

SP ENW DSO Stakeholder Panel

Meeting notes – 4 March 2026

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

Welcome and conflicts declaration

AMc welcomed all attendees and apologies were noted.

On conflicts of interest both DH and MF noted that their organisations were 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 positive challenge, 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

Local Power Plan – JJ noted the publication of GB Energy's local power plan and the significance of the ambition therein. It was agreed that this topic would be added to the agenda for the first policy sub-group meeting at the end of March.

RIIO-ED3 – AMc requested that this topic was also added to the policy sub-group agenda, or a future panel meeting. The panel commended SP ENW's historic flexible and proactive investment approach and was keen to see this continue into ED3 to support regional growth.

VAT on EV Charging – DH flagged a recent challenge that Charge My Street had successfully raised to HMRC around the disparity in VAT on EV charging between home and public charging.

Building community power - MF shared details of a [report that Carbon Co-op](#) had recently published on how to accelerate the uptake of local and community energy.

tRESP – PA gave a short update on the latest position with tRESP, noting that SP ENW was in the process of validating the NESO's SEN outcomes, and that these would be informing SP ENW's ED3 business plan, alongside wider evidence, as well as the May 2026 Network Development Plan and SP ENW's load-related expenditure programme.

Standing items – DSO delivery

Social DSO Fund

KH gave an update on the Social DSO Fund round 1 awards, noting that the scheme had allocated funding of £110,620 across 6 projects with projected wider societal benefits of £166,000 giving a social value return of £1: £1:51. Round 2 of funding was now open until 27 March and KH shared the process timeline with the panel.

The panel then reviewed the detailed governance arrangements for the Fund, with specific focus on three issues as requested by SP ENW:

1. Assessment panel structure – a number of options were presented and the panel agreed that having consistent independent representation from trained stakeholder panel members was the preferred option. **Action: panel members who are able to participate to contact KH**
2. Bonus points for projects in constraint management zones that are able to participate in flexibility services – the arguments for and against this were discussed but a clear consensus was not reached. It was agreed to retain the bonus points for round 2 but to keep this under review to ensure that it was not distorting outcomes. Ringfencing funds may be considered in future as an alternative method.
3. Panel member conflicts of interest – it was agreed that the proposed mitigations were appropriate and should be adopted.

DSO incentive submission

The submission timeline for the DSO incentive was noted.

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.

AB then gave an overview of the forthcoming DFES publication, noting the enhancements in the new version and the headline outcomes. The panel would be invited to comment on the publication in due course.

Standing items – Flexibility services

PG gave an update on the results of the autumn 2025 flexibility tender. He noted that continued education was improving the bid quality. Feedback suggested that providers were still prioritising larger DSOs due to volumes and revenues. In response SP ENW was improving attractiveness through simplified processes, tailored support, developing strategic partnerships and exploring additional products. SP ENW was also launching regular flexibility forums, the first to be held on 5 March.

The panel was pleased to see the progress made to date and was looking forward to a further update following the forum on 5 March.

Session theme 1 – DSO benefits and KPIs

SD updated the panel on the completion of the DSO Collaboration Forum's work on the standardisation of DSO benefits calculations. Agreement had been reached on 14 benefit elements across three DSO activities: accelerating DER connections, deferring reinforcement and outage management and optimisation. All DSOs should be using the standard methodologies in these areas, leading to increased transparency and better comparability. It was noted that non-standardised

benefits such as indirect social benefits could still be reported and may provide scope for further standardisation.

The panel reviewed the Q3 KPI scorecard, noting that two KPIs were predicted to fall behind target at the year end. SP ENW had experienced fewer connections at EHV level throughout the year, which had a significant impact on the MW of flexible connections energised despite seeing a fourfold increase in domestic flexible connections. Flexibility services procured was also forecast to finish the year behind target but was still expected to deliver a 40% increase on the prior year's numbers.

SD then shared with the panel SP ENWs early thinking on KPIs for the coming year, with the addition of several new KPIs to provide increased transparency and to support stakeholder understanding. The panel was supportive of the proposed metrics, and it was noted that these would be included in the KPI scorecard effective from Q1 2026/27. **Action: SP ENW to proceed as agreed**

Session theme 2 – Governance update

HD talked the panel through SP ENW's refreshed conflicts of interest register before discussing the new conflicts raised over recent months by SP ENW team members and panel members. It was noted that several of the conflicts were technical in nature and that the panel was not being asked to approve the technical detail but rather to oversee the process that SP ENW had followed in assessing the conflicts and the ongoing management and reporting of them.

A new conflict for consideration was raised by the panel, relating to the NESO's use of demand turn-up vs DSO protection systems. **Action: SP ENW to review**

Session theme 3 – DSO panel annual report

It was noted that the first draft of the panel's annual report had been circulated prior to the meeting, and panel members were asked to provide comments to AMc by 18 March. A further draft would then be circulated for final review and sign-off by 25 March. **Action: panel members**

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 6 May 2026.