



DSO: You Said, We Did

2025/26



Foreword

I am pleased to introduce our **You Said, We Did 2025–2026** review; our annual reflection on examples of how we have listened and responded to the customers, communities and partners who shape the way we operate our network and deliver our DSO responsibilities.

As we continue our transition to a smarter, more flexible and more socially responsible energy system, one thing remains constant: your insight drives our progress. The feedback we receive across our engagement channels; whether through our DSO Stakeholder Panel, one-to-one conversations, events, consultations or day-to-day interaction, helps ensure that our decisions reflect the real priorities of the people and places we serve.

This year, you told us you want clearer data, faster and more transparent processes, more accessible flexibility markets, and support tailored to the unique needs of your local areas and organisations. You asked for collaboration that is meaningful, for communication that is open, and for actions that demonstrate genuine accountability. You had co-created our Social DSO strategy with us and have collaborated with us shaping how we have taken it forward.

We have listened. And we have acted.

This year we have taken ambitious, tangible steps across flexibility, network planning, data and decision making to make it easier than ever for stakeholders to engage with us and play an active role in the transition to net zero. We have expanded low voltage flexibility at scale, strengthened hands on support for local and combined authorities, and transformed the accessibility and usability of our data. Our commitment to the Social DSO has deepened, embedding fairness, inclusion and community value into everything we do.

Your continued insight and collaboration remain crucial in shaping a transparent, accountable and future ready DSO.

We look forward to continuing this journey with you.



Paul Auckland

Head of Distribution System Operation

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1. Introduction

Our DSO vision is to **enable customers to decarbonise, enable economic growth and provide affordable services and infrastructure vital for achieving net zero for all**. We are a DSO that integrates social value, equity and inclusion into network planning, investment and operation to create an electricity network fit for the future, for the communities we serve.

Listening to and acting on messages from our customers and stakeholders is pivotal to achieving this goal and to making it easy to engage and do business with us. This You Said, We Did review shows how we have done that over 2025/26. It covers:

- ✓ The **stakeholder engagement mechanisms** that inform us about satisfaction with our DSO services. These keep us alert to what we are doing well and where we can improve, and underpin the messages we are acting upon.
- ✓ The messages we have received from stakeholders (**'You Said'**), and how we have responded (**'We Did'**) in four key DSO areas:



Flexibility



Network planning



Data



Decision making

We are grateful to customers and stakeholders for taking the time to feed in messages. Some of our responses are strategic and long term. Others are quick wins where a small change or action by us can make a big difference to a specific stakeholder. Both are equally important and have helped us to make significant progress over the year.

We hope you find this review helpful and look forward to your continuing feedback and collaboration in the future.

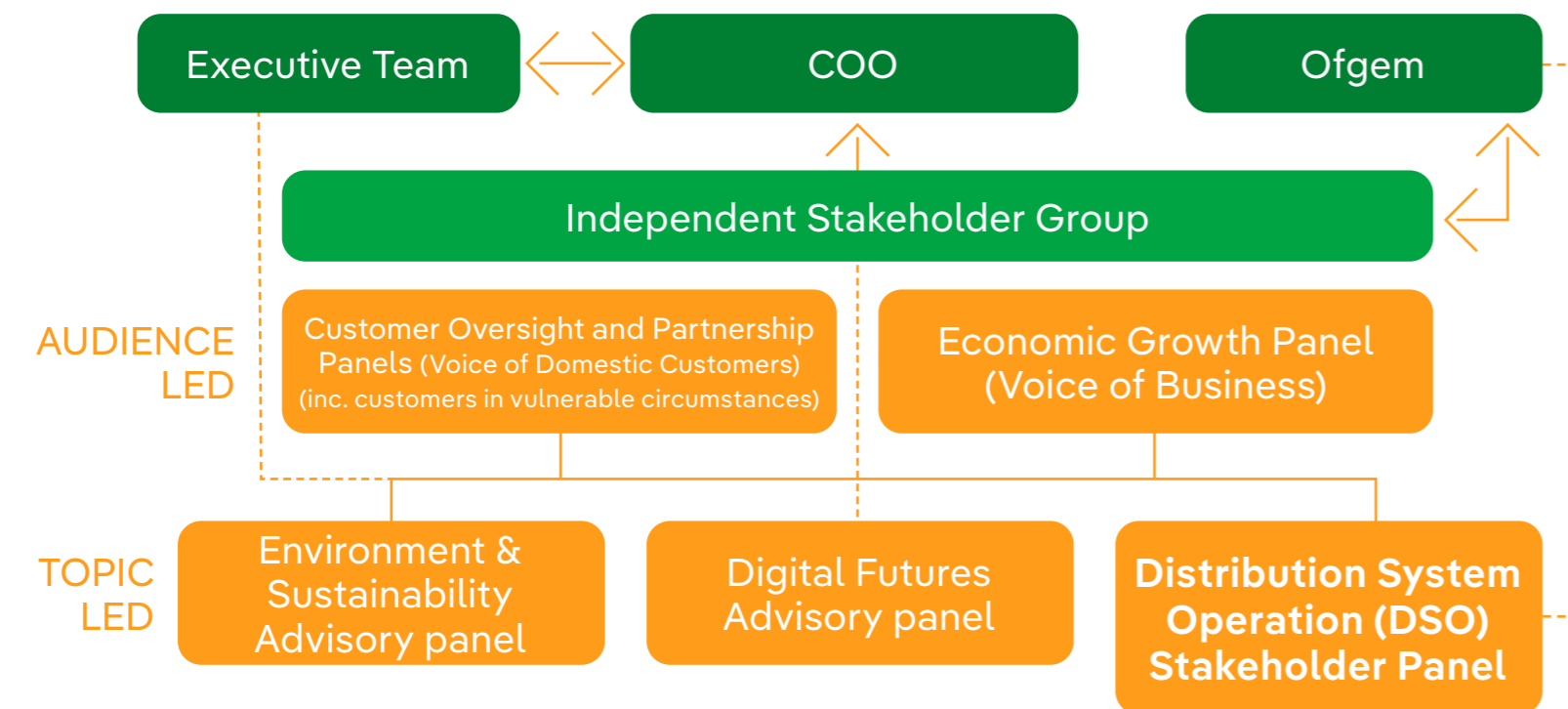


2. Our approach to stakeholder engagement and relationships

Ongoing and open customer and stakeholder engagement and relationships provide a vital foundation for delivering change – both to a DSO way of working and to delivering net zero. It ensures your perspectives and priorities come through loud and clear when we are making decisions about the network now and in the future.

We use a suite of mechanisms to achieve this, tailored to enable our many partners and audiences to easily engage with us in a rich and meaningful way.

Our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy sets out our approach. It is built around clear and transparent governance, feedback channels, and strong executive commitment, using a broad range of engagement mechanisms including advisory panels, regular reporting and triangulation.



The structure includes our DSO Stakeholder Panel, comprised of representatives from a range of stakeholder groups, and which monitors, evaluates and guides the scope and speed of our transition. Its broad membership has strong geographic representation, and roles include oversight of the Social DSO Fund designed to ensure a fair, efficient and sustainable energy transition.

This year the Panel increased meeting frequency to bi-monthly to enable earlier and more agile challenge. It also published its first annual report, strengthening transparency and demonstrating how independent oversight is shaping our DSO transition.

This year we have reorganised teams, introduced new expertise and strengthened feedback loops to firmly embed engagement as business-as-usual. Through conferences, DSO webinars, flexibility forums, consultations, bilateral meetings and our DSO Stakeholder Panel, we engaged with over 450 stakeholders across local government, industry, community energy and commercial market participants.

Messages from these interactions are critical in shaping our work and our approach is paying dividends. In 2026, DSO stakeholders reported improved clarity, meaningful dialogue and confidence that we act on feedback:

88% rated their relationship with us positively in our annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey

89% rated us positively in Ofgem's independent incentive survey

Examples of how we have responded to stakeholder and customer feedback during 2025/26 include:

Supporting local and combined authorities on Local Area Energy Plans

You said

Local and combined authorities requested tailored support in overcoming barriers to building and delivering Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs)

We did

- ✓ Provided bespoke support to local authorities tailored to the stage they are at on their LAEP journey. Informed by 97 LAEP bilateral meetings, support has brought together people and resources across SP ENW to meet specific local needs - helping councils to develop and deliver these key plans more quickly and effectively.
- ✓ Funded local authority access to the LAEP+ digital planning platform. This user-friendly tool enables councils and their partners to develop, model and share LAEPs with DNOs. It has enabled them to reduce resource burdens - including time spent, consultant costs and data procurement - while moving towards a whole-system approach.
- ✓ Launched local authority LAEP education and planning training ('Empower: Upskilling for Local Energy Planning'). The programme's three levels of training support local authorities across different stages of LAEP development, including online 'Introduction to energy networks' and in-person 'Build' and 'Deliver' workshops. This responds to gaps in technical confidence and data interpretation skills, and builds the capacity needed to design, secure buy-in for, and deliver LAEPs.
- ✓ Cumbrian authorities requested support in developing a Cumbria-wide local area plan. We created a bespoke offer of support, providing three different solutions to support regional growth plans.

Strengthening collaboration and one-to-one engagement

You said

Continue to engage with stakeholders including solving problems collaboratively and with preference for one-to-one engagement to enable direct conversations

We did

- ✓ Held ongoing quarterly bilateral meetings with all local authorities and combined authorities in our area - attended by over 400 officers across all 40 local authorities.
- ✓ Held in-person workshops in Kendal and Manchester specifically for local authorities to discuss and understand their issues and barriers - strengthening collaboration and enabling us to jointly address challenges.
- ✓ Agreed Terms of Reference for a GMCA/SP ENW bi-monthly bilateral working group, committing to expediting the delivery of essential infrastructure across Greater Manchester by harmonising strategic planning, regulatory engagement and investment priorities.
- ✓ Ongoing membership of the GMCA Bee Net Zero Business Board, where our role includes helping to address connection pinch-points - enabling progress on business growth and decarbonisation ambitions.
- ✓ Stakeholders wanted to understand the scale of investment in Cumbria. We hosted a site visit to our Harker substation, bringing together the National Grid, NESO, heads of both Cumbrian authorities and Enterprising Cumbria.

Strengthening collaboration and one-to-one engagement (cont.)

You said

Collaborate with other utilities, partners and developers to make schemes happen – and in a co-ordinated way



We did

- ✓ Undertaken activities to align electricity, heat and transport decarbonisation pathways through cross-vector collaboration. For example, we developed reciprocal links with Cadent in our data portals and contributed data to the Northern Gas Networks Navigator project. That has supported network investment modelling and strengthened alignment between electricity and gas transition pathways.
- ✓ Participated in a cross-industry working group with other network operators, NESO and DESNZ to review and enable advancement of strategic priorities.
- ✓ Collaborating with other utilities and key stakeholders as members of the GMCA Strategic Infrastructure Board in support of whole-system planning. We also advanced a Greater Manchester Collaborative street works pilot. This will enhance the efficiency of excavations and minimise disruption for customers and stakeholders.

Support local authorities in engaging with residents on adopting EVs



- ✓ Supported Westmorland & Furness council at their first resident EV engagement event. We attended in person to answer questions related to DNO works required to facilitate EV charging, helping to build the clarity needed to extend uptake.

Personas review

You said

Refine customer and stakeholder personas to include combined authority perspectives, and to better reflect differing industrial and commercial customers



We did

- ✓ Reviewed and updated our whole persona set to ensure personas fully reflect current stakeholder needs, and to maximise their value in informing our planning, delivery and priorities.
- ✓ Added new content on combined authority and commercial stakeholders to ensure personas keep track with the changing organisational landscape and the range of needs we must consider.
- ✓ Added a new Social DSO persona and Social DSO commitments to all personas to reinforce the prominence of this key agenda in decision making.

Engagement events and feedback loops

You said

Stakeholders value engaging via in-person events spread across the region



We did

- ✓ Held a DSO customer engagement event in Kendal and a Resilient North West Customer Summit in Penrith – directly responding to customer asks for events across the region.
- ✓ Complemented our Spring DSO Conference in Manchester with an Autumn DSO Conference in Penrith. By engaging key stakeholders and supporters and updating them on future plans, these events built shared understanding and supported partnership-based progress.
- ✓ Participated in events organised by others, e.g. housing developer-led events in Preston, a North West Business Leaders event in Samlesbury and the Green Summit in Manchester. Doing so extended our outreach and accessibility for stakeholders and helped to share key messages more widely.

3. Flexibility

We prioritise flexibility to manage our network efficiently. Flexibility helps to ease constraints, manage planned outages, and enhance energy security. It supports the transition to net zero and a fair energy market that leaves no one behind.

A critical message from stakeholders this year was to make participation in flexibility easier, faster and more financially rewarding for a wider range of providers. That is especially true for low voltage (LV) or less technical providers like community groups, local businesses and domestic customers, where the complexity of the market can deter participation. This year we have also continued to build relationships with flexibility service providers (FSPs) to understand their needs and then provide practical solutions and support to help unlock their involvement.

Stakeholders also want us to optimise flexibility in real-time, because this gives more opportunities to earn revenue, improves fairness and predictability in dispatch, and reduces operational risk. Our industry-leading active network management (ANM) system has now

been implemented into business-as-usual and is delivering operational benefits, avoiding reinforcement and enabling faster and lower-cost access to the network.

Listening and responding to our stakeholders has supported us to scale flexibility delivery, meaning this year we:

- Offered £27.8 million of flexibility tender opportunities, up nearly 40% year-on-year
- Received 62 bids (totalling 719.4 MW), with 46 accepted and contracted (totalling 607MW)
- Onboarded 34 new FSPs

Over 2025/26, we have listened carefully and responded in the following ways:

Unlocking flexibility by encouraging more FSPs to get involved

You said

Offer pre-scheduled products and more LV requirements

We did

- ✓ Published our [LV Flexibility Strategy](#) to provide transparency in decision making. It sets out the process, criteria and systems we use to estimate, tender and procure our LV flexibility requirements and products.
- ✓ Our Autumn 2025 tender was our largest to date. With £14 million of opportunities, it targeted procurement of 282 LV requirements across 141 substations, covering approximately 110,000 LV customers. This was an increase from 22 LV requirements across 11 substations in Autumn 2024.
- ✓ We have reduced the participation threshold for the LV market from 10kW to 5kW. This makes it easier for more providers to participate directly, especially low voltage domestic customers and small businesses.
- ✓ Our pre-scheduled Scheduled Utilisation and Peak Reduction opportunities in the LV market also aid access – they give advance visibility of dispatch, do not require an API link and give more certainty on payment.
- ✓ We are collaborating with the NESO to improve primacy and their Demand Flexibility Service product so consumers with smart meters and low carbon technologies can participate – helping manage electricity demand in peak periods.

Unlocking flexibility by encouraging more FSPs to get involved (cont.)

You said

Increase the frequency of flexibility tender opportunities to make it easier and more attractive for FSPs to participate



We did

- ✓ In addition to biannual tenders, we have introduced a new monthly procurement window, the first covering requirements for February 2026. This boosts participation as they are closer to real-time, gives FSPs a better view of capacity, avoids the need to 'lock-in' assets and generates a faster revenue return. They also give FSPs scope to operate in multiple markets and stack revenues.
- ✓ We have proactively engaged FSPs to support their readiness to respond, including contacting previously dormant participants to encourage re-engagement.
- ✓ This also supports SP ENW's move closer to near real-time procurement and improves operational responsiveness.

Make it easier and quicker to participate in flexibility tenders including improved processes for checking asset eligibility



- ✓ We have introduced a new MPAN (meter point administration number) checking service to help FSPs quickly and accurately pinpoint which assets are eligible for an active tender. Where previously a provider would need to manually check all MPANs individually, they can now do so in bulk. This reduces manual processes, improves procurement accuracy and enables faster provider participation.
- ✓ We are currently the only DSO systematically applying MPAN-level validation across tenders. We are in the process of fully automating this service in collaboration with the ElectronConnect platform to further speed up eligibility checking.
- ✓ We have responded to FSP feedback that it can be hard to provide their import MPAN. Our service now allows for review of eligibility using the export MPAN instead.

Evolve routes to engage flexibility stakeholders



- ✓ Launched a new quarterly Flexibility Forum in March 2026 to bring existing and potential FSPs together with the DSO and others including local authorities and community energy providers to understand barriers and co-create solutions.
- ✓ Bolstered capacity in our flexibility team, giving more resource to engage, learn, listen and respond to FSPs to understand their capabilities and provide tailored advice to help them find the right product.

Improve the user experience of the ElectronConnect platform



- ✓ DSOs using ElectronConnect have collaborated to feedback to the provider to ensure all platform users experience an improved and standardised service.
- ✓ Our influence has made a difference to FSPs. Improved availability-refinement means FSP assets can now be released sooner (week-ahead) if no longer needed. This gives asset owners greater freedom to use their assets as they choose and more scope for stacking with other markets.
- ✓ FSPs can now bulk upload individual small group assets to form larger aggregated portfolios with enough capacity to participate in markets. API-enabled dispatch is now supported; and operators can now more easily technically qualify and verify performance of single assets or an aggregated group.
- ✓ These improvements simplify and speed up processes and reduce administration to help boost participation. In our Autumn 2025 tender, 14 new providers registered and five participated in tenders for the first time.

Expand understanding of flexibility and its data

You said

FSPs with a non-technical background want clear, easy to understand and navigate flexibility data to help identify tender opportunities and support their participation

We did

- ✓ Refreshed our [Flexibility Hub](#) to make it simpler to find and interpret data on our Open Data Portal. This is reducing complexity for new, existing and non-technical participants, improving self-serve capability and helping people find the flexibility service that is best for them, including clearer identification of LV opportunities.
- ✓ The Hub now provides a single view of flexibility opportunities, visualisations of opportunities by location and voltage, HV and LV filtering and improved navigation, guidance and indicators that are accessible to non-technical users. We also added a new Scheduled Utilisation case study. It gives an overview of the product, process, payment, and a worked example of a typical user.

Optimising flexibility

You said

Offer Actively Managed Connections and make Active Network Management (ANM) business-as-usual

We did

- ✓ We energised our first ANM connection in November 2025 – a 30MW battery storage site near Wroughtington. By connecting the site using ANM, we avoided substantial network reinforcement works and delivered an estimated £2.4m saving while enabling a connection 12–18 months earlier than would otherwise have been possible.
- ✓ We extensively promote ANM flexible connections to reduce curtailment. The result is faster, cheaper, more efficient connections and better use of the network. Find current and future ANM zones [here](#).

Use ANM systems to accelerate connections to the network that are held in transmission reinforcement queues

- ✓ We have co-created technological and commercial solutions alongside the NESO to accelerate connections that were held up awaiting transmission network reinforcement.
- ✓ Our industry leading ANM system delivers the necessary functionality to accelerate connections held in reinforcement queues by up to 10 years as well as delivering cost savings to all bill payers. Many of these connections are pivotal to delivering a net zero energy system.
- ✓ Our new ICCP link with the NESO is a key building block in our use of the ANM system to manage transmission constraints. This link provides bilateral visibility that allows both networks to be co-ordinated and optimised better in real time. Without this visibility it would not be possible to enable DSOs to manage transmission network constraints on behalf of the NESO.
- ✓ We have helped our customers through the connections reform process, which has already shortened the queue by removing connections that were not progressing.

Optimising flexibility (cont.)

You said

Develop a 'Last In, First Out' (LIFO) curtailment approach for sites with Technical Limits (Part 4)



We did

- ✓ We ran two stakeholder consultations to explore our proposed curtailment methodology. Consultees want us to use LIFO because it gives better understanding upfront of likely curtailment. It also means older sites are not curtailed more due to new sites connecting to the network. This provides benefits of transparency, predictability and fairness to stakeholders.
- ✓ In response, for Technical Limits constraints, ANM will use the LIFO methodology. We will continue to use the Curtailment Index approach for curtailing/dispatching flexible resources for SP ENW distribution network constraints.

Utilise flexible connections to provide faster, and cheaper network connections



- ✓ With ANM now a business-as-usual solution, we now offer five types of flexible connection. This means customers benefit from avoiding reinforcement costs and long timescales for traditional network reinforcement.

Contracts and revenues from providing flexible capacity

You said

FSPs seek clearer and greater reward for providing flexibility services



We did

- ✓ A new modelling approach for payments has increased the utilisation price received – so providers can make more money per hour from the same service delivery whilst remaining compliant with the ENA Common Evaluation Methodology.

Be clear on baselines and how payment mechanisms work for responding to dispatch instructions



- ✓ Added further detail to the Technical Specifications Appendix published with all flexibility service tenders. We now show examples of how payments work, when FSPs will be eligible for payment, and when penalisation factors may apply.
- ✓ Added graphs to tenders to visually illustrate and clarify payment and penalty calculations across nine use cases.

Some stakeholders want greater flexibility in the standard Flexibility Services contract and on determining baselines. However, Elexon – the national flexibility market facilitator – want further standardisation.



- ✓ Elexon are aligning local and national flexibility market arrangements to reduce friction and unlock the full value of flexibility. Several new baseline methodologies will go live in April 2026 with only minimal departures permitted as a licence condition.
- ✓ This changing regulation meant we could not meet this ask. However, we engaged stakeholders to help them prepare for the new industry-wide defaults so they do not deter participation.

4. Network planning

Our approach to network planning combines strategic foresight, strong stakeholder engagement, enhanced engineering and modelling tools and data-driven decision-making. We are planning the future network to meet growing energy demand and support local priorities while being reliable, affordable and sustainable.

To support customers and stakeholders on their journey to decarbonisation, we share actionable insights and data on energy trends and how these affect the network. This information shows where new connections are suitable, where flexibility services may be advantageous and how we will create future capacity. But it can be very complex and need technical expertise to translate it into local planning, decision making and investment.

The overall message on network planning this year is that stakeholders want us to support them in ways that are tailored to their unique place-based priorities, needs and process capabilities. They want us to understand their specific requirements and tailor our insights, data and support accordingly.

Our Capacity Strategy, Data and Stakeholder Engagement teams work proactively to build strong relationships and deliver joined up responses to these needs to provide a streamlined experience. Our collaboration with local authorities on Local Area Energy Planning – a key feature of our work in 2025/26 – is a clear example of this integrated response. We cover how we have responded to asks on this in the earlier stakeholder section of this report.

Over 2025/26, we have listened carefully and responded in the following ways:

Supporting places to plan for and invest in the transition to net zero

You said

Use place-based engagement to support stakeholders in developing decarbonisation plans and identify locations for renewable energy generation

We did

- ✓ We hold regular bilaterals with all local authorities in our area. This consistent dialogue, backed by data, aligns assumptions and supports shared problem definition and solution design. Places therefore benefit from better understanding of capacity to inform planning and decision-making. It also helps us sequence investment effectively and avoid piecemeal or mis-timed reinforcement.
- ✓ This year, for example, we held 20 bespoke data support sessions, supported 19 emerging local plans and identified 1,198 MVA of future capacity requirements across 115 planned developments.
- ✓ For stakeholders with less technical knowledge, we have introduced targeted 'Empower' training (see earlier stakeholder section). This has improved access without compromising analytical integrity.

Supporting places to plan for and invest in the transition to net zero (cont.)

You said

Engage proactively in place-based partnerships to identify and resolve network needs and align to local decarbonisation ambitions

We did

- ✓ We meet quarterly as members of Oldham's Green New Deal Delivery Group. Our network and data insights inform priorities and sequencing. Our early engagement and coordination have helped avoid rework, delays and need for redesign.
- ✓ As members of the GMCA Net Zero Accelerator programme board, we provide strategic input to support delivery and growth. We also participate in practical workshops, collaborating with other key stakeholders such as the NESO, local authorities and other utilities to identify the actions required to deliver the pipeline of projects by 2038 and beyond.
- ✓ We are working with GMCA to develop a framework that identifies energy-intensive industrial parks across the region. By providing detailed network data, we can help enable targeted decarbonisation initiatives. This is modelled on our success in supporting Stakehill Industrial Park in Rochdale to drive business adoption of energy efficiency and demonstrates our commitment to engaging with Industrial and Commercial customers.

Local authorities need support in compiling information required by the NESO for transitional Regional Energy Strategic Planning (tRESP)

- ✓ We provided local authorities in our region with a template spreadsheet to complete and then automated the tRESP Strategic Investment Needs submission for them. This saved them time and gave them an overview of all their projects in one place.
- ✓ Our local engagement built the evidence base to directly inform our Strategic Investment Needs submission. As a result, NESO approved over 30 of our strategic investments – among the highest across all DNOs. In the final tRESP outcome, 12 'strategic energy needs' were identified in our licence area – the joint-highest in GB. This demonstrates the value of DSO-led regional insight translating into national investment recognition. Without structured and proactive local engagement, these needs would have been less visible in the national planning process.

Supporting development of low carbon infrastructure and assets

You said

Help places looking to develop battery storage and data centres

We did

- Throughout the year our embedded cross-vector engagement is helping places to make robust operational and investment decisions, for example:
- ✓ We supported Cumberland, Stockport and Wigan to analyse DFES data to inform the business case for battery storage site development based on commercial opportunities for provision of flexibility.
 - ✓ In Wigan, we provided optioneering support for a proposed grid-scale battery. Our support helped the local authority to make an early and informed planning decision and avoid later redesign or connection delay.
 - ✓ We are working across Greater Manchester to assess network capacity timelines and feasibility for connecting large-scale data centres, aligning electricity infrastructure with regional AI growth ambitions. We also supported development of GMCA's Data Centre Strategy.
 - ✓ We collaborated with NHS Trusts and used the Social DSO fund to explore and enable battery storage deployment. This reduced energy costs and increased resilience for critical healthcare infrastructure, supporting operational continuity and patient safety.

Supporting development of low carbon infrastructure and assets (cont.)

You said

Provide insights that support development of District Heat Networks



We did

- ✓ We are supporting local authority plans to use heat networks to meet strategic energy needs by providing bespoke advice and data on network planning and connections. For example, in Blackpool, Lancashire and eight locations around Greater Manchester, we supported the facilitation of district heat networks by incorporating them into our tRESP submission to the NESO.
- ✓ Our partnership work has enabled Oldham to secure £8.7 million from the Green Heat Network Fund to develop a low-carbon district heat network in the town centre. Our input helped reduce delivery risk, improve funding readiness and ensure the necessary connections are in place to enable the scheme to progress.
- ✓ In Lancashire, we are supporting West Lancashire Council's district heat ambitions by providing new domestic heating demand data and participating in cross-vector zoning proposals. At Lancaster University, our ANM approach is helping decarbonise heating while preserving network security.

Support local authorities to select sites for EV charge points



- ✓ We supported Westmorland & Furness Council in their pilot of EV cross-pavement channels by facilitating site inspections to provide data on a local earthing system and working to develop an enduring process to support future growth.

5. Data

Good, reliable data is vital to what we do. And the same data can be of great value to customers and stakeholders too. Reflecting that, **we are committed to open and transparent data sharing and making data easily accessible through our Open Data Portal.**

We are delighted that DSO stakeholders have provided positive feedback about the range and depth of available data. Nevertheless, we want to do more, and we know that making data easy to understand and use can be just as important for stakeholders as the content itself. So, as well as enhancing data, **this year we have put strong focus on further helping stakeholders to access our data and make full sense and use of it.**

This approach underpins many of the asks and responses below and serves the needs of those seeking easy access to high level data as well as those undertaking in depth technical analysis.

Over 2025/26, we have listened carefully and responded in the following ways:

Combining powerful data, clear presentation and ease of use

You said

Continue the focus on accessible information, extend the data available, and put all data sets into the Open Data Portal

We did

- ✓ Moved all datasets into the Open Data Portal, including 50 new datasets and increasing the total on the Portal to 93. External links were provided for data we cannot host. All data is now available in a single place and easily accessible to all.
- ✓ Added new data including the Low Carbon Technology (LCT) Readiness Checker. This easy-to-use tool indicates a property's readiness for LCT connection, streamlines the LCT installation process and helps customers and installers to plan work and avoid unexpected delays. A new Video Guide for the tool on our Data Education Hub helps users make full use of it.
- ✓ Made around 40 data sets available via a shared licence format to enable controlled access for eligible stakeholders. An example is new underground assets data aligned to local authority boundaries. This allows the relevant authority to use the data to support their planning and operations whilst data security is maintained.
- ✓ Published a new LV visibility dataset on the Portal, integrating PRESense monitoring and smart meter data and supported by load-duration curves for substations. This creates a single trusted source of insight to support decision-making and enables more accurate capacity assessment and flexibility planning.
- ✓ Added a new Smart Optimisation Output portal page on Long Duration Energy Storage for Network Optimisation Decarbonisation and Efficiency data – providing visual representations of existing and future assets, constraints, growth drivers and flexibility opportunities.

Combining powerful data, clear presentation and ease of use (cont.)

You said

Present data clearly and make it more readily accessible and easy to use

We did

- ✓ Reviewed the customer data journey and data roadmap on our website to make it easier for non-technical users to understand what data is available, how it may help them and how to use it.
- ✓ Provided additional persona pages to signpost stakeholders to the datasets likely to be most relevant to their interests and used persona-led design to improve our Data Education Hub. We restructured website content around stakeholder use cases, making it easier for users to identify, understand and apply the data they need.
- ✓ Continued to make data accessible via a variety of formats and viewing options to cater for both in-depth and less technical audiences. For example, we now use GIS polygons to better show boundaries (e.g. local authority) that users are interested in.
- ✓ Developed a dedicated hub to help non-technical stakeholders identify flexibility opportunities, widening accessibility to them.
- ✓ Changed how Distribution Future Electricity Scenarios (DFES) data is displayed so users can select and group data to see the full picture for a geographic area. Features such as time-series animations were added to visualise the data and bring it to life.

Timely data and updates

You said

Provide frequent data updates, at least quarterly and ideally monthly or close to real-time

We did

- ✓ Key operational datasets are now updated monthly, including the connection capacity heatmap tool, flexible services procurement and dispatch data; and new systems enable automated data update to increase the publication frequency of key data sets. Data that is now refreshed more often include data on half-hourly measurements for loads in the Long-Term Development Statement.
- ✓ Developed systems which enable data on live outages and the whole system to be available in near real time, getting key information to customers as rapidly as possible.

Data to support local and combined authorities

You said

Provide more local authority area-based data, including to support Local Area Energy Plans

We did

- ✓ Assisting local authorities to access and use data has been central to the tailored LAEP support we have provided, ensuring they are evidence based and impactful (see earlier stakeholder section).
- ✓ New search facility added allowing key data sets (e.g. GIS datasets) to be filtered by local authority boundary, making it easier to access and use the data that matters for their area.
- ✓ Providing more granular detail on connection queues, now available at Bulk Supply Point and Primary level.

Response to specific data requests

You said

Support identification of potential areas for development using capacity data

The NHS sought support in reviewing current and future electricity needs and identifying decarbonisation potential across their property portfolio

GMCA sought data to identify industrial parks with high energy demand and help them decarbonise

West Lancashire Council sought data on heating demand in key buildings (schools, university, hospital, etc.) to help assess feasibility for a heat network in Skelmersdale

GMCA sought data to assist development of their infrastructure pipeline

We did

✓ Provided interactive capacity maps on the portal indicating areas of network constraint and capacity availability, enabling planners and developers to identify areas of greatest opportunity.

✓ Work is in progress with the NHS to develop an automated process and associated data set to map the hierarchy of Primary and Bulk Supply Points feeding each NHS site. This will support the NHS in understanding current and future electricity requirements and in identifying decarbonisation opportunities across their estate.

✓ Working with GMCA to develop a data driven framework which will help identify sites with high energy demand, using data on flexibility potential and network headroom. This will support engagement on decarbonisation opportunities.

✓ Published a new granular data set to illustrate heat demand and combined this with future energy scenarios data to provide evidence for the heat network. We followed up with a bespoke session to discuss network capacity to support the heat network.

✓ Agreed formal Terms of Reference and explained how to make best use of our data to meet their needs, e.g. by combining data sets to generate a combined heat map which would assist planning of future infrastructure.

Response to specific data requests (cont.)

You said

Support data sharing and interoperability between sectors



We did

- ✓ Created a template for local authorities to share data with SP ENW and Cadent for developments requiring both electricity and gas connections. Additionally, created new links between the SP ENW and Cadent Open Data Portals, and to the water companies' collaborative 'Stream' data portal.
- ✓ High Peak Council sits across multiple DSO boundaries, so we collaborated to develop a common template for sharing information with the local authority to help develop its LAEP.

Provide more LV data to support smaller developers and local authority net zero schemes



- ✓ LV data is included in the flexibility tenders we publish and LV monitoring data from last year's Long Term Development Statement has been moved into the Open Data Portal, making it as open and accessible possible.
- ✓ A refresh of the LV data we offer helps non-technical stakeholders (e.g. small businesses and community energy groups) to identify LV opportunities by collating information into a single view and creating map layers/filters for different voltages.

Independent Connection Providers (ICPs) and Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs) requested improved access to earthing data



- ✓ Enhanced our existing ICP Network Trace tool to allow ICPs to conduct independent assessments. This improves early feasibility assessment of projects and enables faster identification of sites requiring additional protection measures.

6. Decision making

Distribution System Operation is the foundation of a modern, net zero energy system. Powered by robust data, forecasting and continual stakeholder engagement, we make the critical decisions that shape how and where the network develops, and how we grow the market for flexible services as a strategic alternative to traditional network investment.

We aim to be a leading Social DSO by embedding social value within network planning and market design rather than treating it as a parallel activity. This means considering impacts on different DSO personas; ensuring flexibility markets are inclusive and accessible; targeting interventions where economic growth and vulnerability intersect; and integrating social cost-benefit considerations within investment appraisal.

Our approach is grounded in transparency, fairness and accountability. We actively listen to customers and stakeholders to ensure our governance and decision making are open, evidence based and trusted. This is a continual process of strengthening the structures we have, reviewing what needs to evolve, and ensuring our systems keep pace with the needs of a rapidly changing energy system.

Over 2025/26, we have listened carefully and responded in the following ways:

Social DSO

You said

Continue to refine the approach to Social DSO and ensure stakeholders are involved to progress a fair and inclusive energy transition

We did

- ✓ Co developed the governance framework for the Social DSO Fund with stakeholders and put fairness approaches centre stage through our Social Return on Investment and cost benefit analysis work.
- ✓ Stakeholder insights helped to shape and establish our Social DSO goals and measures. They have informed development of key tools and services such as data and forecasting, capacity release and flexibility procurement – ensuring our approaches serve stakeholders and society.
- ✓ Updated and expanded the Social DSO content on our website to improve clarity, transparency and accessibility. This provides clearer explanation of what the Social DSO is and how it is being delivered.
- ✓ We developed a new Social DSO persona and added social commitments to all other personas. This embeds our social goals in our thinking and decision making, ensuring they are considered from the outset.

Social DSO (cont.)

You said

Invest in the delivery of the Social DSO strategy and its goals

We did

- ✓ Established the Social DSO Fund and its governance, enabling community-led and energy transition projects to be delivered through up to £50,000 of support plus match funding.
- ✓ Projects we invested in through the first funding round include:
 - Partnering with Solar for Schools to unlock solar and storage schemes in schools serving a high proportion of low-income families
 - Using the Energy Cloud platform to send surplus renewable energy to vulnerable households
 - Using solar PV and battery storage to create a resilience hub capable of operating during outages in a rural community
 - Installing solar PV, battery storage and infrared heating panels at Burnside Community Hall
- ✓ Appointed a dedicated Social DSO Manager to lead delivery and embed Social DSO principles across our operations.
- ✓ Built new partnerships with UK 100, Community Energy England and Green Economy. These supported understanding and action on decarbonisation in communities, small businesses and local authorities.

Transparency, fairness and accountability in decision making and performance

You said

Provide more clarity and consistency in the approach and tools for decision making to support transparency and accountability

We did

- ✓ In collaboration with other DSOs, we updated our methodology for calculating the benefits of accelerating connections, deferring network reinforcement and managing outages. This provides consistency and allows comparison.

Enhance visibility on flexibility and its impact on decarbonisation

- ✓ We collaborated with other DSOs to agree a common approach to calculating carbon savings and have built this into our updated Cost Benefit Analysis.
- ✓ We now publish our Key Performance Indicators on our website and update them quarterly, including the impact of DSO activities on carbon emissions - ensuring our impact is prominent, clear and visible.

Transparency, fairness and accountability in decision making and performance (cont.)

You said

Further develop your governance framework to provide more detail beyond the high level

We did

- ✓ Our DSO advisory panel produced its first independent annual report, strengthening transparency and demonstrating how independent oversight is shaping our DSO transition.
- ✓ We updated our Governance Framework to include detailed process flows showing activities, roles and responsibilities and DSO-DNO hand-offs alongside our first Governance and Compliance Annual Report.
- ✓ We commissioned an independent review of our Governance Framework and acted on its findings via targeted improvements and updates.
- ✓ Published our conflicts of interest management process and refreshed our Conflict of Interest register to ensure openness and transparency.
- ✓ Developed and embedded a governance framework for our Social DSO Fund, incorporating feedback from our DSO Stakeholder Panel and wider stakeholders to strengthen transparency and alignment.

Clarity on Operational Decision Making Framework

You said

Update the Operational Decision Making Framework (ODMF), provide a more concise and accessible version, and show how it aligns to the Social DSO Strategy

We did

- ✓ Updated and published the ODMF in line with our commitment to do so annually. We added industry governance updates, including the Market Facilitator's role in primacy rules and supporting market integrity.
- ✓ Developed a concise 'ODMF at a glance' version to enhance the user experience and make it easier and quicker for stakeholders to understand our decisions and the rationale for them.
- ✓ Enhanced flexibility market integration through the ElectronConnect platform, supporting API-based interoperability for dispatch instructions.
- ✓ Created a case study within the ODMF showing how it fits with our Social DSO principles and objectives.

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