



## Ofgem Incentive on Connections Engagement 2014 / 15 Trial

**WPD Part two - looking back: report submission**

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### Introduction

This report explains the outcomes of our 2013/14 connection customer engagement and service improvement activities in line with the Ofgem Incentive on Connection Engagement (ICE).

The report specifically covers both contestable and non-contestable connections activities for the Distributed Generation (DG) market segments: DG low voltage (LV) work and DG high voltage (HV) and extra high voltage (EHV) work, in each of our four Distribution Service Areas (DSAs) in the South West, South Wales, East Midlands and West Midlands.

As part of any robust stakeholder engagement strategy it is important that we involve a broad and inclusive range of stakeholders and that there is a continual review of the appropriateness and success of the strategy. It is also important that we continually review the delivery of the improvement workplan and assess the benefits that we have delivered for our customers using their ongoing feedback throughout the process.

In this report we present the results of both our ongoing stakeholder engagement and workplan for connections activities, evidencing our approach and outputs. Our DG Workplan, which forms the basis of our initiatives for the year is covered by this report and we explain how this is to be taken forward as part of our Connection Customer Steering Group workplan.



### Engagement approach

WPD has a well established stakeholder engagement strategy and approach since 2007. The feedback from our stakeholders and our first place ranking in Ofgem's stakeholder incentive scheme and broader measure

customer satisfaction scores indicate that our approach is effective. In 2013 and again in 2014 we were externally assessed for our stakeholder engagement activities as 'Compliance Plus' under our Customer Service Excellence Standard accreditation.



► WPD Stakeholder engagement cycle

Our engagement for ICE is integrated with our overall WPD stakeholder engagement strategy, as a continuation of this robust and successful approach. Our strategy of engagement (left) ensures the thoroughness of our programme and that our engagement is meaningful, delivering on the outputs identified.

For our DG connection stakeholders we use a wide range of methods tailored to the stakeholder type and to ensure we capture a full range of views, experiences and input required to influence our improvement plans (see section below and our engagement **timetable on pg. 3** for further details).

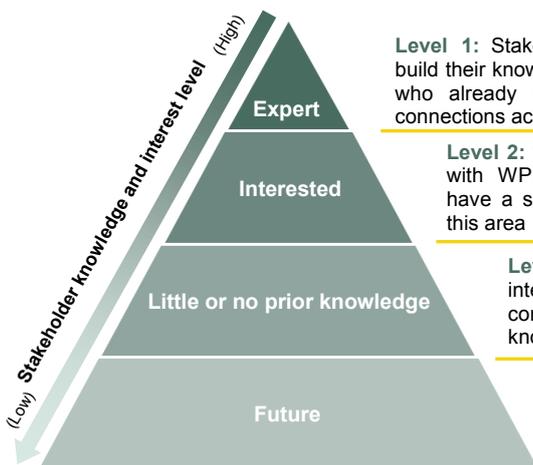
Our engagement is business-led with staff at all levels being involved in our range of activities - from CEO and Director-level involvement at our CCSG to Planners helping customers at Connection Surgeries - stakeholder engagement is seen as part everyone's job at WPD.

# Stakeholder engagement strategy

## Engagement methods for connection stakeholder types

It is important that we engage with our full range of connections stakeholders, using methods that are appropriate to their level of interest and knowledge about connection activities. As such, we tailor our engagement methods to best suit the needs of the various stakeholders. This approach ensures our engagement has the correct breadth and thoroughness in order for us to gather the input we need to develop and endorse the plans we put in place to improve our connections performance.

During 2013/14 we have undertaken a range of methods to engage with our connections stakeholders. We have used methods tailored to the knowledge level of our DG connection stakeholders, these are set out below:



**Level 1:** Stakeholders we work closely with to build their knowledge to an 'expert' level, or those who already have an in-depth knowledge of connections activities

**Level 2:** Stakeholders who interact regularly with WPD for connections activities and have a sizeable knowledge and interest in this area

**Level 3:** Stakeholders who may only interact once or occasionally for connections activities and have little knowledge of WPD or this area

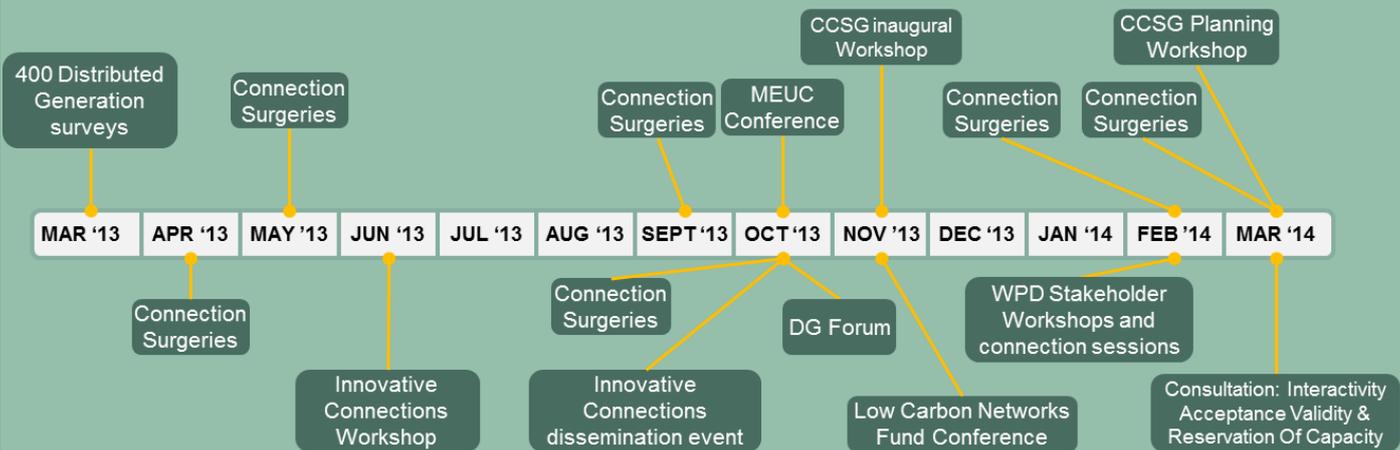
**Level 4:** Stakeholders who may want connections in the future and may have no knowledge of WPD or this area

**Engagement methods:**

- CCSG
  - Stakeholder workshops
  - Bilateral meetings
- 
- Stakeholder workshops
  - Bilateral meetings
  - DG survey
  - Connections surgeries
- 
- DG & customer surveys
  - Connections surgeries
  - Annual stakeholder report
  - Website
  - Media awareness campaign
- 
- Connections surgeries
  - Annual stakeholder report
  - Website
  - Media awareness campaign

## Connection engagement activities for 2013 / 14

In 2013 / 14 we undertook a range of engagement activities with our connections stakeholders using a variety of mechanisms. Details of the key activities is provided later in this report and a summary of these is provided below:



## DG Workplan

Our DG workplan was developed in response to stakeholder feedback at the 2012 DG Forum. The plan is designed to address issues identified by stakeholders to improve services for these connection activities. The final version of the plan for 2013/14 is detailed below with the final status of each of the initiatives addressing the issues. The issues are split into eight sub-headings for specific areas to be addressed:

Issue raised	WPD Initiative	Update/Outcome	Status
<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>			
Monitor customer satisfaction	We will undertake detailed analysis of monthly customer satisfaction results to measure performance, track improvements and identify areas for focus to improve the connections service.	Results show that WPD continues to rank as the top 4 out of the 14 DNOs for connections satisfaction.	Monthly
DG customer satisfaction research	We will conduct further specific research with DG connections customers to measure 2012/13 performance and identify detailed areas for improvements in the process. We will compare the results with 2011/12 and track trends.	We have undertaken a survey of DG customers involving interviews of 400 DG customers who had contacted WPD for a quotation in relation to an ongoing connection. Results indicated increased satisfaction compared to 2012 results.	Completed
Checklist of what customers can expect	We will develop a checklist of the information that needs to be provided in order to start work on a formal connection offer for G59 generation, giving timescales for response.	This has been completed and can be found on our website <a href="http://www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Generation/Installation/G59-2.aspx">www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Generation/Installation/G59-2.aspx</a>	Completed
Checklist of what customers can expect	We will advise DG customers of important changes to industry requirements where this affects the application process.	We have published information on the connections process on our redesigned website at the following pages: <a href="http://www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Useful-Information.aspx">www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Useful-Information.aspx</a> <a href="http://www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Installation.aspx">www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Installation.aspx</a>	Completed and ongoing initiative
Account Manager/ additional non-technical support	We have consulted on a single local point of contact as part of our stakeholder engagement programme in relation to our Business Plan.	Due to our geographically based structure it is a high cost option and was not supported by our stakeholders. However the name of the local contact who will be providing the quotation is provided to the applicant within 2 working days of application.	Completed
<b>CUSTOMER FEEDBACK</b>			
Customer feedback seminars	We will run further Customer Connection Information and Feedback events/seminars for the DG community as part of our stakeholder engagement programme.  We will continue to run local surgeries for DG customers to raise issues and understand the connections process.	6 connection surgery event held across four WPD regions.  Connection specific discussions held at stakeholder workshops	Ongoing
NEW Customer Panel	We will include DG Connections as a topic for our Customer Panel to provide feedback. The Customer Panel comprises a range of stakeholder representatives includes those with an interest in connections. WPD's CEO attends Panel meetings which take place 4 times a year.	NEW A new Connections Customer Steering Group was launched in October. DG customers are represented. The new Panel will meet 3 times per year.	Ongoing
Reinforcement	Clarification on issues and charging methodology behind reinforcement due to DG Projects.	NEW In response to a request from a Customer Panel Member WPD attended a meeting with Ofgem to seek clarification.	Complete
Issues log to capture new issues	NEW The new Connections Customer Steering Group will capture key issues for DG customers.	DG customer issue incorporated into CSCG Workplan.	Ongoing
Issues log to capture new issues	The log of 40 questions and answers raised at the DG Forum was discussed at the DNO/ Renewable UK led working group meeting on 20 March 2013.	We support this issue being taken forward centrally by the DNO/Renewable UK led working groups. New issues specific to WPD will be added to this workplan.	Ongoing

## DG Workplan

Issue raised	WPD Initiative	Update/Outcome	Status
<b>APPLICATION PROCESS</b>			
<b>NEW Online applications</b>	Provide a facility for online applications for a new or increased connection/load.	From 11 November 2013 applications can be made on line via WPD website. The online application facility includes DG applications and non-contestable only (competition in connections) applications.	Completed
<b>Contestable works as part of the same application</b>	We will seek further feedback from stakeholders (as part of the further DNO work with RenewableUK). The current regulatory reporting arrangements require us to record and report Section 16 and CIC (SLC15) applications separately. This does mean that DG developers often request both a S16 quotation and a CIC quotation for non-contestable works only.	We are looking at how our systems can be adapted to provide a one-stop quotation process within the existing regulatory reporting arrangements.  We have introduced a dual offer letter in Dec 2013 for DG EHV connections where a customer applies for both a competitive and non-competitive connection offer enabling the customer to choose one of two options: option 1 is for WPD to undertake all the works and option 2 is for WPD to undertake only the non-contestable works.	Ongoing
<b>Innovative Connection Offers</b>	In response to feedback from DG customers, we will look at ways to provide more flexible connection offers, where our network is reaching capacity.	NEW Alternative connection offers have been developed to provide alternative connection arrangements.  Specific examples were highlighted by WPD CEO at the DG Forum in Cardiff in October 2013.	Ongoing
<b>Database of turbine specs</b>	We consider that this is best co-ordinated via the Electricity Networks Association or another trade association.	This issue is being taken forward at the DNO/ Renewable UK led working groups.	Ongoing
<b>Option for extension of validity</b>	We have already considered this. Extending the validity of an offer beyond a very short extension could disadvantage a customer, if there are other parties also wishing to connect i.e. "interactivity". The customer would have to agree a new Application Date and risk losing their place in the queue. This would also make the management of interactivity even more complex.	We are looking at this issue as part of the ENA COG to find a national solution.  We have revised our policy to allow consideration of the extension of validity where there is no interactivity.	Ongoing
<b>INFORMATION PROVISION</b>			
<b>Information on LV network, voltage issues and plans</b>	We will extend the online Midlands DG capacity map to cover South Wales & South West – for the 11kV networks.	NEW launched October 2013 See WPD website. <a href="http://www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Generation/Generation-Capacity-Map.aspx">www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Generation/Generation-Capacity-Map.aspx</a>	Completed
<b>EHV constrained circuit maps</b>	Development of information on constrained EHV circuits provided on maps for each region.	EHV system overview maps with highlighted constrained circuits (by thermal or voltage constraint) were made available on the WPD website at the end of June 2013 see: <a href="http://www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Generation/Generation-Capacity-Map.aspx">www.westernpower.co.uk/Connections/Generation/Generation-Capacity-Map.aspx</a>  The overview maps will be updated on a six monthly basis at the same time as the LTDS updates.	Completed
<b>Downloadable small scale mapping</b>	We will make our HV and EHV overhead and underground mapping asset maps available in electronic format. Current mapping data is only available in hardcopy.	NEW A package for external customers is now complete and is being distributed to organisations that require an overview of the WPD Network when considering and/or planning an HV or EHV connection.  For more information see <a href="http://www.westernpower.co.uk/Partners/Small-Scale-Mapping.aspx">www.westernpower.co.uk/Partners/Small-Scale-Mapping.aspx</a>	Completed

## DG Workplan

Issue raised	WPD Initiative	Update/Outcome	Status
<b>CONSENTS &amp; LEGALS</b>			
Appointment of non-technical support staff	Required for specialist support for consents and wayleave activity identified.	Each local team has access to specialist wayleave staff who are trained in negotiating consents and wayleaves.	Ongoing
<b>TECHNICAL</b>			
Innovation collation and roll out	We will include innovation as part of the development of WPD's Well Justified Business Plan for 2015-2023, and our associated stakeholder engagement.	WPD's 2015-23 final Business Plan as submitted to Ofgem is published on our website at <a href="http://www.westernpower.co.uk">www.westernpower.co.uk</a>	Completed
Consistency in standards interpretation	We will develop a website for ICP's and other customers that provides technical information	This can now be found at <a href="http://www.westernpowertechinfo.co.uk">www.westernpowertechinfo.co.uk</a>	Completed
Consistency in standards interpretation	We will seek feedback from the DG community on areas where any technical standards are being applied inconsistently across WPD through stakeholder engagement.  We will also continue to work with the ENA Technical working groups to seek to achieve consistency between DNOs.	The technical information website and it's function as a source of policies and specifications helps to ensure transparency and consistency.	Ongoing
<b>CHARGING</b>			
Itemised breakdown of costs including contestable	We will provide a breakdown of contestable and non-contestable costs with all connection offers.	This has been introduced along with a detailed connection cost breakdown provide with formal offers.	Completed
Application fee	As part of the further DNO work with RenewableUK, we will seek stakeholder from the DG community in support of the reinstatement of A& D fees, business case being prepared by the industry COG Connections sub group for submission to DECC.	This issue is being taken forward at the DNO/ Renewable UK led working groups.	
Fair deposit (stage payments)	WPD generally allows stage payments. We request an initial payment to cover A&D fees (post acceptance) and preliminary works prior to construction.  As an interim measure, in response to feedback from one of our DG customers we will also seek stakeholder views on a requirement for larger developers to pay a refundable deposit on application for demand and DG applications over a certain size.	This issue is included in our consultation on connections interactivity, acceptance validity, payments and reservation of capacity.	Ongoing
<b>CHOICE</b>			
Addressing barriers to competition	We will progress WPD's Competition Test application and associated initiatives such as trial point of connection (POC) determination.	Competition test submission made in October 2013 for DG HVEHV connection in four WPD licence areas. Passed test in WPD South West.	Completed
Addressing barriers to competition	We will roll-out live working at LV and HV operational works for CIC providers	Live LV jointing now a business as usual process and a constable active for ICPS. HV joint trial is currently in place.	Completed

# Outputs & Measures

## Outputs of the workplan

To ensure that the initiatives in our DG workplan delivered the expected improvements in our connection service, it was important that we are able to assess and measure this. The outputs and measures below demonstrate our performance in the year against our improvement workplan. They help us understand the successes but also help determine where further work is required for the following year's plan:

- **DG workplan – initiatives, actions and target completion dates**
- **Broader measure – maintain top 4 positions**
- **DG Survey – improvement in satisfaction levels**

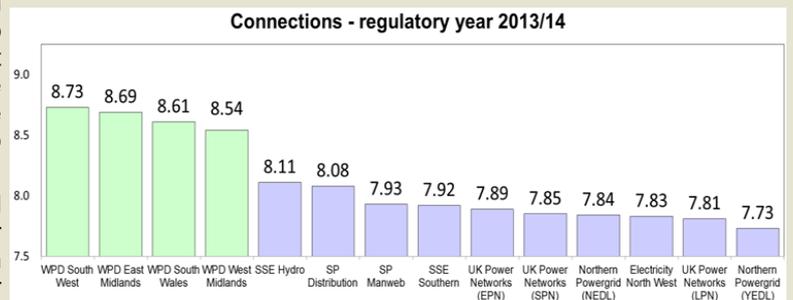
### DG workplan actions and target completion dates

The DG workplan included deliverable improvements with target dates set to ensure that the initiatives had focus and where driven to be delivered on time. The completion of these initiatives and delivery of the benefits identified from them, forms measurable outputs for the year. Further detail on the workplan outputs can be found on pg.4

### Broader measure – maintain top 4 positions

WPD planned to maintain its leading position on connections customer service by remaining in the top four of the 14 distribution licensees. We understand that we cannot become complacent and stand still if we are to maintain our status. Therefore our connection service improvement and customer engagement is vital to ensure we remain leading in this measure.

For the regulatory year 2013/14 we achieved satisfaction scores between 8.54 and 8.73 out of 10 for our four licence areas. We were successful in maintaining our top four position amongst the other DNOs. Our performance against this measure demonstrates the overall effectiveness of our DG workplan delivery.



### DG survey – improvement in satisfaction levels

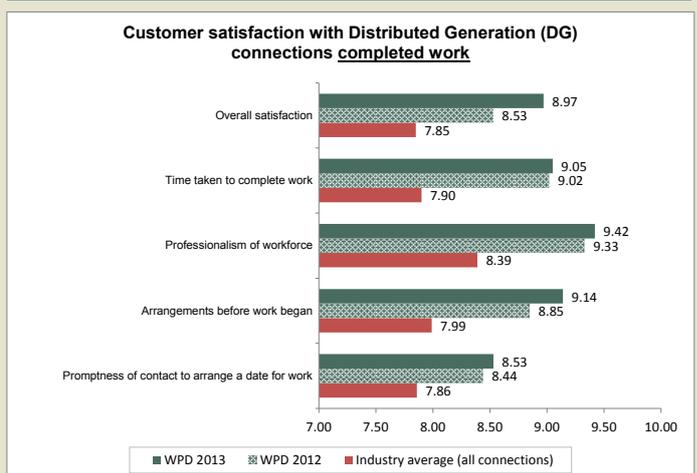
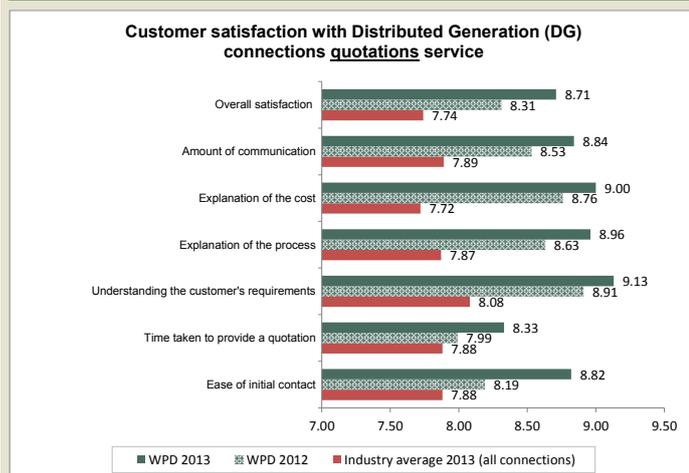
In 2012, WPD were the first Distribution company to conduct annual customer satisfaction surveys specifically for DG customers. Interviews were conducted with 400 customers about the key aspects of our service. We set a output measure to improve satisfaction levels of our DG customers in 2013/14 as another measure of the effectiveness of our engagement activities and improvement workplan. The survey was carried out in March 2013 and showed the customer satisfaction improved in every area of our DG service (see charts below) both against the previous DG survey results and against the industry average for the Broader Measure surveys. Areas identified through this survey for improvement are used in developing our CCSG workplan.

WPD made improvements in every area, but most significantly:

- Ease of initial contact (8.19 ► 8.82)
- Explaining the process (8.63 ► 8.96)
- Amount of communication throughout process (8.53 ► 8.84)

There were still areas for continued improvement:-

- 33% would like to see more communication
- 20% would like to see a clearer explanation of the process/quotation



# Customer engagement

## Connection Customer Steering Group

The CCSG was formed at the end of 2013 with an inaugural workshop in November and has been set up as part of our continuing commitment to stakeholder and engagement, using feedback to inform and shape our improvement plans to better facilitate the continued development of our connections services. Chaired by our Chief Executive, Robert Symons and made up of a broad range of connection stakeholders from a cross-section of sectors, the group comprises of a panel of experts who help to inform and guide our strategy and decisions.

panel member will represent their own views and the views of their colleagues within their market segment(s).

The CCSG will meet three times per year with a cycle of planning, update and review workshops. Instinctif Partners has been engaged by WPD to attend each workshop to capture and report the outputs and to deliver an independent report from each workshop.

It is important that the talking leads to action and the Group inform and endorse the priorities, actions, initiatives and targets forming the annual workplan for WPD connections activities. This CCSG workplan will incorporate the DG workplan issues. The issues and initiatives endorsed by the group are sourced from all areas of engagement, including our customer surveys and stakeholder workshops.

### CCSG Objectives

Each

The CCSG's terms of reference are to:

- Provide feedback on the effectiveness of WPD's connections service and plans for future developments
- Act as a source of and a sounding board for new ideas
- Advise and draw attention to key issues of current or emerging connection customer concerns
- Influence WPD's strategic objectives and future plans for connections services
- Influence and feedback on WPDs connections performance indicators
- Support and facilitate joint-working between WPD and connections groups
- Act as an arbiter for connections customers

### Range of stakeholders

The CCSG is made up of a range of stakeholders representing a cross section of connection customers in order to provide a balanced view of connection issues. Members cover the full range of connection market segments:

- **Public Lighting Authorities**
- **Utilities**
- **Large commercial connection customers**
- **Connection consultants**
- **DG developers**
- **Community Energy Schemes**
- **Independent connection providers**
- **Independent network operators**

## CCSG Workshop cycle

The CCSG has a rolling programme of annual workshops with a cycle of planning, update and review:

<b>March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present WPD's draft proposals based on priorities identified at end of previous year</li> <li>• Ask stakeholders for comments that will be used to refine our thinking</li> <li>• Finalise and agree plan based on CCSG feedback</li> </ul>
<b>June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present a review of progress against the Plan</li> <li>• Present any additions or modifications which may have been identified</li> </ul>
<b>October</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate progress and successes</li> <li>• Reassess the key outstanding issues</li> <li>• Agree actions and priorities for the following year</li> </ul>

# Customer engagement

## Connection Surgeries

Stakeholder Focus: *Connection customers, developers, landowners and community groups*

In 2012/2013 we successfully trialed a series of Connection Surgeries at some of our local offices. We continued this trial into 2013/14 with surgeries giving customers the opportunity to speak face-to-face with a WPD engineer and discuss either the process of applying for a connection in general or specifics about a particular scheme. Particularly aimed at DG connection customers, the surgeries hope to provide assistance with questions on process, timescales, technical requirements and possible constraints in a particular network area, as well as the requirements for different types and sizes of generation.

At our stakeholder workshops our customers told us they wanted it to be easier to discuss their connection requirements with us and following the successful trial of these surgeries we have planned to rollout an annual schedule of Connection Surgeries across all our regions from 2014. The surgeries

will be held three times a year in WPD locations as close as possible to where most participants who have requested an appointment live. To



► Discussion at a connection surgery in Exeter

**This year we have:**

- Held 6 events at local WPD offices in each of our four licence areas:  
 Wales 18 April 2013 | West Midlands 22 May 2013 | Wales 19 September 2013 | South West 24 October 2013 | East Midlands 20 February 2014 | South West 6 March 2014
- Engaged with 300 stakeholders (150 by pre-arranged appointments)

make sure that we reach as many interested customers as possible we are advertising on our website and also in a variety of national publications from May 2014, including Utility Week, CLA, Farmer Union Wales, NFU, Farmers Weekly (see advertisement to be used above). These publications are targeted at groups who may be interested in putting DG on their land and want to understand the connections process.

## DG Forum

Stakeholder Focus: *DG Customers, Developers, Community Groups, Govt. Local Authorities, ICPs, DNOs & Ofgem*

In October 2013 WPD hosted one of the ENA's three annual DG fora in Cardiff. Our commitment to the importance of these events for engaging with our DG stakeholders is demonstrated by the attendance of Robert Symons, WPD Chief Executive who also delivers one of the presentations, his presentation discussed the following areas:

- WPD's DG workplan
- Significant improvement actions taken – e.g. network constraint maps and DG capacity maps online, downloadable small-scale mapping and connections surgeries.
- Low carbon networks projects trialling smart techniques to

facilitate the connection of DG

- Innovative/alternative Connection Offers
- Customer satisfaction and WPD's annual DG research findings and actions
- WPD's new CCSG and how to get involved

The conference gave DG stakeholders across all market segments the opportunity to network with others from the industry and to meet and discuss issues and potential improvements with DNOs. Information and feedback from these events helped to inform, shape and endorse our DG workplan initiatives.

## Major Energy Users Council Conference

We have a longstanding relationship with the Major Energy Users' Council (MEUC), who have been members of our Customer Panel since 2009. This partnership led us to attend their national conferences in March 2013, October 2013 and May 2014. We engaged around 400 stakeholders at each event, delivering a presentation to delegates as well as hosting a display stand for customers to come and hold more in-depth discussions with WPD staff. In 2013 our focus was to consult Major Energy Users on our RIIO-ED1 business plan and giving them the opportunity to influence our 76 outputs. WPD's Future Networks Manager gave a presentation outlining our key commitments, the levels of service improvement these will deliver, how these may impact large energy users and inviting views from stakeholders. As a result, several business customers participated in our wider stakeholder workshops in April 2013 and February 2014.

More recently, our focus has shifted to the delivery of our Business Plan and asking for views on the speed with which we will deliver many of our commitments. Responding to an area of interest raised by MEUC members, we also focussed on Demand Side Response, explaining the outputs of several trials underway and discussing how these innovative arrangements, including alternative connection offers, can benefit major energy users.



► Our stand at the MEUC conference 2013

## Customer engagement

### LCNF Conference

Stakeholder Focus: *DG Customers, Developers, Community Groups, Govt. Local Authorities, ICPs, DNOs & Ofgem*



► Demonstrating an interactive model at the LCNF Conference

In 2012 WPD co-hosted the Low Carbon Networks Fund annual conference, which brought together network operators, energy industry professionals and others interested in a low carbon energy future to share learning from various smart network trials. The event in the Wales Millennium Centre attracted over 400 delegates from across the UK, Europe and USA. This was more than double the attendance at the previous year's event. More recently, WPD's Innovation team again played a key part at the latest conference at the Metropole Brighton held between 13th – 14th November 2013.

Hosting numerous knowledge dissemination events to inform stakeholders about the innovative techniques we're exploring to manage the future low carbon network. We received excellent feedback from many of the 600-plus delegates about WPD's projects. The team also brought interactive models illustrating five techniques of managing electricity network capacity instead of traditional reinforcement techniques for DG connection to the network. Allowing delegates to apply these different techniques via a scale model of parts of our network, a series of lights indicate how these impact our operations.

The Conference included a Question and Answer session with Bristol-based customer, Lee Moore, in front of a packed audience. Lee is currently one of WPD's customers trialling the Battery Storage facilities as part of WPD's So La Bristol project. WPD were the only company to offer a domestic customer's direct views and experience of working with WPD and taking part in one of our low carbon trials.

The conference was also the location for WPD's announcement of the completion of the first Tier Two project in the UK– the LV Templates project. We had lots of discussion about this project with stakeholders, which was completed very successfully and provided us with crucial findings about how we can reduce voltages to save energy and money while having no or little impact on appliances, potentially customer reducing bills and facilitate the connection of low carbon technologies.

### Stakeholder Workshops

Stakeholder Focus: *Connection customers, developers, landowners and community groups*

In February 2014 WPD held 6 events attended by over 200 people across a broad cross-section stakeholders explain the key aspects of our business plan for the next price control period and seek feedback on delivery of the plan outputs.

With both qualitative discussion and quantitative electronic voting the workshop captured our stakeholder's views on areas of the plan including delivery of the connections outputs and whether any of these should be brought forward. WPD does not isolate stakeholder engagement from the operational side of the business and it is a key part of our engagement strategy that engagement is part of everyone's role. As such these events were attended by Distribution Managers and Team Managers from our depots who were involved in the discussions with stakeholders throughout the events.

As part of these events the afternoon sessions involved breakout sessions on key topics of interest, one of which was Connections. The breakout sessions enabled stakeholders to give more specific feedback on our draft

connection workplan.

From these events our stakeholders told us that they wanted us to deliver improvements in time to connect earlier than planned and to be able to discuss their connection

requirements with WPD more easily. The results of are that WPD has now accelerated the delivery of our time to connect improvements and will deliver the 20% improvement quicker than previously proposed, achieving it by 2019 rather than 2023. We have also added customer connection surgeries to our workplan for 2014 to facilitate discussions with customers on their connection requirements.



► capturing feedback the workshop in Leicester

99% rated WPD's workshops as useful

*"Great overview of WPD's plans. Extremely professional and well run, excellent!"*

*"Open conversation was encouraged. Lots of opportunity to express opinion"*

*"Very informative, WPD showing itself to care for the customer and being proactive"*

## Workplan delivery

The DG workplan provided a focus on initiatives to improve our services for DG customers and covered a comprehensive range of the activities for the connection process. In the following sections we describe the outcomes of some of the key initiatives delivered through DG workplan.

## Workplan delivery: Application process

### Online Application

Following feedback from individual stakeholders the requirement to provide a facility for online connection application was included in the DG workplan. We have developed an online application system which was introduced in November 2014. The system enables customers to submit connection requests online and includes the ability to offer regular updates on progress of work via email and also allow the customer to make a 'call-back request' for any queries they have online. Customers can apply for new or increased supplies for demand of DG connections and are given the option of choosing to apply for competitive and non-competitive enquires ensuring that

they are aware of their choice and not hampered from either route.

We are looking to develop further functionality for the online applications system and this is in our workplan for 2013/4. Since the launch we have had 765 applications up to the end of April 2014 via the Apply Online system, with numbers steadily increasing each month:

2013/4	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April
Online Connection Applications	25	31	113	185	208	203

### Innovative connection offers

With the rapid increase in the volume of DG applications and connections to the network, a number of DG stakeholders were telling us that the network constraints as a result of this volume were causing long delays and / or large and expensive reinforcement schemes affecting their projects. In response to the feedback we committed in our DG plan to look at ways to provide more flexible connection offers where network is reaching capacity. In September 2014 we are introducing a suite of alternative connection methods and offers we have developed to reflect these arrangements, enabling customers to decide between a conventional offer or an alternative with constraints to avoid network reinforcement and capacity issues. Depending on the section of the network involved in the individual applications these offers can fall into three main categories (see right).

#### Alternative offer constraint categories

- **Timed** – time of day, day of week or seasonal factors for when generator can operate
- **Soft intertrip** – intertrip on generator constrained down/off under certain network conditions
- **Active Network Management** – full network management system using real time analysis, control of generator output and use of real time network ratings, configuration and voltage management to determine when generator can operate

### Stakeholder engagement Stakeholder Focus: DG trade associations, DG developers, DNOs, Suppliers and manufacturers

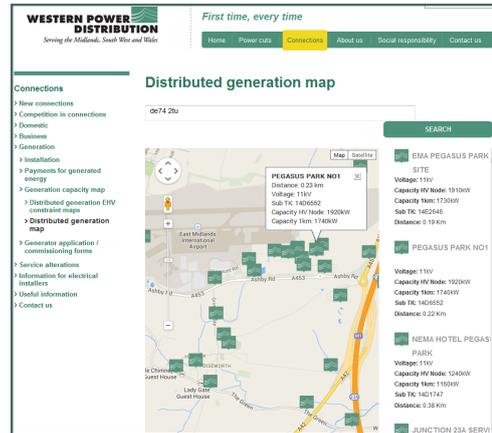
In developing the mechanisms and agreements for these alternative connections arrangements, we knew it was vital that we sought input from our stakeholders in the DG community to inform our thinking. As part of the work in developing our Low Carbon Hub for East Lincolnshire, we held stakeholder events in July and October 2013. Attended by over 70 people these events were held to gain feedback on alternative connection arrangements and disseminate our thinking on how the arrangements would work. Following these workshops we also published a consultation which outlined our proposals and asked questions about them, seeking further input to help finalise our development. The Consensus amongst the DG stakeholder was supportive of the methods and arrangements we are introducing in 2014 and indicated these will be an attractive alternative for DG customers. We will be publishing a report on the Low Carbon Hub and the engagement undertaken in developing these alternative connection arrangements later this year.

## Workplan delivery: Information Provision

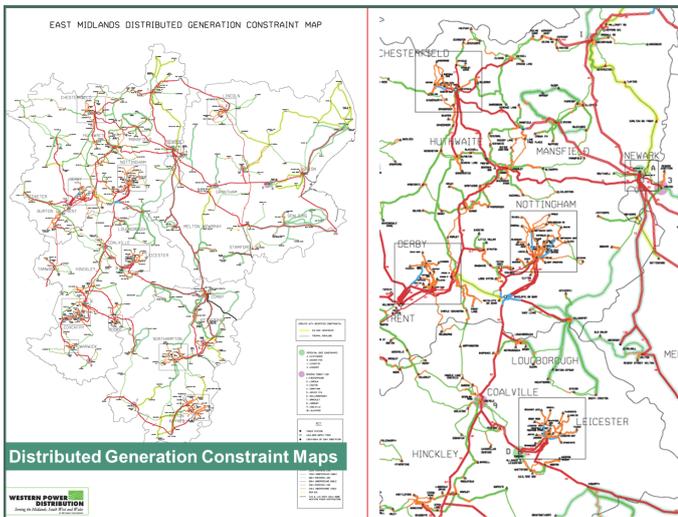
### Information on LV, network, voltage issues and plans

Originally available in the Midlands areas, our online DG capacity has now been made available for all WPD regions. To assist DG connection customers who are seeking to connect to the WPD network, we developed the Generation Capacity Map for our website. This capacity map gives an indication of the potential capacity for the connection of large generators to the 11kV (or 6.6kV) network in each region. By using the information provided on the map, individuals can get an indicative capacity of generation that can be connected to the network at a substation or within 5km of a location. The purpose of this information is to assist customers when initially assessing sites for DG installations, prior to the submission of a budget or formal application for connection. Feedback from individual stakeholders indicated that it would be very useful to have this facility for a WPD regions and we therefore introduced this for the South West

and South Wales at the beginning of October 2013. We have had over 24,000 online hits to these capacity maps



### EHV Constrained Circuit maps



Following feedback from stakeholders that it would be very helpful to have more information on where are the best areas to look to connect generation in terms of available capacity and constraints on the network, we have produced a set of EHV constraint maps. Published on our website for each of our four distribution areas, these maps highlight circuits which are operating at or near their limits for connecting further distributed generation.

Using generation already connected and generation on accepted connection offers but not yet connected, the maps indicate where a constraint in place and whether it is a thermal or voltage limitation. This information helps customers to understand where there will be significant reinforcement works required to connect their generation to these circuits and overcome their impact on these constrained networks. The maps were published on the WPD website in June 2013 and are updated at the same time as our Long Term Development Statements.

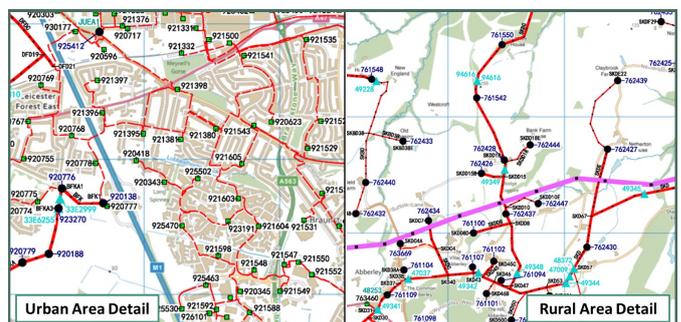
### Downloadable small scale mapping

We committed in our DG plan to make our HV and EHV overhead and underground mapping more accessible and available in electronic format. We have developed a package of information for external customers which is now available for organisations requiring an overview of the WPD network when considering or planning an HV or EHV connection. The package is Available on DVD or as a download via the WPD

Long Term Development Statement website and is refreshed every 6 months. Further development of available asset mapping data is being included in our 2014/15 workplan following feedback from our CCSG panel and other individual stakeholders on information which would help them.

**Benefits of this data include:**

- Overhead conductors and Underground cables  $\geq 6.6kV$
- Locations of Overhead Support Structures
- Location of Points of Isolation on the Overhead Network
- Position of BSP, GSP and Distribution substations
- Supplied against free Ordnance Survey Mapping with 1km Grid and Grid References enabling cross referencing.



**Incentive on Connection Engagement**

If you have any questions about this report:

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