

ISG Meeting – NGED-ISG07
Meeting Date: 15 June 2026
Location: Online
Meeting Time: 15:00 – 17:00



Attendees:

Chair: Trisha McAuley
Vice Chair: Una Brosnan

ISG Members:

- Barbara Anderson
- Duncan McCombie
- Rahoul Bhansali
- Regina Finn
- Russell Greenslade

National Grid Representatives:

- Cordi O'Hara, ED President
- Tim Polack, ED Director of Strategy & Transformation
- Shakeel Butt, ED Chief Information and Digital Officer
- Josh Cocker, ED Head of ED3 Commercial Strategy
- Blanche Oseland, ED Head of Product Management
- Sarah Jeffery, ED Head of Engagement & Insights
- Marena Lesskiu, ED Stakeholder Engagement Officer

Apologies for Absence:

ISG Members:

- Cheryl Hiles
- Rob Gross

National Grid Representatives

- Julie Taylor, ED Director of ED3
- Chris Hayton, ED Director of Corporate Affairs

Declarations of Interest:

None

Minutes:

IT&D ED3 Immersion Session

The purpose of this session was to have an immersion discussion on NGED's ED3 IT, Digital and AI emerging thinking and direction of travel, including an update on the ED2 baseline and current IT Architecture. The full IT&D Strategy will return to the ISG later in the year for input and challenge.

NGED presented its ED2 technology position and emerging ED3 direction, highlighting:

- The move from a legacy, largely on-premise, in-house-built estate towards a cloud-based, data-led, microservices architecture designed to preserve flexibility for future technology choices.
- Two ED2 delivery pillars:
 - technology and operating model, including CNI segregation, cyber, cloud architecture, a live data platform and an agile scrum model;
 - business performance, including rollout of productivity and analytics tools, new digital services, and phased retirement of legacy systems.
- Progress to date, including positive internal audit feedback, systems delivered on time and on budget, and early pilots in machine learning and AI.
- Three broad ED3 options under consideration — traditional systems with limited agentic capability, a hybrid agentic model, or a fully agentic architecture — with the current direction of travel being a hybrid approach focused on higher-value customer-facing and operational areas, while retaining platform solutions in support functions and not moving Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS) / Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) to agentic AI at this stage.

NGED explained that the proposed hybrid model is intended to focus agentic AI and microservices where customers would feel the greatest benefit, including customer contact and service, connections, DSO and potentially asset management, while retaining more traditional platform approaches for functions such as HR, finance and procurement. NGED also noted that the strategy would need to be priced, risk-assessed and tested for deliverability before being finalised.

The discussion highlighted:

- The importance of ensuring that the IT&D strategy is framed around customer outcomes and customer value, rather than around an ambition to be the “leading DNO”.
- The need to explain more clearly how the architecture will enable collaboration with external parties, take in and share data from other sources, support future partnerships, and who NGED will be collaborating with.
- The need for a clearer data governance framework, including how data quality, classification, privacy, access rights and customer data sharing will be governed as the strategy develops.
- The importance of bringing the hybrid model to life with practical examples, including the intended split between platform, microservice and agentic approaches, and the customer and operational benefits expected in each customer segmentation area.
- Whether the strategy is sufficiently proactive in identifying future customer and market needs, rather than relying only on current internal data and reacting to visible demand after the event.
- The need to address workforce planning, organisational readiness, change management and human/digital labour balance more explicitly, including how customer confidence will be maintained and how vulnerable customers will not be excluded.

- Resilience and operational risk, including lessons learned from cloud outages, how failover and duplication are being designed into future architecture, and how critical expertise would be retained if AI-supported services failed.
- The importance of presenting the strategy to the regulator through the lens of consumer outcomes, risks, costs, deliverability and pilots/tests, rather than through technical language alone.

ISG feedback centred on:

- Making the customer value and customer outcomes case much more explicit in the next iteration of the strategy.
- Showing how IT & Digital will enable the wider business strategy, rather than allowing the IT&D strategy to stand alone or become disconnected from wider business choices, workforce implications and delivery realities.
- Setting out the likely costs, benefits, risks and pace of implementation for the proposed hybrid model, including examples of where NGED would go first and why.
- Demonstrating how NGED will manage culture change, skills transfer and organisational adoption as the business becomes more digital.
- Ensuring the strategy reflects both regulatory expectations and wider market developments, while benchmarking ambition against the outcomes sought for customers rather than against DNO peers alone.
- Articulating clearly how NGED will manage the risks associated with pace of technological change, vendor dependence, resilience and the use of AI in regulated activities.

The ISG welcomed the openness of the discussion and the early sharing of NGED's thinking. Members considered the session useful in understanding the current baseline and direction of travel, and encouraged NGED to return with a fuller strategy that is more explicit on customer value, governance, deliverability, risk, pace and practical examples.