

ISG Meeting – NGED-ISG04
Meeting Date: 26 January 2026
Location: NG Office, Warwick
Meeting Time: 09:30 – 16:00



Attendees:

Chair: Trisha McAuley
Vice Chair: Una Brosnan

ISG Members:

- Barbara Anderson (online)
- Rahoul Bhansali
- Regina Finn
- Rob Gross
- Cheryl Hiles
- Duncan McCombie

National Grid Representatives:

- Cordi O'Hara, ED President
- Paul Branston, ED Director of Regulation
- Chris Hayton, ED Director of Corporate Affairs
- Julie Taylor, ED Director of ED3
- Sarah Jeffery, ED Head of Engagement & Insights
- Marena Lesskui, ED Stakeholder Engagement Officer

For Agenda Item:

DSO

- Cathy McClay (DSO session), DSO Managing Director
- Matt Blackmur (DSO session), DSO Head of Strategy & Stakeholder

Apologies for Absence:

ISG Members

- Russell Greenslade

National Grid Representatives:

- Shak Butt, ED Chief Information & Digital Officer

Note: Agenda was revised on 23 January to include an ED3 contextual update due to IT&D being unable to attend the meeting. The topic will be discussed in future meetings.

Declarations of Interest:

No declarations of interest were made.

Minutes:

Ahead of each of the themed discussions, the ISG met in closed session, without NGED representatives.

Item One: ED3 Contextual Update

- NGED provided an update on:
 - The 12 Early Proposals submitted and how ISG feedback was used in their refinement. NGED awaits formal feedback from Ofgem on the submission.
 - The ongoing development of the Consumer Value Framework (CVF) and discussions with other DNOs and ENA to align approaches.
 - The emerging themes shaping the Sector-Specific Methodology Consultation (SSMC).
 - The government's Warm Homes Plan and service unlooping, which continues to grow in strategic significance, both for consumer adoption of low carbon technologies and in the Warm Homes Plan context.
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Item Two: DSO

- The draft DSO Strategy was presented, highlighting its iterative process, extensive stakeholder engagement and plan for alignment with wider business objectives. Along with incentive structure and regulatory interface, NGED also presented:
 - Seven key objectives intended to deliver tangible benefits to customers.
 - Four core roles: three inherited from regulatory requirements and a proposed fourth role centred on standardisation and data interoperability.
 - The ISG supported the direction of travel but requested some refinements:
 - Stronger clarity on what NGED controls vs. influences.
 - Clear articulation of the DSO Strategy's level of ambition, context for its objectives, and how they fit with the wider organisational goals and the ED3 Business Plan.
 - Clear governance between DSO and DNO functions.
 - Rewording of first objective to reflect nuance on local energy.
 - The ISG encouraged the DSO to play an active role in shaping market and regulatory developments and emphasised the importance of continued proactive leadership, particularly in engaging with NESO, local authorities, and other stakeholders.
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Item Three: Stakeholder Engagement

- The draft Stakeholder Engagement Strategy was presented, and the ISG members were supportive of the proposed engagement methods, but raised some concerns regarding the AI Synthesis Tool, which were allayed during the presentation.
- The ISG requested:

- Transparent tracking and rationale behind which stakeholder views are accepted and incorporated into the business plan and which are not.
 - A visible golden thread from engagement to the Business Plan.
 - The ISG also advised NGED that the current guidance may not sufficiently address long-term consumer value, therefore the team should consider future impacts and not just immediate affordability or support.
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Item Four: Forward Planning

- The ISG has requested the following at future meetings:
 - An early view of the Business Plan structure.
 - The overarching themes and how they fit together.
 - Clustering topics with natural overlap (i.e., climate resilience and interruptions strategy).
 - Deliverability and stakeholder input must be discussed alongside future proposals to add credibility and context.
 - Incorporation of risk and opportunity register into business plan discussions.
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Item Five: AOB

- Trisha confirmed that Una had agreed to be Vice Chair of the ISG.
- The group discussed the use of Boardvantage.
- Guidance will be shared on the supplier registration process and invoicing.