

Report on Northern Powergrid's (NPg) Independent Stakeholder Group (ISG) meeting

Q3 August 2024

Summary

This meeting considered the standing items of: Delivery of NPg's (including the production of the SCL50 report), updates from the Business Plan Engagement Group (BPEG) leads (including Data & Digitalisation), an update on NPg's DSO Review Panel¹ (including an update on the DSO performance results) and how NPg and the ISG prepare for ED3 planning.

The meeting also included a piece on NPg Customer Personas, NPg's external affairs team and its objectives, and an item on NPg's brand and external profile.

Business Plan update

The SLC50 was the main topic of discussion, this is the annual report to Ofgem which provides strategic commentary of NPg's commitments. The ISG are very interested in this and keen to track its progress and asked a number of questions which are to be followed up via correspondence. The report is due to be published at the end of October 2024.

BPEG update

Lots of conversations have taken place with cross utility peers, so there is lots of strong collaboration ongoing. Key engagement planning for 2025 is also underway to pull together an overview of engagement opportunities for the future.

The recommendations from the Insight reports pulled together as part of this BPEG process are quite numerous. Hence, the ISG suggested that they are grouped into trends and themes due to the volumes.

Customers are being engaged in October (after initial feedback captured) on the NPg website redesign ahead of its go-live, to help ensure that the proposed changes result in improved functionality from a users experience.

NPg's Data & Digitalisation action plan has been updated with the format remaining consistent with the previous version.

Customer Personas

NPg confirmed its use of customer personas as a best practice to define and service requirements that reflect the needs of users. The ISG highlighted four different uses that they have been made aware of and have questioned if there is any value in having more consistent personas across the business, or conversely any risk of not having this joined up approach.

NPg will now create a list universal to its business, and come back to the ISG before final signoff.

DSO Review Panel

The Chair of the DRP¹ shared that NPg's spring tender results have seen success.

¹Find out more about Northern Powergrid's Distribution System Operation Review Panel here: [DSO Review Panel | Northern Powergrid](#)

Main discussions to date with NPg have been on reinforcement vs flexibility, the DRP have asked NPg to satisfy themselves that decisions to date are just and inclusive.

The DSO Incentive results have been published putting NPg in fourth (out for the 6 DNOs), and NPg would circulate the full report to the ISG.

External Affairs

NPg confirmed its External Affairs Department is growing with the recruitment of a senior external affairs manager and a key analytical role. The departments' objective is to increase its proximity and visibility to policy makers and establish increased connectivity with the new government, particularly given their early focus on energy.

The department is also drafting an external affairs strategy, which once complete, will be shared with the ISG.

External Profile / Branding

The Head of Communications at NPg confirmed changes to the external facing website are underway for an end of year launch.

The new website would incorporate storm response technology which remembers people and navigates straight to the power cut map and helpline during major incidents. Power cuts and connections would be front and centre in the new website.

The ISG challenged that the customer experience needs to be incorporated more for this new design.

Broader Northern Powergrid Updates

NPg confirmed its ED3 planning is underway, with the draft submission due to Ofgem in June 2026. Ofgem have already published their requirements of ISGs in the gas sector, and it is expected that similar, if not identical requirements, should follow for the electricity distribution ISG's.

¹Find out more about Northern Powergrid's Distribution System Operation Review Panel here: [DSO Review Panel | Northern Powergrid](#)