



## **Incentive on Connections Engagement (ICE)**

*2017/18 Mid-Year Update*

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# Our update at a glance

2017/18 ICE Mid-Year Update



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## Foreword

Patrick Erwin - Policy and Markets Director



*This mid-year update gives us the opportunity to provide our customers with an overview of the work we are undertaking in line with the commitments we have made and also to outline some new things we are going to deliver during the remainder of this ICE plan year.*



**Effective engagement with our customers and stakeholders is vital in ensuring we can provide the services they need and want. We really value and appreciate the time and effort our connections customers and stakeholders have taken to help us with our Incentive on Connections Engagement (ICE) mid-year update for 2017.**

In April 2017, we published a comprehensive service improvement plan for our major works connections business, based on the feedback we had received from our stakeholders. We committed to 23 actions, across different aspects of our connections process, including providing better information, improving our application and delivery process, engagement, technical and commercial developments, innovation and further enabling competition.

Throughout the course of the year we sought every opportunity to engage with our stakeholders at numerous, one on one, local, regional and national events and from these interactions we have been able to see where customers think we can improve further and also, very encouragingly, where customers have given us positive endorsements for the work we have already delivered.

This mid-year update gives us the opportunity to provide our customers with an overview of the work we are undertaking in line with the commitments we have made and also to outline some new things we are going to deliver during the remainder of this ICE plan year.

To date, we have completed nine of the 23 actions we committed to deliver; improving the information available about contract milestones, multi-optioneering process and the nature and cost of our range of Independent Connections Providers (ICP) input services. We have also successfully delivered workshops on how to access our mains records, local energy supply and domestic storage. We have been particularly pleased with the results of adopting webinars as a new communication channel, through which we have had a successful interaction with stakeholders about our Distribution System Operator (DSO) strategy, seeking their views and exploring how they can influence and benefit from the new operating arrangements.

From listening to our customers throughout the year, we recognise the areas where we can improve and although this feedback normally serves to support compiling next year's ICE plan, where possible, we would not want to delay improvements that we think we can deliver quickly. We have identified three new actions for 2017/18 which we describe later in this update, two of which we have already delivered.

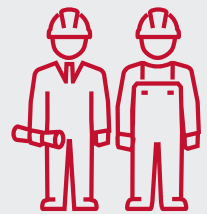
There are a number of areas where we continue to contribute to development of our own and national strategies, including resolving constrained networks; developing flexible connections; connecting energy storage technology; smart grid innovation; Assessment & Design (A&D) fees; resolving transmission issues and operational liaison with customers after energisation. These are all issues that are the subject of current actions in our ICE work plan or will become subjects for consideration in the future.

Again, we recognise that the success of our engagement and the development of our connections service improvement plan relies on the cooperation and commitment of our stakeholders, who help shape and take forward our industry in support of regional and national growth. We greatly appreciate the time and effort that they give willingly to this process and to helping us to improve the service we provide.

# Who we are and what we do

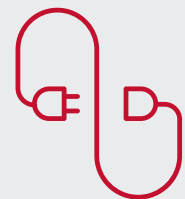
Northern Powergrid is responsible for the electricity distribution network that keeps the lights on for 8 million customers across the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire.

— We serve —  
**8 million**  
customers



Our team is  
**2500**  
strong

We deliver  
**c.30,000**  
new connections  
each year



We have  
**3.5GW**  
of distributed  
generation  
connected to  
our network



We distribute power to 3.9 million homes and businesses through our network of more than 63,000 substations, some 60,000 miles of overhead lines and underground cables, spanning 9,650 square miles. Our team of 2,500 employees is dedicated to delivering a safe and reliable electricity supply to customers. We keep the power flowing 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and if our customers do have a power cut, we'll be there to fix it.

## Our region

We are proud of the vital role that Northern Powergrid plays in the infrastructure of the North of England. We play an active role in securing the future of energy in the north; as part of Business North and through our sponsorship of the Northern Energy Taskforce, we help to provide a unified voice for the business community supporting the development of a regional growth agenda.

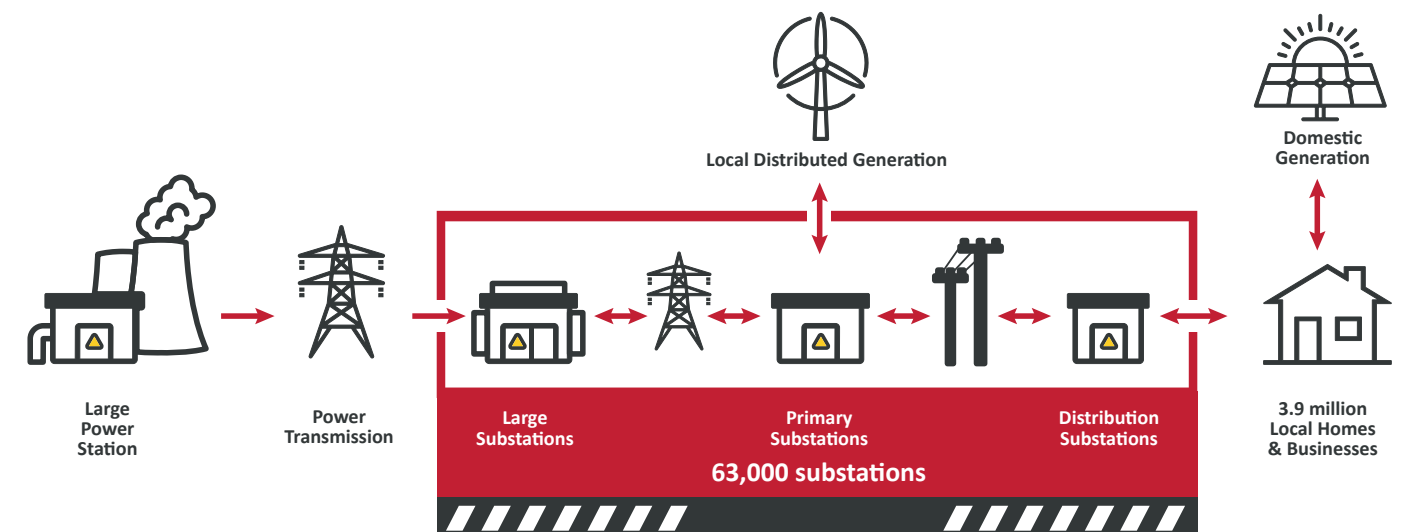
We're also supporting our region through Infrastructure North; a regional utility partnership with Northern Gas Networks, Yorkshire Water and Northumbrian Water. Our work includes best practice sharing, joint social programmes to support our vulnerable customers and communities, and exploring joint innovation projects to help our network become more efficient.

## Our connections customers

Connecting new customers to the electricity network is one of the most critical services provided by Distribution Network Operators (DNOs). It enables new homes to be built and occupied, new businesses to start trading, new forms of generation to produce energy, and providers to deliver new services to the energy system.

At Northern Powergrid we facilitate in excess of 30,000 new customer connections every year. From single premises to new housing developments and large industrial and manufacturing sites each new connection plays an important role in the economic development and growth of our region. We recognise the importance of the service we provide. Our team is fully committed to engaging with our customers to understand the issues they face and what more we can do to help them get connected.

## Where we fit in the Electricity industry





# Engagement update

*How we're listening and acting on your feedback*



*Attendees at our Connections Customer Forum got a preview of our online ICE work plan*

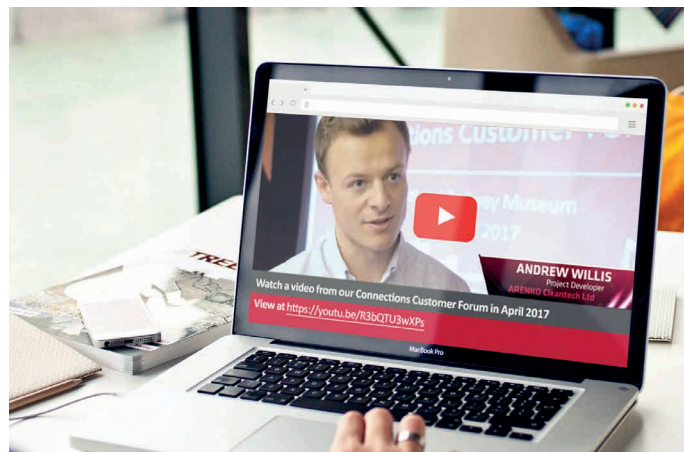
*We work hard to understand the needs of our connections stakeholders and to continually improve the service we provide.*

We operate a robust and effective engagement programme which is endorsed by our stakeholders. This year, we have focused on building on this established strategy by delivering more targeted engagement; exploring new communication channels and making our subject experts more visible and accessible.

## *New opportunities to engage*

Our twice-yearly Connections Customer Forums and ICP Seminars continue to be our primary engagement activity and we are encouraged by the growth in attendee numbers we have observed. We understand that attending these forums can have a significant time and cost implication for our stakeholders and we appreciate all of those who continue to attend and support these events.

This year, and in response to our stakeholders' feedback, we have initiated a programme of smaller, subject-specific workshops which are proving particularly popular. All the workshops that we have run to date were oversubscribed and we will be running follow on sessions for all those unable to attend.



## **WATCH**

*Watch a video from our last Connections Customer Forum to find out what delegates thought about the event.*

<https://youtu.be/R3bQTU3wXPs>

## *New for 2017/18*

We've listened to what our customers are telling us about the ways they want to engage with us. This year we've stepped up our presence on social media and initiated a programme of Twitter 'Ask the Expert' sessions where senior members of our team are available online to answer questions on topics suggested by our customers. Acting on our stakeholders' suggestions we're also now utilising webinars and considering other new communications tools that will help us to reach even more of our stakeholders.

We run monthly surgeries where customers can sit down with our engineers to discuss current or planned projects and this year we've focused on promoting them to stakeholders like community energy groups, who would benefit but may not be aware the resource exists.

Finally, we think it's important that our connections stakeholders are kept up to date on how we are delivering against the service improvement commitments we have made. That's why we're launching a new online version of our ICE work plan which gives a real-time update on the status of our ICE actions. The plan can be filtered to show only those actions applicable to a particular customer group and provides links to outputs and other useful online resources like policy documents and frequently asked questions.

“

*We particularly like the concept of targeted workshops and look forward to being invited along.*”

Roadnight Taylor  
Ofgem consultation on DNOs 2017/18 ICE submissions

YOU SAID:

*“Can more question and answer sessions be internet based i.e. Skype / webinar”*

*Introduced social media 'Ask the Expert' Q&A sessions and more webinar based activities.*

WE DID:



New actions for our mid-year update

When considering actions for our mid-year update we followed the same robust, stakeholder driven process we employed to develop our ICE work plan earlier in the year.

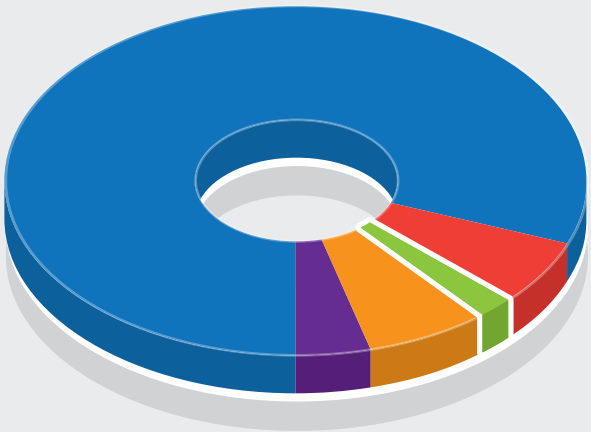
We gather feedback from a number of different sources including events, consultations, surgeries and monthly customer satisfaction surveys. All feedback we receive is recorded in our stakeholder log<sup>1</sup> and reviewed by our Head of Connections Services and ICE Stakeholder Engagement Manager who decide how best to respond.

We collated and considered 142 individual stakeholder comments in the period from April 2017 to September 2017. Most customer comments can be addressed by contact from one of our team and are therefore not suitable for ICE. Where we can resolve a customer's issue quickly, we don't wait to include it in our improvement plan; we solve it through our business-as-usual practices. Where we think a customer has raised an issue best addressed through ICE, we talk to them to ensure we have fully understood their views and that the action and outcome we are proposing will fully address their concern.

Three of the comments we received were appropriate for ICE actions and could be accommodated within the remainder of this ICE plan year. These have been incorporated. There are a number of comments which we are considering for future ICE plans and we maintain a watching brief on those issues. We will continue to proactively engage with our stakeholders' about the issues that concern them and we encourage all our connections customers to talk to us about what we do well and what we could be doing better.



2% of stakeholders comments generated a new action that could be incorporated into our ICE plan at the mid-year point.



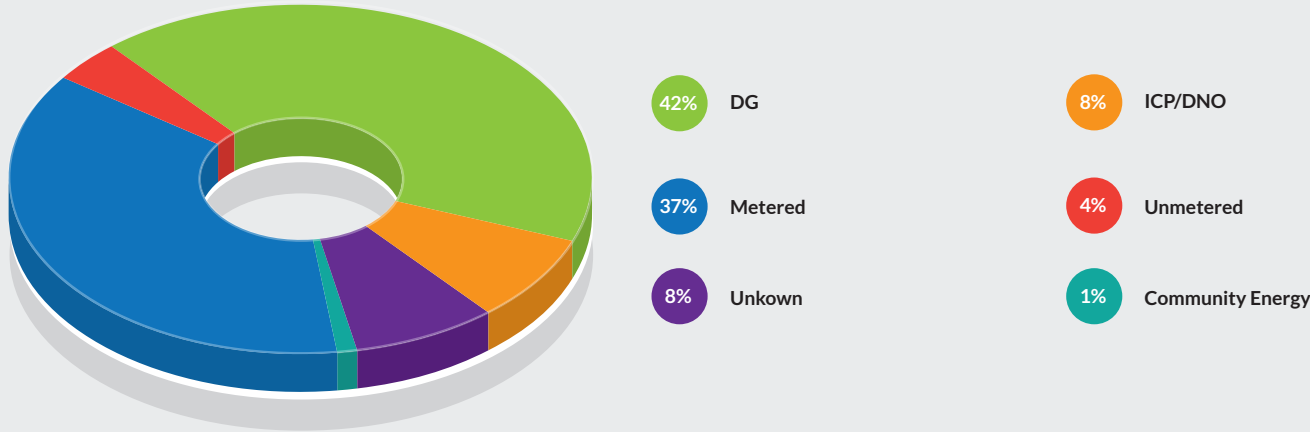
We collated, considered and responded where appropriate to 142 individual stakeholder comments in the period from April 2017 to September 2017.

- 2% The comment generated a new action added to our plan at the mid-year point
- 5% The comment may generate an action in future plans and we maintain a watching brief
- 82% We considered the stakeholders feedback and responded where necessary but their comment was not applicable to ICE
- 7% An action in our current plan already addresses the stakeholders' comment
- 4% We were able to address the stakeholders comment or issue through BAU



At our monthly connections surgeries customers can sit down with our engineers to discuss current or planned projects.

We have received the majority of our feedback to date from metered and distributed generation (DG) stakeholders.



<sup>1</sup> In our stakeholder log we record the customer's verbatim comment, where it originated from, our interpretation of the issue, any discussions or interactions which have taken place and the next steps.



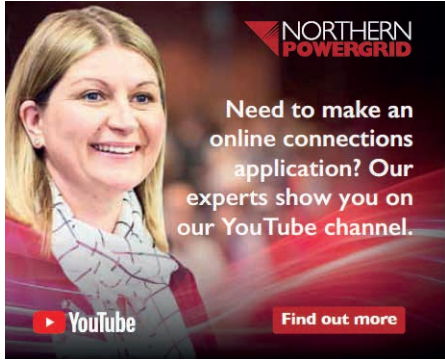
# What we've done

Commitments we've already delivered



“We very much support the idea of recording webinars and connections forums. This will allow those unable to attend to get the benefit of hearing the information first hand, and also allow attendees to revisit sections of these events to refresh memory.”

Nicola Percival, Innogy Renewables UK Ltd  
Ofgem consultation on DNOs 2017/18 ICE submissions



We used social media to reach more of our stakeholders.

M UM DG ICP

## Filming our engagement forums

Customers will often ask for the slides after an event to revisit and remind themselves of the content presented. We also recognise that some stakeholders find it difficult to attend our forums due to time or financial constraints. To try and address this, we made a commitment in our ICE work plan to trial filming the presentations made at our connections events. We said we would post them to the web so that stakeholders could watch at a time that suits them. In doing so, we would also be able us to reach out to wider range of connections stakeholders and give them an opportunity to engage with us.

In line with our commitment, we filmed the presentations from our Connections Customer Forum in April 2017 and our ICP Seminar in June 2017 and posted them to our YouTube channel. We also filmed our first targeted workshop on local energy supplies; thereby over delivering on the performance metric we set had ourselves for this action.

We promoted the videos on our website and via our social media channels; we also emailed stakeholders to inform them about this new resource available to them. Having evaluated the outcomes we considered there was still more we could do to promote these videos. We trialed a targeted social media advertising campaign which allowed us to reach out to stakeholders who may not engage with us on a regular basis but would find the information useful.

Looking forward, we will continue to investigate and evaluate new ways to communicate with our stakeholders and are considering more webinar based activities and webcasts. We will report back on the success of these activities in our next ICE submission.

M UM DG ICP

## Understanding contract milestones

Last year, alongside other DNOs, we contributed to the development of the ENA's guide to the implementation of contract milestones. Following that, and in line with industry best practice, we made changes to our standard terms and conditions that make it possible for us to address the issue of underutilised network capacity locked into contracted projects that do not proceed to energisation.

We made sure we engaged with our stakeholders on the issue and kept them informed during every step of the consultation and implementation process. At one of our connections forums, a customer asked for a simple guide to milestones that he could share with his clients to help them understand the process and any associated risks. We produced a simple guide to contract milestone in August 2017 and published it on our website.



M UM DG

## Accessing network records

Earlier in the year, our Connections Input Services Team ran a workshop on how to access our network records. Following that, we received a number of requests from our metered demand and unmetered customers for a similar event.

In August 2017, and in line with the commitment we made, we ran a successful workshop which was attended by 24 connections customers. Attendees were given a demonstration on how to access our network records and an overview of the information currently available. They were also given a preview of our new IT solution that will modernise the way in which distribution asset records and associated data can be accessed and viewed. The event proved extremely popular, with all the available places filled within an hour of the invitation being issued. Demand was so high that we have now committed to run follow up sessions within this ICE plan period for any customers who were unable to attend.

“Very informative and positive. Good venue, facilities and hospitality.”

James Kostyszyn, Keepmoat Homes  
Accessing network records workshop, August 2017

Looking forward to roll out and access for safe dig use.

Mike Curtis, Sir Robert McAlpine, Street Lighting Service  
Accessing network records workshop, August 2017

M DG

## Design optioneering

Last year we introduced a multiple application optioneering service similar to Scottish Power's Quote+ process, which allows customers to consider multiple connections options whilst maintaining their position in the formal connections queue. Through our ongoing engagement with stakeholders it became evident that many were not aware we provided this service. To address this, we have created a new page on our website which explains the process step by step, including how to apply. We have promoted the new page on our website homepage; via our social media channels and in our customer communications.



100% of attendees told us they found the information presented at our workshop 'very useful' or 'useful'





**WATCH**

Watch a video from our last ICP seminar to find out what Independent Connections Providers operating in our region had to say about Northern Powergrid and how we engage with them.

<https://youtu.be/pEyC-h4U-CQ>



*Our experience of late is that the connections team (designers, planners and contract managers) are very willing to engage on an ad hoc basis. They are invariably very helpful, professional and generous with their time and their intimate knowledge of their particular grid groups.*

Roadnight Taylor  
Ofgem's consultation on DNOs 2017/18 ICE submissions

**ICP**

*Promoting fair and open competition in connections*

Meeting the needs of all our connections customers is important to us and a big part of delivering this commitment is our work with ICPs and Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs). We place a great deal of importance on engaging with these stakeholders to develop and support fair and open competition in connections.

We actively promote ICPs in our region and our Connections Input Services team play a vital role in delivering the improvements that ICPs require to carry out their connections activities. This year, we have delivered four commitments which will directly benefit ICPs and help improve the services they offer their customers, these include;

- Developing an end-to-end process map that covers all aspects of our input services and explains how ICPs can interface with us more effectively;
- Publishing a schedule of rates and prices for the input services available to ICPs so that they can 'pick and mix' the services they require;
- Updating our standard design matrix rules to include unmetered connections and simplify the technical specification;
- Adding a new section to our 'how are we performing' webpage that shows the average time taken to issue point of connection and design approvals so that this information is visible to ICPs.

**M**

**UM**

**DG**

**ICP**

*Sharing our vision for the DSO transition*

At our Connections Customer Forum customers asked us to tell them more about our DSO strategy and when we would be involving them in the consultation process. We made a commitment to share our vision; describe the work underway at Northern Powergrid and seek our stakeholders' views.

We gave updates on our DSO strategy and our involvement in the ENA Open Networks Project at our Stakeholder Panel and Connections Customer Forums but thought there was more we could do to reach out and engage with stakeholders on the matter.

In September 2017, we held a live Twitter Q&A session with Jim Cardwell, Northern Powergrid's Head of Trading and Innovation and Andy Jenkins, Head of Network Trading. The Q&A was promoted via our social media channels and generated significant interest online. Later in the same month, and responding to stakeholders' requests for more online engagement, we hosted a live webinar on the same topic, viewed by over 80 stakeholders, where they had the opportunity to comment and ask questions. Looking forward, we will continue to engage with our stakeholders on this important topic and to seek their views on our vision and strategy.





# What we're working on

Commitments we'll deliver in the remainder of the ICE year

YOU SAID:

"It would be useful to have small workshops on various emerging topics – storage; DNO service procurement, flexible connections and any more you think would be relevant."

We committed to run a programme of targeted workshops on connections topics suggested by our customers.

WE DID:

M UM DG ICP

## More targeted workshops and engagement

This year, acting on our stakeholders' requests, we've focused on delivering more targeted engagement. One of the ways we have done this is through a programme of subject specific workshops which have proved particularly popular with our connections customers. So far, and in line with the commitment in our plan, we have delivered two, with two more planned in the remainder of this ICE plan year. The workshops have been extremely well received by customers who told us they appreciated the opportunity to talk to our team in a smaller, more relaxed environment. Looking forward, we will continue to engage with stakeholders about the subjects they would like to see covered at future workshops and how we can optimise their experience and the time they spend with us.

We've also focused on making our subject experts more accessible and on utilising new channels for engagement like Twitter and webinars. We are running a programme of social media 'Ask the Expert' Q&A's where senior members of our team are available online for a set period of time to answer questions. In line with our published plan we have held two Q&A sessions so far, with two more planned in the remainder of the ICE plan year. Looking forward, we will continue to learn from our experiences and consider how we can make this new concept a useful resource for our stakeholders.

“

Just a quick email to say thank you for the workshop yesterday. I found the workshop informative and useful, which is what you need from a workshop. Please pass my thanks to the rest of the Northern Powergrid team. ”

Steve Watts, Patrick Parsons  
Domestic Energy Storage Workshop, September 2017

M DG

## Assessment and Design (A&D) fees

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is taking forward fundamental changes to the way in which connections customers are charged for the preparation of quotations. We have kept our customers informed on progress of this long running debate and have an ongoing commitment to implement A&D fees on conclusion of the industry consultation and implementation of the required legislation. In September 2017, BEIS announced that it will allow DNOs to charge upfront A&D fees; BEIS is now seeking stakeholder views on how best to achieve this. We will continue to support BEIS in its consultation and keep our customers informed of the outcomes. In line with the commitment we made in our published work plan we are now working to make changes to our policies and practices where appropriate.

DG

## Active Network Management (ANM)

Following deployment of our first replicable ANM scheme on our network in Driffield, East Yorkshire, we continue to identify areas of constraint on our network and to develop flexible solutions which will help more customers to get connected.

We have provided regular updates throughout the roll-out of our Driffield ANM scheme. We acknowledge however that customers want to know more about our plans. In quarter one of 2018, and in line with the commitment we made in our plan, we will initiate a focused programme of engagement on our ANM solution which details its development, future operation and use in any follow on flexible connection schemes.

M UM DG ICP

## Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

We work closely with representatives from our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to minimise the impact of overhead lines in some of our region's most beautiful landscapes. During one of our regular meetings, an issue was raised about the treatment of connections and asset replacement costs. The comment was made that DNOs are provided with allowances to underground assets in National Parks, thereby reducing the visual impact of overhead lines. It was noted however that this was not the case with new connections.

In line with the commitment we made, we have entered into discussions with Ofgem on behalf of our stakeholders. Ofgem is keen to understand the level of support and we will continue to engage with both Ofgem and representatives from our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the matter.

Looking forward, we will be sponsoring our first annual National Parks Conference, which is themed around 'National Parks for the Future' giving us another opportunity to engage with this important stakeholder group.

DG

## Energy storage

Energy storage continues to be an important topic with over 17GW of quotations issued in the past year alone. We have committed to work together with our customers to identify and overcome any challenges associated with connecting this emerging technology. We have a number of actions in our work plan intended to help customers to connect both domestic and larger scale energy storage projects. These include;

- Modifying our online G59 application form to include an option to connect energy storage;
- Engaging with stakeholders to develop a standard suite of storage offers that will make the connections application process quicker and more straightforward;
- Publishing a series of case studies for customers on future use cases and applications for storage.

Our work continues on these actions and we intend to complete all within the current ICE plan year.

DG

## Connecting Low Carbon Technologies

Greater use of renewable energy sources and the electrification of heating and transport are central to government's plans to reduce carbon emissions. The UK's electricity networks will need to be prepared to support the widespread uptake of the new sources of generation and electricity-intensive low carbon technologies like electric vehicles and heat pumps.

We considered there was more we could do to help our customers understand what is involved in connecting to new and emerging low carbon technologies and to guide them through the application process and so we included an action in our work plan to create a new online 'Low Carbon Gateway'. In line with our commitment, we are now developing this resource and in quarter one of 2018, we will be engaging with stakeholders about what we have developed, ahead of roll out later in the year.

## Non-ICE issues we are addressing from customer feedback

In this year's Ofgem consultation on DNOs' ICE plans, Nicola Percival from Innogy Renewables UK Ltd made the comment that seminars on use of system charging, delivered via either the ENA or individual DNOs would be useful.

We agreed that although having an understanding of use of system charges is not a connections issue (and therefore lies outside the scope of the ICE process), we could help customers with their understanding of this issue by explaining how use of system charging works.

We are therefore going to hold an information sharing webinar on use of system charging for stakeholders where they will have the opportunity to learn more about the subject and ask questions of our experts.





## Areas of continuing focus

*Important issues where we maintain a watching brief*



*The UK electricity industry is undergoing a period of unprecedented change as we move towards creating a smarter, more flexible energy system. There are a number of emerging topics where we continue to contribute to the development of regional and national thinking, strategies and solutions.*

### **Flexible connections and constrained networks**

Enabling as many customers as possible to connect to the electricity distribution network continues to be one of our prime drivers in developing new technologies and flexible ways to connect.

We are continuing with our work on the development and operation of ANM. Although ANM is not currently required extensively on our network, we recognise that the continued connection of generation assets will become more reliant on its use. It is therefore important that we understand this technology and have a replicable solution ready to implement as and when required. We are providing customers with updates on progress of our ANM system at each of our main stakeholder engagement events this year.

On the matter of constrained networks there is a groundswell of opinion from customers that DNOs should provide more detailed and readily available constraint information. This is an issue that we are now considering in terms of quotation and heat map information that we will then review in future service improvement actions.



### **DNO to DSO and smart grids**

The increase in new types of technology and renewable generation connections is driving the need to change the way in which we operate our distribution networks and demands increased network flexibility.

A DSO securely operates and develops an active distribution system comprising networks, demand, generation and other flexible distributed energy resources (DER). It acts as a neutral facilitator of an open and accessible market, enabling competitive access to markets and the optimal use of DER on distribution networks to deliver security, sustainability and affordability in support of whole system optimisation. It also enables customers to be both producers and consumers whilst also giving them access, choice and great service.

We have taken every opportunity to share our understanding of the role of a DSO, through our engagement forums, twitter conversations and webinars. We have given customers the opportunity to influence the strategy we are developing and better understand the part they might play and how it might impact their businesses.

This is one of our priority areas of innovation and development and will continue to be a strand in our engagement and service improvement plans into the future. In particular, connections customers will be consulted as we proceed to scope the future through a new project with the University of Bath. This new Customer-Led Distribution System project builds upon the network modelling previously done on the ground-breaking Customer-Led Network Revolution programme. It provides a virtual demonstrator of an energy system saturated with DER to understand how the various future DSO market models being discussed could work in practice and what this would mean for our customers.





# New ICE actions

Commitments we are adding to our work plan at the mid-year point



NEW

DG

COMPLETE

### 1.6 Contracted capacity register update

In our 2016/17 ICE plan we made a commitment to update the information on our generation and demand heat maps on a monthly basis. Customers commended our ambitious undertaking but asked us to do more. They asked if we would also update the data on our contracted capacity register more regularly. We listened and acted on that feedback, adding a commitment to our work plan last October to update our contracted capacity register every month. We delivered that commitment to its forecast delivery date as part of last year's work plan.

Following on from that, we received a request from Nicola Percival of Innogy Renewables UK Ltd to develop this action further. Our contracted capacity register provides useful information for developers on the number and status of connections projects in our region. Ms Percival asked us whether it would be possible to create an archive of the previous month's registers and to provide the information in excel format, as this would be an extremely useful for customers.

We though this was a good suggestion and something we could action quickly. We acted swiftly creating a new page on our website which includes an archive of contracted capacity register data. We also supplied the information in excel format to allow customers to access, manipulate and understand the data more easily.

**Action:**  
We will create a new contracted capacity register webpage that features an archive of previous capacity registers in both excel and pdf formats.

**Customer outcome:**  
Customers will have access to historical information in the formats they require.

**Performance metric:**  
Webpage live and information available.

“  
When contacted by NPg to be told that our feedback had yielded positive change I gave additional feedback on the way this information was presented which was acted upon very quickly to get an even better result.”  
”

Nicola Percival, Innogy Renewables UK Ltd

NEW

M DG

ON TRACK

### 2.5 EHV quotations

At our Connections Customer Forum in April 2017, we asked attendees to tell us three things they thought would improve our connections service. Rickard Von Poten of energy solution development group Suncredit, suggested including a front cover on grid connection offers featuring key information cited in the quotation including capacity, costs and the connection date.

We thought this was a good suggestion and something that we could implement in the remainder of the ICE plan year. We are therefore making a new commitment to add a new front page that provides a summary of key information presented in the offer to all EHV quotations.

**Action:**  
We will add a front page summary to EHV quotations.

**Customer outcome:**  
Summary front page added to all EHV quotations.

**Performance metric:**  
Customer feedback.



Rickard Von Poten of Suncredit suggested adding a front cover to our grid offers.

NEW

ICP

COMPLETE

### 5.5 Extension of independent inspection services

When new licence conditions underlining the code of practice for the services that DNOs should offer and operate with ICPs were first introduced, one of the areas that we thought was important and that was not mandated by Ofgem, was the independent inspection of both DNO and ICP works to ensure adherence to technical policy and procedures. In support of competition in connections we think it is essential that where assets are being installed on a DNO's network all parties are dealt with on an equal basis. Therefore the work of either a DNO or an ICP should be inspected by a completely independent organisation which can carry out fair and objective inspection services.

We were the first DNO to engage an external agency to independently inspect both ICP SLC15 works and DNO Section 16 works in equal proportions. Following the successful implementation of this inspection regime on a trial basis, we discussed its operation with ICPs who told us that it is a good way forward and therefore we have decided to extend the practice and secure long term service provision.

We saw no reason to wait to deliver this improvement and so acted quickly to secure the services of Lloyds Register Energy to carry out independent inspection services into the future.

**Action:**  
We will secure long term independent inspection services to inspect SLC15 and Section 16 connections delivery operations.

**Customer outcome:**  
All installed connections assets will be inspected in the same manner by an independent organisation.

**Performance metric:**  
Percentage of independent quality assurance inspections carried out on Northern Powergrid and ICPs and non-conformance rate from inspections.



# 2017/18 ICE work plan

Mid-year update October 2017

Theme	Area for improvement	Action	The outcome for customers	Performance metric	Our measure of impact/success	Voltage	RAG status	Applicable to	Q2 2017			Q3 2017			Q4 2017			Q1 2018			Comment
									Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
1.0 Provision of information	1.1 Digital communications	We will trial recording the content of our connections forums and workshops and posting it to the web.	Customers will be able to view content from Northern Powergrid events at a time that suits them.	Two connections forums recorded and posted to web by Q3, 2017.	Number of YouTube views and customer feedback.	All	Completed to forecast	M UM DG ICP	◆					◆							PAGE 8
	1.2 Social media	We will trial social media 'Ask the Expert' Q&A sessions on topics identified by our connections customers.	Customers will have access to Northern Powergrid subject experts and will be able to pose questions and receive answers in real-time.	Four social media Q&A sessions held, one per quarter.	Number of customers participating and customer feedback.	All	OK to plan	M UM DG ICP	◆		◆			◆			◆			◆	ON TRACK
	1.3 Timescales for protection settings	We will conduct a formal business process review on the provision of protection setting information to our customers, with a view to developing service solutions that close any performance gaps identified.	Implementation of a revised process to provide customers with protection setting information in a more timely manner following the acceptance of a connection offer.	Formal business review completed and revised process implemented where necessary.	Customers issued settings within agreed timescales.	HV	OK to plan	M													ON TRACK
	1.4 Implementation of contract milestones	We will produce a simple guide to the implementation of new contract milestones.	Customers will have a guide that explains the new milestones being implemented in Northern Powergrid connections contracts.	Guide produced and published on web.	Customer feedback.	EHV HV	Completed to forecast	M UM DG ICP	◆				◆								PAGE 9
	1.5 Access to mains records	We will hold a workshop open to all customers on how to access our mains records.	Customers will understand how to access Northern Powergrid's mains records.	Workshop held.	Customer feedback.	All	Completed to forecast	M UM DG	◆				◆								PAGE 9
	<b>NEW</b> 1.6 Contracted capacity register	We will create a new contracted capacity register webpage that features an archive of previous registers in excel and pdf formats.	Customers will have access to historical information in the formats they require.	Webpage live and information available.	Customer feedback.	EHV	Completed to forecast			◆		◆									PAGE 16
2.0 Improving our application and delivery processes	2.1 Storage applications	We will modify the G59 application form on our website to include an option to connect energy storage	Customers will have a quick and easy method of applying for an energy storage connection online.	G59 form modified and new option available.	Number of applications made using the new process.	EHV HV LV	OK to plan			◆							◆				ON TRACK
	2.2 Distributed generation connections	We will create a quick cost calculator for generation connection applications and make it available on our website.	Customers will be able to obtain an upfront, indicative cost for their generation connection.	Generation calculator available online.	Usage rates and customer feedback.	HV LV	OK to plan			◆							◆				ON TRACK
	2.3 Multi-optioneering service	We will create a new page on our website that promotes our multi-optioneering service and explains the process to customers.	Customers will be made aware of the multi-optioneering service available to them and given a better understanding of the process and how to access it.	New web page available online.	Webpage usage and customer feedback.	EHV HV	Completed to forecast	M		◆		◆									PAGE 9



Theme	Area for improvement	Action	The outcome for customers	Performance metric	Our measure of impact/success	Voltage	RAG status	Applicable to				Q2 2017			Q3 2017			Q4 2017			Q1 2018			Comment
												Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
2.0 Improving our application and delivery processes	2.4 MPAN online service	We will benchmark our find my MPAN online service against other DNOs and make improvements as required.	Customers will be able to locate MPANs more quickly and will have more accurate information.	System benchmarked and improvements made if necessary.	Customer feedback on any changes made.	All	OK to plan	M	UM	DG	ICP													ON TRACK
	NEW 2.5 EHV quotations	We will add a front page summary to EHV quotations.	Customers will be able to see all key information contained in their offer at a glance.	Summary front page added to all EHV quotations.	Customer feedback.	EHV	OK to plan	M		DG														ON TRACK
3.0 Improving our communication and engagement	3.1 Targeted workshops	We will hold targeted workshops on emerging connections topics suggested by our customers.	Customers will be able to shape our workshop programme and gain access to Northern Powergrid subject experts.	Four targeted workshops held, one per quarter.	Attendee numbers and feedback from events.	All	OK to plan	M	UM	DG	ICP													ON TRACK
4.0 Technical and commercial developments	4.1 Assessment and Design (A&D) fees	We will continue to contribute to the national debate on A&D fees and keep our customers informed of the outcomes. On conclusion of the BEIS consultation, we will implement any changes to our existing policies or practices required and communicate these to our customers.	Customers will be kept informed on the outcome of the national A&D fees debate. We will revise our approach to A&D fees as necessary.	Progress reported and new policy and processes implemented as necessary.	Revised processes applied to all relevant connection applications.	All	OK to plan	M		DG														ON TRACK
	4.2 Transmission/ Distribution (T/D) interface	We will continue to support customers through the T/D interface and engage on their behalf in the activities of the national working parties. Where necessary, we will implement changes to our existing policies and working practices to reflect best practice recommendations.	Customers will be better informed and supported through the T/D interface.	Progress reported and new policy and processes implemented as necessary.	Revised processes applied to all relevant connection applications.	EHV	OK to plan	M		DG														ON TRACK
	4.3 Undergrounding of networks in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	We will engage in a discussion with Ofgem on behalf of our stakeholders on the treatment of the costs for undergrounding of rural network in AONB.	Improved visual impact of the distribution network in AONB whilst optimising the use of the ED1 allowance to carry out such works.	Discussion held with Ofgem on whether AONB ED1 allowances can be incorporated into the provision of connections.	Number of customer connections in AONB incorporated into the programme of undergrounding.	All	OK to plan	M	UM	DG	ICP													ON TRACK
5.0 Enabling competition	5.1 ICP input services	We will develop an end-to-end process map that covers all aspects of our input services and explains how ICPs can interface with us more effectively.	ICPs will have a better understanding of the input services Northern Powergrid provide and how best to access them.	End to end process map produced and published.	Customer feedback on changes made.	All	Completed to forecast				ICP													PAGE 10
	5.2 ICP input services	We will publish a schedule of rates for the input services available to ICPs so that they can 'pick and mix' the services they require.	ICPs will have a better understanding of the costs of input services Northern Powergrid provide.	Schedule of rates produced and published.	Customer feedback on changes made.	All	Completed to forecast				ICP													PAGE 10



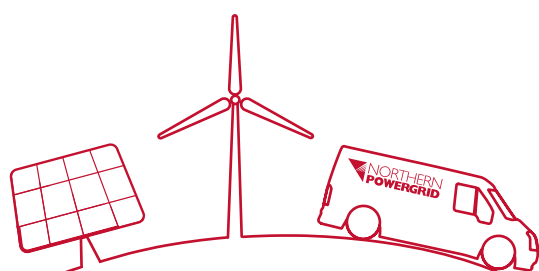
Theme	Area for improvement	Action	The outcome for customers	Performance metric	Our measure of impact/success	Voltage	RAG status	Applicable to				Q2 2017			Q3 2017			Q4 2017			Q1 2018			Comment
												Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
5.0 Enabling competition	5.3 ICP design matrix	We will update our standard design matrix rules to include unmetered connections and simplify the technical specification.	The action will extend the scope and ease with which ICPs can self-determine point of connections.	Updated standard design matrix produced and published.	Customer feedback on changes made.	LV	Completed early	UM		ICP														PAGE 10
	5.4 ICP design approvals	We will publish the average time it takes us to issue ICP point of connection and design approvals on our website.	Customers will have visibility on the time it takes Northern Powergrid to issue point of connection and design approvals to ICPs.	Data published every quarter.	Webpage usage and customer feedback.	All	Completed to forecast	M	UM	DG	ICP													ON TRACK
	NEW 5.5 Independent inspections	We will secure long term independent inspection services to inspect SLC15 and Section 16 connections delivery operations.	All installed connections assets will be inspected in the same manner by an independent organisation.	Percentage of independent quality assurance inspections carried out on Northern Powergrid and ICPs and non-conformance rate from inspections.	Independent quality assurance inspections carried out.	All	Completed to forecast				ICP													PAGE 17
6.0 Innovation	6.1 Transmission System Operator (TSO) / Distributed System Operator (DSO) role	We will continue to support and contribute to the national working party on the development of TSO/ DSO roles and keep customers informed of the outcomes.	Customers will be better informed about the development of TSOs and DSOs.	Communicate the outcomes of the national working party on TSO/DSO to our customers.	Customer feedback.	All	OK to plan	M		DG														ON TRACK
	6.2 Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to Distribution System Operator (DSO)	We will share our vision for the transition of DNOs to DSOs. We will describe the work taking place at Northern Powergrid and seek our customers' views on how to shape the outputs of this work.	Customers will be kept informed about Northern Powergrid's transition and will have the opportunity to engage and shape future outputs.	Vision and strategy shared with interested stakeholders.	Customer feedback.	All	Completed to forecast	M	UM	DG	ICP													PAGE 10
	6.3 Energy storage	We will engage with storage developers to create a suite of standard storage service offers.	The application process will become easier and more understandable.	Suite of storage offers developed and available for use.	Number of applications made using new process and customer feedback.	EHV HV	OK to plan			DG														ON TRACK
	6.4 Energy storage	We will develop and publish case studies that share future use cases and applications for energy storage.	Customers will have access to a suite of energy storage case studies to help shape their future business plans and direction.	Two case studies produced and published on our website.	Customer feedback.	EHV HV	OK to plan			DG														ON TRACK
	6.5 Active Network Management (ANM)	We will engage with customers on the progress of our first replicable ANM scheme in Driffield, South East Yorkshire.	Customers will understand how the Driffield ANM scheme works, the network communications, charging policy and how it can be applied to other areas of the Northern Powergrid network.	Progress communicated.	Customer feedback.	All	OK to plan			DG														ON TRACK
	6.6 Connecting Low Carbon Technologies (LCTs)	We will develop and launch a new Low Carbon Connection Gateway on our website.	Customers will have access to a new resource that provides information on different types of LCTs, how to apply for a connection and when to notify Northern Powergrid about their installation.	New Low Carbon Connection Gateway available on our website	Webpage usage and customer feedback.	All	OK to plan			DG														ON TRACK



# Engagement activity

*This table shows the engagement activities we have undertaken and that will deliver in the remainder of the ICE plan year.*

Engagement Activity	Q2 2017			Q3 2017			Q4 2017			Q1 2018		
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Northern Powergrid Connections Customer Forum	✓							✓				
Northern Powergrid ICP Seminar			✓					✓				
Northern Powergrid Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Group					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Powergrid Stakeholder Panel	✓			✓			✓			✓		
Connections Customer Monthly Surgery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Competition in Connections Monthly Surgery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unmetered Services Meeting (Yorkshire Public Lighting Authorities)			✓				✓				✓	
Local Energy Supply Workshop			✓									
Accessing Network Records Workshop					✓			✓				
Social Media 'Ask the Expert' Q&A			✓			✓			✓			✓
Great Yorkshire Show and other agricultural shows taking place in our region				✓	✓	✓						
Moving to a Distribution System Operator (DSO) Webinar						✓						
Domestic Energy Storage Workshop						✓		✓				
IET Workshop: Adapting to new technologies and moving towards a smarter grid								✓				
Early phase engagement with developers on battery storage and generation projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Powergrid Workshop (stakeholders to decide the topic)								✓				✓
Low Carbon Network and Innovation (LCNI) Conference									✓			
Connections Stakeholder Communications (email, web, newsletter)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ENA Distributed Generation/DER Connections Forum (storage workshop)						✓						
Early phase engagement with Local Authorities on current and emerging connections topics	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Annual National Parks for the Future Conference							✓					
Active Network Management (ANM) Update	✓							✓				✓
Interaction with HS2 Rail Link Team						✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓





## CONNECTIONS ENQUIRIES

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