

Committed to update our web site as part of a continuous process. The first update to include developing the website into a more user friendly format and providing Generation customers with a portal for information and online application.

"THE WEBSITE HAS BEEN
A LONG TIME COMING ,
BUT WE WILL BE GALD TO
SEE IT" – COMPETITION NOTICE
TESTIMONIAL



TECHNICAL

Initiative 9

Innovation collation and roll-out

The NINES Project is ongoing and we will apply any lessons learned to any areas necessary, in order to get the most benefit from the project. We also held an ANM dissemination event (on Orkney) in Sep 2013. We announced ANM as Business as Usual at our second identified ANM in Angus in January 2014.

We are currently identifying geographic areas where similar 'connection surgeries' would be of benefit to customers and have incorporated the 'connection surgery' process into our plans for 2014. Feedback from developers on the prospect of this has been very positive so far. Continued progress committed to in our Engagement Plan in our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15.

Commitment

From our learning through our ongoing NINES Project in Shetland, we ensure that Generation customers have bespoke connection options on constrained networks. This has been a lesson learned from our ongoing project, which we feel can be applied to a wider range of Generation customers.

"WE HAVE ALSO HAD POSITIVE EXPERIENCE OF SSEPD BEING WILLING TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX ON CONNECTIONS AND ARE CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN A MAJOR CONNECTIONS PROJECT, PARLEY 33KV HUB, THAT INVOLVES AN ICP BUILDING A NEW 33KV SUBSTATION INTO WHICH FOUR SEPARATE DISTRIBUTED GENERATORS WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A METERED CONNECTION. THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN ANYTHING BUT "BUSINESS AS USUAL" FOR ALL SIDES BUT SSEPD WERE VERY OPEN TO TRYING SOMETHING NEW." – COMPETITION NOTICE TESTIMONIAL

Initiative 10**Safeguards against unnecessary roll-out**

Our approach to reinforcement driven by multiple generator clusters is now to identify and facilitating consortia of developers. We have now assisted a number of developer groups in this process. The feedback we have received has been very positive, so we have now implemented this as Business as Usual. We have introduced facilitating a consortia solution as Business as Usual and have done this most successfully with circa 30 developers on our Grudie Bridge network.

We have committed to continue this approach going forward as part of our **Engagement Plan in our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15**.

Commitment

We identified a lack of capacity on existing networks, which has the potential for complications. As part of this, we researched various Generation driven reinforcement options with Ofgem. Their preferred solution, which we committed to progressing, is to facilitate consortia of developers in a given area.

Initiative 11**Consistency in standards interpretation**

We have now spent a considerable amount of time ensuring the policies and standards followed throughout our design teams are consistent. As referenced above, all high voltage Generation offers are now sent out from the same central office and this will develop this consistent interpretation further.

Commitment

Committed to review consistency of policies and standards throughout our design teams. This included a commitment to issue all high voltage Generation offers from the same central office.

Initiative 12

Use of legacy projects and strategic developments

This exercise was started in July 2012 and we have now released over 45MW's of capacity held by a legacy contract onto the next developers in the contracted queue that are waiting.

This has allowed over 30 new developers to connect that were previously being held off by transmission constraints Completed.

We also now have dedicated additional resource to tackling this historic issue and are now confident that we have recovered the vast majority of 'legacy contract capacity'. Our robust connection offers and increased contract managers will ensure this issue does not re-occur

Commitment

In order to further alleviate the issue of a lack of capacity on existing networks, we committed to carrying out the termination of legacy projects (or revalidation where necessary) and introduce a process of releasing capacity for others.

We also committed to put in place processes to ensure this capacity blocking would not re-occur.



CHARGING

Initiative 13

Fair deposit

A “fair deposit” policy was introduced in September 2012 and was reviewed in March 2013 and again in September 2013, where we found it had been well received by developers to date. We have also improved our IT systems to deal with the complex payment schedules this produces.

The policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

Commitment

In order to ensure projects are progressing and connections to the network are as efficient as they can be, we committed to introducing a process used when the network is constrained. Together with the customer, we will agree an expected connection date. If this date is more than two years away, we only request a deposit rather than full payment.

“WE WERE REALLY PLEASED TO SEE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE £10K DEPOSIT POLICY BY SSE, BECAUSE IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE TO THE COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH. IT GREATLY REDUCES THE CASHFLOW ISSUES CAUSED BY LONGER CONNECTION TIMEFRAMES, WHICH CAN ACT AS A BARRIER TO SMALLER SCALE DEVELOPERS WITH LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES.” FELIX WIGHT, COMMUNITY ENERGY SCOTLAND

Initiative 14

Itemised breakdown of costs, including contestable

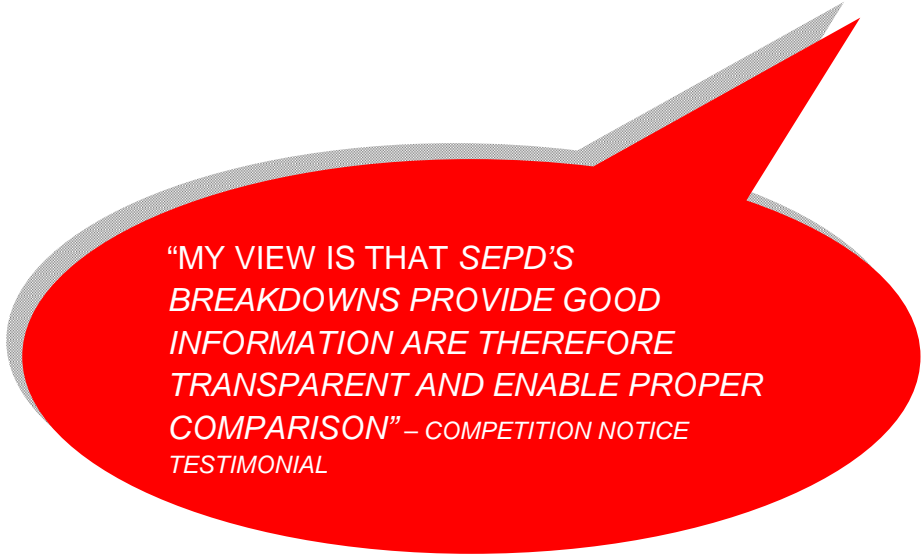
We have improved the provision and detail of breakdown of information in our quotations.

Results and more details on website: <http://www.ssepd.co.uk/Connections/UsefulDocuments/>

Completed.

Commitment

We undertook to review our connection offer and, guided by stakeholders, provide an appropriate and meaningful breakdown of items and costs.



**"MY VIEW IS THAT SEPD'S
BREAKDOWNS PROVIDE GOOD
INFORMATION ARE THEREFORE
TRANSPARENT AND ENABLE PROPER
COMPARISON" – COMPETITION NOTICE
TESTIMONIAL**



Choice

Initiative 15

Address barriers to competition

We are now issuing all generation quotes with the non-contestable only or all works options. We have also now put in place proactive actions to help developers appoint an alternative provider: We issue information reminding all customers that they have a choice in connections at application and quotation. We follow this up with guidance on what to do next in identifying and appointing a suitably accredited company. We carried out a survey to review how this information was received. Results and more details on website:
[http://www.ssepd.co.uk/Connections/UsefulDocuments/ Completed](http://www.ssepd.co.uk/Connections/UsefulDocuments/Completed)

As committed to and detailed under **Initiatives 11 and 12 in our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15**, we will continue to make it much easier and clearer for customers to be aware that they have a choice. This will include introducing a set of plain guides on using other providers and including details on and links to alternative providers available on our website.

Commitment

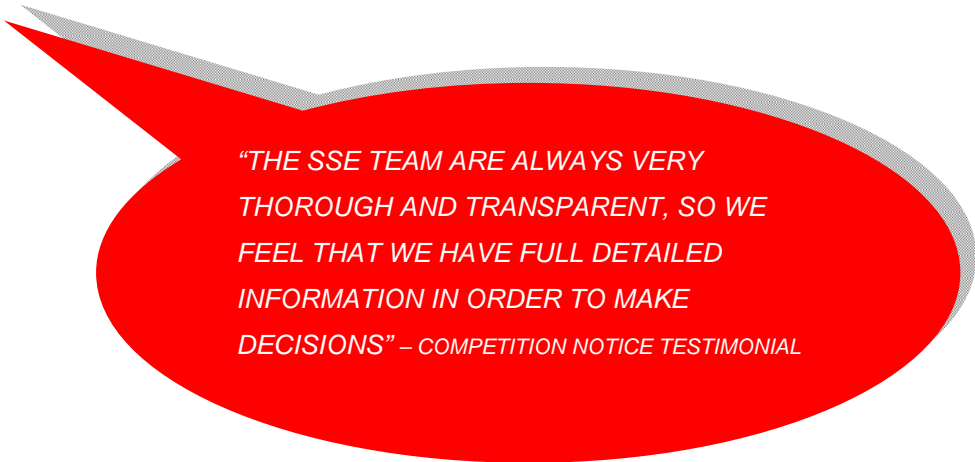
We are committed to helping to facilitate an open and competitive market in connections. As part of this, we committed to make sure that all our quotations for generation connections would be offered as both non-contestable only and all works. This gives the customer a choice at the beginning of the connection process.

"SSE have always been very open about the option of utilising ICPs (more so than other DNOs we have worked with) to carry out part of the works relating to a connection. I also have noted that SSE now send out a fact sheet titled 'You have a Choice' that provides useful information regarding ICPs, who they are, what they can do etc. This is another step towards ensuring transparency and providing the client with all the options in order to select the one that best suits them." – Competition Notice Testimonial

"SSE HAS TAKEN COMPETITION IN CONNECTIONS FAR MORE SERIOUSLY IN THE LAST YEAR AND WE HAVE SEEN SOME IMPROVEMENTS BEING DEVELOPED." – COMPETITION NOTICE



"SSE'S APPROACH TO COMPETITION HAS MOVED FORWARD THROUGHOUT THE LAST 5 YEARS. FES LTD FEELS THAT SSE'S ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED TOWARDS ICPS IN THE FORM OF ACCEPTANCE AND WORKING AS A PARTNERSHIP. FES LTD HAS HAD NO NEGATIVE ISSUES WITH ANY OF THE SSE STAFF. SSE STAFF HAS PROVEN TIME AND TIME AGAIN THAT THEY ARE APPROACHABLE AND HELPFUL." – COMPETITION NOTICE TESTIMONIAL



"THE SSE TEAM ARE ALWAYS VERY THOROUGH AND TRANSPARENT, SO WE FEEL THAT WE HAVE FULL DETAILED INFORMATION IN ORDER TO MAKE DECISIONS" – COMPETITION NOTICE TESTIMONIAL



FEEDBACK

Initiative 16

Risk-free appeals process

We completed this commitment during 2013. We now also have an appointed 'escalations manager' that any customer has the option to contact if they are dissatisfied. We welcome a collaborative approach with the other DNO's to explore a common approach to learning from complaints at national level. An ongoing commitment to collaboration with other DNO's to achieve 'best practice' on this is part of our **Engagement Plan in our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15**.

Commitment

If a customer wishes to make a formal complaint, we have a simple and transparent process for them. We committed to make this more available through our web site and reinforce this with our staff.

Initiative 17

Customer feedback seminars

These improvements which were well received by our customers will mean we have more and better wide-scale customer engagement.

Commitment

Generator Stakeholder Engagement is very important to us, so as part of this we committed to:

- Developing and introducing a Customer Charter; and
- Introducing Golden Rules for customer contact

Initiative 17

Customer feedback seminars

There is now a knowledge transfer partnership in place between SSE and Community Energy Scotland (CES) and we intend to further collaborate with CES during 2014/15.

We hosted and participated in DNO-wide DG Fora in London, Cardiff and Glasgow during October and November 2013.

Currently we are actively involved with the UK Government and Ofgem with various community energy groups in a process of reviewing community generation applications.

The dates for all our forthcoming stakeholder events are now on our website where you can also register for notification of any future events. <http://www.ssepd.co.uk/HaveYourSay/Events/>

These include a new Customer Voice forum, meeting bi-annually and chaired by our Director of Distribution and as of December 2013 also involves Local Energy Scotland – who we have met with and agreed upon a strategy to work together going forward. This forms part of our **Engagement Plan in our Generation ICE Plan 2014/15**

Commitment

We participate in a Think tank Initiative with Community Energy Scotland, as a collaborative opportunity to investigate innovative solutions which allow further renewable connections in challenging situations.

As part of ongoing stakeholder feedback engagement sessions, our Commercial Contracts team also committed to participation at the:

Scottish Renewables DG working group;

Community Energy Scotland workshop;

Scottish Renewables ANM awareness conference; and the Argyll community working group.

Initiative 18

Issues log – also to capture new issues

Completed as part of our Stakeholder Engagement Database. This was successfully externally audited in 2013/14 and formed part of our Stakeholder submission for Ofgem in 2013/14.

Commitment

Create an issues log to ensure that we capture and act on the views of generation customers. This will allow generation customers to engage with us with any concerns or comments they have at their own convenience.

Stakeholder Engagement

If you have any questions, or you would like to take part in future stakeholder consultations:

Email: stakeholder.engagement@sse.com

Write to: Lisa Banks

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You will also find more information on our web site under “Have your Say”
at www.ssepd.co.uk