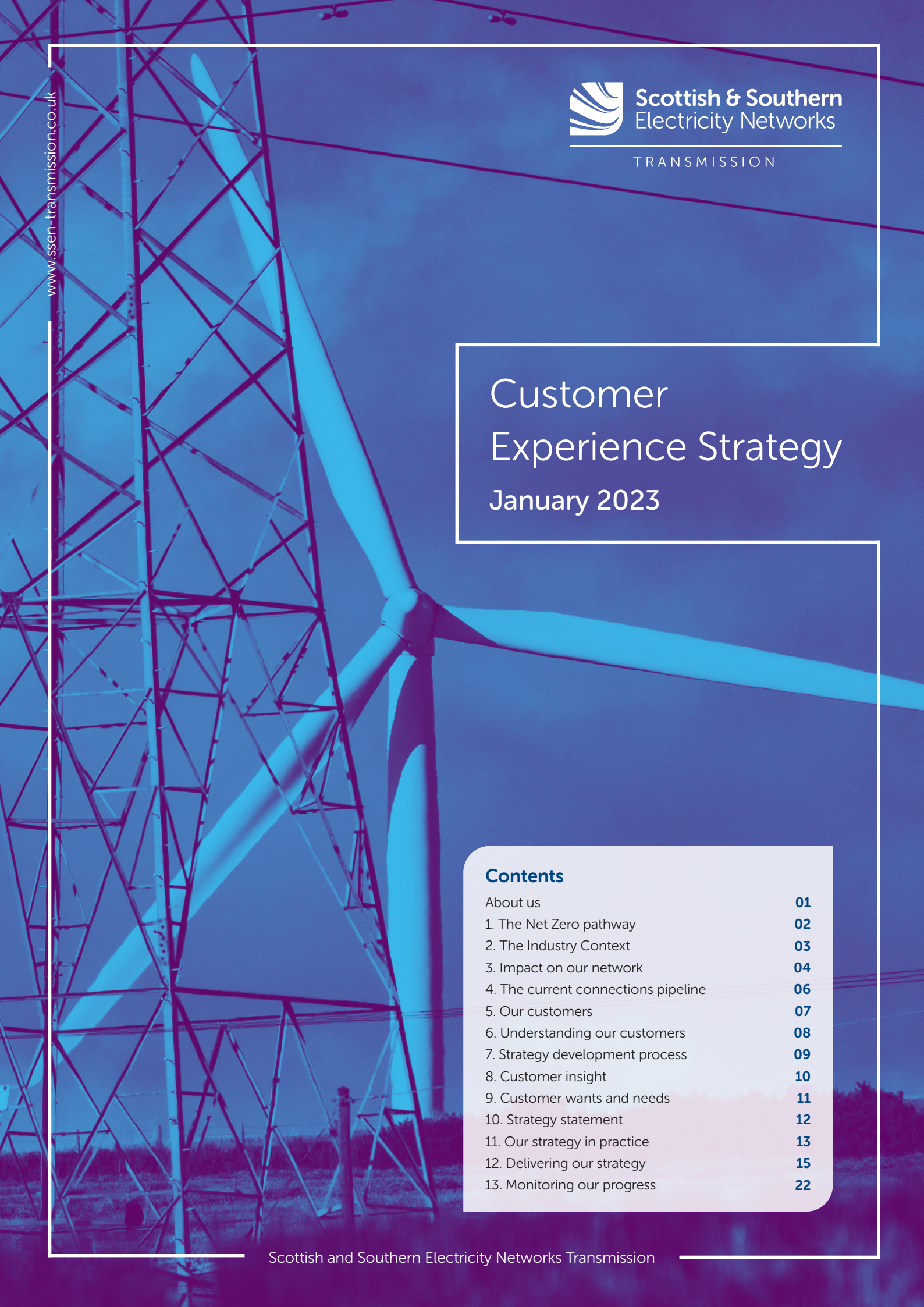


www.ssen-transmission.co.uk

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Customer Experience Strategy

January 2023

Contents

About us

We are SSEN Transmission (the trading name for Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission), and we are part of the SSE plc Group. We are responsible for the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland, maintaining and investing in the high voltage 132kV, 220kV, 275kV and 400kV electricity transmission network.

Our network consists of underground and subsea cables, overhead lines on wooden poles or steel towers, and electricity substations. It extends over a quarter of the UK's land mass, crossing some of its most challenging terrain and powering our communities by providing a safe and reliable supply of electricity. We do this by taking the electricity from generators and transporting it at high voltages over long distances through our transmission network for onward distribution to homes and businesses in villages, towns and cities.

About this strategy

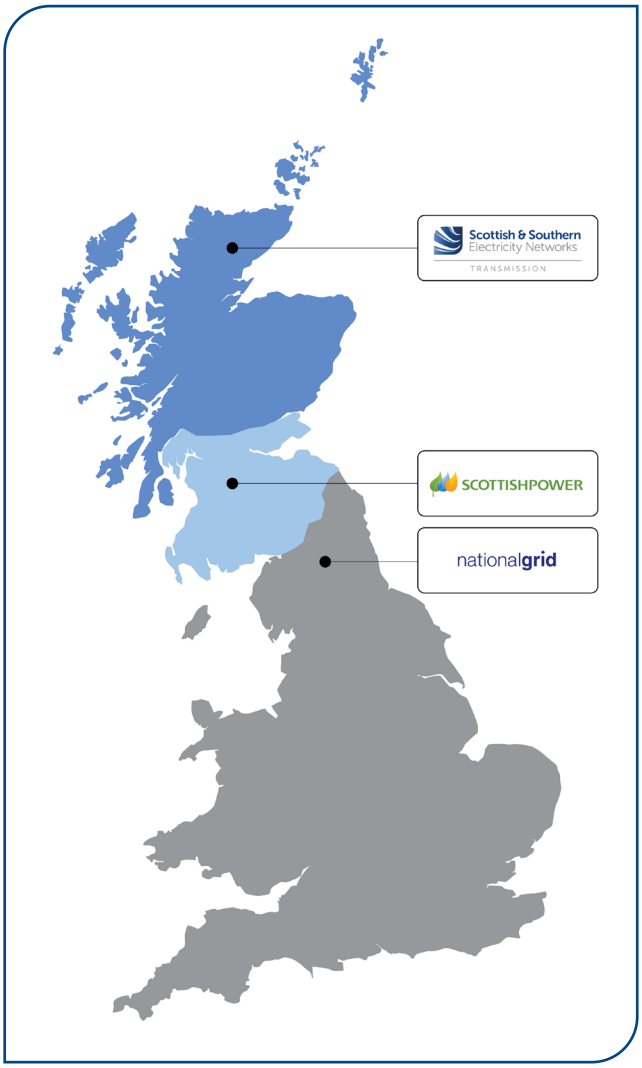
In 2019 we published a Commercial and Connections Policy setting out ambitions to improve our offering for customers connecting to our network. Over the last two years and with a key focus on Net Zero, the requirements for connecting low carbon generation to our network have grown and the expectations of our current and future customers have changed.

This Customer Experience Strategy has re-evaluated the requirements of customers pre and post connection, based on fresh insights, creating a comprehensive strategy, built upon customer and stakeholder feedback and expectations. At its core, the strategy is designed to deliver on the connections elements of our 5 clear goals under our T2 business plan and to deliver connections in line with a pathway to Net Zero. It sets out to meet three main challenges:

1. Identify and address customers' current pain points
2. Identify and implement measures to improve customer experience
3. Address barriers to connection to enable the growth required to deliver Net Zero

Scotland's transmission network has a strategic role to play in supporting delivery of the UK's Net Zero target. We're already a mass exporter of renewable energy, with around two thirds of power generated in our network area exported south. By 2050, the north of Scotland will need around 50GW of renewable energy capacity to support Net Zero delivery. For context, we currently have just over 8GW of renewable generation, including embedded generation connected through the distribution network in the north of Scotland. A map showing the three Great Britain transmission operators, including SSEN Transmission's network area can be found below.

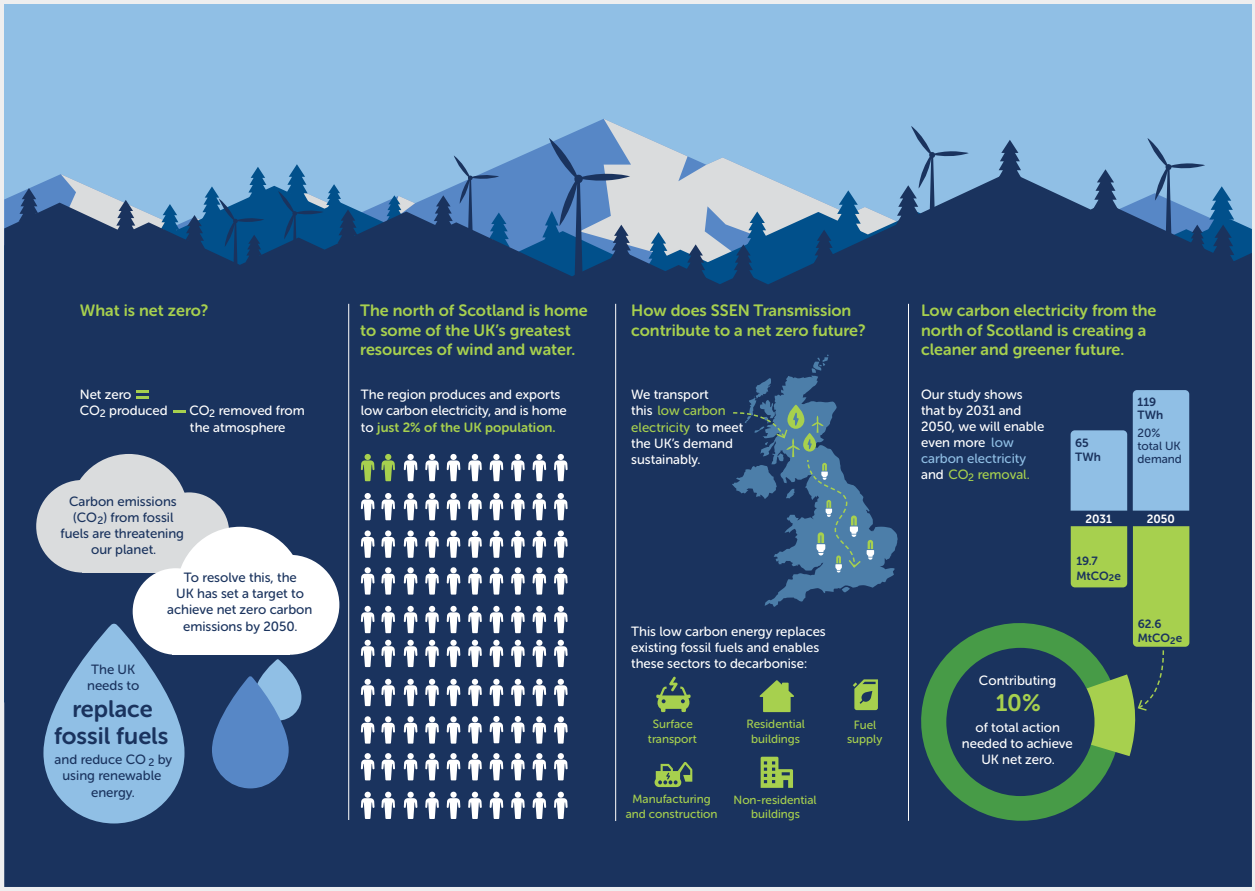
Find out more: **www.ssen-transmission.co.uk**



1. The Net Zero pathway

The north of Scotland is set to contribute 10% of the UK's total emissions abatement to Net Zero. This will require a dramatic increase in renewable energy connected to our network.

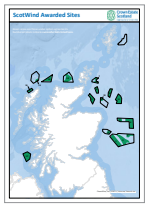
Whilst there are various pathways to deliver Net Zero emissions, greater electrification will make a leading contribution to decarbonising the UK's economy. In its 6th Carbon Budget, which provides analysis to the Government on Net Zero pathways, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) set out its 'Balanced Net Zero Pathway.'* This outlines the contribution of a range of technologies and societal factors in delivering Net Zero pathways, with increasing electrification as the main contributor to Net Zero. Our Getting to Net Zero report, underpinned by the 6th Carbon Budget analysis, shows that the north of Scotland is set to contribute 10% of the UK's total emissions abatement for Net Zero. This means that we, alongside our customers, will have a greater role to play in delivering the necessary infrastructure that will bring renewable power to the UK's towns and cities enabling that greater electrification.



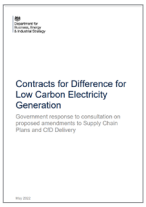
* The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf (theccc.org.uk)

2. The Industry Context

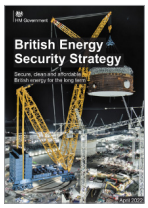
During 2022, we saw a series of major announcements made in the UK designed to progress Net Zero goals. These changes are increasing demand for connections to our electricity network and strengthening certainty of the need for strategic investment in network capacity.



Crown Estate Scotland's January ScotWind announcement saw seabed allocated for up to 25GW of offshore wind in Scottish waters, while the Scottish Government this year proposed to double onshore wind capacity, with an additional 8-12GW targeted by 2030. National Grid Electricity System Operator is now working with the UK Transmission Operators to establish the Holistic Network Design (HND) for these projects.



In February 2022, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) announced that Contracts for Difference (CfD) auctions would be held annually from 2023 to speed up the UK's adoption of renewable power.



The British Energy Security Strategy and Electricity Networks Strategic Framework set out the requirements for strategic investment in electricity networks to meet ambitious targets including an increased target for 50GW of offshore wind by 2030.

The blueprint for the electricity transmission network infrastructure, required to enable the forecast growth in renewable electricity across Great Britain has been set out by the Electricity System Operator in its Pathway to 2030 publication. For the north of Scotland, this confirms the need for over £7bn of investment in onshore electricity transmission infrastructure.

The drive for greater electrification, alongside this rapid industry and policy acceleration is resulting in the needs of our customers changing, as they too seek to play their part towards Net Zero targets.

This presents challenges as the existing network grows and becomes more complex in order to accommodate the substantial increase in the volume of generation trying to connect.

This strategy is designed to enable us to respond to these challenges in regards to connections and customer experience. Across SSEN Transmission, we are scaling up to deliver the infrastructure needed at the required pace.

3. Impact on our network

To meet 2030 targets we need to grow our network to accommodate at least 24GW of low carbon generation by 2030.

As is demonstrated in the graph, modelling shows that to deliver Net Zero scenarios, our network capacity will need to increase from just over 9GW today (just over 8 GW of which is renewable generation), to around 24GW by 2030 and 50GW by 2050.

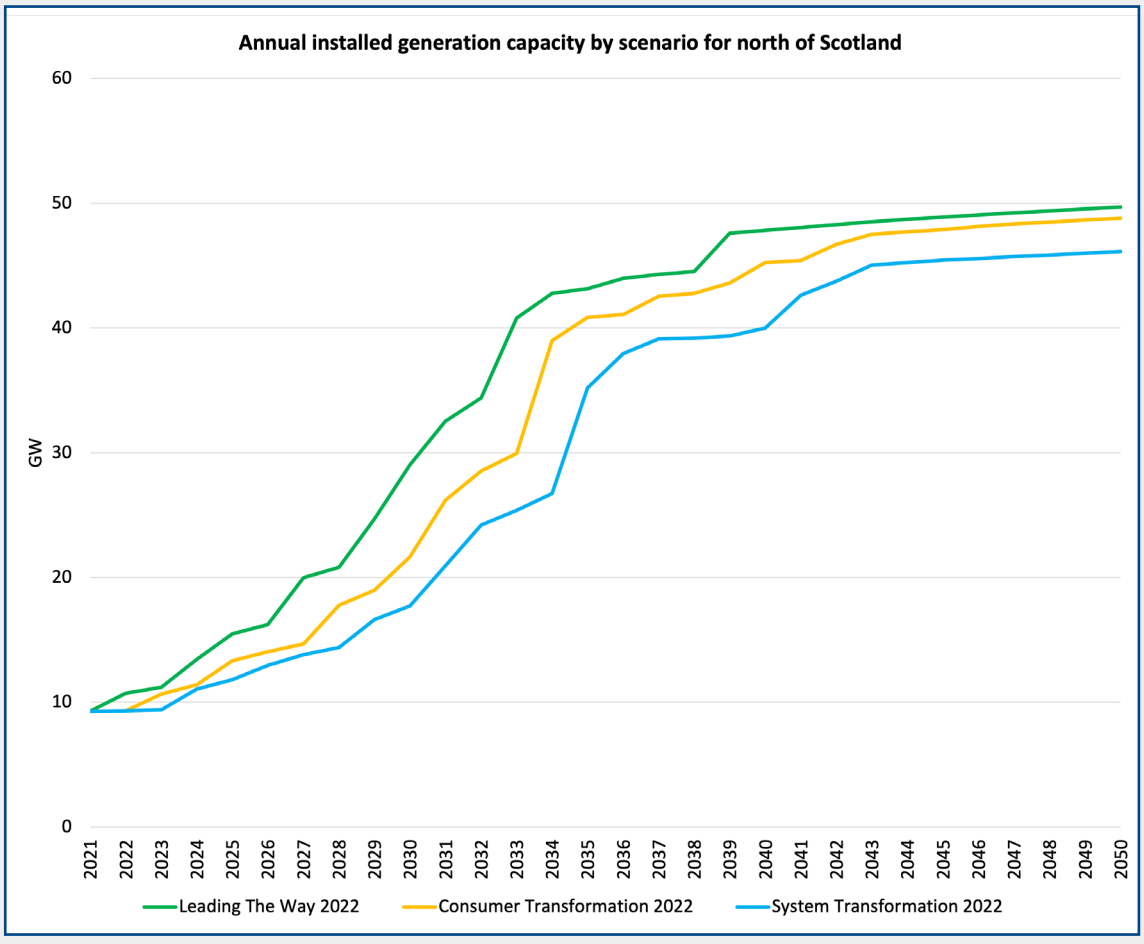
The British Energy Security Strategy (BESS), published in April 2022, set out the Government's increased ambition to connect 50GW of offshore wind by 2030 and to halve the time it typically takes to build grid infrastructure.

The strategic infrastructure required in the north of Scotland to deliver 2030 targets has been set out in our applications for approval to Ofgem and in the Holistic Network Design (HND). Alongside this, we are working with customers already contracted to connect, and with new customers to connect the required 24GW by 2030.

In our response to Ofgem's consultation on accelerating onshore electricity transmission investment, we have provided our clear commitment to deliver these strategic investments efficiently and on time, subject to consideration of issues beyond our control, including delays in the consenting regime, supply chain changes to delivery dates and restrictions in outages for commissioning.

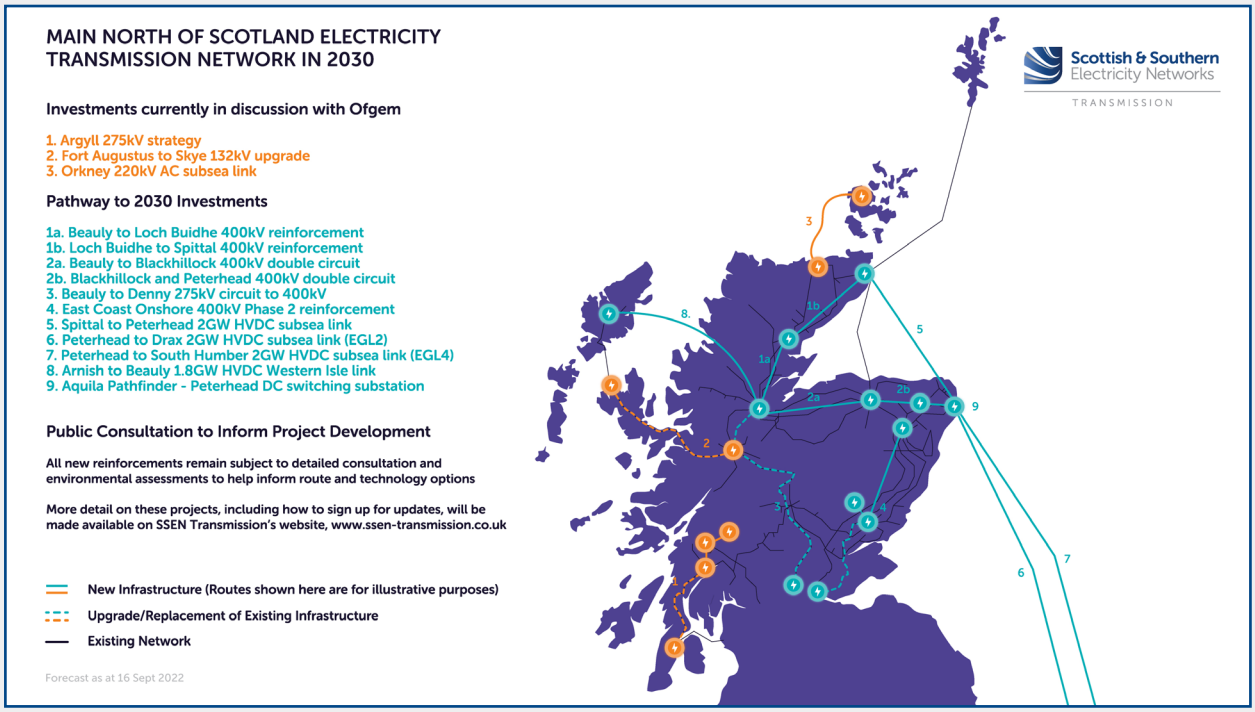
Generation capacity on the north of Scotland network in National Grid ESO's Future Energy Scenarios 2022

Annual installed generation capacity by scenario for north of Scotland



Future Energy Scenario 2022 National Grid ESO

The map below sets out the infrastructure investments required in the north of Scotland to deliver the capacity to enable connections associated with the Pathway to 2030 and Holistic Network Design (HND).



Beyond 2030, the System Operator's Future Energy Scenarios and our own North of Scotland Future Energy Scenarios which inform these, show that further low carbon generation will be required to maintain pathways to Net Zero.

4. The current connections pipeline

During our last price control (RIIO-T1) period, a simple average of new capacity connected per annum was 367MW and our highest capacity connected in one year was 1GW. Averaged out across the period to 2030, **meeting net zero scenarios requires average annual connections of over 2GW a year,** more than double our highest year in RIIO-T1.

2018/19
1GW

Highest Annual Generation Connected in RIIO-T1

367MW

Average Generation Connected in RIIO-T1

Over 2GW

Average Generation Connections needed per year to 2030

We currently have 57GW of generation capacity with offers or contracts to connect to our network, meaning we already have more capacity than is required to meet 2050 ambitions. Whilst we recognise that not all projects which receive offers and contracts will result in connections to our network, the demand for services is increasing every month as new applications are made and offers for connections are accepted.

Between 2013/14 (the beginning of our last price control and business plan) and 2021/22 (the first year of the current price control and business plan) the number of new offers and modified applications combined has tripled. In the 12 month period from 2020/21 to 2021/22, the volume of new offers alone increased by 70%.

Meeting this increased demand for connection offers has necessitated significant increases in resource and new systems and processes to improve efficiency.

Of the offers made each year, around 50% are modifications or notices of changes to existing offers. These updates are a common feature of the current connections process as technical solutions and costs are refined through detailed design and as customers, who are not yet ready to put forward securities for the costs of developing and constructing their connection, will delay their connection dates.

New offers and modified applications

x3 **Tripled**
between 2013/14 to 2021/22

New offers

↑ **70% increase**
from 2020/21 to 2021/22

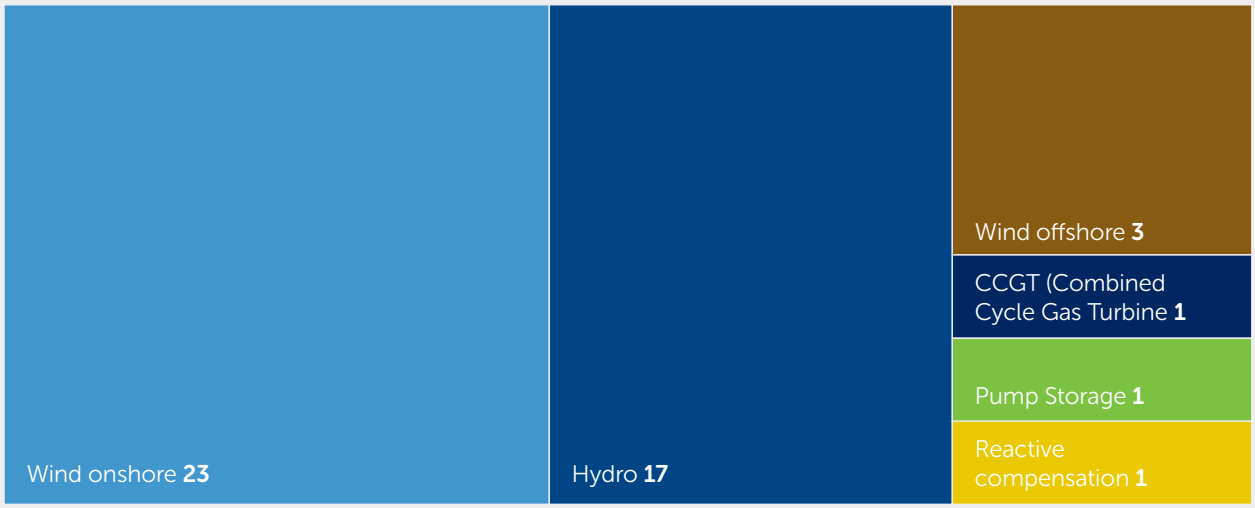
5. Our customers

Our current customer base already connected to and transporting energy through our network is dominated by onshore wind and hydro generation projects. This has meant that historically customers have had similar requirements, and once connected, have required minimal support. The pipeline of future connections – those offered connections or contracted to connect to our network – is much broader in technology type. This has resulted in more varied and often complex requirements throughout the customer journey.

We have historically segmented customers based on technology type and the number of projects in their portfolio with us. Based on input on customer needs gathered during customer focus groups, we have enhanced our customer segmentation to consider UK customers versus international customers who have experience of other markets and connections processes, and the different needs of first time customers in comparison to repeat connections customers who will be more familiar with the process.

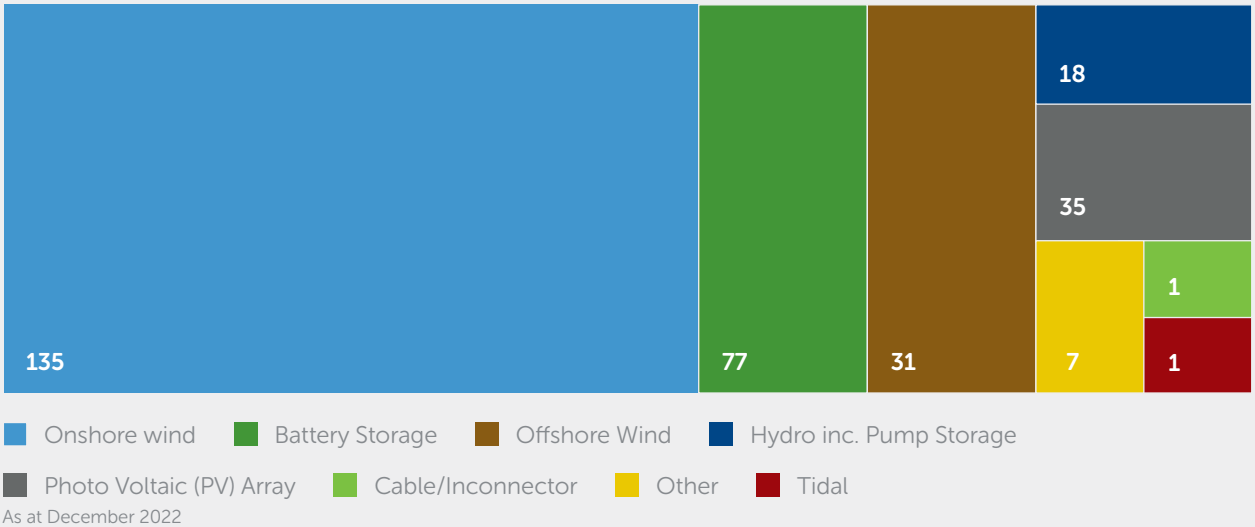
The images below show the change in technology and customer types.

Current number of connected customer projects by technology type(5.5GW directly connected generation)



As at December 2022

Current number of customer projects offered and contracted by technology type (57GW)



As at December 2022

6. Understanding our customers

As well as technology type, we often group customers in terms of their project portfolio, to help inform pre and post connection processes and engagement. These groups are:

Distribution Network Owner Customer

- Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution Ltd is our largest portfolio customer operating, maintaining the distribution network and connecting generation at distribution level.

Large Portfolio Customers

- Keen to move quickly and highly commercial
- Very familiar with the connections process and projects
- Well networked
- Can draw comparisons from experience and costs from other projects
- Dominant technologies are wind and battery
- Intensive engagement

Small Portfolio Customers

- Can be less familiar with the connections process
- Split of new entrants in new technologies versus more established players
- Often work with consultants that are highly knowledgeable
- Can draw comparisons from experience and costs from other projects
- Dominated by wind technology
- Higher volume of queries and more support required throughout the journey

Single Project Customers

Small projects

- Generally lower level of connections process knowledge due to limited experience, some have limited sectoral knowledge
- Draw comparisons of costs and experiences with out of sector projects
- Wind, PV, Hydro and other technologies

Large projects

- Keen to move quickly, highly commercial, often with complex needs
- Good connections process and project knowledge but offshore process still unfamiliar
- Some joint ventures formed of large portfolio customers
- Can draw comparisons from experience and costs from other projects

By considering the diversity of our customers and their requirements we can better tailor our services and processes to meet their needs.

7. Strategy development process

To inform our strategy, we have drawn on existing customer insights and undertaken new engagement with different stakeholder groups and supplementary sources. The gathering and analysis of insights was undertaken by Baringa, an external consultancy, who provided objectivity and expertise in Customer Experience strategy design.

The combination of insight sources minimised asks of customers for their views, while ensuring we received candid and detailed insights from customers on their experience of working with us and what we should be prioritising. In addition, by reviewing best practice we have tested our strategy to ensure it is sufficiently ambitious.

1

Data discovery and insight

In the data discovery phase, we reviewed:

- Employee insights from our business change programme
- Current state customer journey maps & interaction points with customers
- Customer satisfaction scoring and feedback
- Quality of Connections Customer survey results and verbatim comments

2

Internal Customer Sessions (1-2-1s)

15 sessions were held with people across the following business areas: Customer Experience, Development, Project Delivery, System Planning, Outage Planning, Commercial, Digital and Data and Finance

3

External Customer Focus Group Sessions

Three focus group sessions were held with 12 attendees from across 11 different customer organisations covering all stages of the connections journey

4

Best practice insights and expertise

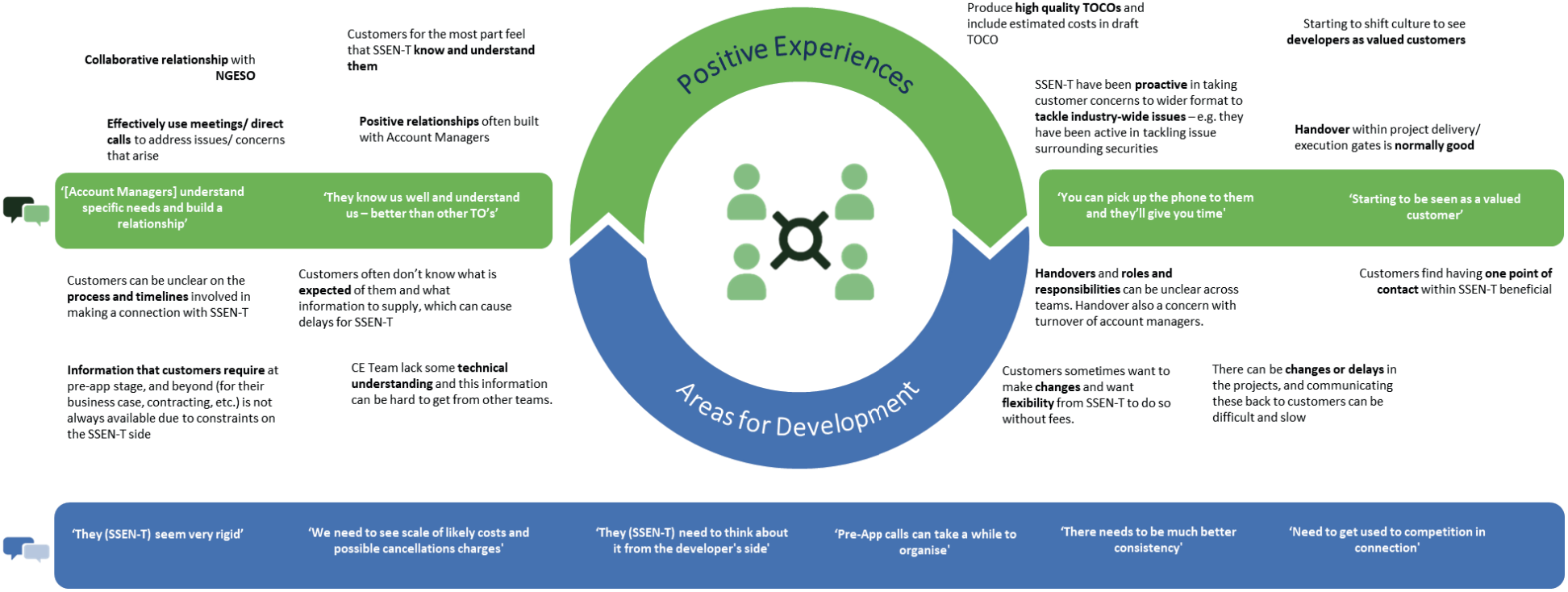
- Insight into Customer Experience best practice
- Directly relevant case study examples (from business-to-business regulated organisations)

The insights were analysed to validate our customer journey, identify pain points and find opportunities to deliver a great experience for customers and employees.

8. Customer Insight

What we know about the customer experience today

Through our data discovery work, and our internal and external customer sessions we were able to gain a clear understanding of the current customer experience. While scoring of the customer experience is positive, comments from customers showed a lack of consistency in level of service and satisfaction, and a desire for more flexibility and transparency.



9. Customer wants and needs

Our analysis of feedback from the customer and employee focus groups showed alignment of pain points between both groups. It is encouraging that resolving pain points for our customers will also resolve those of our employees.

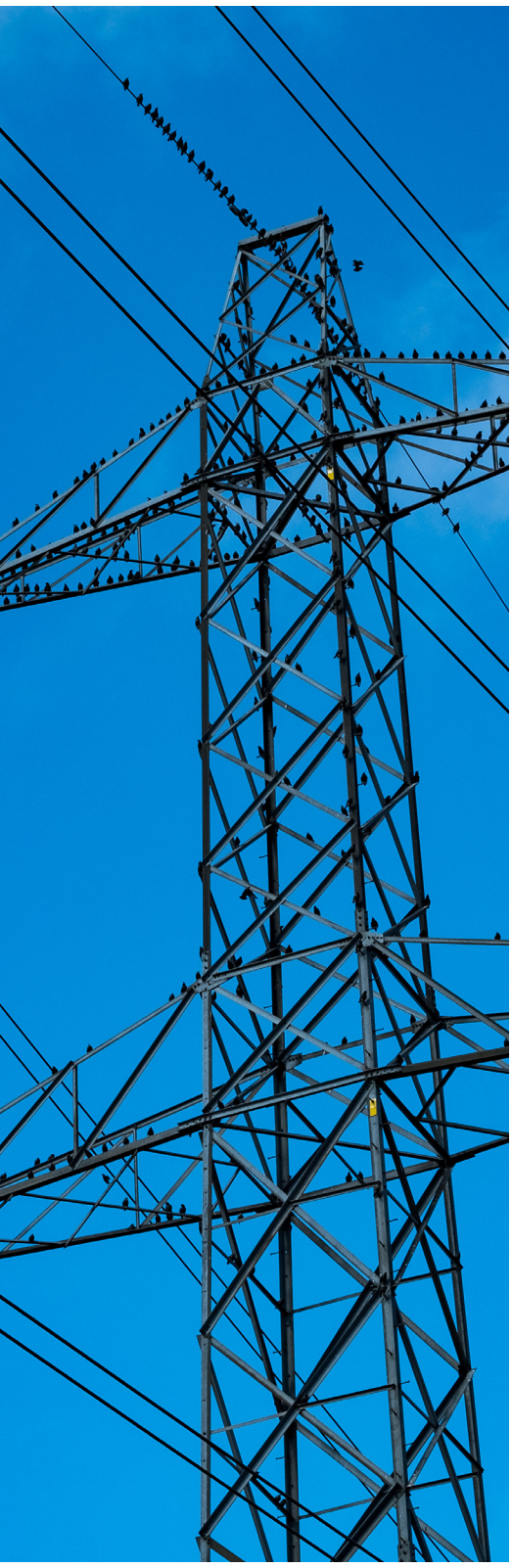
The wants and needs of our customers (including resolution of the pain points) were summarised into ten asks from the customer perspective.

Table 1 Customer asks of SSEN Transmission

	As a connections customer I want SSEN Transmission to...	
1	Understand our business case and help us to refine it	Understand our business motivations and strategic objectives, and how these translate into financial drivers and constraints. Use this understanding to offer us the right solution for us and SSEN
2	Work with us to define our requirements	Understand what we want and guide us through the different options - help us to clarify and refine our requirements (particularly important for new customers). Allow / enable some optioneering on solution to find an optimal solution that works for both you and us
3	Be transparent and flexible about costs and timescales	Use your experience to provide realistic estimates or ball parks and highlight where there is risk / uncertainty or unknowns in costs and timelines (so that we can factor these into our own budgets, ROI targets, financial hurdles). Think flexibly – for example, depending on our business case we might be willing to pay more for faster delivery or wait longer for cheaper delivery
4	Be consistent, clear and communicative	Tell us what to expect - timelines, steps of the process, what will be required from me and when. Be upfront and clear about the level and type of engagement and support SSEN-T will provide. Assign a main point of contact who knows me and my account, but also give me access to the right people across the connections lifecycle
5	Help us to close the gaps	Don't let industry splits (e.g. ESO and TO) hold things up and don't be limited by regulatory requirements (within reason). Regularly review your own policies and processes so that bureaucracy and rigidity don't get in the way of us achieving our goals
6	Embed a corporate memory	The length of transmission projects means that different people will be involved over many years (and even decades). We want to have confidence that things won't get missed, and that you have a complete understanding of us and our project, despite any changes in account managers.
7	Provide helpful tooling	Provide me a single portal to view and manage my projects with SSEN-T. Show me status of consents, financials across multiple projects and help me manage the workflow and versioning of my requests. We want access to geospatial and tailored aspects of design portals to self-serve connection requirements complementing, but not copying, what National Grid has.
8	Engage with us regularly	Form a habit of speaking with us more regularly and make it easy to make contact with the right people.
9	Champion the customer's voice	We would value regular engagement with SSEN-T to refine the process, giving customers a voice and helping you improve.
10	Work with us to connect on time and on budget	Be the Customer voice/champion for "use of system" charges and securities, in particular into NGESO and OFGEM to make them more understandable, clearer, more "appropriate" (=lower). Newer smaller developers don't have the expertise or capacity to do this, but it is hugely valuable to them and others.

10. Strategy statement

The context in which we are operating and the insights we have gathered from customers applying to connect, and already connected to our network, have directly influenced our strategy statement:



Vision

To be TO of choice for low carbon energy developers in the UK

Mission

Realise growth in line with net zero goals by attracting, converting and retaining low carbon customers

Value Proposition

On time and on budget connections with high technical standards and leading sustainability credentials, providing excellent network reliability throughout project life and championing the Net Zero cause by pushing for industry change

Customer Experience

Delivering excellence, through experienced staff, providing an informative, supportive and collaborative service, with a focus on understanding and meeting customers' needs, and a proactive approach to gathering and using insight to inform continuous improvement.

11. Our strategy in practice

Examples of successful strategy delivery

Adaptive Model

In 2021, customers awaiting the results of the ScotWind leasing round, who had accepted their connections offers dependent on wider strategic infrastructure projects that already had construction underway, asked that we suspend securities payments related to these works until the results of the ScotWind auction were known.

Responding to this request, we confirmed that the costs of the works underway were already covered by other connections customers, that no additional risks would be incurred by consumers in temporarily suspending securities payments, and as a result we were able to grant the request.

Constantly Evolving

Over recent years, in addition to the increase in the number of connections applications we receive, we have also seen a significant increase in the number of requests to engage with us on pre-application discussions. Feedback from our customers highlighted opportunities for improvement at this stage of their journey, through a more proactive, coordinated and consistent approach to planning and engagement.

Taking this feedback on board, we considered improvement opportunities in reviewing our operating model and have restructured our Customer Experience team, creating teams with key areas of focus and implementing a range of improvements.

Progressive Solutions

With most customer generation sites supplied via single-connection substations, outage periods of 1-2 weeks are required to allow us to undertake routine substation maintenance. To minimise the impact on production and revenue for customers, we aim to optimise our substation maintenance during the spring, summer, and autumn months, and align with the customer's internal programmes.

In June 2022, we received a request to delay an outage as this coincided with the salmon smolt season and would disrupt river flows, fish migration and have environmental risks. On further exploration, we were able to reschedule maintenance activities at other sites, enabling us to reprogramme this maintenance to October, thus allowing our customer to continue to manage river flow levels within operating levels during the summer months.

Hungry for Insight

In February 2021, we announced plans to replace the existing electricity power line that runs from Fort Augustus to Ardmore in the north of Skye. At this time, we recognised the importance of actively seeking out information on any developers with an interest in generating in the area, now or in the future, to inform our planning and ensure we accurately reflected current and future demand from customers so that we would not need to upgrade the line again in the near future.

To enable this, we carried out a range of engagement to gather information on the needs of customers looking to connect in the area and how this infrastructure could be used by future generation and demand customers. This information was rationalised and used to inform our application for approval to build the project that was submitted to the regulator, Ofgem.

Evidence based advocacy for Net Zero aims

Responding to concerns from our customers and wider stakeholders about Transmission Network Use of System Charges (TNUoS) causing a barrier to connections, we undertook analysis of these charges to quantify the detriment that north of Scotland renewable energy developers face in comparison to those in other parts of GB.

Based on the findings, in 2021 we published a thought leadership paper that explored the case for TNUoS reform in greater detail, advocated for the interests of customers and stakeholders, and provided evidence of the impact. Using the paper as a tool for discussion, we continued to listen to our customers and stakeholders and provided Ofgem with evidence of the overwhelming support for the need for TNUoS reform. Ofgem subsequently confirmed that a review of TNUoS would be beneficial and set out the next steps to be taken forward through their TNUoS Task Force.

Service Excellence

Over recent years we have seen a significant increase in the number of requests to engage with us on pre-application discussions. Feedback from our customers highlighted opportunities for improvement through faster timescales for response and scheduling of pre-application meetings.

Based on this feedback, we designed a new standard service which ensured customers received a response to their request within 48 hours and that pre-application meetings are scheduled within two weeks. To enable this we arranged blocks of availability with the system planning engineers and customer contract managers that are required to provide the information customers need for the meetings to be succesful. This increased satisfaction scores for pre-application meetings over 2021/22, from an average score of 8.1 out of 10 in Quarter 3 and 8.8 out of 10 in Quarter 4.

Human & Digital

We recognise that the most satisfactory experiences for customers are when our experienced employees spend time with them understanding their requirements. In addition, customers now want to be able to access information quickly and easily, and waiting for availability of our teams to provide this can cause unnecessary delays for the customer. To address this, we are adopting an approach where easy to use digital products complement our human customer interactions.

This will deliver increased automation and the ability for customers to take a self-service approach for project updates and information, focusing our people on value-add activities. This will also allow us to efficiently service the growth in new connections applications.

Digital Parity +

Customers have requested access to more information online to support them in their project planning and management, including information that would support pre-application. They have asked that this complement but does not copy National Grid ESO's system.

Based on this feedback and recognising that our customer base has grown and diversified, we are strengthening our customer segmentation analysis, which, through engagement with customers will help us understand varying customer needs, to inform design of our digital solutions, enhancing the process and improving the customer experience.

12. Delivering our strategy

To deliver the strategy, address the pain points highlighted through customer and employee focus groups and enable continuous improvement for pre and post connection customers, we have set ourselves five objectives

Objective 1

Actively **engage** with our customers, getting to know them and understanding their needs

Objective 2

Develop our customer centric **culture and structure** to ensure clarity, transparency and consistency of approach, building trusted and collaborative working relationships with our customers

Objective 3

Review **products and processes** to provide a clear, seamless and efficient service that meets the differing needs of our customers

Objective 4

Proactively participate in industry change, **advocating** on behalf of our customers

Objective 5

Implement **new digital systems and tools,** providing self-serve opportunities for customers and improved management of connections and projects throughout their lifecycle

Objective 1

Actively engage with our customers, getting to know them and understanding their needs

Why?

When we understand our customers well, we are better equipped to provide a service which meets their needs. We improve the scope and quality of the service our customers receive by understanding their drivers, concerns, and risk appetite, enabling us to:

- Continuously evolve our practices and decision-making, and engage effectively setting out what the possibilities are for their project or portfolio;
- Work in parallel under a shared understanding throughout the connection and post connection journey; and
- Undertake evidence-based advocacy to help inform wider industry reforms.

How?

Structure

We have expanded and restructured our Customer Experience (CX) department to enable more proactive and consistent engagement with customers already connected, and looking to connect to our network.

We have separated our previous Customer Contract Management team into a dedicated Customer Relationship Management team and a Connection Offers team, recognising that these activities, while related, are distinct elements of the overall customer experience and allowing each team to focus on understanding customers' needs and delivering the support relevant to the particular stage of their project.

We have integrated our Commercial Policy team within the Customer Experience department, recognising the close nature of the activities of the teams, ensuring consistent and transparent information is provided, and customer focused policy is developed, within the bounds of our licence and regulatory framework.

We have introduced a Customer Insights team to ensure that we make evidence based, data driven decisions by:

- collating, analysing, and better utilising the information we have;
- proactively gathering external insight and considering best practice;
- tracking and measuring our progress through internal and external metrics; and
- providing evidence for advocacy.

In the course of the next 12 months, we aim to bring in a product development function to consider what additional services we can provide to our customers. This will build upon the work of the Customer Insights team.

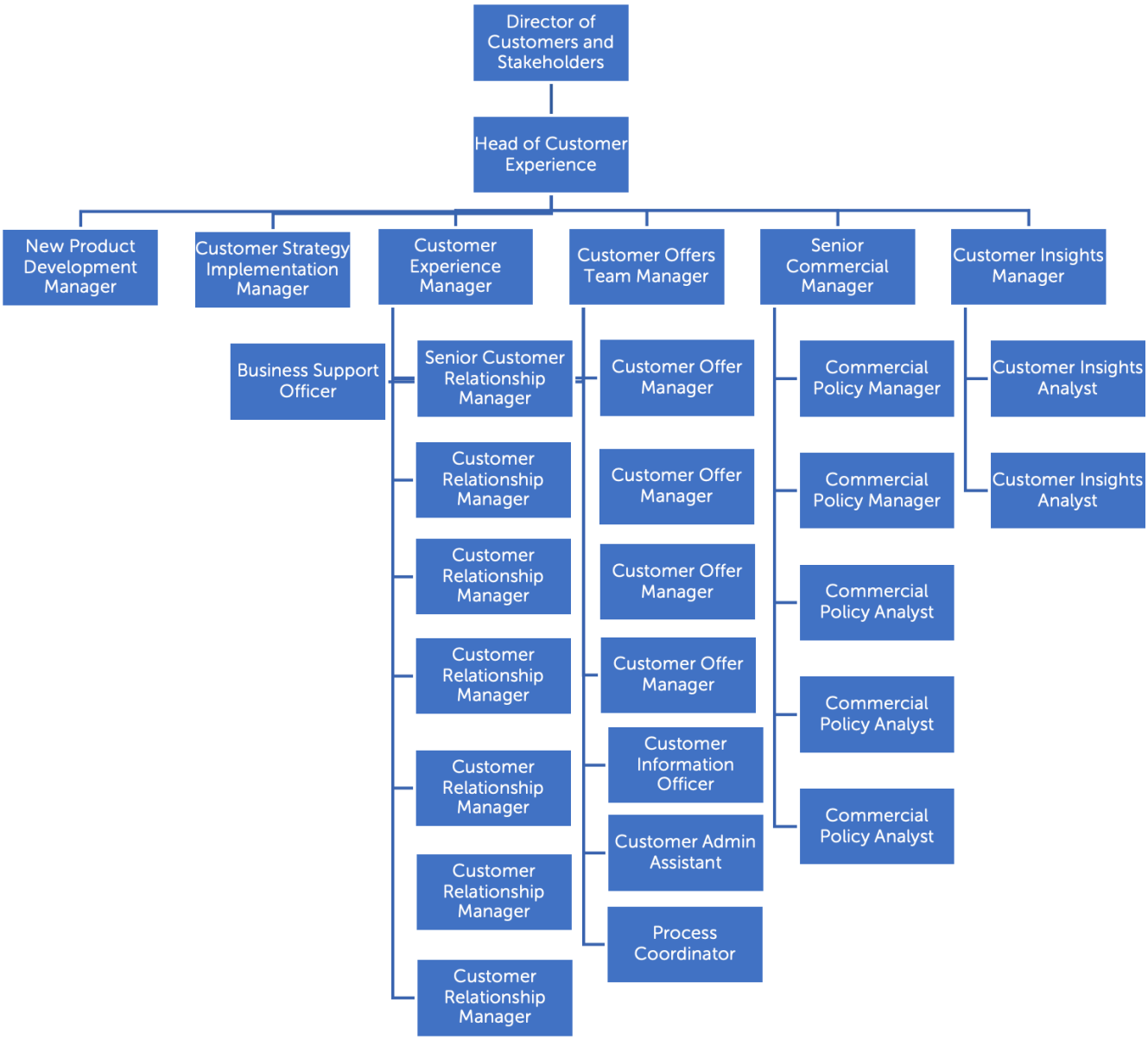
Quality of Connections survey

Introduced as part of our draft RIIO-T2 business plan and subsequently rolled-out by Ofgem across the Transmission Owners, this survey is a mechanism to measure and incentivise continuous improvement in customer service across the full project lifecycle. Our performance in these surveys and direct customer feedback is collated and analysed by our Customer Insights team and is already enabling us to understand customers' needs, poactively identifying improvements, continually updating and enhancing the insight we already hold.

Customer Segmentation

To inform our activities, we are strengthening our customer segmentation analysis. We recognise the scale and pace of change in this sector and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach but effective segmentation will enable us to efficiently:

- Tailor our pre and post connection services, facilitating the development of more progressive solutions and early identification of innovation opportunities specific to customer groups;
- Focus our engagement and advocacy, relevant to a particular customer and point in the customer journey; and
- Recognise when there are new customer types emerging which are not yet catered for under industry arrangements and proactively adapt.



Objective 2

Develop our customer centric culture and structure to ensure clarity, transparency and consistency of approach, building trusted and collaborative working relationships with our customers

Why?

With our strong delivery focused culture, we are well positioned to deliver the target customer experience. Many of the business objectives that drive this culture – delivery on time and on budget and our focus on efficiency and quality – align with customer expectations in delivery and operation of their projects. To enhance this further, we need our employees to include consideration of impacts on customers in all decision making.

How?

Strategy Communication and Engagement

This strategy provides the opportunity to engage colleagues across the business, embedding a culture of service excellence led by our Leadership team and modelled by all. This will enable us to refocus and align our understanding and approach, ensuring all employees across the business understand their role in delivering a transparent and consistent approach to all our customer engagements, no matter what stage of their journey they are at.

Structure

In Objective 1, we detailed the work we are undertaking to enhance our Customer Experience department, integrating teams to build an operating model with customers as its central focus. These teams, working closely and collaboratively with experts from across the business and with an extended remit to support customers through the life of a project, will enable us to strengthen and maintain collaborative and trusted working relationships. This customer centric focus will be further strengthened across the business, through our roles and responsibilities mapping and our standardisation exercises (outlined in Objective 3), which will ensure clarity of responsibility and consistency of approach across teams.

Competency Framework

As our business grows, it's vital that we ensure our employees have the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver consistently and to the highest standard. To support this and ensure a customer centric culture, we are developing a business-wide competency framework, which will include a customer-focus competency. With 'indicators' set appropriate to each role across the business, outlining what good looks like, this will embed a clear and consistent understanding of expectations. The framework will also allow us to set out learning and career paths, enabling ongoing development of customer centric skills.

Training

We are rolling out Service Impact training through the Institute of Customer Service and developing the associated training capabilities in-house, delivering training consistently and regularly across our business to ensure our customer engagement in all activities meets a high standard, and includes a focus on customer impact in actions and decision-making.

Quality of Connections

As set out in Objective 1, this survey is a mechanism to ensure continuous focus and improvement for customers. Recognising the value the insight brings from customers at both the pre and post connection stages, and the role it can play in driving and embedding our customer centric culture, regular cross-business review and improvement meetings have been introduced. This ensures that insight is shared for continuous improvement purposes, that there is clear ownership and accountability for each of the stages in the customer journey and for associated feedback and improvement actions.

Objective 3

Review and improve our internal processes to provide a clear, seamless and efficient service that meets the differing needs of our customers

Why?

Our pre and post connection processes need to be reviewed in light of the significant growth in scale and complexity of connection projects, and developed to ensure they can adapt with future changes and meet the needs of our evolving and diversifying customer base.

A clear understanding of how our processes can be improved also provides an opportunity to identify areas for efficiency and future automation, in turn allowing our teams to focus on value-add activities for customers.

How?

Re-mapping and development of updated process documentation

This exercise will enable us to clearly identify the steps and teams involved and to set out clear responsibilities and timeframes. Using this, in association with the customer segmentation analysis will allow us to identify areas where differing customer requirements need to be accommodated in our processes. In doing this, we can track performance, interdependencies and identify and specify protocols where issues may arise, providing a clear and consistent framework for employees involved to work towards. We will be continuing this work across our pre and post connection activities to ensure the full end to end journey is documented and regularly reviewed.

Improved information provision

We have recently introduced a new website. Having done this, we now aim to increase the information available to our customers, so that even before they have applied or had a pre-application call, they are able to access information which can make this earliest engagement more effective.

This information will also specify the processes through which an application will proceed and detail our role and that of National Grid ESO, with the obligations and responsibilities of each clearly set out, and how customers will interact with both parties at each stage of their journey. We will also outline our internal project gate process, which provides incremental delivery confidence and greater cost and timeline certainty, as the project progresses through refinement at each stage. As projects can impact the wider network, we will also set out:

- How costs are shared between the customer, other network users and the consumer;
- How statutory consenting processes and regulatory approvals can impact timelines; and
- How our activities within those processes seek to minimise that impact.

Standardisation

This will be developed both in our approach to customer engagement processes and technology and engineering design. Standardisation will deliver transparency and consistency across the development of connection offers and development and delivery of customer projects. Our Engineering, Delivery Operations and Development teams are in the process of developing a suite of standard designs and costings for technical and engineering solutions associated with twelve connection solution configurations.

Minimum Standards of Service

Informed by the customer insights research undertaken, and following process reviews over the last 12 months, we will define minimum standards of service for each stage of our customer journey in order to provide a consistent service across projects and across the business, ensuring we are meeting customers' expectations. The initial development phase is nearing completion and will be implemented over the next 12 months.

Objective 4

Proactively participate in industry change, advocating on behalf of our customers

Why?

Change is inevitable and the industry is currently in the midst of significant review of structure, markets, roles, codes and charging.

We need to ensure the services we provide are flexible and capable of moving with this inevitable change. But we must do this in a way that takes account of the adverse impacts that may come with it. By listening to our customers and using our data effectively, we can proactively engage across the industry, highlighting potential barriers to connection and impact on Net Zero targets.

How?

Structure

We are growing our Commercial Policy team, recognising the significant changes already set to impact customers over the period to 2030. Together with a closer alignment with our Customer Relationship Managers and with better access to data from our Customer Insights team, we can augment our policy development with a robust evidence-based approach. By integrating our teams in this way, we are better placed to inform and be informed by our customers and to move towards proactive policy development.

Regular and Targeted Engagement

By engaging regularly and proactively with customers, ensuring they are informed on industry proposals which may impact them, we will be able to understand and feedback customers' views on concerns or opportunities, into proposals or responses on change. It also enables us to communicate more widely, highlighting consequences not previously considered and to advocate for change on behalf of customers with BEIS, Ofgem, National Grid ESO and other stakeholders.

Working Collaboratively

By recognising our role in the achievement of Net Zero targets, we can adopt a pragmatic but collaborative approach to working with industry partners, ensuring we all keep in focus the key drivers (access to accelerated customer connections and Net Zero) when we are considering the proposed reforms required.

Objective 5

Implement new digital systems and tools, providing self-serve opportunities for customers and improved management of connections and projects throughout their lifecycle

Why?

Our business must ensure that the services it provides meet the need for increased pace and more data.

We also need to harness the efficiencies and consistency that can be achieved through process automation and elements of self-service, complementing our human customer interactions. This will deliver high-quality services, minimising manual processing and handovers between teams, creating capacity and resilience in our business, and enabling us to focus resources on more impactful change across the industry, as we all push towards a Net Zero future.

Customers have told us they want digital information platforms and tools to give them more control and oversight of their application, project design or outages, as well as systems which will connect with that of National Grid ESO. The benefits of this integration mean we are aligning approaches across the industry, making the process more accessible and consistent for customers, and delivering efficiencies through less manually intensive processes for our organisation. We can also leverage our systems data and insight to better serve and engage with customers and stakeholders and inform project development.

How?

Website

We have recently introduced a new SSEN Transmission website which will enable us to provide more information to customers via an easier to navigate, accessible platform. The website will provide a platform for future systems, be more secure and reliable, visually engaging, with improved user experience.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

Through the development of a CRM system and online portal, linking customer's application and project, we will provide capability for improved data recording, self-service elements, increase automation (key documentation, updates and tasks), and enable us to better inform customers, during their connection journey and after they are connected to our network.

System Automation

As part of the review of our end-to-end processes, outlined in objective 3, we will actively look for opportunities to automate elements of our processes, using our digital programme of work to enable and maximise these opportunities and their benefits for customers and our business.

Capacity Maps

We are working on data and analytics projects, with the aim of developing network capacity information provided at pre-connections stage, to empower customers by facilitating better informed conversations at earlier stages, with an associated reduction in people time in the pre-application stages.

13. Monitoring our progress

Our Customer Experience Strategy has reflected on the ambitions we set out for the RIIO-T2 period in our 2019 Commercial and Connections Policy and re-evaluated customer needs in the light of the growth of requirements for connecting low carbon generation to our network and the changing expectations of our current and future customers.

The target objectives we have outlined, and the initiatives to achieve these will be managed through an extensive programme of work, which is already underway and will be delivered throughout the RIIO-T2 period, with customers seeing the benefits these bring incrementally as initiatives are delivered.

To ensure successful delivery of this programme of work, we have established defined workstreams, with clear deliverables and will provide updates through our website as initiatives progress. In addition to monitoring effective and timely delivery of workstream initiatives, we will also monitor our progress on a continuous basis through:

Culture and Performance:

- Quality of Connections survey data and insight
- Feedback and insight received and requested directly by our teams, from internal or external parties
- Monitoring of complaints
- Delivery of action plans, resulting from insight gathered
- Training requirements, delivery and associated feedback
- Implementation of our Competency Framework
- Our performance against Minimum Standards of Service.
- The number of technical/engineering solution scope change requests received
- The number of costs changes post-design changes.

Advocacy:

- Key themes developing as a result of insight received
- Data to assess impacts of change on our customers
- Policy changes prioritised on the basis of assessed customer impact
- Our participation in industry events and work with industry to push for quick progress on key reforms
- Response/click rates where we publish informative policy development and advocacy materials.

Digital services

- Use of our website information, tracking increased use of this and activity on the site, gathering feedback and identifying and addressing gaps or areas for improvement
- Requests for information not currently on our website
- Progress with our IT and digital transformation programme
- Use of digital tools as they are rolled out
- Feedback received from customers.

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

SSEN TRANSMISSION AAIOOO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PERFORMANCE ADVANCED 2022

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