

1a) We spent c.40% of our stakeholder engagement strategy on the ‘tackling net zero’ priority, of which c.40% of that was spent on Electric Vehicles (EVs); 40% was spent on Distributed Energy Resources (DER); and 20% was spent on heat. [redacted]

1b) Facilitating EVs remains one of the most important and frequent topics our stakeholders wish to engage on. From 88 of the 127 councils across our patch declaring a climate emergency, to national infrastructure plans, the electrification of transport is an early and key component of stakeholders’ net zero plans.

As the DNO with by far the most EVs fuelled by our network, with over 31% of EVs, 46% of UK chargers and a growth of over 247% in our EV fuse upgrade services in 2019 alone, our stakeholders look to us to lead, engage and innovate to improve our service. This is especially important, as the number of EVs on our network is set to increase from 90k today to over 3.6m¹ in just ten years.

The engagement required from DNOs on EVs is complex; it is a continuously evolving market which demands a company-wide response, with different teams undertaking a cohesive engagement approach with various stakeholder segments. We wanted to bring to life the depth and breadth of our engagement, conducted by teams right across our business from connections, innovation, regulation and smart grid areas. We recognise the decarbonisation of electricity generation and heat are also key components of the net zero transition. [redacted]

1c) We undertook triangulation for a number of EV projects. Whilst our stakeholders said facilitating EVs was very important, our Willingness To Pay (WTP) research with our wider customers indicated it was a lower priority. This highlights that you have to utilise a range of techniques to determine where you invest time and resource. For example, we supplemented qualitative engagement and WTP research with Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) and Social Return On Investment (SROI) analysis conducted by SIA Partners.

This allowed us to develop projects like building EV range confidence, as described in our submission. Our SROI calculation in this respect reported £4.54 of social value created for local authorities for every £1 we spent.

[redacted]

2a and b) When it comes to tackling fuel poverty, we believe it is important to have comparable figures year on year. The benefits of our partnership work is measured over a twelve month period, rather than calculated over ten years or lifetime benefits, which some organisations prefer to use. Our methodology allows us to measure the impact of our fuel poverty work annually, and to ensure we continue to improve year on year for those at greatest risk of fuel poverty.

¹ Source: UKPN analysis. Distribution Future Energy Scenarios 2020.

The £37m benefit is based on an independent and methodical assessment of the impact of our advice materials by testing it with [redacted] customers. [redacted]
[redacted]

The £4.5m benefit from the personalised support is the total of savings delivered and validated by our partners through face to face advice over a 12 month period. It is not estimated or projected; they are actual financial benefits provided at customer level. In this respect, we are pleased to have achieved almost four times the financial saving for customers as we did last year – an increase from £1.2m to £4.5m.

3a) We listened to feedback from a broad range of customers and stakeholders to produce our COVID-19 strategy. Some examples of how this shaped our ways of working include:

- [redacted] In response we were the first DNO to support our customers and stop all non-essential planned work. [redacted]
- Through our engagement with vulnerable consumer advocacy groups, we became aware of the need to urgently support people with financial assistance during the pandemic. Within days of the lockdown, we worked with our regional utility partners to put together a £500k fund to help over 100 local community charities with crisis support, resulting in 34,480 families benefiting from immediate support. We also repurposed our £300k Power Partners fund to specifically support organisations that were best placed to tackle fuel poverty work during the pandemic.
- We developed a smart app based on feedback from our field staff to help them to signpost useful COVID support resources to vulnerable customer that still required home visits. We are proud our PSR customers scored us 99% in customer satisfaction as a result of such initiatives.
- [redacted]

3b) We assessed our engagement mechanisms (of which there are over 20) and translated those into virtual forums. As a result, we have seen attendee numbers increase, whilst also increasing the participation and diversity of hard to reach groups, especially where time was a commodity, for example small and medium businesses – as there is no travel time lost from the working day to participate in one of our events. Furthermore, we recognise in addition to the financial benefits of not having to book venues, we have also near eliminated the carbon footprint of travelling to our events. We have calculated this net CO2 saving from events held digitally so far in 2020 to be 1.4 tonnes of CO2, the equivalent of 10 return flights between London and Edinburgh.

3c) Initial learning from the pandemic includes the following:

- Substantially increased disruption for customers of planned outage work as a result of more home working and schooling during the lockdown, leading us to change our working practices to minimise inconvenience.

- Customers have needed more reassurance ahead of an engineer coming into their home, so we now call them beforehand to explain social distancing rules, procedure and what PPE they will be wearing.
- Customers have become more receptive to interactive education material for their children who are being home schooled. This offers greater opportunity for two way learning, where both the adult and child learn something from the materials.

This is just a selection of initial learnings thus far. We will continue to review and improve as we learn more.

4a) [redacted]

4b) [redacted]

4c) [redacted]