

Together we have the energy to transform our communities

# Our Stakeholder Engagement Activities and The Outcomes We Have Delivered

## Part Two

Ofgem Stakeholder  
Engagement and  
Consumer Vulnerability  
Incentive 2019/20



Electricity North West Limited  
Registered number 02366949

**electricity**  
**north west**  
Bringing energy to your door

# Welcome to our Part Two submission to Ofgem's Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive for the regulatory year 2019/20.

Electricity North West is one of 14 distribution network operators (DNOs) in Great Britain regulated by Ofgem. Although we are the smallest, serving a population of five million and 2.4 million customers, our ambition and performance is impressive.

We champion the region we serve and we're proud that our network keeps our customers' lives running by making sure the electricity flows safely for every minute of every day, whether they're awake or asleep.

We're responsible for maintaining and upgrading more than 13,000 km of overhead power lines and 44,000 km of underground electricity cables and much more across Cumbria, Lancashire and Greater Manchester. This covers a diverse range of terrain and communities, from isolated farms and villages in rural areas such as the beautiful Lake District, parts of North Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Cheshire; to towns and cities with heavy industry and large urban populations, including the bustling city of Manchester.

2019/2020 is the fifth year of the eight-year Business Plan period called RIIO-ED1. This stands for Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs (Electricity Distribution 1). It is the regulatory framework set by Ofgem which drives network companies to engage proactively with stakeholders to anticipate their needs and deliver a consumer-focused, socially-responsible, and sustainable energy service. Ofgem's SECV Incentive is an annual scheme and our response is divided into three parts:

**Part 1:** Our stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability strategies. This provides the evidence required that we have met Ofgem's minimum requirements.

**Part 2:** Our stakeholder engagement activity and the outcomes we have delivered.

**Part 3:** Our consumer vulnerability activity and the outcomes we have delivered.

## Our region



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## Key

These symbols reflect our 2019/20 activities



### New

Initiatives which were introduced in 2019/20.



### Enhanced

Examples of where we have improved our approach this year.



### Embedded

Holistic approaches embedded in our business.



### Hard-to-reach

Initiatives which best serve the specific interests of hard-to-reach stakeholders.



### Innovative

Best practice that could be replicated across the industry and/or initiatives which are exemplary when benchmarked against other electricity networks.



## Introduction from Steve Cox

Director, Engineering and Technical

**The objective of Part Two of our SECV submission is to communicate the activities and outcomes resulting from our embedded stakeholder engagement strategy.**

**I am incredibly proud of both the breadth and the depth of outcomes that the stakeholder-led initiatives we've been pursuing have delivered so far. Our stakeholder engagement strategy, strong alignment and progressive culture has propelled a significant number of colleagues and stakeholders into action, delivering significant change.**

Stakeholder engagement continues to be an essential lever in helping us to challenge, inform and improve our strategy. As such, I would like to thank the 22,800 individuals who, whether representing themselves, their employer or an organisation for which they volunteer, have generously given us their time to share their views so that we have been able to understand their requirements and expectations better than ever before. We are convinced that their efforts have been hugely worthwhile; the result is an ambitious set of outputs that are delivering what stakeholders want and need both now and into the future.

We have structured our Part Two submission around two strategic themes to highlight our activities in the areas that are most important to our stakeholders (see the boxes below). Rather than listing every activity we have undertaken in support of these themes we have focused on 26 key case studies and signposted the Social Return on Investment (SROI) from delivering them. In the table below, we have differentiated between the total benefit resulting from activities delivered this year, and a smaller number of activities where the benefits are likely to be realised over the next eight years. The latter include costs which are borne by third parties, some of which are unknown to us, therefore in these cases, we have not provided a multiplier of benefit for every £1 invested.

	Time period	Activities	Benefit £m	Cost £m	Multiplier
Part Two	Benefits delivered this year	23	£15.0	£4.5	3.4
	Future benefits enabled	3	£59.7	£13.5	-

Part Two, pages four to five

**Keeping our customers' lives running**

Part Two, pages six to eight

**Leading the transition to net zero**

Part Three

**Supporting our vulnerable customers**

Over-and-above our SROI calculation, willingness-to-pay research has indicated that consumers place a higher value on the 23 activities we delivered this year than the cost to provide them, resulting in £12.1m of additional benefit. We always strive to find the most efficient way to deliver these services, as we know that ensuring the affordability of consumers' bills is a top stakeholder priority.

In addition to a retrospective evaluation of our SECV activities a SROI benefits tracker is informing how our initiatives evolve; whether to scale up, change course, or even stop altogether – evidence that we are embedding a process that drives good decision-making.

Our Sustainability Advisory Panel, led by independent chair Todd Holden, continues to provide oversight and scrutiny of our activities. The panel has been instrumental in the iterative development of the 'Leading the North West to Zero Carbon' plan. The plan commits £63.5m of investment which includes a range of initiatives to ensure we take a significant step forwards on the road to rapid decarbonisation in support of our Distribution System Operator (DSO) vision.

**Our DSO vision is for the North West of England achieving the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.**

Stakeholders have affirmed our view that there is not a complete or uniformly accepted long-term roadmap of how to reach this vision. However, our ambitious target is not simply a 'marketing campaign' – our 2019/20 SECV submission demonstrates that we are acting now to lead the North West's transition to net zero. Furthermore, as a result of stakeholder input, we are already making significant progress on their priorities by going far beyond our license obligations.

Extensive engagement with customers also revealed that we needed to improve their satisfaction with how we respond to power cuts. Although this required a major cultural change as well as new policies and processes, our hard work and dogged determination has paid off with transformed satisfaction scores. We are thrilled to be the most-improved DNO in this area.

**But we know we cannot stop there.** Stakeholder engagement is never something that is truly 'completed' – it is an ongoing process that delivers continual learning and our agile approach will ensure that we continually assess where we are making the most headway and enable us to adapt our plans as necessary.

**Steve Cox**  
Director, Engineering and Technical

## Our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Our strategy is aligned to deliver the outcomes our stakeholders prioritise and value. It is aligned to the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (SES) and built around the updated AA1000 AccountAbility Principles (AP) which now includes 'impact' (see diagram opposite and Part One, page two for more detail).

Every year we conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise, along with opportunities and risks assessment to understand our operating environment and identify emerging stakeholders and their needs. This year we made flexibility service providers a unique segment, identified 800 new stakeholders with a strategic interest and/or influence in the transition to a low carbon economy, and used our social data mapping tool to identify stakeholders who represent **hard-to-reach** groups. This process drives our strategy and culture forwards.

In addition, this year we have combined previously separated customer and stakeholder engagement strategies into one consolidated approach and incorporated the priorities of current and future customers into our materiality matrix, which has further strengthened alignment. Our responsive approach to engagement includes scanning the horizon for emerging priorities, which this year has highlighted the increasing importance to customers of bill affordability, environmental concerns and to wider stakeholders of data transparency.



We acknowledge, understand, measure, manage and evaluate the impact of our initiatives on the environment, society, stakeholders and the performance of our organisation itself. One of the many ways in which we achieve this is through assessing the Social Return on Investment of our outcomes (see Part One, page seven for more detail).

# Summary of our outcomes and initiatives

In this section we introduce key performance highlights which encapsulate our stakeholders' priorities. The diverse range of outputs our achievements have been derived from are summarised in a table of 2019/20 initiatives. The summary table is a useful tool for understanding how our stakeholder engagement outcomes map onto Ofgem's SECV Assessment Criteria.

## 2019/20 initiatives

In the table adjacent, we have indicated the maturity of our activities, from new to embedded, in addition to signposting innovative approaches and projects which have significantly enhanced access to our **hard-to-reach** stakeholders. We have articulated the Social Return on Investment (SROI) returned for every £1 invested in our initiatives as a multiplier – an accessible and comparable metric used throughout this year's submission. More detail on how we calculated SROI is included in Part One, page seven.

## 2019/20 headlines

↑ 8%

increase in customer satisfaction



★ Lives saved

through 24/7 monitoring of highest risk multi-occupancy buildings



Customer Load Active System Services

★ CLASS

called upon up to x14 times a day by National Grid



★ Leading

on net zero – 10 Local Authority Carbon Balance Sheets



★ 1st DNO

to achieve Carbon Literacy Accreditation



Our priorities	Initiative name	Page	New this year	Embedded	Innovative	Hard-to-reach	SROI
 Enhancing our culture	<b>Executive-led enhanced engagement</b> • Pension deficit de-risked	3		✓			Reduced risk
	<b>Embedding a process that drives good decision-making</b> • Social Return on Investment Benefits Tracker delivered	3		✓	✓		Improved SROI
	<b>Building a workforce that reflects our community</b> • 14% increase in BAME apprenticeship applications	3	✓			✓	Improved diversity
	<b>Colleague-led fundraising scaled</b> • 1,191% increase in colleague applications	3		✓			x6
 Keeping our customers' lives running	<b>Most improved Distribution Network Operator</b> • 8% increase in customer satisfaction	4		✓			+8% CSAT
	<b>Maintaining power to minimise disruption to customers' daily activities</b> • Supply interruptions avoided for 20,662 customers	4		✓			£1.5m social benefit
	<b>Making it easier than ever to obtain a connection quotation</b> • Pioneering online connections quotation tool reduces average time to quote by over one day	4	✓		✓		X4
	<b>Intervening to restore power to damaged appliances</b> • 1,200 door-to-door safety and appliance checks	5		✓			X10
	<b>Going the extra mile to increase safety and build trust with residents of multi-occupancy buildings</b> • 24/7 monitoring of 2,259 high-risk dwellings • 1 major fault avoided, and lives saved	5		✓	✓	✓	X2
	<b>Forging links with community and local energy groups</b> • £100,000 additional funding added from external sources	5		✓		✓	Improved access
 Leading the transition to net zero	<b>Getting on with our DSO transition</b> • Leading the North West to Zero Carbon plan	6		✓			£63.5m investment
	<b>Leading investment and action to achieve net zero</b> • 10 Carbon Balance Sheets delivered	6		✓	✓		£3.1m social benefit
	<b>Flexibility first</b> • 78% increase in Flexibility Services applications	7		✓	✓		Improved access
	<b>Innovation to support the adoption of low carbon technology</b> • CLASS called on up to 14 times a day by National Grid	7		✓	✓		X2
	<b>Developing and sharing future electricity scenarios</b> • First DNO to publish DFES interactive workbook	7		✓	✓		Improved openness
	<b>Investing for low carbon growth</b> • £5.9m invested in new primary substation	7	✓				10,000 jobs
	<b>Paving the way for the mass adoption of EVs</b> • 40,500 electric vehicles enabled	8	✓				£45m social benefit
	<b>Proactive intervention to enable smart meters</b> • 15,485 cut-out interventions	8		✓		✓	X2
	<b>First Carbon Literate DNO</b> • First bronze level Carbon Literate DNO	8	✓		✓		X4
	<b>Leading by example to reduce our environmental impact</b> • Exemplar Training Academy depot nearing completion • 10% reduction in our Business Carbon Footprint	9	✓		✓		X2
	<b>Alternative asphalt wins streetworks award</b> • A positive use for non-recyclable waste plastic	9	✓		✓		X3
	<b>Transforming our Spaces</b> • 9 attractive, low maintenance, bee-friendly spaces	9	✓		✓		X18
 Changing and shaping our plans	<b>Increasing our engagement with younger voices</b> • Continuous engagement with 11 - 18 year olds	10		✓		✓	Improved diversity
	<b>Giving consumers a stronger voice</b> • Consolidation of consumers and stakeholders' priorities	10		✓			Improved alignment
	<b>Keeping energy flowing during COVID-19</b> • NHS Nightingale North West supported with the Coronavirus outbreak.	10		✓			Lives saved

# Enhancing our engagement culture

We want everyone who works at Electricity North West to be actively involved in engaging with our stakeholders and to be empowered to act on what they hear. The initiatives described below are just some of the many ways in which our hard work to embrace and embed this culture has paid off.

Pension deficit  
**de-risked**

**1st**  
ever digital  
consultation

**New**  
Social Return on  
Investment Benefits  
Tracker

**14%**  
increase in BAME  
apprenticeship  
applicants

**1,191%**  
increase in  
colleague-led  
fundraising

EMBEDDED

## Executive-led enhanced engagement

### What we heard

Our Strategic Advisory Panels (details of which are in Part One, page six) told us that we needed to enhance our structures, processes and governance to deliver the quality of engagement we wanted to achieve.

### What we did

In response, we created a Chief Executive Panel chaired by our Chief Executive Peter Emery and attended by Todd Holden and Jenny Willis, who were appointed this year as independent chairs of our Sustainability and Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panels, sub-panels of the Chief Executive Panel. This structure has facilitated sharing of expert insight and provided stability and rigour in our approach. This year our chairs undertook a mapping of their groups along with an opportunities and risk assessment exercise, to identify gaps in membership (that have subsequently been addressed). The Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel also reflected on its role and reached a unanimous agreement to split into two distinct groups, demarcating the roles of strategy and delivery of activities more clearly.

Our Chief Executive Panel scanned the horizon to identify emerging priorities that we need to address. One of these was de-risking our pension investments so our customers are no longer in danger of having to 'plug the gap' through their bills. The actions we took in response were based on an enhanced understanding of consumers' attitudes to risk, gathered through a robust engagement survey. Another priority was data sharing and transparency, which we made an integral component of our digital consultation.

### Outcome

- We are now on a trajectory to eliminate the deficit in our final salary scheme by December 2023, which will improve the affordability of consumers' bills.
- In January 2020, 176 stakeholders responded to our first ever digital consultation.

Linked to our Responsibility Framework, this year our executive team supported 11 local depots with colleague-led fundraising.

**Applications  
increased by  
1,191%**

**Over £19,000  
donated for 99  
charitable causes.**



EMBEDDED

## Embedding a process that drives good decision-making

### What we heard

Ofgem's 2018/19 SECV Independent Panel highlighted the need for us to demonstrate the outcomes and impact of our initiatives rather than simply describing their outputs, and to broaden our measurement of benefits beyond the use of Willingness-to-pay (WTP) research.

### What we did

We worked with leading economics consultancy, Economic Insight, to enhance our existing benefits identification and measurement process. Together we created a tool for 'optioneering' (identifying and evaluating potential projects) and tracking the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of our SECV activities. This more rigorous approach goes well beyond the

simple modelling provided by WTP data.  
(See Part One, page seven for further detail).

### Outcome

Embedding a process that drives good decision-making has enabled us to make informed and data-driven decisions on which initiatives create the most value and scale that deliver for our customers.

**We have applied the tool to 26 initiatives set out in this year's SECV, the net SROI of which is £75m.** This year we will use the tool to determine how our initiatives evolve; whether to scale up, change course, or even stop altogether.

NEW / HARD-TO-REACH



## Building a workforce that reflects our community

### What we heard

Our Chief Executive Panel said there was a clear link between workforce diversity, performance and our broader social role and that we should be ambassadors of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in schools to inspire the next generation of engineers and employees.

### What we did

Our goal, developed this year by our new Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Working Group and informed by Business in the Community, is to have a workforce that represents our community. Analysis revealed that we were receiving relatively few apprentice applications from **hard-to-reach communities**. Prompted by a colleague, we reached out to Elders representing two local mosques in communities with a relatively high concentration of ethnic minorities, the Madina Institute in Oldham and Masjid E Sajeeden in Blackburn. We heard a misconception that applications are sought mainly from qualified engineers, so the Elders invited us to speak to the community directly. 300 people attended our open evenings and received careers information and CV support at job fairs. Job opportunities are now promoted on the mosques social media channels. D&I Champions have also worked alongside our recruiting managers to deliver 148 hours of unconscious bias training to improve decision-making during recruitment processes.

### Councillor Salim Sidat MBE said:

"Masjid E Sajeeden, Maddrasah Islamiyah and Islamiyah Girls High School are very happy to be in a partnership with Electricity North West - a proactive company that genuinely cares for the local community and about local values."



**ENHANCED** We used an innovative social data mapping tool to select six secondary schools across Blackburn, Oldham, Wigan, Salford and Bolton which our apprentices visited to raise awareness about the electricity industry and work experience and career opportunities. Our 'Bright Sparks' programme has delivered vital key stage 2 (KS2) electricity and safety curriculum lessons, to over 3,500 primary school pupils.

### Outcome

Our community engagement has reputational benefits through improved awareness and trust and is positively influencing our workforce diversity; Black, Asian and minority ethnic apprenticeship applications now account for 25% of total applications, a 14% year-on-year increase, and 22% of all job offers made. Colleague pride associated with these schemes is high as they have the potential to leave a positive legacy.

# Keeping our customers' lives running

We are always striving for continuous improvement, and couldn't achieve this without the on-going input of our stakeholders. This section demonstrates some of the ways that we are delivering above and beyond on our core outputs and acting to keep our customers' lives running through the delivery of a safe, reliable and tailored service.

↑ 8%

increase in customer satisfaction

20,662

customers avoiding supply interruptions

Rapid-response service to fix damaged appliances

Time to quote reduced by ↓ 33% for single connections

Lives saved through 24/7 monitoring of highest risk multi-occupancy buildings

EMBEDDED



## Most improved Distribution Network Operator

### What we heard

Through the industry-wide Broad Measure of Customer Satisfaction survey (with 100 customers surveyed per week), our new 'in-the-moment' telephony survey platform (2,150 customers surveyed per week) and bespoke market research we heard that customers would score us 10/10 if they receive timely and accurate updates during power cuts.

### What we did

We created a 'golden hour' for Estimated Time of Restoration (ETR) communicated to customers, with our front-line colleagues expected to restore power between 45 minutes before and 15 minutes after the time stated.

#### GOLDEN HOUR

The ETR needs to be accurate to within the golden hour that customers expect



To achieve this new service standard, we needed our operational teams to communicate updates more frequently. This required a behaviour change for our colleagues who have traditionally focused on fixing faults safely and quickly, as well as embedding new technology and processes to improve efficiency. In response we briefed 1,182 operations colleagues to help them understand why this change was important, rolled out new smart devices to make the process easier and developed a dashboard tool for delivery managers to monitor their teams' compliance. Fortnightly calls led by senior management enabled teams to share best practice but also be held to account.

### Outcome

We have observed a 42% improvement in compliance with the golden hour rule since it was launched. This, in combination with 10 key customer improvements to our power cut processes this year has helped us achieve 88% overall customer satisfaction, an increase of 8% since FY2015/16. We are proud to be outperforming the utilities industry in the UK Customer Satisfaction Index, a national measure of customer satisfaction reported by the Institute of Customer Service.

EMBEDDED



## Maintaining power to minimise disruption to customers' daily activities

### What we heard

As society becomes ever more dependent on electricity for heating, transport and powering smart homes; network reliability is the most important priority for our stakeholders. Our Chief Executive Panel asked us to focus more on transient power cuts and, generally, we heard customers want to experience fewer and shorter interruptions of any type. Customers who have never experienced a power cut told us they would anticipate feeling a sense of 'panic' caused by the loss of essential appliances and disruption to their routine.

### What we did

We developed a Quality Manual for Planned Supply Interruptions to ensure that various categories of customer needs are accommodated into our programme and managed. This year we proactively used generators during supply interruptions to keep the power on for 20,662 prioritised customers during the winter months, including at affected polling stations on election day in December. This initiative was extended to customers in vulnerable circumstances and critical services such as care homes during unplanned interruptions at other times too.

**ENHANCED** We also introduced 'Power in the Hour' in November, a colleague driven scheme,



which rewards front-line engineers who make themselves available to restore power to customers within an hour of a transient fault occurring. We use innovative GPS technology to locate and dispatch the nearest person to the incident, and now ensure that our engineers, jointers, line workers and fault technicians routinely carry a range of fuses.

### Outcome

Maintaining power supplies has minimised disruption to customers' routines and alleviated anxiety. This has delivered a socio-economic benefit of £1,655,210, however, our initial estimate indicates that the cost of providing this service exceeds the benefit. We are now reviewing the business case for this activity in more detail.



NEW



## Making it easier than ever to obtain a connection quotation

### What we heard

In-depth research with our one-off domestic connections customers showed they were typically unfamiliar with our processes, and therefore have a heightened need for their journey to be accessible, well explained and supported. We heard that our website application process is difficult to use, resulting in lower than expected growth of web applications. Customers want to self-serve for simple quotations, receive instant responses, and be able to pay online at their convenience.

### What we did

We launched our fully online connections tool, change to an industry-first digital solution, allowing customers to apply 24/7, receive a full connection quotation within 15 minutes, and pay without having to call us or send in paper documents. We piloted the tool with customers to ensure it's ease-of-use and to verify that complete and accurate data was

captured at the time of the application, reducing the need for subsequent contact with customers. We monitored the impact of the tool through operational data and ongoing customer satisfaction surveys.

### Outcome

The tool has reduced the average time taken to quote for a single service connection from 3.5 to 2.4 days. A 40% reduction in the need for these customers to make additional contact has released capacity for planners to spend more time on value adding activity. This simultaneously reduced the average time to quote for applications associated with two to four domestic connections and one-off commercial connections from 6.3 to 5.0 days. These changes have led to 89% overall customer satisfaction with online quotations, an increase of 5% since launch and a socio-economic benefit of £743,912 – a multiplier of x4 for every £1 invested.

## EMBEDDED



## Intervening to restore power to damaged appliances

### What we heard

As most power cuts are outside of our control, our operating licence states that we are not liable for any loss or damage to customers' appliances. Whilst thankfully rare, some faults have been known to cause fires at customers' meters or damage essential appliances, which is very distressing for those affected. Stakeholders asked that we address the root causes of customer complaints, including appliance damage.

### What we did

On 8 June 2019, copper theft at a substation in Little Lever, Bolton, led to the loss of the neutral bond, which caused 1,343 customers to experience a supply interruption and 296 to be exposed to high voltage issues, which damaged appliances. In response our colleagues worked tirelessly to access and disconnect the affected properties, allowing the power supply to be safely turned back on once substation repairs were complete. In line with our policy for dealing with this type of scenario, we went above and beyond our regulatory obligations by deploying our rapid-response partner, Haste, to go door-to-door carrying out wiring safety checks and where possible, repairing damaged appliances within a matter of hours. **ENHANCED** We also set up a hardship fund for customers who needed to replace equipment that was beyond repair and not covered by their own insurance.

In the last year, because of the learning from this incident, we have deployed Haste to households experiencing similar circumstances, directly supporting 2,880 customers.

### A customer suffering appliance damage said:

"Unprecedented, they did the best they could do in very difficult circumstances. I can't see what else they could have done. The service is spot on 10/10."



### Outcome

Fixing customers' appliances has provided timely support during vulnerable circumstances, reducing anxiety and avoiding social costs such as ill-health. This has delivered a socio-economic benefit of £2,415,159 – a multiplier of x10 for every £1 invested.

### Continual learning



During the Bolton incident we provided 1,500 hot meals to the community and 89% of customers surveyed were satisfied with the enhanced service they received. Nevertheless, we treat every incident as an opportunity to improve, and our engagement with the local Muslim community identified a gap in our ability to provide Halal food. Consequently, we now have a partnership with Just Eat and Deliveroo which is enabling us to provide for the full diversity of our local communities, ensuring we meet consumers' needs and expectations.



## EMBEDDED / HARD-TO-REACH



## Going the extra mile for residents of multi-occupancy buildings

### What we heard

The Grenfell tragedy in 2017 brought greater scrutiny to safety in high rise multi-occupancy buildings (MOBs), prompting many Local Authorities to accelerate tower block refurbishment programmes. Resident's trust of social landlords is a barrier to progressing electrical Rising and Lateral Mains (RLM) refurbishment schemes and they are reticent about installations within their homes. Additionally, many MOBs are in deprived areas and house hard-to-reach communities with high proportions of vulnerability who can least cope with disruption to their supply.

### What we did

**ENHANCED** Whilst our RLM programme is mature, we have refined a best practise model of stakeholder engagement that builds trust with residents by getting to know the community prior to, during and after works by:

- Attending residents' meetings, maintaining a visible presence during works and returning to address feedback head-on
- Setting up an installation in a vacant property on-site so that residents can drop in to have a look at the work involved and ask questions
- Sourcing tailored trunking that is in keeping with customers' homes
- Making every contact count by promoting registration to our Priority Services Register and provision of energy efficiency advice to reduce energy bills and tackle fuel poverty.

We embedded this approach across the 5,265 homes we serviced this year in MOBs. Our risk-based approach saw us invest £675,000 in the deployment of innovative WEEZAP circuit breakers to de-risk 2,259 of the highest-risk dwellings by enabling us to monitor communal electrical cables at these properties 24/7.



### Tony Wright, Chairman of the Hamerton Road Residents Association said:



"The most open and proactive lines of communication are with Electricity North West, which benefits both sides because it means we can help correct any misinformation given to residents by other third parties. This has proven to be essential for projects to run smoothly and kept on schedule."

### Outcome

Our investment in public safety this year has saved lives. In January 2020, our technology helped to avert a major fault at a tower block in Trafford, where a water leak had caused a fire in the electrical riser. Based on this isolated incident alone our intervention delivered a socio-economic benefit of £1,201,024 – a multiplier of x2 for every £1 invested.

## EMBEDDED / HARD-TO-REACH



## Forging links with community and local energy groups

### What we heard

Our stakeholder-led State of the Sector Report concluded community-led energy projects play a key role in decarbonising the energy system and the DSO transition, but across the UK they are facing unprecedented challenges to growth and therefore require professional support and funding tools at this stage to prosper.

### What we did

In June 2019 we published an annual report for our community and local energy strategy which confirmed our commitment to the three priorities identified by stakeholders during our extensive engagement process in 2017/18 as still being a valid response to their issues. The strategy focuses engagement on these priorities:

### Outcome

Improved access has led to a 16% increase in stakeholders engaging with us since last year, including among them hard-to-reach groups. Our direct financial support played a pivotal role in one project securing an additional £100,000 funding and other projects being supported with connections; 33% at an early stage. Together, our achievements in these areas are delivering a better service and value for money

**1 Improving access:** We have received more stakeholder input through an expanded set of channels including; four e-newsletters, three 'Community Connects' face-to-face events, and ad-hoc surgeries, all led by our Community Energy Manager or network engineers.

**2 Financial support:** We invested £75,000 in six new projects, provided on-going support for community and local energy groups in our region and supported the early identification of viable projects.

**3 Regulation explained:** Following feedback at our 'Spotlight on Regulation' event we have produced a quarterly regulation update.

for our customers, carbon savings, energy cost savings for customers using community energy and improved air quality. We remain passionate advocates of community and local energy; proposing a dedicated workstream during RIIO-ED2 in response to stakeholder's feedback and backing the Local Electricity Bill which would enable local renewable energy generators to sell their energy to local people.

# Leading the transition to net zero

This section demonstrates how we are already developing our capability and delivering the changes required to be a trusted and neutral Distribution System Operator (DSO), acting on behalf of customers to optimise the whole energy system and underpin a rapid and affordable transition to net zero. We are a critical enabler for decarbonisation and are leading the charge on educating and supporting customers to become active participants in the energy system, whilst striving to ensure that no one is left behind or disadvantaged by the changes that are occurring.

78%

increase in Flexibility Services applications

CLASS

called upon up to 14 times a day by National Grid

1st

DNO to publish DFES interactive workbook

Leading

on net zero – 10 Local Authority Carbon Balance Sheets

Trusted

advisor removing barriers to electric vehicles

EMBEDDED



## Getting on with our Distribution System Operator (DSO) transition

### What we heard

Regional stakeholders and our Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel gave us a clear indication that they expect us to work collaboratively with industry forums such as Open Networks to develop the processes and functions required to operate an energy system, preferring instead to engage with us on how they can support our overarching DSO vision.

*Our DSO vision is for the North West of England to achieve the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.*

### What we did

In response to stakeholder feedback, we are getting on with becoming a DSO, committing significant resource to all five 2019/20 Open Networks Workstream Products as part of a whole energy system approach. We have engaged extensively with customers and wider stakeholders about their priorities and in doing so they have genuinely shaped our DSO priorities; facilitating the uptake of Low Carbon Technology (LCT), maintaining the security of supply and delivering value to customers as the transition is undertaken. In response we published our plan, 'Leading the North West to zero carbon', investing £63.5m, to quickly drive down our own carbon emissions (more detail on page nine) and empowering businesses, our customers and our colleagues to support our DSO vision by doing the same.

### Outcome

A simple, intuitive and stakeholder-led DSO vision.

### Continual learning

We recognise the need for a fair and affordable transition and acknowledge that new market models, or the uptake of LCTs by the wealthiest first, can have negative, unintended consequences. We are making fairness a focal point of our engagement and planning for RIIO-ED2.



ENHANCED



## Leading investment and action to achieve net zero

During the past year, attention and commitment to climate action have shot to prominence in the UK and worldwide. In the North West, 65% of District, County, Unitary and Metropolitan Councils have declared a Climate Emergency.

### What we heard

Our bilateral meetings with Local Authorities in Manchester, Lancashire and Cumbria uncovered significant variations in decarbonisation ambition, knowledge and resources. Targeted engagement with our business community revealed awareness of the need to take greater action to support decarbonisation, but this was often constrained by time, competing priorities, and most importantly - not knowing what action to take first.

### What adopting a leadership role means:



1. We are proactive, not neutral

We speak from a position of authority on LCTs and actively encourage their uptake because we believe it's the right thing to do and have plans in place to ensure that there's sufficient capacity in our network to accommodate the predicted uptake to 2028.



2. We can't do this alone, we collaborate

A stretching target of Manchester achieving net zero by 2038, necessitates a 78% reduction in city carbon levels by 2028. We produced Carbon Balance Sheets for each of the ten Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) councils, to identify the scale of local renewable generation such as solar panels that must be connected to offset increased demand. We included practical case studies of how to offset demand such as the installation of 10,000 roof-mounted and canopy solar panels at the Trafford Centre.



3. We challenge others to do more

As reported in the Lancashire Evening Post, we influenced Lancashire County Council and its External Scrutiny Committee this year, leading to an announcement that it would review its energy strategy and hold a Green Summit in 2020. More widely, two thirds of all energy demand on our network is from businesses, therefore, we collaborated with the Tyndall Centre and Impact Research to develop materials such as 'The top 5 things you should do now to decarbonise', with messaging tailored to key sectors: retail (food and non-food), offices, hospitality, factories and transport.

We were described as a 'pioneer' by The Manchester Climate Change Board in its Zero Carbon Framework 2020-2038 after facilitating the adoption of new, science-based carbon reduction targets for Manchester, derived from our independent analysis of network demand and generation data.

MANCHESTER CLIMATE CHANGE AGENCY

### Outcome

We will now replicate our successful engagement approach with Local Authorities in Lancashire and Cumbria and extend our programme to domestic customers to support the mass adoption of LCTs. We will know if we have been successful by monitoring the connection of local renewable generation to our network. By collaborating with GMCA we will support 39.42 GWh of renewable generation being connected in the next five years – a carbon benefit of 8,475 CO<sub>2</sub>e which, when combined with anticipated energy cost savings, delivers a socio-economic benefit of £3,055,023.



EMBEDDED



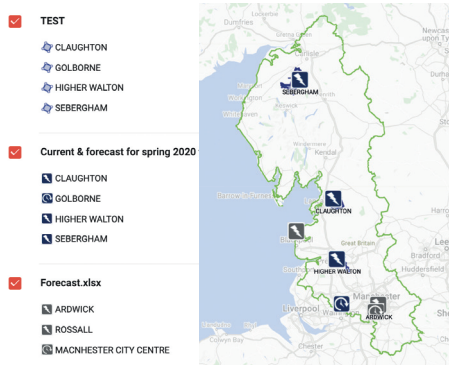
## Flexibility first

### What we heard

This year we convened a Flexibility Workshop and conducted quantitative and qualitative research to help us benchmark our customers' views about Flexibility Services. The results revealed that the most significant barrier to entry is location.

### What we did

Like all DNOs, we are a neutral market facilitator of Flexible Services, but we have made a positive choice not to 'pump prime' (stimulate) the market as this is not an effective use of our customers' money. To increase applications where we have a genuine need for flexibility, we have reduced the minimum kVA requirements to participate, doubled the clarification period for participants to ask questions, introduced an online flexibility map which provides current and forecasted Flexibility Service requirements for the next five years, and issued quarterly newsletters to alert stakeholders to opportunities. We have also started proactively contacting potential applicants to let them know they may be able to provide a service from within a constrained area – an industry first (see our new flexibility map below).



**EMBEDDED** This year we announced our sixth consecutive tender for 15.4MW of Flexibility Services, on top of the 57MW already issued. This is the first flexibility tender in Great Britain to be issued using common definitions agreed by all DNOs in the Open Networks forum: Sustain; Secure; Dynamic and Restore. The use of industry agreed terminology for Flexibility Services facilitates participation through the transparency and simplification of information available. This early adoption shows our commitment to remove barriers to entry into this emerging market and to encourage participation as much as possible. In the spirit of increased openness and data sharing we were also the first DNO to publish a long-term forecast of reactive power demand (reactive power enables energy to be distributed around the North West efficiently, economically and safely).

### Outcome

Our initiatives have improved open access and have increased the number of applicants in our tenders by 78% this year compared to the average for events last year. In the coming years we expect the number of flexible opportunities to grow and therefore, our ongoing high-quality engagement with stakeholders is ensuring that we develop a set of services that meets the requirements of future service providers from the outset.



EMBEDDED



## Innovation to support the adoption of low carbon technology

### What we heard

In its consultation 'Upgrading our Energy System – Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan', Ofgem concluded that DNOs must make more efficient use of new technologies and solutions. In its 2020/21 Innovation Strategy National Grid ESO, the national Electricity System Operator, consulted with stakeholders and made system stability its top priority – driven by the forecasted growth in the connection of local renewable generation and low carbon technologies.

### What we did

We completed the design, testing and deployment of our CLASS dashboard which is incorporated as part of our £23.75m flagship Network Management System (NMS). In parallel we deployed CLASS



technology, developed through a Low Carbon Networks-funded innovation, at 257 electricity substations throughout the region. The dashboard is supporting the roll out of CLASS more widely, such as to National Grid ESO, and showcasing the full potential and capabilities of CLASS on a national level. The events of 9 August last year when 1.1 million UK customers lost power suppliers served to illustrate how CLASS could have avoided this loss of stability.

### Outcome

Our industry-leading CLASS has enabled us to provide 7GWh of demand reduction to safeguard network stability, with customers not noticing a difference to their service. This year National Grid ESO have called upon CLASS 560 times and up to 14 times per day, with 70% of activation occurring after the 9th August event. As a result, customers in the North West have benefited from over £105,000 per month off their bills. This has delivered a socio-economic benefit of £1.3m – a multiplier of x2 for every £1 invested.



ENHANCED



## Developing and sharing future electricity scenarios

### What we heard

In our digital strategy consultation stakeholders said they wanted to see increased openness and transparency to support analytics, external data sharing and new services.

### What we did

This year following our proactive request for input and data sharing a significant number of Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Authorities, universities, and major energy users in Manchester, Cumbria and Lancashire shared knowledge about their localities in our second annual Distribution Future Electricity Scenarios (DFES) report. Two-way iterative sharing of data enriched our understanding of the range of possible future scenarios and highlighted where we are likely to see network constraints. This year we became the first operator to publish the detailed data set behind our forecasts as an interactive data workbook

which allowed stakeholders to understand future demand and uptake levels of LCTs and distributed generation capacities in their own area. The workbook has been downloaded 130 times since it was published.

### Outcome

A more open and transparent approach improved the accuracy of our forecasts, enabled us to explore Flexible Solutions to mitigate future capacity needs and make timely strategic investments. National Grid and GMCA referenced the value of our insights in their own business planning publications with our data informing the design, scale and locations of major projects such as plans for electric vehicle charging at car parks and the expansion of the Metrolink tram network.

NEW



## Investing for low carbon growth

### What we heard

**The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) gained funding for a Local Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone comprising of 50 hectares of developable land and requiring a combined maximum demand of 16 MVA. Due to the rural nature of the surrounding area the electrical network in the area was not sufficient to support this level of forecast growth and flexibility market options were not available; therefore, the project necessitated a significant investment and was at risk of not going ahead.**

### What we did

Working collaboratively with Lancashire County Council we have committed investment of £7.0m in a new primary substation. This long term strategic solution to a network constraint will not

only facilitate economic growth, but also allow the enterprise zone to evolve into a low carbon hub. Across the entire development zone, a strategy of combining behind the meter renewable generation will allow the increasing utilisation of electric vehicle charging, without triggering additional reinforcement works. This is a significant step forward and will future proof the development during the transition to a low carbon economy.

### Outcome

Our investment is forecasted to support up to 10,000 new jobs, as well as delivering economic growth and low carbon development for Lancashire.



## Paving the way for the mass adoption of electric vehicles

### What we heard

In our Regional Advisory Stakeholder Workshops, stakeholders expressed a clear preference for us to adopt a 'trusted advisor' role in facilitating the roll-out of electric vehicles (EVs) and challenged us to create a charge point installation strategy. We heard that a significant cross-section of the business community are hesitant to act due to a lack of credible information and concerns about the scale of investment required to decarbonise their fleets and install fast chargers. In our Chief Executive Advisory Panel, we heard a key barrier to destination charging is the cost of electricity recharging.

### What we did

#### Strategic messaging

We conducted an in-depth study into EV charging behaviour drawing on data from circa 300,000 existing users. From this we learnt that owners are charging, on average, once every other day, mostly at their destination during the daytime and are plugged in for six hours despite only needing charge for three hours. We have used this data to advise stakeholders to consider low cost 13A plugs to achieve an appropriate, cost-effective mix of charging options for a location, rather than adopting ultra-fast chargers by default.

Improved understanding of charging behaviour has reduced risk and uncertainty, encouraging some stakeholders to develop plans for socialising the cost of charging in their car park entrance fee and advertising a 'free charging service'.

#### Strategic investment

In last year's DFES we identified a potential capacity shortfall in the South Manchester Enterprise Zone; home to a vibrant mixture of residential, industrial and hospitality businesses, including Manchester Airport. We subsequently found that viable flexibility market options were unavailable, therefore, we invested in a new primary substation to support the economic and decarbonisation aspirations of the area. This year Transport for Greater Manchester informed our DFES forecasts which indicate that 500,000 EVs can be accommodated within our current investment plans before reaching the threshold for additional strategic reinforcement of the network. This data informed stretching targets for mass adoption of EVs in Manchester.

#### Supportive policy and advice to customers

This year we disseminated a new policy document 'ES230 Connection of Low Carbon Technologies' to ensure standard connection arrangements and assessment techniques are in place. We launched a new fund to cover the cost of infrastructure work that would otherwise prevent the connection of EVs and actively supported schemes such as Charge My Street, led by Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS). The scheme installs charge points giving residents without off-street parking the opportunity to switch to an electric vehicle.

### Phil Davies – Cumbria Action for Sustainability said:

"We find Electricity North West's 'can-do' attitude, offers of technical support, solution-focussed approach to EV processes and response times very helpful."



In addition, we published a helpful guide to electric vehicles and charge points for domestic and business customers on our website.

### Outcome

By investing £7m into a new primary substation in the South Manchester Enterprise Zone, we have enabled capacity to be released onto the local electricity network which will support the equivalent of 40,500 EVs. When these EVs are active on the Manchester Airport network, the annual socio-economic benefit is anticipated to be £45m (scaled to reflect the average EV lifetime benefit, usage and charger utilisation). This benefit is driven by a range of avoided costs: fuel, operational maintenance, environmental impact, health impacts and electricity network resources.

EMBEDDED / HARD-TO-REACH



## Proactive intervention to pave the way for smart meters

### What we heard

Second-generation smart meters (SMETS2) operate on a new smart data network which is not reliant on the mobile phone network. This new network will cover more than 99.25% of Great Britain by the end of the rollout. However, currently, significant connectivity problems in the north mean that, in common with Northern Powergrid, we are only seeing a fraction of national SMETS2 installations. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy would like to see a concerted effort from DNOs to support the roll-out.

### What we did

While solutions are being developed to revive the roll-out of SMETS2 in the north, we have taken the initiative to work closely with energy suppliers to prevent inefficiencies and poor customer service. We have used our workforce capacity to identify and alter loop supplies where two properties share a single electricity service. Although a looped service is perfectly safe, it can lead to difficulties if one of the looped households asks us to provide more power to connect LCTs in the future. In our trial, we upgraded 477 supplies at no additional cost to customers. We also used this workforce to

intervene on 15,008 cut-outs identified as requiring work by Meter Operators before any request to fit a smart meter had been received.

### Outcome

Our interventions have ensured that customers, many of which are **hard-to-reach**, are not left behind in a smart future and will deliver a lifetime socio-economic benefit of £11.6m – a multiplier of x2 for every £1 invested.

### Outcome

Our colleagues have developed action plans which will reduce their carbon footprint by 10%, creating an enduring benefit to the individual, community and organisation. This will deliver a socio-economic benefit of £109,945 – a multiplier of x1 for every £1 invested this year and x4 during RIIO-ED1.

### Continual learning

Our ambition this year is to ensure the majority of our workforce have acquired the knowledge and skills to lower their carbon footprint. We will also trial the delivery of the same Carbon Literacy training and benefits to our local stakeholders.

## First Carbon Literate DNO

### What we heard

64% of the colleagues who took part in our Big Zero Carbon survey, launched on World Environment Day 2019, said they wanted to be more energy efficient, so we asked our managers what they needed to engage with their teams to make our 'Leading the North West to Zero Carbon' plan a reality. The answer was education.

Carbon Literate Organisation  
Bronze



### What we did

This year we made an important commitment towards the development of a carbon literate workforce. Initially we set a baseline against which to measure improvement and five of our organisational leaders became Carbon Literate, leading to bronze accreditation to the Carbon Literacy Project. We scaled up our Carbon Literacy programme and made substantial progress towards delivering 2,100 hours of training to 100% of our management team. In response to COVID-19 we will complete delayed activity as soon as possible to achieve silver accreditation and have put steps in place to embed the outputs into our performance management and assessment systems.



# Caring about the environment

This section demonstrates how we are leading the transition to net zero through our own operations by developing and implementing the policies, technologies, systems and workforce required to support our DSO vision of the North West of England achieving the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

## Bronze

Carbon Literacy  
Accreditation awarded



## Exemplar

Training Academy depot  
nearing completion



## Award winning

sustainable alternative  
to asphalt



## x18 SR0I

9 substations transformed  
into green spaces



NEW



## Leading by example with the launch of two net zero depots

### What we heard

In our stakeholder priorities research, we heard that to support the transition to a low carbon economy we should lead by example and improve environmental performance in our day-to-day operations through greener work-sites, offices and vehicles.

### What we did

In March 2019 we set a stretching business target to become carbon neutral by 2038 in line with Greater Manchester's ambitions. To achieve this, we are cutting our own emissions by 10% year-on-year through a range of initiatives, including investing over £1m to create two net zero carbon exemplar depots in Blackburn and Oldham installing solar panels, ground source heat pumps, enhanced insulation, mechanical systems, and an additional 98 EV charging points.

This year, following a successful trial, we became the first DNO to purchase four state-of-the-art JCB electric mini diggers. The fully electric model, with zero exhaust emissions are five times quieter than its diesel counterpart and are being used to install underground power cables. We have also successfully trialled and rolled-out a cleaner type of Aspen fuel for petrol-powered machinery, battery-powered chainsaws and biodegradable chain oil.



### Outcome

Our exemplar Training Academy is a positive demonstration of how other businesses can adopt low carbon technologies and approaches. This site has contributed to an overall business carbon footprint reduction of 2,189 tCO<sub>2</sub>e this year, delivering a socio-economic benefit of £1.6m – a multiplier of x2 for every £1 invested.



NEW



## Alternative asphalt wins streetworks award for sustainable re-instatement

### What we heard

This year our colleagues challenged the use of single-use plastics across the business. Consumers also told us that reducing plastics waste is a highly valued sustainability initiative.

### What we did

We removed unnecessary single use plastic from our office and operations by no longer buying plastic cups across all our offices and depots, removing the plastic wrapping on our well-regarded colleague magazine NewsWire, included our plastic packaging requirements within the tender process for waste services and are reviewing a plastic alternative for joint kitting components with our cable joint partner. During a six-month trial with Gallaghers, Cumbria Country Council, and manufacturer MacRebur, we became the first DNO to develop a new asphalt product for hand-laid reinstatement. In this more sustainable award-winning product, certain non-recyclable waste plastics that were destined for landfill or incineration replace some of the bitumen (a fossil fuel) in the asphalt.

### Our Streetworks Manager Adam Brunskill said:

"This is an industry first and I'm delighted that our work has been recognised with a national award. We are continuing our testing across other asphalt materials and hopefully we'll be able to use this new product in all our reinstatement work going forward. This means we'll be using less fossil fuel and lowering our carbon footprint which is a great result for the company and our customers."



### Outcome

Each tonne of reinstatement material contains the equivalent of 1,285 single use carrier bags. We are now rolling-out our product across all reinstatement works which will re-use 50.6 tonnes of plastic waste and lead to a 18,000 kg reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually. This supports a circular economy and will deliver a socio-economic benefit of £18,710 – a multiplier of x3 for every £1 invested.



NEW



## Transforming our Spaces

### What we heard

Local Authorities and wider stakeholders told us that we should think beyond the asset by doing more to address complaints from residents near our substations by increasing biodiversity and attracting pollinators in urban areas, thereby reducing vandalism and ultimately giving communities spaces to take pride in.

### What we did

In response to stakeholder feedback we collated intelligence from our grounds maintenance, estates and wayleaves, arborists, and health and safety teams and engaged more widely with Local Authorities and The Wildlife Trust to draw together best practice for maintaining the grounds around our substations. We took this maintenance back in-house and piloted a scheme which selected nine substation sites for improved biodiversity in Egremont, Preston, Burnley, Bolton, Hale and Manchester. All were unattractive and subject to vandalism. The sites were cleared, and new seed mixes planted, chosen specifically to ensure long-lasting colour and interest. The sites are now being proactively monitored in partnership with our teams and by local wildlife groups, who are allocated a geographical patch to look after and the tools necessary to maintain sites through an ongoing programme of visits.

### Trudy Harrison (pictured below, second from right), MP for Copeland:

"What used to be an eyesore is now a vibrant area for the local community to take pride in and a space for revitalising insects and wildlife."



### Outcome

We have observed an 85% success rate in transforming sites into low-maintenance, self-pollinating, attractive spaces. In total, 6,885 consumers living within 1km of the substation have benefited from the programme which is now being rolled out more widely. It has delivered a socio-economic benefit of £189,290 – a multiplier of x18 for every £1 invested.

# Changing and shaping our plans

The world will continue to change for our customers and wider stakeholders throughout RIIO-ED1 and will evolve further in the next price control. In turn, our business and the services we provide will need to continue to evolve in anticipation of these changing needs. In this section we demonstrate how we are using our engagement to plan for the future but also improve our decision making now.

## Plans adapted

to reflect new priorities and events

ENHANCED / HARD-TO-REACH

## Increasing our engagement with younger voices

### What we heard

We use stakeholder engagement to scan the horizon for new and emerging issues that need to be addressed in the current price control period. We heard from our Chief Executive Panel that young citizens are playing an increasingly prominent role within society, with more youth activists, as well as interest in the UK Youth Parliament which provides opportunities for elected 11 - 18 year olds to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning.

### What we did

We expanded our programme of youth engagement with Burnley Boys and Girls Club (See Part Three, page ten) by attending two youth engagement events; Youth Focus North West's (YFNW), 'What makes for good youth engagement' and UK Youth's, 'Involving young people in decision making'. One of the key learnings from these events was that we should tap into established groups and organisations in favour of setting up our own bespoke youth panel. In response, we attended YFNW's 'Youthforia' event where we engaged with more than 50 young people from across the region. These individuals asked both considered and challenging questions, including:

**youth focus**<sup>NW</sup>  
Improving the lives of young people

"How do you protect the network against extreme weather?"; "Why aren't all new builds mandated to have solar panels?"; "If everyone is going to use more electricity in the future how you will make sure it's affordable for everyone?"

A prioritisation exercise revealed that looking after customers in vulnerable circumstances was most important to them, followed by the transition to a net zero economy.

### Outcome

We are keeping up the conversation with YFNW and have agreed to support four regional focus groups and the Youth Green Summit in October 2020; this is improving the inclusivity of our engagement and ensuring that we are responsive to the needs of future consumers who are a **hard-to-reach** group.

## Giving consumers a stronger voice

### What we heard

Research indicates that consumers who have had contact with us are significantly more likely to say they are familiar with our services, satisfied overall and feel that their bill represents good value for money. However, our engagement reached a significant number of consumers who had never interacted with us before and revealed the need for an 'outside-in' approach, which means initially listening to understand what matters to them.

### What we did

We engaged with United Utilities, our region's water utility, who had successfully used customer segmentation to drive personalised communications and targeted support, using customers' preferred channels. In response we partnered with Accent, a leading research agency, to design a robust research programme that engaged 2,100 consumers and gave us a nuanced understanding of our customers' attitudes, preferences and behaviours. Our customer base was segmented into six distinct segments based upon five key factors:

- World view
- Attitude to business
- Lifestyle
- Financial security
- Environmental views/actions

We learnt how each segment would like to communicate with us, how long each can cope without power, how each view their own and others' vulnerability, what support they need and identified those who are unlikely to ask for help during a power cut. We briefed our Consumer Vulnerability Champions (Part Three, page three) and are using these insights to find new ways to reach and maintain a 10/10 service (Part Three, page five).

To complement our understanding of stakeholders' priorities (Part One, page one) we engaged widely on consumers' priorities to obtain a consolidated view. In line with wider stakeholders, consumers are unanimous that delivering a reliable network is their top priority. We also identified that ensuring the affordability of consumers' bills is an important **new priority**, particularly given that 45% say that they sometimes struggle to pay their energy bills.

### Outcome

Our increased focus on embedding SROI into our decision-making process is ensuring that our SECV activities return optimal value to consumers and align to their priorities. We are committing to ongoing engagement that gives consumers a stronger voice so that they can shape the delivery of our services, in a way that meets their preferences, and creates value for them.

## Keeping energy flowing during COVID-19

### What we heard

During the COVID-19 pandemic many people were working from home or self-isolating, and some had children at home resulting in increased reliance on electricity in our customers' homes. Increased anxiety led to customers raising questions about the need for planned maintenance work to continue.

### What we did

As a critical infrastructure provider, engineers continued with essential work to keep the power flowing in the longer term but assessed work on a case-by-case basis. Our agile and responsive approach supported the country's efforts, was informed by engagement with a variety of stakeholders:

National	We worked closely with Government and Ofgem to ensure a consistent industry-wide approach to COVID-19.
Local	We supported the creation of the region's first specialist field hospital, NHS Nightingale North West, to help with the Coronavirus outbreak by installing a second reserve electricity supply and increased the supply to Oaklands Hospital in Salford. We assessed the resilience of all healthcare infrastructure, including hospitals, temporary recovery centres and morgues and installed remote-control technology to protect the power supply to these institutions. We worked with Business in the Communities National Business Response Network and liaised closely with Local Resilience Forums to coordinate support services.
Customer	We changed our standard policy by ensuring, where possible, planned interruptions lasted no longer than five hours and provided a generator for any extended works or where customers needed additional support. We asked self-isolating customers if they required help, such as with food packages and with their permission, passed on their details to our trusted partners or befriending services.
Workforce	Our COVID-19 steering group facilitated vital daily updates to colleagues and access to policy, trusted sources of information and promotion of mental health and wellbeing.

### Outcome

Keeping our workforce safe enabled us to maintain a safe and resilient service to our five million customers. The essential infrastructure we provided to the NHS saved lives by enabling emergency healthcare assistance to those most in need.

## OUR 2019/20 ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION



Stakeholders debating important issues at our Greater Manchester Regional Stakeholder Workshop



Our colleagues leading a Jobs Fair at the Masjid E Sajadeen, mosque in Blackburn



Our apprentices visiting Witton Park School in Blackburn to inspire the next generation of engineers



Our Rising Lateral Mains team answering questions from residents about an example installation



Representatives of Burnley Boys and Girls Club speaking at our 'Powering our Communities Fund' event



Our Director, Engineering and Technical, Steve Cox unveiling one of four new electric diggers



Our colleagues with Trudy Harrison MP at one of our 'Transforming our Spaces' sites



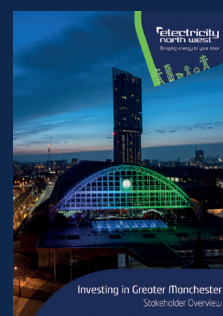
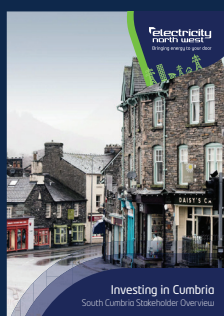
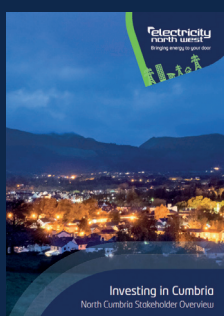
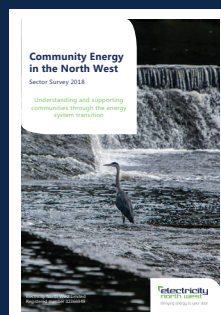
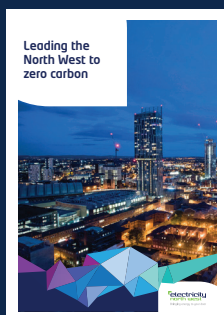
Colleagues representing our Customer Team collecting an Institute of Customer Service Award for 'Best application of Technology' (See Part One, page one)



Our first Youth Focus North West Youthforia event with 11-18 year olds

## OUR KEY PUBLICATIONS

The publications previewed opposite are available to download from our [webpage](#).





Electricity north west  
Bringing energy to your door

# Transforming our spaces

Electricity North West is proud to work with our communities to transform our spaces with our Land Beautification Project.

Working alongside councils, residents and local organisations we are creating and maintaining wildflower spaces to help vital pollinating insects and bring more colour and life to our communities.

Find out more [www.enwl.co.uk/transformingcommunities](http://www.enwl.co.uk/transformingcommunities)

