



Osney Lock Hydro, one of the community schemes benefiting from the Smart and Fair neighbourhood in Project LEO

# POWERING CHANGE

2021-22

**OVERVIEW OF EVIDENCE**  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT  
AND CONSUMER VULNERABILITY  
SUBMISSION

PART  
**2**



# POWERING CHANGE

# PART 2

Welcome to our part 2 submission to Ofgem’s Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive (SECV) for 2021-22.

Part 2 revisits our strategy, our approach to stakeholder engagement and how we measure the impact of our activity, set out in full in part 1. This is followed by a series of examples aligned with SSEN’s four strategic priorities, covering: net zero; customer service; safety and resilience, and making a positive impact on society. In each case we explain how we have acted in response to stakeholders’ guidance, insights and feedback, and identified the positive impacts our actions have had for customers.

**Part 2:** Highlights key achievements and benefits delivered through engaging with our stakeholders during the 2021-22 regulatory year.

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## HIGHLIGHTS

### SCOTTISH HYDRO ELECTRIC POWER DISTRIBUTION (SHEPD)

# 13

local authority areas, of which 64% have declared a climate emergency

# 44%

of properties are off-gas grid, the highest proportion in the UK

# 69%

increase in solar, wind, hydro and marine generation anticipated between 2019 and 2030

### Resilient Communities Fund

£280,000 funded in 2021-22 and £1m committed for 2022-23

### SOUTHERN ELECTRIC POWER DISTRIBUTION (SEPD)

# 59

local authority areas, of which 78% have declared a climate emergency

### Electric vehicle (EV)

take-up above GB average and trajectory expected to remain until late 2020s

### Resilient Communities Fund

£195,000 funded in 2021-22 and £1m committed for 2022-23





## 2.1 DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

**We've continued to drive and embed sustained improvements to our stakeholder engagement strategy and practice to ensure our approach is adaptable and delivers the outcomes that matter most to our customers and stakeholders.**

We've listened hard to the SECV panel's feedback and have made improvements in every area, including deepening our partnership working, with communities, across sectors and with other DNOs, taking advantage of a shared interest in positive outcomes and enabling us to deliver more.

For example, our ambitious local capacity workshops with Energy Hub UK and Local Energy Scotland have improved our engagement targeting and sharpened our response to local community needs. The 12 sessions reached over 50 local authorities and over 100 local energy groups, helping set a blueprint for

future strategic planning and maximise opportunities in areas such as community flexibility.

We've also flexed our hybrid engagement approach to better respond to changing circumstances. With 36,000 people engaged, stakeholder participation is higher than ever before and it was great to reconnect in person at our first face-to-face stakeholder workshops since the pandemic.

We've enhanced our practice in other areas, with Citizens Jury sessions deepening our insight on key issues and our already embedded triangulation process now further strengthened by evidence weighting. New non-exec sponsorship for engagement on our Board means our approach is driven from the highest level.

Our submission includes a selection of initiatives and activities that best demonstrate the depth and breadth of the positive impact we have on customers, communities and broader society.

The selection aligns with our stakeholder-led strategic outcomes, and covers our determined focus on an accelerated and just transition to net zero, such as our industry-leading work on collaborative smart grids, but also on key initiatives that drive improvements – here and now – in core areas such as reliability and customer service, which include putting stakeholder views at the heart of improvements to our agile storm response.

We have a key role to play in helping power communities to net zero. Our embedded and proactive approach to engagement firmly puts stakeholders in the driving seat, driving change in our processes, priorities and activities to ensure they genuinely reflect customer and stakeholder needs.

**Graeme Keddie,**  
Director of Corporate Affairs and Stakeholder Engagement

## 2.2 STAKEHOLDERS ARE DRIVING OUR PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES

Feedback from the 2020-21 SECV Panel has influenced our approach this year, driving us to further strengthen the link between stakeholder priorities and our business strategy.

Building on the co-creation approach used to develop our refreshed purpose and vision, we asked our external panels and a cross-section of our stakeholders to review our priorities for 2021-22. The consistent feedback was that we should align our activities for 2021-22 and the remainder of ED1 against our ED2 business priorities.

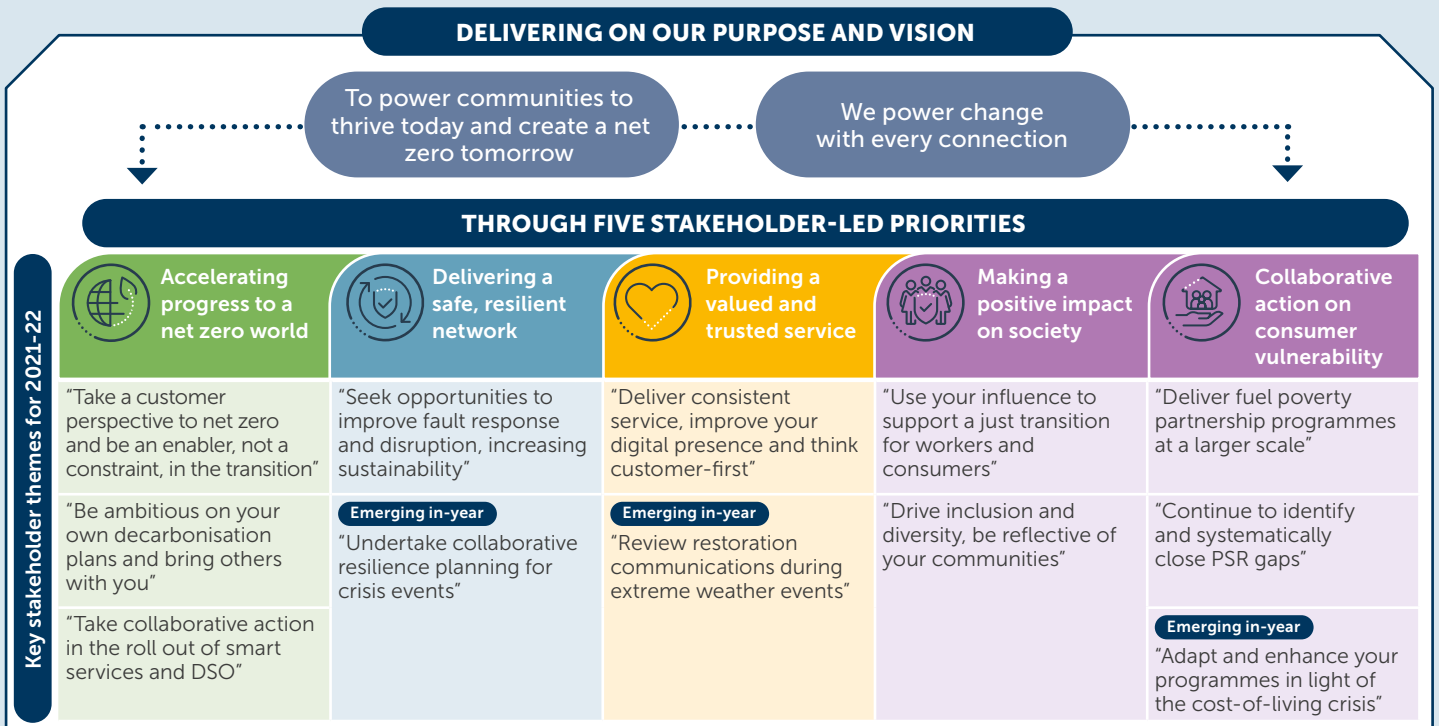
This was based on three factors:

- The robust level of co-creation to agree the business plan priorities and alignment with needs.
- The need to transition to ED2 and mobilise both internally and externally for this change.
- To help drive acceleration of key business plan proposals where they can be delivered in ED1.

Within this framework, stakeholder feedback drove key adjustments, with **Making a positive impact on society**, becoming a fourth distinct priority

instead of an output of the other three and **Collaborative action on Consumer Vulnerability** being retained as a fifth element from the existing stakeholder priorities.

As important as our five priorities are, the actions we take against them are equally critical and stakeholders have directly shaped the key themes for 2021-22 as shown underneath each priority below. Our response forms the basis of parts 2 and 3 of this submission. While keeping a consistent framework we'll continue to re-test these priorities and themes annually, ensuring stakeholders remain at the heart of the way we run our business.



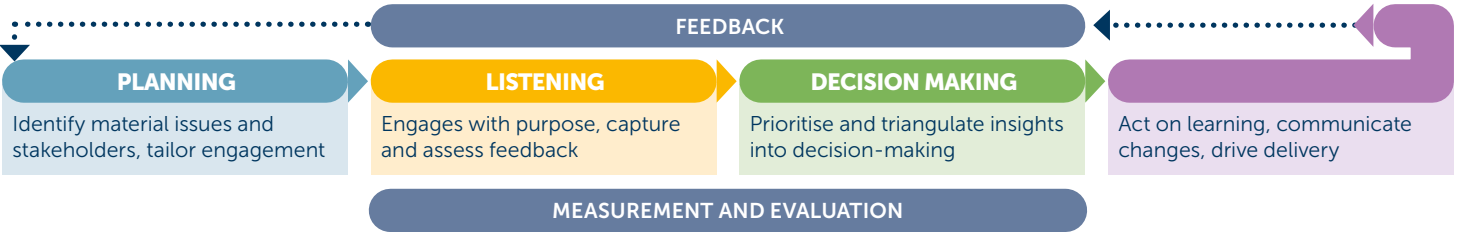


## 2.3 A MATURE STRATEGY WITH CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

### OUR ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES



### OUR EMBEDDED ENGAGEMENT MODEL



### IMPROVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS 2021-22:

We are committed to continual improvement and have acted on the feedback from the SECV panel, our external audit process and, most of all, our stakeholders to ensure our mature and embedded approach to stakeholder engagement is now even stronger with enhanced practice, governance and improved links to decision making.

#### ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT PRACTICE AND INSIGHT

Hybrid events programme established based on stakeholder feedback; web streaming introduced for COP26 event

Introduced an annual stakeholder perception study and 2,239 new stakeholders consented, targeted focus on LAs

Established a process to work with engaged stakeholders to access seldom heard voices (RaaS, page 6)

“Our hybrid approach has boosted participation, with people able to plan an event around their day rather than plan their day around an event.”  
**Jenni Stepher**, HR Business Partner



#### IMPROVED THREAD TO DECISION MAKING

Synthesis reporting in place and embedded providing a rich resource of engagement feedback, accessible to all.

Introduced an engagement metrics dashboard for the Exec Committee and Board packs, which tracks key commitments e.g. fuel poverty support

Introduced a sophisticated evidence weighting process to assess if evidence is methodologically sound, rigorously gathered and credibly interpreted

“Evidence weighting has really helped us assess the relative strength of evidence and consider appropriately rather than risk being led by stronger voices.”  
**Andrew Roper**, DSO Director



#### FURTHER EMBEDDING GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

Appointed a Non-Executive Director responsible for Stakeholder Engagement – three formal checkpoints a year to add to annual Board review

Stakeholder engagement and Empowered to Care training rolled out across organisation; stakeholder now embedded in every committee ToR

Commitment to transpose SECV panel responsibilities to Customer Engagement Group in ED2 with annual public reporting process

“Establishing non-exec responsibility for engagement has helped place stakeholder perspectives at the centre of strategic decision making at the Board.”  
**Rachel McEwen**, CSO and SSEN Board member



## 2.4 USING MEASUREMENT TO DRIVE DECISION-MAKING

Our impact measurement approach detailed in Part 1, page 9, describes the evaluation tools we use to ensure our actions deliver best value for customers, wider society, and our business. No single piece of measurement is used in isolation.

Sharing information and data to better inform our customers and supply chain has been crucial. We have re-examined the scope and pace of the information provided, as well as the investment to deliver it. Using Social Return on Investment (SROI) alongside insights from internal and external stakeholders ensures that decisions are robust, as evidenced.



Robust measurement is crucial to any business and SROI has proven to be a value-add tool in helping us understand the social impact of our actions and assist informed decision-making beyond purely economic metrics. Embedding analysis in-house means we are now applying SROI more broadly across a range of investment decisions.”



**Brian McLaren**, Director of Performance

#### Introducing our supply chain to Climate Academy

##### Decision to be made

Should we fund the education of our supply chain to accelerate their journey to net zero?

##### Alignment to strategic priorities

- Positive impact on our Scope 3 emissions
- RIIO-ED2 ambition - 35% of our supply chain to have set Science Based Targets by 2026
- 81% of SMEs surveyed concerned about rising energy costs

##### Other considerations

- Stakeholder support to deliver this work
- Increasing pressure on SMEs due to rising energy costs

**Forecast SROI** £2.26

**Actual SROI achieved** £4.04

##### Outcome

- Project progressed based on strong SROI linked to climate awareness benefits. Actual SROI higher due to increased participation.

● Financial benefits   ● Social benefits  
● Total benefits

##### Delivered in 2021–22

£2.13m   £1.89m

£4.02m

##### Forecast over 5 years

£3.36m   £0.1m

£3.46m



## 2.5 ACCELERATING PROGRESS TO NET ZERO

Smart and flexible electricity networks will be fundamental to reaching net zero and our stakeholders have urged us to go further and faster, looking from a customer and community lens.

Status: **Enhanced** **DNO First**

### Demonstrating climate leadership through SBTi

#### WE LISTENED

- Our stakeholders have been consistent in their prioritisation of action to tackle climate change.

- Our Citizens' Jury, and wider expert stakeholders, pressed us to be both ambitious and specific by setting science-based carbon targets ensuring our carbon pathway is in line with a 1.5 degree future.

SBTi targets by DNO	SSEN	WPD	UKPN	NPG	SPEN	ENWL
Accredited target set as at 31st March 2022?	1.5 degree	1.5 degree	Well below two	–	–	–
Scope 3 included?	Y	N	Y	–	–	–

#### WE ACTED

- In October 2021, we became **the first DNO to set 1.5 degree science-based reduction targets** for our own operations verified by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

- We founded our climate ambitions on guidance set by the SBTi so our customers and stakeholders can trust that our initiatives are driven by legitimate, credible and global expertise.

#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- We've committed to a **55% reduction in our business carbon footprint** by 2033 from a 2020 base. This represents **22% greater ambition** compared with adopting a 'well below two' degree pathway.
- Urged by stakeholders, including Sustainability First, we included Scope 3 emissions in our SBTi which further strengthens our commitment.



By setting ambitious science-based targets grounded in climate science, SSEN Distribution is taking action to prevent the most damaging effects of climate change."

Alberto Carrillo Pineda,  
Managing Director,  
Science Based Targets at CDP



Status: **New** **DNO First**

### Leading the way on protecting ecosystems

We are collaborating with stakeholders to protect marine and land ecosystems.

#### WE LISTENED

- Following feedback, we refined our Sustainability Strategy to include *Enhancing Our Local Environments* as a core ambition.
- Stakeholders, such as Sustainability First, have consistently emphasised their desire for us to exceed Ofgem environmental requirements and achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain approach.

- At Loch Lihne, we installed nesting boxes for local communities to partake in a project to reverse the decline of black guillemot populations. On the Isle of Mull, we are working with conservationists to sustain and improve machair ecosystems.

#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- We have embedded biodiversity as a key workstream for every future cable installation.
- We are now partnering with the RSPB on a **500% target increase** for local black guillemots, including repurposing off-cuts from cable ducting to construct nesting boxes and other holts.
- Working with conservation charities, we have extended our schools engagement on Mull to undertake STEM projects with 60 children involved.



Status: **Enhanced** **Collaboration** **DNO First**

### Driving net zero in our supply chain

#### WE LISTENED

- We shared our supply chain sustainability risk assessment with **all 8,500 of our suppliers** and held meetings and town-hall style virtual events, gaining valuable insight and awareness of suppliers' net zero status.
- Just under 50% had set net zero targets, with 12.5% committed to a globally-recognised standard. Many suppliers recognised their sustainability policies and practices needed development.

#### WE ACTED

- We shared our Sustainability Strategy including our chosen UN's SDGs and performance measurement criteria.
- We **co-created a Sustainable Procurement Code** with suppliers, setting out expected supplier standards – from paying a real Living Wage to helping us reach net zero by 2050.
- We partnered with the Supply Chain Sustainability School to provide SMEs with free resources and training materials on sustainability topics, including **our bespoke Climate Academy**, a series of six free online webinars to share insight on climate issues and meaningful actions. Our senior leaders hosted each session.

#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- 464** unique Climate Academy delegates.
- On average, **97%** of participants said they felt more informed and **90%** of delegates confirmed they would take action within their organisation as a result.
- Our Sustainable Procurement Code is now included in tenders according to the specific category requirements.

#### SOCIAL VALUE CREATED

**£4.04** per £1 spent  
over the next five years



SSEN's Climate Academy was extremely valuable in terms of insight, experience and meaningful recommendations. Their leadership team demonstrated commitment to collaborating with suppliers to develop sustainability policies and we're using this in future Net Zero strategies."

Harriet Miller, Turner & Townsend



Status: **New**

## Taking a consumer-led approach to the net zero transition

### WE LISTENED

- A consistent theme of customer and stakeholder feedback is that we must “*look from a customer lens*” when helping to facilitate the transition to net zero and should engage on the potential opportunities it brings.
- Our panels and expert groups encouraged us to work collaboratively to better understand consumer behaviours and their impact on our network, ensuring opportunities are inclusive and accessible to all.

#### ANTICIPATE: Collaborating to remove barriers to the EV transition **New** Collaboration



The rise in EV uptake and lack of network visibility at a low voltage level could impact customer resilience. **Project Skyline** has established a reliable data flow between the automobile industry and network operators on the location of new EV registrations to inform investment plans. With partners **UKPN, ElectraLink, CrowdCharge**, the Energy Innovation Centre and automotive networks, a digital platform has been established to share timely and geo-located data and trend analysis.

#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- The digital platform is helping plan earlier network investment, lowering the risk of disruption.
- Location trend data is informing our rollout plan for low voltage monitoring.

#### UNDERSTAND: Partnering to deliver domestic flexibility at scale **New** Collaboration



We've worked with National Grid ESO, Octopus Energy and Ohme to launch **Crowdflex**, the largest ever domestic flexibility study undertaken in the UK, with over **25,000 participating households**. The study has found that active domestic flexibility, with technology such as smart charging and smart time of use tariffs could reduce peak electricity demand by up to 23%, helping avoid or postpone network reinforcement.

#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- We are building the analysis into our flex strategy and tender design.
- A second phase of Crowdflex is underway to trial the delivery of domestic flexibility at scale.

### WE ACTED

We've built a collaborative portfolio of initiatives that seek to **anticipate** and **understand** consumer behaviour in relation to the uptake of low carbon technologies and **engage** further to track emerging trends.

#### ENGAGE: Providing a route map for consumers **New**



Our new **Powering Net Zero website** helps users explore how their local network is evolving through **interactive heat maps**, showing current and future density of low carbon technology with interactive information on benefits of LCTs and steps needed to make the transition. The **'Are you EV-ready?'** survey helps consumers assess their options and provides us with useful insight on likely take up in consumer segments and geographies.

#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- Over 1,500 participants active on the site, with 39% indicating they will purchase an EV by 2025.
- Next step is to build an advice portal and create an insight group to help track consumer trends.

Status: **Enhanced**

## Undertaking bespoke future energy analysis of our island groups

We co-create our Distribution Future Energy Scenario (DFES) analysis with stakeholders and share openly across each licence area, targeting Local Authorities. It iterates each year as we continue to seek external views on improvements.

### WE LISTENED

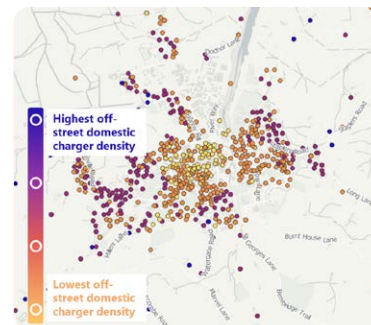
- At our dissemination events for the DFES 2020 report, stakeholders told us a more nuanced approach was needed to reflect island needs, where more stretching net zero ambition exists alongside network limitations.
- We undertook stakeholder segment analysis to identify hard-to-reach voices.

### WE ACTED

- We undertook **targeted co-creation sessions** with stakeholders on the Isle of Wight and core Scottish islands' groups to incorporate the bespoke energy needs of islands communities.
- Over **60 stakeholders** attended the intensive sessions across the public and private sector.
- Alternative data and justification was shared on pipeline projects, which was synthesised in producing the 2021 DFES.

#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- **Stakeholder insights influenced the spatial distribution factors for the 2021 DFES**, increasing projections based on new solar and hydrogen development and adjusting modelling outcomes.



A refreshed analysis of future EV chargepoint density on the Isle of Wight.

- SSEN, Regen, IoW council and island representatives have established a **new Net Zero Working Group** including an indepth study of future local generation potential.
- Work is underway with the Scottish Government to align analysis with their Net Zero by 2040 commitment for six Scottish islands.



Status: **Enhanced** **DNO First** **Collaboration**

## Driving community-led flexibility

Through our holistic smart grid trial environment in Oxfordshire's Project LEO, we conducted a trial open to all businesses generate, store or use energy and can temporarily increase or decrease their usage in response to requests such as to increase export to grid at times of 'peak' demand in evenings.

### WE LISTENED

Following our dedicated engagement webinars, stakeholders told us their motivation for participating in the trial was to support the UK's climate ambitions but felt they lacked knowledge of the flexibility market and the complicated registration process, use of overly technical language, and the requirement for projects to offer at least 50kW were all barriers to entry.



UK100 supports its network of local government leaders to devise and implement plans for the clean energy system, which has flexibility at its core. Project LEO's ground-breaking trials are crucial to that process and will give every home or organisation connected to the grid the potential to benefit from flexibility by responding to local supply and demand needs."

**Polly Billington**, Chief Executive, UK100



### WE ACTED

- We **introduced two Market Stimulation Packages** as an alternative to the competitive auction approach, offering a guaranteed payment if the contract requirements are fulfilled, giving participants certainty.
- We **removed the 50kW cut-off for participation**, allowing even the smallest users, such as community batteries and Vehicle to Grid (V2G), to participate regardless of asset size, and we developed a range of simplified animations to explain the different flexibility services.
- We reviewed our communication materials to promote benefits that matter to most stakeholders and incorporate additional graphics to help explain technical topics.

### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- We launched our first tender in which **18 companies registered** to take part, 17 with assets under 50kW and potentially 74 for further trial periods.
- Participants in the initial three month tender, responded to **69 events** to smooth peak demand, with <50kW sites (community batteries and V2G) **providing 540kWh of generation**.
- Learnings are being shared across the industry through digital engagement, Open Networks and the newly formed international partnership allowing others to replicate the findings and accelerate their own net zero journeys.

### Pioneering tool now replicated across industry **Collaboration**

Following engagement with project partners, potential participants and industry stakeholders, the SSEN-led TRANSITION project has developed a **baseline flexibility tool** which will help flexibility providers to measure accurately what network benefits they have delivered to DNOs. This pioneering tool has now been introduced nationally across DNOs through the ENA.

Our engagement with Open Networks resulted in greater collaboration to ensure the benefits of this common tool are realised by all potential users.

FROM LOCAL



TO GLOBAL

Status: **New** **DNO First** **Collaboration**

## New global smart grid partnership to unlock local solutions to climate change

We introduced the **International Community of Local Smart Grids (ICLSG)** to a global audience at COP26, bringing together DNOs and community groups from around the world to learn from smart grid challenges and opportunities. Following the initial development by SSEN, **this five-year knowledge sharing partnership** is now led by the University of Oxford, as Research Partner.

### WE LISTENED

- Our expert panels urged us to establish an enduring legacy for projects and, working with LEO partners, we **co-created a proposal for a new global smart grid partnership**.
- We **introduced the ICLSG at COP26** to test the need for international learnings to be shared between DNOs and community groups.
- We liaised with Ofgem to ensure alignment with their international *Regulatory Energy Transition Accelerator*.

### WE ACTED

- AusGrid (Australia) and Enel (Italy) joined SSEN as founding partners, with a steering group established.
- We have formalised the partnership and built a website to showcase learnings and outputs.
- Collectively we are targeting recruitment of other DNOs and community groups around the world to ensure learnings from every continent and inform best practice.
- In their role as Research partner, the University of Oxford is conducting synergy research to link member initiatives, a deep-dive research project and horizon scanning.



Project LEO has demonstrated the power and importance of local communities in a participative energy system. The ICLSG takes that idea global, linking LEO to smart grids and communities that are tackling international problems with local solutions."

**Dr Barbara Hammond MBE**, CEO, Low Carbon Hub



### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- **TEPCO (Japan); WEL (New Zealand); and ESB (Ireland) have committed as network partners**.
- Following SSEN's leadership, AusGrid made a commitment to achieving an SBTi-accredited target.
- Learnings shared between SSEN and AusGrid have allowed both partners to take action: AusGrid was informed by SSEN's green recovery programme, while the rate of uptake of solar power in Sydney provides useful learnings for SSEN's southern network.



## 2.6 DELIVERING A SAFE, RESILIENT AND RESPONSIVE NETWORK

The safety and resilience of our network is our core priority and we take all steps to listen to our customers and users and work jointly to implement improvements.

Status: **New** DNO First

### Ground breaking waste heat project for Shetland

#### WE LISTENED

- Fuel poverty figures in Shetland are well above the national average with almost a third of households spending more than 10% of income on heating. This will increase further as the cost-of-living continues to rise.
- Lerwick Power Station is required to complete the Scottish Pollution Release Inventory on an annual basis. We worked with stakeholders to consider innovative ways in which to use the waste heat.

#### WE ACTED

- We **partnered with Shetland Heat Energy and Power (SHEAP) to recycle surplus heat** from our Lerwick Power Station to supplement the existing supply to homes and businesses on the island.

- **New engine technology** means that heat which would normally be dissipated safely into the sea can now be captured and re-distributed.
- It allowed SHEAP, a Charitable Trust, to reduce the need for its primary heat source – refuse incineration – helping lowering environmental impact.



We were delighted to see this ground-breaking project reach fruition. As far as we are aware, there is no other district heating company in the UK that takes industrial waste heat on this scale from elsewhere and recycles it into a network that supplies more than 1,200 customers."

**Derek Leask,**  
Executive Director Shetland Heat Energy and Power



# 600,000

litres of oil saved per year



#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- More than **1,200 customers** are **benefiting** from this innovation which supports homes, healthcare and community facilities.
- This project virtually **eliminates the supplementary 10% of oil burn** which was required to meet peak demand during the winter months **saving around 600,000 litres of oil** over the course of the year.
- It is also expected to **reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** from the SHEAP plant by an estimated **670t annually, equivalent to planting 64,000 trees per year.**

#### SOCIAL VALUE CREATED

**£5.04** per £1 spent  
over the next two years

Status: **Enhanced**

### Rapid fault detection

**Innovative technology improves fault detection rates by more than 40%**

#### WE LISTENED

Analysis of our complaints data and customer listening identified a need to do more to reduce both underground fault restoration times and the level of reinstatement required to roads and drives, with both issues consistently featuring in the Top 5 complaint topics during 2020-21.

#### WE ACTED

- New **Underground Fault Location Technology** was rolled out to **over 180 Rapid Response Officers (RROs)**, who are often the first to arrive on site, allowing faults to be located quickly and accurately, **reducing unnecessary excavations**, the length of interruptions and the need for additional personnel on site.
- A simple hand-held device (Phase-Identification Unit) was launched, allowing RROs to undertake an instant, non-invasive assessment of a customer's supply, with no access to the property required, eliminating the need for the customer to be present during the assessment.

- We launched a Benefits Tracker which allows colleagues to record both the customer benefits linked to use of the new technology and user experience feedback.



It became clear from our customer listening work that this was a key area causing dissatisfaction. Deploying this new way of working, and crucially, rigorously tracking the benefit has helped alleviate customer complaints and drove savings for consumers."

**Eliane Algaard,**  
Director of Operations



#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- **70% of faults are now detected by our RROs**, compared to **25.9%** located using previous methods.
- LV restoration times have been **improved by up to an hour**, reducing customer inconvenience significantly.

#### SOCIAL VALUE CREATED

**£1.16** per £1 spent  
over the next five years

### Our strategy in action: RaaS engagement

The Resilience as a Service (RaaS) project, led by SSEN in partnership with Costain and EON, is developing innovative battery technology that links with local distributed resources to restore power swiftly and automatically in outages.

Recognising that success of the project was dependent on expanding the breadth of participation, we worked closely with core local stakeholders to shape our engagement strategy.

Representation from Minginish Community Council on the project's delivery panel helped identify hard-to-reach voices, influenced engagement activities and provided regular and direct feedback from the community.

Using a variety of methods including presentations, online exhibitions, bilateral meetings, surveys and a website, we broadened knowledge by adapting material for different groups to improve understanding.

We actively shared best practice and insights with industry stakeholders and our findings and insight has fed into project evaluation and future phases. An update on RaaS will be featured in next year's SECV submission.



Status: **Enhanced** Collaboration

## An agile stakeholder-led storm response

Storm Arwen, the most powerful weather event to hit north east Scotland since 1953, affected over 130,000 customers and resulted in the equivalent of two years' worth of overhead line faults in just 48 hours. We undertook a programme of swift engagement, which helped us adapt and improve our response during the subsequent six named storms in what was an exceptional winter.

### WE LISTENED

Prior to winter, we **held ten resilience and Black Start workshops** across our licence areas along with Resilience roundtables with elected members and community groups. These helped us understand our communities needs and

redesigned how we work with Local Resilience Partnerships.

- Following Storm Arwen we engaged quickly and proactively, working with Local Authorities and Scottish Water to run **'listening sessions' with over 200 community members** and conduct **quantitative and qualitative research with over 400 households** affected. This included engagement with PSR customers, targeting hard-to reach segments. We also contributed to debrief exercises at a local and national level.
- Stakeholders praised our communications with resilience partners, storm response, and welfare provision but also gave us feedback on areas where change would be valued – five themes below - to implement at pace.

### WE ACTED

- Coupled with input from wider reviews we set out an interim improvement plan which was put to the test in both Storms Malik and Corrie in the north of Scotland and Eunice in central southern England – which each affected over 100,000 customers.
- Longer-term actions include an improved co-ordination process with mobile network operators, recognising the customer and operational impact of loss of communication, improved compensation processes, and undertaking **trials of personal battery solutions for PSR customers**.

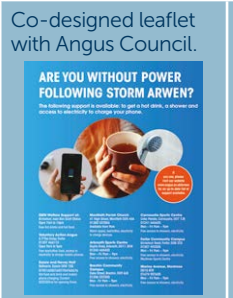


#### FEEDBACK THEME FROM CUSTOMERS

#### FEEDBACK THEME FROM RESILIENCE PARTNERS

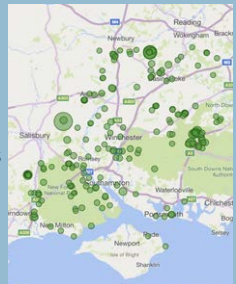
Improve restoration communications	Prioritise analogue communications	Enhance welfare provision	Improve outage data	Support personal and community resilience
We worked with customers and stakeholders to <b>co-create a new strategy for communication of restoration times</b> which was successfully tested during Storms Corrie, Malik and Eunice <b>see page 8</b> .	We created a <b>new Radio Brief</b> for local radio stations to cover our restoration and welfare information as a public service broadcast. We produced a co-branded leaflet template for local authorities to use. <b>Used in Storms Malik, Corrie and Eunice and now Embedded</b>	We improved our sector-leading welfare provision with <b>more food vans, early assistance with food/accommodation costs, and an agile resilience partner approach</b> , to ensure no community was left behind. <b>Applied in Storms Malik, Corrie and Eunice and now Embedded</b>	We produced a <b>visual map of outages</b> to Local Resilience Forums, broken down by vulnerability markers, local authority and parliamentary boundaries, and established a consistent process of reporting. <b>New outage data maps used in Storm Eunice and now Embedded</b>	We <b>increased compensation for Storm Arwen by 20% to £1.7m</b> , aimed at helping customers improve their personal resilience. We made an <b>additional £1m available</b> to community groups and charities in the north of Scotland and central southern England as part of our Resilient Communities Fund. <b>Changed our fund criteria to focus on personal resilience following consultation Enhanced</b>

“One unexpected learning we gained from working with SSEN during Storm Arwen was the non-stigmatising way they deliver aid where and when it was needed, such as the food vans. This year, rather than using a referral system, we are offering more 'free-for-all' programmes.”  
**Jane Stork, Angus Council**



Co-designed leaflet with Angus Council. Deployed 30% more food vans in Storms Malik and Corrie thanks to earlier co-ordination with resilience partners.

Shared editable constituency and community level outage reports twice a day with 11 Local Resilience Forums during Storm Eunice.



### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- £2.7m** delivered in additional targeted funding; directly benefitting **38,000** customers through enhanced goodwill and multiple communities through the established fund.
- Our welfare provision **served over 140,000 hot meals and reimbursed over £1.8m in food and accommodation costs**.
- Our listening sessions showed a marked improvement in overall satisfaction from our Storm Arwen response (**64%** positive or neutral) to our Malik and Corrie response (**83%** positive or neutral). Communication improvements were rated even higher

- (**32%** uplift) and closely aligned with research findings from customers.
- We have fostered deeper relationships with resilience partners and hosted several visits to our control rooms, to meet with operations and customer management teams to develop a greater understanding of the processes and responsibilities undertaken in a severe weather event.

#### SOCIAL VALUE CREATED

**£1.68** per **£1** spent based on enhanced welfare approach

**32%** ↑

uplift in customer satisfaction of communications in Storm Corrie/Malik vs Arwen



Arwen was a storm like no other, but we learned quickly by using our strong connections with resilience groups and communities to undertake considered and collaborative engagement. It gave us a different perspective and drove rapid innovation and change.”



**Mark Rough**, Director of Customer Operations, SHEPD



## 2.7 A VALUED AND TRUSTED SERVICE

In an evolving society, customer expectations are changing. We are working closely with our stakeholders to improve our services – here and now – and set us on a course to a net zero future.

Status: **New**

### Putting customer needs first

In the first days of Storm Arwen a proportion of our Estimated Times of Restoration (ETRs) were overoptimistic as they were based on typical storm assumptions. This didn't take account of the discovery of multiple points of network failure or issues accessing sites.

#### WE LISTENED

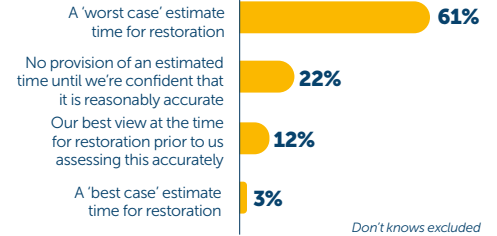
Social listening and live monitoring of customer complaints showed an increased level of frustration with ETRs. This was also voiced by Local Resilience Forums.

#### WE ACTED

- We engaged with several partners including Local Authorities and participated in formal Scottish Government and BEIS reviews which helped us better understand the impact of our ETRs.

- We commissioned qualitative and quantitative research with **400 customers** to ensure we captured insight beyond those who raised complaints and from those who may not have realised they could inform our future approach. **60% of customers** stated they would prefer that we adopted either a 'worst case' approach or didn't give an ETR until fully confident it was achievable.
- We delivered two stakeholder workshops where **61% of stakeholders** told us they would prefer a 'reasonable worst case' approach to ETRs.
- Following a triangulation process which assessed considerations, such as increased accommodation support, we subsequently **implemented a 'reasonable worst case' approach** for Storms Malik, Corrie and Eunice, which is now embedded, and are pursuing changes to the way ETRs are displayed on our systems.

If SSEN are unable to give an accurate time for power restoration, what would be your preference?



### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- 30%** of customers stated they experienced an improvement in the communication of ETRs between Storm Arwen and subsequent storms.
- 57%** reduction in inbound calls between Storm Arwen and subsequent storms.



Worst-case scenarios are much more helpful for our planning. So in Malik and Corrie, SSEN's approach to restoration times was really helpful. It was clear there was real learning between the two storms."  
**Community member**, Focus group

Status: **New** DNO Collaboration

### Helping fleet operators make the switch to EVs

We have worked in collaboration with SP Energy Networks (SPEN) to actively support fleet operators as they switch to EVs.

#### WE LISTENED

- We observed varied, and often low awareness around the issues associated with vehicle electrification and responded by **co-authoring an EV Guide for Fleet Operators**. The guide was designed as a useful 'how to get started' tool and provides an overview of the engagement, design and connections processes.
- In collaborative discussions, bus operators and the Scottish Government told us that DNOs could help support greater awareness of how best to electrify fleets.
- While many fleet operators are aligned to net zero ambitions, they are keen to understand current and future electricity requirements to enable them to put fleet migration plans in place without risking business service levels.

#### WE ACTED

- Led by MD Chris Burchell, we play a key role on the Bus Decarbonisation Task Force, collaborating with SPEN, Confederation for Passenger Transport (CPT), and bus fleet operators to develop a pathway for a zero emissions.

- The guide is published on partner websites and was promoted widely. We also **hosted a webinar for fleet operators** in both of our licence areas.
- Following distribution of the guide we have offered operators dedicated pre-application meetings to discuss their EV charging needs, providing design support, feasibility studies and guidance on budgets.

### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED



- Fleet operators have a greater understanding of the process and timescales to factor into business plans and, in turn, help SSEN meet connection timescales.
- 80%** of participants in engagement events stated their level of knowledge has increased specifically on future charge requirements and options to reduce costs of connections.
- Significant increase in pre-application meetings and fleet connection requests.



### Accelerating Dundee's bus electrification through the green recovery

Founded through engagement at the Bus Decarbonisation Taskforce and funded through a £3m investment in our accelerated Green Recovery Scheme, we are helping bus operator McGill's accelerate the electrification of their Xplore Dundee bus service in the city.

Following collaborative engagement on potential capacity needs and a formal expression of interest, we are progressing strategic investment to upgrade two transformers and underground cabling at Constable Street Substation, unlocking 12.8MW of capacity for low carbon development. It will allow McGill's, who recently put twelve fully electric buses into service at its Xplore Dundee depot, to progress further fleet electrification in line with its Mission Zero programme, while also providing capacity to expand Police Scotland's EV fleet needs.



Status: **Enhanced**

## Delivering an enhanced digital experience

When it comes to the digital experience, our customers expect convenience, immediacy, simplicity and hyper-personalisation. We have partnered with leading customer experts from outside our sector to analyse customer preferences and develop our digital service strategy.

### WE LISTENED

- We analysed over **24,000 individual pieces of feedback** from customer focus groups, co-creation sessions, surveys, and consumer behaviour research to understand stakeholder needs, expectations and concerns.
- Stakeholders told us they often had to contact our call centres to resolve issues when digital channels should suffice. Digital platforms should be intuitive, simple, and easy to navigate, with accurate information and self-serve options. Real-time service updates should be accessible on mobiles and further information about power cuts should be available.
- Working with customer experience experts, we **created customer personas** to inform our decisions relating to new

initiatives and service improvements. These personas are now used rigorously for customer journey design.

### WE ACTED

- We launched our new website with **redesigned customer journeys**, making it simpler for customers to find what they need. We improved mobile optimisation, making it easier to use on the go, and improved self-serve capabilities for customer convenience.
- We redesigned our most visited service, the PowerTrack web portal, with improved mobile optimisation and a streamlined user interface. Customers can now use their postcode to locate nearby power cuts, understand their cause and monitor the progress of power restoration in real-time.
- We ensured the website and PowerTrack could scale to extreme peak demands and handle any significant spikes in usage without impacting service or customer experience.
- Customers can report outages and network damage through our website – we continue to be the only DNO in the UK that provides this service. Our other industry-leading online services include the ability to find your nearest live EV charging point during a power cut.

- We **launched Notify**, a service that allows customers to register for real time text message updates on the status of power cuts and timelines for restoring power.

### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- A **five-fold increase** in PowerTrack usage, excluding storms, reducing calls and allowing prioritisation of customers who prefer non-digital channels.
- Customers using the service since its refresh have scored us an average of **4.3 out of 5** for their experience.
- **100%** availability of PowerTrack through seven extreme storms.
- **98%** of respondents were positive about Notify and would like to receive more power notifications in future.
- Our website has maintained the **highest accessibility score** in the industry for the fourth year running.



We listened hard to customer feedback in developing our digital service strategy, including co-creation sessions. This helped us look at the opportunity in the round, such as how increased digital choice can help protect traditional channels for those that need them."

**Mike Dotts**,  
Digital Strategy Manager

Status: **Enhanced** **DNO First**

## Empowering everyone to Care

The Empowered to Care programme is a key element of our **embedded Customer Experience Strategy**. Our plans to transform our processes and technology will only deliver the intended benefits for customers if our people are equipped with the necessary skills to develop them.

### WE LISTENED

- Customer feedback and internal analysis identified a lack of consistency in customer service-related skills and knowledge.
- We surveyed over **1,000** employees to understand their views. **58%** of those surveyed said they would benefit from improved training opportunities and enhanced knowledge and tools.
- Focus groups with front line colleagues and the Institute of Customer Service (IoCS) identified specific areas for attention including managing difficult conversations, rapport building and understanding customer needs.
- Working with our SAP and ISP, we **developed a robust training framework** endorsed by our Executive Committee.

### WE ACTED

- We have developed a full training programme consisting of three pillars:
  - 1 Service Excellence:** a programme co-created with the IoCS using well-tested and proven best practice methods for all colleagues.
  - 2 Service Excellence Plus:** an advanced development module for teams working in specialist customer roles.
  - 3 Service Leadership:** a module created especially for current and future leaders to provide knowledge on coaching for customer service.
- We have incorporated feedback from our colleagues to develop and drive the methods used, including a blended approach of remote and classroom-based training, introduction of bite-size modules and use of multi-disciplined teams.

### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- Customers have rated the helpfulness of our colleagues at **9.63 out of 10**.
- Of those who completed the Service Excellence module, confidence in customer service has increased from 6.9/10 to **8.6/10**.
- We became the **first DNO to be awarded the prestigious Training Mark Accreditation** from the IoCS.
- We have actively shared our training material with members of the IoCS.



Having identified both a skills and knowledge gap when it came to delivering consistent and exceptional customer service, we developed our Empowered to Care training programme. Rolling this out to every colleague in SSEN ensures we create a customer obsessed culture and deliver a truly world-class service."

**Lisa Doogan**,  
Head of Customer Service  
and Stakeholder Strategy



**1st**  
DNO to be  
accredited





## 2.8 POSITIVE IMPACT ON SOCIETY

Every day teams across SSEN strive to make a positive impact on society. Our stakeholders want us to lead the way and ensure the net zero transition is truly inclusive and just.

### Industry-leading advocacy for a Just Transition

Enabling a just transition to net zero that promotes fair work and opportunities for all is a consistent priority of our stakeholders and ensures we maintain the skills needed in a changing energy sector.

#### WE LISTENED

- We engaged to find out why employees had made the move to a low-carbon career and what would make the move easier and attractive to others.
- We have engaged with the UK and Scottish Governments, Scotland's Just Transition Commission, industry, education and skills bodies, and trade union partners to share our findings.

- We held a **Just Transition event at COP26** attended by 250 delegates Just Transition Minister Richard Lochhead MSP as keynote speaker.

#### WE ACTED

- We published **Just Transition: From Principles to Action**, which included a series of actions for our business and twenty recommendations for industry and government to deliver a fair transition for workers.
- We introduced focus groups for SSEN employees from oil and gas backgrounds to share experience, insights and advice.
- We launched a dedicated career website to encourage applications from those in high-carbon industries showcasing the overall benefits of a low-carbon career.



It is clear that when it comes to delivering a just transition to net zero, SSEN are not just talking the talk – they are walking the walk and providing global leadership.”

**Richard Lochhead MSP**,  
Minister for Just Transition



#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- Out of 180 companies assessed in the World Benchmarking Alliance's Just Transition Assessment, we achieved the **highest overall score** including full marks on fundamentals of social dialogue and stakeholder engagement in a Just Transition.
- Following focus group feedback, we **established an electrical engineering conversion course** for talent transitioning to low carbon roles.
- In 2020-21, **one in five employees** have joined us from a high-carbon industry.

Status: **Enhanced**

### Championing equality for EV disabled drivers

We undertook a two-stage research project in partnership with Disabled Motoring UK to understand the unique enablers and barriers faced by drivers with vulnerabilities adopting EVs and the potential of technologies and DNOs to remove barriers.

Over **100 ideas were generated** through workshops, with several being selected for in-depth development, such as enabling PSR households to use Vehicle to Home to provide back-up power during a power cut.

We published recommendations in our **'Equal EV'** report in collaboration with Energy Systems Catapult and further amplified the project in engagement with

industry and government, hosted project webinars and produced video interviews with participants to highlight their experience firsthand.



Equal EV showed that charge points which are accessibly designed benefit everyone. We are delighted to be working with SSEN to ensure everyone's voices are heard in the transition to EVs and nobody is left behind.”

**Graham Footer**,  
Chief Executive, Disabled Motoring UK



#### POSITIVE IMPACT DELIVERED

- **First UK DNO** to investigate and report on the barriers and challenges faced by over two million disabled motorists.
- Following engagement with the project team and UK Government, a **commitment to improve accessibility at public charge points** for disabled users was included in the **UK Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy**.
- We are collaborating with the industry to implement the solutions identified by stakeholders, such as exploring the implementation of charging services for PSR customers in outages.

## REFLECTING OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGH OUR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY

### Driving disability inclusion

We've taken our disability inclusion commitment forward this year with **disability workshops for all line managers**, supported by active participation and promotion from our Executive team.



### Helping our employees belong

We've created **seven employee-led communities**. After our employees highlighted the need for peer-to-peer support platforms, we worked together to co-create the best way to offer support. Chris Burchell sponsors our BAME group to drive forward the voices at an executive level. Other belonging groups include: Armed Forces, Chronic

Health and Disabilities, LGBTQ+, Menopause, Working Parents, and Taking Care of Ourselves and Each Other.

Having Chris as a sponsor and ally has meant we've been able to give key issues a broader platform which is imperative for change.”

**Asma Sangha**, Co-Lead, BAME Community Group



### Supporting social mobility

We've established partnerships with Barnardo's and the Taylor Bennett Foundation to help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome barriers to employment. Over **300** young people have been supported by the Barnardo's programme.

As a member of the Mayor of London's Infrastructure Group and EDI subgroup, we're working with the Greater London Authority to support the four pledges to ensure that the infrastructure sector better reflects London's diversity.

"Skyline shows how DNOs like Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks can provide true leadership by helping the EV industry to participate in driving down cost of networks. The backing we have received has enabled us to engage industry leading companies including world leading OEMs."



Mike Potter,  
CEO, CrowdCharge

"SSEN is really at the forefront of innovation and have recognised that while location is hugely important, it's people that will drive the net zero transition and listening to and learning from customers and communities will be absolutely crucial."



Laura Sandys CBE,  
Chair, Energy Digitalisation Taskforce,  
speaking at COP26

"SSEN are a willing, helpful and invaluable partner who have directly assisted in our responses to severe weather events across Aberdeenshire. They have pro-actively engaged with both our Senior Leadership Team and Power Resilience Preparedness Group to allow the council to better understand the challenges a failure brings and the possible mitigations."

Neil Cameron,  
Emergency Response Officer, Aberdeenshire Council

UtilityWeek  
**AWARDS**  
2021

**COMMUNITY  
INVESTOR  
AWARD**

**WINNER**

SSEN Distribution  
in partnership with  
Shetland Telecom



Our commitment to communities was recognised at the 2021 Utility Week Awards. The Community Investor award highlighted our work to support the Shetland community with access to high speed broadband as being 'transformative for the communities it serves'.

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