ISG Meeting – NGED-ISG06
Meeting Date: 23 April 2026
Location: The Clermont Hotel, London
Meeting Time: 09:30 – 16:00

Attendees:

Chair: Trisha McAuley
Vice Chair: Una Brosnan

ISG Members:

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

National Grid Representatives:

- Julie Taylor, ED Director of ED3
- Tim Polack, ED Director of Strategy & Transformation
- Chris Hayton, ED Director of Corporate Affairs (Online for Contextual Update and Stakeholder Engagement Update)
- Paul Branston, ED Director of Regulation
- Guy Van Nieuwenhove, ED Director of Asset Management Commercial
- Sarah Jeffery, ED Head of Engagement & Insights
- Marena Lesskiu, ED Stakeholder Engagement Officer

For Agenda Item:

Long-term Integrated Network Plan & Network Load Strategy

- Oliver Spink, DSO Head of System Planning
- Rachel Franks, ED Regulatory Strategy Manager

Long-term Integrated Network Plan

- Andrew Benjamin, ED Director of Asset Management

Apologies for Absence:

National Grid Representatives

- Cordi O'Hara, ED President
- Cathy McClay, DSO Managing Director

Declarations of Interest:

None

Minutes:

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

Item One: ED3 Contextual Update & Stakeholder Engagement Update

NGED provided an update on the external and internal context for ED3, including:

- The evolving policy and regulatory environment, particularly cost-of-living pressures and energy affordability.
- Engagement with government and Ofgem on ED2/ED3 mechanism changes, inflation assumptions, and cost pass-through.
- Rapidly evolving energy policy (e.g. plug-in solar panels, Warm Homes Plan, grant schemes).
- Leadership changes at Ofgem and the implications for regulatory approach and assurance.

The discussion highlighted:

- The risk of short-term policy volatility versus long-term statutory obligations (e.g. Climate Change Act).
- The importance of clarity in NGED's narrative about baseline investment versus ambition and adaptability.
- Whether affordability and consumer protection are being considered over the total bill, not just network charges.
- Avoiding language that could imply retreat from statutory decarbonisation requirements.
- Being transparent about uncertainty while maintaining readiness to scale investment if uptake accelerates.

NGED provided feedback from recent **regional stakeholder events**, noting:

- High levels of engagement and stakeholder maturity.
- Clear support for:
    - Proactive rather than reactive investment
    - Customer differentiation
    - Planned outages over unplanned interruptions
- Stakeholders prioritised resilience and reliability, with a long-term view on bill affordability.

ISG welcomed the insights and stressed the importance of:

- Showing how these insights genuinely shape decisions.
- Moving beyond consultation towards co-creation and place-based partnerships.

Item Two: ED3 Document Map

NGED presented its emerging ED3 Document Map, linking the business strategies and delivery plans with customer outcomes. The ISG feedback was positive, and they demonstrated interest in seeing the Business Plan narrative.

Item Three: Long-term Integrated Network Plan

NGED presented its emerging thinking on the **Long-Term Integrated Network Plan (LINP)**, highlighting:

- The LINP as a new ED3 requirement, providing a long-term, system-wide view beyond ED3.
- Its intended role as an overarching framework integrating network planning, scenario analysis, and stakeholder engagement.
- The use of modelling, assumptions and scenarios to inform investment decisions to 2050 and beyond.

The ISG feedback and challenged focused on:

- The need for explicit deliverability planning, not just aspiration.
- Greater clarity on:
  - Scenarios vs sensitivities
  - Trade-offs and decision points
  - Regional variation and boundary issues (within NGED and across DNOs)
- Ensuring LINP incorporates:
  - Feedback loops
  - Learning from international experience
  - Whole-system thinking beyond the electricity sector
- Making clear who the LINP is for (stakeholders, supply chain, policymakers) and how it will be communicated externally.

Item Four: Network Load Strategy

NGED presented its **Network Load Strategy**, setting out:

- Modelling of demand growth driven by electrification, EVs and heat pumps.
- Differences between primary and secondary network certainty.
- Emerging thinking around a “build and flex” approach.
- Engagement with Ofgem and NESO to smooth delivery profiles and avoid inefficient early over-build.

ISG discussion highlighted:

- Concerns about linear trajectories and the need to plan for non-linear adoption and tipping points.
- The importance of:
  - Testing scenarios through place-based pilots and partnerships
  - Targeted and bespoke stakeholder engagement
  - Being proactive in shaping the market, not just responding to it

- The need to avoid language implying “realistic vs unrealistic” scenarios and instead frame the strategy around robustness under uncertainty.
- Strong interest in how stakeholder behaviour and feedback is fed into modelling and investment decisions.

Item Five: Asset Management Strategy

NGED presented emerging thinking on the **Asset Management Strategy**, covering:

- The step change not just in investment, but in customer expectations.
- Balancing asset health, growth requirements, climate resilience and affordability.
- A shift towards more targeted, data-driven and customer-centric decision-making.
- Improved use of data, technology, and predictive maintenance to inform trade-offs.

ISG challenge centred on:

- How asset trade-offs (cost, resilience, timing) are identified and justified.
- Whether NGED is sufficiently leveraging third-party data and partnerships (e.g. suppliers, housing providers).
- How lessons learned from past investment decisions are captured and used.
- Ensuring stronger linkage between asset management, vulnerability, and customer outcomes.
- The need for a clearer articulation of the future-state vision for asset management.