

Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2016/17



Part 2:
Collaborating with
our stakeholders

Review and enhancing our approach

Stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability are a company-wide responsibility and it's important to me to provide leadership within the organisation on this. I was pleased to be able to chair our Annual Strategic Advisory Panel in June 2016. This was one of my first formal actions having joined the Company only six weeks earlier. I am committed to the need for businesses to engage and collaborate with stakeholders and know that such collaboration makes business more effective. I have supported my Executive team in leading our four Advisory Panels.

In response to stakeholder feedback, we commissioned AccountAbility to review our strategy and our processes and procedures for Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability. Electricity North West is in the process of responding to all of AccountAbility's recommendations, developing our robust foundation and creating momentum for continual improvement and strong performance in stakeholder engagement activities.

I am delighted with the progress we have made over the past year in terms of both outcomes and business performance as a direct result of our stakeholder engagement.

Embedding change and building capacity

Moving forward we have aligned our stakeholder strategy more closely with our business plan and our RIIO outputs, which has significantly sharpened our focus. We know precisely what we need to engage our stakeholders about, and how we will measure the success of this engagement. The four Advisory Panels, made up of subject experts from a broad range of sectors, ensure we deliver our business plan in a way that maximises benefits for the region.

In this section (Part 2) of our submission we'll demonstrate that our holistic approach to stakeholder engagement is embedded within our business and describe the nature of the engagement activities we've undertaken and the action plans we've developed because of this engagement.



We'll describe how the outcomes align with our stakeholder engagement strategy and how they impact on our stakeholders. We'll outline the policy, procedural and cultural change that engagement has affected and share the mechanisms by which we monitor and report engagement and outcomes both internally and to our stakeholders. We'll also describe how we're developing 'best in class' innovative initiatives like the 'Power Saver Challenge'. We'll also give examples of initiatives which best serve specific interests of challenging groups and hard to reach stakeholders.

Refining our approach

Our pace of delivery has stepped up a notch and now we're into our second year of the 2015 – 2023 business plan, this year's submission demonstrates more than ever the close relationship we have with our stakeholders and the progressive outcomes of our industry leading initiatives.

With a robust frontline staff training programme in place to ensure that stakeholder engagement becomes a company-wide asset and skill that is everyone's responsibility, set alongside refined stakeholder panels and partnership collaboration, we are producing even more imaginative projects which meet our business goals and deliver significant regional benefits.

Peter Emery
Chief Executive Officer

As a Community Energy organisation involved in energy efficiency and the development of smart grid applications, we have found the communication and collaborative work with Electricity North West to be absolutely invaluable.

Their engagement work is first class and as a key stakeholder we feel we have an excellent understanding of the issues facing Electricity North West and that they have a good understanding of how our work might help solve these.

We feel listened to and supported.

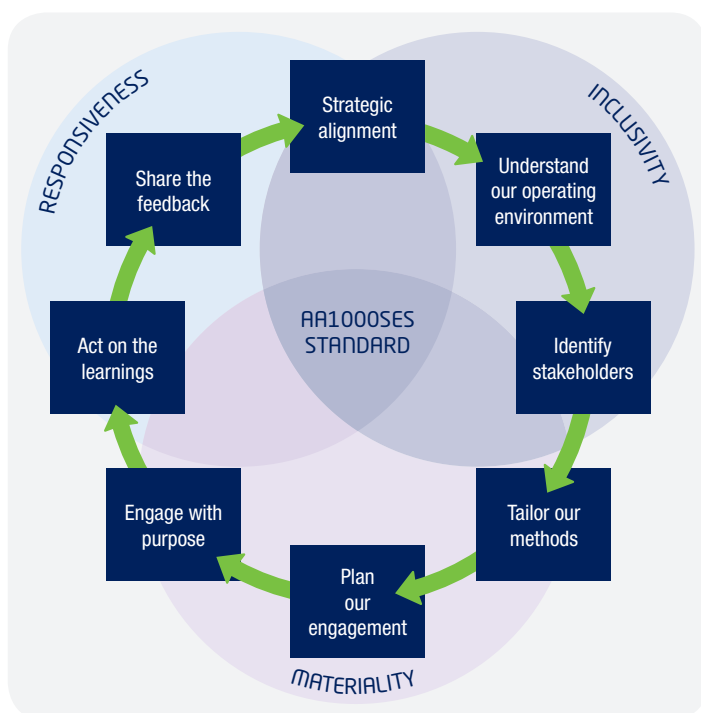
Jonathan Atkinson, Carbon Co-op

Focused and well-informed: An overview of our strategic approach

Our business plan will continue to deliver a host of benefits to the North West between now and 2023 – and by placing our stakeholders at the heart of the process, we are ensuring that what we do is informed and accountable.

But the reason we undertake stakeholder engagement remains the same as it was when we first started this process five years ago. We want to deliver a high performing business that delivers locally, regionally and nationally because we understand that in order for our business to be successful, our communities need to succeed. And that happens when we work together with our stakeholders.

To deliver, we need a strategy that supports this. We've detailed our comprehensive strategy and the business processes that underpin it in Section 1, but here's a view of our company approach to stakeholder engagement.



Embedding stakeholder engagement throughout our business - our four business themes

In order to ensure that stakeholder engagement is fully embedded in the business, we've structured our governance around our four core business themes, which form the bedrock of our stakeholder endorsed 2015-2023 business plan:



Reliability: Keeping the lights on and responding quickly to network faults.



Affordability: Providing an affordable, value for money service for all, while helping to address fuel poverty and providing support for vulnerable customers.



Sustainability: Ensuring our network can adapt to future challenges such as a low carbon economy and climate change.



Vulnerable customer: Providing exceptional customer service to all our customers, especially those who are vulnerable or need some extra assistance.

To support these four core business areas, our established External Advisory Panels provide input and scrutiny, assisting in delivery of the business in a way that maximises benefits for our stakeholders, for our business plan and for the region.

This report is structured in line with our four core business themes. This reflects the work done by each of our four External Advisory Panels and also the strategic alignment of our Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability approach.

Measuring success - capturing the risks and benefits

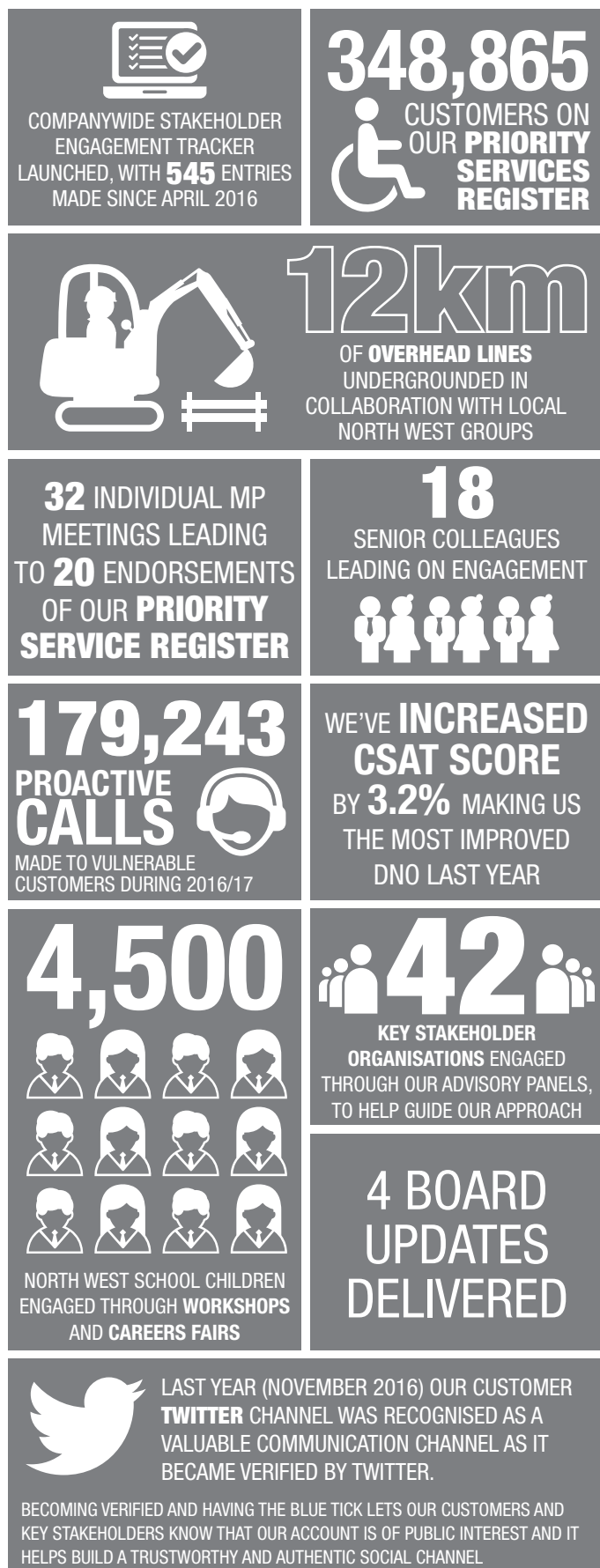
Outcomes and outputs from the advisory panels are captured and reviewed and implemented, where applicable. Our robust processes ensure senior management ownership so that these panels never become just talking shops. They deliver tangible and measurable outputs and outcomes that our stakeholders can use to hold us to account.

Quantitative and qualitative outcomes

We have increased performance further by providing more quantitative and qualitative outcome information on engagements conducted, and by articulating alignment with the Company's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.



What's new for 2016/17



Creating a smart, sustainable network



In our business plan, we describe our approach to developing a sustainable network as follows:

"Our sustainable network will be one which helps deliver the UK's ambitious greenhouse gas emission reductions by enabling low carbon technology adoption, reducing the losses inherent in electricity distribution and contributing to a substantial reduction in our business carbon footprint. We believe that smart meters and other smart technology can contribute as well and our plan demonstrates our readiness to play our role in the smart future."

We used this as a basis to begin our discussions with our Sustainability Advisory Panel and also as the basis for them to provide scrutiny of our ongoing business performance. The panel members were particularly interested in the challenge of meeting future energy demand in an affordable and green way; implementation of smart meters and the move to smart grids and smart cities.

These themes have been central to our approach over the past 12 months, and we are also incorporating them into a three-year work plan, which is being developed in partnership with the Panel. The plan will include measures and targets for the business to achieve.

Sustainability panel

- Salford City Council
- Quantum Strategy & Technology Ltd
- Goldmine Business Development
- Siemens
- Stockport Hydro Ltd
- Procure Plus
- Contractor - Durkins & Son
- Carbon Co-op
- REG Windpower Limited
- The IET Energy policy panel
- Salford FRE
- 10:10 campaign
- Director for Low Carbon
- Irwell Valley Sustainable Communities Project
- Transition Wilmslow

Panel sessions	3
Key themes discussed	Community energy support Working to deliver smarter connections
Key outputs	Future networks partnership development VPN project with Manchester City Council

CASE STUDY

Virtual Private Networks – Collaborative working to deliver sustainable, affordable low-carbon outputs

At our Strategic Stakeholder Advisory Panel in June 2016, our stakeholders discussed the development of private networks and off-grid energy users and they were particularly concerned about the impact of this on customers in fuel poverty. This impact would be 'hidden' and affect those customers least able to respond.

As we were developing our thinking on this topic we received a request for support from Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) Low Carbon Project Delivery Unit to support its District Heating project. To maximise the benefits to the local community connected to the scheme, GMCA also wanted to examine the possibility of building a private electricity network to supply electricity as well as heat.

Our aim was to collaborate so we could provide community energy benefits on the existing electricity distribution network. Maximising the benefits whilst minimising the costs. It also avoids ongoing network costs being borne by a smaller group of customers, potentially negatively impacting fuel poor customers.

We focussed this collaboration on the Manchester Civic Quarter Heat Network project which serves Manchester city centre and surrounding areas.

This industry-leading project requires innovative changes to the charging arrangements for electricity. The sort of arrangements required by Manchester City Council were similar to those being requested by community energy groups, however no substantive progress had been made in delivering these.

Tony McEntee, our Charging Manager, led the work that focussed on identifying a commercial charging solution that required industry change which could be delivered in a short timescale. The idea, whilst simple in concept, is game-changing as it is the first of its kind.

Our proposed solution optimises the benefits of local generation supplying local electricity without installing extra costly new infrastructure, which helps address the vital issues faced by the energy industry of security of supply, affordability and decarbonisation. By supplying power locally costs can be reduced. A win for the business and the communities.

After agreeing this objective with our local authority partners, we began engagement with key stakeholders to help generate support for the initiative, including councillors and our regulator Ofgem.

Collaboration is key to success so it has been important to engage with all stakeholders. The proposals have been shared and developed with our Sustainability Advisory Panel. We have engaged with local 'energy pioneers' who see clear benefits for their communities in following this approach and also with local electricity suppliers and community energy groups who will make these schemes a reality.

All agree this initiative will help to solve the community energy issue and enable them to deliver real benefits to the region. The proposals have been developed into a request for a change to the regulatory framework and we are now awaiting Ofgem's feedback. They have been recognised as best practice by other distribution companies across the Northern Powerhouse so the benefits can be shared across the UK.

Discussions on this proposal are ongoing.

CASE STUDY

Future Networks – Leading the way in developing partnerships and sharing best practice

Innovation enables a modern business to deliver excellence for its customers which is why we place it at the heart of our business. Our innovation strategy explains the customer benefits of our innovation projects and demonstrates how we ensure we deliver value for them through a series of world-leading innovation projects. Steve Cox, Director of Technical and Engineering leads our future networks team.

We are now implementing one of our many low carbon network fund initiatives CLASS (Customer Load Active System Services) this has been identified as providing a potential £200million value to customers and Ofgem are encouraging other distribution companies to adopt our method as best practice. Our Board have committed over £14million of investment to roll out this concept commercially.

Collaboration happens internally as well as with business and council partners. From initiation of each project, we engage with colleagues so that they recognise and can shape the strategic implications changes could have for the North West and for the business. During its development key areas of the business have been involved and in turn identified other areas where it could be deployed and have helped ensure we provide benefits to all of our customers.

Since 2011 we have won over £42 million of competitive research and development funding for five key innovation projects from Ofgem's Second Tier Low Carbon Networks Fund and the Network Innovation Competition. Our two completed projects Capacity to Customers and CLASS are transitioning to business as usual solutions – delivering tangible returns on the initial investments.

In addition to these multi-million pound projects we have also delivered successful innovations through smaller scale projects and continue with our research and development activities under the Network Innovation Allowance, an investment of over £3 million a year.

Our projects

- Capacity to Customers (C2C)
- CLASS
- Smart Street
- Respond
- Celsius
- Fault Support Centre
- Smart meters

Our future networks team are industry-leaders in dissemination and, by working with colleagues from across the business, are building our overall capacity in this area.

I think this is a really important step towards setting up charging mechanisms that reflect the reality of local electricity supply, and I'm fully supportive of it. For small local generators such as community energy organisations, it will allow us to explore alternatives to the simple "direct sales or sell to the grid" options we have now, and also help us to get involved in both supply and demand management projects. It is the start of a process which could revolutionise the local generation and supply market.

Gill Fenna, Quantum Strategy & Technology Ltd

Ensuring a reliable network



In our business plan we describe our approach to developing a reliable network as follows:

“Our network is already **99.99% reliable** but we want to go further. Our stakeholders would like 100% reliability. This would mean us doubling the size of our network to make sure we had a backup when a cable, transformer, switch, pole or tower developed a fault. Given this would be unaffordable, we instead propose to improve network reliability by 20% from its 2012 level by 2019.”

We used this as a basis to begin our discussions with our Reliability Advisory Panel and also as the basis for them to provide scrutiny on our ongoing business performance. This commitment was consistently discussed at our Reliability Advisory Panel s throughout 2016/17.

Panel members are particularly interested in the interdependence between our network development and reliability plans and local economic development needs - particularly in the Northern Powerhouse city of Manchester. This includes leading smarter streetworks.

They also wanted us to consider the impact of network faults on rural businesses where there is a key energy dependency and the impact of both faults and planned supply interruptions for small businesses. The debate around the impact on small businesses paralleled the learning we took for our dialogue with Citizens Advice last year about the impact of school closures on employees with zero hours contracts. This is covered in more detail in part three of this report.

These are themes which we have continued to address over the past 12 months. They will also be built into a three-year work plan which we are developing in partnership with the Panel. The plan will include measures and targets.

Reliability panel

- Environment Agency
- National Farmers Union North West
- Lancashire County Council
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- New Economy Manchester
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- Manchester City Council
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Major Energy Users Council
- Manchester University

Panel sessions	3
Key themes discussed	Helping to reduce congestion and improve street works Helping ensure communities are resilient
Key outputs	Award-winning, industry leading Streetworks programme Leading our Local Resilience Forums Securing flood defence investment

CASE STUDY

Smarter Streetworks

Our customer research tells us that a big source of irritation is around streetworks and the seemingly un-coordinated approach companies take to digging up streets and roads. We are investing more than £1.9billion over the next eight years to upgrade our network, as well as working with other organisations to support major infrastructure projects which require new or diverted power lines. This has the potential to cause considerable disruption to the communities and customers we serve. With Manchester City Council, Transport for Manchester and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities on our Reliability Advisory Panel, we were best placed to form partnerships to develop innovative solutions to address these concerns.

In partnership with local, regional and national stakeholders, we're taking an industry-leading approach to reduce street works disruption and help shape sector-wide improvements. This work is led by Dave Reagan, Manager of our Streetworks Team.

We were involved in a significant number of joint infrastructure projects which couldn't have been effectively delivered without strong collaboration and partnership working. They include:-

- **Metrolink (Second City Crossing & Trafford Park Line)**
 - Multi-Utility Trenching lead by Electricity North West
 - Collaborative Working with TfGM & Local Authorities
- **Network Rail Electrification**
 - Collaborative Working with Network Rail and their principal contractors
- **Network Rail Northern Hub (T40)**
 - Multi-Utility Trench offering lead by Electricity North West
 - Collaborative Working with Network Rail & their principal contractors
- **Lancashire County Council**
 - M6 to Heysham Link Road (T40)
 - Collaborative Working with Lancashire CC and Costain
- **Preston & South Ribble City Deal**
 - Early Stage design input and collaborative working with principal contractors
- **A6MARR (Manchester Airport Relief Road) (T40)**
 - Multi-Utility Trenching led by Electricity North West
 - Collaborative Working with Stockport MBC & Carillion / Morgan Sindall Joint Venture.
- **Greater Manchester Growth Deal**
 - Design Workshops
 - Collaborative working with TfGM to promote collaborative working solutions

We've also worked on a significant number of joint infrastructure projects where innovation and collaborative working significantly improved the outcomes for North West customers. This allowed the business to trial and share a number of innovative practices including:-

- Joint Utility Trenching concepts introduced and actively promoted by Electricity North West on Metrolink are now becoming business as usual on most local authority and TfGM projects. Electricity North West took the lead on these solutions
- Collaborative Working Solutions with Principal Contractors and clients
- Global Traffic Management for Metrolink
- Design Workshops for Major Diversionary projects with Local Authorities and TfGM
- Implementation of processes for Proving Dead of cables and uncharted assets on Metrolink

CASE STUDY

Playing our part in supporting community resilience

Providing support to our communities in the event of an emergency or outage is high on the list of priorities of our Reliability Advisory Panel. That's why we take a lead in developing effective partnerships with our Local Resilience Forums. A 'Local Resilience Forum' (LRF) is a forum formed in a police area of the United Kingdom by key emergency responders and specific supporting agencies. Mandy Ingham, Security and Resilience Manager leads our work on this.

Over the last twelve months we have:

- Partnered with our four LRFs, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire and are members of their executive meetings.
- Worked with Greater Manchester and Cumbria local authorities to prioritise sites should we have a major incident and to jointly develop plans to agree how we work together to mitigate these risks, utilising our learning from Storm Desmond.
- Collaborated with Greater Manchester on their Resilient Cities submission and participated in ongoing planning and implementation meetings.

Electricity North West currently chairs the utilities sub group for our Lancashire Local Resilience Forum and we are working in partnership with other utilities to ensure plans are in place to reduce risk within Lancashire.

We are also active in the Resilience Direct workgroup and are looking at ways to standardise how this system is used. This is extremely important as it is the main way of sharing information during incidents; this group is also looking at new functionality in this system around mapping.

We are members of the site clearance sub group which will help Electricity North West as we are putting in place a plan to deal with this increasing risk which could have major impacts in a community

Managing the risks in major incidents

Exercise Ferranti was a multi North West Local Resilience Forum exercise led by Electricity North West and other members. This exercise showed the effects of a major loss of supply throughout the North West and what impact this would have. It has prompted the LRFs to think about how they would work together during such an event. This engagement led to similar exercises with Greater Manchester Local Authority and we are in the planning stages of hosting a similar event for Lancashire.

We also attended a Cyber exercise with Greater Manchester. This is the start of a new piece of work for the Local Resilience Forum and we were pleased to be play our part in this initial group as Greater Manchester are piloting responses on behalf of all of the Local Resilience Forums to understand how to deal with a large scale cyber attack.

We have also just started work with Cumbria around a live roleplay exercise later this year on the impact of a reservoir dam burst. This exercise will take place in June. We also attend the OSCAR steering group which looks at issues mainly around the Sellafield site but is also now covering Moorside. We will shortly be undertaking a large piece of work with this LRF around risks within Cumbria.

CASE STUDY

Mitigating flood risk through partnership working

In the winter of 2015/16, many parts of our region which devastated by the impact of Storms Desmond, Eva and Frank. It's taken the region a long time to recover and we've played our part by investing more than £130m in 2016 to make our network more reliable and resilient. The work included cutting 505 miles of trees, replacing and upgrading £7.7m of overhead lined and upgrading £15.4m of underground electricity cables.

Of particular concern to those communities affected by a loss of power supplies was our investment in flood defences at our Lancaster, Rochdale and Carlisle sites. Agreeing the right approach to investment at each of these sites required significant local and national engagement.

Locally we had to assure the community about our intent and work with Lead Local Flood Authorities in local authorities and the Environment Agency to develop the right plan in the context of their existing and evolving approaches. Local Members of Parliament were particularly important stakeholders for us and three visited our sites in Lancashire and Carlisle. With stakeholder input we have developed innovative plans to stop using flood defence barriers and lift essential equipment above flood waters.

Nationally, we contributed to the Government's immediate review of the flooding event and worked with colleagues in the Electricity Networks Association, the Department for Energy and Climate Change (now the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy), the Cabinet Office and Ofgem to review and refresh policy guidelines.

We were able to complete this engagement and our on-site project work in a timely manner. This allowed us to reassure our communities in Lancaster, Rochdale and Carlisle ahead of the 2016 winter.

Electricity North West has been seen to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, employing a broad range of engagement levels and means that are suitable and appropriate for each group. Electricity North West has presented commendable efforts in tailoring engagement methods to the engagement objectives and the needs and characteristics of external stakeholder groups.

AccountAbility review 2017

Futureproofing affordability



In our business plan we wrote:

"We have developed a financing package which lets us meet our obligations, maintain a good credit rating and raise the money we need to pay for our investments. We believe we have struck an excellent balance between the allowances we need to meet our funding costs, the additional capital that our shareholders will invest and the incentive revenue we can earn from excellent performance, which is fair for our customers and us."

We used this as a basis to begin our discussions with our Affordability Advisory Panel and also as the basis for them to provide scrutiny of our ongoing business performance. This commitment was regularly discussed at our Reliability Advisory Panels throughout 2016/17.

The Affordability Advisory Panel was particularly interested in working with small and medium sized businesses to develop a shared understanding of the energy efficiency opportunities and to work with fuel poor communities to develop shared approaches to these issues.

Affordability panel

- Salford University Housing Unit
- Energy Saving Trust (EST)
- Greater Manchester Poverty Forum
- Citizens Advice Manchester
- National Energy Action (NEA)
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability
- Confederation of British Industry (CBI)

Panel sessions	3
Key themes discussed	Helping to reduce Fuel Poverty levels Ensuring a varied energy mix in the North West
Key outputs	Building on the Power Saver Challenge Collaborating with Energy Saving Trust on Fuel Poverty Research Working with National Grid on the NUGEN nuclear connection, Moorside.

CASE STUDY

Sharing the learnings from the Power Saver Challenge and creating Power Saver Plus



Last year, we reported on the success of our Power Saver Challenge project. Working with Stockport Council, National Energy Action and social landlord Stockport Homes, we set a 12-month challenge to reduce domestic energy consumption by 10% by making small changes around the home. 60% of participants hit the target and more encouragingly, maintained these energy savings throughout the following year. Sean Leape, our Construction Repair Manager, led this work on behalf of the Company.

The SECV Panel were interested to know last year how we would share the findings of this successful project and if there was a 'next step' in terms of building from this project. We can now confirm that the final results of this project have been reviewed, validated and shared with others in the sector. We can also confirm that we are taking forward the learnings and positive benefits of the Power Saver Challenge to inform our current Network Innovation Competition project.

Improving the energy efficiency of homes and businesses supports three important goals: reducing emissions of CO₂, reducing network costs and reducing bills for customers. Named 'Power Saver Plus' our project will demonstrate how a Distribution Network Operator-led targeted customer energy efficiency programme could more effectively deliver against these goals and the Carbon Plan commitments. In freeing up capacity on the electricity network and reducing the energy bills of network customers, the project will allow for increased adoption of low carbon technologies. Such energy efficiency measures, linked to energy policy, could deliver superior overall electricity system benefits, including lower network losses and reduced reliance on high-carbon generation. Most importantly they could help lift our most vulnerable customers out of fuel poverty and warm cold homes.

Working with members of the Affordability Advisory Panel and the Strategic Advisory Panel, we have developed and refined our project proposals. A number of stakeholders have become project partners.

Power Saver Plus will run from January 2018 to June 2022 and will trial a range of energy efficiency interventions with a representative selection of customers, community energy groups and small businesses. The effectiveness of these interventions will be compared and analysed against a range of alternative smart and traditional approaches.

Key deliverables for Power Saver Plus will include an evaluation tool for DNOs to identify the most effective mix of interventions and an upgraded CBA model for RIIO-ED2 that will enable evaluation of energy efficiency network investment alongside traditional solutions, including whole system efficiencies and wider societal benefits. Cara Blockley, our Central Services Manager is leading this work for the Company.

CASE STUDY

Leading partnership working to secure funding to develop a sustainable Greater Manchester

Paul Bircham, our Director of Strategy, chairs the Greater Manchester Energy Group. In March 2017, the Group successfully secured funding of £21m of European Regional Development funding for low carbon innovation.

The Group includes representatives from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Department for Business, the Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Greater Manchester Universities, the Energy Systems Catapult, United Utilities, Peel and the Cooperative Group.

Greater Manchester has developed a 'whole place' Climate Change and Low Emissions Implementation Plan (CCLES) for 2016 – 2020 to provide more detail on the City Region's proposals for dealing with climate change and delivering a low carbon economy. Supporting this, the Sustainable Urban Development Plan will fund projects including identification and delivery of mechanisms to improve poorly performing building stock with low carbon development, particularly where this can also address ill health, poverty and productivity challenges. Securing this significant funding represents the culmination of a 12-month engagement campaign by the Group with local, national and intra-national stakeholders.

Paul will continue to lead the work of the Group and ensure that the best practice, ambitions and targets included in the plan inform our company-thinking.



CASE STUDY

Understanding fuel poverty in our region

Our Affordability Advisory Panel is concerned to better understand the incidence and impact of fuel poverty in the North West. This, for them, is a key starting point to inform both the Company and their own responses to fuel poverty. What they have told us is that we need an impartial expert in the field to conduct research into fuel poverty and find out where best we could implement solutions to get the best results.

As such, we're working with our partner, Energy Saving Trust to undertake this research and identify solutions we can deliver. Jonathan Collins, our Stakeholder Engagement and CSR Manager is leading on this work.

Fundamentally we are looking at what role can a DNO play in alleviating fuel poverty both tactically and strategically. We want to identify the scale of the fuel poverty problem and what role a DNO can play. The introduction will look at the scale of the problem and fuel poverty social impacts and the changes in fuel poverty understanding. We will also include a North West overview looking at a demographic break down of the North West (area covered by Electricity North West), housing stock types and relationship to fuel poverty, fuel poverty comparison between North West and national average (10.6%) and fuel poverty hotspots in the North West.

We will also focus on the details of the interventions and support that's in the market today – what's being offered and by who (and why – what has been learned about what works, what doesn't) and what help is available together with best practise examples.

We want to focus on the rate of progress, or success, of the current strategy and interventions and then be able to highlight the gap between policy objectives and what is being achieved today.

The report will look at where does a DNO fit in the fuel poverty cycle and what can a DNO do better than others regarding existing interventions. We will investigate what are its comparative strengths compared to organisations intervening in the market today. We are keen to understand what DNOs can do that is appropriate and different to the interventions in the market today and also what evidence is there for this.

Finally, we will identify best practise examples and what other actions a DNO can take to reduce fuel poverty and which organisations should a DNO partner with.

A first view of the research findings will be shared at our Strategic Stakeholder Advisory Panel in June 2017.



Electricity North West places considerable effort and value on systematically seeking stakeholder input and views on the organisation's core services. For example, dedicated stakeholder focus groups aimed at building awareness with regard to Electricity North West's approach and process to manage Planned Supply Interruptions (PSI's) enabled a critical and constructive evaluation of the company's existing notification methods and gave rise to a number of practical improvements.

AccountAbility review 2017

CASE STUDY

Working with our customers and securing value for them in Cumbria

From assisting battery storage trials in Salford, to new nuclear connections in Cumbria, we're active partners in delivering the right solutions for our customers and communities.

Moorside is the project name given to Electricity North West's project to facilitate the transmission works (referred to as North West Coast Connections or NWCC) to connect NuGen's new build nuclear power station to the transmission system. NuGen has contracted with National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET), as the current transmission owner, for initial supplies from 2022 and to commence its export from 2025.

Our role is to divert our existing network assets to provide a clear corridor for National Grid to build a new transmission network to carry the power generated. We'll then have to reconfigure our network to meet our customers' needs. The original cost estimate for this work was £250million with over £100million funded by North West customers. The current cost estimate for this work is £350m and we've worked closely with National Grid to ensure that this delivers value for customers in the North West. This robust approach has resulted in the contribution from Electricity North West customers being reduced to zero.

Our goal is to manage the customer impact of this work and to ensure that the project is delivered cost effectively for customers. Gary Townsend, our Moorside Project Manager, is working closely with Cumbrian councillors, local authority officers and representative groups to understand their concerns and preferences. Chris Gaskell, our Head of Estates & Wayleaves is liaising with local landowners and working with them to mitigate the potential impacts of this important infrastructure project.

During the autumn of 2016, we partnered with National Grid in a significant community consultation exercise. We supported 30 local events which were attended by around 2.2k customers and were able to present our proposals and to listen to their thoughts, concerns and feedback. This informed our discussions with National Grid about our build proposals.

We've also worked closely with Connections customers to ensure that they have appropriate information, provided in a timely manner, to help them manage the potential impact of a deferment on their business development and investment decisions. Steffan Jones, our Infrastructure Solutions Manager has led this work.

Notable efforts have been evidenced with regard to ENWL's post-engagement follow up with stakeholders, through the timely development and communication of engagement outputs and action plans. The approval of the latter is built into the Advisory Panel stakeholder meetings process.

AccountAbility assurance report 2017

Building inclusivity through service



In our business plan, we committed to:

"...provide excellent customer service for all our different customer groups. We will make sure customers can contact us quickly and easily through the most convenient channel for them. We will provide them with accurate and timely information and take ownership of their issues."

We used this as a basis to begin our discussions with our Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel and also as the basis for them to provide scrutiny on our ongoing business performance. This commitment was regularly discussed at our Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel throughout 2016/17.

We will deliver additional assistance to our vulnerable customers in each year of RIIO-ED1. We will support this direct assistance with a co-ordinated programme which brings together companies, agencies, charities and other groups in the North West to develop integrated plans to help address fuel poverty. More detail on our approach to supporting Vulnerable Customers is provided in part 3 of this report.

Vulnerable customer panel

- Stockport Council
- Bolton local authority
- Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)
- Lancashire Police
- Lancashire Citizens Advice
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability
- Your Housing group
- British Red Cross
- Emergency Planning & Resilience Lancashire County Council
- Alzheimer's Society
- Action on Hearing Loss
- United Utilities
- Royal Voluntary Service

Panel sessions	3
Key themes discussed	Communicating with hard to reach groups through all communication channels Improving the data we hold
Key outputs	Fully integrated data strategy, leading our partnership strategy

CASE STUDY

Our data-led approach to everything we do

We recognise that in order to develop the most effective partnerships with the best possible outcomes for our stakeholders, we need strong data to target our activity. By knowing who our customers are, we can focus our efforts much more effectively when developing partnerships and ensure the best outcomes.

In 2015 we invested £1.2million into a CRM system. In 2016, we developed and implemented our holistic data strategy that is delivering positive outcomes. More details can be read in part 3 of our submission.



CASE STUDY

Working with our Advisory Panels to put our data to work

During our Advisory Panel discussions, we were told that sharing specific data with relevant third parties before, during and after major incidents (eg weather warnings) would help with their response planning, as they were often uninformed throughout incidents, particularly 3rd sector organisations that were not part of LRF's.

Outputs

- Getting our data right is a priority, so we've issued our vulnerable customer newsletter to 29k customers, helping us improve our data and ensure customers are fully aware of what services are available to them.
- We now ensure all our people are trained and able to identify and register vulnerable customers on the PSR as they meet them in the field. This helps ensure that customers are registered at the right time, without unnecessary delay.
- We're working with our partners in the industry to help facilitate data-sharing between agencies, to help ensure that in the event of an emergency, our customers get the right level of support, at the right time.



CASE STUDY

Our digital customer strategy – putting vulnerable and hard to reach customers at the heart of our digital innovation

The purpose of our Digital Customer Strategy is to develop solutions that are valued by our customers and allow them to digitally engage with us and access our services quickly and easily. This strategy has been to presented to all four of our Advisory Panels for input and discussion and to ensure we're capturing what our stakeholders require and that we're benefitting from their insights and experience.

We now have a three year plan, endorsed by our Advisory Panels, which:-

- creates the foundations for digital excellence
- uses high quality data to create meaningful insights about our customers and their changing needs, particular for our most vulnerable customers
- enables collaboration between ourselves, our customers and the partner organisations we work with eg British Red Cross, local resilience forums
- allows us to prioritise investment to those services with the greatest positive impact on customers
- is flexible enough to support
 - rapidly changing customer needs
 - technological uncertainty
 - a wider network of welfare partners
 - the smart meter and smart grid future



CASE STUDY

Stakeholder-led approach to website redevelopment – to better serve vulnerable and hard to reach groups

We discussed our intention to redevelop our website with the SECV panel last year and we committed to ensuring that the needs of vulnerable and hard to reach customers would be central to our approach. Our Advisory Panel were also able to provide helpful insight and experience into how we could achieve these aims.

In response to this input, we haven't waited for the new website and have introduced a series of updates to improve our existing website, including:

- Working with the British Deaf Association (BDA) to create sign language videos to support our customer service offering.
- Working alongside the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) to ensure that our blind, pan and partially sighted customers can navigate across our website with ease
- A new 'emergency page' solution to ensure more direct and resilient communications to end user of the website during an incident
- Improvements to the power outage map solution to enable it to handle higher volumes of outages and end user traffic
- Improved 24/7 Service Level Agreement (SLA) with website agency
- Improvements through load testing to ensure proven readiness for possible scenarios
- Easy handling of more of the basic information provision in emergency situations so that staff can focus on more bespoke and 'person to person' customer service provision during these periods
- Keyword targeting around weather and power cuts alongside geo-targeting to reach people who are affected by a fault or likely to have issues with a fault. We use Twitter and Facebook to promote our official accounts to encourage followers and improve the reach of our updates and information.



We continue to work with the Royal National Institute for the Blind on the development of our new website who will help ensure it meets their accessibility standards.

Being able to communicate and reach out to every single one of our customers is important to us, but we understand how difficult that can be. The RNIB are involved in the decision making to support and safeguard how our blind, pan and partially sighted customers navigate our website with ease. Our approach to communication is to make attempts to reach out to all customers with additional communication needs.

By taking a collaborative approach with RNIB, we will ensure our customers are supported when dealing directly with us to make their contact as seamless as possible. We will continue our partnership with RNIB to ensure all innovative services can be utilised.