April 2026

Smart Optimisation Output

Collaboration Plan

April 2026

nationalgrid DSO

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Executive summary

This Smart Optimisation Output (SOO) Collaboration Plan document fulfils the requirements set out in Special Condition 9.13 of the Electricity Distribution Licence and the associated Smart Optimisation Output Guidance issued by Ofgem. The SOO is designed to promote and enable effective collaboration between National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED), its local stakeholders and communities, leading to better decision-making and more coherent local energy planning.

FY2025/26 represents the third year of SOO delivery within RIIO ED2. During this period, the electricity system has continued to undergo rapid transformation with increased reliance on flexibility and digital capability to manage system complexity. Against this backdrop, NGED has now transitioned beyond early delivery and implementation into **a phase of scaled, embedded and outcome focused collaboration**, where smart optimisation principles are increasingly integrated into business-as-usual planning, operational and market activities

Building on the foundations established through the FY2024/25 Collaboration Plan, NGED has continued to mature how collaboration is structured, evidenced and translated into operational and strategic outcomes. This has included moving from initial transparency and engagement towards repeatable collaboration mechanisms that support decarbonisation at the least cost while maintaining a safe, secure, operable and reliable system. NGED's collaboration activity during this year has been characterised by:

- deeper integration of stakeholder intelligence into network planning and operational decision making, ensuring that local and regional plans increasingly inform system outcomes;
- a clear shift from data availability towards **data usability and decision support**, responding to stakeholder feedback that confidence and interpretability are critical to effective collaboration;
- scaled whole system coordination with the National Energy System Operator (NESO), other Distribution System Operators (DSOs) and Transmission Owners (TO), reflecting the growing operational importance of assets connected at distribution level; and
- increasingly digital enabled collaboration through self-serve tools, common data platforms and transparency mechanisms, supporting broader participation and unlocking the greater value at the least cost.

The Collaboration Plan describes how NGED continues to collaborate with stakeholders through **transparent and user-centred sharing** which consistently considers stakeholder plans needs and unique local requirements. As part of SOO delivery, we work across system boundaries and energy vectors to enable whole-system optimisation and ensure that outputs from DSO, Load Related Expenditure (LRE) and data & digital strategies are aligned and mutually reinforcing.

This plan therefore focuses on how collaboration is delivered, not solely on engagement activity. It explains the ways and platforms through which our stakeholders can access NGED's data, tools and insights best suited for their requirements, as well as how stakeholders can engage directly with relevant members of our team where bespoke collaboration is required. To support transparency and accountability, an Engagement and Change Log is included as part of the appendices detailing how, where, and when NGED has actively engaged with stakeholders for smart optimisation purposes, the feedback stakeholders have provided, as well as how that feedback has influenced SOO outputs over the past year. We have also included our collaboration strategies, System Visualisation Interface and other underlying data, tools and processes.

This year's plan sets out how NGED's collaboration arrangements have continued to develop in maturity and scale, how stakeholder input is actively shaping outcomes, and how learning from the first three years of RIIO-ED2 will inform delivery in the remainder of the price control period.

Our smart optimisation strategy

The GB energy industry is undergoing a rapid transformation with unprecedented growth in distributed generation, increased electrification, and greater reliance on flexible, digital solutions to manage system complexity. These changes present both challenges for network operability and significant opportunities to unlock value through smarter, more coordinated use of existing assets. Smart optimisation is NGED's approach to using data, digital tools and flexibility to enable decarbonisation at the least cost while maintaining a safe, secure, operable and reliable distribution system.

Our strategy focuses on making better use of existing network capacity through enhanced visibility, stakeholder collaboration and coordinated decision-making across planning, operations and markets. By integrating stakeholder insight, whole-system coordination and scalable digital capability, smart optimisation ensures that network investment and operational actions are targeted in the right place and at the right time. It also enables stakeholder confidence planning and investment decisions to deliver maximum value for customers and consumers.

Our approach to data sharing

Our objective

Our objective is to proactively engage stakeholders by sharing high quality network capability and market data in a way that is open, transparent, accurate, accessible and relevant to enable decision making. Given the dynamic scenarios our stakeholders are facing, we go beyond just providing data to supporting our stakeholders to use that data effectively and confidently to inform their local plans, investment decisions and market participation.

We are committed to ensuring that stakeholder insights are embedded in our own strategic network planning. We actively seek stakeholder feedback and ensure that insight is fed back into our processes and operations to support whole system coordination across all levels – distribution, transmission and national.

In FY2026, stakeholder feedback continued to emphasise that the primary limitation is no longer access to data, but the ability to interpret, contextualise and apply that data. We are continually improving data provision based on the evidence, feedback and insights from our various stakeholders. NGED has therefore continued to evolve its approach from data publication towards improved usability, interpretation and decision support

How we share data with stakeholders

As the electricity distribution system becomes more complex with rising volumes of distributed generation, flexible demand, electric vehicles and heat pumps, our stakeholders increasingly require clear, timely and relevant information to support planning, operational and investment decisions.

As part of our RIIO-ED2 Business Plan commitments to enhance data access, NGED shares network data through a structured portfolio of digital platforms and engagement channels. We have continued to evolve our approach to data sharing from one focused primarily on open publications, towards a mature, user-centred model which actively supports stakeholder decisioning. This evolution reflects both stakeholder feedback and NGED's experience from the first three years of RIIO-ED2, where the limiting factor for effective collaboration has increasingly been stakeholder understanding and confidence, rather than access alone. During FY2025/26, we have refocused on a layered approach that moves beyond compliance to deliberately enabling decision making for system wide benefits.

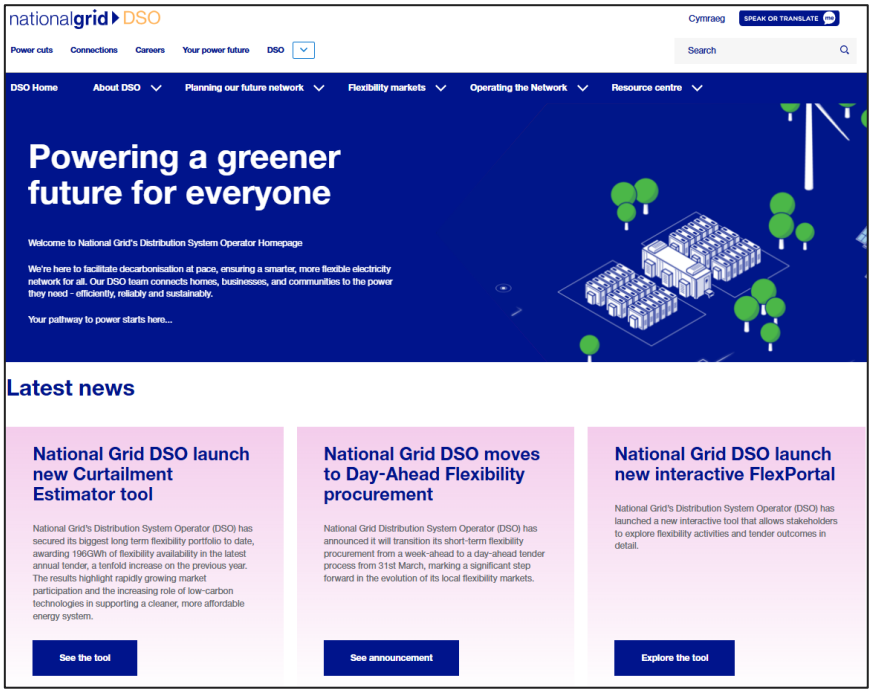

Figure 1: National Grid DSO website homepage.

Raw data and methodologies – open and interoperable datasets via the Connected Data Portal and supported by metadata and documentation

Insight-driven interpretation – dashboards, charts, and summaries that help stakeholders understand patterns, risks, and opportunities even without specialist data or modelling capabilities

Self-service tools – digital tools that allow stakeholders explore scenarios, test assumptions and understanding implication of their own plans and projects

DSO Data Portal

NGED's Data Portal acts as the **System Visualisation Interface** for the Smart Optimisation Output. It provides a single, consistent access point for stakeholders to engage with network, planning, operational and market data across both DNO and DSO roles.

The feedback from various engagement platforms have informed a programme of targeted improvements. We enhanced the Data Portal to improve discoverability, insight-led dashboards and interoperability including:

- redesigned navigation and improved dataset discoverability;
- enhanced visualisation and charting functionality;
- clearer structuring and rationalisation of datasets; and
- improved API consistency to support third-party reuse.

These changes were explicitly prioritised to reduce the effort required for stakeholders to move from "finding data" to "using data", supporting faster and more confident decision making. Consequently, during FY2025/26, the Data Portal supported approximately **790,000 downloads and API calls**, equating to a request roughly **every 40 seconds**. It also hosted **90 open datasets**, with arounds two-thirds relating directly to network planning and development, operational and market functions. The Connected Data Portal was used extensively by local authorities, developers, Flexibility Service Providers (FSPs) and third-party data users, thereby enabling them to make faster, more confident decisions.

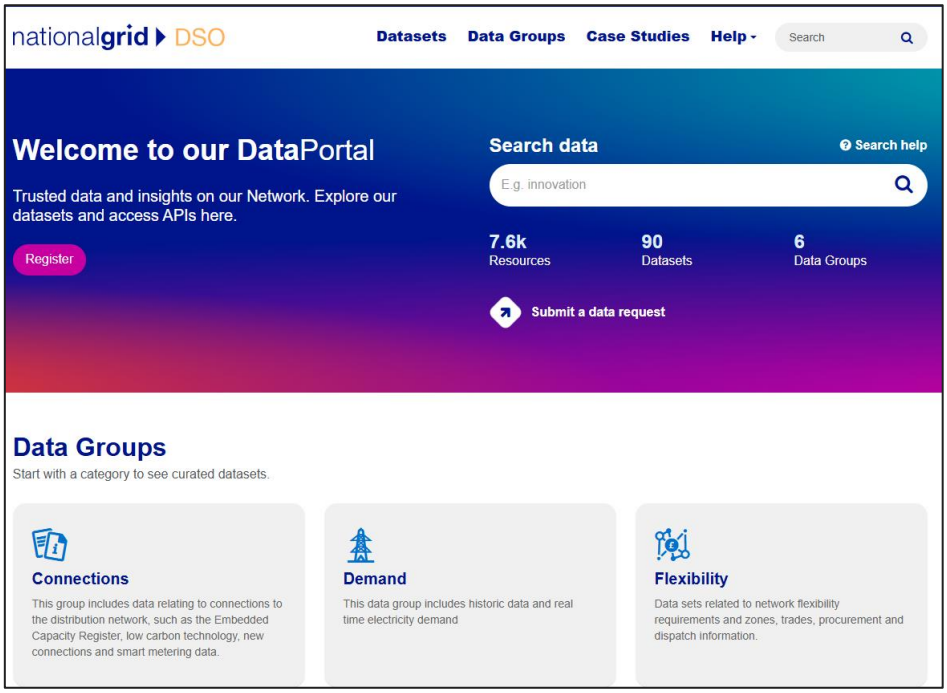

Figure 2: National Grid DSO's Data Portal (System Visualisation Interface)

These figures demonstrate that the Data Portal has moved beyond a passive publication platform to become an active collaboration tool supporting continuous stakeholder engagement, planning and decision making.

How we take account of local stakeholder plans and requirements

A core requirement of the SOO is that data sharing must support two-way collaboration with opportunities for stakeholders to provide data and insights and for such insights to be captured to inform NGED's planning and operations. Our collaboration approach therefore emphasises that system planning must be informed by locally derived intelligence, rather than relying exclusively on national or internal assumptions.

In the past year, we gathered stakeholder input through net zero surgeries, webinars and engagement with local authorities and delivery partners to support the Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES), targeted bilateral engagement on large-scale developments and regional initiatives and direct platform feedback. These inputs were used to refine demand and generation assumptions in DFES, inform Network Development Plan constraints, the Distribution Network Options Assessment, thereby improving alignment between local ambition and network delivery. These insights also informed how we prioritised datasets and tooling improvements.

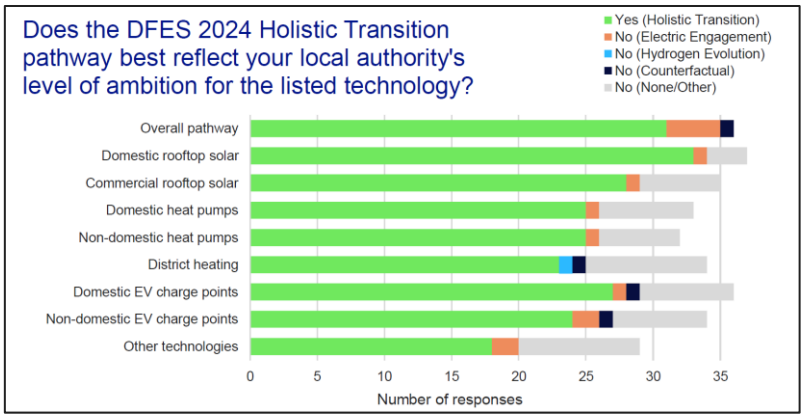

Figure 3: Graph of local authority responses to which DFES scenario aligns with their ambition for different technologies as part of the DFES local authority survey.

Supporting LAEPs

Throughout the year, NGED has continued to support Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) as a key collaboration mechanism. We supported the production of **31 LAEPs**, with a further **43 in progress**. The creation and adoption of LAEP+, an innovative digital planning tool, has improved both the quality of stakeholder inputs and NGED's ability to integrate those inputs systematically into planning processes. We have thus been able to increasingly improve the structure of LAEP data, improving consistency and re-use. Subsequently, the intelligence gathered from LAEP is being incorporated directly into DFES to improve decision making for our stakeholders.

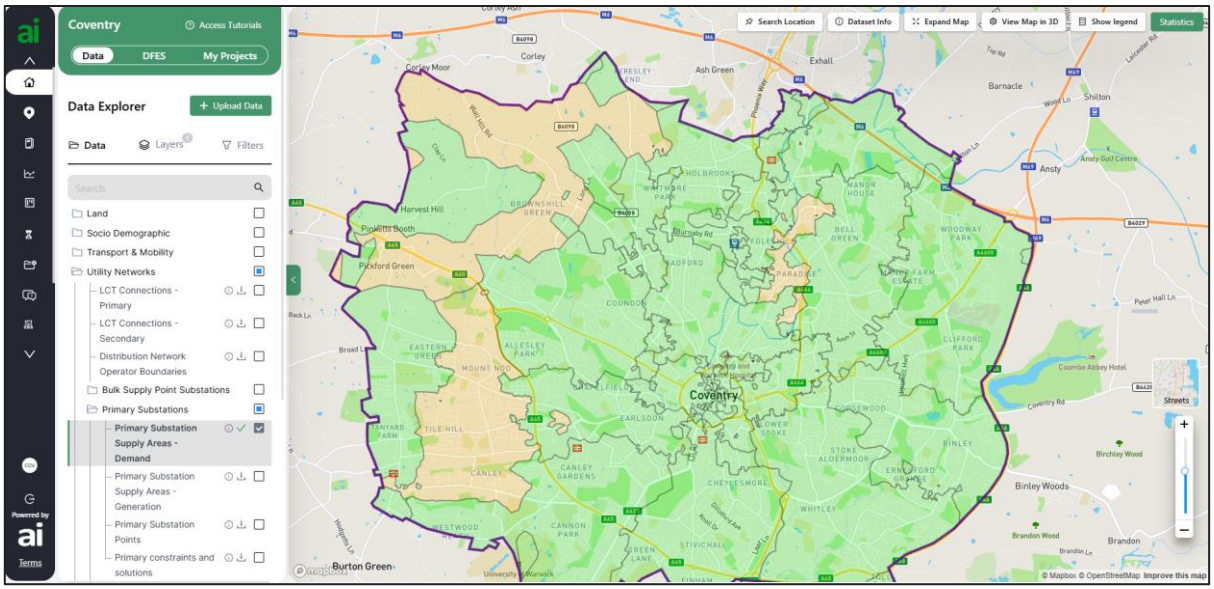

Figure 4: Primary substation demand headroom on the LAEP+ digital tool.

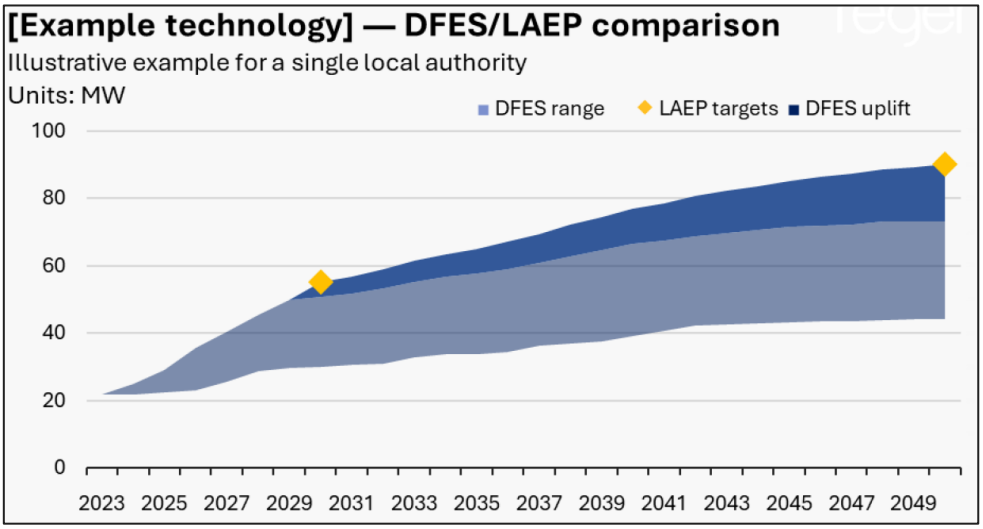

Figure 5: Graph of an unspecified example DFES technology projection being uplifted to match a LAEP target deemed credibly above the existing DFES range.

How we are using partner data and data partnerships to improve industry collaboration

NGED recognises that significant additional value can be created when using third-party data to improve dataset completeness, robustness and accuracy. We have increasingly included smart meter data to improve low-voltage demand profiling, Market Gateway data to enhance visibility of connected assets and targeted partnerships with technology providers and data innovators. By integrating CER and DER data from Market Gateway into our core data systems, NGED has so far identified over 111,000 EV chargers, 3,200+ heat pumps, and 40,000+ energy storage devices that were not previously visible through traditional notification routes.

This enhanced visibility supports both planning, operational and investment decision making, improving stakeholder confidence when relying on published data.

This year, we formed strategic partnerships with organisations including Squid and Yottar to improve accessibility and interpretation of Common Information Model (CIM) network models, develop interactive visualisation tools like the CIM Explorer, and enhance interoperability and data quality across platforms.

These partnerships demonstrate NGED's commitment to collaborative innovation. When third parties build insight and tools on top of open network data, it enables stakeholders to access richer insights without NGED needing to develop the tools in-house.

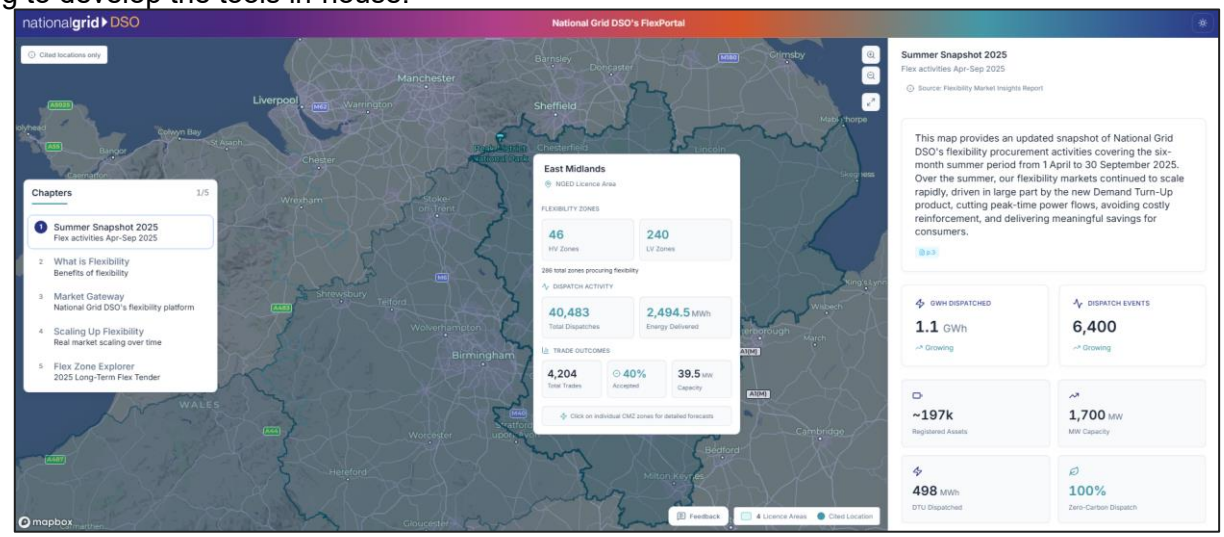

Figure 6: National Grid DSO's FlexPortal

Whole system collaboration approach

Our objective

Our objective is to coordinate across organisational boundaries, operational timescales and system interfaces to support local and regional decarbonisation strategies and deliver whole-system outcomes.

We aim to ensure network planning and operation optimisation reflects whole system costs and benefits, not just distribution level realities. We therefore prioritise coordination with NESO, TOs, other DSOs and relevant industry partners to reduce duplication and misalignment in planning assumptions, data and engagement. In alignment with broader ED2 expectations, we provide stakeholders with clear, consistent signals across system interfaces to enable decarbonisation at the least cost and maximising the existing network capacity.

Collaboration this year has transitioned from exploratory activity into embedded and repeatable whole system operation coordination. We have focused on using interfaces to deliver measurable outcomes for customers and consumers.

Collaboration across boundaries and interfaces

As the distribution network increasingly hosts flexible demand, low-carbon generation and new technologies, effective coordination can no longer be achieved within organisational or asset boundaries alone. Instead, it requires shared data, coordinated planning and aligned operational strategies across distribution, transmission and national system operation. In the past year, collaboration increasingly focused on both strategic planning and real time operational coordination, reflecting the growing scale of distributed energy resources and flexibility markets.

Distribution-Transmission-National Coordination

In FY2025/26, collaboration between NGED and NESO increasingly focused on operational execution, reflecting the growing importance of DER assets connected at distribution level, to national system operation.

A central example of this collaboration is the MW Dispatch, which enables NESO to instruct DER assets connected to the distribution network, to support national balancing and constraint management. NGED provided NESO with enhanced visibility of DER availability, performance and outage information to enable up to 50MW of MW Dispatch in the past year.

This real-time data sharing improved alignment between national and local system needs and supported better coordination for decision making at the T/D boundary. This further enabled whole system benefits by reducing reliance on carbon-intensive balancing actions, improving utilisation of renewable generation connected at distribution level, with lasting impact on enabling earlier and more confident DER connections to the distribution network.

We regularly undertake cross border strategic studies with neighbouring distribution and transmission operators, jointly assessing constraints at network boundaries to develop coordinated, whole system solutions. This ongoing collaboration improves collective visibility of emerging customer requirements, supports more efficient whole system optioneering, and enables aligned investment decisions. This work is a vital part of our long-term system planning, including informing ED3 business planning.

Collaboration with other DNOs and DSOs

NGED recognises that many stakeholders operate across multiple distribution licence areas and require consistent data, assumptions, and engagement processes. Therefore, we continued to collaborate with neighbouring DSOs to develop scenarios, align data standards and publication approaches, maintain consistency in flexibility product definitions and market rules via the Flexibility Market Asset Register (FMAR), and coordinate stakeholder engagement where local authorities or developers' interface with more than one network. These collaborations have reduced friction for stakeholders and support efficient market planning and participation outcomes.

Enabling regional and local decarbonisation

Whole system optimisation increasingly requires coordination across energy vectors and in different regions. NGED continues to participate in the co-development of regional decarbonisation programmes collaborating with local authorities and combined authorities leading LAEPs, and industrial stakeholders with significant electrification projects or ambitions.

LAEPs

We supported the co-development of Local Area Energy Plans and other net zero strategies led by local authorities and combined authorities. We have supported the development of 31 LAEPs, with 43 further plans

in progress. Our role included providing network insight, technical and modelling support and access to relevant datasets. We have also integrated LAEP intelligence directly into DFES and Network Development Plan outputs. This approach ensures that regional ambition is translated into deliverable network pathways, reducing the risk of inefficient or misaligned investment.

Industrial Decarbonisation

In addition to collaboration on LAEPs, NGED engaged with large industrial customers and regional economic during the year to whole system planning for electrification. We supported regional industrial dialogues in areas such as South Wales and West Midlands, coordinating early engagement between distribution, transmission and local stakeholders to understand future load requirements, and identify alternative solutions including flexibility and staged connections.

Whole system outcomes

Curtailment reduction and renewable integration

Further to our cross-system and cross-region engagement efforts, one of the most tangible whole system outcomes delivered has been the reduction of renewable curtailment. This year, we have avoided approximately 835 GWh of curtailment through enhanced outage planning and operational coordination. We have also increased efficient utilisation of existing network capacity through flexibility and enabled renewable generation to remain connected and dispatched during constrained periods. These outcomes deliver benefits across the system including lower wholesale costs for consumers, reduced carbon emissions and improved investment confidence for developers.

Improved flexibility market access

Flexibility markets have continued to be used for whole system coordination beyond the distribution network. NGED procured more than **198 GWh of flexibility**, a ten-fold increase compared to earlier years. This was enabled by increased flexibility participation, including growth in domestic and commercial asset registration, and coordination with NESO markets through the launch of day-ahead flexibility procurement. These developments support whole-system optimisation by allowing flexibility to be deployed where it delivers the greatest overall value.

How we use digital tools to support our customers

Our objective

NGED's objectives for digital tools are to:

- simplify access to network and market information, and reduce friction for customers and stakeholders
- reduce reliance on bespoke, manual engagement to enable scalable collaboration
- improve transparency of network, opportunities and outcomes
- support inclusive participation across a diverse customer base
- enable customers to engage earlier and more confidently in planning processes, ensuring that investment and operational decisions deliver best value for consumers

These objectives reflect stakeholder feedback that digital tools should reduce friction, not create new barriers.

Improving network development forecasting

One of the most significant challenges for stakeholders like developers, investors and local authorities is uncertainty at the early stages of project development. We therefore prioritised tools that help customers

understand risk, feasibility and trade-offs earlier, reducing the need for redesigns or abandoned projects in the future.

Over the past year, our digital tools have enabled our network planning, reinforcement and flexibility decisions, as well as the resulting planning and investment implications for our stakeholders. These tools improve both customer experience and system efficiency by aligning expectations early, and reflects a shift from static reporting towards continuous, data driven optimisation.

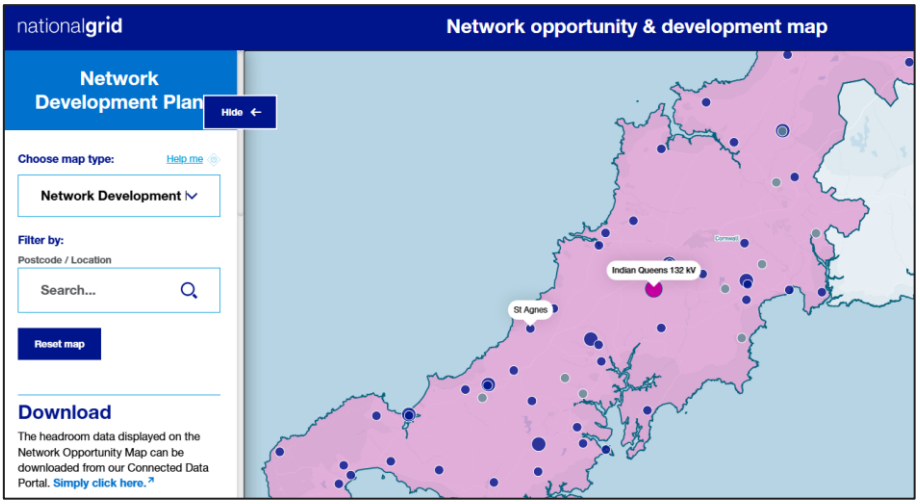

Figure 7: Network opportunity & development map, launched in April 2026 as part of the 2026 Network Development Plan publication.

Curtailment Estimator

Another key example of this approach is the self-serve Curtailment Estimator which was launched in response to stakeholder feedback that curtailment risk was difficult to interpret using static reports alone. This tool allows customers to explore dynamic curtailment scenarios, test sensitivity to different assumptions and translate technical constraints into commercially meaningful insights.

The Curtailment Estimator has been designed with a user-centric approach, reflecting customer needs and preferences, to translate NGED's internal modelling in a format and platform that supports more constructive dialogue between stakeholders and NGED. Early stakeholder feedback already reflects the unique value of the Curtailment Estimator for distributed generation developers, investors impacted by ongoing Connections Reform and consultants supporting multiple projects across GB networks.

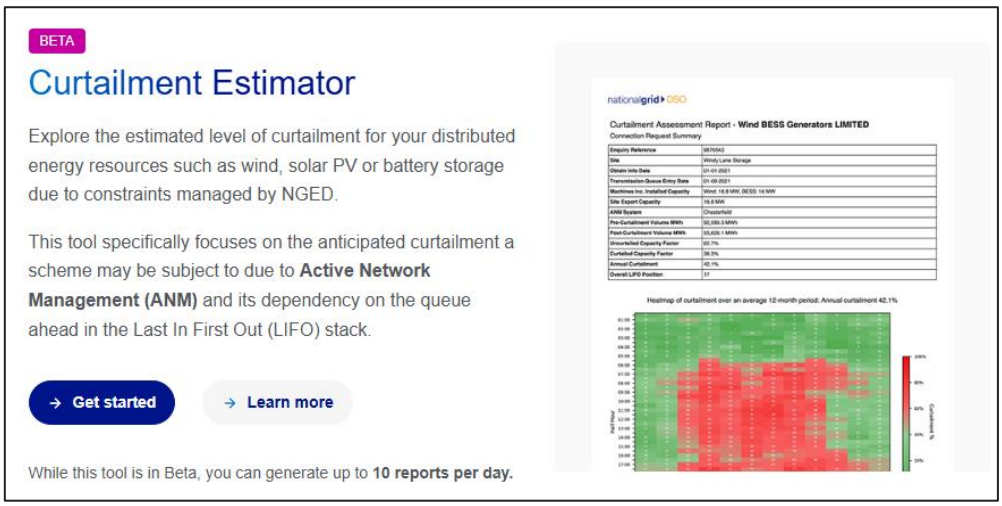

Figure 8: Beta Curtailment Estimator tool

Improving flexibility opportunity and participation

Flexibility markets rely on digital tools and interfaces to function and ensure inclusivity at scale. During FY2025/26, NGED continued to develop **Market Gateway** as the primary digital interface for customers and Flexibility Service Providers (FSPs).

The Market Gateway supports flexibility asset registration and qualification, with over **300,000 assets** registered this year, **more than double year-on-year growth**. Market Gateway enhancements and engagement with Flexibility Service Providers has reduced barriers to entry while enabling increased visibility of market opportunities, interaction with procurement and dispatch processes, and access to performance and settlement information. This has significantly expanded market participation across domestic, commercial and industrial assets.

Stakeholders consistently emphasised the importance of transparency and predictability in flexibility markets. In response, NGED used the Market Gateway and associated digital tools to improve visibility of flexibility opportunities and requirements, provide clearer reporting on dispatch outcomes and performance, and reduce administrative friction for FSPs.

Further, we **launched day-ahead flexibility procurement**, increasing market responsiveness and improving coordination with NESO markets. In response to stakeholder feedback, we continued to develop routes to market through **third party platforms such as Pico**, increasing choice and accessibility while maintaining consistent data standards and operational integrity

Improving access to digital tools

NGED recognises that customers engaging with the network have diverse capabilities, resources and levels of technical expertise. Digital tools must therefore be designed to be accessible and inclusive. To this end, we have ensured any launch or updates of digital tools were complemented by targeted webinars and sessions to provide guidance, promoting uptake and valuable outputs for stakeholders. We also provided non-technical summaries, guidance notes and visualisations, where appropriate.

In addition, we explored partnerships to understand how digital platforms could be improved to support participation by customers in vulnerable circumstances. Collaboration with organisations such as the **Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE**) involved detailed analysis around situational barriers to participation flexibility by vulnerable households. The collaborative effort led to the publication of our landmark **Making Flexibility More Accessible Report**. This led to the introduction of storage heating as a new asset category in our markets, with more than **40,000 vulnerable households now registered** in our markets.

Table 1: National Grid DSO & Centre for Sustainable Energy's flexibility recommendations to improve access and promote fairness

Recommendations – March 2025 CSE Access to Flexibility report	
Recommendation 1	Repeat work to assess uptake of flexibility services amongst households in vulnerable circumstances in future to track changes over time.
Recommendation 2	Share information about how system benefits are calculated and distributed by National Grid DSO publicly.
Recommendation 3	Leverage from learnings developed through existing National Grid projects, like Smart Energy Action Plans, to provide more targeted support for consumers in CMZs in low income or deprived areas to improve their smart energy capabilities and boost their provision of flexibility.
Recommendation 4	Present the case to ENA Open Networks and Market Facilitator to include non-heat pump electric heating as a specific flexible asset.
Recommendation 5	Review baselining approaches for domestic flexibility, with a view to increasing granularity and ensuring fair outcomes for low energy users.
Recommendation 6	Offer more longer-term domestic flexibility options – both in terms of procurement and notice period - incorporating relevant learnings from ongoing innovation trials about potential commercial models and community engagement best practice for including energy efficiency in flexibility procurement.
Recommendation 7	Consider the feasibility of more speculative options raised in innovation projects for improving flexibility accessibility, such as incentivising Flexibility Service Providers (FSPs) to capture more flexibility from vulnerable households.
Recommendation 8	Engage with and support the rollout of HOMEflex to build consumer trust across the domestic flexibility space.
Recommendation 9	Advocate for a national communications campaign to provide trusted information and increase public awareness of flexibility and its benefits and challenges.

Our data architecture

Our objective

Our objective is to provide an interoperable, scalable single source of truth for all datasets underpinning networking planning, operations and markets in NGED. As data is a golden thread across NGED's activities, our data architecture ensures data is accurate, timely and assured, interoperable across internal and external platforms, easily reusable by third parties and clear enough to support critical decision making for our stakeholders. In alignment with Ofgem's Data Best Practice Guidance and ED2 aims, we prioritise reliability, interoperability and scalability of our digital infrastructure for effective collaboration, transparency and whole system benefits.

These foundations ensure our collaboration activity remains scalable, resilient and adaptable as system complexity increases and demand for transparent, granular data grows. This invariably improves decision making and operational confidence for stakeholders.

Data as a golden thread for DSO activities

Data architecture underpins the delivery of the Smart Optimisation Output. NGED's underlying data infrastructure influences our strategic planning, operational decisions and market development. While data sharing and digital tools enable collaboration at the interface with stakeholders, it is the underlying data architecture that determines whether collaboration is scalable, reliable and trustworthy.

This approach has led to **26 million studies on network load flows**, facilitated **integration of the underlying datasets** used for our DFES and NDP publications, outage planning, and large-scale flexibility procurement and dispatch. This alignment reduces the risk of inconsistency between internal decisions and externally published data, which is essential for credible collaboration.

Interoperability, common standards and third-party data

Following alignment, we increased interoperability across systems to support reuse of our datasets by external and third-party stakeholders.

Common Information Model

We published interoperable network models using CIM standards, aligned with Long-Term Development Statement (LTDS) reforms. This specifically reduces the need for bespoke data transformations and allows

stakeholders build scalable tools for planning and analysis. NGED led the GB networks sector as the first to publish LTDS data in CIM format. This data is already in active use by eternal organisations

We further encourage reuse of our CIM Network Models through strategic partnerships with organisations such as **Squid** and **Yottar** to improve interpretation of our models and identify gaps or inconsistencies within these datasets. The feedback from the increased third-party use provides improvement opportunities to improve NGED's core data architecture for general stakeholder benefit.

Integrating third-party data

NGED's data architecture increasingly integrates markets and third-party data into our core systems to improve completeness and accuracy. So far, we have integrated data from smart meters, installation bodies and aggregators to enhance LV demand profiling. We also included data from the Market Gateway to improve visibility of CER and DER, leading to the identification of more than **110,000 EV chargers, 3,200+ heat pumps and 40,000+ energy storage devices** on the NGED network which were not initially visible through traditional notification routes.

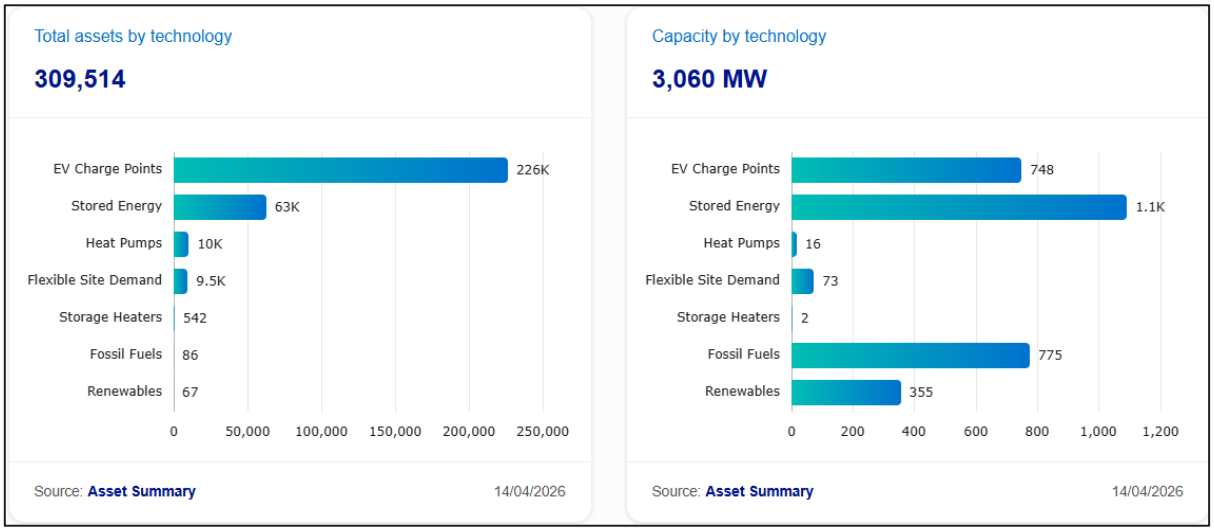

Figure 9: Number of assets and MW installed capacity connected to Market Gateway

Cloud-based scalability

NGED has continued to migrate critical DSO datasets to **cloud-based data platforms**, this migration has prioritised datasets with the greatest impact on collaboration including network load, constraint data, flexibility market datasets, curtailment and connections-related information. Given the scale of NGED's published datasets (currently **150 million data points**), the cloud-based architecture enables scalability to handle growing data volumes. This promotes greater resilience and performance, and the ability to implement consistent data quality and validation rules.

Data governance and quality assurance

Improving governance arrangements

High-quality data is fundamental to our data infrastructure and effective collaboration outcomes. During FY2025/26, we strengthened data quality rules and governance processes to ensure NGED datasets were accurate, internally consistent, supported by clear methodologies, subject to clear ownership, accountability and quality controls.

We have undertaken measures to define data quality rules for priority DSO-critical datasets, aligning DSO data governance with wider NGED standards and embedded assurance processes into standard operations. These are further measures to provide greater confidence to stakeholders that the data used for planning, operations and market participation reflects how NGED actually operates the network.

Methodology transparency

In line with stakeholder feedback, we also continued to publish supporting methodologies alongside complex datasets. This was especially important where data was derived from modelling or analysis rather than direct measurement. Our **curtailment dataset** for instance, was published with accompanying methodology detailing the assumptions, inputs and limitations. Also, network planning decisions and outputs are always supported by **DFES and NDP methodologies**.

Building sustainable capability

NGED has invested in internal capability and skills to embed data led decision making as business as usual, and ensure that architectural improvements are sustainable. We delivered cloud training across our data and digital teams in partnership with technology providers, including data apprenticeships to build internal expertise. We also established “cloud champions” to embed best practice. These investments support a culture where data quality, governance and usability become core operational responsibilities rather than specialist additions.

Measuring effectiveness and stakeholder feedback

NGED publishes extensive information on our activities, planning and operations through our website, Data Portal, publications like the DFES and Network Development Plans, and targeted stakeholder engagements. We prioritise transparency to enable stakeholder understanding of how decisions are made across system interfaces and see how whole-system considerations influence outcomes.

We provide opportunities for stakeholder feedback and measure the effectiveness of our SOO activities through structured engagement, including surgeries, workshops, webinars, surveys and platform feedback. This allows users of our data and digital tools as well as wider stakeholders report issues, suggest improvements and highlight gaps in tool functionality or network planning. We maintain engagement and change logs documenting stakeholder input, and our response and influence. We ensure continuous iteration of our tools, datasets and processes measuring stakeholder and system impact, including usage metrics and digital analytics from our Market Gateway, Data Portal and other platforms to identify and prioritise updates and refinements.

Feedback received during FY2025/26 has reinforced the importance of early engagement, transparent assumptions, clear and standardised data, and visible links between stakeholder input and network outcomes. This feedback continues to shape improvements to our Collaboration Plan and associated digital tools.

Next steps

As we move into the final two years of RIIO-ED2, NGED’s collaboration activity will focus on deeper whole-system coordination with NESO and RESP arrangements, deeper embedding of flexibility within planning and operations as a cross-system resource, continued scaling of flexibility markets, enhanced coordination at T-D boundary, enhanced digital self-service tools to support regional and local decision making, and preparation for transition into RIIO ED3.

NGED will also focus on further enhancing data tools to support decision making, expanding CIM-based data provision, improving self-service digital tools, deepening integration with Regional Energy Strategic Planning (RESP) and exploring the proportionate use of AI to support data discovery and interpretation.

We remain committed to working openly with stakeholders to ensure NGED's networks enable net zero in the most efficient, transparent and collaborative way possible.

Annex

Glossary of terms

Table 2: Glossary of terms used in the report

API	Application Programming Interface
CER	Consumer Energy Resources
CIM	Common Information Model
DER	Distributed Energy Resources
DFES	Distribution Future Energy Scenarios
DNO	Distribution Network Operator
DSO	Distribution System Operator
FMAR	Flexibility Market Asset Register
FSPs	Flexibility Service Providers
GB	Great Britain
GSP	Grid Supply Point
ICCP	Inter-Control Centre Protocol
LAEP	Local Area Energy Plan
LCT	Low Carbon Technologies
LTDS	Long-Term Development Statement
LV	Low Voltage
ML	Machine Learning
NDP	Network Development Plans
NESO	National Energy System Operator
NGED	National Grid Electricity Distribution
RESP	Regional Energy Strategic Planners
SCG	Strategic Connection Group
SOO	Smart Optimisation Output
TO	Transmission Owner

List of relevant documents and webpages

Links to our webpages referred to throughout this plan, and where our stakeholders can provide feedback:

- Connected Data Portal feedback and data request
- Digitalisation Strategy
- Digital Interactive Roadmap
- DSO Strategic Action Plan
- Connected Data Portal (CDP)
- Clearview Connect
- DFES Map
- Network Opportunity Map
- Flexible Power – Value Calculator
- Maps Hub
- DSO Resource Centre

SOO Engagement and Change Log

Table 3: SOO Engagement and change log

Date	Engagement activity	Stakeholders	Feedback received (summary)	Actions taken / decisions
5 March 2026	Network Development Plan (NDP) consultation	Local Authorities, Net Zero Hubs, consultants, developers	Stakeholders confirmed the NDP is a critical planning input but highlighted: difficulty understanding how local plans (e.g., LAEPs) feed into NDP outcomes desire for clearer links between constraints, planned reinforcements and DSO datasets Need for more consistent assumptions across DFES, NDP and Data Portal	Improved alignment between DFES, NDP and Data Portal datasets Clearer signposting within the Data Portal to NDP-related datasets and methodologies Feedback fed into FY2026 Collaboration Plan section on “How we take account of local stakeholder plans and requirements”
30 March 2026	DSO Data Portal demonstration (System Visualisation Interface)	Local Authorities, consultants, Flexibility Service Providers, developers	Users welcomed a single access point for DNO and DSO data but provided feedback that: finding the “right” dataset quickly was challenging raw datasets were valuable but required greater visualisation and interpretation support users wanted confidence on how to practically apply data to decisions	Prioritised redesign of Data Portal navigation and dataset discoverability Introduction of more insight-led dashboards and charts alongside raw data Rationalisation and clearer structuring of datasets Improved API consistency to support third-party reuse Actions reflected in FY2026 portal enhancements and reported usage growth

Ongoing through FY2025/26	Embedded feedback via DFES engagement, LAEP support and data platform feedback channels	Local Authorities, Net Zero Hubs, industry partners, third-party data users	Feedback consistently emphasised that access to data is no longer the main barrier; stakeholders require help interpreting and contextualising information to support decisions	• Strategic shift from "data publication" to "data usability and decision support" • Development of self-serve tools (e.g., dashboards, estimators) Increased use of examples, metadata, methodologies and visual outputs