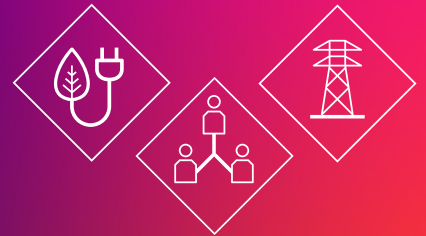


# Switched On

Local Authority Newsletter



**Welcome to the very first edition of our newsletter, specifically designed for our Local Authority stakeholders. We have created the newsletter to share best practice, keep you updated on work that we are doing to help local areas decarbonise, as well as providing useful information to support your Local Area Energy Planning.**



## DSO Electricity Futures Series

**Our 2023/24 DSO Electricity Futures Series concluded on 28 March at Battersea Power Station and online.**

The series has seen 338 people representing 257 stakeholder organisations engage with us.

This final event saw us share the significant progress we have made during the first year of RII0-ED2 and the launch of our **Strategic Action Plan**, which set out our priorities for 2024 and beyond.

A lot of which has been shaped by the stakeholder conversations we have had over the past seven months, developing how we deliver benefits to customers and communities we serve.

Our workshops have taken us on an engagement journey, exploring how we create a more efficient and flexible system that will benefit all customers and empower them to be at the centre of the energy revolution.

This included listening directly to local authorities at our 'Regional Ambitions' event about how we can best work together to help achieve your aspirations for growth and decarbonisation as part of your Local Area Energy Plans.

With this series coming to a close, we will continue to engage closely with our key DSO stakeholders and build upon our strategic partnerships to translate ambition into action.

If you missed out on any of these events, you can access recordings and reports on our website [here](#).

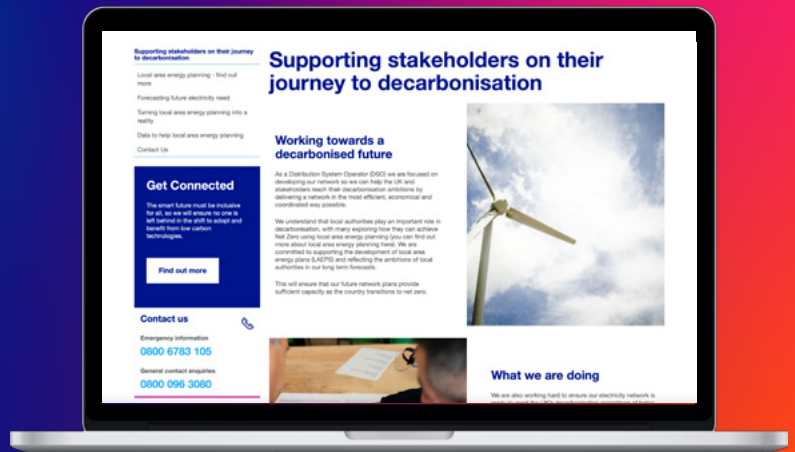
# Dedicated local area planning section of our website

We value your feedback and, following this, we have made improvements to our website's Grid Zero Zone.

A dedicated section has been created to provide local authorities with easier access to information related to local area energy planning.

This section provides detailed information on how we forecast future network demand and how this information is used in our strategic investment process. It also includes links to data that supports local area energy planning, as well as a short video tutorial on how to use our DFES interactive map.

You can view the new webpages by [clicking here](#).



## Distribution System Operator - Our year in review

At National Grid Electricity Distribution, we're not just envisioning the future of smart electricity systems; we're building it. In the last 12 months we've been at the forefront of ground-breaking projects aimed at unlocking network capacity, optimising flows, and accelerating connections.



### Empowering renewable energy

We've **amplified our capacity by an astounding 10GW** for renewable energy projects and secured an impressive **17GWh of flexibility through 19,506 dispatch events**.



### Amplifying community engagement

With **311 net zero surgeries conducted**, we've engaged with **120 local authorities**. Moreover, our Electricity Futures event series has connected us with **257 DSO stakeholder organisations**, fuelling collaboration and progress.

In the last 12 months we've launched new initiatives, such as:

- Megawatt Dispatch Service: Collaborating with Electricity System Operator (ESO) and UK Power Networks
- Low-Voltage Insights Platform
- Domestic Flex Product on the low-voltage network
- Distribution System Operator Panel
- Flex Platform Partnership with PicloMax

We're sharing our knowledge and insights:

- 7th Distribution Network Options Assessment (DNOA)
- 8th Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES) Reports
- Revenue Stacking Report with Cornwall Insight

You can view our short, year in review video [here](#).



# Accelerating connections to support local decarbonisation

**A Somerset solar farm has made history as the first in the country to have been energised significantly ahead of its original planned connection date, demonstrating how partnership working between ourselves and local authorities can help to deliver local decarbonisation aspirations.**

The project was accelerated through the Technical Limits programme, a programme that has accelerated projects in National Grid Electricity Distribution's region by an average of more than 5 years.

Horseley Levels, owned by Blackfinch Energy and located near Bridgwater, Somerset, has been developed and constructed by clean energy company Enviromena and will have an annual energy yield of 27,550MWh - enough to provide clean energy for over 10,000 homes and avoid over 5,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.



(L to R) Steve Cross, NGED South West Operations Director; Chris Marsh from Enviromena; Cllr Mike Best from Somerset Council; Alan Gorman, from Blackfinch.

The project also showcases how support from local authorities can help drive the roll-out of renewable energy across the UK.

The project received unanimous support from Somerset Council and was granted planning consent through delegated power in 2022 and, more significantly, the project connects to the electricity grid on land owned by Somerset Council.

**This is an important milestone in the work we are doing to enable grid connections to help decarbonise the communities we serve.**

**We are investing £500 million over the next five years to ensure electricity generation customers can connect to our network and we are working closely with industry, Ofgem and government to streamline the process and accelerate connection times for active projects.**

**Horseley Levels is the first of many renewable projects to benefit from this concerted and co-ordinated approach and will undoubtedly make a valuable contribution to the South West's pursuit of net zero targets.**

**Steve Cross**  
South West Operations Director  
National Grid Electricity Distribution.

**Our Council Plan sets out our commitment to a greener more sustainable Somerset, and as we continue to work towards net zero, we welcome clean energy solutions that benefit our communities and the environment.**

**The Horseley Levels project near Bridgwater will make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels.**

**Councillor Mike Best**  
Chairman of Somerset Council.



You can find out more about what we are doing to accelerate connections **here**.

## 2023 Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES)

**On 31 January we launched our 2023 Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES) which showcase the range of credible futures for our network growth out to 2050.**

They provide us and our stakeholders with valuable insight into how energy demand may change including the predicted growth of demand, storage, and distributed generation as well as the development of low carbon technologies, including heat pumps and electric vehicles. We use this information to determine when and where investments are needed in the network. In addition to using national data, our 2023 DFES also considered 7,200 local sites/development projects from key stakeholders such as local

authorities, project developers, asset owners, energy consumers, community energy groups and trade bodies. This demonstrates the importance of collaborative working.

By using stakeholder information, we can plan our network accurately and invest appropriately, ensuring local decarbonisation plans are supported. You can explore our scenarios through our online map and read the reports on our **website - click here**.



## Spotlight on South Wales Local Area Energy Planning

**The Welsh Government is the first national government to fund the roll-out of Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) for all its local authorities.**

In our South Wales licence area we have contributed to the development of 13 LAEPs in the last 12 months, by sharing technical data and their understanding of the electricity network, the team has helped to create a comprehensive picture of the future energy system needed in Mid and South Wales.

Gemma Delafield is the Regional Energy Lead for Growing Mid Wales and supports Ceredigion and Powys County Councils.

She says: **“Working with National Grid has been really useful.**

**It has helped our understanding of the challenges and opportunities of decarbonising electricity, unlocking network constraints and where investment in the grid should be prioritised.”**

Kendal Davies, Sustainability Development Manager for Carmarthenshire County Council, added: **“We recognised early on that our aspirations are dependent on local, regional and national grid capacity.”**

**“The support from National Grid in modelling the system has been invaluable. It will ensure our plans are compatible with their future energy scenarios and help inform and, hopefully, influence investment in the network.”**

Kathryn Thomas, NGED DSO Strategic Engagement Officer for South and Mid Wales, has been coordinating the engagement for National Grid: **“It’s a win-win. Local authorities produce meaningful action plans to help their communities get ready for net zero.**

**“We improve our system planning and the data that goes into the annual Distribution Future Energy Scenarios report.”**

**“Local authorities draw on their knowledge and experience across housing, transport, regeneration and more to put together a broad and detailed forecast of behind the meter generation, storage and demand.”**

**“From the roll-out of electric community buses to heat pumps and EV chargers.”**

**“LAEPs also help our regulator,” continues Kathryn. “The action plans show Ofgem how and when communities expect to use our network and provide evidence of the need for investment. Most importantly, it means we are all better placed to ensure energy networks are ready to facilitate net zero at the least cost to consumers.”**

Being developed alongside local area planning is Welsh Government’s Future Energy Grids Wales, a high-level holistic view of the country’s future energy needs.

When combined with granular detail from LAEPs, it will provide a valuable, coordinated and comprehensive view of the future energy system in Wales.

Regardless of the levels of funding and resource, we are keen to support all local authorities across our license areas.

Kathryn added: **“Early and regular engagement delivers better outcomes for everyone and means we will ensure the network is ready when communities need it. We want to help them plan the future energy system now.”**



## Have your say

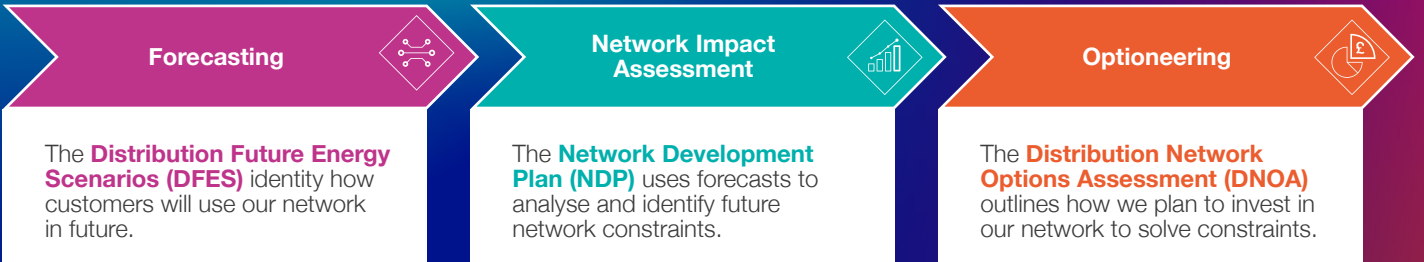
**Look out for the new DSO Stakeholder satisfaction survey... out now**

On 8 April, our first DSO Stakeholder satisfaction survey was emailed to all our stakeholder organisations. This is a new requirement of DSOs nationally by our regulator, Ofgem and will help us be more responsive to the needs of our stakeholders, help us improve service levels as well as

to inform current business operations and planning for future decision making. If you receive the link to the survey, we’d really appreciate you taking a few minutes to give some feedback. The survey closes on 31 May and results from the survey will be published in the Autumn.

# Network Development Plan methodology consultation

Our network investment planning process is the strategic approach we are taking to invest in our network, ensuring that it can meet future demand in the right place, at the right time, while ensuring good value for money for customers.



The planning process begins with our Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES). DFES helps us forecast how we expect customers to use the distribution network as the UK transitions to a net zero future.

We then conduct a network impact assessment, which uses DFES data to identify future constraints.

This helps us develop our Network Development Plans which will show how we plan to develop our primary network (11KV and up) over the next 10 years. We are currently seeking feedback on our Network Development Plan methodology and the format of our outputs.

You can find out more about this consultation process by [clicking on this link](#).

## Get in touch

### Strategic Engagement Team

We have established a dedicated team of Strategic Engagement Officers focussed on supporting your local area energy planning and decarbonisation plans.

They can help you find the information you need about your electricity network needs now and in the future.



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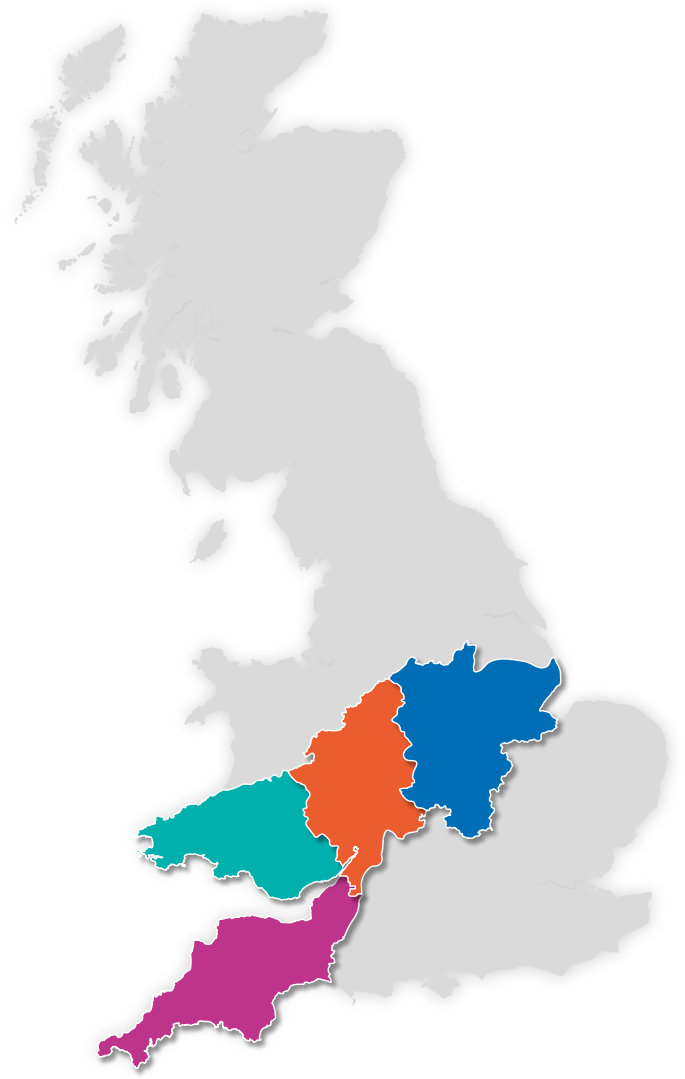
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We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas on our first newsletter. If you have any ideas or comments, please feel free to share them with us.