

# SP ENW DSO Stakeholder Panel

Meeting notes – 6 May 2026

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

## 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 noted by the Chair and Secretariat.

## Safety moment

PA shared details of SP ENW's monthly safety theme of office safety.

## Standing items - review of actions

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

## Standing items – business and ISG update

PA shared an update on the combined SP ENW and SPEN ISG and the ED3 business planning process.

## Standing items – industry issues

**RIIO-ED3** – PA outlined the emerging regulatory direction for ED3 in respect of “build and flex” and the associated business plan requirements.

**Data centres/large demand connections** – PA gave an overview of the current challenges around large demand connections, noting that, while there has been a major focus on generation connection queue reform, attention is now shifting to large demand connections, especially from data centres. This is impacting both distribution and transmission networks and requires industry-wide coordination including via the CAS and RESPs. The panel discussed stakeholder experiences in this area, observing that there appeared to be a lack of coordination from government and the regulator about how projects can be delivered, and noting the need for greater clarity and coordination to ensure that credible viable projects progressed and were not delayed by speculative developments. The panel also noted the need for coordination with other sectors such as water and gas. The panel asked to be kept updated on this issue as SP ENW further developed its strategy and policies.

**Local elections 7 May** – It was agreed that the impacts of the local election results would be picked up at the next policy sub-group meeting. **Action: HD**

## Standing items – DSO delivery

### 2025/26 Performance Panel submission

PA confirmed that the 2025/26 performance panel submission was now complete and published on SP ENW's website. The panel was thanked for its support and contributions to the report and associated publications over recent months. The next step in the assessment process was the Ofgem panel interview which was scheduled for mid-July. It was agreed that the panel would support on preparation for the interview at its next meeting on 8 July.

### 2025/26 KPIs and DSO benefits

SD gave a summary of the 2025/26 year-end KPI performance, noting that targets had been met in 11 out of the 14 KPIs, with exceptional performance in areas such as reinforcement deferral and benefits delivered to wider society.

It was noted that, although the target for flexibility procurement had not been achieved, SP ENW had delivered an increase of 43% on the prior year. The flexible connections target had also not been achieved, and it was noted that this was a result of a significant decrease in major connections activity. Domestic LCT connection volumes had more than trebled since the prior year.

The meeting discussed the flexible connections data and the panel noted that it would be helpful to see more detail, for example, the ratio of flexible to non-flexible connections energised, or the numbers offered vs accepted. The panel also suggested the inclusion of unlooping data for future KPI reporting. **Action: SP ENW to consider further**

The panel also discussed the DSO benefits reported in SP ENW's performance panel submission and the associated impact on customer bills. The panel asked for further detail regarding how customer bill savings were calculated and a deeper dive into "realised" vs "unlocked" vs "ambition" benefits. **Action: SP ENW to follow up**

### Social DSO fund

KH gave an update on the developments made to the fund's governance following the decisions taken at the last panel meeting. Round two of the funding awards had been conducted on this basis.

KH then shared an overview of the data for round two, noting that awards had been made for three applicants with a further three still under consideration pending further information. CM was thanked for his contribution as independent member of the assessment panel.

## Standing items – Communications and stakeholder engagement

KR shared details of recent DSO stakeholder and communications activity as well as forthcoming events.

## Standing items – Flexibility services

PG gave a roundup of the results and highlights of SP ENW'S 2025/26 flexibility market activities, noting the significant increase in flexibility procured and dispatched, increased numbers of FSPs and assets registered, and developments in engagement and support provided to FSPs.

Looking ahead to the coming year the focus on developing the market and providing support to participants would continue, alongside further alignment with the Market Facilitator Flexibility Market Rules, and Flexibility Market Asset Register integration.

### Session theme 1 – Load-related expenditure

SD gave a recap of the background to SP ENW's load-related expenditure reopener application and Ofgem's decision, and the associated impact on SP ENW's baseline allowances. He shared progress to date on some of SP ENW's major load programmes, noting that Ofgem's final consultation and licence modifications were due during June 2026 but that current delivery plans were not expected to change.

SD then looked in more detail at the outlook for ED3, Ofgem's business plan requirements and the associated timelines. The panel was keen to provide input and evidence where it could, and it was noted that this would be a regular agenda item at future panel meetings.

### Session theme 2 – Governance update

**Terms of reference review** – it was noted that the panel's annual terms of reference review was now due. The changes implemented last year were discussed and it was agreed that these were generally working well. The panel noted the high volume of documents for review towards the end of the year, and it was agreed that earlier sight of the workplan would be helpful and that meeting dates might need to be adjusted accordingly. **Action: SP ENW to review**

**Assurance review** – HD summarised the outcomes and recommendations from the recent external assurance review of SP ENW's DSO governance framework and processes. She confirmed that these would all be taken forward during the coming months and that SP ENW would report back to the panel on a regular basis.

### Standing items – Panel forward plan

The forward plan in the meeting pack was noted.

### AOB and close

AMc thanked panel members and SP ENW for their time and contribution to the meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for 8 July 2026.