

Annex 25: Digitalisation Strategy Action Plan

Leveraging digitalisation technology and digitised data
to generate value for customers and stakeholders

December 2021

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1 About Electricity North West

Electricity North West is one of 14 electricity distribution network operators (DNOs) in Great Britain. We are responsible for maintaining and upgrading 56,000km of network and nearly 500 major substations across the region. We supply electricity to the diverse communities in our region which extends from Macclesfield all the way up to Carlisle.

We are regulated by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) who provide DNOs with the license to operate and decide what's fair for us to charge our customers for each price control period.

Our current price control began in 2015 and runs to 2023. It's referred to as RIIO-ED1. In full, that stands for Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs, Electricity Distribution 1. Under this framework, the price we can charge our customers is fixed until the next price control, RIIO-ED2, which will run from 2023 until 2028.

Work is already underway to set the framework for RIIO-ED2 that applies to all energy network companies (i.e. gas and electricity distribution). The framework will determine what RIIO-ED2, which begins on 1 April 2023, looks like.

The period which the RIIO-ED2 price control covers will see significant change in the way electricity is generated, consumed and stored, driving innovation across the whole energy system both now and into the future.

2 Executive Summary

The essential service of electricity distribution that Electricity North West delivers needs to adapt. Net Zero targets necessitate adoption of low-carbon technologies, electric vehicles, and locally generated energy to be distributed, aligned with effective adoption of smart meters and distribution system operations. These changes will change electricity supply and demand patterns at a scale unimaginable when the network was designed and built.

To meet these new demands on our network and the resulting change in customer and stakeholder priorities and needs we have developed and published a Digitalisation Strategy. Our strategy describes the activities we will undertake in the next few years to deliver the necessary change.

This Action Plan provides a view of the activities we will undertake during this six-month period.

We have significantly revised both our governance of the Digitalisation Strategy Action Plan (DSAP) and our approach to its development based on Ofgem's revised principles.

Our approach now focuses on customer and stakeholder feedback and benefits.

A key foundation for our Digitalisation Strategy is the data. We have produced a Data Strategy that describes streams of activity that will be delivered in adherence with the Data Best Practices issued by Ofgem.

We have enhanced our published Action Plan to incorporate the initiatives and projects required to align our focus to the seven guiding principles. Whilst these principles are subject to consultation and feedback we believe they are not likely to undergo significant change.

The key principles are as follows:

1. Prioritise providing benefits to the stakeholders who pay for the products and services and also benefits to the broader Public Interest.
2. Ensure all products and services work towards a defined vision.
3. Take full advantage of opportunities to deliver benefits early and to iterate improvements to products and services.
4. Make it easy to understand the products and services, the status of their delivery and how to access them.
5. Ensure visibility about the nature and status of actions in the Digitalisation Action Plan.
6. There is a shared understanding of success and performance is measured.
7. Coordinate with the wider ecosystem of products and services.

This document is complemented by the following strategy documents

- Annex 10 - Cyber Resilience Plan which outlines at a high-level our Operational Technology (OT) and Corporate IT Cyber Investment Plans
- Annex 21 - Data Strategy which shows in how we will implement the Energy Data Taskforce (EDTF) recommendation and Ofgem's Data Best Practice.
- Annex 23 - Digitalisation Strategy which provides our digital vision for RIIO-ED2 and how we will deliver the vision in support of our business plan.

3 Stakeholder Engagement

Our strategy for managing our stakeholders is based on our wider engagement model. This is outlined in the diagram below:



Key:

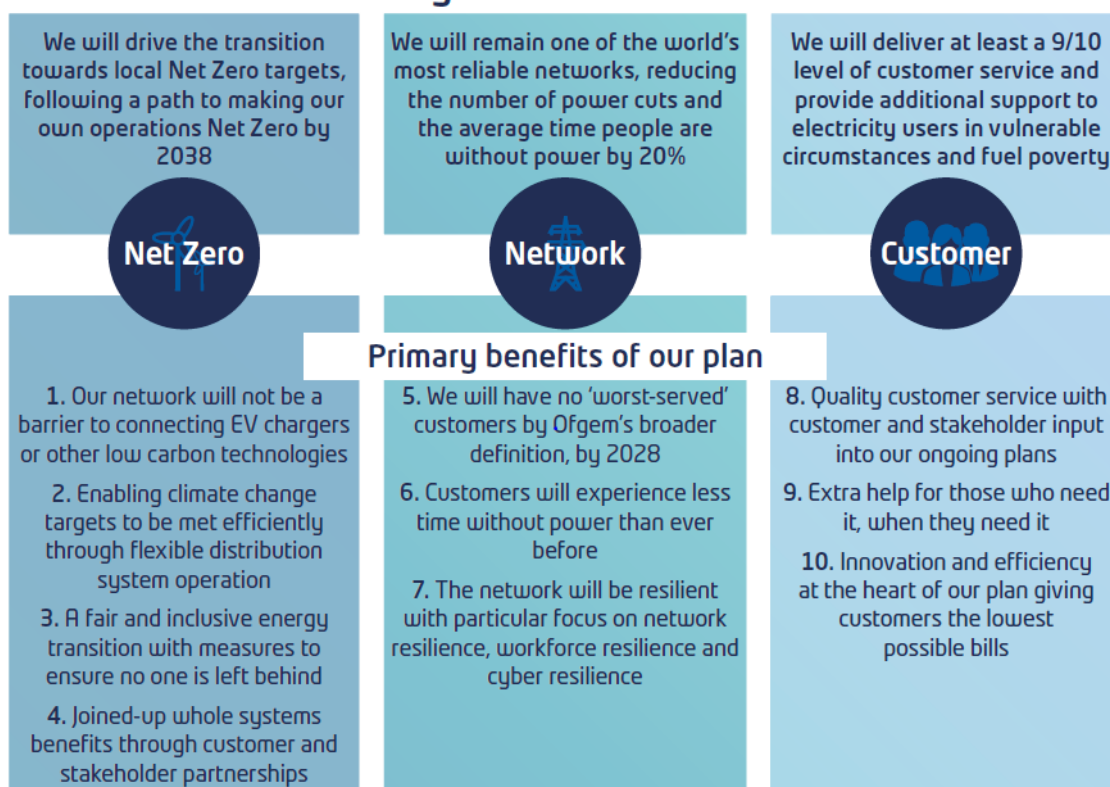
Enhancements

* CVC – Customers in vulnerable circumstances panel part of Electricity Users in Vulnerable Circumstance’s Strategy
[#] Undergrounding for visual amenity
[†] Distribution System Operation

4 Our Stakeholder Vision

Over the past months, working closely with our internal and external stakeholders, Electricity North West has developed a clear business vision built around three towers; Net Zero, Network and Customer. The Digitalisation Portfolio, which we start to deliver from April 2023, has been developed to enable us to achieve the 10 primary business benefits of each of these towers. This Digitalisation Strategy Action Plan outlines how we will continue to work with our stakeholders over the next six months in readiness for April 2023.

Vision: Leading the North West to Net Zero



5 Digitalisation Principles

The following Sections provide a summary of our activities and how they align with or deliver towards the principles.

5.1 Principle 1: We will prioritise providing benefits to the stakeholders who pay for our products and services and also benefits to the broader Public Interest.

Rationale:

Our paying customers will benefit the most from our investment in digitalisation.

Complete

- Updated and published our Data Strategy, which underpin our Digitalisation Strategy.
- Completed 14 draft Investment Proposals for our RIIO-ED2 submission, which clearly articulate benefits for our paying customers.

Next – January 2022 to June 2022

- Define targeted and specific customer and stakeholder engagement plan to understand digital requirements.
- Validation and prioritisation of customer and stakeholder requirements against vision.
- Collate new digital requirements from our stakeholders.
- Update Digitalisation Strategy, as and when required.

Future...

- We will repeat the process every six months and continually improve it with our stakeholders and customers.
- Improve collaboration across the energy system to create a consolidated approach regionally and nationally.

5.2 Principle 2: We will ensure products and services work towards a defined vision.

Rationale:

Ongoing investment in digital services is aligned to our vision and is optimised to deliver customer and stakeholder benefits.

Complete

- Identified externally facing digital services.
- Confirmed business owners for each service and clarified their roles as business owners (by end of December 2021).

Next – January 2022 to June 2022

- Create consolidated externally facing service catalogue with all our external facing services: - ranging from Planned Supply Interruptions (PSI) and Supplier Checker Service.
- Agreed initial metrics for each digital service in place.

Future...

- New and significantly changed digital services are developed in collaboration with our consumers of the services.
- Explore opportunities for shared digital services regionally and nationally.
- Enhancement of our customer journey.

5.3 Principle 3: We will take full advantage of opportunities to deliver benefits early and to iterate improvements to products and services.

Rationale:

Our customers and stakeholders will benefit from continual service improvements and rapid course corrections based to accommodate new requirements.

Complete;

- Feedback channel for after faults - Proactive, automated, text messaging surveys sent to customers to gather feedback.
- Automated customer call backs to reduce customer queueing on calls.
- Automated updates to customers who are off supply based on their message preferences.
- Deployed our new Asset Register system – enhancing our information flow digitally to our teams across Electricity North West (by end of December 2021).
- Replaced our Capital Delivery planning tool, improving our planning capability (by end of December 2021)
- Digitalised standalone processes to the new solution – improving internal digital experience (by end of December 2021).

Next – January 2022 to June 2022;

- Our Digital and Data/Integration platform product teams will spearhead our ways of working.
- Implement DevOps for Data and Integration.
- Workforce and training plan to enhance our digital capabilities.
- Increasing self-service functionality on the website, through the enhancement of content on our website and our chatbot service.
- Priority Services Register mobile app for our teams – enabling our teams to submit requests for contact, on a customer's behalf, to our customer services team.
- Enhancing our process to submit information from the field for faults, capturing more information that will support improved customer engagement.

Future...

- Our RIIO-ED2 Portfolio will be delivered digitally, by default.
- Improvements to our Log a fault service, enhancing the process via our website and call service.
- Enhancements to our call service and call handling process – acting on increasing analytics, on calls received from our customers.

5.4 Principle 4: We will make it easy to understand the products and services, the status of their delivery and how to access them.

Rationale:

Our digital products and services will be described in plain English, easy to find in a service catalogue with transparent reporting on the service status.

Complete

- Website accessibility enhancements – changes to the website to support access and usage.

Next – January 2022 to June 2022

- Publish externally facing service catalogue on appropriate digital channels.
- Enhance the public facing service catalogue, with appropriate metrics.
- Accessibility improvements to our website for sign language.

Future

- Explore future customer and stakeholder appetite for new digital channels e.g. voice interfaces.
- Publish interactive Digital and Product roadmaps.

5.5 Principle 5: We will ensure visibility about the nature and status of actions in the Digitalisation Action Plan.

Rationale:

Our digital plans will be accessible to our customers and stakeholders in a number of different medium that are designed to elicit and encourage feedback.

Complete

- We have published our Digitalisation Strategy Action Plan H2 2021.

Next – January 2022 to June 2022

- Provided a list of actions and their status as part of our action plan.
- Create interactive drillable chart on the actions.

Future

- Continue to update and refresh our Digitalisation Strategy Action Plan each six months.

5.6 Principle 6: We will ensure there is shared understanding of success and performance is measured

Rationale:

Our digital metrics will drive towards our vision and ensure that everything we do is aligned to our customer and stakeholder needs.

Complete

- Develop additional metric to measure and drive the digitalisation agenda.
- Governance to drive digital agenda.

Next – January 2022 to June 2022

- Mature the metrics we use to measure and drive the digitalisation agenda.

Future

- Repeat Gartner’s Digital Execution scorecard assessment.

5.7 Principle 7: We will coordinate with the wider ecosystem of products and services

Rationale:

Our customers will get a more consistent service across the energy system.

Complete

- Energy Network Association - active participation in the Digitalisation and Data Steering Group
- Digitalisation and Data Steering Group – Member of the sub-working group on Data Triage that is looking at playbooks for how to deal with data requests
- Digitalisation and Data Steering Group – Common Information Model (CIM) Subgroup – will ensure Electricity North West provides an active member to participate in this newly formed group
- Digitalisation and Data Steering Group - National Energy System Map – continue to support the working group and achieve deliverables as part of the project.
- A founder member in sub Distributed Network Operator Data Collaboration group, which focuses on the electric network providers.

Next – January 2022 to June 2022

- Digitalisation and Data Steering Group - National Energy System Map – continue to support the working group and achieve deliverables as part of the project.
- Digitalisation and Data Steering Group – Member of the sub-working group on Data Triage that is looking at playbooks for how to deal with data requests.
- Digitalisation and Data Steering Group – CIM Subgroup – will ensure Electricity North West provides an active member to participate in this newly formed group.

6 Our Plan for January 2022 to June 2022

Principle 1 - We will prioritise providing benefits to the stakeholders who pay for our products and services and also benefits to the broader Public Interest.		
Validation and prioritisation of customer and stakeholder requirements against vision.	Collate new digital requirements from our stakeholders.	Update Digitalisation Strategy, as and when required.
Define targeted and specific customer and stakeholder engagement plan to understand digital requirements.		
Principle 2 - We will prioritise providing benefits to the stakeholders who pay for our products and services and also benefits to the broader Public Interest.		
Create consolidated externally facing service catalogue with all our external facing services: - ranging from PSI and Supplier Checker Service.	Agreed initial metrics for each Digital Service in place.	
Principle 3 - We will take full advantage of opportunities to deliver benefits early and to iterate improvements to products and services.		
Our Digital and Data/Integration platform product teams will spearhead our ways of working.	Implement DevOps for Data and Integration.	Workforce and training plan to enhance our digital capabilities.
Increasing self-service functionality on the website, through the enhancement of content on our website and our chatbot service.	Enhancing our process to submit information from the field for faults, capturing more information that will support improved customer engagement.	Priority Services Register mobile app for our teams – enabling our teams to submit requests for contact, on a customer's behalf, to our customer services team.
Principle 4 - We will make it easy to understand the products and services, the status of their delivery and how to access them.		
Publish externally facing service catalogue on appropriate digital channels.	Enhance the public facing service catalogue, with appropriate metrics.	Accessibility improvements to our website for sign language.
Principle 5 - We will ensure visibility about the nature and status of actions in the Digitalisation Action Plan.		
Provided a list of actions and their status as part of our action plan.	Create interactive drillable chart on the actions.	

Principle 6 - We will ensure there is shared understanding of success and performance is measured.

	Mature the metrics we use to measure and drive the digitalisation agenda.	
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Principle 7 - We will coordinate with the wider ecosystem of products and services.

Digitalisation and Data Steering Group - National Energy System Map.	Sub-DNO group.	Digitalisation and Data Steering Group – CIM (Common Information Model) Subgroup.
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