

SP ENW DSO Stakeholder Panel

Meeting notes – 21 January 2026

Present:	Andrew McIntosh (AMc), Alistair Craig (AC), Greg Dodd (GD), Matt Fawcett (MF), Daniel Heery (DH), James Johnson (JJ), Debbie King (DK), Craig Morley (CM), Jamie Shaw-Stewart
In attendance:	Paul Auckland (PA), Helen Daly (HD), Stuart Dearden (SD), Rebecca Drakeford (RD), Paul George (PG), Katherine Horne (KH), Kate Rogers (KR), Tom Royle (TR)
Apologies:	Jonathan Edwards (JE), Kate Gilmartin (KG), Meriel Lakin (ML), Jennie Stein (JS)

Welcome and conflicts declaration

AMc welcomed all attendees and apologies were noted. On the topic of conflicts of interest DH noted that his organisation was currently involved in applications to SP ENW's Social DSO Fund. This was duly noted by the Chair and Secretariat.

Safety moment and business/ISG update

PA shared details of SP ENW's monthly safety theme of slips, trips and falls, and gave an update on business changes and ISG activity since the last meeting.

Standing items - review of actions

The action log was reviewed, and updates given on the outstanding actions.

Standing items – industry issues

RESP – RD gave an update on the recent RESP methodology consultation, including key insights from SP ENW's stakeholder engagement on the topic, and a summary of SP ENW's response. The next steps would be the publication of the tRESP, due 30 January 2026, followed by the establishment of regional working groups and regional strategic boards over Q2 and Q3 2026. Panel members noted that there were ongoing concerns about duplication of effort but agreed that the collaboration required for RESP was a hugely positive step. They also noted the importance of clarifying how of the community energy sector would be represented at a regional level.

Warm Homes Plan – GD noted the publication of the Warm Homes Plan on the morning of the meeting date. RD confirmed that she was currently reviewing the impact of this and would add it to the agenda for the next policy update session.

Standing items – DSO delivery

KH updated the panel on recent developments within SP ENW's Social DSO Fund. She summarised the outcomes of the first round of funding undertaken during November and December 2025 and outlined the plans for the second round, taking place from January to April 2026. The process for round 2 was being enhanced based on participant feedback from round 1 and KH confirmed that the panel would be asked to provide a level of independent oversight as part of the refined process.

The panel expressed its support for the progress made and noted its future role to provide independent oversight. GD asked for a further discussion with representatives from NGN to share knowledge and learnings from the process.

Actions: SP ENW/GD to arrange bi-lateral, and SP ENW to share detailed framework with the panel in due course

PA provided an update to the panel on the timeline for the annual DSO performance panel submission. It was noted that the panel would be asked to review the submission during late March/early April.

Standing items – Communications and stakeholder engagement

KR shared details of recent DSO stakeholder and communications activity as well as forthcoming events and publications that the panel would be asked to provide feedback on.

Standing items – Flexibility services

PG gave an update on SP ENW's autumn 2025 flexibility tender, noting that the bidding window would open on 26 January. An update on the bid outcomes would be delivered at the March 2026 meeting. He also shared details of recent changes to the tender process, following engagement and feedback from stakeholders. On top of the six-monthly long-term tenders, which would continue, SP ENW had in December launched its monthly tenders for short-term flexibility needs. The learnings from these initial monthly tenders would be built into the process for future tenders and the outcomes would be shared alongside the autumn 2025 results at the meeting in March.

The panel was also provided details of the forthcoming flexibility forums due to be held in March. The aim of these sessions was to facilitate collaboration between SP ENW and a range of FSPs, helping FSPs to develop a deeper understanding of SP ENW's flexibility requirements, allowing collaborative development of processes and products to increase participation, and sharing knowledge and opportunities. Panel members were invited to attend, and also to potentially present/share experience at the forums. **ACTION: SP ENW to confirm dates and speaker opportunities**

The panel noted its support of progress made, in particular the development of the monthly tenders and the flexibility forums.

Session theme 1 – DSO benefits and KPIs

SD summarised for the panel how the use of cost benefit analysis (CBA) by Ofgem and networks had developed across recent regulatory periods and how CBA tools were being used to assess and prioritise projects for delivery.

TR explained in more detail how SP ENW was using CBA to assess the delivery of DSO benefits and talked through the improvements that it had made to its CBA model over recent months. This included the standardisation of certain elements as part of the cross-DSO collaboration forum, led by SP ENW as well as internal changes, the addition of a social CBA for decision-making and the capture of a wider range of societal, network and customer benefits. The outcome of this work would be captured in an updated benefits methodology publication which the panel would be invited to review during February/March.

The panel thanked SD and TR for the update and noted that it was positive to have the analysis explained at an accessible level in order to maintain transparency and foster stakeholder trust.

Session theme 2 – Governance update

HD reminded the panel of SP ENW's key governance initiatives for 2025/26 and delivered an update on progress since the panel's last discussion in November. She highlighted the update of the DSO DNO governance framework and conflicts of interest documents which the panel would be invited to review during February/March. **ACTION: SP ENW to circulate material in due course**

Session theme 3 – DSO panel annual report

HD confirmed that SP ENW had secured an independent contractor to support the panel with preparing its annual report. Ways of working were discussed and agreed, and it was noted that an additional meeting would likely be required during March 2026. **Action: SP ENW to make appropriate introductions and facilitate meetings if required**

Standing items – Panel forward plan

The forward plan in the meeting pack was noted.

AOB and close

AM thanked panel members and SP ENW for their time and contribution to the meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for 4 March 2026.