Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

T R A N S M I S S I O N

Our Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan

December 2019

About us

We are Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission (SHE Transmission), part of the SSE Group, responsible for the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland.

We operate under the name of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, together with our sister companies, Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution (SHEPD) and Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD), who operate the lower voltage distribution networks in the north of Scotland and central southern England.

As the Transmission Owner (TO) we maintain and invest in the high voltage 132kV, 220kV, 275kV and 400kV electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland. Our network consists of underground and subsea cables, overhead lines on wooden poles and steel towers, and electricity substations, extending over a quarter of the UK's land mass crossing some of its most challenging terrain.

We power 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 onwards distribution to homes and businesses in villages, towns and cities.
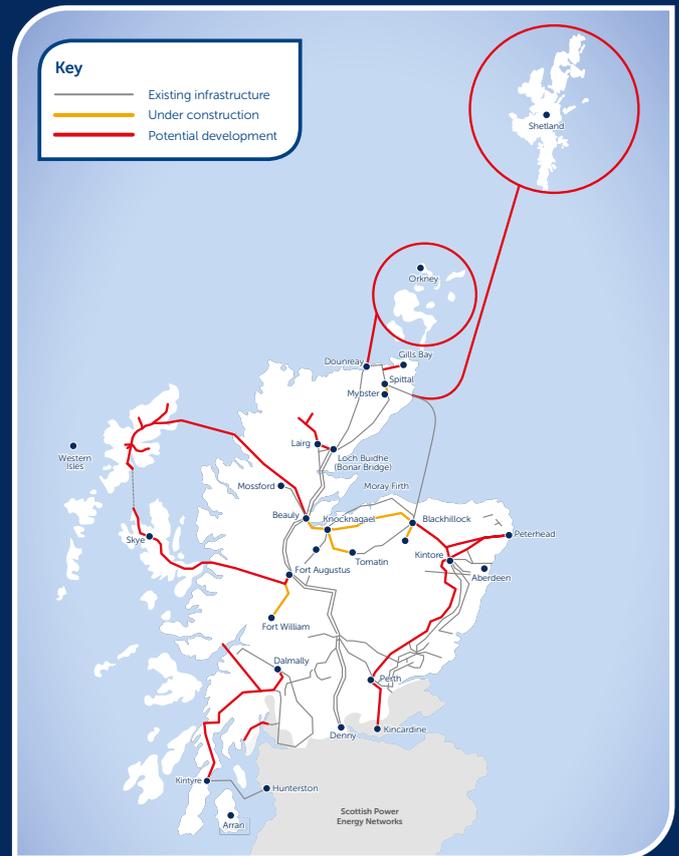

Figure 1: Our existing and (potential) future infrastructure

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Our Action Plan

To deliver our new Stakeholder Engagement Strategy we have created a plan of action.[1] This document provides high-level information on those actions to help demonstrate our commitment to achieving our ambition to be at the forefront of engagement practice and achieve real benefits for our stakeholders and society.

This document includes the actions we will take to deliver each objective in our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, as well as an example of activities we will do each year during RIIO-T2 to demonstrate how those actions will contribute to our engagement.

We have captured the cost of engagement (where available), as well as a high-level timeframe for completing each action so that you can hold us accountable. To support this and ensure we are being transparent, we will create an annual public Stakeholder Engagement Report to share our progress.

To ensure we create a significant and successful change that delivers real value to our stakeholders, they told us to trial any new improvement and assess the value of it before rolling it out entirely. As part of our annual report we will document what has and has not been successful, sharing any lessons learned where appropriate, and provide details on any resulting changes to our Action Plan based on that learning.

Our approach to stakeholder engagement and our Action Plan has been designed to meet the needs of our stakeholders and our relationship with them as the Transmission Owner for the north of Scotland. We have therefore taken a bespoke approach to stakeholder engagement to our sister companies, Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution (SHEPD) and Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD). However, we will continue to work closely with them when we are engaging with shared stakeholders.

Our approach is one of continuous development. To support that, this is a living document which you can directly influence by challenging and amending areas to increase its effectiveness. Please contact us if you would like to provide input on our proposed actions.

Information provided in response to this document may be used in future SHE Transmission documents. Responses will be generalised and not attributed to specific people. If you would prefer the information you provide to be confidential, please let us know.

This paper and an online comment form will be hosted on:
https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/informationcentre/industry-and-regulation/stakeholderengagement-strategy-review/

If you would like to post us your feedback, please send it to:
Sarah Dooley, Communications Policy Manager, SHE Transmission, 1 Waterloo Street, Glasgow, G2 6AY.

If you have any queries on this document, please get in touch with us at: **YourPlanOurFuture@sse.com**

[1] SHE Transmission Stakeholder Engagement Strategy; https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/media/3560/shet-stakeholder-engagement-strategy-final-document.pdf
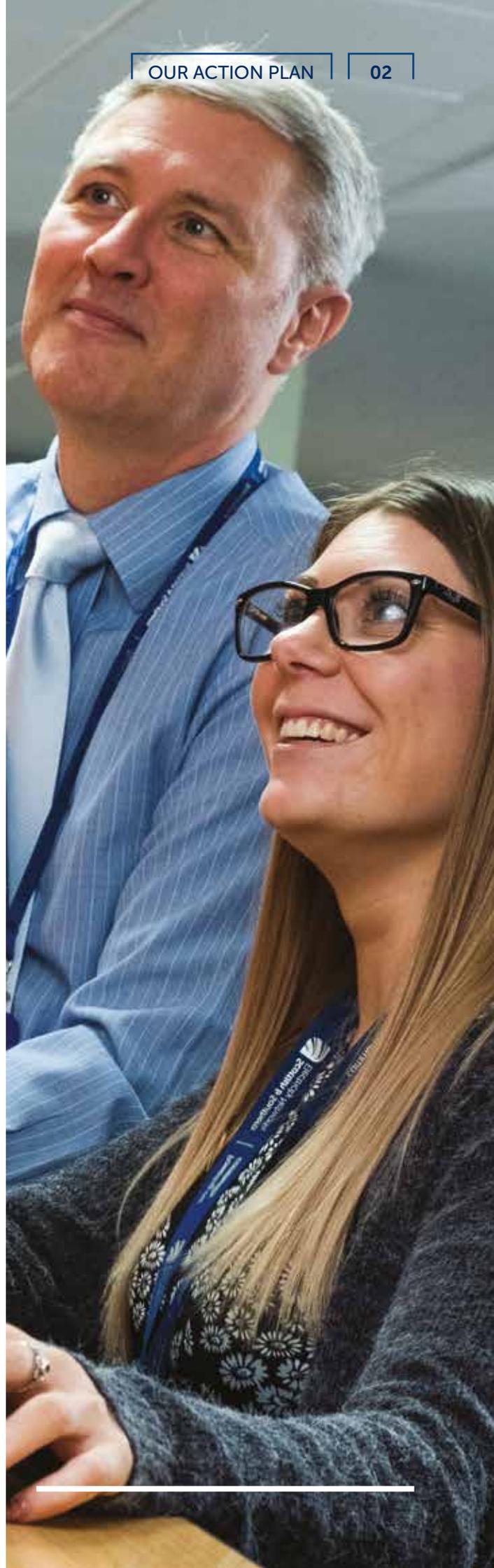
How the Action Plan was developed

To create our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, we analysed input from over 185 stakeholders, including consumer representatives such as Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland.

Their input provided insight into how we could change and what action we should take to improve our engagement with stakeholders. This input was critical to creating a plan of action.

To develop the plan, we held an open internal webinar within our business to raise awareness of our objectives and gather further input on what action we should take to deliver them. 27 employees attended this session and they identified further employees who would need to provide significant input. We then had 23 internal meetings to create specific actions.

A first draft of the plan (which included responsibilities for each action and target dates of completion) was issued for review to 19 targeted employees from each business area. We then held a peer review meeting to discuss any required changes.

We then developed that detailed plan into this Action Plan for our stakeholders. It has been designed as a living document and will be shared on our website, as it will always be open to stakeholder challenge and input. We will also continuously update it in line with best practice – both in our industry and further afield – through monitoring developments in the discipline, increasing our attendance at knowledge sharing sessions and reviewing our peers.

118 External stakeholders provided input on how we should improve our engagement

1 Deep dive session with our RIIO-T2 User Group to discuss key actions and content

27 Employees attended our open internal webinar to gather input to develop a plan

23 'One to one' meetings with targeted employees to create specific actions

14 Employees peer reviewed the plan including responsibilities and our ability to deliver it

"You have to start somewhere and then constantly review things. If something isn't working, drop it or find out why it isn't working."

Infrastructure/ engineering representative

1 Choosing the right objectives

Our first step in creating a new strategy was to engage with stakeholders to understand their needs. When engaging we were open to all stakeholders' suggestions, as it was important to not limit the opportunities for improvement. This stakeholder-led qualitative approach helped us determine the desired needs of our stakeholders. By considering trends in stakeholders' input, trade-offs between different stakeholder groups and assessing how we could act on their input in our role as the transmission owner of the North of Scotland, we identified three overarching outcomes desired by stakeholders:

- an improved experience when they engage with us;
- a culture within our business that values and encourages meaningful stakeholder engagement; and
- and an increased level of engagement in shaping the future.

By identifying these desired outcomes, we were able to create seven objectives that would enable us to deliver them.

2 Choosing the right actions

To achieve these objectives for our stakeholders we pulled together a detailed set of actions. These actions were developed by considering every suggestion or 'option' provided by both internal and external stakeholders. They were then assessed to ensure they were the most appropriate choice for our stakeholders. This assessment included the consideration of:

- Our current strengths and weaknesses in our stakeholder engagement to determine which action would generate the largest benefit;
- The cost of delivering the action and the potential benefit it would produce;
- The time we would need to realistically achieve it, including the steps we would need to take; and
- Our new organisational structure, specifically how responsibility and accountability has been distributed.

The actions in this document follow a practical structure of delivery that will enable us to build on the examples of best practice currently found within the business, whilst taking logical steps to improve the areas stakeholders have asked us to address.

4 Developing a time frame

Our plan has been designed in line with the price control periods as set by Ofgem. The completion for each action has been categorised as:

- Short term (by March 2021,the end of RIIO-T1);
- Medium term (by March 2023, the middle of RIIO-T2); and
- Long term (by March 2026, the end of RIIO-T2).

We have also included 'continuous improvement'. This highlights actions which we have already made significant progress on during RIIO-T1.

Whilst these will be considered as business as usual during RIIO-T2, we believe we can continue to improve upon them.

3 Calculating the cost and the benefits

Some of these actions have clear costs – for example paying an external company for a service – whilst others are captured through our business as usual funding such as resource costs. Whilst the full costs of our new stakeholder engagement approach have been submitted as part of our RIIO-T2 Business Plan, we have included in this document any costs which we are able to publicly share (for example those that are not commercially sensitive).

To create actions that align with our goal for efficiency, we assessed the costs and deliverability of the available options. To do this, we used stakeholder input, researched various options and researched the costs of the organisations who are leading in stakeholder engagement.

We have committed to work with stakeholders to develop a quantified Cost Benefit Analysis for stakeholder engagement, under objective 4. Consistent with our wider business strategy, we will aim to consider the full range of social, environmental and economic costs and benefits.

Our Stakeholder Engagement routine in RIIO-T2

Whilst the rest of this document will call out actions to implement each objective, the following page documents some of the activities we will carry out each year as part of our business as usual stakeholder engagement during the RIIO-T2 price control.

Each year it is important for us to plan, deliver and review our stakeholder engagement to ensure we maintain an up-to-date understanding of stakeholders' needs and ensure their views are captured and incorporated into the day-to-day operation of our business.

These activities are based on lessons learnt from RIIO-T1, such as our successful annual stakeholder event which provided significant input into our business plan; as well as our research into best practice which has prompted us to conduct the AccountAbility Health Check, a process highly recommended by other Transmission Owners.

These actions do not capture all the activity we will undertake each year. They have been selected to provide our stakeholders with an insight into how we carry out stakeholder engagement.

We are currently doing most of these activities now. The actions on the following pages will enable us to deliver the others, such as assessing connecting customers satisfaction.

All new measurements for RIIO-T2, including surveys, will be trialled to establish baselines in advance of full reporting.

Ensuring we have the right resource

Our approach to developing the new Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and the input we received from stakeholders give us confidence that we have created an approach that suits the needs of all our stakeholders including end consumers. To achieve this improved stakeholder engagement, we have learnt from RIIO-T1 and from best practice, and recognise that we need to increase our resource.

Before RIIO-T2 we will increase the number of employees within the Customer and Stakeholder Directorate to 30. This will enable us to deliver value through enhanced stakeholder engagement by effectively understanding and including the needs of our stakeholders in our current network planning, development and operations, and in planning for a decarbonised future.

We also recognise that resource is required in other departments to help meet stakeholder needs and these roles have been captured within the actions throughout this document.

Current process ⚏

New process for RIIO-T2 ⊕

Planned improvements through the Action Plan ⬈

Plan

Complete review of our stakeholders
We will run an internal workshop to review and update the data we hold on our stakeholders. This information will then be reviewed against our stakeholder management system to complete any gaps. This review will include identifying future consumers and hard to reach stakeholders to ensure they are included in our engagement activities. ⬈

Develop Engagement Plan for the year ahead with key stakeholders
We will assess upcoming business objectives and create supporting engagement plans for the year ahead. All engagement plans will then be captured in one over-arching plan which will highlight and address any conflicts or areas for consolidation. We will then contact key stakeholders (including our 'new RIIO-T2 Implementation Group') to: engage on our business objectives and proposals; develop our understanding of their priorities; and agree a suitable programme of engagement for the year ahead. ⬈

Create an Internal Communications Plan
We will review our business priorities and objectives, and design a supporting plan that increases employees' internal knowledge. ⚏

Deliver

Conduct our annual stakeholder event
We will hold at least one annual event to gather stakeholders' input on our proposed business priorities and policy developments, so they can influence our plans and policy positions. ⚏

Conduct our annual stakeholder roadshows to discuss our programme of works
We will travel across our affected regions to share with stakeholders our plans for the network. This will provide opportunities to collect their input and establish a plan for further engagement. ⬈

Proactively share learning from all innovation projects
We will continue to attend forums such as the ENA and proactively raise any lessons learnt from our innovation activities. ⬈

Gather Real-time information on stakeholders wants and needs
We will build intelligence on our key stakeholders. For example, we will follow them on social media and conduct desk-based research such as analysing their financial reports. ⬈

Work with our 'new RIIO-T2 Implementation Group'
We will work with our new RIIO-T2 Implementation Group throughout the year to gain their insight into proposed action, decision making and delivery. ⬈

Review

Assess connecting customers satisfaction
We will assess connecting customers satisfaction at key stages in the life cycle of their connection journey with us. This will be done via our Quality of Connections survey. ⊕

Assess stakeholder's satisfaction who have been impacted by new transmission infrastructure
We will continue to work with impacted stakeholders and conduct primary research to assess their level of satisfaction on the quality of their engagement experience. This will be done through an annual survey as well as mini surveys provided at the end of engagement activities such as consultation events. ⬈

Assess wider stakeholder satisfaction
We will carry out an annual stakeholder satisfaction survey to gather input from stakeholders not captured in the two activities above. This will assess the quality of engagement they experienced from us on areas such as policy changes and business planning. ⬈

Track accessibility of information we currently provide and identify any issues
We will work with external specialists to review our website and assess us against accessibility and inclusiveness. We will also assess all public documents against free online tools such as WebFX 'Readability Test Tool'. ⊕

Conduct external assurance
We will work with external specialists Accountability to annually conduct the AA1000 Health Check. ⬈

Continuous improvement
We will continue to engage with the business and our stakeholders to analyse and review new initiatives that we trial and incorporate successful activities into business as usual, such as our 3D modelling as trialled on the Orkney project. ⚏

Costs

Our website is a key channel for stakeholders to access ourselves and our information. Using stakeholder input we have created a plan to improve several elements of it, such as creating a new live capacity map which uses real-time data to display the status of our network. The estimated total costs to deliver the upgrades to our website are around £1.6m.

Within this Action Plan we have captured the requirement for consultancy support to deliver various actions. We have costed this at around £50k per year.

Other costs to deliver these actions are included in our business as usual (ie employee resource) and captured in our Total Expenditure.

Actions to deliver Objective 1

Enable and encourage stakeholder input by providing easy access to ourselves and appropriate information as well as ensuring our communications are inclusive.

To increase engagement with end consumers (particularly future consumers) we will become more inclusive and share more information in an accessible manner. Stakeholders agreed with this approach.

They told us to be mindful of our stakeholders and tailor what we share and how to suit their needs. For example, people told us to use social media more to promote positive news such as our efforts to reduce carbon emissions, which would interest younger consumers. Whilst a new live 'capacity availability map' would provide connecting customers with the information they need to succeed.

We know from our engagement with stakeholders that they want us to use simpler language in our publications. To address this, we have looked to best practice to develop methods for improving, such as using free online tools to assess and improve our documents readability before publishing them.

Online channels can make us more accessible to hard to reach stakeholders. By improving peoples' access to our website through online search engines and posting information on social media, we will improve stakeholders' experience when looking for information.

"The target should be that no one goes away feeling that they have been passed on to someone else. The first contact needs to keep ownership till the correct relationship has been established with the other part of SSEN where appropriate."
End consumer

"You could share your successes and promote your good news stories on social media."
Infrastructure/ engineering representative

"I am sometimes unsure what information I can and can't share when it comes to these large-scale Transmission projects, who's doing what, when is it going to come and who's impacted? Better Internal Communications would help"
Internal Employee

Actions		Reporting	When
Provide easy access to ourselves	**1.1 Provide open information on our organisation structure and teams responsibilities** Create an area on our website that summarises each teams' responsibilities including who to contact regarding specific topics.	Completion status	Short term
	1.2 Help stakeholders self-select areas of interest, knowledge and engagement approach Develop sign-up lists and surveys to enable stakeholders to self-select areas of interest, level of knowledge, and desired engagement including when and how we interact with them.	Completion status	Medium term
	1.3 Work with SSEN Distribution to improve how we engage with shared stakeholders We will use one system to capture stakeholder information to help us identify common stakeholders.[2] We will also develop a new collaboration agreement with supporting processes so stakeholders can quickly and easily get access to the correct information.	Completion status	Medium term
Provide easy access to appropriate information	**1.4 Create a live 'capacity availability map' on our website** We will work with external specialists to engineer and implement the map, as well as working with them to create an automated process/system to gather live data such as capacity on the network and curtailment information.	Completion status	Long term
	1.5 Create a new online portal though our website for connecting customers We will assess the requirements of delivering an online portal including information, resource, system requirements and work with external specialists to engineer and implement the online portal.	Completion status	Long term
	1.6 Include the use of social media into our engagement plan We will include details on when and what we will post on social media in our engagement plan, moving away from our current ad-hoc process.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	1.7 Improve internal knowledge We will create internal engagement plans to improve knowledge on responsibilities, active and upcoming projects, external updates etc. This will be supported through the development of an 'engagement tool-kit' with guidance on why, when and how to engage. We will also provide employees with the tools and training to find information to answer stakeholder queries.	Monitoring progress	Short term
	1.8 Improve our website and access to it We will continue to review and update our website's capability and the information on it. For example, we will improve the website so it can support our Environmental Impact Assessments. We will work with external specialists to improve its accessibility, including applying the 'Recite Me' tool. We will also increase our search engine optimisation so people can easily find information.	Monitoring progress	Medium term
Ensure our communications are inclusive	**1.9 Provide communications in different languages as appropriate** We will provide information in different languages when engaging with stakeholders where English is not their native language, for example some Scottish communities still use Scottish Gaelic.	Monitoring progress	Medium term
	1.10 Ensure all engagement activities meet current and future stakeholders' needs We will continue to, and improve, our use of communication tools/aids to increase inclusiveness of both our published communications and at our events. This will include using free tools to create public documents with high readability scores for the average GB adult, adopting the Scottish Governments' principles of communication support needs, and working with organisations who can identify vulnerable consumers and communication support needs in areas where we will have an impact.[3]	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement

[2] Tractivity is our new stakeholder engagement management system which is used to store and manage stakeholder information including activity, stakeholder feedback and our associated actions.
[3] https://www.gov.scot/publications/principles-inclusive-communication-information-self-assessment-tool-public-authorities/pages/1/

Actions to deliver Objective 2

Build intelligence on stakeholders' needs so we can make balanced and fair decisions which anticipate and meets their needs.

Each stakeholder group has different needs and requirements. If we can develop an early understanding of those needs, we will have a better chance to meet them. People agreed with this and were quick to highlight that stakeholders' needs often change, therefore maintaining a relationship with stakeholders is crucial.

Over the past 18 months stakeholders have been pleased to see us working with others to develop a better understanding of our stakeholders, and creating plans based on that understanding. They recognised that it is impossible for any company to take into consideration, and act upon, the views of all its stakeholders, including consumers. Therefore they encouraged us to continue working with representative groups such as Citizens Advice.

They also highlighted that gathering knowledge is only beneficial if that knowledge is used. They stressed that we should avoid engaging with stakeholders unless we are prepared to take it into consideration and act upon it.

Stakeholders have previously commented that sometimes we can be reactive and use existing processes as reasons for not adapting. Whilst objective 7 tackles this in detail, we want to develop a strong innovative culture that encourages employees to anticipate and meet stakeholders' needs.

"Increasing the level of insight into SHE Transmission's engagement is the right thing to do. Working collaboratively is the best way to do this. However, we need to know what everyone's aim is in order to enable us to work collaboratively."
Infrastructure/ engineering representative

"What about training stakeholders in how they can influence the system? We ran workshops on what people could object to and what we could deliver. It was very successful as it reduced people's expectations of what they could object to and what they could stop."
Community Council

"We track our key stakeholders and influencers on social media and post back because that's our horizon scanning, anticipating what's going to come up from stakeholders."
Anonymous feedback

Costs

So that we can meet our stakeholder needs we need to understand them. Therefore, we have included activities such as research and attending events which has been costed at around £126k per year.

To use our new Tractivity system we need to pay for licenses, this is costed around £30k per year.

Setting up and working with a RIIO-T2 Implementation Group will require funding to cover items such as resource costs, travel, meeting rooms etc. Based on the costs from our existing User Group we have costed this at £105k per year.

To share information and gain insight into our stakeholders needs, we will need to go to our stakeholders and work with them, for example working with schools and colleges. We have costed this at around £110k per year.

Working with partners to deliver benefits for our stakeholders requires funding for items such as shared research costs, development of public material such as communication campaigns, and potentially the loan of equipment. Because of this, we have budgeted around £100k per year.

Actions		Reporting	When
Build intelligence on stakeholders' needs	**2.1 Identify future and hard to reach stakeholders** We will analyse and explore what the future might look like to help us identify future and hard to reach stakeholders, such as new consumers, energy innovators and potential collaborators.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	2.2 Ensure our key stakeholders have a dedicated contact within our business Using Tractivity we will formally document in one location all relationship owners within our business. Employees will consult with these owners prior to engaging with that stakeholder to ensure consistency. The relationship owner will also be responsible for maintaining and sharing knowledge on those stakeholders within our business.	Monitoring progress	Short term
	2.3 Carry out knowledge sharing sessions with targeted stakeholders We will develop these sessions (which was trialled in RIIO-T1) into business as usual, creating guidance so that all teams can use this method to work effectively with external stakeholders. This will help us all to understand each other's needs and how to influence plans.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	2.4 Establish a new external RIIO-T2 Implementation Group We will develop a new external group who will substitute our current User Group. They will represent our stakeholders and help us further understand our stakeholders needs. We will develop supporting Terms of Reference and guidance for this group.	Completion status	Short term
Make balanced and fair decisions	**2.5 Formalise partnerships** We will review our current and future initiatives, and research who we can partner with to help us meet our stakeholders needs, for example in areas such as whole-system, vulnerable consumers and innovation. We will also continue to work with groups who represent our stakeholders. We will formally capture, log and maintain all relevant information, including agreed methods of collaboration and formal processes.	Monitoring progress	Short term
	2.6 Develop and use one consistent process for assessing our impact on stakeholders We will create one consistent Stakeholder Impact Assessment (with supporting guidance on when and how this assessment is conducted) for identifying impacted stakeholders, their needs and engagement preferences. We will then work with external specialists to review our processes and highlight where the Stakeholder Impact Assessment is required.	Completion status	Medium term
	2.7 Formally include our impact on stakeholders in decision-making processes We will build the Stakeholder Impact Assessment into our approval processes which inform the decision making of the Executive Committee and Board. This will ensure material decisions, which require significant consideration of stakeholders' needs and wants, are consistent and formally captured in the appropriate documentation.	Completion status	Long term
	2.8 Develop one consistent complaints procedure for all our business We will review the various methods within the business and establish one process for stakeholders to raise a complaint with a supporting system that can be used by all departments in the business. This will include the process for reviewing the complaints/ feedback from stakeholders and how to improve.	Completion status	Medium term
Anticipate and meet stakeholders' needs	**2.9 Improve current, and develop new, research and feedback capabilities** We will do a comprehensive review of our current research methods and work with specialists to determine what information we are missing and identify the most effective way to close the gap. This may include social media, primary research, publicly available information and 3rd party research.	Completion status	Medium term
	2.10 We will encourage innovative thinking to meet stakeholders' needs We will empower employees to remove blockers and create new solutions to meet stakeholders' needs, openly celebrating those who achieve this. This will tie in with, and support, the development of a strong innovation culture.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement

Actions to deliver Objective 3

Work with stakeholders in our planning and delivery, and strive to achieve mutually acceptable and agreed outcomes.

Working more collaboratively is a challenge for many organisations. A reoccurring barrier is a lack of understanding. We heard from several stakeholders that knowledge sharing events are an effective way of combating this. We know from our own experience during the current price control that these activities are beneficial, as they enable both parties to understand and work more closely with each other. Stakeholders particularly supported our suggestion to co-create engagement plans with stakeholders.

In order to achieve mutually acceptable and agreed outcomes we need to assess our methods of engagement and the outcomes they help achieve. For RIIO-T2 we have decided to tailor our research into stakeholder satisfaction by stakeholder type. As each stakeholder group has different experiences people told us to tailor these assessments to gather meaningful input that can be acted upon.

It is important to note that the actions created to achieve the earlier objectives, will enable us to achieve this objective. For example, by understanding stakeholders needs we will understand what is required to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes.

Costs

To ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to input into our business, we will deliver stakeholder roadshows, an annual stakeholder event and engagement workshops. These have been costed around £365k per year. This includes costs such as the production of inclusive material, location costs, external facilitators etc.

We need impartial external specialists to help us capture stakeholder satisfaction and conduct assurance. To support this, we will create public transparent reports to share that information as well as our progress against our commitments. These have been costed around £85k per year.

All costs required to deliver stakeholder engagement within a project, for example consultation activities, are captured within the project's funding.

"The key thing is appropriate engagement. You may do lots of it, but it may not be appropriate or productive. You have a lot of projects and there are many times that we don't need to be engaged."
Government/ government body representative

"Build more trust by being more open about what things can be changed and what can't be changed. Don't build false hope. Be clear about the restrictions you have to work to and explain why."
Community Council

"Investigate a way of consulting with all statutory consultees such as SNH, SEPA, the Forestry Commission and Historic Environment at the same time when consulting on a particular case."
Statutory consultee

Actions		Reporting	When
Work with stakeholders in our planning and delivery	**3.1 Share information on our full programme of work** We will ensure engagement activities include supporting information on our full programme of works. This will help our stakeholders: explore potential impacts at a programme level; understand the interaction between projects and our overall business strategy; and develop their understanding so they can provide more informed input.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	3.2 Update our Project Planning templates to formally include engagement activities We will update our internal standard templates used for planning, including but not limited to our 'High-Level Project Plans' and 'Discipline Activities', to formally capture and prompt engagement periods.	Completion status	Continuous improvement
	3.3 Collaborate with key stakeholders on plans and supporting engagement plans We currently work with targeted stakeholders to co-create construction project plans. We will build upon this to increase the range of plans co-created and include the co-creation of supporting engagement plans. We will also increase the range of stakeholders involved.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
Strive to achieve mutually acceptable and agreed outcomes	**3.4 Create opportunities for impacted stakeholders to come together at the same time to openly discuss decisions** We will facilitate open forums (either digital or physical) when making key decisions that will impact on a group of stakeholders. This will help stakeholders to understand the impact of choices on each other, enabling constructive and meaningful debate on the options. Guidance and support for running these events will be developed.	Monitoring progress	Short term
	3.5 Create information sharing opportunities prior to consultation activities We will create opportunities to share information between all parties prior to consultation events and/ or meetings, so stakeholders can develop their knowledge before engaging in key discussions. This will help stakeholders understand what can and can't be changed. We will work with stakeholders to determine the most appropriate way of doing this.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	3.6 Build the new Stakeholder Impact Assessment into a project's life cycle We will create and implement a process so that the Stakeholder Impact Assessment is used throughout the life-cycle of a project. This will ensure information on stakeholders are kept up-to-date and at the forefront on the project's decision-making process.	Completion status	Medium term
	3.7 Implement a new Quality of Connections survey We will continue working with Ofgem and other TO's to develop a methodology for surveying connecting customers satisfaction, including common measurement points and key themes around assessing the improvement of the service we provide. This will enable us to complete the activity described on page 6.	Completion status	Short term
	3.8 Update our stakeholder satisfaction survey We will work with external specialists to implement two separate surveys to assess stakeholders' satisfaction on our engagement with them. The first will target stakeholders who are impacted by new transmission infrastructure. The second will target stakeholders who will not participate in either the Impacted by Infrastructure survey or the the Quality of Connections survey. This will enable us to complete the activity describe on page 6.	Completion status	Continuous improvement
	3.9 Introduce new methods to assess stakeholder's satisfaction We will work with external specialists to develop a quick and easy way for our stakeholders to feedback quantitative and qualitative input after large engagement events such as town halls and large workshops. This will include developing a method that will meet peoples' various communication support needs. This will enable us to complete the activity described on page 6.	Completion status	Continuous improvement

Actions to deliver Objective 4

Develop consistent and transparent processes to capture, act on, discuss and feedback on stakeholder input.

We have repeatedly heard that some of our teams are excellent at stakeholder engagement, and that we must develop consistency to build this level of satisfaction across the business.

Stakeholders highlighted that processes for mapping impacted stakeholders, using gathered input and making decisions to address conflicting stakeholders' needs are crucial to developing that consistency.

Stakeholders also suggested that we improve how we provide feedback. They noted that one form of engaging is not appropriate for everyone and employees need help determining how to do this. During our engagement on this strategy we heard from various stakeholders who each had their own preference. Gathering this information from stakeholders will be built into the process.

Stakeholders such as consumer representatives and regulators are keen to see us use a form of cost benefit analysis to plan our engagement and report on its success.

The need to report on our activity is crucial as stakeholders are rightly demanding transparency. We have developed actions so that we are accountable for this and can provide clear information to our stakeholders.

Costs

Costs for Tractivity and AccountAbility have been captured elsewhere in this document. Other costs for delivering these actions are captured in our Total Expenditure, such as the cost of employees.

"Know who the meaningful stakeholders are because the potential universe is so huge... Identify the influencers and who can collaborate and help you."
Stakeholder Advisory Panel

"It would not necessarily be useful for people to receive an email saying 'Here is the draft report. Take a look and give me a call if you have any issues', because this approach would be too broad. You need to seek ways to get more targeted feedback instead."
Business representative

"It shouldn't be too prescriptive. It has to be more flexible, human, talking, ie not numbers and box ticking."
Infrastructure/ engineering representative

Actions		Reporting	When
Processes to capture and act on stakeholder input	**4.1 Update all processes, work instructions and governance to include new principles of engagement** We will ensure the Communications Policy Manager is added to the review list for all process document updates during their review cycle. This will ensure stakeholder engagement is captured in all processes.	Monitoring progress	Long term
	4.2 Expand our use of Tractivity, our new stakeholder engagement management system We will develop an internal working group with representatives from each business area to agree how we can increase the effective use of Tractivity across the business as it is currently only used by the stakeholder engagement team.	Completion status	Short term
	4.3 Create one consistent process to map impacted stakeholders We will develop one consistent method based on best practice and incorporate it into our new Stakeholder Impact Assessment. We will also develop guidance on identifying the strategic purpose and requirement of stakeholder engagement, to help employees engage with those impacted stakeholders.	Completion status	Continuous improvement
	4.4 Develop a methodical decision process to act on conflicting stakeholder input We will develop a process for determining stakeholders' level of influence that can be applied to each construction and business project. This will include creating a scale of priority that will allow us to weight and balance competing demands.	Completion status	Medium term
	4.5 Provide information requested by stakeholders which is currently unavailable We will develop a consistent process to review incoming information requests (such as estimated connection costs and future projects) and where possible, remove the barriers to releasing that information.	Completion status	Medium term
Processes to discuss input with stakeholders and provide feedback	**4.6 Develop guidance on when and how to provide feedback to stakeholders** We will create a decision tree to help employees consistently choose the right method and level of feedback to provide. This will lay out all the options and the consequences of each decision ie the cost and benefit of providing individual feedback against creating a wider report. This will be rolled out across the business and included in our tool kit (action 5.7).	Completion status	Medium term
	4.7 Develop Cost Benefits Analysis process for stakeholder engagement We will research, test and build models to help us choose the most beneficial method of engagement. We are aiming to utilise the full range of social, environmental and economic costs and benefits, including intangible effects from a decision such as stakeholder satisfaction.	Completion status	Long term
	4.8 Conduct our first health check and strive to improve each year We will carry out the AccountAbility Health Check against the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard. This will be completed in 2020 and will provide the bench mark for improvement in the coming years as described on page 6. Our aim is to reach Mature Stage with a score over 76% by the end of the RIIO-T2 price control.	Monitoring progress	Long term
	4.9 Develop KPIs for the actions in this document We will develop Key Performance Indicators specifically on our engagement activities based on the actions within this document. We will report on them each year in our annual Stakeholder Engagement Report. These will be regularly updated to reflect progress in our continuous improvement, and any changes in our stakeholders needs.	Monitoring progress	Short term

Costs

All new roles captured within this document have been factored into our business as usual costs captured within our Total Expenditure. Some of these roles will be filled before the start of RIIO-T2 to ensure we can deliver benefits as soon as possible for our stakeholders.

Our Sustainable Workforce Strategy and supporting Action Plan covers the cost for training our people. The increased costs for stakeholder engagement training is factored into that budget to ensure our people are fully equipped and comfortable to deliver consistent, high quality engagement.

Actions to deliver Objective 5

Develop a culture of engagement by implementing a training programme for our employees and ensuring accountability through clear roles and responsibilities.

Stakeholders told us that we need to ensure our employees have clear roles and responsibilities and receive communications on:

- the benefits of stakeholder engagement so that they understand why we are working to improve;
- the details in the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy so that they understand what we are trying to achieve; and
- the Action Plan so that they understand how our business is changing and what is expected of them.

The information we have gathered from internal and external stakeholders, and our review of best practice, has also highlighted the need to provide training on the following:

- principles of communication support needs and how to meet them to ensure inclusiveness;
- how to identify and help vulnerable consumers;
- principles of consensus decision making and how to work towards mutually acceptable outcomes;
- customer service training; and
- conflict management so they can carry out productive discussions on difficult topics.

All these activities and more are addressed on the following page, and all are aligned with our new Workforce Strategy, "Growing our Business; Growing our People".[4]

"The leadership team need to be considerate regarding employee mistakes, which are likely to happen as they begin to engage more. It's a natural part of change and learning."
User Group

"It has to be driven from the top. Leadership has to take a role; that's a real challenge... You need to have smart objectives: how do you measure it? How do you measure progress?"
Developer/ connections representative

"To be honest, I find it really hard. Stakeholder engagement requires a different skill set that I don't possess."
Internal employee

[4] https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/riio-t2-plan/sustainable-workforce-strategy/

Actions		Reporting	When
Ensure accountability through clear roles and responsibilities	**5.1 Recruit for new roles within the new Customer and Stakeholder Directorate** We will continue to recruit for the new roles which have been created in the new Customer and Stakeholder Directorate. These roles will help deliver the new strategy and improve our stakeholder engagement within the business.	Completion status	Short term
	5.2 Ensure clear responsibility for stakeholder engagement is assigned in our business We will map out all existing and new stakeholder engagement activities/ processes within the business in line with action 2.6. We will then ensure clear responsibility is assigned to the appropriate roles, updating all role profiles within the business as required.	Completion status	Long term
	5.3 Ensure one objective related to stakeholder engagement is included in all employees' yearly Performance Review We will communicate with all line managers and provide guidance prior to the start of SSE's performance management cycle in February.	Completion status	Short term
Develop a culture of engagement	**5.4 Deliver an internal communications campaign to raise awareness and buy in on our new strategy** We will deliver a campaign designed to empower employees that will incorporate the training and tools being developed as part of this plan. It will include the clear expectations for how we engage and opportunities to discuss the outcome of the engagement.	Monitoring progress	Short term
	5.5 Create consistent and common habits in our business We will introduce new opportunities into our routine to help develop the desired behaviours such as introducing mandatory stakeholder engagement questions into team meetings ie who did employees engage with, what was the outcome, what engagement is planned for the following week.	Monitoring progress	Long term
Implement a training programme for our employees stakeholders' needs	**5.6 Deliver required training across the business** We will undertake a Training Needs Assessment, identifying and documenting the training courses each role in our business is required to complete to be able to successfully engage with stakeholders. We will create a roll-out schedule and deliver the training across the business.	Completion status	Medium term
	5.7 Enhance our Senior Managers' understanding of engagement benefits and their ability to engage We will continue to develop our senior management and provide them with external coaching on stakeholder engagement and influencing change so that their actions/ behaviours are consistent.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	5.8 Coach our employees before they engage with stakeholders We will continue to build on our internal pre-engagement knowledge sharing sessions before all external consultations and events. This will ensure employees are fully informed prior to engaging so that they feel confident sharing information.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	5.9 Update our induction process for new employees to include our new strategy We will review the induction process and include awareness raising activities as well as any required standard training highlighted in the training needs assessment.	Completion status	Short term

Costs

To support action 6.8 we are currently developing a method to openly share specific operational challenges on an external platform. This will enable suppliers to provide innovative solutions, through external government funding, in partnership with our business.

Other costs for delivering these actions are either captured in the previous pages, for example the costs to attend events or, are captured within our Total Expenditure, such as the cost of employees.

Actions to deliver Objective 6

Develop future optionality with input from a diverse group of stakeholders.

Developing an understanding of what the future might look like, including future consumers' needs and stakeholders' long term expectations, will enable us to plan and prepare for the future.

During the discussions on this objective in the consultation, stakeholders made the point that we should engage at the earliest opportunity. They stressed that early engagement with the right stakeholders will enable us to make long-term decisions that will be supported by our wider stakeholders.

They highlighted that we need to engage with the right stakeholders, as early engagement can set unrealistic expectations and create significant challenges which would prevent us from meeting the needs of our end consumers. People are also keen to see us working with others in this area, as we are only one element that delivers for the public. They want to see companies and organisations working together to develop options that are in the interest of the public rather than self-serving.

Engaging with future consumers will be essential to our forward planning. Our engagement with this group will be carried out through partnerships with schools, colleges and universities; as well as specifically targeting younger audiences via social media and online engagement.

It is important to note that actions created to achieve the earlier objectives, will enable us to achieve this objective. For example, by working with partners who represent end consumers we will be able to gain a better understanding of their views and develop a future that will meet their needs.

"I think that one thing that should be done in this area is engaging with Citizen's Advice Scotland and the Institute of Customer Service."
Infrastructure/ engineering representative

"The new National Planning Framework (NPF) that will incorporate revised Scottish Planning Policies will play a huge role in your operations going forward, so you need to consider that. All the strategies need to be joined up at a national level, so that everything connects together harmoniously."
Local authority representative

"This engagement can be an opportunity for you to create an open and honest dialogue with stakeholders and enhance collaboration opportunities, which is key."
Government/ government body representative

Actions		Reporting	When
Exploring future options	**6.1 Develop engagement plan for North of Scotland Future Energy Scenarios** We will identify who, how, why and when we engage with people to develop our knowledge on potential futures specific to our area and business. Engagement activities will include but are not limited to running workshops, holding bi-laterals, and conducting primary research.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	6.2 Engage with stakeholders to support the development of their future scenarios We will pro-actively identify and engage with stakeholders who are looking into future scenarios including other network owners and operators, councils and academics. We will offer our input and participate in their engagement activities where appropriate.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	6.3 Establish consistent analysis and exploration of what the future might look like We will investigate best practice for 'horizon scanning' in our industry (including examples from within our own business) and implement an approach that is consistent across the business. This will include how we engage with stakeholders such as academics, government, consumers etc. on topics such as the future of consumer use, long-term business planning, and the future of the network.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	6.4 Review how we can build further stakeholder input into the options we present to National Grid for the annual Network Options Assessment We will analyse and review how we can engage earlier with targeted stakeholders, to better understand the potential difficulties and benefits of options put forward to National Grid for the annual Network Options Assessment, this may include gathering input at our regional roadshows, our annual event and bi-laterals.	Completion status	Continuous improvement
Developing future solutions	**6.5 Increase stakeholder input into our Innovation Strategy** We will review, collaborate and consult on, and publish our Innovation strategy and the supporting funding model bi-annually to ensure alignment with energy systems transition and updates from Ofgem and the industry.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	6.6 Increase the number of opportunities for innovation we openly share We will develop a process for highlighting challenges and initiating innovation, which we will communicate and promote through line management. We will then share these challenges openly via websites, partnerships and open reports to seek technical advice.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	6.7 Recruit a Whole System Manager and Senior Whole System Planning Engineer We will employ two additional people who will work and collaborate with stakeholders in areas including heat, network capacity services, transport, etc to develop and deliver a network that delivers benefits to the wider GB society.[5]	Completion status	Short term
	6.8 Support the development of Local Area Energy Plans and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies in the north of Scotland We will work with local and community energy customers, and local authorities by providing support where appropriate to their contribution to the transition to a net zero economy. This will factor into our Whole-system planning. To do this we will provide access to experts, and develop a framework for engagement and investment planning.[6]	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
	6.9 Enable connecting customers co-location and collaboration We will work with our connecting customers to facilitate engagement between them. We will encourage and enable them to work together and share information between themselves. This will be built into our applicant process.	Completion status	Medium term

[5] https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/riio-t2-plan/enabling-whole-energy-system-outcomes-policy/
[6] https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/riio-t2-plan/local-energy-area-plans-community-energy/

Costs

Our Regulatory Framework - Outputs, Incentives and Innovation paper covers the funding for our innovation projects.[7] Each individual project will include the costs for stakeholder engagement in its specific funding.

Other costs for delivering these actions are either captured in the previous pages or, within our Total Expenditure.

Actions to deliver Objective 7

Actively participate in industry change as a committed advocate for customers, society and the environment.

To manage change effectively, impacted stakeholders need to understand the requirements for that change and the implications. People have told us that they struggle to get sight of upcoming changes in the industry and understand the implications it will have on them. This is an area which we can provide support with, an ambition which was supported by our stakeholders.

Stakeholders also thought that we should do more to engage with decision-makers at all tiers of Government, as well as with Ofgem and the Electricity System Operator (ESO), in order to actively participate in industry change and advocate on their behalf. They want to see us working with Ofgem to change any rules that prevent us from going further on behalf of our stakeholders. We have included our action to create a queue management service for our connecting customers as an example of this, which we will be held accountable for.

Whilst people were keen for us to address change outside of our organisation, they stressed that we need to be better at changing our own processes and ways of working.

Actions throughout this document have been influenced by our Innovation strategy and have been designed to help deliver that strategy on behalf of our stakeholders. This is particularly evident in this objective.[8]

"In terms of some of the work that we're doing locally with energy projects, we need to understand how the network is changing over time and how communities can take advantage of decarbonisation opportunities."
Local authority representative

"You need to go where the demand is. The infrastructure needs to be in place, and you need to work more with Holyrood to inspire greater confidence."
Internal employee

"Early engagement would enable us to align our position and find a way that you could coordinate your lobbying efforts."
Business representative

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[7] https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/riio-t2-plan/regulatory-framework-outputs-incentives-and-innovation/
[8] https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/riio-t2-plan/innovation-strategy/

Actions	Reporting	When
7.1 Recruit a Business Development Manager This employee will be responsible for our new Policy Engagement Service, and for short-to-medium term horizon scanning. They will pro-actively engage with connecting customers and stakeholders on future policy issues and changes.	Completion status	Short term
7.2 Build upon our Policy Engagement Service We will increase capability through training and recruitment so we can take a more proactive approach to: gathering insight; providing stakeholders with up-to-date information; and engaging with them to get their input on required and upcoming changes.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
7.3 Ensure we have representation at industry forums and working groups We will review our representation at forums, panels, groups, etc. to ensure we have one representative where appropriate. For example, we are committed to continuing our presence at the Scottish Government's 'Scottish Energy Advisory Board'. These individuals will be responsible for attending events, gathering information and presenting our, and our stakeholders', views and opinions. This responsibility will be added to their objectives.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
7.4 Develop a process to analyse what change means for our business and our stakeholders We will develop a process to proactively anticipate, monitor and track industry change. This will include the development of a new inclusive Change Impact Assessment. This assessment will include the impact on our stakeholders including future consumers. To complete this assessment, we will work with stakeholders to ensure we all understand the potential impact.	Completion status	Medium term

Advocate for customers, society and the environment

Actions	Reporting	When
7.5 Encourage change in the industry through innovation We will start sharing information on our cost and benefits related to the Network Innovation Allowance (NIA) funding to the Energy Networks Association (ENA) and the public, in a joint effort to further improve in this area. We will also continue to collaborate with the ENA to help other companies adopt successful solutions by sharing knowledge and increasing understanding from our own lessons learnt.	Monitoring progress	Medium term
7.6 Encourage change in the industry through proactively providing input We will improve our awareness of upcoming changes through our horizon scanning (action 6.4) and proactively allocate business resource to engage early on upcoming industry changes. This will include providing input into early development stages as well as consultations.	Monitoring progress	Continuous improvement
7.7 Encourage and enable change within our business We will raise awareness of the new Innovation strategy and its processes to increase employees' participation in innovation. We will also develop a change request process for internal changes to processes and work instructions. Through these actions and those found within this document we will create a culture of strong innovation.	Monitoring progress	Medium term
7.8 Update our strategies and policies with stakeholder input We will ensure all strategies and policies have an appropriate review cycle to ensure they remain relevant to our stakeholders. When these require reviewing, we will collaborate with stakeholders and change them as appropriate to ensure we are meeting their needs. Our Project Information team will provide governance in this area, ensuring the reviews take place in a timely manner with the correct input.	Completion status	Continuous improvement
7.9 Create a queue management service for our connecting customers We will work with the ESO and the ENA's Open Networks project to create and utilise a queue management service. This approach will be trialled on our Orkney project. Should the trial be successful we will update our charging statement and create supporting policy and procedures.	Completion status	Medium term

Proactively change our business and our industry

Our stakeholder engagement ambition

We continually strive to achieve ambitious targets for the benefit of our stakeholders and society. This is evident in our approach to sustainability and our rate of delivering new infrastructure for a low carbon economy. This level of ambition is present in our new Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and this Action Plan, as we recognise the need to put stakeholders at the heart of our business and go further than current best practice.

We have set ourselves the ambition to be leaders in stakeholder engagement – in our industry and beyond. We want to be at the forefront of stakeholder engagement practice, ensuring our strategic priorities align with the needs and expectations of our stakeholders. To do this we need an ambitious plan that will take time for us to complete. It is important to recognise that we have been developing our engagement throughout RIIO-T1 and the lessons learnt have created the foundations which will enable us to improve consistently across the business.

Whilst developing our plan to achieve our long-term ambition, we used change management best practice and Kotter's eight stage approach to strategic change.[9] This approach emphasises the need to continually introduce more change to create the desired culture.

By acknowledging that these actions within this plan are a continuation on the steps we have already taken to improve, we can:

- recognise our employees' achievements;
- embed a continuous improvement approach that will lead to an enduring culture of engagement within our business; and
- be open and honest with our stakeholders, helping them understand our current capability and our desired future.

Planned activity

8 Anchor into culture — We will embed all successful trials into business as usual and update how we control, plan, and measure our business.

7 Maintain momentum — We will celebrate employees' efforts and create more change to continuously improve and embed a culture of engagement.

6 Short term wins — We will create short term wins which will increase our performance during RIIO-T1 and create support for the new strategy.

5 Remove barriers — We will remove inefficient processes and management practices to help employees try new approaches and processes when engaging.

4 Internal empowerment — We will train our employees as well as creating opportunities for them to engage more with stakeholders and make decisions in stakeholders' best interests.

We are here

3 Vision and initiatives — We have created a new strategy that describes the future we want to create and this action plan details targeted and coordinated activities to make that future a reality.

2 Guiding coalition — We have developed a group with strong positional power and credibility in our business to drive improvements.

1 Sense of urgency — We have started engaging with our employees to explain why we need to improve.

Progress so far

Figure 2: Our progress against Kotter's eight stage approach to strategic change

9 Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World, John P Kotter: Harvard Business Review Press; 1 edition (April 8, 2014).

Monitoring, governance and reporting

Part of our governance will be providing stakeholders accurate and current information on the efficiency and effectiveness of our stakeholder engagement, and the status of our actions in this document.

We hold ourselves accountable for each action. Throughout this document we have documented how we will report on each action. We will either report: that the action has been completed, for example we will inform stakeholders that we have successfully delivered a live 'capacity availability map' on our website; or report a measurement through monitoring our activity, for example we will report how many stakeholders inputted into the next revision of our Innovation strategy.

As part of our reporting we will develop internal performance indicators to measure our progress. From these we will extract Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be highlighted for our stakeholders. We will provide all of this information in an annual Stakeholder Engagement Report.

This will be separate from our Service KPIs (such as reliability and customer satisfaction) which will be reported on in our annual reporting framework.[10] These service KPIs provide a measurement of how we are meeting our stakeholders' needs.

Our promise

We will return the baseline costs of any initiatives that we do not deliver and do not replace with a materially equivalent initiative.

We're committing to this so that we can demonstrate our commitment to delivering the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy that our stakeholders support and helped create while ensuring efficiency for consumers.

[10] https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/riio-t2-plan/