Investing in Cumbria



SP Electricity North West

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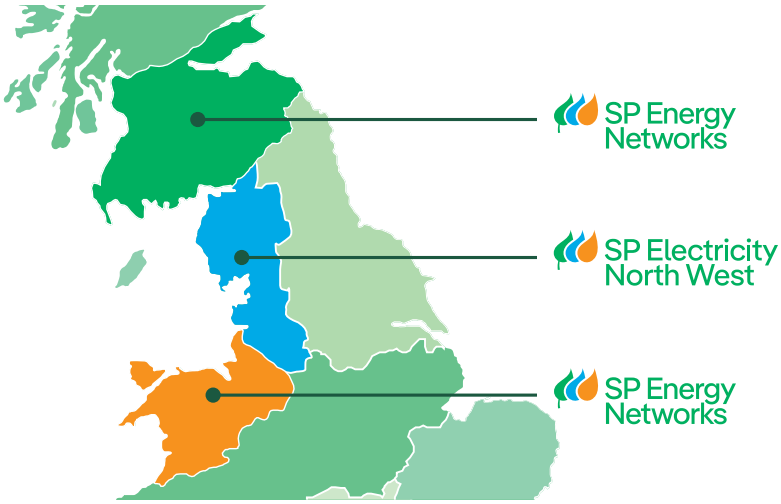
Who we are and what we do

SP Electricity North West (SP ENW) is the electricity distribution network operator (DNO) for the North West of England. We're owned by Scottish Power along with two other electricity network businesses in Great Britain. We're responsible for maintaining and upgrading 58,000km of electricity network and thousands of substations across the region.

We supply electricity to the diverse communities across our region which extends from Macclesfield all the way to Carlisle. Our overhead lines, underground cables and substations bring power to 5 million people in 2.4 million homes and businesses.

We invest millions of pounds in the region focusing on key areas of safety, reliability, customer service and enabling net zero.

This document highlights our performance and investment plans for Cumbria which includes small parts of North Yorkshire. All information is correct as of July 2026.



We deliver a reliable essential service for everyone in the North West, 24/7

2.4 million
Number of customers

12,355km
Overhead lines

45,623km
Underground cables

23km
Submarine cables

Total network length 58,001km

We take high voltage electricity and lower the voltage to make it safe to use in homes and businesses across the North West.

132 kiloVolts (kV)
The voltage of electricity we receive from National Grid

33kV and 11kV
We reduce the 132kV down in our substations to supply the communities in our region

415/240 volts
This is then further reduced to feed homes and business

SP Electricity North West

Investing in our region 2023 – 2028 (RIIO-ED2)

Watch our video to find out more about our five-year investment plan.

We are regulated by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) who provide DNOs with their licence to operate and decide what's fair for us to charge our customers. Ofgem's current price control (known as RIIO-ED2) covers the five-year period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028.

During this five-year period we're investing £2 billion in the region's infrastructure to keep electricity flowing and meet the increasing needs of the region. That's more than £1 million a day – the largest ever for our network.

This includes new investment in the operation, maintenance and upgrading of the region's electricity network to support the changing needs of our customers in the transition to net zero. We'll also reduce our customers' time without power during a power cut by 20%.

We'll be investing a significant amount to enhance our customer services and support those in vulnerable circumstances. Support will include helping customers in power cuts, helping those in fuel poverty and ensuring that no one is left behind in the green transition. We'll invest in world-leading innovation and technology and continue to be the most digital network operator in Europe. Our investment will also enable the continued development of our award-winning apprentice scheme and create hundreds of jobs directly and as part of our supply chain.

We'll deliver all this investment while keeping our part of your bills as low as possible. Whichever supplier you pay your bill to, around £123 a year comes to us to fund the network – that's just 33p a day – one of the lowest in the country.

Engaging with our stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement is at the heart of our business. From developing our long-term strategy, to enhancing our day-to-day processes, we know that engaging with you delivers better outcomes for us and our region. To develop our RIIO-ED2 business plan we spoke to more than 18,000 customers and stakeholders to make sure it delivers value and meets your needs.

Our RIIO-ED2 investment in numbers

Over investment in numbers

OVER £2bn we'll invest over £2bn in the network from 2023 to 2028

OVER £1m we'll invest more than £1m per day into the network

OVER 93% we aim to increase our customer service scores to over 93%

£123 Our part of your electricity bill will remain low

20% we aim to keep power flowing by reducing customers' time without power by 20%

18,000 we developed our plans with input from over 18,000 customers and stakeholders

Key projects

£59m in Cumbria to replace 94km of overhead lines between 2023-2028

£36m in Lancashire to increase capacity at 11 substations

£37m in Greater Manchester to reinforce the network at key locations across the county

All of this will help us to enable more renewable energy generation and the take up of electric vehicles and heating across our region.

Delivering for our communities

We will:

- Provide excellent value for money by keeping our performance high and our part of electricity bills low
- Continue working hard to keep our colleagues, customers and our equipment safe
- Create new jobs in the region and take on more apprentices through our award-winning programmes
- Continue to develop our network as the most digitally advanced network in Europe
- Deliver on net zero as more people take up electric vehicles and heating
- Make our own operations net zero by 2038

SP Electricity North West

Investing in your area – key projects

Between 2023-2028 we're delivering our largest ever investment in the North West's power network, including our biggest ever investment in Cumbria.

We're investing across the region to strengthen the electricity network, improve reliability and support the growing demand for cleaner, greener power, including:

- New substations and upgraded overhead lines as part of the first phase of the Cumbria Ring
- Underground cable projects in Barrow to modernise ageing infrastructure
- Undergrounding overhead lines in Coniston to make the network more resilient during storms.

Our work is helping to modernise and future-proof the network that homes, businesses and communities rely on every day as the demand for electricity continues to increase.

Coniston

Due to complete March 2028

A £16m investment to underground and reinforce the 11kV and 33kV power network along a 39km route. In November 2021 during Storm Arwen, supplies were lost to Coniston for a considerable period of time. This investment will increase the resilience of Coniston's primary power network to help protect supplies during future weather events.

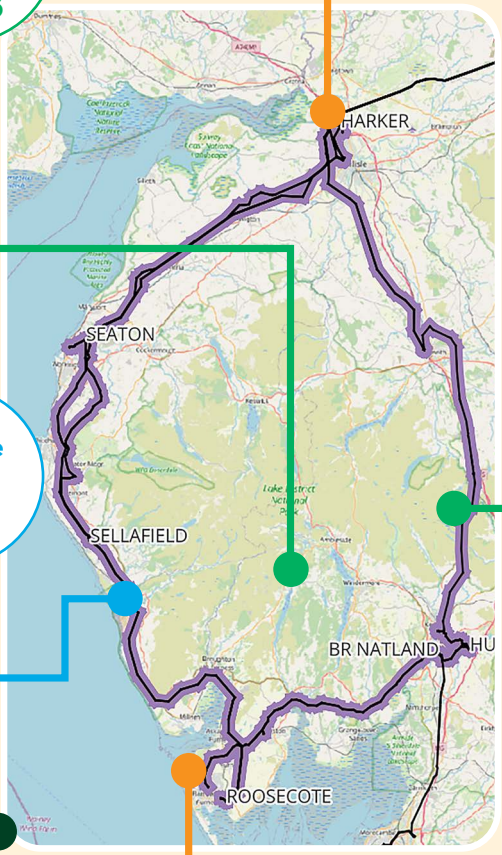
www.enwl.co.uk/coniston

Harker substation

Due to be energised 2030

A new 132kV substation, this £60m investment at Harker in Carlisle will provide power for the high-voltage overhead line network that runs around the perimeter of Cumbria, known as the Cumbria Ring. An integral part of our network improvement and capacity increase across Cumbria and beyond, this project is running in conjunction with National Grid as part of their £350m rebuild of the 400kV Harker substation on the same site to feed supplies between Scotland and England.

www.enwl.co.uk/harker



Roosecote to Sellafield

Due to complete April 2027

A £56m 132kV overhead line refurbishment spanning 47km with 152 pylons either replaced or refurbished. Overhead lines will be replaced with new modern conductors, almost doubling the capacity to power an additional 350,000 homes.

www.enwl.co.uk/roosecotesellafield

Selsmire

Due to complete May 2027

A £14m investment to install 11km of 33kV underground cables between Orton, Shap and Selsmire. We're also building a new substation to expand Westmorland's infrastructure and enable the connection of low carbon technologies.

www.enwl.co.uk/selsmire

Barrow

Due to complete March 2028

A £4.5m investment that will benefit over 4,820 homes and businesses, reducing the frequency and duration of power cuts. We'll replace aging underground cables along a 5km route between Barrow and Dalton with modern cables and upgrade local substations.

www.enwl.co.uk/barrow

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Other investment projects



Rural substations

We're replacing over 200 small rural ('Borrowdale') transformers to reduce power cuts and improve network reliability for the customers they serve. The condition of many of these substations is starting to deteriorate so we will progressively replace all of them with safer, more modern equipment. 50% will be replaced by 2028 and the remainder by 2033, depending on their condition.

£8.9m

1,561 customers

Due to complete **March 2033**

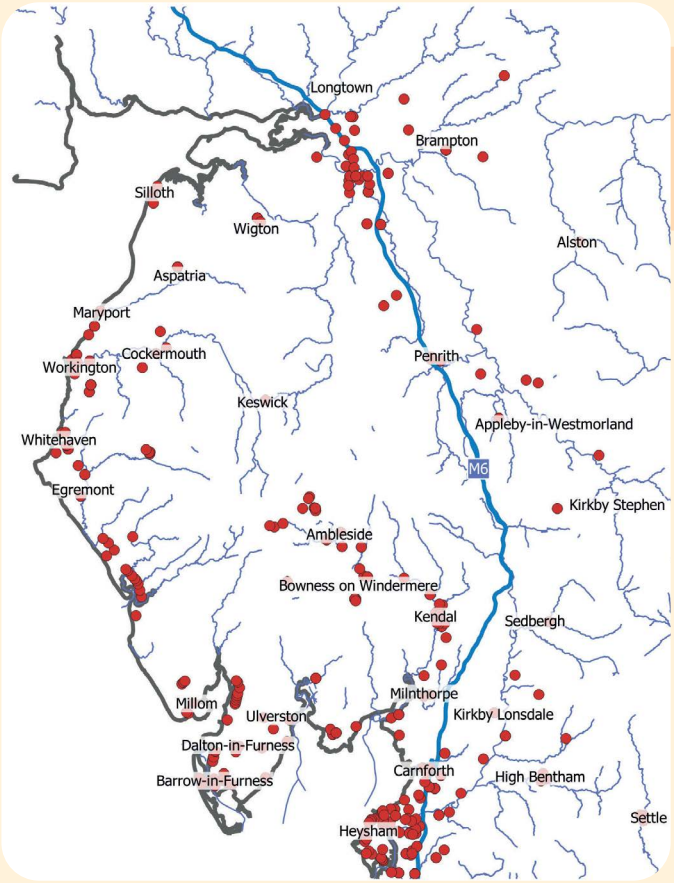
Egremont substation

We're investing £5 million to upgrade our substation at Egremont to benefit over 28,000 customers. We'll upgrade the equipment in the substation to improve the reliability of the local electricity network and future-proof supplies for customers.

£4.9m

28,000 customers

Due to complete **March 2028**



These case studies are just two of the areas where we're investing in Cumbria. The red dots on the map show the sites of all of our investment projects between 2023-2028.

Find out more about our investment in Cumbria.

Digitalisation and innovation

We are one of the most innovative companies in our sector, developing ground-breaking, flexible solutions driven by the changing needs of our customers in a low carbon future. Our network management system (NMS) and our network connectivity model make our network the most digitally advanced in Europe.

Our approach is to maximise the use of our existing infrastructure and combine new technology and creative thinking to provide real solutions to real problems. Here are some of the innovative projects we've developed and adopted into business as usual.

Smart Street

Investment £64m

Savings up to £70 pa

Benefits 250,000 customers

Using innovative voltage control technology, Smart Street will enable our networks and customers' appliances to perform more efficiently and make it easier for low carbon technologies to connect to the electricity network improving energy efficiency and reducing bills for 250,000 customers.

LineSIGHT

Investment £46m

8,000km of overhead line

Faults on rural networks can sometimes cause overhead power lines to hang low while remaining live, which also creates a public safety hazard. New technology developed by SP ENW will enable the detection of damaged equipment earlier and help us to pinpoint the location of faults, enabling more efficient despatch of repair crews.

CLASS

50% of revenue shared with customers

Customer savings £100m

Our award-winning CLASS project uses innovative voltage control to reduce demand for electricity without customers noticing a difference to their service. CLASS (Customer Load Active System Services) is a low-cost solution which uses voltage control to manage electricity consumption at peak times. By installing cutting edge 'voltage controllers' in our substations we could save customers in the North West around £100 million by the end of 2028.

Dig, Fix and Go

Average duration of emergency streetworks (2025/26) 4.4 days

1 day reduction benefit per year £21m

A bespoke incentive mechanism that aims to drive a transformational change to reduce the impact of our emergency streetworks on customers. This is a proposal formed and led by feedback from our customers and stakeholders. Reducing disruption by accelerating emergency streetworks to below five days on average.

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Reliability

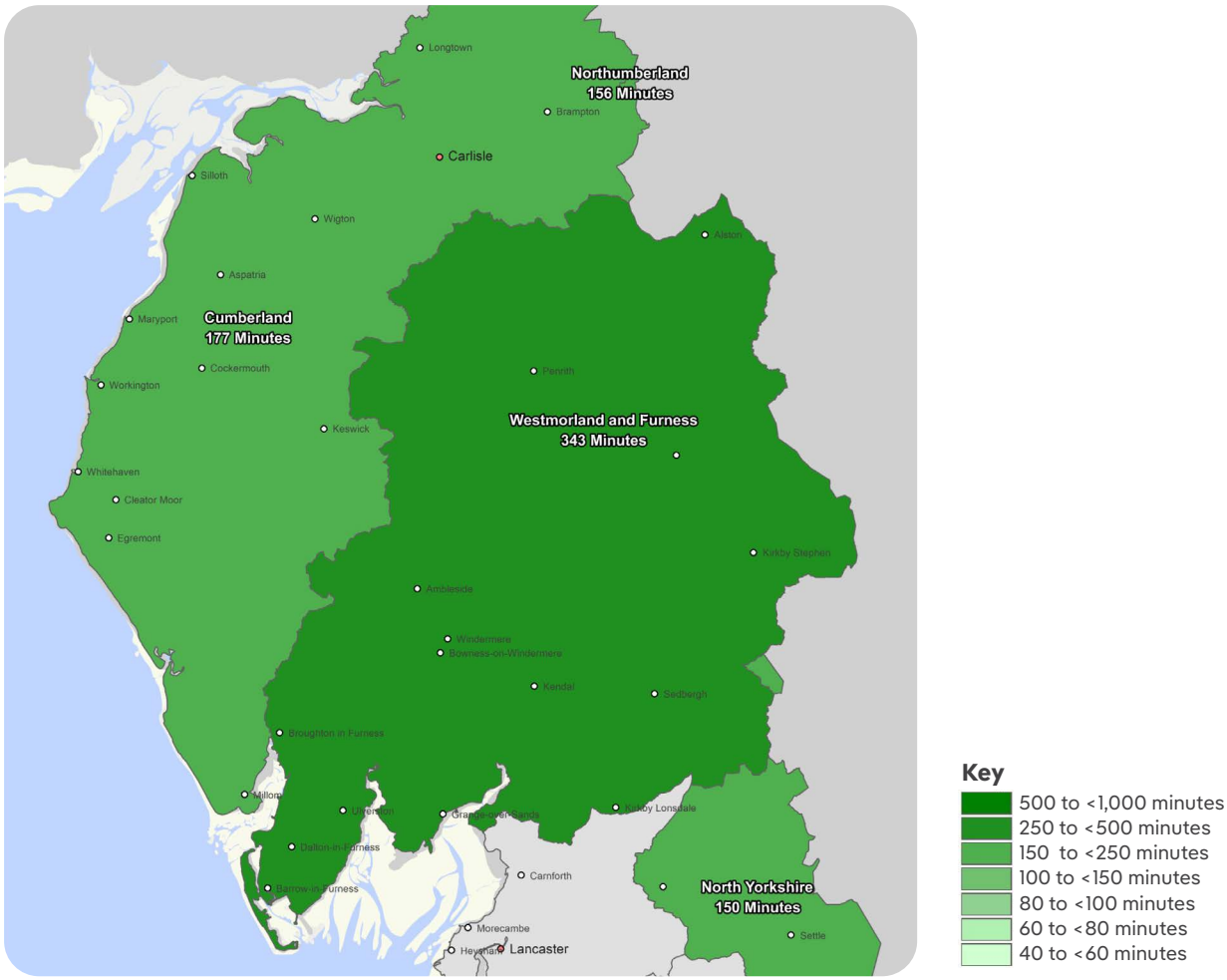
We measure the reliability of our network by looking at how often customers experience a power cut.

When you experience a power cut due to planned investment, maintenance or a fault we make it a priority to get your power back on as quickly as possible. The time this takes is influenced by factors such as:

- Type of fault – underground cable or overhead line
- Location
- Adverse weather – it may not be safe for our engineers to work
- Cause of fault.

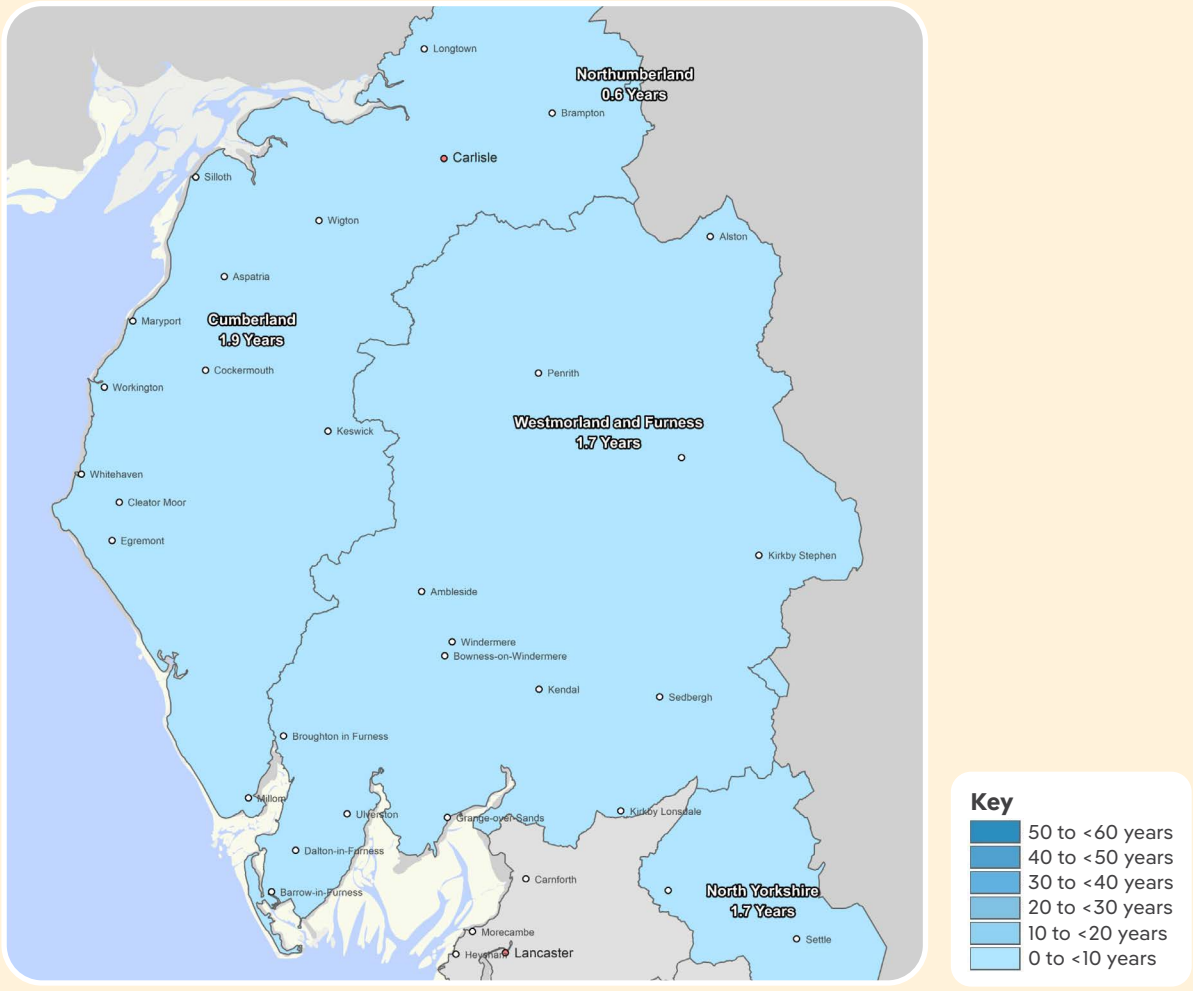
On average you may experience power cuts more frequently in certain areas. The information collected from power cuts is used to help inform our investment to carry out reinforcement and replacement work on the network to reduce the frequency of power cuts. In the 2024/25 regulatory year, SP ENW and SP Energy Networks were recognised in Ofgem's latest annual report as the best network operators for reliability in Great Britain.

Average duration of power cuts in Cumbria



High voltage faults only. Correct as of July 2026.

Average time between power cuts in Cumbria



Correct as of July 2026.



Environmental action plan and biodiversity





Improving sustainability by looking after the environment across our region

Our biodiversity action plan, part of our environmental action plan, increases the biodiversity of the land we manage. We have identified more than 100 sites where we can make significant biodiversity improvements. The sites are largely grassland and woodland and we've carried out surveys to assess their current state so we can track the level of uplift we provide. We cut the sites bi-annually and leave the cuttings on site in a dedicated area to promote wildlife habitats.

We also take care to look for nesting birds and protected species and the cuts are completed at specific times of the year to help the native wildflowers and grasses flourish. The programme has been designed in line with the government's 25-year plan which requires a biodiversity net gain of 10%.

Undergrounding for visual amenity

A significant proportion of our network (12,355 kilometres) is made up of overhead lines. These can have a direct visual impact on the surrounding environment, particularly where the surrounding environment is within a naturally appealing landscape. There are three national parks and four national landscapes, collectively known as 'designated areas', either wholly or partially within our region. Our long-term aspiration is to remove all visually intrusive overhead lines from these areas where it is economical, feasible and desirable for our customers.

Improving management of trees near overhead lines

Our teams of trained arborists and surveyors have increased the number of inspections of vegetation near overhead lines in RIIO-ED2, and are working collaboratively with landowners to prune, fell and dismantle more trees at risk of damaging our network.

We're also addressing the impacts of diseased trees, particularly Ash Dieback – a highly destructive disease caused by a fungus – which causes ash trees to weaken. This poses a greater risk of trees falling onto overhead lines and the consequent impact on power cuts and safety.

We have reviewed the number of trees that we cut down during our proactive vegetation management activities. While most trees are pruned or coppiced by our skilled arborists, some trees do need to be fully cut down. Due to the impact of Ash Dieback, we may need to cut down up to 10,000 trees per year during RIIO-ED2. To offset our vegetation management activities we're working with our partners to plant 10,000 trees across our region every year between 2023-2028.

Our annual environment report provides an update on progress against our five-year environmental action plan.

Preparing our network for the future



As the region's network operator, it's our responsibility to enable green growth, create the capacity needed for new homes, businesses and industry and support jobs, skills and supply chains across the North West.

It's also our job to prepare for the growing numbers of electric vehicles, heat pumps and other low carbon technologies we expect to see, making it easier for consumers and businesses to make the switch when they are ready.

To make sure our network can meet the extra demand and to adapt to the unparalleled changes we expect to see, we're implementing plans now to ensure customers can continue to enjoy one of the most reliable electricity networks in the UK, at the lowest possible cost.

As part of our 2023-2028 business plan we're increasing capacity and flexibility, investing in digital technology and developing innovative solutions to deliver more efficient ways of working.

Capacity planning

This involves forecasting electricity use and co-ordinating network development. Our forecasts combine data, insights and learning from continuous engagement with our regional stakeholders with third-party data and insights. This helps us predict the impact of customer choices and societal changes such as the uptake of low carbon technologies so we understand where network development is needed and where there are opportunities for 'flexibility services'.

Flexibility services

Flexibility services can help to balance the network and reduce the need for costly and time-consuming network reinforcement. They do this by compensating consumers and generators for using their electricity differently. For example, consumers may be incentivised to adjust their electricity usage during peak periods, or energy storage systems may be asked to store excess renewable energy for later use.

Find out how we're planning for the future.

Working with our stakeholders

By actively engaging with stakeholders such as local authorities, we ensure that decisions are made in collaboration and are aligned with the priorities of the region. This includes regular consultations, workshops and feedback mechanisms that enable us to gather valuable insights and incorporate them into our planning processes.

Community and local energy

Community energy refers to local and community led projects or initiatives to reduce, manage, generate or purchase clean energy. We offer support to these projects by providing grants for initiatives such as community EV charging hubs, solar projects, battery storage and energy-saving ideas.

Inspiring and enabling our customers to take action on net zero

We provide information, advice and guidance to customers and businesses to help them take action to reduce their energy bills and carbon emissions. We do this by working with partners across the region and nationally who have the expertise and knowledge to help you reduce your emissions and energy bills. For example we're working with UK 100 and Green Economy who provide support for businesses while Take Charge provides free, confidential energy and money advice for households.

Leading by example

We're committed to transforming our estate to be as energy efficient as possible by using onsite and off-site generation to meet our energy demand and by adopting energy efficient measures wherever possible. Our fleet is adopting electric vehicles and we're making it easier for colleagues to do the same with our sustainable transport policy. We became the world's first 'carbon literate' power network operator after receiving bronze accreditation from the Carbon Literacy Project in 2019 and silver accreditation in 2022.

Investing for growth – RIIO-ED3

Our next business plan period RIIO-ED3 runs between 2028 and 2033. Over this period, we'll invest billions of pounds in the electricity network that serves your homes, businesses and communities.

It will determine what gets upgraded, how resilient the network is, how ready it is for electric vehicles, heat pumps, renewables and how well it works for the realities of everyday life.

Find out more about the plan



Contacts and more information

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